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The social worlds and identities of young

British Sikhs and Hindus in London.

Declaration

I, Manmit Kaur Bhambra declare that this thesis, which I am submitting, is entirely my own work except where otherwise indicated. It has not been submitted, either wholly or substantially, for another degree of this University, or for a degree at any other institution. I have clearly signaled the presence of quoted or paraphrased material and referenced all sources.

Abstract

This thesis is centred on exploring the identity options and orientations of young British Indians, from Sikh and Hindu backgrounds, who are British born and living in the London area. Recent socio-political debates have assumed a lack of Britishness amongst these young people, an assumption that is rooted in the belief that high bonding capital within ethnic minorities has led to a lack of bridging capital. This thesis argues that such statements are an essentialisation of the reality of these young people. In fact, their sources of belonging are far more complex, and far less threatening than we may be led to believe. Through the utilisation of eighty in-depth interviews, this thesis presents the intricate social worlds of these young people and the range of orientations (positive and negative) they feel towards component parts of their social worlds, as well as examining the strength and permeability of boundaries that demarcate these social worlds. The final substantive chapter deals with Britishness, and uncovers and presents the different perceptions and understandings that these young people have about British national identity and the ways in which it is accommodated (or not) alongside other important sources of belonging. It is found that a multi-dimensional approach to identity and belonging is best suited to understand the diverse and highly individualistic trajectories of these young people and that 'diverse-dual identities' are the most common pattern of belonging in this particular empirical case.

This thesis make a significant contribution to the existing theoretical frameworks on identity and assimilation as well as the current socio-political debates on Britishness and the cultural integration of ethnic minorities in Britain, by presenting data on an under-researched group, British Indians, and highlighting the range of experiences within this group and the sources of this diversity.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 *Overview*

The key foci of this work are the issues of identity and belonging for second and third-generation young people from Sikh and Hindu backgrounds in the wider context of the current debates on the integration of ethnic minorities in British society and the existing academic literature on assimilation, integration, and identity options, and orientations of second-generation ethnic minorities. This research is concerned with the life experiences and perceptions of young people between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five years, from Indian-Sikh and Indian-Hindu backgrounds, British-born and living in the London area.

This research utilises the narratives of these young peoples' lives to create a picture of the social worlds in which they live – the 'groups' they acknowledge, the different shades of meaning they attach to different groups and sources of belonging, their relationship and feelings towards these groups and the people in them, as well as their own ideas and experiences about the perceived structure and organisation of these groups. It is also concerned with the ideas of boundaries, the mechanisms by which social contact shapes sources of belonging and how these young people conceptualise and experience 'Britishness'. This is thus a study into social relationships between people, the interactions that foster or perhaps hinder the nature of these young peoples' social ties, and the manner in which this impacts their sense of identity and belonging in different social contexts.

This research is situated in the current empirical socio-political debates on the integration of ethnic minorities into mainstream British society, which has been given added emphasis recently by the concern that multiculturalism has 'failed', in the British case, to create a cohesive society. There is debate on the success of

multiculturalism as an overarching policy in Britain; this debate focuses specifically on the integration of ethnic minorities into mainstream British life, particularly given the concerns of politicians and policy-makers about the need for a shared common culture. This debate has been given added emphasis by political theorists and social commentators such as Trevor Phillips who have argued that ethnic minorities are leading 'parallel lives' (Phillips 2005). This debate has focused its concerns mainly in respect to the integration of South Asian communities, whose distinctive cultural traditions and strong community organisation have been seen as a boundary to successful integration.

Although the debate would lead us to believe that there is a real crisis in the social and cultural integration of ethnic minorities and, specifically, to believe the claim that ethnic minorities have a lack of Britishness, the question is, how real is this crisis? Should we be concerned?

Accordingly, the central questions that guide this thesis are:

1. How do young Sikhs and Hindus understand and experience the organisation and structure of their social worlds?
2. What are the mechanisms that shape sources of belonging?
3. What are the different understandings and experiences of Britishness?

The real issue has been that of integration, or lack of integration, a concern that people or specific communities have led and are leading separate lives away from mainstream society (Joppke 2004; Modood 2007; Vasta 2007; McGhee 2008; Pilkington 2008). This separation thesis, based on a concern over integration, has recently evolved from the idea that multiculturalism, or more specifically multicultural policies in Britain have negatively impacted the sense of commonality, and common culture evident today; these concerns about

multiculturalism have raised concerns about the compatibility of ethnic minorities and western European British values. The conclusion has been that multiculturalism has in fact led to a lack of integration. The assumption is that members of ethnic minorities, especially South Asians, are strongly bound together within their distinct communities, and that there may be an incompatibility between the values of these communities and those of 'western European' British society that has led to a lack of integration. (Barry 2001; Joppke 2004; Wright & Taylor 2011; Bingham 2012; Palmer 2012; Heath & Demireva 2013; Platt & Nandi 2013; Heath & Sprekelsen 2014)

This research challenges these assumptions through an exploration and analysis of the social worlds and interactions of an under-studied group, young British-born Sikhs and Hindus. However, in this thesis, the focus will not be to 'test' multiculturalism against the criteria on which its failure is assumed. The debates within multiculturalism add concern to the issue of integration, and have provided added emphasis and justification for a closer look into the reality of belonging of ethnic communities in British society and the life experiences of young people from ethnic-minority backgrounds for whom we have very little data.

1.2 *Research outline*

Young British Indians are under-represented in both academic and empirical literature. High educational attainment levels and perceived social mobility, as well as the treatment of 'British Asians' as one aggregate group, hides the complexity and diversity of belonging within this group. This research challenges these ideas by presenting in-depth research from a diverse range of young Sikhs and Hindus, from a range of backgrounds, to highlight not only the diversity in their life experiences and attitudes, but to display the very different ideas that young people

from within these groups have about who they are, where they fit in, their own 'Indianness', 'Sikhness', 'Hinduness', 'Punjabiness', and 'Britishness'. This research challenges the essentialisation of these groups and the behaviour of its members, and provides a detailed insight into the complex lives of these young people, and the very different pressures and challenges they face.

This research utilises qualitative methodology to collect the rich narratives of eighty young people living in the London area. The sample constitutes twenty young males from Sikh-Indian backgrounds: twenty young males from Hindu-Indian backgrounds, twenty young females from Sikh-Indian backgrounds and twenty females from Hindu-Indian backgrounds. Equal numbers of each sub-group are thus represented. These young people represent the diversity of their own communities; some are orthodox Sikhs, wearing turbans and keeping uncut beards, some are orthodox Hindus, some are agnostics, and others represent the many shades of belief and identification that lie between. These young people were from all walks of life; some were unemployed, some were in semi-skilled labour, and others were in white-collar professions such as law and banking.

Some of these young people were from what they understood as 'strict' and 'traditional families' where cultural traditions were upheld and young people were expected to behave in a certain way and live their lives in accordance with these traditions; other young people were from what they understood as 'liberal' backgrounds, where families experienced a greater level of 'westernisation', which was experienced and understood by many young people as 'doing more British things' rather than sticking rigidly to cultural and religious customs. Again, there were many shades of experience in between. Young people were contacted and recruited through a snowball sampling method; data was then collected via a semi-

structured in-depth interview between the interviewee and myself. The results of these interviews form the central arguments and analysis of this research.

This research is centred on the experiences of the individual, their relationships to members of their own ethnic groups, the feelings of belonging and acceptance they feel at the hands of their own family/community structures, as well as wider British society. It is an analysis of how and why different sources of belonging become important and desirable, and why others become sources of disattachment, indifference, and in some cases, deep-seated resentment and animosity. It is an in-depth exploration and analysis of the actual meanings of 'identity' and 'belonging' for these young people. The diversity of opinion and experience about being British and Britishness are also examined at the end of this thesis in a chapter exploring different understandings of 'Britishness'. This final chapter is my contribution to the continuing debates on Britishness, as well as a challenge to the essentialising notions of young people from ethnic minority backgrounds and their attitudes towards Britishness, as well as their own ethic identity.

1.3 *Contribution and justification: Why is this research important?*

On 14th January 2006, in a speech at the Fabian New Year Conference 2006 – *Who do we want to be? The future of Britishness* – Gordon Brown spoke of the challenges facing Britain, ranging from the global, such as relationships with Europe, America and the rest of the world, to the local and the individual, in areas such as modern citizenship, diversity and terrorism. He then argued that these issues underpinned the need for Britishness, stating that Britain and its citizens needed to be clear about what it meant to British.

He contended that Britishness should draw upon the country's qualities of 'creativity, inventiveness, enterprise and internationalism', but also emphasized its

commitments to ‘liberty for all, responsibility by all and fairness to all’. Brown believed that the establishment of such shared values could foster a new British patriotism that would move beyond ethnicity, race and institutions, and which would allow people to share ‘a common view of challenges and what needs to be done, forge a unified and shared sense of purpose about the long-term sacrifices they are prepared to make and the priorities they think important for national success.’

He also argued that there was a pressing need for a common Britishness in the face of new threats:

> ‘We have to face uncomfortable facts that while the British response to July 7th was remarkable, they were British citizens, British born, apparently integrated into our communities, who were prepared to maim and kill fellow British citizens irrespective of their religion [...]. We have to be clearer now about how diverse cultures which inevitably contain differences can find the essential common purpose also without which no society can flourish.’[1]

In recent years, when tensions have arisen and boiled over between different ethnic groups, multiculturalism’s failure to bind people together has been seen as the cause. The solution thus far on a policy level has been to promote a ‘new Britishness’ focusing on commonality and togetherness, which will bind people together in the face of new challenges and pressures. (Cantle 2012; Kalra & Kapoor 2008; Kundnani 2007; Pilkington 2008; Worley 2005).

The idea is that social fragmentation and unrest has been caused by people living separate lives, which has led to the assumption that if there was a clearer sense on citizenship, and commitment to ‘British Values’ (whatever these may be), this will

[1] *http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4611682.stm*

be the much needed 'glue' necessary to hold together a fragmented society. As a result, throughout Europe, governments have begun to clarify the meaning of 'national identity' as a way to better integrate members of ethnic minorities. (Pilkington 2008; Vasta 2007; Barry 2001; Bingham 2012; Joppke 2004; Palmer 2012; Wright & Taylor 2011; Heath & Demireva 2013)

The political agenda and debate surrounding 'Britishness' and national identity continues. David Cameron spoke in February 2011 about national identity and the lack of togetherness and unity that he felt was evident in Britain's multicultural society. Like Gordon Brown and other policy makers before him, David Cameron centred the need for a greater sense of national identity, in relation to what he saw as a lack of unity between people living in Britain and also framed the argument around young Muslim males, whom he felt were drawn to extremist Islamic ideology because of a lack of identity:

> I would argue an important reason so many young Muslims are drawn to it (Islamic extremism) comes down to a question of identity. What I am about to say is drawn from the British experience, but I believe there are general lessons for us all. In the UK, some young men find it hard to identify with the traditional Islam practiced at home by their parents, whose customs can seem staid when transplanted to modern Western countries. But these young men also find it hard to identify with Britain too, because we have allowed the weakening of our collective identity.[2]

Cameron ended his speech by saying that common purpose will 'help build stronger pride in local identity, so people feel free to say: 'Yes, I am a Muslim, I am a Hindu, I am Christian, but I am also a Londoner or a Berliner too. It's that

[2] http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/speeches-and-transcripts/2011/02/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference-60293

identity, that feeling of belonging in our countries, that I believe is the key to achieving true cohesion.'[3] The proposed alternatives to multicultural policies were focused on cohesion, shared values, citizenship and national identity. (Cantle 2012; Kalra & Kapoor 2008; Kundnani 2007; Pilkington 2008; Worley 2005).

What Cameron does not know is if young people already feel like this, what experiences shape their identities, and what are young people's feelings about and experiences of 'British identity'? This thesis sheds light on these issues and thus contributes to the debate on British identity and its role alongside other identities and sources of belonging in the lives of young Hindus and Sikhs. Is Cameron trying to fix a problem that is not really even there, or at least as not as widespread as he assumes?

The way in which leaders such as Gordon Brown and David Cameron define this issue of a lack of integration, and the idea that South Asian communities are living separate lives runs the risk of 'essentialising' these ethnic communities and their members. The argument simplifies ethnic minorities into homogenous units, static and unchanging, almost locked in their own traditions and culture, with little integration and desire to integrate. This idea of 'essentialising', as Ali Rattansi has recently described it, will be challenged in this thesis. (Rattansi 2011)

I argue that ethnic minorities have been conveyed as a unified, unchanging phenomenon, something which does not convey the diverse and complex reality of these communities. The essentialisation of these groups has led to a lack of understanding about different ways in which members integrate into society and the complexity of their orientations. I would argue that the ideas of 'British values' and 'British society' have also been 'essentialised' in this debate on integration and

[3] http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/speeches-and-transcripts/2011/02/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference-60293

multiculturalism; they too have been simplified and portrayed as being defined by a high degree of uniformity, that is, the idea that there is a definitive set of 'British Values' and 'British society' and that all members of society understand these notions, and that they mean the same thing to everyone.

What I show in this research is the complex variety of experiences that these young people have and the wide range of perceptions they express about their sense of belonging to their ethnic communities, and British society, as well as the way in which social experiences and social interactions influence these aspects of life. Through showing the diversity and complexity of identity and belonging within ethnic communities, by focusing on the statistically large, yet under-researched group of young Sikhs and Hindus in London, I argue against the simplistic debates, assumptions and criticisms of this group in terms of their ethnicity and integration.

This research will contribute to the continuing debate on the integration of ethnic minorities by uncovering and analysing how these young people experience and understand life in our communities. Debates centred on the issue of integration have not focused enough on the way in which treatment from members of the white British majority has impacted the way that members of ethnic minorities integrate. Others have assumed that inclusion and acceptance are only one way, and that members of ethnic communities are deeply rooted, accepted and comfortable in their own ethnic communities and ethnic identities at the expense of belonging to wider British society. They fail to understand, firstly, if this is really the case, and secondly, the mechanisms by which the lack of integration may have been caused, if not exacerbated, by the treatment they receive from white British people. Additionally, it is poignant that what it means to be part of British life, to have a sense of Britishness, and what really constitutes successful integration are areas that remain relatively untouched in the current debates on this subject.

This research contributes to the on-going debates, by providing new insights into the way in which young people from these ethnic minorities relate to what are often assumed to be their own communities. This research explores the theme of ethnic identities by showing that the idea that young people from ethnic minorities are automatically grounded and accepted in these communities, and/or that this acceptance, where it occurs, is at odds with a sense of Britishness, is flawed. I seek to challenge easy generalisations made about these young people and their identity options and orientations.

This research shows that young people from Sikh and Hindu backgrounds can face a complex web of pressures, expectations, acceptance and/or rejection from both their own ethnic communities, and/or British society. Essentialising these groups, or their members, does not accurately convey the complexities faced by these young people, and the intricate ways in which they assess their own identity options and compatibility with other members of their own or different groups.

This research captures a form of intersectionality[4] at work. I find that there are different axes at work in these young people's lives; different ways in which

[4] Intersectionality is a concept often used in critical theories to describe the ways in which oppressive institutions (racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, xenophobia, classism, etc.) are interconnected and cannot be examined separately from one another. The concept first came from Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 and is largely used in critical theories, especially Feminist theory, when discussing systematic oppression. Existing theories of intersectionality have argued that race and gender are not merely additive, but represent independent, interactive, systems of control (King 1989). The Intersectionality literature has focused on the intersectionality of gender, in particular in the labour market (Browne & Misra 2003). As Browne and Misra explain, an individual can experience disadvantage and privilege through overlapping identity categories: interlocking systems of race, gender and class. These categories 'produce and maintain social hierarchy' (Browne & Misra 2003: 489). This creates a situation in which people can simultaneously experience both privilege and discrimination/disadvantage rising from a combination of gender, race and class, among other social categories, for example sexuality and age. Individuals' socially constructed identities influence not only their self-perception, but also how they are perceived and treated by others. (For further discussions of intersectionality see Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman, 1999; England, Christopher and Reid 1999; McCall 2005; Dickerson, et al. 2010; Mintz and Krymkowski; 2010).

patterns of contact, the effects of different types of contact acceptance, and belonging differ according to which segment of the British *and* British-Asian population we are dealing with. *This research finds that the nature of the interplay between minority and majority depends on the segment you are looking at*.

This research shows that intersectionality has an impact in terms of gender, with young women reporting specific effects. However, I offer my own extension and contribution to the existing literature on intersectionality by showing how intersectionality is also evident in the way young people feel accepted/rejected by members of their own community and wider British society; caste, orthodoxy, socio-economic status, education, family life and values all cut across and interact to create a situation where the type of treatment young people receive from others (which later goes on to affect the desirability of their membership of different social groups – a factor I also refer to as 'identity options') depends on the individual concerned (the social segment they are from and the characteristics this entails, as well as the pressures they are subject to from family and/or friends). Intersectionality is thus seen to be a crucial element in the development of ethnic and national identity, as individuals experience certain advantages/disadvantages in terms of their belonging and acceptance in the two key spheres I am interested in: ethnic community and wider British society.

1.4 *My argument*

My argument is thus a challenge to essentialising notions. Standard concerns and critiques are put forward as stylised facts and fail to recognise the dynamism and diversity of British Values, British society and ethnic minorities. This is a dangerous oversimplification, which leads to social problems being misunderstood.

My argument is formed of eight key (interconnected) elements:

1. There is much more diversity and complexity in ethnic communities than has generally been assumed; they are not monolithic, unchanging communities. Instead, they are formed of diverse and sophisticated young people with different experiences. Social worlds comprise of many social circles; minority and majority groups are not homogenous units, but rather they are seen to comprise of many different segments, each with their own characteristics. Young people can have a sense of belonging (or not) in any combination of these social circles. There is great diversity in the way that these young people relate to their minority and majority communities.

2. Diversity takes a range of forms; for some people there is no conflict in belonging, they have what have been called ‘dual-identities’, which in practice means they have a sense of Britishness as well as their own ethnic identity, and a sense of belonging, inclusion and acceptance in both mainstream British society as well as their own ethnic communities. However, dual-identities are not experienced in a uniform way, they are extremely diverse. I also add to the existing debates and literature by highlighting my finding of ‘diverse dual-identities’, which are embedded in different social circles in complex, highly individualised social worlds and

characterised by thicker and thinner versions of belonging to a range of social circles, each with brighter or blurrier boundaries.

For others, the 'conflict' is on the other side. Where the arguments citing the failure of multiculturalism and the lack of integration of ethnic minorities have assumed that members of minority groups have a sense of 'ethnicity' that either impedes their integration into wider British society and/or is more important to these people than 'being British', the reality is that many young people feel excluded and rejected from what are assumed to be 'their' communities and traditions. Some young people feel a sense of belonging in certain social circles within minority and majority groups, yet have little or no interest in the wider group as a whole. For a few young people, there is a crisis of the type outlined, but not fully understood, by recent prime ministers, Cameron and Brown. These young people feel detached and excluded from British society, yet this does not always mean that they are deeply rooted in their own ethnic identities. They can feel outside of both. It is not an 'either/or scenario'; identities are too complex and diverse to be deducted according to these types of essentialisations. The paths to integration and belonging are very different; destinies are divergent.

3. What drives this diversity of experience? Why are some young people accommodating and embracing British society, and others rejecting it? My argument is that the social worlds, social experiences and social relationships of the young people and they ways in which they react to these different facets is key to understanding their diverse responses to multiculturalism and integration as well as their diverse adaptations. My argument is that there needs to be a focus on this diversity in empirical and theoretical approaches to this subject.

4. I find that social contact, and the information generated in diverse contact scenarios, is a key mechanism in shaping social worlds through the assessment of shared (and clashing) values with various social circles.

5. Young people's sense of belonging is influenced by different dimensions that interact with identity options and orientations in a very intricate way. Who you are as an individual, for example, if you are the child of well-integrated, socio-economically successful, culturally assimilated first generation immigrant parents, affects in theory where you live, what school you go to, the nature of your social ties and so forth. Thus being a part of a certain segment of the ethnic minority population means that you are more likely to have contact with a certain type of white British person (with a similar background), which then affects how you feel about being British, and the extent to which you are accepted, as well as your own ethic identity. This is an area I explore in some detail.

6. Boundaries vary greatly across young people. Ideas of 'who is like us' and 'who is not' are not uniform. Ethnicity is often not the basis of social boundaries. Boundaries can be formulated on a range of issues. Boundaries are not restricted to an interplay between majority and minority; given the complexity of social worlds, young people often feel simultaneously many different boundaries to various social circles within their social worlds. Some of these boundaries are 'brighter' and more salient than others, while others are more blurry and perceived as being more permeable.

7. British society is experienced and understood in diverse ways, and just as ethnic minorities should not be treated as homogenous, unchanging and static, this essentialisation should also not be applied to the idea of 'British Society'

and ‘British identity’. This research shows that the latter is experienced in diverse ways, and represents many shades of meaning for different people whose experience and ideas of what it means to live in Britain and to be British depend on their own individual expectations.

8. Treatment from members of white British society *and* ethnic groups cannot be essentialised. Belonging and acceptance as well as exclusion and rejection are not automatic regardless of which group we are discussing. There are many dimensions that shape individual identity options and orientations.

1.5 *Operationalisation of research problem and thesis outline*

I operationalised my research aims into the following research questions which would be answered in the substantive chapters of this thesis:

Chapter 4 Social worlds

- How do young Sikhs and Hindus understand and experience the organisation and structure of their social worlds?
- Within these social worlds, where does their sense of belonging lie?
- Where do boundaries lie and on what are they formulated?

Chapter 5 Contact

- How does contact play out in practice; what are the different types of contact experiences that these young people can have?
- What are the mechanisms by which contact can shape sources of belonging?

Chapter 6 Britishness

- What are the different understandings and experiences of Britishness?
- How is Britishness accommodated (or not) with other sources of belonging

Chapter Two: Conceptual framework; main intellectual currents

2.1 Identities

Identity is itself open to many interpretations,[5] but in the following chapters when I refer to 'identity', I refer to the ideas that an individual has about themselves, a 'sense of belonging', or an aspect of life that gives them some meaning in some way, that is a part of who they are. I am aware that my definition is rather loose, but the concept of 'identity' is so fluid and individualistic in nature that I think that a looser definition is appropriate, and as I will show in the data I present from my respondents – identity means different things to different people, at different times, and in different social contexts. I am not alone in arguing that identities are not fixed, nor are they a 'given'. This D.Phil. shows the range of options and life experiences young people have in terms of their own sense of 'identity' and this concurs broadly with other writers such as Kahani-Hopkins and Hopkins (2002), Bourdieu (1983), Bauman (1996), and Martin (1995), who have argued that identities are fluid, changeable and part of an ongoing process.

According to Nimmi Hutnik, most social scientific definitions of identity can be divided into two broad categories: Personality theorists who regard identity in terms of 'a sense of personal distinctiveness, personal continuity and personal autonomy'. The other perspective originating in sociology and social psychology is one that tends to 'stress the fact that a sense of identity is formed from the dialectic between the individual and society' (Hutnik 1985: 298). Sociologists and social psychologists are often specifically interested in the way in which membership in social groups influences, or determines individual's perspectives of themselves, that

[5] There are so many different interpretations of the notions of ethnicity and identity that it is beyond the scope of this D.Phil. to analyse all of the many different ways that identity has been discussed and represented in various academic disciplines.

is, their social identity (Jacobsen 1998: 10). These concepts are key themes in the work of Mead who analyses the process by which an individual acquires a full sense of them themselves. Mead argues that the 'self' is developed 'by organising the individual attitudes of others into [...] organised social or group attitudes', and as a result the self becomes 'an individual reflection of the general systematic pattern of social or group behaviour in which it and the others are all involved' (Mead 1964: 222). Thus, 'identity', or sense of self, is formulated not only by the individual, but through social processes between self and other.

Social Identity Theory has been expounded by both Henri Tajfel and John Turner to understand the psychological basis of intergroup discrimination (1986). Earlier, in 1970, Tajfel et al. attempted to identify the minimal conditions that would lead members of one group to discriminate in favour of the in-group to which they belonged against another group to which they did not: the out-group. Before I launch into the concept of in-groups and out-groups in more detail, it is important to note that the idea of the 'self' is at the heart of this theory. In social identity theory, categorization of other people is done with the self in mind and this leads to the in-group / out-group differential; 'categorizing others must have direct implications for ourselves in so far as it says something about the category relations between self and other' (Hogg & Abrams 1988: 21). Tajfel argues that the purpose of categorising and in-group identification is to achieve a group-based positive distinctiveness in relation to out-groups.

Social identity theory contends that a person has not one 'personal self', but rather several selves that correspond to widening circles of group membership; different social contexts may trigger an individual to think, feel and act on the basis of his personal, family, or national 'level of self' (Turner et al. 1987). Apart from the 'level of self', an individual has multiple 'social identities' (Berry 1997; Verkuyten

& Yildiz 2007; Platt & Nandi 2013). Hogg and Vaughan define social identity as the individual's self-concept derived from perceived membership of social groups. In other words, it is an individual-based perception of what defines the 'us' associated with any internalised group membership, which can be distinguished from the notion of personal identity, which refers to the self-knowledge that derives from the individual's unique attributes (Hogg & Vaughan 2012). Social identity theory is predominantly about intergroup processes. The focus is on relations and comparisons between groups and people are thought to evaluate their social identity in direct comparison with other groups. According to social identity theory, threat to group identity is an important factor to consider when examining groups' attitudes and behaviours (Verkuyten & Thijs 2002; Van Oudenhoven et al. 1998; Prins, 1996).

Tajfel encourages a dynamic approach to social identity based on 'the complex dialectical relationship between social identity and social settings' (Cairns 1982: 283). Tajfel is another scholar who does not see social identity as a fixed or permanent aspect of an individual's life, nor is it seen as the crucial and defining aspect of a person's self. Rather, according to social identity theory, an individual's self-concept is made up of varying self-images, which, 'can be construed as falling along a continuum, with individuating characteristics at the personal extreme' (Abrams & Hogg 1990: 4). Thus 'the salience of an individual's social identity varies from situation to situation: in some cases, an individual's actions are primarily shaped by his or her membership of any one of the social groups to which he or she belongs; in other cases, behaviour is determined by personal characteristics' (Jacobsen 1998: 11).

For Tajfel, social identity is 'that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with

the value and emotional significance attached to that membership' (Tajfel 1978: 63). If we take this definition, which I find useful, we can thus define ethnic identity as the feelings that a person has about his or her membership of an ethnic minority that originates in India, religious identity is then the set of feelings that they have about being part of a Sikh or Hindu minority in Britain, the religion itself, and the way it impacts their lives. Other writers have spoken of the identity options of young people from minority backgrounds in the United Kingdom (see Jacobsen 1998, and Rex & Josephides 1987), and some have argued that there is more than one social identity available to people and that this may be a cause of stress (Castells 1997).

Some writers have argued, however, that when there is a choice of identities available to individuals, individuals will often choose to identify with their own religious, ethnic or national identity as a way to distinguish themselves (Deaux, 1993, 1996; Huddy 2001; Huddy 2003; Hogg 2006; Greenfield & Marks 2007; Huddy & Khatib 2007).[6] It is assumed that these groups are relatively easy to be a part of and present a range of ways that people can identify with them (Smith 2003). The social cost of these identities is not often focused on, nor the way in which race relations and social prejudice may make it easy to identify with some groups and not with others (see Waters 2003, and discussion later in Chapter 4 on 'Symbolic ethnicities'). What is also missing from the literature is insight into the way in which losing or disassociating from ethic identity, or becoming more

[6] I have found that ethnic and religious identity are not necessarily seen as distinct. As I will show, many young people saw religious identity as being part of being an 'ethnic' – or as part of an 'ethnic identity', we might say. Often, the distinct cultural traditions and practices of a culture, say 'Punjabi', are seen as being part and parcel of life as a 'Sikh'. As a result, in the rest of this D.Phil., I do not treat religion and ethnicity as different bases of social identity, unless specified by my respondents. Unlike other scholars who have found this distinction useful (see Jacobsen 1998), when completing my fieldwork, I found that the two were so overlapped, to treat them as different aspects of social identity would be to manipulate the facts about these young people's lives and what they described to me. In some instances where the individual had a strong sense of religious identity, and these were the exception, religion and ethnicity were treated separately by me, the interviewer, as they were by the respondent in question.

acculturated can also be an affective identity choice that young people from ethnic minority backgrounds make in order to 'distinguish themselves', (from other ethnics), as well as a deeper analysis of the issue of 'choice' itself. I will return to this later in the course of the following chapters. I will thus explore what impacts these young peoples decisions about what their own identity is, what it should be and what it should not, or cannot be.

2.2 Assimilation and acculturation

What I am interested in can be understood as the cultural assimilation of young people from ethnic minorities. Therefore, the existing literature on assimilation and acculturation is a good place to start. This literature has focused on how immigrants adapt, or not, to the culture of the host society. It is a literature that has developed over many decades to reflect the changing circumstances of immigrants and host nations. Assimilation can be broadly defined as being incorporated, and this D.Phil. focuses on this notion of incorporation, not only in British society, but also in 'Asian' society. Thus this academic framework is the most appropriate one in which to situate this research.

The competing theories of assimilation dating from the Chicago school of the 1920s are a useful conceptual framework for this research. Feeling accepted and integrated are can been seen as facets of 'assimilation' and the historic and modern theories of assimilation offer some useful and relevant conceptual frameworks for this research, in particular by offering a range of theories about the *different* paths to assimilation (or not) that individuals and groups can take. It is the differences in the paths that this research focuses on, and thus these conceptual frameworks are useful to understanding and analysing the narratives of these young people.

What will follow now is an overview of the key intellectual strains of 'Assimilation Theory'. This work is not completely embedded in this theoretical perspective, nor does it seek to prove or disprove any of the theories I will now present. Instead, where relevant and useful, I will refer back to these perspectives in the course of this work to show how my findings concur, diverge or extend the existing theories to make a contribution to the academic literature and debates in this area.

Assimilation can be broadly defined as a process by which the characteristics of the members of the immigrant groups and host society come to resemble each other, although the political aims of a country's assimilation of new immigrants may not necessarily equate to this definition. Assimilation has economic, social and cultural dimensions, starting with the first generation and continuing through to the second generation and beyond. Groups may vary in the apparent 'incompleteness' of their assimilation for a number of reasons – including the level of human capital (education) they bring with them and the social and economic structure of the society they enter. Different aspects of assimilation may vary in completeness at different times, for example, a person may be able to master the language of the host nation more quickly than they able to reach the same level of earnings of a native-born resident. Assimilation may be incomplete, because it is blocked outright, delayed, or merely unfinished. But the type of incompletion matters, because each type is freighted with different implications for theory, and thus policy. Incompleteness could be due to the sharing of economic resources with co-ethnics, and as Susan K Brown's research shows, this would delay assimilation (Brown: 2006, 2007,2012), or it could be because of racial/ethnic discrimination, which would be an example of blocked assimilation

There are many different interpretations and definitions of assimilation, so we must ask ourselves: What defines assimilation? Assimilation in its historical sense refers

to the extent to which immigrants shed their distinctive ethnic cultural traits and come to resemble the general population of the host nation. Assimilation in this sense has not been a political or social imperative in Britain, where the focus has been on the successful *integration* of ethnic minorities into British society, whist accommodating cultural and religious difference.

Assimilation theories have been derived in large from assumptions supported by empirical studies to explain the varied processes and paths that immigrants have undertaken to incorporate into the mainstream of the destination country**:** assimilation theories prevailing at different times are barometers of the political and socioeconomic environments experienced by immigrants. They have influenced social policies designed for the incorporation of immigrants and public attitudes that directly affect the perception and reception of immigrants. Different assimilation theories, therefore, could trigger the emergence of varied coping and adaptive strategies among immigrants as a response.

Although the process of assimilation may be changing, it is still useful to understand the general typology of assimilation theory as a conceptual framework to this work. The key intellectual strains of the academic literature on the assimilation of immigrants are, broadly speaking, the 'classic' or 'straight-line' assimilation framework that dates back to the Chicago School of the 1920s; the theory of 'segmented assimilation' put forward by Portes & Zhou (which builds on earlier work by Gans in 1992), and the literature on the notion of 'symbolic identity' (Gans 1979). I will provide an overview of this framework in turn.[7]

[7] Although I have a sound knowledge of the available literature on nationalism, I do not think that an extensive review of the available literature is particularly useful here, given that I am interested in young people's perceptions and understandings of their own identities and sources of belonging, rather than the historical and theoretical aspects of nation-building and nationalism itself. (See Anderson 1991; Armstrong 1982; Billig 1995; Gellner 1983, 1995, 1997; Hobsbawm 1992a, 1992b, 1992c; Kedourie 1983; Kohn 1955; Smith 2003, 2002, 2001, 1998, 1997, 1995a, 1995b, 1991a, 1991b, 1989 and 1986).

Concepts of assimilation have been central to understanding the American experience since colonial times; the centrality of assimilation for the scientific understanding of immigration is more recently traceable to the Chicago School of the early twentieth century, especially in the work of Robert E. Park. In 1921, Park and Burgess provided an early definition of assimilation as they saw it:

> Assimilation is a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life. (Park & Burgess 1921: p. 735)

The work of Park and Burgess was based on the American idea of assimilation. The authors argue that immigrant groups would gradually become 'American', that ethnic identities would become symbolic, and boundaries between groups would be increasingly blurred. This approach was thus labelled the 'straight-line' or 'classic' assimilation model. This classic assimilation model sees immigrants and native-born people following a 'straight-line' or a typical convergence, in which immigrants become more similar over time with the norms, values, behaviours and characteristics of the adopted country. There is also an expectation that immigrants residing the longest in the host population, and the later generations, will show greater similarities with the majority group than immigrants who have spent less time in the host society.

The classic-assimilation perspective has as its core the assumption that 'there is a *natural* process by which diverse ethnic groups come to share a common culture and gain equal access to the opportunity structure of society; that this process consists of gradually deserting old cultural and behavioural patterns in favour of new ones; and that [...] this process moves inevitably and irreversibly towards

assimilation' (Zhou 1997a: 976). This process creates a 'marginal man', who is pulled towards the culture of the new host culture, but also drawn back to their culture of origin (Park 1928; Stonequeist: 1937). To Park, this push and pull scenario leads to a natural cycle of race relations and Park's legacy is closely associated with his conceptualisation of this cycle, which espouses assimilation as the final stage of a 'race-relations-cycle', of 'contact, competition, accommodation and eventual assimilation'.

Parks' 'race-relations cycle' (1969) was one of the first systematic attempts to account for the origins and evolution of group relationships. In this theory, Park posited four stages in the development of group relations: competition, conflict, accommodation, and assimilation. He argued that when groups first come into contact (through immigration, conquest, and so forth), relations tend to be competitive and conflictual. Park saw competition between individuals and groups as inevitable, given that all people naturally compete for their share of resources. He argued that competition between individuals in a social system is both impersonal and unconscious, and does not require face-to-face interaction.

Park argued that assimilation does not produce uniformity or sameness but rather a 'unity of experience and orientation, out of which may develop a community of purpose and action' (Park 1969: 737). Competition and episodes of conflict continue after assimilation but are organized along lines other than those of ethnicity, culture, or race – such as class, for example. Although his ideas have been extremely influential**,** they are not without their limitations. Park's theory has been criticized for its lack of specificity in the time frame required for assimilation and, more importantly perhaps, in its lack of detail with regard to the process of assimilation. Early versions of the theory have been criticised as being 'Anglo–conformist' because immigrant groups were seen as conforming to unchanging

middle-class white Protestant values. Park has also been criticised by later writers who argue that his conception of stages portrays assimilation as an inevitable outcome in multi-ethnic societies (Lyman 1973: Stone 1985).

Another proponent of the classic assimilation model is Milton Gordon. According to Gordon, assimilation occurs when people from different cultural backgrounds achieve cultural solidarity, a common cultural tie, to the extent that an immigrant person is 'able to function in the host country without prejudicial attitudes or discriminatory behaviour directed towards them' (Gordon 1964: 63). A key component of Gordon's concept of assimilation is that in this process cultural differences disappear because immigrants give up their cultural identities and assume the identities of the primary subculture, which, in the United States, was WASP.[8]

'What happens when peoples meet?' was the question Gordon posited in his 1964 paper on the 'The Nature of Assimilation'. Gordon argues that there was a 'compelling need for a rigorous and systematic break down of 'assimilation; into all the possible relevant factors or variables which could conceivably be included under its rubric' (Gordon 1964: 65). Gordon started by displaying continuing controversy of what assimilation actually meant, using examples from Brewton Berry, Joseph Fichter, Park & Burgess, and Arnold Rose (Gordon 1964: 65). He argues that acculturation and assimilation have become blurred, where there are in fact vital differences between the two: 'In recent writings, a number of sociologists have simply equated "assimilation" with "acculturation", or defined it as an extreme form of acculturation' (Gordon 1964: 65). The critical distinction for Gordon was between these two concepts: 'This differentiation [...] is crucial, since in the cruel distinction between cultural behaviour and social structure lies one of

[8] White Anglo-Saxon Protestant.

the major keys to the understanding of what the assimilation process has actually been like in the American experience. This distinction was conceptualised by the present writer in a discussion of the nature of the American pluralist society as the difference between behavioural assimilation and 'structural assimilation' (Gordon 1964: 67).

Gordon thus argued for acculturation or 'behavioural assimilation' to be treated separately from 'structural assimilation' in order to gain a true insight into the 'meeting of peoples'. He also stressed that any study of immigration as such should also look at the way in which the host nation and its population treated newcomers. Gordon saw this as a two-way process: immigrants had to be adaptable, and the host nation had to be hospitable to newcomers. Although he also stressed that, *acculturation* was mostly one-way, with the minority group adopting the culture of the majority, who remained basically unchanged – he acknowledged that change at the margins only was also a possibility.

Gordon postulated several stages that follow the acquisition of culture and language. The seven assimilation variables as proposed by Gordon are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1 The Seven Stages of Assimilation (Gordon 1964: 71)

Sub-process or Conditions	**Type or Stage of Assimilation**	**Special Term**
Change of cultural patterns to that of host society	Cultural or behavioural assimilation	Acculturation
Large-scale entrance into cliques, clubs, and institutions of host society, on primary group level	Structural assimilation	None
Large-scale intermarriage	Marital assimilation	Amalgamation
Development of sense of people-hood based exclusively on host society	Identificational assimilation	None
Absence of prejudice	Attitude receptional assimilation	None
Absence of discrimination	Behavioural receptional assimilation	None
Absence of value and power conflict	Civic Assimilation	None

Gordon argues that acculturation, or 'behavioural assimilation', does not necessarily mean that other forms of assimilation will happen (for example, large-scale entrance into the institutions of the host society and intermarriage), and that acculturation can continue indefinitely even without any other type of assimilation successfully occurring. Ethnic groups can remain isolated from one another due to a lack of contact and spatial isolation. Their full assimilation thus depends on the degree to which they are accepted by the dominant population (Zhou 1997a: 977). Gordon argued, that 'Acculturation [...] does not necessarily lead to structural assimilation, structural assimilation inevitably produces acculturation. Structural assimilation, then, rather than acculturation, is seen to be the keystone of the arch of assimilation' (Gordon 1964: 81). It is this theoretical distinction between structural assimilation and acculturation that is a key component in Gordon's work and one

that has been criticised by contemporary scholars. In Gordon's account, acculturation could occur without being accompanied by other forms of assimilation – yet acculturation was the only stage of the assimilation process, as envisioned by Gordon, that could remain indefinitely.

Gordon felt that acculturation was inevitable to a large degree, but he did not see structural assimilation as being the same. Gordon envisioned the US as being constituted from ethnic sub-societies, in whose institutions and social networks most individuals spend the majority of their social lives (Gordon 1964: 159).

Although extremely influential in the study of immigration and assimilation, Gordon's approach has come under criticism from contemporary scholars. One key criticism is that he completely ignores the crucial aspects of education and occupation in his approach. There continues to be considerable scholarly interest in understanding the adaptation and assimilation processes in recent years of the new immigrants and their children (Alba & Nee 1997, 2003; Bankston & Zhou 1997a; Zhou 1997b; Farley & Alba 2002; Hernadez 1999; Hirschman, Kasinitz & DeWind 1999; Gans 1992; Harris 1999; Harris, Harker & Guo 2003; Jasso & Rosenzweiz 1990; Perlmann & Waldinger 1996; Portes & Rumbaut 1996, 2001; Waldinger & Feliciano 2004; Zhou & Bankston 1998; Xie & Greenman 2005).

2.3 Revised theories of assimilation

A major contribution to the academic field comes from writers Gans (1973) and Sandberg (1974) who develop an idea originally put forward by the work of Warner and Stole in 1945: 'straight-line assimilation'. This theoretical perspective adds a 'dynamic dimension to Gordon's somewhat static formulation in that it envisions a process unfolding in a sequence of generational steps; each new generation represents on average a new stage of adjustment to the host society' (Alba and Nee

1997: 832). This adjustment means that each generation constitutes a step away from the community and culture established by the immigrants and a move towards complete assimilation (Lieberson 1973). It is generations then that are seen as the motor for change and not just the timeframe in which the assimilation takes place. Proponents of the straight-line approach argue that each new generation will inevitably face a distinct set of issues in regard to the host society and to the ethnic group, and the resolution of these distinct issues will bring about a distinctive pattern of accommodation. This concept of 'generational inevitability' is not without problems, especially as it rests on the assumption that all ethnic content is imported by immigrants and does not recognise that it can be created in response to conditions and out of cultural materials in the host society (Alba & Nee 1997; 833). Many writers oppose this view by arguing that the proponents of the straight-line model have ignored the fact that ethnicity can shift and change, it can go through periods of recreation, redevelopment and sometimes renaissance (Galzer & Moynihan 1970; Yancey, Erickson & Juliani, 1976; Greeley, 1977; Conzen et al., 1992).

Gans recognised this criticism and in 1992 modified the theory now describing it as the 'bumpy-line theory of ethnicity'. In this theory, Gans retained the crux of his earlier theory –'that there is a generational dynamic behind ethnic change and that it moves, perhaps with tangents, in the general direction of assimilation' (Alba & Nee 1997: 833). This revision was made, in part, because the acculturating generations are once more being partly replaced by new immigrants from the same countries and because of the evidence of the continuing maintenance and support of ethnic identity for third and later generations (Alba 1990; Waters 1990; Gibson 1988). Gans explains that this view was not likely to have been foreseen by Warner and Srole in the 1930s and 1940s,which was a time in which immigration was

severely restricted and assimilation and ‘Anglo-conformity’ was seen as a goal for many groups (Xie & Greenman 2005).

Gans also argued that there was a chance of ‘second generation decline’ (Gans 1992: 172). He states that the second generation faced one of three possible scenarios: education-driven mobility, success-driven mobility, and ‘niche’ improvement. He found that children of less fortunate immigrant families were at a significant disadvantage compared to children from middle class backgrounds. Gans argued that assimilation was halted for lower income, darker-skinned second generation immigrants who face the bleak outlook of being trapped in permanent poverty in a era of stagnant economic growth in the United States and the process of ‘Americanisation’ because these children ‘will either not be asked, or will be reluctant, to work at immigrant wages and hours as their parents did but will lack opportunities, skill and connections to do better’. (Gans 1992: 173-174) The idea of a second-generation decline is also echoed by Perlmann and Waldinger in 1996.

Alba and Nee are amongst the most influential contemporary writers on the assimilation perspective, and are responsible for one of the main breaks with classical assimilation theory. In what they call ‘New Assimilation Theory’, Alba and Nee refined Gordon's account by arguing that certain institutions, including those bolstered by civil rights law, play important roles in achieving assimilation.

Despite being defenders of the classical assimilation perspective, Alba and Nee (2003) argue that assimilation theory needs a modern conceptualisation. Specifically, the formulation developed by Gordon and his predecessors is far too rigid and fails to accurately encompass the real experience of American Immigration. According to Alba and Nee, any definition of assimilation needs to be flexible enough to describe the incorporation into a racially diverse mainstream

society, and recognise three key points: (1) ethnicity is a social boundary that influences the way people act and respond to others; (2) ethnic distinctions are embedded into a variety of social and cultural differences between people; and (3) assimilation occurs through changes taking place both sides of the boundary. (Alba & Nee 2003: 10–11).

The way in which Gordon conceptualised 'culture' itself is also seen as problematic and rigid. Alba and Nee argue that American culture (on which Gordon's work is based) is not homogenous, and varies as you move across the social scale, locale and class. The assumption then that acculturation will happen assumes that the 'culture' of American life is constantly middle-class Anglo-American, which is not always the case (Alba & Nee 1997; 833). They argue that 'what is lacking in Gordon is a more differentiated and syncretic conception of culture and a recognition that American culture was and is more missed, much more of an amalgam of diverse influence, and that it continues to evolve'. (Alba & Nee 1997: 834).

Alba and Nee argue that previous writers have seen 'acculturation' as the idea that one groups 'adopts' the culture of another, that the culture of immigrants is simply replaced by its equivalent in the host society without fully understanding that the process itself is far more complex. They argue that minority cultures can influence normative customs and behaviours in the mainstream, a process which has meant that 'elements of the minority cultures are absorbed alongside their Anglo-American equivalents or are fused with mainstream elements to create a hybrid cultural mix'. (Alba & Nee 1997: 834). Other contemporaries have also shown how ethnic culture can affect mainstream American life (Conzen et al., 1992; Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983; Sollors, 1989, Sowell 1996, Greeley 1997).

Alba and Nee also stress that Gordon's concept of identificational assimilation appears overly demanding, requiring the extinction of any form of ethnic identity in favour of an exclusively national 'American Identity'. It implies even the loss of family memories of extra-American origins, which not only seems an extraordinary expectation, but one that flies in the face of the data demonstrating that the majority of Americans still acknowledge some non-American ethnic ancestry (Lieberson 1985; Gibson 1988; Lieberson & Waters 1993).

One of the main criticisms put forward by the writers is that Gordon's work has failed to differentiate between individual and group levels of ethnic change and has thus 'sidestepped some of the most important lines of investigation within the assimilation framework – the reciprocal effects between group processes and individual attainment' (Alba & Nee 1997; 385). Gordon thus ignores the supply-side of ethnicity – the context determined by community and group, which may determine assimilation at the individual level (Portes & Rumbaut 1996). Alba and Nee argue that the relationship between group and individual is far too strong to be ignored in any comprehensive model of assimilation; if at the community level there is a lack of opportunity to express ethnicity, or it is seen as socially inappropriate, then it follows logically that the intention to maintain ethnicity, assuming it exists, may be hindered (Alba & Nee 1997; 835). The writers also state that Gordon does not place enough emphasis on the role of socioeconomic assimilation (Ibid.): 'Occupational mobility and economic assimilation are key dimensions of socioeconomic assimilation. Socioeconomic mobility creates the social conditions conductive to other forms of assimilation since it likely results in equal status contact across ethnic lines in work places and neighbourhoods'. (Alba & Nee 1997: 835).

To a greater extent than was the case in earlier versions of this theory, Alba and Nee stress that the incorporation of immigrant groups also involves change and acceptance by the mainstream population. Classic assimilation theory as a whole works best, however, when the mainstream is easily defined. While Alba and Nee acknowledge that assimilation takes place within racially and economically heterogeneous contexts, this has led to the criticism that they are trying to define assimilation so broadly that the concept loses meaning (Xie & Greenman 2005).

Another major break from classical theory is the 'Segmented Assimilation Model'. In 1992, Gans described several distinct trajectories that children of new immigrants, who he refers to as the 'new second generation' can follow. He argued that the second generation could follow a path of downward as well as upward mobility. Portes, Zhou and Rumbaut developed these ideas further as a critique to traditional assimilation theory in 1993, and proposed a theory of 'segmented assimilation' in which they combined elements of both the straight-line assimilation and the ethnic disadvantage perspectives.

In this theoretical approach, the authors argue that the United States is a stratified and unequal society, and as a result, different 'segments' of society are available into which immigration may assimilate. Portes and Zhou outline three possible paths to assimilation that immigrants may take. The first largely concurs with the predications made by classical assimilation theory, essentially increasing acculturation and integration into the American middle class. The second path is one where there is acculturation and assimilation into the urban underclass, which results in poverty and downward mobility. The third and final path is one where there is 'selective acculturation' (Portes & Rumbaut 2001: 54). This is seen as a deliberate process in which the immigrant community's culture, traditions and values are preserved, whist being accompanied by successful economic

integration.[9] (Rumbaut 1994; Portes & Zhou 1993; Zhou 1997a). The Segmented theory approach emphasises that there is more than one way to 'become American', which certainly contrasts with the classical approach which has traditionally seen the process of assimilation as the shedding of ethic identity and a move into the cultural norms and behaviour of 'middle class' or WASP America. Later versions of the approach contend that Americanisation is not necessarily beneficial to everyone (Bankston & Zhou 1997, Zhou 1997a)

Portes and Zhou argue that structural barriers, such as poor urban schools, lack of access to employment and other opportunities, which are obstacles that often are particularly severe in the case of the most disadvantaged members of immigrant groups, will hinder the assimilation process. Such disadvantages can cause stagnation or downward mobility, even as the children of other immigrants follow divergent paths toward classic straight-line assimilation. Heavily disadvantaged children of immigrants may even reject assimilation altogether and embrace attitudes, orientations, and behaviours considered 'oppositional' in nature, such as joining a street gang. More advantaged groups may sometimes embrace traditional home-country attitudes and use them to inspire their children to achieve, a process Portes and Zhou call selective acculturation.

'Selective acculturation' is in fact the most common interpretation of the segmented assimilation approach. Many scholars have argued that limited assimilation is the most beneficial to immigrant groups (Bankston & Zhou 1995; Portes & Rumbaut 2001; Portes & Dewind 2004; Portes & Schauffler 1996).

In 2001, Portes and Rumbaut expanded segmented assimilation theory by offering an explanation for the distinct factors that may influence why a given individual

[9] I will refer to these as Path 1, Path 2 and Path 3 respectively in the remainder of this discussion.

may take one of the three paths they had specified in their original work. They identify human capital, family structure, and modes of integration into the host society as key factors that influence the paths of first generation immigrants. Portes and Rumbaut argue that these factors then affect the relationship between the *type* of acculturation first experienced by immigrant parents, and later, by their children; this relationship is central to the assimilation outcome of the second generation. When parents and children acculturate at a similar pace and nature, this is considered consonant acculturation (if both move smoothly into America culture, or both remain unacculturated), or selective acculturation (if both agree on limited acculturation). 'Dissonant Acculturation' is a phrase used to describe an outcome where children acculturate faster than their parents, which, according to Portes and Rumbaut, can cause parent-child conflict and a breakdown in communications between the two generations. The authors argue that dissonant acculturation can diminish parents' ability to guide and support their children, which constitutes a major risk factor for downward assimilation amongst the second generation. Portes and Rumbaut emphasise the importance of the relationship between the acculturation of parents and that of their children as it influences the family and community resources available to support children, who themselves are subject to a range of issues as they adapt to life in the host society.

The segmented assimilation model can thus been seen as a 'middle-range theory that attempts to explain divergent destinies – which has often been neglected by earlier assimilation models' (Zhou 1977: 984). It is a theory that is extremely useful as it gives a framework in which to study 'why patterns of adaption emerge amongst contemporary immigrants and how these patterns necessarily lead to the destinies of convergence or divergence'. (Ibid.). The theory attempts to explain

what determines into which the segment of American society into which a particular immigrant group may assimilate.

Segmented assimilation theory breaks from the classical perspective because it assumes that these determinants are in themselves of marginal importance – the key consideration is the *interaction* between the two; the theory explicitly considers both processes and outcomes of assimilation. Path 3 is distinguished from Path 1 and Path 2 by process, specifically whether assimilation has been partial or complete. The difference between paths 1 and 2, which are both forms of complete assimilation, is based solely on divergent outcomes – which direction mobility has taken – upward or downward. Consequently, segmented assimilation focuses on identifying the contextual, structural, and cultural factors that separate successful assimilation from unsuccessful or even 'negative' assimilation. Portes, Zhou, and other proponents of the theory argue it is particularly important to identify such factors in the case of the second generation, because obstacles facing the children of immigrants can hinder the process of assimilation at perhaps its most crucial stage (Xie & Greenman 2005).

Since Portes and Zhou's 1993 seminal paper on segmented assimilation was published, the approach itself has received much attention in the ongoing debates and academic scholarship on assimilation. Some scholars have argued that assimilation outcomes may differ according to immigrants' characteristics such as socioeconomic status, ethnicity, social capital, family cohesion and possibly gender. (Farley & Alba 2002; Hirchman 2001; Portes & Rumbaut 2001; Rong & Brown 2001; St. Hilaire 2002; Waldinger & Feliciano 2004). The availability of resources has been seen as a key determinant; it is argued that those immigrant groups with good resources such as physical, cultural and/or social capital are able to follow the traditional assimilation path (Path 1), yet those who are not so well

equipped in these areas face an increased risk of downward assimilation (Path 2). Additionally, the nature of the majority population has been seen as important insofar as assimilation outcomes may differ based on the varying characteristics of the host nation population (Gans 1993; Rumbaut 1994, 1997; Bankston & Zhou 1997). If immigrants assimilate into white middle-class American society then assimilation is 'straight-line' (Path 1), if they assimilate to inner-city, underclass minorities who are struggling with crime, poverty and joblessness, the assimilation process is 'downward (Path 2; Xie & Greenman 2005).

Critics have argued that the casual link between assimilation into the underclass and the development of 'oppositional cultures' is questionable. Perlmann and Waldinger (Perlmann & Waldinger 1996: 915) contend that 'rebellion' is not confined to the second generation – that it was not uncommon amongst earlier European immigrant groups and that these groups were also hindered by it in terms of their upward mobility. The authors argue that 'oppositional culture' in recent times is more likely to be due to following Path 2 – assimilation into the American underclass rather than coming about solely because of the working-class experience.

Other key critiques of the theory address the advantages and disadvantages of deliberately limiting assimilation and maintaining ethnic ties (Path 3). Many advocates of the segmented assimilation perspective have argued that such limited assimilation will have a protective effect for contemporary immigrants, which will lead to better socio-economic outcomes than if they were to assimilate fully. (Bankston & Zhou 1995; Portes & Rumbaut 2001; Portes & Dewind 2004; Portes & Schauffler 1996). However, critics have disagreed by stating that by avoiding full assimilation into the American mainstream can have costs as well as advantages. Lack of social ties outside of the ethnic community can restrict the

flow of information to immigrants about their opportunities, and a strong grounding within the community may burden people with excessive obligations towards relatives and co-ethnics (Dewind & Kasinitz 1997). Such obstacles are seen as hindering the process. As to be expected, proponents of the classical assimilation perspective are quick to stress that in order to succeed in American society, it is functionally imperative to assimilate, regardless of whether immigrant families intend to or not. (Alba & Nee: 2003).

Alba and Nee make an important critique by arguing that the segmented assimilation model is 'essentialising central-city black culture in the image of the underclass' (Alba & Nee 2003: 8). There are a variety of cultural modes among African-Americans, it is thus naive and problematic, if not dangerous, to assume that assimilation into a minority will lead to downward assimilation and into the underclass. Neckerman, Carter, and Lee (1999) suggest that immigrants may well assimilate into the black middle class, a possibility overlooked by many proponents of segmented assimilation theory.

The segmented assimilation model is a useful development in the existing literature insofar as it breaks with traditional theory and offers a range of outcomes for immigrants. Thus highlighting the fact that paths are often divergent, and that a range of socio-economic factors can affect the path that a given immigrant could take.

'Symbolic Ethnicity' has become an important sociological paradigm on white ethnicity in the United States. In 1979 Herbert Gans began a discussion on what he called 'symbolic ethnicity', which he defined as an ethnicity that is characterised by 'a nostalgic allegiance... a love for and pride of a tradition that can be felt without having to be incorporated in everyday behaviour' (Gans 1979: 9). The phenomenon

of symbolic ethnicity is largely attributed to European Americans, because Black, Hispanic, Asian and Indian Americans do not have the option of a symbolic ethnicity at present in the United States and for them 'in which ethnicity does not matter for white Americans, it does matter for non-whites; 'the social and political consequences of being Asian or Hispanic or black are not symbolic for the most part, or voluntary. They are real and often hurtful' Waters (1990: 156; see also Boleria & Hier 2006).

Gans argues that renewed interest in ethnicity (in America) should not been seen as an 'ethnic revival', as many have understood it, but rather that 'acculturation and assimilation continue to take place [...] Among third and fourth generation 'ethnics' a new kind of ethnic involvement may be occurring which emphasises concern with the feeling of being Jewish, Italian, etc. Since ethnic identity needs are neither intense or frequent in this generation [...] ethnics do not need either ethnic cultures or organisations; instead they resort to using ethnic symbols [...] ethnicity may be turning to symbolic ethnicity, an ethnicity of last resorts, which could persist for generations'. (Gans 1979: 1). Symbolic ethnicity is thus seen as a 'new form of ethnic behaviour and affiliation' (Gans 1979: 6).

Gans argues that specific ethnic practices may continue and persist but, if they do they will be taken out of their original cultural contexts and become 'stand-ins' or symbols' of it (Gans 1979: 9). According to Gans, 'most people look for easy and intermittent ways of expressing their [ethnic] identity' (Gans 1979: 8) and that as participation in ethnic primary and secondary groups declines, symbolic ethnicity will increase (Gans 1979: 7). 'Symbolic ethnics' can 'find their identity by "affiliating" with an abstract collectively which does not exist as an interacting group' (Gans 1979: 8). Symbolic ethnicity can thus be seen as new stage of

acculturation and assimilation and is a new way to strive for individualism. (Gans 1979: 2)

Gans hypothesises that members of the third and fourth generation are less interested in their ethnic cultures and organisation – both sacred and secular – they are instead 'more concerned with maintaining their ethnic identity with the feeling of being Jewish or Polish, and with finding ways of feeling and expressing that identity in suitable ways' (Gans 1971: 10). The idea of 'choice' is critical in Gans' theory; he argues that norms are more voluntary and less ascriptive, it is a role that people choose to play alongside other roles (Ibid). Behavioural expectations on ethnics are seen to have declined so that the way in which ethics choose to play this role is a choice that they can make: 'Moreover, as ethnic cultures and organisations decline further, fewer ethnic roles are prescribed, thus increasing the degree to which people have freedom of role definition'. (Ibid)

'Symbolic ethnicity' itself is seen a sense of pride or love for traditions and culture that does not need to be incorporated into everyday behaviour (Gans 1979). This love and pride can be focused on generalised traditions or more specific ones such as 'a desire for the cohesive extended immigrant family, or the obedience of children to parental authority, or the ambiguous orthodoxy of immigrant religion, or the old fashioned despotic benevolence of the machine politician' (Gans 1979: 9). Cultural patterns are transformed into symbols that are guided by the common imperative of having to be visible and clear in giving meaning and they must be 'easily expressed and felt, without requiring undue interference in other aspects of life'. (Gans 1979: 10)

Gans argues that ethnic identity depends on the existence of an ethnic group, yet symbolic ethnicity does not require functioning groups or networks – 'feelings of

identity can be developed by allegiances to symbolic groups that never meet, or to collectives that meet only occasionally and exist only as groups for the handful of officers that keep them going' (Gans 1979: 12). Unlike ethnic identity, symbolic ethnicity does not depend on the existence of practiced culture; symbolic culture is as much culture as practised culture, but the latter only persists to supply symbols to the former (Ibid). Gans argued that through having no need for ethnic organisations and culture for the purpose of adaptations, these assimilated ethnics were able to express their ethnicity differently from their parents and grandparents – through readily available and contextually deployed ethnic symbols (Agagnostou 2009: 94).

What Gans was thus proposing was a radical shift: ethnicity takes on an expressive rather than instrumental function in people's lives, and white ethnicity becomes a matter of enjoyment and leisure in which an individual manipulates culture for the temporary purposes of belonging to a collective, and connecting nostalgically with an immigrant past. These 'easy and intermittent ways of expressing identity' (Gans 1979: 8-9) are achieved through exercising individual choice as well as the decline in the role of social structure in the formulation of identities.

In contrast to assimilation theory, there have been a number of scholars who have argued that second-generation minority identities are intensified in relation to those of the first generation (Rumbaut 2008). The notion of reactive ethnicity is based on the premise that expectations of a general weakening of ethnic or group identity among minorities across generations does not pay enough attention to the way in which young people from the second generation may grow up with life chances which are different from the majority. (Platt 2013: 48). There are thus claims of an 'ethnic revival' in the second generation, or 'reactive ethnicity' which emphasise

‘the role of a hostile context of reception in accounting for the rise rather than the erosion of ethnicity’ (Rumbaut 2008: 3).

This idea of ethnicity as voluntary identification has received much attention in recent years and has many advocates, among them Milton Gordon, Andrew Greeley, John Higham, Michael Novak and Talcot Parsons all of whom have supported the understanding of the ethnicity of Christian American of European descent (to whom Gans’ work is confined) in the United States as a matter of individual choice rather than culturally determined behaviour. Additionally Richard Alba (1990) and Mary Waters (1990) provide what Gans argues is evidence to support the hypothesis that from the third generation onwards, ethnicity is symbolic, that is, it characterised by the ‘consumption’ of ethnic symbols such as festivals, ethnic food, and holidays to the Old Country (Gans 1992a: 44).

Yet ‘symbolic ethnicity’, the ability to choose when and how to be ethnic with no social cost is not a universal option for all people. Given the fact that minority groups often suffer from racial prejudice, some scholars have argued that racialized minorities in multiethnic societies such as the USA are far more limited in their ability to assert their desired ethnic identities, in comparison with white Americans (Alba 1990; Lieberson 1988; Waters 1990). These writers argue that the adoption of ethnic identities by Americans of European descent, such as Irish Americans or Italian Americans, is optional, because they are able to invoke their ethnicity when, and as, they wish. For instance, in many aspects of their everyday lives, Irish Americans may not actively invoke or be reminded of their Irish heritage, yet they may celebrate St Patrick’s Day or assert their Irishness in ways that they wish. Alba (1988), who has characterized Italian-American ethnicity as being in the ‘twilight’ of ethnicity, and Zenner (1988), who has argued that Jewishness is largely a matter of individual ‘preference’, have made similar arguments about the directions of

white American ethnicity. In other words, white Americans' ethnicity is purely symbolic (Gans 1979), and its celebration is without real social costs.

Symbolic ethnicity is an integral part of the ongoing debates on acculturation and assimilation as it attempts to understand why ethnicity persists amongst middle-class white suburbanites in the United States, and why America is a 'mosaic' of subgroups and subcultures (Greeley 1974). The theory itself sees the answer in *individual agency,* and so marks a drastic departure from classical understanding of ethnic culture as a force that *determines* key patterns of social life such as occupation, marital status, place of residence and distinctive ethnic behaviour, norms and attitudes.

Mary Waters utilised her own substantial qualitative research in 1990 to publish her book *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America*. Waters argues that what she finds in her respondents are many instances of 'symbolic ethnics' – people for whom symbolic ethnicity was appealing due to the element of choice involved. (Waters 1990: 150). Waters' work analysed why whites were attached to multiple ancestries instead of ethnic ascription. She argues that 'even amongst those who have a homogenous background and do not need to choose an ancestry to identify with… people do choose to keep an ethnic identity. [...] The choice to have a symbolic ethnicity… is an attractive and widespread one despite its demonstrative context, because having a symbolic ethnicity combines individuality with feeling of both community and or conformity through an exercise of personal choice. […]. Most importantly, the community and membership, however 'symbolic', has no social cost for them and does not interfere with their individuality (Waters 1990: 151).

The situation is different for non-whites for whom ethnicity does matter in social life. For non-whites, ethnicity does affect choices made, such as who you marry, what job you have, who your friends are, and most importantly, 'what your chances are for success in American society' (Waters 1990: 156). In her book, Waters stresses the difference between the concept and the reality of ethnicity for white ethnics. She argues that in real life, white ethnics are able to exercise much more choice and and are able to manoeuvre more than they think is the case. This contrasts with the reality for members of racial minorities whose lives are strongly influenced by their race or national origin regardless of how much they may choose not to identify themselves in ethnic or racial terms (Waters 1990: 157). Waters (1990) argues that, in contrast with many white Americans, racialized minorities cannot exercise ethnic options in the same way as white ethnics, because for racialized minorities, ethnicity is not a freely exercised option, given their distinctive physical attributes. For racialized minorities such as African Americans, their identities, and their lives more generally, are fundamentally shaped by their 'race' and their national origins. While white Americans of European descent can be said to celebrate 'individualistic symbolic ethnic identities', racialized groups are faced with a 'socially enforced and imposed racial identity' (Waters 1996: 201). Furthermore, while racialized groups must constantly contend with stereotypes of themselves, white people tend to be represented as being complex, changing and infinitely varied individuals (Dyer, 1997).

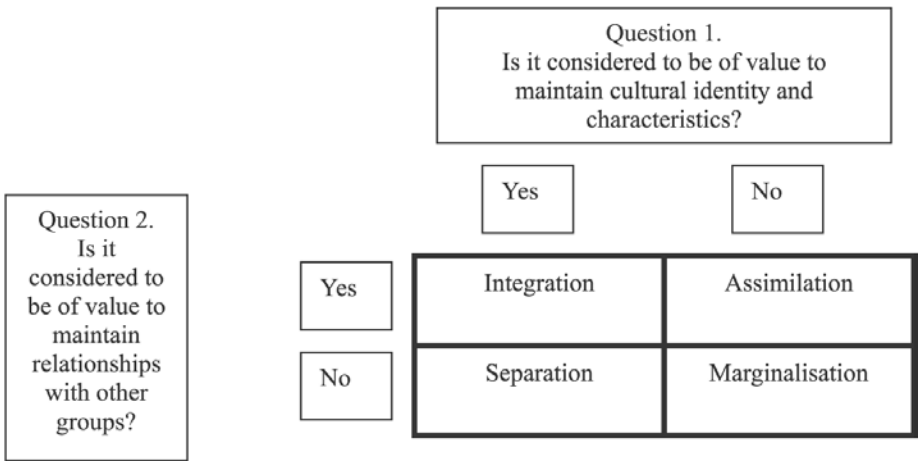
2.4 Assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation

Given that I am interested in how minority and majority cultures are accommodated (or not), Berry's acculturation framework is a useful typology in which to situate this research. Berry focuses on two axes, thereby acknowledging not only that there are multiple dimensions (the decision to adopt the culture of the host society, and

the decision to maintain ethnic culture and identity), but also the interrelatedness of these two dimensions, which may result in any of the four 'strategies' he outlines.

Berry argues that in a pluralistic society, cultural groups and their members, in both the dominant and non-dominant situations, have to deal with the issue of how to acculturate. Strategies regarding two issues are usually formulated through daily contact with each other. These issues are 'cultural maintenance (to what extent are cultural identity and characteristics considered to be important, and their maintenance strived for); and contact and participation (to what extent should they become involved in other cultural groups, or remain primarily among themselves)' (Berry 1997: 9). When these two underlying issues are considered at the same time, Berry argues that a conceptual framework is generated which posits four acculturation strategies:

Figure 1 Berry's Acculturation Framework (Berry 1997: 10)



Berry's acculturation model identifies four possible acculturation categories based upon an individual's ethnic identification and the value of maintaining a relationship with the dominant society (Berry 1980). According to Berry's model, individuals in the assimilation category are characterized as having a low ethnic identity and placing a high value on maintaining a relationship with the dominant

culture. Therefore, they are expected to exhibit high participation in dominant culture behaviours and low participation in ethnic cultural behaviours. Since individuals in the integration category are described as having a high ethnic identity and valuing relationships with both the dominant and ethnic groups, they are expected to show high participation in both dominant and ethnic cultural behaviours.

Individuals in the segregation category of Berry's model are more likely to have high ethnic identity, and to consider it important to maintain relationship with only their ethnic group. Therefore, they are expected to exhibit low dominant cultural behaviours and participate in more ethnic cultural behaviours. Those in the marginalization category are characterized as having low ethnic identity and do not consider it important to maintain relationships with either group. Therefore, they may not exhibit behaviour acceptable to either group.

Berry states that the model is based on the assumption that the non-dominant groups and their members have the freedom to choose how they want to acculturate (Berry 1997: 9), which is not always the case (Berry 1974). This choice can also be restricted if the dominant society is not open and inclusive in its attitudes towards cultural diversity (Berry 1991, 1997). 'This mutual accommodation is required for integration to be attained, involving the acceptance by both groups of the right of all groups to live as culturally different peoples'. (Berry 1997: 10)

Hutnik (1991) and Verkuyten (1992) have also offered their own model of how two cultures can be accommodated. This subject has received much scholarly interest in recent years (Bernal & Knight 1993; Modood, Beishon & Virdee 1997a; Modood, Berthoud, et al. 1997; Ghuman 1994; Ghuman 2003; Padilla 1995; Liebkind 1996; Weinreich, Luke & Bond 1996; Phinney & Devich-Navarro 1997; Phinney, Cantu

& Kurtz 1997). Hutnik and Verkuyten stress that the existing literature on self-conception which focuses on the availability of just two identities – minority and majority – is too simplistic. People are able to identify with more than two groups. Using data collected in 1983 from Asian adolescents living in Birmingham in the UK, and based upon a quadripolar model, Hutnik (1985,1986,1991) found evidence of four strategies of self-categorisation based on the idea that the identity strategies of young people from ethnic minority backgrounds can be related to the extent to which they identify with both the majority and majority. Since identity can be classified as 'high' or 'low', the possible outcomes are:

a) Dissociation – high for their ethnic minority group, low for the majority group;

b) Assimilation – high for the majority group, low for their minority group;

c) Acculturation – high for both the ethnic minority and the majority group;

d) Marginality – low for both their minority and the majority groups.

These themes of alternative strategies, segmented assimilation and different orientations towards ethnic community and the wider national society are recurring themes throughout this thesis as we shall see in chapters, 4, 5 and 6.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1. *Self-selection of topic*

It has been argued that self-selected research topics often arise from a researcher's own experience, and thus bear a personal significance (Oakley 1979; Goodson & Sikes 2001). This thesis is no exception. My own parents arrived with the first wave of immigrants fleeing East Africa under Idi Amin's programme of Africanisation. As I grew up, my parents and other family members have often recalled the terror they felt at leaving Africa, where my parents were born, and where my grandparents had emigrated to some decades before. On arrival, my parents spoke about the shock they felt at the cold weather and the small roads with seemingly endless rows of houses. Even greater shock was the racial abuse and discrimination they experienced from the moment they came to Britain (see Bhachu 1985). This ranged from overt name-calling to discrimination in schools and housing. My father, who wears a turban, refused to remove his turban and cut his hair. Other members of my family were often beaten in racially motivated attacks in which their turbans were ripped off. My parents recalled to me several memories where close friends of theirs were subjected to this kind of abuse, and later removed their turbans permanently in an attempt to blend in.[10] Yet despite this initial hostility, I was raised in a family with a deep respect for Britain and the opportunities it afforded.

As I grew up, I found myself with mostly white British friends, with very little engagement with cultural traditions. I saw myself as British more than anything else. In my teenage years I started to realise that young people my age from similar

[10] By the 1960s, some migrants from India who had been quick to remove their turbans started to re-grow their hair and beards. East African Indians were rather used to being a visible minority and so their commitment to keeping the turban in the British context gave other migrants from India the confidence to make a public statement about their ethnic identity (Ballard & Ballard 1977: 37).

backgrounds were following what seemed to be as very different lives. To me, they seemed more knowledgeable and engaged with Sikhism and/or Punjabi culture than I was. I started wondering why our outcomes were so different. And I kept on wondering. Coupled with the public debate on Britishness in recent years, it was this wondering that led me to decide to undertake this thesis. I wanted to make a contribution by showing the diversity of the 'ethnic minorities' casually spoken of in the public arena, to challenge the easy conclusions made about 'us', as well as to take this opportunity to ask questions about things I had thought about for most of my life.

3.2 Sample selection

British Indians are one of the largest ethnic groups in Britain. After the Second World War, and the break up of the British Empire, migration from India to the United Kingdom steadily increased in the 1950s and 1960s. Much of the immigration that Britain experienced initially was due to the growing needs of the growing National Health Service and London Transport Service, which started recruiting drives in the West Indies. Additionally, employers in the North Midlands and London also recruited migrant workers. As news spread of employment opportunities, more migrants from India, Pakistan and the West Indies came to Britain, leading to 'chain' migrations. White Britons enjoyed an economic boom, migrants were forced to take unskilled and often dangerous jobs, whilst living in cheap housing in less desirable areas, constrained by low income levels and a desire – and expectation – to send money home to families. Discrimination against these 'coloured workers' was often direct at the hands of both housing associations and private landlords.

Most of the new arrivals worked in industries like foundries and textiles and settled predominantly in London, Birmingham and West Yorkshire. The first batch of Sikh migrants usually removed the outward religious symbols (turban, long hair and beard) as racist prejudice in Britain would have kept them out of work. Migration from East Africa was the result of the move to Africanise countries like Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya, depriving many Asians of their work, and in many cases expelling them altogether. The position of South Asians in Africa because very uneasy. 'Their position can perhaps be best described as filling in the colonial sandwich, superior to the indigenous population but inferior to Europeans' (Ballard & Ballard 1977: 25). As African independence came closer, Africans started to move into those positions occupied by South Asians and it became clear that remigration was the only option. A majority came to Britain (for an extensive history of South Asian immigration to Britain, see Ballard 1973a, 1973b, 1975, 1977; and Bhachu 1985).

This research focuses specifically on the experiences, opinions and ideas of a select group of people; young British-born Asians from Indian-Sikh and Indian-Hindu backgrounds, between the ages of 16 and 25 years, living in inner and outer London. Most of whom are the children and grandchildren of these immigrants. As outlined before, the dialogue, and much of the empirical work surrounding 'British identity', the need for social cohesion and British values, as well as the issues of perceived 'identity crises' and 'split loyalties' has focused in recent years on British Muslims, without fully engaging with or presenting data from, the breadth of the British Asian community. As a result, subsequent policy recommendations and findings have often been formulated without comprehensive dialogue with different sub-sections of the British-Asian community. Politicians and policy makers are talking about an identity crisis, a lack of togetherness and a

need for a common culture, without providing rigorous data from the country's second largest ethnic group, British Indians.

Table 1 clearly shows that British Indians are the second largest minority ethnic group in Britain with 1,451, 862 (2.3%) of the total population, and second only to the Black Caribbean/Black African/Black British group which has been aggregated. Additionally, there is a significant number of British Indians in both inner and outer London where this research was conducted. British Indians are thus statistically one of the largest minority groups in this country, yet there is comparatively little data or research into how this group of people feel about the issues that are being discussed politically, by party leaders and policy makers, and sociologically, by empirical researchers and the academic community.

Indian communities have long been established all over the country, from Southall in Middlesex, Birmingham and Solihull, Leeds and Leicester, and London. My decision to focus on London was formulated on several grounds. First among these was the scope of this D.Phil. Realistically, to conduct the in-depth fieldwork that was necessary for this research, undertaking research in more than one area would have been too ambitious, and may have affected the time I had to spend with and interview each respondent. Secondly, given that I was using a snowball sampling method to recruit respondents relying on my own networks in London, the capital seemed the best place to conduct this research given the diverse range of people that I needed to recruit to take part in the research. Lastly, demographics: charts 2 and 3 give an accurate overview of the percentages of non-white people living in inner and outer London. London has the highest concentration of non-white people in the country and within the whole London area, British Indians are a statistically large population.

Another key factor in my research was that London is the most ethnically diverse part of the United Kingdom. This gave me the chance to speak to people who lived in a multicultural and multi-ethnic city. I was thus able to explore the area of contact and social ties better, and to uncover the role of diversity in contact experiences and the nature of individual ties in shaping identity, belonging, and identity options.[11]

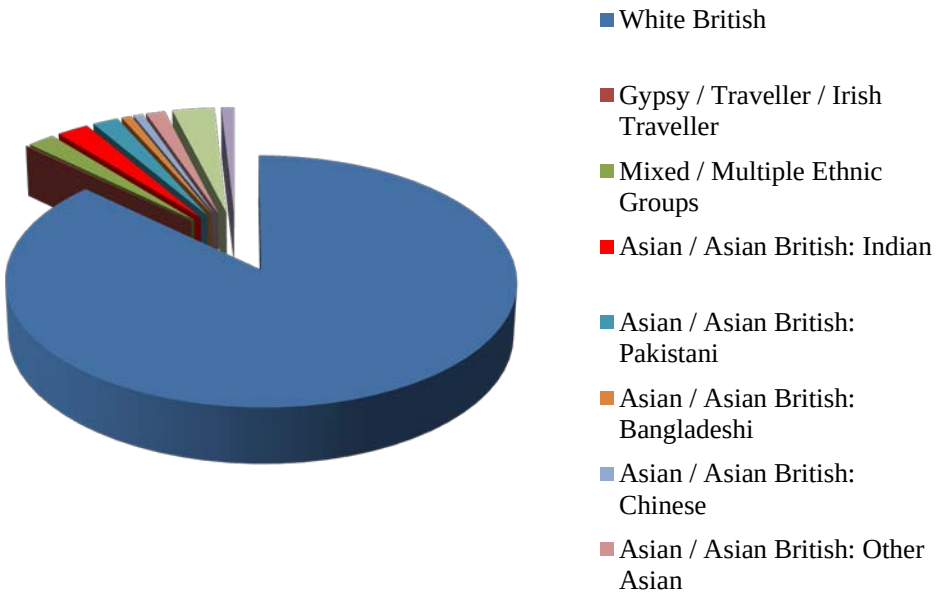
[11] I acknowledge that this may mean that my findings can not be generalized into other contexts, yet, I feel that given that my aim in this thesis was to conduct in-depth qualitative research with a select group of people, this will not impede the overall contribution I will have made to the understanding of these young peoples lives.

Table 2 United Kingdom Population Statistics by Ethnic Group (2011 Census)[12]

Ethnic group	Number of persons	Percentage of total population
White British	55,010,359	87.1
Gypsy / Traveller / Irish Traveller	63,193	0.1
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups	1,250,229	2
Asian / Asian British: Indian	**1,451,862**	**2.3**
Asian / Asian British: Pakistani	1,174,983	1.9
Asian / Asian British: Bangladeshi	451,529	0.7
Asian / Asian British: Chinese	433,150	0.7
Asian / Asian British: Other Asian	861,815	1.4
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	1,904,684	3
Other Ethnic Group	580,374	0.9

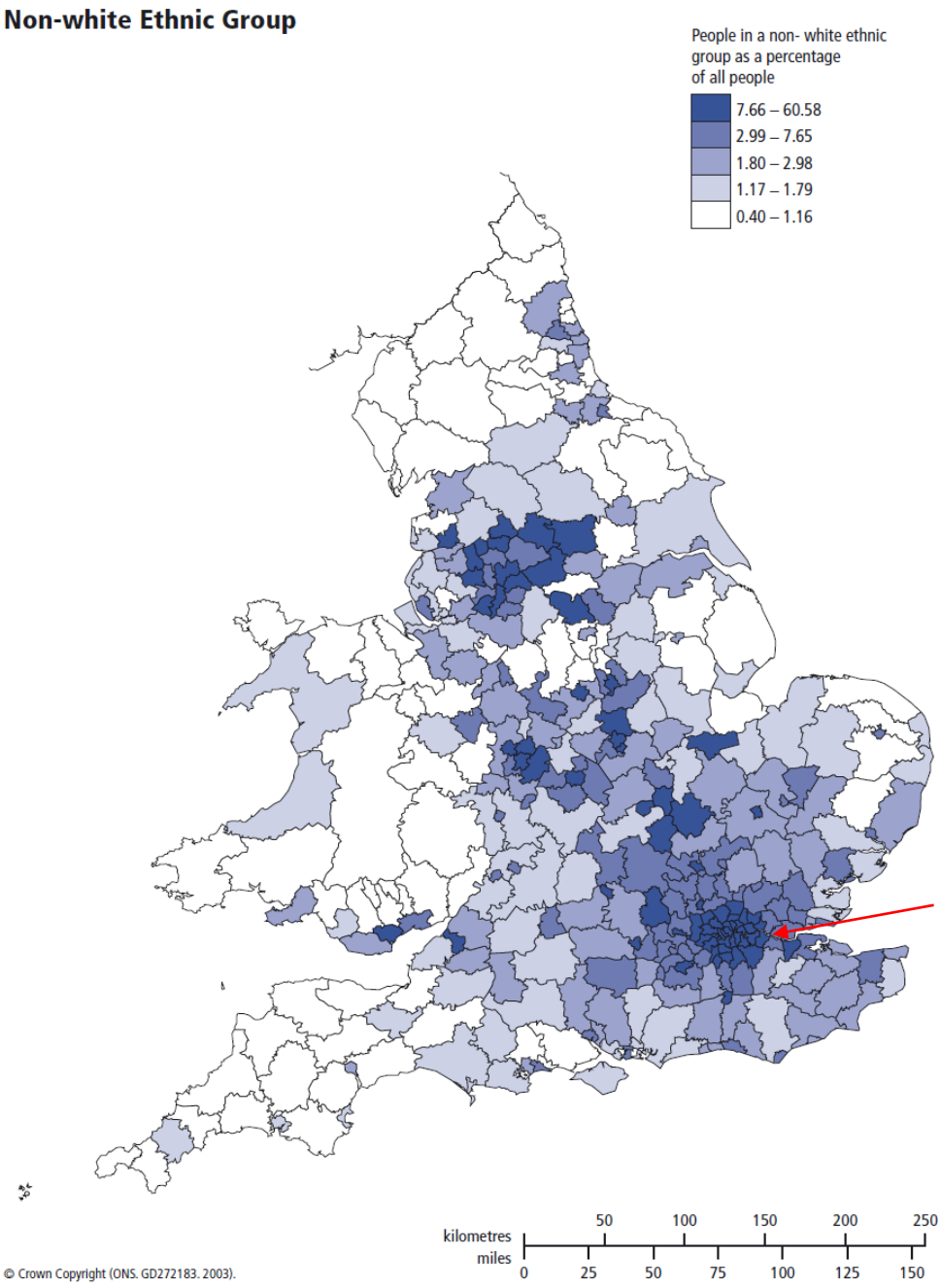
[12] Source: Office of National Statistics: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons

Chart 1 Population of England by Ethnic Group[13] (2011 Census)



[13]Ibid.

Figure 2 People in a non-white ethnic group as a percentage of all people



Source: Office for National Statistics[14]

[14]http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/taxonomy/search/index.html?newquery=ethnic+group&newoffset=0&pageSize=50&nscl=Population&content-type=Reference+table&content-type=Dataset&sortBy=none&sortDirection=none&applyFilters=true

Chart 2 Resident Population Estimates by Ethnic Group in Inner London Area (Total population 3,231,901):[15] (2011 census)

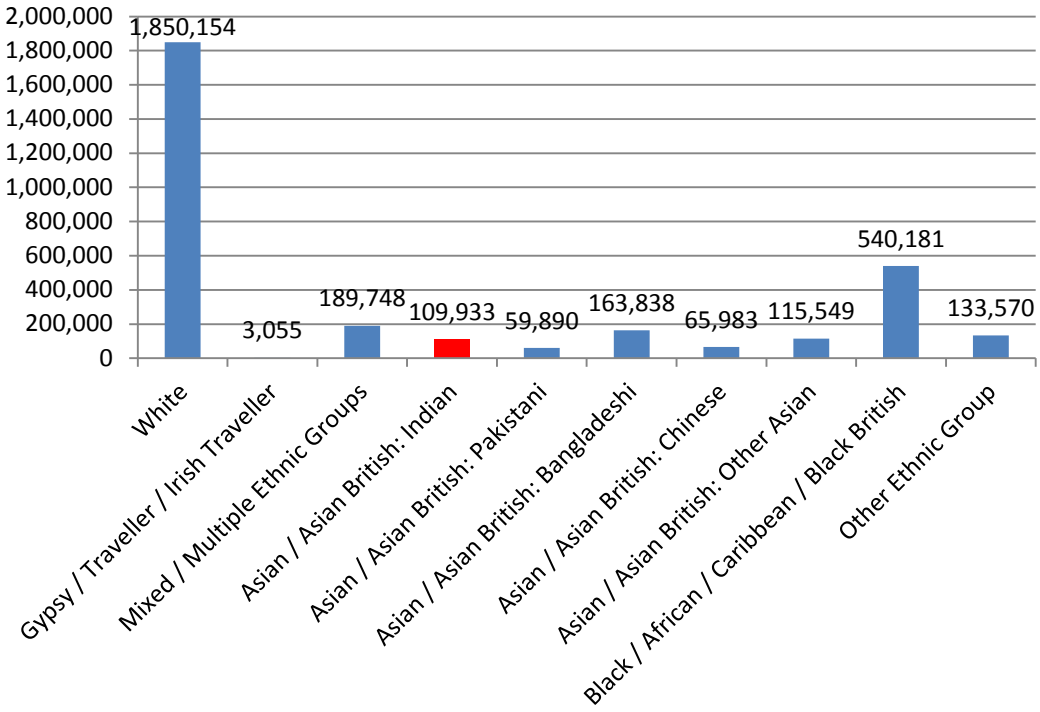
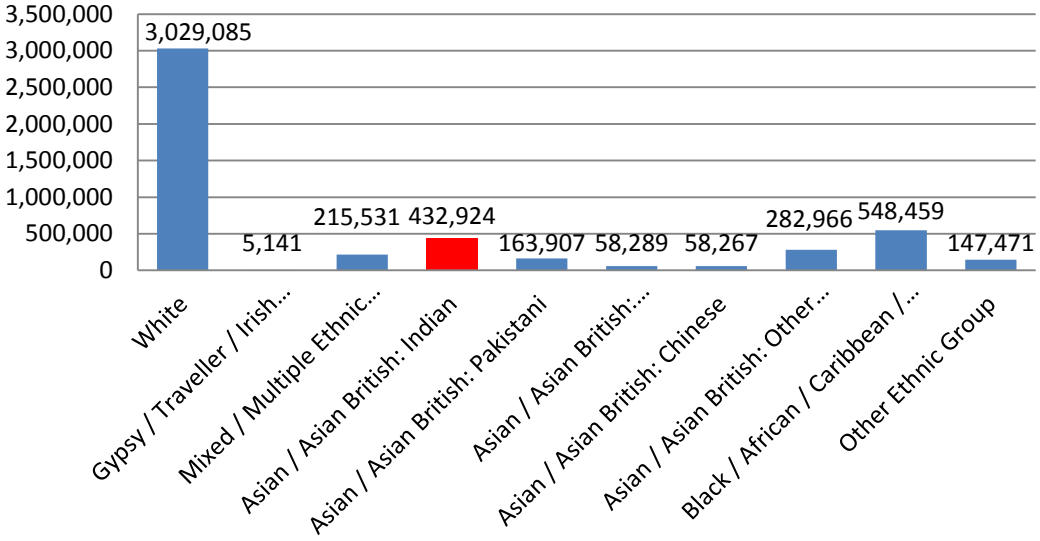


Chart 3 Resident Population Estimates by Ethnic Group in Outer London Area (Total population 4,942,040):[16] (2011 census)



[15] Source: Office for National Statistics: http://www.ons.gov.uk
[16] Ibid.

3.3 Ethno-cultural and religious differences

Often, the idea of 'ethnic communities' or 'minorities' has specifically focused on South Asian people. The idea of the ethnic and cultural 'other' has conveniently been applied to Indians. Their distinctive culture, language, dress, food, and religious beliefs and practices make Indians living in Britain more visibly different than other groups.

Comparatively, the Black community differs on some important grounds. Unlike first or second generation Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus from South Asia, Black British people with African or West-Indian roots often share some cultural similarities with the white-majority group particularly in terms of language and religion. I am not arguing that these groups are without problems of racial discrimination, social cohesion, disadvantage and dissatisfaction. Additionally, my decision to focus on British Indians rather than any other racial group is justified given that the on-going questions over an 'identity crisis' have been framed in the context of British Asians, rather than any other ethnic group. The political debates have in fact often focused on British Muslims, which gives further impetus to focus specifically on British Sikhs and Hindus to give a more nuanced overview (and basis for comparison) of what is happening in our communities, and whether we do indeed have a crisis of integration, by presenting data from a group of people who have thus far been left out of this debate.

3.4 Community organisation

The idea of community organisation is also key to the choice of young British Indians as the primary subject of this research. Indians in the United Kingdom have established and utilized their own community organisation as an integral part of life in Britain. Black Caribbean and Black African communities often have distinct

cultural organisations that are central to everyday life, notably the church, but as mentioned above, the church and church membership is not a distinctly different group to the white majority. In fact, it could be argued that church attendance and membership signal commonality between this group and the white majority. Indians have successfully established a range of community groups, based locally and nationally, to help people with their specific cultural needs, which range from local sports centres and teams for young Sikhs around the country, day-centre drop-ins for the elderly Gujarati in Leicester, and a vast network of small and large scale organisations designed specifically to help the second generation find a marriage partner from their own cultural or religious group. The success and frequency of these community organisations can lead to the idea that Indians are not as easily acculturated into the British mainstream as other ethnic groups, with the logic that Indians not only have more marked differences in terms of cultural and ethnic traditions that are distinct from those of the white majority, but that these needs and demands are sufficiently met through community organisations. This in turn makes their desire/need to assimilate less than other groups (see Ballard & Ballard 1977). The implication is thus that Indians may be less assimilated into British society and therefore less likely to feel 'British'. The strength of community has also been used to assume that the feeling of 'Indianness' and 'togetherness' within the Indian community is strong, without having sufficient empirical results to determine this.

3.5 Research design; ontology, epistemology and research design: employing a 'Subjectivist' approach

Crotty defines the theoretical perspective of his research framework as 'the philosophical stance informing the methodology' (Crotty 1998: 3) and claims that there are potentially many theoretical research perspectives that result from particular epistemological and ontological stances. This research has been shaped

by my own interpretation of the issues I have focused on, and thus, my own ontological and epistemological approaches constitute an aspect of my research design that I need to justify.

Crotty claims that the terminology used in research literature is confusing, with epistemologies, theoretical perspectives, methodologies and methods 'thrown together in a grab-bag style as if they were all comparable terms' (Crotty 1998: 3). Crotty suggests that these terms in themselves represent distinct hierarchical levels of decision-making within the research design process. In short, a research project initially adopts a particular stance towards the nature of knowledge (for example, objectivism or subjectivism). This stance or epistemology will underlie the entire research process and governs the particular theoretical perspective selected (for example, post-positivism or interpretism). Crotty argues that the theoretical perspective will be implicit in the research questions and dictate the researcher's choice of methodology. Finally, this methodology will inform the choice of research methods employed, such as questionnaires or surveys.

Crotty (1998) recognises that he omits ontology from the research process but conflates it with epistemology claiming that the two are mutually dependent and difficult to distinguish conceptually when discussing research issues: 'to talk about the construction of meaning (epistemology) is to talk of the construction of a meaningful reality (ontology)'. (Crotty 1998: 10). Creswell (2003) utilises Crotty's (1998) four research design elements and argues that these four decision-making elements lead to a research approach, which may be more qualitative, quantitative or mixed, primarily dependent on the researcher's initial stance towards the nature of knowledge.

Epistemology is about ‘how we know what we know’ (Crotty 1998: 8) or the ‘nature of the relationship between the knower or the would-be knower and what can be known’ (Guba & Lincoln 1998: 201). Epistemology is concerned with providing a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that it is adequate as well as legitimate (Maynard, 1994). Epistemology is intrinsically linked to ontology, which Crotty calls ‘the study of being’ (Crotty 1998: 10), or ‘the nature of reality’ (Lincoln & Guba 1985: 37). Crotty emphasises that an ontological stance implies a particular epistemological stance and vice versa.

I feel it prudent to set the stage for my research in the context of the ontological and epistemological approaches I have applied to this work. I feel that it is particularly important as the analysis in the following chapters is based on the narratives of the young people whom I interviewed. It was always my intention to use this opportunity to gain insight into the social worlds of these young people, so my approach from the outset has been one based in subjectivism.

A subjectivist approach sees a crucial role in the part of the individual, on the basis that knowledge cannot exist without individuals to construct it. Knowledge is essentially subjective, as each individual will construct their world in a unique way in light of their background and the social forces acting on them. The key component of a subjectivist ontology and epistemology, as employed in this research, is the understanding that not only is knowledge created by an individual in light of their background and the social forces they are subject to, but also that there are multiple ‘mind dependent’ interpretations of any given situation: there is no single truth; a subjective ‘truth’ is only true under certain conditions, at certain times, or for certain people. This is in contrast to an objectivist approach, which is based in realism.

My theoretical perspective has thus influenced the way I have chosen to operationalise my research questions (a focus on uncovering diversity and seeking to convey differing experiences and interpretations), and this has in turn affected my choice of methodology (semi-structured qualitative interviews). My research is thus underpinned by my stance that identity and belonging are deeply personal, and shaped by life experiences and emotions that are deeply embedded within the mind of an individual, and that any study into this sense of self or sense of belonging or identity needs to adapt an approach which focuses on the individual experiences that shape and influence feelings of identity, and thus employ an appropriate methodology that will allow the collection and exploration of these issues.

In line with the relativist foundations of subjectivism, it follows that my stance is based on the premise that there is no 'objective truth to be known' (Hugly & Sayward 1987: 278) and emphasises the diversity of interpretations that can be applied to the world and 'constructed realities'. With this is mind it is important for me to acknowledge that what I have employed is a subjectivist ontology and epistemology, I have been interested in exploring individual interpretations of social worlds and capturing the diversity of interpretations that respondents have offered within a key framework, thus what I present are varying perceptions of social reality, in the understanding that there is no 'one' true answer, instead choosing to focus on individual perceptions and experiences.

To that end, I do not present my findings here as 'absolute truths'. I do not infer them to be completely true or accurate, I simply present them here as experiences that have been understood by individuals in the context of their backgrounds and different pressures and expectations to which they feel subjected. For example, I will show how many young people spoke of feeling discriminated against on the basis of their skin colour. When I present such data, it has been done with a

subjectivist approach, to show differing interpretations, rather than to infer that what my respondents have said is completely true. Although I do not doubt the truthfulness of what has been expressed to me, for the purposes of the validity of this research, I have to state very clearly that I have been focused on capturing individual perceptions. Proving the extent to which these realities are completely 'true' in the sense that they could be proved in a court of Law is beyond the scope of this research, but given that I have employed a subjectivist approach, this has not hindered the analysis that is presented. I have focused on gaining an insight into social worlds, and how the social world of an individual is formed of many shades of interpretation and understanding, and is based on feelings and emotions that may not necessarily be a 'true' depiction of what happens. But for research such as this, which is situated in a subjectivist approach with the aim of uncovering meanings and interpretations, it is sufficient. My approach is thus situated in 'Verstehen' (Weber 1947), an interpretative sociological approach which is focused on exploring what Weber called 'meaningful understanding', an understanding which I take to be constructed by individuals themselves. I took a Grounded Theory approach allowing themes to emerge in the course of the interviews.

3.6 Designing a methodology

When faced with the challenge of selecting a methodology and method it is essential to design a methodology that is well indicated for the research problem you are faced with (Gaskell & Bauer). My choice of methods and methodology thus had to be appropriate to my conceptualisation of the research problem and the way that I operationalised my research aim into my research questions. My key considerations were thus to ensure that I could keep my sample equally representative of both religious groups, Sikhs and Hindus, and of both sexes within these two sub-groups. Beyond this I also wanted to ensure that I could speak to young people from as many walks of life as possible: I needed a sampling rationale

that would allow me control over the diversity of my sample to ensure as much of a range of experience as possible in order to challenge the essentialising notions as I had set out to do.

3.7 Final sample selection and methodological approach

As for much applied social science, given the nature of my research questions and my aim to have a diverse sample in the time constraints of this research, it was neither practical nor theoretically sensible to conduct random sampling. Given my aims for this research, I decided that I would conduct a criterion-based sampling approach. This is defined as 'selecting cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance' (Patton 2001: 238). Additionally, I utilised my own networks of family and friends, my contacts at London community centres for British-Indian youths, and my contacts at London-based Gurdwara and Mandirs. I then used a snowball-sampling approach to gain more participants via these networks. These methods together allowed me to gain access to young people whom I needed to speak to in order to make sure my sample was as diverse as possible.

Qualitative researchers often use criterion-based sampling as it allows the researcher to deliberately select units to reflect particular features within the given population. As Ritchie and Lewis state, 'the sample is not intended to be statistically representative: the chances of selection for each element are unknown but, instead, the characteristics of the population are used as the basis of selection'. It is this feature that makes qualitative research with criterion-based sampling methods 'well suited to small-scale, in-depth studies'. (Ritchie & Lewis 2006: 72)

Qualitative research needs to maximize the variety of the unknown phenomenon given the scope and scale of the research study in question, and this sampling

approach allowed me to do so within the limitations of this research. I would hasten to add that although my approach is not without its methodological limitations, I have not sought nor claimed to capture the experiences of all the British Asian population, nor have I made unjustified inferences without sufficient evidence. Instead the purpose of this study is to understand what identity means to young British Sikhs and Hindus and what factors promote or hinder the sense of inclusion for the people I interview and present common themes as well as highlighting diversity.

Bauer and Gaskell argue that 'the real purpose of qualitative research is not counting opinions or people but rather exploring the range of opinions, the different representations of the issue' (Bauer & Gaskell 2000: 41). My criterion-based sampling of eighty respondents from a range of educational and socio-economic backgrounds and ages was an appropriate method with which to uncover the range of experience this research centres on, and has provided me with enough insight and data to present a contribution to the academic field in which this research in situated.

My sampling rationale was to maximize the range of opinions that can be collated on this issue, given the size and scale of a doctoral thesis and I achieved this through a methodical approach utilising criterion-based sampling, utilisation of my own networks, and snowball sampling following the latter. Essential for reliability and validity concerns is the fact that 'to be confident that the full range of views has been explored the researcher would need to interview different members of the social milieu' (Bauer & Gaskell 2000: 41). Criterion-based sampling of eighty respondents was sufficient to achieve this exploration of the given social milieu, considering the wide range of opinions and experiences I was able to capture before reaching the point of saturation in the interview process.

The success of snowball sampling as a technique depends on the initial contacts and connections made. My main concern was representativeness and diversity. The young people who took part in this research needed to come from a range of backgrounds in order for me to gain insight into the range of experiences and opinions necessary for this work. I have for many years been involved in a range of community organizations, which has proved instrumental in this research and allowed me to reach out and contact young people from all facets of the Indian-Sikh and wider British Indian community. Snowball sampling allowed me to recruit other respondents, and the criterion-based methodology then allowed me to manage the level of diversity and representativeness (which was key to the research) in the sample itself. As Ritchie and Lewis point out, criterion-based sampling has two principal aims: 'to ensure that all the key constituencies of relevance to the subject matter are covered […] and to ensure that within each of the key criteria, some diversity is included so that the impact of the characteristic concerned can be explored.' (Ritchie & Lewis 2006: 79).

Given that I was interested in speaking to a range of young people, Sikh, Hindu, male, female, with different family backgrounds, education and work experiences and with different social relationships, criterion-based sampling was integral in allowing me to form a sample that was representative and diverse enough for me to explore the impact of these different aspects of life on their feelings of belonging, acceptance and identity. Criterion sampling offered me, as the researcher, control in designing the most representative and diverse sample given the scope of this research, this allowing me to explore the range of meanings and shades of experience I was interested in.

3.8 Access

Access to these young people was gained in a range of ways. Being a Sikh myself, I was able to contact a select number of young people from my own social networks. However, I was extremely conscious that the people I know may be in my social networks due to similarities in our own family backgrounds, our career and education choices. I was able to recruit several young people I know who were university students, or those who had graduated recently and were working in London. This constituted only four of the total interviews that took place.

I used my own acquaintances to contact young Sikhs from a range of backgrounds, as well as utilizing my contacts at a London-based drop-in community centre for young Sikhs, and contacts at London Mandirs and Temples. The initial contacts I made were made mindful of the fact that people needed to come from a diverse range of backgrounds. I therefore networked vertically and created the appropriate sample, characterized by a high degree of diversity in life experience.

My previous contacts in a range of target areas allowed me to gain initial respondents quickly, the fact that they knew me personally also helped to secure further interviews through snowballing. These initial contacts then helped me to keep information about who I was and what I was doing flowing through the contact group, thus enabling me to reach out to new people. I would hasten to add that I feel that knowing me personally would have meant that these initial contacts may have held back a little during the interviews, so as a result, I made less use of their interviews in the final write-up.

The process usually followed the same pattern: through my initial contacts I reached out to a few young Sikhs and Hindus that I knew had recently graduated from university and were now employed, some of which I knew from the Gurdwara

and Mandir networks I am part of, some who came to the community centres I help to run, and others whom I knew personally or through family and friends. Through utilizing all my networks, and not just relying on friends and family who perhaps had similar experiences to me, I was able to access a range of young people. These young people then put me in contact with their acquaintances, often similar to them, thus providing more interviews with other young people who were, employed, unemployed, orthodox Sikhs and Hindus, liberal Sikhs and Hindus, and so forth.

Snowball sampling is often cited as having a high risk of sampling bias, or for being inexact. However, I found that this method allowed me to gain access to the young people I needed for this research. The diversity in experience and opinion presented and analysed in this research is testament to this method in accessing a diverse group of young people. It was particularly useful as it allowed me as the researcher control over the people that became involved in this study, and it was this control that allowed me to counteract the above-mentioned issues of sampling bias and lack of representativeness.

It was a challenge to achieve the sample for this group. This is not research into the lives of highly educated young Sikhs and Hindus, nor is it solely about the young people from this group who are disaffected in any way. Instead this research contributes to knowledge in the fields of ethnicity, belonging, and national identity, by highlighting how different and unique personal experiences can be instrumental in shaping ideas about where these young people feel that they fit in.

Snowball sampling is often criticized on the grounds that subjects tend to nominate people that they know well. However, I used this to my advantage by initially contacting a diverse range of people, who I then asked to nominate people who were also ‘out of work’ or, ‘at university’, ‘or other Hindu-females’, and so forth, thus utilizing the rationale of criterion sampling to overcome this.

Table 2 gives information for each of my respondents. Names have been anonymised, but information such as gender, age, religion, level of religious engagement and occupation/occupational status remain as reported by respondents. As the table reports, the young people who took part in this research came from all walks of live. It is important to note that a majority of these young people were educated to university level. This should not be seen as a lack of diversity in the sample, but is rather an accurate and representative reflection of the higher than average educational attainment levels of the young people from Indian backgrounds in Britain.

Table 3 Demographic information for sample of interviewees (N=80)

#	Name	Gender	Age	Religion[17]	Level of Religious Engagement	Occupation/ Occupational Status
1	Jasraj	Male	25	Sikh	Orthodox	IT Consultant
2	Neel	Male	20	Hindu	Orthodox	Graphic Designer
3	Sonny	Male	23	Hindu	Orthodox	Musician
4	Jindi	Male	18	Hindu	Orthodox	University student
5	Pankaj	Male	19	Hindu	Orthodox	College Student
6	Ajay	Male	22	Hindu	Orthodox	Jobseeker
7	Vinod	Male	25	Hindu	Orthodox	Property Developer
8	Nirav	Male	18	Hindu	Orthodox	University Student
9	Kirit	Male	21	Sikh	Orthodox	University Student
10	Navjot	Male	21	Sikh	Orthodox	University Student
11	Manjeet	Male	19	Sikh	Orthodox	University Student
12	Pritpal	Male	21	Sikh	Orthodox	University Student
13	Sanjeet	Male	24	Sikh	Orthodox	Plumber
14	Kavinderjeet	Male	18	Sikh	Orthodox	College Student
15	Shaani	Female	22	Sikh	Orthodox	Trainee Accountant
16	Simarjeet	Female	22	Sikh	Orthodox	Master's Student
17	Indu	Female	18	Hindu	Orthodox	University Student
18	Rekha	Female	23	Hindu	Orthodox	Stay at home Mum
19	Harvinder	Male	21	Sikh	Moderate	Trainee Actuary
20	Jaspreet	Male	19	Sikh	Moderate	Law Student
21	Priya	Female	22	Hindu	Moderate	Policy Analyst for Government Department
22	Rajan P	Male	22	Sikh	Moderate	Unemployed
23	Nikhil	Male	19	Hindu	Moderate	University Student
24	Harpinder	Male	21	Sikh	Moderate	Recruitment Consultant
25	Sukhi	Female	22	Sikh	Moderate	Accountant
26	Payal	Female	20	Hindu	Moderate	University Student
27	Sita	Female	25	Hindu	Moderate	Stay at home Mum
28	Amit	Make	24	Hindu	Moderate	Manager of Family Businesses
29	Jai	Male	23	Hindu	Moderate	Financial Analyst
30	Satnam	Male	22	Sikh	Moderate	Builder
31	Anisha	Female	18	Hindu	Moderate	University Student
32	Manpreet	Female	18	Sikh	Moderate	Child minder
33	Simran	Female	20	Sikh	Moderate	Carer for the Elderly
34	Neelam	Female	22	Hindu	Moderate	Accountant
35	Dav	Male	20	Sikh	Moderate	Mechanic
36	Bijal	Male	23	Hindu	Moderate	Accountant
37	Harmeet	Male	22	Sikh	Moderate	City Worker
38	Arvinder	Male	22	Sikh	Moderate	Accountant
39	Nirpal	Male	22	Sikh	Moderate	Pharmacist
40	Tarlok	Male	19	Sikh	Moderate	University Student
41	Daljit	Female	20	Sikh	Moderate	University Student
42	Sarbjit	Female	21	Sikh	Moderate	Jobseeker
43	Balvinder	Female	24	Sikh	Moderate	Stay at home mum
44	Tejinder	Female	18	Sikh	Moderate	On a 'Gap Year'
45	Talwinder	Female	22	Sikh	Moderate	Master's Student
46	Kiran	Female	19	Sikh	Moderate	University Student
47	Hardeep	Female	22	Sikh	Moderate	Cashier in High Street Bank
48	Ranbir	Male	19	Sikh	Moderate	Nightclub Promoter
49	Sohan	Male	18	Hindu	Moderate	University Student
50	Akash	Male	22	Hindu	Moderate	Accountant
51	Namrika	Female	18	Hindu	Moderate	Charity Worker

[17] When I refer to a person as 'Hindu' or 'Sikh' it is not my intention to make any assumption about the degree to which they are involved or adherent to these religions, but simply to refer to their ethnic and religious backgrounds in order to categorise them for the purpose of this study.

#	Name	Gender	Age	Religion	Level of Religious Engagement	Occupation/ Occupational Status
52	Sunaina	Female	23	Hindu	Moderate	Legal Secretary
53	Sudha	Female	20	Hindu	Moderate	Data Analyst
54	Rani	Female	22	Hindu	Moderate	Receptionist
55	Anoop	Male	22	Hindu	Moderate	Trainee Pharmacist
56	Anita	Female	19	Hindu	Moderate	Nursery Nurse
57	Rakesh	Male	19	Hindu	Moderate	Jobseeker
58	Geetanjali	Female	22	Hindu	Moderate	Hairdresser
59	Sneha	Female	19	Hindu	Moderate	University Student
60	Inderjit	Female	20	Sikh	Moderate	Beauty Therapist and Make-Up Artist
61	Satwant	Female	19	Sikh	Moderate	University Student
62	Deep	Female	18	Sikh	Moderate	Trainee Nail Technician
63	Hema	Female	22	Hindu	Very Moderate	Civil Servant
64	Rajan D	Male	20	Hindu	Very Moderate	IT entrepreneur
65	Jaz	Male	25	Sikh	Very Moderate	Community Worker
66	Rupa	Female	20	Sikh	Very Moderate	Beauty Therapist
67	Sonia	Female	20	Sikh	Very Moderate	University Student
68	Reena	Female	23	Hindu	Very Moderate	Jobseeker
69	Ria	Female	18	Hindu	Very Moderate	University Student
70	Minal	Female	20	Hindu	Very Moderate	Receptionist
71	Bhumika	Female	19	Hindu	Very Moderate	Jobseeker
72	Harpaul	Male	23	Sikh	Very Moderate	Jobseeker
73	Sonia	Female	20	Sikh	Very Moderate	University Student
74	Priyanka	Female	22	Sikh	Very Moderate	Postgraduate Student
75	Amrit	Female	19	Sikh	Very Moderate	Beautician
76	Tejin	Male	24	Hindu	Agnostic	City Worker
77	Ashia	Female	22	Sikh	Agnostic	Care Worker
78	Aditya	Male	18	Hindu	Agnostic	College student
79	Uday	Male	20	Hindu	Agnostic	Jobseeker
80	Raks	Male	22	Hindu	Agnostic	Works in family 'Cash and Carry' business

Sample Composition: 20 Sikh Males; 20 Sikh Females; 20 Hindu Males; 20 Hindu Females

Total	**N = 80**

3.9 Employing a Qualitative approach

This study is primarily exploratory in its nature, and because of this, I decided that a qualitative method would be most suitable. Qualitative methods are characterised by openness allowing people to express things in their own words. In contrast, quantitative methods are better suited to deductively and formally testing a priori hypothesis. The comparative openness of qualitative methods stems from the utilisation of more inductive strategies, which begin with 'sensitizing concepts' (Glaser 1978) in order to explore a research topic in an emergent way (Flick 2006). My research questions were aimed at the life experiences of my respondents and

the way they constructed their own realities rather than trying to seek large-scale correlations (Ibid). By using a qualitative methodology I was able to capture 'the nuance and complexity of the social situation under study' (Janesick 2000: 380) whilst remaining open to emerging themes throughout the process of this research.

My decision to focus on qualitative methods also stemmed from my desire as a social researcher to gain insight and understanding of the everyday experiences of the individuals who comprise my sample. I have stated throughout this paper that this research was an opportunity for young people to contribute to the debate on nationality and Britishness, belonging, inclusion and acceptance by giving them an arena to talk about what they have experienced and how they feel about being these issues. Qualitative methods are most suited to the study of experiences and opinions. As Robert Farr (1982) notes, qualitative interviewing is 'essentially a technique or method for establishing or discovering that there are perspectives or viewpoints on events other than those of the person initiating the interview' (Farr 1982: 151).

Some previous work aimed at capturing feelings of belonging has included quantitative analysis of surveys collected from the public on the issues of race, inclusion and identity.[18] Although useful, these methods would not have enabled

[18] See Laurence, J. and Heath, A. (2008). 'Predictors of community cohesion: multi-level modeling of the 2005 Citizenship Survey'. Report for the Department for Communities and Local Govt. Available at: http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/681539.pdf See also Tilley, J., et al. (2004). 'Dimensions of British identity', in Park, A., et al. (eds.), *British Social Attitudes: the 21st Report*. London: Sage; Communities and Local Government (2010), Citizenship survey: 2009–10 (April 2009–March 2010), England. Cohesion Research, Statistical Release 12. ; Available at: http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1515776.pdf; Kiwan, S., et al. (2010). 'Young People and Community Cohesion: Analysis from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England. London: Department of Education.' Available at: https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFE-RR033.pdf; 'Department for Communities and Local Government (2009). Citizenship Survey, 2008-2009.' DCLG and National Centre for Social Research, Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive [distributor]; Heath, A., et al. (2011). 'Ethnic Minority British Election Study'; Home Office (2003) 'Building a Picture of Community Cohesion: A guide for Local Authorities and their partners.' London: Home Office. 'National Centre for Social Research, British Social Attitudes Survey 1983-2009.' Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive; UK Border Agency (2009). Public Attitudes Survey, Wave 6 – September 2009. Available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100503160445/ http:/www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/ sitecontent/documents/aboutus/public-attitudes-surveys/

me to collect the type and breadth of personal experience that this D.Phil. has captured, presented and analysed. Surveys are extremely useful for conducting large-scale research where one-to-one in-depth qualitative interviewing is impossible. They also present data collectively about ethnic groups, which hides the diversity of interpretations and perceptions of individuals. Survey and quantitative data are also far less suited to seeking 'Verstehen' in Weber's terminology (Weber 1947). For example, a survey may show that a given person feels that they 'strongly belong to Britain', but it rarely gives adequate insight into how this feeling is experienced or what contributed to the development and establishment of this feeling. In this research I have wanted to take this opportunity to capture the real life experiences and the *understandings* of these experiences of young people whose lives are often hidden in umbrella statistics about minority groups, without ever having their voices heard.

Essentially, the aim of this work has been to capture what belonging and identity mean to young people. Quantitative methods or survey questionnaires with the use of Likert scales and closed-option answers would have failed to encompass the range of experience and opinion that I need to capture for this work. Additionally, the issues of false answering, non-response and forcing people to answer one way or another, or categorise themselves in a particular way imposed by me in order to warrant a quantification of their responses would not have provided the data that is required for this work. Also, this type of arbitrary categorisations, and homogenising of people, which has led to essentialised beliefs about ethnic minority communities and their members, is what this research has sought to avoid, if not oppose.

As Bauer and Gaskell note, 'qualitative research tends to maximize the ***variety*** of the unknown phenomenon. This is different from the sample survey research: there,

the opinions and attitudes are *a priori* framed in the questions and compared across known strata of people.' (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000: 33).

3.10 Justification of methodological approach

Within the qualitative methodological approach, there are spectrums of methods available to the researcher (Flick 2006). I also had to consider that my operationalization of the research problem meant that I was focused on subjective individual perspectives which have typically been addressed in the social sciences from within a phenomenological perspective that is 'generally seen as a study of people's subjective everyday experience' (Crotty 1998: 83), through the utilisation of semi-structured interviews or narrative interviews to elicit data about respondent life worlds (Flick 2006).

George Gaskell has argued that this type of interviewing is 'the *sine qua non* of qualitative interviewing' (Gaskell 2000: 39) as these interviews allow the researcher to gain a 'grasp of the social conditions of which they are product' as well as 'the circumstances of life and the social mechanism affecting them' (Bourdieu 1999: 613). As a researcher, my desire to explore the familiar, often taken-for-granted social worlds of my respondents allowed me to investigate many dimensions of their lives, dimensions that they were not used to talking about but were able to reflect upon in the course of the interview. My use of qualitative interviewing allowed me to cover such topics as 'home and family, school or work, and neighbourhood' and to encompass objects, events and people, with 'the last of these conveying certain values, beliefs and discourses' (Atkinson 2010: 7-9). In my exploration of identity and belonging, my ability to explore these social realities through the flexibility, openness and time granted to me through my choice of a qualitative approach was vital.

In-depth interviewing has long been one of the main methods used in qualitative research; it is the tool by which social research can gain an insight into the social reality of respondents. Rather than numbers and survey responses I decided that I wanted to focus on the medium of language and expression, and the choice of in-depth interviewing was best suited to this type of exchange. Hammersley and Atkinson's description of the power of the in-depth interview in expression captures these ideas succinctly: 'The expressive power of language provides the most important resource for accounts. A crucial feature of language is its capacity to present descriptions, explanations, and evaluations of almost infinite variety about any aspect of the world, including itself' (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995: 126).

The issue I faced when deciding which method to employ was the fact that with the topics in which I was interested, the information that I needed from the interviewee was often very personal and often not verbalised in the way I needed in day-to-day life. It depended on the young people involved in the study recalling, opening up and having to think about, and verbalise (to a relative stranger) issues and experiences that formed their social world, but were often not spoken about in everyday life. I conducted two pilot interviews using a structured interview technique, with specific questions. I found that the interview did not flow well, and that the required rapport was not established: the answers I got from the young people were short and mechanical.

What I needed was a way of almost conversing with the interviewees, yet controlling the topic of discussion to ensure that I was able to cover the main questions I needed to ask. As noted above, semi-structured interviews and narrative interviews are often employed to answer phenomenological questions and I decided, following the lack of success I had in eliciting information during my two

pilot interviews, that semi-structured, in-depth interviews were the medium by which I could best answer my research questions.

This type of interviewing gave me more flexibility to listen to respondents' life stories and make room for any unexpected topics, whilst permitting me to maintain an element of structure in order to elicit data on the key issues I was interested in, as well as the ability to explore unexpected responses. If I had employed a purely narrative approach, it would not have been possible for me to do this as the narrative interview is traditionally unstructured in order to go beyond typical question-answer interview scenarios (Jovchelovitch & Bauer 2000).

Most importantly, this type of interview allowed me to combine structure with flexibility (Legard, Keegan & Ward 2009: 141). This flexibility allowed me to ask questions and cover topics, without the atmosphere becoming too formal, and for me to ask follow-up questions and probe further when necessary. It was this aspect of in-depth interviewing that made this technique most suitable to this research. I would describe in-depth interviewing as a form of conversation, a point mirrored by Sidney and Beatrice Webb in 1932, who described this method of interviewing as being a 'conversation with a purpose' (Webb & Webb 1932: 130). As Rorty states, such a conversation is key in that it 'reproduces a fundamental purpose through which knowledge about the social world is constructed in normal human interaction' (Rorty 1980). Semi-structured interviews granted me the openness and flexibility to discuss unexpected topics whilst simultaneously allowing a biographical focus and space for additional questions of interest to be asked.

I employed an iterative approach, allowing themes to emerge from the data rather than imposing a rigid theoretical framework in which to situate my findings.

3.11 Conducting the research

For this research, I undertook eighty in-depth interviews, as I wanted to speak to a wide range of young people. This sample of eighty interviews comprised twenty interviews from each of the following sub-groups; males from Sikh backgrounds, males from Hindu backgrounds, females from Sikh backgrounds and females from Hindu backgrounds. The sample was thus designed to represent equal numbers of males and females, as well as Sikh and Hindu backgrounds. However, I was conscious that equality in numbers would not be sufficient to gain the different shades of meaning and experience that this research sought to uncover. To counteract any bias that may have arisen, I chose respondents to take part in this research with the aim of interviewing young people from a diverse range of belief systems, from less and more ethnically diverse parts of London, and from different socio-economic and educational attainment levels. My aim was to gain an insight into different individual lives, to avoid treating young British Sikh and British Hindus as a homogenous group in any way, and to capture the diversity of life experience and identities within these communities. I found that eighty was a sufficient number given the scope of this thesis and the length and depth of the interviews.

The location of the interview depended on what was most convenient for the respondent, I often travelled to young people's homes, community centres, or local coffee shops, and interviews were also often conducted at my own home. The location of the interviews often depended on the pressures and concerns of the individuals themselves; sometimes young people from more traditional families preferred not to be interviewed at home. To put minds at ease, this flexibility in terms of where the interview could be conducted was something I made explicitly clear when organising the interview.

The interviews were conducted on a semi-structured basis with the use of a topic guide (Appendix 2) to make sure my central research questions were covered. Identity and feelings about inclusion are complex issues, and thus warrant some flexibility in allowing the interviewer to uncover how people feel

The interviews themselves rested on the respondent opening up about their own experiences, the acceptance and discrimination they felt, and where they felt they belonged and why, as well as explaining in detail why they felt the way they did. Often, the interviews brought out experiences that were upsetting or difficult for the young people given the nature of the prejudice and exclusion they were describing. Also, I knew from the outset, when designing the research, that not only were 'identity' and 'belonging' difficult subjects to simply launch into at the one-to-one interview stage, but also that most of the young people involved in this research would probably not have been asked to open up about these issues and their feelings surrounding them before, and especially not to a relative stranger like myself.

Interviews all followed the same format. I would meet the interviewee in the arranged location and spend a few minutes talking informally and making the interviewee feel at ease. We then sat down in the designated area where I gave a short overview of how the interview would work, explaining why I would be using a voice recorder, and outlining the format that the interview would take.

As with all semi-structured qualitative interviews, the topic guide was central because 'behind the apparently natural and almost casual conversation seen in the successful interview is a well prepared interviewer' (Gaskell 2000: 40). I achieved this through utilising the knowledge I had on this topic and the knowledge I achieved from conducting the comprehensive literature review. I created a topic guide that was in line with my conceptualisation and operationalisation of the

research problem and my overall aims for this research project. Overall, my topic guides were specifically designed to allow my interviewees plenty of opportunity to talk at length and introduce new topics to the conversation. However, there was a loosely structured agenda, which I found useful in achieving the smooth flow of the interview scenario and ensuring that I covered the topics that I needed to address. The topic guide made sure that I was able to bring the interview back to central questions if it drifted.

3.12 Ethnic matching: 'What about you?'

I found that being a British Asian myself was integral in gaining access to young people. Many of my interviewees whom I contacted by email or letter later told me that seeing an 'Asian' name made them want to meet me; some even stated that had it been a white person then they would have refused to take part in the research. However it was a complex scenario where being a British Asian myself often made it easier for the respondents, and females in particular, to open up in the interview process, but occasionally made it more challenging to engage with some of the interviewees.

Being an Asian woman was extremely useful when conducting interviews with the young women involved in this study, many of whom commented that they were able to open up more about the pressures they felt as young Sikhs and Hindus from them own families and the community at large. Here my own experiences and knowledge of Indian traditions, cultural pressures and attitudes were extremely useful as I was able to understand what the young people, male and female were alluding to, without having to stop their dialogue to seek an explanation about the cultural traits they were describing. Young women in particular expected me to

understand, as a young British Asian, the dilemmas they often faced in terms of acceptance, identity and belonging.

At times, young women involved in the study would ask me about my own experiences and if and how I had experienced the same pressures they had: *What about your parents? Are you married? Did you have an arranged marriage?* As an interviewer it was important for me not to seem distant from my interviewees, I did not want to seem as though I was extracting information for my own needs, asking them to delve deep into their personal lives and relationships without offering any insight into my own life and the issues and concerns we were discussing during the interviews. However, it was a complex situation, since I was very conscious as a researcher that my opinions and expressions could perhaps affect the way in which the interviewees answered: I did not want to create a distance between myself and the interviewee by offering different life experiences and opinions. I did not want to influence the openness of the interviewees' responses by offering my own insights, which may have led them to feel judged or different if their lives were contrasting. With all these concerns in mind, I gave as little information as possible, only answering questions and offering information when directly questioned by the interviewees, I was careful not to launch into any deep narrative of my own life and concentrated on my topic guide to lead the interview to areas concerned. Any answers I gave were short and to the point, but neutral, without prejudice and judgement so to maintain the perceived neutrality of me as an interviewer and the interview itself.

There were other challenges, which I overcame in the interviewees. When contacting the interviewees, I introduced myself, the research itself and the topics I was interested in, as well as the fact that this was research for the completion of a Doctoral Degree for the University of Oxford, of which I was a student. Although

many of the respondents commented that this gave them a sense of pride and positivity; the fact that they would take part in what they saw as an 'important study' from a 'good' university, some young people, male and female, later commented that the fact that I was undertaking this work highlighted the differences between me and 'them'.

This happened on five occasions; it was not a cause of discontent, or aggression towards me, but on these few occasions when these young people were speaking about their difficulties in gaining employment, gaining university positions or even experiencing racism and discrimination, some of the young people I interviewed felt that a British-born Sikh female undertaking doctoral research for an Oxford D.Phil. would not understand the dilemmas they faced, nor any of the prejudice and discrimination they had encountered. It was also assumed on occasion that I would have not faced the same complexities of acceptance and multiple sources of belonging and identity. I was often asked: *What about you? Did you have this happen to you*? Alternatively, on a few occasions some of the young people commented: *You wouldn't understand. You won't get it. It's ok for you going to Oxford.*

These exchanges were limited, fortunately, but when they did occur I was aware that I needed to put the interviewees' mind at rest without straying away from the core topics of the interview. I responded to these comments and questions only when necessary, without becoming overbearing or defensive, outlining to the young people that I had had many of the same experiences that they had had, that I had faced many of the same challenges, and that I was not judging them or their lives, albeit without launching into deep narratives or giving detailed accounts of my own life experience. I said enough to put the interviewees mind at rest, to diminish any

possible negativity they may have had towards me, and to continue with the interview.

Overall, I found that from the very outset of this research through to analysing the data I collected, that being a member of the British Asian community helped me gain access to the young people I met and interviewed. It helped me to gain their trust and confidence while they opened up about areas of their lives that they had often never spoken about before, and allowed me to ask sometimes difficult and challenging questions about them as individuals, members of families, and members of ethnic and religious communities and wider British society. There were some instances where being an Asian, or an Asian female in particular, did give rise to some challenges in the interview setting, but these were small challenges rather than major obstacles, and could be overcome by emphasising the common ground between the respondent and me as the interviewer. I also found that the semi-structured, and relaxed and relatively informal atmosphere created by the research design and the way in which I conducted myself as the interviewer – approachable and informal – helped to smooth out any issues that arose.

Being Asian myself thus helped to gain access and build a rapport, and it also helped to have the insider knowledge and understanding of the experiences that young people described, without having to make respondents explain themselves in an already complex interview. Being an Asian female was especially helpful in gaining the trust of young women and creating an atmosphere in which they could talk about their personal difficulties in relation to belonging and identity. Jacobsen's work in 1998 highlighted the difficult of being an 'outsider' in gaining both access and trust, 'As an "outsider" to the Pakistani community of Waltham Forest – that is, as a member of the white British majority – it was always possible (understandably enough) that I would arouse particularly acute suspicions among

some parents' (Jacobson 1998: 54). Unlike Jacobsen, I found from the outset that being Asian helped secure trust and rapport when organising interviews and initially approaching respondents.

3.13 Data collection and analysis

Interviews were on average between an hour and an hour and a half long. Given the number of interviews conducted and their length, by the end of the fieldwork stage, there was a significant amount of data, which I then transcribed over a period of several months. I chose to transcribe the data myself as I wanted to refamiliarise myself with the interview and what was said, and draw out key themes as I went over the data. After each interview, I spent time making notes on the discussion, highlighting the key issues raised in relation to my research questions.

In terms of data analysis and organisation, I used one CAQDAS programme, NVivo, to organise and store the large amounts of transcribed data that I had. NVivo proved extremely useful in this respect. The advantages of CAQDAS software in qualitative research have been outlined by many writers (Lewis & Silver 2007; Miall 1990; Silverman 2010), and for this D.Phil., the software's ability to store the data, while allowing me to see my data on the screen organised according to various themes was extremely useful. Given that I was interested in specific research questions and themes, the ability to code and retrieve texts quickly was crucial to the progression of the thesis; this was equally as important given that I was interested in comparing males and females, Sikhs and Hindus. I was able to code segments of the transcribed interview text according to conceptual frames, for example, 'Racist incident', 'Strict families', 'no white friends', 'female experience', and so forth. I was then able to retrieve these coded segments when analysing different themes and concepts, and I was also able to quickly see on screen the people whose interviews had been coded with these factors, thus

allowing me to see patterns emerge. The 'search and retrieve' function thus proved integral to the organisation and data analysis.

The main advantage of this for me as the researcher was organisation and time-saving. As Silverman points out, a key advantage of CAQDAS software is that it 'gives the data analyst more time to think about the meaning of data, enabling rapid feedback on the results of particular analytic ideas so that new ones can be formulated. Qualitative data analysis then becomes more devoted to creative and intellectual tasks, and less immersed in routine'. (Silverman 2010: 254)

However, given the complexity of the issues raised, and the often subtle way in which the interviews developed, the NVivo software was not sufficient to analyse and understand the data in the in-depth way that was required. The complex, multi-faceted and often overlapping way in which the young people described their social worlds, their hopes, their fears and their life experiences were too nuanced and too subtle to simply be understood by any CAQDAS software. I conducted the in-depth analysis, reading through the transcript interviews, and analysing and coding in detail in order to uncover the shades of meaning, experiences, emotions and life ideas that inform the central research questions of this research.

3.14 Ethical considerations

In this research I have adhered to the instructions regarding ethical research set out by the British Economic & Social Research Council (Research Ethics Framework, ESRC) and have gained ethnical approval from my department. As a researcher, I have been very conscious of the ethical issues that concern qualitative sociological research such as this (Freed-Taylor 1994; Green & Thorogood 2004; Riessman 2004; Israel & Hay 2006) and have made sure that I have concerned myself with

‘moral integrity’ to ensure that the research process and my presentation of the findings are ‘trustworthy and valid’ (Biber 2005).

I obtained informed consent (Silverman 2010) by sending a consent form and letter, (via post and email) outlining the process of the research, how the interviews would be conducted, how their information would be stored securely and how their names would be anonymised to protect their privacy (Appendix 1). This letter also outlined how the interviews would be tape-recorded, transcribed and how these recordings would be securely stored and later destroyed after the research was complete. The participants were thus made fully aware of the process of this research and the security of their information.

In the letter and at the beginning of the interviews, I reminded the participants that they had the right to withdraw from the interview at any point. I felt that it was prudent to outline the process of the research and the anonymity of data to these young people given that they were disclosing personal information about their lives and experiences that they often did not want other people to know. These interviews required a higher level of intimacy in contrast to other methods, and as the researcher, I ensured that I was available to contact before and after the interviews if the participants had any questions or concerns about the process, or the research (Goodson & Sikes 2001).

I also tried to make the interviews as participant-led as possible so the respondents felt that they were in control, that they were at ease and that they could control what they disclosed or not. My choice of semi-structured interviews gave me the freedom to do this. In most of the interviews, as a young woman of similar ethnic background I felt that the power differential had been eroded.

Chapter Four: Social Worlds

4.1 Introduction

This research is an in-depth exploration and analysis of the actual meanings of 'identity' and 'belonging' for these young Sikhs and Hindus living in London. It is an examination of their ideas about their social worlds, their own experiences about ethnic communities, religions and the British society in which they live and how these experiences have shaped their own feelings of belonging, identity and acceptance.

Questions over the integration of ethnic minorities in Britain are often based on the assumption that people are strongly rooted in their own ethnic community, and less so in wider British society. There is thus an assumption that both British society and ethnic society/community are distinct units, that people within each group have similar characteristics, that they are experienced by these young people in the same way, and that these young people have the same level of attachment/dis-attachment to their group. Both groups are presented as being homogenous units, with strong characteristics, with strong boundaries between them and a separation between members of the two groups (as well as a unity between members of each consecutive group). How much do we really know about the structure of ethnic minorities? How much do we know about how young people from ethnic minorities experience British society? The answer is 'very little' (see Platt & Nandi 2013).

The empirical and theoretical literature on the subject of integration does not present enough findings into how people live and experience the ethnic communities they are assumed to be part of, neither does it offer any substantial ideas on how exactly people from an ethnic minority background understand British society and their own integration into this (see Rattasi 2011). Any

comprehensive study of the integration of ethnic minorities needs to first start with speaking to people from minority backgrounds to understand how they experience life in Britain, how they understand the social world in which they live, and what characteristics they attribute to different social segments of people and thereby explore their sense of belonging to these social segments. This is a crucial starting point in understanding the identity options and orientations of these young people.

This chapter will examine how these young people understand the social worlds they live in; where they see themselves as fitting in and not fitting in. It is thus an insight into the reality of integration and acceptance, it is an opportunity for these young people to say for themselves which groups (and as I will later show, which sub-groups) they feel well integrated in and where they see the splits and demarcations with their social worlds. This chapter will also focus on the perceived characteristics of social groups: what they mean to young people and how they are experienced, to give new information into how young people from ethnic minority backgrounds perceive various parts of their social worlds. This chapter will give new insight into the integration of young people from ethnic minority backgrounds by presenting new information about where they feel a sense of belonging and where they do not.

This chapter also challenges any essentialising notions of ethnic minorities by showing that the social worlds of these young people are far more complex than might be thought, and the extent to which young people are integrated into British society and/or what is assumed to be their own ethnic communities is not fixed in any way. Integration or lack of integration is not a given no matter which ‘group’ we are discussing.

If we consider an individual's social world as constituting membership to various groups (Berry1997; Verkuyten & Yildiz 2007; Platt & Nandi 2013), then it first and foremost imperative to map this social world with its intricacies and complexities, and what emerged from my interviews was a picture of a complex social world, with groups and sub-categories within each group, which young people experience in different ways. The meanings attached to different groups, such as British, Indian, Sikh, Hindu, Punjabi, Gujarati, and so forth, varied according to each individual and the experiences that have shaped their current perceptions of the different groups that exist in their social world. The main research questions for this chapter centre around how young people understand and experience the social world in which they live, what groups they see as being part of their social world, their experience with each social group that they recognised, and the opinions they had about groups on the basis of their individual perceptions.

Following my earlier conceptualisation of the research problem, this chapter will focus on answering the subsequent research questions:

- How do young Sikhs and Hindus understand and experience the organisation and structure of their social worlds?
- Within these social worlds, where does their sense of belonging lie?
- Where do boundaries lie and what basis are they formulated on?

4.2. Existing theoretical framework.

Key academic works from Barth and Alba are a useful framework in which to situate the finding of this chapter. Frederick Barth's work *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969) is a key text on the idea of the establishment and maintenance of boundaries despite social contact and interconnectedness, which is useful to the British case where ethnic loyalties and customs have remained an important part of

people's lives even though many are well-integrated into mainstream British culture. Barth outlines an approach to the study of ethnicity (rooted in anthropology), which focuses on the on-going negotiations of boundaries between groups of people. Barth's view is that such groups are not discontinuous cultural isolates, or logical *a prioris* to which people naturally belong. Barth uses his research to part with anthropological notions of cultures as bounded entities, and ethnicity as primordialist bonds, replacing it with a focus on the interface between groups.

Ethnic Groups and Boundaries focuses, therefore, on the interconnectedness of ethnic identities. Barth writes: 'categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information, but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained *despite* changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories' (Barth 1969: 9). Furthermore, Barth accentuates that group categories – i.e. ethnic labels – will most often endure even when individual members move across boundaries or share an identity with people in more than one group. The interdependency of ethnic groups is pivotal for Barth; as interdependent, ethnic identities are the product of continuous so-called ascriptions and self-ascriptions, whereby Barth stresses the interactional perspective of social anthropology on the level of the persons involved instead of on a socio-structural level. A key argument is that ethnic identity *becomes* and is maintained through relational processes of inclusion and exclusion. This is a useful argument, especially in the light of arguments about 'reactive identity' and 'reactive ethnicity'.

Barth argues that 'the ethnic boundary canalizes social life […], the identification of another person as a fellow member of an ethnic group implies a sharing of criteria for evaluation and judgment'. Conversely, 'dichotomization of others as

strangers, as members of another ethnic group, implies recognition of limitations on shared understandings, difference in criteria for judgment of value and performance, and a restriction of interaction to sectors of assumed common understanding and mutual interest' (Barth 1969: 15). Thus, boundaries instigate demarcations between different groups, and members of the same group imply by group membership the common ground they share with other members who are seen as 'playing the same game', as opposed to members of other groups who are not. Boundaries are, according to Barth, what separate 'us' from 'them'.

The boundary approach advocates a focus on the respondents' perceptions of who they are (and who they are not), and where they feel belong (and do not belong), as well as their perceptions of difference. Recent studies on boundaries and boundary processes (Zerubavel 1993; Poutignat & Streiff-Fenart 1995; Isajiw 1999, pp. 19-20; Juteau 1999; Zolberg & Long 1999; Lamont 2001; Lamont & Molnar 2002) highlight the idea that boundaries are not all alike and that boundary-related changes are too complex to be conceptualised into a single set of processes.

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Richard Alba argues that ethnic minorities in all immigrant societies impose a social distinction between immigrants and natives, which in sequel becomes a

sociologically complex fault line. Alba distinguishes between what he calls 'bright' and 'blurred' boundaries to understand the ramification of the distinction between foreigners and natives. Depending on how a boundary has been institutionalized, immigrant minorities are less or more likely to achieve parity of life chances with their peer groups in the social mainstream.

Richard Alba sees the difference between 'bright' and 'blurred' boundaries as being fairly straightforward: 'If boundaries are 'bright', the distinction involved is unambiguous, so that individuals know at all times which side of the boundary they are on. Others are 'blurry', involving zones of self-presentation and social representation that allow for ambiguous locations with respect to the boundary' (Alba 2005: 21). Like other writers before him (see Weber 1968; Horowitz 1975; Wallman 1978; Baubock 1994; Zolberg & Long 1999; Juteau 1999), Alba argues that ethnicity is best conceived as a categorization with both symbolic and social aspects. Thus, it is a distinction that individuals make in their everyday lives and one that shapes their actions and mental orientations towards others; and it is typically embedded in a variety of social and cultural differences between groups that give an ethnic boundary concrete significance – so that members of one group think, 'they are not like us because...'. (Alba 2005: 22). Although many boundaries can have these characteristics, an ethnic boundary can be distinguished from others on the basis of Max Weber's (1968, p. 389) famous identification of it with a 'subjective belief in common descent' – i.e., in a shared history based on a common point of origin in the past, which may be real or putative. Alba argues that by defining an ethnic boundary in this way, it is clear that ethnic distinction can be affected by changes either side of the boundary.

Alba analyses the effect of boundaries for specific ethnic minority groups in three countries, and by focusing on race, language, religion and citizenship concludes

that: ‘the nature of the immigrant-native boundaries for Mexicans in the U.S., Maghrebins in France, and Turks in Germany indicates that the bright vs. blurred distinction reveals a meaningful difference between the U.S. and European situations. In France and Germany, religion creates a bright boundary, which is reinforced in the case of Germany by the barriers to citizenship for the second generation that existed before 2000’. (Alba 2005: 41). Alba stresses that one requirement for comparative research is the identification of concepts that enable the researcher to find equivalents in other immigration societies for such features, or equivalents in the U.S. for prominent distinctions and differences elsewhere (Alba 2005: 41).

There are three key ideas that I wish to focus on in this chapter:

1. Ethnic boundaries canalise social life. The idea that members of an ethnic group share a common ancestry, that this *boundary* has social and symbolic aspects and ‘is embedded in a variety of social and cultural differences between groups that give an ethnic boundary concrete significance’ (Alba 2005: 22). For members of ethnic minorities, ethnic boundaries are thus seen as a crucial and defining part of social life and social organisation.
2. That group categories, or ethnic labels and the boundaries associated with them are maintained to some extent despite changing patterns of participation and membership.
3. That a boundary can be ‘bright’ or ‘blurred’.

I will return to this at the end of this chapter

4.3 The social world in which I live. What is 'British society'? Perceived characteristics and individual experience

Respondents were first asked to outline how they experienced and understood 'British society'; focusing on what defining characteristics they believed British society encompassed and the extent to which they felt that British society was inclusive or exclusive, diverse or homogenous. This then lead on to a conversation about where they saw themselves as fitting in, whether they experienced British society from the outside, not fully encompassed and separate, or from inside; integrated and accepted.

Respondents can be divided largely into two groups based on their ideas about British society; First, those who understood British society to be characterised by a strong sense of and appreciation for multiculturalism and diversity and a high-degree of social cohesion and tolerance between all composite ethnic groups and second, those who saw British society as an exclusively white group, exclusionary, and separate from themselves. However, there were many shades of understanding between, which I will highlight to emphasis the diversity of experience.

Comparison between communities and different groups was an important notion for many of my respondents, often those with high opinions of British society and the way in which it operated and is structured, had formulated and thus expressed these ideas in direct comparison with the negative ideas they had about 'Sikh', 'Hindu', 'Punjabi', or ethnic community and society in general. Ideas about groups and societies were often explained and had been experienced in terms of comparison with other groups, or segments within groups, as I will show.

For some of the respondents, the idea of 'British society' was a positive concept, with many interviewees explaining in depth the positive characteristics they felt

that British society encompassed and represented. Amongst the most prominent notions, were those of tolerance of other cultures, particularly ethnic and religious cultures, and the notion of a diverse and multicultural society. Respondents spoke about opportunities, economic, political and social, which they felt characterised what they saw as a very 'British' ideal of individual rights and fairness. Many of the interviewees, in particular those with higher education and those with high-income jobs such as bankers and lawyers, spoke at length about meritocracy, and the idea that in British society, the opportunity infrastructure was in place for everyone to have the chance to take advantage – providing that people worked hard.

I found a distinct pattern, insofar as respondents who fell into this category were not mostly Sikh, nor mostly Hindu, nor did age or gender have a great effect on the respondents' ideas about British society. Instead I found that a vast majority of the respondents who had these ideas about British society, were from upwardly-mobile families, they were most frequently the more educated of the group, and were those whose social environments meant that they had relationships and contact not only with a wide range of people from different ethnic groups, but also were mostly likely to have white British friends from a similar (broadly upper middle-class) familial and socio-economic background.

Some respondents felt that British society was organised in a way to provide opportunity and success for those people who wanted to work hard. Harvinder, a young recent graduate who works at a top accounting firm in London exemplified this:

> Being British opens doors for us, I mean, imagine if you didn't have a British passport, it would be much harder to travel. Indians over here they are always moaning about the country, why don't they go back to India then? They want all the benefits from being British, but they don't have a good word to say about it. [...] British society is where anyone can be British, it's not only for the whites, it's for everyone, anyone can be British, can't they? Indians, Lithuanians, Polish, the

> lot. British society is more open than Indian society, ain't it? Indians are so racist, but being British, anyone can be British, you can come here and make a successful life for yourself. Look at my dad, he came from India with nothing, now look at him, look at us.
>
> Harvinder, 21, Male, Moderate-Sikh, Analyst at top-tier Accountancy Firm, LSE-educated, successful family business.

Harvinder is from a wealthy family and went to a top-tier university where he studied Accounting and Finance; he lives with his family in an affluent part of South London, in Blackheath Village. Harvinder's interview was very useful to this research as he outlined the positive ideas he had about the way he saw British society as being structured, and what it was characterised by, whilst drawing on his own life to explain his feelings. He explained that he felt that British society was structured in a very open and transparent manner; it was meritocratic and full of opportunities for everyone, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. These characteristics and ideas were formed in direct contrast with his ideas about Indian society, which he felt was restrictive, insular, hierarchical and even 'racist'. On further discussion, Harvinder explained that he felt that Indian society was racist due to his feeling that Indian people were intolerant of other races. He explained that he had been outcast by some of his Indian friends for dating a white British girl, and this had made him feel angry and victimised; he felt that white British society and white British people were tolerant and fair compared to 'Indians'.[19]

Harvinder explained that his social world was made up of white middle-class friends with similar education and socio-economic backgrounds; this affected his ideas about the structure, organisation and characteristics of British society as a whole. He felt well accepted and had a strong sense of belonging to this group. He also felt that Indians, who did not experience the same level of success as him and

[19] Young people often referred to other British Indians as 'Indians'.

his family, were to blame for their own problems, as they had not worked hard and taken advantage of the opportunities afforded to them as British citizens.

This idea of opportunity and success, working hard and doing well, were themes in several interviews. Jaspreet echoed some of the ideas put forward by Harvinder in his interview. Jaspreet is a 19-year-old male from a Sikh-Punjabi background, studying Law in London. Both of Jaspreet's parents are lawyers, and his family has a successful law firm; he lives in an affluent part of West London:

> You have to try and be part of the society. I know so many Asians who don't try and be part of British society, look at them rude boys from Southall[20] and East Ham,[21] they don't care about British society, they are the ones whose families live off benefits. England is multicultural, you can wear your pug (turban), and no one is going to say anything to you. White people – they are used to us! If you want to work hard here then, I mean, the sky is the limit, and I don't think that there is any other country that is like that, ok maybe America, but even then it's more dominated by the whites and the Jews than over here.
>
> Jaspreet, 19, Male, Moderate-Sikh, University student in Law.

Again, a theme in Jaspreet's interview was that British society was structured in an open and accessible way, and was characterised by fairness and tolerance for other people, as demonstrated by a commitment to multiculturalism. British society was seen as inherently fair, insofar as opportunities were available to everyone – if you were willing to work hard. Like Harvinder above, Jaspreet's interview was insightful, he carefully outlined a separation between 'us' and 'them', where the 'us' were other successful people who had made living in Britain an economic success. This could be white British people, or other British Asians who had

[20] Southall is a large suburban district of west London, England, and part of the London Borough of Ealing. Southall is primarily a South Asian residential district, sometimes known as 'Little India'. In 1950, the first group of South Asians arrived in Southall, reputedly recruited to work in a local factory owned by a former British Indian Army officer. This South Asian population grew, due to the closeness of expanding employment opportunities such as London Heathrow Airport. There are ten Sikh Gurdwaras in Southall. The Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, which opened in 2003, is one of the largest Sikh Gurdwaras outside India, and it won the Ealing Civic Society Architectural Award in 2003. There are two large Hindu 'Mandir' temples, the Vishnu Hindu Mandir on Lady Margaret Road and the Ram Mandir in Old Southall.

[21] East Ham is a suburban district of London, England, and part of the London Borough of Newham. East Ham is a multi-cultural area, with a majority of South Asians, African/Caribbean and eastern Europeans resident.

experienced the same level of socio-economic success as Jaspreet and his family. 'Them', the outsiders, or the 'out group' were those people who had failed to be successful due to their inability to take advantage of the opportunities offered to them in British society, particularly British Indians. To be integrated was thus defined as being economically successful, rather than being defined by race. Belonging and boundaries were not based on racial grounds, that is, what colour or religion people were, but similarity in perceived social standing, which was based on economic success and often, educational attainment.

These ideas about opportunity were often passed down to these young people by their families, so the extent to which first-generations had been able to integrate into British society and feel accepted and comfortable, which was often determined by economic success, affected the way their children experienced and understood the structure and characteristics of British society. Rajan's interview exemplified this idea and was typical of the ideas that other respondents expressed:

> British society, it's like, open, open-minded, anyone can be British, what's the point of living here and thinking that you are in the Pind?[22] If you ask me, London is the best city in the world, you look around and I reckon there are people from every part of the world. Mum and dad always say if they hadn't come here then they would still be getting paid 50p a week in India doing mug's work [...] India and Indian society is so fucking corrupt, here, it's legit, go to Uni, get a job, earn money, invest money, and that's it, and anyone can do that, this is place for that. My family have worked hard, other Asians they look at us like we show off, but goras (whites) they are like 'good on ya mate', that's British society, you work off your own merit, you have rights, it's legit, not like all the backhanders you get in Indian society, there it's all about who you know, in England, it's what you know, and if you are willing to work.
>
> Rajan 20, Male, Hindu-Punjabi, Very Moderate Hindu, IT entrepreneur, successful family business.

Rajan expressed many ideas about the way he felt 'Indian society' in India and in Britain was structured and how it was characterised by corruption, exploitation,

[22] *Pind* is the Punjabi term for 'village'. Young people often used this term to describe the 'backward' or 'narrow-minded' attitudes and behaviour of other British Indians, who were seen as displaying the 'villager' or 'Pendu' attitudes of people from India.

backstabbing, and jealousy of other people's successes. As he outlined above, he felt that British society and the way it offered opportunity was the reason for the economic success of his family; he felt that British people were happy for his family, yet, British Asians were jealous of them. He explained that he felt that British-Asian society and the network of South Asian communities in Britain had exported into Britain the aforementioned perceived negative characteristics of India's society and this was continued through the narrow-mindedness and back-biting he felt was evident in British-Asian people.

Interestingly, I found that Rajan had no Indian friends, and that he had never been to India. He explained that the ideas he had about Indian people and India itself had come from what he had been taught by his parents, and the experiences they had had; negative experiences in India and Britain from other 'Indian' people, positive experiences in Britain from white British people. The way he understood his social world, the way he understood and experienced British society, and Indian society were thus deeply influenced by the lives and experiences of his parents.

Priya offered a female perspective on the idea of openness and meritocracy:

> I love being part of British society, I love it. Just going out in London, going to Uni, socialising, everything, it's great. Its multi-cultural, there are churches, Gurdwaras, Mandirs, hustle and bustle, everyone is equal. I mean, look at voting, everyone can vote, where I work, we have special policies in place that mean that no minority finds it hard to get a job, there are lots of opportunities and jobs for everyone. As a woman, there are lots of things in place for me; in fact there are special opportunities for Asian women. I think that is a uniquely British thing, like fairness, making sure ethnic minorities are represented and disabled people get jobs in government. Indians aren't like that, they think women should be at home, and I can't imagine them putting policies in place for anyone except the really privileged ones [...] British society is very democratic and just, that's why I love being British, I am glad I was born here and not in India!
>
> Priya, 22, Female, Hindu-Punjabi, Moderate Hindu, Policy Analyst for Government Department.

Even within this category of respondents, who felt that British society was open and full of opportunities there were still shades of understanding dependent on the experiences of the individual. For Priya, being a woman and the idea of gender equality was paramount. Priya explained in her interview that she felt pressured and trapped by the ideal of 'an Indian woman', whom she felt had to be a good housewife, and not work. She felt that this gender ideal was not widespread in British society. She felt that British society was structured and characterised by an attempt – a genuine attempt – to create equality and to be fair, unlike Indian culture and society which she understood as being inherently patriarchal and prejudiced, especially towards women.

Many of the respondents who had these ideas about the fairness and tolerance, which characterised British society, and the economic and social successes that were seen to be available to all, were often those whose social positioning made them the most likely candidates to experience this. Many of the respondents with the most positive ideas about British society were the ones who had come from upwardly mobile families, lived in more affluent and ethnically diverse areas and attended universities, and who had succeeded in finding employment in highly paid jobs such as banking and law. They were exposed not only to a range of people, but white British people who were similarly educated and economically successful. Respondents' focus on the sound opportunity structure of British society was thus strongly linked to their own experience of living in Britain and being British, an experience that was shaped early on by the economic and social opportunities that as members of affluent families, they were often able to take advantage of. These young people were in a better position to experience and thus take benefit from the opportunities that they often saw as being available to 'all' people.

The above extracts from interviews show that respondents who felt this way about British society referred to other members of their ethnic or religious groups as 'pendus' or 'backward' and highlighted their lack of success at financial or educational attainment in Britain, or their perceived unwillingness to take advantage of the inherent opportunities in British society.

Interestingly, for these respondents, their experience of the British opportunity structure led them to believe that those who were unable to progress in the same way as they had, had failed to do so through a lack of hard work and an unwillingness to fully engross themselves in the British way of life as they saw it. Thus separations within groups were often made along social-economic, financial or educational lines, with the more successful, more affluent and more upwardly mobile young people on one side, and the less successful, less assimilated 'Asian Rudeboys'[23] or 'pendus' on the other. Additionally as I will show, these 'Asian Rudeboys' in turn felt that these well-integrated, upwardly mobile British Indians had turned their backs on their culture, and were 'Coconuts',[24] so there were thus penalties for being too 'Indian' or too 'White' (See Fordham & Ogbu 1986). I will return later to this idea of group hierarchies and the way that many young people saw other Sikhs and Hindus as being a 'different class' from themselves.

4.4 Perceived negative characteristics of British society

Conversely, many of the respondents' ideas about British society were in stark contrast to positive ideas expressed by some respondents above. Many of the respondents, Sikh and Hindu, conceptualised and experienced 'British society' as

[23] Asian Rudeboys or Rudeboy in the singular is a term used to describe Young British Asian men who are seen by others as 'backward'. These young men are seen as being too engrossed in their ethnic identities, only having friends from the same background as them, listening only to Indian music and refusing to integrate outside of their own ethnic group. I found that this term is usually utilised by young British Indian males to distance themselves from these more 'undesirable 'members of their ethnic community.

[24] 'Coconut' is used to describe a British Indian who is 'white on the inside and brown on the outside'. It is usually used to make fun or to mock British Indians who are seen to have abandoned their culture, and who have 'become white' and are 'acting white'.

an exclusively 'white' or 'exclusionary' entity. British society was experienced by these respondents insofar as they recognised its existence, and were able to outline the characteristics that they understood it to have, but it was experienced from the outside. Some respondents saw their separation from British society as imposed, while others saw it as an affective choice on their own part.

Respondents with negative experiences and ideas about British society focused on the way in which they felt excluded. Those who had experienced a high level of perceived discrimination, racist comments, prejudice at work or school, or in basic social settings such as while shopping, sitting on a train, or while socialising at pubs and clubs, not only felt a high degree of separateness from British society, but had the most negative ideas about what they thought British society actually meant and was characterised by.

Jasraj 'British society? You mean the goras[25] [...] that's British society, the whites, all the chavs[26] together. Even if we live here, we are still Indian, we are still Sikhs, we are still like, a bit, on the outside. They don't want us, British society is the whites all together, then all the other little groups on the outside, like Blacks, Indians, Muslims, we all live here but the core, is white.

Manmit Have you ever felt part of British society?

Jasraj How can I feel part of it? I'm a Singh, I've got a pug, they have their society and we have ours, they can't be part of our society and we can't be part of theirs. Don't get me wrong, I'm not bothered, most of them are well chavvy anyways.

Jasraj, 25, Male, Orthodox Sikh, IT Consultant.

Jasraj understood British society in terms of simply 'goras', meaning white people. He explained, that to him, being British did not have any real affective or emotional component, British society was 'their' society (white people's society), and 'they' did not want ethnic minorities to be part of this, or even consider themselves to be part of this. Jasraj explained that he had always felt on the outside of British society

[25] Punjabi term for 'white people'.
[26] The term 'Chav' is a stereotype and pejorative used chiefly in the United Kingdom. The stereotype was popularised in the British mass media to refer to white working-class youth subculture in England.

mainly because of the prejudice he had experienced from a young age where he was teased by white British children for having a turban as part of his Sikh faith. This experience had made him feel that British society was characterised by white people only, and that while these people were forced to accept that ethnic minorities lived in 'their' Country, they had a deep-seated resentment and animosity for people of colour, which was exemplified by the repeated incidents of racism he had experienced from a young age.

Other respondents also explained their ideas about the racist and prejudiced characteristics of British society in their social worlds:

Rajan I used to think I was British, but as I've got older I can see that really being British or being part of British society is much easier and more possible if you are white. People always think of you as being a colour. Look, if you go into an interview, the first thing they are going to think is 'oh look, here comes another Indian', no matter how much they try and style it out it's there, so how can we really be part of British society?

Manmit Have you experienced this often?

Rajan Yeah I have, difference is now, I know people are lying when they say that they aren't racist, I used to hang around with goras at school, I used to play football, all that stuff, but after a few drinks they say stuff like 'Paki' or 'Nigger'[27] [...] I've heard so much shit like that, things that I wasn't supposed to hear, but I did. [...] You realise that you can try and blend in as much as possible, but at the end of the day, you are still just another Paki to them, so what's the point of all this equality stuff? After the stuff I have seen and heard, I don't want to be part of that society, and I can't anyway, can I?

Rajan, 22, Moderate- Sikh, Unemployed, University Graduate.

Like Jasraj, Rajan felt that British society was 'white society'; he also felt that British people were inherently racist and that they had an innate dislike for ethnic minorities. During his interview, Jasraj expressed his unhappiness and frustration at not being able to find a job since he graduated from university. He explained that he had been interviewed for several positions and that he had been rejected. He felt

[27] See *'The Changing Face of Football: Racism, Identity and Multiculture in the English Game'* by Back, Crabbe & Solomos (2001), in which the authors argue 'that in the rituals of sporting life the relationship between race, nation and inclusion is repeatedly stated and defined through the feelings of identity and belonging that are manifest between teams and their devoted supporters'. (Bloch & Solomos 2010: 11)

felt that this was because white employers did not want to employ 'another Paki'. Rajan felt that British society simply equated to 'white people', and that these 'white people' disliked people of colour. He felt strongly that British society itself was structured to provide opportunities for white people alone. Thus, he felt that his inability to secure a permanent job for himself was an example of the deep prejudice that characterises British society. Rajan said that he did not want to be part of British society because he could not. His ideas about British society, his place in it and his lack of choice in being an outsider were all formed from these experiences where he felt he was being discriminated against because of his colour. He could see that opportunities existed in British society, but felt he was excluded and victimised because of his race.

Nikhil, a young male from a moderate Hindu-Gujarati background outlined his experiences of racism and how it had affected his ideas about British society:

> British society is racist, it's all the football hooligans all the thugs,[28] really intimidating. London is very multicultural, I really love London, but I don't think that is exactly 'British society' that's more like London society. When I think of British society, it's well, white people, the proper English ones. When you go to vote or you have to apply for a job, they have those little boxes where you write if you are Indian or whatever, so we are different? After 9/11 people always used to look at me weird when I used to get on the train like I was a Muslim. I'm Hindu! Don't they know the difference? And it weren't just the chavvy people, it was all of them! So British society IS all whites then, isn't it? The minute something terrorist happens, then every brown person is an outsider, you are the problem, I'm not kidding, don't matter if you are born here, you live here, you pay your taxes, you are never really part of British society are you?
>
> Nikhil, 19, Moderate-Hindu, University Student.

Many respondents thus explained 'British' society in negative terms based on the experiences they had have. Evidently as well as overtly racist behaviour such as name calling, many respondents spoke at length about the subtle and discreet ways in which they had been made to feel like outsiders by the 'white' British population, in particular the way they people looked at them in a certain way and

[28] Ibid.

how this made them feel, or how they felt that people did not want to sit near them in a public place.

This was particularly salient for those young people who wore *turbans*[29] or *tikkas,*[30] or any overt symbol of their ethno-cultural or religious membership. For these young people, the wearing of a *turban*, or a *sari* or a *tikka*, served not only as a marker for their own group membership and being an insider for that particular group, but there was a perception that, for white people, it was seen as a distinct marker for being an outsider. For many young people it was the way that they had been treated by white people that meant that they could not be part of British society, but rather a deliberate choice on their part to be an outsider, and it was often the perceived focus on distinctive cultural or religious markers that was seen as highlighting white people's inner, often disguised racism

> I see people staring at me all the time, I feel like I am a fucking alien to them, my pug[31] and the long beard. I had some white guy laughing at me the other day saying I looked like a wizard. It just feels so humiliating, I just feel really [...] like, I don't know, sometimes I just sometimes kinda wished I lived in India where there are more Sikhs, at least I wouldn't feel like a fucking alien, like look like an alien. I love being a Sikh, but it proper makes you stand out as an outsider and that's what people see when they see a Singh, they don't understand us, and they don't want to get to know us.
>
> Jasraj, 25, Male, Orthodox Sikh, IT Consultant.

Jasraj's frustration stemmed from his feelings that white people are unified in their dislike of people like him: i.e. members of ethnic minorities and 'Singhs' in particular – Sikh males who stood out with their unique appearance. He felt that it was his turban and uncut beard that made him stand out to white British people, and that British society was not open to anyone who looked different, like him.

[29] The Sikh turban, known known formally as *Dastar* or a *Dumalla*, the turban is used to show others that they represent the embodiment of Sikh teachings, the love of the Guru and the teachings to do good deeds, the turban also protects Sikhs' long unshorn hair and keeps the hair clean. The turban is mandatory for all baptized Sikhs to wear. As Sikhs only form 2% of India's population, their turbans help identify them. When he institutionalized the turban as a part of the Sikh identity, Guru Gobind Singh said, 'My Sikh will be recognized among millions.'
[30] A *Tikka* is a red dot placed on the forehead after Hindu worship.
[31] Punjabi slang term for Turban.

The issue of *choice* was important. For those respondents who had positive ideas about British society and what it constitutes, there was an overall feeling that British society offered something that they could advantage of and utilise. This feeling of opportunity and openness was notably absent when these particular respondents spoke about what British society meant for them. Their ideas were marked with experiences of racism and prejudice – overt and/or subtle – and the way their physical appearance served as a distinct boundary maker, *for white people*. They felt that their membership of the Sikh community, the Indian community, the Hindu community, or ethnic community per se, meant that they had no choice in whether they could be part of wider British society. They felt like outsiders, and since their exclusion had been imposed on them from the outside, by white people, they had no choice but to stay as outsiders. It was not that they did not want to integrate; they felt they could not, on the basis of the discrimination they had encountered from white British people.

For these respondents, Sikh, Hindu, male and female, 'British society' was something tangible that existed, but unlike the earlier respondents, it was something that operated around them, and was characterised by exclusion and a lack of acceptance for their religious or cultural-ethnic identities. It was not a haven of opportunity, but instead a society where people of different races lived on the periphery of the core component of the white British group, and were never fully accepted. Their 'outsider' status was not an affective choice; rather, members of the majority 'in-group', the white British population, had imposed it on them.

Many respondents described how this feeling of being an outsider led them to deliberately move deeper into their own culture where they felt that they belonged. They felt that as a result of the discrimination they experienced from white British society, their ethnic or religious identities became more salient in everyday life.

The idea of opportunity was also important for these young people, they were able to recognise the fact that living in Britain could afford certain people certain privileges, and they understood the existence of many chances and opportunities in this country, but felt that they had been let down by the system and excluded from the opportunities they saw others enjoying. For them, British society was seen as offering opportunities for the 'right' people but not being meritocratic for everyone.

Harpinder's interview exemplified the way this sentiment was expressed by several respondents:

> Yeah there is some good stuff about living in Britain, but I think a lot of it has got to do with who you know not what you know. […] I wanted to be a lawyer, I did law at Uni, but it's all about who you know, and I can see now that law is really a white person's career; it's disappointing, but they have the advantage from the start […] There are some Indians as lawyers, but they are the ones that are really *gorafied*,[32] they have money, they went to the posh schools, they like fit in and blend in better than the rest of us, so yeah, I think that's why they have been successful. People like us who don't have the connections, we are screwed from the beginning, we are like on the outside and it's hard to get in and be successful.
>
> A lot of Asians have been really successful in the UK, actually not just Asians, but Turkish people and the Chinese too. I think it's because their parents had a hard time, so the parents wanted to make it easier for their kids and for them to get a good education so they could do well. […] There are a lot of opportunities in this country, especially compared to India, but in a way it is a lot like India 'cos only the rich few get to have all the chances. My parents aren't poor, but they definitely are not rich! They have done the best with us, but some of my other Indian mates, their parents were more like clued on, they had the money to send them to private school, so they got the better grades and then went to a better Uni, I think if my parents had more money and that, they could have sent me to a better school and like got me tutors and stuff, I would have been able to get into a better school and be successful like other people – but I never really got the chance.
>
> Harpinder 21, Male, Moderate-Sikh, Graduated in Law, now works as a Recruitment Consultant.

Harpinder explained his frustration at not being able to find a full-time job, having studied Law and dreamt of being a lawyer. He now believed that being a British-Indian male was the sole reason he had not been able to achieve this. He went into great detail during his interview to explain how the social world he lived in was

[32] 'Gorafied' is a term marrying both English and Punjabi, Gora being used to describe white British people. It describes someone who is understood to have become too westernised and too white.

characterised by hierarchies, both within the majority white British society, and British Indian society. He felt that practices such as Law were meant for 'goras', and not 'normal' members of ethnic minorities, he explained to me that only the top layers of Indian society (those from wealthy families, whose parents could pay for them to go to private schools and top universities) were able to break into these professions and bridge across into the upper layers of British society. He felt that as a young British Indian from a working class background, he never had any real 'chance' of being successful. Harpinder described living in an intricate and multi-faceted social world where being upwardly mobile was defined, instigated and achieved via economic success, and more specifically, he believed that only people 'with money' be they white, or British Indian, could succeed.

He felt that those upper layers of Indian society were people who he shared no common values and life experiences with. Harpinder used the term 'gorafied' to describe those other young British Indians who had been successful in 'upper-class' professions such as Law. He explained that he felt that these young people not only had the economic support of their wealthy parents, but also that they 'acted white' and were thus more able to mix with 'upper-class white people'; in order to succeed, you needed to strip yourself of all signs that you were 'an ethnic', you needed to 'speak posh' and 'turn your back on other Asians'. Feelings about British society were thus linked to personal experience. Harpinder had dreamt of becoming a lawyer and felt that not being 'white' had prevented him from achieving this dream in a society that favoured 'its own' and those who acted like 'its own', for the best jobs.

Harpinder's interview gave great insight into the way in which ethnic minority 'groups' or 'communities' are experienced as being split hierarchically. In fact, most respondents described in detail the deep splits and differences between

themselves and other Sikhs, Hindus and British Asians (I will go into more detail about these in the next section of this chapter).

The interesting thing here is that even meritocracy or perceived meritocracy of British society was experienced in many different ways. Young people from ethnic minority backgrounds displayed the very different ways that they experience British society and how this then translated into its perceived characteristics and structure.

4.5 Perceived structure and organisation of social groups

Following on from their ideas about what it was that they saw as constituting and characterising British society, respondents were further asked how they saw it being structured. What was evident was that many of the respondents, both Sikh and Hindu, saw British society as inherently 'class-based'. Class categorisations were not uniform, but did follow a similar pattern, with 'upper classes' being seen as those white British people with inherited financial security, who were well-educated, insular and spoke with 'posh voices'. The 'middle classes' were seen as being less easy to define, but with the general characteristics of strong family values and a similarity in outlook due to their focus on the 'Indian Values' of hard work, respect, and tolerance. Many respondents, regardless of age and educational and socio-economic background, described what they saw as the 'lower class' of British society as being characterised by 'chavs' and 'hooligans', people whom they saw as having poor family values, coming from broken homes, being lazy; all values and characteristics that were seen as being at odds with their lives, traditions and family/cultural/religious views.

The ‘lower classes’ were also seen as the mostly likely to overtly display discriminative or racist behaviour, and the descriptions of ‘chavs’ were often the most detailed and concise.

Table 4 The perceived structure of British Society based on collated data from respondents

Class Level	Characteristics	Attitude towards Ethnic Minorities
Upper Class	• Sense of entitlement • Posh • Stuck-up • Well Educated • Culture • Unapproachable/Insular • Wealthy • Extravagant lifestyle	• Acceptance, but covert subtle racism, towards ethnic minorities.
Middle Class	• Family orientated • Accepting of other people, • Fun • Non-judgemental • Traditional family structure • Educated • Acknowledge the contribution of Ethnic minorities • Approachable	• Positive attitude towards ethnic minorities • Accepting
Lower Class/Working Class/‘Chavs’	• Scroungers • Racists • They blame ethnic minorities for their problems • Family problems • No community • No religion • Unaccepting of different races of people • Sense of entitlement – exploit social welfare system • Lack of culture • Lack of respect for other cultures • Lazy • Lack of social and economic contribution • Unapproachable/Insular	• Negative and racist attitude and behaviour towards ethnic minorities • Overt racist behaviour

Respondents elaborated on this structure in their interviews and some of the main, most frequently expressed ideas are shown in the following interview extracts:

Sukhi, a young woman from a Sikh family, had the following ideas about how she understood British society, its people and their characteristics:

Sukhi British people are all divided by class, like we have the caste system, they have the class system.

Manmit How would you say this class is system organised?

Sukhi Well, at the top, you have the posh people at the top, like David Cameron, the aristocrats.They are really posh and stuck up, I have nothing in common with them, they are probably racist too, but they don't act like chavs about it. Then I would say you have like normal well-educated people, like hard working people are like in the middle, they are what they call 'middle class' – my friends are mostly from that group. They go to university, have good job; it's family values. Most of them have a family, or are going to start a family, or have very young children, so they immediately feel that responsibility to their family. When you look at the white community, English/British community, when you go up to middle or higher class, their values are predominantly what have been passed down to them, so they then have that sense of belonging because they've had that upbringing. They haven't really had that television influence.

Manmit What sort of sense of belonging do you mean?

Sukhi Sort of reading, being educated, family, working hard like we do. They like to read books and newspapers. They like to know what goes on in society, rather than watching the news. Not like the chavs, who are at the bottom, they have no education, no family-life, they are from broken families, totally different from Indian families. They're sort of more ones I tend to just don't want to be part of at all.

Sukhi, 22, Female, Moderate Sikh, Accountant, University Graduate.

Sukhi emphasised the idea of 'family' throughout her interview, as a young woman from a large extended family, she had been raised to respect family and her elders. Sukhi's family live in South-East London, in Lewisham, an ethnically diverse area with a strong Black-Caribbean and Black-African community, and a smaller community of South-Asians. Sukhi described her upbringing as 'quite traditional', her elderly paternal grandparents live with her family[33] and she described this sense of family togetherness, respect and love as something that had been instilled in her.

[33] This is common in many South-Asian families, where traditionally, the paternal grandparents come to live with their son and daughter-in-law, when they become elderly. The grandparents are treated with great respect and are considered the head of the family unit. They then take an instrumental role in the marriage ceremonies of their grandchildren.

Sukhi's ideas about the class-hierarchical structure of Britain were thus deeply influenced by this idea of 'family'.

'Chavs'[34] – who were understood to be white working-class people – were seen as having turned their back on the traditional family unit, which Sukhi held in high esteem. She felt that these people were the 'lowest of the low'; they did not work, they had broken homes, and they had children out of wedlock, and were the people whose lack of education led them to behave in an overtly racist manner toward people from different races. The upper classes were seen as having a sense of family, so Sukhi's attitude towards them was less negative, yet more neutral, based on her feelings that they were inaccessible and incompatible with people like her, based on their 'stuck-up' and 'posh' attitudes. Interestingly, middle-class people were seen to be most alike to Sukhi and her family; hard-working, educated and with a strong (understood as traditional) family unit, where both parents were still married and older children continued to live with their families a little longer, instead of:

> The chavs who get pregnant at 16 and then get a free flat and move into a council estate with their boyfriend.

The notion of 'working hard' was also important in determining the structure of British society, Sukhi felt that people from ethnic minorities worked very hard, and she felt that this was part of 'Indian culture', so for her, the ability to work hard differentiated classes; chavs did not want to work hard, and the middle classes were most similar to Sukhi's family insofar as they encouraged hard work. However, the upper classes were seen to be people who respected hard work: they worked, yet

[34] Owen Jones's book '*Chavs: The Demonisation of the Working Class*' provides a useful and insightful discussion of the socio-political impacts of the pejorative notion of 'Chavs' and issues surrounding the perceived stereotyping of sections of the British working class (Jones 2011).

they did not have to work as hard as the middle class British population, or ethnic minorities.

Other comments in the same thread included:

> I don't think all goreh are same, there are definitely different levels of people [...] the ones who hang around on street corners are the proper council estate scum (laughs), the hoodrats, but they are the ones who are most likely going to call you a Paki when you walk past. But since I have been at Uni, I have made lots of white friends and they are totally different. Where I am from the goreh are really chavvy and racist, but the ones at Uni, like they are interested in Indian culture in Hinduism, they all got involved in our Diwali Ball.[...] So yeah, there are like classes, the lower classes and then the more educated, less racist, more like tolerant, smart goreh like the ones I have at Uni, and from my work experience […] But I thought they were all chavs before I came to Uni, because of where I am from back home.

Payal, 20, Female, Gujarati-Hindu, Moderate Hindu, University Student

Payal explained how the new friends she had made at university were a 'different class of 'gora'. Unlike the 'chavs' who inhibited her local area, and who had racially abused her on several occasions, these new friends were better educated, more tolerant and 'smart'. Interestingly, the way these new friends had taken interest in the annual Diwali Ball held at Payal's university was extremely salient for her; it was a mark of respect for her culture and traditions, and proved that these white people were inherently different from 'those chavs back home'. This interest in her religion and culture served as bridging capital between her and the perceived 'out-group' (Tajfel & Turner 1986) of white people. This initial bridge then turned into bonding capital between her and her friends, the basis of the bond being that she found, via the bridge, that they had similar interests, were of similar age, and enjoyed the same activities (Putnam 1995, 2005). Other comments that exemplify the typical responses in this stratum included:

> I think British people have their own divided society; English people have always had upper class, middle class, lower class. I'm not really sure exactly who is middle class and who is upper, if you are rich I guess that means that you are automatically upper class. But definitely there is a lot of lower class people [...] I think a lot of young English people are lower class, they aren't educated, they take drugs, I mean look at how many girls get pregnant when they are teenagers! I think

the UK has one of the worst teenage-pregnancy cases in the world. There are definitely differences; I think the upper classes are like the really rich ones, or the really educated, middle classes are probably the one with ok education and a bit of money.

Sita, 25, Female, Moderate-Hindu, Stay at home mum, University Graduate.

All them chavs, they all get together near the pubs and train station on a Friday night, they can be quite scary you know! They are the ones who will blatantly call you a 'paki' when you walk past them. I just crossed the road when I am near them, or I get my phone out and pretend to talk to someone, or I ring someone randomly. I don't think all goreh are like that. The ones that come into our shop are well alright, they have a right laugh. [...] We have got to know them and they are like friends now; they aren't racist, even mum who doesn't speak that great English, they are respectful to her, but some young ones they have said some racist stuff. [...] Actually I think the younger goreh are more racist [...] but the ones at my Uni are ok, I think it depends on family and whether they have been educated. The less educated ones are more chavvy and racist, but there are some decent ones, from good families and that.

Amit, 24, Male, Hindu. Works in family business of corner shop/off licence and is a post-graduate student.

Jai, a young financial analyst worker also offered his ideas about 'class' differences in British society:

Jai I find that the chavs – the working class families – they feel like things should be given to them, and I have quite strong views on that the government has provided a huge safety net and they feel like they're in poverty. They haven't even seen poverty.

Manmit Why do you feel that way?

Jai Basically, I think the government over the last ten years has created a massive safety net where if you have a kid, you're going to get a house for free. What incentive does that give them to then work, because they're going to get twenty grand on benefits? They'll get ten grand maximum working in Morrison's. So there's no incentive for them to work, and they feel that they deserve a house if they have a kid and that they deserve to get Child Benefit. That's their solution. Sometimes you read some papers and stories in the paper where a woman had thirteen kids within thirteen years, and eight of them have gone into foster care. No one is being racist towards her. If that was an Asian... then can you imagine? Those goreh are the scum, not the educated or hard ones, those ones are the trash and I don't want anything to do with that class of people, they are embarrassing to this country and all the hard-working people in it.

Manmit You say you have white friends, are they like that?

Jai No, that's the point I'm trying to make, those are the chavs. The white friends I have, they are different, they have more money, they are smart, they work hard. You've got a few of them that work in the city, uptown, you've got a few that run their own businesses and are successful in doing what they are doing. It's sort of that balance between work in the city or run their own businesses, and they work

proper hard. They are nothing like the chavs, they have a good standard of living, and I think they have a lot of pride as well, like Asians. Asians are proud, we don't want to live off other people, we have our own kimat,[35] these goreh do too […] My gora friends, they hate the chavs and the scroungers as much as I do, we have that in common, and they have a different attitude towards Indians and other minorities.

Manmit What is different about their attitude?

Jai Basically, I think that because they work hard, they appreciate that we work hard, and that we contribute to the country, they acknowledge that. That's the main difference, they know that we aren't scrounging from the country, they know it's the chavs not us. Just because we have brown skin they know that we are not here to get a free ride, they are smart enough to understand the basic economics of it, but a chav, they will always say 'you come and take our jobs', all of that rubbish. That's the most important difference.

Jai, 23, Male, Moderate Sikh, Financial Analyst, University Graduate.

Ideas about family life, socio-economic contributions and the way that specific 'classes' of white British people *treated* these young people and ethnic minorities in general, were thus instrumental in shaping the ideas about the way that British society was structured and what the social hierarchy constituted. I found that individual perceptions of 'important things in life' became the benchmark for the social categorising of white people. For example, those young people who were particularly sensitive to the idea of 'hard work' and 'contributing' shaped their ideas about who was most desirable and who was least desirable in British society based on the extent to which they worked hard and contributed. The same pattern followed for ideas about having a traditional family unit, respecting the cultural and socio-economic contribution of ethnic minorities, and so forth.

There were also shades of rejection. Overt name calling and prejudice were seen as the way that 'chavs' would behave towards members of ethnic minorities, yet the upper classes ,who were seen as inherently different and inaccessible, were often seen as 'racist', but the prejudice they would inflict would be far more subtle, less overt, 'less Chavvy'. As Priya stated:

[35] Punjabi work for 'effort' usually employed to describe hard work and a desire to succeed through honest work.

> Well, at the top, you have the posh people at the top, like David Cameron, the aristocrats. They are really posh and stuck up, I have nothing in common with them, they are probably racist too but they don't act like chavs about it.

The type of rejection that these young people faced thus depended on the type, or 'level' of white British people they were came into contact with. This was further complicated by the fact that certain young Sikhs and Hindus were more or less likely to experience racism in the first place, based on a range of factors, including how they looked, how well they were able to blend in, or simply, where they lived, or where they were at the time and the racial mix of that area. I will explore these ideas in greater detail as the chapter progresses.

There was another pattern that emerged in this area. I found that those young people who had a wide range of contact experience with an ethnically diverse range of people were able to offer a more detailed view of how British society is structured and the different layers of people or attitudinal or behavioural characteristics they saw as making up the wider population. However, for some young people, British society or 'white people' in general, all had the same mind-set and mentality, especially in their derogatory attitude towards Indian people, both Hindu and Sikh. Young people with these ideas had often experienced discrimination and prejudice from a range of white British people, and felt a strong sense of separation between their ethnic or religious group, other groups or white British society as a whole. The following quotes exemplify this:

> All goreh are fucking racist, even the posh ones, I just don't think they show it as much. I don't think any of them really want us here and they would have us out on the street, like the 'Rivers of Blood' speech that bloke made. All goreh hate Indians, I think they hate Indians more than they hate Kaleh[36] or Chineh[37], I think it's because we have our own culture and stuff, we have our own music. They have their roast dinners and their TV and stuff, we have our culture, they don't want us

[36] Colloquial Punjabi term for 'Chinese' people, usually employed in a descriptive, non-prejudicial and non-discriminatory sense. This term is often used to describe all people from Far-Eastern backgrounds and not only those of Chinese descent, even though the term itself is based on the word 'Chinese'.
[37] Colloquial Punjabi term for 'Black' people, usually employed in a descriptive, non-prejudicial and non-discriminatory sense.

> to be part of their society and I don't want to be anyway, they can't be part of our society. I have been discriminated against for being a Singh most of my life one way or another. It's our pug, , I think that's what it is;, it's the first thing people notice, they all do it, all goreh do it, they might be nice to your face if they are a bit posh, but I bet you they are thinking: 'rag head'.

Satnam, 22, Male, Moderate Sikh, Wears Turban and has uncut beard. Works as builder in family business.

> I have been called a 'paki' so many times; just when you think things are getting better, people always say something. Coming back from the Mandir, people stare at my tikka. Just the other day, I got on the bus at Bethnal Green and a bloke laughed at me and goes, 'What's that paki spot on your head?' They all do it, they all hate Indians, some just show it more than others I think. All goreh are the fucking same, they are all together in their society 'cos they hate all Indians, they are all racists underneath, trust me, I have seen it. Young, old, the posh ones, the chavs, they have all called me a 'paki' at some point in my life, racism is a big part of their society, like […] I think that if you are a gora and you have Indian or black friends, other goreh think you are turning your back on the British society, they want whites together, that's how they stay strong and dominate.

Nirav, 18, Male, Orthodox Hindu, 18, University student.

Kirit a young Orthodox Sikh Male, offered his insights into life as a young man in London who stands out due to his physical appearance:

Kirit Being a Sikh marks you out a lot. I am proud, I guess I'm more proud of Sikhs because it's more distinctive than just being an Indian – there was a programme on the BBC, the tribute to the Sikhs who fought in the world wars for Britain, and that makes you feel quite proud. But although I feel proud, I feel angry too, 'cos despite what we have done for this country and they obviously know about it – that's why they have these programmes, we still get racial abuse.

Manmit Who are 'they'?

Kirit The English people, I'm proud of being a Sikh, but having a putka,[38] then a pug, it makes you look different, it makes you feel different. One of the worst things I remember when I was little people were saying to me, 'Are you a girl?' 'Are you a girl?', 'cos I had gutha, then when I got a patka, it was like, people would call me a 'knot top' or a 'bobble head', and then wearing a pug it's 'Rag head', or since all the terrorist stuff, people have called me 'Taliban' or 'Bin Laden', all those Afghans they wear like turban things,[39] so being a Sikh has become harder 'cos of all the shit that the Muslims are doing around the world.

[38] A *patka* is a Sikh head covering which is worn by many Sikh children in preference to its 'bigger brother', the turban. When the length and volume of the uncut hair on the head (*kesh*) gets to a stage where the management of the hair is challenging, the patka is worn to keep the kesh tidy and clean; this garment is basically a small piece of cloth which is tied around the head to cover the hair.

[39] After the September 11, 2001 attacks in the USA, many turban-wearing Sikhs faced assaults by some Americans who confused them with the Arabs (who were being associated with terrorism). Many respondents felt that the continual media coverage of turban-wearing Mullahs and Al-Qaeda members has caused an increase in prejudice and racism towards them in London, as they felt that white British people, wrongly, associated them with terrorism, both domestic and international.

Manmit How do you think that has affected you?

Kirit Well, I'm a pretty strong person so they only thing it has made me do is be prouder of being a Sikh, and generally I want to stick with my own community as I have seen from a range of things that most English people are racist and they don't like people with turbans. For them, it's like something to laugh at, and they are all ignorant like that, and I don't want to be around, or be friends with ignorant people.

Kirit, 21, Male, Semi-Orthodox Sikh, Jobseeker, University Graduate.

I found that of the respondents, Sikh males had experienced significantly more racism and discrimination than others, and males overall, Hindu and Sikh, reflected most on these experiences and the effect that they had had on their feelings of belonging and inclusion, and their general attitudes. Interestingly, for many young male Sikhs and Hindus, specific 'symbols' affected them, such as wearing a *Tikka* after Mandir, or having a *Pug* and/or an uncut beard for Sikhs, meaning that they were often the ones who looked the most different, and so experienced the most discrimination and racism. Respondents with specific cultural markers such as these seemed to have become the most visible and easily identifiable 'outsiders'. It seemed that this led some of these young people to believe that all British people had these ideas about them, and that assimilation into British society was impossible due to their choice to be 'Sikh' or be 'Hindu' and look a certain way because of this cultural membership. The perceptions of prolonged racial abuse and prejudices had made these young people feel that all white people disliked and resented them, and as a result these respondents did not see British society as being separated by class levels, instead there was a high degree of perceived uniformity based on racism, hatred for ethnic minorities, and intolerance of Sikhs and/or Hindus.

Respondents' ideas about what constituted and characterised British society were largely shaped by their immediate world of 'Britishness', i.e. the white British people they had most contact with, the specifically 'British' activities or symbols

they witnessed or took part in (or were excluded from or avoided), and the British way of life as they encountered it. Thus, what made up 'British society' varied from individual to individual, due to the fact that each person's immediate social world was made up of different 'white' British people, and this determined the British activities and/or attitudes that drove their ideas about what the society itself constituted. Those with greater exposure to a range of people were able to form more nuanced and detailed ideas about the structure of British society, the range of people it encompassed and what it meant to be part of it.

Overall, I found that young British-born Sikhs and Hindus experience British life in different ways and that their own experiences of white British people affects the way that they understand the social structure of their social world. The way these young people understand their British social world is linked to their own sense of acceptance and belonging.

4.6 *'Indian' society*

The notion of a singular, homogenous 'British-Indian Society' or 'British-Indian group' was challenged by respondents' ideas about how people from Indian backgrounds were organised and situated within wider British society, and the way in which they felt that they belonged to this group as such. Ideas about the organisation of Indian society and community in Britain were as complex as respondents' ideas about British society, and often even more so. British-Indian people were seen as often being segregated by a range of dimensions, and many respondents described the British-Indian community, not as one cohesive group providing a sound sense of belonging for all members, but as a complex and multifaceted grouping, with different layers of people being more or less desirable within the Indian community. This notion of 'desirability' was often formulated on

the particular behavioural or attitudinal characteristics that were seen as important by the respondent. The idea of a British-Indian group, or homogenous minority ethnic group, with a sense of bonds and commonality between its 'members' was not necessarily how young Sikhs and Hindus understood and experienced their ethnic communities.[40]

The notion that ethnic minority groups provide a sense of belonging, a strong sense of unity and togetherness, which adversely affects the level of social and cultural integration in Britain, was thus shown to be an essentialisation of the reality of young people's sense of attachment to, involvement with, and understanding and experience of ethnic community itself.

The perceived sense of togetherness of British Indians, or Sikhs or Hindus, as a community, was thus extremely varied according to individuals' experiences. Additionally, ideas about boundaries and separations between minority and majority – externally and internally between various sub-sections – were expressed in different ways. There was great diversity in experience, which thus translated into a range of opinions about what characterised British Indian society and how it was structured. I will explore these ideas in the following analysis.

[40] I use the term 'their' ethnic communities throughout this research. I is important to note that I do not imply that the individual concerned has any specific level of involvement in or attachment to these communities. I use the term for purposes of coherency, for example, ain any discussion of a Hindu-Gujarati individual, 'their' community would be the Hindu-Gujarati community as they describe it.

4.7 All Sikhs, Sikhi and the external threat to Sikhism

Respondents' immediate reaction to the idea of Indian Society varied vastly, depending on whether they were Sikh or Hindu, and the way in which they had experienced Indian people, Indian culture and traditions as they have grown. One major difference between Sikh and Hindu respondents was the strength of ideas some respondents had based on their religion. For example, for many of the Sikh respondents, in particular the males, Indian Society was 'Sikh-Punjabi' society, and the notion of 'Indian Society' itself was only relevant when the group was attacked from what they saw as the outside, in particular 'white people' but also 'Muslims'. In such a situation, 'Indian society' was 'all Indians' who needed to pool together against the external threat. Otherwise, Sikhs were different and a unique group in themselves. The boundaries thus shifted momentarily to include people who were usually viewed as outsiders.

Navjot's interview outlined some of the most commonly held beliefs about this:

Navjot I would say that Indian society is like all Sikhs together, my community is my Sikh community. My Sikh-Punjabi community, it's not really even Punjabi community 'cos there are Hindu Punjabis, and a lot of Muslims considered themselves Punjabi, 'cos they speak the language and stuff. But I think Singhs need to stick together, we are unique. You can spot a Singh a mile off, I mean, we are obvious, and we are one group. I consider myself Sikh-Punjabi first, then Indian, then well, being British, well I am British, but that's more 'cos I live here and I have a British passport, but culturally my community is Sikhs, the Sikh community.

Manmit Is that all Sikhs?

Navjot It is all Sikhs, but mostly the ones in my local area, the ones that go to my Gurdwara, but generally, all Sikhs. But obviously you can't see all the Sikhs in the whole world, but the ones I see the most in my local area, they are my community, and they are like the example of how I feel about all Sikhs being one community?

Manmit What makes you feel so strongly about 'Sikh community'?

Navjot Because Sikhs have been persecuted throughout the times, Hindus have persecuted and killed Sikhs. Look what happened when Indira Ghandhi was killed,[41] and don't

[41] Operation Blue Star took place between the 3rd and 8th of June in 1984 and was an Indian military operation, ordered by Indira Gandhi, then Prime Minister of India, to remove Sikh separatists from the Golden Temple in Amritsar. The separatists, led by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, were accused of amassing weapons in the Sikh temple and starting a major armed uprising.

> get me started on the Muslims, they are out to get Sikhs, I have had so much trouble with Pakistanis, and the goras, they take the piss out of people with turbans, so why should we let them into our group? The only time I would side with other Asians is when the whites attack Pakistanis and Muslims,[42] or they are attacking like all immigrants or all Indians, then it's important to stick together and show a united front.
>
> Navjot, 21, Male, University student Orthodox Sikh.

This idea of the need to protect and unite as a Sikh community was echoed by Manjeet:

> I see Indian community, being Sikhs, all Singhs, all of Sikhi[43] all over the world. To me, that is my community – that is my society. You walk along the street, if you see another Singh, there is a warm feeling there, like we are brothers, we don't even know each other but it is definitely there. I think a lot of Singhs have turned their back on our Sikhi,
>
> I see a lot of mhune,[44] and it gets my back up if I'm honest. It ain't easy being a Singh, wearing a pug and sticking out, but they should do it for Sikhi, a lot of people these days they have forgotten what our Gurus have taught us […] they drink, they smoke, they eat meat. Us proper Sikhs are on one side and they half-arsed Sikhs are on the other, we are fighting the battle alone, they just want an easy life. Our Gurus made sacrifices for Sikhi so why can't we make sacrifices?'[45]
>
> Manjeet, 19, Male, Orthodox Sikh, Job seeker, University Graduate.

The operation was carried out by Indian army troops with tanks, artillery, helicopters and armoured vehicles. According to the official estimate, 492 civilians were killed. The military action led to uproar amongst Sikhs worldwide and the increased tension following the action led to assaults on members of the Sikh community within India. Many Sikh soldiers in the Indian army mutinied, many Sikhs resigned from armed and civil administrative office and a few returned awards and honours they had received from the Indian government. Four months after the operation, on October 31, 1984, Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two of her Sikh bodyguards in what is viewed as an act of vengeance. Over the next four days nearly 3000 Sikhs were massacred in systematic riots planned and led by Congress activists and sympathizers. The then Congress government was widely criticized for doing very little at the time, if not acting as a conspirator, especially since voting lists were used to identify Sikh families.

[42] The animosity between Sikhs and Hindus on one side and Muslims on the other continues today and many of the young people whom I interviewed outlined their dislike and distrust of Muslims. These poor relations are a legacy of the bloodshed during the Partition of India, which has caused the current tensions between India and Pakistan. For Sikhs, the resentment towards Muslims can be traced further back into the origins of Sikhism itself, and the killing of Sikh Guru Arjun Dev in 1606 by Mughal Soldiers. Many young people described the stories told by parents and grandparents about Muslims and the way they had 'ruined India' and 'killed our people'. Many young people understood that Sikhism was born out of an inherent conflict with Muslims.

[43] 'Sikhi' is a word commonly used to refer to the global community of Sikhs. 'Sikhi' comes from the word 'Sikh' and the word 'Sikh' comes from the Sanskrit root 'Sisya' which means 'disciple' or 'learner'.

[44] Sikh male who has cut his hair.

This idea of the uniqueness of Sikh community was common for the Orthodox Sikh males I interviewed in the process of this research. The notion of uniqueness was often intertwined with idea of current and historical threat and the need to protect Sikh culture from external threats, in particular from Muslims who were seen as a group who wanted to obliterate and undermine Sikh culture and people. Ethnic community was thus Sikh community/culture/religion and people. This in-group could temporarily expand its boundaries to include other 'Asians' when it was felt that Indian culture and people from Indian backgrounds were being attacked, in particular, by the White majority. Additionally, in interviews, these young men also described their anger towards Sikhs who had cut their hair and become 'Gorafied' or 'Coconuts'. These 'half-arsed Sikhs' were seen as having turned their backs on their religion and 'Sikh Brothers'. The notion of 'community' was thus strongest for Orthodox Sikhs, yet there remained a looser sense of belonging and bonds with Unorthodox Sikhs, generally for the purpose of protecting the 'wider community'. However, these 'True Singhs' (Orthodox Sikhs) viewed themselves as the central and 'real' core of the Sikh community.

For them, the Sikh community was a clear group, but it lacked homogeneity based on the extent to which people were committed to Sikhism (which they desired). This was due to the fact that other Sikhs had chosen an 'easier path'. Although their sense of commonality towards these members was less then what they felt to be the 'real core', it was still there as Sikhism as a whole needed to be protected. (For a detailed social-psychological outline of the way that 'group threat' can increase in-group bias and intra-group boundaries, see Grant & Brown 1995; Branscombe et al. 1999; Voci 2006; Badea et al. 2010).

4.8 Different perceptions of what constitutes 'Us'

For other respondents 'Indian Society' or 'Indian community' was not solely defined in terms of being a 'Hindu' or a 'Sikh' it was a more encompassing idea of all Indians standing together. Hindu-Punjabi respondents like Sikh-Punjabi respondents, described society and community in terms of being 'Punjabi'. Additionally, Gujarati-Hindu respondents, male and female understood and experienced 'Indian-society' as their Gujarati community. The idea of an *Indian* society was often only relevant for respondents when they spoke of discrimination and prejudice that they felt all Indians experienced, this was the only real time when the idea of a British-Indian community had any real affective component. Regional customs, language, food and culture was extremely important in young people's conceptualisation of what 'Indian Society' entailed; Punjabiness or Gujaratiness were more important for some young people whose families were from these regions, rather than being Hindu or a Sikh itself. For these young people, local Mandirs and Gurdwaras were central to their understanding of community, but the idea of a 'global Sikh' or 'global Hindu' community was also particularly salient for these individuals; religious identity and affiliation was strong enough to overcome geographical boundaries and distance and provided a bond between any Hindu or any Sikh.

Typical responses included:

> I am so proud of being a Hindu-Gujarati, so I would say that my community is Gujarati first. I'm not sure about Indian community 'cos there are so many different Indian communities, like Punjabis, they eat meat and drink so they are really different from us, but to me Hindus are one race and our community is the Gujarati-Hindu community.

Anisha, 18, Female, Moderate Hindu-Gujarati Female, University student.

> As a Sikh-Punjabi woman, I would say that my community is the Sikh community, here in Britain, in India, and all over the world; I guess we are all tied together in

> some way. Sikhism is a young religion and I think all Sikhs should stick together so it gets stronger and stronger for our future generations of Sikhs.

Manpreet, 18, Female, Moderate Sikh, Childminder.

4.9 Local Community

Some respondents found it easier to conceptualise the notion of '*Indian Community*' rather than society, and the ideas about what constituted Indian community depended vastly on the social world of the individual respondent. For those young Hindus or Sikhs who participated in frequent worship and prayer, Indian community was respectively 'Hindu community/society', or 'Sikh community/society', and community was thus organised and experienced along religious lines. However, there was often a clear sense that the immediate local community of other Sikhs and Hindus was the real community; the demography of community was often other Sikhs and Hindus living in close proximity to their homes (see Bhachu 1985). For these young people, their 'local Gurdwara', or 'local Mandir' was an important landmark in defining the boundaries of their community:

> I think my community is the local Sikhs in this area, we all go to the same gurdwara, so I think they are the people you end up seeing at the gurdwara and at peoples functions [...] I wouldn't say like the Sikhs in Southall are my community, they have their own gurdwaras, and they do Nagar Kirtans[46] and that sort of stuff. The community here is a bit, like less pendu![47]

Simran, 20, Female, Moderate-Sikh, Works in care home.

> All the Gujaratis in this area go to Mata Mandir,[48] I would say that's the local people, the ones that live close in this area, that's the local community. I think its more because everyone knows each other, and the Mandir organised a lot of events for religious functions, like Garba[49] and Diwali,[50] so you get to know people from a young age and kind of become friends. That's my community.

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[46] *Nagar Kirtan* is a Sikh custom involving the processional singing of holy hymns throughout a community. The procession concludes at the Gurdwara with *Ardas* (prayer). Nagar Kirtans are held frequently in Britain, predominantly in areas with a strong Sikh presence.
[47] A term coined by 'British Asians' to describe people who display what they see as the backward 'village' (*pind*) mentality and behaviour.
[48] Hindu Temple focused on the worship of the Goddess 'Mata Saraswati'.
[49] *Garba* (is an Indian form of dance that originated in the Gujarat region. In Britain, Garba forms an important part of the Hindu-Gujarati calendar, with local communities coming together in local town halls and Mandirs to celebrate.

Neelam, 22, Moderate-Hindu Female, Gujarati, Accountant in City firm.

> I live in an area where there are a lot of Asians [...], so it's too big to be one community, I think it depends on which Gurdwara you go to. We go to the Tarkhan Gurdwara,[51] and then there are couple of Jatt[52] ones, so I guess people kind of get split like that.

Dav, 20, Male, Moderate-Sikh, Mechanic in family business.

Local temples were thus an important way of defining the 'local community', respondents described how their parents and their grandparents had all worshiped at local temples, weddings and blessings had taken place there, so the local place of worship became an important component of local community life. Respondents described how they would often make friends at the local Gurdwara or Mandir, and would see the local people from the temple at the same local weddings and during important religious events such as *Diwali* and *Navratri* for Hindus, and *Vaisakhi*,[53] *Satsang*[54] and also Diwali for the Sikhs. For those young people who attended the local place of worship, it became an important source of belonging for them, it was

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[50] *Diwali* is perhaps the best known of the Hindu festivals. The word Diwali means 'rows of lighted lamps'. Diwali is known as the 'festival of lights' because houses, shops and public places are decorated with small earthenware oil lamps called *diyas*. In Britain, as in India, the festival is a time for spring-cleaning the home, wearing new clothes, exchanging gifts (often sweets and dried fruits) and preparing festive meals, decorating buildings with fancy lights and the huge firework displays that often celebrate Divali. British Hindus and Sikhs celebrate with fireworks and social gatherings to mark the occasion. With the support of the Mayor in London, Trafalgar Square hosts 'Diwali in London' every year, with music, food and cultural events.

[51] Sikh Temple for members of the Tarkhan Aritsan Caste (historically Carpenters). For a further discussion of the maintenance of cast structures within this group, see Bhachu 1985.

[52] Sikh Temple for members of the Jatt Aritsan Caste (historically Farmers)

[53] *Vaisakhi* (also known as *Baisakhi*, *Vaishakhi*, or *Vasakhi*) is a festival celebrated across the northern Indian subcontinent, especially in the Punjab region by the Sikh nation. For the Sikh community this festival commemorates the establishment of the *Khalsa*. The festival bears a great significance for the Sikhs due to the fact that on the Vaisakhi Day in the year 1699, the 10th Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh laid down the foundation of the *Panth Khalsa*, that is, the Order of the Pure Ones. Many Sikhs in London attend the festivities organised by the Major of London at 'Vaisakhi in the Square'. This event takes place every year on April 13 at London's Trafalgar Square, where people from all cultures are invited to join in the Vaisakhi event with live music, dance, guest artists and DJs from Sunrise Radio (London's radio station for the British-Asian community).

[54] In Sikhism, a *Satsang* typically involves listening to or reading scriptures, singing religious hymns and enjoying *Guru ka Langar*. Guru ka Langar ('Gurus' communal dining-hall) is a community kitchen run in the name of the Guru. Often referred to as the Guru's Kitchen, it is usually a small room attached to a Gurdwara, but at larger Gurdwaras, such as the Har Mandir Sahib (Golden Temple, Amritsar), it takes on the look of a military kitchen with tasks arranged so that teams of *sewadars* (volunteers) daily prepare tons of food (all meals are vegetarian) for thousands of the Gurus' guests).

described as a place where young people could enjoy the cultural or religious aspects of life that were important to them, it was also served as a place where the 'Sikh part', or 'Hindu part' had most salience.

As well as serving as an important definer of 'local community', it became evident in the interviews that places of worship were also defining in the sense that where you worshiped conveyed membership to different segments of the Sikh or Hindu population. Respondents spoke about the *Jatt* Gurdwara, or the *Tarkhan* Gurdwara, the Gujarati temple, the Mata Mandir, or the Punjabi Mandir, which was attended by Hindu-Punjabis. The local temple thus became an important marker for local community, but also often served to split the community along caste or regional lines. Young people could thus feel a sense of belonging and integration with their 'local' caste or regional community of Sikhs and Hindus, rather than with British-Indian society, or Sikh/Hindu community in a wider sense.

4.10 Caste and in-group 'splits'

Some respondents experienced Indian community completely along caste lines. In some instances, caste demarcations were extremely powerful in categorising people from the same ethnic group into a series of sub-groups. These splits were further strengthened where community organisation was along caste lines, in particular separate places of worship in the immediate locality, which meant that subsequent community events (which are often organised through the local Gurdwara or Mandir) were also along caste lines. I found that caste separations were especially strong in Sikh communities where temples and subsequent cultural and community events organised through the Gurdwara, which often acted as boundary markers in local community, were done along caste lines. I also found that some Gujarati-Patels were experiencing their Gujarati communities in a way that was based on caste, like the Sikh respondents. It was mostly young males who saw the caste

separations in their own community as being most salient and characteristic of what they saw as 'their' community.

Bijal The way I see community, if you said to me, 'Community is...?' in London we have – I'd call it a clique if you want, it's a bit more than that. But because we're a certain type of Patels, certain type of Patels all congregating together in what's called the community...Now, in London, there are different types of... I mean, you'll be familiar there's different castes. Within castes there's a specific type of Patels. And those Patels all are a part of what we call this community. We have like monthly meetings and celebrate religious festivals together and things like that. Which sort of makes it sound like a utopia, but it's not. Basically in our little caste world I think there are four broad castes.

Manmit In the Patels?

Bijal In the Hindu Gujarati world. I think there are four of us. The Patels are a farming community. So we sit in the tier third out of the four, along with various other people, which I don't know who they are. That is what is it, its not like all us Gujeratis are one community, actually not all Patels are one community, everyone has their own little clique and that's the people you see, that's the community.

Bijal, 23, Male, Moderate- Hindu Gujarati-Patel, City Worker

Harmeet, a moderate Sikh 22, explained the way he felt that Sikhs were split according to caste:

> Sikhs are split; anyone who says that all Sikhs are together is fucking lying. Jatts,[55] Takhans,[56] there is friction there, then there are jhure,[57] they are the untouchables, they don't come to Gurdwara, we all have different Gurdwaras, we don't really marry each other […] If we do marry out of caste then it is a big deal. The Sikh community is split up in a lot of ways, anyone who is Sikh will tell you that. Even the really religious Sikhs, when there is people who have Amrit Shak,[58] they don't mix with us normal

[55] *Jat Sikh* is a sub-group of the Sikh ethnoreligious group from the Indian subcontinent. In Britain, Jat-Sikhs are understood in terms of the modern-day Sikh Caste system, determined by the historical employment of families; Jatts are descendents of the farming communities of the Punjab.

[56] The Tarkhans are a Northern Indian ethnic tribe that inhabits the Punjab, which is now divided between Northern India and northern Pakistan. They are known to be of the same heritage as the Jatt ethnic tribe and other tribes as they are a purely Indo-Scythian tribe. Historically, Tarkhans are carpenters. My paternal and maternal grandfathers carried on this tradition of carpentry as a Tarkhan family and both worked as Master Craftsmen in Carpentry in Britain.

[57] Low Sikh Caste

[58] The phrase 'Amrit Shak' refers to those Sikhs who have been baptised in the Sikh tradition, and who are what have been to referred to in this research as 'Orthodox Sikhs'. These Sikhs uphold the five K's of the Sikh tradition in every aspect of their lives. Sikhs who have been through the Amrit Ceremony of initiation, or *Amrit Sanskar*, become baptised Sikhs, take new names, and wear the five Ks. (The Five Ks are five Articles of Faith that Khalsa Sikhs wear at all times as commanded by the tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh The Five Ks are not just symbols, but articles of faith that collectively form the external identity and the Khalsa devotee's commitment to the Sikh way of life.

> Sikhs who have hair cut and drink and stuff. There are a lot of like split-up groups in our community.

Harmeet, 22, Male, Moderate-Sikh, City Worker.

Respondents painted a detailed picture of Indian community, with separations *within* Sikhs, Hindus, Gujaratis and Punjabis. Young people had an extremely nuanced idea about how Indian community, be it Sikh or Hindu, is organised and structured, and where exactly they fit in based on their values, the things which are important to them in their lives, and perceived commonality between them and other members of their community.

A majority of respondents spoke about Indian community characterised by hierarchy, demarcations and splits. What was evident was that young people, both Sikh and Hindu, experience Indian community as a range of groups and segments all operating under what many politicians and commentators have understood as the umbrella notion of 'Indian society' and 'community', but the level of commonality and sense of bonds between and within these groups varied on individual perceptions and life experiences. Young people spoke about their experiences of certain segments of the Indian group, and ideas about British society, and many young people further emphasised the idea that there were some some groups and 'levels' (or social circles) of the community that they felt a sense of belonging with, and with which they could, and wanted to, be a part of, but there were others that were as separate to them as any other ethnic group.

Unlike ideas about British society, where many of the respondents spoke of three main class categories – Upper, Middle and Lower – when speaking about Indian community, many of the respondents emphasised the idea of a few main categories: 'Indian Indians' (of which 'Asian Rudeboys were a sub-category), those Indians that unlike them, have little or no contact and meaningful relationship with other

groups, who display the negative characteristics they associate with all Indian/Sikh/Hindu people and those who the respondents felt to have failed to integrate with wider British society. The second main group was those other Indians like themselves, whom the respondents felt had made a success of living in Britain, those who had diversity in their social network, those who were upwardly mobile, politically engaged, and most importantly for the respondents, those other Indians who did not display 'typical' or 'backward' attitudes, unlike their 'pendu', 'Indian Indian' counterparts. This dichotomy was by no means fixed, for example, those young Hindus and Sikhs who were deeply religious saw this split not as being determined by economic success, but on the extent to which British Sikh and Hindus had adhered to the culture and religion of their parents and grandparents. Here the split was between 'Proper Sikhs and Hindus' who had retained their culture, and 'coconuts' who had abandoned their heritage. 'Community' and community membership could thus be based on a rage of factors that determined who was 'in' and who was 'out'.

Jaz's interview conveyed this idea of perceived 'Indian backwardness':

Jas	I've got a cousin, like Raj, and people like, you know, who I speak to at the Gurdwara...
Manmit	*What is their thinking like?*
Jaz	Their thinking is like... they're very sort of Indian-ish, you know [...] and I notice that they're very sort of Indian. Like Harpreet and Sonia, my other cousins who live in Hounslow […], they're [...] they live in a predominantly Indian area, right – if you see what I mean. We here don't because there's not many Indians around here, apart from you get a few small things of people. [...] Whereas Hounslow, Hounslow is a predominantly Indian area, here it's the other way around. They like Bhangra music, I'm not saying I like Bhangra music, but I love listening to it, but my knowledge of it is weak; I've got to admit that, it's very weak. And the same with Indian films, I can't sit and watch, say, three hours because I get very [...] I'm thinking, 'Where's the halfway point in this. Come on, let's do something.' I mean, I used to watch them, but then something changed in my head and [...] that was years ago. But I think it's the attitude, I think a lot of Indian... my cousins they sort of, you know – how can I put it, oh God!
Manmit	*You can put it however you want.*

Jaz	Oh God! It's interesting. Because I think they're brought up in these areas they think that we're strange. I mean, my cousins always tell us that we're strange.
Manmit	*Why do they think you're strange?*
Jaz	Because we live in this area.
Manmit	*But why does that make you strange?*
Jaz	For them, because we don't live in their sort of community, the Indian way of life you know, sort of thing. I believe that you're born with who you are, you are, it's your identity. But these more Indian Indians, they don't want to mix up, and they can't understand why we do, I can't fit in with those people. They are very backward in their thinking, very Indian-ish, very judgemental and like, they don't mix up with people from different races, they want to like, re-create India here. […] I also find that a lot of these type of Indians they are prejudice against people like me […] I hate that they are really intolerant of Lesbian and Gay people too, that's the backwardness in them. They are intolerant.

Jaz, 25, Male, Very-Moderate Sikh, Community worker.

Jaz is a young man who lives with his parents in a predominantly white part of North London. In his interview Jaz explained the difference between his thinking and that of 'backward Indians'. He felt that he was more open, tolerant and 'westernised' in his thinking. This, he felt, meant that he was more open to different people and cultures, unlike other young British Asians, who were 'backward'. Jaz explained that this 'backwardness' was propagated by living in 'Indian Areas' such Southall and Hounslow,[59] where there was a strong presence of British Indians who had re-created 'a little India'. Young people from these areas, he felt, were more engrossed in this lifestyle, which resulted in them being more 'Indian' than himself; they were 'backward' in their thinking, intolerant of difference and displayed all the negative characteristics of Indian mentality which Jaz had experienced. Jaz himself has a form of Cerebral Palsy, his ideas of 'backwardness' and 'intolerance' were thus linked to his own experience as a person with disability, and he was particularly sensitive to any people who displayed negative behaviour towards

[59] Hounslow, West London, close to Heathrow Airport, is home to one of the UK's largest Indian communities

anyone with a disability or any group he felt was socially marginalised. He explained that 'Indian Indian' with their backwardness were more likely to behave this way than 'westernised', 'integrated' Indians.

Many other respondents spoke about this idea of 'Indian Backwardness', the following extracts from interviews exemplify the most common ways this was expressed during the interviews. Sonia, a Sikh Female and Bhumika, a Gujarati-Female, both of similar ages spoke about the differences between themselves and other young people from the same background and the strong sense of separation they felt from these people:

> You get the Pendus, all the Indians girls that hang around with other Indian girls are so bitchy, they all have the side fringe, and wear loads of black clothes! They are so backward, proper back-stabbing bitches, they are the ones that are all part of the LSE Sikh-Punjabi crew […] They listen to Bhangra, they aren't interested in mixing up, like the Chinese, they never mix. Most of them are from really Asian areas like Harrow. I don't want to be like that, me and my friends, we go theatre, cinema all different stuff, these typical Asians, they aren't interested in doing anything that isn't Indian. I think Sikhs and Gujjis are the worst for it, they all hang around in big gangs […] I don't want to be like that typical 'Indian, Indian' girl'

Sonia, 20, Female, Very Moderate Sikh, University Student.

> I hate it when you go to a restaurant and there is a huge group of Gujaratis, or Sikhs, it's like an Asian Invasion! I find it quite embarrassing really, especially if I am out with my friends who are all white really. I think 'why can't you mix up a little? I mean, this is London, this isn't India is it? I don't like that sort of thing, I have never liked it, those type of Indians are really backward, really like engrossed in the culture and stuff, I mean, I like being Indian, I like being Guj, but there is more to life isn't there, you should mix up… The ones that don't mix up, I think they have a warped idea, like a false idea about what British people are like, they don't get to know them, they just want to be with other gujis. I don't have time for that part of my community, their parents are back-biters and gossipy, and the kids are the same. I just choose to not be part of that group.

Bhumika, 19, Gujarati-Hindu Female, Unemployed, looking for work.

Arvinder, offered another male perspective. In contrast to Jaz, who focused on the attitudinal backwardness of 'Indian Indians', Arvinder was more concerned with behavioural backwardness (which he understood as a strong sense of cultural and ethnic identity) that often caused him a great deal of embarrassment.

Arv. Have you seen the rudeboys? The Bengalis and the Sikh rudeboys, actually all Asian rudeboys, they all look the same! They all have the same haircut, loadsa gel, all the little patterns cut in it, the baggy jeans, the black jacket, and there are always loads of them out in London. […] I think they give Asians a bad name, they cause trouble, hang about, listen to Bhangra music really loud in their cars, I just fell really embarrassed when I am out with my white mates in town and I see a load of Asian rudeboys turn up.

Manmit *Why do you feel embarrassed?*

Arv. Because it's embarrassing! I don't want my mates to think that I am like that, and I think because I am friends with them, they have kind of forgotten that there are Asians that are rudeboys too. I just find it really embarrassing. I have to explain to my mates that they are our version of the 'chavs'; they aren't like us in the sense that we work hard and make the most of ourselves in this country, they are the layabouts, and they don't represent all the Asians that have come here and made a success of themselves and have educated their children. [...] They still think they are in India and their parents do too.

Arvinder 22, Male, Moderate Sikh, Accountant.

Ideas about the structure of Indian community and Indian society within wider British society were thus extremely varied depending on the individuals' personal experiences with other people from Indian backgrounds. Some respondents saw themselves completed isolated and separate from other Indians, be they other Sikhs, other Hindus, other Punjabis or 'all Indians', so their ideas about the structure of the society were less detailed. Often young Sikhs and Hindus who felt this level of separateness from the British-Indian community often did so because of negative experiences, which were then seen by young people as characteristic and 'typical' of all Indians, Sikhs, Hindus and so forth. Thus, their ideas about structure were less detailed, but more about the negative attitudinal and behavioural characteristics of the group as a whole. Ideas about socio-community structure were thus strongly linked to whether the respondent had positive or negative ideas about other Indians based on their own life experience.

Tejin and Ashia offered some key insights into the way that their experiences with people from the same ethnic background as them had shaped their ideas about the structure and characteristics of wider British-Asian society.

Tejin My community is not worth bothering with [...] the only thing they care about is one-upmanship and gossiping and seeing people fail. They're happy to talk about peoples' failures, not their successes, and they cast judgement too quickly, and they're judgmental about things that don't really concern them. And everyone's guilty of that, even your nearest and dearest sometimes are a bit, you know... And the things that they think they can speak about, to make judgments on, are probably nothing to do with them. So probably sticking their oar in where it's not wanted.

Manmit *Are there any other things about your community that you like or dislike?*

Tejin Gossiping like backbiting, getting all political, one-upmanship, you can pick any of those words!

Manmit *Can you give me some examples of the sort of things that you might hear in a conversation between two of these people.*

Tejin Well, as an example – I can give you numerous examples. 'Oh, did you hear that his and her son dropped out of university? Isn't that terrible? It must be a waste of time.' I'm paraphrasing, but you get the gist. But on all of those reasons – yeah, 'It's somebody else's child, so basically it's none of your business, so shut up.' is my view. Other examples, it might be, 'Oh, did you see that girl over there was supposed to be getting married to him, but something happened and then it didn't happen.' And they don't know any of the facts, but they still cast opinions [...] And the other thing I just wanted to add on to that is sometimes people need to look a bit closer to home, and I include my own in that, in that they should just be happy with what they've got in front of them and not really bother about anybody else. Community doesn't allow that because it's a community.

Tejin Can I add one more thing to that?

Manmit *Yes, you can add whatever you want.*

Tejin They care too much about what other people think.

Manmit *And you?*

Tejin My community has always judged me, when I've done something I've been the topic of many discussions

Manmit Do you think all Gujaratis or all Indians think and behave in the same way?

Tejin Yeah they do, to some extent or another, and I don't give a monkeys. Even a lot of the young ones are like that, they have all pushed me out at some point or another. I don't want anything to do with my community. My family know that I'm not exactly integrated into the Indian way.

Tejin, 24, Male, Moderate Gujarati-Hindu Background – Agnostic, City worker.

Ashia, offered her views which contained some of the key themes of judgement and perceived narrow mindedness of the British Asian community as a whole:

> Generally people from [...] like my parents who were born in India and have come to this country and still very much feel like they have the need to do things the way things were done in India. So they haven't really adopted that mentality or broadened their mind in the same way as people who were born here generally would. Then you have some people who are like from certain areas, like I don't know why this is, but you have people from certain areas, like Gravesend, Birmingham, who are... they feel they have to continue the way their parents do, and they're very backward in their views [...] Which is probably 'cos of their views in the first place where they limit who they hang around with, but I would say that most Indians, Sikhs in particular have the same attitude towards a lot of things, they love to gossip, they love to backbite and they love to make a judgement.
>
> It's been hard for me at the end of the day, I'm marrying a Muslim so it's a pretty big deal, but the way people have reacted to this, it's confirmed all the things about Indians and Sikhs that I knew anyway, the more integrated people have been as bad as the more backward Indians when it comes to talking about me so I guess they are all the same.

Ashia, 22, Female from an Orthodox Sikh-Punjabi Background, Care Worker

Ideas about the structure, organisation and characteristics of Indian community were thus varied; there were many shades of understanding based on the different ways that these young people experienced ethnic communities and the people in them. Overall, there were four main strains of thought that repeatedly came to surface during the interviews. Young people saw the splits between themselves and other Sikhs, Hindu, or British Asians on the basis of four main aspects, economic success, culture, attitudes and religion. These were the basis of boundaries between themselves and other people in their social worlds. These boundaries then came to define who was 'like us' and 'our community', and who was 'not like us'. Positive bias towards an individual's 'in-group' was formed on the basis of these factors. The table below represents the main ideas from respondents about how, in their social worlds, ethnic communities were structured and demarcated.

Table 5 Key themes about the basis of boundaries within 'Indian' Society/Community

'Indian Society'		
In group (We are/ they are not) Basis for in-group Bias	**Out Group (They are/ we are not)**	**Key difference**
'Economic Success'		
• Economically Successful • Well integrated into mainstream British society – socially and culturally • Willingness to integrate • Symbolic ethnic identity	• 'Indian Indians' • Not economically successful • Have a deep involvement in Indian traditions and practices (music, food, Mandir, Gurdwara) • Lack of diversity in social networks • Lack of social and cultural integration into British society • Unwilling to integrate	• Economic success • Education • Willingness to Integrate
'Culture'		
• Proud of being Indian (Sikh or Hindu) • Proud of culture and Traditions • Desire to uphold ethnic traditions • Enjoyment of Indian food, music, celebrations • Feel most happy and comfortable with members of ethnic community	• 'Gorafied' • 'Coconuts' • Turned their backs on their heritage and culture • Too assimilated • Social networks comprise of white people • Social activities based around 'doing white things' • No interest in Indian culture, music, food, traditions, religious activities	• Culture, not religion or economic success.
'Attitudes'		
• 'British' attitudes: easy going, flexible, tolerant, non-judgmental • British attitudes seen as 'progressive' and 'superior' • Forward-thinking instead of the 'Backward-thinking' of traditional 'Indian' values and attitudes	• 'Indian' attitudes; insular, judgemental, back-biting, gossiping, very involved in ethnic 'communities', jealous, intolerant, rigid, demanding • 'Backward'	• Attitudinal
'Religion'		
• 'True' Sikhs or Hindus • Proud of religion • Loyalty to religion • Strong sense of unity and togetherness with other 'true' Sikhs and Hindus	• 'Coconuts' • No religious beliefs • No 'Loyalty' to Sikhism or Hinduism • Abandoned their religion by embracing British 'Western' lifestyle	• Commitment to religion

I shall draw on these distinctions further in the conclusion that follows.

4.11 Conclusion

At the beginning of this Chapter I outlined the main research questions I would be addressing in the analysis that followed. These were:

- How do young Sikhs and Hindus understand and experience the organisation and structure of their social worlds?
- Within these social worlds, where does their sense of belonging lie?
- Where do boundaries lie and what basis are they formulated on?

I will now conclude by showing how the findings presented in this chapter have answered each of these questions.

With regard to the first question, I have outlined in detail in this chapter the different ways in which young Sikhs and Hindus understand and experience the social organisation and structure of the ethnic community and wider British society. I have shown that young people see and experience their social worlds in different ways, often in accordance with things that are most important to them as individuals. For example, those young people who were committed to Sikhism and Hinduism saw the organisation and structure of ethnic communities along religious lines. In turn, this also affected the interplay of boundaries – the extent to which other British Hindus or Sikhs were committed to their respective religions affected the intra-group boundaries between these young people and others from their communities. Externally, the extent to which they felt that white British people respected their religion affected the strength of separation and the malleability of the inter-group boundary between majority and minority, and thus the feeling of belonging within the wider British group.

Social worlds are not fixed, static nor homogeneous; individuals have very different social worlds, which is a reflection of the diversity of this group. Young people themselves explained in great detail the structure of their social worlds, what these social worlds were characterised by (in their opinion) and the extent to which they identified, or felt a sense of belonging, or exclusion to each specific group and sub-group in their social worlds. The idea that young people from ethnic minority groups are integrated into their own ethnic communities was challenged by respondents' own descriptions of their social worlds and the way they see themselves as fitting into various social spheres.

I have shown that 'community' itself was a fluid notion – community could encompass different people, boundaries between people 'in' and 'out' of the community could shift – community could mean a wide range of things. The concept of a British-Asian community, a Sikh community or a Hindu community (and so forth) did not always reflect how respondents experienced their ethnic communities. In their social worlds, 'ethnic community' or 'ethnic social world' could constitute a variety of ideas. Not all British Asians experience 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic community' in the same way. Nor do they see ethnic community as being characterised by the same things.

For example, some young people were deeply rooted in their 'Sikh community' or 'Hindu community'; these young people derived a great sense of comfort and happiness from this. Others felt highly uncomfortable and 'suffocated' when taking part in traditional cultural and religious activities that constituted 'ethnic community life'; these young people felt a high degree of separation from their ethnic communities, and the people in them. The relationship that young people had with their ethnic community was thus complex, and by no means did being born into a Sikh or Hindu family mean that young people automatically had a sense of

belonging to an ethnic community, or even a sense of being definable as a Sikh or Hindu.

The way in which young people understood and experienced British society was also diverse and complex. Some young people understood British society to be a definitive homogenous group of 'white' people, with the same attitudes and behaviour. Others understood that their 'British social world' was made up of different types, or layers of white people, who all had distinct traits, who all had different levels of desirability and who were more or less likely to treat them in a certain way. A young person could thus feel comfortable with 'middle-class' white British people, more than upper-class and lower-class 'chavs'. This sense of belonging could also be greater than the sense of commonality and belonging they felt to 'their own' ethnic community'.

Young people's relationship with the ethnic community was complex, and depended on a range of factors I have explored in this chapter. Young Sikhs and Hindus did not always have a sense of 'Sikhness' or 'Hinduness', ethnic communities were shown as being split and demarcated by a range of factors: These communities are not fixed, unchanging, static units, but instead complex social worlds where young people understand the distinctive characteristics of each 'segment' and have a nuanced idea about their relationship with these segments. This was similar for ideas about British society; the way that British society was experienced, and the ideas about what it constituted were varied and diverse – there were many shades of meaning and expression. For some young people, British society was 'white society', for others it was a society made up of different layers of people, much like 'Indian society', where certain people, or segments, were more desirable than others.

Young people described the different ways in which they saw their social worlds as being structured, and how they saw themselves as fitting into, or being excluded from, ethnic community and wider British society. I have explored and presented the key themes of social world organisation and characteristics throughout this chapter to show the diversity of experience of these young people, and the way in which the social worlds, and young people's relationship with the constituent parts of their social worlds, is far more complex than assumed.

Additionally, there has been very little information about how young people born in Britain understand and relate to ethnic communities and the traditions of their parents and grandparents, and how they manage and navigate their way as British citizens, but also as 'Hindus' and 'Sikhs'. There has also been an assumption that ethnic minority communities are made up of people who have a sense of belonging to the group itself and to each other, that they are in some way bound, that there is a definitive sense of identity and belonging within these groups and that there is a consistent way in which people experience these groups. This strong 'ethnic identity' derived from a 'unified group' is what is seen to hinder integration into wider British society, which is also understood as having distinctive traits, as well as being a coherent unified 'group'. This chapter shows that this is an essentialisation of the reality in this specific group.

This chapter has shown that young people from Sikh and Hindu backgrounds show the complexity of their social worlds. In these social worlds, groups are not unified, but instead split according to a range of factors. Young people experience their own ethnic communities in a range of ways, and have different ideas about what they constitute, as well as how they are structured. This also applies to their ideas about British society, where young people experience and understand their British social world based on their own experiences.

I have shown that it is not simply a case of a 'lack of integration'; young people can be well integrated into specific social segments in their British and ethnic 'social worlds', but not the 'whole group' as such. The idea that integration involved movement from one group to another is also an inaccurate depiction of these young people's lives, young people move in and out of various segments in both social spheres. The lack of uniformity in both social worlds makes it difficult to speak of 'integration' into groups as a whole.

Respondents highlighted the complexity of their social worlds, where groups were made up of sub-groups, and people, from both white British and ethnic minority backgrounds were seen as being separated by factors deemed important by the individual themselves; socio-economic status, 'Indianness', the extent to which other people were 'Westernised' and so forth.

Respondents painted a complex picture of a social world characterised by a range of social groups. Their experiences challenged the idea of a single British group, or a single Indian group, and even religious communities were often described as being separated along caste, socio-economic or even desirability levels. Young people also challenged the essentialising notion of British Indians, Sikhs or Hindus constituting one unified group. Instead what emerged was a multi-faced, multi-layered and overlapping social map, where different groups were seen and experienced not homogenously, but intricately and hierarchically.

It is not as simple as being British Asian and thus automatically belonging to the Indian community whatever that may constitute for each individual, nor is it the case that young Sikhs and Hindus feel a strong attachment to other Hindus and Sikhs, or to Indian culture and community as a whole. Additionally, what is understood to be Indian society or community, and what is understood to be British society, varied deeply from individual to individual; the social world of these young

people was mapped in accordance to their own experiences with a range of people in a diverse society. How they then understood different groups to be structured ultimately led to their own self-positioning in the social world they described.

4.11.1 Contribution to existing theoretical framework.

At the beginning of this chapter I outlined that I would make a contribution to the existing literature on boundaries. The key aspects of the existing approaches I wanted to focus on were:

1. Ethnic boundaries canalise social life. The idea that members of an ethnic group share a common ancestry, that this Boundary has social and symbolic aspects and 'is embedded in a variety of social and cultural differences between groups that give an ethnic boundary concrete significance' (Alba 2005: 22). Ethnic boundaries, for members of ethnic minorities are thus seen as a crucial and defining part of social life and social organisation.

2. That group categories, or ethnic labels and the boundaries associated with them are maintained to some extent despite changing patterns of participation and membership.

3. That a boundary can be 'bright' or 'blurred'.

I can concur to some extent with all these elements of the boundary approach on the basis of my findings, but the picture is far more complex than the literature suggests. I will examine these key areas in the discussion that follows and show where my findings concur, dispute and extend the existing literature on the subject of boundaries.

Let me start with this notion of an ethnic boundary that 'canalises' social life, that is, a boundary that serves to separate one ethnic group from the other and that is maintained despite changes in membership, to other groups, for example, and life experiences. At the heart of this idea is the assumption that this boundary actually exists and that both groups on either side exist as a 'group', a group definitive enough for members to conceive of and experience an 'ethnic boundary'. Alba has in fact argued that ethnicity as a boundary includes social and symbolic aspects and 'is embedded in a variety of social and cultural differences between groups that give an ethnic boundary concrete significance.' (Alba 2005: 22) Building on Barth's assumption, Alba argues that ethnic minorities in all immigrant societies impose a social distinction between immigrants and natives, which in sequel becomes a sociologically complex fault line.

My findings concur with Barth and Alba, yet only to a point insofar as I do find that for some individuals ethnicity is the basis of separation between minority and majority and for these people the ethnic boundary 'is embedded in a variety of social and cultural differences between groups that give an ethnic boundary concrete significance.' (Alba 2005: 22). Certainly for some of my respondents the recognition of 'another person as a fellow member of an ethnic group implies a sharing of criteria for evaluation and judgment' (Barth 1969: 15) was the basis of the separation between 'us' and 'them' and the most powerful boundary they experienced in their social world, and the fault line for the categorisation of self and 'others'. For those young people who feel a strong sense of being rooted in their ethno-religious community, for whom 'social and cultural differences', that is cultural traditions and practices, are favoured and upheld, then the ethnic boundary is the key point of separation between themselves and other non-Sikhs, non-'Indians' or non-Hindus (depending on how broad or narrow the net is cast in their

understanding of ‘ethnic community’). But overall, this chapter has shown that the reality is far more complex than this.

The notion of a concrete, distinct ethnic boundary is disputed by the findings of this research due to the fact that the notion of coherent ‘groups’ either side of the boundary is inaccurate. For some young people, ethnicity does indeed offer the possibility for individuals to distinguish themselves from others, and the ethnic boundary is a key part of social life and the basis of self-categorisation and the categorisation of others as outsiders. To these young people, the perceived ethnic boundary is the basis of the organisation of their social worlds and is maintained even though there are ‘changing patterns of participation and membership’. This boundary is comprised on the notion of difference. It is a boundary that is based on what respondents understood to be stark differences, in culture, religion, upbringing, values, yet, rarely is the boundary itself about skin colour or race – it is more about differences in behaviours and values which are seen as intrinsically linked to cultural and religious heritage, and upbringing

However, for most young people the ethnic boundary, or ethnicity itself is usually an insufficient basis for the organisation of social worlds. Rather than race and ethnicity, or religion, boundaries were based on the aforementioned key themes of Economic Success, Culture, Attitudes and Religion (See table 5 above). These themes thus influence the understanding of social identity and ‘in and out groups’. For these young people, ethnicity itself may not be the key determinant of the boundaries they experience in day-to-day life; instead, the boundaries are based on these similarities and differences in respect to Economic Success, Culture, Attitudes and Religion.

Yet, the complexity of the ethnic boundary does not end here. As I have shown, groups are understood not as homogenous units, but marked by hierarchy and

splits. Boundaries are thus based on intra-group differences as well as inter-group differences. For example, even for those young people who see the ethnic boundary as paramount to where they belong, this simplified idea of an ethnic boundary where everyone who has the same background as them is on the same side of boundary as them, and where everyone else is seen as an 'outsider', is rarely what they actually experience. For second-generation British Indians, the notion of social boundaries is far more complex and intricate.

From my in-depth interviews I can contend that orthodox Sikh males or orthodox Hindu females often understand that ethnicity is the faultline on which their social world is organised, but in reality the boundary is far more nuanced and complex; these young people feel a strong sense of separation from say the white British majority, but the boundary does not end there, it is extrapolated into the 'in-group' in which it then further separates people, and even within this initial 'in-group' of Sikhs and Hindus, their sense of separation or 'boundary' is not the same for all Sikhs and Hindus. For example, they often feel a strong sense of unity and 'no boundary' between themselves and other orthodox Sikhs or Hindus, a brighter boundary with those who are seen to have become 'coconuts' and abandoned their religions and heritage, a slightly blurrier but still bright boundary for 'Asian Rudeboys' who are often seen as having assertive male identities and not taking culture and religions seriously and so forth.

Jessica Jacobson also found evidence of 'assertive male identities' in her study of Pakistani youth in Waltham forest. She writes:

> The individuals in question can be said to display 'assertive Muslim identity' not simply on the grounds that they expressed some attachment to Islam while acknowledging that their behaviour is largely irreligious [...] it is my contention that a vital aspect of the 'assertive identity is its blending

> of religious awareness with rebelliousness, toughness or a degree of aggression. The men [...] all gave the impression [...] being somewhat hardened and streetwise. They also [...] made a number of comments which suggest that they believe these characteristics easily go hand-in hand with [...] an attachment to Islam'. (Jacobson 1998: 126).

I concur with Jacobsen's findings and find some stark parallels in my own research. 'Asian Rudeboys' or young men with these assertive-ethnic identities did have the same characteristics of aggression. I found this in Sikh Males in particular who admitted that their behaviour was largely against the teachings of Sikhism; cutting their hair, smoking and drinking alcohol, etc., but understood and manifested their religious commitment in an aggressive, defensive manner. They all had a toughness, which was blended with being hardened, and streetwise, the outlet for their toughness and aggression was the need to be a 'Singh', a Lion, to be a warrior. Many of them had tattoos of the Sikh Khanda,[60] which they saw as a mark for power and aggression; they were thus more concerned with being a 'Singh', being tough and streetwise, which they saw as intrinsically linked with the latter, as opposed to following the teachings of the Granth Sahib. Externally they were referred to as 'Asian Rudeboys' by some co-ethnics, but these young men saw themselves as 'Shere' Lions, real Singhs, *real* Sikhs ready to battle and defend their religion.

Going back to Orthodox Sikhs, I found that intra-group, the basis of the boundary for these young people is the notion of 'orthodoxy', i.e. how orthodox other

[60] The *Khanda* is the symbol of the Sikhs. It reflects some of the fundamental concepts of Sikhism. The symbol derives its name from the double-edged sword (also called a Khanda), which appears at the centre of the logo. This double-edged sword is a metaphor of Divine Knowledge, its sharp edges cleaving Truth from Falsehood. The circle around the Khanda is the *Chakar*. The Chakar being a circle without a beginning or an end symbolizes the perfection of God who is eternal. The Chakar is surrounded by two curved swords called *Kirpans*. These two swords symbolize the twin concepts of *Meeri* and *Peeri* – Temporal and Spiritual authority introduced by Guru Hargobind. They emphasize the equal emphasis that a Sikh must place on spiritual aspirations as well as obligations to society.

members of the ethnic group are; externally, inter-group, these young people base the boundary on the notion of cultural differences, but also 'respect for their culture', with the brightest boundaries being between themselves and white 'racist' goreh. Bright boundaries internally are rarely quite so strong as bright boundaries externally, and are based on different expectations, for example on 'orthodoxy' as opposed to 'acceptance' and 'cultural differences'.

In reality such individuals feel strong or 'bright' boundaries based on ethnicity and/or religion. These bright boundaries remain strong, yet they are dimmed slightly – but salient nonetheless – when the focus shifts intra-group, a group which, as I have shown, is understood to have many hierarchical splits and categorisations. Young people like Jasraj feel strong boundaries between themselves and other British Sikhs or British Hindus who they feel have 'abandoned' their religion. Other young people like Harpinder feel a more 'blurred' boundary between themselves and the British majority, yet brighter boundaries between themselves and more orthodox Sikh and Hindus, such as Jasraj above.

Barth and Alba have focused on the role of boundaries between minority and majority. My contribution to the existing literature is to show the complex reality, not only of ethnic boundaries, but boundaries as a whole in the lives of young second-generation British Sikhs and Hindus in London. Although some of my findings concur with Barth and Alba insofar as the ethnic boundary does have a great deal of cultural significance for some individuals, I use the traditional boundary approach as a starting point, a springboard for the findings I have presented in this work, rather than an all-defining framework for how boundaries should be understood. I feel that Alba's distinction of 'bright and blurry boundaries' is especially relevant to my findings.

The reality is that these second generation British Indians are not a homogenous group, and to assume that the role of ethnicity, the role of the ethnic boundary affects them all in the same way, or even that they understand it and experience boundaries in their social worlds in the same way, is to essentialise them. In fact, these young people, and their parents before them, have assimilated in very different ways, and these different paths to assimilation – be it complete, partial, or symbolic – have strengthened, eroded, blurred, brightened, simplified, or complicated the way in which they experience the notion of ethnicity itself, in particular the ethnic boundary between themselves and others, and within the group itself, between themselves and other people from the same racial and ethnic background.

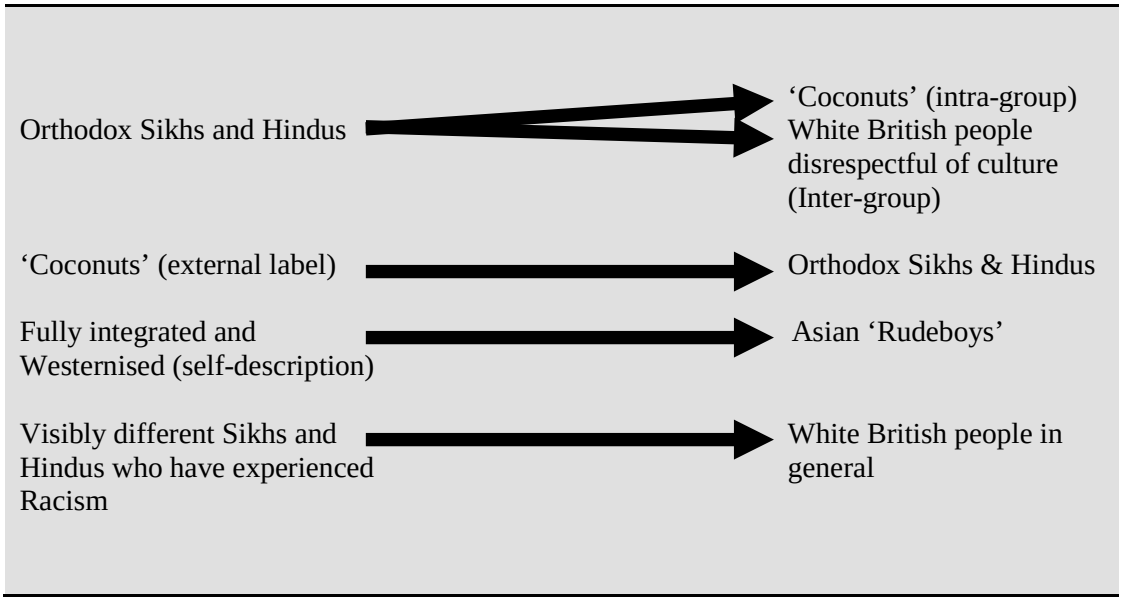
The focus on ethnicity and the ethnic boundary, which for some young people can itself be based solely on religion, or can instead be wider or narrower, has led to an essentialised simplification of the real boundaries that these young people experience, and the diversity within this notion of boundaries. In fact, there is no such thing as a single set of generally recognised boundaries, but diverse perceptions in where the 'boundary' lies and on what the boundary is formulated.

For some young people there are strong ethnic boundaries, while for others they are more blurred, and for some, boundaries are insignificant: they feel that have surpassed the boundary and through the acquisition of social, economic and/or educational capital which allows them to experience all boundaries as permeable. They do not feel restricted; they are able to pass freely within and between groups with no social consequences. They have a 'free pass' to come in and out of various groups without any social cost. For these people, the boundary is not a boundary as such, it is more of a loose separation based on the understanding that there are different social and ethnic components of their respective social worlds that have

their own characteristics; the groups are understood as discrete and separate, but the boundaries between them are of marginal importance.

If we take this idea of a 'Bright Boundary', the nature of the bright boundary depends on the individual in question.

Figure 3 'Bright boundaries'



We can see that orthodox Sikhs and so-called 'coconuts' feel a strong sense of a bright boundary to each other, despite technically being from the same ethnic minority. Furthermore, these young people position themselves differently when it comes to the sense of boundary they feel to the white majority. For well-integrated highly westernised, economically successful, young people or 'coconuts', as they are often referred to by some co-ethnics, the boundary between themselves and the white majority is extremely, blurred, or non-existent. They may even acknowledge that there are 'bright' differences and a 'bright' boundary between the ethnic minority and the white British group, but to them, this boundary is made up of 'cultural and traditional stuff' that is of little or no importance to them. The fact that they have chosen to restrict their engagement with their cultural background means

that the bright boundary is one that they may recognise, but which has no social consequence to them, and so for them, and not their ethnic community, this boundary is blurred or does not really exist.

Yet some of the brightest boundaries they feel are towards Orthodox Sikhs and Hindus, who they feel have failed to adapt to Western Culture, and who are judgmental of their decision not to engage with the religion of their parents and grandparents. Highly westernised, culturally assimilated young people also feel bright boundaries to 'Asian rudeboys' based on their perceived lack of economic success and 'embarrassing' behaviour. Conversely the boundary that they feel towards Orthodox Sikhs and Hindus is based on a perceived lack of flexibility and failure to adequately adapt to western culture.

Some Orthodox Sikhs and Hindus whom I interviewed were highly educated and economically successful. Their desire to devote themselves fully to their religion did not impede their economic or educational standing; they simply chose not to engage with the 'undesirable' activities of white British culture, which were at odds with their religious beliefs. Often, they also chose not to engage with some other Sikhs and Hindus who drank alcohol and ate meat and so forth. 'Asian Rudeboys' were seen as being from 'bad areas' who 'played Bhangra really loud' and 'acted like chavs'. Orthodox Sikhs and Hindus also felt a strong sense of boundary to 'Asian Rudeboys', but less so than they felt towards 'Coconuts':

> At least the Gundeh aren't completely gorafied, I mean, they need to get their act together, but at least they are proud of some parts of their culture even if it's just Bhangra and drinking whisky and not going to the Gurdwara like they should.
>
> Jasraj, 25, Male, Orthodox Sikh, IT Consultant.

Here are two illustrations to display the complexity of these social boundaries:

Figure 4 Illustration of social boundaries felt by some orthodox Sikhs[61]

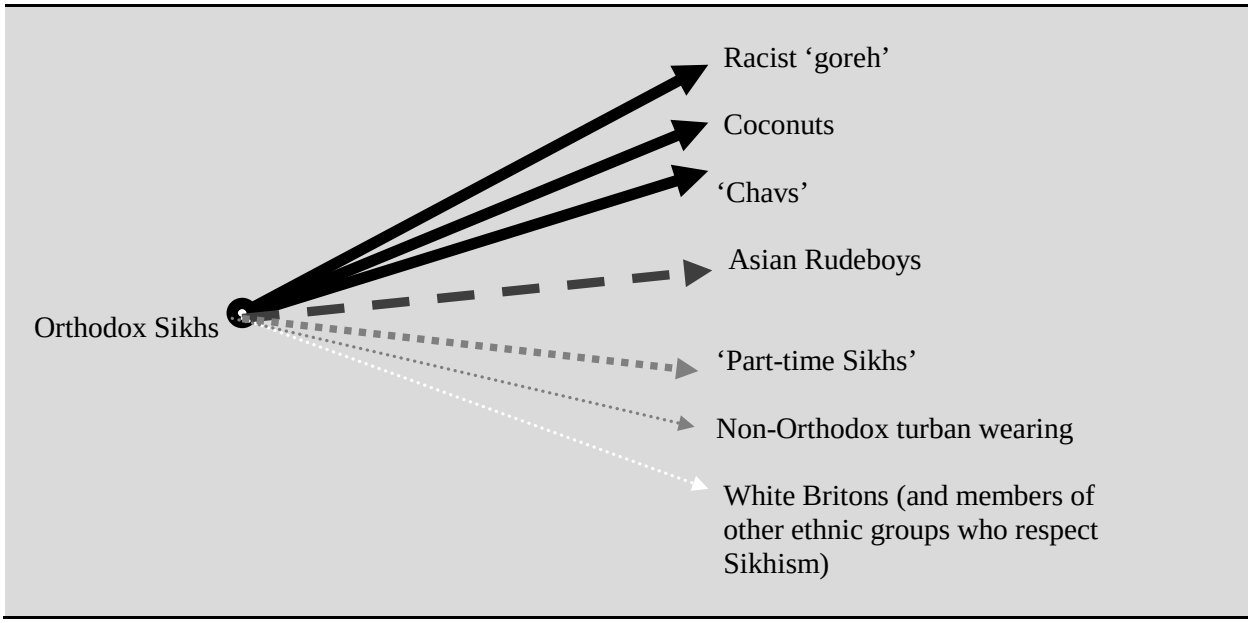
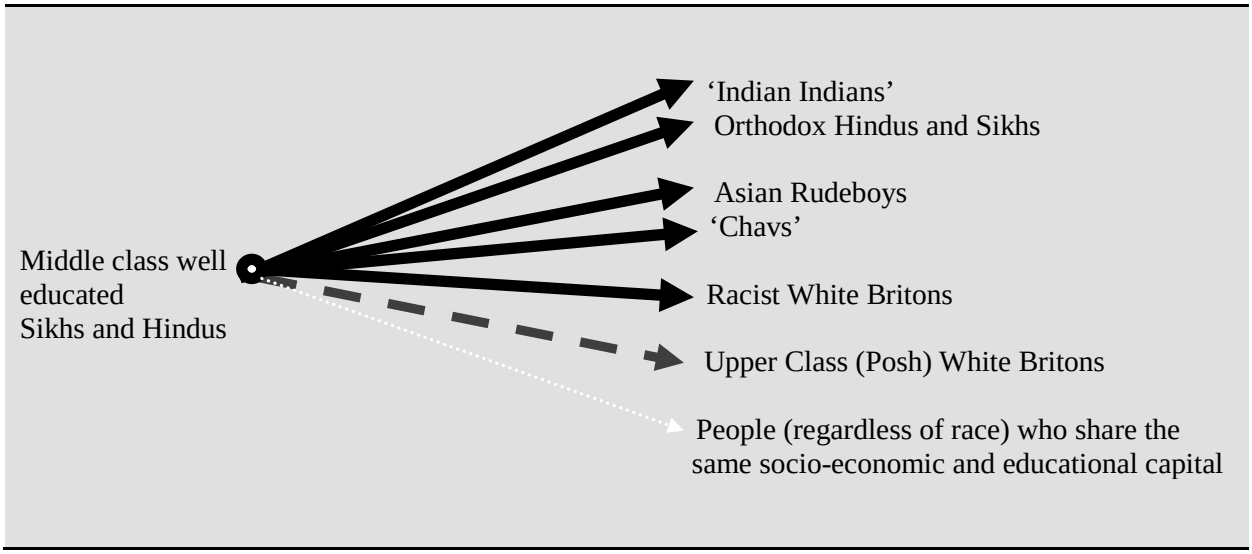


Figure 5 Illustration of social boundaries felt by some middle class, culturally assimilated Sikhs and Hindus



[61] Depending on their darkness and thickness the lines represent the different levels of brightness and/or blurriness of different boundaries as explained by respondents. The darkest, thickest lines represent the strongest boundaries, the grey dashes-line is a fairly strong boundary, but more blurry than the former with a higher degree of permeability. The thinner grey line represents a blurry boundary; the white boundary is one that is very transparent and permeable.

Young women from Indian backgrounds spoke of the strong sense of separation they felt from Asian Rude Boys who belittle them for 'socialising in the British way', they felt equally bright boundaries between themselves and orthodox males in particular, whom they felt were bigoted and judgemental towards them. These young women felt a far more transparent and malleable boundary between themselves and white people in general ('chavs' excepted) who they felt were more open and less judgemental of women and who did not expect them to live up to to the unattainable and suffocating image of a 'good Indian girl'. There is also a substantial majority who feel blurred boundaries between themselves and both the British Majority and their own ethnic communities; they are usually moderate in their religious engagement and dip in and out of their 'ethnic identity' to enjoy cultural activities. These young people feel that they can access both groups, but still feel a stronger sense of boundary from 'extreme' segments of both groups such as Orthodox Sikh or Hindus, 'chavs' and 'upper class white posh people'. Yet these young people do not feel the 'free pass' enjoyed by some highly educated, wealthy young people who feel that the boundary is completely void; for the former group, the boundary still has some social and personal salience.

It is clear, therefore, that perceptions of boundaries differ greatly.

There are two dimensions at work. First there is what I will call the 'level of religious engagement' and at the same time there is the level of socio-economic and education capital or attainment, or the level of 'social stratification'. In the course of my interviews and analysis it became apparent that for these young people, their status in respect to how religious they were, or the level of their engagement with their religion and culture, and their place in the social hierarchy or social stratification determined where they see themselves and where they see others. These two dimensions thus determined *where* they saw boundaries and the *type* of

boundary (bright or blurred, or non-existent) that they experienced with a range of social circles.

Barth contends that that group categories or ethnic labels and the boundaries associated with them are maintained despite changing patterns of participation and membership. My argument is that in fact, these young people highlight the complex reality of social boundaries – not only ethnic boundaries – for young people from ethnic minorities in Britain. Yes, ethnic labels are maintained, but not in the same way for everyone. Changing patterns of participation and membership are not uniform, and as a result, the social worlds of these young people are not uniform, and neither are the boundaries they experience. In some cases changing patterns enforces the ethnic boundaries, for others it becomes weaker and more diluted, and for others, changing participation and membership erodes and negates the ethnic boundary completely.

As I have shown in this discussion, my contribution is to highlight the complexity of boundaries and challenge the idea that there is a clear sense of separation of ethnic minority and British majority, delineated by a stark ethnic boundary. As I have shown, these young people convey the complex nature of their social worlds, and how the boundaries that demarcate these social worlds are far more nuanced. They separate people into distinct segments, and young people feel a stronger or weaker sense of boundary on respective segments, or layers, of each 'group'.

As I have shown, boundaries, for different people, are based on a range of factors: for some it religious engagement, for others it is acceptance, and often there are difference bases for boundaries depending on which particular boundary is in question and the discrete sub-group it is aimed at. The nature of the boundary also

serves as the social capital on which ‘in-groups’ and ‘out groups’ are based (Tajfel 1979).

I have found that understanding about groups, sub-groups and people as well as the structure of social worlds and boundaries are based on social interactions. I will now turn to the issue of ‘social contact’ and the nature of social ties in my next chapter to uncover the mechanisms by which contact can shape social worlds, the boundaries that structure these social worlds and the subsequent sense of belonging (or not) in various social circles.

The nature of social ties; the role of diverse contact experiences in shaping identity and sources of belonging

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is a study into the role of contact in the process of identity formation, boundary construction and establishing a sense of belonging to the different social groups in these young people's lives. It is concerned with the everydayness of social contact and how this may influence belonging in a range of social contexts.

The key focus of this chapter is to explore the mechanisms by which the nature of social ties and contact experiences can promote feelings of belonging, acceptance and inclusion in a variety of social contexts. Given the findings of the previous chapter where young people showed that the social worlds they live in are made up of many groups and sub-groups, this chapter focuses on the way in which contact experiences with these various segments may impact the way in which young people formulate ideas about their own acceptance, belonging *and* sense of being rooted into these social layers.

I am interested in exploring the *diversity* of contact experiences and how this may influence the diverse social worlds conveyed by respondents in the previous chapter. In this chapter I will examine the mechanisms by which contact shapes identity options and orientations and show that the most powerful of these mechanisms is the generation of information on which shared and clashing values are assessed; an assessment which shapes the desirability and feasibility (or otherwise) of belonging to varies social circles within an individual's social world.

The previous chapter showed that the social worlds of young Sikhs and Hindus were extremely complex and multi-faceted. This finding challenges the notion that

young people from ethnic minority backgrounds operate in a world where there are two main groups, that of the white British majority, and their own ethnic community, and that these groups are understood and experienced by these young people, in the same way (Parekh 2000; Cameron 2011). The essentialising notions of uniformity and homogeneity within each 'group' were shown in the previous chapter to be completely at odds with what these young people described as making up their social worlds. They described how they felt that ethnic communities, as well as white British society, were in fact made up of layers, or hierarchies, of social circles each with their own characteristics and differing levels of attractiveness in terms of belonging.

The previous chapter on social worlds highlighted that some young people feel a much stronger sense of being rooted and accepted into various segments of their own ethnic communities and British society than others. In the discussion that follows I will build on this finding and explore how contact shapes belonging, as well as how contact can influence the nature and strength of sources of belonging over time, as well as relating to the strength and position of boundaries, for different people, in different ways. I have shown that young people have different ideas about the structure of their social worlds; this Chapter will now look at the way different contact experiences may shape these diverse social worlds.

My key concern is exploring how day-to-day experiences with a range of people in a diverse society affect where young Sikhs and Hindus feel accepted and comfortable, and how this translates to the sources of belonging that become meaningful to these young people.

My focus in the analysis that follows will be to provide a comprehensive answer to two of my aforementioned key research questions:

- How does contact play out in practice; what are the different types of contact experiences that these young people can have?
- What are the mechanisms by which contact can shape sources of belonging?

5.2 Theoretical framework

Intergroup contact has long been suggested as a key tool for reducing intergroup prejudice; some early works looked at the effect of desegregation on inter-racial attitudes (see Brophy 1964). It has historically been a subject rooted in the discipline of social psychology, where researchers have often reported that intergroup contact is a source of mutual acceptance (Allport 1954 & 1979; Pettigrew & Tropp 2005). Scholars researching all over the world have found that intergroup contact reduces prejudice towards ethnic minority members in a number of different countries (Voci & Hewstone 2003; Dovidio et al. 2003; Brown & Hewstone 2005; McLaren 2003; Pettigrew 1997; Wagner et al. 2003, 2006; Pettigrew & Tropp 2006, 1998; Ward & Masgoret 2006; Thomsen 2012).

Gordon W. Allport's (1954) work on *The Nature of Prejudice* examined the relationship between inter-group contact and the state of race relations and racial acceptance in a society. Allport introduced the most influential statement in intergroup contact theory. It is important to note early on that Allport's work does not convey contact as the single way to reduce inter-group prejudice and improve race relations; he does not argue that contact, any contact, will systematically break down prejudice and discrimination between different groups in the same society. What he does do, and why the theory is extremely useful for empirical sociological work such as this, is that he seeks to observe and analyse the drivers and obstacles to membership of social groups and sources of belonging, to show how under certain conditions, contact between groups can help reduce levels of prejudice and

improve relations. This can in turn be useful in exploring the extent to which contact between young people within their own ethnic/cultural/religious groups, and externally, between themselves and other groups they do not see themselves as belonging to, can influence the way in which they experience living in a diverse society, and how this may influence the sources of belonging and identities that are meaningful and important to them in their day to day lives; themes which are central to this research.

Allport distinguishes and analyses the effect of different types of contact on inter-group relations: contact-casual, contact-acquaintance, residential contact, occupational contact, and goodwill contacts which will highlight the pursuit of common objectives and personality differences. Allport uses his own work and other selected small sample studies to argue that under certain conditions,[62] contact can reduce prejudice, through not only breaking down race-based stereotypes, but also through the identification of similar personality, life experiences and objectives (Allport 1954).

However, as outlined above, Allport acknowledges the limitations to establishing direct causality for contact reducing prejudice. He argues that contact experiences, cannot always overcome the personal element of prejudice. Essentially, if prejudice is deeply rooted in the psychology of one of the individuals in the contact situation, then it is unlikely that contact itself will successfully eliminate this feeling. Other limitations outlined are that 'people may come to take for granted the particular situation in which contact occurs but fail completely to generalise their experience', contact experiences between different groups 'must reach below the surface in order to be effective in reducing prejudice', and 'the effect of contact will depend upon the kind of association that occurs and the kinds of persons who are involved'

[62] Namely, who is involved in the process of contact, how and where the contact takes place and the frequency of contact.

(Pettigrew & Tropp 2006: 751). Allport outlines four 'optimal conditions for contact': equal status between groups in the situation, common goals, intergroup cooperation and the support of authorities, law or custom'. The success of contact as a method for prejudice reduction will depend on the presence of these aforementioned conditions.

However, the contact-tolerance relationship remains disputed (Dovidio et al. 2008; Thomsen, 2012). Some researchers argue that contact has little impact on majority group members' political attitudes toward ethnic minorities (Brown et al. 2003; Dixon et al. 2005; Jackman & Crane 1986; Van der Noll et al. 2010). Other scholars have contested this by arguing that contact does increase support for minority rights (Hayes & Dowds 2006; Dixon et al. 2010; Mutz 2002; Pettigrew 1997; Pettigrew & Tropp 2011; Popan et al. 2010). Conversely, using a large cross-sectional sample from eight European counties, Turner, Hewstone, Voci & Vonofakou found a positive relationship between intergroup contact with immigrants, and attitudes towards immigrants, but also two unrelated out-groups (Jews and Homosexuals). The authors argue that this type of generalisation shows that contact can be a very efficient and powerful means of improving intergroup relations in increasingly diverse and cosmopolitan societies. (Turner, Hewstone, Voci & Vonofakou 2008: 843-860). Pettigrew and Tropp argue that their findings show that 'Allport's optimal conditions are not essential for prejudice reduction [...] Hence future work should focus on negative factors that prevent intergroup contact from diminishing prejudice as well as the development of a more comprehensive theory of inter-group contact'. (Pettigrew & Tropp 2006: 751)

Social-psychological works are thus useful in identifying general processes and helpful in giving a scholarly background to how the issue of contact itself has been researched and analysed. However the approach utilises a more quantitative data

set, which is not the key method of this work. I have used this literature as a springboard of a kind, a starting point for applying these theoretical ideas to the particular empirical sociological context I am interested in. I am interested in how these processes play out in the day-to-day life of these young people, rather than applying a scientific, meta-analytic analysis such as that provided by Pettigrew and Tropp. Instead, I have used the richness of the data I have collected to delve into the everydayness of contact and how it affects feeling of belonging and acceptance.

The issue of contact and social ties is not confined to social psychology; sociologists around the world have studied the role of intergroup contact when researching ethnic minority integration and relations between minority and majority groups in multi-ethnic societies. See Agirdag, Van Hotte & Avermaet 2011; Berrington 1996: Blau 1964; Blau & Schwarz 1984; De Souza Briggs 2007; Fong & Isajiw 2000; Heath & McMahon 2005; Iceland, Mateos & Sharp 2011;Kalmijn 1998; Kanas et al. 2011; Kao & Joyner 2004; McPherson, Smith-Loven & Cook 2001; Martinovic, Tubergen & Mass 2009; Mouw & Entwistle 2006; Muttarak 2010; Muttarak & Heath 2010; Peach 2005; Sabater 2010; Sigelman & Welch 1993; Titzmann & Silbereisen 2009.

An especially relevant recent seminal study by Raya Muttarak has argued that 'Interethnic friendships can reflect intergroup relations and immigrants' integration into host societies' (Mutarrak 2014). Mutarrak's methodological approach is different to the one I employ, yet some of her findings have parallels with my own, which I will discuss further in this chapter. Muttarak utilises pooled 2007-09 Citizenship Surveys to investigate interethnic friendship choice and finds that 'having ethnically cross-cutting ties may be important in promoting economic integration, educational achievement and intergroup cohesion [...] the second generation has a lower proportion of individuals having only co-ethnics as close

friends [...] the generational difference is particularly evident in the likelihood of having white British close friends' (Muttarak 2014: 94). Yet ethnic and religious identities remain important factors in determining interethnic friendships. Muttarak finds that 'Cross group friendships (apart from those with white British) are likely to be pan-ethnic'. (Ibid.)

Her findings are similar with previous sociological studies conducted on intermarriage in Britain in terms of ethnic and generational difference. Previous studies have found low rates of intermarriage with white British for South Asians and higher rates of intermarriage for those individuals from a mixed heritage background, black Caribbean and Chinese (Berrington 1996; Peach 2005; Muttarak & Heath 2010), Muttarak finds similar rates with regard to the likelihood of having white British close friends (Muttarak 2014: 94–95).

Muttarak also argues that ethnic homogeneity in friendship networks can be partly explained by homophily along other dimensions: 'the finding that having higher income increases the propensity of having interethnic close friends suggests that a low income may constrain individuals into social networks with a high co-ethnic concentration, [...] The odds of having close friends from different ethnic groups also increase with level of education' (Muttarak 2014: 95). Muttarak utilises quantitative methods and makes these conclusions on the basis of her analysis of the citizenship survey data. I will also make a contribution to the existing literature by utilising the in-depth narratives provided by my respondents to show the diversity of experience within the group of people who I interview, some of whose ideas about contact broadly concur with those presented by Muttarak, and some that do not.

My aim is to explore the everydayness of contact and the diversity of contact experiences, and how these social exchanges may shape the social worlds and sources of belonging I explored in the previous chapter. My aim is not to test any given theory but to instead focus on the individual narrative provided by the respondent, the feelings and experiences that different contact experiences, with different people, from different groups and sub-groups have had on their lives, and the way they see themselves as fitting in and integrating. I am interested in the short-term and long-term effects of both 'positive' and 'negative' contact on identity formation and feelings of inclusion and acceptance in different social spheres.

The theoretical framework and the empirical evidence on this subject show that contact experience can reduce prejudice between different groups in a given social context. My own findings in the previous chapter of this research has shown that social worlds are formulated on the basis of social experiences and interactions, that is, that young Sikhs and Hindus understand the social world they live in on the basis of the social interaction, however small, they have with other people. Other people then become symbolic of the group, or sub-group that they come to represent in the social world. This is not confined to interplay between majority and minority – in-group and out-group, but is happening as young people assess their relationship between themselves and their ethnic-religious-cultural community, and the composite elements of this group as such.

The key contribution here is that where there has been a debate on the integration of ethnic minorities in mainstream British society, there has been an assumption that young people are established in their own communities, but less so with respect to the British way of life (Parekh 2000; Berry 2005; Leach et al. 2008; Cameron 2011). However, in the previous chapter I have shown that young people may feel a

strong sense of belonging and acceptance to a certain group or a certain segment of a group and that complex belonging varies from person to person depending on a range of patterns. I often found that feeling a sense of belonging to the British way of life does not hinder ethnic identity, nor vice versa, but more interesting is the finding of perceived segmentation in both groups, and the way this is understood. Identities are not simply 'dual'; they are in fact far more nuanced.

Allport and others have argued that inter-group contact can be a clear contributor to a reduction in prejudice. My concern here is not to focus on prejudice alone; certainly I can highlight how contact affects perceptions of prejudice to my respondents, but given that I have not interviewed members of the white British population, I cannot examine if contact reduces prejudice in both directions. However, I have looked at a specific empirical case of young second-generation Hindus and Sikhs living in London, and how contact impacts their sense of belonging to the different segments of the intricate social worlds they have conveyed to me.

I can thus make a contribution to this existing literature by showing how contact affects not only perceptions of prejudice from the majority and how this affects a sense of feeling accepted (and wanting to be accepted) as part of wider British society, but also how contact relates to the way that these young people feel about their own ethnic identities and communities and how this may influence their sense of feeling (and wanting to feel) a sense of belonging here.

This was an arena for these young people to talk about the specific experiences they have had as young British Asians, growing up in a diverse city like London; the people they have come into contact with, the relationships they have made, the good and bad things they have experienced with different races of people, as well

as other young Asians, and how *they* think this has affected the way they feel about their belonging and inclusion and how they fit in.

Another interesting perspective that I will draw on is that of bonding and bridging capital. Robert Putnam's publication of *Bowling Alone: the Collapse and Revival of American Community* propelled the concept of social capital into global debate. In his book, Putnam surveys the decline of 'social capital' in the United States of America since 1950. He has described the reduction in all the forms of in-person social intercourse upon which Americans used to found, educate, and enrich the fabric of their social lives. He believes this undermines the active civil engagement that a strong democracy requires from its citizens. Putnam discusses ways in which Americans have disengaged from political involvement including decreased voter turnout, public meeting attendance, serving on committees and working with political parties (Putnam 1995, 2000, 2005).

Putnam defined social capital as 'the connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them'. He argues that a high level of social capital allows individuals to trust each other and act together to pursue and achieve shared objectives. Putnam makes an interesting distinction between 'bridging' and 'bonding' social capital. He explains that 'Bonding' capital is identified with cohesion amongst defined communities: it brings people together who are seen to be similar, who are 'like one another'; this can be in relation to a range of areas such as similarity in class, gender, or age. 'Bridging capital' is part of a process where overlapping networks are created between particular communities. Putnam argues that those two kinds of social capital, bonding and bridging are not mutually exclusive. Putnam and his advocates acknowledge the fact that a high amount of bonding capital can have a negative effect insofar as it can create strong boundaries between insiders and 'others' who

are then excluded and stigmatised. Therefore, bridging capital is a crucial component if wider social cohesion is to be achieved:

> Bonding and bridging aspects of social capital have different consequences. Bonding social capital links you to people just like you, same gender or age or race. Those sorts of links are good for some things and not for others. Bridging social capital, on the other hand, represents your ties to people who are unlike you, who are of a different race or generation. For a modern and diverse democratic society, bridging social capital is important because, if you have a society that has tons of bonding but no bridging, you have a society that looks like Beirut or Baghdad.[63] (Putnam 2008)

My intention in the following chapter is not to test Putnam's theories against the experiences of these young people, but to utilise the notions of bridging and bonding to extend Putnam's model to look at the role of contact in these mechanisms. Social contact and bonding and bridging capital are largely aspects of the same phenomenon, but in the discussion that follows I am specifically interested in the everyday social contact experiences that foster and/or hinder bonding and bridging capital. I am interested in how this process plays out in the lives of these young people and how it may influence the sense of belonging they feel in various social contexts.

Additionally in terms of Berry's typology (Berry 1997), I am interested in how social exchanges may influence where a particular person would be situated within this model. I am also interested in the issue of 'value', which is key to Berry's approach and how contact itself shapes the extent to which minority and/or majority ties are considered to be of 'value' to these young people.

[63] *http://www.the-american-interest.com/article.cfm?piece=374*

The standard literature on contact itself has often focused on contact as a tool for the reduction of prejudice. In the discussion that follows, I build on existing contact theory, but use the literature as a springboard to look far deeper into the everydayness of contact experiences and the broader range of outcomes in which it can shape belonging. In particular I explore: good and bad contact, the 'randomness' of contact, locality, the long-term impact of negative contact, reactive identities and bad contact, the role of shared values and bridging capital.

5.3 'Good' and 'bad' contact experiences; effects and 'randomness'

For many respondents positive contact experiences were based on the idea of feeling accepted by people, in particular on the idea of feeling accepted by the white British majority. Acceptance was formulated on a range of experiences, from making friends with people from different ethnic backgrounds, or from feeling that ethnic differences were respected and often feeling that other people took an interest in the culture and religion of these young people (for whom the latter was an important source of belonging). Often such exchanges were the most powerful in creating relationships and bridging capital as well as fostering friendly relationships with a range of people from different groups. It became apparent during my fieldwork that some respondents were experiencing far more 'positive' contact and had greater diversity in their social ties than others. Some of them seemed more likely to experience what they saw as negative social contact, which ultimately led to feelings of exclusion and not being accepted.

5.4 Locality

Locality was often a clear contributing factor in the type of contact young people were more or less likely to experience. It become clear that there was a cycle in effect, a group of certain demographic, familial or personal characteristics that led

to certain young people developing a greater sense of belonging to British society than others, but these factors were not 'random'. There was a distinct pattern which broadly concurs with the findings of earlier studies which found that interracial friendships are more common in racially mixed neighbourhoods (Brophy 1964; Massey & Mullan 1984; Sigelman et al. 1996; Mouw & Entwisle 2006). I found, unsurprisingly, that contact with a range of people was consistent with these findings, and that such contact, and the likelihood of having diverse contact experiences, may be influenced by where you lived. This may is turn influence the possibility of young people going on to have meaningful relationships and friendships with an ethnically diverse group of people. The role of contact in fostering interracial friendships is important, but the locality of an individual may influence how much contact, or 'good' contact they have, which then acts as bridging capital in fostering a sense of belonging. Any analysis of inter-racial friendship and diversity in social ties must also take into consideration the issue of locality and diversity within that locality.

For those young people Hindu and Sikh who lived in predominately ethnic, or 'Asian areas' as they were often described by the respondents, contact itself was more often with other members of their given ethnic, or religious group. What seemed common was that these young people had often attended nursery, school and then later sixth form or college with large numbers of other British Indians; this had led some of them from the outset to have greater contact and social ties with members of their own community from a young age. *Yet this had not affected people in the same way*. Some young people, females in particular, felt that this contact had in fact led them to retreat often markedly from their own ethno-cultural group, on the basis of perceived acceptability – some young females felt extremely

pressured to conform to traditional culture by their families and communities (I will explore this in more detail as this chapter develops).

However, for many of the young Hindus and Sikhs I interviewed, it was this contact from an early age, which had deeply rooted their feelings of inclusion and acceptance with members of their own ethic group. There was a sense of ease, of familiarity and comfort with people from the same ethnic background. Often these young people described how they would actively seek out members of their own ethnic group in new social settings, such as when they started college, a new school or a new job.

> I have lived in East London for most of my life and there are a lot of other Asians here, there were hardly any white people at my school or even at college; it was mostly Asians, not just Sikhs, Muslims, Pakistani, Bengalis, lots of different Asians. It's a real like Indian feel where we live, there are loads of shops for Indian clothes, jewellery, and you can get wicked Indian food here. It's just a lot easier being Indian in this area, compared to like... I don't know, maybe like Chelsea and Kensington. All my mates are Punjabi, and all our families have known each other for years, a lot of them are from Jalandhar[64] like my mum and dad. [...] When I started working in the city, we had a few taster events and networking stuff, I was like whoooww I am the only Indian here! But then I saw a couple of Singhs[65] and I went over and started talking to them, they were safe with me, we are good mates now. [...] There were some Gujis,[66] but they were proper coconuts, they just spoke different and I could tell they didn't want to mix up with the other Indians, they were really gorafied. I thought, fuck that! [...] I guess I just feel more comfortable with my own, we have been brought up like that, it's better, I have some white mates but it's not the same closeness.

Nirpal, 22, Sikh Male, works in City Accountancy Firm.

What Nirpal describes is feeling a sense of 'comfort' when he is with other young co-ethnics; he associates this comfort with his immediate locality and with being able to get Indian clothes and foods in East London where he lives. Nirpal's family live near the Green Street area of East London, an area that has a settled community

[64] Jalandhar is a large town in the Punjab, India.
[65] 'Singhs' is a slang term used by young Sikh-Punjabis, particularly males, to describe other Sikh Males. The term 'Singh' itself is derived from the middle name 'Singh', meaning Lion which is given to all Sikh men.
[66] 'Gujis' or 'Guj' is a slang term used by British Asians to describe people of Gujerati descent. The term itself can be positive or derogatory depending on the context in which it is used. However, it is usually used descriptively.

of Sikh, Hindus and Muslims. Green Street itself is something of a little India, with numerous Indian clothing shops, shops for Indian foodstuffs and Indian restaurants. In his interview, Nirpal described the feeling of support and comfort he had growing up in East London, and his quote above describes the contrast with areas like 'Chelsea and Kensington', areas that he saw as having a predominantly white population, and therefore as being less desirable.

The comfort Nirpal feels being with other Indians impacts his decisions and the people he wants to be friends with. As shown above, he describes how he looked for other 'Asians' when he started university, so locality and the demographic mix of that locality can have an impact on the nature of current social ties that tend to echo those that young people have from a young age. This is often when they felt most comfortable and well-integrated, so the pattern of their social ties can extend out into later life as with Nirpal. Nirpal calls Gujeratis 'coconuts', which he explained was a way of saying that someone was 'brown on the outside and white on the outside'. To him, this meant 'acting white', having a lot of white friends, but most importantly, he explained that 'coconuts' were those other Indians, who were not interested, if not a little embarrassed, in being Indian – they wanted to be white. There were then penalties for acting too white, and not being Indian enough for these young people. Another similar term was 'gorafied', a unique term used by young Indians in Britain to describe other Indians or their actions as being too white, or highly influenced by white people. Nirpal described his comfort and acceptance with other Asians, but in further examination of his narrative, what he is really saying is that he feels happy and comfortable with a certain type, or segment, of Indians, those that are like him and enjoy being Indian, and not those who are 'gorafied', thus highlighting the intricate, demarcated social world that he lives in.

The idea of seeking friends from the same background was a common theme for many of the young people who had been brought up in parts of London with a strong ethnic community. Young people often looked for other young people who were also Sikh or Hindu in new social networks. Tarlok's experience echoed that of Nirpal in many ways:

Tarlok	It's all about the Sikh Society at LSE, that's the best thing about being here at Uni in central London. I thought that when I came here there wouldn't been other Singhs, but that's the first thing I saw at the fresher's week fair, I knew it was going to be such jokes!
Manmit	*Which societies did you join when you started university?*
Tarlok	The Punjabi ones, obviously! I joined the Sikh Society and the Punjabi Society, that's how I have got involved with organising all the Bhangra events at the Uni. […] Its weird 'cos I really thought that LSE was a proper gora university, to be honest I would have rather gone City or Brunel 'cos I have a lot of mates that went there and they said that there is a really community of us Punjabis there. […] I was worried about that when I started Uni, but I found the right people to hang around with and represent with.

Tarlok, 19, Sikh Male, University student studying Actuarial Science.

Tarlok described being worried about not being able to make friends with other Sikhs at university; in his interview, he described the fear of being alone at university as one of the most anxious times of his life. What I found interesting here was that Tarlok was willing to go to a university that did not fit his grades simply on the basis that there would be more people like him there, he explained that the only reason he did not go through with this was at the insistence of his parents. Tarlok is from Plumstead, a part of South London with a strong presence of ethnic minorities. Sikhs in particular are well established in the area, with a strong network of community organisation, Gurdwaras, community centres, and Sikh Youth Centres. Tarlok described growing up with his cousins and other Sikh friends, attending the temple once a week, taking Punjabi lessons from a young age, and how this had made him proud to be a Sikh and 'represent' Sikhism. It is

important, too, that Tarlok was one of several Sikh males who took part in this research who had been teased by British white people about the way they looked, with their turbans and their beards. This teasing, coupled with the strength of the Sikh Identity in Tarlok's life, shaped the people he chose to surround himself with in his day-to-day life.

Conversely, those young people who lived in more ethnically diverse areas, such as south-east London, central London and west London, were more likely from a young age to have frequent contact with a more diverse range of people. That is not to say that locality and contact had a straightforward relationship, more that there was a pattern insofar as, for these young people, where they were born and raised, did have an impact on the people they were surrounded by. This influenced the level of contact they had with people outside of their own ethnic group, which in turn often seemed to impact the level of diversity they currently had in their social ties. However, many London Boroughs that have high levels of ethnic diversity are also the poorer parts of the capital, and this also shapes the type of contact experiences and the long-lasting influence this has on feelings of belonging and acceptance for these young people. The important point here is that having meaningful relationships and a sense of belonging to a wide range of groups *is not solely in the hands of the individual*.

Reports often suggest that ethnic communities in Britain have become ghettoised, or that there is a lack of integration for some young second-generation Asians (Phillips 2005). During the interviews, it became evident that some young people had more chance of positive or negative contact, or more or less diversity in their social ties than others, on the basis of where they lived (Blau & Schwartz 1984; Blau 1977; Massey & Mullan 1984), where they went to school, the strength of

ethnic community and community organisation in their own locality, and even their physical appearance.

For some young people, the lack of meaningful, positive contact with members of other ethnic groups, or the level of distrust they felt – often due to racist or discriminatory contact experiences with the white majority – meant that the ethnic identity became very strong over a period of time, and the ethnic group was strongly felt as the place where people could be themselves and be accepted. Positive contact experiences with other Indians, enjoyment of traditional cultural customs, special days, food, and music from a young age meant that some young people were very rooted in their own ethnic communities. These experiences were often made even more special and comforting by the fact that negative, racist or prejudicial experiences in relation to white British people had a deep impact on these young people with a strong sense of ethnic identity. They saw these incidents as an attack on the tradition they felt so strongly about, and saw these actions as a clear boundary marker between 'us' and 'them'. As a consequence, the need and desire to stick together became even stronger. The following quotes are from some young people from parts of London with a strong presence of Sikh and/or Hindu communities:

> I don't really have any gora mates, I mean where I live is mostly Asians [...] I've been out in central London a few times and last time a group of goras called me a paki bastard, I feel like [...] it's better to stick to your own. At least I don't have to feel nervous when I go out local, I mean, it's mostly Asian. I like my culture, if people don't like my culture then they can fuck off – I don't want to know them, the only I difference I think is the more well educated goras, I don't think they are as racist, but there aren't that many of them around, its mostly the chavs.

Pankaj, Male, 19, Hindu Orthodox College Student.

> I think it's better to stick to your own community, most of my friends are from round here and we do everything together; our parents are friends, like our mums go to the Gurdwara together. When I am with my own I feel most happy for sure, I think white people prefer us to stay separate [...] that's the impression I have always got, I think they are racist towards us Asians. I feel stronger when I'm with

> my own people, like we are a strong community. It's like that where I live the Asian are all one big community, and there are a lot of us. I don't feel the need to go outside of my own community, like there's no pressure to do stuff that we would get in trouble for, like smoke or have boyfriends like the goriah do, we know what we can do and what is acceptable.

Talwinder, Female, 22, Moderate Sikh, Masters Student.

> My mates are all Sikhs, like that is what I have grown up around. To have gora mates I would need to go out and look for them you know? Like I would have to make an effort to make them as friends, there ain't that many goreh round here that aren't like that. They are racist, I know trust me, and they have been racist to me many times and even to my mum when she is wearing her Indian suit walking home.

Pritpal, Male, University Student 21, Practicing Sikh.

Having a strong sense of 'Indianness' or being rooted in the ethnic community was often propagated by being brought up within a locality where there was an established minority community, and the community organisation and social networks that were established early on in life. Young people who felt this sense of being rooted in their immediate ethnic community would often have parents who were involved in the community and took their children along to Gurdwara and Mandir from an early age. Their experience of their own community was thus a positive one, with positive contact, a sense of commonality and shared values. This feeling of comfort and belonging formulated on positive experiences, was further strengthened for some individuals by negative contact experiences with white British people, and therefore there were push-and-pull factors in establishing a sense of belonging.

It seemed to be a double-edged sword in many cases. Some young people born and raised in predominately 'white' areas found themselves as outsiders; they felt isolated and often alienated because of their skin colour, which they felt marked them out from other young people. They felt that living in a white area made their difference more visible, and this made it harder to fit in. Some of the young people

who felt this way were the most rootless of all the respondents, they did not have significant ties with their ethnic identity, they wanted to fit it, but they felt rejected by the white British people they lived near, as well as the ethnic community that they felt they should have some tie to – which was, in reality, something of an empty concept for them as they had not been exposed to cultural traditions in the same way as those young people who were from areas with a greater degree of ethnic diversity.

These young people felt rootless and had neither bridging nor bonding capital. Robert Putnam has developed the idea of 'hunkering down' to describe those individuals who, particularly in diverse communities, may chose to limit their social contracts both with in-group and out-group members (Putnam 2007). The issue here is more *a lack of choice*; these young people felt a sense of rootlessness specifically through their lack of choice, they felt a sense of rejection from both the in-group and the out-group, and some of these young people had no sense of an 'in' group; both groups were seen as outsiders. In terms of Berry's typology, these young people were 'marginalised' (Berry 1997).

> Belonging? I don't feel l belong anywhere, the goreh where I live they just hate us cos we are Indian, and other Asians just think we are gorafied 'cos we live in a white area.

Ria, 18, Female, Very Moderate Hindu, University Student.

Conversely, however, there were some respondents who felt that growing up in a predominately white area had made them more 'English' or 'British'. For them, the greater exposure to white British people had led to them feeling themselves to be 'less Indian' and 'more westernised' in their behaviour. They felt that the 'British' side of them was stronger that the 'Sikh' or 'Hindu side', and that growing up in a white area meant that there was greater separation between them and the more 'Indian Indians'. This was all seen in a very positive light, and was often a source

of pride. The way this was described in the interviews by some respondents as being almost like a sense of cultural superiority, the ability to assimilate and move away from traditions such as having Indian friends, eating Indian food, attending temple, etc. was understood by some young people as 'moving forward'. It was social progression and a marker of being a member of the better class of British Indian.

Thus living in a predominantly white area could mean feeling a strong sense of being accepted by white British people and society, or it could mean a sense of total rejection by the latter. In some cases it meant that young people felt 'lost': not white enough for the British people in their immediate locality, not 'Indian' enough for their wider community. I found here that the type of contact experience, racist/inclusive, respectful/discriminative that these young people had shaped their ideas about where they could fit in and how accepted they really were. It is important to note here, that symbols of religious or cultural markers were seen as being the key reason why some Indians could be accepted and others not, turbans and patkas, alongside tikkas, having Indian food in your lunchbox, not taking part in specifically 'British' activities of going out, drinking, having boyfriends or girlfriends, were seen as markers of difference, and thus the reason for a lack of acceptance.

The racial mix of different localities thus affected different young people in different ways.

> I think living in an area away from other Indians has been better for me and the family. Indians they just are so nosy, they judge you, there is a lot of hypocrisy and I don't like all the stuff where people are constantly talking and gossiping about each other. Like I think it has let us be a bit more free. [...] We are all a lot more open minded, like I don't like prejudice towards other people, and especially homophobia, I think a lot of Indians are intolerant towards stuff like that. […] My cousins that live up near Southall way, they are so Indian and backward in their thinking [...] it's 'cos of where they live, they are surrounded by too many Asians.

Harpaul, Sikh Male, 22, University Graduate looking for work.

The idea that Indians who surrounded themselves with other Indians were 'backward' was again a theme in Harpaul's interview. Harpaul lives in an affluent part of North London, where the social mix is predominantly white middle-to-upper class British people. In his interview, Harpaul described his childhood as being what he called 'very British'; he was not encouraged by his parents to learn to speak Punjabi, or attend Gurdwara. Harpaul described his parent's decision to move into a 'white area' as a deliberate choice:

> Mum and dad wanted to get away from other Indians, and start in a new area where I could make more decent friends and they wouldn't be forced into all that Indian Punjabi stuff.

Harpaul's parents are both well-educated professionals, whom he described as wanting to provide the 'best' education for their children, hence their move to affluent Chelsea with its good preparatory schools, which Harpaul and his siblings attended. The move away from what he described as 'Punjabi stuff' was deliberate. He explained that by this he meant moving away from areas where his parents had immediately settled following their arrival from India, namely East London, where everyone seemed to know each other, and there was 'a lot of Indian culture', restaurants, music, the local temple and so forth. His perception of living in a part of London with a strong Indian community presence contrasts strongly with that of other respondents, such as Tarlok and Nirpal mentioned earlier, who derived a strong sense of belonging and identity from living in these areas. Harpaul and some other respondents who lived in 'white middle/upper-class areas' saw this as a positive move away from Indian society and community; it was in fact seen as a move *upwards* on the social scale.

However, for some young people like Kiran and Namrika, the experience of living in a predominately white area was strikingly different:

> Living in a white area is tough; you really stand out. I hated being the only Indian in my class, people picked on me all the time, it was really hard on me. Where I live the goreh are all on benefits, they are chavs. I remember being so embarrassed when mum used to pack paranthas in my lunchbox, everyone used to laugh at me. [...] A lot of the time I just used to chuck it away and not eat, I felt like really stuck – I didn't want to upset mum and dad by saying I didn't want their food, but at the same time it was hard for me 'cos everyone was laughing at me. It just kind of made it even more obvious that I was different, I felt really angry, I mean so what if I have something other than ham bloody sandwiches, but then I felt angry with my parents. My dad was always saying to me, 'stick up for yourself'. 'If you can eat that at home then you should be proud to eat Indian food everywhere.' He just didn't understand, I felt really trapped. It was like when mum and dad used to pick me up from school, dad with his turban and mum in her Indian suit, I felt so embarrassed. I felt sorry for them, but at the same time I just wanted them to dress like everyone else.

Kiran, 19, Female, Moderate-Sikh, University Student.

> Living round here, well we are the only Asian family; I was the only Indian girl in my whole year group. It makes you stick out, it makes you feel like, well you are more aware that you are different. [...] I have felt conscious of it for most of my life. At school, I was an easy target, it wasn't always like racist, but just like, you know you are different, you stick out more. It's not easy, it better to live in an area where there is a bit more of a mix.

Namrika, Moderate-Hindu, 19, University Student.

Young people who grew up in predominantly 'white areas' thus were not automatically less 'Indian' and therefore more accepted. It depended on the individual themselves – their family, their appearance, as well as the specific characteristics of that area. As I mentioned before, ethnic diversity is often higher in some poorer parts of London. Therefore, it is not as simple as greater ethnic diversity leads to diverse social ties; for some young people like Pritpal and Talwinder, being from an area with a large population of Sikhs had meant that their sense of belonging had become entrenched in their ethnic community and culture. However, ethnic diversity within a locality can take many forms and thus impacts young people from minority backgrounds in diverse ways. There are some areas that are ethnically diverse, but substantially poorer than others. Additionally not all young people are able to derive the sense of security and belonging from their ethnic community as Pritpal and Talwinder. Ethnic diversity does not always mean

that there is a settled population of other Hindus and Sikhs living in a certain area, and even if there is, high levels of bonding capital are often not the result.

There were diverse contact scenarios occurring in diverse areas and impacting notions of boundaries and boundaries in diverse ways.

For example, Kiran is from a poorer part of London, Thamesmead, where she felt discriminated against by the 'white chavs' she went to school with.[67] Kiran's experiences of racism and sense of feeling like an outsider were heightened by her parents' insistence, or 'inflexibility' as she called it, in maintaining cultural dress when collecting her from school and making sure she had Indian food for lunch. She felt that living in an area 'full of white chavs' meant that these 'lower class chavs' would happily use any difference to racially abuse her in an overt manner (see Marschall & Stolle 2004; and Sturgis, Brunton Smith, Kuha & Jackson 2014).

Namrika on the other hand is from a more middle class part of London, Greenwich, and is part of a middle-class westernised family, she too experienced being the only Indian girl in her class, but her experience was not overt, it was subtle yet still powerful in creating a strong boundary between her and the white middle-class people around her. For Namrika it was a more subtle form of rejection. The 'class' and socio-economic composition of an area affected how diversity, or the lack of diversity, impacted sources of belonging for these young people.

Some young people felt that being in a majority white area had made them more open to new ideas and people, away from the judgment they associated with the

[67] Thamesmead is an ethnically diverse area with a high population of black Caribbean and Black African people. Thamesmead has long been a destination for immigrants from Africa, but traditionally it was one of the most homogenous estates of its type in London, being predominately white and working class residents who continue to remain in the area (42.4 %). The area has a smaller population of Asian or Asian British residents at 7.8% of the total population. *(http://data.london.gov.uk/datastorefiles/visualisations/atlas/2011-rate-diversity-ward/atlas.html).*

Indian community, as Harpaul describes above. Yet for others being in a 'white area' meant that they felt they 'stuck out' even more, as described by Kiran and Namrika. However, as the interviews progressed it was evident that there were many factors at work. A key factor was family background and the expectations that the first generation placed on their children. For many young people whose families did live in a 'white area' and were traditional in the sense of wearing traditional Indian clothes and eating traditional food, as Kiran described above, the feelings of 'sticking out' and being 'outsiders' were heightened. Those young people whose families were less traditional were often less likely to experience racial abuse and subtle prejudice to the same extent, they would not be concerned with their children having Indian food for lunch for example.

However, locality was often influenced by socio-economic factors. Young people who lived in more working class areas experienced British culture and activities in a certain way, yet others who were in more affluent areas felt that the white Britons in their areas did not 'act like chavs'. They felt that the white Britons in their areas were more educated and family orientated, and they were thus happy to take part in their idea of British activities based on people in their immediate areas – such as going out for meals, going to the theatre, meeting for a few drinks, and so forth. Living in a more affluent area often increased the opportunities for socialising in this way compared to lower income areas where such opportunities were constrained.

One of the most interesting ways in which contact affected feelings of belonging and acceptance was the way in which having 'good' contact experiences with outside groups, in particular with white British groups, affected how isolated and sometimes repetitive negative experiences were understood, and the effect these experiences had on the individuals' sense of where they belonged, where they felt

accepted and what identities and sources of belonging become more salient and important to them over time.

5.5 Impact of negative contact on long-term feelings of acceptance and integration

Many of the respondents spoke at length about the different experiences they had had growing up in their particular part of London. Most of the respondents had experienced some racist behaviour in different forms at some stage of their lives. It is important to point out here that, many of the males in my group of respondents had experienced substantially more racism then the females. It was difficult to ascertain why this was the case, but the fact that many of the males had been allowed greater freedom to socialise and go out from a younger age to places such as football matches, pubs and clubs, was perhaps one factor in this.

The most negative experiences of racist behaviour were closely linked to those young people whose appearance rendered them most 'different', specifically in terms of their physical appearance, such as those with turbans, patkas, and those who wore Indian traditional dress or a tikka after Hindu worship. Racist behaviour was understood as the most negative type of contact experience that a young person could have with members of an outside group. This was not restricted to the white British majority, but often also included 'Muslims', or 'Pakis' (British Pakistanis), who were seen as a distinct cultural group, with strong boundaries and animosity towards all 'Indians'. Overall, however, I found that, overt or covert, it was racist behaviour that was often recalled, sometimes with great emotion that led to young people feeling like outsiders.

Racist experiences were common in the sense that most of the respondents had experienced racism in one form or another; however, some respondents had

experienced substantially more racism than others. Locality, physical appearance (the aforementioned wearing of turbans, tikkas or traditional clothing), and the nature of social ties all combined to create a pattern where some were more likely to experience more incidents of racism than others. Young people felt that racism had a deep and profound effect on their sources of belonging and feelings of inclusion and acceptance to different social groups, yet this impact varied from person to person and was extremely complicated. In the interviews, it became evident that the way in which racist behaviour or negative contact experiences were able to impact and affect the individual was affected by the nature of their social ties.

Overall, I found that those young people who had friends who were white, or had gone to school with white people, or experienced white people in a range of capacities, were often able to isolate racial experiences without it changing their overall feelings towards all British people, or the level of acceptance they felt in wider British society. It seemed that by having 'good' experiences and meaningful relationships with white British people, especially of their own age, these young people were able to isolate these racist incidents. Quite often, the people displaying racist behaviour were seen as 'chavs' and not representative of all 'goras': diversity in social ties allowed these young people to have a nuanced idea about the way in which British society was structured. Thus they were in contact with – and had relationships with – a broad spectrum of white people, from which they were able to understand that not all British people had the same attitude towards them.

Payal spoke at length about how meeting new people changed her perceptions of white British society, breaking down the stereotypes that she and her parents had had, as well her ability to have white friends:

> It wasn't until I got to Uni that I realised that not all goreh are racist. I wasn't really friends with any white people growing up, they are really racist and chavvy. If I hadn't gone to Uni I would not have realised that goras are not all chavs [...] mum and dad always said that goras don't like us Indians being here, and I used to believe them 'cos of all the gora chavs where I live were so racist. I told my mum that actually not all goras are like that. [...] They have their classes too, my Uni mates are a much higher class than the chavs where I am from, they respect my culture, and they are educated and come from decent families.

Payal, 20, Female, Gujarati-Hindu, Moderate Hindu, University Student.

Conversely, many of the young people I spoke to who had developed a strong sense of being outsiders from what they saw as 'white' society and those who had less diversity in their social ties and meaningful social exchanges, often came to believe that racist, or discriminatory behaviour towards them from white people, exemplified 'what all goreh[68] are like' and the racism and derogatory feelings that all white people felt towards them.

> All goreh are racist, some of them are just better at hiding it, the chavs are more blatant about it that's all. The more posh goreh pretend to be too educated to be racist, but they are, they would never let their kid marry an Indian, or have an Indian work for them. I have worked with chavvy goras and posh ones in the building trade. They hate Indians; they have all been racist in one way or another. They have resentment that we are here and we have our business and we make money.

Satnam, 22, Male, Moderate Sikh, Wears Turban and has uncut beard. Works as Builder in family business.

> When white people look at me all they see is a 'Paki'. I have been called a paki so many times I have given up even thinking that white people will ever accept me. It's not just the young ones, even the old people, they way they look at us Asians, they hate us, they don't want us to be in their country; they want it to go back to when it was all white.

Nirav, 18, Male, Orthodox Hindu, 18, University student.

The pattern that emerged was that it did seem that one of the most important ways that contact could affect a sense of belonging was the way that having social ties and a history of positive contact experiences with white people allowed young

[68] Term used to collectively describe all white British people

people to understand that there were differences between people, and that racism and prejudice were not necessarily a given characteristic for all white people. They were thus able to isolate negative experiences and not allow them to cause feelings of resentment and rejection because they had friends or colleges, or neighbours who 'weren't like that'; the extent to which boundaries between 'us' and 'them' were affected by racist social experiences was often determined by this ability to isolate. (For a socio-psychological perspective of this 'secondary transfer effect' of contact, see Forbes 2009: Pettigrew 2009 & 2011). Young people with deeper longer lasting social ties with white Britons were thus able to isolate the superficial racist exchanges which were predominately from white British strangers.

It is important to note here that some of the respondents had experienced racist abuse over a period of time, either currently or while growing up, for these young people, these experiences had become very hurtful and damaging, they led to strong feelings of disattachment from British society and feelings of exclusion. These negative contact experiences shaped their understanding that there was a strong boundary between themselves as Sikhs or Hindus and white British people. Some of the most powerful feelings of dislike and animosity towards white British people came from some Sikh males like Satnam above, in particular the orthodox Sikh males wearing turbans and uncut beards. These young men were more unique in their appearance than Hindu males – for whom there is no specific demand to have uncut hair. This had made them targets for racial abuse over the years; the abuse commonly took place in passing from strangers in a superficial context, but had deep consequences.

My findings thus largely concur with those of Heath and Demireva (2013) who found that 'perceived discrimination has some of the strongest effects on negative outcomes' (Heath & Demireva 2013: 177). I found that discrimination was often

the biggest obstacle to a sense of British identification; my findings are thus also consistent with those of Maxwell, who has shown the importance of perceived discrimination for a lack of British identification (Maxwell 2006). I will explore these themes in the remainder of this chapter.

5.6 Reactive identities and 'bad' contact

There have been few attempts to assess the existence of 'reactive ethnicity' in Britain. I mention this here as the role of contact in what Rumbaut calls 'a hostile reception' is integral. As I have shown, negative contact experiences with the white majority can lead to young people almost giving up on being treated as British. For some young people who are from more conservative, traditional families, their social networks are often with other Sikhs and Hindus and this is just what they prefer. The affect of negative contact experiences highlights to them how they should stick to their own. As Pankaj states:

> I don't really have any gora mates, I mean where I live is mostly Asians [...] I've been out in central London a few times and last time a group of goras called me a paki bastard, I feel like [...] it's better to stick to your own.

Pankaj, Male, 19, Hindu Orthodox College Student.

Hostility in this context seems to push young people back into their social worlds made up of other 'Asians' – if this is what they experience initially. The difficultly for me as a researcher lies in ascertaining and demarcating how bad contact experiences can deepen and strengthen ethnic identities. I find overall that for some young people, there is an 'ethnic revival' which is not solely the result of negative contact, but rather that hostility and a sense of outsiderness as well as a sense of clashing values – which are experienced and assessed in the sphere of social contact – may well impact this 'reactive identity'.

As I have emphasised, not only are contact experiences diverse, but the way in which they impact that individual's sense of belonging depends on a range of factors. Some young people from areas with higher diversity already have friends from Sikh and Hindu backgrounds and so hostility when it occurs can seem to justify their existing social networks. Some have a more ethnically mixed social network and so when they experience hostility they are able to isolate these negative experiences to 'chavs' who are not like 'my gora mates' and so forth. There are young orthodox Sikh males who look different, but feel like they 'are still one of the lads', yet because of the hostility they face, the name calling and the teasing of their turbans and beards, and their sense of disappointment, they opt to 'stick to other Asians'. However, I would not say that hostility for them evokes 'an ethnic revival', their ethno-religious identities are very strong from the outset. Hostility rather makes them feel like they cannot be 'British'.

These young people do not fit into any neat typology. But there is a smaller contingent of people whose stories are interesting in terms of this idea of ethnic revival insofar as hostility has heightened and intensified their sense of 'being a Sikh' or 'a Hindu'.

Rajan P – a young moderate Sikh – was the most striking example of what could be seen as a young person who had developed what may be seen as a 'reactive identity' through his direct experience of hostility and racism. Rajan P and his family lived in an ethnically diverse part of south London, yet despite the heterogeneity in his neighbourhood, Rajan told me that he felt constantly singled out. In London, ethnically diverse areas are often poorer areas and Rajan explained that his area was in his eyes 'full of chav goras'. He outlined to me in great detail the many incidents of racism he experienced from these 'chavs' in his local area, and from those he referred to as 'blacks'. This hostility had a profound impact on

his life growing up, he explained, since he had had friends from all races and felt like he fitted in when he was a child. As a young teenager, Rajan felt that this had changed dramatically. As a teenager, Rajan experienced racist bullying at school and bullying from 'white boys' cemented his feeling of being an outsider. At the same time he felt like he was old enough to see how prejudice and discrimination was widespread in British society:

> That's when I thought 'Fuck it'. I went home and I told mum and dad, 'I want to keep a pug from now on'. I really thought that they would be happy but they were just shocked, they couldn't understand it, mum started crying! Dad used to wear a pug, but he took it off years ago. He was just shocked, he just kept saying 'Why do you want to make your life harder?' I told them straight that if I going to be an outsider than I'm going to do it properly, I'm gonna wear a pug, I'm going to be a Singh and I want people to treat me like a Singh, at least the Singhs will know I'm a Singh, at the moment I'm just like in no man's land. I want to be more Sikh, I want to been seen as a Singh. [...] I just felt like I didn't really belong anywhere so I thought, if I am a proper Sikh, like I will feel more secure.

Rajan P, Male, 33, Moderate Sikh, Unemployed.

Rajan told me how hostility in this context had made him want to be 'more Sikh'. Rajan is not an orthodox Sikh in his beliefs, but he does wear a turban, and he wears it with great pride. He started attending Gurdwara more and became more active in community organisations. He also told me how he made more 'Sikh mates' and felt that they respected him for what he had done. Rajan's story does concur with the wider themes of this notion of reactive identity. Here is a young man, from a moderate family, none of whom wear turbans, nor are they especially traditional in their beliefs. In fact, Rajan explained how after the racial abuse suffered by his father, his parents had made a very conscious decision not to have their sons grow their hair and keep turbans for fear of the isolation and prejudice they might encounter. Rajan's experience of racism and hostility from a young age accounts for a rise, rather than erosion of his ethnic and religious identity. (Rumbaut 2008: 3). Rajan's experience shows how the interplay of hostility and

reactive identities happen on the ground. It is a specific example of how hostility and ethnic revival can play out in multi-ethnic identities.

Rajan's experience is also interesting in the sense of the difference between his attitude and that of his parents. His parents experienced racism, he said, and his father was willing to remove his turban in a desire to be less visible. Rajan and many other second-generation young people are not willing to accept either racism or discrimination. Rajan made the choice to become more visible. In a context where he was already experiencing racism, he made the conscious choice to become more of an 'outsider' and thus expose himself potentially to even more prejudice; his expectations of fair treatment were intrinsic in this. (See Heath & Roberts 2008)

As I have outlined in this and the previous chapter, a hostile reception is not confined to majority-minority relations; young people can experience 'hostility' in different contexts, and hostility is not necessary racial. Some young people felt a sense of hostility and outsiderness from people from their own ethno-religious background. The reaction here was sometimes, but not always, a strengthening of their sense of Britishness, or their attachment to a particular segment of British society. Reactive ethnicity on the ground is more complex than may be assumed; it is not confined to an interplay of majority and minority. Although this can occur, as Rajan's story exemplifies, hostility from members of the community can also lead to a reaction. On occasion, it can lead to a *reactive Britishness*. Sonia, Ashia and Tejin explained how this had happened to them in their own social contexts.

> I don't want to be like that, me and my friends, we go theatre, cinema all different stuff, these typical Asians they aren't interested in doing anything that isn't Indian, I think Sikhs and Gujeratis are the worst for it, they all hang around in big gangs […] I don't want to be like that typical 'Indian, Indian' girl. I don't want to be like them, I've realised; that's why I have all white mates now.

Sonia, 20, Female, Very Moderate Sikh, University Student.

> I feel so outcast from my own community, like goras, they are more accepting of us. They are less judgmental. I always think of myself as British first nowadays 'cos I've seen how Asians can just make your life hell if you don't do what they want you to. British people are more accepting.

Ashia, 22, Female from an Orthodox Sikh-Punjabi Background, Care Worker.

> I have all white mates, and I am happy about that, they do accept us. I feel more at home with them than my own community, I feel more British than 'Indian' or Guj; I think the fact that I hate the double standard of Indians in this country has made me more open to being a proper Brit if I am honest. [...] My community has always judged me, when I've done something; I've been the topic of many discussions.

Tejin, 24, Male, Moderate Gujarati-Hindu Background – Agnostic, City worker.

I have thus found some evidence that broadly concurs with the existing literature of an ethnic revival (Rumbaut 2008). Hostility and specifically racial prejudice can lead to an ethnic resurgence and higher engagement with ethnic and religious identities. But I have also shown that hostility from 'the community' can lead to a revival or deeper sense of engagement with British society as a reaction to a sense of outsiderness from the ethnic community.

5.7 Shared values

What became evident in the process of my fieldwork was that the notion of commonality and shared values was extremely important for most of the young people I spoke to. Both young Hindus and young Sikhs, males and females, spoke at length about how important it was to them to surround themselves with people who have similar values and moral outlooks. It is not surprising given that most people look to similar personality traits and common interests when forging meaningful relationships with people, but the ideas presented during interviews went deeper into this. Similar value systems were seen as extremely important in fostering meaningful relationships, and thus affected the nature of an individual's social ties. Additionally, similar family values, and upbringing were seen as crucial in determining who was 'like us', as well as determining where other people stood

in the social hierarchy described in Chapter One, where less desirable, less educated young people, white and South Asian, were seen as the 'chavs' or 'Indian Indians', and were thus unlikely to become part of that particular individual's social network.

At the beginning of this chapter I sought to understand:

- What are the mechanisms by which contact can shape sources of belonging?

I found that contact within group and inter-group shaped identity formation and belonging (as well as the desire to belong) through the recognition of shared and clashing values and by being the instrument by which young people assessed their acceptance, feasibility as members and the extent to which being part of the group, or sub-group, became important to them (desirability). Shared values could act as strong drivers to feeling included and integrated, yet racist exchanges and lack of respect for ethnic cultures were becoming the biggest obstacles to some young Sikhs and Hindus feeling a sense of Britishness.

The importance of social contact experiences here is that it was social contact experiences that led to young people becoming aware of the similarities and differences between themselves and members of other ethnic groups, or members of different segments within the wider British and British-Indian community. The current level of diversity in the social ties of many of these young people was greatly influenced by the contact experiences they had had with different people from a young age.

There were in fact a great range of contact experiences that these young people outlined to me. Broadly speaking, two main categories emerged: the brief and more casual contact experiences that were often made in passing with strangers and the

deeper more meaningful contact with friends and family and acquaintances. Contact could thus be superficial or it could be in the context of a deeper more meaningful exchange. I found that the more overtly racist experiences were mostly from strangers in the more superficial contact scenarios and often from 'chavs'. While this is unsurprising as friends and family are unlikely to display discriminative behaviour, the impact of superficial negative contact from strangers should not be overlooked.

What I found is that these more superficial experiences were from a young age instrumental in these young people assessing their own belonging to wider British society: those with positive superficial experiences from a young age were more likely to go on to have more meaningful relationships with white Britons early on. These casual racial experiences were extremely powerful in putting up boundaries between young people and British people, or a particular segment of white British people. Some young people were able to have more positive experiences later on, which eroded the strength of these historical boundaries, but those with repeated negative superficial experiences from a range of white Britons often had less diversity in their social ties as they grew up and thus as adults, their boundaries were less permeable. Superficial exchanges could thus be extremely influential in shaping social worlds and the positioning permeability of boundaries from an early age.

Superficial contact, however small, made it clear to the person involved that members of a certain group or specific social segment had something in common with them, or alternatively, that they were completely incompatible with the value systems they had either created for themselves, or that were deeply entrenched in them by their families, religion or culture. Value systems themselves were extremely varied amongst respondents. For those young people with a strong sense

of 'being a Hindu' or 'Being a Sikh', commonality and shared values were often based around important religious beliefs.

For example, many of the Hindu respondents spoke about how they could never be friends with people who 'ate beef'.

> Goras and that, they eat beef, like I don't even want to go in restaurant that serves beef. [...] I've been out with a mixed group before and people have ordered it and eaten it in front of me – they have no respect. I don't want to hang out with goras like that who blatantly insult my religion to my face. Better to stick to your own I think, then these things don't happen.

Vinod, Male, 25, Hindu Orthodox, Property Developer.

For some young Sikhs, the moral behaviour of other people was often an issue given their commitment to the teachings of the *Guru Granth Sahib*.[69] Sikh males who wore turbans or *Patkas* also spoke about the notion of 'acceptability', as well as shared values and morality. They wanted to have relationships with people who would accept them as they are. On further discussion I found that most of the respondents were actually talking about their physical appearance and the fact that wearing a turban or having an uncut beard was extremely salient to them in day-to-day life, and they were continually conscious about only having meaningful relationships with people who would accept the way they looked and what this symbolised and meant to them as practising Sikhs.

Typical responses included:

> Being a Sikh does mark you out, from when you're a kid, that's it, you are different. I had my Amrit Shak the age of 5 so I have never cut my hair, never, and I never would. I am proud of what I am, and its not just that, I want to be seen professionally as a Singh, so when I am successful in my career people will look at me a see a professional, successful Sikh, and I think that that reflects well on the Sikh community as a whole. But you have to choose, you can either be a Sikh or be a British person, you can't be both. It's on both sides, the Indians won't really take you seriously as being a Sikh if you hang about with goras, but the goras won't think that you are anything else than a Sikh, or they even understand what that

[69] Guru Granth Sahib Ji is the religious text for all Sikhs. It provides a behavioural and moral code for all members of the Sikh religion.

> means, to be a Sikh, they won't accept you as being a British person, or just a regular 20 something guy. It's cos we look so different. [...] The funny thing is that I am into football, Liverpool!!! I like going out, I don't drink, but I don't judge people that do, but I like going cinema and out for meals and stuff, and I love to travel, but if you have got a pug[70] and a beard, to the white people, you are too different to be part of them, which is a shame 'cos I like a lot of the same things, but being a Sikh, a kathar[71] Sikh, means you are too weird and look too weird to just be one of the lads, so you are better off sticking in your own community, at least you get a bit of respect there.

Pritpal, University Student 21, Practising Sikh.

Pritpal's interview gave great insight into the life of a young British Sikh who wears a turban and keeps an uncut beard. Pritpal's entire family are what are known as 'amrik shak'. This means that they have been baptised in the Sikh tradition and so follow the teachings of the Holy Book, the Granth Sahib in day-to-day life. Pritpal lives in Camden, London, which is usually seen as a fairly diverse and tolerant part of London, but his experiences show that looking different, in the way he feels he does, makes him stand out regardless of how racially mixed an area is. In his interview, Pritpal described the feeling of rejection he felt at the hands of whites, males in particular, who judged him on his appearance and did not want to know that he enjoyed the same activities as other young men his age. These racist experiences led Pritpal to believe that white people in general would never accept him on the basis of his looks, that they were racist, and narrow-minded. The notion of 'respect' thus became extremely important. Pritpal described how he needed to feel that people with whom he was friends respected his appearance and his religion, and he felt this was best achieved by surrounding himself with other Sikhs, with his 'own community'.

Casual contact experiences, be it at school at an early age, on the bus, on the train, walking down the street, or buying a newspaper at the shop, were not random unimportant events. For most of the respondents, over a period of many years, these

[70] Pug, is Punjabi for turban.
[71] Kathar Sikh refers to a Baptised Sikh.

small social exchanges were working, consciously or unconsciously, depending on the individual, to help these young people carve out a place for themselves. This carving out was often done by meeting people and seeing if they had similar morals and values to the ones that the particular person held as being important. It was therefore contact – and the information that contact provided – that influenced decisions about whom they wanted to have as friends and which groups they wanted to be a part of, and those that they wanted to avoid.

When politicians and social commentators such as Trevor Phillips (2005), David Cameron (2011) and others have spoken about a crisis in integration, they have assumed that people from ethnic minorities are strongly rooted in their own communities in a unique way and at the expense of their integration into wider British society. As a result, a strong ethnic identity is often seen as problematic for an integrated society (Platt & Nandi 2013: 1). This essentialisation of these young people does not show the intricate mechanisms that work behind whether a person feels a sense of belonging or not, and whether or not they feel accepted. A sense of belonging is often based on feelings of acceptance, which, as I have shown, is not solely in the hands of the individual.[72] This idea that ethnic minorities are fixed and unchanging does not show the way in which these young people move in and out of different social situations and different groups, assessing their own acceptance and integration based on a myriad of factors. Integration is not a one-way street. I have shown that the way that integration is formulated is complex, given the complexity of the social worlds these young people describe. Their membership and sources of belonging often change all the time and overlap. Young people move in and out of groups and sub-groups, assessing their compatibility, and try to reach a place where

[72] An empirical example lies, I believe, in the publishing of the British government's White Paper on 'Secure Borders, Safe Havens: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain'. The paper outlined the duties of newcomers to conform to a sense of a shared identity, yet the issues of racism and prejudice, which may significantly impede the latter, were only mentioned in passing (Bloch & Solomos 2010: 9).

they can best integrate into whatever specific element of the social strata is best suited to them and the life they want to live.

These young people conveyed how contact and the information it provides in different scenarios can highlight shared values, and this becomes extremely important for young Sikhs and Hindus as they seek to carve out a place for themselves in a multi-cultural society. Once the existence of commonality and shared values is accepted, then the values themselves often lead to meaningful relationships, within their own 'groups' as such, but also on the outside, with members of other social or ethnic groups.

Interestingly, I often found that shared values were more powerful in forging relationships and creating a sense of belonging than simply belonging to the same ethnic or religious group. I have outlined the way in which negative contact affected some young people, but many respondents spoke about the positive experiences they had had with white British people that had led to many strong bonds and friendships. Here, contact broke down perceived prejudices, but went further to dissolve boundaries and foster a sense of belonging and acceptance.

> Mum and dad used to tell me not to mix with goras, especially gora[73] girls, my parents think that goriah[74] are really bad; they drink, they smoke, they get pregnant and have kids really young, so I do kind of understand why they were like that; they were trying to protect me I guess. Growing up, even though we lived in a pretty mixed area, I stayed away from the goriah and made friends with other Punjabis, some of them were like daughters of mum and dad's friends from the Gurdwara or from my dad's hockey team, so we kind of got really close as mates. I didn't really have anything to do with goreh, like they weren't my friends. Mum and dad wanted me to get good 'A' levels and get into a good Uni, so they kind of forced me, I guess to stick with the 'good Indian girls', whose parents they knew [...]. The more I hung around with them, I could see how like our upbringing was the same, but they were totally different from me! They were really into Indian boys and Bhangra, but when I was that age, I was really into like Indie music and rock. It was when I started Uni that I started making friends with a mix of people, 'cos universities, I think are a lot more mixed. Now my three best mates are white! I realised that actually they are really educated as well and they have really good families, so all these ideas that mum and dad tried to pass off were actually

[73] Gora Girls, refers to white British girls.
[74] *Goriah*, refers to white British girls.

> rubbish, if anything they are less gossipy and bitchy than my Indian mates. We have music and theatre in common, plus we study the same thing so we do all our work together, but it wasn't until I got to know them properly, going to lectures and living in halls together that in realised how much we had in common.

Sonia, Sikh-Female 20 university student from London.

Sonia lives in Greenwich in South-East London, an area that has close proximity to areas such as Woolwich and Plumstead with a strong presence of Hindus and Sikhs. In her interview, she described the importance of community organisation and community networks in her childhood, as her parents were involved in the running of the local Gurdwara, and so their friends were those other Sikh families who attended this temple. As outlined in my chapter on 'Social Worlds', the local place of worship was an important boundary marker for families like Sonia's. As she described above, her parents wanted her to involve herself in the local community in the same way, and make friends with the daughters of their friends. Her parents did not want her to start 'acting white' and having white friends, they disapproved of the behaviour of 'white girls' as she describes above. Like other young women I spoke to, Sonia describes a slow realisation that the Indian girls from her own community, who were assumed to be 'like her', were in fact very different. She described getting older and developing her own taste in music and fashion, and realising through contact with other young Sikhs that in fact there was a clash of interests. She described a strong feeling of wanting to move away from this group of friends and the community network when she started university and was able to 'start fresh'.

Sonia's experience shows the role of contact and social ties in highlighting differences, even within her own community, between living with her parents and then attending university, and the way in which as she grew older she was able to assess the feasibility and desirability of maintaining these relationships through this contact. Sonia explained that by the time she started university she knew what was

important to her, and so made friends on the basis of similarity and interests. Her friendship with other Sikh girls had made her conscious of her own difference and she felt it imperative to move away from this and make friends who were white; she was able to make up her own mind about 'white girls' and 'Indian girls' despite the views of her parents.

Simarjeet, a young orthodox Sikh woman who adheres to the five 'Ks' and wears a turban echoed some of Sonia's experiences.

> I think I have had it worse than anyone, wearing a turban and being a woman. I think British people are quite used to men wearing turbans but when they see me they are extra confused. I have had a lot of abuse growing up and that's why I have always stuck to my own community, mum and dad always taught to stick to other Sikhs. It was hard, but since I have been to university I made some white mates. They are from quite well educated families, I think they still think it is a bit strange but they respect my culture and my Sikhi, they are like the more well spoken, well educated, top class goreh..

Simarjeet, Female 22, Sikh Orthodox.

Nimesh, a young Hindu male from West London described his similar experience, where living in an area where there were many other 'Asians' and the contact experiences he had with these people from his own community led him to understand that he could not have any meaningful relationship with them; they were too different in their approach to issues and their taste in music and social activities. Having worked from a young age in his family's network of shops, Nimesh had meet many white British people, and had come to think that he had more in common with white British people, compared with other people, young and old, from the Hindu-Indian community he had grown up around. Contact thus generated enough information for Nimesh to see that his value systems were more in line with the white British people he came into contact with at work, these people then became representative of all 'whites', and Nimesh felt that he was more comfortable and integrated into British society than Hindu-Indian society.

> Having the shop, you get to meet a lot of people, and to be honest, I'm not being racist or anything, but most of the people who come to our shop are the white people, to buy their fags and their newspapers, I think it's like a more cultural thing, a white thing, to go to the local corner shop and get those things, we hardly see any Asians, and there are quite a lot of them in our areas. I actually think I have more in common with them than the Asian; Asians just don't mix with other people, all my Asian mates they want to go to like Bhangra gigs, date Asian girls and do things the traditional way. I don't feel like I want to do that, so I tend to stay away from them, well I don't really socialise with them that much anymore, we see each other now and then at the temple, or at people's functions but that's about it. When I started going out with a white girl a few years back, they snitched on me big time, all my so-called mates grassed me up to all their parents, and like all the aunties and uncles were telling my parents that I was with a white girl, I was like, fuck this. I realised I don't really have that much in common with them all the time, we have like, grown up and really grown apart.
>
> But white people are different, they come into the shop, we chat about footie, the cricket, where we are going out over the weekend, they are game, do you know what I mean? No judgement, they accept Indians, more than I think like the Indians accept Indians. If you want to be part of the Asian scene then you have to be a pendu,[75] you have to think the same, you have to look the same and you have to be act and want the same things. Goras are different, they accept you, I only date white girls and I have never had a white bloke say anything to me, but the Asians it's like something for them to talk about. If Asians are coming into the shop, they are looking around. 'Ohhhh look Indians own this shop!' 'I wonder how much money they have?' and they don't want to buy anything, I've realised a lot about people working in that shop, and I am sticking with the goras for now!

Nimesh, Hindu Male works in family business of corner shops and off licences, 22 years old.

The pressures and demands of being a Sikh or Hindu female were also highlighted by interviewees, and the way in which contact experiences and relationships with other Sikhs and Hindus had led some young females to feel that they could not fit in and become a 'good Indian girl'. Their experiences with white people led them to believe that they would be more accepted in British society where they could just be themselves and there was no pressure for them to conform to any stereotypes. Contact thus led these young females, much like Nimesh and Sonia above, to move away from their own community and traditions, and become, often deliberately, more engrossed and integrated within certain segments of the white British

[75] *Pendu* is a term coined by British Asians to describe other British Asians who they believe display the negative characteristics associated with people from India. The term itself derives from the Punjabi term 'Pind' meaning village. It is thus used to label people as what is understood as the 'village' mentality; backward and uneducated.

population. Priyanka, a young woman from East London (an area with a significant number of ethnic minority communities) exemplified this sentiment in her interview:

Priyanka I find it easier to fit in with white people more than my own community, I just don't feel like I can be a real 'Indian' or a 'Punjabi' 'cos the standards are too high, there is too much expectation, too much restriction. It's like signing your entire life away and I can't do that. I find that with other Indians in the Asian community, especially as a girl, it's very restrictive, as I've grown up I think I have become less 'Indian', not that I'm not proud of being Indian, I am proud, but I find it really suffocating, I don't really think that Indians will let you be Indian and be a normal like British girl. [...] I actually used to think that we as Indians had to stay out of British culture, especially as I was brought up a lot in the Gurdwara, I went to Punjabi school and played the vaja[76] and did kirtan[77] and stuff like that, but that was more when my grandparents were alive. The more I have been around Punjabis I think it's really put me off them! I am Punjabi and I am proud of that, but there is more to me. I got a job in a telesales place locally in the school holidays and I made friends with some white girls, and it made me think that actually, I have been a bit racist towards them because of the way I was brought up. I think my parents and grandparents have suffered a lot of racist abuse, but things have got better and I don't think it's as bad in the younger generation, I realised that I do enjoy their company and they are from good families too, they aren't like chavvy, they want to be professional, they have family functions and their parents, some of them, are quite strict with them, they have the same kind of family life as I do.

Manmit *How has that made you feel about White British people?*

Priyanka Well, most of my friends at university are white now, so I guess that says a lot! I do have some Indian friends, but I have a lot more in common with the white girls that are my mates.

Manmit *What do you have in common with them?*

Priyanka I like going out, I like clubbing, travelling that sort of thing, but also the good thing is they want to have fun in the same way and they still do have a lot of the same moral and family values that are still important to me. I guess I have just realised that not just Indians have these values but lots of other people too, but it has let me get really close to the girls and they are like my family now. My grandparents keep telling mum and dad to tell me to stop going out with my white friends, they think they will lead me down the wrong path, they think everyone in the community will be talking about me but I don't care. All they want is the good little Indian girl sitting at home, it's suffocating. I feel like they have lost respect for me.

Priyanka, 22, Post Graduate student, Sikh Female.

[76] *Vaja*, Punjabi for harmonium. Instrument often used in Sikh Hymn singing and religious worship.
[77] *Kirtan*, Punjabi Hymn singing and collective prayer.

For many young Sikhs and Hindus positive *contact experiences with white British people were a strong driver of feeling included* and accepted in wider British society, and the way in which contact was affecting feelings of belonging and integration was often through the assessment of acceptability, the assessment of a similar value system and morals and through these young people judging where they were best able to fit in, who would accept them the way they were, and what part of society would be best for them to surround themselves with in order to live the type of lifestyle they wanted. Contact could thus break down negative stereotypes that minority ethnic young people had heard from their parents and grandparents as they were growing up.

In the sphere of a common culture and a sense of belonging to Britain this was positive, but in the home it could create tensions between generations, as young people like Priyanka not only found, through contact, a deeper sense of belonging with white Britons than with co-ethnics, but also came to understand the social opportunities a westernised culture like Britain offered. She spoke of enjoying attending theatre, clubbing and travelling, parts of a democratic egalitarian society, which she enjoyed. This created tensions between her and her grandparents in particular who did not want their granddaughter to be seen in the community as socialising and behaving like a 'white girl with no morals'. The information generated in contact scenarios not only led to some people feeling more at home with the Britons, but for some also feeling a sense of being constrained by their family and community, particularly through not being able to enjoy being British and the social opportunities this warranted. Contact could thus highlight opportunities as well as differences.

Although Allport and subsequent authors have highlighted how contact, under certain conditions, can reduce inter-group prejudice, I found that for many of the

young people I interviewed, it was actually contact experiences, from a young age which had highlighted to them the differences between themselves and other people from various social strata, as powerful as contact between groups could be for some individuals in fostering a sense of belonging, commonality and shared values, *it was equally as powerful in its ability to create divisions and highlight incompatibility between individuals and then groups.*

Alternatively, the role of shared values was important for many of those respondents who had had what they saw as 'negative' contact experiences, as it conveyed to them the differences between themselves and people outside of their 'group', and here again, there was an emphasis on family life and family structure, which were seen as intrinsically linked to compatibility. Unlike the previous respondents, the contact experiences that these young people had with the white British population led them to feel that the strength of separation and boundary between minority and majority was very strong, and definitive, on the basis of a clash of culture, a clash of values and morals:

Typical comments included:

> I just don't think that we as Asians have that much in common with white people [...] it's not just white people, it's blacks and obviously Muslims too. All the Muslims I have ever known have been total gundas,[78] just tramps, total trash, and they still believe in all the weird stuff that is against Sikhism, like all the 3 wives business and all of that, we have nothing in common with them, so what's the point? All the goreh I have ever known have, just well a total different upbringing than them. I remember being at school and the boys were allowed out when they were well little, like 13. I was never allowed out, and then they used to have the girlfriends staying over in their bedrooms! [...] They have no rules, no like structure in their houses. [...] Walking to the station I've been called a paki, by men and women, they were all wasted, tits out, legs out, it's disgusting! What do us as Indians have in common with them?

Savjot, 20, Sikh male, university student.

[78] *Gunda* is a term used by British Asians to describe who they see to be the undesirable members of their community. It has many of the same connotations as the term 'chav' in British society.

> I really had a hard time at school with the white girls [...] where we live is actually quite a white area, so I really stuck out like a sore thumb! Mum and dad and my dadi,[79] they didn't let me cut my hair, the first time I cut my hair was when I was 19 and then most of the family didn't speak to me for ages. They are alright now, I just keep it tied back most of time so I don't think you can really notice. […] They used to tease me so much, saying I had sideburns, saying I looked like a paki, it was awful, it just made me realise that when you are an Asian in this country its best to just make other Asian mates, that's what I did, and I am happy I did that, because they get it. Do you know what I mean? As I got older, then all the white girls they all got boyfriends, and obviously I wasn't allowed, that just made me seem weirder to them I think! They used to get all dressed up and go out at the weekends, then the whole week was talking about it. […] I was never allowed out like that, not that I wanted to! If I had I would have ended up like them most likely, three girls in my year group when I was in year 11 got pregnant, and like their families were alright with it! They just have different morals from us, actually they don't have morals, I don't want to be like that, I mean, I don't need to get dressed up like a tart and get drunk, puking up everywhere to have a good time, I don't need to lower myself to that level.

Hardeep, Sikh-Female, 22, analyst in City Investment Firm.

> Asians don't have that much in common with goras, when you go out, you see that, the white girls look at them, they act so loose, our girls don't act like that, they know it ain't on. […] We have strong values we have like traditions, they don't, you go into any pub or club and you will see the difference in our upbringing'.

Nikhil,19, Moderate-Hindu, University Student.

The pattern that emerged in the process of this research was that contact was central in the process of these young people negotiating their place in their complex social worlds through the intricate interplay between self and other when assessing similarities. People came to represent groups and sub-groups, and the extent to which value-systems were compatible. This compatibility then affected the extent to which young people wanted to surround themselves with this particular section of society, and later, the extent to which they identified with this group, and the level of integration they felt.

Multiple contact scenarios occur with different people from different groups, identities were fluid and feelings of belonging and acceptance shifted for these young people. They could feel that there were well integrated into, say Sikh

[79] *Dadi*, Paternal Grandmother.

community, and then get older and realise that actually, they could not cope with the cultural expectations pressed on them and thus decided that in order to be able to live the life they wanted they would be better off surrounding themselves with middle-class white people. Previous positive contact experiences would make boundaries seem more permeable. Young people would then move from being more involved and embedded in this group (embeddedness was understood – not exhaustively – as being determined by having friends of the same colour, attending temple, listening to Indian music, eating Indian food and attending Indian community events – weddings, engagements and so forth), to engaging in more 'British' activities and having more white friends.

However, some young people were less likely and less able to move and penetrate boundaries based on a range of factors such as (but not limited to) family support, their appearance and the level of racism they had faced from white British people from a young age. The significance here is that boundaries can shift, and it is contact experiences that determine the strength of boundaries between minority and majority, but also the different segments within this, as outlined in the previous chapter. For example, a young person like Nimesh who is brought up with a strong sense of Hinduness and a strong sense of being part of the British-Indian community, can through contact experiences, realise that the boundary between himself and his own community, is actually far stronger than the boundary and cultural separation he was led to believe there was between him and white British people. Through contact, the boundary is made weaker, more specifically the perception of the boundary is reformulated – it is seen as blurry and permeable.

I would like to revert back to the previous chapter. The table below highlights the key themes respondents offered about boundaries, and what they felt determined the boundaries between 'us' and 'them'.

Table 6 Key themes about the basis of boundaries within 'Indian' Society/Community

'Indian Society'

In-group (We are/ they are not) Basis for in-group Bias	Out-Group (They are/ we are not)
'Economic Success'	
• Economically Successful • Well-integrated in mainstream British society – socially and culturally • Willingness to integrate • Symbolic ethnic identity	• 'Indian Indians' • Not economically successful • Have a deep involvement in Indian traditions and practices (music, food, Mandir, Gurdwara) • Lack of diversity in social networks • Lack of social and cultural integration into British society • Unwilling to integrate
'Culture'	
• Proud of being Indian (Sikh or Hindu) • Proud of culture and Traditions • Desire to uphold ethnic traditions • Enjoyment of Indian food, music, celebrations • Feel most happy and comfortable with members of ethnic community	• Gorafied • Coconuts • Turned their backs on their heritage and culture • Too assimilated • Social networks comprise of white people • Social activities based around 'doing white things' • No interest in Indian culture, music, food, traditions, religious activities
'Attitudes'	
• 'British' attitudes: easy going, flexible, tolerant, non-judgmental • British attitudes seen as 'progressive' and 'superior' • Forward thinking instead of 'Backward' thinking of traditional 'Indian' values and attitudes	• 'Indian' attitudes; insular, judgemental, back-biting, gossiping, very involved in ethnic 'communities', jealous, intolerant, rigid, demanding • 'Backward'
'Religion'	
• 'True' Sikhs or Hindus • Proud of religion • Loyalty to religion • Strong sense of unity and togetherness with other 'true' Sikhs and Hindus	• 'Coconuts' • No religious beliefs • No 'Loyalty' to Sikhism or Hinduism • Abandoned their religion by embracing British 'Western' lifestyle

The key point is that contact, and the information generated in these contact scenarios became the capital by which young people understood the boundaries between themselves and others. It is contact that allowed young people to assess their compatibility with others, this then gave them the information they needed to understand the different strands of their social worlds which they outlined to me in such detail in the previous chapter. The table above shows that boundaries were frequently based on the aforementioned themes of Economic Success, Culture, Attitudes and Religion. Contact provided the information by which young people formulate their ideas about the splits and demarcations, as well as the 'brightness' and 'blurriness' (Alba 2005) of the boundaries within their respective social worlds. The young people whom I interviewed showed their deep understanding and concern with their sense of felling accepted in different social spheres, they were intelligent and conscientious young people who did not take contact at face value; they understood contact with a range of people as showing who accepted them and treated them with respect, who had similar values, and who did not.

Boundaries can shift and change composition, the boundary between ethnic minority and British majority can strengthen or weaken depending on the nature of social ties and the contact experiences of that particular individual. Social contact can also affect the nature of the boundary within groups. Young people may find that they fell well connected and integrated with white and South-Asian well-educated people, but equally separate from 'British Chavs' or the less desirable, more 'Indian Indians'. Alternatively, those whom others may refer to as 'Indian Indians', or 'Pendus', may feel a great deal of separation from other Sikh or Hindus, who are too 'White' or who 'Act white', the boundary between them is as strong as say some Sikh males with turbans and beards who feel that they have been racially abused by 'White British people 'on the basis of their appearance, or

between a young person who feels that the colour of their skin is why they are unable to find a job when all their ‘white friends can’.

A crisis in integration (Phillips 2005, Cameron 2011) of ethnic minorities assumes a boundary, a separation between ethnic minorities and white British society, what I have shown here is that these boundaries are determined by a complex interplay between people, but also that they shift alongside this interplay – they are not fixed. Also, young Sikhs and Hindus can feel a stronger sense of belonging in British society than their ethnic communities, or vice versa, a kind of belonging and acceptance far more complex than is generally understood or assumed.

What become obvious during the interviews, and delving into the lives of the young people themselves, was just how powerful shared values could be in bonding people together, regardless of race or religion. The recognition of commonality, and shared family life in particular, commonality in the focus of education and respect for elders, which were seen as intrinsically ‘Indian’ values, alongside the focus on hard work and self-improvement and the emphasis on a ‘good family background’ were extremely important to many of the respondents. Having a wide range of contact experiences and social ties with a range of people gave young people the chance to see who was ‘like’ them, and thus, with whom they could be friends and where they could fit in. This was where contact - and the information that was provided in the contact setting - becomes an important driver in fostering relationships and creating sources of belonging: through highlighting the existence of shared values.

5.8 Bridging capital

Putnam argues that 'bridging capital is part of a process where overlapping networks are created between particular communities' (Putnam 2008). This, he argues, is integral to a cohesive democratic society. My interest was to extend Putnam's ideas specifically to look at the relationship between contact and bridging (and bonding) social capital, and in particular, at the key ideas of 'integration' and sources of belonging. I found that young people who had higher levels of bridging capital did feel better integrated into wider British society; they felt accepted and comfortable in wider British society. However, it was contact experiences that provided the infrastructure where bridging capital could be gained. Some young people who had had a range of positive experiences with white British people were the same young people who lived in areas where there was not a high concentration of other Sikh or Hindus and thus by association, there were weaker levels of community organisation along these lines. This was often coupled with encouragement from their families to be more involved in the 'British way of life', and less in the way of penalties or disapproval from their families and friends for 'acting white' or 'abandoning' their heritage. These young people were better placed to create networks that overlapped into different communities, and this bridging capital did help foster feelings of integration and acceptance in British society.

Shared Values were the most powerful way of creating bridging capital. Once shared values were acknowledged in a contact scenario, the process of bridging began, with many young people feeling accepted and comfortable, the boundary between 'us' and 'them' was weakened, and young people began to bridge into various social segments they may not have started in.

The key issue in the context of a lack of integration or parallel lives is whether high levels of bonding capital adversely affect bridging capital.

For those young people who had a strong sense of being a Sikh or a Hindu and were deeply embedded in social networks comprising of other Sikhs and Hindus who often had stricter, more traditional families encouraging them to maintain this social network, bonding social capital was associated with significantly less bridging across different networks – and specifically for this discussion, less bridging into mainstream British society. This meant that these young people felt less integrated and accepted in British society, but far more happy, comfortable, rooted and accepted in their ethnic communities. However, as I have emphasised, these young people were often the ones who had experienced higher levels of discrimination from white British people, or those who were less able to make friends with a range of people due to where they lived or how they felt they would be judged on their appearance; individual choice does not solely determine bridging capital, societal features and experiences often shape the extent to which bridging can occur.

A high number of young people had both bonding and bridging capital, they were those who, as I have outlined, felt a sense of blurred boundary between all groups, who could pass in and out and enjoy the ‘perks’ of being British as well as the cultural richness and traditions of their own communities when they felt like it. *Bonding capital often does not erode, or hinder bridging capital.*

> I like being both, being British has its perks and being Sikh and Punjabi has its perks; I feel like I can have both. I can go out and be British, then I can go to my cousin's wedding, enjoy everything all the religious and culture stuff, then go back to being a British person. […] I have good gora mates and I have my cousins so I can enjoy being one of the lads and being part of the family too, I don't really think there is a major problem. Goras like to drink and have a good time and so do Sikhs. It might be different if I was a Muslim, there might be more of a conflict for some people.

Satwant, 19, Male, Moderate Sikh, University Student.

> I have a lot of mixed friends, Black, Turkish and a lot of white mates. I would say I live the life of a normal British person, but I enjoy Navratri and Garba, I like having the option to be Gujerati *when I choose*. I don't feel like it has to be one of the other, I feel like part of both.

Hema, Gujerati-Female, 22, Very Moderate Hindu, Civil Servant.

> I feel like I am both. […] Sikh and British, I don't want to be just one, I feel happy being both.

Akash, 22, Male, Moderate-Hindu, Accountant.

> I don't think I have to choose, I love being Sikh and Punjabi, I am really proud of my culture. I am a British person too, I am proud to be both really.

Manpreet, Female, Moderate Sikh, Childminder.

My findings thus concur with those of Heath and Demireva who similarly found that 'bonding social capital does not have the adverse consequences anticipated by the critics [...] high levels of in-group marriage and friendship are compatible with the adoption of a British identity and a positive orientation towards British society'. (Heath & Demireva 2013: 177). I find that bonding and bridging capital are not binary opposite, or either/or. Many of the individuals I spoke to had both bonding and bridging capital. (Heath, Fisher, Rosenblatt, Sanders & Sobolewska 2013: 30).

5.9 Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter I identified the key research questions that I will be addressing:

- How does contact play out in practice; what are the different types of contact experiences that these young people can have?
- What are the mechanisms by which contact can shape sources of belonging?

In this chapter I have shown the many different ways in which the nature of social ties influences feelings of belonging, identity and acceptance. There is no simple answer. The fact is that, as I have shown, contact itself can be good or bad; the impact this has on young people varies tremendously and there is great diversity in contact itself, as well as the range of outcomes it can influence. However, there are some distinct patterns, which I have identified.

For many young people, the best or most positive contact experiences were the ones where they felt accepted, included and respected. Often, white people accepting the cultural differences they had with these young Sikhs and Hindus could be a powerful tool for creating friendships and bonds, as well as bridging capital. On the other hand, the most negative and damaging contact experiences were often expressed in terms of racial abuse, subtle and overt prejudice, and discrimination in which white Britons racially abused young people, mocked and belittled them. The effects of these experiences included feeling rejected and often led to them becoming more engrossed in their own community where they felt accepted, and/or making the conscious effort to make more friends and have meaningful relationships with other ‘Asians’. Contact thus affects identity formation as well as the markings of ‘boundaries’ between ‘us’ and ‘them’. This is done through the contact setting being a place where value compatibility is often

played out. I found that shared values were a clear contributor to fostering a sense of belonging, inclusion and acceptance.

I found that the nature of interplay between minority and majority depended on which *segment* of the latter was involved in the contact experience. For example, as outlined above Sikh males with turbans and beards, were more likely than Hindu males to experiences racist taunts and prejudice. This racism was seen as being more common for them given their distinct appearance, more distinct, it was felt, than other Sikhs without turbans, yet these young men outlined that racist behaviour, and overt racism in particular, was more likely to be from 'white chavs' rather than upper-middle class whites, who were understood to be better educated, perhaps still racist, but not overtly so. However, the situation was not the same for everyone; some of my respondents, orthodox Sikhs from wealthy and educated backgrounds, experienced racism from 'white chavs', yet they felt that they simply did not care about the opinions of these 'chavvy scumbags', they felt in fact that they had passed through any social boundaries through the educational and/or economic success they had achieved; they had little regard for the 'ignorance of chav goras'.

There were also some interesting findings along gender lines. Young women reported that contact with their own communities could often lead to them feeling pressure to conform to ideas about the acceptable behaviour of a 'good Indian girl'. This level of pressure and expectation was experienced by some Sikh and Hindu females, but not males. This segment of the 'community' was therefore experiencing specific pressures and demands, which affected their belonging into British and Sikh/Hindu society.

Young people often stated that ‘chavs’ would still be racist towards them no matter how ‘British’ they felt or how much they tried to blend in. However, compared to other young people who did not have meaningful relationships with other white Britons, the difference was that these did not affect their feeling of general integration and acceptance in wider British society. The experience of isolated racist contact did not impede their sense of belonging to Britain, as they had friends who were white and made them feel like they were accepted and no different from them – they were Brits. Young people with established friendships or a good history of bridging capital were able to isolate the more casual racial exchanges from strangers without it hindering their positive orientations towards the majority in general. On the other hand, those who experienced continual racist exchanges who did not have deeper or more meaningful relationships with members of the white majority found it harder to separate these incidents.

Living in a more ‘white’ area did not affect young people in the same way. Some felt that it made them a target for racial abuse and heightened their sense of being an outsider, others found that they enjoyed being away from ‘other Asians’ who would drag them down (backwards), and then there were those who felt a complete sense of rootlessness – not white enough for the British people in their locality and not Indian enough for other British Asians who had more exposure and greater understanding of their cultural traditions and religions. Ethnic diversity could also mean that the area was poorer and thus some young people felt that they were ‘surrounded by white chavs’ who were explicitly racist towards them.

As I have shown, contact itself is not random. Where you live or how different you look can influence the level of diversity young people have in their social ties and contact experiences. Locality is an important factor to consider when assessing diversity in social ties, and the racial mix of a given locality as well as the socio-

economic status of that locality are important factors to consider. The outcome of these factors can have a diverse range of outcomes on any given individual's social ties and social interactions.

What was evident was that these young people had from a young age undergone a range of contact experiences with people from their own cultural/ethnic/religious group and with members of the white British population, as well as other ethnic groups. Contact Theory itself sets out the way in which, under certain conditions, contact experiences can help to reduce prejudice between different groups, but this chapter has shown the intricate and multi-faceted ways in which contact experiences shape and influence the way in which young British Born Sikhs and Hindus feel about where they can belong in British society, the feasibility and desirability of being 'Indian', being 'British' and so on. The most influential way in which contact experiences helped to shaped young people's sense of identity and sources of belonging was through the recognition of shared and clashing values.

Contact experiences with other young Asians and white British people, highlighted to these young people *what they had in common*, thus starting a process where common ground became an important basis for the feasibility and desirability of having relationships with a range of people. Conversely, it also highlighted differences and clashing values. For many of these young people, contact experiences conveyed to them the incompatibility of relationships between themselves and others. This often then translated into perceptions of differences, not only between the individual and the other, but also into perceived differences and incompatibility between groups. The impact of this was diverse depending on the nature of embeddedness of the individual in his or her own family or ethno-cultural network.

Contact shaped identity formation through the information that was generated in the contact setting. Young people extracted a great deal of meaning from even small social exchanges where they evaluated compatibility, shared values, similar attitudes, similarities in upbringing and family life. These then helped them to evaluate acceptability, openness and the desirability of engaging further with people from within their own communities and with white British people.

For these young people, it is notions of commonality and shared values, acceptance and respect that drive belonging and the desire to belong to any social sphere, be it British or Ethnic. The contact experiences that social ties produce are thus key to understanding how young British Indians experience integration, but also why some young people are more or less integrated in different social spheres than others. Young people have to want to integrate for that process to occur, and the extent to which this 'want' is present is often based on how they are treated by other people, how respectful these other people are, and the extent to which there is commonality between them – this information is generated and assessed in a range of social interactions, which affect young people in different ways.

In terms of Berry's model (Berry 1997), I can conclude that in this particular empirical case, social contact is instrumental in shaping where a person would be situated within the typology given that contact shapes the desirability of belonging to certain groups as well as the feasibility of becoming or maintaining membership to a particular social stratum in their social worlds. Therefore, the 'value' of maintaining ties to both the majority and the ethnic culture and community is largely determined by the contact that these young people have with members of both of these social groups. I can also contend that for these young people, contact is the social sphere where both bonding and bridging capital (Putnam 1995, 2000, 2005) are created, maintained or impeded.

Building on the concepts of bonding and bridging capital, my contribution has been to highlight that contact can create or impede bonding and bridging simultaneously. What I have shown in this chapter is that young people experience a diverse range of contact experiences with co-ethnics and white Britons in everyday life. I have also shown that sources of belonging can change and shift. First, building on the previous chapter, it is clear that these groups are not experienced as homogenous units, but are rather groups comprised of various social circles. Young people can have a range of bonding and/or bridging capital with *various elements* of both social worlds. This process happens everyday whereby the desirability and feasibility of belonging to composite segments of both minority and majority groups is being played out via social contact with the perceived members of these groups and social circles. More specifically, it is a process often contingent on the *information that is generated in the scenario*, which then allows for the assessment of shared or clashing values and acceptance, and thus the strength and permeability of social boundaries.

The current political anxiety over a lack of common culture can be interpreted as an assumption that there are high levels of bonding capital, which impede bridging capital. This is an essentialisation of the reality. My contribution based on the findings of this chapter is to argue, firstly, that bonding capital with co-ethnics does not always exist; secondly, that young people may feel a sense of bonding capital to a particular segment of the minority group and not to others; and lastly, bonding and bridging capital are not either/or concepts, nor are the orientations they create fixed or concrete. As I have shown, previous high bonding capital can be hindered by the breaking down of stereotypes some young people have been bought up with by their parents in respect to white British people and/or a feeling of incompatibility with other co-ethnics. Alternatively, experiences of prejudice and

racism can reduce feelings of bridging and create a reactive bonding capital where young people purposely change their orientations to their own ethnic group to feel more accepted. A sense of clashing values with co-ethnics can lead to a greater identification with the majority. Social contact is the vehicle for this, and bridging and bonding capital and the shifts that occur in these orientations are predominantly based on the information generated in these contact scenarios.

My earlier chapter on 'Social Worlds' explored the social worlds of young Hindus and Sikhs, the groups and sub-groups they understood as composite sections of their social worlds, and the characteristics of the various layers of this world. This chapter has built on these findings by showing that contact and the nature of social ties are instrumental in shaping these intricate and complex social worlds where belonging is far more complex than may have been assumed. Thus any analysis of social words and belonging need to take into account social interactions and the power they have to shape a sense of belonging (or not) in a variety of social contexts; contact can hinder or promote a sense of belonging, or do both simultaneously with respect to different social segments. In the previous chapter, I have shown the diversity of social worlds and I have shown that this is linked to the diversity of contact experiences that emerged.

I will now turn specifically to this idea of Britishness and explore the diversity of understanding there: how do young people feel about 'British identity'?

Chapter six: British identity

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I explore the range of understandings attached to British identity for these young people. Additionally, this chapter will look at how British identity fits in with the other sources of belonging presented in the earlier chapters. In the previous two chapters I have explored the social worlds of these young people, the role of boundaries and social contact in shaping these social words and the sense of belonging that these young people feel to particular segments of their intricate social words, and how this sense of belonging is formulated and experienced.

This chapter will now take this opportunity to look specifically at the notion of Britishness and the reality of national identification for these young people. My aim is to contribute to the on-going socio-political and academic debates on the role of collective identity in multicultural societies using this specific empirical case of young British-born Sikhs and Hindus in London and the backdrop of the issue of 'Britishness' and particularly, the perceived *need* for a more explicit Britishness.[80]

This chapter will thus focus on answering the final of my research questions:

- What are the different understandings and experiences of Britishness?
- How is Britishness accommodated (or not) with other sources of belonging?

The perceived lack of integration of ethnic minorities has led, in recent years, to a renewed debate and new interest in the role of national identity. Specifically, as I have discussed in the introduction to this thesis, leaders have highlighted the lack of

[80] Throughout this thesis I have used the terms British identity and Britishness interchangeably, given that these young people essentially perceive them as the same thing. I continue this practice in this chapter.

'British identity' or 'Britishness', citing the lack of collective identity as a reason why social life in Britain is fragmented, why people fail to 'integrate' and why ethnic communities remain separate from British life (Gordon 2006: Cameron 2011). Post 9/11 and 7/7, policy makers and politicians approached the idea of Britishness as a method for curing the perceived lack of integration of ethnic minorities. Gordon Brown was the first politician to open the debate on Britishness in 2006:

> We have to face uncomfortable facts that while the British response to July 7th was remarkable, they were British citizens, British born apparently integrated into our communities, who were prepared to maim and kill fellow British citizens irrespective of their religion [...]. We have to be clearer now about how diverse cultures, which inevitably contain differences, can find the essential common purpose also without which no society can flourish.[81]

David Cameron has since revived the debate. Speaking in 2011, Cameron outlined his vision for new emphasis on common culture:

> I would argue an important reason so many young Muslims are drawn to it (Islamic extremism) comes down to a question of identity […] we have allowed the weakening of our collective identity.
>
> Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. We've failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We've even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values…[82]

[81] http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4611682.stm
[82] http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/speeches-and-transcripts/2011/02/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference-60293

Like Blair and Brown before him, David Cameron also placed emphasis on the role of community activism and civic participation as a means to promote 'common purpose'. His government, he argued, would introduce a National Citizen Service for young people from different backgrounds to live and work together, thus promoting contact, which would foster a sense of common culture. Cameron ended his speech by saying that such common purpose will 'help build stronger pride in local identity, so people feel free to say, "Yes, I am a Muslim, I am a Hindu, I am Christian, but I am also a Londoner or a Berliner too". It's that identity, that feeling of belonging in our countries, that I believe is the key to achieving true cohesion'.[83]

There has been extensive public debate in the United Kingdom, and internationally on the 'successes of multiculturalism' and the liberal multicultural project, underpinned by the belief that multiculturalism has undermined minority groups' willingness or ability to sign up to the national identity of their country of residence (see Platt & Nandi 2013). Kymlica (1996) and Modood (2007) have defined multiculturalism as 'the recognition of group difference within the public sphere of laws, policies, democratic discourses and the terms of shared citizenships and national identity'. Yet there has been on-going concern about the extent to which group recognition is compatible with egalitarian principles of liberal democracies (Barry 2001; Verkuyten & Zaremba 2005; Platt & Nandi 2013).

Shared National identification is widely regarded in the literature as an important indicator for levels of social cohesion and the incorporation or alienation of minorities (Platt & Nandi 2013). There are broadly speaking two sides of the argument. On the one hand there has been a celebration of the inclusiveness of a multiculturalist society and its accommodation of diverse populations within a common framework (Platt & Nandi 2013; Parekh 2000). On the other hand, there

[83] Ibid.

has been a growing anxiety about the extent to which members of ethnic minorities are seen to be following parallel paths with a potential exclusiveness of strong minority ethnic and religious identities (Huntingdon 1993; Phillips 2005; Cameron 201l).

In the British context, despite the country's tradition of being internally inclusive whilst being externally exclusive in relation to minorities (Joppke 1999: Platt & Nandi 2013) and the attempts to reconceptualise and reformulate the multiculturalist ideal (Modood 1998: Parekh 2000), the unease about its potential implications has remained. This political anxiety has been rooted in a fear of potential separatism, as shown by David Cameron's comments above (Cameron 2011). 'While there are many different versions of the critique of multiculturalism [...] the first step in most critiques is the claim that MCPs will tend to foster separate communities where ethnic groups lead parallel social lives. More sociologically, the hypothesis is that MCPs promote "bonding" rather than "bridging" social capital' (Heath & Demireva 2013: 162).

There has been much debate and academic research on British national identification (see Cohen 1995; Colley 1992a; Colley 1992b; Dowds & Young 1996; Ethnos 2005; Hazelden 2003; Heath & Roberts 2008; Jacobsen 1997; Langland 1999; McCrone & Surridge 1998; Parekh 2000a; Parekh 2000b; Parekh 2000c; Platt 2013a; Platt 2013b; Smith & Jarkko 1998; Tilley, Exley & Heath 2004a; Tilley, Exley & Heath 2004b). However, the issue of data on the everydayness of identity still remains. There is an assumption that minority groups may not sign up to the notion of Britishness, but as Modood points out, we lack the basis for properly conceiving if there is a crisis of shared understanding or whether, according to the more sanguine perspective, difference is accommodated alongside a common national identification (Modood 1997). As Platt and Nandi highlight,

‘there is relatively little evidence on the extent of the nature of minority group identity patterns’ (Platt & Nandi 2013).

We simply do not have enough information about the identity patterns of ethnic minority members to make sweeping generalisations about their identification, or lack of identification with Britishness. ‘Despite the common academic belief in national identity as central to cohesion, a social glue that binds individuals together the evidence relating to minority immigrant identification is not extensive’ (Platt & Nandi 2013: 4, see also Moran 2011 and Reekens and Wright 2013). As Reekens and Wright argue, ‘studies of immigrants’ national allegiance are thin on the ground. This is critical, largely because debates over immigration almost invariably tie ‘successful’ incorporation to immigrants’ loyalty to their adoptive nation’ (Reekens & Wright 2013: 2).

My aim in this chapter is to contribute to this debate by providing the real opinions of young people from minority backgrounds in this specific empirical case.
I will thus make a contribution to the on-going socio-political and academic debate on the role of Britishness by uncovering and presenting the reality *and diversity* of national identification of these young people who are part of the debate, but whose in-depth and individualistic experiences of Britishness are largely missing in the current available literature.

6.2 Theoretical framework and summary

There are broadly speaking two existing theoretical positions, which have addressed changes in minority identification over time. First, there is the argument expounded by Alba and Nee, situated in broader assimilation theory, which states that over time there is a convergence in identities as minority identification gives way to majority identification (Alba & Nee 2003). In this approach, identity assimilation is seen as a movement along an 'axis' (Platt 2014) from minority to majority identification (Gordon 1964: Maliepaard, Lubber & Gijsberts 2010). Herbert Gans (Gans 1979) argues that third and subsequent generations may adopt a more 'symbolic ethnicity', but this would not change the overall trend outlined by Alba and Nee (Alba & Nee 2003). Traditional assimilation theory regards minority ethnic identification as part of a wider socio-cultural process (Platt 2014), in which the strength of minority identification declines over time and generations. This process is, as I have shown in earlier chapters, impacted by the strength, or 'brightness and blurriness' of boundaries (Alba 2005) and is not necessarily paralleled by patterns of structural integration (Portes & Zhou 1993).

The second position is one where writers argue that the idea that identity assimilation is a process which occurs not as a movement along one axis, but rather as two processes which are interrelated yet unsymmetrical (Van de Vijver & Phalet 2004; Casey & Dustmann 2010; Verkuyten & Yildiz 2007). Here, majority identification may increase without minority identification inevitably decreasing. This concept of complementary, interrelated axes of minority and majority psychological acculturation has been popularized by Berry 1997 (see also Hutnik 1991; Verkuyten 2007; Manning & Roy 2010; Schaafsma et al. 2010). [84]

Current academic and political debates have centred on the extent to which

[84] For a more detailed review of the existing literature see Chapter 2.

members of ethnic minorities have not ascribed to a sense of national identification whilst maintaining strong ethnic identities, and the perceived separatism this has caused. Yet there is currently a developing literature that suggests that the picture is far from as bleak as people like David Cameron and Trevor Phillips may have us believe. The evidence that we have to date does not suggest that members of ethnic minorities have weak national identification (Karlsen & Nazroo 2013: Manning & Roy 2010: Masella 2013: Reeskens and Wright 2013). Although these studies are useful, especially as there is limit to the data we have, the more general issue is that these studies tend to focus on national identification of British Muslims only, which is hardly surprising as the need for Britishness has often very publicly been framed as a remedy for the perceived separatism of British Muslims (Cameron 2011). As a result, they do not capture the relative position of Muslim minorities, either by focusing on that group alone (Karlsen & Nazroo 2013), or by focusing on religious rather than ethnic differences (Reeskens & Wright). As Platt and Nandi have recently argued, 'Much of this discussion has focused on Muslim minorities and has paid little attention to perceived or actual identity patterns across the range of minority groups within different societies' (Platt & Nandi: 42). The following chapter will thus go some way towards giving a more complete and accurate picture by focusing on young Hindus and Sikhs in a literature that has paid particular focus to date on British Muslims.

Other recent studies find that in terms of markers of identity, while Muslim men maintain strong religious, and less ethnic identities inter-generationally (Platt 2013), overall, the pattern is that there is a strong tendency across all minority groups for national, majority-orientated identity to increase with time. This is especially the case for second generations, where minority identity declines (Guveli & Platt 2011; Manning & Roy 2010: Platt 2013). I have shown in the earlier

chapters of this thesis that I find that majority-orientated identity does not always increase with time; the picture is far more complex in the groups that I have researched. Nor does minority identity necessarily decrease at the same time; the experiences of these young people do not all follow the same pattern; identity orientations and sources of belonging are diverse and highly individualistic. Additionally, recent studies have shown that in terms of their attitudes towards the white British majority and the perceived inclusiveness of British society, rather than British Muslims, it is the Caribbean group in the second generation who appear to be most alienated, at the same time as having the least invested in alternative identities (Heath & Roberts 2008: Heath & Demireva 2013: Platt 2013a).

The following assumptions are thus by certain politicians: the idea that members of ethnic minorities do not have an adequate sense of Britishness, underlying which lies the assumption that Britishness itself is a clear and tangible concept. There is then assumption that ethnic identity is strong and that the strength of this identity undermines the scope for a sense of collective national identification. There is also the intrinsic idea that minority and majority 'groups' are 'groups' as such, that they are tangible and separate with 'bright' boundaries. As I have shown, these assumptions are highly simplified essentialisations of the social life of these young people.

Other writers have acknowledged the multiplicity of identities and moved away from the idea that identities are singular (Gordon 1964), implying that change can only occur on one axis (Van De Vijver & Phalet 2004). Berry (1997), Verkuyten & Yildiz (2007) and Nimmi Hutnik (1991) have argued that identities can be, and often are, multiple. It has also been argued that individuals with dual (integrated identities, in Berry's typology) are more adaptable to receiving dominating society

compared to those with singular identities (Berry & Sam 1997; Sam & Berry 2010; Platt & Nandi 2013).

One of the most recent papers on the issue of second-generation minority identification has come from Lucinda Platt and Alita Nandi. The writers utilise a large-scale data set: UK Household Longitudinal Study. Overall they find that their analysis of the data set 'clearly shows that after adjusting for age and education, those of minority ethnicity typically express a stronger British identity than the white majority' (Platt & Nandi 2013: 24). They also argue that their results directly undermine the political anxiety of those specifically worried (Cameron 2011) about British Muslims by showing that 'all Muslim groups, of whatever ethnicity [...] identify more strongly as British' (Ibid.). These results are thus consistent with other studies, which have shown that British Muslims do have a strong sense of national identity despite claims and concerns of separatism and parallel lives (Karlsen & Nazroo 2013; Manning & Roy 2010; Platt 2013; Platt & Nandi 2013). The authors go on to state that their analysis in terms of Berry's framework shows that 'across all groups, the most common outcome is for people to be 'integrated', that is, to hold strong minority and majority identities; thus, it is dual identity that is the norm for first generation minorities [...] this is particularly the case for Indian Hindus and Sikhs and African and Pakistani Muslims. [...] among the UK born we see a continued preference for dual identities'. (Platt & Nandi 2013: 32-33). The writers conclude that 'dual-identities are the 'typical' acculturation pattern for the UK's ethnic minorities. Holding a strong British identity increases over generations as the tendency to have a strong minority identity decreases (Platt & Nandi 2013: 40). Platt and Nandi conclude by arguing that 'minority identification does not necessarily imply a loss of national identity [...] the most common pattern in our sample of minorities was to hold strong national and minority identities at the same

time'. (Platt & Nandi 2013: 42). However they argue that data remains an issue as 'there remains relatively little nationally representative work on the patterning of dual identities across minority groups (Ibid.).

Platt and Nandi's findings differ somewhat from my own, differences which can somewhat be attributed to the different data sets we have utilised in our respective research. Additionally they have been interested in generational changes, which I have not investigated here. In the discussion that follows I will show where I concur and where I disagree with these and other similar studies. Unlike other writers who look at a specific ethnic group, or across groups as Platt and Nandi have, my focus has been to look *within* these two groups and examine the diversity of understanding within each social group. Studies looking across groups can be useful in giving us information about general trends, but they can present statistics that hide the diversity within groups, and thus can give a misleading idea about not only the heterogeneity of the group, but also the complex reality and everydayness of identity for people within this group. My contribution in the following chapter will be to investigate this reality for the specific empirical case I am interested in, uncovering real ideas about Britishness and what it means to these young people.

What I have shown so far in this thesis is that some young people do feel a sense of belonging to British society, that this is often based on a sense of acceptance by white British people. Some feel a sense of belonging to a particular segment of the social hierarchy, for example, what they see as middle-class, well-educated white people. Others feel they want to be part of wider British society, but they may feel rejected by the white majority, or they may face 'penalties' from friends and family who do not wish them to 'act white'. There are also those young people who feel separate from British society; their separation may be an affective choice by not wanting to be British, sometimes due to a sense of clashing values and beliefs.

Alternatively some young people feel that the barrier and exclusion has been imposed on them by the white majority. As I have emphasised, there are many shades of experience. Young people from ethnic minorities do not all experience identity and belonging in the same way. I will now explore the diverse understandings of Britishness that respondents spoke of.

6.3 Britishness; negative meanings and experiences

6.3.1. Cultural emptiness

Some of the young respondents understood and experienced 'British identity' in direct comparison with the perceived cultural richness and 'togetherness' of their own 'group'. It was unsurprising, then, that those respondents who felt this way most strongly were also the same young people whose experiences of being a 'Sikh', being a 'Hindu', or simply being 'Indian' were not only positive and inclusive, but more importantly provided them with a strong sense of belonging. British identity was thus often considered an empty notion for these young Sikhs and Hindus as it was seen as being devoid of the rich cultural attributes that constitute an 'Identity' as such; distinctive food, music, religious days, language and community. The latter was drawn on heavily by respondents who defined the notion of 'identity' interchangeably with having a sense of culture, unique traditions and a distinctive community who upheld these traditions. To them, you could not have a sense of identity without a strong sense of community. Britain was seen as fragmented and insular, in comparison with their own ethnic/religious community, which was experienced as having a strong sense of togetherness, loyalty and mutual respect.

> I would say that there isn't a British identity, if you look at people that live in Spain, or Italy and France, well they have their own culture, they like their healthy living and their wine, but there isn't anything like that here, there isn't a culture, there isn't any pride, it's all really mixed up [...]. I don't think you can have a British identity when there isn't a British culture. People have to be together for there to be an identity, like how we are Sikh brothers we have that issat.[85] We are together, there is nothing like special about them […] they haven't got a culture. If you haven't got a culture then you can't have like a British identity 'cos there is nothing to celebrate; it's all like bland. People are all separate; no one talks to each other. We can depend on our community if we need something, the goras,[86] they have no community, they haven't got a culture like we have.

Ranbir 22, Sikh Male, Accountant.

In his interview, Ranbir focused on his own ideas of what it means to have a sense of 'identity'. He spoke fondly of his own family gathering at special Sikh-Punjabi festivals, the smell of the Indian food cooking, the men gathering for a drink, the women of the family congregating in the kitchen preparing a feast for everyone. He described the 'warm feeling' he had at such gatherings, the sound of Bhangra[87] music in the backgrounds, and the inevitable dancing that would occur as the night progressed, and the sound of the Dholki[88] as his aunts gathered to sing Boliyann.[89] This to him was 'identity', this feeling of unity, a strong bond and togetherness, celebrating with special foods and music. Ranbir explained that, in his opinion, to have an 'identity', was to have this togetherness and cultural richness that made him feel happy, secure and bonded with other members of his community. This rich 'Sikh-Punjabi Identity' celebrated with food, music, and traditional dress was to him the definition of belonging to a group. He questioned how this could possibly exist in the British case, as he asked:

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[85] Punjabi word for respect.
[86] Punjabi term for 'white' people collectively.
[87] *Bhangra* is a genre of riff-oriented popular music associated with Punjabi culture. It was developed in Britain in the 1980s by first and second-generation immigrants from the Punjab region of India and Pakistan forming the Punjabi diaspora, drawing from music and song of the Punjab region as well as various Western musical styles. It is seen by some in the West as an expression of South Asian culture as a whole. Today, Bhangra music exists in different forms and styles all over the globe. Today, Birmingham, England is considered to be the hub of Bhangra music.
[88] Indian drum.
[89] *Boliyaan* are traditional folk songs of the Punjab. Passed down from generation to generation, women in Punjabi families recite these songs at special occasions, clapping together, playing the *Dholki* and dancing to celebrate the festivities.

> What is unique about Britain? What culture do they have? You can't have an identity without a culture [...] goreh don't have a culture. They haven't got a culture, of you haven't got a culture then you can't have like a British identity 'cos there is nothing to celebrate, it's all like bland.

Tejas, a moderate Gujerati, echoed Ranbir's idea of culture and community as defining identity:

> There isn't a British identity. That's actually what is wrong with this country. If there was more like pride, then I think people would get on more and like they would have more in common. It's all just really separate, like people living in their little bubbles. I actually wish there was more of a sense of community, but there isn't. If you look at Asians, or say the Gujerati community, my community, then there is a community culture. I don't think there is that togetherness. There is no like sense of community. [...] That's the main difference between Asians and goras, we have our own culture and community.

Tejas 19, Gujerati Male, University Student.

Cultural distinctiveness was thus very important, a culture could only be a culture as such if it was based on something different and unique to that particular group of people; culture was thus seen as the basis of any identity, you could not have one without the other.

The meanings attached to British identity were thus often formulated in direct comparison with other culturally rich and more meaningful identities. Additionally, the idea of a sense of togetherness, of camaraderie and that feeling of support from a community was intrinsic for many of the young people I interviewed. British identity did not exist, not only because there was nothing special, or culturally rich in Britishness or British life itself, but also because British people, meaning white people specifically, were fragmented; they had no sense of community and brotherhood. These ideas were formulated in direct comparison with the feelings of security and warmth provided by their ethnic community. British identity was thus void. As one respondent asked me, '*how can you have a sense of identity when the people don't have nothing to do with each other, they are all split up?* To have identity was also to have togetherness.

Sukhvant's interview was typical of this response:

Sukh. British identity isn't really something I have ever thought about really, it's not that important to me.

Manmit *Why do you feel that way?*

Sukh. I don't know, I guess part of it is because I think identity is really about the group that you belong to the most, so I don't really think that it applies to me in the same way as being a Singh. I don't really think that British identity is that obvious, like that clear.

Manmit *Can you explain what you mean to me?*

Sukh. Well, it's like it doesn't really have any real meaning, I doubt that even the goras really know what British identity is 'cos there are so many different types of people living here now, everyone has their own culture and traditions in their own groups, there isn't a big culture for everyone [...] I don't think goreh have any bond between them that you could call an identity.

Manmit *What do you think that?*

Sukh. Goreh are really split as well aren't they? We have our caste systems, but they have splits, they have their class system. All the chavs you see walking around, well, what have they got in common with the rich and educated goras? They have got nothing in common; they may as well be from different countries. Thing is with us Asians, we have respect for each other, even if you have a rich Sikh family, or a poor Sikh family, they may not be in each other's pockets but you are still Sikh, you still have the bond on a level, goras don't have anything like that, they don't have a culture.

Sukhvant, 21, Sikh Male, Works in family business.

For some young people, the issue was lack of culture, for others it was lack of community and togetherness coupled with the absence of distinctive characteristics to refer to. There was a range of meanings that young people attached to British identity based on what they understood as identity, its necessary components and attributes.

For many young people, the perceived cultural emptiness of British society led them to believe that British culture, and thus, British national identity were either non-existent, or impossible. Their own experiences of their own cultural and religious groups were often very positive; in the interviews many of the respondents went on further to describe the importance of their own ethnic identities and the rich cultural membership and sense of tradition and belonging

that this provided them with. British identity for these young people failed to either exist or be important in the same way through its distinct lack of traditions, culture and richness. The rich fabric of his or her own ethnic identities was thus often used in direct comparison to the culturally empty idea of 'British identity'.

Culture and national identification were closely linked for some of the respondents who found it hard to conceptualise the idea of a national identity without a distinct culture. Many of the young people I spoke to described life in Britain and London as a myriad of cultures, a place where many people lived in their own cultural groups, where people interacted with each other in the workplace, at university or in day-to-day life, but then retreated to their own cultural group, their own segment of the population. Being British was described as superficial involvement; being part of the workforce, being part of a university, but then going home to what was seen as the 'real culture', the real source of belonging – family, traditions, Indian food, culture and unity.

> There is no glue, there is nothing to hold British people together, there is no togetherness no bonds with each other.

Tejas 19, Gujerati Male, University Student.

The lack of 'glue', 'bonds' and 'togetherness' in British society was also focused on by respondents; for these young people, having a sense of solidarity and union was an important part of their own communities, be it the Sikh community, the Gujerati community or the Punjabi community – whichever community they felt strongly grounded in. This was described as a fundamental part of being a Sikh, or a Hindu-Punjabi; the idea that there was definitive bond between themselves and other members of their community group – a bond that could be called upon in times of hardship or need. This was understood and experienced as an inextricable part of this ethnic identity and belonging. Thus, the perceived absence of this bond

and togetherness in wider British society was seen as the reason why British identity could not exist.

It is important to note however that most of the young people who understood British identity in direct comparison with the cultural richness and positive sense of belonging of their own group were the same young people who had had the most positive experiences of being Sikh or Hindu, Punjabi or Gujarati; they were the same people who had a strong ethnic identity and were often those who felt most rooted in their religious or ethnic life, traditions and culture.

So ideas about British identity were often developed in direct comparison to other identities and sources of belonging in young people's lives. The way they felt about their own ethnicities thus impacted the way that they understood and experienced British identity. The nature of social ties and contact with different people thus shaped ideas about Britishness. I often found that the young people with the most negative ideas about British identity and what it constituted, or those who felt that it had no real affective value, were often the same young people who displayed some combination of a number of different factors:

1. Young people with very strong religious identities often from very traditional and religious families, Sikh and Hindu.
2. Young people whose social networks were limited in diversity and who were very engrossed in their own cultural rather than religious identities; 'Punjabiness' or 'Gujeratiness'.
3. Young people who had suffered racial abuse and prejudice from white people – who later came to define British people and British identity as a whole based on these negative experiences.

4. Young Sikh men, who wore turbans and had uncut beards, who saw themselves as visibly different, and thus had experienced racial taunts from white British people.

These young people's ideas ranged from having negative ideas about Britishness to those who felt that it existed, but lacked any real salience or socio-cultural significance to them as an identity as such. These young people often derived the most sense of belonging from their own ethnic and religious identities; for them, the negative connotations of Britishness were most salient, on account of its failure to deliver a sense of belonging and cultural richness, the lack of any bonds between its members, or because British identity had come to represent the isolation and racism they had experienced from white Britons over a prolonged period of time. For some respondents, racism highlighted their difference, and they then consciously chose to move deeper into their own ethnic communities. They saw this as the reason for their negative feelings towards Britishness.

6.3.2 Geo-politics; current and historical

For other young people, the meanings they attached to British identity were not shaped so much by the lack of culture and traits, but instead were more about the negative traits of the country's current and historical foreign policy. During the interviews, these young people did not focus on what British identity lacked, or how it compared unfavourably with other more 'culturally rich' identities, but instead focused on the actions of the country's leaders and Britain's role in geo-political events such as wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. For them there was a 'British identity' and it was determined by the actions of Britain (understood broadly as domestic and foreign policy). There were British traits and values, but these were negative and damning, rather than non-existent. These traits were based on the

actions of the 'British', currently and historically, and the way that these actions had shaped their ideas about what 'British identity' meant. For these young people, British identity was a celebration of Britain. The problem was, however, that Britain had not behaved in a manner that warranted 'celebration'. For these young people, to have a sense of Britishness was to feel proud and celebrate the actions of the country itself. These young people felt that they did not want to celebrate the behaviour and actions of the 'British', and the impact that these actions had had on the lives of other people. British identity was thus understood as a celebration and pride in the 'country', what the country did then, and what it does now, domestically and internationally.

Typical comments included:

> When I see the damage that this country has done to countries all over the world I feel proper ashamed, it's disgusting ain't it? Absolutely disgusting! When you ask think of Britain's identity, that's what it is, divide and conquer, split countries up and then take over. That's what they did to India, that is British identity, colonialism, empire. It's a shameful identity; it makes me laugh now that Britain is trying to export democracy to other countries after the way they have pretty much fucked up the world. It's not something anyone should be proud of.

Nihkil, 19, Hindu, University Student.

> I think England recently has started doing a lot of bad stuff around the world like joining the Americans in Iraq and Afghanistan, I mean they killed a lot of people. [...] I am proud that Britain is a clever country with weapons, but when I see them around the world using all their expensive machinery to kill people who haven't got the same weapons, it makes me feel really sad and ashamed. That's when I don't want to be seen as a British person. [...] If you look at India, we have nuclear weapons, and machinery but we don't start wars. Britain has started wars all over the world and I think that this is part of their identity part of who they are, they are proud of it as well, I think it makes them feel powerful.

Jasraj, 25, Sikh, IT Consultant.

> I think it is hard for us Indians that are born in England, cos' we can't forget what has gone on in the past, if you know what I mean. Our loyalties are always going to be India, but like we can say we have 'British identity' like what you are asking me 'cos British identity is like being proud of the culture of Britain, the culture of like ruling other countries, like how they ruled India. Imagine if we tried to rule their country? They are always saying 'Pakis' should get out and immigrants get all the good jobs, but the British actually have the guts to go into another country and take

> over and make the people of that country their slaves. How hypocritical is that? They don't even like immigrants working in their country. [...] I can never forget what they did to India. That is their identity: 'the rulers of other countries'.

Namrika, 18, Moderate Hindu Female, On a Gap-Year.

Thus current and historical foreign policy was interpreted in a certain way and became symbolic of how some young Hindus and Sikhs felt about British identity. For them, this identity was highly politicised, with domestic and foreign policy dictating what British identity represented and what it stood for. Some young people spoke at length about the British Raj, how the rule of India had affected their grandparents and the sense of sadness and often anger they felt at how their ancestors had been treated by the British at the time. These political contexts influenced the way some respondents felt about British identity. For them, the notion itself was so strongly intertwined with events of the past or current political behaviour that it was impossible for them to embrace British identity in any way. It is important to note here that not having a sense of 'British identity' did not mean not having a sense of belonging to Britain in any capacity. Young people often explained that although they did not feel that they could or wanted to have a sense of Britishness itself, they could still feel included in the looser and thinner idea of living here, being born here, but not a deeper sense of belonging that national pride would entail.

The idea of 'exclusion' was an important part of these ideas: The idea that the contribution of Sikhs and Hindus to modern day British life, as well as historically, was not recognised in an official way or in national celebrations. Particular emphasis was given by some young people to the perceived lack of respect and acknowledgement given to the contribution of Indian soldiers in both world wars. Gurpreet, a young Sikh female whose paternal grandfather had fought in the British Indian Army during the Second World encapsulated the key ideas respondents

expressed about the exclusion of Indian soldiers, and their contribution to British freedom:

> I think British identity is about celebrating all the things that Britain has done, I think it is all a bit imperialist, but that's not really surprising as that is British history, it is not really even that, they just ignore all the stuff that Indians have done for Britain. My Papaji,[90] he fought in the war for Britain, he lost a lot of his friends. Mum said that Papaji was miserable pretty much all his life for what he went through at the war, I always remembering him being quite sad, and he sacrificed so much. When Bibiji[91] was having the kids she was all on her own, he was away fighting, she used to always tell us how none of the kids didn't recognise their dad as he was away all the time. I think that is actually really sad. But it really makes me so angry, he never got an invitation to all the Remembrance Day stuff, when you watch it on telly, where are the Indians? They have got all the old white men sitting there in their wheelchairs like they are only ones who have made a sacrifice. I'm not trying to be out of order! But where are the old Indian men? They are left out. [...] British identity is celebrating British stuff, but making it out like it was only the white people who made it happen.

Gurpreet, Moderate Sikh, Female, 22 years old, Master's Student.

> I don't think that the British identity celebrates everything that Indian people have done for the country, it just celebrates all the stuff that the goreh have done. Indian people have done a lot for this country. They are the hardest working people, they have contributed to the economy, they go to work every day, they teach their kids to work hard and not cause trouble. [...] Indian soldiers fought in the war, but nothing is ever said about that, that part is just completely ignored. British identity is like about all the stuff that Britain has achieved, but there is no talk of how other communities have played a part in making Britain what it is today, and that's not right is it? They should say we helped, that we still help. They took over our country and we are here now working in theirs, making it successful.

Sunaina, Moderate Hindu-Gujerati Female 23, Legal Secretary.

There were thus two main intertwined strains to this idea. The first that there is a distinct British identity; one that is based on celebrating the behaviour and 'achievements' of Britain historically and currently. Young people understood British identity to be a celebration and sense of Pride in historical Imperialism and the Empire itself, and/or the more current wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The issue for some respondents was the memory of the British Raj in India. In the interview, respondents described the passing down of stories from generation to generation about the effect of the British Raj, and the displacement caused by the Partition of

[90] Punjabi term for Paternal Grandfather.
[91] Punjabi term for Paternal Grandmother.

India in 1947.[92] These stories were told with great emotion, and these young people recalled the hurt and suffering of their grandparents and great grandparents; they held on to this emotion, and it often turned into resentment. Young people were thus in a dilemma. British-born and often well integrated by their own admission, the feeling of hurt and anger at the behaviour of the British in 'their' Motherland, India, still remained. British identity was seen as a celebration of this behaviour, and was thus seen in a negative light, exclusionary and deceitful for its perceived pride and celebration at something, which had caused great pain to their forefathers. Additionally, for some respondents, recent foreign policy often evoked these feelings about 'British Imperialism' and the 'taking over of other countries with military force' made the idea of 'British identity' very uncomfortable and undesirable. These young Sikhs and Hindus understood British identity as what Britain exported to the rest of the world; the image of Britain abroad was what defined British identity itself.

Secondly, there was another idea, which was not completely distinct from the above, which focused specifically on the idea of 'contribution', specifically that British identity celebrated the historical achievements of the past, but was an identity that failed to evoke any sense of belonging or desirability specifically because it excluded the contribution of Indians historically, in the two World Wars, and/or currently, as hard-working members of the population. British identity was thus understood as a celebration of 'white people' and the story of 'Britain' with Indians, collectively, being purposely excluded from the story. Gurpreet's anger at

[92] The partition of India was the partition of British India on the basis of religious demographics. This led to the creation of the sovereign states of the Dominion of Pakistan (that later split into the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the People's Republic of Bangladesh), and the Union of India (later Republic of India). The violent nature of the partition created an atmosphere of mutual hostility and suspicion between India and Pakistan that plagues their relationship to this day.

her grandfather's exclusion at Remembrance Day Services was a poignant expression of this feeling of exclusion and lack of acknowledgement.

6.3.3 The 'British' way of life

Where some respondents had previously outlined the lack of British culture and traits as constituting what was meant and understood as British identity, other young people explained that to them, British identity was about taking part in the British way of life. More specifically, there is a British identity and culture which is defined by 'doing British things', which these young people saw as being unfavourable to them, incompatible with their lives as young Sikhs and Hindus, or simply 'bad'. These activities focused on drinking, socialising, having boyfriends and girlfriends, smoking and going out to pubs and clubs. These were seen as the characteristically 'British' activities that made up the core of British identity itself.

> If you want to be British then you have to go the things that the goras do, going out, sleeping around, getting wasted, all that stuff. That is their culture and if you want to have a British identity then you have to do all that stuff 'cos that is their culture. If you look at us Hindus, for example, our culture is different, we spend time with family, we go to the Mandir, we don't eat meat, we don't drink […] you can't be a Hindu if you don't do those things, and its the same thing, you can't be British, or have British identity if you don't do the things of the culture.

Sudha, 22, Hindu Female. Data Analyst.

Mikhil exchoed these ideas:

Mikhil 'Look I don't want my family to have bhesti[93] if I am going out all the time and getting drunk and acting like the white kids. Their culture is different from ours, they have their traditions, we have our tradition'.

Manmit '*What are their traditions?*'

Mikhil Socialising, going to the pub, watching footie, smoking, sleeping around, drinking. Stuff I don't want to do.

Mikhil, Gujarati-Hindu Male, 19, Student.

[93] Punjabi word for 'shame'.

Young people from strict and very traditional families were affected by the concern and often suspicion that characterised their parents' attitudes towards white people. It is important to note that many young people whose parents were very cautious and anxious about letting their own children have meaningful relationships with white people had often experienced racism and discrimination and what was understood as a lack of opportunity as young people themselves. Thus young people from these families were often banned from socialising 'the British way' and were strongly encouraged, or simply told to adhere to the cultural and/or religious traditions their parents felt would keep them on the right path.

> Looking back I don't think I ever really had a choice about being Kuthar Sikh,[94] everyone in my family is like that, no one has a hair cut, so I guess it was natural for people to just do the same with me. My family don't mix up with goras, or any other group and obviously they hate all Muslims. [...] I've never been out to the pub or anything like that, I don't really see the point and I don't drink anyway – we are all Amrit Shak.[...] Mum and dad wouldn't let me make friends with goras, even when I was little cos they didn't want me to get mixed up in drink. [...] To be honest goras have always taken the piss out of my putka and beard and pug anyways so I'm not really that bothered about being close with them, and they probably don't want me to be anyways. [...] I would say that British identity is about what white people like to do, how they act and how they like to enjoy themselves, it's not in line with me and my family anyways.

Kavinderjeet, 18, Sikh-Male, University student.

For these young people there was a British identity and culture, but it failed to provide them with any sense of belonging as the meanings they attached to it were based on what they saw as 'undesirable' British activities. It was an issue of two cultures, which were seen as incompatible. These young people did feel that there was a distinctive British culture and Britishness but it simply was not something they wanted to be part of and was often see as a way of life, which was not compatible with the traits of being Hindu or Sikh. This draws on the earlier issue of clashing and incompatible values, which I have outlined in the previous chapters.

[94] 'Kathar' Sikh refers to a Baptised Sikh.

6.3.4 Threat, exclusivity and xenophobia

Another variant of this idea of British identity as 'negative' and 'undesirable' focused on the culture of hooliganism, threat, and racism, which were seen as prominent features of the culture that formed the basis of the identity itself. These young people acknowledged the presence of a British culture and a British identity, yet for them it was devoid of any positive characteristics. Instead the identity was seen as a representation of the threat, exclusivity and xenophobia that they had experienced in their lives.

Typical responses included:

Armit British identity, I think it's quite sort of threatening, its not for us Asians its mostly for the goras I think, the racist ones. They are the ones that always have the flags, all the football hooligans. They want Britain to be all white, they don't want any blacks or Asians living here, that's what they want, to get rid of us. [...] That's British identity, its white identity, it's about getting England back to the way it was before all the immigrants got here. From what I have seen of most goras, they don't like Asians, they don't like Sikhs, they take the piss out of us the way we look, they don't want us to be here, they don't want us to think of ourselves as British, they want us to always feel like outsiders.

Manmit *How does British identity make you feel?*

Armit Nothing really, just like, more outside.

Armit, 18, Sikh-Male, University student.

> British identity, it's about the white people wanting to protect Britain, and like make it obvious that even though the country is mixed, it's still a white country. They feel like they have to protect their identity, I think they feel a bit threatened by all the coloured people in their country. […] That's why they call us pakis. Their culture is a bit like that, like all the hoodies and all the chavs and skinheads, they are the ones trying to protect British identity.

Rani, Hindu Female, 22, Legal Secretary.

British identity was thus understood not only as something for 'white people', but was seen as a way to threaten members of ethnic minorities. It was understood as a racist identity, where white people came together, where they united to 'protect' 'their' country. During the interviews, young people described British identity as

something that was designed to remind them that Britain would never be 'their country'.

Symbols of British identity and culture were used to highlight its perceived exclusivity. For these young people there was a culture, in fact their expressions of British culture were comparatively thicker in terms of history, events and celebrations, than other respondents who simply saw British identity as being racist or xenophobic. These young people often understood that British identity was formulated on British culture, which had many different facets from the Royal Family, to celebrating Remembrance Day, to the image of the Union Jack and the cross of St Georges. Unlike other respondents who highlighted the fact that Indian people should be included in celebrations, these young people felt that these events and symbols also served as strong boundary markers between these young Sikhs and Hindus on one side, and the white British, celebrating their British culture and British identity on the other.

> I don't like it when all the old people start selling poppies, why should I buy a fucking poppy? The poppy appeal is about the old goreh, it actually really makes me mad. Then when you don't buy a poppy they look at you as if to say 'oh yeah there goes another paki, who lives here and isn't interested with anything to do with our country'. [...] Even all this stuff with the Queen, the Royal marches and stuff, I don't feel anything about it, I don't feel part of it, it's for the goras, it's not for us'

Kulweer 22, Sikh Male, Trainee Account.

> If you have a close look at the British flag, it has lots of colours, and it is crossed in different directions, but if you look at the St George's Cross it has been stripped of all colours – it is just red and white, like just white people and their country. [...] When I see that flag, it makes me feel really uncomfortable, I just think that this is a really racist flag that's meant to make Asians and Blacks feel like outsiders in Britain. [...] I don't feel that way about the other flag, the Jack, 'cos that's what they use when they do all the sports events, but the other one makes me feel like that, it's weird.
>
> Look at all the celebrations they have for the Queen, you see it on the news, thousands of people outside the palace, waving their flags, it's like a sea of fucking white people, I have never seen no Indians there. [...] It's like it's like it their chance to say, this is our celebration, this is our identity, it is British, it's our time so everyone else fuck off. God Save the Queen and all that fucking bollocks.

> Maybe the Queen should give all the jewels back that she has nicked from India like the massive Koh-i-Noor.[95]

Anita, 19, Gujarati Female, Nursery Nurse.

Events and symbols associated with 'British identity' were thus important in creating ideas of belonging, inclusion and exclusion. Historical contexts of wars and what symbols stood for also shaped the way in which they were understood by some young people and became important markers of exclusion for them. Many respondents spoke about the exclusion they felt on what they saw as 'British days': the Queen's Jubilee, Royal Celebrations, St. George's Day and Remembrance Sunday. Young people saw these events as British celebrations, but only celebrated by the white majority, often they felt confused about what these events represented and their role in these celebrations.

The conclusion was often that they were not 'allowed' to be part of these celebrations due to their colour, and/or they did not want to be part of these celebrations as these were meant for white people exclusively. They felt that they were not wanted and that the white majority used these events to show their unity and their culture, and to show that British identity was very much about celebrating 'white things'. Often the combination of different symbols at these events – flags, songs, traditional poetry or music – were understood as clear markers of boundaries. This for many young people was 'British identity' in its true form as 'white identity'. These aspects of British identity were closed to these young

[95] The Koh-i-Noor (the 'Mountain of Light') is a diamond that was originally 793 carats and was once the largest known diamond. The diamond has belonged to many dynasties, including Kakatiyas' Rajputs, Mughal, Afsharid, Durrani Empires, Sikh and British. It was seized as a spoil of war, time and time again. In 1849, the diamond was forcefully taken from the Sikh Empire by the British East India Company and became part of the British Crown Jewels when Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India in 1877. The diamond is currently set into the Crown of Queen Elizabeth and is on display at the Tower of London. India has claimed the diamond and has said that the Koh-i-Noor was taken away illegally and that it should be given back to India. When Queen Elizabeth II made a state visit to India marking the 50th anniversary of independence in 1997, many Indians in India and Britain demanded the return of the diamond. On 21st February 2013, while visiting India, David Cameron stated that it would be illogical to return the diamond.

people. The Union Jack, Poppies on Remembrance Day, and the events associated with the monarchy were particularly poignant and served as reminders of cultural separation; young Sikhs and Hindus saw these as intrinsic parts of 'British identity'. British identity was formulated and celebrated by white people coming together to remind others that this was 'their country', and these celebrations were 'theirs', that this was their chance to celebrate 'their history', 'their way'. This made these young people feel completely excluded from these events and celebrations, and removed from the idea of Britishness itself which was seen as being celebrated through the medium of this collective identity and participation and pride in these events.

6.3.5 Temporarily 'British'

Comparatively, there was another facet to this idea of a thicker version of British identity, which acknowledged its cultural traits and traditions and its exclusivity, but was more positive than the above sentiments expressed by Kulweer, Anita and some other respondents. For some young people, British identity did have some positive attributes, which gave them a sense of patriotism and pride. The issue was more that they felt that they were only 'allowed' to be part of this at certain times. British identity was not always characterised by negative traits, nor was it culturally empty, nor was bland. It just was not accessible to some young people in a long-term and permanent way – which some young people felt that they wanted.

Some young people spoke at length about how they enjoyed inter-national sporting events, cricket, football and tennis as the national sentiment at this time 'allowed' them to feel British and to be part of the patriotism and nationalism surrounding these events. Shaan provided a typical account of this sentiment:

> The only time I really enjoy like my British identity I would say is when we have like the world cup or England is playing cricket or the football. We always hang a British flag outside our house, we wear the England tops; it's our chance to show that we are British and we want England to win. [...] I feel more proud of being British when it's more of a World Cup game as it is one country against another. Once the games are over though, it's like we can't be part of it anymore, like 'see you later!' Loads of my Indian mates and some of my Gora mates have asked me loads of times, 'Why do you put that flag up?' The Indians think you should support India, and the goreh can't understand that we actually do want England to win.

Shaan 22, Sikh Male, Trainee Account.

Priyanka When we have the Olympics I will be cheering for Great Britain, I am really looking forward to that, I think it will make all the country come together. [...] But when it is over, you know, that feeling is gone, and we are just the ethnics again, we can't be proud of Britain like we were, we are the outsiders again. [...] I would like to feel like more proud of Britain all the time.

Manmit Is that what British identity means to you?

Priyanka Yeah exactly, British identity is like a feeling that we are all together and we are proud and this is our country, it's like how mum and dad feel about India, but we can't have that feeling all the time cos' the goreh don't want us to. We can support and be British when the country needs everyone's support, but after that, the doors are shut, it's like we get used to show that all the Asians are really included.

Priyanka, Hindu-Gujarati Female.

For these young people, rather than feeling completely excluded from the idea of British identity, there was space and time for being British and enjoying Britishness through supporting the country itself in world events. This was a time when many young people described feelings of inclusion and pride, a time when young Sikhs and Hindu – males prominently, described being in pubs and bars watching cricket and football with other Brits and feeling nationalistic and proud. However, it was understood that once this had ended, this feeling and this camaraderie ended. For these young people it was not that they did not want to be part of celebrations of British identity, nor did they display animosity towards what they felt constituted this. Instead they felt that they were not able to immerse themselves and be included in the way that they wanted because of the attitudes of white British people. However, the focus was on sporting events and the way in which these

could foster a sense of Britishness, not at events such as Remembrance Sunday and the Queen's Jubilee, which were focused on by respondents such as Kulveer and Anita, and which were understood as more politically and historically charged and thus more exclusionary.

However, it was clear from some of these respondents that if national events and symbols could be re-formulated and promoted as inclusive, as representing the historical and current contribution of Indian people to Britain itself, then there was a strong chance that these young Sikhs and Hindus could identify with British identity, and it could become, for those for whom it was not already, a source of belonging.

6.4 British identity; positive meanings and experiences

6.4.1 Comfort and positive values

In contrast, there were many respondents who had very positive ideas about British identity and their own Britishness. For many young Hindus and Sikhs, being British was a source of great pride in their lives. They had a very clear sense of what British identity stood for and felt that it was their primary source of belonging, while for others, it was as important as their own ethnic identities. It was described as something that these young people felt comfortable with. Their descriptions of British identity were less culturally charged than other respondents: it was not about the lack of distinctive culture or traditions, or the lack of togetherness, but instead the focus was on the openness of British identity; it was part of their lives, not demanding, nor particularly culturally rich, but it existed nonetheless – and this was enough. Their descriptions often centred on British values and traits, which, to them, constituted the very idea of British identity.

Harj. I think British identity has a lot of really good attributes, democracy, tolerance, respect and I really like the way British people kind of mind their own business, unlike Asians. I would say that I am really proud actually of my British identity, I am really proud to be British. [...] Having a lot of white mates, actually, it shows all the good stuff that British identity stands for, being gentlemanly, sportsmanship all that kind of stuff. I actually think it's easier for Indians to be British then say Pakistanis or other Muslims, because British identity is about, well mostly, democracy, and our parents are used to that sort of democracy as we are Indian and India is the oldest democracy in the world.

Manmit *How does British identity make you feel?*

Harj. I just feel proud, I feel proud when we do well at sports or cricket, I really don't understand all these Gunda Indians that go crazy every time India plays England at cricket, why don't they support England? It's so embarrassing, we live here, we work here, we were born here, we should be supporting England. I personally do feel proud of being British, I think Britain does a lot of good stuff around the world. I think white people are very tolerant towards Asians and all the other races that live here and I am proud of that. […] Being British is pretty cool, anyone can be British as long as they make an effort to try and fit in.

Harjeetpal, 19, Sikh Male, Looking for work.

> I am British, it's not like something that I have ever battled with or had a problem. If you are born here and you live here, that makes you British in my eyes, I guess some people don't want to take it any further than that especially in our communities people don't really mix with white people they tend to stick to their own. [...] I have always felt more comfortable with white people than Indians anyway, I think I have more in common and I guess that's why I feel more British than Indian in a way.

Geetanjali, 22, Hindu Female, Masters student.

> I am British in the same way as I am Sikh, I'm Punjabi, I'm a Londoner – it's just another thing that I am, that's just what I am, that's it. I enjoy being British the same way I enjoy being Punjabi. [...] I think it's good that we can be everything, we don't have to choose, choosing would be hard. I can be a Punjabi Londoner!!! Its fine, mum and dad have always told me to have different friends; I guess they know how Indian people can be when they get together.

Neeta, 20, Sikh-Female, works as a full-time nanny.

These respondents saw British identity as something that simply 'was'; it existed, it was part of their lives. The meanings they attached to it were less about cultural fulfilment or taking part in certain activities that constituted British identity. Instead the focus ranged from young people like Harjeetpal and Geetanjali who saw that there was a British way of life, it was open to everyone, but people from other backgrounds needed to make an effort to become part of it. Unlike earlier

respondents who felt that British identity lacked the cultural attributes necessary for 'identity', these young people provided a thinner description of what it meant to be British, focusing on values of openness and tolerance. This to them was sufficient for 'identity'. To be British, to have a sense of Britishness did not require any thick cultural fulfilment or uniqueness compared. Additionally, British identity was described as open and inclusive; it was there, permanently, if people wanted to be part of it.

These opinions contrasted with earlier respondents who saw British identity as exclusively for 'goras', or others who felt that they could have a sense of British identity during some periods, but not at others. It also differs from the idea put forward by some respondents that British identity was defined by the negative and discriminatory behaviour of white people who did not want Indians or other races to be part of their nation or part of their celebrations of national pride and history.

Some of these young people saw the impetus as being on ethnic minorities themselves to try and get involved and have a sense of Britishness, rather than the focus being on white Britons to involve them. A stark contrast to some aforementioned young people who saw the exclusion they faced as something that was imposed on them from white British People. Going back to the earlier chapters, this was linked to boundaries and social worlds and the social contact and social ties of young people and the extent to which they had had positive contact with white people, which of course, as I have highlighted, depends on a range of factors.

6.4.2 British activities

A myriad of factors were working and shaping young people's ideas about their own British identity. Family was extremely important. The more liberal families were less demanding in terms of traditional dress and the behaviour of their young, encouraging their children to integrate more and be more open to having white friends. This also led to these young people often being more free to socialise with white friends and those from other ethnicities in what were seen as the 'white' or 'English' traditions of going to pubs, clubs, and football matches, which meant they were more likely from the outset to feel a greater level of inclusion and be able to see the similarities between themselves and other young people outside of their own ethnic group.

> My family are pretty easy going, mum doesn't really talk to her family that live local and they don't really mix up all the Asians and go to Gurdwara or anything like that. [...] I've always been allowed out, a lot of my Sikh and Gujjie mates aren't allowed out, their parents are proper strict with them, they aren't allowed out, they have to go Gurdwara, I think 'cos their parents are worried about them getting on the wrong track and also what other people in the community might think. [...] I've always had a lot of freedom growing up; mum and dad have a lot of gora and black friends so they didn't ever have a problem with me doing the same. [...] I don't think I would feel British in the same way if I had just mixed up with Asians, but I am British, I feel proud to be British, probably more than being Asian – Asians can act like dicks sometimes.

Gurdev, Sikh-Male, 21, University student.

> I like the culture here. It's pretty laid back. I think Asians can be really like intense; you have to look a certain way, do certain things. With my white mates, we just have a laugh together, we go out every Friday to the pub, we go football, we go around each other's houses and play XBox and Playstation, it's just easy, it's easier. I am British, we all do the same stuff, no one has ever said anything racist to me, you know, we live their lifestyle, so we are as British as them.

Piral, Hindu-Gujerati Male, 19, Works in family business.

British activities were seen as central to defining British identity, but unlike earlier respondents who disapproved of what they saw as the British way of life, these respondents enjoyed doing British things and being part of the British lifestyle. The

positive meanings attached to these activities were often formulated in direct comparison with the negative connotations of their own ethnic communities or 'what Indian people think and do'.

The positive ideas that young people had about being British and their own sense of national identity were based on their own experiences. The way that they had been treated by the white British population was instrumental in shaping their own Britishness. For some young people, the rejection they felt at the hands of their own communities had led them to embrace being British as their primary and only source of belonging. These young people also felt like they could embrace Britishness due to previous positive contact with members of the white majority, which led them to feel that Britishness itself was accessible. Others felt, often as they approached and entered young adulthood, that the traditional views of their parents and/or the community as a whole were incompatible with their own views and the lives they wanted to lead for themselves. This often meant that being British and engrossing themselves fully in the British way of life, as they saw it, was an escape from the pressures and conflict they felt in other spheres. Young people who felt this described becoming more involved in football, the gym, and other 'British' activities such as going to bars and clubs as well as the conscious decision not to surround themselves with 'other Indians'. These young people had formed meaningful, positive relationships with white Britons and felt that they had a strong sense of Britishness.

However, it was not solely the case that negative experiences within ethnic communities led to a positive sense of British identity.

6.5 Other nationalisms

There was also the feeling that as young British Asians, some young Sikhs and Hindus had almost a nationalistic void in their lives. Some young people could see that national identity could provide a strong sense of belonging and attachment, it could also provide enjoyment, yet they felt that in Britain, they could not be part of this:

Sav. If you look at America for example, they have a real American identity, my family live in Florida and they are proper Americans. They have the flag everywhere, they celebrate Thanksgiving. I don't actually know what that is, but they have a big family Christmas Dinner, they do Independence Day. They are American, but we aren't British, well we are British 'cos we live here, we are born here, we have a British Passport, but I don't have that same feeling of pride the way they do.

Manmit *Why do you think that is?*

Sav. I just think it's easier for them to be proper Americans than it is for us to be British, everyone is allowed to be American, in this country there are too many restrictions on people.

Manmit *Why do you feel like that?*

Sav. I don't know, I just think they have more of a culture, an American culture that is open to everyone, so everyone can get on board with it; it's set out, these are the things Americans do, in this country we don't have anything like that. Christmas is like a Christian event, well I wouldn't even say that it is that anymore, it's more about people going crazy buying presents and then spending the next year in debt! [...] There is nothing really British is there? So I don't think can say there is a British identity without those things, and to be honest even if we did have them I still think people, white people, would think 'what right have they got to be getting all involved'. It's a shame really, Indians in India are so proud, but we can't 100 per cent be British, or have that national pride; I would like to have the same kind of stuff they have in the States and get involved.

Savneet 22, Hindu Male, Carer.

For young people like Savneet, 'living here', 'being born here' and having a British Passport was not enough to sufficiently constitute 'identity' as they understood it. The cultural emptiness of British culture was an idea formulated in comparison to what they perceived as other more open and engaging forms of nationalism, in particular, that represented by 'American identity'. Several of the young Sikhs and Hindus I spoke to looked to American identity as an example of what British

identity 'should be'. American identity was not seen as providing cultural richness in the same way as their own ethnic identities, yet this was not a requirement. The culturally thinner attributes of having a special day to mark the nation, special holidays most importantly, and being able to have a sense of pride were what were said to be missing in the British case. Their ideas seemed to be a slightly more positive variant of the earlier idea of 'cultural emptiness'; for these young people, if this emptiness could be filled in a certain way, the American way for example, then they could immerse themselves the way that they wanted.[96] It also seemed to be a more subtle form of exclusion whereby young people felt left out, but were not experiencing overt racism and prejudice, but felt excluded nonetheless.

I found that there were many different ideas about what these young people needed from British identity. For some the positive values they associated with British identity – fairness, tolerance, acceptance – were enough to make them feel that they had a sense of Britishness. For others, there was no cultural distinctiveness; more unique aspects of British identity were needed for them to engage better. Young people like Savneet, above, focused on the idea of special days and a sense of pride – the 'American Identity' – which was seen as all encompassing, inclusive and open.

6.6 Gender

The idea of 'being allowed' to have a sense of British identity was further complicated by the issue of gender. Many of the young women whom I interviewed, both Sikh and Hindu described the additional pressure they felt from their families about conforming to the 'good Indian girl' image they felt was imposed on them. Often, even some young women from more liberal families felt

[96] Many of the young people who focused on American identity, were influenced by American popular culture, television, movies and music. These images of America shaped their ideas about what it meant to be an 'American'.

that as females, the extra pressure was on them to maintain a certain image in the community, that of a traditional Indian girl who stayed away from negative influences and out of trouble. Although the men in their family were able to socialise and enjoy the 'British way', these young women were often stopped from taking part in Britishness as they saw it. They were unable to fully immerse themselves in socialising and enjoying other aspects of being British in the same way as their brothers or male cousins (see Ballard & Ballard 1977).

Young women described the additional pressures of maintaining a 'clean image', that is not being seen to have boyfriends or undertake any behaviour that may have led to them having a 'bad reputation'. In fact, the idea of reputation itself was key to many of the problems these young girls faced. This was unquestionably linked to the issue of marriage, and being able to be seen as a potential wife with a 'good' reputation, which depended greatly on young Sikh and Hindu females not engaging in British activities with British people. They saw themselves on the periphery of British identity and culture, going to university and going to work with white British people, but unable to fully engross themselves in the British way of life in the way they wanted. This limited the extent to which they could have a 'real' British identity, as they understood it. Unlike earlier respondents who felt comfortable having a passport, 'living here' and 'being born here', this was not enough for these young women. They had the thinner attributes of being British, but needed more richness by way of engaging more in the culture and lifestyle of a 'British person'. In their eyes, their inability to do so limited the extent to which they could have a 'real' British identity.[97]

[97] See K. Hall 1995 who has examined the constraining forces of culturally conservative attitudes in the British Sikh community.

As Ballard and Ballard noted in their 1977 anthropological study 'because their chastity is of such important to family honour, girls tend to get into greater difficulties with their parents than boys [...] very often they turn a blind eye to their sons' behaviour away from home' (Ballard & Ballard 1977: 43-45). Gendered ideas about acceptable behaviour and the importance of reputation are still extremely constrictive for some of these young females.

Typical responses included:

> Mum and dad they want to make sure that I have a good reputation in the local community; if I get a bad name for myself they say it will be harder for me to find someone to marry. It's hard [...] I want to be able to go out to Uni nights, but I have to live at home, they don't understand that just because you go out doesn't mean that you are like going to go mental and go off the rails. They are just scared of what people will think.

Sneha 19, Hindu-Punjabi Female, University Student.

> I can't really be British, can I? I'm not allowed out. My parents want me straight home after school, I'm not allowed to go out anywhere. Mum and dad they don't ever make me go to the Gurdwara or anything like that, they just don't want me becoming like a Gori,[98] going out and going to clubs. I think the thing they are really scared that I will start smoking or going out with white boy [...] I don't know what they are scared off. I won't be like a proper British person 'cos I'm not allowed to mix up with them and do what goreh[99] do. I'm trapped, it really gets me down so much, they don't care if I cut my hair or eat meat, but they care if I want to go out? What's the deal with that? I'm not a proper Sikh, but I'm not allowed to be British either. It's fucking shit.

Inderjit, 20, Sikh Female, Beauty Therapist.

> I am British 'cos I was born here and I have a British passport, but that's about it really, like its not the same as being Sikh. [...] When you are a Sikh you know other Sikhs in the community, you all go to the same functions, you meet at weddings and all of that stuff, but I don't mix the same way with white people as mum and dad, and my nana,[100] nani[101] don't want me to be seen going out. [...] At the end of the day, I'm not going to lie; I would really like to go out with my mates from Uni and work, but I'm just never going to be allowed. When I was at sixth-form, like, then was the hardest time, I used to want to go to all the gigs, and I would ask mum and dad, there would be massive arguments every week, mum used to start crying. [...] I've just given up now, I want to do all the normal stuff, I want to be British, but I'm not going to be able to, they are just too worried that all

[98] Punjabi term for white, British female.
[99] Punjabi term for white, British people collectively.
[100] Punjabi term for maternal grandfather.
[101] Punjabi term for maternal grandmother.

> the aunties will find out and I will get a bad name. Maybe they should all just worry about what their kids are getting up to!

Simran, 22, Sikh Female, Masters Student.

Again, British identity was understood to mean taking part in British activities and the British way of life. For these young women, it was about mixing with white British people, and socialising in the British way. This is what having a sense of Britishness meant to these young women. Unlike other respondents, British identity was not exclusive, nor was it threatening. In fact, these young women spoke of British identity in a way that was similar to respondents discussed earlier who were suggesting that British identity did indeed exist; it had specific characteristics and it was open to everyone, for them, 'being allowed' was not determined solely by the actions of white British people, but was instead in the hands of their families.

Margaret Gibson's 1988 ethnographic study of Valleyside High school and the lives of Punjabi Sikh immigrants have some parallels here. Gibson found that parents were encouraging their children not to have too much contact with children of the majority in the fear that they would bring shame on the family by 'becoming Americanized', which was understood as forgetting your roots and adopting the most disparaged traits of the majority, such as leaving home at age 18, making decisions without parental consent, dating, and dancing (Gibson 1988). Almost twenty-five years after Gibson's study and in a different country, these concerns still remain paramount for some parents, concerns that subsequently shape identity options and orientations for these young women.

Many of these young women were from fairly liberal families; they were not under pressure to wear traditional clothes or to immerse themselves in Sikhism or Hinduism, nor the cultural/local community. However, the importance of *reputation* meant that many young women, both Hindu and Sikh, were not able to

take part in what they saw as British life. For some young women this pressure meant that even though they lived in ethnically mixed neighbourhoods, went to ethnically mixed schools and had friends who were white British, they were not able to enjoy what they saw as the 'British lifestyle' in the same way as young males in their families. This often meant that although they had a sense of being British and belonging here, the idea of British identity as such lacked any real salience or sentiment for them and they were not fully able to immerse themselves in wider British culture in the way that they wanted to. Gender thus played an important role in the extent to which some young Sikh and Hindu women could be 'British' and have a sense of Britishness in the way that they wanted to.

British identity was not seen as unappealing or exclusive; for these young women it was simply unavailable.

6.7 Dual identities and cultural crossing

The most common sentiment amongst most of the young people I interviewed was that there was a space in their lives for British identity and being British. I did not find any overarching evidence of self-segregation or a lack of integration amongst these young people; what I did find is a range of ideas and great diversity about the notion and reality of British identity. I found that the way these young people understand what constitutes Britishness and how they relate to it in their day-to-day lives is highly individualistic and shaped by the social interactions and social contact I have explored earlier. In terms of Berry's typology, most of my respondents were 'integrated', holding both minority and majority identities simultaneously (Berry 1997). I can thus concur with Platt and Nandi who find that 'across all groups, the most common outcome is for people to be 'integrated', that is, to hold strong minority and majority identities' (Platt & Nandi 2013: 32-33).

I would emphasize however, that although many young people felt a sense of minority and majority identification, this identification was not the same.

Young people may have dual-identities but these identities were individual and unique. They were not experienced in the same way, yet the overall pattern was for a sense of both minority and majority identification, whatever this may constitute in each individual case. Identities are the products of social worlds and social exchanges and are thus highly individualistic. Young people experience minority and majority cultures in a diverse ways. For example, given the complexity of social worlds, a young person may simultaneously hold a sense of identity to a particular segment of both British and ethnic cultures – their ethnic and national identities were thus entrenched in these segments given that their social interactions are often with people from these layers. Additionally, given that young people have differing levels of embeddedness and attachment to both groups, the salience and strength of both identities in a typical 'dual identity' scenario is not uniform across the group.

Platt and Nandi state that 'minority identification does not necessarily imply a loss of national identity [...] the most common pattern in our sample of minorities was to hold strong national and minority identities at the same time' (Platt & Nandi 2013: 42). I concur and find that many young people with a sense of ethnic identity do also have have a sense of Britishness. However, I would go further and argue that identities and the 'strength' of these identities are constituted and experienced in everyday life in different ways; expectations about both of these identities are diverse. As I have discussed in this chapter, young people have a range of ideas about what they want from Britishness: some need it to be more culturally rich and unique, while others are happy with the thinner attributes of citizenship, living here, respecting institutions and British values, and so forth. Not only does minority

identification not impede Britishness, but Britishness does not mean the same thing as ethnic identity to these young people – they are not interchangeable, but seen as wholly different, and often both are seen as equally important and experienced simultaneously.

A sense of ethnic identity with a unique culture, food and traditions exists for many young people at the same time as a sense of Britishness, culturally thinner, but still important in the sense of living here, being born here, having a British passport and so forth. These are often understood as two very different identities, but often compatible. In fact, the culturally thinner and less demanding attributes of Britishness are why young people often have dual-identities and are able to accommodate this alongside the more culturally rich and sometimes demanding ethnic identity.

Perceptions of British identity are diverse. Yet this is neither necessarily surprising nor problematic given that we do not have a clear statement about the core components of British identity and its constitutional ideals. It is an on-going dialogue. A sense of Britishness is evident in young people who experience Britishness in both culturally thick and thin versions, as I have explored in this chapter.

In fact, having a strong ethnic identity is often not the cause of a lack of Britishness. In the particular empirical case I have explored in this thesis, I have found that a hostile reception, specifically prejudice and racism from the white majority, is the most powerful hindrance to a sense of belonging to wider British society and having a sense of Britishness. I can thus concur with Rumbaut et al. (Aleinikoff & Rumbaut 1998; Portes & Rumbaut 2006; Rumbaut 2005), as well as Heath (2008) and Maxwell (2009), who have highlighted the negative impact of

prejudice on belonging. As I have shown in this chapter, there are many young people who want to feel a sense of Britishness; they feel that being born here as British citizens, Britishness is the only real national identity they could embrace. They often cannot relate to the Indian nationality embraced by some of their parents. Some want to feel a sense of national identity, but they feel excluded by the white majority and by the way they feel that British identity is formulated and celebrated on the public sphere.

It is thus not simply the case that young people have a strong sense of ethnic identity and that this therefore stands in the way of a national identification. There have been fears that multiculturalist policies have supported the maintenance of ethnic culture and ethnic identity and as a result have directly undermined and hindered the scope for the development of an overarching national identity (Platt & Nandi 2013: 5). For a majority of these young people, it is simply not a case of the either/or scenario envisaged and espoused by nervous politicians such as Cameron (Cameron 2011). In fact, as I have shown in this thesis, some young people do not feel a sense of belonging to their ethnic community or to ethno-religious culture; some feel a purely symbolic attachment, while others feel a sense of belonging to particular segments of minority and majority groups in their complex social worlds. We cannot simplify their complex, intricate experiences of identity formation and belonging into any essentialised typology in which national identification and ethnic identification stand at opposite ends. It is simply not an accurate picture of the identity orientations and options of most of these young people as evidenced by this thesis.

The reality is far more complex; there are some young people who feel no sense of ethnic identity and no sense of British identity and thus feel completely alone; they are neither integrated, nor assimilated into either majority or minority group. In

terms of Berry's typology, it would appear that these young people are within the 'marginalised' category, yet Berry's model rests on the extent to which an individual considers it to be 'of value' to maintain cultural identity and characteristics and/or relationships with other groups (Berry 1997). Yes, these young people do often feel marginalised, but my key contribution here is to show that marginalisation is not only in the hands of the individual. Many of these young people could see the *value* of maintaining ties to either group, but for a variety of reasons they felt excluded. Berry's model does not give enough emphasis to the way in which marginalisation can be perceived to have been imposed, rather than simply being a person not seeing the value of having ties with either group. This typology implies an element of choice that some young people felt that they did not have, an issue that Berry himself acknowledges (Berry 2005).

In fact, some respondents already had a clear sense of national identification, yet others expressed clearly that a strong sense of national identity was something they would like to have, but their own feelings of exclusion, lack of acceptance or simply the lack of clarity about what British identity constitutes left many young people in a strange position; they wanted to feel a strong sense of belonging and national pride, but were unclear and often pessimistic about how this could be achieved and what it would entail and include.

However, the overarching pattern was that of dual-identities. Over a long period of time, many of the young people I spoke to, both Hindu and Sikh, had reached a place where they were comfortable in all their social worlds; they had successfully created the type of infrastructure that would allow them to navigate freely and happily from one group to another. These young people saw themselves very much as British Asians, that is, they felt that they were able to enjoy the important cultural attributes of their community, whilst feeling accepted and part of wider

British society. However it was evident that some young people were more able to create this 'infrastructure' than others based on their own family lives, the way they felt that they could fit in, and the level of prejudice and discrimination they had experienced from white British people – and this affected the extent to which some young people even wanted to engage with 'being British'.

A majority of the young people I interviewed expressed the way they felt about living with what they described as 'two cultures'. They acknowledged the negative and positive attributes and life experiences of being both a young British-born Sikh or Hindu and a British Asian. Although some of the young people occasionally found it hard to juggle the responsibilities and obligations they felt to their parents and the cultural traditions of their own ethnic group, at the same time as being a young British person, many of these young people had found a way to be both Indian and British. They had created the infrastructure they needed to enter and exit both groups as and when they needed to maintain both cultural memberships. These young people were often those who had had a fairly liberal upbringing and were not under extreme pressures from their families to continue specific religious or cultural traditions. Often these young people had a range of friends, those from Indian and white British backgrounds, as well as other ethnic groups; they were exposed to different cultures by attending racially mixed schools and enjoyed a range of activities.

> I'm really happy with things; I know a lot of Asians are a bit confused but I like my life the way it is. [...] Day to day, you know, I'm with all my mates, we go out, we play footie we go club, I have had a right laugh being at Uni. Then when I go home, I can have mum's Indian food, maybe visit family [...] I don't really go to functions in the community or anything like that, I don't go Gurdwara, mum and dad don't really care. I've never really been interested in that stuff anyway, I'm not that religious. [...] My cousin got married recently up in Birmingham, you know I really enjoyed all the pre-wedding traditions, and the big wedding, I felt really, like Punjabi, I enjoyed it a lot, but after the wedding it's back to normal. I wouldn't want to be that Punjabi all the time, but its fun during weddings and that.

Satwant, Sikh-Male, 19, University Student.

> I don't get involved with other Asians at work, I don't want to be seen as someone who really mixes up with other Gujeratis, people start to think you are a bit insular if you do that. I have a lot of mixed friends, black, Turkish and a lot of white mates. I would say I live the life of a normal British person, but I enjoy Navratri[102] and Garba, I like having the option to be Gujerati when I choose.

Hema, Gujerati-Female, 22, Civil Servant.

> I have some Punjabi friends, but they are like me, they don't get involved in the community that much. Mostly, I hang around with the girls I went to secondary school with and they are mostly white. [...] At first mum didn't like it that I went out clubbing, but I think she knows that I am not going to go off the rails, so she is kind of ok about it, she doesn't give me grief about it. [...] I like that I can be British when I'm with my white mates, like most of the time and blend in, but at the end of the day I am Punjabi, so I do like it that I can be Punjabi at the same time. I enjoy getting dressed up and going to functions and I like listening to Bhangra and that, not all the time, but now and then. [...] I'm lucky I can do both really.

Deep, Sikh-Female, 18, on a 'gap year'.

These young people were also able to cross in and out of different groups and sources of belonging due to the fact that there were no penalties for them from their parents or peers. Other young people from stricter backgrounds, or those who had mostly South Asian friends, worried about being called a 'coconut' and being accused of abandoning their own culture or even of trying to be, or acting 'white'. Thus, the extent to which there was prejudice and penalties from family and peers about having white friends and engaging in British activities affected the extent to which young people were freely able to enjoy membership to both groups.

These young people had found a good middle way whereby they could feel like they belonged to Britain and that they had a sense of Britishness on a day-to-day basis, but could also enjoy the cultural richness of their own communities at the same time. Often what was described was a comfort at being part of mainstream British society, but the ability to dip in and out of Punjabi, Sikh, Hindu, etc. culture as and when they wanted, but also as and when the necessity arose, for example

[102] *Navratri* (nine nights) is one of the greatest Hindu festivals. It symbolises the triumph of good over evil. Navratri takes place at the beginning of October around harvest time and, as the name implies, this festival is celebrated for nine days. Navratri is also known as Durga Puja.

during important religious functions such as Navratri, Vaisakhi, and Garba. What was also evident was that the support of the immediate family was integral in allowing this cultural crossing to occur. If parents, siblings, or even friends resented the fact that young people were only present for some cultural events, or did not immerse themselves fully in traditional behaviour of cultural practices, then these freedoms could be limited.

Many of these young people displayed dual identities, understood as a sense of membership, and comfort both as young Brits and as young Sikhs or Hindus. They felt comfortable calling themselves 'British Asian' and enjoyed the cultural aspects of their own community as well as the membership to wider British society. In fact the idea of 'comfort' was central to the way some young people described their lives as British Asians; they felt comfortable and secure in their own ethnic and religious communities, they took part in events and traditions that they enjoyed and felt happy and comfortable engaging in the British way of life. The felt accepted as both 'Sikh' or 'Hindus', by other members of their communities, or specific social circles within the ethnic community, and felt that white British people, or specific segments of the British social world as they saw it, accepted them as 'British'.

6.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I set out to explore how these young people understood and experienced Britishness, my specific research questions for this chapter were:

- What are the different understandings and experiences of Britishness?
- How is Britishness accommodated (or not) with other sources of belonging?

I have shown that there are many subtle shades of meaning surrounding British identity and great diversity in the way that young Sikh and Hindus express their relationship with the notion of Britishness. Ideas about what British identity constituted and meant were mostly formulated on the life experiences of the individual; contact with white British people, their own level of involvement and attachment in their own ethnic communities, and where they felt they could fit in their day-to-day lives – within British society, in their own ethnic communities, or in a combination of the two. This process of assessing where they could 'fit' was largely determined, as I have explored in the earlier chapters, by their social worlds, the varying perceptions of strength, and the permeability of the social boundaries and the social contact and relationships they experienced in their everyday lives.

National events, national symbols, and the historical and current policies of the British Government had strong implications for the acceptance of British identity as a source of belonging in some of these young people's lives. For some, British identity was a source of pride, for some it was difficult to describe, for others it was culturally empty, and for some it was representative of every negative experience they felt that they had endured from white British people.

A common theme during the interview process was the idea of accessibility, that is, the fact that many young people involved in this research could see very clearly

that there was a national identity, there was a British identity, but the problem for them was the extent to which they were 'allowed' to celebrate and feel part of this. This echoed the sentiments made in my chapter on 'social worlds' and 'contact', where the feasibility and option of being a part of mainstream British society was outlined by many respondents. Often, instead of young people being negative or indifferent to the idea of British identity, what I found was a sense of sadness that they felt at not being able to fully encompass themselves in a patriotic and nationalistic way. The reasons for this were varied: racist experiences had often led them to believe that British identity was solely the realm of the white British majority. Thus social contact and social ties impacted the perceived accessibility of a sense of national identification, as well as the boundary between these young people and having a sense of Britishness. Even with this sense of being outsiders to the notion of Britishness, these young people still felt a sense of being British in a thinner, more civic, and wider sense; there was no sense of separatism, just a feeling of wanting to be more included in a more affective and salient way.

Alternatively, young people themselves, particularly those with meaningful relationships and interactions with white people, recognised that racism and xenophobia were not what British identity was about. Conversely, there were some young people whose negative experiences with white British people – often over a prolonged period of time – had led them to associate these actions with the very idea of British identity. British identity thus became white British identity.

Many young people explained that they felt almost a void of belonging: their parents often had strong affiliations with India and took pride in being Indian and had a pride in India itself, or in East Africa. They felt that white British people were also able to stake a claim to Britain, yet for them as British-born Sikhs and Hindus, they could not have these sentiments towards either Britain or India. There was

often an underlying feeling of missing out on having the same pride and sentiment towards a nation that they witnessed in particular with their own parents; there was space for national identity. This sentiment was also especially strong for young people not engrossed or connected with their own ethnic identities, yet who still felt excluded from what they saw as 'white British society'.

The idea of being between 'two cultures' (Watson 1977) was relevant for these young people mentioned earlier who felt that they wanted to have a sense of national identity. They felt that their parents were able to have a sense of being a proud Indian, yet many of the young people I interviewed had very little experience of India itself and could not relate to the way of life that their parents spoke of fondly. On the other hand, they felt excluded from the idea of Britishness, they did not feel like they had a *legitimate* right to have a sense of British national identification as they were not white; they thus had a very ethnic notion of Britishness. These young people were in between two cultures: at home they were exposed to the rich cultural history of India and/or East Africa where their parents had been born; outside of the private sphere they were exposed to Britishness, a 'white' identity. They thus felt caught in between both of these nationalisms, being in a transitional state characterised by not being able to engage in the way they wanted with either.

Watson argued that many members of second-generation minorities were 'between two cultures [...] especially those born in Britain are caught between the cultural expectations of their parents (the first generation migrants) and the social demands of wider society [...] young Sikhs [...] often feel that they do not "fit" in either culture' (Watson 1977: 3). In the same volume, Ballard and Ballard argue that second generation Sikhs 'have been exposed to socialisation in two very different social contexts, at home and at school [...] conflicts arise, they can sometime

become extremely serious and children are faced with some difficult choices. Asian parents expect their children to work very hard academically while at the same time dissociating themselves from their white peers and playing an increasingly important role in communal activities'. (Ballard & Ballard 1977: 45).

I found that some young people felt that they *lived with* 'two cultures' and that they were often able to accommodate both into their lives. However, some were caught between the two in the way that Ballard and Watson argue. They found it difficult to 'be both'. Needless to say, almost fifty years has passed since the Ballards and Watson presented their respective works, and as time has gone by, many younger members of the community have been better able to construct and live a dual identity that suits them. This may be a reflection of a decrease in the cultural demands imposed on them by families, as well as greater autonomy and independence on the part of these young people. However, as I have shown, not everyone can enjoy both social spheres in the way they want to, some still have family pressure and pressure from friends, as well as deeper feelings of exclusion from Britishness on the basis of prolonged racism and discrimination, so some of the same issues are still paramount for members of the second-generation ethnic minorities today.

Overall, I found that a majority of these young people had positive orientations to both groups: they had 'dual-identities'. Although many young people said that they 'felt' British and had positive ideas about what British identity constituted, it was clear that it was not often not culturally fulfilling in the same way as their own ethnic identities; the lack of distinct cultural characteristics, traditions and national pride meant that young people felt British but it did not provide them with the same feelings of pride, belonging and attachment. Yet for some this was a problem, for others it was not. There were thus 'thick' and 'thin' versions of British identity: for

some, Britishness needed to be culturally 'thicker', there was a desire for special days, customs, food, music and a sense of community between all people living in Britain. For others Britishness was a thin glue. These young people described comparatively 'thinner' ideas of citizenship, 'living here' and 'being born here', yet this was sufficient enough for them to have a sense of British identity; a looser, thinner sense of cultural identity, but a sense of belonging to Britain in a wider sense.

Many young people with dual-identities were able to cross between both 'cultures', allowing the ethnic and religious traditions of their own community to provide the thicker cultural attributes of belonging and identity, as well as the culturally thinner, but important feelings of acceptance and inclusion in wider British society. Others, however, were less able to move in between cultures and social worlds because of a range of factors, such as penalties for acting 'too' white, or too 'Indian' from family and friends, bad contact experiences with white Britons, locality, appearance, and gender.

Additionally, there were some young people who felt that they could not understand what British identity was, and others who felt that it did not provide them with a sense of inclusion or belonging, though they often stated that there was a space for national identity in their lives – if it could be filled in the right way, if it could mean the right things and if it could be made open to people of all races and religions. Although a select number of young people had negative perceptions of British identity due to their own experiences, I found that often they were often apprehensive, rather than highly opposed.

Young people's ideas about British identity and the way that this fitted into their lives were formulated on the basis of a subtle process of negotiating their own place

in their own social worlds. Drawing on the previous chapter, social contact was important in how these young people understood their own national identification.

A range of interconnected factors affected how open young people were to being British and how important British identity was to them in their day-to-day lives. The way they had been brought up, having very traditional, or very liberal parents, the level of diversity they experienced in their own schools and neighbourhoods – which often influenced the level of diversity in their social ties, their experience with their own ethnic identities and communities, and the level of acceptance or exclusion they felt in wider British society (often determined by the treatment they received from white British people) were all factors that determined both how young people understood and conceptualised what 'being British' meant, the level of positivity and attachment it provided them and whether it was an important source of belonging for them.

I find that there was great diversity in the experience and attitudes that these young people attached to British identity. For some it was exclusive and xenophobic, and British identity itself came to be defined by the negative experiences that these young people had had from white British people. For others, British identity was about British foreign policy, current and historical, the image that Britain exported to the rest of the world through its foreign policies. Some saw British identity as a core part of their lives, a comfortable source of belonging, providing a thin glue, but a glue nonetheless. For others it was open and engaging, yet inaccessible due to the pressure they felt from their families. Young people saw British identity as different things, the demands they put on this national identity also varied. For some it was 'enough' to have positive values and traits of tolerance, democracy and respect; while for others, citizenship, having a passport, being born here and residing here were sufficient determinants of this 'identity'. For another group,

British identity could not even be considered to be a viable identity through its lack of rich, cultural traditions, yet this did not mean they led parallel lives – they often felt a culturally thinner sense of being British that was based on legally being a British citizen and structural integration.

There was thus a range of thicker and thinner ideas surrounding the meanings and attachments these young people described, which can also be related to ethnic and civic conceptualisations of British national identity (Breton 1988; Heath & Tilley 2005). Some young people understood Britishness to be a more civic nationality; they often compared it with the thicker, more affective, culturally richer ethnic identity. They felt that Britishness was a thin civic identity based on respect for British institutions, the legal citizenship of being born here and living here and that having a sense of civic, or thinner, British identity was sufficient to 'belong'. On the other hand, there were those young people who thought that Britishness was more ethnic in its character; it was about white people, doing white things. Perceived xenophobia and exclusivity on the part of white Britons were key parts of this more ethnic conception of the British nation (see Heath & Tilley 2005).

There were others who felt that Britishness was too thin, too civic, it needed more cultural weight to make it viable and appealing as an identity option. These young people felt that Britishness needed to be more culturally unique and have distinctive celebrations that could be embraced by all British people – they did not feel that Britishness was all about 'white people', but rather that it needed to be thicker to create a stronger sense of common identity amongst all British citizens.

There were thus different conceptions of civic and ethnic identity and what these constituted. Social boundaries and social contact were key to this with young people who had more negative experiences with white Britons feeling that

Britishness was more ethnic, and those with positive contact and long-term meaningful relationships with white Britons feeling that Britishness was more civic and that is was accessible to all Britons. Those with brighter boundaries between themselves and white Britons were more sceptical of British national identity, feeling that it was only for white Britons and was a medium for collective racist and xenophobic sentiments. It is also important to note that locality also played a factor in shaping ideas about Britishness. Young people from poorer parts of London felt that they were surrounded by 'chavs' who had a more ethnic conceptualisation of Britishness. This made young people feel quite threatened about British identity as they saw it celebrated in what they felt was a very racist manner. Alternatively, those from middle-class areas felt that white people in their locality were more educated and often had a more civic idea of Britishness.

One finding I wish to emphasise here is the fact that many of the young people I interviewed who had a thinner more civic conceptualisation of Britishness were not only happy with this thinner glue, but they felt that the comparative thinness of Britishness was why they could accommodate it alongside their thicker, and often more demanding ethnic identity. To them, the fact that Britishness was based on a less demanding, more civic notion of identity meant that in day-to-day life they could easily hold dual-identities without impeding their sense of belonging in either social circle. They were thus able to embrace a civic Britishness, which was often understood as a sound institutional and legal framework that they felt part of, whilst enjoying the thicker ethno-religious-cultural aspects of being a Hindu or a Sikh. These young people felt that if Britishness were made thicker and more culturally demanding it would make the accommodation more difficult; it would in fact be harder to be British and be a Sikh or Hindu and this scenario would lead them into a place where they had to make a 'choice'.

Not having a sense of 'British identity' often did not mean that young people were completely separate from mainstream British society. I found that many young people who, by their own admission, did not have any sense of Britishness, were not segregated from British life. They did not need to have a sense of Britishness to be good citizens, to work, to go to college or university. The relationship between having a sense of Britishness and being British in the thinner sense of being a British citizen, abiding by the law, paying taxes and making a contribution was not mutually exclusive. Politicians may *want* people to have a sense of 'Britishness', but I found often that even without this 'identity', many of these young people still had a connection with Britain, they still felt some level of attachment and loyalty to the country where they lived and where they had been born, even if they did not feel a sense of affective 'Britishness'.

In some cases British society and British identity were seen as separate: you could feel 'structurally' part of British society without having a sense of Britishness – which was often seen as an exclusively English and white notion celebrated by 'white people doing white things'.[103] Young people felt that they were structurally part of wider British society. They felt part of the socio-politico-legal institutions of Britain and respected this and felt part of wider British society as British citizens, yet they felt no affective sense of a national identity. Their lack of Britishness did not equate to a sense of separatism, nor did they always have an accompanying strong sense of ethnic identity.

Overall, my findings broadly concur with earlier works that have found that identities are not necessarily singular (Gordon 1964), but rather that they can be multiple (Hutnik 1991; Berry 1997; Verkuyten & Yildez 2007; Platt & Nandi

[103] I have utilised Gordon's term as it has parallels with what some young people expressed to me. As I have discussed in detail in Chapter 2, Gordon argued that assimilation has seven stages, the second being 'structural assimilation' whereby there is 'large-scale entrance into cliques, clubs, and institutions of host society' (Gordon 1964).

2013). Traditionally, minority ethnic identification has been 'regarded as part of wider socio-cultural processes, whereby strength of minority identity can be expected to decline over time and generations' (Platt 2013: 47). I have shown that the reality is far more complex than this. Some young people have a strong sense of ethnic identity – sometimes stronger than that of their parents; and others have a sense of belonging to a certain segment. Yet the nature of a person's sense of ethnic identity is not linked to a sense of majority identification in a neat and uniform manner.

Overall, the evidence I have found for dual or multiple identities is strong enough for me to contend that one identity does not rule out the other. In this specific group the issue of time, of change in generations is insufficient to explain what I have found. I find that overall the key trend is for young people to hold two or more identities, yet I will emphasise that there are some young people who may have an exclusively ethnic identity – due to a perceived clash in values with the white British majority and/or a hostile reception (Aleinikoff & Rumbaut 1998; Portes & Rumbaut 2006; Rumbaut 2005; Operario & Fiske 2001; Platt 2013: 48), or a feeling of being left out and not awarded the same treatment and opportunity as young white Britons of a similar age (Heath 2008). I can thus also concur with Heath and Roberts who have emphasised that the second generation are more embedded in non-group contexts and are thus more aware and sensitive to inequalities within wider society (Heath & Roberts 2008). However, there are also some young people who fully immerse themselves in Britishness with very little or no attachment to minority ethnic identification, and this finding in particular is powerful evidence of the inaccuracy of stylised essentialised facts about the parallel lives and separatism of young people from ethnic minorities and highlights the

complete lack of understanding about the diverse reality of identity orientations within this particular group.

I can also concur with Platt and Nandi's conclusions about the multiplicity of identities, which build on earlier work that has acknowledged the complementary axes of majority and minority psychological acculturation (Hutnik 1991; Berry 1997; Berry 2005; Verkuyten 2007: Manning & Roy 2010: Schaafma et al. 2010). I find that there is great evidence of dual identities, which I feel undermines political anxiety about separatism and parallel lives. However, I too wish to avoid the essentialisation of these young people's experiences, so I would argue that it is important to acknowledge that this does not always mean that young people are fully immersed, or immersed in the same way in their belonging to both majority and minority cultures. Thus my contribution to the existing literature is to highlight the complexity and *diversity of dual-identities* for this particular group.

There is some truth to the claim that parallel lives may lead to stronger ethnic identity (see Heath & Demireva 2013). Yet for the young people in this particular empirical case, the fear that high levels of bonding capital have led to low levels of bridging capital and the subsequent separatism of young people from ethnic minorities seems to be an over-simplification of their social reality. First, as I have shown, high levels of bonding capital are not always the norm for these young people. In fact, the situation is far more complex whereby young people may have higher bonding capital with certain segments of their ethnic community and not with others. As I have emphasised, rather than high levels of bonding capital, it is negative social experiences with white Britons that provide the most powerful hindrance to bridging capital. Some young people have high levels of bonding, but by choice, they have a more superficial – but important – bridging with Britishness, whereby they involve themselves structurally and institutionally, feeling a sense of

security as British citizens without taking part in, or having a salient sense of national identification. In fact, bonding and bridging capital, positive orientations to both minority and majority group culture and attributes, as well as specific positive orientations towards certain layers of these groups constitute the most common experience for these young people.

I can thus concur with Heath and Demireva who have also found similarly that 'high levels of bonding social capital coexist with positive orientations towards integration, high levels of British identity and low levels of hostility to white people [...] One of the key assumptions of the critics of multiculturalism namely that high levels of bonding social capital would lead to an unwillingness to integrate, does not therefore seem to be well founded'. (Heath & Demireva 2013: 171). I find that it is not an either/or situation and can also concur with the conclusion that 'high levels of bonding social capital are not especially correlated with willingness to integrate, British identity, or support for protest' (Ibid).

I feel that it is important to identify trends and patterns in order to make a contribution to the on-going academic and political debates whist highlighting the complexity and diversity of what I have found in the process of this research.

Overall, I find that the general trend in this specific empirical case of young Sikhs and Hindus is for young people to have a sense of belonging to both minority and majority groups. I can thus concur with other writers who have found similar results using different datasets (Platt 2014; Heath 2014; Platt & Nandi 2013). In addition to finding evidence of dual identities, I find that in this group it is often the case that having a dual-identity is not to have a generalised sense of belonging to everyone in the minority and majority groups in their entirety, but to certain layers

that are seen as compatible with the views and expectations of the individuals concerned. I have chosen to call *this 'diverse dual-identities'*.

Diverse dual-identities were the most common outcome for these young people. These identities are characterised by a more general, thinner, yet positive sense of identification towards both groups, in which they acknowledge the positive attributes of both minority and majority cultures and groups. However, the sense of belonging to other people within these groups was more nuanced. Often, they felt a sense of Britishness, but felt that their sense of camaraderie with white Britons was restricted to the particular segment of the white British population that they felt most comfortable with and most accepted by, as well as those, as I have explored earlier, who shared the same values as them. This feeling was often accompanied by a more general, thinner sense of belonging to Britain and positive orientations towards Britishness. This was mirrored in their experience of minority culture, where young people often had positive orientations towards the general traditions and cultural practices of their ethno-religious communities, but felt a more affective sense of belonging – in terms of people with whom they felt the strongest sense of commonality and acceptance – to a certain segment of people within the ethnic community.

Diverse dual-identities are thus embedded in these layers. Social worlds and the social interaction and social relationships instigated and experienced in these social worlds not only influence understandings of acceptance and boundaries, they are also crucial in shaping ideas about Britishness. Overall, I found that although there was great diversity, this diversity of opinions did not impede the general trend of positive orientations to both groups – coupled with a deeper sense of belonging to specific segments within each group. Although I found that to have a dual-identity was the most common outcome for many of the young people, in this specific

empirical case I found that the nature of the duality is far more complex than may be assumed. Dual-identities are diverse and highly individualistic and the everydayness of these diverse and complex dual-identities is based on the level of embeddedness of each individual in various social circles within their complex social worlds.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

At the beginning of this thesis I stated that my aim in this research was to delve into the reality of identity and belonging for second-generation young people from Sikh and Hindu backgrounds living in the London area. My aim was to uncover how identities play out in everyday life; I wanted to explore what shapes identity options and orientations in this specific group, whilst highlighting the diversity of experiences. My choice of sample was based on a range of issues, not least the fact that British Indians constitute one of the largest ethnic minorities in Britain and one of the oldest, coupled with the comparatively little data we have on the belonging and social worlds of these young people.

My aim was to use the rich narratives of these young people to highlight the range of experiences and thus work against the easy generations and essentialisations that have led to a misunderstanding of these young people's identity orientations. It has been assumed that there is a widespread crisis in identity orientation without exploring identity options and what shapes these options. There has been a fear that multiculturalism has led to separatism whereby young people from minority ethnic backgrounds are deeply rooted in their own ethnic community, and this has impeded their sense of Britishness. (Brown 2008; Phillips 2008; Cameron 2011). There has thus been growing concern that, sociologically speaking, high bonding capital has impeded bridging capital (Heath 2013). My aim throughout this thesis has been to explore and present the complex and sophisticated social worlds of these young people and emphasise that their individual experiences warrant in-depth examination, rather than the all too easy generalisations that have tended to underpin some of the socio-political commentary on this subject.

I framed this work in two key, interrelated spheres; the current socio-political debate on the perceived crisis in identity for ethnic minorities in Britain, and the existing academic literature on identity formation, acculturation and assimilation in multi-ethnic societies. This final chapter now summarizes the key findings of the three core chapters (chapters 4-7) whilst highlighting key contributions to the existing literature in each constituent area.

7.2 Social worlds

This chapter was a starting point for discussions about identity and belonging through an in-depth examination of the social worlds of these young people. My aim in this chapter was to uncover how these young people understood and experienced the social world in which they live, as well as examining their identity options and orientations within these social worlds. My aim was to explore the diversity of experiences and opinions.

The current anxiety of over a lack of 'Britishness' and 'parallel lives' assumes a sense of belonging in the minority ethnic community at the expense of minority identification. Additionally, there is also an assumption that there is homogeneity in these groups, their members, and the way that these groups are experienced. This chapter uncovered the reality of individual social worlds, the groups that young people see as existing within these social worlds, the perceived structure and organisation of these groups, as well as their sense of belonging to various social circles which are seen to comprise these groups. This chapter thus uncovered the everydayness of minority and majority groups and identification for these young people. This chapter also examined the strength of boundaries and showed that contrary to what has been espoused by some politicians and policy makers, boundaries can take a variety of forms, and they can have differing levels of

brightness and permeability. I showed that boundaries are not restricted to minority-majority relations; the situation is far more complex and intricate.

The concept of 'society', of a coherent social group as such, was not one that was always exposed by respondents. Their perceptions of British and Asian 'societies' varied tremendously. I found that the notion of 'society' itself was by no means fixed nor even plausible on occasion, with many respondents struggling to conceptualise and relate to the idea of 'British society' in particular. The idea of 'society' was marked by a degree of fluidity, with what characterised and defined 'society' changing at different times, as well as the idea of 'society' itself ranging from immediate ethnic community to wider 'British society'.
British society was seen by some respondents as being 'multicultural' and diverse, a place where anyone could be British regardless of their race or religion, yet some respondents understood the idea of 'British society' as a predominantly, if not exclusively white notion, with restrictive 'entry' and membership from the outset.

The notions of 'Indian society' and 'Indian Community' were characterised by similar levels of diversity in conceptualisation and experience. Respondents saw 'Indian community' as viable, or otherwise, based on their own experiences. Indian society or Indian community had different meanings and different levels of attachment for different people, and ranged from being a defining source of belonging for some respondents, to being marked by a high level of disattachment and animosity for others. This was echoed in respondents' ideas about British society, where British society represented a haven for all that was wrong and restrictive in their 'Indian community' for some young Sikhs and Hindus, to being marked by exclusiveness and notions of racism from the very outset for other respondents.

What was evident was that the notion of distinct groups, for example, a British group, or an Indian group or community, was too simplistic to fit the respondents mapping of their own social worlds: 'Indian' society, British society, and even Hindu and Sikh societies, were very often explained and experienced in hierarchal terms, or by levels or social circles that respondents saw as existing within each 'group'. Respondents' mapping of their own social world conveyed the complexities of group membership for young British-born Sikhs and Hindus, the way in which individual-level experiences shaped perceptions of self and others, and the intricacies of the social world in which they live. I found that young people are experiencing their social world, through the nature of the own social ties and the social experiences they have with different segments of the groups they see as inhabiting their social space.

Young people have a diverse, complex and nuanced understanding of their 'social words'. Social worlds are complex, and my findings undermine the idea of a static and uniform idea of ethnic minorities, as well as British society. These young people do not simply live in a social world comprised of people from minority and majority groups; the picture is far more complex and intricate than that. There are many social circles and sub-groups, which they see as existing within the wider minority and majority framework. I found that many of them simultaneously have a sense of belonging, as well as a sense of exclusion and outsiderness, in any of these social circles. This sense of belonging can have different levels of salience and attachment; sources of belonging are diverse and the notion of 'belonging' and what it constitutes in each scenario is also extremely diverse.

Young people's individual understanding of their social world, be it British, Indian, Sikh, Hindu, Gujarati, Punjabi, or whatever, varied tremendously. The idea of 'society' was key, with young people outlining their own ideas about where

boundaries lay between and within their own social words. For example, for some young Sikhs, ‘ethnic community’ was demarcated by membership to the local Gurdwara. Members of this Gurdwara within the given locality thus became the ‘ethnic community’. For some young Hindu-Gujaratis, community comprised of all Gujaratis globally. In this chapter I also explored how caste can affect local community. In particular, how many Gurdwaras and Mandirs were for specific caste members and so young people who were involved in the local temple and the community organisation which often accompanied, ‘community’ often became intertwined with members of the same caste, who attended the same temple and events organised by the temple and so forth.

Young people described the way in which their appearance, the appearance of their parents and families, the food they ate and the way they behaved (not partaking in certain activities) became obvious makers of difference. Be it a turban, or having an uncut beard, dressing in modest clothing, wearing a tikka after Hindu worship, or having Indian food in lunchboxes, they felt that these were seen as ways in which people saw these young people as ‘outsiders’ and became the way in which being visible members of ethnic communities marked them out as outsiders to white British people. This had a deep impact on the way that some of these young people saw their social worlds, and the way they fitted into these worlds.

Social worlds were thus characterised by a high degree of complexity and challenged the simplistic model of a singular British society, uniform and static, as well as the idea that ethnic minorities are homogenous, monolithic entities. Young people described the splits and demarcations within their own ethno-religious communities, whatever these were. The ‘communities’ they described were often very separate, with little overlap. Sikhs and Hindus often saw themselves as two separate communities. There were hierarchical splits according to Hindu, Sikh, and

Gujarati castes, as well as splits and types of separation based on family life, wealth, education, and upward mobility. There were also tensions between the more strictly religious Hindus and Sikhs, and those who were more 'Westernised'. British society too was seen as highly demarcated, along class lines, and the idea of a singular British society was also challenged by these young people, who understood that there were different types of 'white people'.

I found that the individual priorities of young people often came to shape their social world and the boundaries that define these social worlds. Barth argued that 'the ethnic boundary canalises social life' (Barth 1969: 15). I find that for some young people, ethnicity is the key concept that underpins important social boundaries, but for the majority of young people who took part in this research, ethnicity nor religion are not the basis of all social boundaries. Boundaries are often based on the priorities of that particular individual. If a young person was highly committed to their religion then their sense of belonging was most salient with other Sikhs or Hindus who were similarly orthodox. They also felt that the British majority society was structured according to those who were 'educated and respectful' of their religion. The basis for boundaries with the majority thus became 'respect and tolerance' for their religion, and for their co-ethnics the boundaries were based on 'religiosity'. The key concerns of the individual thus shaped the perceived structure of their social world, the feasibly and desirability of belonging within these composite segments, as well as the basis of social boundaries. (See Tables 4 and 5)

These boundaries constituted the separation (or not) between the individual and members of that particular social sphere. I showed how a range of boundaries could be experienced simultaneously, each with different levels of brightness or blurriness. For example, a young well-educated moderate Sikh could feel a very

bright boundary to ‘Asian rudeboys’ and ‘White chavs’, yet have a blurrier, or non-existent boundary to middle-class white Britons. They could thus feel a range of boundaries to these composite segments simultaneously, and the basis of the boundaries could vary for each person.

I found that these young people are extremely sophisticated in their social worlds. The intricate mapping of social worlds, and in particular the way in which they saw the splits between and within social groups allowed them to actively judge the level of the ‘feasibility’ and the ‘desirability’ of becoming members of those groups, and of having any meaningful interaction and relationships with members of groups, or sub-sections of groups. For example, chavs or white working class people were seen as ‘undesirable’ for most young people, as were the ‘Asian rudeboys’ for young people who saw themselves as more upwardly mobile, westernised and successful.

Building on earlier works on social boundaries this chapter makes a contribution by showing that in this empirical case we can see the complexity and diversity of boundaries is far more intricate than may be assumed. I have shown that a young person can have a sense of belonging to a range of groups and/or sub-groups in their social world coupled with the feeling of a range of boundaries between themselves and these groups and sub-groups or social circles, some ‘bright’, some ‘blurry’, some non-existent – with certain respondents feeling that they have ‘passed the boundary’ – and others finding the boundary completely impermeable. I can thus concur with other writers who have argued that boundary processes are not all alike and that boundary-related changes are too complex to be conceptualised into a single set of processes (Zerubavel 1993; Poutignat & Streiff-Fenart 1995; Isajiw 1999, pp. 19-20; Juteau 1999; Zolberg & Long 1999; Lamont 2000; Lamont & Molnar 2002).

My contribution has been to highlight the complexity of boundaries in this group. In particular, I have shown that young people can feel many different boundaries at the same time. I have built on Alba's notion of 'bright' and 'blurred' boundaries (Alba 2005) by showing that these young people can have a very diverse set of bright and blurred boundaries based on their social worlds and experiences, and I have explored what influences brightness or blurriness. I have shown that boundaries themselves can also be formulated on a range of issues, and that these issues may be different depending on whether the boundary is with co-ethnics or white Britons – or with specific social circles within these groups.

Earlier on in this thesis, I explored in detail the existing approaches to social identity. In terms of the existing literature I am able to contribute to the social identity framework based on the work on Tajfel and Turner (1986). Specifically, I make a contribution to the existing literature relating to notions of in-groups and out-groups (Tajefel & Turner; Hogg &Abrams 1990; Branscombe & Wann 1994; Gagnon & Bourhis 1996; Prins 1996; Rubin & Hewstone 1998; Van Oudenhoven et al. 1998; Aberson et al. 2000; Verkeyten & Thijs 2002) by highlighting the complexity of the in-group/out group model in this specific empirical case.

First, I find that the ethnic minority group is often not the in-group, in fact, building on what I have discussed above, my findings show that there are many 'groups within groups', so an 'in-group' can be a particular segment of either the minority or the majority culture, as can an 'out-group'. A person can have a sense of belonging to a particular segment of British society without feeling any affective belonging with the rest of the group. This is also echoed in the minority group. Thus in-group and out-groups can take a variety of forms and in the process of this research I found many different formulations. Additionally, 'in-group bias' or 'favouritism' can be based on a range of social and personal issues.

I have also made a contribution by uncovering the available 'identity options' (Jacobsen 1998; Rex & Josephides; Waters 2002) of these young people. I have shown that any assumptions of where these young people feel that they belong do not sufficiently acknowledge the great diversity I found in terms of which identities were understood as available and unavailable to different individuals, as well as highlighting what shapes the feasibility and desirability of an 'identity option'.

There are thus a range of 'identity options' for these young people depending on their individual social worlds. Groups are not homogenous, but should rather be seen as being comprised of various social circles, each with their own characteristics and commensurate feasibility and desirability of belonging. Boundaries are not confined to majority and minority relations; in any given individual boundaries can be felt towards any group and sub group. Some young people feel more comfortable and have a much stronger sense of belonging in British society than they do in their own ethnic community.

7.3 Contact

Building on the previous chapter, this chapter explored the mechanisms by which social contact experiences shape understandings of social worlds and identity options and orientations. From the outset I was interested in examining the range and type of contact experiences that these young people could have, as well as the diverse ways that these experiences could shape an individual's sense of belonging to the groups and social circles they described in the previous chapter.

I showed that the existing literature had focused primarily on inter-group contact and the reduction of prejudice, yet I was interested in a broader range of outcomes. I found that contact was the mechanism by which these young people assessed their compatibility not only with white British people, but also with co-ethnics.

Specifically, I found that people came to represent the specific social circle that these young people categorised them as being from. For white Britons, this might be 'chav' or 'posh', while for co-ethnics it might be 'Asian rudeboy', 'Indian Indians'/'Backward Indians', and so forth. Social exchanges with these people were the mechanism by which these young people assessed their compatibility with the multiple social circles that comprised their social worlds. Contact thus shapes belonging to social circles or composite sub-sections of the minority group and the majority group.

These young people are highly skilled at assessing their compatibility with others and seem to be doing this continually. Contact can be good or bad, and what constitutes a 'good' contact experience was often a sense of respect and acceptance (from white Britons), and similar commitment (or not) to religious and cultural traditions (for co-ethnics). Contact is diverse, but what constitutes a positive or negative contact experience depends on the individual concerns of these young people and how they *want* to be treated by a range of people

Contact can strengthen or erode boundaries; it can also change the position of boundaries. Some young people had grown up with negative stereotypes of 'white people' but through continual positive contact they were able to break down these stereotypes and see for themselves that '*not all goreh are like that*'. Others felt that contact with co-ethnics had made them realise that they did not fit in with other British Indians. Contact is thus instrumental in shaping belonging through its ability to reinforce or breakdown stereotypes and boundaries. It is the mechanism by which identity options are assessed in everyday life, particularly through the assessment of shared and clashing values with white Britons and co-ethnics.

Racist and prejudicial contact experiences were extremely powerful at creating a sense of outsiderness and strengthening/reinforcing boundaries. Young people who had had many experiences of racism over the years now felt that white Britons would never accept them. For some, it left them feeling excluded and unhappy, for others it was the basis for their conscious decision to become more involved with their own ethnic community where they felt they were accepted.

Contact could be part of a more meaningful relationship, or it could be a more casual exchange with a stranger. Racist incidents were often the latter. This type of contact was extremely damaging for those involved, but also became the basis for very strong boundaries between these young people and British society, as well as the basis for feelings of rejection and exclusion. I found that some young people were able to isolate an occasional racist exchange from white Britons as they had meaningful relationships with other white Britons who '*weren't like that*'. Thus, previous positive contact could limit the negative impact of casual racist exchanges in shaping belonging. Others without such relationships just felt that this racism was symbolic of all white people.

I found that contact was often not random. Young Sikh males with turbans and/or uncut beards, young women wearing salwaar kameez, or male and female Hindus wearing Tikka after Hindu worship reported more racist contact experiences than others who were less distinctive in their appearance. Some of these young people live in poorer parts of London where they felt that they were '*surrounded by chavs*' who were more likely than '*decent educated goras*' to call them racist names. Some of these young people, the women in particular, felt pressured by family to dress in traditional clothes, their ability to blend in was thus restricted. Conversely, living in a white middle-class area, having no parental pressure to uphold any cultural or religious traditions meant that some young people were better able to 'blend in'.

Locality was a clear factor in the level of diversity that young people had in their social ties. Young people from areas with a strong presence of ethnic minority members often had a stronger sense of their own ethnic identities and sense of belonging to their own ethnic communities. However, it was not a clear relationship insofar as some young people from such areas who felt that they were different from other Sikhs and Hindus felt a sense of sharp rejection and exclusion from co-ethnics. For some young people living in more 'white' areas, this meant that they felt more westernised, more British and less 'Asian', and less linked to ethnic communities, while for others, the feeling of being Asian in a white area led them to stand out more and to feel greater discrimination and isolation, which did not always mean that they consciously made an effort to become more entrenched in their ethnic communities and traditions. Locality did have an impact, but it impacted people in different ways and alongside other factors. There were a range of dimensions that could make a person more or less exposed to racism; this racism thus shaped perceptions of boundaries, identity options and feelings of rejection in different ways. There were multiple axes at work which shaped contact experiences: image or 'looking different', parental pressure and the specific demographic composition of the locality in which the individual lived.

I found that contact shaped the complex social worlds I outlined in the earlier chapter; it was the mechanism by which the organisation and structure of social worlds was based through its ability to generate information about 'who is like me' and 'who is not'. I found that the most significant way in which contact can lead to feelings of belonging and acceptance is through the information that is generated in the contact scenario, and more specifically, through the fact that commonality and shared values are assessed by young people through social interactions. If values are seen as compatible, this acts as bridging and later, bonding capital. Values

themselves were diverse; for some young people values were based on family values and upbringing, while for others, it was an issue of religion, and they could only be friends with people who, for example, did not eat beef. As well as shared values, there was also the idea of clashing values, if it became apparent through social exchanges that young people were not accepted or that there was no commonality, then this would lead to exclusion and consciously stepping away from people and the groups they represented, both British and ethnic minorities. For the latter, a lack of commonality or shared values would often lead to the strengthening of boundaries. The most powerful social exchanges were those that fostered a sense of comfort, acceptability, and respect for the distinctive culture of these young people. These young people continually assess their compatibility with white Britons and co-ethnics.

Earlier works on the role of contact have often focused on *inter*-group contact and the reduction of prejudice. The findings in this chapter make a contribution by building on earlier literature, but showing that the social contact is crucial in determining sources of belonging. Specifically, I have shown that contact is instrumental in shaping a broader range of outcomes and not only the reduction of prejudice. I show that contact shapes orientations *within* and *between* groups and with the social circles that are seen to comprise these groups. I have shown that there is great diversity in the type of contact experiences that young people can have. Contact can be positive, or it can be negative; it can be a casual, superficial exchange with a stranger, or it can be part of a more affective relationship. These diverse contact experiences shape social worlds and the orientations of belonging within these social worlds.

I have shown that social contact allows young people not only to assess value compatibility, but also allows them to break down and/or strengthen their stereotypes of people. For example, Sonia felt that it was only when she attended university that she realised that *'not all white girls are bad'* and that she *'had more in common with them than Asian girls'*. Similarly, Amit felt that through consistent positive contact with white Britons, he realised *'they are not really racist, they are a lot more supportive than other Asians'*.

I found that gender could be an issue for some young women who find themselves restricted in their identity options and social contact as they are pressured to maintain a '*good Indian girl*' image. This means they cannot have '*a lot of white mates*' and '*can't go out drinking and socialising with white people*'. Assumptions about 'parallel lives' often sidestep the issue of choice. Many young people would like to have more white friends, but they feel excluded. Any discussion of the identity orientations of second-generation ethnic minorities needs to take account of cultural sensitivities that may influence the extent to which young people can fully exercise their own choices in this context.

I have thus made a contribution by showing the diverse nature of social contact for these young people, and the diverse way it can shape belonging. I hope that future research into the identity orientations of these young people will look closely at the process of belonging and acknowledge that treatment from white British people is a key factor in young people from ethnic minorities feeling that they can be part of wider British society. It is not simply the case that ethnic minority members do not want to have more diversity in their social ties, but on-going racism and prejudice has often made them feel like outsiders. I also showed that some young people like Rajan P. had what may be called 'reactive ethnicities'. After on-going racist abuse Rajan grew his hair and beard and started to wear a turban stating '*if I am going to*

be treated like an outsider I may as well look like one properly, I may as well represent Sikhi […] at least the other Singhs will respect me'.

7.4 Britishness

My final chapter was an exploration into the way that these young people understood and experienced Britishness and the way that this was accommodated (or not) alongside other sources of belonging. My aim was to provide real data about national identification for this particular group in order to inform current socio-political debates based on assumptions about their identity orientations.

I found that there were made shades of understanding around Britishness. Some felt that British identity had no affective component and was culturally empty; they felt that to have a sense of Britishness there needed to be something unique about Britishness, which there was not. Often young people compared British identity with the culturally thicker sense of belonging they had with their ethnic community and subsequently deemed Britishness culturally void. Others were more positive, feeling that they had a strong sense of Britishness; they felt that Britishness was about meritocracy, respect and tolerance. Understandably, those young people who had experienced Britishness in this positive light could identify with these attributes more strongly, others who had felt rejected by white Britons felt that Britishness was a celebration of all things white; it was about white British people celebrating *their* culture with their special events. It was understood as completely exclusionary.

Others felt that white Britons allowed them to have a sense of Britishness on select temporary occasions where the boundary was made more permeable for a short period of time; World Cup football matches and the Olympic games were cited as examples of this. Some young people felt that they wanted to have a sense of

Britishness, that there was almost a void; they were not really Indian enough to have a sense of Indian national identity, nor did they feel that they had a right to stake a claim to Britishness.

There has been evidence in recent years that young people from ethnic minorities have dual-identities (Berry & Sam 1997; Heath & Roberts 2008; Sam & Berry 2010; Heath & Demireva 2013; Platt & Nandi 2013; Platt 2014). I can largely concur with these writers given that I also found that a majority of these young people did indeed have dual-identities. However, I would emphasise the importance of acknowledging those who have a different experience to the majority in order to gain a detailed and accurate knowledge of the diversity within this specific group.

My contribution to the existing literature is to highlight my finding that dual-identities are *diverse*; they are experienced in unique and highly individualistic ways. For example, I found that young people often felt a general, thinner sense of belonging to both minority and majority groups, but that their sense of belonging was most salient within certain composite social circles of these groups. Dual-identities were embedded and practiced in day-to-day life within these social circles. These dual-identities could take a range of forms and compositions. I would argue that we must not essentialise positive orientations towards both groups as simply 'dual-identities'; we must acknowledge the complex and diverse manifestations of these dual-identities to give us a better understanding of the reality of belonging for these young people.

There was a range of thicker and thinner understandings of Britishness. There was a more ethnic understanding that focused on the fact that Britishness was an ethnic identity for white Britons. Alternatively, there was a thinner, more civic thread of understanding that focused on respect for British institutions, the legal citizenship

of being born here, living here and speaking English (Breton 1988; Heath & Tilley 2005; Reeskens & Hooghue 2010). Where there were dual-identities, young people often had a more civic understanding of Britishness; it was seen as a glue, a thinner glue, but sufficient enough nonetheless. Others felt that Britishness was too civic and need to have more cultural uniqueness.

An important finding I wish to highlight here is that many young people felt that the thinner, more civic nature of Britishness was the key reason why it could be accommodated alongside the other, more culturally demanding ethnic identity. They felt that if Britishness were to be made more culturally demanding, they might struggle to accommodate both. It is poignant then that current anxieties about 'parallel lives' (Phillips 2005; Cameron 2011) fail to acknowledge that most young people in this specific empirical case do have positive orientations towards Britishness, but that the thinner, more civic understanding of Britishness is a key factor in its accommodation alongside other sources of belonging. Additionally, as I have found, this socio-political debate fails to grasp the complexity and nuance of belonging and the intricate way it plays out in practice. I found that even when young people did not feel any salient sense of Britishness, they could still feel structurally integrated; a lack of national identification does not equate to separatism or 'parallel lives', and young people could feel rooted in British society without an affective sense of British identity.

I find that it not an either/or scenario; one source of belonging does not necessarily hinder others. Identities and sources of belonging are multiple (Berry1997; Verkuyten & Yildiz 2007; Platt & Nandi 2013) and are not restricted to an interplay between majority-minority; young people can feel a range of belonging to a diverse set of groups and social circles within ethnic communities and wider British society. This belonging and orientation is negotiated and assessed through the

medium of social contact. I find that racism and prejudice are in fact the most powerful hindrances to these young people feeling a sense of Britishness. (Aleinikoff & Rumbaut 1998; Portes & Rumbaut 2006; Rumbaut 2005; Operario & Fiske 2001; Heath & Roberts 2008; Heath & Demireva 2013; Platt 2013)

7.5 Contribution to assimilation and acculturation theory

At the beginning of this thesis I outlined the key academic positions in regard to the assimilation and acculturation of ethnic minorities. I would now like to make some final comments about my contribution to these existing works. I outlined the original theories from Park, Burgess and Gordon's straight-line assimilation model, the bumpy-line theory (Gans & Sandburg 1973), second-generation decline (Gans), second-generation revolt (Perlman & Wadinger), new assimilation theory (Alba & Nee), segmented assimilation (Gans), selective acculturation (Portes & Zhou), symbolic ethnicity (Gans 1976), and the idea of a reactive ethnicity (Rumbault 2008). I wanted to explore how far the experiences of these young people seem to concur with the existing theoretical positions

My contribution to the existing literature has been to show that young people within this certain group have different patterns of assimilation and acculturation; within this group of young people of similar ages, from the same ethnic backgrounds, any given individual can fit into a given model. Overall however, I find that Portes and Zhou's model of segmented assimilation was the most useful typology in which to situate my findings.

Some of the young people I interviewed seemed to fit the straight-line assimilation model; they largely saw themselves as culturally and structurally 'British', and they had very little attachment to their ethnic identities and communities. A key factor in this was the role of parents: these young people often had well-educated, affluent

parents who felt that to move 'upwards' was to move 'away' from other 'Asians'. These young people had been raised to believe that any involvement in, or attachment with ethno-cultural community and/or religion was of no advantage to them. They in essence felt that they had crossed the boundary between minority and majority and had overcome the limitations this boundary may entail. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) argue that human capital, modes of incorporation into the host society and the structure of the family unit shape the experiences of the first generation, and this in turn shapes the experiences of the second generation. These young people were mirroring the way their parents acculturated and were thus experiencing 'consonant acculturation' in the movement towards full structural and cultural assimilation into British society. (Also known as Path 1 in Portes & Zhous's segmented assimilation model),

However, a majority of these young people had some level of positive orientation towards both minority and majority groups, albeit experienced and understood in diverse ways. In 1993, Portes and Zhou advocated their model of 'segmented assimilation' and contended that the United States as a society was both unequal and stratified. As a result, there were various 'segments' of this society, which any given immigrant could assimilate. The authors outlined three paths:[104] Path 1, which is predicted by the classical assimilation model of straight-line assimilation into the American middle class; Path 2, acculturation and assimilation into an urban underclass leading to downward mobility, and Path 3 'selective acculturation' (Portes & Rumbaut 2001: 54) which is characterised by the deliberate maintenance and preservation of the immigrant culture, community and values which occurs in tandem with economic integration (Rumbaut 1994; Portes & Zhou 1993; Zhou 1997a). The theory emphasizes that there is more than one way of 'becoming

[104]See page 46 in the literature review chapter for a more detailed outline.

American,' while arguing that Americanization is not necessarily beneficial to everyone (Bankston & Zhou 1997; Zhou 1997a).

Overall, I find that a majority of these young people are experiencing something similar to 'Path 3'. I use the expression 'something similar' here deliberately, as even though these young people are maintaining ethnic ties and are integrated economically, the ways that they do this are diverse and individualistic, as I have argued. The general framework of Path 3, however, is a good framework in which to situate the majority of their experiences.

My contribution then is to argue that in the British case, in this specific case of young, second-generation men and women from Indian Sikh and Indian Hindu backgrounds, living in inner and outer London, the most common path to assimilation is to maintain their ethnic culture and community values in an individualistic way, while being economically and structurally integrated into wider British society. This economic and structural integration is also understood and experienced in diverse ways.

As I have shown throughout this thesis, the way that ethnic values, community and culture are maintained and experienced is very diverse. We should not then assume that if young people are maintaining these cultures, they are necessarily deeply rooted and feel a sense of belonging to all co-ethnics; in fact, they may often maintain and practice their ethnic identity in specific social circles rather than within the group as a whole. Portes and Zhou argue that Path 3 is characterised by economic integration, I would concur, but argue that in this specific empirical case, the integration is not only economic, it is structural and institutional as well as *socio-cultural* – with many of the young people having a sense of 'Britishness' alongside their ethnic identities. This sense of majority identification or Britishness

can also be more ethnic, or more civic from person to person as I have shown. Minority identification can be more symbolic (Greeley 1974; Gans 1979; Waters 1990) for some people and in practice this symbolic identity manifests in a preference to 'dip in and out' of their ethnic community and cultures in order to enjoy special days. However, the element of choice is crucial in this ability to choose when to dip in and out, some young people were more able than others to do this. I can thus largely concur with Waters who argues that symbolic ethnicity is often appealing due to the element of choice is it involves (Waters 1990). For others, the maintenance of ethic and community ties is more salient on a day-to-day basis as they adhere to religious and/or cultural traditions. Therefore the sense of belonging they have to majority and minority groups is very different from person to person, even though they largely fit into the 'Path 3' typology.

It is interesting that the segmented assimilation model by nature acknowledges that there are multiple segments into which people can assimilate. I would make a contribution here by arguing that this research shows that the segments are not confined to the host society, but are apparent in the minority group too. Young people can feel rooted in any combination of these minority and majority segments, which comprise their social worlds.

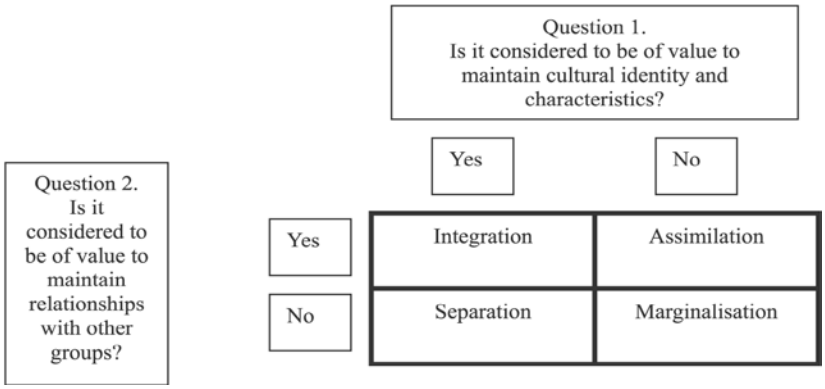
I have found little evidence of 'downward assimilation' (Path 2) in this research. Even those young people who lived in poorer parts of London and were experiencing racism were not characterised by downward mobility (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco 2001; Waldinger 2001). Neither did they have 'oppositional cultures' which are often accused of encouraging truancy and lack of educational engagement (Hirschman 2001; Portes & Rumbaut 2001; Zhou 1997a; Portes & Zhou 1993). Perhaps this is a refection of the higher than average educational attainment levels of this group coupled with the strong family units that these

young people are part of, a unit which strongly encourages attending school and working towards a good career. Rather than having oppositional cultures, these young people felt a sense of being outsiders; they felt excluded and victimised. They were not members of a dangerous underclass, but rather one of the key demographics that need to be focused on when attempted to make young people feel more accepted in wider British society.

Lastly, Portes and Rumbaut have emphasised the importance of understanding and recognising the context of reception that immigrants are faced with and the role of these contexts in social integration processes (Portes 1995; Portes & Rumbaut 1990, 2001, 2006). I find that these young people are largely not concerned with the initial reception that their parents had as immigrants from India and East Africa, which was in many cases hostile. Moving on from Portes and Zhou, I find that the *current* reception that these young people have is crucial in shaping their identity options and orientations rather than focusing on the initial hostility faced by their parents.

7.6 Building on Berry's model

At the beginning of this thesis I stated that Berry's acculturation framework was a useful typology in which to situate the key concerns of my research, given that it is concerned with orientations towards minority and majority groups at the same time. I wanted to focus how the notion of 'values' plays out in reality and to explore how far the real experiences of these young people fit into the outcomes that Berry outlines.



Berry's Acculturation Framework (Berry 1997: 10)

I found that 'value' is not solely in the hands of the individual. A young person may well feel that there is value in maintaining cultural identity and cultural characteristics, but may be unable to do so due to the feeling that they are excluded by co-ethnics and/or that they have clashing values. An example of this is the case of some young Sikh and Hindu females who felt pressured to have a 'good Indian girl image' and so could not fully participate in the minority community and British society in the way that they wanted.

I have shown the detrimental influence of racial prejudice. Often, young people might feel that they wanted to be more involved in British society, yet they feel unable to do so given the level of imposed exclusion they experience. Berry's

model looks at the value of maintaining cultural identity and characteristics and the value of maintaining relations with other groups. My interest has been specifically situated in exploring orientations towards minority cultural identity and majority (British) identification. Based on my findings in this research, I can contend that identity orientations are not based on value alone; they are based on the identity options that young people feel are available to them in their social worlds. The availability of these options is not solely in the hands of the individual; value alone does not determine how entrenched these young people in different social contexts. Their identity orientations are based on social interactions and experiences that shape the 'value' they attach to various identities; value in isolation is not the sole determinant of identity orientations. An identity may initially be seen as being of value, but can later seem undesirable or unfeasible due to a hostile reception in both majority and minority contexts. I thus make a contribution by building on Berry's model to show how the reality is far more complex in terms of 'value' and how this is assessed.

Furthermore, young people in reality experience majority and minority groups as comprising of various social circles, and they can thus often see the value of having a social tie with a particular sub-group within both majority and minority groups, rather than with the group as a whole. Their sense of belonging thus becomes embedded and is played out within these sub-groups. Belonging itself is diverse and these young people have different types of relationships with various social circles. For example, a young person may see the use of maintaining professional relationships with members of the majority, but have no interest in having white friends.

Berry argues that there are four potential outcomes: integration, assimilation, separation and marginalisation. Socio-political anxieties about a lack of

‘Britishness’ in recent years have assumed that maintaining cultural identity and characteristics has led to ‘separation’. I find that the reality is more complex. As I have shown, young people often have diverse dual-identities whereby their sense of belonging is most salient in specific sub-groups within majority and minority groups. Theoretically, they can be seen to experience segmented assimilation. In practice this plays out as a thinner, more general feeling of belonging to both groups, coupled with a thicker more salient feeling of being accepted and having most common ground with specific social circles within their social worlds. Even within these specific segments, the way that belonging is experienced is often not uniform with young people expecting different things from minority and majority groups, for example, a more civic Britishness and more culturally unique ethnic identity.

In this specific empirical case, this is how ‘integration’ usually plays out.

A small number of respondents felt that they did not belong in either ethnic community or white British society; they felt rootless and rejected. But was this because they placed no ‘value’ on maintaining ties to either group? The answer is ‘often not’. Most of them could see the value, but they felt that they could not exercise these identity options due to the behaviour and prejudice they felt from white Britons and co-ethnics. Additionally, these young people may not have an affective sense of Britishness or being a British Asian, but they were structurally assimilated into British society; they did not lead parallel lives, they felt that they were legally part of British society, they spoke English as their first language they went to university and work, they just did not feel that they could be culturally accepted into either group.

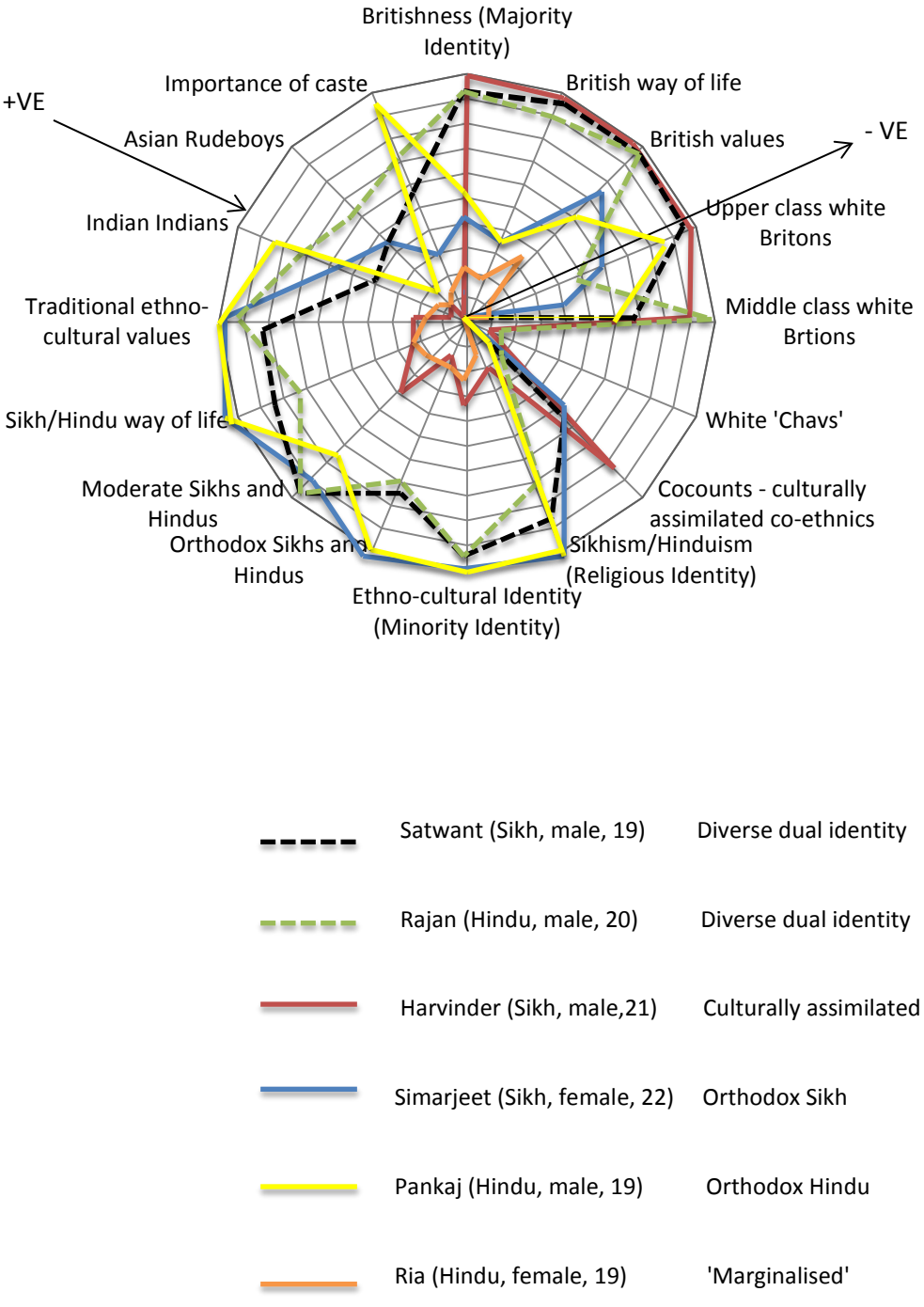
Overall, a majority of my respondents were 'integrated' but in a more complex, nuanced way than the existing model suggests; they assessed the value of relationships with a whole spectrum of social circles in both groups and the outcomes of this assessment was a sense of belonging (or not) in any given combination of social circles in their social worlds. They felt integrated, but in a very nuanced and individualistic way that does not fit into any neat typology.

7.7 A new 'Multidimensional Model'

Berry's model concentrates on two dimensions, orientations to ethnic and national communities and postulates four possible outcomes on the basis of these two dimensions. Portes and Zhou are also mainly concerned with two dimensions. First, economic which is the basis of their distinction on 'downward assimilation' and the basis for the 'majority identification' element of segmented assimilation as they see it. The second dimension is socio-cultural which is a key in the three trajectories they outline.

Based on the findings presented in this thesis I would argue that there are more dimensions involved in the identity processes of these young people. These young people live in complex social worlds where they are aware of a spectrum of social circles, minority and majority. There are many dimensions to their belonging, which are not confined to their orientations to simply the majority and minority and economic and socio-cultural factors. Although these categories outlined by Berry and Portes and Zhou are relevant, the situation is far more complex and nuanced than these categories allow. In fact, the strength of their positive orientations towards a range of dimensions is what maps their sense of belonging in a range of social contexts.

Figure 6 A new multidimensional model of belonging and positive orientations[105]



[105] Individual points on this diagram show the strength of the positive orientations towards the values or group indicated. I have not designated numerical values as I feel that this would not be faithful to the underlying qualitative nature of the data. The points are attitudinal, the central point on the diagram represents a 'negative attitude' and the outer points of each dimension represent a completely 'positive attitude'. On the basis of this, this diagram shows how young people can have a range of attitudes towards different dimensions, which in turn influence their identities. On the basis of the interviews, I have reflected the different orientations and attitudes that these young people expressed to me by placing them between 'negative' and 'positive' for each dimension appropriately. The key aim here is to present the multidimensionality of identities and sources of belonging in a useful visual representation.

The diagram above shows how the strength of young people's positive orientation to a variety of dimensions in their social worlds can take very different forms, and this in turn accounts for the diverse patterns of identity and belonging I have found. There are dimensions of caste, religious identity, ethnic values, British values, ways of life and the additional complex dimensionality of different social circles within minority and majority groups, all of which are understood to have distinct characteristics.

Young people can choose the different dimensions they want to be embedded in, based on their positive orientations towards them, and can construct their own belonging to the different identity options they see as being available to them. As I have shown, some young people are more able 'to choose'; others less so, due to family pressures or a reception of hostility form certain social circles of white Britons and/or co-ethnics. Young people have different levels of positive orientations to these multidimensional factors, which shapes their overall sense of belonging in a range of contexts.

Outcomes are therefore not four-fold (Berry 2005), nor three-fold (Portes & Zhou 1993). In fact, any given young person can have any combination of belonging and positive orientations towards different people, different value systems and different ways of life. This in turn means that the existing models are an oversimplification of the possible trajectories of members of second-generation ethnic minorities. In this empirical case the complexity of social worlds and the different identity options and orientations that any person can have means that there are a varied range of outcomes. Young people are able to construct their own patterns based on multidimensional factors and the range of social circles that are desirable to them on the basis their positive or negative attitude towards them.

There are of course some patterns that are more common than others, but even within these, there is diversity. Figure 7 highlights how young people can inhibit a range of social circles and how the strength of their positive orientations towards different dimensions can be different. I show that even within the diverse dual identity category, the pattern is not exactly the same with Rajan's sense of dual-identity being more embedded with middle-class white Britons, yet Satwant's sense of belonging was most salient with more upper-class white Britons, although they both felt more rooted among moderate Sikh and Hindus within the minority group – the strength of their positive orientation towards both Britishness and ethno-cultural identity were equally strong.

Simarjeet, an orthodox Sikh female, felt that she respected British values of tolerance, respect and liberty, but felt that the British way of life, with its emphasis on 'drinking and going out clubbing' was undesirable and incompatible with her religious beliefs. Her pattern on the diagram reflects the strength of her positive orientations towards British values but not the British way of life. The most positive orientation in her social worlds were towards other Sikhs, the Sikh way of life and traditional values, although she did have a strong positive orientation towards white, upper-class white Britons who she felt were more respectful of her religion. These orientations shaped her social world and the most salient sources of belonging within this social world.

The diverse dual-identity individual has a wider pattern of belonging on both sides, with positive orientations towards both the host and minority groups as well as all the sub-groups apart from 'white chavs'; their positive orientations towards a range of dimensions mean that they inhabit a broader area within the figure. The orthodox Sikhs and Hindus are more embedded in those dimensions that are most important to them: Sikh and Hindu values, the Sikh and Hindu ways of life, ethno-cultural

identity and religious identity. As the diagram shows, even orthodox Sikh and Hindus that have little sense of Britishness still have positive orientations towards British values, echoing my earlier comments that people can have a sense of a more sanguine belonging based on different dimensions (in this instance British values), even when there is little salient sense of Britishness itself.

Figure 7 shows how the strength of positive orientation towards different dimensions maps sources of belonging and the very unique and individual identities that these young people have. These young people often hold a range of orientations at the same time with their sense of belonging being most embedded in certain segments in tandem. The different levels of positive orientations are reflective of the thicker and thinner sources of belonging I have explored. As the figure shows, their sense of belonging is most salient in certain social circles within both the minority and majority groups where their diverse dual-identities are embedded, and they have a thinner, more sanguine sense of belonging and positive attitudes towards other groups, values and ways of life. Their experiences are thus best understood by a multidimensional model such as this, which acknowledges the different dimensions that shape their identity orientations. Berry, Portes and Zhou concentrate on a few important aspects, but their models oversimplify the possible trajectories of these young people, which can lead to an essentialisation of their experiences. There are many different dimensions at work, and many different trajectories that these dimensions can bring about.

7.8 Limitations of this research

Although my research has explored the wide diversity of understandings and experiences of eighty young people, it is important to acknowledge the extent to which it is perhaps limited. A potential limitation is that of the sample itself, where

I may always face the criticism that this research has only focused on a select number of people. A quantitative approach would surely have managed to give more range in the sample, but arguably far less depth. On balance, although my interviews did give me a great deal of rich data, interviews by nature are a 'snapshot' of a person's life. Identities and boundaries are not static; they are constantly moving, changing direction and composition. As a result, it can be argued that a 'snap shot' will not adequately encapsulate all the processes involved in this. On reflection, a more ethnographic approach may be useful in future research where I could conduct observational work in particular settings to explore the areas I am interested in. This may be interesting especially in exploring the social interactions that shape belonging, but of course, this approach too is not without methodological restrictions and complexities as well as practical considerations (see Silverman 2010).

7.9 Final comments and future research

My aim at the beginning of this D.Phil. was to use this opportunity to explore and uncover the reality of belonging and identity for young people from Sikh and Hindu backgrounds living in London. The richness of the data I elicited in the process of this research has allowed for a greater understanding of the highly complex and sophisticated social worlds of these young people, their sense of belonging (or not) in different social contexts, what drives and hinders this belonging, the role of social contact in shaping identity orientations and options, boundaries, and the variety of understandings and experiences of Britishness. I have thus made a contribution to both the existing academic literature and the socio-political debates on Britishness. I have also created a multidimensional model to build on existing works in order to highlight the different dimensions that shape belonging.

I wanted to challenge the essentialising notions that have underpinned the socio-political debates and have done this by highlighting the diversity of experiences I encountered in the process of this research. The socio-political anxieties about the lack of Britishness in this empirical case seem to be unfounded, with a majority of young people having some positive orientation towards Britishness and specific segments of British society. Britishness is a thinner, more civic form of social glue, but it is a glue nonetheless and one that can be accommodated alongside the thicker, more culturally demanding ethnic cultures; its accommodation is often perceived as being possible on account of its thinner nature. Those calling for Britishness to be a more civic glue to encourage commonality should be encouraged to know that this already exists, in diverse forms, amongst most of these young people (Gitlin 2007). The research presented here can be utilised by policy-makers to better guide their understanding of the identity orientations of these young people. Identity is complex; it means different things to different people, and we simply cannot conflate it to fit into a neat typology where ethnic identity and national identity stand as binary opponents.

Future research should continue to explore the diversity of experiences within ethnic groups rather than treating them as static monolithic units with homogenous members. By exploring the diversity of experience we can better understand the reality of identities – so let us not assume there is a widespread problem without comprehensive research and understanding. For future research, I would personally like to explore these issues from 'the other side', that is to say, from the side of white Britons. I would like to explore the social worlds of young white Britons to uncover their understandings of social structures and identity options and orientations, as well as their attitudes towards who they feel is British and who is not. I would like to explore their understandings of Britishness itself and compare

the findings to what I have presented in this thesis. Such a research project would require a different research design, perhaps employing a white British interviewer to elicit life experiences and opinions that these young people may not want to disclose to me, a British Asian. In this debate, if members of ethnic monitories are being asked to embrace Britishness, it is crucial to understand the extent to which this identity is held by the majority themselves (Platt & Nandi 2014). It is also imperative that we contextualise 'minority diversity within the diversity of the majority population' (Platt & Nandi 2014; Wyn Jones et al. 2012).

Lastly, I would conclude by saying that I found that minority and majority cultures are not separate entities. In the future we may see more hybrid identities, and amalgamations of minority and majority traditions (Alba and Nee 1997). For example, I found that cultural and religious events in minority cultures were being changed to reflect living in a liberal egalitarian environment. '*Lohri*',[106] which is a traditional celebration for the birth of boys in Punjabi culture, is now being celebrated for the birth of girls too. Many Hindu males were now fasting on '*Karva Chauth*',[107] a fast that women traditionally take for the well-being of their husbands. Ethnic cultures are in fact changing to reflect the second generation's rejection of what they saw as unequal cultural traditions. They saw this as a reflection of being British and respecting the right for equality, which they saw as an intrinsic part of Britishness. Minority and majority cultures can in fact influence each other and create cultural content.

My purpose was to fill many gaps in understanding by focusing on an understudied group in order to contribute, empirically and theoretically, to the broad area of race

[106] *Lohri* a festival celebrated on the 13th day of January is a festival of zeal and verve marking the coming culmination of the cold winter. In the British context, in Hindu-Punjabi and Sikh-Punjabi families, it has been celebrated most commonly for the birth of a baby boy.
[107] *Karva Chauth* is a one-day festival celebrated by Hindu women in which married women fast from sunrise to moonrise for the safety and longevity of their husbands.

and ethnic identity in Britain. I hope that this thesis has made a significant contribution to the understanding of these issues for young British-born Sikhs and Hindus.

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APPENDIX 1 PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM AND LETTER

Manmit Bhambra
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Email: manmit.bhambra@stx.ox.ac.uk

Dear Participant [Date]

My name is Manmit Kaur Bhambra and I am Dphil. (Ph.D.) student at the University of Oxford. I am from South East London. I would like to invite you to take part in the research I am conducting for my research report. My research is about young people like you and me who are from Sikh and Hindu backgrounds, who live in the London area and are British Asian. That is they are the children of parents who originate from India or East Africa. I would like to ask you about your experiences of growing up as a British Asian in London.

Some details

Participation in this study is completely voluntary; there is no pressure on you to take part. Anything you say to me in the interview will be entirely confidential. Your name will not appear anywhere; instead I will use an anonymous name.

During the interview I will tape record our conversation, the only reason for this is because I cannot write fast enough to record all of your answers and I would prefer to talk freely with you rather than continuously take notes as we talk. During the interview, I will turn the recorder off at you request. The recordings will then be transcribed anonymously and information and will be stored securely. The recordings will be destroyed after this research is completed. Although some of what you say may appear in the final research report, you name will never be disclosed. **There are no right or wrong answers.** I am only interested in the things that you have experienced, your opinions and individual perceptions. Your participation is completely voluntary which means that you can choose to stop the interview at any time. If there is a question that you do not wish to answer then I will happily leave it out.

Thank you very much; I really appreciate you taking the time to take part in this research. I look forward to meeting you.

Yours Sincerely,

Manmit

I confirm that I have understood the research, the interview process and the way my information will be stored, made anonymous and utilised for this research and that I am happy to be interviewed

Please print name: *Date:* *Signature:*

If at any time you have further questions please call / text me on [telephone number] or email me at manmit.bhambra@stx.ox.ac.uk

APPENDIX 2 – INTERVIEW GUIDE

(SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS)

These questions are a guide to the key topics that need to be covered to keep the interview on track, and prompt where necessary rather than a rigid set of questions. I am employing a semi-structured interview method so the interview will be open to emerging themes and will allow me to respond to the individualistic nature of the participants responses in an open manner.

Preamble

- At the beginning of the interview I will introduce myself to the participant. For example, 'Hello, thank you so much for taking the time to be here. As you know, my name is Manmit Bhambra and I am a second year doctoral student at the University of Oxford. Today I would like to ask you some questions about your life growing up as a British Asian.
- I will outline the process of the interview and emphasise that the interview is voluntary and that the participant can ask me stop at any point. Additionally I will tell the interview that if there is any question/s that they are not comfortable with, we can leave them out.
- I will ask the participant for permission to record. I will also emphasise that this is only because I cannot write everything down as quickly as needed.
- I will explain to the interviewee that the recording will be stored securely and that their name will anonymised as will any names they mention during the interview.
- I will explain there are no right or wrong answers and that I am interested in their perceptions, feelings and experiences.

Participant introduction

- Can we start with a little more information about you? I would like to get to know you a bit better at this stage
- Do you have any siblings? How old are they? What do they do? Do they live with you?
- Tell me about your parents. Do you live with them? Are they originally from India? What is their religious background?
- What part of London do you live? What is it like there? Do you like it? Is there a settled Asian community there?
- What do you do?
- Do you enjoy it?
- Have you always lived in the same area?

Social worlds

- Do you even attend Gurdwara/ Mandir?
    a) If 'yes' how often, which Gurdwara/Mandir do you attend?
    b) If 'no' why?
- How would you describe your friendship group? Is it mixed or mostly other Asians?
    a) Is there any particular reason for this?
- Do you feel like you are part of different groups in your day to day life?
    a) If 'yes' then what are these groups
- Do you think the people in each of these groups are the same?
- How important is Sikhism/ Hinduism in your everyday life?
- How being a Sikh or being a Hindu feature in your life?

- Do you feel more comfortable with people from your own ethnic background or white British People or both?
    a) If ‘yes’ then why?
    b) If ‘no’ then why?
    c) If ‘yes’ to ‘both’ then why?
- Do you enjoy being Sikh or Hindu?
- How do you feel about your ethnic community?
- How do you feel about the cultural traditions and practices?
- How do you feel about British society?
- How do you feel about white British society?
- How accepted do you feel in these various social groups?
- What makes you feel accepted?
- What makes you feel rejected or excluded?
- Have you always felt the same?
    a) If ‘yes’ why?
    b) If ‘no’ then why? What happened? What changed?

Contact

- Who do you come into contact with on a day-to-day basis?
- Who do you have the best experiences with?
- Who do you have the least experiences with?
- How have these experienced made you feel about these people?
- How have these experiences made you feel about British people and society?
- How have these experiences made you feel about co-ethnics?
- How have these experiences made you feel about ‘the community’?

- How have the experiences made you feel about where you fit in?
- Do you feel that there are separations between yourself and anyone else?
- What makes you feel like you belong?
- What makes you feel like an outsider?

Britishness

- Would you consider yourself to be British?
    a) If ‘yes’ why? What does it mean to you?
    b) If ‘no’ why?
- In your opinion what does Britishness mean?
- How do you understand Britishness?
- Does it play a role in your life?
    a) If ‘yes’ then how?
    b) If ‘no’ why not?
- Would you say that you had a sense of Britishness, of British identity?
    a) If ‘yes’ then how?
    b) If ‘no’ they why? Would you like to have a sense of Britishness? How could this achieved in your opinion
- Is having a sense of British identity important to you
    a) If ‘yes’ then how and why?
    b) If ‘no’ then why not?
- Do you think you need to have British identity to be British?