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The meaning of being successful:
Perceptions amongst a selected group of British Indian first degree
students

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Abstract

For two decades, the education and career aspirations of British minority ethnic groups has been considered too narrow, unrealistic or over-ambitious. Meanwhile, certain minority ethnic groups' in England (Indian and Chinese) are commonly referred to as 'model and successful minorities' because they persistently qualify for sciences and competitive degree courses (medicine and law) in comparison to other minority groups. Amongst these model minority groups', British Indians are considered to be 'over-represented and over-crowded' on medicine courses and under-represented on others - although there is no conceptualisation of 'this' success, or of their attraction to narrow career planning, that has obtained directly from their belief system. Their voices very rarely influence sociological debates about minority ethnic students in England. Drawing on a broad empirical focus on success, and data from 29 qualitative interviews with British medicine and LLB students of *Indian* ethnic background, this study is amongst the first to offer a complex and nuanced understanding of the decision making processes that underpin British Indian students decisions to apply for medicine and law. Four factors inform their decision-making process; *being in the top class; being British born and westernised; age driven goals and British Indian ethnicity driven competition*, which arise in three distinct different socio-economic and education background contexts. British Indian medicine students' expressed a desire for a career or education in a non-medicine or law field, but all had internalized that the British White middle class student/individual have the full privilege of considering the full spectrum of subjects and careers because they considered it the natural and proper group. So, even for those who came from medicine and Russell group backgrounds, the process of strategizing and planning for a career began at the beginning of schooling. The findings reveal a nature and process of middle class strategizing which is shaped by a way of thinking influenced by ethnic identity construction, suggesting a distinct binary within middle class re/production. They contribute to the infant body of knowledge about the challenges that students from model minorities experience to be educationally successful which they normalize as natural. Thus, the research focus afforded a novel perspective explaining why inequality persists in England. The interpretation of the four factors was guided by a Bourdieusian overall social class reproduction theoretical.

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Declaration of Authorship

I, *Jatinder Kaur Kang*, declare that the thesis, entitled:

The meaning of being successful: Perceptions amongst a selected group of British Indian first degree students

The work presented in this thesis is my own and has been generated by me, because of my own original research. I confirm:

- This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this university
- Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed
- Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given
- Except for such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work
- I have acknowledged all main sources of help

None of this work has been published prior to submission

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Definitions

There are a number of key terms used throughout this thesis. These are defined in simple terms below, but their meanings are elaborated upon in greater precision as part of the research focus develops throughout the study. In this thesis:

- ‘British’ refers to an individual/student whose permanent place of residency, and/or birthplace is the UK and who was primarily schooled in England.
- The terms ‘prestigious’ and ‘high status’ are used to refer to universities in England that form part of the Russell Group and which deliver traditional courses, namely medicine courses. These terms do not refer to universities that were formerly polytechnics.
- ‘Middle-class’ subjects, ‘traditional vocational degree courses’ refer to medicine/dentistry, pharmacy and LLB Law. Similarly, a ‘dominant’ post 16 route, would be considered as a degree at a Russell group university.
- ‘Indian’ refers to the Indian generation that originated from Western (Gujrat), and Northern (Punjab) states of India and Eastern Kenya as defined by anthropological literature (Ballard 1994).
- ‘British Asian’ refers to a broad ethnic categorisation, comprising of three ethnic groups that originate from the Indian sub-continent: Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis.
- Class categorisations typically refer to traditional indicators including socio economic background within specific socio-economic groups. However, throughout this thesis, care is taken when defining class, because traditional indicators are increasingly considered as flawed tools for performing sociological centred analysis of contemporary society; and is influencing researchers to rely on theories/class models which account for wider and hidden indicators of class, that are relevant to one’s background. Although traditional class indicators are not abandoned in my research focus, emphasis will be placed upon emotionally, subjectively and culturally understood meanings of class (Savage et al. 2013).

- Relatedly, the terms ‘middle-class’ and ‘working-class’ are highly contested. Their meanings are fluid because they relate with experiences of specific ethnicities, races and gender. I aim to develop a nuanced class description of my participants by considering subjective class indicators (type of school, ranking of the Russell Group universities; the cultural and social differences between students’ socio-economic and education backgrounds – and, traditional class indicators (socio-economic status)
- Elite occupations/sectors refer to two broad occupation sectors: linguistics, art, literature, and classics (Befiore 2002; Arnett 2014) *and* vocational degrees medicine and law (doctor, dentist, pharmacist, lawyer, barrister). For reasons that become apparent in the thesis, the current research is concerned with the second subject group.

Abbreviations

CEP	Coalition Education Policy
ECU	Equality Challenge Unit
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
LEA	Local Education Authority
LU	University in London
MEG	Minority Ethnic Groups
MU	University in the Midlands
NS-SEC	Office for National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification
ONS	Office for National Statistics
RG	Russell Group
UCAS	University and College Admissions System
YCS	Youth Cohort Study

Personal context to the study

My curiosity about the ideas around success was borne out of my personal experiences of schooling and navigating the choices available to me for learning within higher education (HE). My experiences were framed by the ethnic nature of my socialisation, upbringing, and the type of knowledge and resources that I had access to at home. Further pressure arose from the fact that I was the first UK born Indian in my family. This meant that I was expected to fulfil certain expectations concerning grades, to adopt occupational aspirations that I had no personal interest in. However, the form of cultural capital to which I had access differed from that which is essential to meet the conventional entry requirements to facilitate social mobility in the UK. I only came to understand the significance of the 'right' capital when conducting research for my Master's degree with UK born women of British Indian origin, wherein I examined experiences of generational conflict. I became concerned with the meanings and understandings associated with success, because I had explicitly been considered unsuccessful by my parents' families, who felt they could share nothing about me with their immigrant British Indian peers. In my family, nobody had had any understanding of the UK education system. Their educational qualifications from India were not transferable in a manner that could facilitate my own schooling experiences.

My father holds a diploma from a college in the UK, is a school governor, a member of the Rotary Association, a recipient of the Queen's Honour List (BEM), and has served in the Kent Fire Brigade for 30 years as a Principle Fire Liaison Officer. On occasion these roles afforded him access to useful contacts, such as school governors, but with regard to cultural capital, there was little provision for this in my household, and income was also limited. My family's aspirations were nevertheless middle-class; although my parents did not mind what I studied; it was important that I studied something. Nevertheless, myself and my siblings are all considered unsuccessful by the previous generation, because none of us chose to become doctors, dentists, pharmacists, lawyers, or accountants, thereby offering them nothing to celebrate to date. My father is viewed as unsuccessful as a parent, because he has been unable to convince me and my sister to agree to arranged marriages (with the result that we are now defined as unmarketable within the middle-class British Indian marriage market).

In terms of success, both myself and my sister studied for degrees that are deemed 'a waste of time and money' (sociology, criminology, education), at 'bad' universities based on where they

are positioned on the league tables. However, notably, nobody in our family took any responsibility for not possessing the type of cultural capital that are required for educational success in British classrooms. Our relatives, including our parents, were unaware of the significance of access to cultural artefacts (e.g. certain books, certain educational resources), despite providing us with verbal encouragement and tutors during exam periods. By contrast, my brother is regarded as successful because he has amassed economic capital, thereby mitigating his decision to become self-employed in a non-traditional sector (catering for working-class specific young populations by running an affordable private gym). Our parents and extended family also imagined that the conflict between Western and Indian ethnic identities would have no noteworthy influence on our educational attainment. My awareness of the expectations placed upon myself and my siblings, and my experiences in education inspired me to find a platform from which to study success as it relates to both ethnicity and class.

Experiences with British secondary school teachers

The school I and my siblings attended was our local state comprehensive school. The teachers there rarely encouraged my siblings and I to strive to achieve our academic and occupational potential. My father knew many British White middle-class school governors, who assisted him in finding work experience opportunities for us at solicitor's firms, schools, and pharmacies. However, we were fearful of engaging in work experience at solicitor's offices. I now realise that our schoolteachers failed to provide structured tips and advice to my immigrant parents as to how they could support us; holding back advice, almost as if they had written us off to our fate as housewives. When I completed my GCSE's, with the help of a private tutor, the head of my sixth form (Mrs R) advised me and several of my British Indian and White working-class friends, that we should pursue a GNVQ course (vocational post compulsory course) in Travel and Tourism. In my case, for example, she explained that I would struggle less with a vocational course, than I would were I to pursue A-levels in English, Government and politics, and Sociology. Despite her advice, I went ahead and attained satisfactory passes. When I reached the stage of applying to university, the head of sixth form appeared shocked that my father wanted me to go to university. Unfortunately, nobody in my home was aware that British universities were ranked according to status (until I made enquiries for PhD funding – some 6 years later), because the careers advisor at my school (Mr H) and the head of sixth form never informed us of this. Thus, my experiences accessing and studying for my first degree, and

my Master's up until the point at which I was able to access funding to pursue this thesis, brought me into contact with a further dimension of inequality, compounding that I had already experienced within the Indian community. I observed that attaining educational qualifications and participating in HE, as well as acquiring and fulfilling career aspirations, was contingent on something not widely discussed; i.e. access to *specific* schooling, a *specific* occupational and educational background, and familiarity with *specific* cultural markers (e.g. specific clothes, a *specific* pace of talking, listening to certain types of music), referred to as cultural and social capital by Bourdieu (1986). I have lived my own experiences as a British Indian women – or student more specifically, with parents whom had little to none insight into the British education system (curriculum, teachers and preparation for revision for specific subjects), but whom at the same time were desperate and committed to ensuring that mine and my siblings life would not be the way migration and settlement experiences in England had treated them in England.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background and rationale

This thesis is one of the first to provide a complex and nuanced understanding of British Indian students who are buried under, and silenced by, the discourse of ‘a model and successful minority’ (Heath and Ridge 1983; Heath et al. 2008). It does so in the context of a debate that has been persistent in British higher educational and ethnicity literature (considered below) regarding their narrow degree course and career aspirations.

The debate over *success* and British Indians in the British educational literature first emerged in the 1980s, when former Indian migrants were recognised to be progressing more rapidly than other British Asian groups (Bhachu 1985; Gibson and Bhachu 1988; 1991). As measured by their educational outcomes at end of school, in the decades that have followed, British Indians have outperformed Black and most notably other British Asian groups’, which like the Indian ethnicity, originate from the Indian subcontinent; that is, they effectively secure places to study for degrees that are challenging and have competitive entry requirements (namely medicine/dentistry, pharmacy and LLB law) at Russell Group universities (Modood 1993, 2002; Boliver 2013; Basit and Tomlinson 2012; Boliver 2014; Kirkup 2015). Research with British Indian students, who have not qualified for, or pursued such degree courses and universities (Bhopal 2010, 2011; Khambhatia 2014) and those who underperform in terms of their school grades in core subjects, find that it is more realistic for them to qualify for degrees in education, social work, healthcare at former polytechnic universities. British students from other British Asian groups (Pakistani and Bangladeshi) have too been allocated research frequently over the decades (e.g. Brah 1994; Dale et al. 2002; Dale 2005; Dwyer et al. 2011). Furthermore, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black, Indian and Chinese groups hold high aspirations for all core subjects, but primarily sciences – but official statistics have persistently shown that it is students from the last two ethnic minority groups whom are able to aspire and achieve high grades in core subjects at the same time, whilst the former groups have high aspirations for science based – related careers, but their grades in sciences persistently are outperformed by Indian and Chinese students (Fielding et al. 2008; Archer 2008; Wong 2015).

However, as mentioned at the start of this introduction, there is an ongoing debate in relation to British Asian groups, and one that is particular to British Indian students whom are notably 'over-crowded' and 'over represented' on medicine associated and LLB Law courses: that these groups are 'narrow minded' with regard to their career choices, and which need broadening (Leslie 2005; Richardson 2008, 2015; Modood 2006; 2012). This debate has been ongoing and recurrent in British HE research into ethnicity since the 1990s (Modood 1993, 2002).

Furthermore, studies noted that British students of Indian origin are often rejected for a place on a medicine degree, and dentistry and pharmacy become the next available most acceptable alternatives (Ballard and Vellins 1985; Taylor 1993; Modood 1991, 1993, 2003; Modood and Shiner 1994, 2002; Swail 2003; Boliver; Noden et al. 2014; Shiner and Noden 2015).

Meanwhile, the British media represents the British Indian group using simplistic measures to define them as 'successful', although they are at times ambiguous in their definitions of British Indians in relation to success in medicine jobs, because they don't make it clear whether they refer to British Indians who are UK domiciled graduates or Indians outside of the UK. For instance, based on the findings of the 2011 Census, Kirkup (2015) reports:

There is a very good case to be made that British Indians are not just the most successful immigrant group in this country's recent history, but the most successful group of people full stop. More of them go into professions such as medicine. British Indians are barely 2 per cent of the population, but 12 per cent of all doctors. For such reasons, some Conservatives see British Indians as natural Tories; the party's successful campaign to win over non-White voters at the general election focused much effort on them... (Kirkup 2015, The Telegraph)

It is also noted that the British Chinese group are treated similarly in the media (Clarke 2010; Li 2018; Kirkup 2015). Both groups' are referred together as the 'model minority groups' (Heath and Cheung 2007; Heath et al. 2008), and as 'marked examples of success' (Butler and Hamnett 2011). What tends to be overlooked, is that British students of Indian and Chinese minority groups are identified as 'model minorities' and as 'successful' *when they are compared against other minority groups* (Francis and Archer 2005; Archer et al. 2009). As noted by this small group of researchers (Francis and Archer 2005; Archer and Francis 2006a, 2006b; Wong 2015), there is a lack of emphasis and conceptualisation of *how* minority groups which are labelled as 'successful', form this success, especially one, that is based on their own methods and journeys to maintain themselves as 'educationally successful' and as upwardly mobile minority groups.

Therefore focusing on, British Chinese pupils and their parents, a small group of British educational researchers (Archer and Francis 2006a, 2006b; Francis and Archer 2005; Archer et al. 2009), have observed that the experiences, decision making processes, and strategies of

ethnic minority groups who are persistently high achieving are less widely discussed in the research. However, and importantly, this body of work has revealed that high levels of achievement and the career planning strategies of ‘model minorities’ and ‘successful minority groups’ are considered unhealthy, erroneously constructed and unbalanced by White British schoolteachers. Yet, Indians (and Chinese) have tended to always be referred to as ‘achievers and behavers’ (Gillborn and Youdell 2000, 2009) and as examples of educational success amongst the minority ethnic population in England. Thus, a process of that success has only recently begun to be noticed in the literature (through the perspectives of Chinese). This thesis builds on this focus to further emphasise the need to discover how minority groups which appear to do well, do so. There is no complex understanding available in the British literature about British Indians in relation to their educational success, and especially not with regard to the concerns associated with their outperformance of other British Asian groups on competitive vocational courses. Given that my focus on British Indian students relates to the narrow career planning in context of medicine associated and law *degree* courses, it is worthwhile to consider key debates currently affecting British HE students.

British students from different backgrounds ‘play the game’ as a means to enhance their chances of securing graduate jobs is now a popular focus of research, because educational success or failure (including accessing university and attaining a degree) and its transferability into employment, is considered the responsibility of the individual (Bathmaker et al. 2016; Henehan 2016; Kupfer 2011). This ideology is being activated via league tables and annual surveys which universities employ to assist potential HE applicants to make informed decisions about which universities and courses to apply for (Molesworth et al. 2011, 2012). Students are encouraged to develop more instrumental consumption of HE, more so than was ever the case in previous decades in British HE, assuming students’ will graduate with a competitive edge in an increasingly crowded graduate job market (Collini 2012; Bunce et al. 2017). However, not all students accepted into HE in Britain will be guaranteed a job at graduate level, in their subject field, because in the current climate a HE student is required to develop a set of cultural and social capital that applies and links with their subject (Morgan 2016). Students’ do not qualify for the same courses with equal volumes of the ‘right’ cultural or social capital, which continues to influence their experiences and development of social capital in their chosen subject upon graduation (Bathmaker et al. 2016). Developing a type of ‘thick skin’, as a type of resistance is necessary (Tomlinson 2017), to be able to deal with frustration in accumulating subject knowledge, and at the same investing in the time to secure the skills required for subject specific graduate level roles (Tomlinson 2007, 2017). British

educationally successful minority groups have yet to come into focus relative to these changes, especially in the context of the focus of British Indian students' whom are attracted to narrow degree courses, and, but, whom form part of an ethnic minority which is considered an example of a 'successful' ethnic minority as identified above.

Thus, British Indian students have only come under an overly simplistic focus and there are conflicting analysis of their educational and socio-economic profile: e.g. as considered above: 'successful' but also 'crowded' and 'over' represented on medicine associated and law and not humanities and arts (Richardson 2008, 2015; Noden et al. 2014). This messy narrative about British Indian students' 'success' comes under investigation in reference to those considered successful in qualifying for competitive degrees despite also being narrow minded.

1.2 The Argument

The main argument of this study is that my British Indian pharmacy, dentistry and LLB law students attraction to a narrow set of degree courses does not arise out of a personal choice, but is constrained by what they observe within education and employment trends in British society. Relatedly, this argument extends to noticing that my British students of Indian ethnic background decision to apply for medicine and law (narrow career plans) is based on no agency or free will. They have a personal choice and desire to explore music, arts and humanities, *but* they observe that in British society, those subjects do not equate to upward social mobility for ethnic minority students, who are either already from professional backgrounds, or whether they are new to the process of achieving a middle class status in England. Exploring my British Indian medicine associated and LLB law students understanding about success, beyond their educational experiences, enabled a wholesome understanding of why they are more inclined to make decisions based on what they observe in British society, rather than their personal choices. According to these particular group of British Indian students, decision making about social mobility is the product of what they observe in the following spaces: school, the media, labour market and the elite groups' including the Monarchy and British politics. As will be discussed in the analysis chapter, chapter 7, my British Indian medicine and law students understood the British white pupil from a middle class background, to be the perfect one, or the natural middle class one, who they consider as the ones who can take advantage of the full range of degree courses, and different occupational fields in the labour market; they had observed that the white british middle class individuals are the proper and fixed middle class group, unlike themselves whose job it was to conform to

the meaning of success that is observed in society. I argue that this study is amongst the first that begins an important process in providing significant and distinctive insights into how the British Indian model minority group remain the most socially upwardly mobile ethnic minority, by attempting to uncover the underlying thoughts that form their beliefs. Furthermore, this study is significant because some students' were reproducing a middle class education and occupation, whilst for others this was a foreign and fresh experience; some were already exposed to a higher professional medicine and law background, whilst others in sharp contrast were from manual backgrounds with no British HE background.

My findings are necessary because they consider a careful examination of how socio-economic and education background influenced and informed my British Indian medicine and law students methods of qualifying for such competitive degrees and also in their decision making processes to qualify for a medicine or law degree. Furthermore, for most of my students from no HE and a manual employment routine, they could not access the more prestigious Russell group university, whilst those from a Russell group and medicine and law background did. The study was able to step beyond simple understandings about British Indian students by revealing some of their innermost intentions, strategies for success and their ways forward, in what sociologists of education in England consider as an increasingly competitive graduate labour market (DBIS 2016; Ingram and Ward 2017). What my findings most importantly stress is that my British Indian students educational decisions were influenced more by structural factors (whether it be the role of parents occupations, or the influence of teachers feedback, or what they observed in the labour market. Their decision to pursue a vocational degree course such as a medicine associated one and LLB law, arose out of a different way of thinking about social mobility, than how they thought a British White medicine and law student's would – more natural and personal than how their decision making process had been. Their reason for pursuing a narrow set of degree courses was based on an understanding about upward social mobility that was influenced not only by what they observed in their family home, or whether they could advantage from their parents jobs, and education background, but rather how being non-white and ethnicity related with their class background to maintain or become middle class.

1.3 Development of research focus and questions

Although my curiosity about the meaning of success, and in relation to the British students of Indian origin began when I started my first degree, as considered in the aforementioned sections above, an examination of persistent concerns and gaps in the literature on ethnic minorities and education were considered. My decision to focus on British model minority students was not a straightforward one. The voices of students belonging to both model minorities (more so the ones of British Indian students') are quietest in the wider discussion about how British students of Black and Asian backgrounds consider educational choices and consider career planning. So, I began by thinking about British students of Indian and Chinese ethnicity. However, the scale and level of complexity of trying to provide a detailed understanding about British Indian students strategies for qualifying for competitive vocational subjects, and in relation to understanding why they are attracted to those subjects was a persistently recurring matter in the literature, noted since the 1980's as aforementioned above. I was interested in pursuing this task by drawing upon a theoretical framework which would allow me to look at the finer role of the influence of particular socio-economic and education backgrounds, and thus at a deeper level. This included considering the benefits and limitations a student's parents' specific occupation or education background would have on his/hers decision making processes. Therefore, the development of the research focus was considered with careful consideration.

The main and secondary research questions that I developed were designed to offer an understanding of how success is conceptualised directly by those British students of Indian ethnic origin who have already qualified for competitive vocational courses at high status universities in England. I wanted to provide British Indian dentistry, pharmacy and LLB law students with an opportunity to reflect on the journey and process of qualifying for, and deciding to apply for their degree course. They offered their decision making processes in context of their broader understanding of success; i.e. what else they consider becoming successful and success to include. Thus the empirical focus on British students of Indian origin in this study was a broad one; it was borne out of a deeper curiosity about what British Indians students whom reflect the 'model and successful minority' discourse, understand the process of being successful to involve, and the experiences and strategies that they adopt. The empirical focus is designed to see beyond or beneath Indian students' whom are 'over-represented', 'over-crowded' and aspire narrowly. To begin revealing what underlies this, the following questions became the finalized questions:

Main research question: How do British Indian medicine and law students define the term 'being successful'?

1. *Which factors do they associate with 'being successful' and how?*
2. *Do they associate their reason for applying to certain universities and for medicine and law courses with their understanding of success? If so, how?*

The design of these questions demonstrates that the focus was on discovering and investigating *the processes* through which British Indian students who qualify for specific medicine degree courses and for LLB law consider understand and form meanings about success. This research focus emphasizes the need to discover processes to be able to interpret the destination (being accepted on a medicine or law course at a RG university), rather than merely emphasizing the over-representation in dentistry, pharmacy and law/narrow career plans. Implicit within the design of these research questions is not just the need to discover methods of how they qualify for competitive vocational degree courses, but in also discovering the reasons and contexts, in which those strategies and methods arise.

1.4 Theoretical framework

The argument this study makes was guided by Pierre Bourdieu's social theory. Some critiques argue that Bourdieu's concepts are over-valued, particularly by contemporary early career sociologists (Abrahams et al. 2015; Thatcher et al. 2016). However after engaging with Bourdieu's definitions of his concepts (Bourdieu 1986), and understandings about his social theory (Ingram 2014; Thatcher et al. 2016), I identified his concepts to be the sharpest at serving me in considering my participants' qualified for middle class HE qualifications and why they were attracted to them. British 'model minorities' occupational and educational outcomes have usually been considered via traditional class measures i.e. broad socio-economic categories, especially in the case of 'model minority' Indian students. Pierre Bourdieu's social theory inspired me to consider how my British Indian medicine and law qualify for middle class routes and the nature of thinking that encourages a decision to either reproduce or produce a middle-class career route.

Bourdieu argues that emphasis should not be placed on either the structure or agent, the collective nor the individual (Bourdieu 1977), and that their existence is dependent on one another, rather than as separate factors. When Bourdieu talks about structure e.g. field/social space, he is referring to society (Robbins 1993; Ingram 2009). Bourdieu does not believe that

the actions of people in the social world are neither totally an outcome of free will/freedom and nor an outcome of an independent structure, but an outcome of both of these worldviews informing one another (Nash 1990). Therefore, in applying this methodological approach of Bourdieu's to my own study, I begin with the assumption that the formation of the meanings and success strategies of British Indian medicine associated and LLB law students, is a product of personal desires and what they witness in a given western capitalist society.

Bourdieu's social theory asserts that a student's educational outcomes and career plans are informed and guided by either a broad working class or broad middle class type of: *habitus* (subconscious and deeply engrained dispositions and norms); *cultural capital* (knowledge, information and academic skills); *social capital* (having connections and networks which are readily available) (Bourdieu 1986; Ball 2003); and acquiring high volumes of economic capital and having the cultural knowledge of how to invest in it to facilitate social mobility (Ball 2003, 2005). Bourdieu's social theory contends that the social class of the previous generation determines whether a student's habitus, or the cultural (interests, tastes and activities), social (access to networks, friends and contacts), and economic (money, financial assets, e.g. home ownership, money savings) capital to access a particular social space (e.g. a Russell group education) will serve them in the way it needs to, to be educationally successful and enhance the chances of upward social mobility. If a parent has high volumes of the 'right' habitus, which leads to the 'right' cultural and social capital, they possess symbolic capital (status, honour and respect) (Bourdieu 1990, 2003). Therefore, this inspired the analytical focus to assume that the students' were in a position to qualify for such courses because they either had reasonable or high levels of one or all of these capitals. I am encouraged to consider that my students were not only influenced by money and wealth (economic capital), but also by the advantages that their parents brought in guiding them and in helping them to qualify for the courses they did. Furthermore, because habitus cannot be seen because it is deeply engrained in us, I will only be able to see the nature of my students' habitus i.e. the specific ways in which their formative and previous upbringing influenced them to strategize for and be attracted to a narrow set of vocational competitive degrees. A basic assumption in considering habitus will involve acknowledging that their previous and formative years and experiences were a product of their personal and structural factors present in their life at home (influence of parents occupations and educational experiences) and those in a particular school. I will need to pay attention to particular ways that my students think, in order to notice distinct patterns of thinking. Because students' are likely to have more, less or some of the 'right' cultural, social and economic capital, we see why (broad) class divisions exist and endure, and the role it can

play in assisting the focus in highlighting distinct differences between medicine and law qualifying British Indian students who are currently considered as a homogenous group.

Because I also apply Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence to consider my participants' success strategies and meanings, I begin with the assumption that those of my participants' whom may not have high volumes of the 'right' resources blame themselves for not having the resources. Symbolic violence is an important concept, which encourages us to consider why students and their families might strategize, because in essence it refers to a deeper way in which all individuals might think about social mobility; for instance, it refers to why individuals may consider themselves as the problem, by internalizing that the structure and society is natural and the normal state of things and thus naively contributing to the reproduction of inequality and different educational experiences and outcomes (Connolly and Healy 2004; Bourdieu and Wacquant 2013). Thus, applying symbolic violence also means that I begin with the assumption that those British Indian medicine and law students whom had no HE or professional employment background had internalized that it was their responsibility to act on this.

The theoretical framework is designed to focus on recognizing the role and influences of structural factors that are present in society and in the family home in the decision and outcome of a middle-class degree course. It also emphasizes the need to consider the cultural and social resources a students' parents occupation had in facilitating their success in being accepted on a middle-class degree courses. A qualitative methodology that would provide scope for the influence of structural (home, school and employment environments) and any distinct pattern of thinking that translate into the decisions to apply for medicine and law was crucial (Demie and Lewis 2010; Clarke and Zukas 2013; Thatcher 2016; Abrahams 2016)

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This chapter has demonstrated the importance of the research, describing why the research questions and the research focus is significant. It also investigated the focus of analysis and indicated the methodological approach. I have also included my personal motivations to conduct the study. The next chapter (**the theoretical and conceptual framework**) is a short chapter that sets out the Bourdieusian theoretical framework, to be used in the empirical chapter. It will begin by discussing the reasons why a Bourdieusian approach is pertinent to the research questions, and why his concepts of capital, habitus, symbolic violence, and field

are particularly useful as a way of understanding how British Indian students qualify for competitive degree courses and educational institutions, and the different non-economic capitals that potentially allow this. It sets out a broader definition of the social reproduction of class, and of the 'right' variant of cultural, social, economic capital and habitus in detail. One of the key criticisms of Bourdieu's theory is discussed here, i.e. that his theory is too deterministic and does not permit agency. Agency operates within the confines of structure, and therefore people are neither fully determined nor free to have agency. It also considers the concept of symbolic violence, and the potential ways in which the participants might have strategized this to be able to access specific forms of HE success and not others. The meaning of the concept of habitus is explored here and in the context of attitudes and dispositions characterised by a specific ethnicity. The scope and specific nature of the theoretical and conceptual framework is elucidated in the findings and discussion chapter. **Chapter three (British Indian group's historical, cultural, and religious context)** considers British Indian undergraduates' historical (immigrant), ancestral culture, religious context, as it relates to the wider British Asian diaspora in Britain. It provides an outline of ethnic minority population statistics, considering ethnic differences within the (British) Indian group, and between British Asian groups regarding assimilation and integration. The family values that all British Asian groups are assumed to share and uphold across the British diaspora, such as patriarchal values, as well as notions of izzat (honour) and sharam (shame), are discussed. The chapter engages with wider literature that allows a nuanced description of the participants Indian ethnicity to be formed and which affords a graduated understanding of British Indians' cultural capital, their networks and connections, and their habitus within class specific British Indian households (or upbringing). **Chapter Four** comprises a **literature review** of a selection of relevant educational, social mobility, sociology of educational, and socio-economic studies of British minority groups; emphasising pupils, students, and graduates of Indian origin. It elaborates on the concepts and current discourses introduced herein, including the effects of neoliberalism on HE students, and subjective models of social class. A discussion regarding the wider concerns that influence the maintenance of social inequality between ethnic groups and races will also be considered, including a history of how meanings of social class have evolved in Britain. The review then narrows its focus to concentrate on discussions about minority pupils/groups within the British compulsory education setting, situating the research and referencing the findings of the Swann Report 1985. Moreover, research that has challenged conventional ideas concerning the process of success, placing the study in a wider context is also reviewed. The chapter then moves on to address debates about British minority groups

that relate to HE, socio-economic status, and self-employment. The key issues and recurring patterns related to British Indian students are extrapolated and specific questions posed.

Chapter five concerns the **methodology** of the study. The ontological (subtle relativist) and epistemological approach (subjective) is identified according to the research focus. The chapter discusses the value of a qualitative approach, and this is followed by a review of different qualitative interviewing techniques, which will prove appropriate for drawing out a subtle and in depth understanding of the participants' views and approaches to success, and to allow an efficient analysis to be formed. The purpose of employing a purposive sampling strategy is also discussed. This chapter also discusses the experiences of being an insider/outsider, including experiences of the class dynamics between myself and the participants. It also discusses the power dynamics present, adopting Bourdieu's reflexive sociological stance to explain my position relative to the construction of social knowledge. The latter stages of this chapter address the process of analysing the interview data using inductive thematic analyses, and the steps taken to ensure research quality and ensure adherence to ethical research standards. **Chapter six** describes the research sample and introduces the participants. Drawing on Bourdieu's social reproduction of class theory, concepts of cultural, social, economic and symbolic capital, the heterogeneity of middle-classness of my sample is identified and exemplified citing socio-economic status, parents' occupations, parents' education level, type of school background (e.g. private/grammar or state school). The hierarchical differences between the two Russell Group universities are considered. I use details about the participants' socio-economic and educational backgrounds to identify a hierarchy within the sample, establishing who is most, moderately, and least advantaged. This data is then applied to the analysis given in the next chapter. **Chapter seven** presents the findings. I discuss the primary and secondary themes in order of their emphasis specific frequency i.e. based on the degree of assertiveness the participants gave them. I draw on the most thought-provoking selection of data extracts to capture the theme (*being in the top class; being British born and Westernised, intersectionality of race, ethnicity, a specific class and gender and British Indian ethnicity competition*). The diverse forms comprising a middle-class background allow for a multifaceted view of cultural, social, and symbolic capital to be applied when interpreting specific perspectives. The scope and nature of habitus, cultural, social, economic, and symbolic capital – and hence the ethnic-specific nature of social class inequality is also revealed. This chapter further discusses their perspectives of success in relation to the wider experiences of individuals at higher status universities, and their enthusiasm to look ahead and to discuss capitalising on their degree outcomes. **Chapter eight** discusses the

implications of the findings and how they have modified or narrowed the scope of social reproduction theory, habitus, and the four different forms of capital. It reveals the different nature of social reproduction of class specific to my participants, and original, compelling, and unique constructions of what success means. I also consider the implications of each of the themes, by drawing out the hidden meanings associated with how the themes are being discussed and the limitations of the research. I also make suggestions for policy and practice, and consider scope for further work based on new gaps and ideas that serve to help build a comprehensive and wider understanding of ethnic-specific middle-class experiences, journeys, and perspectives on success. **Chapter nine** provides my reflections about the study.

Chapter Two: Theoretical and conceptual framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter elaborates further on Bourdieu's theory of social class reproduction, as introduced in the previous chapter. It explains his concepts of habitus and capital, including symbolic capital, and defines concepts inherently associated with symbolic capital (symbolic violence), which relate to the context in which social class reproduction occurs (field). The chapter also presents Bourdieu's definitions and perspectives on the theory and his concepts, and then outlines the researcher's own, before considering them in relation to British dentistry, pharmacy, and LLB Law students of Indian ethnic origin. As indicated previously, the aim here is to develop a theoretical understanding of British Indian middle-class students, to arrive at a nuanced understanding of how they construct the meaning of success. The chapter is broadly divided into two sections: definitions of the theoretical and conceptual framework, followed by the researcher's own interpretation of the findings, and their intended operationalisation relative to the study participants.

2.2 Definitions of the theoretical and conceptual framework

2.2.1 Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction

Bourdieu argued that objective structures and personal viewpoints influence one another, because personal choice is never personal, as it is influenced by structure, which cannot function without the individual. The social world cannot be studied with either one of these examples (Grenfell and James 1998). Bourdieu's social reproduction theory explains how classes are reproduced in the social world within Western capitalist countries. It also offers a theory of class analysis to explain why inequalities persist in educational outcomes, despite the state claiming it intends to expand equal educational opportunities for the members of all social classes. Bourdieu's theory explains why working class students are represented more in dull, routine occupations than middle class individuals are. Power and dominance are derived not only from the possession of material resources, but also from the possession of cultural and

social resources. According to Bourdieu (1971), the value of any form of capital depends in part on social recognition:

The major role of education in society is to contribute toward social reproduction which is the reproduction of the relationships of power and privilege between social classes.
(Bourdieu 1971: 123)

Thus, he argued that the education system ensures the professions at the top of the occupational structure attract those who innately reflect the values of the structure (the middle and upper classes), and that the professions at the bottom end attract those who do not possess the skills or middle and upper class values at the subconscious level (Bourdieu 1973). He highlighted how the system maintains mechanisms of social reproduction, as they refer to schools. In *Reproduction* (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977), Bourdieu demonstrated how children from culturally wealthy backgrounds inherit wealth in the form of embodied dispositions, which are recognised and valued by teachers and by the institutional procedures associated with the educational system. These students appear brighter and more articulate to their teachers, because they speak with a similar or identical vocabulary and style, and because the cultural knowledge and abilities valued and rewarded within the educational system mirror those which these children experienced and acquired at home (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). Often, their parents read and purchase the same or similar books to those that the teachers use, and distribute them to children in the classroom, helping them grasp the concepts being studied in the curriculum in a given subject (Sullivan 2003). Typically, this is because the parents themselves succeeded in school or were educated in a Western capitalist country (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977).

2.2.1.1 Capital

Capital is valuable because economic independence is advantageous, as it leads to higher levels of spending power and status. Bourdieu's notion of capital, as previously explained, has enabled many researchers to evaluate multiple factors, besides money, which explain structural variations, such as students' class, ethnic, racial, or gender backgrounds. Bourdieu (1986) argued that every individual has a 'portfolio' of capital/resources, comprised of three main forms: economic, cultural, and social. The nature and form of these types of capital is significant, especially the final two, because certain forms are rewarded and inform the influences on habitus that students' parents are naturally drawn to.

2.2.1.2 Economic capital

Economic capital is:

...directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the form of property rights. (Bourdieu 1986: 48)

Money and other economic forms of capital are important considering the inequalities that characterise educational success, because parents can draw on economic capital to purchase various forms of advantage to help their children pursue conventional forms of social mobility (Archer et al. 2005). Capital informs what parents can afford to enhance their children's exam grades, such as school trips and private tutoring. However, according to Bourdieu (1986) possessing this form of capital cannot explain why, for instance, pupils whose families have equal economic capital may achieve different school grades and occupy distinct parts of the occupational hierarchy.

Lack of economic capital and material assets, for a student from a working class background, can inform where they are positioned within the occupational hierarchy. For example, during their time in HE, working class students tend to work alongside their studies to enable their families and themselves to avoid tuition fee penalties, so that awards are not frozen, and so they can afford books, and travel to and from the family home and libraries, which would otherwise cause them inconvenience during their degree courses. Therefore, understanding the role of economic capital on degree outcomes and attainment is essential to appreciating how financing contributes to the reproduction of working class populations, and the struggle of working class students to readily secure occupations at the upper end of the occupational hierarchy (Canaan 2013).

Economic capital is at the root of all other types of capital and that these transformed, disguised forms of economic capital are never entirely reducible to that definition, and produce their most specific effects only to the extent that they conceal the fact that economic capital is at their root. (Bourdieu 1997: 195)

Therefore, economic capital is only a powerful and useful tool for realising the dominant ideology of success *if* it can be converted into specifically middle and upper class forms of cultural and social capital (Wilson 2002).

2.2.1.3 Cultural capital

Cultural capital is more complex than economic capital and refers to ‘...forms of cultural knowledge, competences or dispositions’ (Bourdieu 1986: 70). In the embodied state, cultural capital refers to enduring dispositions of the mind and body; whereas from an objectified perspective, it refers to cultural goods, material resources that serve a specific purpose, such as to facilitate educational success, and in the institutionalised state it refers to the educational results awarded by a recognised institution and credentials (Grenfell and James 1998). Individuals possess these forms of cultural capital, and often reflect more or less of a specific class (just like economic capital is possessed by everyone, but in different class specific forms and in varying quantities). Thus, the form in which a family or person possesses cultural capital reflects the values of a specific social class (Lareau and Horvat 1999).

2.2.1.4 Social capital

According to Bourdieu (1986), **Social capital** refers to:

The process of capitalising on social participation and connection, as it effects membership of networks, groups, communities and families to facilitate educational success and destinations within the occupational structure. (Bourdieu 1986: 76)

In other words, the type of social capital an individual possesses is determined by whether their friends and colleagues share similar interests, skills and attitudes. In these terms, social capital is the:

...sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. (Bourdieu 1986: 61)

This means, social capital is a dimension of cultural capital. Bourdieu believed that cultural and social capital, combined with economic capital, create and reproduce inequality, and so:

...should be treated as assets and valued as representing the product of accumulated labour. (Bourdieu 1986: 50)

Social capital means the majority of children from the middle or upper class have parents who have contact with individuals and families working in occupations at the top end of the occupational structure. These connections therefore increase the opportunities of such children to experience and access information regarding conventional education and

occupational routes. In addition, because social capital assists in the reproduction of the dominant ideology, a school teacher or a school governor might be a contact known to middle-class and upper class parents through a mutual or direct contact, which would then help them to feel part of the dominant group, and improve how their knowledge of the school and curriculum is gained (Horvat and Weininger 2003; Brown & Carasso 2013).

Therefore, Bourdieu (1997) believed that it is impossible to understand the social world without acknowledging the role of capital in all its forms, and/or by acknowledging it solely in one (economical) form. Indeed, he argued that capital is:

The aggregate of potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group. (Bourdieu 1997: 200)

Thus, the possession of social capital arises from networks that provide support and affirm an individual's social position (Grenfell and James 2004). Social capital is therefore relevant, due to its significance when giving value to certain class structures.

2.2.1.5 Symbolic capital

Symbolic capital refers to, “a degree of accumulated prestige, celebrity or honour, and is founded on an analysis of knowledge (*connaissance*) and recognition (*reconnaissance*)” (Bourdieu 1993, p. 7). It is therefore a significant source of power. In *Distinction* (1984), Bourdieu referred to symbolic capital as “the acquisition of a reputation for competence and an image of respectability and honourability” (1984, p. 291). It is the wealth an individual or group has accumulated in terms of their cultural and social capital:

When differences of economic and cultural capital are misperceived as differences of honour, they function as symbolic capital. This function always accompanies the exercise of power and which extends to all practices and in particular consumption. It is a credit; it is a power granted to those who have obtained sufficient recognition to be in a position to impose recognition. (Bourdieu 1979: 85)

Therefore, symbolic capital reveals the outcome of the conversion of other forms of capital, legitimising it as a form of other capital (e.g. when people ascribe noble moral qualities to upper class members as a result of their charitable donations) (Bourdieu 1979). The position and power of an individual/a group depends on the total volume and composition of the

capitals it holds; also determining the existence of symbolic capital or otherwise. According to Bourdieu (1989: 24),

Authority, knowledge, prestige, reputation, academic degrees, debts of gratitude owed by those to whom we have given favours are all forms of symbolic capital. It can be readily convertible into the more traditional economic capital.

Thus, symbolic capital is a form of capital that is only possessed by those families or individuals whose habitus, cultural, social, and economic capital is high in terms of the 'right' (dominant, middle-class) form. However, it is the most important capital, in the sense that it is also the most powerful. Skeggs (2004) stated that the *value* afforded to different forms of capital is dependent upon context, as it corresponds to power relations. In other words, the value and weight of different forms of capital rests upon the extent to which they are recognised as symbolically legitimate or dominant. For example, working-class forms of social or cultural capital tend to only be valued, or generate status and benefit at a local level, because they are not legitimised within dominant middle-class representations (Skeggs 2004). As Skeggs (2004) explained, the processes whereby capitals are afforded different forms of *value* are central to understanding the social reproduction of class. Therefore, the most powerful forms of capital are those in which intrinsic value can be converted into or generate a symbolic and recognisable form. In comparison, other forms of capital might only convey a 'use-value', whereby value is only locally recognised (e.g. by those who possess it) and does not translate within dominant contexts and fields (education, British education, high-status universities). Capital is valued and recognised within the education system and the employment sector in Western capitalist countries. That is, according to Skeggs (2004: 250), education, and therefore symbolic capital denotes:

The form the different types of capital take once they are perceived and recognised as legitimate.

It is important to note that Skeggs (2004) cited the process by which legitimation is achieved, rather than the actual form or content of the capital. This is because social class is produced through processes of inscription, exchange, evaluation, and perspective, and like gender, race and ethnicity (Yosso 2005), "is a continuous process of production with fuzzy boundaries manifesting through struggle" (Skeggs 2004: 253). Therefore, it is through implementing different exchange relations (power) that specific types of individuals are produced.

2.2.1.6 *Habitus*

According to Bourdieu (1985: 723), “habitus is differentially formed according to each person’s position in social space, as such it is empirically variable and class specific”. However, it exists at the:

...subconscious level of the individual, and is durable, developing as a child grows within the family environment. (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990: 58)

Bourdieu (1979: 80), referred to habitus as a “structuring structure”, in that it is structured, because it is shaped by one’s past and present circumstances, such as family upbringing. It is structuring because one’s habitus helps to shape one’s present and future outcomes and exists in a systematic way. It informs the thoughts individuals reproduce. It is ‘embodied history’ that is dispositions, tendencies to think, feel and behave in particular ways, which cause an individual to associate other individuals with themselves, e.g. ‘people like us’ (Reay 1998; Reay et al. 2009). Habitus can be transformative and deterministic (Bourdieu 1990). Bourdieu’s concept of how habitus serves as a tool explaining how the dichotomy between dominant and dominated is reproduced has been criticised as overly deterministic (Nash 1990). However, although habitus reflects a class that is deeply engrained in the individual at the subconscious level, and causes individuals to think and behave in a certain way in a certain social context, through self-critical reflection and by becoming aware of how they feel about a situation, it can also be forced to adapt or merge with the habitus of a different class (Bourdieu and Nice 1977). Bourdieu suggested that individuals can exercise strategic choice and “conscious deliberation” that extends beyond the influence of their habitus (Noble and Watkins 2003: 123). However, natural and earlier formed habitus do not entirely leave the working class individual’s experiences even when consciously avoided (Ingram 2011; Abrahams and Ingram 2013). Therefore, the strength of habitus in maintaining and reproducing the status quo lies in the fact that those subject to it are not necessarily aware of it. For instance:

When habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it finds itself as a ‘fish in the water’, it does not feel the weight of the water and takes the world about itself for granted. (Bourdieu 1989 in Grenfell and James 2004: 517)

A child’s habitus is powerful enough to dictate to teachers whether a child will be given access to the conventional route to social mobility, encouraging them to guide the child in ways that are not necessarily pre-determined (Bourdieu 1993). Knowledge, values, and behaviour are constructed through habitus:

In the case of the family, the habitus describes not what capital the family owns, but what it decides to do with it, how it chooses to use the capital in a certain space. (Brooker 2015: 40)

Habitus is significant to understanding how social class divisions are maintained, because it generates the collective dispositions of a particular social class and of a particular socio-economic group at the subconscious level. Therefore, it is the habitus that determines how individuals (e.g. pupils) behave and respond within a given social space (e.g. the classroom), and the type of cultural capital they are drawn to. Habitus is powerful because it tells us how to approach a situation within a specific social space such as a classroom, or a university setting. It influences how we feel about a situation within a specific context and how we construct and adapt strategies to suit the context we want to progress in.

2.2.1.7 Field

Following capital and habitus, the third general concept of Bourdieu's sociology that must be introduced is that of *field*. Bourdieu defined field as:

A structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and people who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which various actors struggle for the preservation of the field. All the individuals in this universe bring to the competition all the relative power at their disposal. (Bourdieu 1989b: 40-41)

Therefore, a person's position in the field, and the strategies they consider is defined by the power they bring to the field. This means a librarian not only works in a library, when a teacher works in a school, or a solicitor works in a law firm, they are not just working within and for these respective institutions, but also within a larger powerful field. Consequently, the material and symbolic value of these positions/occupations is then superior to others - materialistically, symbolically or both. The field is a field of power, comprised of multiple fields which are not on a level playing field. For example, what happens in the housing field, depends on what happens in the financial field, and what happens in the education field, depends what happens in the state field (Bourdieu 2005). Parents wish their children to do well in this field of power, but this is challenging, because the field of power distinguishes between individuals, leading some to be dominant and others subordinate, and thus it is the same field in which inequality is produced. As noted previously, Bourdieu viewed the class structure of a social formulation as an objective network of positions which are logically related to one another. He understood the social world as being divided up into a variety of distinct arenas or 'fields' of practice, such as art, education, religion, law, and so on, each with their own unique set of rules,

knowledges, and forms of capital (Bourdieu 1993). While *fields* can certainly overlap (for example, education and religion), Bourdieu considered each field as relatively independent from the others, stating that each has its own set of positions and practices, as well as its struggles for position, as people mobilise their capital to stake claims within a particular social domain (Bourdieu 2005b). According to Bourdieu (1990) a field is a system of social positions (for example, a profession such as the law) structured internally in terms of power relationships (such as the power differential between judges and lawyers). More specifically, a field is also a social arena of struggle over the appropriation of certain species of capital — capital being whatever is taken as significant for social agents (the most obvious example being monetary capital) (Swartz 2012).

Fields are organised both vertically and horizontally (Grenfell and James 1998), and are not analogous to class, often being autonomous and independent spaces of social play. The field of power is peculiar in that it exists ‘horizontally’ through all the fields, and the struggles within it control the "exchange rate" of the forms of cultural, symbolic, or physical capital between the fields themselves (Bourdieu 1986: 60). A field is constituted by the relational differences in the positioning of social agents, and the boundaries of a field are determined by where its effects end. Different fields can be both independent and interrelated; for example, education and the labour market are independent and related. This is because, as noted earlier in this thesis, schools function, and are set up, in a way that seeks to ensure that only children from specific classes secure occupations at the top end of the occupational structure. The field is therefore a much wider site of struggle and competition amongst students, in which only middle-class and upper class students have the opportunity to succeed. This competition defines the objective relationships between participants, as understood through factors such as the volume of capital they contribute, their trajectories within the field, or their ability to adjust to the rules inherent to the field. Different species of capital act in different fields, and in turn are defined by the power balances exerted by the capital. The term ‘field’ is meant to recall a ‘battlefield’ or ‘a playing field’, and more specifically, the fact that individuals who confront one another also enter into conflict or competition with one another, each from a more or less advantageous position (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 16). A field is a site of struggle for competition and of control, but its nature dictates how it is controlled (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992).

Bourdieu also considered the legal sector a field. In *The Force of Law: Toward a Sociology of the Juridical Field* (1987), he outlined a sociology of the juridical field discussing both state and

law. He argued that laws serve to maintain inequality. According to Bourdieu, the legal sector reflects a structure of differentiated professionals, prestige and power:

It is strangely linguistic, symbolic and hermeneutic in which the struggle is for legitimised dominance. (Bourdieu 1986: 809)

In addition, he stated that the legal sector in particular determines the lives not only of those working within it, but of all citizens in Western capitalist countries, by:

...imposing their internal norms on broader realms and to establish the legitimacy of interpretation favourable to the self-conception of the field, to the internal consistency and outward extension of its prerogatives and practices. (Bourdieu 1987: 810)

This means that society is comprised of different fields (such as politics and education), with politics and the judiciary system being the most specific dominant fields. Individual fields, and the wider field in which struggle for dominance takes place, is made up of people and institutions located in a hierarchy of power relations competing with one another (Bourdieu 1989). The opportunities available to an individual in a specific field depend on how well that individual is endowed with cultural and economic capital.

This chapter has so far demonstrated that habitus is significant in determining whether someone possesses the 'right' type of cultural and social capital to be able to compete efficiently in the wider education and employment field, and to be seen as prestigious, important and powerful within specific fields (e.g. economy, politics, and the judiciary system). In addition, it has explained that the purpose of this hierarchy and competition between individuals in a field occurs so that class structure can be reproduced. However, the reason why the ideology of social class reproduction exists in the first place is due to 'misrecognitions' (Swartz 2013: 195) that are deeply engrained within the status quo, which groups and individuals accept as natural, normal and internalised, and consequently contribute to the belief that certain individuals/groups/classes exist and are reproduced to be dominated by other certain individuals/groups and classes that are destined to dominate. This is termed 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu 1979).

2.2.1.8 Symbolic violence

This term was first established by Scheper Hughes in 1992 as 'everyday violence' that explains social difference leading to surprising levels of suffering that were caused by institutional

processes (Thapur – Bjorket et al. 2016). Bourdieu is not concerned with the suffering that people experience as a result of their class background, but with defining and theorising why this suffering happens and endures. He defines it as:

Gentle, invisible, pervasive violence that is exercised through cognition and misrecognition, knowledge that is often with the unwitting consent of the dominated. (Bourdieu and Eagleton 1992e: 115)

Thus, it refers to ‘mental structures’ which orient individuals in their public/professional and personal lives. It informs individuals within (broad) social classes establishing what decisions to make/not to make, and what they should say in response to a question when asked by a particular person from either their own class or another (Skeggs 2004). For instance, individuals accept certain class based conditions and potential outcomes for their life without questioning them. For instance, if an individual applies for a job, that they believe they possess the necessary qualifications for, but is rejected they are more likely to question their own performance than the equity of the entry requirements. They may also overlook the influence their self-representation had on the rejection, and believe that the applicant was successful because they had better experience, without examining whether that applicant’s access to contacts benefitted them in securing the role. In other words, symbolic violence is violence that is subconsciously supported, produced and reproduced by individuals. According to Bourdieu, individuals allow themselves to be treated unequally and differently from the dominant class, because they naturally expect to be treated differently, which in turn impacts on their aspirations and decision making in relation to social mobility. The same example can be applied when considering race, where those from one race feel the need to strategize far more than the dominant white majority (Rollock et al. 2013; Bhopal 2017). Thus, symbolic violence is:

The violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity. (Bourdieu 1993: 60)

Symbolic violence is produced, and then reproduced unintentionally as a subconscious act, by those who are not within the dominant class (white middle class) (Vincent et al. 2012), and is then deemed legitimate through ‘schemes’ that are inherent in everyone’s habitus’ (Bourdieu 2001: 33). Those (working classes) ethnic groups, and races (non-white) that are dominated, view domination from the perspective of the dominant class, which makes domination appear natural and ‘self-evident’ (Bourdieu 2001: 35). Therefore, a key point in *Bourdieu’s* conceptualisation of violence concerns how everyday normalised familiarity with violence

renders it unexceptional, such that the structure is normalised and accepted. It determines which class, ethnic groups, and race will be reproduced as conventionally un/successful in social mobility, implicating class groups/hierarchy and structure. It also determines which attitudes, mentality, music, food, arts and knowledge are reproduced as legitimate (Lawler 2005). Symbolic violence in this form is impactful and lasting.

Although Bourdieu's definition of violence draws our attention away from direct physical violence, it does not necessarily mean that his conceptualisation of symbolic violence has no impact on physical violence (Swartz 2013). For instance, situations that might result from symbolic violence, such as one student being denied a place at a Russell Group university and being made to feel that their place is at a university local to home, as informed by their habitus, could result in an assault on that individual's *mind*. They may display bodily emotions such as regret, shame, anxiety, blushing, frustration which can lead that individual to contribute to their own inequality subsequently (Bourdieu 2004). Symbolic violence is therefore powerful enough to make inequality seem natural, when in fact it is artificially co-created. Symbolic violence functions through three key elements which act at the same time: the ignorance of the arbitrariness of domination; recognition of this domination as legitimate; internalisation of domination by the dominated (Bourdieu 1998). This process of misrecognition of the arbitrary character of the rules that govern fields (viewing unequal social mobility destinations and competition within the field of education and employment as outcomes primarily arising from individuals' behaviour) (Swartz 2013) is a crucial element of Bourdieu's theory of social class reproduction. Bourdieu used field, habitus, capital and symbolic violence to show *how* classes are reproduced and how the class structure is maintained in western capitalist nations, and the inevitable function of education.

In contemporary societies, ideas about domination are reproduced and permanently maintained not only by the habitus and capitals that families within particular social classes possess, but also through the state (Bourdieu 1998), which relies on the church (Dillon 2001), the school (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990), and the legal system (Bourdieu 2003) to maintain the structure as it is and to reproduce inequality between groups of people in society. For Bourdieu, the state is a space where the 'public' and the 'official' are created and defined by its universal domination. The state produces the categorisations and hierarchies that are internalised and trusted by individuals within different classes and different ethnic groups, including those who rebel against it (Nayak 2006). An earlier questionnaire, conducted by Lightbody et al. (1997), with minority ethnic and white British school leavers found that

minority ethnic pupils, particularly those from a British Asian background, were attracted to law as a profession for the amount of respect and honour it conveys upon an individual within society. Something else that illuminates this is the legal sector, in addition to the medicine field, which is considered a 'safe and trusted route' to social mobility, because its respectability speaks for itself. However, the nature of the job is rarely considered in such calculations. The intention of the legal system is to disguise social reality to maintain a certain status quo that permits domination and differentiation among individuals (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). The concept of symbolic violence has also been considered and applied by contemporary sociologists to understand the ongoing failure of white working class boys in England.

Considering secondary level definitions of symbolic violence, Jenkins (1992) defined symbolic violence as:

The imposition of system of symbolism and meaning (i.e. culture) upon groups or classes in such a way that they are experienced as legitimate. (Swartz 1997: 83)

This view was considered too deterministic by Connolly and Healy (2004), who argued that the complexity of Bourdieu's symbolic violence was being overlooked. As noted by Connolly and Healy (2004), and Stahl (2010) in their findings on working class White British boys in Belfast (Connolly and Healy 2004) and South London (in Stahl's work), working class students might feel they are being drawn by two different habituses: either they must abandon their working class values to absorb the school's values and work towards the expectations their teachers place upon them, or fail and allow their schoolteachers to enter them to sit compulsory school examinations as standard protocol, remaining loyal to their working class neighbourhood traditions. Both habituses felt natural (something that Ingram's work (2013 2014) also noted with educationally successful white working class boys). These children are made to feel that *they* choose to fail because they do not adopt the values and attitudes necessary to escape their problems, i.e. the solidarity of their neighbourhood; thus, they cannot blame the school and the system. The man made system that schools operate within lacks an appreciation of working class attitudes and values and tends not to support students to excel in their school grades beyond the minimum.

Thus, children from working class backgrounds face a greater challenge in school than their middle class peers, as they must learn the standard curriculum as well as the *hidden curriculum* of middle-class values. Working class children can internalise that middle-class children possess the proper and correct skills and abilities for educational success, when encountering assessment objectives for different subjects, particularly core subjects (Connolly and Healy

2004). Children and parents both believe the challenges they experience with negotiating study materials is their own fault. Parents who encourage their children and force themselves to learn the rules of the school and invest time in understanding the deeper meaning of the teachers' instructions and feedback are likely to confront teachers and/or question the materials given by the teacher. Furthermore, Rollock et al. (2013) and Archer and Francis (2005) amongst other studies, find that minority ethnic students invest in extensive resources to secure good passes and commit to extra lessons in the evening, because they feel it is *their* duty to fill in the gaps that the school does not in ensuring the highest grades are secured.

Thus, the concept of symbolic violence differs markedly from notions of the working class being purposely manipulated to consent (Connolly and Healy 2004). It is a very natural process in which individuals, through their previous and current experiences and observations of the education system and the labour market, and knowledge of others' experiences within educational and employment structures, learn to accept inequality as correct (Connolly and Healy 2004). As Bourdieu (1988: 21) explained:

The important function of the wider field is to socialise the working-class into a culture of failure so that they take, without question, routine and dull work and to socialise the middle-class into achieving legitimate pathways to social mobility.

This indicates that symbolic violence is not given any explicit attention.

Legitimation of the social order is not the product of a deliberate and purposive action of propaganda or symbolic imposition; it results, from the fact that agents apply to the objective structures of the social world structures of perception and appreciation which are issued out of these very structures and which tend to picture the world as evident.
(Bourdieu 1993: 60)

The related notion of habitus illustrates how individuals come to internalise themselves as subordination - and how symbolic violence works in practice (Bourdieu 1988). Therefore, habitus can also be understood as a set of tendencies individuals develop to approaching and thinking about their social worlds that they have come to learn over time because of their experiences (Swartz 2012). The more individuals go through thoughts and actions and experience them to work or not work within particular social situation in education and in the labour market, the more those thoughts become durable and exist as part of their sub consciousness (Bourdieu 1990). Social inequality is maintained when some students are made to feel worthy of the opportunity to pursue legitimate routes to social mobility, such as being accepted at Russell Group universities, grammar schools and independent schools, and others do not. Students begin to match their family life, their family values, their grades and the

resources they have at hand with institutions and others that match theirs and is experienced and reproduced through the decades as second nature.

Simple examples of symbolic violence and of misrecognitions might include gender differences, including men and women both agreeing that women are weaker, including being less intelligent than men; or class relations, in which the working, middle and upper classes believe that the working classes are not able to run the country; and British classroom situations in which students from working class, ethnic minority backgrounds naturally believe that learning Shakespearean texts is central to gaining qualifications in English (Sullivan 2003 2006). Working class parents might consider middle-class children better behaved and more obedient because they have greater tolerance for authority, overlooking the fact that it is the man made system that is responsible for the habitus that children possess in the classroom, because the child's habitus is a product of their experience in the field and of their understanding of that experience (Stahl 2010). Similarly, parents from ethnic minority backgrounds would rather blame their children for any negative feedback about learning received in parental consultations (for instance, in the case of British Chinese students) (Archer and Francis 2006a, 2006b; Archer et al. 2009; Modood 2012) because they are desperate for their children to be noticed, and to earn prestige and attention in the HE field and beyond.

To consider social class reproduction as a useful theory for why a specific group of students, of a specific ethnic minority are reproduced as the legitimate one, whilst other British Asian groups are not, we have to apply habitus, field, symbolic violence and capital to fully understand the nature of the participants.

2.3 Intended operationalisation of the theory and conceptual framework

An important component of social class reproduction is that individuals who come to school with a cultural capital and habitus that is compatible with both the state's and the school's values will be the type of individuals who are likely to be rewarded by being allowed access to prestigious and conventional forms of education, because they come to school ready to absorb teaching, rather than finding opportunities in the classroom to be taught how to learn (Archer and Hutchings 2005). Those who reflect the second type of habitus and cultural capital will be placed on the occupational structure only to reproduce a similar habitus once again. The

educational system does not fill in gaps in understanding of the system that might arise from parenting, students' wider families, or their upbringing.

A-level students entering HE directly from school are likely to have developed an appropriate habitus by accruing the 'right' type of cultural capital (in the form of exceptional A-level grades) to enable them to operate within prestigious educational institutions on degree courses. Furthermore, the modes of learning generally employed in A-level work are more likely to correspond to those of HE, such as individual essay writing and examinations, as opposed to learning commonly adopted on Access Courses or BTEC/Diploma work, which is based on constructing a portfolio and evidence of work experience (Reay et al. 2002; Archer et al. 2003). Therefore, to enhance their child's educational outcomes, parents must be self-reliant when accessing knowledge describing what constitutes the 'right' type of cultural capital and how to access it.

2.3.1 Applying Bourdieu's social class reproduction theory to the research focus

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the process that British minority ethnic students of Indian origin go through to make the decision to apply to study medicine and law courses in the context of their wider understandings of success. To do this, I have chosen to focus on investigating students from an ethnic minority group as rewarded by the British education system, rather than students from ethnic minority groups who are persistently not rewarded – to discover their understanding of and strategies for success. Social class reproduction theory focuses on research designed according to this rationale. Students from this ethnic minority group are less likely than students from other ethnic minority groups to be subjected to inequality by the British system, given that they are persistently reproduced as middle-class in terms of their destinations: including most securing places at prestigious universities, for which possession of skills, attitudes, and values reflecting those of the dominant class are required.

Based on this, my participants' can be defined as middle-class, according to their knowledge about how not to be drawn into dull routine work, as confirmed by their efforts to achieve the 'right' grades and reflect the 'right' habitus and cultural capital towards their teachers, affirming their eligibility to study courses at prestigious universities intended to place them at the top end of the occupational hierarchy. They can also be considered middle-class in

reference to the current challenges that graduates are experiencing, yet students from this ethnic minority group are more fortunate in securing graduate jobs (Rafferty 2012). The theory is important for analysing such middle-class students' understandings and strategies, as it contributes to establishing a diversified understanding of middle-class reproduction processes in England. This means studying middle-class destinations and reproductions in the context of an Indian ethnicity that is influenced by particular middle-class backgrounds. The specific role of Indian ethnicity in relation to social class reproduction theory is something that can only be determined by analysis. The resources, i.e. different forms of middle-class cultural, social, and symbolic capital, that Bourdieu considered significant in allowing access to dominant success routes needs to be contextualised in reference to students' specific (minority) ethnicities, so the meaning of these resources to be developed and expanded upon. The students under focus can be considered to exemplify the ethnic-specific production of middle-class students.

Inequality in Western capitalist countries is much more complicated in the twenty-first century (Jones 2015), as it is affected by the role of specific ethnic groups and different races in the production of middle-class and working class populations (Savage 2014). Analysing the thoughts and perceptions of middle-class students living in Western capitalist countries requires a theoretical and conceptual framework, such as the one defined in this chapter, to reveal the implicit factors influencing these students' construction of success ideology — such as the variation in cultural and social capital between Indian minority students who qualify for prestigious routes. This theory allows ethnic or other specific ways of thinking, and the impact of family and parental relationships that have influenced these students to pursue the academic degree courses they are on, as noted when applied to specific perspectives.

Applying habitus to the study: However, the nature in which habitus exists within (specific) middle-class students in a given Western capitalist country will be determined by the participants' strategies and understanding of success, which will be further informed by their families' different educational and employment backgrounds. As discussed previously, the reproduction of specific ethnic minority students is constructed and subjected to different experiences based on their specific ethnicity, but also by a particular class background, which influences British Indian students' decision to apply for medicine and law courses. In the case of minority groups that outperform Black and British Asian Muslim groups (i.e. British Chinese families), research has found that even when parents are from non-professional occupational backgrounds, they rely on economic capital and their child to locate and identify the

information and resources their children need to gain outstanding grades (Archer and Francis 2005 2006; Wong 2015). Therefore, with regard to the production of Indian students who qualify for prestigious and elite institutions and courses, which require the most outstanding educational outcomes, the role of the ethnic and class-specific domestic environments might differ from how habitus is formed by conventional White upper and middle-class students' upbringing.

Applying cultural capital: The participants' habitus generated the 'right' type of cultural capital to be transmitted to Indian students who have fulfilled the criteria set by prestigious universities. As discussed earlier in this chapter, it is imperative for educational success in Western capitalist schools, because it prepares children to develop a sophisticated understanding that they must demonstrate in various subject curriculums, given that the teacher usually delivers the curriculum at an abstract level, assuming the students possess the skills to grasp the lesson objective. Thus, these students to some extent reflect this type of cultural capital; however, the nuanced nature of this will only be visible once the particular research participants are studied in relation to the characteristics of their specific prestigious universities, and in context of their specific construction of success. These students and/or their parents demonstrate how the cultural capital and the resources and knowledge that they implemented is present in their social and work lives (in the case of the students' parents) and facilitates the production of middle-class students.

Applying symbolic violence and the practice of misrecognition to the study: This chapter also aimed to provide an in-depth discussion of symbolic violence, and offer some broad examples of symbolic violence in relation to class. With regard to symbolic violence as it relates to the current study, the students under focus spent time constructing decisions about which educational or employment route to consider beyond their GCSE school examinations. They chose to apply for dentistry, pharmacy or law. However, this decision is likely to have been considered early on during their schooling, to ensure they secure the relevant grades to be eligible for these courses. In terms of factors that may have influenced this decision, we were able to note that these Indian and other British Asian communities in England considered their main occupations, as they have a chance of securing social mobility in traditional terms in England through vocational degree courses. Anthropological research suggests this (Ghuman 2003), as well as educational (Modood 1993; Leslie 2005; Archer and Francis 2006a, 2006b; Modood 2004; Richardson 2008; Boliver 2014; Wong 2015), social mobility (Heath et al. 2008; Kirkup 2015), and social geography research (Butler and Hamnett 2011). They consider

vocations degree courses to be 'safe routes' (Wong 2015), ideal for ethnic minority communities wishing to access traditional forms of British social mobility. This could be considered an example of symbolic violence whereby minority groups believe that they are aspiring to middle-class occupational fields in England, but are in fact also defining themselves as unworthy for other dominant occupations, by writing themselves off subconsciously. The reasons cited by parents in empirical research, however, includes that qualifying for these jobs brings status, respect, honour, and income for the specific Indian community in Britain, and also broadly in society. Moreover, that access to these occupations provides security for the future in terms of developing a professional career and income. Rarely are the specific job descriptions cited as key reasons. According to the literature and the work of contemporary sociologists, the fascination with these courses is very much associated with the cultural and symbolic worth attached to these particular occupational routes (Savage et al. 2013).

The symbolic violence and misrecognition of the dominant ideology in terms of social mobility as it occurs within these students' habitus, means that they are unknowingly being dominated by the dominant group. That is, they are encouraged to believe that medicine and law occupations are the only ways in which they will be recognised in western capitalist society. Furthermore, these ethnic-specific minority students are being dominated because they have conformed to the necessary rules and attitudes of dominant middle-class ethnicity (White British middle-class) by acquiring dominant middle-class values. The middle-class students in this study are unknowing carriers of symbolic capital and power; they exercise symbolic violence by constructing occupations and making educational decisions based on subconscious feelings of insecurity related to their ethnicity and backgrounds. Another way in which I would like to demonstrate my understanding of symbolic violence, is by considering British Asian students from other ethnic minority groups in relation to medicine and law courses. British Asian students from other British Asian backgrounds have expressed that medicine and law courses are highly challenging and competitive in terms of their entry requirements (Ahmad et al. 2003), and they appear convinced that the problem lies within them rather than the eligibility criteria for studying medicine and law, or the type of habitus, interests and personality necessary to invite their attention to these courses.

This section has presented a discussion of how symbolic violence is applicable to the current research focus, and the role of symbolic violence in the British Indian students' construction of success meaning is considered below.

2.4 An exploration of the positioning of British medical and law students of Indian origin in the *field*

HE is a social space (subfield) connected to other closely related social spaces (such as secondary school, labour market, occupational hierarchy, benefits system) (Bourdieu 2005). As considered previously in this chapter, Bourdieu (2005) argued that this wider educational field consists of positions occupied by agents/individuals and also by individual institutions. What happens in/on the field is consequently organised according to an implicit hierarchal order, and is influenced by the volume of middle-class cultural and social capital and habitus, and competition between the field's occupants. Therefore, the competition and the criteria needed to succeed in the field are challenging particularly, because it is unspoken. The production and reproduction of working class and middle and upper class children/individuals typically unfolds and are illuminated after compulsory schooling is over, when students make critical choices regarding their aspirations or their likelihood of social mobility. Different institutions in the education and occupational field attract specific classes and class-specific ethnic students (Bowl 2001). From a social class reproduction theory perspective, different universities attract students reflecting a class-specific habitus and cultural capital. The courses/universities that the students in the current study qualified for suit those who have acquired hidden knowledge of the structure requirements and are prepared to learn through a sophisticated reading of the field. Policy holders value such students, and they usually apply for universities that they feel will be a *natural* fit for them; i.e. where they are least likely to feel intimidated by alien values. This relates to the nature of habitus, and the economic, cultural, and social influences that parents and home lives instil and transmit (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990). It also determines how complicated or straightforward a student's experiences and position within a target field will be. Behaviours and actions with an unknowing and subconscious influence can determine how an individual's thoughts and activity interact within the field of education-employment, and are referred to as 'habitus'.

It is essential to consider how the students in the current study might be positioned, or where they may be viewed within the wider education and employment space (field), by focusing on the eligibility criteria that entailed their so-called success or ability to qualify for a position on medicine associated and law academic degree courses. These are courses that can require six years of study (in the case of dentistry; courses for pharmacy and law are three to four years long). They can only be accessed with outstanding A level grades in specific subjects (Woolf et

al. 2008a, 2011, 2013; Bolliver 2016). In addition, the educational institutions at which these A levels are gained are also assessed for their position in the league tables (Leckie and Goldstein 2011; Bolliver 2013). Furthermore, in the UK context, the specific HE institutions that deliver these courses are typically prestigious universities that have traditionally existed as universities, rather than — for instance — HE institutions that were formerly further education colleges (post-1992 former polytechnic universities) (Tatlow 2015). However, most significantly, these specific academic degrees (medicine associated and LLB Law) are viewed in the eyes of the state (those in power) as morally and culturally significant (Savage et al. 2011; Devine et al. 2016). The students in the current study can be considered an advantaged subsection of the (UK) middle-class population, and at a far lower risk of downward social mobility and inequality than students from working class backgrounds, because they are relatively closer to the dominant ideology of success. Their ability to compete in the field of education and in the labour market is stronger than students who cannot access such positions in the HE subfield, and therefore in the labour market, without immense struggle or no access to the specific type of cultural and social capital that is fundamental to knowing the hidden conditions of competing in this wider field. According to Bourdieu's social class theory, the educational system (comprised of schoolteachers, school head teachers, university academic teaching and research staff, and university deans across the HE subfield) does not provide the skills, knowledge, and information regarding what accessing these courses and occupations involves in practice for students and their parents, as this does not form part of the schools' or universities' teaching curriculums. This ensures that parents struggle to aspire to embark on occupations that earn respect and recognition in the eyes of the state (Ball 2012). However, students and parents who either naturally possess the requirements to pursue such occupations (based on family background), or possess the curiosity to question and learn about them do so without the help of occupying positions in the individual institutions that make up the (wider) educational field, such as schools and universities (Apple 2017).

2.5 Chapter summary

This chapter provided a theoretical framework for the study, affording insights into how middle-class students in Britain of Indian ethnic origin qualify for places that typically and significantly reduce their chances of inequality in comparison to those who do not and cannot. The students in the current study form part of a dominant minority ethnic group that is persistently perceived as successful/socially mobile in conventional discourse. The chapter

further presented a simple outline of the key aspects of the theoretical and conceptual framework that might serve to explain the significance of this specific ethnic group's achievement of advantage and dominance according to the students' own success ideologies. It also clarified the perspective from which the research aims and objectives are considered. In the next two chapters, this theory and conceptual framework are used to review the relevant literature within the anthropological (wider) and educational and social mobility (specifically relevant disciplines) contexts to help build a nuanced picture of minority students, and specifically British students/families/parents of Indian origin.

Chapter Three: The wider British Asian historical and cultural context

3.1 Introduction

This study is about ethnic minority students whose ethnic background originated outside the UK and Europe, considered as developing countries. In the previous chapter, I considered that the awareness of requiring a particular cultural capital may have required a specific type of mentality and upbringing. Therefore, anthropological literature/debates that inform us about the ways in which Indians and the wider British Asian community perceive socialisation, family life, and education, and their ethnic migratory experiences serve as an important context in which to consider the extent of the role the wider Indian community in the UK, might have played forming valuable social networks and connections and to consider the ethnic and community factors influencing habitus and cultural capital. This chapter may become the main backdrop against which British Indians' educational and occupational destinations are consistently produced as reflecting as successful in comparison to other British Asian groups from the Indian subcontinent. I begin by considering definitions of race, ethnicity, and Britishness, offering some descriptive knowledge concerning the ethnic composition of the British Indian group, the problematic nature of the term 'Indian', and similarities and differences between and within British Asian communities. I then consider former Indian and British Asian migrants' experiences of immigration and their process of settlement, as well as how different British Asian groups have assimilated within the dominant race.

3.2 Defining ethnicity

Ethnicity and race are considered central to the identity and understanding of minority ethnic students who are positioned more widely in the education and employment fields (Modood 2012). The dictionary of race and ethnic relations describes ethnicity, 'as the salient feature of a group that regards itself as in some sense...distinct' (Miles 2004: 35). In this sense, an ethnic group can be defined as one that possesses some degree of solidarity, being comprised of people overtly aware of their common origins and interests. Therefore, everyone has an ethnicity/an ethnic background, despite these terms being frequently associated with Black and minority ethnic populations, and seldom to British White populations (Gillborn 2008),

although the role of a White British ethnicity has been subject to attention in the context of working class White British boys (Stahl 2010; Ingram 2013, 2014) and women (Skeggs 2004). Despite the different ethnic categorisations classifications proffered by the ONS for White and non-White ethnic groups, the role of these ethnic groups in relation to understanding students educational outcomes and their educational and occupational choices is often far more complex when contextualised within their class background and classed experiences (Gillborn 2008). The effectiveness of this categorisation does not necessarily work in practice. Class background influences experiences of ethnicity and vice versa (Modood 2012). Furthermore, a person's ethnicity (just like habitus) is at times required to adapt, and is replete with challenges, according to the different settings within the wider educational field, such as schools, universities, and different employment settings. Therefore, ethnic categories as offered by ONS are rarely used consistently across studies, nor within them because they do not work independently in practice from other social identities such as class, gender, etc. (Pathak 2000). In reality, in relation to understanding educational, occupational differences, groups tend to reflect race, class and ethnicity. British students of Indian ethnicity however do tend to only be understood in ethnic terms, and are rarely subject to focus in relation to class (with the exception of a few studies that focus on working class Indian female students see Bhopal 2011a, 2011b and Khambhatia 2013). Race is another concept which is interweaved with ethnicity.

3.3 Defining race

The original use of the term race applied the view that people can be categorised into biologically distinct groups identifiable primarily by skin colour, to justify the slave trade (Ladson-Billings 2004). During this period, Indians were accorded higher status cleaning and housekeeping jobs, whereas African people were situated and treated as inferior. The belief of separate races within the human race has now been rejected by scientific research and reputable practitioners (Parker and Song 2001). The terminology used to describe various ethnic groups, especially those from minority ethnic groups has also changed, in response to different socio-political historical climates (Mirza 2000). Being Black allows postcolonial migrants of different languages, religions, cultures, and classes a shared identity based on a common experience of White racism (Modood 2014). Others, however, explain that being Black can also simply mean not being White. In other words, 'White' exists as a fixed, stable norm with ethnic groups being placed under the heading 'Black' in relation to Whiteness,

irrespective of cultural and economic differences (Gillborn 2008). The distinction between Black and White citizens in Britain, and the idea of people sharing similar cultures, traditions and values (ethnic groups) is also associated with British citizens' sense of national identity. The students in the current study have relevance to these evolving meaning of ethnicity and race, because they are not White in terms of biological definitions of race, and nor do they form a part of British *White* middle-class students; although they are associated with an ethnicity (Indian) which form part of the inequality that was present within the colonial era. I will now move onto describing the Indian group diaspora in the UK and in relation to other British Asian groups whom originate from the Indian sub-continent (Pakistani and Bangladeshi) (Modood 2004).

3.4 British Indian population demographics

As a group, British Asians comprise 4 percent of the UK total population (Census 2011; Das 2013). In total, 2.5 per cent of this 4 percent are of Indian extraction (1.4 million), according to data collected in 2011 (ONS 2011). In terms of their demographic profile, they also include a UK born population (ONS 2013/14). The 2011 Census indicates that 67 percent of the UK's Indian population are between the ages of 16 and 64, and 22 percent are under 16 years (Thakur 2014). 15.4 percent of this 67 percent are employed in higher managerial, senior administrative and professional roles (Platt 2012). However, based on the outline of how ethnicity and race are defined in reality, it can be predicted that not all Indians are in higher professional occupations, but as a group, Indians in the UK, persistently have remained at the top end of socio-economic occupational structure in comparison to other British Asian (and Black) groups (Platt 2012).

3.5 The British Asian category

'British Asian' constitutes three ethnic groups: Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. These three groups share similarities with regard to certain practices (food, women's traditional style of dress, spoken language, marriage values, gender norms, ethnic and religious solidarity, elders wishes replacing personal and individual aspirations; definitions of honour and respect) (Charsley and Shaw 2006). The Indian group differs from the other two in many of these areas, but Indians can be set apart from the other two in relation to their education, socio-economic

and in terms of their assimilation with wider British society (Bagguley and Hussain 2007). Over recent decades, Indians have been found to have markedly differently values towards marriage, cohabitation, the socialisation of children and gender-based values, when compared to the other two (Sekhon and Szmigin 2007; Robinson 2009). The factors that could be useful in terms of considering the potential influence of ethnicity as a means to allow certain British Asian ethnicities to be associated with dominant success ideology, depends on the degree to which these three and ethnic minority groups more generally conform to British White attitudes and values, and sacrifice aspects of their ancestral ethnicity (Vincent et al. 2012).

3.6 The ethnic diversity of the British Indian group

British Indian population primarily comprises two distinct Indian ethnic categories: the Indian community that originated from Punjab (northern state of India) and the Indian community that originated from the affluent part of India: Gujrat (Western state of India) (Desai 1963; Platt 2005). The majority of British Gujaratis are Hindus, whilst most British Punjabis are Sikhs and/or Hindus (Vertovec 2007). Distinctive populations within the Indian group are largely recognised and separated according to their religious differences. Indians who are also Hindus form 45 percent and 30 percent of Sikhs, with 12 percent being Muslims and 5 percent Christians (ONS 2011). Most Indians self-identify as Hindus or Sikhs, or come from a background sharing some aspects of both, whilst Pakistanis and Bangladeshi's are referred to and self-identify as Muslims (Charsley and Shaw 2006). When citing religion as a variable in the census data, Platt (2005, 2007) observes that British Hindus are *more* likely to be 'successful' in upper managerial and professional occupations than Sikhs. Not only does this mean there are distinctive (religious and ethnic specific) populations to consider within the Indian group when building realistic class understandings, but it also that the nature of cultural, social and therefore symbolic capital may differ in terms of Indian-religion specific differences between students of Indian background. 56 percent of Punjabi Sikhs and 37 percent of Gujarati Hindus and other Hindu caste-specific communities (Brahmins) were born in the UK (Dhanda 2009). Few qualitative studies investigating British Indian students (Bhopal 2010, Khambhatia 2013) have accounted for their Indian participants' religious, caste, and socio-economic class background. The cultures and values of *non-Indian* British Asian communities are considered subordinate. Negative representations of non-Indian British Asian groups are frequent in certain dominant sub-fields such as British media, compared to Indian (and Chinese) individuals (Modood 2008).

3.7 The history of British Indians

British Indians have fulfilled various roles in Britain since the 1930s. Formerly they worked as high-class servants within the British monarchy, when Indian migration to Britain began in the 18th century (Visram 2011). Before the First World War, early Indian migrants included students, lascars, and nannies from the East India Company (Bance 2007). In the 19th century Indians were free to enter the UK, as they were British subjects under colonial rule (Das 2013). In 1948, the British Nationality Act was introduced. This approved the right of commonwealth citizens to enter Britain after 1947, which significantly increased Indian immigration to Britain. Although there were some professional immigrants (mostly doctors), many of the immigrant workers were men from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, who took occupations at the bottom of the occupational structure: hard labour and other manual and unskilled roles (Robinson 1986). The Indian communities that migrated from the Indian sub-continent were Gujraatis and Punjabis. Singh and Tatla (2006) note that political factors, as well as agricultural and economic development patterns in Punjab were significant push factors, leading Punjabis to emigrate, not just to the UK, but also to other countries: namely the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand; although the majority entered the UK (Vertovec 2007). By 1961, over 100,000 Indian and Pakistani nationals were living in the UK. Labour shortages in the UK following Britain's post-war economic explosion lasted until the 1970s, and provided job opportunities for British Asian groups. Predominantly, it was Indians from Gujrat and Punjab (Desai 1963; Bance 2007) who adopted these roles, with the construction trade hugely popular amongst working-class Pakistani, Bangladeshi and also Indian communities. Men and jobs in construction continued to attract new male migrants from all three British Asian communities, because they are well paid and do not necessarily demand a high degree of knowledge of the dominant language; English (Charsley 2013). For women, who were not fluent in English, and from farming and manual occupation backgrounds in India, sewing jobs, fruit and vegetable picking and packing in warehouses were key occupational choices, again which are at the bottom of the occupational structure (Charsley and Shaw 2006). The 1950s and 1960s saw mass immigration to the UK, particularly from the Caribbean, India and Pakistan (Desai 1963). During this period immigrants sponsored family groups and friends in their villages of origin to migrate to the UK. Immigration control was introduced in 1962 through passport restrictions in India for Indian immigrants by the Commonwealth Immigration Act (Das 2013), because much of the chain migration to the UK was from the Indian group (Ballard and Banks 1994).

African Indians (who had first emigrated to Kenya from India and then to the UK), termed 'twice migrants' (Bhachu 1985) emigrated to the UK as refugees because of political disturbances in Africa in the 1970s (Das 2013). Immigration from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh is now restricted (Thakur 2014), and growth amongst the British Asian population since the 1970s has mostly been due to the entry of immigrants dependent family members (Centre of Research on Ethnicity Dynamics 2011). We can already see that in terms of inequality, and social class reproduction, escaping social inequality was not straightforward for Indians, because they were given manual occupation jobs during the colonial era, and work that required more effort was allocated to Black groups, but neither were Indians experience a smooth experience upon their entry to the UK (Modood 1993).

Indian immigrants intended to leave the UK after earning sufficient money, but the majority chose to remain adapting to British values and integrating into the British way of life (Helweg 1986). Immigration controls encouraged Indian communities (Gujaratis and Punjabis) to remain in the UK by reducing their options with regard to entry and exit from the UK, which led to the generational growth of Indians in the UK (Heath and Cheung 2006; Li and Heath 2016). British Indian undergraduates form a part of this generational growth. Increasing control over the entry and exit of Indians throughout the 1960s and 1970s echoed concerns about the apparent differences between British Asian immigrants and the host White British society (Bance 2007). The Labour party supported the new non-White immigrant arrivals, unlike the Conservative party; the situation in this regard has dramatically changed, where most Indians now support the Conservative ethos (Katwala and Ballinger 2016). British Indian immigrants were subject to chronic discrimination and hostility in the 1960s, with violent attacks and racist immigration laws implemented as a result (Bance 2007). Solomos (1993) argues that there is an inherent conflict between ideology and practice on the British government's part. Experiences of hostility, racism and discrimination have contributed to British Indians motivation to conform to British White values (Das 2013). Since the 1960s British Indians were recognised as able to integrate the fastest into the British way of life than other British Asian groups (Ghuman 2003; Charsley 2014). Race is usually only explicitly associated with Black British individuals' struggles with social mobility, whilst religious inequality is usually given as the reason for Pakistani and Bangladeshi students' problems accessing social mobility. For Indians, early challenges were often the result of distinct physical markers (women's distinctive dress sense, e.g. wearing of bhindis, saris, long plaits, oiled hair).

3.7.1 British Indians assimilation into wider British society

British Indians adapted to the host UK culture in a way that allows them to preserve certain social practices from their ancestral country and to respond to social, economic, and cultural forces in the host country. This type of adaptation is known as *acculturation* in the context of anthropology (Ghuman 2003). This adaptation is an ongoing process, which involves continuous negotiation for British Indians, especially in terms of their identification as British and Indian (Ghuman 1999, 2003). I am mindful that these terms are contested and vary from family to family (Modood 2012). The younger generation of British Indians, the majority of whom were born in the UK (Platt 2007), remain multifaceted in terms of their ethnic identity formation (Ghuman 2003). British Indians' desire to adapt to their host country's expectations, but wish to avoid completely eroding their cultural identities (Das 2013); this has led to the reconstruction of certain social practices, e.g. arranged marriages. The understanding of arranged marriages for instance have now been modified to suit those British Indian young people whose families wish to merge the values of the dominant race and ethnicity with Indian values (Bhopal 2011a). Thus, there are now several approaches to marriage, deemed acceptable to British Indians, some of which continue to be rejected by British Asian groups that practice Islamism (Bagguley and Hussain 2007; Gill et al. 2014). Marriage is considered a key method in maintaining and reproducing specific ethnic groups and Indian and religion specific groups (Bhopal 2011a).

3.7.2 Identity

British Indians have been found to widely incorporate a British identity; for example, approximately 75 percent of Indians in the UK identified themselves as British in the 2001 UK Census (ONS 2006). Almost 79 percent of Sikhs, and 69 percent of Hindus described their national identity as British, English, Welsh or Scottish (ONS 2006). Berthoud (1997a, 1997b, 2000a, 2000b) suggests that all British Asian groups in Britain remain loyal to their communities' histories and traditions, as well as their community, which means developing solidarity. The identity of Indians in the UK remains an important marker of ethnic identity for Indians, because their culture and tradition are intrinsic to their religious practices (Jhutti-Johal 2014). Barn and Kirton (2014) point that for British Indians (Hindus and Sikhs) religion frames their individual and communal existence, and governs their social lives. However, others (e.g. Abbas 2003) emphasise that Indians in Britain, across the generations, do not place

a heavy emphasis on religion, and that it would of little surprise if within the next 20 years or so the only notable religion originating from the South Asian sub-continent would be Islam, as young people from Indian backgrounds rarely apply the philosophies and beliefs of the Sikh and Hindu religion routinely. Religious spaces also serve as social spaces for the British Indian community, allowing members of the older generations in particular to exchange stories about everyday life (Das 2013; Jhutti-Johal 2014).

3.7.3 British Indians and Izzat

Izzat usually translated to mean personal or family honour and pride (Soni 2013; Gill 2014). It serves as a form of symbolic capital (status, prestige) linked to how the British Asian community define honour. For British Asians, including Indians, symbolic capital is not only subject to whether they hold middle-class forms of cultural and social capital, but also whether they possess *izzat*. All British Asian groups consider *izzat* important, because it serves as a means of conferring status on individuals and their families, leading to the notion of 'standing' within the community (Ballard 1999; Charsley and Shaw 2006). This standing can take the form of education, social mobility, socio-economic status, economic capital, the modesty, behaviours, lifestyle and appearance of unmarried daughters within the family and daughters-in-law entering the family (Gill 2014).

3.7.4 British Indians and family: households and family relations

Family life is highly valued among British Indians (and other British Asian groups). It is characterised by closeness and cooperation in times of need (Brown 2006). When British Indians initially settled in Britain traditional family systems could no longer exist as saliently as they did previously, with many generations and multiple related families lived together creating large extended families (Das 2013) due to the distances between family members resulting from migration (Singh and Tatla 2006). Hence, for some families, communication with grandparents and other members of the extended family could only be maintained through letters, telephone calls and visits (Berthoud 2000a, 200b). However, for the newer British Indian generations (Platt et al. 2005; Platt 2007), their extended family are more likely to also be present in the UK, living in their own homes, which are mostly owned outright (Butler et al. 2008; Butler and Hamnett 2011). Approximately 14 percent of British Indian

families are multi-generational (ONS 2007), with 13 percent of Indian families having both children and a paternal grandmother living with them (ONS 2007; Platt 2007). Anthropologists (e.g. Beishon et al. 1998; Ghuman 2003), and social class geographers (e.g. Butler and Hamnett 2011) find that British Indian parents prefer their children to live independently once they are married, although they are still expected to live close to the parental home. Proximity is based on negotiation, whereby the younger generation can enjoy independent living, whilst also accessing the collective support of extended family members to socialise and raise their children, while instilling traditional values through practice (Das 2013).

3.7.5 The home life and socialisation of UK born Indian children

The socialisation of children is given more attention by British Indians than by native Indians, because those in the UK tend to be more conscious, i.e. fearful, of the degree to which the cultures and lifestyles of the host White British community will influence their children (Ghuman 2003). They fear that host culture norms might distract their children from aspects of Indian culture they want them to adopt (Anwar 2002; Ghuman 2007). Western values or cultural values that are aspects of the dominant social class, which middle-class Indian parents are wary of including: too much freedom of speech, having the power to reject family wishes, guidance on career aspirations, practicing independence including leaving home at 16/18 and making decisions independently; dating and forming intimate relationships (Stopes-Roe and Cochrane 1989, 1990; Ghuman 2003; Soni 2013). These values are considered to contradict conventional Indian values, which emphasise that individuals and young people make decisions in consultation with elders in all matters, remain in the family home, until marriage takes place, and that freedom of speech should only be practiced promoting educational attainment, and not for personal development (Dosanjh and Ghuman 2003). Parental authority is given very high prominence in British Asian groups; sometimes, the father's brother or sister, if they live nearby, are given equal rights to discipline children in the absence of parents if suspicious behaviour is witnessed (Modood et al. 1994). Parents from all British Asian groups are likely to refer to religious and moral codes to discipline and correct bad behaviour (Dosanjh and Ghuman 2003; Das 2013). However, what is considered bad behaviour varies between White British/White European ethnic groups and British Asian ethnic groups (Bhopal 1997). Therefore, the nature of habitus and cultural capital for the Indians in the current study could include ethnic specific dimensions, with such factors influencing the construction of meaning of success and their potential position at the top end of the structure.

3.7.6 Faith schools and British Asian groups' values towards education

British Asians view accessing British education as a way out of poverty that combats racism, discrimination and exclusion (Longhi et al. 2012). Abbas (2002) suggests that British Indian parents are more likely to support their children's education through private one-to-one home tutoring, and possess the cultural and social capitals to achieve higher representation in British fee-paying schools. Most state comprehensive, grammar and fee-paying schools do not deliver Punjabi, Gujraati, or Urdu languages at GCSE level as part of the languages curriculum, instead emphasising European languages (Spanish, French), although Mandarin is delivered by some schools (Jacobsen and Myrvold 2011). Most, if not all boroughs across London, Greater London and especially in the North deliver weekend classes; for instance, Sikh places of worship hold Punjabi classes at the weekend; Hindu places of worship deliver Gujraati and Hindi, and Muslim places of worship deliver Urdu with emphasis on teaching children to recite the Quran (Arweck and Nesbitt 2010). Faith schools are scarce or entirely absent within the Sikh and Hindu populations in Britain, as they consider the British curriculum, and the marketisation of education to be valuable; bolstering their children's position in the wider fabric of society more than Sikh or Hindu government run schools would (Singh and Tatla 2006).

3.8 Chapter summary

This chapter has been mainly descriptive, in that it has aimed to provide the reader with an understanding about Indians and other British Asian groups specific cultures, connections and what these ethnicities value, including the differences between them. It has also served the findings chapter, in that the students construction of success ideology can be referred to their Indian specific background. We found that Indians have generally conformed to the culture and values present within the dominant culture (British White middle-class values), and so have chosen to merge *their own* values with those of the middle-class British White group, complying with traditional ideas about success, and being willing to sacrifice aspects of their ancestral identity. Scholars of social and race justice in education are convinced that this conformity is deeply rooted in the colonial and immigrant background of the Indian group (Gillborn and Youdell 2001). This chapter also serves the theoretical and conceptual framework, by encouraging an ethnic specific nature of social class reproduction to be elicited,

and of the concepts. I have reviewed aspects of the ethnic-specific nature of habitus and cultural capital that might contribute to my research participants' construction of success and their access to high status universities. The chapter explored British Indians practices in the UK, in the context of their differing social norms, the values, customs and lifestyles of the different castes, classes and religious groups, relative to the dominant culture. Moving on, the following chapter will engage with empirical research and concepts that are associated with dominant success ideology in the UK on a broad and specific level.

Chapter Four: Literature Review

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into five parts. The first part begins with an overview of key concepts associated with British citizens and their capacity to achieve social mobility. It continues by reviewing how the education policy reproduces dominant ideas of success (including neoliberalism, the evolving meaning of class in Britain, ideas about dominant success ideology) and previous studies that have employed my intended conceptual framework or adapted it. The second part focuses on minority ethnic groups and compulsory education, summarising how scholars have articulated this area by drawing on their empirical findings. The third part concentrates on debates concerning the wider nature of HE in the UK, considering minority ethnic groups in relation to the universities they attend and the courses they study. The fourth part focuses on minority ethnic graduates, and on how minority ethnic groups are represented in the occupational structure. This part also considers the economic profile and poverty rates among different minority ethnic groups. The fifth part considers literature that has challenged the dominant discourse and traditional routes to social mobility, to demonstrate the progress to date with regard to developing nuanced understandings of educational success strategies, by reviewing empirical studies on subordinate groups (middle and working-class specific ethnic populations -including White working-class) and the challenges that middle-class British White students face when striving to maintain conventional standards.

4.2 Part one: Discussion on relevant abstract concepts

4.2.1 Meanings of social class in Britain

This study concerns constructs surrounding the notion of being successful from the perspective of a particular dominant group within the minority ethnic specific middle-class population in the UK. Currently, the White British middle-class and elite dominate in terms of their ideas about success, citing a straightforward progression towards social mobility (Ingram 2014). Throughout British educational, sociological and social mobility research it is apparent that social class background is a powerful factor determining who can access dominant success

ideology. Moreover, ethnic groups and class specific backgrounds are equally influential. For instance, Indian and Chinese groups are perceived as middle-class minorities, relative to Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black groups, despite the presence of middle-class populations in every ethnic minority group (Archer 2008; Rollock et al. 2013). According to my theoretical and conceptual framework, one explanation for this could be that most children and students from the Indian ethnic minority, in contrast to Black and other British Asian groups, reflect the 'right' type of habitus and cultural capital (Basit and Tomlinson 2012). The majority of the time, this link between ethnicity and class is implicit within the British media and research, describing specific minorities as successful, or as model minorities, with others being less successful by comparison (e.g. Clarke 2010; Li 2018; Kirkup 2015). This, however, does not mean that minorities that are defined as successful or as model minorities fulfil *their own* criteria for success; rather these labels refer to the extent to which minorities reflect British White middle-class and upper class values pertaining to success. Therefore, when applying Bourdieu's social class reproduction and the different forms of capital that are significant when researching ethnic and middle-class specific students, it is worthwhile to first clarify why class categories and fixed definitions of class are no longer relevant for explicating traditional ideas about success.

In Britain, how understanding of class has evolved since the later eighteenth century has been 'striking' (Savage et al. 2013: 27). Prior to the Industrial revolution, there were many wage earners engaged in agriculture, as well as skilled and unskilled trades. They attained a strong sense of independence, and were classified as the 'freeborn Englishman' in traditional class studies on the working-classes (Thompson 1962). Those in these occupations felt a strong sense of confidence, and their rooted class identity was associated with manual work; they were proud, rather than ashamed or afraid, of how they were perceived. They interacted well with socialist movements, and were associated with the emergence of the Labour movement in the 19th century (Savage 2000). However, their presence did not significantly influence aristocratic upper-class identity, and in the UK (unlike in most other European nations), they remained powerful throughout the industrial revolution (Jones 2015). The British upper class was self-confident and drove capitalism forward, developing a powerful trading infrastructure (Savage et al. 2013). For their part, the 'middle-classes', comprised of business people, managers, tradesmen and white-collar workers; they were sandwiched between an impermeable and confident upper class, which it was hard to gain entry to, and the manual working-class (Savage 2015: 28).

In the 19th century, relations between the three classes played out in the field of electoral reform, as conflict between the classes took on a political advantage. The working-classes were increasingly viewed as dangerous, and likely to bring down the standards of the upper and middle-classes, causing social and cultural decline (Savage et al. 2013). Therefore, it was important not to allow their ideas and identities to become overly influential. Yet for socialists and those active in the Labour movement, the working-classes reflected a more democratic identity, which might have resulted in a fairer and more genuine British nation. Meanwhile, the positioning of the relatively insecure middle-classes was however uncertain (Savage 2015). From the late 18th century onwards, the middle-classes wanted to create a clearer class identity for themselves, and so pursued particular forms of luxury and consumption, developing *different* cultural traits from the working-class (Savage and Mouncey 2016). It became clear that the meaning of class and success was one of cultural politics, with developments focused around the 'middle reaches' of the class structure (Savage 2015: 35). Despite the apparently clear distinction between the three classes professionally and culturally, it remained confusing whether well paid working-class, and deprived white-collar clerks, corner shop owners or primary schoolteachers were part of the middle-class structure, or if there was an additional structure within the middle-class British population that could be termed 'lower middle-class' (Savage and Pouncey 2016). In other words, who possessed symbolic capital, and who did not, was unclear. For the majority of the 20th century these uncertainties fuelled English people's ongoing concerns about class. Identifying the main differences between working and middle-class became the primary aim when describing class in Britain, and influenced a great deal of the research in the social sciences; particularly in the fields of sociology of education/HE and sociology of race and ethnicity in education (Devine and Sensier 2017). The upper classes knew who they were and as such were rarely challenged.

However, some within the middle-classes felt insecure about whether their occupational ranking truly differed from that of skilled workers. Concerns about who was respectable, the role of mass urbanisation, and the nature of poverty, led to the official measures to determine class specifications (Savage et al. 2013). The Registrar General's Office developed these in 1991 to classify households into different social classes. To explain the different health of various social groups, and notably the extent to which the poor were more subject to illness and early mortality, it was important to clearly differentiate between people by class. This categorisation identified the broad class boundary as associated with the difference between non-manual and manual jobs, based on the grade of different occupations, placing professional jobs and then managerial jobs at top of the class structure, and skilled non-manual employment and partly

skilled and unskilled manual work at the bottom (Wharman 1995). Class was viewed as the product of occupation; however, occupations were grouped according to their associated *cultures* rather than according to the skills, income or job descriptions associated with them (Bottero 2014a). When British Indian (and Chinese) parents emphasise that they want their children to pursue and study 'safe options', implicitly they could be referring to the cultural status and symbolic value associated with such 'safe' occupations, and not actually thinking of the practical tasks involved in a doctor's job description (Archer and Francis 2006a, 2006b; Wong 2015). When someone identifies themselves or someone they know, as/with a doctor, dentist, lawyer, professor, they are not saying, "I can fix teeth", "I cure people" (medicine jobs), I'm defending somebody's supposed criminal act (law); rather they subconsciously consider themselves valuable, as holding recognised symbolic capital, making them successful. The preferences of ethnic minority groups for certain occupations is based on a desire to conform to the requirements of the existing system. The cultural aspect of class was significant, because cultural factors appear to be important in terms of explaining why some social classes have lower mortality rates than others (Miyamoto 2017). The less comfortable classes are apparently typically less cultured (Bottero 2014b) or reflect/possess the 'wrong' culture (Rollock et al. 2013). Indeed, class categorisations were formulated to make cultural judgements about the ranking and social importance of jobs.

4.2.2 The influence of immigration and ethnicity in meanings of class

Increasingly during the 20th century, concerns about how far professional and manual workers' class manifests in the realms of both gender and immigration arose. For example, many Black and ethnic minority men and women from other ethnicities embarked upon manual employment from the early 20th century onwards (Savage et al. 2013). Savage et al. (2014) also perceives that many (mainly Afro-Caribbean immigrants) deliberately and proudly appropriated working-class identities, adopting British identity according to the conception of class. The legacy of the history of class in Britain has been to create boundaries between the middle and working-class that persist at the centre of British understanding of class. Thus, while for most nations, immigrants prepared to define themselves as middle-class, in Britain being middle-class implies cultural snobbery and privilege (Reay 2005). Consequently, when specific minorities achieve a social mobility that can define them as middle-class, at least in occupational terms, they might choose to reject middle-class identity in the British sense, as it does not capture the immigrant context nor their associated hardships (Vincent et al. 2013).

From the mid-20th century onwards, the aim was to establish class divisions to provide a more objective understanding of class (Goldthorpe and Lockwood 1963). Goldthorpe built a new occupational class categorisation in the 1970s, which formed the basis for the system of class categorisation used today by the Office for National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC). Goldthorpe' aimed to analyse class in relation to employment and education, and so chose to distinguish class analytically, thereby reducing the influence of cultural indicators (Devine et al. 2011).

This links to the role of salary and income when considering the meaning of class. The majority of people are paid a sum for the specific work they do, and this is paid in the form of an hourly rate, or a monthly sum (Savage et al. 2014). Some employees play a role that is difficult to observe directly, and so their employers offer additional rewards such as increasing salary, pensions, and other benefits which are designed to encourage longer-term commitment in their employers. These are usually workers with a great deal of expertise, or who hold managerial status because they are responsible for supervising others. Goldthorpe's analysis proved a useful framework, because it was more focused to the nature of people's employment. However, the upper class remained outside of the class hierarchal structure, because they had always been small in number and are situated right at its pinnacle. The same belief could be applied when considering why specific ethnic minorities have been able to access the top of the social structure and other ethnicities are not.

Over the last decade, however, contemporary British sociologists (Skeggs 1997; Sayer 2000; Savage et al. 2012; Savage 2015; McKenzie 2015), and sociologists of education (Reay et al. 2005; Ball 2012; Crozier et al. 2008) have witnessed a new kind of snobbery, one that classifies people according to lifestyles, consumption and leisure choices (Reay 2005; Savage et al. 2013). I consider these scholars' work to be more compatible with Bourdieu's theory of social class reproduction, in the sense that they assert implicit and cultural factors when understanding inequality, rather than simply being able to see the inequality on charts and graphs between ethnic groups as offered by ONS, and league tables. This new snobbery distinguishes those who are skilled in exerting judgment in a knowing and sophisticated way, from those, whoever they may be, who are deemed to choose ineffectively (Savage 2014: 45). Bourdieu's social reproduction theory, and concepts of habitus, capital, and symbolic capital allow us to distinguish snobbery according to certain (middle) forms of cultural and social capital, and to consider the nature of middle-class capital for ethnic and middle-class specific groups/students when reflecting the symbolic status present in a given structure.

4.2.3 Neoliberalism and associated discourses

The current research (broadening the construction of meanings of success for a middle-class minority group of students), is taking place at a time in Britain when social mobility i.e. success is increasingly associated with class inequality (Pilkington 2013; Bhopal 2016). This is because of the impact that neoliberalist ideology is having on schools, universities, including competition and marketisation of education. This has consequences for families as they struggle to easily facilitate conventional ideas of success. This is particularly problematic for subordinate groups, including minority ethnic groups and White working-class families whose knowledge is already incompatible with the British educational system (Apple 2014). The key views of neoliberalism-marketisation are associated with privatisation/pre-privatisation (Whitehead and Crawshaw 2012). As explained, in the wider context of this study, neoliberalism is central to education, the sociology of education and broader sociological debates (Davies and Bansel 2007; James et al. 2010; Reay 2012). One of the so called values of neoliberalism is that we live in a classless society, but in reality, economic inequality has reached a point not seen for almost a century (Savage 2015). My aim is to deliberately study middle-class students from a specific ethnic minority group, who have qualified for highly competitive courses and universities in this rising economic inequality climate. The term, 'disadvantaged students' is already a very common concept in educational research, so I think it is important to shift the focus to *advantaged* students to clarify how the effects of neoliberalism might work in that context.

Discourses of merit and individual responsibility imply that everyone has an equal starting point, and so in order to explore and review such discourses, it is important to acknowledge that some students *begin* from a position of advantage (Ingram 2017). Some students embody certain elements of the idealised neoliberal student (Molesworth et al. 2012). To understand how neoliberalism is embodied, it is useful to draw on Bourdieu's work on habitus, because a key feature of habitus, as we saw in chapter two, is that it is not simply internalised, but embodied, affecting the way individuals speak, dress, act, what interests them, what they consider valuable and what they consider worthless (Sayer 2005). The ideal neoliberal student will invest in themselves and their future. They are adept at being flexible and making calculated choices, and are individually responsible for the consequences of their choices, whether positive or otherwise (Molesworth et al. 2012). For instance, Mirowski (2013: 108) in Houghton (2015: 45) describes a neoliberal student thus:

...a neoliberal student is not simply an employee or student, but also an entrepreneur of their possibilities...provisionally buying the person they must soon become.

Therefore, for the enterprising student, almost every act becomes a saleable advantage in a competitive world. Neoliberal competition is increasingly enacted within HE not just between institutions, but also students. For example, the student who contributes to discussions at their university's law society may begin doing so simply because they enjoy contributing to interesting debates, however those intrinsic reasons are placed in the background when the student is encouraged to think about how they may stand out in a competitive job market. Suddenly debating skills become an investment, an opportunity to gain employable skills such as leadership, or to be offered a trainee solicitor role at a law firm. How students understand this competition will be affected by their individual social contexts (Abrahams 2016). Students' social worlds are varied, drawing on experiences from university and from their lives before they entered HE. Some students find that their previous experience and their university experiences are complementary, while for others the difference seems vast, as various studies have revealed (Reay et al. 2005; Reay et al. 2009; Bradley et al. 2013). Such studies (Reay et al. 2009; Ingram 2011; Abrahams 2016) suggest that students with a habitus more compliant to the expectations of HE enter it with an inherent advantage over those whose previous frame of reference has not encouraged study and contemplation.

4.2.3.1 Neoliberalism: the student as a consumer

The student as consumer model has become almost the key articulation of changes to British HE since the introduction of tuition fees (Saunders 2015). HE policy conceptualises students as consumers, influencing HE provision (Chalcraft et al. 2015). For instance, the Russell Group (2016) is a lobby group that represents 24 leading UK universities which are committed to maintaining some of the best research standards, an outstanding teaching and learning experience and first class links with business and the public sector. These universities are characterised by high entry grades and a focus on research led teaching, and all their members held university status prior to 1992. These factors combined giving them prestige within the HE sector in Britain. This prestige has concealed the Group's role as a lobbying organisation, and has presented it instead as exclusive, a stamp of quality within HE (Dorling 2017). This has been a remarkably successful approach, given many of its members do not fare particularly well in their league tables relative to their perceived status. Many of the Russell Group institutions began as either Victorian vocational, redbrick universities, or were established

following the 1963 Robbins Report, which called for fairer access to HE. But these institutions are now firmly located as elite institutions compared to the new post-1992 universities (Savage 2015). It is unsurprising that the increased competition in the HE sector has accentuated these hierarchies between institutions. Education in the UK has always been stratified across all levels; what has changed under the political description of neoliberalism is that this stratification has been actively encouraged through policy, in the name of increasing choice and facilitating social mobility. This latter aspect has been justified and allowed to go relatively unchallenged by the discourse of meritocracy (Littler 2013).

Ideas of meritocracy have always been problematic and have been co-opted by the idea of neoliberalism as a means of further inserting competitiveness between students and the guides of increasing social mobility. The discourse of rewarding merit allows prestigious universities to market themselves to the best and brightest students. Bourdieu (1991) would suggest that ideas of brightness in education are problematic, as they favour students whose habitus complements the expectations of the education system. This becomes particularly relevant for HE when examining how different institutions rank themselves through their entry grades. In asking for set grades, universities suggest there is equal access for equally bright students, but as evidence suggests, this refutes the fact that middle-class students have more material symbolic good at hand to help them achieve better grades, and this way have an inherent advantage. This body of literature on neoliberalism and prestigious minority ethnic students has not yet been contextualised within minority ethnic students who qualify for such universities in England. The prestige attached to high entry universities demonstrates itself in better employment prospects and earning potential for Russell Group graduates (de Vries 2014). An economically rational, ideal student should be aware of the difference in the status of universities, and the effect this would have on their own prospects.

Nevertheless, while it is assumed that students maintain some sense that there is a hierarchical system between universities in England, including understanding of the students different groups of universities may attract, there is nothing that tells us where the resources to tell British students of Indian background whom access prestigious universities comes from, and whether it's influenced by their broader construction of the meaning of success. I wonder whether they qualified for Russell Group universities because they consider the other universities worthless, or whether they consider certain degree courses or certain post-1992 universities worthless because they possess a different type of habitus. The current study is distinctive as the neoliberalist concerns specific to HE have not previously been applied to HE

students from non-White minority groups (Furlong 2013). There is also market competition between universities (Reay et al. 2011), which was promoted by previous Conservative governments (led by Margaret Thatcher and John Major) (Reay and Ball 1998; Davies and Bansel 2007; Whitehead and Crenshaw 2012). However, British parents do not have ultimate control over which universities their children attend, as in many cases the university admission boards choose which students/children they want to accept (Ball 2003). This elaborates the hierarchy and elitism within the state education system and maintains the social reproduction of class (Warde et al. 2009). This is a significant example of how neo-liberalisation affects schooling.

A further consideration in the context of Britain, is that, in a market, if you are neoliberal, you need to be able to assess the perceived value of products (Hill 2010). For instance, in England, there is now a demanding system for testing pupils (age 5-7, Key stage 1 and age 9-11, KS2). This determines children's baseline level. Children's exam results are used to create a league table of schools within each borough across England. This is unfortunate for parents who do not possess the cultural capital to access this information, or have the economic capital to afford better schools. Parents who have the economic means (cars, cost of transport) and the 'right' social capital (friends in their circle) to access schools that generate better results, are oblivious to the consequences of neoliberalism for other parents. Another aspect of class is difference in *attitude* (Vincent and Ball 2006). Evidence from the discipline of the sociology of education reveals a difference in attitude between middle-class parents and working-class parents (Ball 2002).

Sociologists of education report that middle-class White British parents value characteristics such as *individualism*, *success* and *career* more than parents of other ethnic origins (Ball 2003). The idea of individualism is widely rejected by British Indian parents, for whom traditional routes to social mobility may not be achieved if a child were to aspire to and build confidence in an occupation of *their* choice - without considering familial influence (Ghuman 2003; Khambhatia 2013). In the case of working-class parents other factors are prized, such as staying within the local community, and managing aspirations in favour of loyalty to previous generations, so that their children will be able to attend school with friends and people know (Reay et al. 2001). Acknowledging that individualism is a core belief of neoliberalism, and that collectivism and shared community values are a core belief of Indian and wider British Asian values, for me initiates a curiosity about the type of role habitus will play in Indian students

success in qualifying for Indian students whom qualify for and study at prestigious Russell Group universities which condone individualism.

4.2.4 Defining success in conventional terms

As outlined in the introduction and also the neoliberalist climate we considered above, a successful British person is one who supports the mechanisms of the status quo, and not an individual who simply participates in HE, or achieves the highest school grades. Specifically speaking, here, in the UK, success is a process which begins when GCSE examinations begin in year 11 at school. It is measured by the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A to C grades at GCSE or equivalent (GNVQ) (Rosenthal 2004). In England, GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education) and GNVQs (General National Vocational Qualification) are the examinations that pupils sit around the age of 16, their final year of compulsory education (Gorard 2000; Shaw et al. 2003). The best performing schools are ranked according to the percentages of pupils obtaining A star and C grades; although a numerical grading system 1-9 is now being used, with 9 being the highest and 1, the lowest. The results are published in the form of annual performance tables in the national press (West and Pennell 2000), and are consulted by parents wishing to access evidence of the achievements of pupils in their local secondary schools, to compare them with other schools in the area and in England generally (William and Bartholomew 2004). Thus, the emphasis of league tables is on measuring success based on the achievement of GCSE grades in four English, Maths and Science subjects, with 9 being the highest and 1 the lowest (Ireson et al. 2005). Additional evidence suggests that GCSEs are ultimately of insufficient value both to employers and pupils (Gillborn and Youdell 2002; Rollock et al. 2011). They are principally a tool by which pupils can access different post-compulsory routes of study; with those achieving good grades being able to access 2-year A-level courses (Leckie and Goldstein 2009). Once completed, A-level grades determine one's suitability to gain access to high-status universities. Some universities demand the highest possible grades in all science, mathematics and English subjects, a A-levels have been completed at selective schools (Boliver 2014).

According to Bourdieu's (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990), analysis of why educational differences endure, addressing GCSE questions in English, Maths and Science successfully is not a matter of ability, but a matter of students being rewarded for coming to school prepared with the 'right' cultural capital and habitus. Parents' misfortune or lack of the appropriate

cultural and social capital is reflected in how children are supported, enhanced and disadvantaged in comparison to children with access to the 'right' culture and habitus. College routes, vocational courses, apprenticeships, studying at polytechnic universities, a working-class parental and home background including non-professional and non-degree educated family backgrounds are disconnected from traditional ideas of success. Social reproduction of class thereby significantly complicates the process of social mobility for those from a non-middle-class background. British pupils and students of Indian origin are rarely, if ever, represented as unsuccessful due to their attitudes, behaviours and aspirations:

More than 75 per cent of British Indian students in England get five or more "good" GCSEs, compared to 61 per cent of White British students. Later, 14 per cent of British Indian students obtain three A or A grades or better at A-level. It is 10 per cent for White British students... Then 26 per cent of British Indian students in England go on to a top-flight university, compared with 15 per cent of their White British classmates. (Kirkup 2015, The Guardian)*

Fifty-five per cent of Chinese pupils and 31 per cent of Indian pupils who took GCSE maths last year achieved an A, according to figures from the Department for Children, Schools and Families. Among White British pupils, the figure was 16 per cent. For Black African pupils it was 14 per cent, for Pakistani 13 per cent and Black Caribbean 8 per cent...youngsters from Black African, Pakistani and Black Caribbean backgrounds again trail behind. (Clarke 2010, The Daily Mail)

Such understandings reproduce stereotypes regarding specific minority groups, overlooking the diversity within the Indian group for instance, assuming a universal definition and process of success that is informed by White British middle-class ideas of success. We can see how Indian (and Chinese groups) are considered and reproduced as the dominant group within the minority population, revealing the ethnic nature of social reproduction of class. My concern is that the criteria used to determine which minority ethnic groups are successful and which not, are not informed by an understanding of success that is inclusive of the Indian group.

4.2.5 How Bourdieu's concepts have been operationalised in empirical research discussing minority ethnic students

Any two individuals working in professional socio-economic occupations might perceive of, or have achieved success differently, due to their specific ethnic, religious, gender identity, or their parents differing socio-economic positions. In the eyes of a given objective structure, the *process (cultural capital, habitus and social capital)* by which a person has arrived at a professional occupation plays a more critical role in determining whether they can access

conventional success routes. In contemporary research, focus on success is no longer about identifying the differences between students from working-class White and middle-class White backgrounds, as it was in the 1960s (Thompson 1963) when there was a unified conceptualisation of poverty, and a durable sense of the working-class pride and values, of a distinctive elite group (Savage et al. 2013), and a combined middle-class. Today the presence of individuals with different ethnicities and from different races must be considered when mapping the class situation in British society (Archer and Francis 2005 2006; Rollock et al. 2011; Modood 2012; Basit and Tomlinson 2012). Bourdieu's theory offers a mechanism for helping us grasp the complexities of class dynamics in the broader field of education and employment. Gender, race and class are complicating factors when formulating class designations because they work differently to influence social mobility outcomes, especially when these three identities influence one another (Rothman 2015). Thus, social class, as defined by occupational category, only reveals a small fraction of the mechanisms whereby one's social class status is determined (Savage et al. 2013). The processes responsible for generating social reproduction of class can no longer be addressed without reference to other aspects of identity, such as gender, ethnicity, race or sexuality (Brah 1994; Patillo 2013).

Non-traditional students are typically defined as British students from ethnic minority groups, mature students and White British working class students (Bowl 2001; Archer and Hutchings 2005). Meanwhile, the success of non-traditional students (White working-class and minority ethnic students) is widely debated as an important strand informing the fabric of the British, HE system; as when students from these subordinate groups access HE, or manage to attain success, they do so by overcoming hurdles created by not having the 'right' type of cultural and social capital and habitus (such groups primarily include students from Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black families) (Archer and Hutchings 2000; Hutchings and Archer 2001; Read et al. 2003; Archer 2005). This area of debate is considered particularly complex in the case of minority ethnic students for whom cultural and social capital and habitus is influenced by their specific ethnic values (Modood 2012; Basit and Tomlinson 2012). Scholars concerned with how social capital works in the context of race and ethnicity, in relation to Black middle-class students and their parents, have observed that they rely heavily on Black middle-class networks instead of White middle and upper class networks (Vincent et al. 2012; Patillo 2013). The same tendency has been identified in research into individuals with British Chinese parents (Ran 2001; Archer and Francis 2005), and British Pakistani HE students (Shah et al. 2010; Bagguley and Hussain 2016), as well as White working class students (Ingram 2014). British students and parents from these groups also refute any association with middle-class identity according to British

White middle and upper class values, unless their specific ethnicity is credited with their middle-class destination.

Researchers have long been interested in developing theoretical explanations to clarify how parents and students from specific minority groups formulate middle-class aspirations. Drawing on cultural capital to study how British parents of Black Caribbean origin negotiate strategies to attain the best educational outcomes, including selective education, for their children, Rollock et al. (2013) propose the notion of 'moral capital' (p. 123). This refers to ethnic minority parents who do not wish to be associated with ideas of White middle-class success, as they feel that being middle-class in occupational terms does not equate to being fully middle-class, as this would also mean being White. This significantly complicates understanding of the concept of what 'being middle-class' means. Therefore, 'moral capital' applies to minority ethnic parents who have succeeded in achieving good educational outcomes, and subsequently drawn on their experiences and memories of having a working-class background to drive them to pursue middle-class aspirations. Drawing on theorisations of cultural and social capital, Modood (2012) rejects the influence of social class when explaining how middle-class aspirations are formed among working class minority ethnic students, particularly those from minority groups who reflect working class socio-economic profiles (British Pakistani and Bangladeshi students) and discuss 'ethnicity as social capital' as a key resource (p. 123). He argues that the ethnic specific nature of social capital is more useful when considering why British Asian Muslim students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, for instance, are keen to pursue HE, because students from specific ethnic minority backgrounds are supported by unique resources that differ in terms of the factors students who are advantaged might access. Focusing on working-class students, including those from minority ethnic groups who receive a working-class education illuminates the role of 'aspirational capital' solely relative to repetitive verbal encouragement and moral support to encourage children to pursue HE and to aspire to non-manual and routine occupations. The resources Bourdieu has heavily influenced these theoretical constructs offers to explain the unequal distribution of power. As such they focus on constructing a theoretical framework to explain how minority ethnic and working-class families/parents and pupils imagine and pursue HE routes that were traditionally inconceivable, due either to non-HE backgrounds in their country of origin, lack of familiarity with mechanisms for success in Western capitalist countries, or because they hold working-class values that are fundamentally incompatible with middle-class ideologies of success.

However, these theoretical models fail to explain why ethnic minority groups in western capitalist countries that access and are accepted at prestigious universities and on courses with competitive entry requirements, do so. Nor do they address the significance of acceptance at prestigious and difficult to enter universities, on courses demanding high entry requirements in core subjects, with possibly a background in private selective education (Bolliver 2013). Verbal encouragement (aspirational capital), the role of ethnicity (Indian) and memories of working-class experiences in the context of how their ancestors may have lived in India, do not explain this group of minority students' middle-class aspirations. The term aspiration/s in the context of former studies focuses on those minority and working-class students who readily imagine themselves in middle-class occupations (Basit and Tomlinson 2012). The students in the current study, however, do not align with these types of aspiration or working class backgrounds. Based on type of habitus, the middle-class cultural and social capital that Bourdieu asserts to be necessary to access such social spaces, they may have already experienced advantage and feel more advantaged than the minority ethnic subjects discussed by Rollock et al. (2013), Modood (2012) and Basit and Tomlinson (2012). Archer (2006) introduces the concept of 'diasporic habitus' to explain how UK born, educated pupils and parents of Chinese origin conceptualise strategies for success, and develop a drive to pursue middle-class aspirations that mesh with a Chinese-specific upbringing. It is useful to apply this theoretical concept to minorities known to be highly achieving educationally in terms of professional level employment. However, inherent within the concept of diasporic habitus, as it applies to Chinese students, is the knowledge that outstanding GCSE outcomes and methods of pursuing conventional success routes are erroneously constructed, because they try too hard to realise the dominant success ideology. The works of Rollock et al. (2011 2013), Modood (2012), and Basit and Tomlinson (2012), evaluating minority HE students' experiences of being Black, Pakistani or working-class are relevant to this literature review, because they share the same concern as my wider focus does; i.e. to enhance understanding of the processes detailing how different non-White middle-class students influence their own educational and occupational outcomes by constructing nuanced understandings concerning different forms of capital and habitus.

4.2.6 Summary of part one

This portion of the review provided an overview of key terms and concepts that combine to characterise the nature of the meaning of success as conventionally understood. It revealed

that ideas about success are informed by British White upper and middle-class (cultural and social markers of occupation and certain post compulsory routes) influences. This explains why some minority groups are failing and disadvantaged while others are conceived of as fitting in and successful. We can also see that specific A-level courses, university courses and high-status universities hold positions at the top end of the wider field, and so not every student attends a high-status university or pursues A-levels. According to nuanced understandings of these processes, meanings of success are lived and defined by ethnic and middle-class specific students; this provides a context in which to understand ethnic and non-White social reproductions of class. British students of Indian origin tend to access conventional success ideology in greater numbers than most other minority ethnic groups, as borne out by GCSE outcomes (Archer and Francis 2006a, 2006b), and by statistics showing admissions to traditional high-status universities (Noden et al. 2014). British students of middle-class background can be considered to exemplify *ethnic specific middle-class reproduction*, whereas Indians have (in statistical terms) become the dominant minority ethnic group in certain professions.

Applying social class reproduction to study the way the British Indian students who qualify for 'dominant' routes considered legitimate pathways to social mobility, will demonstrate that the binary between students' who pursue dominant HE routes is complex. There are British Indian students who can access middle class HE routes like law but are from working class backgrounds, similar to the British white 'converted working class students' discussed by Bowers-Brown's (2016). However, because the reasons for pursuing law for the least moderately advantaged students in my study relate to the way they considered their ethnicity as inferior for any other subject such as English, we must acknowledge the binary between working class backgrounds students pursuing dominant HE routes is not homogenous. Thus, the findings of the thesis will contribute to revealing differing binaries relative to securing jobs in the same occupational sector.

Having considered abstract aspects of the literature background, I now want to progress to discuss the empirical background of minority ethnic groups in Britain in relation to the onset of minority ethnic education in Britain and how differences between them began to emerge, before engaging with HE debates regarding minority ethnic students.

4.3 Part two: Background literature regarding British minority ethnic pupils' schooling

This section presents key debates and literature that acts as a kind of backdrop to explain how theoretical models of how ethnic hierarchies in Britain are created and maintained and allows the underlying relationship between minority ethnic groups and the UK educational context to be revealed prior to engaging with debates that are relevant to ethnic minority trends and inequalities at HE level. The debates considered in this section are relevant to minority ethnic groups engaged in compulsory education, and their post compulsory education options. These studies have influenced the majority of the research, focusing on minority ethnic students in HE.

4.3.1 Earlier research on minority ethnic pupils; Multi-ethnic education, The Swann and Rampton Report

As with many Western states, widespread public discussion about multi-culturalism, and the position and prospects of ethnic minorities only occurred in Britain in the post second world war era. This was largely triggered by postcolonial labour migration from the West Indies in the late 1940s, and subsequent migration from countries in South Asia (Modood and May 2001). The notion of multi-ethnic education evolved in the late 1970s to support assimilation and integration (Modood and Ackland 1999). This concept of a pluralist society, with competing, and distinct classes and ethnicities that differed from White British mainstream values mainly developed within racially mixed schools, being completely ignored in rural and White British inner-city schools (Modood and May 2001). Those groups of non-White children with immigrant parents, and sometimes different languages, had distinct racial and ethnic markers in terms of clothing and hairstyle, and were perceived as an alien population in British classrooms by the indigenous White British community (Flude and Hammer 1991). The ethnicity and culture of non-White British students was problematic in one way or another, irrespective of or not they performed well in GCSE examinations and beyond (i.e. professional employment, as is revisited later). Black and minority ethnic pupils were perceived as problematic, and their difficulties deemed abnormal to those in British schools, because these students displayed a rare set of cultural, physical and linguistic skills (Gillborn 2003).

Attempts to emphasise the educational importance and social significance of ethnic and cultural distinctions, above those of class, required that they institutionalise ethnic differences

as the foundation for making educational decisions and creating multi-ethnic education policies (Gillborn 2003). Acknowledging and incorporating minority ethnic groups' cultures and languages was arguably significant; it was intended to improve Black and minority ethnic children's low self-esteem, which was caused by living in a hostile and unfamiliar racial environment (Wright 1992; Gillborn 2003). British teachers continued to teach the same content and set the same classroom tasks regardless of the composition of their classes, and their children provided the multi-ethnic diversity. Content was White Euro-centric, and no attempt was made to integrate aspects of the culture and ethnic backgrounds of non-White children into lesson plans (Wright 1992 1993). Since the children were either shy and unwilling to share aspects of their culture that would be of interest, and/or wanted to avoid being labelled as strange, European culture dominated the British classroom (Foster 1990). Consequently, children adopted the English way of life to such an extent that teachers felt there was no reason to alter the curriculum (Tierney 1982; Milner 1983; Sarup 1986). However, a distinct finding with regard to this was that British pupils from, what were identified as 'Asian' backgrounds, adopted the conventional curriculum more successfully than those of Black origin, experiencing fewer obstacles with teachers in the classroom than Afro-Caribbean children (Gillborn and Mirza 2000; Mirza 2006).

Contemporary British society hosts a complex variety of social, racial and ethnic groups, although the British education system does not celebrate this. Consequently, it fails to prepare children to interact in a society that is multicultural (Foster 1990; Gillborn and Mirza 2000). Reay et al. (2007) found that middle-class White British parents consciously select racially, ethnically and socially mixed schools, so that their children can integrate with those from other cultures, to enable them to become rounded British citizens, whilst still safeguarding their middle-class identity. To date, overt forms of racism have had a negative impact on minority ethnic children's ability to perform well educationally, and therefore in the workplace after they finish education. A culturally sensitive curriculum, accounting for the cultures and values of specific ethnic groups, was considered the best way to challenge negative self-images, but also to reduce feelings of prejudice (from British White pupils), which were thought to derive from ignorance of other cultures (Connolly 2006). However, there is a question over whether or not all minority groups required or desired this, or whether they wanted to learn the strategies to conform to the curriculum as it was – biased towards an English middle-class value system (Gillborn 2003). I consider this, because the concept of multi-culturalism has received widespread support following an independent inquiry into the causes of underachievement in minority ethnic pupils, but which emphasised Black Caribbean pupils.

This ensured minority ethnic pupils and minority ethnic groups remained under close scrutiny (Tomlinson and Tones 1983; Troyna 1984), but which perhaps overlooked a focus on why other groups, e.g. Indians, were not emphasised as much of a so-called issue.

The Rampton and subsequent Swann Report (1985) were perhaps the most comprehensive reports providing evidence of the educational performance of pupils of British Asian and Black origin in the UK. The Swann Report rejected the notion of intelligence, which linked poor academic performance to genetic factors. It also acknowledged the need to develop positive relationships between teachers and pupils (Rampton 1981; Swann 1985). It considered racism as a significant factor impacting the schooling of minority pupils (Swann 1985). In considering whether minority pupils were able to realise their full potential, and whether their educational needs and aspirations were being met, Taylor and Hegarty (1985) conducted a systematic review of large and small-scale research studies over a period of 20 years. They revealed that in the absence of an efficient national policy regarding the education of minority ethnic children, several ad hoc and localised educational measures had led to British researchers making incomplete statements about the under-achievement of minority ethnic pupils. Another study, entitled, 'The School Effect' (1989) studied the effectiveness of multi-racial British comprehensive schools, questioning the assumption that minority ethnic groups under-achieve in the context of secondary schools, and that although starting behind White British children at the age of 11, 'Asian' and West Indian children catch up between the ages of 13 and 16. They claimed this had little to do with British school policies, the pupils' academic abilities or the work set, but were a result of parental strategies and concerns. However, other arguments about British non-White communities have rejected the idea of offering multi-cultural education, mainly because, to reflect such a diverse range of ethnicities would require the delivery of special courses by specialist teachers. For instance, in relation to Black pupils, Dhondy (1978) attacked multi-culturalism, observing that it has been taken over by the state, rendered respectable and consequently suspect. He argued that the idea of integrating Black cultures into the curriculum is problematic, because the mixture of colonial history, working-class culture and high culture is too diverse to align with the examination system.

In relation to British Asian ethnic groups, efforts to actively communicate with parents and ensure that translation services are in place to facilitate their understanding of the curriculum were stressed. The result of this is that only those British Asian parents educated in English in India, Pakistan or Bangladesh are able to understand the UK education system and curriculum even partially (Gillborn and Mirza 2000). English literature texts and lesson plans simply did

not consider Black, Indian or Chinese history, or stories emerging from those countries (Sullivan 2006). However, English poetry curriculums do include poetry that reflects different cultures and ethnicities, but identifying nuance and the complexity of prose, and the structure of stanzas in poetry, has been considered a strength of White middle-class students, more so than minority ethnic middle-class students, as they can struggle with this aspect of English (Wong 2015). Bourdieu considers this an important part of cultural competency that aids educational outcomes also dictating the type and volume of cultural capital a student possesses (De Graaf et al. 2000). For Black students in particular, political identity has been fundamental to their development and how they perceive their success, and this continues to be a recurring theme in contemporary research regarding British Black male pupils (Rollock et al. 2013). Commonly, pupils from multi-ethnic backgrounds and British Asian ethnic group families with low skills in the dominant language, can be conceived of as victims, as demonstrated through analysis of statistical trends and qualitative research conducted beyond the 2000s (e.g. Gillborn 2001; Gillborn and Mirza 2006; Stubbs 2012). However, cultural competency can be communicated if not necessarily internalised, through tutoring services, illuminating the significance of possessing knowledge of how to use economic capital to achieve the 'right' type of cultural capital. A high level of middle-class cultural capital is required to pass English examinations at GCSE level as they require sophisticated levels of analysis and understanding of fiction and non-fiction sources, including extracts taken from broadsheet newspapers and classical literature (Gregory 1994; Sullivan 2006). This type of cultural capital is not common among ethnic minority students, and little support is provided by the English education system to tackle this (Gillborn 2003). Based on Bourdieu's theory of social class reproduction, the issues that Black and parents from British Asian groups experienced in this earlier decade were the beginning of a new form of inequality that was to be witnessed in addition to the existing inequality between middle and working class White pupils. Given that British Asian children's barriers to learning (translation and lack of English fluency) differed from those of Black groups (culture identity conflict, but ability to speak English fluently), it is clear that reflecting the type of habitus that does not reflect the ancestral ethnic culture is important to gain educational qualifications. My research focus is broad enough to allow the influence of habitus and of cultural capital for Indian students to be revealed.

1979 saw the election of a Conservative Government under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, which led to the rejection of the recommendations of the Swann Report (which suggested that racism was widespread within British education) and the introduction of a National Curriculum, under the Education Reform Act of 1988. The main intention of this act

was to provide pupils with 'practical skills' to promote a fairer chance of achieving upward social mobility (Gillborn 1990). The Conservative Government refused to acknowledge the role and consequences of cultural difference, maintaining that treating all pupils the same was the best approach (Whitty and Menter 1988; Parekh 1989). The curriculum created administrative and governmental demands, which inherently supported the status quo, as there were limited resources directed towards planning to produce certain outcomes (Parekh 1989). This meant that British teachers increasingly applied disciplinary procedures, such as fixed term and permanent exclusions (permanent removal from school), to manage children displaying complex and difficult behaviour (the wrong type of habitus and embodied cultural capital) (Bourdieu 1990). Such students disturbed the flow of lessons and prevented teachers from meeting the targets imposed by the new curriculum/British Government (Le Metais 1992); that is, teachers took no responsibility for determining their own contribution to the disruption of teaching.

The Swann Committee recognised the central influence of racism on British educational institutions as morally wrong. Swann's approach to racial inequalities did not employ the historical and structural terminology associated with colonial and capitalist dimensions, but was described in terms of prejudice (Gillborn 1997; Docking 2018). Contradicting Rampton, the Swann Committee removed the responsibility for under-achievement from teachers, schools and LEAs (local education authorities), returning responsibility to parents. It applied racist stereotypes to explain the relatively better performance of, for instance, 'Asian' children, as 'Asian' pupils keep their heads down' and come from 'tight knit communities and families' and so behave better in school (Gillborn and Mirza 2000: 48). In contrast, the same tight knit family and community structure allegedly held Asian children back in the 1960s (Bhatti 1999), and is still considered a problem for Asian Chinese pupils (Archer et al. 2014).

'Education for Some' (1986), as shared in the Eggleston Report, provided a different perspective on the issues surrounding minority ethnic groups and education. Based on the educational and vocational experiences of 15-18-year-old minority ethnic pupils, it addressed the part played by schooling as a factor influencing the future education and employment of pupils from minority groups. Differently, this study did not address the failure of minority ethnic pupils, or of West Indian pupils, but instead drew attention to the failure of the British education system itself. Criticising British White teachers, headteachers, career advisers and those occupying decision-making roles in the education and associated fields. It revealed that even when students and teachers do not perceive of educational institutions as acting in a

racist manner, the outcome of certain forms of actions by institutions are racist. A key component of this research included an ethnographic study of two schools with minority ethnic populations comprising 25 percent and 60 percent. The report emphasised the resistance by some pupils to the racism engrained in institutions, which they reported to be no different from that identified in previous decades by Coard (1971) and Stone (1981). The 10 pages of recommendations made in, 'Education for Some' were addressed to schools and teachers, Further Education Institutions and LEAs. The recommendations for schools included careful planning of the curriculum for the 16 plus age group, to account for pupils' ambitions and motivations, and to evaluate procedures for allocation to sets and bands, as well as those for school exam entries, ensuring that individual pupils would be given adequate opportunities to secure GCSE qualifications at the highest level. The persistent inequalities and ongoing conflicting portrayal of specific ethnic minority groups in the British media to date shows this was a superficial and unrealised vision (Bloch and Solomos 2009).

Schools were asked to develop the capacities of minority group pupils, but not to 'ghettoise' them (Arora 2005: 33) by providing them with a soft option curriculum, which restricted them from accessing traditional routes to social mobility. Therefore, 'Education for Some' provided the empirical data that both Rampton and Swann had neglected. It demonstrated that racist attitudes and practices were considerably delaying the education of Afro-Caribbean pupils in particular. It also highlighted that year 9 is a key stage in secondary schooling when weaknesses and inequalities emerge, with minority ethnic pupils starting to go downhill in their work (Gillborn et al. 2012). Black pupils reportedly lose interest in their work because of teachers' attitudes, which results in their being allocated to the lowest bands/bottom sets (Cole 2004). Although Bourdieu does not make explicit reference to the role of ethnicity or race, his social class theory and conceptualisation of capital captures this principle (Vincent et al. 2013).

The School Effect (1989), a study of multi-racial comprehensives, challenged the assumption that minority ethnic groups underachieve in secondary schools due to a loss of interest. They noted that the decline in schoolwork in year nine is a consequence of the lack of attention to ethnic specific patterns within year groups in school policies. The study followed a group of 3000 children in 20 multi-racial comprehensive schools over a five year period, up to age 16. They concluded that measures that promote the interests of racial minorities in secondary schools are the same as those that raise the standards and goals of education more generally for all pupils. It did not single out racism as a factor in educational performance, mainly

because parents did not raise the issue of experiencing racism; however other research claims that racism is the key factor influencing minority ethnic students attainment: 'Racism in Schools' (Kelly and Cohn 1988), *Learning in Terror* (CRE 2008), *The Burnage Report* (Mac Donald et al. 1989) and *Bullying in Schools* (Tatum and Lane 1989). These studies demonstrated evidence of bullying and racial harassment in schools. The majority stated that children of Black origin are the most affected. The educational responses to research and policy reviews included significant developments to promote appropriate educational provision to suit Britain as a culturally plural society.

4.3.2 Inequalities between minority ethnic groups' attainment at KS3 and KS4

There are consistent unequal differences that relate to minority ethnic groups and how they perform by the time they attain GCSE level (Gillborn and Mirza 2000). During the 1970s and 1980s, British Asian pupils were leaving school with fewer qualifications or average grades that were lower than British White pupils, and this was especially true of 'South Asian' girls (Tomlinson 1983). However, in the 1990s, analyses of educational research into minority ethnic pupils discovered that specific Asian groups were excelling in terms of their educational outcomes (Gillborn and Mirza 2000 2001; Demack et al. 2000). Demack et al. (2000) showed that ethnic inequalities in GCSE performance, as measured in terms of passing five GCSE's with grades A to C, had expanded between 1998 and 1995, with Indian pupils amongst those who 'performed the best' and Bangladeshi and Pakistani students 'amongst the worst' (Demack et al. 2000: 54). Ethnic inequalities between British Asian groups persisted, even after gender and social class differences were considered (Demack et al. 2000; Gillborn and Mirza 2000). Outcomes at GCSE level changed significantly between 1986 and 1999, with the research showing that British female students of British origin performed best at this level by 1999, closely followed by Indian boys. Indian girls had improved the most since 1986, followed by Bangladeshi girls (Bhopal 1997; Mirza 2005; EOC 2006). Later analyses of Youth Cohort Studies (Gillborn and Mirza 2000; Sammons 1995; Blair et al. 1998; Connolly 2006; Rothon 2007) revealed that pupils of Indian and White British ethnicity were more likely to gain five higher GCSE grades nationally than those from Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean groups. Indians showed the highest level of improvement in attainment; enough to close the gap between themselves and pupils of British White ethnicity. Even when social class was controlled for, significant inequalities in attainment between minority groups were identified.

Although the attainment gap between Indians and British Whites may not be wide as regards GCSE attainment, research during the 1990s and subsequent decades (e.g. Strand 2011) has revealed that pupils from British Asian groups, including Indian pupils, experience prejudice at the hands of British teachers, and their home life is described as oppressive (Basit 1997; Bhatti 1999; Demack et al. 2000; Shain 2003; Archer and Francis 2006a, 2006b). Details of the performance of pupils of British Asian backgrounds at school have been the subject of controversy. Researchers have closely linked the struggle for attainment with their home life (*habitus*), raising concerns about the lack of opportunity afforded to such children to communicate in the dominant language. Evidence is provided that suggests unrealistic expectations are being placed upon children who lack the appropriate cultural capital to fulfil their aspirations, with the most affected group being Pakistanis and Bangladeshis (Tomlinson 1983; Haque 2000). The experiences of minority groups in the educational setting therefore differ from one another, with Indians having been highly advantaged compared to other minorities, even when class factors are controlled for, emphasising the importance of ethnic and class specific identity in the role of educational outcomes.

4.3.3 Minority ethnic pupils' attainment based on social class

Pupils from non-professional Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and British White working-class backgrounds have been found to be *as* successful as Black pupils from professional backgrounds. British scholars troubled by this phenomenon focused on the sociology of race and ethnicity, but particularly on race as it relates to education (Gillborn 2003; Modood 2004; Rollock et al. 2011; Basit and Tomlinson 2012). They argue that social class background does not influence or play the same role in facilitating social mobility for British pupils from Black backgrounds, arguing that middle-class aspirations appear to benefit some ethnicities but not others. Strand (2007 2008 2011) reported that Indian pupils lead in terms of attainment in GCSE outcomes. He also noted that social class explains the gap more fully than ethnicity and gender. Factors such as deprived housing and the low level of parents' education do affect attainment, but more disproportionately in the case of White British students. In relation to progress at secondary school, he learned that Indian pupils made more progress on average than White British children, as despite being behind at KS2 they had caught up to White British children by KS4. This meant that they were substantially ahead of Black and Bangladeshi pupils at KS4. Strand (2007 2008 2011) also found that Indians, Black Africans, Bangladeshis and Pakistanis, progress more in secondary school than White British children. The picture

that emerges suggests that if an individual is categorised as belonging to a certain ethnic minority group, such as Indian or Chinese then they are likely to do well, making better progress by the end of school than their peers from other ethnic minorities.

Archer and Francis (2006) consider the additional difficulty of finding a good indicator of social class when evaluating the educational experiences of ethnic minority pupils in the UK. A particular barrier is that their different trajectories and experiences often challenge traditional British categories of social class; hinting at a need for a nuanced analysis of minority ethnic students to develop clearer understandings of their class position (Archer and Francis 2006a, 2006b: 30). This is an important observation, because it demonstrates the value of identifying minority ethnic group populations by socio-economic status, relative to an understanding of family that is contextualised against the older generation's settlement processes and experiences. Thus, it is crucial to treat social class definitions of minority ethnic pupils with care and careful analysis (Gillborn 2012). Arguably it is an inevitable consequence of any hierarchal society that inequalities will persist. The power of more advantaged students, and certain British minority groups has enabled them to direct the process of change. Inequalities are thus locked in a vicious circle (Arora 2005). If you have power, then you will attempt to retain that, using whatever strategies are available to you.

The majority of the concerns and debates regarding initial studies into minority groups centred around the discourse of underachievement by minority groups, and the inconveniences different races and distinctive cultures have imposed upon the Government. The focus also addressed how specific minority communities' relationships, understanding and skillsets can be integrated to augment their children's learning, and how some ethnic minorities remain disadvantaged despite their social background. Gillborn and Mirza (2000) raised concerns about minority ethnic learners' efforts to succeed being undermined because their educational experience was viewed through the lens of under-achievement, resulting in their being labelled as underachieving by default. The most prominent discovery has been that minority ethnic pupils from Black and Muslim groups have less success as measured by educational outcomes than Indian and Chinese students. This is thought to be the result of British (predominantly White) teachers' intolerance, and the lesser value placed on certain races and faiths (Housee 2008). Teachers are responsible for the stereotypes that currently exist around Black boys, and hold limiting beliefs about the oppressive home lifestyle of British Asian girls (Tomlinson 1983; Basit 1997). The consequence of this is that British teachers'

judgements about which minority students to support and which ones to ignore are based on their perception of these children's cultural capital and habitus.

4.3.4 British minority ethnic pupils' behaviour and relationships with British teachers

Behaviour and how pupils consciously or subconsciously engage with teachers and with the rules of the classroom are core indicators of how teachers interact with the learners. They are also a reflection of their discipline at home, and are inspired by dominant white middle-class groups preferred habitus (Bourdieu 1990). Wright et al.'s (2000) analysis shows that certain minority groups are at a considerably greater risk of exclusion than others, a factor that then and corresponds with GCSE level attainment. Those at a disproportionate risk of exclusion are traditionally Afro-Caribbean boys, and the least likely to be excluded are those of Indian and Chinese origin (Hayden 1997, Parsons 1996, Gillborn and Gipps 1996). The picture is the same for both England and Scotland. Richardson (2005) and (Gillborn 2008) note that exclusions have become one of the most controversial areas of inequality as far as race, ethnicity and education are concerned. Further, that differences are widespread within certain groups, suggesting that the factors that facilitate educational attainment are based on readings and judgements of pupils and ethnic groups' habitus and cultural capital. The role of ethnic minority cultures and class and ethnic specific roles on the production of inequality in educational outcomes is not empirically known.

Writers in the 1980s and 1990s (Troyna 1985; Tomlinson and Wright 1993) were particularly concerned by findings suggesting West Indian/Afro-Caribbean (and other minority group) pupils' underachievement in the school system was becoming a given, in both policy makers and the public's minds, as well as in the minds of the pupils themselves. Consequently, this caused teachers and other commentators to hold low expectations of this group, resorting to stereotypical and racist views regarding these learners' academic abilities. Such views became engrained over time amongst educational institutions, as teachers assessed Black Afro-Caribbean children on the assumption that they would be problematic, simply based on how they sat or made eye contact. Meanwhile, students who reflect an embodied cultural capital that differs from that of Black pupils, i.e. one that presents as shy, passive, or over-worked, are also read as problematic (Archer and Francis 2005 2006). Mirza (2006) commented on the fact that all educationalists in academia, as well as policymakers are familiar with the ethnic minority bar chart that shows each ethnic group lined up in order of achievement (at GCSE

level as outlined above) in school, with Chinese and Indian pupils at the head of the line, followed by White, and then Bangladeshi, Pakistani, African and finally, Afro-Caribbean pupils. These give the impression that minority pupils from certain non-native ethnic groups must have greater or lesser academic ability, although really it is a question of who has the 'right' disposition, the 'right' way of walking, talking, looking, standing and the correct pace and vocabulary when engaging with teachers. Indians and Chinese students are closer to exhibiting correct style.

It is seen as a good thing, with Indian and Chinese (the so-called 'model minorities') at the top and Africans and Caribbean's (the so-called failing minorities) at the bottom. But what does this tell us? Some are gifted, others are not? Are Asians docile and hardworking (like the colonies of the past)? Do Blacks have a chip on their shoulder and rebel (like uppity slaves of the past)? What do you think? What do we think? What do teachers think? (Mirza 2006: 151)

Mirza here provides interesting links to answer her questions regarding current (majority White) discourses about minority ethnic groups of pupils, and British colonial history: questions which return us to the topic of immigration and the historical relationship that individual minority groups have with the British economy and institutions. She questions whether academics and educational policy inform past stereotypes and understandings about former colonial subjects to guide or challenge thinking about current British subjects. Ultimately, she notes there is a scarcity of minority groups perceived as close to the dominant group.

4.3.5 Qualitative research on British minority ethnic pupils/groups

Much of the research on minority ethnic pupils of compulsory school age use school test result data to formulate understandings about individual minority ethnic groups. In the 1980s and 1990s qualitative research studies began to appear, addressing, processes within classrooms and the experiences of ethnic minority pupils in English schools. Gillborn situates this work in relation to statistical work conducted in the 1970s 1980s and 1990s claiming that in such work, data on ethnic minority pupils was,

...often aggregated in ways that lost sight of a significant historical, cultural and political and social differences resulting in only a 'partial and possibly misleading picture. (Gillborn 1995: 43)

Troyna insisted that it was important to “dive beneath the surface and consider the relationship between ethnicity and who goes where and who gets what” (Troyna 1991b: 363). However, the relationship between certain ethnic groups who are represented in top jobs attaining high rates of employment can be defined as overdue, awaiting a ‘beneath the surface’ approach, as allocated to Black and Muslim British Asian pupils.

Qualitative research that emerged during the 1980s looked at complex processes, because setting bands and tiers for examinations based on teachers’ sole judgement were key to creating educational and (therefore social mobility) hierarchies, and in maintaining social class differentiation between minority groups (Cline et al. 2002). Research by Stone (1981), Green (1985), Short (1985), and Dhondy et al. (1985) demonstrates that qualitative research on Afro-Caribbean pupils dominated in-depth research during the 1980s, with ‘Asian’ pupils, and particularly Muslim girls (Haw et al. 1998; Shain 2000) becoming the focus of qualitative research during the majority of the 1990s and early 2000s (Stopes-Roe and Cochrane 1990; Ghuman 1994; Shain 2000; Haque and Bell 2000; Bhatti 2002; Anwar 2002; Abbas 2004). Green (1985) considered the social relationship between the Black, ‘Asian’ and European average children, and their teachers, studying the teachers’ interactions with each child. His analysis showed that teachers grouped ‘Asian’ and European pupils together and West Indian children separately. This in itself is potentially a measure of which groups reflected dominant forms of cultural capital, as this allowed the teacher to perceive students’ habitus. European boys were the group most favoured by teachers, and West Indian boys the least favoured. Researchers stated that as ‘Asian’ children are not White but somewhere in the middle, certain aspects of their cultural capital and habitus enabled them to access learning and support. West Indian boys received notably less individual attention from their teachers than other children, as well as less praise, and more orders. Green (1985) assessed and recorded classroom interactions using Flanders’ (1970) systematic observation schedule; therefore, it was not a qualitative study, but rather focused on six specific classrooms, defined as qualitative in this context. Similarly, in Wright et al.’s (1998) study of four inner city primary schools, subtle, but inevitable differences in the way White teachers treated learners of different ethnicities within the classroom were noted. As reported in Green’s (1985) study, West Indian/Afro-Caribbean pupils were considered by their teachers to be the most disruptive group, and as such were frequently criticised as the most overtly controlled group within the school. They were also more likely than any of the other groups to be subjected to the school’s exclusion/sanction system. However, in this qualitative study, similar inequalities were also identified amongst ‘Asian’ pupils. For instance, Wright observed:

The Asian children (particularly the younger children) were perceived as a problem to teachers because of their limited cognitive skills, poor English language and their inability to socialise within the classroom. However, at the same time Asian children were well-disciplined and hard-working, and would immediately feel shame if they were given any caution for their behaviour. (Wright 1998: 57)

Despite Asian pupils doing better in terms of building relationships with teachers and learning, they were the group deemed most likely to experience frequent ethnic related harassment from their White peers, and were also subjected to the most covert forms of racism in school. This was worsened by a 'child culture' within the school, in which British White children marked themselves off from non-White ethnic groups, constructing a hierarchical status from which Asian children were excluded and official school responses to this were unclear. Wright also found that Afro-Caribbean pupils had the highest average reading scores, yet still completed compulsory schooling with the lowest number of passes.

'Asian' children were supported more by their teachers, as their quietness and language difficulties were perceived as requiring attention, although they required less effort in terms of disciplining. For example, Mac and Ghail (1988) presented four case studies, based on ethnographic research that examined the experiences of Afro-Caribbean and 'Asian' pupils in a sixth form college and an inner-city comprehensive school, as well as teachers and pupils' views of one another and the survival strategies each adopted. Gillborn (1990) provided a detailed account of life in a large inner city comprehensive over a period of two years based on interviews and classroom observations. He revealed a complex situation in which Afro-Caribbean and 'Asian' pupils experienced school in different ways. His analysis concluded that ethnicity played a key role in how teachers use cultural stereotypes about Asian and Black ethnic groups. For instance, he discovered that teachers perceived Asian children as hardworking, well-disciplined and from stable home backgrounds, and felt that Black Afro-Caribbean pupils home backgrounds were not reflected in their treatment.

Asian pupils, Gillborn claimed, shared a similar relationship with teachers, which transcended judgements about ability. Confirming Wright's claims, Gillborn (1990) observed that teacher judgments were the 'prime obstacle' to academic success for Afro-Caribbean pupils and the key factor in Asian children doing better (Gillborn 1990: 100). A significant limitation on earlier research in this area was the homogenisation of Asian groups, which produced simplistic understandings of the historical context.

4.3.6 Minority pupils and language skills

Although Asian pupils displayed dominant forms of cultural capital as a result of their habitus, with regard to learning and ability in comparison to West Indian/Caribbean pupils, they struggled to learn and understand the English language, as their mother tongue was Hindi, Punjabi or Gujraati (Mullard 1982; Tomlinson and Tomes 1983; Bhatti 2002). As English was not these individuals' mother tongue, and because many earlier immigrant Asian parents struggled to speak English, the children did not use English at home, and their parents were unable to help them explore the meaning of the texts in English (Bhopal 1997; Bhatti 2002; Chand 2005). From the perspective of teachers, Afro-Caribbean children displayed 'wrong behaviours', although their English was similar to that of native British White pupils (Gillborn 2005). Troyna's (1991b) study examining the experiences of 'South Asian pupils' in secondary schools was not a qualitative study, but her analysis of statistical trends revealed evidence that seemed relevant to what qualitative research was revealing at the time. While both Gillborn (2005) and Wright (1985) noted that Afro-Caribbean pupils were assigned to low ability sets based on 'teacher judgements', despite their ability, Troyna found South Asian/Asian pupils were less likely to be placed in high sets for English, despite having been assessed as 'good' by their junior schoolteachers (Troyna 1991b). Meanwhile, 91 percent of White pupils assessed as 'good' by their junior schoolteachers were placed in a high English set, only 82 percent of South Asian pupils were; and while 67 percent of British pupils who were assessed as 'weak' managed to gain a place in a middle set in English, only 20 percent of Asian pupils managed this.

A similar picture emerged for Maths. Troyna learned that minority pupils were not moved up into higher sets at the end of their third year, even if they did well in their exams (now year 9 when pupils are aged between 13 and 14). Thus, the allocation of pupils to sets on entry to school at age 11 had implications for their access to higher sets before the end of compulsory schooling. Troyna (1991b), like many other scholars concluded "the ethnicity of the pupils played a mediating part in structuring their opportunities for placement in the higher ability sets" (371). The above studies make a case for considering racism, and ethnic specific racism between minority groups as significant factors when considering and explaining the educational performance of different ethnic minority groups.

4.3.7 Qualitative research on minority pupils' construction of ethnicity and gender identity construction

Researchers started to look at the very complex and subtle ways that pupils drew on discourses of 'race' when developing their identities, particularly how at the ages of five and six they had reworked their knowledge of 'race', gender and sexuality to rationalise their experiences. Connolly (2006) for instance explored how knowledge, perceptions, and expectations from both inside and outside schools create teacher-child identities in the classroom. In relation to South Asian boys, Connolly reported that teacher discourses in school (praising South Asian boys for hard work, for being quiet, describing them as 'little' and needing to be looked after) positioned them as 'effeminate'. Bhatti (1999) examined 'Asian' pupils' experiences of their urban secondary schools, and set these alongside their teachers' and parents' views and experiences, suggesting that race/ethnicity, social class, and gender operated to produce and experience marginality for the Asian pupils in her study defined as Punjabi and Gujraati. She also found that White teachers believe Asian children work harder than expected, but that Asian children are often isolated as learners because their parents order them to study, and try to provide them with the 'right' cultural capital in an objectified form, but often have little understanding of how to support their learning. The relationship between middle-class, ethnic specific non-White race middle-class family backgrounds may differ.

These studies, however, altered the focus of research into ethnic minority achievements by concentrating on test results and comparing the different attainment rates of different groups, to clarify the subtle and complex processes that inform 'race', ethnicity and gender within classrooms. Furthermore, the schools themselves affected the educational opportunities of minority ethnic pupils. Some researchers aimed to move beyond the dichotomy of 'within school' or 'outside school' explanations to illustrate how both settings connect and inform one another. Although able to contribute to the debate about Afro-Caribbean boys' underachievement by describing where Afro-Caribbean boys' behaviour came from, Connolly's insights into the positioning of South Asian boys and girls in school did not offer any insights into why some South Asian groups of pupils (i.e. Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils) underachieve in school, although Archer et al. (2003) amongst others (Walters 2003 2007; Din and Cullingford 2006) did. For example, Archer (2003) explored the complex interplay between race/ethnicity, Muslim faith beliefs and social class, as lived by Muslim Pakistani and Bangladeshi boys. The research revealed that religious identity is paramount, and that it

influences teachers' experiences in school, as well as children's beliefs about teachers and Western education more generally. Case study research by Walters (2003) explored factors that limit Bangladeshi pupils from becoming successful learners, finding that Asian pupils of Bangladeshi origin were unable to complete work, or complete work correctly, or 'pay attention' to teacher talk due to ongoing struggles they experienced grasping English concepts and writing in English. They were defined as EAL students, but their learning needs were not considered, rather personality, ethnicity, and a deficit version of habitus, were assumed to impact their learning. Walters' (2003) findings demonstrated how expectations and assumptions about male and female South Asian pupils' behaviours, affect the support the children receive and how they are identified. Nevertheless, Gillborn (1990) notes that teacher stereotypes of South Asian cultures do not disadvantage Asian pupils in school in the way that those accorded to Afro-Caribbean pupils do. Bangladeshi pupils' academic performance, unlike that of Indian students (Mirza 2006) was not compared with that of White learners, or with the more highly achieving minority groups, because they were viewed by their teachers as too different, much as Afro-Caribbean students were. Thus, the research illustrates a context in which Indian students are not as disadvantaged by teachers; although they are criticised for being too shy, quiet, too obedient or too focused on their studies. Crucially, their presence in the classroom has not been perceived as offensive or over-bearing, and therefore they are considered ideal minority students.

4.3.8 British ethnic minority parents

The importance of creating a good relationship between home and school, and the support of parents in their children's learning, has been a regular feature of much education policy and discussion (www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/parentalinvolvement). Parents are referred to as the child's first teachers, and they take on the role of preparing and resourcing the child to learn. By the late 1990s, how best to involve parents in the education of their children was high on the political agenda (Whalley et al. 2001: 6). For this reason, some researchers have examined the role and experiences of minority ethnic parents in their children's learning in school. Apparently, parents of children from certain minority ethnic groups have been found to be more forceful about making subject choices *on behalf* of their children. Additionally, they typically dissociate social activities and extra-curricular activities from academic education. This is because they view them as a distraction to securing outstanding passes in the core subjects that are necessary for participation in HE, and to access traditional social mobility

destinations (Bhachu and Gibson 1986; Lightbody et al. 1997; Abbas 2003; Modood 2004; Strand 2008; Butler and Hamnett 2011).

Other researchers have found that working-class British Asian parents feel unable to approach or communicate with their children's schoolteachers, observing that teachers often fail to produce a detailed account of their children's attainment or to explain how they might improve their attainment. For instance, Blackledge (2000), in his study of British Asian - Bangladeshi mothers and their relationship with their children's schools, found that parents reported experiencing difficulties communicating with their children's teachers despite their wish to find out more about how to help their children develop their English literacy and about their progress in school. His examination of teachers' accounts of collaborating with parents revealed that assumptions about Bangladeshi women and homes positioned mothers as lacking the cultural resources required to contribute to their children's learning, thereby barring them from any meaningful partnership work in schools. Moreover, Crozier and Davies (2006) considered how Bangladeshi parents' traditions, cultures and values corresponded to or conflicted with those of their children's schools. They explored the understandings that Pakistani and Bangladeshi-heritage parents had of the English education system, investigating how they saw their role in their children's education, and reporting that Bangladeshi parents and many Pakistani parents had little knowledge of the English education system, and so were rarely concerned about their children. Furthermore, that they avoided visiting their children's schools due to cultural, language and practical constraints. This was particularly the case for parents of secondary school pupils. Pakistani parents expressed concerns to interviewers about teachers' low expectations of their children, but they all valued education. Many Bangladeshi parents reported that they felt unable to support their children with homework (Crozier and Davies 2006). Children frequently protected their parents from potential embarrassment and insult by creating barriers to their parents' involvement in their school life. Similarly, Haque's (1999) interview based study of Bangladeshi pupils' achievements in school, reported that Bangladeshi secondary school pupils received very little parental help at home, and instead relied on older siblings who already knew and understood the British system (Haque 1999). The pupils claimed that they were expected to help at home with housework (girls) or with looking after their younger brothers and sisters (both boys and girls). Nevertheless, the Centre for Bangladeshi Studies found a distinctive (class specific) population within the Bangladeshi ethnicity group, comprising educationally successful young Bangladeshis. It found that parents in this case played an important role in the young people's educational success, not necessarily through helping with school work, but through allowing their children to get on with their

school work at home and not expecting them to assist with household chores (the girls) or to take a part time job to support the family financially (the boys) (Centre for Bangladeshi Studies 2001). This can be explained by Basit's (2012) concept of aspirational capital (the power of verbal encouragement and resources that non-degree educated minority parents draw on). One clear finding from the Centre for Bangladeshi Studies research was that all the young people interviewed had experienced racism as part of their journey to conventional social mobility routes in the form of name calling, and sometimes in the form of physical assault, during their school careers.

An important observation about minority ethnic groups, with regard to their relationship to British education, was the narrow purpose they believed education to serve. They argued that minority ethnic groups post-compulsory choices, especially those of British Asian and Black groups, place little emphasis on the broader benefits of education. This can help them to become widely read or knowledgeable, as particular sub-sections of British White middle-class parents take an interest in them.

4.3.9 British minority group pupils' post-compulsory routes

Before people are able to access HE, and particularly high status universities, and medicine and law degree courses, they require the requisite qualifications to gain access (Bolliver 2013); e.g. they must gain two or more A-levels and five or more good GCSEs (grade C or better). In terms of which ethnic minorities secure places in conventional post compulsory routes, the picture is the same as that described above in reference to KS3 and KS4 attainment (Archer 2002; Bhattacharyya et al. 2003; Connor et al. 2003, Connor and Britain 2004; Thomas 2005).

The same ethnic groups that return the best GCSE results also secure places to study for A-levels, without resitting GCSE's in competitive subjects (Maths and Science); i.e. Indians and Chinese (Strand 2011). In particular, boys and girls of Indian origin have the most impressive percentages in terms of passing two or more A-levels and obtaining the highest average grades; only one third of Pakistani and Bangladeshi (women) have two or more A-levels, whilst only one quarter of Pakistani and Bangladeshi boys gain these qualifications (Dale et al. 2002; Beck and Fuller 2006; Bagguley and Hussain 2007). This appears to be a key factor explaining both the lower rates of application and admission to university, and the concentration of British Asian students in new universities (Shiner and Modood 2002). An aspect that needs to

be remembered when considering the Indian minority ethnic group's (or indeed any minority ethnic group) restricted access to conventional post compulsory routes is that this is often the result of parental unwillingness to initiate contact with teachers to discuss specific ways in which their children can improve their examination grades. Therefore, a lack of dominant cultural awareness on the part of the school, or of alternative career/subject routes is influenced by deeper structural inequalities (Bolliver 2011 2016). Ethnicity and its relationship to social class plays a role in the educational outcomes of students, informing the persistent inequalities in educational outcomes that are apparent among attendees at high status universities.

Research has evaluated minority and ethnic students' participation and achievement within the further education sector, including those who typically participate in HE by means of further education courses, such as BTEC courses or higher level NVQs (Gorard and Smith 2007). Over the past two decades, the Indians and Chinese have persistently been found to have the lowest representation in such courses (Leathwood and Hutchings 2003). Morrison (2010) draws upon three case studies describing three young people (two of Indian ethnic origin, and one from a working-class background (non-professional and non-managerial employment backgrounds)) studying for an Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education in travel and tourism at a large college in an ethnically diverse area of the West Midlands. The analysis showed the post compulsory route helped individuals to secure the best forms of non-manual employment, and also carried a low risk of redundancy. They also considered a degree in business studies to be one of the best choices. Employment in professional jobs was not considered to be as fundamental as securing a full-time job in a stable business sector (retail). This was fuelled by the hardships that Indian students' parents experienced as working-class level, and the experiences of immigrant Indian parents in Britain, who were unable to capitalise their qualifications from India to access dominant forms of cultural and social capital.

The main objective of the students in Morrison's study was to arrive at a better destination in the occupational hierarchy than their parents. They set realistic aspirations for themselves, although their parents did not understand why they did not pursue higher professional roles. The desire for stability in professional or managerial employment, and the assumption of direct correspondence between HE credentials, and occupational success is a characteristic of what Brown and Scase (1994) identified as the traditional bureaucratic' orientation towards work and careers; a trait which they found to be most common among working-class and minority ethnic groups. However, further education is the least popular route into HE for the

Indian ethnic group, because the majority of students from this group enter by means of conventional post compulsory route (A-levels) (Richardson 2015). This finding overlooks possible discrepancies affecting Indians from certain class specific populations. Further education courses have been taken up by Indians, whose parents have either not been aware of, or could not afford dominant forms of cultural capital, as they possess low levels of social capital (Bagguley and Hussain 2007; Bhopal 2010). This reflects most upon Bangladeshi and Pakistani parents, who lean heavily on the advice of their own community (Modood 2004; Shah et al. 2012). Gillborn and Gipps (1996), when conducting their OFSTED review of the achievements of ethnic minority learners, found that within each ethnic group, the higher the learner's social class background, the higher their rate of participation in conventional post compulsory routes. They noted that participation in the first three years of post-compulsory education was higher for all major ethnic minority groups when compared to young White people, regardless of social class and gender. However, there were significant differences between the chief minority groups, with the most obvious being between the Indian group and others. At the age of 18, students from the British Asian category, were the most highly qualified group, due to their tendency to follow traditional academic courses, and Afro-Caribbean learners were the most likely to pursue vocational courses at college. Bhattacharya et al.'s (2003) and Rodeiro's (2009) analysis of ONS data also found Black, and students from the British Asian ethnic category, to be more likely than British White learners to enrol on vocational courses. These courses are typically for those who failed to achieve the highest grades at GCSE, and so they continue to be associated with students from subordinate groups and classes. The media only tends to celebrate A-level results of ethnic groups who outperform in these routes (e.g. The Telegraph, 17th August 2017, Anon).

In the Scottish education context too, Indian, Chinese and those from mixed heritage are more likely to go into HE than White British pupils (Scottish Government 2009), and in Northern Ireland minority ethnic pupils (50 percent) are more likely to go into HE than White pupils (42.8 percent) (Department of Education 2010). Nevertheless, Drew (1995) stated that when attainment is considered, ethnic origin is the single most important factor determining a pupil's chances of continuing to A-level. However, some groups of ethnic learners improve their qualifications over time, gaining GCSEs later their British White peers. A study based on statistics from a Youth Cohort Study confirmed many of the above findings. It evaluated the same pupil cohort Strand targeted in his 2007 2008 study (Burgess et al. 2008). For instance, once the young people had reached the age of 18, two years after the end of their compulsory education, many had gone on to gain five or more A star to C grade or equivalent (level 2) or

two A-levels (level 3) and were participating in FE, HE, work or employment (NEET). Key findings regarding level 3 qualifications, at age 18 are that at age 16 Indian (68 percent) and mixed Asians (70 percent), as well as British home learners, are more likely to have A-level qualifications than other British Asian and Black groups. Indians (19 percent) were the least likely of the British Asian and Black groups to enter HE through college vocational routes or direct employment. The findings regarding post compulsory education direct our attention to the fact that it takes some ethnic groups longer on average, and others less time, to attain important qualifications and to question class specific learners from minority groups. What emerges from this is that ethnic minority groups of learners are far more likely to stay on in post compulsory education than young White British people, and that certain minorities are particularly popular amongst conventional post compulsory routes, although influences from the perspectives of minority groups are missing from the literature.

4.3.10 NEET (not in employment, education or training)

In the UK, NEET status varies according to ethnicity, age, religion, and GCSE grades. Among the main ethnic minority groups, including for Muslims, the proportion of NEETs increases across age cohorts (Bynner and Parsons 2002). This can be interpreted to mean that as young people move on from GCSE's to A-levels, and from A-levels to studying for a degree, they do not connect with opportunities in the same way as White British students from professional socio-economic groups do (Lewis 2002; Greenbank 2006). In 2015, after completing Key Stage 4 (at age 16), it is youths from Roma (24 percent), and Black Caribbean (8 percent) backgrounds who are the most likely not to enter education, employment or training. Chinese and Indians are the least likely (1 and 2 percent respectively). At Key Stage 5/A-levels (age 18 or 19) this remains the case, with figures of 17 and 11 percent for Roma and Black Caribbean's. Those with mixed ethnicity, and Pakistanis, both have a higher than average rate at 10 percent. The White British rate is 9 percent, whilst for Indians it is 6.8 percent and for Chinese its 3 percent (Sunak and Rajeswaran 2014). Class inequalities in the context of British education therefore do not rest entirely on a single conceptualisation of class, but arise in the context of a class profile in which minority groups are considered together, thereby overlooking the experiences of middle-class individuals from ethnic groups.

4.3.11 Summary of part two

I have considered the key concerns and arguments that inform the foundation and background against which to understand and consider the nature of diversity of HE research pertaining to minority ethnic students as a single population (i.e. combining students from Indian and Chinese, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black groups), and individual class populations within these groups. The review that follows considers the abstract nature and core facets of British HE; in particular what and who it serves in reality 'on paper' (theory); the courses/subjects that minorities apply for, the universities they access, and the implications for different aspects of their future; i.e. employment, poverty and economic profiles, which illuminate the depth and breadth of this knowledge.

4.4 Part three: British HE

4.4.1 Defining British HE

The traditional route to employment has been via paper qualifications (Archer et al. 2003). However, the modern route includes integration within a network of individuals willing to cooperate, educate, and train new staff members (Brockmann et al. 2010; Clarke and Winch 2012). The White Paper, 'Learning to Succeed' (1999) completely reformed the management and delivery of post-16 education and training to include the promotion of employability by developing skills that are in demand (Bynner 2001). More current and recent developments have included concepts such as Inclusive Learning, Lifelong Learning and Widening Participation (Nasir and Saxe 2003; Gorard et al. 2008; Chowdry et al. 2013). All of these are closely linked to the equality agenda, although this link is not made explicit, rather it remains implicit. However, the majority of the frameworks used to assess quality management and quality enhancements in Further and HE do not include a direct reference to issues of equality, nor do they require institutions to demonstrate a commitment to equity (Callendar 2003). HE has been experiencing a profound change since the founding of polytechnics in the 1960s (Basit and Tomlinson 2012). The sections that follow examine existing HE studies that relate to minority groups.

4.4.2 HE policy in the UK: tuition fees

In recent decades, a number of countries have introduced tuition fees for HE on the grounds of efficiency and equity (Woodhall 2002). Tuition fees were introduced to the UK in 1998, with different arrangements applicable under the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Prior to this time students did not pay for HE courses, instead receiving a means-tested grant. In October 2017, the Government confirmed that tuition fees would remain capped at £9250 for the 2018 entry cycle. Students whose parents earn more than around £30,000 per annum are liable for the full amount. Some exemptions are given to students whose parents earn between approximately £21,000 and £30,000 per annum, and students whose parents earn less than £21,000 per annum are exempt from fees. In 2016, maintenance grants were replaced with loans for full time students in England. The student finance package currently includes a tuition fee loan and a maintenance loan. Students can still apply for grants if they are eligible for certain benefits; for example, if they are disabled, or need help with childcare costs (Furey et al. 2014).

However, it is worth emphasising that the real value of student grants was being steadily corroded well before their abolition in the late 1990s. Researchers have examined issues relating to education and social mobility as it links to HE funding (Saunders 1997; Gayle et al. 2003). Gayle et al. (2003) found no evidence of an increasing socio-economic gap in HE participation in their analysis of the 1969 and 1970 cohort, age 23 students in the Youth Cohort Study (a major programme of longitudinal research designed to monitor the behaviour and decision of representative samples of 16-19 year olds). This led them to acknowledge that quantitative comparisons over time using their results are not straightforward. In 2004, the UK parliament narrowly passed legislation to make further changes to HE funding. Variable tuition fees were proposed, with the result that fees now vary both according to course and by institution. However, arguably the most important feature of the White Paper proposals, from the perspective of extending access, was that fees should be repaid after graduation via an income reliant loan system, with grants to be restored to low-income students (Lunt 2008; Barr 2012). Despite the increase in tuition fees, the participation of British Asian and Black groups in HE remains relatively stable, with the ethnic hierarchies found at KS3 and KS4 reproduced in the context of degree outcomes. The rise in tuition fees is a concern on terms of closing gaps in educational attainment, and with regard to social mobility (Lunt 2008). It also means students from minority groups, or working-class groups, are likely to experience more obstacles and a more arduous route to social mobility, because paying loans back is a

significant responsibility that they may choose not to take on. The requirement to repay loans might also be influencing degree choice, with an increase in minority students pursuing degree courses that are likely to lead to well-paying jobs. HE is a key sub-field preserving inequality, and this explains why exploring success in different HE contexts is relevant to any study about what constitutes success in Western capitalist countries.

4.4.3 Research on British minority ethnic groups' participation in HE

All minority groups aim to secure institutionalised forms of cultural capital in one way or another, but the value and benefits of differing forms have been found to vary in terms of employment. Since the 1980s, analyses of official sources (e.g. Vellins 1982; Craft and Craft 1983; Vellins and Ballard 1985; Modood 1991; Taylor 1993; Battu and Sloane 2004; Broecke and Nicholls 2006; Dex and Lindley 2007; Lindley 2009; Richardson 2010; Broecke 2012; HEFCE 2014 2015/16; HESA 2013/14; Noden et al. 2014; HESA 2013/14; HEFCE 2016) have reported that, as a group, British Indian first degree students have the highest rates of participation in British HE (among the minorities), as well as at high-status universities (Taylor 1993; Modood and Shiner 1994; Owen et al. 2000; Blackstone 2001; Connor et al. 2003; Connor et al. 2004; Modood 2004; Shiner and Modood 2004; Bolliver 2013 2016; Noden et al. 2014; Richardson 2015; Alexander and Arday 2015; Gorard 2017). The empirical findings offer us an understanding of what is happening *structurally* (Bourdieu 1989), i.e. in the field of HE. Thus, research has shown over the two decades that nearly all ethnic minority groups manifest a strong drive to attain university qualifications. Both sexes in all minority groups are likely to participate in post compulsory education. This is true for Caribbean males and Bangladeshi females, two groups about whom at various times anxiety has been raised concerning their educational participation and performance. Some groups, such as Indians, and Chinese are much more likely to participate, and at high status universities (Noden et al. 2014), introducing the issue of inequality of opportunity. Gorard et al. (2006) maintained that inequalities in (British) HE participation are apparent across a person's lifetime, and vary significantly relative to ethnicity. This has led to an interest in finding ways of increasing the participation of ethnic minority groups in higher and further education (Gorard and Torgerson 2012). Interestingly, some ethnic minorities outperform British White students as measured by participation in HE, achieving an equal (or a better) share of the places available, although so far disproportionately at less prestigious institutions. In 2004, Connor and colleagues estimated that of the 2001-2002 cohort, the participation rate for UK HE was 38 percent for

White British students, but 56 percent for those from ethnic minorities. Moreover, the proportion of UK domiciled students from ethnic minorities ranged from 14 percent in 2003-2004 to 18.4 percent in 2010-11 and continues to grow (Equality Challenge Unit 2012 2016/17).

While there may be particular ethnic sub-groups with lower participation rates, it is blatantly incorrect to claim that people from ethnic minorities are under-represented in UK HE in general. More fundamentally, it is ethically dubious to promote the idea of widening participation for such groups if they cannot be guaranteed equitable outcomes.

Proportionately, at least twice as many 18-24-year-old Africans, Chinese, Other Asians and Indians have been entering university than Whites over the last two decades (including in the two most competitive subjects: medicine and law) (Modood and Shiner 1994, Modood et al. 1997; Bolliver 2014), signifying remarkable achievements and examples of middle-class forms of minority success, unanticipated by race experts (Modood and Acland 1998). However, it is important to note that these achievements were made in spite of racism and ethnic discrimination, and should be viewed with an appreciation of these individuals' complex experiences and multi-faceted backgrounds (Modood 2002; Bhopal and Preston 2011 2012). Research focused on understanding the unequal social mobility between social minority and between race groups continues to demonstrate that racism influences the progression of minority ethnic and non-White students and academics (Bhopal 2011). However, this does not explain why the degree outcomes of specific minority groups differ from one another.

4.4.4 Research on degree attainment, outcomes and minority ethnic groups

Over the last 20 years it has become apparent that students from ethnic minorities in Britain are less likely to obtain better degree outcomes (with first or upper second-class honours) than British White students from working-class backgrounds. However, discrepancies in degree attainment between ethnic minority groups are best understood in the context of the type of university that specific minority groups/backgrounds gain a particular degree outcome from (Noden et al. 2014). The value of a 2.1 degree from a former polytechnic university does not equate to a 2.1 degree from a high-status university, underscoring the importance of individual context. Research on attainment for minority ethnic groups has shown that the group of interest in this thesis, i.e. Indians, have on average higher chances of securing a 2.1 or a first than students from other ethnic backgrounds. Research to date suggests that trends in

degree attainment between minority ethnic groups have remained stable. For example, Connor et al. (1996) surveyed students who had graduated from four UK universities 1993; 65 percent were White students who had obtained a 2.1 or first class degree, but only 39 percent of non-White students had obtained such outcomes. Subsequently, this pattern was confirmed in datasets comprising UK domiciled graduates from all UK institutions (Owens et al. 2000: 1997-1998 1998-1999; Naylor and Smith 2004: 1997-1998' Connor et al. 2004: 2001-2002; Leslie 2005: 1998-2000; Elias et al. 2005: 1996-1997 and 2001 - 2002; Richardson 2008a: 2004-2005). Subsets from these studies were analysed by Broecke and Nicholls (2007) and Fielding et al. (2008), who reported that the probability of a non-White student obtaining a good degree is half that of a White student obtaining a good degree. Similar odds ratios occur in terms of the attainment of first-class honours. This pattern has been broadly consistent over time (Richardson 2008b). The attainment gap is greater for Black students than 'Asian' students; and greater in Asian students than students from Chinese, Mixed or Other minority groups (Richardson 2015). The trend for 'Asian' and Black students to be less likely to obtain good degrees than White students is more notable in mature students than in 18/19-year-old students, effects women more than men, and some subjects more than others (Richardson 2015).

The attainment gap as encountered by British Asian students is greatest for those who take combined degrees, and less significant for those who take medicine and dentistry (Leslie 2005; Connor et al. 2004; Modood 2006). The attainment gap for Black students is highest among those who take combined degrees and less significant for those who study agriculture. The attainment gap for all ethnic minority students is greater at the post-1992 universities than the attainment gap amongst the minority population who study at Russell Group universities, which is inevitably linked to outcomes at A-level in conventional subjects, and for those studying at selective sixth forms (Bolliver 2011 2013). Demographic and course-related variables can be seen to account for half the attainment gap as it affects ethnic minority students. If entry qualifications denote academic ability, then about half the attainment gap is attributable to differences in academic ability (Swail 2003; Berry and Loke 2011; Bolliver 2016). Nevertheless, the remainder of the attainment gap is not attributable to differences in academic ability. Typically, ethnic minority students are awarded poorer degrees for reasons that have nothing to do with their academic ability, and are also being rejected from universities which increases the value of their degrees (Kao and Thompson 2003).

For instance, it has been noted that the poor attainment of certain British Asian and Black students is rooted within their negative experiences in HE in comparison to British White students (SurrIDGE 2008). In a National Student Survey, SurrIDGE (2008) found that White students rated their programmes more favourably than 'British Asian' or Asian or Black students did. However, the effects were small and only achieve statistical significance due to the very large sample size. Findings are also inconsistent from year to year, but Connor (et al. 2004) interviewed full time students at 29 British universities and concluded there was no consistent message from student surveys suggesting any group of minority students felt more disadvantaged than their White peers. The literature shows that degrees are not awarded as a result of authentic academic ability to non-White students, but on race specific demographic factors such as ethnicity and socio-economic background, and on specific relationships of these demographic factors with one another.

4.4.5 Research on type of university and minority ethnic groups

Connected to the problem of inequalities in degree attainment and outcomes between groups, Indian and Chinese students have the highest representation at high status universities (Noden et al. 2014). There is also evidence of a significantly higher stay on rate in post compulsory education among Black and minority ethnic groups compared to their White British peers (Modood 1993 2006; Shiner and Modood 2002; Richardson 2008 2015; Singh 2011). Participation rates in HE are determined by factors such as the value of the education in personal terms, and in terms of the social status that an HE qualification bestows upon individuals within their own community (Ball et al. 2002). It is also determined by social class, the nature of the schooling received, and benefits anticipated from HE in the labour market (Tomlinson 1997; Strand 2011). For minority ethnic groups in Britain, discrimination in admissions and assessment procedures can limit their chances of benefiting from the opportunities available (Singh 1990; Modood 2004; Pathak 2006). In addition to the general ethos of the institution, the nature of the curriculum can also deter some sections of minority communities from entering HE.

The participation of British Asians (Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis) in full time HE, at high status universities, is greater than that of Black and White working-class British White groups (Modood 2012). In 1992, 11 percent of home students from minority ethnic groups entered universities (greater than their proportion in the total population) (Modood 2004).

There were more Indians and students from British Asian backgrounds, than from Black African and Caribbean groups. The CRE survey (Ranger 1988) of minority ethnic trainee teachers revealed that overall, students from minority ethnic groups comprised only 2.6 percent of all students in the relevant groups/courses, compared with an estimated 5.3 percent in the entire age group. The results also showed a significant difference in respect of the type of courses undertaken by students of African and Caribbean, and students of British Asian origin. Over two thirds (67 percent) of British Asian students were taking PGCE courses, compared with half (48 percent) of African and Caribbean students.

There was also a marked variation in terms of representation of students from minority ethnic groups at an institutional level (Ranger 1988). About one third of PGCE courses, and a little over two fifths of Bachelor of Education degree courses did not represent students from minority ethnic groups. Evidence from an intensive ethnographic and statistical surveys of two multiracial comprehensive schools (Wright 1986) showed interactions between teachers and students of African and Caribbean ethnicity was frequently characterised by confrontation and conflict. A Minority Ethnic Groups and HE (PSI 1994) study collated statistical analysis from more than 500,000 applicants to UCAS and PCAS in 1992 for admissions to Universities and Polytechnics. This found that British students of Pakistani or Caribbean origin have a relatively poor chance of gaining entrance to 'old' universities (high status), even after their A-level results are considered. In the academic year 2007/2008, minority ethnic students comprised 17.2 percent of all students in HE (ECU 2009: 43), a proportion which exceeds their presence overall in the 18-24-year-old population in the UK. In the UK, the British Indian group had the highest rate of representation in 2007-2008 (at 3.3 percent), closely followed by the Black or Black British African group (3.2 percent) (Archer and Francis 2005). The most under-represented groups in terms of proportions within the wider population were the British Bangladeshi group (at 0.6 percent) against 1 percent in the UK population), and the British Pakistani group (at 1.9 percent against 2.2 percent in the UK population) (ECU 2009). However, the figures for particular groups mask considerable intragroup differences. Among Black Caribbean groups, participation rates for women have been considerably higher (at 52 percent) than for males (at 33 percent). This situation is reversed within the Bangladeshi group, for whom male participation stands at 43 percent whereas for females it is 33 percent (Connor et al. 2004: 43).

Further findings by Connor et al. (2004) include that Black and minority ethnic students represent 22 percent of all undergraduates at post-1992 universities, compared with just 15

percent at high status universities. These patterns do, however, vary considerably across minority groups. Students from British Indian and Chinese families were apparently more likely to gain admission to an 'old' university than White British students with similar A-level outcomes. Moreover, evidence suggests that relative disadvantage within the UK hierarchy of HE institutions fuels labour market disadvantages, with consequent negative implications for individuals' future earning power (Chevalier and Conlon 2003). Gorard et al. (2017) reported that British undergraduates from 'ethnic minorities' are now up to 3 percent more likely to be studying at England's 'most selective' universities than they were six years ago, with those from the British Indian group having the 'most notable' access in this regard. Discussions of knowledge pertaining to British minority groups almost always include the work of Connor et al. (2003), and Connor et al. (2004). They explored the factors that influence 1300 British 'minority ethnic undergraduates' to participate in HE, their lower degree outcomes, and the subjects they chose. Of the 1300 considered, 700 were defined as 'British Asian'. Their research did not reveal the proportions of the three British Asian groups among the 700 'British Asian' undergraduates and so their study only offers us a simplistic picture. Although Connor et al. (2004) and Connor et al. (2003) did attempt to clarify and probe responses gained from the survey by conducting telephone interviews, there are no details in their studies explaining how these interviews were analysed.

Research has also consistently found that British Indian men (32 percent) are among those most likely to have a degree, after British Chinese men (35 percent). Similarly, 23 percent of British Indian women hold degrees, with British Chinese women outperforming them at 35 percent (ONS 2007). British Indian boys and girls are more likely than boys and girls from other British Asian groups to achieve five or more high GCSE pass grades (above grade C) (ONS 2002; Rothon 2007). British Indian women are historically known to be more likely to have a degree than all other British women of their age (Modood 1993; 1997; Bhopal 1997; Bagguley and Hussain 2007). The British Indian group consistently maintain the highest representation in the most competitive courses (medicine/dentistry and pharmacy degrees) (HESA 2015/16) at Russell Group universities (HEFCE 2015/16); and when securing a first or 2.1, in comparison to other British Asian groups. Certain sections of the British Indian group and of British Indian undergraduates explain these figures. A study by Owen et al. (2003) reviewed statistical data and found all the minority groups comparatively well represented in HE, but identified variations in the levels of participation amongst ethnic groups, and particularly evidence of under-participation amongst Bangladeshi women, when compared to Bangladeshi men.

4.4.6 Minority ethnic students, age and mode of study

Numerous studies have observed considerable variation between the ages at which minority ethnic group students start HE degrees and their mode of study; most of these seem to relate to gender (Owen et al. 2003; Connor et al. 2004; Broecke and Nicholls 2006; Richardson 2008). For instance, Owen et. al (2003) also discovered that students of Black origin are more likely than those from other groups to be mature students, whereas students of British Asian ethnic origin are often significantly younger than students from other groups; particularly those from the Indian group, and women from the Pakistani group entering HE after following conventional post compulsory routes (A-levels). However, Owen et al. (2003) and others (Connor et al. 2004; Broecke and Nicholls 2006; Richardson 2008) learned that students of British Asian origin (especially Indians) often enter university at a significantly younger age (18 or 19), than those from Black groups, and typically study for full time courses. Black students were also revealed to be more likely to study part time, perhaps explaining their lower participation rates at high status universities (Owen et al. 2003). They found that students from Chinese and Asian Other backgrounds have higher rates of postgraduate study.

The relatively higher rates of participation compared with those of White students were achieved from a relatively disadvantaged class position. As Connor (2004: 35) observed, minority ethnic students in HE are more likely to be children of parents from lower socio-economic classes, but while minority ethnic students do come from professional backgrounds, they are often of Indian and Chinese origin (Modood 2006; Platt 2007). Understanding of the participation of minority ethnic groups in British HE is a complex one, in which class, race, gender and ethnicity all feature, making for complex patterns of access and attainment within the sector. We consider the role of subjects in relation to minority ethnic groups separately below.

4.4.7 Research on minority ethnic groups and associated subjects

4.4.7.1 Theoretical perspectives on school subjects

Scholars who used Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital questioned why some students are drawn to maths and sciences while others are drawn to English (Van de Werfhorst 2001;

Sullivan 2003). Children are likely to choose subjects that reflect their parents' occupations and interests (Sullivan 2001 2003). The impact of attaining grades in specific subjects at school influences the subjects that are chosen at degree level and associated occupational interests (Sullivan 2003 2006). Previous research suggests that students from cultured homes (defined as homes, reading and other forms of cultural participation are encouraged) have a comparative advantage in terms of literacy, the arts, and humanities (Uerz et al. 1999; Sullivan 2003). Cultural participation may also lead these students to enjoy the arts, humanities and English literature and poetry more than science and mathematical subjects, because the former subjects are directly linked with leisure interests that reflect those of the dominant middle-classes (British White middle-class) (Sullivan 2006; Rollock et al. 2013).

British Asian and Chinese minorities, being more successful in mathematical and scientific vocational subjects, might indicate the wider implications of having the 'right' cultural capital to enter schools. That is, Indian students might engage more and revise more for maths and science subjects (Rothon 2007; Rodeiro 2009) because they find it harder to compete in the arts and humanities than in science and maths subjects, where they do not face the same comparative disadvantage. This implies a narrow or partial conceptualisation of cultural capital, or one that disregards forms of cultural capital that reflect a culture inclined towards other revision habits. A lack of uptake or contribution towards English literature should not suggest an absence of the 'right' cultural capital. Good grades in maths and science require that learners value and respect books and the idea of studying in general. This is a factor contributing towards the construction of cultural capital (Sullivan 2006). Some researchers claim that the effects of home life have an impact on progress in English, while progress in science results from school teaching (Mortimore et al. 1988; Manski 1993). This implies that students leading in maths and sciences do so, because of the role of their science and maths teachers, rather than their ethnic specific habitus (Archer and Francis 2006a, 2006b) or any particular learning environment at home. Leisure interests or home interests are associated with maths or other topics, but the impact of outstanding school grades in other subjects should also be considered as associated with coming from cultured homes (Sullivan 2003). Being accepted at high status universities on to competitive degree courses at universities requires the attainment of the highest grades in *all* core subjects; this means that even if students are pursuing science based academic subjects, they still need to gain a certain level of passes in English to do so, whether or not their family's interests are based in the domain of literature. This is the result of the 'right' type of cultural capital and habitus (Archer 2008).

4.4.7.2 Subjects at school level

Minorities prefer science, maths and business subjects and seek to translate competency in these into the highest professional and paid jobs in Western capitalist countries (Ghuman 2003). Research conducted to date has suggested that there may be an important link between the early formation of aspirations for science-based careers and the need to study science and science related subjects at degree level (Tai et al. 2006; Archer and DeWitt 2015). For instance, Tai et al. (2006) point to how early science career aspirations are a better predictor of studying science than achievement. Elias et al. (2006) found that links between attitudes/aspirations and progression to study science at higher levels does not necessarily translate in a straightforward manner for all ethnic groups, particularly in the case of students of Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin in the UK.

Since the 1980s, research has suggested that there may be something distinctive about the attitudes and engagement of students from 'South Asian' (Abbas 2004) backgrounds in British schools. This research focused on a so-called 'Asian' effect, describing the particularly high levels of interest and achievement in science recorded amongst 'Asian' students. For instance, in her analysis of data from a Girls into Science and Technology project, Kelly (1988) highlighted the consistently positive scores of 'Asian boys' and their apparent liking for science and greater interest in physics than other pupils, which correlates with higher scores in science examinations in year 11. This is impressive, as Asian boys have less science knowledge than White boys when they enter secondary school. They seem to be more 'successful learners' of 'science' in schools than other pupils' (Kelly 1988: 124). In more recent years, a considerable body of work has emerged suggesting analysis conducted using the category 'Asian' is imprecise, as it masks differences within and between ethnic and religious groups classified as 'Asian' (Archer 2003; Gillborn 1990; Abbas 2004). In particular,

Striking differences have been identified between the engagement and achievement of those students of Indian (and Chinese) heritage (who tend to be higher achieving within the UK education system and those of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage (who tend to be low achieving). (Archer and DeWitt 2015: 113)

Indeed, such work has not only identified differences in attainment in scientific and mathematic subjects, but also in the ways in which these groups of students are discursively positioned within educational discourse as (British Indian) 'achievers' versus (predominantly Muslim) British Pakistani and Bangladeshi 'believers' (Gillborn 1990), who are viewed as

'failures' (Abbas 2004), or 'problems' (Archer 2003). This pattern of differential achievement and post-16 progression between British Indian and other Asian students continues to be confirmed in national examination results (Department for Children, Schools and Families 2008), and is similarly reflected by differential rates of attribution from science's 'leaky pipeline' (Jones and Elias 2005). As Jones and Elias (2005) have discussed, minority ethnic students of Indian (and Chinese) heritage achieve more highly and are more likely to progress to study science at higher levels than those of Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage. The interesting point to note here, however, is that whilst all minority ethnic groups generally report having excellent educational (often science based) aspirations, the link between aspirations and attainment/participation in science only manifests for those of Indian and Chinese backgrounds. In contrast, Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage pupils appear to experience what Mickleson (1990) calls the 'attitude-achievement' paradox. That is, they appear to express very high aspirations (especially compared to White, majority ethnic students), but their rates of attainment and progress do not match them. This finding marks a departure from the more general relationship between aspirations and attainment/progression, as described by Tai et al. (2006).

To illustrate the above point, we can view Strand and Winston's (2008) study of educational aspirations amongst inner city pupils in England, which showed that 90 per cent of British Pakistani pupils aspired to post-compulsory education. However, government statistics (DCSF 2008), indicate that only 40 percent of British Pakistani pupils achieved the benchmarked standard in GCSE's, highlighting a potential gap between aspirations and achievement. Moreover, DeWitt et al. (2011) drew on survey data from the SPIRES project to map out issues pertaining to the development of children's science aspirations over time. This project was a 5-year study conducted in the UK using longitudinal data to examine the factors shaping the educational and science choices and aspirations of children aged between 10 and 14. The study used 60 interviews and 9000 questionnaires to explore how educational and occupational aspirations arise, as well as how those aspirations are influenced by peers, parents and experiences of school science, and how they are shaped by gender, class and ethnicity. Their data pointed to a number of important themes, extending what was already known about minority ethnic occupational aspirations. The most important finding perhaps was that Indian and Chinese students are more likely to want a job in science and /or to become a doctor, dentist, pharmacist or something associated with a professional science subject than White (and Black) students, and that pupils from all British Asian and Chinese backgrounds consider science fundamental to securing a job in a respected profession. They

also found that the parents of Indians and Chinese parents are more positively involved in their children's schooling, and not just specific aspects of school life, e.g. choosing subjects; and so although Pakistani and Bangladeshi students do aspire to science, they are less well-supported to access positive experiences in practice; i.e. with science grades. Their findings also identified that some minority ethnic families, particularly those from Black and Muslim groups, are disadvantaged in terms of being able to translate their involvement into symbolic capital; i.e. into a form that can operate effectively within the sphere of mainstream education to promote traditional and conventional forms of success.

Similarly, Wong (2015) argued that fewer minority ethnic pupils continue with science into post compulsory education, and little is known about how certain minorities relate to or identify with science and the occupations that science leads to. For his research, he conducted 46 individual interviews and 22 hours of classroom observations with British students (aged 11-15) from Black Caribbean, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Indian, and Chinese ethnic backgrounds, identifying five types of science participation, and learning that minority ethnic students participate in science in diverse ways. The results showed that students from Indian and Chinese background pursued medicine, dentistry and pharmacy occupations, as the issue of social and cultural capital possibly curtails the range of career paths available. This might correspond to the suggestion that minority ethnic families tend to encourage their children to follow known 'safe' routes to employment, which for 'South Asians' include medicine, dentistry, pharmacy and law (Lightbody et al. 1997; Osler 1999). This approach could then be seen to function as a pragmatic strategy to promote success within an environment wrought with multiple inequalities.

Earlier, in-depth work into British Asian students' occupational aspirations was conducted by Thornley and Siann (1991), Penn and Scattergood (1992) Lightbody et al. (1997) and Osler (1999). Osler (1999) compared the occupational choices of 158 'Asian' students to those of White British students. The researchers also identified which factors 'Asians' who are born in England associate with ideal career and occupational interests. Lightbody et al.'s (1997) study compared the factors British 'Asian' students consider when making occupational choices with those of British Whites. Both studies (Lightbody et al. 1997; Osler 1999) arrived at similar conclusions, i.e. that White British students were motivated by individuality, job satisfaction, freedom of choice, and interest, whereas 'Asian' students chose *respectable jobs* or those with *high status*, e.g. doctor, dentist or accountant. From the perspective of this thesis, the key finding here was the emphasis on *respectable* and *high-status* jobs among 'Asians'. An

important limitation of these studies was that they did not detail the context in which 'respectable jobs' and 'status' were mentioned by 'Asian' students. Furthermore, anthropological research, which explored (British) Indian migrant parents' education strategies (Bhachu and Gibson 1985 1988) associated these factors with success, on behalf of school age British Indian children, as the introduction chapter indicated. Anthropological research with British-born Indian school age pupils (Ghuman 1993 1997) also reported that respectable jobs, such as doctor, dentist, pharmacist and solicitor or lawyer, were preferred by British Indian first-generation parents, because they are associated with upward social mobility and convey status (symbolic capital) in the eyes of other British Indian parents.

4.4.7.3 Minority students' subject choice at degree level

Compared with the overall cohort of UK students, British Asians, especially those of Indian origin, have a history of being over-represented in the field of medicine and related subjects at the older universities. Meanwhile, they are under-represented in the Arts, languages, social sciences, education and teaching and the humanities (Vellins 1982; Bolliver 2013 2014; Richardson 2008 2015). Earlier studies have shown that gender and class specific British Asian groups (e.g. working-class Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian females) like to apply for education, teaching and social science courses and business studies at newer universities (Bagguley and Hussain 2007; Bhopal 2010; Khambhatia 2013). However, most students from this Indian ethnic group have, over the past two decades, maintained higher acceptance rates on medicine/dentistry, pharmacy, and law courses (e.g. Modood 1991; Taylor 1993; Field and Lennox 1996; McManus et al. 1995 1996; Bhattacharya 2003; Connor et al. 2003; Connor et al. 2004; Bagguley and Hussain 2007; Modood 1991; Owen et al. 2000; Modood and Shiner 2002; Broecke and Nicolls 2007; Fielding et al. 2008; Yorke and Longden 2008; Richardson 2008; Bolliver 2013).

Furthermore, UK doctors from an ethnic minority comprise 35 percent of hospital doctors, of which 22 per cent are of Indian origin (Knapton 2016). Britain relies heavily on doctors of Indian origin in the NHS, especially those directly from India (Knapton 2016; OECD 2015). There is an underlying role of habitus and of symbolic capital specific to the Indian group, which sets them somewhat apart from other British Asian populations and other professional Black populations. Some scholars (e.g. Owen et al. 2000; Modood and Shiner 2002; Bhattacharya 2003; Connor et al. 2003; Connor et al. 2004; Bagguley and Hussain 2007;

Broecke and Nicolls 2007; Yates and James 2007; Richardson 2008 2012) suggest that it is not healthy for any ethnic group to be over or under-represented in any particular discipline, as this creates competition and struggle in the labour market (Pathak 2000; Bagguley and Hussain 2007), entrenching inequalities associated with social mobility within the minority population.

Some researchers have argued that the high representation of Indian students on medical degree courses might simply be because they have the requisite academic ability to complete medicine degrees. Even if this were the case, it still would not explain why they are more successful at accessing conventional routes to social mobility than other British Asian middle-class populations. McManus et al. (2006) analysed two large databases (YCS and UCAS) to understand the behaviours of minority ethnic and White British undergraduates. They reported that British undergraduates from minority ethnic groups underperformed in medicine, dentistry, and medicine-related subjects, after commencing their course. This corresponds to findings recorded in other studies (Bhattacharya and Ison 2003; Leslie 2005; Richardson 2008 2010 2012; Modood 2012). Additionally, Leslie (2005) argues that medicine/dentistry, and medicine associated subjects (as well as certain humanities subjects such as law), are too 'challenging' for minority ethnic groups to study at degree level, because they have too many commitments beyond the classroom, such as working part-time at weekends and in the evenings to fund their studies, resulting in poorer degree outcomes relative to White British students. Moreover, Smith and White (2011) reported the findings of an Economic and Social Research Council funded study, which had investigated the patterns of participation in UK HE science degree courses over two decades. Using data about applications and acceptances to university, they described trends in the proportions of candidates who choose to study science and science related degree programmes. They observed that in terms of age, occupational background and ethnic group, patterns of participation in science subjects have remained stable. Where inequalities do exist, they have been largely unaffected by policies aimed at widening access. They also found that the characteristics of those students who study the broad range of science and science related subjects resemble those of the wider student population. However, differences do occur in the type of science degree chosen, with entrants from traditional backgrounds more likely to study for more prestigious science subjects. This is exemplified in the physical sciences, which remain largely the preserve of White, traditional age students from professional and managerial backgrounds, and the fact that, as already discussed, minority ethnic groups, and students from Indian and Chinese background are most prevalent in the science subjects. The Office for Fair Access 2013, and

Beard (2013) raised concerns that British first degree students from the Indian group apply for 'demanding' and 'highly competitive' degree courses (which they define as medicine and medicine related) regardless of whether doing so is appropriate for them, and that this is something schools should consider when designing career advice policies to cater to minority groups more specifically. Based on analysis of UCAS admission data, Beard (2013) suggests policymakers should be informed principally by students' voices and experiences, rather than scholars' interpretations of tables and figures.

Previous research (Leslie 2005; Woolf et al. 2008b; Dillon 2010) has suggested that Indian, Chinese and minority ethnic communities more generally, should trust the opportunities afforded them in the medicine and law professions more cautiously, given that the labour market is highly competitive, and the values of degrees are not homogenous. However, such studies tend to overlook the reality that particular populations within the minority population are repeatedly successful in these fields. Cooke et al. (2003) explored the nature of racism in the medical profession, as experienced by UK graduates, to consider strategies. They conducted a survey of 476 doctors from minority ethnic backgrounds, asking them questions based on the extent to which they felt their ethnicity was a factor in their progression within the medicine field. Four focus groups were conducted with 33 doctors to examine the issues that arose from the survey in greater detail. The study revealed that in the population of UK graduates, racism is manifest in terms of access to training and careers, and in norms of acceptable behaviour. Cooke et al. (2003) also found that the system is sustained by the reluctance of trainees to complain, and the widely held view that problems encountered by trainees from an ethnic minority are caused by factors such as 'not understanding English culture'.

4.4.7.4 LLB Law and minority ethnic groups

Another degree course that has proven distinctly popular among minority ethnic groups is Law. LLB law is the only non-medicine competitive degree course to which all British Asian groups apply every academic year, in larger numbers than White British students and Black students (Ahmad and Modood 2003; Connor et al. 2003; Connor et al. 2004; Bagguley and Hussain 2007; Davies 2004; Noden et al. 2014; Bolliver 2014; Smith and White 2015). The legal profession requires a good command of English, to enable practitioners to think, speak and write simultaneously in both technical and vernacular English, and to be able to convert

one to the other with ease and credibility. This credibility, rather than the skill itself, is a subjective and tactical element of assessment, both for recruitment into courses and entry into the profession. This area of judgement is prone to personal, social and cultural assumptions, which are typically unknown to the candidate. Davies (2004) studied the perceptions of British first-degree minority undergraduate LLB law students in relation to their participation within the labour market. She attempted to explore why law is a popular subject amongst this group. Her findings revealed that religious identity influences British Asian undergraduates selection of LLB Law, because it enables them to feel a sense of belonging, and is more comfortable for them than working in occupations that other British Asian groups are well established in. Again, however, her study treats all British Asian groups as one. Law is a subject that has been reported to be popular for all British Asian groups for decades (Modood 1993; Modood and Shiner 2002; Modood 2006; Richardson 2008); it is also a subject that British Indian parents have mentioned in occupational terms as highly respected, but which has not been examined in terms of why it continues to be the only popular non-medicine related subject.

A specific pattern has been identified amongst women of British Asian origin. So far, researchers (Ahmad et al. 2001; Ahmad and Modood 2003; Hussain and Bagguley 2007; Bagguley and Hussain 2007; Bhopal 2010 2011; Khambhatia and Bhopal 2015) have observed five subject areas which British Asian women applicants disproportionately apply to gain acceptance on degree courses relative to White women applicants: medicine and dentistry subjects allied to medicine, mathematical and computer sciences, law, business and administrative studies. Together these subjects account for around half of British Asian women's applications. Women from British Asian backgrounds are twice as likely as young White British women to apply for degrees in these subjects. Furthermore, research has found that there is very little variation between the three different British Asian ethnic groups in this regard, although British Indian and Pakistani women are more likely to be interested in subjects allied to medicine than young Bangladeshi women (Bagguley and Hussain 2007). This may reflect British Asian parents' preference that their daughters target traditional professional subjects (Abbas 2004). However, I would be wary about making this kind of generalisation. For instance, over the past twenty years the picture has been a relatively dynamic one.

Some of this dynamism undoubtedly arises from the development of new degree programmes that might prove attractive to British Asian women applicants. Over the past twenty years, there has been a noticeable shift among British Asian women applicants away from the

subjects that they would typically apply for or be interested in. Although women from British Asian groups have a lower acceptance rate to train in medicine and dentistry than White British women, among the minorities they are the most successful. For maths and computer sciences there has been little differentiation between Indians and individuals from Muslim British Asian ethnic groups. Research shows that law is an especially competitive subject for entry, and like medicine, the acceptance rates are lower for British Asian women of Pakistani and Bangladesh ethnic origin, than for those of Indian background (Bagguley and Hussain 2007). There has also been a shift away from medicine, dentistry, and law, towards subjects allied to medicine, business and administrative studies. There is still emphasis placed on professional, semi-professional and vocationally oriented degrees, but the elite professional degrees that include medicine and law are declining in relative popularity among British Asian women from non-professional backgrounds, and from parental homes where parents have no academic credentials.

4.5 Part four: Research on minority group graduates and financial returns from HE

More young people are going to university now than ever before, making the graduate job market particularly competitive, leading employers to place greater emphasis on factors that could differentiate between graduates; e.g. the subjects they studied, their educational background, ethnicity, gender, and so on (Brown 1995; Sloane et al. 1999; Dolton and Vignoles 2000). By 2013, there were 12 million HE graduates living in the UK (ONS 2013). In central London, six out of every ten are HE graduates. Of the first degree graduates who completed university in 2014, 56.6% were working full time six months after graduation; 12.8% part time, 12.1% were undertaking further study, training or research; 6.3% were unemployed; and 5.5% were working and studying (HECSU and AGCAS 2015). According to the ONS (2016) the high skilled employment rate for graduates declined between 2014 and 2015: 1.3 percentage points across the working age population (16-64) and 2.2 percentage points across the young population (21-30 year olds). Graduate salaries have remained mostly flat since 2008, and while across the working age population graduates earned £9500 more than non-graduates, on average these gaps were narrower for the young population with graduates earning £6000 more than non-graduates – making the graduate bonus for fee paying graduates less than for the group that includes graduates whose HE was state funded (Green and Zhu 2010). It is also important to note that black graduates have a lower rate of high skilled employment, higher unemployment rates and lower median salaries than White and British Asian graduates; only

37% of this group are in graduate jobs (ONS 2016a). Degree class has more of an impact for the young population than the working age population. Young graduates who have achieved a first class degree ear, on average £3000 more than those who achieved an upper second (Owens 2012). Young graduates who achieve an upper second can earn £2500 more than those who achieve a lower second or third. As the number of graduates increases, the importance of degree class also becomes more important as a means of differentiating them (Greany 2015). Similarly, the subject studied at university becomes more relevant. Graduates who studied STEM subjects (medicine and subjects associated with medicine) have higher employment rates, greater high skilled employment rates, lower unemployment rates and higher median salaries than who studied, 'Other Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities' subjects (ONS 2016).

Whilst the majority of subjects offer a broad range of skills that are transferable across many sectors, many industries require graduates to have specific expertise (Roberts 2002; Mason et al. 2009; Green and Zhu 2010). The subjects that are most in demand in the marketplace tend to be science, medicine and dentistry, technology, maths, engineering, and subjects allied to science (generally STEM subjects) (Museus et al. 2011); these areas are also associated with higher financial returns. For instance, evidence from the Labour Force Survey; a representative study of the occupational circumstances of people in the UK, suggests STEM graduates earn more than their peers who graduate in other subjects, as do students studying Law, Economics, or Management (LEM) (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2011). It is possible that the returns on particular subjects change over time, while returns for the most recent graduates differ. Recent evidence looking at early career destinations (1994-2010) six months after graduation questions whether STEM graduates truly consistently outperform other graduates (Owens et al. 2012). Furthermore, the release of Next Steps (previously known as a Longitudinal Study off Young People in England), collected when students were aged 25, prompted a further look at the destinations of 'millennial' graduates born between 1989 and 1990. These young people would have graduated into a more competitive job market, both due to the recent recession and the inactivity in wages, as well as because of increased university attendance overall. Next Steps is a longitudinal study, designed to capture information about young people's educational trajectories, personal and family characteristics, and current occupational outcomes. 25 was considered an important age to evaluate the emergence of differences in outcomes, because people are typically beginning to find their feet professionally at that age.

Graduates were asked if they were in work, and if so what their job and income were. Jobs were coded using the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification, a common factor for

measuring social class. They were also asked how many hours they worked each week (with 35 hrs classed as full time), and whether their role would reasonably be classified as graduate employment. The study found that STEM graduates are more likely to be in employment by the age of 25, or in professional or managerial jobs, or graduate jobs. These graduates, along with law and economics graduates are also deemed to be most likely to work full time. They have relative positive occupational outcomes compared with their peers who studied social sciences, arts, humanities and education. It is possible that the higher pay packets of arts and humanities graduates reflect the types of students who choose to study this group of subjects, rather than the labour market returns on the subjects themselves. Analyses of official data by scholars (e.g. Lees 2002; Archer and Davison 2008; Wakeham 2016) shows that students who study the arts and humanities are more likely to be female, and to come from relatively advantaged social backgrounds, and to be White. This group earns around 6 percent more than STEM graduates shortly after completing university. These differences remain statistically significant when controlling for families' socio-economic background. The relative disadvantage experienced by ethnic minority graduates in the labour market affects their average earnings, making it appear that arts and humanities subjects offer higher returns than they really do (for minority ethnic students) (Modood 2012).

UK public and policy discourse around the decision to pursue HE qualifications has been dominated by the understanding that participation in HE results in long term financial benefit, with graduates enjoying increased earnings over their working lives, compared to their non-graduate peers (Smith et al. 2000; Wilton 2011). For a reasonable proportion of graduates, a non-graduate job is a clear possibility, and the first cohort to pay £9000 may be more deeply aware of this than their predecessors. Browne's report, and the subsequent government policy that followed it, framed students as 'empowered choosers', who – with the right information – would make the right choice over where and what to study. The information on which Browne felt students should make this decision was their 'employment prospects':

Students choose their degree courses for many different reasons. Some will be particularly interested in one course and decide to pursue it with relatively little concern about what it will do for their employment prospects. Others choose a course because it will improve their employment prospects.

Employment outcomes will also make a difference to the charges set by institutions. Where a key selling point of a course is that it provides improved employability, its charge will become an indicator of its ability to deliver – students will only pay higher charges if there is a proven path to higher earnings. When complemented by the improvements we propose to information, this will help students make a better choice about what to study. (Browne 2010: 31)

In Browne's HE sector, the right information relates almost entirely to employment prospects, and this again was strengthened by the 2016 White paper (BIS 2016: 58), which called for the establishment of the Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) dataset linking HE and tax evidence, to measure graduates' earnings. This data was intended to be a valuable source of information for potential students to gain a better picture of the labour market returns for different courses and institutions. However, Brown (2014) challenges that it is impossible to accurately provide this type of information because universities can give approximate information about how previous graduates are doing; prospective students must in effect evade their chances of success based on the odds provided by universities.

Some economists, such as Chowdry et al. (2010), have recognised differential returns based on degree subject studied and university attended. Meanwhile, others (e.g. O Leary and Sloane 2011) emphasise that despite their considerably higher numbers, graduates maintain a salary premium relative to their non-graduate peers. Using Labour Force Survey data from 1997 to 2006, Elias and Purcell (2004) sustain that the earnings advantage of graduates remained largely stable across this period for both genders. This was the case in all subject areas, regardless of ability allocation. It also continued to undergo this during the current economic downturn. Bukodi and Goldthorpe (2011) show that significant class differences in relative occupational outcomes have continued over the past 60 years, despite increases in absolute mobility. The work of Brown and colleagues (Brown and Hesketh 2004; Brown et al. 2011), in contrast, observes that expansion in HE globally is driving changes in graduate labour markets. Brooks and Waters (2009) and Brown et al. (2011) argue that competition for 'good, middle-class jobs' is increasingly a global phenomenon, with middle-class families in particular adopting desperate measures to stay ahead of the competition to generate future employment. The focus of these authors' work is oriented towards competition for places in higher and elite professions, and therefore they are particularly applicable to students who encounter inequalities when attempting to participate in HE, and when translating their degree success into a job.

Drawing on the work of Bourdieu, Bathmaker et al. (2013) explored the argument that having a degree is no longer all that is required when competing for graduate jobs. They argue that to 'play the game', i.e. to be read as 'successful', students need to enhance their 'employability' by engaging in additional activities, including work experience and internships, and by exploiting the skills obtained through extracurricular activities (ECA). Tomlinson (2008) looked into the way pre-1992 HE students understand and interpret the role of their HE credentials in shaping

their future outcomes in the labour market in the context of the discourses and changes associated with being a graduate, and the challenges HE students experience, finding that contemporary HE students are under pressure to do extra to increase the purpose of their degree. Students feel pressurised. On the one hand, a degree from a Russell Group university is crucial in the labour market, but on the other hand students need to take on additional roles to increase the status of their degree. With regard to minority ethnic students, particularly those from British Asian groups, taking on extra-curricular activities while at school (Bhatti 1999; Anwar 1999; Abbas 2004) or in HE is beneficial to their futures in the labour market (Hills 2003 2004; Modood 2006, Lindley 2009; Kirton 2009).

Despite this, specific minorities can be seen to be more advantaged than others, because they are perceived to have the 'right' ethnicity, or to have come from the 'right' kinds of homes and backgrounds from the outset. Graduates from specific minorities have also been found to be more advantaged than others. Using the Labour Force Survey (1993 -2003), Lindley (2009) explored cases of over and under education, and the effect on earnings for British minorities relative to British Whites. She also compared the earning penalties associated with over and under education across minority ethnic groups for men and women. She learned that compared to British Whites, Black African, Other Non-White and Indian men are more likely to be over-educated, whilst for women it is Indian and Bangladeshis/Pakistanis who are more likely to be over educated. Her analysis also revealed greater returns on occupational skills for some minority ethnic and immigrant groups (Indians and Chinese) relative to others (Black and Pakistanis and Bangladeshis) that exceeded the returns on qualifications. For instance, in 1995, Connor et al. studied employment outcomes and career progress of members of ethnic minorities who had graduated from four universities in 1993, in comparison to White British students. Of 272, half were members of 'ethnic minorities'. They learned that ethnic minority graduates took longer to secure full time employment. By 1996, it was apparent that a higher proportion of ethnic minority graduates were in professional jobs, although the average salaries for ethnic minorities were slightly lower than for British White graduates. Meanwhile, white graduates were consistently more likely to enter employment immediately after degree completion. Data from 25 students showed that two out of five ethnic minority graduates reported experiencing some form of racial discrimination in the workplace. Although Connor et al.'s (1995) findings treat ethnic minority graduates as a homogenous group, they do serve to enforce the idea that in general minority ethnic graduates, encounter more problems pursuing professional roles experience than White British graduates do.

Similarly, Kirton (2009) explored minority ethnic students' career aspirations, with particular emphasis on how business studies graduates conceptualise their career choices. The study reported on the subjective dimensions of early career formation. It considered non-White students as a single group, providing an understanding that expanded beyond an analysis of employment data. The study paved the way for explorations of the influences of 'race' and ethnicity; demonstrating that career plans and aspirations are commonly formulated in the light of construction of an ethnic *identity* based on a racialised and discriminatory labour market. Similarly, Hussain et al. (2008) interviewed selected individuals from within the minority ethnic community, living within the West Midlands in the UK (Birmingham, Coventry, Wolverhampton and Dudley), to profile the characteristics and entrepreneurial motivations of graduate entrepreneurs from Black and minority ethnic communities. Their research suggested that BME graduate entrepreneurs were diverse in terms of their chief characteristics (size, gender, ethnicity and age). The two most compelling motivations for self-employment were 'being your own boss', which was most evident among graduates of Indian and Bangladeshi background, and making more money (31 percent), which was a driver for those of Black Caribbean origin. Two thirds of the interviewees obtained advice from family and friends, while just over a third had completed training or other courses. However, the sample size was small and selective and therefore not statistically significant, although the study provided a glimpse into the motivations of minority ethnic students taking up self-employment, highlighting the importance and ethnic nature of cultural capital, and the continuing significance of economic capital for minority groups. More recently, Rafferty (2012) examined ethnic graduates' reports of over-education, unemployment and wages as potential markers of discrimination or as broader 'ethnic penalties', revealing that despite high levels of educational attainment in HE, penalties persist particularly disadvantaging Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean and Pakistani groups.

For Black and British Asian minority groups, the emphasis on business, self-employment and economic capital are rooted in a durable subconscious belief that they are an inferior group living in a White dominated country (Ram 1992; Barrett et al. 1996; Clarke and Drinkwater 1998; Pathak 2000). When examining inequalities, I note that researchers find persistent trends that show certain minority groups are likely to face frequent discrimination in education and employment settings than others (Indians, Chinese, Asian other); however, this should not suggest that minority groups who are found to occupy more spaces in professional jobs (at least in statistical terms) do not demand attention as part of aiming to study inequality from all angles.

4.5.1 Student debt

As more cohorts go through university on a higher fee rate there is increasingly evidence that debt is having an effect on students' habits and attitudes. For example, there has been a perceived trend that students are enjoying less leisure time since the implementation of the £9000 fees (Garner 2012). The 2016 Students Lifestyle Survey found that of the 2000 students surveyed, only 21% cited the importance of having a good social life as a key reason for going to university. Over a quarter of students reported spending nothing on socialising in a typical week. It is possible that the survey responses were not entirely accurate, as students may not want to admit to placing high importance on the social side of university. However, if the responses were accurate, this arguably strengthens the impression that students have been led to believe that university is primarily a process for gaining human capital, with anything else being counter to what is expected.

However, in the manner in which critics refer to it, student debt is an interesting concept. It is a term which does not really refer to all the debts a student may have, but the debts incurred as a consequence of being a student, in effect tuition and maintenance grant loans. The tuition and maintenance loans are for the time being at least – publicly owned (Garner 2012). Currently these loans begin to be paid back once a graduate begins to earn over £21,000 per year and repayment stops if their annual salary falls below this amount, and what then remains of the graduate's debt is written off after 30 years (Husbands 2018). Repayments are taken from salaries via an individual's tax code, removing the worry of missing a monthly payment (Husbands 2018; Doku 2018). Making student debt the individual's burden, rather than awarding grants as a societal contribution, means that if an individual chooses to take on student debt it is their own responsibility to repay it.

4.5.2 Research on minority ethnic groups' socio-economic positions

There is a strong direct association between social class background and educational success in the UK. The result is that the higher a child's social class, and the higher their position in the ethnic hierarchy (e.g. being of Indian or Chinese origin), the greater their likelihood of securing professional and higher managerial employment (Marshall 1997; Gillborn and Youdell 2000). According to the majority of Government reports (e.g. Millburn 2009 2012; Barnett 2014)

children from the most advantaged backgrounds (classified as managerial/professional in the Youth Cohort Study) are more than three times as likely to gain GCSE grades, grade C and above, and to study for A-levels. This is a long established trend in British education, although the association is not fixed. Indeed, there is evidence (Bolliver 2011 2013; Triventi 2012) suggesting the inequality gap in attainment between the social classes has expanded since the late 1980s. Social class background is both difficult and costly to categorise. Although nearly all measures collect information about parental employment status, there are differences in how occupations are categorised, and also disputes concerning additional related factors (such as parental education) (Basit and Tomlinson 2012).

Academic writers in the UK draw a simple distinction between manual and non-manual backgrounds, where the former is taken as roughly equivalent to 'working-class' and the latter to 'middle-class' (e.g. Gillborn and Youdell 2003). Research (Gillborn 1990; Commission for Racial Equality 1992; Demack et al. 1999 2000; Vincent et al. 2012 2013) has identified two patterns that emerge when considering the interaction of students' ethnic minority and their socio-economic class. Firstly, the familiar differences in attainment between pupils from non-manual and manual backgrounds is replicated within each ethnic group. Secondly, social class factors (parents education background, professional occupation) do not override the influence of ethnic and racial inequality, because when comparing pupils with similar class backgrounds in terms of parents' socio-economic background, there are still marked inequalities of attainment between different groups. Meanwhile, the impact of ethnicity and race is less dramatic for Indian and Chinese pupils from professional backgrounds, in terms of opportunities for educational attainment and access to conventional routes to social mobility, than it is for other minority groups (Hatcher and Thomas 2000; Tomlinson 2008). Students from these ethnicities, reflect dominant forms of cultural capital and habitus, contributing a further set of class related factors for schools to consider (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Nash 1990).

The socio-economic outcomes of minority ethnic groups in advanced societies (e.g. Britain) raise important empirical issues, with significant policy consequences that determined by HE outcomes (Heath et al. 2008). We already discussed in the first part of this review that socio-economic status/occupation is merely one aspect of social class, and of the inequalities within education. For minority ethnic groups who leave school with outstanding educational outcomes at GCSE levels, and at A-level in the sciences, their social class profile typically sets them apart from minority groups with a working-class portfolio (education, employment).

Thus, it is still necessary to clarify how minority ethnic groups are positioned within the occupational hierarchy.

Analyses of the socio-economic position of British ethnic groups (Platt 2002 2005 2007 2010 2011 2014) and NS-SEC data consistently show that the British Indian group outperforms other groups, especially other British Asian groups. For instance, Platt (2010) showed that in 2005, British Indian (36 percent) men were the second largest group to hold managerial or professional occupations (after British Chinese (38 percent) men), compared with 27 percent of White British men (ONS 2007). British Indian men had the highest rates of employment, at 73 percent, second only to White British men, with an employment rate of 81 percent. British Indian women achieved a 53 percent employment rate; the highest relative to other British Asian groups and third highest compared to all other minority ethnic women. In addition, the unemployment rate for British Indian men and women stood at 10 percent and 7 percent respectively, making it lower than for all other groups except for White British. The British Indian group attained high levels of upward mobility in terms of socio-economic class (occupation) (Platt 2005), and the differentials in income between the British Indian and White British groups are low (Clarke and Drinkwater 2007). Within the British Indian group, the second generation has a greater probability of achieving a higher social class status (Platt 2007) in occupational terms. However, an in-depth analysis of the socio-economic class of the British Indian group reveals that Hindu Gujaratis are more successful at securing professional roles than Punjabi Sikhs, although Sikhs are more successful than British Muslims (Platt 2007).

In the 2011 Census, there was little to distinguish class 1 (higher managerial, administrative, and professional occupations) White British from the ethnic minorities: 9.8 percent of White British people are found in class 1, compared to 10.3 percent of individuals from Britain's Black and minority ethnic groups (The Policy Exchange 2011). 15.4 percent of Indians are found in class 1, while only 6.2 percent of Pakistanis, and 4.1 percent of Bangladeshis are there. Black Africans and Black Caribbeans are also less well-represented in this class (7.5 percent and 6.1 percent respectively). In terms of racial differences, only 4.7 percent of the White British population are found in the 'never worked' and 'long-term unemployed' categories, compared with 11.2 percent from the minority ethnic group. Of this 11.2 percent, Indians form 2.3 percent and Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups 8.3% (Census 2011). Black Caribbeans are slightly better represented in class 3 (intermediate occupations). White others and Pakistanis are better represented in class 4 and owning small businesses self-employed workers (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2012).

To clarify how the above statistics manifest differently by gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status, I consulted 2015 Labour market statistics. They show that unemployment rates vary from 14 percent for the Black group to 6 percent for the Indian group, and that Pakistani and Bangladeshi women have inactivity rates of 57.2 percent, compared to 19 percent of men of the same ethnicity (Department for Work and Pensions 2015). Inequalities in socio-economic status can further be viewed relative to differences between women from different British Asian group. An earlier study by Dale et al. (2002) found that low labour force participation among Bangladeshi and Pakistani minority groups is seldom a result of an inability to find work or employer discrimination, it is self-determined. Whilst Bangladeshi and Pakistani British women have lower overall employment rates than Indian women of Hindu and Sikh backgrounds (Bhopal 2010), there are consistent differences between Indian British women and those from other British Asian groups, with those of Indian backgrounds participating in employment significantly more than Pakistani and Bangladeshi women. Although in 1993, 40 percent of British Indian women were economically inactive, this figure had declined to 28 percent by 2013 (Platt 2013). Notably, after 2011 unemployment rates for Indians compared with Pakistani and Bangladeshi women tended to track each other quite closely, only differing more recently. For Indian women unemployment has fallen to 6 percent, while for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women combined it stands at 10 percent (Bhopal and Khambhatia 2013). Furthermore, research also shows that while Bangladeshi women have caught up with Pakistani women, the difference between the two groups in terms of the probability of becoming unemployed has diverged since 2007. Bangladeshi women are increasingly economically active, although both groups take longer to find jobs than Indian women do (All Parliamentary Group on Race and Community 2013).

Black African and Black Caribbean men are 50 percent less likely to be employed in managerial jobs than the remainder of the male population; only one in ten Black African men and Black Caribbean men are employed in managerial jobs (Heath et al. 2008). In stark contrast, men from the Chinese and Indian group are almost twice as likely as their British White counterparts to work in higher managerial and professional jobs. Research from the 1980s and 1990s (Halsey et al. 1980; Heath 1981; Heath and Ridge 1983), to date (Loury et al. 2005; Heath et al. 2008) has identified members of this ethnic hierarchy within the occupational structure. This has implications for how particular minorities support their children economically. Amongst the minorities, the Indian group are not only better represented in managerial and professional jobs, but are also engaged in the more elite professions such as medicine. Although 41 percent of doctors in Britain are from an ethnic minority (including

doctors from overseas), 15.4 percent are Indians who have studied in Britain. Indians 'lead' in medicine and legal jobs, at 15.4 percent, according to the Census 2011 analysis (Kirkup 2015).

The understanding of British Indian undergraduates' success, as noted by the media during the Indian Prime Minister's recent visit to the UK, is that, "there is a very good case to be made that British Indians are not just the most successful immigrant group in this country's recent history, but the most successful group of people full stop" (Kirkup 2015). More specific analysis of the Census 2011 data by Kirkup (2015) and Connor (2015) found that the British Indian group has higher acceptance rates at 'top-flight' (Russell Group) universities. This is linked with their higher representation in certain professional and managerial roles. For instance, Kirkup (2015: 1) learned that "12 percent of them [are] entering top medical jobs like doctors and dentists". There appears to be a straightforward link between medicine degree courses and certain medicine related jobs, although minority ethnic medicine professionals are less well-represented among consultants.

In the legal profession, non-White ethnic minorities accounted for around 40 percent of trainee solicitors in 2012, suggesting that at the time the UK was witnessing a rapid change in terms of the race of its legal professionals. However, research suggested that non-White minority solicitors were more likely to be found working in small, local firms, where they make less money. Moreover, where minority ethnic individuals were promoted to higher level positions (e.g. barrister, and judges), they were usually of Indian ethnicity (Sunak and Rajeswaran 2014). Only 5 percent of the police force are from Black and minority ethnic groups, and just 3.3 percent of those are chief inspectors or employed in the higher ranks. Of these, 2.9 percent are of Indian background (Nazroo and Kapadia 2013). The police are partly responsible for enforcing ideas about the structure of society, alongside other elite professions such as medicine, and the legal sector (Perkin 2003). Occupations that preserve class divisions in the UK are more likely to be occupied by individuals who are White British or the Indian British. However, maintenance of the status quo serves White privilege and entrenches the ethnic hierarchy (Owen et al. 2012). This hierarchy (Indians and Chinese are at the top, and Black and Muslim groups at the bottom) has remained stable in the UK over the last twenty years, largely because Indian and Chinese individuals have been allowed to access conventional routes to social mobility.

4.5.3 The role of fluency of the dominant language

A further specific factor considered an effective explanation for the ethnic inequalities between those of different occupations and British Asian groups is the degree of fluency in the dominant language (English) (which in part informs HE qualifications) (Pathak 2000; Modood 2012). According to the 2011 Census, those who speak English either as a first language or as if it were their first language, are more likely to be employed, than those who do not speak it, and language proficiency inevitably informs attainment in schools more generally (Gillborn and Mirza 2000). Those who are non-proficient English speakers are more likely to be economically inactive, and 41.2 percent of economically inactive people who cannot speak English care for family members and their homes. There is very little difference in the educational profiles of those who speak English as their first language and those who speak and write it as their first language. Thus, it is perhaps the high level of English within the Indian group that explains the persistent socio-economic advantage they hold over Black and Muslim British Asian groups (Platt 2006; Platt and Thompson 2012).

4.5.4 Self-employment and ethnic minority groups

The class inequalities that are observed within the ethnic minority population in the occupational structure are worth exploring in the context of self-employment, especially in the context of British Asian ethnic groups, a diaspora that often adopt this type of employment (Dhariwal 2011). Self-employment is the preferred method of employment for all three British Asian groups (Brown 2006; Kirkup 2015) and is embedded within former British Asian migrants' experiences of working in manual trades under the supervision of White British employers (Visram 2011). During the 1950s – 1960s self-employment was viewed as a way of earning money without having to experience overt forms of racism within the context of the British labour market (Helweg 1986; Ballard 1994, Brown 2006). For British Indians, self-employment began with 'corner shops', progressing to ownership of clothing factories, and Indian clothes shops targeted at women (Helweg 1986; Rees and Shah 1986; Jones 1981; Basu and Goswami 1999). Meanwhile, food businesses have been popular choices for other British Asian groups (Rafiq 1992; Ram et al. 2000; Basu and Altinay 2002). Deakins et al. (2010) study 'Developing success strategies for ethnic minorities in business', involved 43 interviews with ethnic minority small business owners, in Scotland. The successful minority ethnic business owners suggested that the key to a successful business includes relying upon the development

of effective networks and marketing strategies, and the use of contacts (social capital). Clarke and Drinkwater (2010), and Jones and Mascarenhas-Keyes (2012) note an increasing trend in minority ethnic self-employment after 2003. The British Indian group's 'success' in self-employment is currently not restricted to corner shops, factories, and clothing targeted at immigrant British Indian women (Dhaliwal and Deakins 2014). Indians now own Indian jewellery shops, Western oriented Indian bridal and clothing shops, electrical appliance shops, sophisticated catering business for weddings, and hair and beauty salons (Ram et al. 2000; Hussain et al. 2008; Clark and Drinkwater 2010; Wang and Altinay 2012; Jones et al. 2012; Dhaliwal and Deakins 2014). Research (e.g. Vora 2008; Wang and Altinay 2012; Jones et al. 2012; Jones and Mascarenhas-Keyes 2012; Dhaliwal and Deakins 2014) shows that British Indians' businesses are now expanding beyond the UK, into what can be described as contemporary affluent non-Western countries. Dubai is particularly popular, as it has a growing Indian diaspora who are migrating from the UK to build properties and invest in gold jewellery shops (Vora 2008 2013). The quote below reports how British Indian undergraduates have been directly associated with this transition towards Western oriented businesses.

Impressive educational credentials, an increasing presence in the professions and diversification into new and emerging sectors are rapidly changing the profile of Indian entrepreneurship in the UK. (Wang and Altinay 2012: 93)

With regard to how British Indian middle-class student's degree outcomes translate into occupation, research has highlighted a link between the British Indian group's high representation in medicine degrees and their high representation in pharmacy related self-employment (Willis et al. 2009; Ram and Jones 2008; Benson et al. 2009; Allen 2010). British Indians and Black Africans are both well-represented in pharmaceutical self-employment. Earlier research by Willis et al. (2009) asserts that the pharmacy industry is a growing area of self-employment amongst Britain's minority groups, although this is particularly apparent amongst the British Indian group, as reported in earlier analyses of business and enterprise trends amongst Britain's minorities (Barrett et al. 1996; Hassell et al. 1998; Silverthorne 2003; Cope et al. 2007; Ram and Jones 2008). Pharmacy is an example of a particular medicine-related degree course in which the British Indian undergraduates maintain a level of over-representation (Willis et al. 2006; HESA 2013/14; HEFCE 2014).

Some studies (e.g. Jesson et al. 2006; Novak et al. 2006) have focused on British Asians as a group, whereas others (e.g. Springate et al. 2008; Archer and DeWitt 2015) have studied British Asian and Black groups together to examine their representation on pharmacy degree

courses. Wilson et al. (2006) conducted a study, commissioned by the Pharmacy Practice Research Trust, undertaken by a team at Aston University to investigate minority ethnic students' career aspirations, motivations and expectations from a pharmacy degree. Their research findings suggested that a proportion of 'British Asian' first degree students only chose pharmacy as their *second* choice, after rejections from dentistry or medicine. Dentistry and pharmacy were found to be the most popular medicine courses for British Indian students (HESA 2016/2017). The study also noted that British Asian students typically began courses at the age of 18/19, with fewer than 10 percent applying after the age of 25, especially in the case of Indians. Research shows that ethnic minorities in Britain favour self-employment, as they are more protected from racism in this case (Ram and Jones 2006; Dhaliwal 2014); nevertheless, research also shows that starting self-employment, and attaining success in it, often requires a combination of business skills, educational qualifications and economic capital.

4.5.5 Economic inequality, poverty between minority groups

Wealth inequality has always existed, regardless of the socio-cultural model. Under capitalist democracy the intention is that social mobility can become a reality. However, many of the measures currently required in England to mitigate polarity within society (e.g. planning laws, debt-based money, government subsidies, income tax, interest rates) are considered avoidable (Frisby 2018). Prevailing economic inequality, which is apparent in educational inequality, is within the power of the British Government to rectify. Wealth is supposed to be created by hard work and endeavour, not by reallocation and redistribution, and yet the wider education and social field penalises labour and subsidises both debt and the ownership of assets (Barnes and Khambhatia 2009). Nevertheless, all that is really required for capitalism to succeed is a level playing field, honest money, and a simpler tax system, which rewards everyone, not just those who reflect the British Government's attitudes and values. However, we now live in a society, where for many, hard work does not allow one to move in economic terms beyond making ends meet (Dorling 2017). For this reason, income inequality has been the subject of an extensive body of research; some of which has examined its implications for inequalities in education, highlighting ethnicity, and patterns associated with conventional forms of success.

Poverty has also been subject to substantial investigation, designed to identify trends and 'at-risk' groups (e.g. Bangladeshi, Pakistani). Moreover, there is a steadily expanding (albeit still

small) body of work specifically on UK ethnic poverty differentials (Berthoud 1997 1998; Platt 2007 2009; Nandini and Platt 2010). This has revealed that all minority groups experience higher poverty rates than the majority population, and that for some Pakistani and Bangladeshi men, women and children the rates are significantly higher. However, there is substantial variation across the different minority groups. The findings of Hills et al. (2010) challenged the notion that we can conceive of minority groups as singular coherent groups, highlighting the fact that even if average incomes, earnings and poverty rates differed substantially between groups, the distribution of incomes (household and individual) and earnings echoes that of the population as a whole. Moreover, large average differences between groups struggles to explain overall inequality. Arguably, without ethnic differences, population inequalities would remain much the same; nevertheless, inequalities within groups are still relevant to clarify the inequalities of position between different groups, even in the absence of their ability to explain wider social inequality, e.g. regarding educational and socio-economic status (Platt 2012).

Poverty affects some ethnic groups more than others in the UK. Ethnic minority British people have a poverty rate almost twice that of White British individuals, and thus draw more heavily on the social security system (Platt 2009). Rates are highest for Bangladeshis and Pakistanis (Platt 2009 2012). Platt (2005 2007 2009) also reported that Bangladeshis and Carribeans not only have a high poverty rate, but also the lowest levels of internal inequality. In contrast, analyses have shown that the Chinese minority has a relatively high poverty rate, but many from the Chinese group receive a high income. A similar situation to that noted with the Chinese has been observed with the Indians in Britain, although the inequality in this case is less pronounced (Nandini and Platt 2010). Analysis by Nandini and Platt (2010) using mean logarithmic deviation (MLD), suggests that specific factors can be associated with poverty in certain minority groups. For example, higher rates of workless households and low pay in work for Bangladeshi households; higher rates of lone parenthood among Black Caribbean and African households; and, larger than average size households for all three British Asian groups (i.e. more than 4 people in a household). However, this does not mean that these characteristics are common to all households in each of these groups, as they have remained stable for specific ethnic groups. The extent of inequality across minority groups indicates that they do not form economically homogenous, distinct segments of the population. The inability to enjoy the highs and lows associated with a highly unequal society, such as the UK would indicate particularly strong fault lines in terms of ethnicity (Platt 2011).

Relatedly, there is an extensive body of research that has explored and considered differences that inform economic inequality and educational success between the minority ethnic groups. Butler and Hamnett (2011) link higher rates of residence in rural areas and/or the tendency to reside in more affluent ones, instead of crowded towns and boroughs such as Southall, with higher chances of access to conventional routes to social mobility, with Indians most notable in this regard. This desire to move out of the inner city and the more crowded parts of London, or indeed other crowded parts of minority crowded cities (e.g. West Midlands), is not a result of economic differences within ethnic groups, but is potentially a consequence of 'class – consciousness' (Reay et al. 2014), and class snobbery (Savage 2014), whereby the focus is on which class, lifestyle and type of consumerism individuals wish to associate themselves with. It indicates that certain minorities are indeed aware of, and make conscious choices related to class reproduction, as they leave working-class Indians behind. However, research also shows that Indians who are Sikhs and Hindus, rather than Muslims, are persistently economically stronger, experiencing lower poverty rates, even if they are not from professional socio-economic backgrounds, because Indians have the lowest unemployment rate relative to other British Asian groups (Li and Heath 2015).

Previously we considered how language has been identified as a factor that influences ethnic inequalities within professional employment. Lack of fluency in speaking, reading and writing English at the professional level inevitably influences the disproportionate poverty rates between British Asian groups. Platt (2011), preparing a study for the Joseph Rowntree foundation found that for all ethnic groups, speaking English as a first language was associated with a reduction in the likelihood of being in poverty by 5 percentage points. The Wealth and Assets Survey for 2006-2008 and 2008-2010 demonstrated that Bangladeshi and Black African groups had the lowest levels of wealth of any ethnic groups, while Muslims were the poorest among the major religious groups, with a median net wealth of £42,000 per household in 2006/08. The wealthiest religious groups were Jewish people with a median net wealth of £422,000, and Punjabi Sikhs, who came second at £229,000 (noting that Sikhs and Hindus represent the main bulk of Indians), followed by Christians at £223,000 and Hindus at £206,000. Respondents to the Family Resources Survey (2008) were asked to estimate the value of all their bank accounts and any financial assets they might have (excluding housing); the mean amount for all ethnic groups was just under £1200. For White British people, the mean was £1269, compared with £816 for ethnic minorities. Indians from Sikh and Hindu religious groups are wealthier on average – a mean of £1399. The ethnic group with the lowest

value on average were Black Africans at £157, while Pakistanis (£287) and Bangladeshis (£269) also reported lower wealth.

Receipt of benefits varies by ethnicity; and in general, ethnic minorities are more likely to receive major state benefits than White British people. According to the Family Resources Survey of 2011/2012, 3.4 percent of ethnic minorities claimed Jobseekers Allowance and 20 percent claimed child benefit. The ethnic groups with the greatest proportions of people claiming tax credits were Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Black Africans. Analyses of ethnic minority data and the benefits system show the minority groups in Britain with the lowest proportion of people receiving social security benefits are individuals of Chinese and Indian ethnicity (Berthoud 2000a, 2000b; Kenway and Palmer 2007; Platt 2010; Longhi et al. 2012). Research by Platt (2011) found that 19 percent of British Whites (meaning all White and not just the British White) received income-related benefits (including things like council tax benefit, housing benefit and income support) compared to 14 percent of Indians, 30 percent of Pakistanis/Bangladeshis, and 29 percent of Black households. Only 5 percent of Indians relied on housing benefit, compared to 12 percent of Pakistani/Bangladeshi and 12 percent of White families. Benefit applicants amongst minority ethnic groups largely come from Muslim religious and Black households and the lowers number are from Indian and Chinese background. Of the top 50 in the Times Rich List 2017 slightly fewer than half were of White British origin, 15 were Whites from other groups, 6 were of Indian ethnic origin, and 4 from other ethnicities (such as ethnic specific Muslims: Arab), and there was one Chinese billionaire.

The Chinese experience is dramatically different from that of all the other minority groups, showing substantial economic achievement at the top end (Platt 2011); this is despite the extremely high inequality levels for this group (Platt 2011). Scholars often overlook the Chinese group, in terms of the different socio-economic, educational, and economic profiles that construct them as a group, mainly because that they do well in larger numbers than individuals from other groups (Nandi and Platt 2010). In terms of understanding poverty rates, it may well be that poverty is associated with a specific population within the Chinese group, distinguished perhaps by generation (age), country/region of origin, or period of migration. Qualitative research is required to enhance our understanding of the extent to which poverty rates are meaningfully constructed relative to the Chinese and Indian 'group' (Platt 2011).

Inequality patterns within the Indian group indicate some degree of polarisation. For instance, Platt (2009) showed high levels of earnings and wealth holdings in contrast with high levels of inequality across income and earnings; although this is not as striking as for the Chinese group,

as there are above average poverty rates. The study also revealed substantial evidence of the growing educational and “labour market success of this group” (Platt 2009: 15). The extent of inequality and the dispersal of a range of incomes suggests that the poverty risks encountered may be a consequence of differences in experience within the different populations that comprise this group. Platt (2005) and Longhi et al. (2009), for example, showed how studies differentiating Indians by religious affiliation have identified a more advantaged group (Hindus) and a less advantaged one (Muslims), with a more complicated picture emerging for Indians of Sikh religious background. Platt (2011) interprets:

It is likely that the more successful minorities, such as the Chinese and Indians, contribute much more than they take out, while poorer groups, like Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, do the opposite. (22)

Similarly, Modood (1993), when considering British Indians’ higher acceptance rates at high status universities, and the better returns on their education in the labour market, defines Indians as an ‘economically successful’ and ‘commercially successful’ group (23). To define certain groups as ‘marked examples of success’, ‘as model minorities’, ‘commercially successful’, ‘economically success’ and so forth, based on their ability to outperform other minorities to access conventional routes to social mobility, implicitly enforces inequality. This is because the use of the term success in relation to Indians and Chinese suggests that nuanced understandings are not required for these groups, giving the potential impression that social class inequalities between minority groups result from the social structure.

I have aimed to establish a comprehensive outline of the most relevant abstract definitions, identifying key issues and concerns pertaining to class differences between minority ethnic groups/pupils, as a way to review discussions about GCSE level attainment, post compulsory routes, rank in HE and beyond (indicators of social mobility: ranking in the occupational structure and economic capital). It is very apparent that a long-standing concern is that minority ethnic pupils and students receive a negative start to social mobility in contrast to other minorities as a consequence of the expectations placed upon them. This problematises their likelihood of educational success and their access to conventional routes to social mobility. The research presented in this section also shows that social mobility for minority ethnic groups is far from equal. Moreover, it reveals that the ethnic hierarchical structure in which Indians and Chinese lead and Black and Muslim British Asian ethnic groups fall behind is a result of imbalances inherent in the socio-cultural framework of British society.

4.6 Part five: Research that has problematised conventional ideas and experience process of social mobility

4.6.1 Black and minority ethnic group students' experiences in British HE

Research in the area of the sociology of education, and the sociology of education in race and ethnicity has moved on from the notion of 'under-achievement', to highlight the processes by which success is traditionally achieved. Research questioning conventional notions of success includes conventional ideas of social mobility. These include the suggestion that conventional processes identify students who are not from dominant backgrounds that are British White, upper or middle-class and have multiple responsibilities, even when they participate in HE in Britain. Being enrolled on full time degree courses, while also participating in paid employment, and maintaining commitments to family life is challenging (Archer and Francis 2006a, 2006b; Ingram 2009; Vincent et al. 2013). Thus, the majority of students now enter British HE, perceiving of a degree as a stepping-stone to fulfilling their career aspirations, whether or not they knowingly or unknowingly select a university with a relatively lower status (Archer et al. 2014). Many students do not consider their ethnicity a central factor in their experience of HE, and those that do, view it as one among the many interacting social and economic factors that shape their experiences (Sims 2008). Non-traditional students are from student populations that are not British White, degree and higher professional or elite backgrounds, for whom the process of social mobility and securing a place at the top end of the wider field is least problematic, because their parents are knowledgeable regarding how best to access the proper set of resources. A large volume of the research involving minority ethnic students and White working-class students has demonstrated this.

Black students in particular fail both the written and practical components of their academic assessments in disproportionate numbers (Willis 1987). Students of Black African and Caribbean origin argue that British White academic tutors do not apply universal assessment criteria to all students equally. Lecturers have also been accused of using the setting and marking of essays as tools by which they can control students (Dhanda 2009). Those tutors who take the initiative to seek out material that reflects the multi-cultural backgrounds of their students, have often been accused of passing students using unrecognised and non-academic sources. The Widening Access to HE (1992) report found that access to work experience and sponsorship is particularly important for Black students, because of the breadth of

discrimination in the labour market and the higher incidence of unemployment among Black graduates.

Other researchers have focused on working-class students as a population in the context of their ethnic backgrounds (e.g. Archer and Hutchings 2000; Bowl 2001, 2003; Hutchings and Archer 2001; Reay et al. 2001; Ball et al. 2002; Read et al. 2003; Leathwood and O'Connell 2003; Archer et al. 2005; Stevenson and Lang 2010; Basit and Tomlinson 2012). Archer and Hutchings (2000) studied how working-class British students rationalise their experiences of HE when constructing occupational choices. Focus group discussions were conducted with 109 non-participant Londoners, aged between 16 and 30 years, all from a range of working-class backgrounds. Their findings suggest that how working-class British students construct risks, costs and benefits during application, participation and graduation are relatively complex. They discuss their perceptions of 'value', with relation to expanding participation strategies amongst ethnically diverse 'working-class' groups. Ball et al. (2002) drew upon an Economic and Social Research Council funded study of student choice in HE; analysing the viewpoints of sixty-five minority ethnic students. They discovered two main findings. Firstly, the processes, concerns, resources and outcomes when 'choosing' differed between working-class students from White and minority ethnic groups based on their experiences of class. Secondly, for a large minority of these students, 25 out of the 65, the 'ethnic mix' of HE institutions is a significant factor influencing their choice about which university they should apply to. This factor also informed their work seeking experiences. Reay et al. (2001 2005) studied the behaviour of 'non-traditional' British undergraduates who would not have been expected to participate in HE in earlier decades, offering a useful account showing the overlapping effects of social class, ethnicity and gender when choosing which university students need to attend. It draws on qualitative and quantitative data to illustrate how social stratification has deepened, generating a range of inequalities. They found that whilst gender inequalities have reduced, social class inequalities persist, being even more complicated in the context of different races and different minority and religious values. The study drew on the work of Bourdieu, as do many of the studies that aim to provide a nuanced understanding of unequal rankings in occupational and educational outcomes. Race and class significantly influence how students are positioned in the wider field, and this becomes increasingly apparent to students as they approach the point of employment (Gillborn 2009; Rollock et al. 2010).

The Ethnic Monitoring Research Project in Leeds (2012) offered case study evidence about the experiences of Black students undertaking degree courses at Leeds University. They found that

because the university had low numbers of Black students, the academic course tutors had no experience of collaborating with pupils from minority groups, or of specific minority ethnic group's cultures and values. The majority of British White and European students had no experience of communication or friendship with people from different ethnic groups. The isolation felt by Black students on arrival persisted throughout the course. They felt that lecture halls were crowded with White students, and that they determined the learning environment; moreover, they observed that course tutors' conversational topics naturally meshed with theirs. Black students engaged with tasks, but often held back from participating in the learning setting and exploring the module fully, relying on textbooks for everything. Those Black students who grew up in London felt particularly awkward, as they had become accustomed to mixed ethnic and social groups in the classroom. They had not previously studied amongst large groups of White students, and felt unable to access the same mechanisms of social mobility as their White middle-class peers (Reay et al. 2005).

Similar experiences have been reported by students from Black and minority ethnic groups studying law, medicine, management and social work. The admission procedures at St George's Hospital Medical School were found to be discriminatory on racial grounds (CRE 1988). The Medical School has a respectable student profile and aims to improve it (De Witt et al. 2010 2011); nevertheless, its admission procedures reveal practices that are discriminatory against both students from 'Black and minority ethnic groups' and women. The Central Council for Social Work Education and Training has made considerable progress towards encouraging HE institutions to improve the accessibility of their courses to minority ethnic pupils. This helped Black students access courses during their training and subsequent employment, which tells a different story. This indicates that Indian students who pursue these courses may well experience inequalities.

Dhanda (2009 2010) studied the experiences of 'minority ethnic students' based on degree attainment. The research consisted of an analysis of quantitative module level data about Black and minority ethnic students' performance, and qualitative interviews with thirty-four Black and minority ethnic students. She learned that 'Black and minority ethnic students' have mixed feelings about the quality of support they receive from British White academic tutors, and they link the quality of their performance with the perceived ability of the tutor to make a module interesting. Her analysis also found that academic tutors do not expect enough from minority ethnic students, and do not challenge them, as they encourage them to read more widely or provide guidance on how to build their grades, which they felt does not allow them to excel

beyond a low or mid 2.2-degree outcome. Her analysis also found that students felt that they were most disadvantaged when modules concerned how to understand the concepts being used in seminars. The obstacles they encountered may well have resulted from a combination of their level of English and their class background (e.g. parental education level), although the students stated that the resources to assist them, such as 'office hours', served to provide only vague tips even when specific questions were asked.

Moreover, in 2006, Kimura et al. studied HE minority ethnic students' experiences within the broader context of the widening participation agenda, to examine the changing expectations of the role of HE in society. Within the context of social and economic changes in British society, and the challenges to the discourse of multi-culturalism, their research explored students' experiences of HE from year one after starting their degree to the initial stage of finding graduate employment. The project assessed stakeholders' perceptions of the effectiveness of HEI strategies and the policies designed to support (ME) participation. Their findings suggested career development is the most common reason for Black and minority ethnic students struggling. Students from non-professional families consider the diversity of universities that have a rich ethnic culture to be a positive characteristic during their degree course, although the majority mix with students of their own ethnic origin. The study also found that employability has become a contested issue, concluding that British students from minority ethnic groups are read differently within the labour market, with Indians and Chinese communities preferred over Black and Muslim students. Kimura et al. (2006) highlighted in particular, that minority UK domiciled students believe more contact with subject staff outside formal lectures or classes would improve their performance. However, the reality is that those who already possess cultural capital, i.e. the subconscious mindset that fits with how learning is engaged with by the dominant group, remain at an advantage.

4.6.2 The experiences and aspirations of students of British Asian background

As indicated above, the term British Asian can be used to refer to three groups. Thus, it is crucial to define the ethnic composition of the study sample when focusing on British Asians. To date, studies of British Asian students' experiences of HE have predominantly concentrated on those of the second generation; i.e. UK born women's reasons for participating in (post-1992) HE institutions, highlighting their experiences with tutors and in the context of traditional British Asian shared values, such as the patriarchy. A significant number of

qualitative studies have examined the experiences of UK born Pakistani and Bangladeshi students (e.g. Dwyer 2000; Dale et al. 2002a; Dale et al. 2002b; Ahmad 2001; Ahmad and Modood 2003; Ahmad et al. 2004; Dale 2005; Tyrer and Ahmad 2006; Li and Beckett 2006). Others have aimed to provide a general understanding of British Asian women's experiences of learning, and managing British Asian home and community life in tandem with studying, and their ambitions for employment (Rana et al. 1998; Abbas 2003; Bagguley and Hussain 2007; Hussain and Bagguley 2007; Kaur-Rana et al. 1998; Brown 2006; Basit 2017). Although, because of the persistent inequalities between Indian women and women from other British Asian groups, and the nature of daily news reports, which portray specific British Asian groups negatively or as dangerous (in response to terrorist related world events), the analysis of the majority of research has targeted Pakistani and Bangladeshi students' perspectives, as presented in the media (Modood 2003 2005 2013; Modood et al. 2006). Many scholars have also studied the relationship between religion, class and gender (Kalra 1980; Shaw 1994; Bhopal 1997). Research into British Asian men in education has placed the majority, if not all, emphasis on Pakistani and Bangladeshi boys, highlighting their perceptions of education (Archer 2001 2002 2003; Din and Cullingford 2006; Dwyer et al. 2008; Shah et al. 2010).

For instance, in the context of British born Muslim girls living in Oxford, where communities expect them to marry native Pakistanis, or from within the Pakistani community living in Oxford, Shaw (1994), demonstrated that, whilst only a small minority of girls at the time had attained higher qualifications, they had remained within the community, encountering few problems combining careers with arranged marriages, participating fully in family and community events. Similarly, Bhopal's research (1997b 2000), which was based on interviews, examined the intersection of gender and ethnicity making specific reference to Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women (studying at post-1992 universities), and how their participation in HE impacts upon women's responses to the issue of dowries (presents the bride's family is expected to give to signify their submission to the groom's family). It emerged that British Asian women who had accepted the assistance of third parties (parents, members of the community, extended relatives) to identify matches for them, thereby reproducing the practice of arranged marriages and rituals that degrade the role of women in society, were those who had accepted early marriages in favour of pursuing independence. In contrast, Bhopal (1997b 2000) observed, British Asian women who pursued degrees usually then rejected the practice of dowries and only accepted third party involvement to meet potential matches. The same study was repeated among British Asian women from all three British Asian groups studying social sciences and education degrees at post-1992 universities. This

time women from all British Asian groups accepted third party involvement, but Indian women had a far greater capacity to dictate and control when match-finding begins on their behalf, accessing stronger rights to negotiate. By contrast, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women explained they would be prepared to start the marriage process immediately their degrees were completed. They felt that their fathers had already been supportive enough by encouraging them to pursue degrees. The parents of ten of the fifteen participants in the study accessed non-professional roles, but the mothers and fathers of all Indian students were in full time employment, as opposed to the Pakistani and Bangladeshi students for whom neither the mother or father were unemployed or ill. Furthermore, all of the women in the study only had Asian or Black friends, with only the Indian friends having one or two White or White European friends. They had little understanding or clear direction regarding the occupations they would choose after completing their degrees, but they were certain that they would eventually (in the near future) marry. Bagguley and Hussain (2007) and *Hussain and Bagguley* (2007) reported similar findings, although they also reported that Pakistani and Bangladeshi women felt comfortable with women from British Asian working-class background, or indeed Black women as they were able to readily accept the diversity of one another's cultures, music and struggles to secure full time work. They reported that education policy requires adaptation, to recognise the nature of the difficulties Muslim women experience when embracing their religious identity. They also found that the parents of Indian women from working-class backgrounds are willing to accept British Western values. In some studies, it emerged that a positive consequence of HE and participation in economic activity (i.e. one which challenges traditional British Asian gender norms) was that it improves marriage prospects (Ahmad et al. 2003). Ahmad et al.'s (2003) research on British Asian female students and graduates also found that they struggle to negotiate with their parents, and that as a result learning an ethnic specific skill, such as making Asian bridal clothes, or becoming an Asian wedding make-up artist, or a nursery teacher are commonly identified as routes to happiness. It is noteworthy that the students in these studies were predominantly from backgrounds involving manual employment.

These studies reveal that earlier cohorts of UK born British Asian women accept aspects of traditional Asian norms. Their experiences are the product of ideologies, social practice and social structures, of which racism and class background are key determinants. Consequently, British Asian women, especially those with Muslim religious backgrounds are presented in the popular imagination, and some academic texts, as docile and submissive to family pressure. It

is supposed that they are unlikely to realise personal ambitions and desires, even if they wish to pursue conventional routes (Afshar 1994; Kalra 1980; Khanum 1995).

4.6.3 Private tutoring and ethnic minorities

Tutoring is considered to be a contemporary form of cultural capital in an objectified form (Maxwell 2016). It is an educational resource, used to enhance academic attainment, and to increase the value and experience of education (Diskin 2010; Vincent and Maxwell 2016). The private one-to-one tutoring business is a popular and highly effective form of education marketisation. It is believed to facilitate progress in the wider field. Minority ethnic groups in the UK rely heavily on private one to one tutoring, in core subjects. Parents without degrees, who are in professional employment, are very likely to depend on home tutors, and this trend is very evident in working-class British Asian homes (Modood 2012). Knowing that tutoring will facilitate access to HE and conventional post compulsory routes, demands a middle-class habitus (Reay et al. 2014). Economic capital plays a crucial role in accessing private home tutoring (Reay 1996; Vincent and Martin 2000; Vincent and Maxwell 2016). For pupils enrolled at local comprehensive schools, rather than non-fee paying or non-selective state schools (grammar), private tutoring can allow pupils to improve upon the school grades that teachers had previously predicted for them (Vincent and Martin 2000; Vincent and Maxwell 2016).

With regard to the British Asian community context, agencies such as Tutor House and Personal Tutors report that their database shows ‘Sikhs’ and Gujraati Hindus are amongst the most likely minority groups to access tutoring websites, and that they typically request maths and science tutors. Alex Dyer, director of private tutoring firm Tutor House, reported that British Indian parents, especially Hindu Gujarati parents, rely heavily on tutoring services. He reports that during initial consultations, parents clearly communicate that they require certain results in English, Maths and Science, despite the implications for subjects such as History, Geography, Art, or languages. He commented that British Indian parents find it ‘humorous’ if their tutors suggest tuition to support career options in sport, the voluntary sector, or art, as there is “still no real space for subjects like art, sport, music and drama for British Asians and especially Indians” (Dyer 2016: 1).

Furthermore, Turner (2017), Education Editor reports that young people from ethnic minority backgrounds have a far higher rate of private tuition than those from White British families,

according to a new piece of research by Sutton Trust. They reported the findings of a YouGov poll of over 2500 secondary school children, commissioned by researchers, which revealed that 56 percent of pupils from British Asian backgrounds, and 42 percent of Black students stated they had a tutor. A spokesperson from the Sutton Trust explained that high rates of private tuition among ethnic groups may reflect 'strong cultural appreciation of education'. The study (Extra Time) found that children from wealthier families are twice as likely to have received additional help, compared to those who make ends meet, observing that private tuition is the 'hidden secret' of British education, in an 'educational arms race' that reinforces the advantages of youngsters from 'richer homes' and that this is an important topic in education for social mobility (Sutton Trust 2017). Therefore, private tuition can exacerbate existing educational inequalities. Furthermore, based on findings from a major research project, presented at the BERA annual conference at Queen's University, a study (Harris 2015) specifically found that pupils from Chinese and Indian backgrounds are twice as likely to be doing more homework, than those with parents with Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds, because their parents demand it and have different ways of communicating in relation to educational matters. Likewise, another study by the Nuffield Foundation in 2016 revealed a sharp rise in private tuition amongst some minority ethnic groups in the UK. Children from Chinese, Black and Indian backgrounds are more than twice as likely to receive private tuition. The researchers investigated a group of 19,000 children born from 2000-2001 to investigate how they spend their time outside of school. The figures revealed that of those who receive tuition at age 7 20 percent were from Indian backgrounds, whilst just 3 percent were White. They learned that 48 percent of the pupils in this group were from Chinese backgrounds. Nuffield's research suggests that school league tables, which are in large part based on students' results, may be 'heavily influenced' by tuition, which takes place outside of school. The study reported that evidence regarding why pupils with minority ethnic parents seek private tuition more than White pupils was inconclusive, and they called for further nuanced research.

These studies show that where minority ethnic parents in Britain may be under-represented in fee-paying private schools, they draw on private home tutoring services to fill in the gaps in learning and effort which arise in schools, investing time, effort, and hope into those who readily come to school to learn. Arguably certain minorities see higher returns on private tutoring than others, due to the way their ethnic group is perceived in the social structure.

4.6.4 Research that has reconstructed and problematised conventional understandings of 'success' in relation to minority groups

The majority of UK educational and social mobility policy is framed around notions of educational under/achievement. Nevertheless, a small body of work has begun to focus on notions of 'success'. For example, researchers have explored educational success among 'dominant' groups, including British White middle-class families (Ball 2003; Power et al. 2003) and White, middle-class girls (Delamont 1989; Walkerdine et al. 2001). Research has also been conducted into White middle-class British HE students' reasons for studying at universities outside the UK (Brooks and Waters 2009). Research into what comprises success has also been undertaken with pupils from underachieving minority groups whose experiences could be read as successful in conventional terms; e.g. Black boys from professional backgrounds (Rollock 2006), Muslim women (Ahmad 2001), and working-class women (Mahony and Zmroczek 1997). Much research has focused on students from non-dominant groups; i.e. those studying at former polytechnic universities who have experienced conventional forms of social mobility (e.g. Reay et al. 2001; Read et al. 2003; Leathwood and O'Connell 2003; Archer and Hutchings 2005; Bowl 2003).

These studies reveal the highly problematic nature of acceptance, as it is perceived and experienced within the education field and beyond. They reveal that economic capital is a key obstacle to attaining a degree, and highlight how, coming from a working-class socio-economic and educational background, middle-class aspirations, a non-White race, or a specific ethnicity produce a complex learning experience and different journey towards realisation of middle-class status. Importantly, these studies have not simply sought to identify the factors that contribute to success for minority ethnic students, and for students and individuals from non-professional backgrounds. In addition, they problematise and provide examples of the complex and nuanced nature of the meaning of success in Britain. They draw attention to the continued hardships, tensions and inequalities experienced by successful pupils. In doing so, based on an analysis of four different studies with pupils from British Chinese and British Asian backgrounds, British White teachers, Archer and Francis (2006) constructed a model that provides four broadly defined types of success on the basis of conventional definitions of success (i.e. according to the White middle-class and upper class). The following table does not display different ideas of success, in the sense that they are not definitions of success based on

the perspectives of different groups of students, but are types of success that British White teachers associate with class and ethnic specific groups.

Table 4.1 Archer and Francis' (2006) success framework based on teachers' perceptions

Type of success	Characterisation	Predominant type of student associated with
Traditional academic success	Highest level of academic achievement in all national examinations Desired gold standard achievement	White middle-class boys and girls Chinese boys and girls Some British Asian (non-Muslim) pupils e.g. high achieving, professional background Indian pupils
Good enough success	Middle levels of academic achievement Seen as good, but problematic and unrealistic	Black girls Muslim and working-class Indian pupils Some Chinese boys White working-class girls
Value-added success	Relational measure, reflecting average levels of achievement reached from considerably lower point Does not attract much resources or attention in practice	Working-class pupils (especially girls) Bangladeshi, Black Pakistani pupils, especially those from non-professional backgrounds
Desired-denied and potential success	A relationship to success in the absence of a recognised actual level of examination attainment Problematic and requiring intervention	Working-class pupils Black boys and girls Muslim boys and some Muslim girls English as an additional language students/refugees

Table extracted from Archer and Francis (2006: 92)

From this categorisation, we can see that pupils from Indian and Chinese groups are in the first instance, considered the most legitimately successful minority students. Other ethnic groups are associated with failure, or adopt an otherwise problematic version of success. However, a

detailed analysis of British White teachers shows that even for students from these two minorities, who go on to produce outstanding GCSE results, they adopt a wrong and over-burdened approach to achieving their results. Thus, success is not entirely based on their natural ability, but rather an unrealistic degree of pushing and unhealthy revision techniques. Archer and Francis (2006) addressed the fact that middle-class ethnic minority groups are also victims of inequality, as they are considered to be merely imitating the middle-classes. Nevertheless, students from these minorities are still likely to be read in the first instance as coming from homes that are cultured and arranged according to what Archer and Francis (2006) refer to as 'diasporic habitus'; i.e. an ethnic specific upbringing of the pupil, or in other words an ethnic specific middle-class form of habitus. Moreover, arguing, that the system depends educationally and occupationally on middle-class minority groups to justify its efficiency, Mau (2018) and Wong (2015) explored the educational successes of British Chinese pupils, who are synonymously recognised as a model minority, due to their tendency to achieve exceptional grades. Wong conducted twenty-three semi-structured interviews with students aged 11-14, to consider whether these particular children identified with labels such as 'model minority', and how they perceive their educational success. Mau's (2018) research involving British Chinese pupils similarly concerned the lack of understanding of 'successful' minorities in Britain. Focusing on anthropological context. She examined how British Chinese young people constructed their identity as either Chinese and/or British, and drew attention to the contexts in which Chinese children find themselves valuing both ethnicities equally, rather than viewing their identity as either one or the other. This research draws our attention to the fact that young people, who might be read as successful by the system due to their ethnicity, are not truly understood or known, requiring examination by scholars from different disciplines.

In line with Archer and Francis' (2005 2006) findings from the interviews with teachers, Bagguley and Hussain's (2007) research with British Asian working-class Indian and Muslim (women) students clarified that parents place multiple expectations upon children from a young age, especially directing them towards certain subjects. Their qualitative analysis finds, in line with Richardson (2008 2015), and Leslie (2005), that parental over involvement can lead to insecurity within the child, prompting them to make poor choices, thereby delaying their true occupational aspirations. The Chinese children in Wong's research felt a need to deal with the fear of failure, because of their reputation of not achieving high grades or prioritising revision for certain subjects. This is too damaging and unbearable for the family within the

respective Indian and/or Chinese diaspora in Britain, as this is an understanding repeated in the UK across anthropological disciplines since the 1970s (Wong 2015).

In Francis and Archer (2005), Archer and Francis' (2006), Mau's (2018) and Wong's (2015) research, types of success were rooted in the teacher's notion of what comprises 'wrong' and 'right' forms of embodied cultural capital, such as certain tones of language, body language when sitting at the table, brands worn (e.g. Nike hoodies, laughing or speaking loudly on their way into lessons), how uniform is adapted by students, and inconsistency in the submission of homework. These were identified by Rollock in her research of Black boys (Vincent et al. 2012 2013; Rollock et al. 2012), when exploring the educational experiences and strategies of 62 Black Caribbean parents; this was the largest qualitative study of education undertaken with the Black middle-classes. They found that Black parents and their children are subjected to frequent criticism by teachers, in comprehensive and grammar school settings. They suggest that Black boys and men in particular are at risk of being read as deviant, and as having a negative effect on students from other minorities. Their research demonstrates race inequality, and social class inequality; although the former in particular continues to hinder Black children from reaching their fullest potential, and social class background does not guarantee success in conventional terms. Furthermore, Bradford and Hey (2007) explored young people's understanding 'of success', by investigating those studying at multi-ethnic schools in West London. It considered ways in which 'discourses of success', as part of New Labour's project of inventing schooling, might shape young people's subjectivity. The study examined articulations between new Labour policy and various aspects of class difference, and how these inform how individuals identify success. In particular, the study reviewed how class, gender and ethnicity shape discourses of success, and how they are implicated in their distribution. Their analysis revealed how current education policy, particularly in relation to educational success, articulates the public domain with discourses of the private self, and they suggest that this understanding is a vital component of the pursuit of social justice.

4.6.5 Research that has reconstructed and problematised conventional understandings of 'success' in relation to working-class White British individuals

There is also another body of research that problematises British social mobility and educational policy. This has largely focused on British White students, who are regarded as one of the least aspirational populations amongst the wider working-class population in Britain,

including those from minority groups. It demonstrates that failure and success is intertwined with the process of students' construction of their own identity (e.g. Reay 2002; Stahl 2010; Demie and Lewis 2006 2011; McDowell 2011; Ingram 2013 2014; Willis 2017). The discourse of a 'deficit of aspiration' (Demie and Lewis 2006) has been identified by this particular group, and within broader constructions of working-class White definitions (based on for instance White working-class women) (Reay 2002 2009; Skeggs 2013) as well as mixed race working-class mothers' experiences perceptions regarding intimidation by White middle-class mothers/women (McKenzie 2014). A key factor that has been associated with White working-class boys for instance is their anti-social behaviour (Gove 2011). Demie and Lewis (2011) examine the key barriers to understanding how to raise the attainment of White British pupils from low income backgrounds. Their case study and focus groups demonstrated that parents have low aspirations regarding their children's education and a negative attitude towards conventional success formulae, which are attributable to their marginalisation within the community. This is worsened by teachers' lack of aspiration and hopes for White working-class children, which are apparent from how teachers erode working-class children's self-esteem. They observed that schools do little or nothing to break the cycle of poverty and disadvantage. A White Paper entitled 'The Importance of Teaching' asserts that good teachers instil an ethos suggesting aspiration serves as a simple antidote to complex problems (Department for Education 2010).

Research by Ingram (2009 2011, and 2014) and Bradley and Ingram (2014) on 'gateways to success' echoes this finding. Drawing on qualitative interviews with White British working-class boys, conducted in Belfast, they mediated the local habitus of working-class boys. Elsewhere, research by Stahl (2010 2014) studied the subjectivities of working-class White males aged 14-17, living in multi-ethnic parts of South London. White working-class male narratives emphasise loyalty to self in discourses relating to aspiration. The study found the 23 working-class boys' habitus underwent complex identity transformations when reconciling competing and contrasting notions of aspiration. These studies combat conventional routes to social mobility and mainstream ideas about success, principally by discovering and providing examples of the very complex nature of what it is to be middle-class in Britain, using methods that allow an understanding of the various faces of inequality.

These studies have aimed to explicitly acknowledge that 'success' is a term that needs to be thoroughly contextualised through different populations; whether ethnic-specific or middle-class (e.g. Black Caribbean middle-class, *see* Vincent et al. 2013; White British working-class

boys Ingram 2014). This has expanded knowledge, demonstrating that for non-White British middle-class students, the process of pursuing and accessing middle-class routes to social mobility is highly complex, demanding constant conscious reflection on habitus (Ingram 2014), and requiring elicitation of the ethnic natures of dominant cultural capital (e.g. Chinese specific values (Archer and Francis 2006a, 2006b).

4.6.6 Research on British White middle-class students

A small body of work has prioritised the need to study students from the dominant group: British White middle-class students as Britain becomes a highly socially, ethnically and economically diverse nation (Savage and Irvine 2015). Participation in HE, and racial policies that enforce universities to promote racial diversity are factors that have led White middle-class mothers to make 'choices' carefully, with diverse populations in mind (Lawler 2005; Crozier et al. 2008; Reay 2008; Mendez 2008; Reay et al. 2008; Reay et al. 2011), and British White middle-class students even consider HE routes outside the UK. Brooks and Waters (2009 2010) examined the motivations and experiences of British White middle-class students wishing to review the strategies they take to preserve their class background and retain middle-class status. Success has been defined narrowly, as ability to access the elite universities, enter highly successful careers. Their research shows that British (White) students who are privileged frequently study in universities outside of the UK to ensure they gain elite qualifications, as middle-class British students adapt to insure their class inheritance (Brooks and Waters 2009). The problems encountered to relate to students' perceptions of success, or their narrow definitions of the same, but are deeply embedded within the social structure, which it is beyond their capacity to change. These students simply take responsibility for protecting their access to social mobility; they do not make rules, and nor do they possess the habitus that prepares them to enter the field.

4.7 Conclusions and messages from this review

This review has clarified that class differences between British Indians and British Chinese families and other minorities have been relatively stable since the 1980s. Indian and Chinese pupils are located at the top in terms of education success, relative to the other minorities. This is a broad statement, however, and there are no explicit statements regarding how British White dominant groups define success in policy documents. Nevertheless, there are recognisable trends that allow minorities to access conventional post compulsory routes and more prestigious forms of HE. These support a clearer understanding of what constitutes a

traditional idea of success in the west (*habitus*), which then inform us to whether an individual is resourced correctly, as evidenced by their progression within the education, and employment fields. Within the minority population, the majority of Indian individuals are read as more dominant than those from other Black (especially Muslim) British Asian groups. The evidence also informs us that the reasons for this can be associated with Britain's history of colonisation and slave trading. Inequalities in social mobility destinations do not simply exist between White and non-White students, or between middle-class and working-class individuals, but between specific ethnic, racial and class groups.

The review further revealed that even when pupils from minorities have parents with a middle-class occupation, education and cultural profile (I use culture in an abstract middle-class sense), they continue to experience ethnic disadvantage, although they are read as normal, because they mirror the culture of dominant middle-class race. Racism and ethnicity combine with social concerns as powerful factors that inform our understanding of minority students. At present, minority ethnic students experience racial and ethnic inequality; Black groups experience racism and ethnic inequality with regard to embodied cultural capital; Pakistanis and Bangladeshi's experience both ethnic and racial discrimination on religious grounds; and Chinese students experience ethnic inequality. Similarly, White British working-class students experience ethnic inequality on social class groups, which are related to Black Caribbean students. Working-class Indian students are expected to maintain their ethnic ties and pursue non-competitive courses, but may access HE and work more rapidly than working-class students from Muslim British Asian groups. Meanwhile, middle-class Indian students, who constitute the majority of the Indian group are subject to considerable contradictions, because on one side their over-representation in medicine and law courses is translated as success, as it leads to their greater representation in higher professional medicine and law jobs. However, within the educational literature a long standing concern has been unrealistic aspirations and wider understanding of the reasons for pursuing science and maths careers.

The chapter has also explained that knowledge about the British Indian students/group is largely descriptive and overly simplistic. It lacks nuance and portrays them as a homogenous group. The review shows that knowledge about the reproduction of Indians and Chinese as successful in conventional terms has not been examined from an internal standpoint. The existing literary structure has reproduced them as more successful than other groups, although the influence of agency is lacking. There is an understanding in the school system that British Indian and Chinese students are forced to study and are habituated in an unhealthy way when

securing conventional routes. This supposition lacks direct evidence from students from the Indian group. Broader constructions of success, including of the nature and scope of social reproductions of class are missing from how middle-class minority groups in Britain relate. In the next chapter, I therefore present the outcome of the reviews of previous work, formulating research questions.

Chapter Five: Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines both the personal and academic rationale for the research. It includes a discussion of the wider debates within the sociology of education (i.e. race and ethnicity), as well as the specific focus, aims and objectives of the current research. The study responds to the findings of the literature, as well as to (as discussed above) the educational and historical, British Asian and White Western cultural context. It therefore focuses on a distinctive group of British middle-class students of Indian origin who are pursuing vocational middle-class aspirations, typically at high status universities. The study examines their strategies to secure places on dentistry, pharmacy and law degree courses, including at prestigious universities, through the means of understanding their wider meanings of success. I have chosen to focus on a small group of minority ethnic students in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of a narrow group of middle-class Indian students; i.e. those studying specific subjects. I identified a number of research questions which enabled me to move beyond simplistic (i.e. descriptive) debates about British Indians regarding educational success, and to contribute towards the body of research on complicating and developing nuance about the process of achieving educational success that is specific to different minority groups.:

1. *How do British Indian dentistry, pharmacy and LLB Law students define the phrase 'being successful'? (Primary research question)*
2. *Which factors do British Indian dentistry, pharmacy and LLB students associate with being successful and how?*
3. *What do British Indian dentistry, pharmacy and LLB students understand about the meaning of success? And, does their understanding influence their decision to apply for specific courses and specific universities? If so, how?*

The research questions enable me to widen conceptualisations of 'educational and occupational success for the British Indian group' by discovering how they understand this term. The research questions have been designed to be simultaneously broad and specific at the same time. The following questions were developed as the basis for the current research. My aim was to create a more realistic, insightful, and nuanced understanding about British Indian students' reasons for deciding to apply for dentistry, pharmacy and law courses. These can allow the theoretical and conceptual framework to be applied considering these academically successful students. The following section discusses ontological and

epistemological viewpoints, along with the methodological approach for addressing these questions.

5.1.1 The ontological view

Ontology is concerned with the existence of shared social reality (Lewis and Ritchie 2013), and in particular whether social reality and the world exist independently of human knowledge (i.e. the realist view), or are an outcome of social construction, (i.e. knowledge is entirely dependent on how human beings make sense of their understanding and experiences within, and of, the world). In addition, the ontological view, known as 'subtle idealism/relativist' (Patton 2015) considers whether social reality is based on multiple realities. This research focusses on the formation and nature of the concept of success in the UK. This has already been discussed in relation to a number of different groups of students, based on their social background (i.e. class, ethnicity, race and gender) and the influence of their family environment (i.e. whether households are considered to possess an appropriate set of resources). Likewise, the research questions consider the significance of the view of success as held by middle-class British students of Indian origin who are preparing to become dentists, pharmacists, lawyers and barristers.

The research questions are consistent with the relativist viewpoint, in terms of examining how academically successful British Indian students construct personal meanings of success, in relation to specific degree courses. It can thus be considered that, in this research, 'being successful' is a socially constructed concept, based on the perspective of British Indian students. The research questions also assume that knowledge of the world is dependent on a factor termed by social scientists as 'context', i.e. in this case exploring the construction of success as understood by HE students. The focus is on broadening existing concepts of success (including the process) using a narrow context based on specific indicators of class and ethnicity. The focus would therefore have been placed primarily on identifying the factors associated with success, without identifying the context/experiences and circumstances leading to a specific factor being associated with success. However, I have followed an epistemological and ontological perspective, which argues that the constructions of a socially constructed term cannot be pre-assumed. My chosen ontological view also influences the creation of the answers to these research questions, along with my own role as the researcher. Thus, some aspects of the epistemological focus are discussed following the completion of the fieldwork.

5.1.2 The epistemological perspective

Epistemology is a set of assumptions about society or the world, primarily concerned with: (1) *what* can be known; (2) *who* can know it; and (3) *how* the knower and the known impact on the answers to the research questions (Harding 1987). The two opposite poles of 'knowing' about social reality are generally referred to as subjectivist and objectivist (Cohen et al. 2000) and represent different ways of observing and interpreting social reality (Burrell and Morgan 1979). The epistemological stance reflected in the current research questions is firmly rooted at the subjectivist end of the continuum. This research therefore focusses on the subjective and personal knowledge of British Indian first-degree dentistry, pharmacy and LLB law students (Bryman 2015), who are acknowledging the inherent influence of objective structures (field) (Bourdieu 1989). Subjectivism is consistent with the subtle relativist ontological view of the world, as reflected by the aim and the questions in the current research. Unlike the objectivist view, the subjectivist viewpoint emphasises the socially constructed nature of reality (Seale 1999; Walsh and Downe 2006) and is characterised by an interpretivist research paradigm (Mack 2010).

A paradigm provides a theoretical understanding of key aspects of the following: (1) the workings of the social or natural world; (2) the nature of research participants and research phenomena; and (3) what constitutes knowledge in the context of research (Denzin 2000; Willies and Jost 2007). Guba and Lincoln (1994) categorised the main paradigms as: (1) positivism; (2) post-positivism; (3) critical theory; and (4) Interpretivism/social constructivism. It should be noted that this classification remains influential (Guba 1990; Cupchick 2001; Gephart 2004), including research examining the workings of conventional ideas of success, such as the current study. The positivist approach is primarily associated with quantitative research. Positivism has been considered inappropriate for use with many forms of social research (Silverman 2013), due to assuming an objective and external reality upon which an inquiry can focus (Denzin and Lincoln 1994). On the other hand, post-positivist approaches to social research are more flexible, while remaining committed to the 'natural scientific method', i.e. emphasising that the researcher should not exert a personal influence over the research (Marshall and Rossman 2014: 6). By contrast, the critical theory paradigms (i.e. Interpretivism) are consistent with concepts of subjective knowledge, and thus reject the idea that research can be value-free, arguing that researchers form part of any social reality and phenomena they might study (Marshall and Rossman 2014).

However, although critical theory and interpretivism are both entirely consistent with subjective knowledge, the former paradigm tends to look at the world through a 'political lens' (Kincheloe and McLaren 2011: 212). It can therefore be considered more suitable for studying phenomena and groups that are significantly marginalised, vulnerable, or disadvantaged by the way capitalism exerts power (Berg and Lune 2004). Thus, the goal of critical theory is often the 'emancipation of the oppressed' (Creswell et al. 2007: 240). Although the critical theory paradigm (unlike positivism or post-positivism) recognises that the researcher will inevitably influence the nature of knowledge, this was not the case in relation to the current research questions. The participants of this research were relatively advantaged, in particular in relation to students from other minority groups. I therefore did not consider them as oppressed, marginalised or disadvantaged, particularly as they accessed courses requiring a certain level of social privilege. On the other hand, I felt they could be viewed as having been marginalised under the condition of the production of knowledge concerning the nature of success, along with the process of social mobility for minority ethnic students. However, I did not consider them to have been excluded from society in political or 'emancipatory terms' (Patton 2005). In addition, the interpretivist paradigm focusses on human beings' understanding of social reality. It therefore considers that the researcher must acquire knowledge about social reality according to the perspective of the participants, while also emphasising the role of context, i.e. aspects of the researcher's own life as they relate to the participants' perspectives. It thus believes that explanations concerning social reality can only be offered at the level of meaning, rather than cause (Patton 2005; Creswell 2008).

The above section examined the various elements of epistemology, which are concerned with the relationship of the knower and known, and how this influences the production of knowledge. This is now followed by a discussion of the various methodological decisions I made concerning the collection of data and the recruitment of participants.

5.3 The qualitative approach

The philosophical assumption underpinning qualitative or interpretive research is that reality is a construct determined by the interaction of individuals with their social world (Merriam 1998). It is further concerned with how individuals interpret their social reality (Bryman 2015). Qualitative research pays particular attention to humanising both the researcher (i.e. as an active individual) and the research subjects (i.e. as human beings with rights and feelings).

The current research questions require a nuanced and complex understanding of British Indian students, potentially experiencing fewer ethnic and class inequalities than minority students from other ethnic groups. The questions focus on the personal perspective of these students, i.e. one that is not influenced by how they are perceived in the literature. Although quantitative methods have a reputation for producing knowledge that is generalisable to wider and larger populations, they can also lose the significance of the context of the data capable when revealing a specific perspective or factor. In the current research, this includes the nuanced understanding of the construction of meanings of success in the context of the students' ethnicity and class background, which provides useful contexts for the development of the underlying context of inequality. Douglas (1976) observed that sociologists engage in exploring the 'social meanings' of 'any group's activities', and in doing so they:

Necessarily rely, at some level, upon their own common-sense experience in society. Thus, their own subjective experience is ultimately the basis of all their imputations of meanings to the people they are trying to understand scientifically. (Douglas 1976: 24)

I therefore adopted a generic qualitative approach to address my research questions (Merriam 1998). Merriam (1998 2002) states that a generic qualitative research approach is required when research questions are not designed to study a particular culture, build a theory, or study the life histories of individuals, but rather, as in the case of the current research, seek to understand perspectives and worldviews in relation to a topic, or socially constructed problem/idea. The research questions symbolise the main characteristics of qualitative research. For example, I am aware that there are many different research approaches that also consider established approaches to qualitative research, including: (1) phenomenology (i.e. the study of subjective experience); (2) ethnography (i.e. the study of the everyday cultures and traditions of a group of people); and (3) narrative (i.e. individuals' lives as told through their own stories) (Lewis 2015; Cooper and Endacott 2007).

The key characteristics of the qualitative approach are a focus on meaning rather than behaviour, and involve taking an inductive rather than a deductive approach to knowledge, i.e. based on prior assumptions concerning the research subject (Hammersley 1995 2003; Gillham 2000). An inductive approach was considered consistent with my research questions, i.e. rather than deciding variables in advance and 'pigeon holing' participants into standardised categories (Patton 2005: 56), the study aimed to contextualise the findings into the participants' own words, allowing dimensions and patterns to emerge directly from the data. This was due to my questioning of the concept of being a completely value-free researcher, preferring to view the current study with an unbiased framework, as advocated by the

positivist epistemological stance. This is in accordance with Braun and Clarke's (2013) argument that:

Neither us [social researchers], nor the participants, are robots. We are both alive and flawed. Is this a problem that the social researchers are human, alive and flawed like the humans they are studying? Absolutely not. We are human beings, and that's all we can do [be human], so instead we have to be reflexive about these things [our role as researcher] in our research. (Braun and Clarke 2013: 36)

5.3.1 Choosing an appropriate qualitative data collection method

As indicated by the research questions, this current research focussed on gaining a complex understanding of class and ethnic specific meanings concerning success and the contexts of meanings. The goal was not to stimulate discussion *amongst* middle-class Indian British students, but to probe each other's responses. The aim of this research was to produce a meaningful and detailed understanding of the aspects that the students *personally* consider to be signs of success, based on their motivation for applying to certain universities. In order to address the research questions, it was therefore important to choose a method of data collection that would neither bias nor interrupt their responses, but rather assist them in not feeling overly conscious of the views of their fellow students (Morgan 1996; Kendall 2008). This was particularly so as I wished to establish an understanding of a meaning of success that was in-depth and specific to each participant's personal reasons for applying to study his/her course. I consider that focus group interviews cannot be truly personal, as they elicit personal perspectives produced within a particular group or group setting (Kitzinger 1995; Morgan 1996; Krueger and Casey 2014). This might therefore have resulted in difficulties ensuring that the beliefs expressed by the British Indian undergraduates in relation to success were deeply personal. I therefore felt it important to identify any potential influence on their perspectives from their biography, including aspects of: (1) community; (2) family; (3) education/schooling; (4) parental background; and (5) any obstacles they might have overcome. The use of focus groups could have led to the views of some participants being heard more loudly than their peers, resulting in inconsistent data, which would not have been a fair representation of the participants' perspectives. This could have resulted in a meaningless analysis (Patton 2005; Mason 2010).

5.3.2 Individual qualitative interviews

The term 'interview' is generally viewed as denoting success, dominance and authority. In addition, interviews are the primary tool to use to gain inspiration from influential individuals, i.e. celebrities, film stars, and political figures. Thus, qualitative, one to one interviews are often reserved for those considered particularly successful in a variety of contexts, i.e. individuals considered unique or exceptional (Brinkmann and Kvale 2008). Such interviews take place to facilitate lessons delivered in the form of biographies representing the lives of celebrities. This premise has led researchers to seek to learn from those considered experts' experiences, especially those who have experienced some form of disadvantage as a consequence of the existing social system. By contrast, the current research wishes to learn from individuals perceived to have a number of differences from other minority ethnic groups, while, at the same time, students tend to be perceived as more effective examples of ethnic minority citizens.

Gerson and Horowitz (2002: 201) suggested that one-to-one interviews exploring a specific theme with well-placed individuals provide an opportunity to solve empirical puzzles. My choice when using such qualitative interviews was influenced by the use of the concept 'habitus', which encourages a focus on subjectivity, personal background and personal influences to capture influences and stories that are relevant to home and family life. Bourdieu (1993: 86) noted that habitus is narrative, as it "refers to something historical: one's background. It is linked to an individual's history and biography". Individual interviews thus form a beneficial method of data collection in the presence of a habitus (or an ethnic-and class specific habitus), as an interpretive method of analysing data (Baxter and Eyles 1997). In particular, it brings into focus the subjective elements of personal life and thought.

The one to one interviews examined the micro social processes experienced by these particular students. In addition, they allowed me to "focus attention on individual biographies, which become a lens through which to view social contexts, and those individual lives are seen to embody larger structural and cultural formations" (Baxter and Eyles 1997: 507). Individual qualitative interviews are considered a meaning-making exercise (Holstein and 2002; Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). The specific type of qualitative questioning approach utilised in this current research is discussed later in the current chapter. As both the interviewer and the researcher in this study, I was inevitably creating meaning (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009).

Holstein and Gubrium (2002: 113) emphasised the active nature of interviewing, observing that meaning is not simply gained by asking specific questions, or by their outcome. In addition, they noted that meaning is “actively communicated in the context of the interview encounter”. Although it is important for the researcher to make the participant feel he/she is taking part in a conversation, interviews differ from everyday conversations (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). As discussed in further detail below, I took care as the interviewer to put the majority of the questions in a manner designed to make the participants feel they were engaging in a casual conversation. It should be noted that I shared only one aspect in common with the participants, i.e. an interest in the notion of ‘success’ and the meaning of ‘being successful’.

The stage of building rapport between myself and the students played a key role in ensuring the participants did not merely answer a list of questions, but felt able to speak confidently and with a sense of responsibility towards the social world. Thus, the rapport stage in the current study was vital for effective data collection. I was aware that the rapport stage can determine the degree of richness gained about the participant’s life and their underlying views. For example, I ensured the participants in the current study began to feel at ease between our meeting point and arrival at the location for the interview, with many already conversing with me about aspects associated with their families, friendships and details of their course. Both these spaces were within the university grounds, and chosen by the participants. Although the selection of the questioning approach underwent a degree of careful consideration, many aspects raised by the interviewees had been already touched upon during the ten to fifteen minutes used to build a rapport. I observed that, once the recorder was turned on, the participants immediately abandoned their previous conversation, shifting their focus to a discussion of the nature of the introductory question. However, I took additional notes about specific comments made during the rapport stage, for which the participants gave full permission.

5.3.3 Types of qualitative interviews

Three types of interviews tend to be employed during research: (1) *structured*, (2) *semi structured*, and (3) *unstructured/narrative* (Stuckey 2013). The nature of questioning varies considerably between these three broad forms of questioning. Firstly, structured one-to-one interviews are not considered a strictly qualitative method of data collection, due to their

reliance on a rigid format, and because they rely on specific sets of questions. The questions put in a structured interview are designed to tightly control the data elicited by the research participants, to enable the researcher to follow a specific set of questions in a predetermined order, with the participant being given the choice of only a limited number of responses; i.e. a controlled response. The unstructured approach relies on individuals' navigating and controlling the structure of the interview, thus providing the basis for how an understanding into the construction of their decision making to apply for medicine and law are formed, including their wider understandings of success. However, researchers can draw on structured and unstructured questioning styles, i.e. by having an outline of topics to be covered present, while the interviewee's response determines the direction of that specific topic in the interview; such questioning is generally considered semi-structured.

Either way, the researcher is influenced by their main research aim and their research questions (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). Researchers need to follow a style of questioning that captures data that is relevant for answering their research questions. This may even mean that researchers' style of questioning includes two types, such as having broad questions that are reliant on probing, and prompting, and specific questions that at times lead to satisfaction about the level of understanding of a certain response or topic at the end. The pilot stage is designed to further help clarify the style of questioning (Siedman 2012). The goal is to achieve reliable and relevant data.

There are also specific natures of questioning that have to be further considered in relation to unstructured and semi structured interviewing (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009); The following sessions outline each form, and are followed by a discussion of the approach I used in accordance with:

1. *Discursive interviews*: these focus on *how* individuals use *language* to reject specific activities and identities. All interviews are naturally discursive and imply different discourses. Researchers conducting qualitative interviews from a discursive perspective tend to pay more attention to specific aspects of the interaction of the interview discourse, which differ from conventional qualitative interviewing. Discursive interviewing focuses on how something was said in response to a broad question (Kvale 2008).
2. *Phenomenological interviews* combine life history interviewing with focused and in-depth interviewing, which is informed by assumptions drawn from phenomenology (i.e.

an exploration of the subjects' experiences of a specific event) (Englander 2012; Kvale 2009). For this approach, researchers primarily (but not exclusively) use *open-ended* questions (Fielding and Thomas 2008; Englander 2012), focussed on the participant reconstructing his or her experiences within the topic being studied.

3. *Conceptual interviews/semi-structured interviews* are considered vital for conceptual clarification, and explore the meaning and conceptual dimensions of central terms. Conceptual interviews are effective when exploring accepted assumptions about certain notions and concepts (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). Although the aim of the current research was to gain an understanding of a particular group's meaning of success (i.e. a choice to pursue a course in medicine or law), it was vital to ensure this could be achieved *within the context* of their own lives, and so they were encouraged to draw on real life situations they felt were significant. The focus was thus to achieve a personal representation of the meaning of success from this group of students, resulting in the adoption of an unstructured (i.e. narrative) style of questioning.
4. *Narrative interviews/unstructured interviews* take the form of unstructured questions centred on the participants' stories, using plots and structures of relevance to their own lives. Such stories may arise spontaneously during an interview, or from a response to a broad introductory question (Rosenthal 1993; Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). In a narrative interview, the researcher can encourage the participant to speak in more detail about an aspect of their life relating to the research aim or objective. The researcher may ask for a life story, opening with a choice of the following: (1) "Please tell me about your life"; (2) "Please could you introduce yourself"; (3) "Please tell me something about what brought you to study this course"; and (4) "Please tell me how the decision to apply to this course was made".

The focus of the research was on gaining a nuanced understanding of why British Indian students apply for certain medicine courses and for law degree courses based on their wider understanding of success ideology. Because the focus was on understanding process, the style of questioning required questions that were broad, open ended and that at the same time enabled participants to feel as though they were having a conversation. I wanted the first question to also elicit various aspects of their biography. In the current study, I tended to open with the question "So, could you introduce yourself?". I only needed to ask one further specific question during the course of the interview (i.e. "Tell me how the decision to apply to this course was made?"). This was only required when the answer to the former question had failed

to move beyond a description of the objective aspects of the participants' background (e.g. parents' jobs, age and geographical location). I found that one of these questions almost always resulted in the participant discussing their degree course openly. As in the interviews, I recognised that the researcher's role almost always changes to that of 'prober' and 'prompter' through the use of facial expressions (i.e. nods) to ensure the participant feels even more comfortable talking in depth than at the rapport stage. During the course of the current research, I therefore used a combination of probing, prompting, and facial expressions as the core strategies in narrative interviews. Aspects of semi-structured questioning were not entirely removed from the questioning style, because it was important to ensure that understanding the participants' reasons for choosing to study *specific* medicine degrees and law were gained.

It has been previously noted that research participants can sense a level of interest in their point of view, based on the researcher's approach to listening and lack of desire to hurry the conversation. This then allows the participant to give informative responses (Rosenthal 1993). I therefore found narrative interviews an effective form of data collection for these particular students, as it highlighted the role of their home, school and family background and family attitudes, revealing the scope of habitus and cultural capital. This approach allowed the everyday reality of the participants' lives to be inserted into the body of knowledge concerning British students of Indian origin, and in particular those applying for courses that (as identified in the review) lacked direct responses in the literature.

However, it is also important to acknowledge that the narrative interview approach requires the researcher to be mindful of the aims of the research, along with the research questions, as these form the focus of each unstructured interview. This questioning approach enables the participant to express his/her own perspective, in as much detail as they require, based on values they consider important, while using their own frame of reference and ideas. This interview method thus enables the research participants to possess their own agency and express their personal perspective and interpretation of the structure. In addition, the interviewer offers general guidance to maintain the narrative. This method therefore has some overlap with the semi-structured interview, in that the interviewer may have a very simple schedule, which might not be strictly adhered to in unstructured interviews. This ensures the data can be contextualised according different aspects of the participants' biography and experiences, i.e. that it is nuanced rather than influenced. I therefore considered flexibility vital when using this approach; thereby producing themes that are broad, unexpected but also

meaningful for addressing my research question. The narrative approach allowed me to elicit those aspects the participants saw as contributing to success, along with relevant stories and experiences. Narrative interviews were appropriate for the current context, as their form prevented the researcher from disrupting their flow. The rich contextual data achieved by this approach resulted in the formulation of a comprehensive and complex picture, one that was neither partial nor lacking in detailed context.

During the interviews, the answers were elicited with careful prompting and probing, which resulted in: (1) additional information concerning the participant's relevant event/experience/viewpoint (i.e. their subject or an individual they associated with success); or (2) suggested a question that did not involve the researcher saying 'why' (Ten Have 2004), which can result in participants lacking confidence in their answers, therefore influencing their subconscious. I thus ensured I focused on encouraging them to express their natural perspective on some aspect of their HE choices (i.e. the subject). This study was therefore in accord with Lee (1999: 104), who pointed out that (in contrast to structured and semi-structured interviewing) unstructured interviews elicit nuanced themes and findings and reach beneath the surface.

Researchers might wish to have only minimal control over the data/conversation, but at the same time they need to steer the conversation, in order to maintain the interviewee's focus, thus ensuring the resulting recording is beneficial for the purposes of the research. I therefore considered this style of questioning to be effective for addressing the current research questions, particularly as it allowed me to understand the context and highest degree of nuance concerning the participants' views of success. The interview guide was thus used as a source of insurance, and as a last resort, particularly as I was aware that the researcher has the freedom to refer to the interview guide and the research aims/questions prior to undertaking each interview.

5.3.4 Formulation of the interview guide

Each question on the interview guide can be evaluated with respect to both a thematic and a dynamic dimension (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). In addition, it can be evaluated with regard to its relevance for the research theme, and the interpersonal relationship taking place during the interview. An effective interview question (or subtopic) should contribute thematically to

the production of knowledge, and to dynamically promoting interaction. Thematically, the topics/prompts relate to the topic of the interview, i.e. the theoretical conceptions at the root of an investigation and the subsequent analysis. The more spontaneous the interview procedure, the more likely it will be to prompt lively and unexpected answers from the interviewees (Gillham 2005). Dynamically, the questions (which were put in the form of probes and prompts) promoted a positive interaction, maintained the flow of the conversation and motivated each participant to discuss his/her perceptions, experiences and feelings.

Research focusing on the subjective perceptions of an individual places him/her in the role of thought leader in relation to the concept under discussion (i.e. the meaning of being successful, and whether this influences degree choices). Furthermore, I considered that it was important that they be made to *feel* this way. I acknowledged that the researcher's role is to probe and prompt in such a way as to ensure research questions are being addressed, without causing the participant to believe there is another question waiting. This was reflected in the nature of the responses in the current study.

For this research, I formulated a set of specific questions (see Appendix G) to guide the initial question and indicate when I should probe deeper. The guided interview questions were dictated by the narrative questioning approach, which was controlled by the research aim, as well as its objectives and questions. It was therefore vital not to influence the replies of these participants. As previously noted, I commenced each interview by asking a brief (but carefully designed) bibliographical question, requesting a self-introduction from the participants, or an explanation in their own words of their process when applying for their current course.

Bibliographical questions gather information about the participant's background and allow the participant to introduce himself or herself highlighting aspects of their biography they wish to bring to the researcher's attention. Such questions have the potential to go deeper with the assistance of probing and prompts. In the current research, the contextual data was then preserved to enable it to be used with a particular quotation. Questions concerning meaning and opinion were written in the guide; i.e. (1) how the participant defined the term 'being successful', and (2) what they considered to be involved in 'being successful'. However, I found that the participants' beliefs concerning these issues began to naturally emerge during the conversation.

Punch and Hyde (2011) cautioned that a researcher may, at times, need to prompt an interviewee over a prolonged period, while on other occasions their responses can be highly

insightful, even resulting in insights into a separate research question (Brinkmann 2007; Punch and Hyde 2011). I therefore carefully considered the wording of my questions, including the probing and the prompts, which I ensured were short and easy to understand, while also remaining open-ended. I also avoided the use of complex academic language (Flick 2014; Ritchie and Lewis 2013; Siedman 2013). Once the guide had been prepared, it was then piloted.

5.3.5 Limitations of qualitative interviewing

It has been previously stated that interviewees may be preoccupied by 'self-presentation'. Firstly, this ensures that, despite the effectiveness of the rapport stage, along with the use of prompts, there is no guarantee that the participant is always telling the entire truth (Van den Berg 2008; Ormston et al. 2014). Brinkmann (2013) noted that, if researchers have particular doubts and require clarification, they might rephrase a question, or return to a specific topic or statement made earlier during the course of the interview. However, I recognise that this does not necessarily reveal the truth, and a participant's response might differ if faced with another researcher (Berg 2004). On the other hand, the same could be noted about the use of questionnaires and surveys (Bryman 2015). Secondly, conducting unstructured interviews with individuals can be time-consuming and tiring (Wellard and McKenna 2001). However, I felt that an investment of time with such students had been previously lacking, and therefore this was an important process informing the current research. Thirdly, the participant may be influenced by their physical face-to-face interaction with someone who is potentially a stranger (Rubin and Rubin 2011), and so may wish to create a good impression and give responses they assume the researcher might wish to hear; i.e. based on the researcher's gender, name and ethnicity. In order to minimise these limitations, I asked each participant to say 'a bit more' about any aspect that seemed particularly different. Often the participants continued to talk after the recorder was turned off, i.e. on the way to the train station, or as they walked out of the building. I asked their permission to make notes of this conversation, to which they all agreed. To minimise the tiring aspect of the interviews, I attempted to conduct fewer than two interviews on a single day.

5.4 The pilot stage

A pilot study is a 'mini version' of a full-scale study and is used to pre-test a research instrument, in this case, the interview schedule (Van Teijlingen and Hundley 2002). It is also an opportunity for the researcher to evaluate their own skills and competence using a particular method (Sampson 2004; Marshall and Rossman 2014). For my own pilot study, I recruited six participants, who were not personal acquaintances, but whom I located through my personal and professional network. They were all students studying at universities in England. To prevent the findings from the pilot study being used in the official data set, I deliberately interviewed participants studying subjects other than those targeted by my research questions. When I reflected on the pilot interview transcripts (see Appendix F), I found that I needed to pay greater attention when it came to deciding when to probe further and when this was not necessary. I considered it important to acknowledge this and to be transparent about this aspect of the writing in this study. Furthermore, interviews undertaken during a pilot study are considered to be a useful indication of the researcher's interviewing skills. However, it needs to be born in mind that interviews with pilot participants can be conducted with a certain attitude in mind (i.e. that these are trials), while interviews with the participants in a main study are dependent on the researcher's level of enthusiasm about the group and the purpose of the interview (i.e. the research aim).

5.5 Sampling strategy

I felt that the sampling strategy most appropriate for my research aims was non-probability sampling, which (unlike a probability or random based strategy) allows deliberate targeting of a group that does not necessarily represent the wider population (Marshall 1996). Inclusion is a matter of chance in probability sampling, with every member of the wider population experiencing an equal opportunity of being selected. I considered that there was no need for me to choose a random sample, due to having a clear vision of who I should exclude and include, based on the reasons outlined in previous chapters. I was mindful that non-probability sampling takes many forms, including: (1) convenience or opportunistic sampling (in which participants are chosen based on their availability); (2) quota sampling (in which where there is an attempt to represent significant characteristics of the wider population being studied); (3) snowball sampling (in which existing participants are enlisted to recruit or identify other

potential participants); and (4) purposive (or purposeful) sampling (in which participants are selected for a specific purpose, i.e. their typicality) (Marshall 1996).

As previously indicated, I considered that a purposive sample would produce the most relevant data to address my specific research questions. I was aware that any chosen sampling strategy should maximise what is learnt in relation to the set research questions (Stake 1995). I therefore selected a purposive sample, due to the most relevant data being only available from British Indian undergraduates who were studying (as indicated by the research questions) *specific* subjects (Noy 2008). Oliver and Jupp (2006) identified two types of purposive sampling: (1) contingent (i.e. in which the researcher changes the selection criteria, or if it evolves over the course of the fieldwork) and (2) priori (i.e. if the selection does not change). This research employed a priori purposive sampling strategy (Oliver and Jupp 2006; Bryman 2015).

5.5.1 Participant eligibility criteria

The use of a purposive sample is useful when data is required from a specific sample, one considered appropriate for addressing the aim of the study, including key objectives and specific questions. Thus, the current aim is to discover an ethnic-specific meaning of success by a group dominant within its minority grouping. The premise of this current study is firstly, that students from certain minority groups experience greater opportunities, and secondly, it seeks to identify how British middle-class students from a specific minority group define success. The students in this study were therefore those whose ethnic minority had not obviously proven a source of disadvantage, particularly in relation to the experience of Black, Chinese and other Muslim British Asian students.

Within this wider context, the literature review revealed a long-standing concern that the Indian group are over-represented on courses focussing on law, and even more so within specific areas of medicine, despite these translating as a source of success in terms of socio-economic class destination (Li 2018; Kirkup 2015). There has traditionally been a desire amongst British Asian and British minority groups for British-born children to pursue 'safe occupation' routes, in which only certain ethnic minorities are expected to succeed. I consider that such interpretations have now been superseded, although they were rooted in the fears of British Indian and British minority parents concerning their children (Butler and Hamnett

2011). Academically successful British Indian students pursuing conventional routes to success (and specifically conventional routes to social mobility) were a significant factor in the current study, in particular when considering which participants to interview. *Each participant was therefore required to:*

- Be a British born domiciled student, who declared their ethnicity as Indian on the UCAS application system;
- Be enrolled on a dentistry, pharmacy or LLB law degree;
- Be attending either LU or MU (defined below); and
- Be aged between eighteen and twenty-four and enrolled on a full-time course (this was due to Indians having been known since the 1990s to begin their degrees no later than nineteen, and to complete the degree within the intended duration of the course, if the degree was three years full time, or six years for a medicine degree).

This specific criteria is informed by the literature review, which revealed that this ethnic group is over-represented on medicine and law courses, that these courses are overly popular, and that Indian students maintain the highest representation at prestigious universities – which in turn impacted on the formulation of the research aim and questions. In addition, parents from British Asian and Chinese communities were viewed as having an extremely narrow perspective concerning those occupations facilitating a middle-class identity in a professional occupation. Parents in this study also (in comparison to British White students) rejected the idea of a ‘gap year’, aimed at broadening skills and interests (Archer and DeWitt 2015); i.e. volunteering, travelling and learning to cook (Archer et al. 2003). As identified in the literature, students from the Indian group are traditionally found to pursue higher opportunities for success in traditional post compulsory routes, i.e. ‘A’ levels. This trend has been linked to the desire to secure employability among Indian communities, and is a belief that this can be achieved through the HE system. I therefore wished to incorporate this aspect into the sample criteria. Indian students are also less well represented when it comes to part time study. British students of Indian origin who are accepted on competitive subject courses at university level are usually in possession of the appropriate cultural, social and economic resources, but have never previously been directly questioned on their views about their educational experiences, their decision to study medicine or law, and where these choices stem from in reference to their broader beliefs about success (Archer and Francis 2006a, 2006b).

5.5.2 Justifications for choosing London University and Midlands University

The participants taking part in the current study were all enrolled in high status (i.e. Russell Group) universities. These are challenging to access, but (in comparison to other minority groups) the Indian ethnicity is highly represented (Modood 1993; Noden and Parel 2014; Boliver 2015). The students were selected for interview as they reflected the indicators of conventional forms of success, as considered within British social mobility reports; i.e. being accepted at a Russell Group university (Millburn 2009 2012). I liaised with HESA, who extracted data comprising a list of all Russell Group universities, including the number of Indian students enrolled in each. This revealed some significant patterns. Firstly, it confirmed that LU consistently enrolls the highest number of Indian UK domiciled students each academic year, and the fewest number of students originating from Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups. Secondly, that MU had a large number of British Indian, as well as those from other British Asian groups.

Both London and Birmingham are ethnically diverse areas. LU has the highest number of Indian students following medicine courses (HESA 2013/2014; 2015/16), while MU has the highest number of Indian students studying Law (HESA 2015/16). There are a number of other contrasts between the two institutions. LU maintains a stricter recruitment strategy, including conducting interviews for British students from non-traditional backgrounds. By contrast, MU actively consults on initiatives supporting non-traditional students. Both universities require different grades, with it being easier to secure entry for law at MU. The current researcher is familiar with both universities. Although both are Russell Group universities and therefore considered more prestigious than former polytechnic universities, LU is considered to be more competitive, and of a higher status, due to its age and the higher entry requirements for both humanities and medicine degree courses. It has a distinctive reputation in relation to medicine degree courses, including a close association with all major London hospitals. This description serves as a useful HE context when considering the findings in relation to the various demographics identified in the sample, i.e. ethnic, religious, and socio-economic differences.

5.5.2.1 Description of both universities

As noted above, both universities are part of the prestigious Russell Group. MU was founded at

the start of the last century as a civic university, attracting students from all religions and backgrounds on an equal basis. The university is part of Athena Swan (Bhopal 2017) and accepts students with 150 different nationalities. UCAS data from 2017 reveals that MU made the greater proportion of its offers to UK domiciled (i.e. non-international) students. The grades it requires for dentistry and pharmacy are AAA, while for law the requirement is AAB. LU is, as noted above, is the more prestigious, being one of the oldest universities in the UK. It was founded in the first half of the nineteenth century by a group of politicians and churchmen, and it is currently regarded as one of the best in the world. This university has influenced many of the advances that shape modern life, including the discovery of DNA, as well as the study of medicine, and is the largest centre for the education of healthcare professionals in Europe. The entry requirements for courses in dentistry, pharmacy and LLB Law are A*AA. Unlike MU, LU does not emphasise expanding participation on its website, although it does note that its students represent over 150 countries.

5.5.2.2 Participants' reasons for choosing their universities

This is discussed in further detail in Chapter Seven. The students applied to either MU or LU depending on which appeared best suited for their course. Distance between home and university was not a factor, as it had been for working class British Indian students (Khambhatia and Bhopal 2013) and students from other subordinate minority groups (Bowl 2001). Degrees in Dentistry and Pharmacy from LU led to more instant employment opportunities than the same degrees from other high-status universities that form part of the Russell Group, as suggested in my research. Punjabi Sikhs primarily chose MU to study for LLB Law, as this was perceived as a socially diverse Russell Group university, and was located in an urban area in which there was ethnic specific night life at the weekends. There were also a number of interesting modules and pathways to follow in relation to immigration law. The students' explanations varied and revolved around the nature of social capital; e.g. professional contacts, and employment advice within the reach of close family friends.

5.5.3 Accessing the participants and the sample size

My personal experience in accessing my participants did not accord with Johl and Renganathan's (2010: 25) view that "the secret ingredient in gaining access in qualitative

research studies is for the researcher to learn how to maintain access and how to manage relationships with gatekeepers". In relation to the current study, I felt that spending too much time contacting those helping me to create my sample could negatively impact on my chances of access. Instead, I felt that a one-off communication with a few carefully selected gatekeepers was a more effective way of arriving at a pertinent sample than recruiting participants through a wide range of gatekeepers (Miller and Bell 2002). Wanat (2008) argued that qualitative researchers must learn about the social structure of the site (i.e. UK universities) from which a researcher intends to access his/her participants. For the current research, I needed to contact individuals in positions of authority, including those in senior managerial positions, with whom I had never previously spoken. I made my request by email, careful to address each in a respectful manner and reassuring them that I was mindful that, due to their limited time, they may not be able to accept my request to circulate the material. I also performed an online search of Google for the names and contact details of programme/course directors teaching the three subjects at both universities, in order to access participants meeting the eligibility criteria. I then sent an email with a request to circulate the information sheet, and an eligibility criteria poster to all British domiciled students on their Dentistry, Pharmacy and LLB degree courses, to enable interested students to self-identify as fitting the criteria and wishing to participate (see Appendices C and D). The poster (see Appendices C and D) was written in a simple and bold font, with the criteria listed in bold bullet points, followed by my contact details.

All programme directors were sent the letter and the attached materials on the same date. However, I found that the only responses were from students studying Pharmacy and Dentistry at LU along with LLB Law students from MU. I concluded that the students from Pharmacy and Dentistry at MU, and Law students at LU, did not respond so quickly due to their term dates. I therefore re-sent the same email, and this time immediately received responses from Pharmacy students at MU and Law students at LU. Twenty-two participants contacted me to confirm that they had received an information sheet that fitted the criteria. Seven further participants also fitting the criteria were subsequently identified as a result of the snowball sample technique; i.e. I asked the first participants to mention the study to others fitting the criteria, emphasising a need for more Law students. In total, twenty-nine participants took part in the study. See Table 5.1 for the sample statistics from both universities and the three subject areas, including the sample resulting from the use of the snowball technique.

Table 5.1 Response rate

	MU Snowball	MU Original method	LU snowball	LU original method
Dentistry	0	0	1	9
Pharmacy	0	1	2	3
LLB Law	3	8	1	1
Total MU	12			
Total LU	17			
TOTAL	29			

5.5.4 Arranging the interviews

The participants either sent me an SMS message, or emailed me to express their interest in taking part, with only three choosing to contact me by telephone. None of these participants requested further information or clarification. They simply summarised the purpose of the study in their own words, in a manner consistent with the information sheet, and asked me about the procedure to meet and take part. I took this opportunity to suggest a date and time to meet for the interview. My aim was to be practical and arrange to interview at least two participants from LU on the same day, and those from MU on a separate week. The participants accepted the dates I suggested, but wished to remain flexible regarding the timing of the interview. I told them that, if possible, I would prefer to meet them at their university/faculty. Most agreed to this. Some asked if they could meet me at the weekend (i.e. in their halls or a rented apartment), but (being a student researcher, and given that these students were sharing accommodation with other students) I felt it would be more appropriate to meet them at the university. I thus explained to these participants that I would prefer to meet them during the week and during working hours, i.e. between 9 am and 6 pm. I was fortunate that the students proved understanding and agreed to this.

On several occasions, I arranged to interview two participants on the same day, but found that one texted me to postpone the time, due to their clinic over-running. However, all the participants were understanding and helped me organise times during the day, and informed me where necessary, giving me the opportunity to re-schedule the second interview. I found all the participants helpful, which lessened the complexity when organising the interviews. I am aware that this is not always the case with qualitative research.

5.5.5 Interview procedure

Each interview lasted between fifty-five and sixty-five minutes. The participants appeared comfortable and had often already informed me of several aspects of their personal life, which typically revolved around: (1) their siblings; (2) their previous activities that day; (3) their views of the area in which their student accommodation was located in comparison to their home surroundings; and (4) a Sikh wedding they had attended the week (or month) previously. A small number commented on an aspect of my appearance related to my clothing, or remarked that Punjabi Sikh girls do not usually wear their hair short. Following this initial rapport stage, I began each interview by briefly repeating the purpose of the study, along with the participant's right to withdraw at any time. I then asked the participant whether they wished to re-read the information sheet, which none chose to do. I then asked each participant to read and sign the consent form. I subsequently reminded them of the future use of the data and asked them whether they had any objection to being recorded. In all cases, the participants nodded and/or said that it was fine. However, one participant did comment, "It feels like being in a police station, not that I've been in one", and laughed nervously. Given this comment, I was careful to ask the participant again whether they were happy for me to record them, but they told me that they had no objections.

The data was collected between 20th October 2015 and 21st February 2016. As already indicated, none of these participants were directly approached or contacted by me, or any member of staff, apart from in instances in which the participants was asked to consider taking part. All the interviews were digitally recorded, and no notes were taken during the interview, but (as stated earlier) notes were made for nearly all the participants following the interview. It was also a natural part of the research process to reflect on my feelings about how each interview went, and on my perspective regarding each participants' level of productivity during the interview. These notes were made following the interview, generally (in the case of interviews carried out at LU) when I was on the train or in a coffee shop next to the train station, or (in the case of the interviews conducted at MU) in my car before setting off on the return journey.

Each participant was asked whether he/she would be happy to maintain any contact up to the stage of writing up the findings, and whether they would like to see a copy of the interview transcript and/or a summary of my interpretation of the interview. However, all of the

participants said that there was no need for this, either because they had told me everything they considered relevant, or because they ‘trusted me’ to use the recording in the most appropriate way for my research. Five from the sample, told me that they would be happy to help with if I needed additional participants. Three of these participants commented on the nature and purpose of the research study. Another three participants were somewhat surprised, and questioned me further about the origins of this study, clearly expecting to find personal reasons for my interest. This was firstly, due to ‘success’ being a subjective experience, and secondly, because of the lack of explicit acknowledgement of this subject, both in everyday conversations and at research level. For example:

People are definitely obsessed with being successful, but it’s something that people just do, and don’t talk about. (Bhavni, female, Dentistry, LU)

No one talks about being successful. Your teachers don’t teach you about this, err, this concept, actually now that I’ve said it I think it would be good if schools... taught it with sociology or English. (Eshaa, female, Law, LU)

I thought that a research study?... about what being successful means? No one asks that question, no one says so what does being successful mean to you? Ever... like everyone craves to be successful, but I don’t think it’s just about money and education... it’s like a philosophical idea. (Arjun, male, Dentistry, LU).

The comment “no one asks that question”, identified the appeal of being successful and therefore the benefit of exploring this issue for both academics and the general population. Arjun (a participant) further drew attention to the significance of this research stating that: “people are obsessed with the idea of being successful, but it’s something that people don’t talk about”. This comment implies that the wish to gain success is both an assumption and socially taboo, but can also become an obsession. I believe that it was the qualitative approach that allowed such important perspectives to be represented. The following stage was to concentrate on the organisation and management of the data, and commence the analysis.

5.5.6 Difficulties experienced during interviews

The majority of the problems experienced during the current fieldwork related to the balance of power (as discussed in more detail in the following section), rather than the practicality of the interviews. A problem did, however, arise when one of the participants asked if they could undertake their interview by means of an online downloadable application for smartphones (i.e. ‘WhatsApp’ or ‘Facetime’). This was in response to learning that I would prefer not to

conduct interviews in a university apartment, and they anticipated that no rooms would be vacant within their faculty. In this case the participant subsequently texted back after consulting one of her tutors, to say “it shouldn’t be a problem”. However, this type of questioning style had never occurred to me as a contemporary interviewing method, and in particular ‘Facetime’, through which the researcher and the participant are able to see each other. However, there is no way of guaranteeing that the participant is alone when using such applications, along with other issues related to disturbance, in particular connectivity (i.e. due to issues with a mobile signal).

5.6 Epistemological issues

5.6.1 Epistemological issues: the balance of power

In social research, ‘power’ refers to whether the researcher is in a more privileged (or superior) position during the production of knowledge. In the current research, both myself as the researcher and the participants played powerful roles in the production of knowledge. The participants had the advantage that firstly, only they were fully aware of whether they were telling me the truth, and to what extent, which ultimately impacted on the knowledge delivered in the findings. Secondly, they were permitted to withdraw and terminate the interview at any stage. Thirdly, their responses informed the interview schedule. Fourthly (and most importantly), without them my research questions would have served no meaningful purpose. On the other hand, as the researcher, I had a powerful influence on the knowledge that was produced. Firstly, I decided which aspects of my participants’ lives I wished to explore. Secondly, I decided which aspects of the participants’ responses I wished to examine in more detail. Thirdly, I was able to exploit the data in the way that best suited the interests of my specific research questions (of which the participants were unaware).

I took a number of steps to reduce any negative impact of my own position of power on the participants’ ability to express themselves, by considering the way I dressed and by avoiding the use of academic terms/complex vocabulary. I also took small, unobservable steps to help the interview take the form of a conversation. I always asked questions using vocabulary consistent with my participants’ style of speech and vocabulary. I also took care to reduce my potential influence as a researcher with the seating arrangement by sitting at the side with them, rather than directly in front of them. In addition, I feel that within the academic community, there is an underlying assumption that academic researchers are of a higher-class background than their participants. However, in this case the participants were studying

subjects considered more competitive than my own at degree level, while they were also studying at Russell Group universities, of which I was not even aware during my own time as a first-degree student. Unlike myself, many of the participants had been privately educated, with parents who occupied an upper middle-class socio-economic status, in particular in relation to their occupations. In addition, I found that my participants had a powerful influence over my role as a researcher on a much deeper level, including their views and beliefs echoing members of my extended family:

Subjects like sociology and history are just a joke, I think. I mean, they're not subjects that give you a future. (Jasraj, male, Law, MU)

Furthermore, the participants tended to express beliefs similar to those of my extended family, but which I did not share, about properties and age-driven targets. When listening to such comments, my participants had a powerful influence over me, including taking me back to experiences I wished to forget. I also found a number of other ways I both related, and did not relate, to my participants, and which also influenced the relationship between myself as the researcher with the researched in the research process and the findings, as discussed below.

5.6.2 Insider, outsider, or both?

Researchers conducting research on members of their own ethnic group (i.e. Indians researching Indians, or Pakistanis researching Pakistanis) have been criticised for being too subjective (Ratna 2011). As I was researching members of own ethnic group (i.e. Indian), I felt that my research also had the potential to be criticised for being too subjective. However, Ratna (2011) noted that a White British researcher can be considered an insider if they research White British communities and individuals, while a researcher can also be considered an insider if their gender is identical to those they are researching (Ratna 2011).

In this current research, I was both an insider *and* an outsider to my research participants. The most obvious factor that made me an insider was that I was a British-born Indian and all my participants were also British-born Indians. However, when I spoke to the participants to arrange a time and place to meet for the interview, I found that either at the beginning, or towards the end, of the call certain participants make remarks including: "Just out of interest, you're Punjabi Sikh aren't you?" and "Jatinder; that's Punjabi Sikh isn't it?" The participants who put these questions were Gujarati Hindu Indians, while Punjabi Sikh participants would

simply ask me whether I was from Southampton. On reflection, I wondered what this meant for the findings. These questions became clearer when I met each participant on the day of the interview. Some of the Gujarati Hindu participants (both male and female) told me that I “didn’t look like a typical Punjabi” or that I “didn’t look like a typical Punjabi Sikh girl”. I understood this to mean two things, firstly, that I was expected to look a certain way (i.e. like a typical Punjabi Sikh ‘girl’) by the Indian Gujarati participants and secondly, they expected me to instantly understand their responses. For example:

I don’t understand why they [relatives] have to butt in everything. Like they seem to know everything about my grades, which universities I applied to, and even where I went on holiday last week. But I didn’t tell them anything. Don’t you hate it when they think they have a right to know everything about you? (Arjun, male, Dentistry, LU)

This participant assumed that, because I was also Indian and born in the UK, I would also have experienced such nosy extended family members, despite the fact that he had previously pointed out that I was not Gujarati. His comment “don’t you hate it when they think they have a right to know everything about you?” suggests that he believed I would automatically understand this, without any need for an explanation. Similarly, when I asked a participant towards the end of her interview whether she wished to add anything further, she said:

You know what, I know I’m not going to ever see you again, but it felt like I was just telling my cousin Priya [pseudonym] everything. Sometimes I talk to her for hours, like she’s the only person I talk to about everything. You seem really genuine. Normally Punjabi Sikh girls, like the ones from here, just talk to their own circle of Punjabi Sikh girls. (Eshaa, female, Law, LU)

This participant was also, like the previous participant, an Indian who was a Gujarati Hindu, who had also informed me that ‘she knew’ from my name (Jatinder Kang) that I was a Sikh, but felt comfortable with me and had apparently talked to me as openly as she would have done to a close cousin. The British Indian undergraduates who were Sikh saw me as a direct insider. Some British Asian researchers have found that when they are a direct insider to the community they are researching, participants hold back information and are not completely honest, because they fear the researcher will be familiar with someone who knows their family members and may ‘gossip’ (see Bannerji 1997; Bhopal 1997; Ahmad and Modood 2003; Culley et al. 2007; Ratna 2011). I can understand this point of view, having myself withheld personal information when speaking to those directly from the Indian Punjabi Sikh community. However, the participants who were, like me, Punjabi Sikh, did not appear to hold back any information. I had assumed that Punjabi Sikhs would hold back information and that I would

need to use more probing techniques than for Indian Gujarati Hindus. However, I found that the reality was different.

Some participants would make comments such “my boyfriend has a friend who’s married to someone from a Kang family”. I did think that this could have an implication for their responses during the interview, because they might make a judgement about me. However, behaviour often regarded as ‘deviant’ and ‘taboo’ within all British Asian communities, and subjects of ‘hot gossip’ (i.e. having boyfriends and girlfriends) (Bhopal 1997; Ghuman 2003; Hall 2004; Sekhon and Szmingin 2011) were casually mentioned in passing, when participants would, for example, tell me about their plans beyond university. I further observed that there was no hesitation or change of tone when introducing such subjects.

Thus, Pavan, a Punjabi Sikh Law student, told me that I was lucky I had sent the email about this study now, rather than two weeks later, because then she would have been busy packing to go with her boyfriend on a trip to Venice that her parents had booked for them “as a surprise for her birthday”. I found this quite startling, because, among all British Asian communities, openly talking about having a boyfriend is considered highly inappropriate in both academic and everyday conversation. I found it refreshing to discover my participants (and in particular the female ones) disclosing such aspects of their life in passing, and, in this particular case, to learn that their parents had booked the holiday for the couple. My assumption, based on my personal experience, is that if I had been an Indian researcher who had been born and raised in India, rather than the UK, my participants might have considered me as an outsider and would therefore have proved more reticent about making such comments.

In many other ways, however, I was an outsider. Principally by being at least ten years older than my participants, which meant that I was from an older generation of British-born and raised Indians. I was also an outsider when it came to socio-economic class status, as all my participants had parents in full-time professional employment, whereas my own mother has not been in any form of employment since 1985.

In most cases, a researcher can be considered as both an outsider and an insider by their participants. I felt I was considered more of an insider by my own participants, which influenced the quality of engagement in their interviews, along with that of their responses, i.e. the breadth and depth of their replies, including to probes and prompts. However, I also wished to ensure that the personal views of my participants and the interviews were transparent in the research process (see an extract from the research diary: Appendix H).

5.6.3 Being reflexive

Reflexivity is at the core of Bourdieu's approach to researching agents in society (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2010). Bourdieu noted the importance of a reflexive sociology, in which sociologists are required to conduct their research while paying conscious attention to the effects of their own position and set of internalised structures, including how these are likely to prejudice their objectivity (Bourdieu 1990). Bourdieu (1992) further stated that the sociologist must engage in a 'sociology of sociology', so as not to unwittingly attribute the characteristics of the subject to the object of the observation (Bourdieu 1992). The researcher thus needs to be cognisant of their own social position within a field, recognising the conditions that both structure and make possible discourses, theories and observations (Shacklock and Smith 1998). In addition, a sociologist must be aware of his/her own interests in the academic or sociological field and render explicit the conditions and structures of understanding that are implicitly imbued in his or her practices within these fields (Shacklock and Smith 1998). Bourdieu's (2004) sociology can be generally characterised as an investigation of the pre-reflexive conditions generating certain beliefs and practices found in capitalist systems.

Cutcliffe (2003) suggested that the purpose of reflexivity is to render explicit the researcher's values, beliefs, and biases, in order to enhance the research's credibility and level of trust. Johnson and Duberley (2003) discussed two types of reflexivity: (1) methodological (referring to behavioural elements, with the researcher always conscious of his/her impact on the research setting), and (2) epistemic (which accepts that the researcher has internalised presuppositions that cannot be separated from his/her biography, and thus that there will be more than one true account of any research). Although, in order to ensure reflexivity, I focused on a number of areas, I made every effort to be reflexive, but I recognise that there may remain a number of limitations to the reflexivity I exhibit, in accordance with Cutcliffe (2003), who suggested that:

Excessive emphasis on reflexive activity might inhibit conscious and deliberate attempts on the part of academics to explore the world of ideas boldly; to take more risks in theory development and to move away from being timid researchers. (Cutcliffe 2003: 136)

Furthermore, Johnson and Duberley (2003) suggested that 'hyper-reflexivity' should be used where the ontological position is subjective (as in the current study), and the epistemological

position is *also* subjective, and thus reality becomes a “self-referential outcome of discursive practices” (Johnson and Duberley 2003: 1282).

5.6.4 Undertaking academic research as a student

The participants were aware that I was a student, although I subsequently regretted that I had failed to clarify that I was a postgraduate researcher. It is not easy to identify whether the fact that the participants were also students influenced their responses, however, they demonstrated curiosity about certain aspects of my position. For example, my research diary on the day of the interview with Arjun noted that he asked “so what subject are you studying at Southampton? And is this your first year?” My notes on the interview with Jasraj report that he was interested in knowing why I had applied to Southampton, telling me that he had also thought about applying to Southampton and asking whether I was from ‘the area’ (i.e. Southampton).

These comments might have simply been motivated by naive curiosity, or may have been intended to covertly question my authority as a researcher. I kept my answers brief and honest, because I was conscious that the more I said in response, the greater the potential that I would jeopardise the quality of the data. There was also the risk of the relationship becoming more personal (May 2011), due to being viewed as a student rather than an established academic.

5.7 Data Analysis

5.7.1 Data management and organisation

The data in this current research was collected from twenty-nine research participants. It was principally organised using NVivo software (Version 10), particularly due to its useful aspects, including ‘attributes’ allocating the transcripts to gender and the participants’ sub-ethnic group, i.e. Gujarati Indian and Punjabi Sikh. The software played a key role in ensuring the quality of my focus during the analysis, as it significantly improved the clarity. Given the amount of data I had obtained, I required time to develop a highly organised and systematic means of storing the data transcripts. This process enabled me to subsequently focus on

visualising and studying the patterns that emerged at the open-coding stage (as discussed below), also ensuring the emerging themes were consistent.

5.7.2 Method of data analysis: inductive thematic analysis

My method of data analysis was thematic, as my research was underpinned by a subjectivist epistemology and the subtle relativist viewpoint. As previously discussed, this emphasises inductively derived data, ensuring findings are grounded in the data and that the analysis is data driven, rather than (as informed by the literature) led by pre-existing knowledge. However, this should not be confused with the grounded theory method of analysis (Braun and Clarke 2014), as the purpose of the current data analysis was not to produce a theory but rather to use the ‘inductive thematic analysis’ analysis method proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006 2014). There is no established concrete procedure in place for using an inductive thematic analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a foundational method of qualitative analysis. It is compatible with the interpretivist paradigm, while also identifying and analysing patterns to produce rich and detailed accounts that are grounded in the data. Rather than fitting data into a pre-existing framework, inductive thematic analysis shares similarities with grounded theory, i.e. it does not involve fracturing the data (Strauss 1987) or taking segments of data apart (Charmaz 2006), but allows individual stories to remain intact (Salmon and Reissman 2008).

I have endeavoured to ground my analysis in the data and, as far as possible, have used the participants’ own words to frame my interpretations. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested themes are often taken at the explicit (or surface) level, with little further analysis. The latent (or interpretive) level goes beyond the semantic content of the data to examine the underlying conceptualisations shaping (or informing) the semantic content (Braun and Clarke 2014). I am also aware that my interpretation of the current data is a biased construct, i.e. I did not come to the research focus empty-handed (Geertz 2003). A range of concepts inevitably informed me, i.e. my review of the literature, my theoretical framework and my own experiences and observations (Strauss and Corbin 1990). I therefore observed Patton’s (2005) advice that an effective means of commencing inductive analysis is to identify the indigenous terms used by the participants to rationalise their world in relation to the research questions. Patton (2005) described this as an *emic* approach, resulting from the perspective being taken from the participants, as opposed to the *etic* approach, in which categories are imposed from the

researcher's perspective. By using the participants' own words, my interpretation focuses on reflecting their meaning.

5.7.3 Transcribing the interviews: the first stage of data analysis

The first stage of the data analysis procedure was the transcription of interviews, i.e. converting the digitally recorded data into a written document. I found that the experience of listening to the interviews while transcribing differed from participation in the interview itself, as discussed below. In order to ensure accuracy, I then read each transcript in contrast with the recording. I found this stage, together with the actual transcribing of interviews, was critical, as it allowed me to note patterns and distinct categories relating to how British Indian undergraduates defined 'being successful', including the factors they associated with success.

5.7.4 Coding and categorising data

The transcripts were coded using open coding, as introduced by Corbin and Strauss (1990), i.e. data led coding. The categories/themes (nodes) were developed 'on the go', and were neither predetermined nor anticipated in advance. A phrase, sentence, or a paragraph be treated as code (Saldana 2015), informing the topic the research questions seek to explore (Mason 2010). For example, all the participants repeatedly discussed in depth the meaning of 'being born in the UK' and 'top or high class' and 'the lower or bottom classes'. Any data I found relating to the context of being 'top class' or being born in the UK was located under these two categories. Additional patterns and categories were identified in this manner, and similar data placed under these categories. Table 5.2 exemplifies two categories (nodes) that are relevant to how the eight participants defined being successful, and shows the specific data coded under this category.

Table 5.2 Example of two patterns (categories) emerging in the dataset

Being born in the UK	Feel lucky to be British	We have everything here	Where does being just Indian get you?	I thank my parents that I was born in the UK, because it's a hundred times easier to be successful here
Top or high class	A teacher isn't a 'top' occupation	It's not hard to be in the 'top' class, you just need to pull up your socks and get A stars	Like those people that live on council estates and smoke weed all day	There's no point in being able to afford things at only one point in your life. I don't want to be constantly checking my bank balance

Following the interviews, the transcripts were coded for the relationships. I made a more in-depth study of the data within the categories, paying attention to the emerging sub-themes. Thus, when I looked closely at the data within the themes of 'top' and high-class, I noticed the presence of three sub-themes, pertaining to belonging to a 'top' or high class: (1) 'top class occupations'; (2) 'top class identity'; and (3) 'affording top class'. Table 5.3 depicts extracts from the data related to the three sub-themes.

Table 5.3 Example of sub-themes emerging within one pattern

Sub-theme identified	Example 1	Example 2
Top class occupation	I would hate my daughter to be a make-up artist, unless it was for Jimmy Choo or Chanel	No one is going to see a teacher as successful, in comparison to a solicitor or barrister
Top class identity	Like those people that live on council estates and smoke weed all day	Someone who lives on a council estate might think their kid is successful if they get a job in Marks and

		Spencer's. I would be embarrassed.
Affording top class	Need to be earning at least 70,000 minimum a year, not just one person in a couple, but both (140,000 total)	Everything costs here, you need savings and you need to get the top jobs

I was mindful of those aspects that should be reflected by a theme and sub-theme. Firstly, a theme is generally broader than the codes through which it is illustrated, as it reflects multiple facets (Braun and Clarke 2006 2014). Secondly, a sub-theme reveals a distinct aspect that relates to that broad theme (Braun and Clarke 2006 2014). In order to ensure the quality of my thematic identification, I employed the following questions suggested by Braun and Clarke (2014) as beneficial for researchers using inductive thematic analysis: (1) Is it a theme, or is it another code that should be placed within the category?; (2) Does the theme tell me something meaningful about, and play an important role in explaining the data in relation to any of my research questions?; and (3) Are all the codes in the category directly useful for addressing the questions and related to one another? (i.e. was there sufficient data to support the theme?). I considered these questions at three different times during the analysis, firstly before coding, when I was identifying categories; secondly, after completing coding and categorising; and thirdly, when reviewing the themes (Ollerenshaw and Cresswell 2002; Pratt 2009).

5.7.5 Limitations of the inductive thematic approach

Inductive thematic analysis is employed to analyse data collected using qualitative methods. It provides a way to represent each participant's account in relation to the research aim/question in the data set. This type of analysis enables the researcher to provide a rich and detailed account of the data, due to it being based on a distinct set of codes, which address both the research aim and questions (Braun and Clarke 2006 2014). These distinct sets of codes therefore reflect a distinct theme, as well as sub-themes that are distinct, yet at the same time it is centred on the overall theme (Braun and Clarke 2006 2014). However, this method also contains a number of negative implications related to aspects of the participant's life. For instance, although a rich description of the data is generally maintained, some of the depth and complexity of each transcript is necessarily lost (Boyatzis 1998; Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006; Braun and Clarke 2006). One way of preserving depth when interpreting the data is to

refer back to the individual transcripts, drawing on the participant's profile and considering the wider context relevant to their biographical lives, i.e. the broader British Indian history and culture discussed in Chapter Two. This also guaranteed that my participants' perceptions of being successful were accurately represented.

5.7.6 Identifying themes: semantic or latent approach

I needed to decide whether to read the data at the semantic or latent level (Robson 2002). Semantic analysis takes place when the level of analysis (i.e. making sense of the data) goes beyond the content of the data to examine underlying ideas, assumptions, conceptualisations, and ideologies which are theorised as informing the semantic content of the data. The semantic approach does not seek to describe the surface of the subject being discussed, but rather its meaning and form. The latent approach also identifies key features giving form and meaning. Thus, for latent thematic analysis, the development of the themes involves interpretative work, and the analysis that is produced is not just a description but is already theorised.

5.7.7 Naming the themes

An important element of the analysis involved awarding names to categories and themes, as this signalled my analytical approach to the content of the data. I aimed to give my themes and sub-themes names, which, as suggested by Bazeley (2009a) and Braun and Clarke (2014) were concise and informative, as this affords the reader an immediate sense of the subject under discussion. The names of these themes can be considered in two ways. Firstly, the researcher can use the participants' direct words as they consistently appear in the data (e.g. 'top and high class') enabling the researcher to stay close to the language and concepts used by the participants. Secondly, the researcher can give a sub-title for the name of the theme that signals the analytical scope (Bazeley 2009a; Braun and Clarke 2014). Themes should capture the essence of the theme's focus; i.e. 'top class' tells me that this theme is central to the way British Indian first-degree Dentistry, Pharmacy and LLB Law students understood the meaning of being successful.

5.7.8 Using numbers to discuss the consistency of themes

This study employed a qualitative approach. Pyett (2003) and Braun and Clarke (2014) discourage qualitative researchers from using numbers when talking about the consistency of their patterns, advocating terms such as ‘many participants’, or ‘most participants’ rather than stating ‘twenty-three participants reported this’. Qualitative research emphasises that ‘frequency does not determine the value of data’ (Braun and Clarke 2014: 261), i.e. the number of those making a statement does not determine whether it is insightful or important for elucidating the research questions (Braun and Clarke 2006; Anderson 2010). One-to-one qualitative interviews are responsive to the participant’s developing account, and not every participant in an interview discusses the same issues, or within the same context, or for the same reasons.

5.7.9 Selecting data extracts to discuss the themes

I aimed to select powerful and compelling data extracts to form supporting data to discuss the themes and sub-themes revealed in the analysis, as suggested by Sandelowski (1993) and Braun and Clarke (2006). Where I have edited part of the data extracts, I have replaced it with [...]. I also avoided any unnecessary use of the same data extracts on more than one occasion, and ensured that I introduced the data extracts in context. Extracts that were shorter than three lines long are generally embedded into the text.

5.7.10 Interpreting data extracts in relation to the themes

Bazeley (2009b) raised concerns about how qualitative researchers interpret and choose segments of their data extracts to discuss the ways their theme or sub-theme is meaningful and relevant to their research question. Her evaluation of empirical studies using qualitative interviews argued that researchers’ interpretation of their data extracts ‘should be deeper’ (Bazeley 2009: 134). She employed examples from studies to demonstrate how researchers present a certain extract to support a theme they have identified, and then fail to observe the most salient and hidden meanings behind the extract. This can lead to a misrepresentation and misunderstanding of the data in relation to the aims of the research. I took care not to impose meanings upon the topic of my research, or, in accord with Braun and Clarke (2014: 269), to

squeeze it into either pre-conceived categories or theoretical formulations. I did not wish to reduce it to an underlying cause, which invites those conducting qualitative research to use qualitative methods as a way of capturing the ‘messy complexities’ of everyday realities. I was therefore mindful that I used data to illustrate how I discussed a theme, while also being mindful of my interpretation of a specific piece of data in line with Beazley’s (2009) concerns. Furthermore, I continued to address this issue while writing up the findings.

5.7.11 Operationalising the theoretical and conceptual framework for the analysis

In this research, I used Bourdieu’s theory of social class reproduction (including certain capitals and habitus) as a tool that was interpretive, rather than analytical. This was not aimed at influencing the production of the themes, but rather to establish my personal perspective (i.e. the interpretive approach). Thus, the theme of ‘being in the top class’ was based on the participants’ own words, rather my discussion of the theme in relation to the research question. My aim was to draw on the literature as opposed to the theoretical framework when categorising the data, and to locate the analysis within the theory and current literature, in order to ensure the themes reflected the students’ perspectives, i.e. their motivation for studying a specific course. This allowed the reader to understand my own perspective.

5.8 Quality of the research

Traditionally, rigour in research as informed by an educational context has centred on questions of validity, reliability and objectivity (Morse et al. 2002; Silverman 2010). It is therefore considered inappropriate to measure the validity of qualitative research using criteria intended to judge research with very different theoretical and philosophical underpinnings (Patton 2005). Interpretivism is based on the premise that individuals experience a constructed reality, based on a subjective interpretation (Holden and Lynch 2004). Thus, validity depends on the trustworthiness of the findings, i.e. whether they are “really about what they appear to be about” (Patton 2005: 93). I was the ‘research instrument’ for the present study, with its trustworthiness dependant on establishing that my findings accurately reflected the perspectives of my participants, i.e. that I accurately interpreted and represented their behaviours, experiences, and motivations. Merriam (1998) noted that qualitative research is important for understanding the perspectives of those involved in the

phenomenon of interest and to uncovering the complexity of human behaviour within a contextual framework. In this research, I was not seeking to find objective (i.e. 'accurate') accounts, but the subjective meanings the participants attached to the idea of being successful. Validity was therefore dependant on ensuring that I had understood the participants' realities (Wolcott 1990) and represented them in an accurate manner. Reliability is concerned with the replicability of research (Hey and Perry 2000), and with positivistic measures that are dependent on the standardisation of research tools and the assumption that a single reality that is static over time and therefore "studying it repeatedly will yield the same results" (Merriam 1998: 205). This positivistic view of reliability is seen as inconsistent with relativist ontology. Lincoln and Guba (1985: 288) suggested that the term 'dependability' is more appropriate for use in qualitative research. Dependability focusses on "whether the results are consistent with the data collected" rather than "whether the findings will be found again" (Merriam 1998: 53).

In considering the credibility and dependability of my research, I was mindful of Patton's advice that interpretivism emphasises capturing and honouring a number of perspectives. In order to enhance trustworthiness and authenticity, I clarified: firstly, my philosophical position; secondly, my ontological and epistemological assumptions; and thirdly, the reasoning behind decisions that are taken when introducing this study. I have also sought to establish transparency in my research design and research procedure, as well as my analysis of the data. To ensure that I could represent the perspectives of the participants as accurately as possible, I used a number of strategies, including rapport, checking for misunderstandings, probing when uncertain, and identifying opportunities for participants to ask questions and add information.

I have also set out my personal and inner reflections concerning my participants and each individual interview. Researchers are human beings and so interpret everything they see, even when researching communities and groups about which they are enthusiastic when it comes to constructing knowledge; i.e. I am "part of the social world I am seeking knowledge about" (Janesick 1994: 12). Thus, reflexivity is "an awareness of the ways in which the researcher as an individual with a particular social identity and background has an impact on the research process" (Robson 2002: 172). It is not possible to remove the effects of experience and background, but it is possible to be aware of them and understand them (Ahern 1999).

Qualitative data can provide contextual information with the potential to 'greatly alter findings' (Guba and Lincoln 1994: 106). Rather than abandoning generalisability in qualitative research, it may be the 'basis of generalisability', which should itself change (Lewis and Ritchie 2003).

Qualitative research can favour 'naturalistic generalisation' (Gobo 2008: 12) due to arising from studies of singularities, while noting the potential for aspects identified in the singularity to be found in similar situations elsewhere (Bassey 1999). However, the term 'transferability' is more consistent than 'generalisability' with qualitative research (Guba and Lincoln 1989: 241). Transferability is dependent on the similarity of two contexts (Lincoln and Guba 2000) and therefore requires judgements about the transferability of findings, as well as contextual information or 'thick description'. My aim was not to provide positivistic notions of generalisability or hypothesis testing. I wished to enhance the transferability of my findings by sharing a rich description of contextual information.

5.9 Research ethics

Members of the Research Committee of the University of Southampton confirmed that this research was safe and met their ethical guidelines (see Appendix A). In consideration of the fundamental ethical principle of the research, which states that the researcher should do no harm to the participants, I endeavoured to act in an ethical manner. In this, I was guided in by the ethical guidelines set out by the British Educational Research Association (BERA 2009), and by the University of Southampton's School of Education and Ethics Review Checklist. I also detailed some of the ethical dilemmas inherent in the current research, including how they were addressed. Four main branches of research ethics have been considered.

5.9.1 Privacy, trust and confidentiality

Throughout this study, I reminded each participant of their right to withdraw from the interview. However, most of the participants politely indicated that it was pointless for them to withdraw, with one participant even joking that he would not have changed his plans to come here and then say, 'I can't participate'. Privacy was guaranteed to each participant in the consent form, information sheet and at the beginning of the interview.

5.9.2 Anonymity

For the purposes of anonymity, I replaced all the participants' names with pseudonyms chosen by the participants. I advised them to select a name that reflected their gender and sub-ethnic group, as I wished to preserve the sense of their specific cultural or faith meaning (Orb et al. 2001; Tizard and Phoenix 2002; Phoenix and Hussain 2007). It was notable that six of the participants made similar remarks to the effect that "they had nothing to hide", and felt that changing their names made their contribution feel inauthentic. However, they did understand that (for reasons over which I had no control) I needed to protect their original identity. One participant (Rahul) made a comment that challenges conventional ideas about research ethics and perhaps also stimulates further thinking about the nature of qualitative research.

It's pointless that you have worry about protecting what we say... you should instead encourage people to be brave and be open about their views... what's the point of researchers wanting to hear our opinions and stuff, so they are heard, but no one can see who said it. It's not like I'm talking about drugs or something illegal. (Rahul, male, LU, Dentistry)

5.9.3 Security of data, consent forms and digital recorder

Materials relating to this research were, at all times, stored in a lockable drawer, including: (1) my research diary; (2) the digital recorder; (3) the interview transcripts; (4) memory sticks; and (5) administrative documents relating to the fieldwork, i.e. addresses and printed emails.

5.9.4 Benefits for participants

I ensured that my research participants were aware that they would receive no payment for their contribution. The primary reason (of which participants were not informed) was that my PhD funding did not cover such expenses. In addition, I felt that offering money or gift vouchers could lead to bias in the participants' responses (Newman et al. 2001; Molyneux et al. 2012), although this issue remains an area of debate (see Grady et al. 2005). I took care to reassure the participants of the importance of their contribution, and I also thanked each one for making the time to participate in the study.

5.10 Chapter summary

This chapter first discussed the outcome of the literature review (i.e. the research questions), along with the ontological, epistemological and methodological framework of the study, including the rationale for choosing these frameworks and associated assumptions. Secondly, it presented an outline of various aspects of the research design, including the role of the unstructured interviewing approach. Thirdly, it examined issues of trustworthiness and how I have addressed the ethical dimensions of my research. Finally, it outlined my data analysis strategies. The following chapter introduces the participants and provides an ethnic and class specific description of the sample.

Chapter Six: Description of the participants in context

6. Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive description of the students whose perspectives are set out in the following chapter. It considers differences within the sample that are informed by the theoretical and conceptual framework (subjective and implicit indicators of class) and conventional indicators of class (parents' occupation/specific socio-economic status). This will hopefully provide a nuanced understanding of the sample's class profile which can be applied to the formation of the analysis in the following chapter. The study also identifies ethnic and/or religious and class specific differences in relation to who has applied for medicine associated degree courses and LLB law, and in relation to who was studying at older Russell Group universities. The theoretical, conceptual, British Asian culture and historical context chapters assist the formation of the analysis.

6.1 Conventional analysis of social class: Parents' socio-economic class status

A student/individual's socio-economic background plays a key role in forming a preliminary understanding of their class group, but cannot account for the discrepancies within ethnic minority groups and between students. Socio economic background also does not give a realistic understanding of a student's background. In the sample there are clear and significant findings with regard to parental occupation. This defines the sample as broadly middle-class; i.e. the only middle class characteristic that all participants shared was that all twenty-nine participants' mothers and fathers were in full time paid employment and none of their parents were in manual, unskilled jobs. Broadly, all parents' occupations fell into the first three categories of the NS-SEC's. This was predicted, as it reflects the implicit (cultural, social) and explicit (economic) resources required to access competitive high status universities and courses. Beyond this point, there were key differences with regard to their middle classness. Nevertheless, the shared middle class factors between the participants clarifies the fact that class inequalities between British Asian groups vary between Indians and other British Asian groups, and between Indians and Black groups.

Furthermore, students from homes where both parents are in full time employment have greater economic capital within the household, and if both parents are in occupations which fall into the first three broad occupational categories, they are likely to have contacts and friends who have been educated at a university, have experience of the education system, and are knowledgeable about the books, support and specific tutors required to facilitate their child's progress in core subjects. However, in the case of this particular sample. This would be varied. The students in the sample are therefore likely to have had (varying levels) of access to the 'right type' of support, advice and resources (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990). Table 6.1 details the categories that were used to identify specific socio-economic class differences within the sample. Following this, table 6.2 provides each student's mother's and father's occupation and their specific category, confirming that students from middle-class backgrounds are not only necessarily diverse because of the ethnic differences present within the Indian group, but also due to the types of professional jobs their parents hold.

Table 6.1 National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification

Broad category	Operational categories	No. of parents
1.1	Employers in large establishments Higher managerial and administrative occupations	
1.2	<i>L3 higher professional occupations</i> L3.1 traditional employee L3.2 New employees L3.3 Traditional self employed L3.4 new self employed	27 parents out of the total 58 parents in the sample (mothers and fathers included)
2	<i>L4 Lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations</i> L4.1 traditional employee L4.2 new employees L4.3 traditional self employed L4.4 new self employed L5 lower managerial and higher technical occupations L6 Higher supervisory occupations	25 parents (including mothers and fathers working in this category)

3	Intermediate occupations
4	Small employers and own account workers
5 N/A	Lower supervisory and technical occupations
6 N/A	Semi-routine occupations
7 N/A	routine occupations
8 N/A	Never worked and long term unemployed

Table 6.2 Details of individual participants' socio-economic background

Name and gender	Course and HEI	Self-defined identity	Home town/city	Education background	Both parents' NS-SEC classification based on occupation as provided in participants own words. <i>Some roles were stated in broad terms (e.g. doctor), and some in specific terms (duty health visitor).</i>
Deepak M	Dent. LU	Sikh	Leeds	Grammar	Father: doctor L3, L3.1 (traditional, higher professional work)
					Mother: lecturer in FE L3.2 ('new' professional work)
Sukruti F	Dent LU	Hindu	Crawley (Surrey)	Grammar	Father: doctor L3, L3.1
					Mother: duty health visitor (and school governor) L6 (higher supervisory)
Tarsem M	Dent LU	Sikh	Ealing (West London)	Comp.	Father: chartered accountant (L3, L3.1)
					Mother: self-employed - lawyer, company secretary (owner of legal firm) L3, L3.1
Aeshaa F	Dent LU	Hindu	Leeds	Grammar	Father: self-employed, owner of housing and letting business L4.4
					Mother: FE languages teacher L3.2
Chamkaur M	Pharm LU	Hindu	Greenford	Private fee paying	Father: GP L3, L3.1
					Mother: FE lecturer and astrologer (own business) L3.2 (coding is based on FE lecturing job,
Preeti F	Law MU	Sikh	Woolwich	Comp	Father: senior police constable L3.1

					Mother: Manager at John Lewis L5 lower management and administration occupations
Amy F	Law MU	Sikh	Southampton	Private fee paying	Father: lawyer L3.1
					Mother: admin at nearby RG university L5 – lower management and administration occupations
Lali M	Pharm MU	Sikh	Seven Kings	Grammar	Father: self-employed contractor construction trade L4.4 (new self-employed, lower professions)
					Mother: Asian bridal wear family business L4.4
Ravi M	Pharm LU	Hindu	Leicester	Comp	Father: pharmacist L3.1
					Mother: owns a laser hair removal treatment business L4.4 new self-employed in lower professional work
Kiran F	Law MU	Sikh	West London	Comp	Father: self-employed in housing and letting L4.4, self-employed in lower professional work
					Mother: Manager at post office L5: lower management
Gina F	Dent LU	Sikh	Edgbaston	Comp	Father: police sergeant (murder unit) L3.1, higher professional
					Mother: team leader mental health organisation L6, higher supervisory
Ajmer M	Law MU	Sikh	Wolverhampton	Grammar	Father: police constable L4.4 (lower professional employee)
					Mother: senior police constable L3.1
Abi F	Law MU	Sikh	Wembley	Grammar	Father: immigration solicitor L3.1

					Mother: barrister and magistrates judge L3.1
Aryaan M	Dent LU	Hindu	Birmingham	Grammar	Father: immigration officer for Home Office L4.4 lower professional work
					Mother: Indian gold shop owner L4.4, new self-employment in lower professional work
Vikram M	Pharm LU	Sikh	Heston	Grammar	Father: owner of produce grocery and off licence L4.4, new self-employment in lower professional work
					Mother: owner of same business L4.4
Bhavni F	Dent LU	Hindu	Leeds	Comp	Father: owner of pharmacist practice (pharmacist) L3.1
					Mother: GP L3.1
Arjun M	Dent LU	Hindu	Solihull	Private fee paying	Father: GP L3.1 Mother: diabetes consultant (doctor) L3.1
Eshaa F	Law LU	Hindu	Orpington	Private fee paying	Father: pharmacist (and owner of pharmacy) L3.1 Mother: GP and owns a homeopathy clinic L3.1
Rahul M	Dent LU	Hindu	Harrow	Private fee paying	Father: cosmetic surgeon L3.1 Mother: owns a translation services business L4.4, new self-employment in lower professional
Jasraj M	Law MU	Sikh	West Bromwich	Comp	Father: self-employed in housing and property contractor L4.4

					Mother: secondary school higher level teaching assistant L4.2, lower professional and higher technical occupations - new employees
Pavan F	Law MU	Sikh	Windsor	Grammar	Father: Asian bridal wear and bridal make up businesses L4.4 new self-employment in lower professional work
					Mother: works in the same family business; mother also jointly owns another make up business with her sister L4.4
Tessa F	Law MU	Sikh	Luton	Comp	Father: events catering business L1, employers in large organisations, employers of at least 25 employees
					Mother: assistant store manager retail store L5 - lower management and admin occupation
Sonam F	Law LU	Hindu	Maidenhead ad	Private fee paying	Father: owns 3 Indian jewellery shops L4.4, new self-employment in lower professional work Mother: joint owner of same family business L4.4
Manisha F	Law MU	Hindu and Sikh mixed	Langley	Grammar	Father: police sergeant, private detective L3.1
					Mother: police constable L4.4
Krish M	Pharm LU	Hindu	Twickenham am	Grammar	Father: chartered accountant L3.1
					Mother: lawyer L3.1
Ravi M	Law MU	Sikh	Heston	Grammar	Father: owner of two cash and carries (one in UK, one in Dubai) L4.4
					Mother: Department store manager L5
Monica F	Dent	Sikh	Gants Hill	Comp	Father: driving instructor

	LU				L4.4 new self-employment in lower professional work Mother: assistant bank manager L5
Harry M	Law MU	Sikh	Edgbaston	Comp	Father: owner of accountancy firm L3.1
					Mother: secondary school teacher L4.4, lower professional work
Govind M	Pharm LU	Hindu	London	Private fee paying	Father: optician L3.1
					Mother: pharmacist L3.1

Bourdieu's theory emphasises that to understand the occupational destinations for a student in the wider field (structure), one must understand how these are read within the field (Tyler 2008; Jones 2012; Dorling 2014; Savage et al. 2015). The NS-SEC occupational classification provides a quick and instant approach to judging an individual's position in the field, but does not convey the nuanced meaning of differences in parents' socio-economic background which are important for ruling out real differences between who is more advantaged than another student. For instance, Vikram's parents are owners of a large grocery business, which includes an off license and is located in one of West London's most ethnically wealthy postal codes, close to Southall, which is one of the towns to which migrants from India migrated to during the first significant migration wave (Modood 2006). If considering Vikram's parents' occupation from the perspective of cultural and social capital, we are less likely to identify them as having the 'right' types of social and cultural capital. In sharp contrast, Govind's parents who are both higher ranked professionals in medicine occupations, in direct contact with professional circles, with good economic capital (e.g. ability to afford tutors) to facilitate access to conventional social mobility, but also be able to independent advisors as well.

Vikram, Pavan and Tessa's parents, for instance, were more likely to depend on a privately paid private tutor to achieve the highest grades, because they had not studied at university, and had not themselves been exposed to the education system in England. Arjun, Rahul, Aryaan, Govind, Eshaa's parents for instance, were more likely to instil cultural aspirations more in tune with those of the dominant group, than to rely solely on economic capital. However, an aspect of Bourdieu's theory is that large amounts of economic capital can be exchanged and invested into the 'right' cultural resources, when parents possess knowledge of the requisite resources, which Vikram, Pavan, Tessa's parents must have done in order for them to have arrived at such destinations. This is precisely why a cultural perspective of socio-economic capital is essential to understand how access to conventional routes to social mobility are possible for these students. There was clearly a sharp contrast within the sample concerning which participants might have had a better experience of familial and parental input to prepare them for HE destinations. This means that some might have experienced more complex paths than others. The role of these differences within this broad middle-class group, is addressed in the next chapter. Another inevitable indicator of the participants' social class background is the educational level of their parents.

6.2 Parents' education level

We have indications about the research participants' socio-economic background, details of their specific occupations, an understanding of the varied differences in 'cultural and social capital'

between the sample. The parents specific occupations also provide an indicator of which parents might have a degree, and which might not. However, it is important to remember that a degree at either a low or high-status university does not guarantee professional employment. Furthermore, the structure, needs and policies around HE and professional occupations is more competitive in contemporary times than it was for their parents who may have attended a university, although one gained from a high status university does increase the chances of professional employment. However, higher professional employment in the medicine and law sector requires specific certification, which is gained from particular universities. In-depth information about the ins and outs of the participants parents' educational background, and the process of their occupational destinations was not sought during the interviews, as the focus was on utilising the time to gain an understanding of the students' perspectives regarding how they applied to their courses. Such details sometimes emerged or were elicited during the rapport building stage, but usually the participants provided contextual data when they were introducing themselves; this tended to include details of their parents' occupations, education, country of birth, or family demographics. This type of information usually provided a reasonably sound contextual basis in the form of objective indicators of class (and the way they defined their objective ethnic identity too).

Specifically, 15 fathers and 14 mothers in the sample held a degree. In total, 29 of the 58 parents (total includes 29 mothers and 29 fathers) possessed a degree from a university in England. Out of these 29, those who were working in higher professional occupations (lawyers/barristers, general practitioners, pharmacists', dentists, chartered accountants, were owners of new forms of professional self-employment (e.g. of an astrology business), including those who worked in the police force, all held a degree. However, those who were lawyers, barristers and practising medicine held a degree from a high-status university. I observed that these participants (initially) introduced themselves as Hindus/and or Gujaratis. The remaining 30 parents out of the total no. of 58, held either a diploma, a certificate, or professional qualifications recognised in British Asian specific employment sectors. 24 of these were from Punjabi Sikh backgrounds. Already a significant and nuanced description of the parents' class profile was being formed. In the earlier literature review chapters (3 and 4) we saw that religious trends within socio-economic status show Indians who are Hindus are more highly represented in higher professional occupations than Indians who are Sikhs, but that Indians who are Sikhs are more heavily represented in higher professional occupations than Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black groups. This was expected based on the findings of the literature review.

6.3 Participants' schooling background

Although influences of school type influence the construction of conventional 'success ideology', in this section I want to consider the numbers of students who attended different types of schools. Specifically, seven attended a fee-paying school. Twelve attended a grammar school, having passed an additional set of entrance examinations at age 11. The remaining ten however, attended a local state funded comprehensive. The reasons why some attended free schools and others fee-paying schools is not wholly explained by parental income, but can indicate a sense of class consciousness. Sukruti's parents for instance hold higher professional jobs, having gained degrees from high status universities, and sent Sukruti to their local community state funded school, as did Tessa's parents, who hold lower managerial positions. Krish on the other hand attended a grammar school situated in an affluent area of Surrey (Twickenham). Research (Owen et al. 2012, Dorling 2015) suggests that those who attend fee paying or highly selective schools like grammar schools have an advantage over those who gain the same or better grades at a local comprehensive school, because the selection procedure is partially based on the status of the school attended as determined by league tables, more than based on the merit of securing outstanding A-level passes (Bolliver 2016). Research also shows that parents who believe that private and grammar school schooling promotes and aids social mobility, go to great lengths to register their children using a different address, or choose to live in a particular area (Reay and Lucey 2000; Taylor 2018) solely to increase the chances of their child attending a school that will be preferred by a university.

Educational scholars (e.g. Reay 2014) who focus on pupils and students through the lens of Western subjective indicators of class (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Reay 2014), emphasise that in the UK, the *type* of educational institution that one decides to send their child to serves as a significant indicator when making a quick judgement about a student's class background. Cultural judgements about what school a high-status university applicant attended, and their postal address, are also factors that university admissions offices consider (Bolliver 2014). Seven participants attended a fee-paying school, i.e. private schools. Private schools are also known as 'independent schools', and are non-government funded. Pupils are not expected to follow the national curriculum at KS3 and KS4. Twelve of the participants attended a grammar school; these are state secondary schools that select pupils by means of an examination taken at age 11, and known as the 11-plus (Dickson 2016). Dickson (2016), writing for *The Conversation*, drew on a nationally representative data source (Understanding Society 2009-2012), which reported that grammar systems increase inequality, lowering earnings at the bottom and raising them at the top. They select a few individuals from poorer backgrounds who can benefit from the grammar system,

but the vast majority are not expected to attend a grammar school, and are ultimately more likely to eventually access jobs with lower earnings.

There are approximately 163 grammar schools in England, out of some 3,000 state secondaries (there are a further 69 grammar schools in Northern Ireland) (Dorling 2017). Many complain about the nature of the test, as it often features questions targeting knowledge not taught on regular state curriculums (Sullivan 2003). Grammar school entrance exams can consist of all or a subset of the following: Numerical reasoning (maths), verbal reasoning, English comprehension, punctuation and grammar, non-verbal reasoning and creative writing. They traditionally use questions based on verbal reasoning and non-verbal reasoning, and it is argued that those who have been intensively tutored often do much better in these tests than those who aspire to, but do not have the structure in place at home to become familiar with the questions asked and nor the economic capital to afford such services. Those who attended state and comprehensive schools mentioned that their parents relied on them having more than one tutor every week, whereas those who went to grammar school mentioned they had one tutor. This hints at possible desperation on the part of the comprehensive and grammar school attendees' parents, while the parents of children attending fee paying schools appeared to be less concerned. Ten pupils attended their local comprehensive school. Pupils of all abilities and aptitudes are taught together in comprehensive schools, and their status varies according to where they are situated, and relative to the demographics of the town/city (Bolliver 2014). Comprehensive schools do not take students on based on their academic attainment level, unlike grammar schools, which adopt a specific selection criteria.

Despite the differences in the sample, all the students in the sample undertook traditional routes to university, which were selected in the context of their occupational aspirations. Those who studied dentistry and pharmacy undertook A-levels in different types of Maths subjects, e.g. Further maths and at least two sciences. Those who studied Law also studied Maths, English and another subject; e.g. a language, law, or psychology.

6.4 Private home tutoring

Tutoring is a key contemporary indicator of cultural capital in the objectified form (Reay 2007). It is indicative of 'middle-class habitus' (Reay 2007) and also economic capital. All students in the sample told me that they had received tutoring for English, Maths and Science. However, many of

the males referred to English in relation to tutoring, whilst the female participants referred to Maths or Science. Private tutoring was a core part of all students weekly or daily lives up until the last few days leading to their GCSE examinations. Many of these also went towards maintaining tutoring at A-level for Maths and Science, but only during the period leading up to the A-level examinations.

6.5 The role of social capital in private tutoring

Social capital played a key role in determining how parents locate the right tutors. For instance, Lali mentioned that the Head of Maths built up a good rapport with his parents at parents' evening, just as did Arjun's English teacher did with his father. The epistemological dimension to this is noteworthy; both these students in fact, 'hoped' that I would not know anyone from their school, because these teachers had asked them and their parents not to mention this within their circles of friends. Access to these types of resources are infrequent, and a form of dominant social capital. Arjun and Lali were relaxed and trusted me, as they knew that they had not given me the name of their school, nor the names of those teachers, so it did not matter that they had told me. However, these were British White teachers and from a middle-class background, agreeing to tutor their children outside of teaching hours at an agreed hourly rate. Arjun told me his father paid £35 per hour for him to ensure he got an A star in English Literature in particularly as he had been on track for a grade B.

A key aspect of Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital is the role and emphasis placed upon certain forms of arts, music, literature and leisure activities, and how an interest and participation in for instance classical and historical pieces of music, and literature and poetry allow students to feel at ease within the school system (Kimura et al. 2006). Challenges with English, and particularly poetry, prompted many of the male students to seek tutoring. This was most likely because the participants' GCSE focus was on areas such as, chemistry, biology, physics, and maths. English Language was preferred over English literature. However, the participants' leisure interests were not explored, and therefore, as I stated earlier, my utilisation of cultural capital is somewhat partial, in that the participants did not refer to their social and leisure interests as something influencing their grades and nor was a topic included on the interview guide. Tutoring, and investing in books that support the syllabuses they were studying were the main forms of cultural capital their parents paid attention to.

6.6 Ethnic/religious and middle-class specific differences within the sample

When dates for the interviews were being arranged, almost all the participants called me or texted me to clarify their and my understanding of 'Indian'. This was expected, because I too, as an 'Indian', rarely declare my ethnic identity as 'Indian' when introducing myself to people. The term 'Indian' was not considered to denote an ethnicity or any particular group. My participants told me that they had ticked 'Indian' on the UCAS form when submitting their UCAS application, but 'only because the UCAS ethnicity form doesn't give the option of ticking Hindu Gujarati or Punjabi Sikh' (*Manisha*). Therefore, they had no choice *but* to tick Indian, as Krish texted, "because I'm obviously not Pakistani or Bangladeshi, so Indian is the only other choice". Two distinct ethnicities were identified in the sample, based on how each of the twenty-nine participants initially defined their ethnic identity: Gujarati Hindu or Punjabi Sikh.

Eleven told me that they were Hindu Gujarati/Brahmin. Eighteen told me that they were Punjabi Sikh or British Sikh. Based on the wider (anthropological literature) that we looked at in chapter three, all the participants identified being Indian (an ethnicity), and closely and directly identified with either being Sikh or Hindu, which reminds us of the fact that religious groups are not ethnic groups, theoretically speaking (Ghuman 2003). These religions were understood by the participants as associated with particular ethnicities and/or communities. Out of the eighteen British Indian undergraduates who were Punjabi Sikh, eleven were studying LLB law, in contrast to another two, who identified themselves as Hindu.

The difference between Sikhs and Hindus who were studying medicine degree courses (dentistry/pharmacy) was notably smaller; nine were Hindu, and seven were Sikh. Regarding the differences affecting those studying at LU and MU, only six of the eighteen Sikh Punjabi participants were studying at LU, and all were studying the same subject (medicine related: dentistry or pharmacy). However, all eleven Hindu participants were studying at LU, although the majority of the Sikh participants were studying at MU (12/18).

As I considered when describing the two universities, LU is historically a higher status university than MU, as it is a Russell Group university that does not accept any students who attain B grades. The higher number of Hindus at LU than Sikhs enforces the idea that Indians from Hindu family backgrounds possess a finer knowledge set regarding what constitutes conventional forms of social mobility in the UK. On the other hand, Sikhs, as the literature review revealed, are popularly known

for awareness of economic capital. UCAS, HESA, HEFCE, ECU, and the Sutton Trust do not account for finer contextual markers that distinguish student populations within the Indian group. Although the participants came from socio-economic occupational groups 1, 2 and 3, these indicators are overly simplistic; they do not allow differences within broad middle-class students to be viewed, or for ethnic and middle-class specific student populations to be visible. Although the sample in this study is small, it is one of the very few, if not the first, to acknowledge the diverse nature of middle-class students within a small sample of British students of Indian ethnic origin, which in turn helps to demonstrate that ethnic minority groups in western capitalist countries that are defined as successful in metaphorical terms, are done so, based on measures of educational, professional, economic activity, entrepreneurship trends. The sample itself revealed significant characteristics of middle-class British students of Indian origin.

Based on the distinct educational and socio-economic background identified in the sample's background, the twenty nine students could be identified into three distinct types of groups. Other factors that influences the construction of this categorisation include factors relating to whether students come from a Russell Group education background, any British education, whether or not the students come from professional employment backgrounds directly related to their own course. Thus, the groups are identified according to which students are most advantaged in terms of having access to the 'most useful' type of cultural and social capital.

Table 6.3 Diversity of middle-class backgrounds identified within the sample

<p>Most advantaged middle class group: Includes participants whose parents hold a British and Russell Group education; including whose parents are in higher professional employment related to medicine and law and whom attended fee paying schools</p>	<p>Govind, Krish, Rahul, Arjun, Bhavni, Abi, Chamkaur, Tarsem, Sukruti, Deepak, Eshaa, Amy</p>
<p>Moderately advantaged middle-class group: Includes participants whose parents hold a British degree/have experienced British HE, including whom are in professional, managerial occupations in lower medicine and law fields such as healthcare, FE teaching, but not necessarily in medicine and law sector; participants whom might have attended grammar school but whose parents.</p>	<p>Harry, Monica, Manisha, Ajmer, Preeti, Gina, Kiran, Aeshaa, Aryaan, Ravi</p>
<p>Least advantaged middle-class group: Includes participants whose parents have never experienced British HE, do not work in professional or higher managerial occupational sectors; do not hold A levels, include owners of businesses oriented towards working class consumption tastes. This group of students may have relied</p>	<p>Sonam, Pavan, Vikram, Jasraj and Lali, Tessa,</p>

entirely on paid tutoring services to facilitate the grades required for specific courses and whom have no insider knowledge of HE and of western medicine and law labour markets	
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6.7 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have set out a detailed class background analysis of the sample. I have identified differences pertaining to the students' socio-economic, education background, type of schooling, differences relating to the HEI and subject courses characterised by specific Indian ethnicities. Based on this, I have drawn out further differences within the sample relating to cultural and social capital. We also witnessed that tutoring plays a pivotal role in facilitating access to conventional routes to success, and that this type of paid service suggests a sense of belief in neoliberalist ideology. In the next chapter, I will draw on these three distinct middle-class backgrounds to interpret their understanding of success in relation to their decision to apply for medicine associated degrees and LLB law at certain universities.

Chapter Seven: Ethnicity and class specific success strategies

7.1 Introduction

This chapter reveals how the three distinct middle class backgrounds influenced my British Indian dentistry, pharmacy and LLB law students perceptions of success including their strategies to qualify for competitive success routes and be attracted to narrow occupations. The themes are interpreted relative to three different types of socio-economic and educational backgrounds identified in the previous chapter, that informed three different types of decision making processes for British Indian students, as and their decision to apply for medicine associated law degrees. It addresses key themes, and the sub-themes within those themes, in the form of an inductive thematic analysis. For ease of reference, the key research question was: *How do British Indian dentistry, pharmacy, and LLB law undergraduates define the term 'being successful'?* The secondary research questions were: 1) *Which factors do British Indian dentistry, pharmacy and LLB Law students associate with 'being successful', and how?* and 2) *Are British Indian students' reasons for applying to study dentistry, pharmacy, and LLB law, and their selection of university, influenced by the way they understand 'success'? If so, how?* Table 7.1 provides the main themes and sub themes within them that the analysis identified. My focus on the interpretation of these themes is informed and guided by Bourdieu's concepts of capital, habitus and symbolic violence and field too, because as we have considered in the introduction of Bourdieu's theory in chapter 1, and in the elaborated description of his ideas in chapter 2, field/social spaces inform and are inherent within the habitus.

Table 7.1 The research findings: shared themes and sub-themes

Main themes and sub themes
Main theme: Being in the top class Sub-themes: Money, and affording a top class lifestyle; top class occupations; top class identity
Main theme: Being British-born and Westernised. Sub-theme: Making decisions based on race, ethnicity, and gender intersections.
Main theme: Age driven goals. Sub-themes: Settling down; Owning a house.
Main theme: British Indian ethnicity driven competition.

Sub-themes: Healthy competition; Having a healthy blend of Indian and Western values.

7.2 An overview of the findings in relation to the theoretical framework and the students class profiles

On an abstract level, the participants' middle class habitus was developed in the context of them expecting racial inequality in British society, if they do not consider the purpose education in a strategic way. There was a recognition that the labour market would be more challenging for them if they pursued work in the fields of journalism or philosophy. This set of beliefs is based on the internalisation of a need to be cautious of the dominant group's perspective and to court acceptance from them. The foundation of this British Indian students habitus is constructed on a fear arising from being non-white, and this comes with costs and a need to be more structured and strategic in terms of securing educational success. For the research sample, their habitus is not homogenous. For instance, such fears are more present among students from the least moderate group, rather than those brought up with family members engaged in medicine or law related occupations. This varied middle class habitus, developed in the context of fear of racial inequality, influences the subconscious act of avoiding some subjects and pursuing others. Connolly and Healy (2004: 16), in taking issue with Jenkins' (1992) definition of symbolic violence, demonstrate through empirical studies relevant to education and other social science disciplines, that the key fundamental idea behind Bourdieu's conceptualisation of violence is that it is invisible and brutal because its legitimacy is accepted, e.g. by for instance, not feeling the need to questioning fear of downward social mobility that my participants felt would arise because of their different race/ethnicity to British white students.

Gaining insight into this small group of British Indian students, who qualified for competitive degree routes and universities might reveal them as 'dominant' relative to others and as a group of individuals whom are unreflexive towards those who have not been successful in qualifying for competitive routes. However, applying a qualitative methodology enabled me to see that these students are either dominated by, or dominate one another, given that some accessed these courses referencing the advice and networks around them, whilst others relied only on economic capital. Secondly, the one commonality between these students is their decision to avoid subjects such as humanities, music, philosophy (which as discussed in reference to the extracts below) could be viewed as an example of symbolic violence. Thirdly, why the students from the least advantaged group e.g. Tessa, Vikram and Jasraj's parents were not in a position to transmit the

cultural knowledge necessary to facilitate their progress in a certain medicine or law field, was not considered to be related to the need to strategize. The students were themselves able to devise a plan for how to become a doctor, or dentist or lawyer, even though their motivation for doing so seems to be deeply subconscious, arising out of fear of downward social mobility.

Researchers in HE research as we saw in the introduction of this thesis and in the literature review, consider British Indian students to be 'over represented' (Leslie 2005, Richardson 2008, 2011; Modood 2012; Boliver 2013, 2014) in certain professions, largely because they make *narrow choices* (Leslie 2005, Broecke and Nicholls 2007; Archer and DeWitt 2015). However, based on the findings of this study, with British Indian students, these choices are narrow because they do not consider all options as available to them. New insight is offered here, because the interviews included an exploration of 'issues' surrounding choice in the context of the participants family's migratory choices and their parents occupational and educational experiences. According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1994), symbolic violence occurs when an individual or group believes something in the social world is happening in the 'right' way; i.e. it is the natural and proper way to do something, such as a 'right' way to become educated, a 'right' way to achieve social mobility, or a 'right' way to gain economic and social rewards, also possibly - a 'right' way to be successful. The students considered their approach to be right, but at the same time, their strategies reflected their decisions when struggling to qualify and succeed on certain competitive degree courses and not others. This was because they felt it natural to subject themselves to a higher form of domination than the white top class.

The themes constitute the factors that British Indian medicine and LLB law students consider important when constructing success, and the factors that influence their decision making process when applying for medicine associated and LLB law at particular Russell Group universities. However, as mentioned above there three different types of decision making process inform British Indian students' desire to apply for these particular subjects – depending on whether they are from the *advantaged, moderately, or least advantaged* socio-economic and educated backgrounds, hinting different levels of the 'right' cultural and social capital present within the sample. To allow the British Indian students to consider their reasons for applying to study certain medicine associated degrees and LLB law, the researcher conducted a highly structured and critical assessment of individual subjects and the risks associated with applying to them in the context of being non-white and from an ethnic minority. The reasons informing the decision making process were arguably influenced by the need to be accepted by those who are dominant and white and

thus demonstrating the importance of symbolic violence. This was explored in relation to key themes.

Wanting to either be in the top class (qualify for a top class occupation), or to preserve their parents top class occupations by pursuing the same or similar occupations, was unrelated to the personal desires or personal understanding of success to these students. The students considered themselves to have the agency to apply for medicine and law degrees, because they could qualify for these courses. However, it is interesting to note that these students' decision making process began during the early years of their secondary education. Furthermore, much of their childhood involved discussions identifying a subject, a course, or an occupational field that their families acknowledged as professional, highly paid, respected, and as available to them as educationally successful ethnic minority students. The data in this chapter will show that the students' parents had internalised understanding about being successful without any awareness on the part of their parents regarding them as secondary and subordinate citizens, because they were ethnic minority and not white. The students also have internalised this belief, as we see in this chapter. Although the students aspire to either gain or preserve a top class identity through either occupation and earnings – and indeed qualified for this either by affording intensive tutoring or having access to insider and immediate knowledge of medicine and law (parents), the factors they associated with success were not personal. Undoubtedly, the degree of structuring their decision making reflects the extent to which the dominant perspective remains natural and justified. Thus, symbolic violence was useful in drawing out the main reasons underpinning these themes. Habitus explicates the association between family background and reasons for applying for these subjects. The different cultural and social capitals were contextualised relative to three different socio-economic backgrounds, which enabled a nuanced understanding of heterogeneity with regard methods for qualifying for courses. The students were committed to accessing subjects that reflected top class aims. However, they only focused on qualifying for and succeeding in certain areas and deliberately did not concentrate on excelling at others, because they felt they would encounter barriers within the UK labour market. This is an example of how the students subjected themselves to a significant level of strategizing that reflects a form of violence. This process was so normal to them, such that they did not question the very act of needing to strategize.

The themes developed are strategies, and from a symbolic violence point of view, they reflect the factors that British Indian medicine and law students consider to constitute success, all of which would make them more dominant than those not linked with success, but less successful than those judging whether they are successful; e.g. white and middle class. The themes reflect the factors that

these ethnic minority students focus on in terms of preparing to be accepted by the dominant top class group. These students are more dominant than other ethnic minority students from the Indian and other British Asian group, but they do not consider themselves as dominant or as subconsciously controlled by the UK's hierarchical power structure.

The 'success' strategies (the themes) discussed in this chapter now appear the order in which they were emphasised by the students, and draw on relevant data extracts, contextual data (type of school and parents specific occupations) and Bourdieu's conceptualisation. I was able to reveal why these British Indian students endure the process and journey of exclusion from dominant mainstream society, or in their words the white top class, as demonstrated from their perspectives. By employing symbolic violence, I could determine why these students placed significance on top class occupations, and on the significance of being white and westernised. Having provided an overview of the main findings and of the participants' background contexts and Bourdieu's theory, the chapter now focuses on each of the themes in turn, before considering the participants' different processes when choosing certain Russell Group universities and exploring their potential positions after completing their degrees.

7.2.1 Main theme: Being in the top class

During the analysis, the first theme identified pertained to the significance of being in what was referred to as 'the top class'. This phrase often arose in the context of students telling me how they felt when they came to learn about the research study, when they began to consider why they had pursued a particular course, which often led to a discussion of their parents occupations. At other times, the topic arose when the students were curious about whether the study about success was 'actually about being in the top class' (Preeti, moderately middle class). Vikram (least advantaged background, attended grammar, non-professional background) asked whether the study was related to being 'high class'. An important observation I made was that the participants from the moderately and least advantaged middle-class groups, were most curious about whether the research focus was about being in the 'top class'. Furthermore, they tended to be the ones who considered their aim of being in the top class more explicitly and reflexively than those who were from the most advantaged backgrounds. This is an important observation to consider in this analysis, because it hints at the heterogeneity of habitus present within the sample, which influenced how the participants' perceived the study and the aspects they chose to focus on when introducing themselves. For instance, Govind didn't ask whether the study was about top class, but

mentioned that his parents are '*actually in top class jobs*' (most advantaged background, male, pharmacy, LU, Hindu background, FP school).

When identifying the way class was spoken about in the data, it was apparent that it was considered significant. It did not appear to be associated with selfish desires, or in the case of those who were from the most advantaged backgrounds, a sense of snobbery, but because they had experienced and observed it as a natural key organising factor personally. The students unknowingly described social class as something that was inevitable and inherent to any consideration of success. When Vikram, a pharmacy student from the least advantaged middle-class group' was prompted to describe his family members, and his siblings, he referred to himself and his family as 'in the top class' with 'top class goals'.

My parents aren't educated here, but you can't really tell, cuz their kids are. (least advantaged group, pharmacy, LU, male)

When I prompted him to continue, he said,

There's either a top class, or a bottom class; there's nothing in between. I think I'm in the top class, or a high class. We have everything that average people don't, God willing.

This understanding of being in the top class appears to be characterised by an understanding of the top class as defined by wealth (having everything), but excludes knowledge, networks and connections, which as we saw when introducing the theoretical framework, is significant for ensuring straightforward and smooth access to employment in the UK. 'Having everything' in the context of Vikram's socio-economic and education background implies a sense of dominating other groups of people, but at the same time it implies a misunderstanding of what 'having everything' means and what 'being average' would mean, at least from a symbolic violence perspective. Apparently, Vikram has internalised the view that he is not being dominated, but that he is dominating those in the 'bottom class'. Having to immediately identify and introduce his family members by considering his position in relation to the class hierarchy – and whether he and his family dominate other groups, suggests that aspects of his family do not appear to be top class unless they are made explicit. Although the extract suggests that he only considers money to define who is dominating others, the fact that he is introducing himself to me through the lens of class, shows that he wishes to justify his parents' non-professional occupations, and their lack of experience and UK academic credentials. Furthermore, what might be underpinning Vikram's account here is the focus that he places on his parents' and his family's situation and their social position *in England*. For instance, he considers his family background according to in relation to factors that he has witnessed living in England. This consciousness, as we see later, might be

influenced by his awareness of the fact that he is not white. However, whilst Vikram's brief account captures the degree of significance that the students from the moderately and least advantaged group gave to class, students from all three backgrounds spoke about three particular factors that they associated with accessing and maintaining success: 'money and affording the top class', top class *occupations*. Students from all three groups also considered cultural indicators of 'top class' identity, which they considered as important to access the top class - or to preserve any top class aspects they already had in their family (i.e. parents in top class occupations) cultural indicators of top class identity.

7.2.2 Sub-theme: Money, and affording the top class

Another factor frequently mentioned was the role of money, as money was considered to have a key role in accessing many top class aspects, when maintaining the costs of reproducing the top class. As was established in chapter 6, the participants from the least and moderately middle class backgrounds had qualified for their dentistry, pharmacy and law degrees having had financial backing from their parents in the form of tutoring all throughout their schooling. One commonality shared by the participants from all three backgrounds was that they were able to access courses that offered access to high salary careers with low chances of redundancy. The fact that students from all three groups had to consider how to gain a position allowing them to either form or reproduce a position to attain money that affords access to the top class is an example of symbolic violence. These students considered a strategy for attaining 'money and affording' when thinking beyond their educational experiences. They had to think about how to attain top class status, and how they might continue to afford the necessary opportunities to access the top class (as in the case of those who had been fortunate enough to afford tutoring) as an act of strategizing and worrying. This is an example of how students consider themselves as fortunate enough to be able to attain good school grades to qualify for their degrees, or for the likes of Aeshaa, Govind and Bhavni, who noticed the importance of resources beyond money – including how they are all dominated by a subconscious fear of racial inequality, as demonstrated.

For the participants from the most advantaged middle class background, and many from a moderately middle class background where at least one parent was in a professional role, the experience of earning money through middle-class employment had already been met within their families, and so these students were advantaged because they already had insight into how a top class lifestyle can be afforded via a top class occupation. For Vikram, Tessa and Jasraj, the processes

involved in this experience had only recently begun to emerge, because their parents had only experienced the process of earning money through routine forms of self-employment, to ensure their children qualify for certain courses, and so these participants were uncertain about the progress towards earning a high salary, which might potentially mean they could struggle more than students from the most advantaged group. To be aware of what occupations yield a high salary is one thing; but to know the process by which this can be achieved is another, making this a new path. Irrespective of their socio-economic and educational backgrounds, they are concerned about the future, and therefore, considering money is an inevitable component of their decision making process. For instance, when I prompted Bhavni, a participant who attended private schooling and whose parents are both in higher professional occupations, to explain what she meant by 'you still have to think though don't you', she continued:

My parents' jobs are my parents jobs; they can give me savings and support me financially while I study, but I don't expect them to know every person whose studying on my course. I'm going to have kids one day and so I need to be able to afford for them myself, you know, so (laughs) money's important. (Bhavni, most advantaged group, dentistry, LU, female)

This quote reflects the reality of a British minority ethnic student who can be considered as 'successful', but when one looks deeper, we can see that being advantaged culturally, socially and economically is not enough. Bhavni acknowledges how her parents' jobs can advantage her, but she also acknowledges that they cannot go through the process for her, and that the fact remains that earning a high salary is not guaranteed. However, any struggle that might arise is considered natural and therefore necessary. Securing access to a top class occupation proved significant because of their awareness and understanding that life in western nations incurs financial costs. Their reasons for emphasising money and having money through a professional job were based on an understanding that they do not experience downward social mobility, something they understand as natural and not socially constructed. The concern about needing to undergo a detailed assessment of which occupations might enable that, is not questioned by the participants and their habitus does not push them to question it.

Considering strategies to be able to afford a top class lifestyle was considered the duty of the individual. One way in which the participants expressed the value of having money was that they observed the level of debt citizens were experiencing in their daily lives. Their habitus did not allow them to see the reasons for this, and they accepted it as natural. To navigate the situation, they constructed a strategy to avoid being penalised. The fact that the students offered debt as an example to illustrate the significance they place on money demonstrates that their habitus cautions them to be fearful. Meanwhile, however, it does not suggest they question why a fear of debt is

being experienced. The quotation below shows the ways in which Tessa is subject to symbolic violence, and that she accepts it as natural. In doing so, she contributed to her own subordinate condition:

In the UK, to be successful, you have to pick your career carefully, otherwise you end up with debt. I think caste is important in India, and class is important for success here [in the UK]. I applied for law because when I was in Year 10, I didn't want to do medicine or anything like that, like be a dentist, because I wasn't that great at science, but I was good at English, really good, although I did get a B in science, and an A in maths. I just thought with law, I can't go wrong, and it's interesting, and it's a, what's the word, like a top class job. (Tessa, female, law, MU, least advantaged middle-class)

Tessa considers choice of career as important, and as a process that began at school for her. Her habitus prompted her to think of wider aspects associated with structure; e.g. that certain classes are valued in England, and she considered her subject options accordingly. She also does not consider factors that may have contributed to her low achievement in science, i.e. a lack of transmission of cultural and curriculum knowledge to support her science attainment, instead considering this to be attributable to her own weakness (I wasn't that great at science). This is an example of symbolic violence, given that Tessa is made to feel by her habitus that she is at fault, and does not question this lack. Accessing the top class via a professional job does not seem to be innate to her; although she displays an understanding that qualifying for a law degree will instigate the process.

One might observe a sense of anxiety within Tessa's account when she describes feeling forced to orientate towards a particular subject (science rather than English). Tessa's words, 'that one cannot go wrong with law', because it's a top class job suggest that the construction of top class status is new to her immediate family also. 'Picking your career carefully' can be considered to refer to middle-class employment within the context of being middle-class and not white. This is implicit in Tessa account, because she compares social stratification systems within India, her ancestral nation, and the UK, but has adopted the UK version of social mobility and success as the correct version of social mobility. Tessa's need to raise the subject of debt in England may stem from witnessing her parents' experiences of earning money through routine employment; e.g. full time shift work, including having worked many hours. Eshaa on the other hand, who does have insight into the process of earning money through a professional job, when asked to further comment about her significance of financial security, referred to what she considers a top class lifestyle to be. Although she too expressed a fear over being able to afford private healthcare for instance, she gave a somewhat more relaxed explanation about why she considered money important. This did not appear to reflect the fear of not having money in the same way as Tessa's

account did. Eshaa emphasised the significance of money by referring to specific costs involved in affording daily life in contemporary England. Unlike Tessa, in the extract below, we can see that Eshaa does not consider the importance or fear of money directly in relation to her own decision making processes; perhaps because her decision making process when studying law was not predicated on the stress of having to undergo the process of qualifying for a middle class vocational degree.

These days £20 is nothing, unless you buy supermarket brand things; you can't buy the best of the best... not just that, anything, like in terms of the best of the best, you can't go to the best gyms, buy designer clothes, you can't afford private healthcare, you can't fly in business class, you can't do anything, and you need to be able to... oh, and yeah, also like a mortgage and a car, yeah, you need to be able to afford all of this, not just for a time, for all years, so you can live a normal life basically. Well, it is for me at the moment. (Eshaa, female, law, LU, most advantaged middle-class)

There is a sense of fear and awareness in Eshaa's extract regarding being in a position to attain top class costs (you *need* to be able to afford all this, for many years). Moreover, she also suggests she expects access to the best lifestyle choices, creating the impression that she has experienced the benefits of top class income. To be able to afford a certain type of mortgage, health and travel (the *best of the best*), reflects a particular type of aspiration with regard to health, travel and housing. However, whilst her focus on money is not directly related to her choice of degree subject as Tessa's was, Eshaa does communicate a subtle tone of panic when she mentions she needs to earn good money not just for a time, but for years to come. Why the affordance of such costs has to be subjected to planning and strategizing is not questioned by Eshaa. The very mention of 'it is for me at the moment' hints that the costs of top classness she is exposed to at present, are a result of her parents' money. This too is an example of symbolic violence, because Eshaa may perceive herself and her financial situation as advantaged relative to those who do not enjoy private forms of housing, health and travel; however, to attain these things for herself she implies she needs to plan.

Bhavni was also asked to elaborate on what she meant by being in the top class, being in the most advantaged middle-class, and not the first in her family to attend university. Similar to Eshaa, she was not the first person in her family to afford top class costs via a professional occupation. Bhavni, however, describes the significance of money in a similar way to Tessa, a student we saw whose decision making processes included a sense of fear of experiencing debt and a responsibility to form a plan to avoid it. Bhavni emphasises the importance of a decision making process including the examination of different vocational occupations, by considering possible typical salaries:

To be in the top class, you have to have a certain job, lots of money so you never run out [laughs] and don't have to take out loans and ask people for money. (Bhavni, most advantaged, dentistry, LU, comprehensive, female)

Bhavni is a student from a contrasting occupational and education background to Tessa, but debts, loans and being careful not to 'run out' of money are realities that Bhavni presents as normal. Already having an insight into the process of how to gain high salaries from professional vocational jobs having witnessed both her parents, Bhavni seeks to reproduce their financial position for herself. By deconstructing what being advantaged really involves for Bhavni and Eshaa, and the other students in the most advantaged group, Tessa's decision making process; i.e. considering how to avoid fear of debt highlights that she naively subjects herself to far more symbolic violence than the other two girls. Already we can see how dangerous it is to perceive of certain minority ethnic groups as 'successful', or high achieving and overlook the need to consider their decision making processes to stay ahead.

Sukruti, who comes from a medicine background and a Russell Group education background like Eshaa, appears to have experienced a similar financial situation. Sukruti implies that all the costs she enjoys have been afforded by her parents, and she accepts that qualifying for high salary professional occupations is important to not only afford certain aspects of a top class lifestyle, but also to be valued in society.

You need to be able to afford holidays and travel, and, I don't know, like socialising, and everyday things, like things to [laughs] study with laptops, oh yeah, and university fees. I've never actually thought about that, parents just pay for it, but yeah, I think you need to be able to be comfortable in terms of money, and not to have to completely rely on monthly wages; that's not really a life. Like if my parents, if one of them wasn't working, or even if both of them weren't for a few years, they would still have savings, and have people to rely on, because they have a good reputation. Once people recognise you as good people, like top class, even if you're out of work, or get made redundant, they're not going to judge you, because you're from a good work background. (Sukruti, female, dentistry, LU, most advantaged middle-class)

Her account implies that it is important to be valued by other 'people', and this can only be achieved through certain occupations. Her reference to satisfying 'people' may relate to those within her own ethnic group, and the need to be accepted and rewarded both financially and symbolically by them. However, Sukruti appears to feel an influence directing her to adopt a certain view of success – e.g. her parents medical occupations - as the proper route to 'respectability', and to undergo the process and struggle for it is considered as a natural process. This suggests that her habitus has informed her that it is the only way to afford a top class life, and so she prepares to reproduce this process (as she is not the first to experience it in her family), thereby perceiving of herself as something to be dominated. The significance and value that Sukruti places on English HE

is expressed when she makes a sudden mention of ‘oh yeah, and university fees’. This might imply that she understands that money is valuable only if invested in being top class from the white British dominant perspective. She seems to value money from the perspective of what she seems to consider dominant; i.e. English HE policy.

Surkruti also seems to feel that her own journey in the British field will be easier to manage, because she is aware her parents’ occupation will advantage her in multiple ways and enhance her opportunities of success in the field. We have seen how British Indian participants from the least and most advantaged backgrounds contribute tacitly to their own subordination. Of the participants, Tessa’s responses suggested she is the most likely to subject herself to domination by other British Indian students who are much more advantaged in terms of their knowledge arising from their family backgrounds (Bhavni, Sukruti and Eshaa), and also from those who form a structure in which fear of debt is socially constructed. When we compare how my British Indian participants conceptualised money and attained it, i.e. completing certain professional jobs, the views of British Black, middle-class parents in a study conducted by Rollock et al. (2014) comes to mind. They agreed that a monthly wage for a professional job is not enough, because it means one can only rely on that one wage all month, and as such it is an insufficient way to afford a life in England. However, like Rollock’s minority ethnic participants, my participants, including Aeshaa below, stress the importance of being able to afford access and aspects of top class consistently, or struggle to manage with a monthly wage (as in Rollock’s participants). Simultaneously, however, they are blinded by their habitus, and instead consider the manner in which they are enhancing the power of the dominant group is natural. For instance, Aeshaa below points out that the purpose of having money is to be able to be in a position to afford mortgage based housing, private transport, and that often monthly wages are inadequate to ensure this in Britain.

It’s not just about having money, for me it’s important to know how to use money, and what to spend it on. Things like a house, car, and mortgage, and things like that are obvious, but also investing in things, and not relying on your wages every month. I think, to have a good quality of life, you need to be comfortable to some extent. I mean, I am comfortable, because of my family, but obviously, they probably understand the concept of money, and how hard it is to be successful, better than me. We haven’t had it that hard, because we’re completely British, but I still want a decent career, not just to work in a shop, or just any old company. (Aeshaa, moderately advantaged group, dentistry, LU, grammar, female)

When I questioned the phrase ‘decent career’ with curiosity, Aeshaa continued:

Like, studying to get a decent career that is professional, but also highly paid is important in this country, to be able to afford things without always checking the bank balance... I mean I’ve never seen or heard of my parents sitting there wandering if they have enough money for that bill or the next bill.

She accepts that she is not used to budgeting, and so is 'comfortable', but has observed her parents have worked to create such a lifestyle. This kind of process of earning money is considered normal. However, it appears that being born in Britain facilitated Aeshaa's and her parents' access to middle-class employment. Particularly notable here, is how the importance of money and class is informed by what she regards as a universally idealised goal (Britishness, being completely British). She misrecognises that 'being completely British' is not why she 'hasn't had it hard', because her decision making process to have a 'decent career', i.e. dentistry, is part of her preparation to reproduce the 'comfort' she is familiar with. What is innate to these students is the comfort of having access to resources (having the money for tuition fees, holidays, travel insurance, or the money to afford substantial tutoring to compensate for cultural resources that the Tessa for instance, and Aeshaa do not have access to). They are restricted by their habitus to notice that their qualification for courses is a socially constructed problem, to which they inevitably contribute as they are unable to perceive the symbolic violence. Like Eshaa and Sukruti, Aeshaa suggests she does not experience hardship financially as a result of her family, who earn *non* higher professional salaries, unlike those of Eshaa and Sukruti. Aeshaa views the idea of a decent occupation through the lens of what she sees as top class in Britain, and determines what she needs to afford based on the dominant perspective.

Tessa and Vikram's accounts, suggest they are more conscious of hardship and the level of labour that goes into accumulating the money required to afford top class choices, like a private education and tuition fees; an awareness and experience that Sukruti, Eshaa, Aeshaa and Bhavni have not had, as manual and routine work is not something they are not familiar with. Below, Jasraj, whose parents are from a much lower occupational ranking than Aeshaa's, noted that his parents work long hours in a low status professional role. Consequently, this results in an arguably more realistic understanding of earning money, and encourages a more conscious reflection on the fear of not having money:

It's kind of hard to explain. Everything costs, so to be in the top class, or just a higher class, you need money; life isn't free. People say money can't buy you happiness, that's true of course, but money can buy you the things that you need to make someone happy and safe, for instance. Like, if I don't have money, where am I going to keep my children in the future? A house, and not just like, you know, a shitty [researcher emphasis] one; a nice, big, spacious house that has everything in it. (Jasraj, least advantaged group, law, MU, male)

When I said 'everything'? Jasraj added:

Like everything that children need to have a good life, like if I have a good job, then I will be able to be more flexible with my hours, like my parents couldn't be flexible, well actually my Mum could, but not my Dad... My Dad just like (laughs) offered my Mum and us money and made sure

we had computers, the latest gadgets, but like kids need an easy life in terms of money... she shouldn't have to worry about whether their parents can afford things, and like even the parents shouldn't be stressed about working all the hours to make sure money is never short.

Jasraj expresses the importance of money in much clearer and more powerful terms, almost as if the power of money is beyond description when he begins to think about success. He also implies that it is his duty to be responsible for having money. He has seen the way his parents have had to compensate between earnings and time with him, which he implies is important (his parents could not be flexible) when ensuring there is never shortage of money. They could not do both. This is a reality that Jasraj considers in reference to wishing his children to be more advantaged than he was. His words imply that he considers himself less advantaged than those students who did benefit from their parents' flexibility. No responsibility on the part of the government or politics is considered, because these experiences of unequal parenting and raising children in unequal family settings is considered the societal norm. Vikram, another medicine student with a low advantaged middle-class background like Jasraj, had similarly internalised a sense of responsibility with regard to being successful, in a way that aligns with British white structural ideology. Vikram, whose parents were not able to transmit much of the 'right' cultural and social capital, relied on investing economic capital to allow him to experience educational success. This implies that he takes responsibility for strategizing ways to move into a position in which he can consistently afford to access the indicators of a top class life.

You have to be able to easily [researcher emphasis] afford things like a mortgage, lifestyle, holidays, healthcare, kids' education, you know, because all that is important. You can't be constantly chasing your tail. Like I said, no point being successful for x amount of years.
(Vikram, male, pharmacy, LU, least advantaged middle-class)

When I wanted more clarity regarding his use of the term, 'easily', Vikram continued:

Like I think studying pharmacy will hopefully provide a stable salary, like surely my parents would be so erm disheartened if nobody in our family had an easy way, and a professional way to earn a high salary. My parents earn a lot than a single professional job, but they have to work without flexibility to make sure of that. They just want us to not work manually like that, and be tired every night... I hope I didn't go on there (laughs).

Vikram has experienced a similar upbringing to Jasraj, who mentions his father as being generally absent. The decision making process arose from the knowledge that it was normal for his parents to experience such health conditions to provide Vikram with a way to qualify for a pharmacy course. Pavan's account below, also illustrates the strength of the dominant perspective, and British society's hierarchy as normal, by the way she conceptualises the importance of money; i.e. being able to afford schools in England which require a fee. Not only does Pavan's account present

her as an outsider to the dominant form of education, but also reveals the degree of domination she considers herself subject to. She perceives of the fee paying education system as a different world, and is unable to consider it is a deliberately constructed social reality, nor can she understand why she is not a part of that world, nor why it is desirable:

My Dad says that he would like us to try and send our kids to those private fee-paying schools in Westminster. I was like Dad, Dad, Dad... how do you know about Westminster schools? I don't even know, and obviously my masi's [maternal aunt] daughter works in Pimlico, and she knows the area and that... and I tell him they're not that special, they're just have a reputation for being good... but then who knows? I wouldn't reject it if I knew I had the money and the right support. (Pavan, female, law, MU, least advantaged middle-class)

She does, however, imply that her parents, like Jasraj and Vikram's did not transmit certain knowledge and resources beyond the money required to qualify for such courses (and the right support). Pavan's account suggests familiarity with what is regarded as dominant in the UK, but it also suggests Pavan and her background feeling of being foreign relative to the dominant class, of which she wishes to be a part. She is the first in her family to be setting out to construct top class aspirations. Pavan possesses some modest indirect social capital; e.g. an aunty who works in Pimlico, but what is most evident is that she sees this as a different world, one in which she can access power. Pavan's parents were in similar occupations to Vikram's parents and Jasraj's father, had no experience of how to capitalise on economic capital in England, except to invest in a service to enhance academic success. Unlike Aeshaa, whose parents had capitalised on economic capital by attending a British private fee-paying schooling, and whose parents were surrounded by professional medical contacts placed her in the 'right' type of social and cultural surroundings required for the British field, Pavan's could not. 'Westminster schools' serve the political/status quo and are typically associated with the education of powerful people, i.e. those responsible for reproducing the dominant ideology and class structure (Dorling 2015, 2017). Pavan's explicit acknowledgment that these schools are powerful for the wrong reasons (e.g. it's just the name, and 'how do you these schools Dad') suggests she is accepting herself and other aspects of her upbringing as non-dominant. She does not consider why Westminster school students damage her own position, but she is aware that the situation is unnatural.

Eshaa enjoyed much of the 'right' cultural and social capital, and for her, the experience of a decision making process involving a professional occupation is not new and fresh, as it was for Pavan, Tessa, Vikram and Jasraj's. Her account, like Sukruti's and Bhavni's displayed an understanding of economic capital, which reflects not only her desire for luxury consumption (Rolex watch), but also her perception of money and what needs to be afforded. Her expectations

align with the dominant perspective in England, and she believes that it is her duty, or the duty of the individual in general, to be in a position to meet the rising costs in England.

Not really, yeah, a bag of crisps, a newspaper, and a drink maybe [grins]. Who doesn't have money for those things? You can't buy a Rolex watch with it [laughs]. Kids think of £20 as nothing these days. They want £100 minimum. My cousins do. One of them brought a pair of trainers, his Mum was telling my Mum, for something crazy like £250, or something like that. (Eshaa, female, law, LU, most advantaged middle-class)

Eshaa's view and considerations here refer to more than just how much things cost in England. It suggests she has internalised an understanding within the British white western ideology of success that has led her to conceptualise money as essential to attaining security. What is not explicit in Eshaa's account, is that she accepts and considers it to be self-evident that it is a citizen's duty to ensure they can finance themselves. Eshaa does not say that she would personally like a Rolex watch, but she wished to be in a position where she is confident about being able to afford one. She acknowledged that only certain jobs can help fund such costs. An awareness of the significance of having money was conceptualised and emphasised as critical to living in England. This was expressed in varying ways, ranging from fear of debt, loans, redundancy, in more assertive tones than others depending on whether a participant was new to the process of affording it through a professional job, or whether they were familiar to how money was earned via a professional job. Those from the least and moderately advantaged groups contextualised the need for a high salary earned through a professional job, because they had experienced their parents not being able to be flexible or able to make the most of their time with their children. Meanwhile, those who were conscious of having had a comfortable upbringing, also enjoyed insider knowledge concerning what constitutes pursuing higher salary professional roles. However, they all accepted that it is their role to be responsible if they fail to attain a salary. The role of the structure in supporting this responsibility did not form a part of these students' understanding. This responsibility, and the different socio-economic contexts in which experiences of money were formed influenced individuals' decision making processes, regarding *which* top class occupations were the best ones to pursue. This revealed the different way in which the students contributed to their own domination.

7.2.3 Sub-theme: Top class occupations

A top class occupation was defined very specifically, and considered a significant observation within the context of data analysis. Top class occupations were defined as medicine associated; in

particular, pharmacy, dentistry, becoming a doctor, barrister, lawyer or a chartered accountant. Occasionally, optician and uniformed services, including police sergeant were mentioned. Some students were therefore naturally reproducing advantage, and for some, they were the first in their families to attend university (in the case of the least moderately students) or the first to go through the process of qualifying for a medicine associated or law course. They promised a high degree of consistent economic capital too, as we saw in the previous section. Constructing subject choices and post 16 choices was not a matter of what subjects students felt drawn to or inclined towards. They could not see themselves as likely to succeed in the British graduate labour market in any occupational field other than medicine, medicine associated fields and law. One commonality that all of my participants shared was an understanding that being a British student from an ethnic minority background was an impediment to pursuing subjects in the humanities, arts, and music disciplines. For instance:

English, Maths and Science are definitely the most important subjects, but I needed to get A stars in all the sciences cuz well it's pharmacy. (Lali, least advantaged group, pharm, LU, grammar, male)

Lali's point of view is further highlighted in reference to other class background specific contexts, but at this stage this comment captures the desperation of those wishing to attain high grades in science. It is important to acknowledge that they had not understood their ethnicity and their non-white status as something incompatible with humanities, music, and the arts. For instance, they might have looked to apply for them and strategize for the entry requirements these courses set if they were easier to access and were subjects their level of attainment was high in. This is a further example to understand the nature by which socially, man-made structures form the habitus of my participants, who do not feel they cannot explore other options when making decisions about subject. For instance, when Sonam, a student with no HE or law background, was prompted to explain further why she did not pursue English as a degree, having scored high marks on her English assessments but knowing it wasn't worth anything, she stated:

You can't do much with English; unless you want to like (few moments silence) like want to be a writer or you know write stuff in the Guardian or publish and that, like it's not a sort of top class job that Indians would go for. (Sonam, least advantaged, law, LU, female, fee paying school)

My Dad said once you get into law, we can rest and retire (slightly laughs) and you can help your sister, cuz I will have the knowledge if my sister wants to do law. (Manisha, moderately advantaged, law, MU, grammar school, female)

These students consider themselves British students whose race and ethnic minority status is only compatible with a limited number of occupational fields. Sonam and other students from the least

advantaged group, and their parents, felt that it was ‘this way or no way’ to enter a top class occupation; i.e. to invest significantly in economic capital to ensure they qualify for law (as shown in Manisha’s comment). Sonam’s habitus does not enable her to question the incompatibility she sees between English and her ethnicity. It appears that Sonam’s father felt that his priority was to ensure he invests as much as possible financially to ensure Sonam qualifies for law, so he made sure she attended a fee paying school. This extract implies the ethnic and racial nature of an act of symbolic violence. The extract implies a belief in the responsibility for success and/or failure expressed by a father who spends his working life working to support his daughter. Manisha, who does have access to HE in England, but not related to her course, weighed up the responsibility of providing the resources necessary for her sister to access law. Although Manisha is not the first to pursue law, she will be able to transmit knowledge of the process and subject knowledge to her sister, as her father clearly implies it is her duty to ensure she transmits the resources to her sister. Similarly, another student who was only supported by his parents’ economic capital to qualify for pharmacy, reflects on the decision making process he went through when choosing to apply for pharmacy:

You go to university because it is a special place, you don’t waste that time... the most expensive doctors in London, like Tony Blair’s doctor for instance, [laughs] he didn’t spend his time clubbing, or socialising, or volunteering in Africa did he? He studied to pass his exams. He didn’t wait five years to become a doctor, and his Mum and Dad didn’t pass his exams for him... because those are the real courses, and deep down, it’s the students who do those courses that don’t struggle with life in general, because they choose those courses because they respect these professions, like genuinely, not just for the money... courses like dentistry are highly respected in society, any society globally. (Vikram, male, pharmacy, LU, least advantaged middle-class)

Vikram implies that he has complete faith that qualifying for pharmacy will provide him with suitable earnings. He overlooks the significance of extracurricular activities, and considers the key to securing employment in the UK to be the outcome of his degree alone. This discounting of extracurricular activities is one outcome of coming from a family where tutoring was the only or main form of support Vikram gained to qualify for this degree. His decision making process was subject to disadvantage, because, due to no fault of his own, or his parents, he was unable to access insider knowledge into what experiences and skills are required to complement his pharmacy degree and ensure he is employable. The level of inequality that Vikram has experienced reveals how the structure not only presents itself as the dominant perspective but as natural and deeply engrained into Vikram’s and his parents’ habitus. In considering the meaning of success and the legitimisation, and the worth of his degree, he is inclined to consider those who are white and studying pharmacy as from the top class and therefore as sources of inspiration. Vikram unknowingly is considering himself as inferior to a British white student, and strengthening the

misconception that those in the political domain in the UK are inevitably and unquestionably, appropriate examples to emulate. His comparison with his own pharmacy degree and that of an individual who may have been highly privileged in terms of socio-economic and educational background, reflects a lack of knowledge of the requisite cultural and social capital. Below is another interesting example from a student who comes from a professional background, where his parents underwent schooling and HE in England and so have some insight into, and experience of life in England. Deepak considered the role of the British government in the decision making process when pursuing a top class job. He did reflect upon the role of the government through a critical lens, and questioned their failure to deliver what they promised, although he observed that they are usually supportive of those who help themselves.

I think to be successful, you need to not let government and politics influence your choices, because they want the best for themselves, and don't actually, deep-down, care about the public. I think they throw all these words around the papers, and in their speeches, like 'achieving success', because I think they know people in Britain are just losers unless they really do have a clear idea about what they want to achieve. (Deepak, male, dentistry, LU, moderately advantaged middle-class)

When I repeated the phrase, 'really do', he continued:

Yeah, like actually want to have a high class job, like politicians and that are selfish, and only care about themselves, but if we know that then kids should work hard and study hard and try and get into a top class job. It's not easy, but it can be easier once you have got your foot in a good job. Dentistry is a respectable profession. Well I could have studied politics (slightly laughs) but it's not really a proper job, it's more about making decisions and all that. It's not for me. Like different sorts of people and you only have to look at Sadiq Khan (laughs).

There are two key comments here that underpin Deepak's decision to apply for dentistry. He is interested in the subject of politics, but felt that to pursue it as a profession he would need to be a more decisive person. He characterised himself as subordinate and inferior to politicians, encouraging himself to be inferior and insignificant to them. Although he questioned why politicians make decisions that are not reflected in society, he does not seem to question why people like himself are unworthy to take on such roles. He appears to suggest that becoming a politician is a higher status role than becoming a dentist, but his habitus requires that he pursue an occupation he considers top class and so can strategize for. Deepak's account implies that he did not possess a narrow outlook concerning potential subjects at degree level, because he does not mention wishing he had scope to explore something else. However, his habitus causes him to accept that he would not be suitable to lead a nation.

Eshaa was more advantaged than Deepak and Vikram, based on the way she prepared to qualify for law, and with regard to the knowledge she holds about the employability side of the law profession. She too regards the western field as superior and universal, despite observing that the white upper classes accrue more rewards in terms of symbolic capital than she ever will. She accepts her own journey to become educationally successful as reflecting a level of strategizing to succeed in the British field that white upper class individuals take for granted, or readily gain. However, although she like Deepak began to compare how she is advantaged relative to others, she observed that only those of a certain race can be considered dominant. She notes that her own decision making process has undergone greater structuring and far more effort, but still interprets this as less 'truly middle class'. Eshaa may have experienced far more advantage and gained far more from her parents' occupations, yet she does not perceive her background to be genuinely and authentically 'middle class'.

What about people like Pippa Middleton, Kate Middleton, Jonathan Ross, they are seen as special and extra, you know, posh, even though some of us [middle-class people who haven't inherited such positions] have more qualifications than them. I got A stars; did any of them? And I think it is destiny, it must be... Pippa Middleton is just pure lucky, she is now related to Prince William. So, she doesn't seem a truly middle-class person. She gets it all from her sister. (Eshaa, female, law, LU, most advantaged middle-class)

She considered such individuals have little insight into or experience of strategizing, but she implies that those who strategize and get A grades are subordinate. Eshaa shows a conscious realisation of the distinctions between the different types of individuals who secure outstanding educational success and pursue middle class occupational routes. Irrespective of this, she apparently subconsciously considers these distinctions between herself and those who are white and could be considered dominant as a situation that cannot be helped (Pippa Middleton is now pure lucky, because she's now related to Prince William, she gets it all from her sister).

My participants consider the above advantages unfair, but naturalise them when considering their own journeys to success. Vikram, implies that he relates with individuals who have strategized and are more likely to have invested effort to earn value than he would with someone who has not. However, Vikram, yet again considers and reflects on his parents' disadvantaged position, and further references evidence of his parents' lack of any sort of cultural and social capital to support his progression into pharmacy, by showing a naive understanding that what his parents offered should be adequate to succeed in the pharmacy profession.

People like David Cameron, or the royal family, they're not real people, or celebrities, but then celebrities, I think, are more real than them. I mean I haven't had it lucky, or got spoon-fed everything. Yes, we had tuition, Apple MacBooks and designer clothes, but my parents have

worked night and day, they don't know pharmacists or doctors, they just supported us the best they could, by making sure we have everything to become a pharmacist. (Vikram, male, pharmacy, LU, least advantaged middle-class)

Their strategies had to be constructed at a deeper level to guarantee that they would attain a lasting middle class occupational identity, but one which is still not a legitimate form of middle class, because they are strategizing. From this we considered the significance of constructing a strategy to study a particular subject when the students in the sample possessed the least amount of the 'right' social and cultural capital; i.e. those for whom the belief in a western white success ideology had just emerged in the family (the likes of Pavan, Vikram, Tessa, Sonam and Jasraj). This suggests that although these students accept that they make highly selective subject choices and strategize from an early age, they are conscious of their subordinate and inferior position at times, but believe this to be the immutable way of society. They try to improve themselves and raise their position within British society. *In this sense*, it appears as though they are not contributing to their own subordinate condition, because they are attempting to consciously improve their class status to level up to those who they consider genuinely top class and in decision making powerful jobs (politicians), but they are doing so in the understanding that the white middle classes are the real 'model minority' rather than themselves; as Chamkaur notes when asked what he meant by the term 'powerful groups':

It's like powerful groups, like I was just saying that basically that it's not impossible to get into good jobs, and that to do well in England you have to be in a medicine profession, so that you can be treated and noticed you know it's worth putting the effort in now. (Chamkaur, most advantaged, pharmacy, LU, fee paying school, male)

For Chamkaur and also for Eshaa, who comes from a much more advantaged middle-class background than Vikram and Deepak, it is normal to conform and go to different levels of effort to be considered worthy by the white dominant group. Their accounts suggest symbolic violence becomes deeply implicit and as such is difficult to question (England, powerful groups) and when some students did reflect on their strategizing experience (I got an A, Eshaa), or by considering those in the government, it seemed natural to conceive of them as powerful. This type of habitus is characterised by experiences of schooling, upbringing in which their ethnicity (being Indian), combined with socio-economic and educational backgrounds have led these students to prepare their journeys into the white field of employment, imagining they have to strategize to fit that world of success. Vikram clearly is unfamiliar with this world - to the same extent that Eshaa is. She implicitly reproduces herself as subordinate, but has much more of the 'right' capital to draw on to enhance her chances of securing employment. The differences between Eshaa and Pavan (below)

relate to the experiences or perceptions that cross their minds when thinking about the way they strategized their jobs as different.

Pavan implies an experience and upbringing that resonates with that of her parents' manual and long routine hours employment; i.e. long business hours and a much more explicit and conscious focus on the varied nature of shift work in England. In the extract below, for Pavan, jobs can be deemed 'crappy', according to the income they provide, and the amount of physical labour and routine work involved in them. The jobs that came into Pavan's mind when she was probed on her choice of law, also arose as a result of challenges when securing an occupation matching Pavan's degree. Pavan's family does not possess the knowledge to secure legal employment, and therefore this thought process could prove a reality for Pavan.

No point earning money all day, doing shit jobs like cleaning, shift work, and just like crappy jobs, and not having any time for a life, to focus on other areas of your life, like social life, family, travelling. You might as well have two jobs and live on a council estate or something. (Pavan, female, law, MU, least advantaged)

If there's a kid who has both parents, I don't know, who work in McDonalds, that child is going to see his parents working in McDonalds, so if he says I want to apply for the job in the post office, or work full time in Marks and Spencer's the parents might think that their child was more successful than them, but my parents would hate that, and I would be ashamed. (Pavan, female, law, MU, least advantaged middle-class)

Once again, we have two accounts, from two students from contrasting socio-economic and educational backgrounds. First of all, in Bhavni's extract, there are references to employment in the British labour market, as if this is the only context or way to plan and construct subject based and occupational choices.

I would hate for my daughter in the future, for instance, to become a fashion designer, unless it was for Jimmy Choo or Chanel [laughs], or a hairdresser for a celebrity, not for Toni and Guy, or Supercuts. I would feel I did something wrong in the way I brought her up ...someone who lives on a council estate might think they are successful if they become a nursery teacher, or get a pay rise from £10 to £12. I mean that is unimaginable to me. (Bhavni, female, dentistry, LU, most advantaged middle-class)

I repeated, 'unless it was for Jimmy Choo'? To that she laughed and slightly continued:

Oh, I'm just saying that I want my daughter to be able to study whatever she wants and chooses to, like she doesn't have to be a dentist, but whatever she does want to do, I will make sure she excels at it and get her the right support for it.

Although Bhavni and Pavan both come from quite different socio-economic and educational backgrounds, they reflect similar attitudes towards routine work in the retail sector. However, one important divergence between these accounts is that Pavan refers to her parents, and how her

parents would 'hate' the idea of her working in routine retail work, despite themselves engaging in this type of employment. This is a line of work that she is exposed to, and which has shaped her understanding of employment, which Bhavni's, Eshaa's and Sukruti's has not. Pavan acknowledges that her parents have played a key role in influencing her decision to apply for her subject, and notes that her parents might wish their child to be more successful than them. However, from Pavan's account, one could also speculate that she is implying that her parents possess aspirations that challenges her own. However, interestingly, Bhavni's account does imply an act of symbolic violence. She almost admits to strategizing, and that her daughter will not have to in the same way (she doesn't have to be a dentist). A view about nursery teachers is expressed by Bhavni, to indicate this occupation is a lower class choice within her family occupational history, implying that there is a sense of duty to reproduce and attain the same class profile as her parents. This, unlike Pavan's was what contributed to her considering a specific top class occupation. What is also evident in Pavan's account is how she compares herself and her parents with others of supposedly the *same class* background (routine employment and long hours). On the other hand, although Bhavni gives an interesting account her background is far more privileged than Pavan's, as reflected in the words: 'I would think I raised her wrongly'.

The assumption that neoliberalism is based on an ideology of choice (Olsen 2004; Harvey 2005) is not apparent from the extracts above. The British Indian students' understanding of success stresses the importance of class identity in the context of the nature of symbolic violence; i.e. students internalising the belief that the white dominant perspective is the one from which they seek validation and which influences how they filter which subjects to study in England to become or maintain their middle-class background.

In the next section, I consider the role and impact these students' school-teachers, and the role of the school more generally, had upon how they constructed strategies to succeed in the British white field. I aim to draw out the key differences between the students from the three different groups with regard to the role their school played in the decision making process when they applied for medicine and law.

7.2.4 The role of tutoring, schooling and school teachers in British Indian students' subject decision making processes

In the case of minority ethnic groups, which are considered 'successful' in terms of education and professional occupation trends (Indian and Chinese), we saw in the literature review that their 'success' and the formation of these ethnic groups education and professional employment profiles as 'model minorities' is considered wrongly constructed, or constructed in an unhealthy or obsessive way; i.e. not natural (Archer and Francis 2006a, 2006b). Schooling and the role of teachers in the west, has been considered influential in determining pupils' school examination outcomes and the decisions pupils make as a result of those grades and experiences at school (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990). Students from non-professional employment and educated backgrounds rarely grasp the concepts and curriculum delivered at school as quickly and easily as those who are. Some students experience greater complexity than others. Parents in professional and higher professional roles can provide the necessary resources and the knowledge to explore aspects of different subject curriculums, and have the knowledge to engage in conversations about their children's potential attainment (Sullivan 2006).

As we discussed in the former chapter and the analysis so far, although all students qualified for a medicine associated or law degree at a Russell Group university, those in the least advantaged group relied almost exclusively on tutoring to compensate for their parents' lack of knowledge about curriculums and efficient revision methods. Those whose parents were in higher professional medicine and or law posts were particularly advantaged and tutoring was not heavily relied on as insurance. We see a difference below, between Vikram's parents use of tutoring, and that of Chamkaur's parents, as Chamkaur comes from the most advantaged middle-class background:

I used to have a gora [White] tutor, and my Mum used to do his head in [laughs]. He used to nod, and set me lots of homework. I told her I wanted to be a doctor, like a consultant. I had some work experience, I liked all science subjects, and so did my older sister, but she still used to ask Mr William, Are you sure that he knows everything for his exams? because I was naturally good at science subjects, and he just used to go over stuff with me, and she wanted him to always make sure he hasn't missed anything. I changed my mind, I thought I'd do pharmacy because I have a lot of support for exams and employment opportunities already in place, and it's a top medicine job. (Vikram, male, Punjabi, LU, dentistry, least advantaged middle-class)

And, below we see how Chamkaur's mother engages with Chamkaur's learning, and the process of successfully shaping his educational success to succeed in the same occupational field:

My Dad used to set his own homework for maths... for me to do after school, as well as the homework my maths tutor gave me. I did it though. It was just the same questions, to make sure I still remembered the things I learnt with Mr Gill. My Mum was annoying though... because she always gave me spelling tests from these newspapers she read. (Chamkaur, male, pharmacy, LU, most advantaged middle-class)

I prompted Chamkaur to offer further information about which newspapers, to which he replied:

Yeah, like The Guardian or Financial Times, because they're the only ones they really look at.

Chamkaur's account differs from Vikram's considerably in terms of the description of his school years. Chamkaur's mother appears to have a particular understanding of the type of resources required to succeed in the English curriculum, whilst his father actively became involved in teaching certain subjects. In sharp contrast, Vikram's parents relied on the tutor for *all* engagements regarding teaching and assessment. A family environment, in which both parents are in medicine and law occupations, and are aware of the process of learning and revision for core subjects is likely to have a different impact on students whose knowledge results from a tutor's advice and tips on a particular subject. Therefore, no two students trying to qualify for the same degree course will have arrived at that destination in the same way. Chamkaur and Vikram's accounts reveal what effects possessing knowledge and taking an active role in producing cultural capital can have, as opposed to relying solely on economic capital (i.e. Vikram's mother was unable to make a personal judgement about the content of the work). It is important to note that there are differences between the approaches of Chamkaur's parents and Vikram's parents in terms of developing appropriate forms of cultural capital, since the latter were often busy developing their earning capacity to obtain a middle-class income from their working-class business, and so depended heavily on external cultural resources which include tutoring (Reay et al. 2011). Students from the most advantaged and least advantaged group (i.e. those discussing whether parents were able to provide resources for every aspect of their learning, or not, did not consider the role of teachers, the process of choosing school options and their relationship with learning more broadly in an open minded way. For instance, when I asked Krish what he meant by 'my teacher gave me a 6 in English, but I wanted an 8 for both', he replied:

We did a creative writing assessment, and I wanted to do a redraft and she just said sort of didn't say no and she didn't say yes that I could, but she didn't encourage me. I only asked because my Mum asked me to ask, you know... but yeah I just think with sciences and maths its more straightforward, like it's not erm subjective so it's a different revision experience. (Krish, most advantaged, pharmacy, LU, male)

Krish interprets his decision to pursue sciences and maths at school and his strength in being able to grasp revision techniques for these subjects as an outcome of his ability, rather than something

that his teachers' advice and approach might have contributed to. For instance, he and his family did attempt to pursue English Literature and express a desire to improve in creative writing but his understanding of why he did not pursue that draft diminished into air. The experience Krish had serves as an example of how the school and teachers might consider an extended desire to learn as unworthy of the student, or as an opportunity that is unavailable. Either way, it was easier to align himself with sciences and maths, because the experience of growing in these subjects seemed to feel less confrontational with teachers, and so it was easier to maintain relationships with his English teacher. Vikram's extract shows that he was not inclined to question the teacher further, perhaps as a way of respecting her role as teacher. However, in doing so, he made the decision to not pursue or develop in a subject he wished to pursue, hence accepting his ability as better suited to pursuing sciences and maths. When speaking about his experience with schoolteachers in relation to careers advice, Jasraj also shows how he was inclined to listen to and obey schoolteachers' advice about what career might be compatible with his interests. However, he interpreted it as the school and/or teacher having low aspirations for his future. Jasraj defined success in terms of accessing a route to the top class. He considered his school's career advice to direct him in the opposite direction; i.e. downward social mobility. Although he was disadvantaged in terms of his parents not having the knowledge, information or contacts of the decision making steps to assist him to qualify for law, or to provide more nuanced advice towards his revision time plan for instance, he was clear about which occupation he wanted to qualify for to access the top class.

School told me to do sports science at school, because they knew I liked sports, but I wouldn't actually study it unless I knew it would make me famous. I don't want to just become a fitness instructor as a career... I was, like, you're joking, right? What did I do with my life? Oh, I was a fitness instructor, and I got some certificates... or I practise law, I'm a barrister... who will be taken seriously and seen as important? (Jasraj, male, law, MU, least advantaged middle-class)

When I repeated, seen as important? Jasraj said:

Yeah, like you want people in the world of work like firms and companies, like just when you approach someone for a mortgage for a house or you want to open a bank account, they speak to you differently than how they would to a personal trainer maybe, just people.

From Jasraj's account we can consider that whilst his parents were unable to transmit knowledge or information about decision making around subject choice, Jasraj expected the school would be able to offer more in terms of having a higher expectation and goal setting for careers and the knowledge required to understand the route to it. Instead he felt that they were almost setting him up for failure (I was like, you're joking, right? What did I do with my life?). Jasraj is implying that he is dominated by somebody or a higher perspective (who will be seen as more important, who he

considers to be people who are established in top jobs and top fields (world of work)), and considers the occupation of a person to play a significant role in how one is treated in society. Jasraj has insight into how class operates at the everyday level and such observations have shaped his career trajectory and decision making process.

Whereas Jasraj may view this suggestion in the context of a desire to improve his family's socio-economic position in the field, and may be implying that he expected more from his school in the way of guidance, Rahul, has already been exposed to higher professional occupations and first-hand advice suited to his advantaged background. He further considers the role of the school teacher and the school to be minimal and considers his future choices as dominated by his parents. In this sense, Rahul is implying that neither teachers, nor the school, dominate his career goals and his strategy, as his parents hold power over the school. He interprets the role of his teachers as literally teachers of specific subjects.

No, school had no input on what subject I applied for. I think school is only good for academic subjects, like maybe helping you get those A stars, not even that actually. I don't know, school had nothing to do with any choices I made. I mean, why would people would expect teachers and your school to know anything about different occupations? They're teachers, they only about [laughs] teaching, and no offence, but I don't want to be a teacher. My parents are in top jobs, and so I suppose it was a natural decision to do a medicine subject. (Rahul, male, dentistry, LU, most advantaged middle-class)

Jasraj had internalised an understanding of the occupational hierarchy in which he places the fitness instructor role below that of a professional job in the legal sector, but is based on a need to do better potentially than his parents. Rahul could potentially place trust into his parents, unlike Jasraj, whom on one hand did not consider his teacher's advice to match his aspirations, and on the other hand, nor could his parents advise him in relation to professional occupations; he could rely on neither to gain the 'right' advice. Whilst both of these young men did not seem to value their teachers' advice nor input in the construction of building strategies to succeed in the British white field, for one this strategy was relatively smoother than for the other, who could afford to not rely on the school. Rahul had personal teachers; i.e. his parents, who were potentially in a position to educate, advise and direct him to the professional sectors in the British labour market.

Similarly, Tessa, another participant in the sample, who grew up with a background low in the 'right' cultural and social capital, when guided through the British education system, felt similar to Jasraj. She expressed powerful cultural and moral connotations around the teaching profession, which seemed to be shaped by her experiences with several teachers. Her experiences with teachers led her to rule out teaching as a career she would like to qualify for.

No one deep down will think of a teacher as successful, in comparison to a barrister, let's face it. (Tessa, female, law, MU, least advantaged middle-class)

My tutors gave me more feedback on my work, like it wasn't vague... my schoolteachers I don't think they care... they're not really interested... yeah I don't think they're interested in getting your grades up there you know. Maybe grammar schools are different. But I don't think they are... my chachi's [Dad's sister] daughter goes to the Grammar school.

In her account, Tessa contrasts between teaching and a professional role in the legal sector in depth, based on the position of these two occupational fields in the wider employment sector. Her account exemplifies her beliefs about the way different occupational fields are positioned in terms of status. Tessa's background could reinforce this belief; like Jasraj's, her decision making process is not based on a background involving employment in professional fields. This might have required her to develop strong views, and contrast between two middle-class professions. Secondly, her observation, which is based on her experience with teachers reveals that she was disadvantaged by her teachers too, whom she felt had given her back feedback and were not explicit in their advice.

Some of the accounts below allow us to see how some of the British Indian students felt they had to disregard some subjects they felt inclined towards and would have liked to pursue – because they felt that they would not succeed in the occupations linked to them. Even for Rahul, below, who comes from a parental background steeped in the 'right cultural and social capital', he was not able to pursue the subjects he enjoyed at school at university or translate his passion into an occupation, but more importantly, it was because this is how he understood and believed his worth should be understood. The process of schooling therefore appeared to be considered as years of strategizing and constantly assessing the occupational value of subjects within the British labour market. Two of the British Indian students from the most advantaged middle-class group expressed the following when reflecting on how they chose their subjects at school:

I was good at English at school, and at politics, and I really enjoyed them, especially philosophy at A-level, but these subjects, there's just something about them, like they only suit White people, like politicians or someone like Jamie Oliver. I don't know, I would be sitting at home for years if I studied something like that, living off my parents. Indians just suit certain subjects [laughs]: hard-core subjects. (Rahul, male, dentistry, LU, most advantaged middle-class)

I think, to be successful, you need education, and to study hard, and have a clear idea of what sort of life you want, and what you think is important. You have to think at least 10 years ahead, and not just make choices based on what you want now. I knew I was going to go into medicine from Year 7, when I started tuition. My parents found good tutors, and all the influence kind of kicks in and makes you make the right decisions, like good career and education choices. Otherwise I would have ended up in college, or something, and in a job. It's just the way you think about things, and what sort of people you stick with. (Aryaan, male, dentistry, LU, most advantaged middle-class)

These accounts suggest that despite those British Indian students like Tessa and Jasraj having nobody at home or school to rely on, they are very conscious of who/what they consider would provide them with knowledge and whose advice that would enhance their grades and confidence and who would not. For instance, they feel hesitant about turning to their teachers for professional advice about subjects and careers, and would rather simply rely on private tutoring. This in itself reveals a habitus comprised of a lower socio-economic parental background, and being successful equates with being able to access the top class.

These accounts also imply that even for those British (Indian) medicine students from highly professional and educational backgrounds – it is not a straightforward nor a natural process to approach dominant forms of social mobility, yet they have internalised that this is not the fault of underlying structural goals, but that of the teachers who may advise others wrongly. They rely and trust only on their own stock of the ‘right’ cultural and social capital, but also seek to strengthen it and rely on external educational services throughout their (e.g. Aryaan) entire schooling period. For Aryaan, however, there is a belief that he has internalised about which types of institutionalised cultural capital are legitimate and proper (e.g. not college courses that are work based). Aryaan’s account suggests his career choices were constructed from an early; i.e. 11 (year 7). He has been very advantaged by strategizing to overcome the lack of any of the ‘right’ cultural and social resources. Similarly, Rahul explains that although he does possess a wider interest and appreciation in the range of subjects and occupations, this carries more significant implications for him than if Jamie Oliver had chosen those subjects (e.g. white upper class). Rather than being able to realise the nature of inequality he is being subjected to, he subconsciously reproduces it saying that Indians suit certain subjects.

Some of the British Indian medicine students from the least advantaged middle-class group, provided other examples of how their parents communicated their fears that their children might experience a life of manual labour, shift work, and exhausting work.

My Dad used to say when I was about 10, I am going to tattoo the word education on your hand, unless you want to wake up at 3am to work like me ...because no-one likes success, son, unless it is their own. [participant adopts strong Indian accent] (Vikram, male, pharmacy, LU, least advantaged middle-class).

After a pause to laugh, Vikram added:

Obviously, he wants me to have an easier life, where I use brain power, rather than physical labour, like a good top class job where people come to you, and you’re not chasing people for jobs. Like a doctor, which is true. My Dad, you know, he is successful, but he has worked for every

little bit, so have I, I have studied just as much. (Vikram, male, pharmacy, LU, least advantaged middle-class)

Vikram's father, and Vikram subconsciously consider themselves and their experiences as inferior. Vikram considers his father successful, but within the context of his migratory experiences. His father does not however consider his working life and his everyday routine as an example of success for Vikram to emulate. Presumably, Vikram only had his father's words of encouragement and economic capital to capitalise on. It is important to appreciate here that I am basing my reading of parental views on how their children portrayed them. Brain power would, however, involve not only the studying involved in qualifying for pharmacy, but also strategies to describe how to develop social capital and occupation specific knowledge to translate academic studies into marketable skills. This highlights the difference between Rahul and Aryaan's process of studying, against Vikram's and the level of strategizing required. Rahul and Aryaan might not have been able to choose the subjects they wished to study (e.g. English), but Vikram has the stress of also accumulating the 'right' types of cultural and social capital, unlike both Rahul and Aryaan. Through this analysis we witness the heterogeneity of British Indian students, in terms of their battle for the same positions in the field. The transmission of the British success ideology is absent from Vikram's account of his upbringing. In contrast, Arjun, the son of two parents working in higher professions, expressed a more nuanced impression of the factors influencing his occupational choice:

Indians in Britain, education is everything to them, and if a British Indian man becomes a teacher or [laughs] a museum receptionist, it's okay for a girl. Even then, it's just stupid, but for an Indian man, who's born here, it just makes you seem like a failure, like all that education, tuition, and top grades to be a, what, a teacher, you know? It sounds a bit queer. Sorry you know. (Arjun, male, dentistry, LU, most advantaged middle-class)

Above, Arjun, whose parents made the decision to send him to a fee paying school, which potentially advantaged him in the LU application procedure, feels that pursuing teaching raises a problem around the ethnic context (being Indian) and gender identity, e.g. loss of masculinity with connotations around sexual identity. This suggests the need to strategize *that much* more when considering subject choices and their value relative to different jobs. It also shows that parents' professional socio-economic background and education level contributes to the tools their children will utilise in the field, *although* it does not show the level of construction that is involved in getting there, as they are unable to recognise the inequality they impose upon themselves as habitus.

It may appear that these accounts are more relevant to the theme of top class occupations, within which particular students in the sample consider those occupations that are worth pursuing and

struggling for. However, I examine these accounts in the context of schooling and schoolteachers, because their emphasis was on how teachers shaped their social mobility strategy. These British Indian students' decision making processes reflected a cultural awareness of the role of the English educational system, in which they considered the experience of their parents advice and experiences of hardship in employment in England (e.g. Vikram), and also when British Indian students come from highly professional socio-economic and Russell Group backgrounds (e.g. Rahul and Aryaan's case), the implications not being white has on the way subjects at school are studied and taught is important. The role of English schools, whether they are fee paying ones (Rahul, Arjun and Aryaan's case), grammar ones (in Vikram's case), or state schools (Jasraj, Tessa, Vikram, Pavan), does not advantage the students disproportionately to additional tutoring or benefits arising from parental profession. Experiences with schools and teachers does not seem to build and increase learners' confidence to approach other subjects. The students, and their parents, considered it normal to accept the different challenges they endured when planning for success as their responsibility. These students capitalise on economic capital to purchase tutoring (all students case), fee paying schools (the case for the most privileged group), or to have first-hand access to the 'right' social and cultural capital (the case for the most privileged group and for the moderately privileged group), which is how they relate to neoliberalism. Affording a certain school and investing in tutoring for other parents helped learners compensate for what they felt schools and teachers were not culturally invested in. However, my participants capitalise on the 'right' levels of cultural and social capital to quite different extents; for some there is nearly an absence of it and for others they are surrounded by it. Regardless of whether they lack it or have it, and whether they can only take advantage from maths and science or not, they do not blame white people (Jamie Oliver), although they use them as examples. Rather they believe that they are dominant and of the natural ethnicity and race.

The next section considers another distinct theme that arose. It led on from how the participants considered the subjective nature of top class occupations and other experiences and observations that informed their subject decision making processes. It reveals stereotypes and experiences that they link with their perception of success, and ultimately that have informed the process of how they decide which careers they must qualify for.

7.2.5 Sub-theme: Top class identity

Another distinctive pattern of thought that was noted in the participants' accounts was that they all considered which types of behaviours, lifestyles and habits served as obstacles to success and were

associated with unsuccessful people. One quotation which captures the essence of what this pattern tended to reflect was:

Nobody wants to be unsuccessful... like when you think of success... unsuccessful people are everywhere, you can usually tell if someone is successful or a respectable person, like from the way they talk, walk and just behave in general. (Abi, most advantaged group, law, MU)

In addition to experiences of school, there is a level of understanding based on success requiring submission to the dominant top class, which is strongly suggested to be white top class individuals working in the medicine and law professions, with behaviours, lifestyles and habits that further shaped their subject decision making and their reasons for reproducing their very advantaged background, or changing it to one that reflects aspects of top class (occupation, money and behaviours and habits). The important point in Abi's extract is not that she associates certain types of bodily dispositions with success, but that she has internalised an understanding that there is only one type of success, which is determined by certain behaviours, lifestyles, attitudes and neighbourhood and residential status. Abi's comment shows that her habitus understands that there is only one form of success, and it is one in which involves inclusiveness of personalities, or of people from different backgrounds. Below, Vikram's different experiences of occupational and educational class experiences repeat what Abi has mentioned, but are differently contextualised in relation to the way his parents understand success. Neither students consider this type of success to be consciously changed, and this shows that lifestyles are naturally subject to being rewarded or not rewarded.

Although my parents do shift work, and work really long hours and stuff, and they're not like doctors and stuff, they're still more successful in my eyes than like, I'm not sure what to call them exactly, like, you know, chavs, and those council estate parents who smoke all day and live on benefits. My parents don't claim benefits, they use their money for good things, like they invested in our education, and they don't waste their life, because they don't think like chavs and people like them, they think 'big', like big money, big education, and big dreams. (Vikram, male, dentistry, LU, least advantaged middle-class)

Here, Vikram compares his parents' vision (e.g. big) and type of aspiration (e.g. money, education, not relying on state dependency, not living on council estate) with a different section of the British population, which might be defined as working class. It could be observed that Vikram does not consider a particular perspective of success as controlling his and his parents' thoughts about where money should be spent. The adjective 'big' is interesting in Vikram's account, because Vikram misrecognises that he is subconsciously considering something else to be bigger than his dreams and his parents' understanding of where to spend their money. Although Vikram has adequate economic capital to access more expensive housing, and not to rely solely on support

from the state, he is still being dominated when he considers himself more dominant than those citizens who are less affluent than him. This is because the education journey and subject choice process we have seen him experience (in former themes) were narrowly controlled and determined by limitations over what he can study. He and his parents have mis-recognised the wider meaning of 'thinking big'.

Jasraj, another student from the least advantaged middle-class group in the sample, does not recognise that the characteristics associated with dreaming and aspiring big are 'down to the person', but the reality is that another's ideology is dominating them. So, Jasraj, like Vikram is naively encouraging a perspective which is socially constructed and does not have to put Vikram's parents through so much financial investment in his education, leading Vikram to imagine his understanding of his decision making is based on equality. Jasraj's perspective below also shows he has become complicit about being controlled, as he is unable to question 'why being successful is not easy':

Being successful is not easy, but it's not hard either. It's about the way you think, and how you want your life to go, and what you are prepared to do for a good life. Like, I think education is the key to everything, but some parents and kids just say that you must do it. You have to study long and hard to get in a higher, or like the top class ...a perfect example is, oh, it just makes me cringe, just the thought of it, you know all these Kosovans, and women who have loads of kids, and kids falling out of pushchairs, why didn't they go to school and study, even if they didn't have support at home. It really is down to the person. (Jasraj, male, law, MU, least advantaged middle-class)

These views demand inclusion in the social reproduction of class theory, and do not reflect the nature of symbolic violence as it includes individuals and sections of the non-white population, to extend the extent to which the dominant ideology and white western dominant ideology remains successful and influential in terms of how individuals construct their position and purpose within wider society. Vikram and Jasraj are *neither* middle *nor* working class. Similarly, the students who are most advantaged are neither truly very advantaged nor are they disadvantaged. They all believe they are autonomously pursuing certain subjects either through money (as for those who are in the least advantaged group) or through their parents' jobs and economic capital (as for those especially in the most disadvantaged group). Any responsibility that the state could have is not present in their understanding. In a naive sense, they can be considered as neoliberal students who have brought into the neoliberal idea that the family or individual is taking full responsibility. When I asked Deepak if he could explain what he meant by 'not everyone can get into law, like erm chavs maybe', he clarified;

Well, everyone knows it, I'm sure you do too. They just stand and chew gum and swear. Everyone knows the same sort of people... They pick benefits, they can't be arsed, it's too hard to study. People have too many rights here; in India, people like that just get thrown aside. No one listens, the government listens too much, they shouldn't give free money. People should be forced to do jobs they don't want. It's too easy here. (Deepak, male, law, MU, moderately advantaged middle-class)

Deepak considers the Indian government manage their country well because they disregard and do not reward those who are not in a position to help themselves. It is based on this, that he considers England to be fairer to those in financial difficulties. Deepak's extract shows that his decision making process when applying for the law was not only influenced by his parents higher socio-economic class than Vikram's and Jasraj's, but also of the cultural understandings within society and of class that relate to how success is rewarded more widely in the UK. Deepak's account implies that he considers 'being chucked out on the street' as a harsh strategy, because it is explicit and physical, and encourages people more directly to question themselves, than the form of violence that he is unable to see himself subjected to; i.e. not being able to see beneath or within what the state offers, i.e. 'free money'. This is an example of symbolic violence, whereby he is contributing to his own subordination, but not consciously. The symbolic nature of violence is not explicit, because it is so deeply dissolved into habitus.

At the end of the interview, Deepak told me he had never been to India, as his parents left when they were children because their parents were very poor in India. It was relative to his experience of social stratification in India, that Deepak found the social class system in the UK to be relatively considerate. Specifically, the rewards for his parents were greater financially in terms of symbolic capital than their caste would have permitted in India. This extract is useful, as it provides insight into the context from which British Indian students come, and the enduring relevance of any experience of knowledge of their migratory and minority ethnic background. Lali, whose family were from are from a higher caste community in India, unlike Deepak's, but whose socio-economic and education background in England is beneath that of Deepak's parents, cites some of the implications of his parents' low socio-economic status. For instance:

I think it's important not to follow, my Dad calls them gypsies, like lower class. I think that's what you call them [flowers voice]. People follow gypsy gora [White] culture. They don't really have a life do they? I think it's because they can't be bothered to work hard and really invest their heart in the things that you need to be successful, like studying and trying. They don't try hard enough. Unless you're proper up there, sort of thing, like you have friends in high places, you have to work hard, otherwise you don't get anywhere. You've got to want to achieve. I think it all comes down to the environment you're brought up in, and how fussed you are about not being low class. (Lali, male, pharmacy, MU, least advantaged middle-class)

The very use of the words ‘need’ ‘investing’ ‘trying’ ‘hard enough’ and especially the phrase ‘unless you have friends in high places you have to work hard’ imply a desperation to be accepted by those who are in high places, and by those in the top class, and an understanding that implies that intensive labouring and struggle is a normal experience that everyone needs to familiarise themselves with. He also implies that he currently sees himself as of a lower class than the one he intends to be, but considers it normal and natural as he has no relative in a ‘higher place’ who can advantage him. He considers himself more dominant than those who don’t strategize in a very organised and specific way, but believes that the fact he is strategizing makes him a better human being because he considers this the right thing to do. Tessa shows the same kind of innocence and naivety as Lali did, by also believing that to access a higher quality and socio-economic class you have to make it your responsibility.

I think the most unsuccessful people are low-lives who sit around wasting money on false nails, decorating car spoilers, on hundreds of gold tracksuits, Black music, and who cry because they have spent all their dole money, and then they slag off people, especially if they’re not gore [White British] who have more expensive taste, and wear original Burberry, and original brands. Like, get off your arse and work, wash cars, clean, work for £6 hour, don’t moan, if Polish people do. My Mum’s neighbours are Polish, they have one daughter, they have tuition for her, they go to church on weekends, they’re really nice kids, my Mum babysits them sometimes, and their Dad is a lorry driver. You see. (Tessa, female, law, MU, least advantaged middle-class)

Both Lali, and Tessa are from family backgrounds in which they have only been able to capitalise on tutoring to assist them with their academic success and generate economic capital to be able to pay for their tuition fees. This may cause them to be more critical and conscious of particular types of embodied cultural capital, and particular cultural tastes in the context of what is required to access top class. Their reason for being critical of others’ choices proceeds from their understanding that it is important to struggle, especially because it is normal to do so in the British field.

Applying social class reproduction to explain how the British Indian students who qualify for ‘dominant’ routes considered legitimate pathways to social mobility, demonstrates that the binary between students’ whom pursue dominant HE routes is not straightforward. Specifically, because the reasons for pursuing law for the least moderately advantaged students in my study related to the way they considered their ethnicity as inferior for any other subject such as English, we have to acknowledge that the binary between working class backgrounds students whom pursue dominant HE routes is not homogenous. Thus, the findings contribute to revealing the very changing binaries to securing jobs in the same occupational sectors for instance.

We have seen that the participants’ subject and occupation decision making process was influenced by their understanding of what success involved. The process of accessing their understanding of

success was influenced by their assessment of different occupations with regard to their financial (affording private choices and a privileged lifestyle without relying only on monthly salaries) and cultural rewards (respect, value). Their decision making processes have also been shaped by their experiences with teachers and schools. All the students appear to be influenced by their parents' jobs and experiences and knowledge of education in terms of feeling disadvantaged and advantaged. However, they are all disadvantaged in terms of not choosing to consider themselves employable if they study other subjects. Subordination is accepted as normal, and is arguably defined as becoming successful, because their understanding is that being successful refers to being accepted in the eyes of the dominant culture in the white western world, therefore including being controlled. This leads to me to the next distinct theme that arose during the analysis.

7.3 Main theme: Being British-born and westernised

My participants felt that being born and schooled in a white western capitalist country, and consciously adopting wider western values advantaged the students' decision making processes. Despite the requirement for a large amount of studying and strategizing, or a sacrifice of subjects that some of them might have excelled in, and negative experiences with teachers, they believed that being born in England was itself of value. This was apparent in the context of how they imagined their decision making processes for medicine and law would have been different had they been living in their country of origin (India). Their views, as we see imply that not only are they blinded by a lack of agency, but they also self-define their ethnicity and race as inferior and submissive. However, they consider this to be common to all the minority ethnic students and families whom they relate themselves to. This renders them more subject to inequality and likely to experience further subordination. They considered whiteness in Britain as crucial to developing a middle-class position in the field, because White people govern western capitalist countries. The implication of this is that they have no agency in their decisions, and consequently they consider it normal to devalue their ethnic and racial background and history.

Obviously, I don't want to say I'm not proud of being Indian, but let's be honest, there's Indians in India too. What use is being Indian alone? Everything is better in the UK, we have no problems [in the UK]; we make our future here, and the least we can do is say we are happy to be British, and thankful to our parents that we weren't born in a country where it is ten times harder to be successful. (Rahul, male, law, LU, most advantaged middle-class)

'We make our future here', as we continue to see in the analysis, is something that is misunderstood by my participants, given that they have brought into the idea that they were responsible for the subject decisions they made, and their parents were responsible for the cultural and social resources the participants either accessed or did not at school. Moreover, they considered the state to have no responsibility here, as the social mobility system in England seems natural and correct.

In Britain, you have everything. We have a good system here. You don't have to be involved in stories in the news about cuts in that and cuts in this all the time. You just need to study, get a top job, and if you do that, all the doors are open... like in India, even if you get top grades, it is still hard out there. So, thank you to my Mum and Dad that I'm born here. (Bhavni, female, dentistry, LU, most advantaged middle-class)

Bhavni considers the process of studying and academic attainment to be sufficient to access a particular top class occupation. Arguably this could be influenced by the fact she has the resources and information to give her more time to focus on the process of studying at university and at school.

I'm not going to gain anything from going to India, and both sides of my parents' family are in the UK. We would rather invest in the UK. (Govind, male, pharmacy, LU, most advantaged middle-class)

The participants constantly negotiate and compare the opportunities in the UK with those in developing countries. Despite their professional and Russell Group educational backgrounds, they express subconscious knowledge that the white British field and the social structure is a legitimate one, and superior to their Indian heritage. Furthermore, when Bhavni says 'we have a good system here', she is showing that she has internalised the hierarchical system in schools, noting that the socio-economic classification that requires the filtering of students and graduates, is a natural way of doing things. By appreciating a British birth, schooling and these opportunities in England, and considering that British Indian identity restricts them from pursuing as a natural coincidence and is not a socially constructed problem is an original example of symbolic violence that reveals the nature and specificity of symbolic violence. Rahul's Bhavni's, and Govind's accounts show those of other students in the most advantaged group, also noting that their parents' occupations and education level and the nature of their parents' education can easily be overlooked as successful, when these students are actually pressured to negotiate from the age of 11, consider these pressures as normal – as their responsibility, preventing them from therefore questioning it. They review their situation on a wider level in terms of identity, i.e. reflecting on those in India.

Rahul, Bhavni, and Govind can neither be perfectly defined as British, nor as Indian, because they accept there is a limit to the fields they can battle in, and neither do they belong to India, because they feel that success means being accepted into the British field, and adopting leading occupations within it. Although they view their British identity and their birth in the UK as a form of success, what comes with it is a severity of negotiation and strategizing they feel white people do not accrue. Although their reading of India's social mobility is subordinate to Britain's, they position their own Indian identity as superior to that of people in India. They juxtapose themselves against other Indians on the international stage, because when comparing themselves with the white middle-class here i.e. those in power, they are less secure. The students' interpretations of their Indian background implies that the white dominant group presents itself powerfully and yet invisibly. The students consider the white dominant group as operating in a safe space within which they are able to strategize. This appears to be because they have internalised the understanding that whiteness is powerful and they hold a higher status, which they understand as a natural and universal belief. The hierarchical system in England appears to have led the students to believe that genuine success includes a process of strategizing, sacrificing and constantly reviewing the advantages and disadvantages present within family life. It is also powerful as a tool making students believe that the white dominant group is not a deliberate construct. For those like Jasraj, Tessa, Vikram, and Lali, the opportunity to apply for medicine and law suggests a structure that provides those who qualify with a sense of power and domination over others, which the students would not feel in India. However, when doing so, the students consider their Indian background to be dominated by their belief and trust in whiteness as naturally powerful.

I can't imagine being born in India, like where my Mum and Dad were born, it's hard, isn't it? Like there, if I went school, college, and became a tutor and married someone who treated me half decently, I would consider myself successful, but here, that's like being a [pause] loser. It's embarrassing to your parents, because by being born and raised here, you're halfway there aren't you. (Sonam, female, law, LU, moderately advantaged middle-class)

He's [Rahul's Dad] in I would say a top class [medical] job. But if he had that job [doctor] in India, there's just so little progress. It's just not the same there. It never will be. If they were born here, they could have been successful from birth, but they still are amazing role models to me. (Rahul, male, law, LU, most advantaged middle-class)

The parents of the participants had constantly emphasised that their choices about studying, and making decisions around employment and education have to suit how the hierarchy and the labour market are structured in the UK. The quotes also imply that they consider being born in England a form of capital in a sense because it is a factor that pushes them to invest in excessive studying. Tessa compares the working class nature of her parents' employment with the experiences of individuals in India who share the same level of education as them, and she feels they are relatively

middle-class. In this context, being British born, and her parents being in a subordinate position in England, she instantly feels dominant and superior.

My Mum and Dad, they're not really intelligent, like academically; they didn't do A-levels and that, but are fluent in English. They have a whole chain of businesses, and some people with degrees can't even get a job, or just go into a business, but in India they would have been sitting half employed, or working in a factory, just shit jobs [says quietly] basically. (Tessa, female, law, MU, least advantaged middle-class)

Tessa accepts herself and her parents as subordinate, observing that their situation in Britain might not be considered perfect in the eyes of the dominant class. However, she considers the working class nature of her parents' employment as having more potential than similar work in India. This awareness on her part implies the way in which the white dominant group reproduces itself as a dominant and credible. She considers it obvious and natural that employment in the UK dominates the world of work and success. Being British born is viewed as a privilege and a blessing, but the benefits are dependent on gaining access to the available social capital.

7.3.1 Sub-theme: Decision making processes based on race and ethnic intersections

My participants went on further to consider race in the context of how constructions of gender, race and ethnicity influence perceptions towards different subjects and occupations. The participants focused on how being not white and Indian limits their subject choices. The product of the interaction of race and gender and its influence on how subject/career decision making process was considered closely by women in particular. The ethnic and racial nature of symbolic violence becomes more evident, determining how people subordinate their non-white race and their non-British White ethnic groups as secondary and submissive, less powerful, only existing to take unspoken orders. These orders are implicit and unspoken, and the students automatically felt that the reasons they could only apply for certain subjects was because they were subjects in which *only white* people could gain positions. The extracts below show that students and parents who are not white contribute to reproducing themselves as second class, emerging, or recurring middle class citizens. For instance:

Everyone wants to be successful. I'm not saying I want to be White, because I really, really don't; I'm proud to be British Punjabi, but it does mean you have to do that extra bit to be successful. Like, I can't afford to do a degree in languages or music... my uncle calls it pakh pakh [pause] pakhandi [jokey tone]. He says that you can't get away with those sorts of subjects; study something that will make sure you will not struggle...I simply go to university because I know to be successful, I've got to work for it...I can't go to university to do a degree in music, or classical

art... I'm not a posh and White....and I'm not going to be seen the same as like [laughs] Prince William. They study those sorts of subjects...it doesn't matter what subject they study, or what grades they get, they will get far, based just on the fact they are like upper-upper class and White. I'm like [pause] British-born, but I'm also not White and I've got to study a proper subject. You know like [pause], if I do a music or art degree, I'll end up on Brit Asia, or one of those Indian music channels [laughs]. I'm going to make sure I take advantage of university properly, study a course that will at least half get me taken seriously and [pause] respected for the rest of my life in Britain. (Jasraj, male, law, MU, least advantaged middle-class)

Jasraj seems to believe that even if he wished to study languages or music this would not be possible, because his race and ethnicity means he is not authentically middle class. He has internalised an understanding that white middle class individuals are the only legitimate group able to succeed in whichever subject/profession they wish. He observes that white students from advantaged backgrounds can make *choices*. British Indian students construct themselves as second class middle class citizens by considering themselves unable to make decisions about subject discipline through 'choice'. Jasraj and his family are strategizing constantly, assessing the value of different academic subjects within a non-white context.

They observe that the value of a degree courses delivered by an English university does not translate in the labour market in the same way for non-white and ethnic specific non-white individuals (in this case in terms of humanities and arts subjects). However, they are not able to help themselves, because they have not been provided with an opportunity to be curious about why such differences recur and exist. Jasraj is not capable of capitalising on his parents' success for anything beyond economic capital, and his uncle for verbal encouragement. These resources, and the process of completing a degree in law are suggested as sufficient tools to attain a secure job in the British legal sector, which suggests these efforts are relatively *fresh* in their family, as the strategies appear slightly outdated in relation to the changing climate of the labour market, as does Tessa's and Vikram's. What appears most significant in Jasraj's account is the subconscious way in which he references this degree of negotiation, unlike what he says white students/individuals engage in, observing that this is a natural process. Similarly, Vikram, another student from an equal education and employment background as Jasraj, also accepts limitations, and through his decisions is reproducing his race as submissive. Obedient to the white British field's way of filtering employment and graduates according to race:

I mean, I have never experienced it [racism], and nor did my sister or my parents. They speak English fluently. I just feel that when you're born in the UK, and will live in the UK your whole life, and you know you're not White, you do have to pull up your socks [low voice]. You can't just go to uni for fun, and to learn how live independently and all that [sarcastic tone of voice]. (Vikram, male, pharmacy, LU, least advantaged middle-class)

Vikram's reflection on his having 'never experienced racism' in England suggests he thinks that this is something to thank the white western race for, as reflected in their fluent use of the 'English' language, which he (and his parents) imply is dominant. The phrase 'pulling up one's socks' could be underpinned by an experience or subconscious knowledge that he does not have the requisite cultural and social knowledge to enhance the value of his pharmacy degree. Why this is the case is considered to be a personal issue by these students and their families – a problem arising as a result of a weakness within them. Challenging the system and the structure is not deemed possible, because it is considered innate.

There was some discussion in the interviews regarding why several students chose not to apply for a medicine degree, and applied instead for medicine associated ones. In the literature review we noted that often British White students are more successful at being accepted on medicine degree courses than those from British Indian backgrounds, prompting them to select dentistry and pharmacy as alternatives instead (Richardson 2008, 2011; Beard 2013; Boliver 2015). There were several cases where this matter arose and was mentioned in the most advantaged participants' accounts. They offered an alternative way of understanding this, and their reasons had little to do with not being able to qualify for medicine. Bhavni's account proved particularly informative, because both her parents are doctors and studied medicine degrees. At the onset of her interview, Bhavni began to detail her family background, starting with her parents' occupations and mentioning that they were interested in Bhavni participating in the study.

My Dad laughed at me and said make sure you communicate confidently, and that research is good so you should take part... my Dad's a doctor, and my Mum's a GP. They know everything about different medicine sectors. They told me about the sort of hours and training that trainee doctors at GP's and those at NHS hospitals go through. I wanted flexibility and the opportunity to be self-employed. We didn't have a dentist in the family, and although my parents aren't dentists... they know dentists. My Mum goes to this err rotary club and yeah she has a good network. I like my course. (Bhavni, most advantaged group, dentistry, LU, female)

Bhavni's account explains that she would have been in an advantaged position were she to have applied for medicine. She appears to have adequate and rich sources of cultural and social capital to guide her towards a wide array of medicine disciplines. Her parents have insight into the experiences of graduate medicine students and their roles at entry level. Although this extract does not deny or account for British Indian students who pursue dentistry or pharmacy as a result of being rejected from medicine courses, it does offer an alternative insight into British Indian dentistry students' decision making processes when applying for dentistry. Similarly, Chamkaur says his first thought was to apply for medicine, because his father studied medicine. However, ultimately, his father's experience played a key role in Chamkaur's decision not to apply for

medicine, and to apply for dentistry or to study to become an optician. Referring to when he was considering the subjects he chose at A level, he made a comment about which medicine associated degree he had considered and why.

I wasn't sure which sciences to do and which maths subjects. I did think of being an optician and to follow my Dad, like he is a GP partner, but I didn't think I was being ambitious enough. I wanted to study something in medicine which was making my own decision. That sounds like an affirmation (laughs). I didn't want it to be all Dad's work. (Chamkaur, most advantaged group, pharm, LU, male).

Again, having a parent who studied medicine in the UK, places Chamkaur in a highly advantageous position to succeed in getting a job after completing a medicine degree, but he wishes to have some agency over his decision making, rather than being prepared and guided by his father, but does not question why this wish has been prevented i.e. the role of structural influences in not allowing this wish to come true. He wanted to reproduce the family's status as top class, but maintain some autonomy.

7.4 Main theme: Age driven goals

For the *British Indian* (ethnic minority students) in this study, strategizing did not just relate to subject choices. In the next sections, I consider the distinct patterns in the analysis that reveal the participants' attachment to values and morals that are specific and relate directly to Indian ethnicity. They dissociate from some aspects of success, but relate other aspects of success to being Indian and part of a British Indian community. This was one of the advantages when exploring the wider meanings of success beyond the exploration of educational experiences. In doing so, a complex insight was gained into how they relate to and identify with a particular ethnicity. Moreover, whilst this study is not in itself about ethnic identity specifically, their relationship with ethnic identity was identified in the analysis as a factor encouraging them to consider strategizing and sacrificing and to view excessive study as natural.

7.4.1 Sub-theme: Settling down

Age was a factor that all participants referred to as important to address in terms of strategic and planning experiences regarding access a top class profession. This allowed us to contextualise their struggles according to their wider plans about life, beyond their education. My participants considered it necessary that completion of their degree, securing of a professional position (relating to either law, medicine or pharmacy), buying a house, dating and marriage should all be

experienced by a certain age (ideally 31). I considered this quite a notable focus within the analysis, given that there was much talk about the age of British graduates at 21, as too young, naive, and unprepared for employment (Infrastructure 2015).

The intentions set by the participants from each of the three different education and socio-economic groups reflected a sense of confidence, characterised by experiences and understandings of being Indian. For instance, all the participants referred to 'settling down' citing two factors: marriage (and home ownership). Thus, their strategizing to access medicine associated or law courses appeared further constrained, and could be considered even more constraining for those seeking to access top class occupations, who were consistently being able to afford a top class life via a top class occupation as an under-developed and hence new experience. For Eshaa, stability in relationships, and investing in a house were both important, but it is important to consider this in relation to the resources, advice, and support she has at hand to ensure the process of achieving this by a certain age. This is considering her wish to secure a profession before engaging in the processes of marriage and house purchase.

I want to be married and settled by 31. I don't think you can be purely successful with just having a top-class occupation, money, and house, and just being in relationships, like you would, but I won't feel successful, as I've succeeded in life... it's important for me that I do things by a certain age...I don't want to be buying a house when I'm 45, for instance, or marrying when I am 40. It just sounds scary to me. (Eshaa, law, LU, female, Gujarati most advantaged middle-class)

The terms 'purely' and 'a certain age' imply a specific way of thinking about the process of succeeding in Britain. This specific way can be considered as an Indian way of thinking, because the significance of being married by a certain age was identified as a key aspect of British Indian and wider British Asian values over the past 40 years, as the historical and cultural chapter considered. Eshaa's account reveals a further insight into what shaped subject decision making processes, and the intensity of strategizing, which we have been able to reveal through a wider exploration of their meaning of success. Eshaa is not emphasising marriage for its own sake, but in the context of a success strategy (accessing top class salaries, occupation) as recognised by the British dominant perspective. Below, Sonam, however, does not come from a law background, but rather her parents are self-employed jewellers. She stated that she considers the support her 'boyfriend' provides her morally to be a key motivating resource for her. Sonam's strategy to succeed in the British legal sector is characterised by a deep commitment to her role in Indian family life, although it is arguable whether she will be able to pursue immigration law (the top class field she wishes to succeed in) while also satisfying the other factors she associates with success.

My boyfriend, he's doing business and finance at Kingston. I knew him from school, to be honest, and we're thinking to get engaged when I'm 25, because that's what our kundli [Indian astrology] says, that I'll be successful and happy if I marry after 25. But he's already got a family business too, but he always says go and do what you want to do, and I was interested in immigration law. So yeah, I think to be truly successful, the people in your life who mean a lot to you, they matter the most, and if you are happy with your relationships, then you can achieve all the other things too, like a good career. (Sonam, female, law, LU, moderately advantaged middle-class)

When Sonam compares her subject decision making with her boyfriend's, it gives her a sense that she has agency in her future with regard to her occupation (then you can achieve all the other things too, like a good career), but the reality may be different when we compare her actions as a law student to Eshaa above. Sonam is under the naive impression that success in other areas of life promotes a smoother journey into a top class occupation. Sonam's parents are unable to put her in direct contact with those in senior positions at top firms, or with those aware of other ways to initiate the process, unlike Eshaa's and Arjun's below. Therefore, Sonam might subsequently experience that she has a great deal to learn about what it might realistically take for her to attain a good career. Arjun also places emphasis on the aspects of age and time, the way Sonam does, except he seems to be much more advantaged than either Sonam or Eshaa, in terms of strategizing further in terms of age. He already has a placement awaiting as a result of his parents working in medicine, and is also potentially closer to relevant social capital.

There's a certain order in which I hope, I expect, the next five years to pan out for me. Obviously, there's no doubt I'll finish my degree soon, then we have a full-time placement for me in London, where I will be living in Finchley. Obviously then, for at least three years I just want to focus on work and establishing myself, and then we have to decide whether I will buy a house in South East or Greater London, or back in the West Midlands, because we want to invest in a nice house. And then I hope to get married, and I just hope that by 40, I'm in a happy place. Marriage and family life comes last, but I don't want to leave it too late. (Arjun, male, dentistry, LU, most advantaged middle-class)

Arjun appears to be an exception within the most advantaged group, and can be considered as the most advantaged among those studying dentistry. He may have implemented strategies and felt unable to pursue a humanities subject, due to his race. Ravi shares some similarities with Arjun. For instance, he has an opportunity to work with his father awaiting him, as he is an established pharmacist, although he did desire something of his own like Arjun.

I'm just thinking like I have one year left until I finish my degree. I know it's going to be somewhat difficult but I'm not taking it too serious, my Dad's a pharmacist. I'm going to work and build my experience up with him first, and then I will see after couple of years what to do, if I get my own placement, my Dad is looking, but I don't want to be focusing on career stuff forever, because there's other things to focus on too, although there's still time, you know like

settling down, and the order can't be the other way around. (Ravi, least disadvantaged, pharmacy, LU, male)

The underlying focus here concerns a deeper and further level of strategizing, emphasising age and timing as factors, as these inform a deeper understanding of success that goes beyond education and occupation. However, at the same time it causes many of the students to expect more pressure. Similarly, another factor which they consider as part of thinking about what success means to them is home and property ownership.

7.4.2 Sub-theme: Home and property ownership

Home ownership and property ownership were defined separately, but in the same context; i.e. as ways of accumulating economic capital to provide supplementary income to their salary. This is a secondary strategy that they consider will assist them with earning a top class salary. This reflects evidence presented in the literature review, suggesting that British Indians continue consider housing investment as a key strategy. For instance, as we have seen the students from the least advantaged group, in terms of the 'right' cultural and social resources, did not appear to be disadvantaged economically. They came from backgrounds where they had access to almost anything that money could buy; e.g. technology and tutoring. Nevertheless, economic capital did not seem to be associated with resources beyond tutoring to provide a richer understanding of the subjects they were studying. Owning a home, and investing in a property were considered to provide a sense of security and overall completeness, and also from a cultural perspective where it was something they felt 'Indians' just do. Eshaa, below conceptualises a home as of value beyond economic capital, emphasising subjective and cultural aspects of property ownership. In the extracts below, Eshaa implies that she may have a conditional placement waiting but states that she will be in a position to invest in a property with the help of her father.

If I get a first, you know, and practise law in Holborn [affluent part of London], which I should, fingers crossed, a year later I would like to put a deposit down for my own house, before I meet someone, you know. I might believe that I'm becoming successful. I really want to make sure I have my own house too, but not rush because he [father] wants me to invest in a nice area too, around here though. (Eshaa, female, law, LU, most advantaged middle-class)

When I repeated fingers crossed to Eshaa, she continued:

Well my Dad's older sister is a solicitor, but well like we kind of... you know how it goes in our families... like stopped talking for a while, but recently I know my Dad was back in touch with her. I think she will look after me... well to some degree. Well I hope she can help, but she focuses on organised crime, but she should know people. Then my parents will feel relieved and just focus on what they are adamant about, making sure me and my sister have a property, so we

like erm move into it or rent it. They're very knowledgeable about housing markets and that, well my Dad is.

Eshaa's accounts implies a sense of urgency with regard to the importance of needing a placement. She and her parents appear to be conscious of the importance of social capital as relevant to law, and consider it will determine her ability to consider other areas. However, although Eshaa's parents are not employed in the law sector, her father appears to be from a background of educational success, in which there is established insight into top class occupation fields. Her parents consider owning a house to be a source of safety for Eshaa, whilst she concentrates on her placement. Eshaa's parents and Eshaa understand a property is also a crucial indicator of success. It is a way of thinking that Eshaa considers significant. Moreover, success is understood as something that can be mapped in relation to time. Eshaa and her father, similar to the other participants in this socio-economic group do not appear to stop strategizing and planning. It seems to be the only way in which they know how to live in England. Yet they have internalised an approach to success that they experience as being highly subject to strategizing, ordinary and characterised by a way of thinking that is exclusive to how British Indians attain economic capital.

In a study of the same ethnic group, marriage and choice of locality among middle class white boys in Belfast, Connolly and Healy (2004) found students remained attached to their place of origin and did not want to move too far away to search for employment (especially those from Indian or Sikh backgrounds). It appears as though their habitus impeded them from selecting a diversity of career aspirations, because of a fear of letting go of home altogether. An Indian middle class habitus therefore developed with boundaries around locality too, as well as planning middle class career aspirations in the context of minimising racial inequality. These students develop an Indian way of thinking about success that further influences the way they strategize, forming a habitus. This habitus thus contributes to the reproduction and production (for emerging top class participants) of restricted choices, as they consider this level of strategizing to secure comfort to be normal. Their habitus causes them to ensure they have other means of finance consistent in their life, which is further illuminated by the three participants from culturally and socially disadvantaged homes. Their accounts suggest they trust their backgrounds will assist them in appearing top class, suggesting they are in fact not striving to attain their own personal version of success. The extracts below are from culturally and socially disadvantaged students. Their experiences and insights into family life and their upbringing consisted of only seeing money and finance as useful to their subject/career decision making. They appear to show a more in depth need to secure a property.

I think the most embarrassing thing in life is if you rent the house you live in. I mean, if you have various flats that you rent out, like in Dubai, Spain, or Swiss Cottage, that's different, but your

main family home should be owned outright. Having your own house, you instantly feel it's a home; when it's rented, no matter how gorgeous a place is, it's not home. I would never feel content living in a rented place, unless it was a holiday home. (Pavan, female, law, MU, least advantaged middle-class)

I think owning a home is important. It's one of the most important ways of being economically secure, I think. I think it might be a British Indian thing. I don't know what it is with Asians in general, but house ownership and properties is something that interests Asians, but Indians more obviously, I think. I mean, it's a big achievement to buy a house, especially in a more expensive, slightly better, area, out of crowded places where it's really packed. I want to get a house, and rent it. Just a bit of security, just in case if I ever need my own space or something. Maybe when I'm a year into my job. (Harry, male, law, MU, least advantaged middle-class)

When I repeated the phrase, 'in a year you said', he replied:

Yeah, well it's not really gonna be me who looks in the house thing, you know it'll be my Mum's brother and my Dad jointly they'll look at something. They say it'll be my wedding present, but they always say that, because it's their way of pushing you to focus on your degree and stop worrying about things they can take care off.

Harry's emphasis on housing appeared to reveal a complex cultural reasoning, in which he combined British Indian forms of strategizing for economic success with cultural meanings associated with different geographical areas. Although he expects invest in a house, he is aware that he does not have to use his money to do so. Jasraj also reveals a similar understanding of home ownership.

Taran [girlfriend] wants to do the same... someone I'm seeing at the moment, she's actually older than me, she's just finished her degree in law, she wants to get her own house too, and so do I. I don't know, maybe we can rent that out, a gift to our first child [laughs]. (Jasraj, male, law, MU, least advantaged middle class)

I asked Harry to explain what he meant to which he provided the following response:

My Mum has had this account, it's like a premium bonds account with NatWest. She says you can use your salary to pay the council tax and bills and but the mortgage is being paid for already by tenants. So, I think where most students like me have to think of ten things as well as getting a job, I don't have to think of a house.

Bradley and Devadason (2008) found that in their thirties British students can continue to struggle to gain employment. In light of this, it was interesting to see how the British Indian students despite the harsh reality of contemporary labour markets, took it for granted that they would be advantaged in terms of parental protection and financial security. If there is one area of their success perception in which they are advantaged it is access to economic capital. This is an advantage that they can gain from how they believe Indians think about money.

A further factor that these students consider to have facilitated them to qualify for medicine and law, and to apply for Russell Group universities was the way the participants interpreted and defined their parents' experiences with their wider extended families and Indian families in the community from the same socio-economic and educational backgrounds.

7.5 Main theme: British Indian ethnicity driven competition

The British Indian participants in this study had grown up observing how their parents interact with other Indians, and the nature of the conversations British Indian parents have with those from similar occupational and educational experiences and backgrounds. They defined this in terms of healthy and encouraging competition between parents in the Indian community. My participants also observed that British parents and young people from an Indian background, and those from the Chinese community appear to be more 'successful' than those from other British Asian groups, referring specifically to those from Muslim practicing communities; in doing so they and their parents further submitted themselves to a white dominant success ideology emphasising a need to sacrifice the bulk of Indian traditions, particularly where the religious values that arise are reflected within British Asian communities. We looked at both of these themes in relation to symbolic violence and habitus.

7.5.1 Sub-theme: Healthy competition

My participants felt that British Indians with generations of family in the UK, referring to Punjabis and Hindus specifically, consider success involves constantly competing to secure success. The level of competition within the Indian British diaspora was defined as healthy by the participants, based on their understanding that competition delivers a meaning for success that everyone desires universally.

In reality, I think you automatically end up thinking how people see you, like relatives and Asians around here, they talk about whose children are studying what, which university, what grades they got, and my Mum doesn't even go that often [to the Sikh temple], she's quite glorified [someone who holds White values and attitudes] ... things like enough money, a nice house that is like ours, detached and all that, a good job that is respected and stands out in wider society. (Jasraj, male, law, MU, least advantaged middle-class)

'How people see you' refers to how the Indian community in Britain judges other Indians and their children based on British white western indicators of social mobility. Indians are competitive when discussing how successful they are at achieving British White version of social mobility (university

education, grades, wider society). Jasraj's account suggests how specific ethnic groups (Indians in this case) reproduce their ethnic group as inferior. Jasraj's account suggests that being part of a British Asian diaspora means he felt pressure, including from his parents, to pursue specific subjects at particular universities, irrespective of his parents' background. He misrecognises that this pressure is in fact caused by the success ideology that they strategize to align with. The disadvantage that he feels by being Indian for instance is a result of everyone in any given minority group not being advantaged equally. This is considered a community problem or something created by those who do not value White dominant values. Furthermore, Jasraj's account suggests that although competition refers to a white western success ideology, 'Asians' have particularly internalised that their worth is based on traditional indicators of white western success, and as a result is insensitive towards whether or not Indians' particular social backgrounds provide this as easily. Manisha below illuminates this more clearly:

I feel like sometimes being Indian is hard, because there's always someone you or your family has to answer to, like you automatically feel like someone's watching how you're getting on, like someone in the community. I don't think it's in a horrible way; people want to know, and I don't think people are genuinely happy if others' kids are more successful, I think it's more because they want ideas and inspiration of how someone is achieving their goals. (Manisha, female, law, MU, moderately advantaged middle-class)

For Manisha, adopting white western success ideology is not a new phenomenon in her family. Similar to Jasraj's case, but more positively, her account suggests that her Indian parents and other Indian families in Britain encourage her and push her to succeed to secure a good position in a particular labour market, as judged by British norms. Her account suggests that for her competition is not problematic, as it will ultimately lead to realising the dominant success ideology, which is the force that creates that need to be competitive with one another; so, like Manisha, one begins to consider competition for work as a positive trait in society rather than as a form of violence. Her account shows that 'people' refers to Indians, but what these Indians 'want to know' is 'how' Manisha 'is getting on' in achieving success as conceptualised in the UK. This shows an understanding that helps us to see how a particular race and ethnicity (British white) encourages individuals of another ethnicity and race (Indian non-white) to accept their position as inferior.

Vikram's account below clearly reveals the severity and degree of belief and internalisation of the British white success ideology as one that serves the purpose of life, and is particularly valuable, because he contextualises it relative to his parents' immigrant and employment status in Britain.

A couple of their [parents] family friends said, why doesn't your son [the participant] open another grocery shop, or something? He will earn lots. But my parents just said, no, why don't you ask your son to open a grocery shop, because we all know it's not about money, it's about

coming out of that sort of thing. My parents chose to have a family business because that was the best they could do with what they had at the time, and so they don't expect me to open a fruit and veg grocery... you're born in the UK, and being educated in the British education system, so it would be quite shameful, I think, and they think that too... and these people know that. (Vikram, male, dentistry, LU, least advantaged middle-class)

Clearly, Vikram's account shows that being British and having an education, strategizing, and planning to work in England draws on a form of symbolic capital. When Vikram says his parents chose to have a family business, because 'that was the best they could do with what they had at the time', he is subconsciously implying that the reason his parents could not succeed according to the white western success ideology was because they did not have the 'right' background. He is not able to see beyond this reality; i.e. that this was the best the UK social climate could provide for his parents. Vikram's understanding therefore, as informed by his parents work situation is that they were right to compete with others of the same socio-economic position because it was the only way to come out of the situation; i.e. through Vikram strategizing to qualify for a dentistry course. His account also suggests the barriers to his parents' lack of social mobility is normal, and cites expectations of, rather than examples of, inequality that his parents have faced. Rather Vikram is only able to see community members as creating violence. Amy, who comes from a sharply contrasting background to Vikram's, reveals a slightly different example of how her parents encounter competition to achieve western success ideology amongst British Indians:

Sometimes you feel this set of eyes saying, yeah, and what else have you achieved? You feel this urge to think, am I trying hard enough? It's like a competition that exists amongst Indians, or Gujaratis, or even Punjabis, in the UK. But it's not always in the form of words, and conversations. It's like my auntie will say to my Mum, not how my gran would, but in a gora [White] type of way, so what is x going to do after his course? And my Mum will respond, but she'll lie, and say he will see. Obviously, it will be something medical, but my Mum won't expose the real plans, because she, well, all Indian parents, think my aunt and Indian people in general will jinx it [laughs]. (Amy, female, law, MU, most advantaged middle-class)

Amy's parents seem to have different experiences with other Indian British parents than Vikram's and Jasraj's did for instance. They seem to experience more subtle emphasis on competition; e.g. 'my Mum won't expose the real plans', but speaks of Amy's goals with confidence. The fact that Amy's aunty asks Amy's mother about Amy's plans 'in a gora type way' suggests Amy makes the point that she is better because she strategizes in a way that is valued by 'gora' (the white dominant group). This shows that it automatically makes Amy take notice and pay attention to her Aunt's words, unlike her gran who does not speak English with a white British person's accent.

Similarly, Monica has instilled the belief that white British success is the dominant form to the extent that she believes that it was studying that got her to 'where she is now'; i.e. in a Russell

Group university studying dentistry. She does not give credit to the strategic planning that she has had to do as a result of having parents of non-professional educational backgrounds, who are moderately middle-class. This once again illustrates how dominant race and ideas about success are heightened by non-dominant ethnic groups, who reproduce themselves as non-dominant through the methods by which they understand and negotiate and give credit to a structure and perspective which causes these students to understand it is their role to find strategies and prevent obstacles. Hence competition was one such strategy that these students employed as a way to remain focused on their goal to qualify for dentistry as Monica did.

Westernised Indian parents won't force their kids to be successful, like do upper class jobs, and have good plans, and make choices clearly, but deep down all Indian parents are highly competitive. It's not just them, I think I will be too, it depends, like I believe highly in education, and studying got me to where I am now, so I think deep down, even with any community, there is of course always competition. (Monica, female, dentistry, LU, moderately advantaged middle-class)

There were also some comments suggesting the participants were unable to reflect critically on the way different ethnic groups describe themselves as inferior to the dominant nation. For instance, below Pavan says that anyone who is from another country, i.e. one that presumably is not a white capitalist country, strives to be accepted by the white capitalist system because this is the ultimate goal.

I think the competition will always be there, and it's not just with Sikhs or Gujaratis, or whatever, even with gore [White], I think, and Chinese, any community, especially if your family are from another country, and it's not a bad thing. (Pavan, female, law, MU, least advantaged middle-class)

I hate gossip, I seriously do, but it's what makes us go for it, I guess. Who isn't interested in someone else's life? That's the whole point of life really. I think, like, you see what other people are doing and it's fine. You have to accept it. (Sukruti, female, law, MU, most advantaged middle-class group)

While the above quotation may appear to explain the source of Sukruti's inspiration, it was rooted in the observation of 'Indian people like us, and Indian people like them', which are in turn informed by a belief that those Indians who convey a white British dominant success ideology are proper and normal, relative to those who do not. However, whilst Sukruti may consider herself to be perceived by the British dominant success ideology to value her, she is misunderstood because she considers it normal to sacrifice aspects of her Indian identity, and go through subjective decision making which did not need to be experienced by her. So, it appears as though Sukruti views herself as someone who has sacrificed her Indian background, having accepted that conveying or strategizing for a white success ideology will be valued and more dominant than

Indian students who have not strategized in the same way. The obstacles and structural inequalities across this divide are considered normal or expected. The hierarchy between the ethnic groups is also considered normal and anticipated. An in depth analysis of the value of different subjects, as based on white and non-white race is considered normative.

7.5.2 Sub-theme: Having a healthy blend of Indian and Western values

The participants subscribe to the white definition of success, white values, whiteness and white strategies for social mobility, i.e. completing a Russell Group education, and professional employment. They understand that all other ethnicities and ethnic focuses should work around this central ethnicity, because they understand ethnic minorities to be socially constructed revealing how white race, and indicators of social mobility are maintained and reproduced as superior by ethnic minority groups (by these specific British Indian students).

I think living and being born in a Western country gives you a chance to become more successful, because you don't always have to take that tradition, or that culture, or that rule into account. If you're always wrapped up in that festival, that prayer, this tradition, that tradition, you're not allowed to do this, that, you're not reaching your full potential. (Govind, male, pharmacy, LU, Hindu, most advantaged middle-class)

As we can see from Govind's extract, the participants believed that the values of eastern communities can become potential obstacles to 'achieving their full potential', as is underpinned by Govind's trust in his understanding and belief system; i.e. that the ethnicities that enforce prayers and traditions are inferior and non-dominant. Govind's account suggests that when a habitus is infused with a focus and duty to a religious identity and cultural values, accessing top class occupations becomes problematic. The following extracts show the extent to which the British Indian students in this study have been accepted within the white British field. They show a strategic explanation of why they reject ancestral values and ethnic minorities' values as dominant at any level, which only further illuminates the degree to which they have internalised white British success ideology as leaders and idealisers.

Our lot [Punjabi Sikhs living in the UK] don't really care too much about having a good reputation about all the cultural stuff, like my parents. Actually, I think all Indians see things like education and jobs, and money and quality of life as better indicators of if they're successful, if they manage to find someone who is from the same community to settle with. That's pretty much everything then [laughs]. (Ravi, male, law, MU, Sikh, least advantaged middle-class)

Some Indian parents here, I think it's Muslims and Somalians more, they're really strict about religion, and about all the other religious rules, and they expect their kids to be on their religion

all the time, and also to get the best grades and land the best jobs. You can't do that. It's, I think, one or the other. I mean, don't get me wrong, I go to the Sikh temple, but on Diwali, or on New Year's, and I do it out of respect for my parents. My parents don't really care, as long as my mind is focused on my education, and making careful, like what's the word, like think carefully about how I can minimise struggles in the future about work, family. (Monica, female, dentistry, LU, moderately advantaged middle-class)

Thus, some of the students engage in conscious distancing from their religious practices (i.e. prayers, religious festivals). This is an example of the participants' contribution to their own subordination, and it reflects the general subordination of the ethnic groups of which they broadly form a part.

I think, to be successful, you need to be Westernised, like the way you think about life, because being Asian, or Black, or whatever alone won't give you the upper hand; you have to prove that you do respect and adopt White cultures as well, because being Western is going to be associated with being successful, more than being Asian (Gina, female, dentistry, LU, moderately advantaged middle-class)

In each of these quotations, we can see the particular ways in which symbolic violence occurs; for instance when Monica says that she and her parents are willing for the values and cultures of their ethnic groups to be informed by their belief that the white British race is the dominant one and naturally in a position of greater power, thereby governing perceptions of race and ethnicity. This is suggested by Monica's focus on education, and her awareness and knowledge that she might experience struggle in her field of work, which could arise from her consciousness. Feeling the need to minimise struggles in the future about work appears to impose an implicit consciousness that the struggle that Monica feels may arise out of her sense that her subordinate ethnicity and race is dominant among the westernised white British group. Similarly, Gina's account shows why she would feel it is her natural duty to strategize and undergo a critical journey when making educational choices; in her words: to be successful, it is important to be *westernised*. This is a clear example of how westernisation and the white British race is reproduced as ahead and in control through the way ethnic minority ethnic students and their families consider their struggle to be normal. However, what we also see from Gina's account is that the extent to which these ethnic minority students worship westernisation, does not seem to be internalised to the same degree, because students from this ethnic group sacrifice the traditional values, traditions and festivals pertaining to Indianness and Sikh (Vaisakhi) and Hinduism (Diwali).

Kiran's account is also particularly interesting with regard to how individuals of certain ethnicities and races are reproduced as normal, and how dentistry, pharmacy and law students who are Indian and born in England reproduce themselves as subordinate and inferior to British white students pursuing the same educational routes.

If I hadn't been born in England, like if my family weren't Westernised, I don't think that I would have been able to even think about success. It would just be learning how to do housework, doing my A-levels, maybe doing a degree, at a stretch, in business management, and then spend another two years looking for a normal 9-5 job, or shift work even. You need to think in a Western way... but not like gypsies or uneducated gore [White] people. (Kiran, female, law, MU, moderately advantaged middle-class)

Kiran gives the impression that her understanding of success is universal and applies worldwide. This is shown in her words 'if I hadn't been born in England, I don't think that I would have been able to even think about success. She seems to understand that being westernised provides her with the resources to achieve success. This highlights the way Kiran is made to feel that her ethnicity, i.e. her origins, are not useful to her and play only a limited role in achieving the success ideology that she considers superior, despite westernisation allowing her to strategize specifically to secure a position within that order. The white western success ideology encourages these students to feel that they are benefitting, but in fact its values and ways of defining success are socially constructed.

The students maintain symbolic domination by reproducing and accepting themselves as subordinate, and this sense contributes towards it, reminding us of the significance of employing Bourdieu's social class reproduction theory - to begin to draw out aspects of the process through their reproduction as more 'successful than other groups'.

How my participants define success is a consequence of an internalised 'structure', and is a subjectivity arising from what they experience and understand as objective; i.e. what they have seen happening. This means who they have seen being treated in certain ways in white western society has formed their perception of what success entails and reflects. It also refers to what they observe about other ethnic minority groups in the education and employment system, and in their everyday lives. They understand certain types of individuals in Britain have been rewarded with top class salaries, occupations and simultaneously have seen different types of people rewarded with particular types of jobs and educational experiences. They consider everything they have seen to be self-created by those who experience it, and that those who are ideal role models are supposed to be white, meaning it is acceptable to be dominated by them because that feels right and normal to them.

Up to this point, the chapter has considered specific factors that form my participants' wider understanding of success, including factors they associate with success. These factors have been considered and contextualised within three types of decision making processes when deciding to apply for medicine associated and LLB law. The chapter now considers the different processes that

influence British Indian medicine and law students as they apply to certain Russell Group universities and not others. This will further include how they internalise the fact that only Russell Group universities deliver suitable courses.

7.5.3 Decision making processes concerning which Russell Group Universities to apply to

Data regarding decision making processes about which universities they applied to arose when students were asked, 'you're at MU/LU?' as the response would be enough for the participant to begin explaining in detail which universities they applied. At other times, the participant's would bring this up themselves when considering aspects relating to home ownership. In chapter five, the two universities from which the students were recruited were introduced. Both the universities are in the Russell Group and specify high eligibility criteria to secure places to study dentistry, pharmacy and law. LU required A stars and A's in all sciences, and also an interview procedure, whilst MU, required A's and B's and no interview, and received Russell Group status after LU. LU is renowned for its ownership and direct links with hospitals in London. Russell Group universities, such as the ones my participants selected, offer traditional medicine ones such as dentistry, pharmacy, law and medicine (The Bridge Group 2016; McKellar 2017).

All the participants identified as most advantaged, came from homes in which their parents had attended a Russell Group university to study a similar degree. The participants were in a much more advantaged position with regard to the advice and knowledge they had about HE study. I am aware that the difference between parents Russell Group education and those of Rahul's, Eshaa's, and Bhavni's for instance would involve a different process and understanding of Russell Group education, due to the associated time difference. However, to reiterate, almost all the participants from the most advantaged group, attended LU. These students were likely to have gained a deeper insight into notions of hierarchy and the stratification between British Russell Group universities than those participants whose parents are in the moderately advantaged group, and tended to hold degrees and attain insight into a different world of British HE: Million Plus Universities. In the case of the students in the least advantaged group, their parents had no insight into British HE.

Overall, the participants appeared to have accepted that British universities are marketized and they are customers. The participants from the moderately and least advantaged groups had to strategize and consider university choice more closely than those from the most advantaged homes, due to the lack of knowledge their parents were able to provide them about medicine and law courses. Russell Group league tables and the ranking of universities was one method. In this context, they presented themselves as ideal neoliberal students who make decisions as if they are

customers. They had brought into the student as consumer discourse, but felt a need to strategize that disadvantaged them relative to detailed and insightful knowledge about the Russell Group universities, in addition to the degree courses they were going ahead to pursue. This was an example of symbolic violence, whereby some of the students who were disadvantaged implied that it would be good if their parents transmitted a richer understanding of the Russell Group universities.

For instance, although Aeshaa attended a more prestigious university, her parents maintained a broad understanding about universities, not one that was specific.

My parents don't usually have a clue about different universities, but they do know that there's a difference between different universities, like good universities and weak ones, because they know people, like my Mum's a teacher. (Aeshaa, dentistry, LU, female, moderately advantaged middle-class)

Aeshaa implies that her parents should possess an understanding of HE. She indirectly expects her parents to have knowledge of the HE system, but settles for what they have transmitted, which is not directly relevant to her own course nor a Russell Group university. Furthermore, her account also suggests she considers a hierarchy between universities to be natural, because she implies that it is a default understanding, and unquestionable. This shows that the decision making process for universities was first informed by an understanding that are some universities are not to be considered at all (weaker ones). Then we get insight into how parenting that does not involve any British HE experience caused Lali's strategy of choosing a university.

My Dad was not fussed about where I should go. We already decided that I wasn't going to live at home while I studied [laughs]. My Dad already had a separate sum for travel, accommodation, like, even if I didn't want to live in halls, I could rent out a room. He just wanted it to be a university that was of a good status, and that employers were familiar with, so this one [MU] was really good (Lali, male, pharmacy, MU, least advantaged middle-class)

When I repeated the phrase, a university of good status, Lali continued:

A Russell Group one, but he doesn't know what we mean by that. I found out about it myself during this interview I had at school. I thought of another one in London, UCL was one, but I didn't get in, but I'm settled in this one. I don't think there's major difference.

Lali's account suggests that his parents, or his father, possessed substantial knowledge about economic capital, and in particular, what economic capital could afford in terms of preparation for HE in England. However, he was unable to provide any specific or structured advice beyond that. For instance, his father wants him to attend a university of comparatively 'good status'; this makes the advice and social capital that Aeshaa has at hand (her mother being a teacher) richer culturally

and socially, than Lali's father's. One way in which this has been highlighted is that Lali went onto qualify for MU rather than a higher ranking one. His account also implies the impact of his parents' lack of ability to explain what a 'good status' university is, meant he was able to accept the university he was selected for.

What Aeshaa's and Lali's accounts also show is that they wish to attend good universities; notably, universities that 'employers would be familiar' with, and the reasons for this may stem from themes mentioned in this chapter; i.e. the subconscious knowledge that they are not white, concern about which universities are best for their children. This arises from not having adequate knowledge or experience (in Lali's father's case at least) to gain a clearer insight into the purpose of stratification. Cultural and social capital indeed differs between Aeshaa and Lali, with Aeshaa's mother having greater access to the 'right' social capital, which helps her to understand and come to terms with the notion of ranking, as opposed to Lali's father, who can only impose this task onto his son to find out for himself, and ensure he is doing proper research. Another student at the same institution as Lali, and also from an identical employment and education background, expressed understanding regarding how significant the 'choice' of a university is, demonstrating how conscious she and the community are of particular British universities based on word of mouth and gossip. Pavan's account also informs us, as does Aeshaa's knowledge, that they have internalised the stratification of universities as natural, as has Lali and his father.

People just chit chat there about whose kids are doing what... we only go on like Diwali or New Year's, but even on that one occasion, you're bound to meet someone who says what university did Pavan go to? [laughs]. (Pavan, female, law, MU, least advantaged middle-class)

When Pavan was prompted to elaborate, she continued:

They just want to know if you go to a shitty one, like Brunel or Middlesex, or good ones like Queen Mary and King's College. They don't know about all the universities [in the UK], but they seem to know the names of certain ones like Birmingham or Queen Mary [adopts Indian accent; laughs]. They don't know which ones are Russell Group and that, but they have a rough idea where their own kids and nephews have been and stuff. But they don't understand it's about choosing the best one for your course.

Pavan's account reflects on the respect that she and her ancestral community place on educational institutions in the white western world. This sense of appreciation is particularly evident because of the context in which it is being discussed; i.e. amongst non-white individuals and a particular ethnic community. Pavan has also misrecognised that her decision making process, when determining subject and selection of university are not 'choices', but have been understood through her experience of others based on her free will. However, Rahul, who is from a Russell Group and a

medical background, in sharp contrast to Aeshaa, Lali and Pavan, provides an understanding of how he thinks about the process of applying to Russell Group universities. It is relatively comprehensive and demonstrates a deeper understanding and of some of the factors that define the stratification of universities in England. One example of symbolic violence included views regarding the Million Plus British Indian applicants who specifically attended certain Million Plus universities, including, Hertfordshire and Westminster, because they were not classified as successful in the 'right' way – according to the white British social mobility approach. The students did not feel that British Indian students at these universities had constructed their subject and employment strategies as strategically and responsibly as Rahul's had for instance. This is an example of how Rahul understands the process of being advantaged and disadvantaged in terms of knowledge of strategies and processes of selecting a university to be something that is created in the family, rather than with the help of the state and the school. Rahul considers himself more dominant than those Indians who attend former polytechnic universities, although he too is subconsciously dominated.

You go to universities like Hertfordshire, Westminster, Kingston, and you get Asians, especially Pakistanis and even Indians, you know, studying these pathetic subjects like business, business management, business and law, finance and business, and Asian girls just taking selfies every two seconds, pouting [laughs]. Like, they just waste time. (Rahul, male, law, LU, most advantaged middle-class)

Wasting time can be implied as being referred to as not strategizing. The subjects that Rahul considers as 'pathetic' are judged so based on the socio-economic and education context in which he strategized. His understanding of success is that only strategizing that is compatible and reflective of the dominant white group is valid and to be rewarded and valued. The social stratification between universities that Rahul witnesses is considered to be based on truth. He does not consider choosing universities for their individual courses and strengths, and the individual communities of students within those universities, as legitimate or as serving a useful purpose for either themselves or to their students. The mention of 'taking selfies and pouting' links back to the theme of top class identity, where we saw that these students relate educational decisions to the ability to access certain universities and professions from a cultural perspective. Taking selfies and pouting or studying business degrees courses should not be related to one another and nor in judging the credibility of a university, but Rahul has seen this as a means to determine access to the top class. However, and interestingly, Tessa who grew up with hardly any of the 'right' cultural and social capital required to consider and match a university with her course, provides us with an insight into British Indian students *like her*. She makes the same judgement about students who

attend Million Plus universities and who study business as Rahul. Tessa experienced a deeper conscious strategizing about accessing a Russell Group university than Rahul.

You know what? Indians either study economics, accounting, dentistry, pharmacy especially, or medicine; that's usually Hindus, I reckon. But all the ones who go to uni for the sake of it, or just to rave every night, just go to Westminster, or Hertfordshire, or Kingston is another one, and they all do business management or some crappy subject like that. Then afterwards, they still drive around in BMWs, because those are the ones who think being successful is just about being rich. They know it's harder to be successful if you're not White, so they just find another way round it, and their parents are just as bad. (Tessa, female, law, MU, least advantaged middle-class)

Tessa is clearly trying to distance herself from the mentality of this type of British Indian student. However, what Tessa's account suggests is that she (and according to her, other British Indian students also) is aware of being controlled by another race. However, she is trying to find a different way around this: by not relying solely on the materialistic assets her parents provide her with. Either way, there is a sense of acceptance that she is struggling to fit into, and being part of the stratification of universities is inevitably part of her strategy. Tessa refers to particular courses directly in relation to the ranking of specific universities. This suggests an internalisation and a belief that this is how HE is supposed to operate; i.e. hierarchically. Tessa is new to the stratification of HE, but the battle to succeed at a highly ranked university, other than the ones she mentions is important to her, because it is considered natural.

Vikram, another student from a similar socio-economic and education background to Tessa's, but at a university that is ranked higher than MU, shows how he has internalised the impression that the stratification of universities can define universities as either 'good' – or not:

Obviously, most of the good ones, like Russell Group they're called aren't they, did my course [pharmacy], but I think there are certain London ones that I think are really good for medicine ones [courses]. (Vikram, male, pharmacy, LU, least advantaged middle-class)

When Vikram was prompted to elaborate on this point, he continued:

The Russell Group ones in London are older, aren't they. They're linked to the hospitals. I got my grades, and my uncle studied the same degree there too, many years ago.

Again, this shows the belief that the older a Russell Group university is, the more prestigious and valuable its degrees are likely to be judged in the marketplace. This reality is considered as unquestionable and as normal. Vikram's background may be similar to Tessa's, but the fact that his cultural and social capital was notable than Tessa's' and hence was able to access a higher ranking Russell group university. These students have constructed their university choices and their

subject choices based on a sense of naivety, a need to reproduce themselves as subordinate and the white race as dominant, because they do not question this dominance as sociologists are able to.

Below once again, Lali's account reveals, this time in a clearer way, the challenges he faced, and his desire to attend a Russell Group university in London, accepting its competitive nature as natural. He almost instantly links his failure to be accepted at a London institution with not having a certain social capital and the help his mother provides with constructing a CV, revealing Lali believes a degree in pharmacy from a Russell Group university within London would provide better employment prospects.

I wanted to go to London to study pharmacy, but they wanted an A star, and I just missed that, but my Mum knows someone who says she will do my CV for me. She is a pharmacist, and she knows my Mum through another mutual work friend. (Lali, male, pharmacy, MU, least advantaged middle-class)

However, Amy, although from a Russell Group and legal parental background, pursued MU consciously to avoid living in the over-crowded city of London. She, however, appears to be well resourced, with not only her father to guide her into the field of law, but also family members who work in the British legal sector in higher posts. Amy's decision to attend a lower ranked university is quite different from how other students selected MU. For instance, Kiran states:

I wanted to go [to MU] for law, because my older cousin on my Dad's side, well he's quite old, but he's a barrister, and he has some contacts for me. I think London is overrated a bit. (Amy, female, law, MU, Sikh, most advantaged middle-class group)

I want to open up a law practice in Solihull, as my boyfriend wants to stay in the Midlands after we get married, so I applied [to MU], and live here too. (Kiran, female, law, MU, moderately advantaged middle-class group)

Amy is likely to be much more advantaged in her future career, and able to maximise the value of her degree in law from MU than Kiran. Kiran does not have the same Russell Group and legal sector background to capitalise on. She continued by telling me:

Like I think I can get the savings in the future to start my own practice up, but I know it's hard as well, I might get some work just like with a law firm first, I should be ok, like I need to get some experience I know that, but I'm looking, but I do want to stay up north. (Kiran, female, law, MU, moderately advantaged middle-class group)

There were participants from the most advantaged, moderately and least advantaged middle-class groups at both the MU and LU. Across the accounts considered, we can see the significance and level of naturalisation and the differences across the Russell Group universities that the students had internalised. Questioning the university system, and the application procedure was not

something they knew, even Tessa who explicitly recognised that British Indian working class students know they are not 'white', so they take a strategic approach to align with the expectations of the university system, and conditions in their chosen field. The university and admission system in England is considered to be 'the system' as if it is not a man-made system. The students identify gaps in aspects of their own background, their own home and family life, rather than in the structure; for instance, when Aeshaa says that her mother is not that knowledgeable about universities, but knows there are good ones and poor ones, or when Lali says his father just wants him to go to a good university, but would be able to support her with the money side of HE. These are examples of the way students have internalised and adopted an understanding that this based on struggle and state of adapting, compromising, and planning as to which university to attend is preferable.

The ethnic minority students' views varied due to their different middle class occupational, and educational backgrounds. Their varied and different levels of the 'right' cultural and social capitals influenced their decisions about what they could accomplish, and what a white western ideology of success means. This belief was formulated for different reasons. For instance, Govind, a student who had qualified for a more prestigious university, and had also experienced a private school education, with parents in the medical profession viewed the ideology of success in a more natural and organic way than Pavan, Vikram and Sonam for instance did. However, their parents did not hold middle class professional occupations, and they had no parent or family member within their household who had previously undergone the process of middle class re-production in England.

I mean it wasn't really a big decision to like study for a medicine degree. My parents did medicine too. (Govind, pharmacy, LU, male, most advantaged middle class group)

My parents didn't mind me working in the family business, but they wanted someone to go into a career that was more professional and out there in the real world, because their business obviously only focuses on Indian people, or Asians more broadly; even though we have got branches everywhere. They wanted someone with a higher status job to enter a higher social class. (Pavan, law, MU, female, least advantaged middle class group)

The differences between Govind and Pavan's upbringing informed the factors explaining whether their habitus was oriented towards asserting a white western success ideology. For Abi, Govind, Rahul and Amy (the most advantaged middle class students), although their belief in a white western ideology did not stretch as far as being able to practice it fully in relation to their career aspirations, they tended to believe success is more natural and habitual, due to their parents already having experienced it, than students whose parents had not experienced or been exposed to a process of dominant white success ideology. However, those students whose parents had had

no experience in HE nor in the professional or managerial labour market (Pavan, Jasraj, Sonam, Vikram and Ravi), having only been exposed to middle class income were brought up to formulate a belief and tendency towards a white western success ideology as a new and first time process. Therefore, a belief in western white success ideology in the context of a neoliberalist agenda, was engrained in this sample of middle class students at different levels. Due to the different socio-economic and educational backgrounds of the participants, it could be noted that this ideology of success began to be engrained at *different* stages in their children; i.e. for some earlier than others, and for some in a more deeply engrained way.

These students' habitus is based on a way of thinking about success and social mobility which began during early secondary schooling, in response to the knowledge that their middle class options might be limited. Their habitus was based on the inevitability of choosing prestigious universities, but inherent within this middle class habitus was a sense that they needed to strategize more consciously than white middle class students and individuals do, as illustrated.

Like one of my friends, well she's actually a friend from sixth form, she's a gori [white girl]. We were doing the same A level subjects. Like we both did English, economics, Law and I did maths too, but thinking about it now, she applied for English Literature with Business studies combined. I think she went Exeter. I'm not sure. I spoke to her for the first two weeks. But my brother did economics at Swansea, but amongst us, I felt I could do Law, it did appeal to me, but English would have been interesting too, but I think that's like for editing jobs or writer jobs. There's not much need of that sort of thing I don't think like when you think of jobs out there. Law is better. But I know I need to find good work experience and start looking at that. (Sonam, law, LU, female, least advantaged middle class)

I asked Sonam, 'you said your friend went to Exeter, to which she replied:

Yeah, I did look into that one with her, but they're like gora aren't they, they like to go to weird, just different areas. They're not fussed about how far they go, or if they will miss family. I wanted to live out but not like in a totally different place, like my brother did. He went to Swansea and loved it there.

It seems that although Sonam did not have the knowledge within her family home to support or guide her in the process of selecting universities, she was able to commentate on her friend's decision making process. Sonam's understanding of success is that she has to 'fuss' in a way that white students do not tend to when deciding which university to attend. The reasons she gives are interesting, implying that her university decision making processes, and those of other Indians may be characterised by a way of thinking about university decision making informed by being non-white. It reveals a habitus which has witnessed white students perhaps letting go of their family or background to explore different locations. Sonam did not even consider why she might not expand

her university decision making process to include a wider perception of exploring Russell Group universities.

The participants' understanding that stratification between Russell Group universities is a natural way of organising and structuring how dentistry, pharmacy, law and other degree courses are delivered, meant that they saw their rejections from certain universities as normal and associated with something lacking within them. Deciding which university to apply to was shaped by cultural factors, the varied levels of information and guidance transmitted by their parents, and the need to make decisions about universities as customers who were negotiating the best deal given their grades, background, how far they wanted to travel and also by understanding certain lifestyles, ways of acting and speaking to relate with certain universities.

Two exceptions in the sample were Rahul and Eshaa. They both considered applying to an Oxbridge institution. Although Eshaa was rejected from an Oxbridge institution and Rahul and his family decided to not pursue an application, considering the decision making process that led to that point can tell us more about Eshaa and Rahul than the outcome itself did. Research on the value placed on attendance at Oxbridge universities is often treated separately from the discussion about Russell Group and post-1994 universities, including in relation to the marketisation and discourse on students as consumers. A degree from an Oxbridge university and participation within these institutions relates to having the highest levels and degrees of cultural, social and economic, especially the former in addition to academic success. Eshaa thought that:

Obviously, Cambridge and Oxford are a big deal, but when my application was rejected, my Dad said, that's okay, we tried, as long as it is a good Russell Group one... My brother was the main person who guided me closely with which universities to choose. He proofread my application, because he's already there [Oxford], so he was the best person. I was one grade down, but I'm not disappointed, although I was at first a bit, because London is also a really interesting place to be in and work in. (Eshaa, female, law, LU, most advantaged middle-class group)

Eshaa's father's words, 'it's OK, we tried' suggested that they allocated a distinctive status to Oxbridge universities over any other British university, which stems from an understanding and belief that it affords powerful capital. When Eshaa's continues to tell me that her father said as 'long as we get into a good Russell Group' one, suggests that they have that Eshaa is not worthy to apply to a higher status university. However, they do not link the university's rejection with race, given that she already has a sibling studying for a degree there. The interpretation that is most pertinent here is Eshaa's reflection on her rejection: 'although I was at first a bit (disappointed about being rejected by Oxbridge)'. This shows a clear confidence in the Oxbridge institutions which Eshaa does not consider explicitly, because she expects understanding of her sadness to be evident to anyone

she shares her experience with. Arjun and his parents also accepted that their family's cultural capital was unfit for an Oxbridge university. The conflict between his parents regarding Arjun applying to an Oxbridge university was informed by their acceptance of a subordinate status, and a lack of worthiness. This was a way of accepting and implicitly stating that some students and families are more suited than they to considering a university that was more prestigious than LU. This was despite treating Oxbridge and their procedures with scepticism and suspicion. The account suggests how different forms of domination, e.g. the status of Oxbridge is reproduced as dominant when described relative to the feelings and perspectives of those who are not part of the elite or upper class.

My Mum said [to Arjun] let's leave that one [Oxford], but they kept arguing about it amongst themselves in the kitchen for many days, because my Mum said, leave it, and my Dad was saying, what's the harm in trying? (Arjun, male, dentistry, LU, most advantaged middle-class group)

Arjun implied that these institutions are typically reserved for a very narrow group of students, but was not able to consider the reason for this. While both participants wished the process for applying for a place at an Oxbridge institution was simpler, and believed that they were not advantaged in this context in the same way as White students from elite backgrounds, they did not explain why they felt it would be challenging to be part of such an elite group, an experience which their habitus has led them to consider as unquestionable and tolerable. For these British Indian students, the process of choosing subjects, choosing careers, and choosing a university was informed by different degrees of strategic *skill*. These skills in this context can also be considered as acts of symbolic violence. In other words, these participants have not allowed themselves throughout their schooling, subject decision making and their A level years to apply some agency to their decisions, because they have interpreted their decision making as a personal choice, because they misrecognise what agency is and who really possesses it.

The chapter now expands the analysis to consider how wider aspects of higher education life were experienced by the participants. These matters did not directly arise out of the interviews themselves, but were factors that the participants discussed before and after the interview. For instance, when referring to the increase to tuition fees from £3375 to £9000 in 2012 (Dearden et al. 2011) there were interesting comments from some of the participants before the interviews regarding costs associated with HE including accommodation. For instance, students from the least and moderately advantaged backgrounds told me that they were living in private rented accommodation, and told me that their parents were paying for that cost. For instance, after her interview, Pavan said, *she felt lucky that my Dad told me I don't need to ever worry about tuition fees or if I don't find a job for a while*. To this she added, *my Dad just said I can take my time with my*

education.

A degree in a vocational traditional subject certified by an English university was viewed as crucial and fundamental, and not underestimated or treated with doubt or suspicion at any level in relation to cost. I recall Arjun in particular saying something just after his interview: *that you can't put a price on your education*. The debt incurred by paying university loans, or the costs associated with HE costs was considered as worthwhile. For instance, I recall Gina told me, *that HE costs money but it is what it is. It's life*.

Many students feel burdened by having to pay the tuition fees back, especially with no guarantee that a course related job will ever be secured (Moore et al. 2012; Holdsworth 2009; Foskett 2010; Brown and Carrasso 2013). Parents have to consider the number of children they have, and weigh other financial responsibilities (Bathmaker et al. 2013, 2016). However, Manisha whose parents do not earn salaries from higher professional jobs, told me: *my sister is starting university next year and so my parents are busy with her too as she wants to go to Bath, but it's ok, and Mum's started to save up for her now*.

These insights reveal some of the considerations that influence British Indian students and their parents. These insights reveal the importance of 'success' to British Indian students relative to other groups. Others talked about how far they had walked to the campus, where their flat and accommodation was, how they travel home at the weekend or every fortnight, means of transport, i.e. whether they commute home by car or train. I then often probed them regarding these examples. For instance, Abi said: *I'm having problems with two of the students who I share the house with; my Dad paid extra for it so I can have the bigger room, but it's a long story, I have to speak to him about it this weekend*. The various costs of HE were not questioned and the comfort that the parents seemed to provide involved strategizing and budgeting. The participants' comments regarding the costs of HE imply that the costs associated with gaining a degree in medicine and law at a Russell Group university were completely worthwhile and necessary, further highlighting their faith and trust in HE. In addition to the comments regarding costs covered during the pre-and post-interview rapport stage, many other participants spoke more freely about how they intended to apply their degree, and increase its value. Full permission was sought and readily granted by the participants regarding using the information from these pre and post interview conversations in the thesis.

7.5.5 Wider experiences as British HE students

The focus of the study was firmly on success and how this term can be understood; and so, for this reason, a much broader understanding of student identity was captured in the context of the key themes that emerged. The analysis revealed that the students often spoke at length about the significance of completing a degree in particular subjects, and how important it was to be strategic when thinking of subjects, their value and the significance of a white western education. Their broader thoughts on university life were also optionally and self-willingly brought up. For instance, in terms of being realistic about their life at university, several participants showed that they understood the application of their degree to real life and extracurricular activities. However, this was not always the case. Vikram told me that he did not consider the significance of volunteering and emphasised the value of studying. Nevertheless, he was a member of LU's Sikh society, which he is Deputy President of. The Sikh Society is a society that allow British Indian students from Sikh practising backgrounds to develop and access supportive networks. Vikram and Pavan told me these things after their interview was complete in the context of casually discussing the ethnic demographics at their university.

Some of the female LLB Law students discussed their personal time openly in the context of being an Asian Indian students. Sonam for instance was enthusiastically shared with me that she is documenting her HE law degree journey on YouTube as a vlogger. Preeti, another student, told me that if I had time I could check out her holiday vlogs. This was an activity she had recently started investing time in and arose out an interest in sharing experiences as a form of knowledge. Sonam and Preeti will benefit from these additional skills given that they are investing in ways to developing skills to build their networks and develop real life skills beyond their degrees. Sonam and Pavan are building skills around editing, filming, IT skills and online/virtual teaching; these IT related skills are significant to the skills that new graduates are can be expected to have alongside their degrees (Snelson 2015; Burgess and Green 2018). Abi mentioned how skills sharing is very useful to her in her studies and went onto explain the context in which she learnt about it, when she had finished explaining her brother's job as a photographer. She said:

It's like an online community, all the university students are using it like it sponsors their vlogs and channels and you can learn over millions of skills, like even silly skills like how to make coffee. (Abi, female, LU, dentistry, most advantaged middle-class group)

The uncertainty that students are surrounded around by is reflected in discussions with other students, and the opportunities and emails that students receive from university careers services and also the influence of social media (Purcell et al. 2012). Sonam and Tessa's skills might prove

useful, given that traditional graduate jobs, such as law and accountancy are declining, and being replaced by graduate jobs such as IT, web design, event organising and personal services, catering and hospitality jobs and call centre jobs (Purcell et al. 2012; McKellar 2017). For instance, 20% of graduates currently hold non-graduate jobs (Brown et al. 2011). The students and their parents drew upon a wide range of ways to access forms of social capital deemed important for increasing employment chances. of the law students also underscored how important and central the Law Society was to their course and development, although those from a law background, such as Abi and Eshaa told me they had direct access to work experience at law firms, as their parents were lawyers and/or barristers. Pavan for instance, when she spoke to me, told me she will have hair and make up to turn to as well, which she can use to build a supplementary income, as it is something she enjoys, but does not see as a professional job. Pavan's decision to consider hair and make-up is influenced by her lack of direct insider connections within the legal sector, and her parents expertise in hair and make and clothing industries; i.e. areas unrelated to traditional vocational courses, unlike Eshaa' and Pavan's. However, the fact that Pavan also possess other skills and the opportunity awaiting to start a business places her in an advantaged position to Tessa who does not.

Many of the dentistry and pharmacy students at LU in particular, seemed to be exposed directly to professional bodies directly associated with teaching departments. This was work experience embedded in their courses to help translate teaching modules in practice and assist patients and pharmacies within the university who are in partnership with the university.

I do a weekend placement at a dental practice. My Dad's friend is a dentist, and he knew that dentist. Long story yeah...but it's just 20 minutes away from my room here. (Sukruti, dentistry, LU, female, most advantaged middle-class group)

I'm thinking like this summer if I get some work experience before the third year. I'm getting my CV ready. My Mum's going to check it for me she said. I'm just trying to get a reference. I'm thinking my parents don't know any solicitors, well not personally, but I know my Mum's sister does because her husband is a solicitor. Second year is important for all that. (Preeti, law, MU, moderately advantaged middle-class group)

This account shows the extra effort and time Preeti, and her mother have to invest to enhance her prospects of entering the law field. Her parents possess social capital but not directly with those in professional fields. This is a stark contrast to Sukruti, whose father might work in a different higher professional occupation, but his status nonetheless places Sukruti in a more advantaged position. These experiences within a directly relevant work setting are significant to enhance employability. They increase the students' relationships with their chosen occupational sectors beyond the lecture theatre. These experiences also help encourage the participants to prepare and develop a mental

attitude that helps them become and appear professional. Another way that these students look to develop and enhance their social capital is to make use of university careers services. The careers services at university lead her to team leaders who then direct her to specific institutions and keep her posted about open days.

We have two open days this year at university. This university is good like that and you actually meet decent people who give you cards and websites and opportunities. I'm going to this one towards the end of this year...erm. My Mum said it would be good because although I'm going to start some work experience next year, I still need time to focus on doing more work on this. I just have so much studying to do. Sometimes you get so exhausted like sleep deprived. (Gina, dentistry LU, female, most advantaged middle-class group)

Managing and finding the time to successfully complete a degree, and investing the time to access the 'right' social capital to enhance it is also not straightforward for Gina, and nor for Preeti either, who admits her parents do not have any social capital in the law firm. Both girls cannot rely wholly on their socio-economic background, including Gina. As Gina rightfully says, she needs to invest her own time and effort into developing work experience contacts in dentistry. However, Gina's degree is likely to be considered as more credible because of the status of LU university. A few participants also referred to moving away to London and living there for work purposes during the week and returning home to their hometowns at the weekends, after completing their degrees, as a way of locating themselves in a city environment, in which opportunities and employment related forms of social capital are likely to be more apparent.

I think I need to live in London, like stay here for my degree. I've been thinking. And then I could go and stay with my family on weekends. I wouldn't just leave them. They let me just do what works for me, like they don't depend on me for anything, but I don't wanna just forget them, like, it's just not me. (Chamkaur's, pharm, LU, male, most advantaged middle-class group)

This kind of strategy, i.e. to enhance social capital and expand one's surroundings is a significant indicator of middle-class activity as a component of enhancing ones chances of being employable and moving forwards, according to the several directors of Russell Group universities (The Bridge Group, 2016). However, it is important to note the role of family and ethnicity characterised within Chamkaur's negotiating and strategizing beyond graduation. His sense of home life, and not detaching from his family life are significant in terms of how he constructs plans to gain economic and social rewards. Many participants asked me to join them on LinkedIn (to keep in touch if I had further research opportunities in which they could take part); a request I politely rejected for ethical reasons. This led to some of them explaining how LinkedIn can be useful for 'meeting people.'

I've got LinkedIn. I find out about like opportunities on there too. Like lots of medical students talk to me on there. My parents made my profile for me. They've got all these people sending me links, like people they know. It does kind of like make you feel professional, you know. I know that probably sounds strange, but like it makes you feel you're working and mixing with people, like different people from university (Rahul, dentistry, LU, most advantaged middle-class group)

Creating a profile in LinkedIn instantly helped Rahul feel more in touch with the professional world as also evidenced in empirical research (Benson et al. 2014; Utz 2016). This LinkedIn, although spoken about humorously, is defining and shaping Rahul's sense of identity in relation to his chosen subject. It is enhancing how he prepares his mind. His feeling of a sense of professionalism and mixing with people who are outside the university population is important if he is to gain economic and social rewards. It is important not to overlook this sense of professionalism and knowledge of LinkedIn, or the contacts that he is exposed to on LinkedIn, which are influenced directly by his parents' socio-economic profile.

We can also see that the participants are not on a 'level playing field' in terms of the different performance status of the Russell Group university, but also in relation to the cultural and social capital that they have access to during and throughout their university years (Bathmaker et al. 2013, 2016). This inevitably means the value of their institutionalised cultural capital (their degree) will be subject to far more or far less strategizing when considering plans about the labour market. Their choice of degree subject, including their choice of university, and choice of Russell Group university is influenced by belief, appreciation and trust in the white western ideology of success, which is underpinned by either a natural tendency and inclination towards this success ideology because parents have already been subject to a middle-class white process (as in the parents of students in the first group); or the choice of medicine and law degrees, which stems from a fairly newly developed middle-class process involving social mobility (as in the case of the last group for instance). In addition to the societies, vlogging and LinkedIn profile activities, the participants in the moderately and least advantaged middle class group would need to invest further time after their degrees to research and develop their cultural and social capital; i.e. to build their networks with those students with Russell Group and medicine and law backgrounds such as Rahul, Eshaa, Arjun, Govind and Sukruti, who had insider knowledge of opportunities and institutions, and firms with opportunities which other students studying the same subjects would need to spend time after university developing their strength and mindset for.

The analysis so far has provided an insight into British Indian students and the differences in terms of how they orient themselves, and strategize to fulfil their mutual understanding of success: to achieve a white western ideology of success.

7.5.6 The participants' decisions and strategies beyond graduation

This section considers the strategizing of British Indian students with regard to capitalising on their degrees after graduation. It considers the specific strategies that these students can employ to gain practical and realistic life experience, as a strategy to enhance their knowledge and skills not limited to their subjects, and their exposure to a life outside of their degree courses. We will also examine some of the specific strategies, the British Indian medicine and law students took to supplement the quality of their degrees, and how their parents' class backgrounds may have supported their ongoing need to strategize.

British students are increasingly recognising a need to volunteer, participate in sports games, join societies, work placements, summer internships and to manage all this alongside their studies; students feel the pressure of applying for jobs, are stressed and overwhelmed by examination pressure, and dissertation projects (Bathmaker et al. 2016). Tomlinson (2017) to develop *graduate capital model* framework oriented towards understanding capitals in context of the labour market, extends the framework to include *psychological capital*, referring to students developing the strength to handle rejection from employers, from interviews, and building or possessing the strength to handle rejection and uncertainty, and to appreciate the uncertainty around job contracts and part time contracts. It is necessary for my participants as they approach the end of their degrees to develop a realistic understanding concerning the value of *their* specific dentistry, pharmacy and law degree in context of their specific Russell Group university. The occupational sectors of law and medicine are two leading sectors within the labour market (McKhellar 2017), and both pay attractive salaries at the professional level (Henehan 2016; McKhellar 2017). To enter and participate within these sectors, the participants within the moderately and least advantaged group are likely to undergo a more critical assessment of the networks and knowledge they possess in the law and medicine fields, beyond finding the necessary networks and connections to access the cultural capital required to grasp the content of the modules of law, dentistry or pharmacy, given those in their primary background (parents) do not possess it.

The degree of access and exposure to the 'right' social capital; i.e. within dentistry, pharmacy and law occupational sectors, determines whether the participants will be able to access the 'right' cultural capital and the cultures and values of these fields. Otherwise many of them, especially those in the moderately and least advantaged will need to invest time to refine their cultural capital and social capital to suit those of the (law, dentistry and pharmacy) occupational sector within the labour market. Such cases include Eshaa and Pavan. The two females are both studying law at different Russell Group universities, taking the same course. They are both bringing their course, university to the labour market as graduates, arising from significantly contrasting socio-economic backgrounds.

I can't wait until the degree is over, like I'm looking forward to it, but I'm also busy with...
(Pavan, law, MU, least middle class middle-class group)

My Mum's managed to get hold of some sample CV's and a list of accountancy firms. She did this like a private search, but she's always on the net doing something like that for me... she brought something home the other day and she said I found this. I've got it. I'll start looking into it. (Harry, Law, MU, male, least advantaged middle-class group)

I've got some work experience next week at the firm where my Mum is based. I do work experience there quite a bit because my Mum is a judge at two courts and has a lot of cases she's defending. I work with two of the solicitors at the firm. I thought I'd focus on this [this interview] this week, because I won't get time after that. (Abi, law, MU, female, most advantaged middle-class group)

This places Harry and Abi on different levels, and in competition with one another, to secure employment or contact with a prestigious law firm. Abi is likely to be in a stronger position with regard to becoming employable than Pavan and Harry, although Harry is more likely to be able to access professional contacts through his parents than Pavan is. His parents have no experience of professional employment in the labour market. These three students are likely to experience and undergo a different process upon exposure to the legal sector. Pavan's degree for instance, will require further legitimising and strengthening than Abi's degree will, despite them both having graduated from the same Russell Group university.

The same situation has been considered by some of the students on medicine associated courses, and applies when we examine the nature of the social capital they mentioned as part of their construction of success strategies. All the students above mention potentially having access to a particular contact within the legal team, but these contacts are not on a level playing field within the legal sector, nor are they in the same professions. For example, Abi can be expected to have the greatest likelihood of becoming employable and mentored by her parents as she has direct daily contact with a form of social capital that is contextualised within her chosen field. An aunty who is

a legal secretary is different from a parent working as a solicitor, in a 'top' firm. Similarly, a cousin who is a solicitor is different from having a parent who is a solicitor. As is evident from Harry's words, his parents are not in frequent contact with the appropriate 'social capital'.

An important requirement of cultural capital that these students need to possess would serve their purpose in terms of attaining career management, including developing strategies that mitigate against unemployment (Little 2008; The Bridge Group 2016). They need to be able to identify, read the needs and gaps in the dentistry, pharmacy and the legal sector in relation to the wider needs of the economy, in order to become employable. This is going to inevitably vary for students from each of the three middle class groups identified in the sample. Some of these students might find they require further professional training within LLB Law or pharmacy. Some might also choose to pursue a postgraduate qualification as a way to enhance their skills-set, or choose to use that time in a productive way to identify which way their skills are orienting and will serve their purpose, based on the knowledge economy and their chosen sector. Parents' occupations are also relevant; in particular, whether or not their occupations are within the same occupational field. In addition, whether they hold degrees from Russell Group universities plays a significant role in the students' experiences of becoming employable.

Knowledge of a specific subject at degree level shows that a student possesses the requisite *knowledge capital* to serve a specific occupational sector (Tomlinson 2017). Knowledge in law, dentistry, and pharmacy would provide the students in the sample with specific subject knowledge, and establish specific concepts that would be applicable within the employment sector. However, the students would need to learn how to build strategies and contingency plans to be able to identify appropriate ways to apply for opportunities in the labour market that are relevant to that field (Cranmer 2016; Tomlinson 2017). They need the social capital to access the 'right' knowledge when addressing such offers and opportunities, and the cultural capital to be able to identify the skills required within the dentistry, pharmacy or law field (Morley 2001; Brown et al. 2004; Boden and Nedeva 2010; Tomlinson 2017).

Ravi, Pavan, Jasraj, Vikram and Lali might be expected to experience situations in which they will need to learn to build adversity and face challenges. Abi may experience a lesser need to build a high degree of physiological capital, as both of her parents are in leading roles in the legal sector. She also has already begun to understand the reality of the labour market, and the contemporary meaning of being a graduate, which could in reality be informed by her parents' knowledge of the professional labour market, something missing from Vikram's background. Inevitably, the students are not on a level playing field, which reveals the inequality and challenges affecting the production

of students who might be considered as middle-class without such analysis. Some of the LLB Law students at MU specialised in immigration and marital law, and as Jasraj commented to me: *it's an area [law] that's always in high demand among new British Asian immigrants and their families.* However, whilst Jasraj shows an understanding of his community, this does not necessarily demonstrate, nor evidence, the skillset required to actually secure a role of a solicitor for life, when also considering his working class background. However, a few of the students on medicine courses from within the privileged group whose parents already owned pharmacy practices, or worked in the medical sector in higher professional roles, had already forged contacts for their children, both in the UK, and in Switzerland. Another option the students did not consider was postgraduate education as a means to enhance their subject knowledge in law or an area of medicine, nor in the context of buying time to think and strategize further about alternative options.

We can therefore see, a British Indian way of thinking, is not grounded upon a taken for granted sense of freedom and choice. Their movement around subjects is bounded, and characterised by limitations of not being white. This highlights the importance of considering how reproduction takes place in groups who are educationally and professionally mobile and successful, but distinct from white middle class students. Their orientation towards education and the labour market was anticipated to have a more comfortable approach to studying, given that none of them were working to resolve shortages in economic capital. They had room to think and construct strategies more often than working class students (including working class white pupils (Abrahams 2016)), or students from other minority groups have tended to (Ahmad 2001; Bagguley and Hussain 2007).

Reflecting on the way in which these students understand success, it would be easy to view them as typical neoliberalist subjects, because they understand failure and success from a neoliberal perspective. However, the context in which they find the neoliberal way of success convincing is that they have felt a need to be self-reliant in the context of their specific family upbringing and have little faith in the school and schoolteachers' advice. They understand white dominant perspectives to make them the natural and superior group, and they have strategized accordingly based on the resources they had access to. In the next section we consider the themes in relation to the participants as neoliberalists.

7.5.7 Defining British Indian medicine and law students as neoliberal subjects?

Neoliberalism creates the impression that it promotes equality and fairness by providing an approach to making citizens classless, so they can make choices within different markets that can enhance their upward mobility, which includes education, health, housing markets and any others

that relieve state responsibility (Olsen and Peters 2005). However, what it brings to the surface is that money is needed to be able to make choices within different markets.

The factors that the participants associated with success resonate with neoliberalist thinking, because their strategies for success resonate with a need to either reproduce or achieve upward social mobility. However, these students only had power as far as being able to afford educational services to secure outstanding GCSE and A level grades are concerned, and in the case of Eshaa, Rahul, Chamkaur for instance, a private education also. Education did seem to be treated as a business for these parents, as they seemed to have a very specific and clear idea about the role of school and education as a way to gain specific school grades to offer a specific reason to help enhance social mobility. The law students from the least advantaged middle class group for instance were unable to afford what the most advantaged middle class group of (medicine) and law students possess when pursuing places at the most prestigious universities, which arguably would make those courses more credible, as their institutional cultural capital would be of a higher value (Bathmaker et al. 2016).

Furthermore, the participants did have a somewhat competitive nature, but nevertheless it was possessed in a naive sense. For instance, their views suggest that they subconsciously considered competition to be an unchangeable, and universal vision, and a way to achieve or reproduce social mobility. It may seem like these students were competing with different ethnic groups, such as with Kosovans, and Black individuals, or students who study on less prestigious courses, but it seemed that their argument was not based on their need to compete with them in social mobility, but that those groups are able to help themselves climb the ladder by changing the way they dress (hoodies, R n B music), because they had internalised the view that modifying these lifestyle changes can facilitate and support them to achieve social mobility within western labour markets. Therefore, the reason these students considered educational success possible, including participating and gaining a degree, was because they had the financial means to succeed in education as far as securing grades and accessing tuition fees was concerned. These students are subject to an inequality produced by neoliberalism, in as much as their success strategies resonate with tenets of neoliberalism and affording choice. These subject fields were 'safe routes', which were characterised by a fear of downward social mobility. These were the only middle class occupations they felt they had to reach out to remain upwardly socially mobile or to be the first within their family to achieve it; it was not a decision that was caused by the pressures of parents as such, but by the way the structure opens the door to success in the humanities and other middle class occupations to certain races more than others. On the surface it seems as though the issue is

parents, as in the case of these views, the desire to pursue other subjects is there, but their habitus causes them to fear this.

In terms of owning or buying a house they did appear to be neoliberal subjects, because they had the means to maintain and reproduce economic stability as a way to afford choice in other markets, such as in regard to home ownership, letting, and private education for their own children, as well as private healthcare and gym memberships. These markets were greatly admired by the participants, and lack of state dependency was associated with those who they considered successful. However, in terms of accessing and succeeding in the professions, the least advantaged middle class group, and the moderately middle class group, could not draw on adequate economic capital to be able to enrich their medicine or law specific social contacts, opportunities and cultural knowledge.

Another sense in which they appear neoliberal is their need to be competitive within the Indian community, as was illustrated from the way they drew distinctions between themselves and Indian students who had not attended Russell Group universities, and those who do not study on prestigious courses (defined as business studies, and Kingston universities). However, this gave the impression that they were competing against them, although they appeared to be faulting their social mobility choices based on the assumption that they have the resources to pursue the same HE subjects and institutions, or the belief that everyone would like to pursue the same courses. This gives the impression they are not interested in the courses that are delivered at newer universities, and indeed that they do not value newer HE institutions. When they refer to Indian working class students 'taking selfies', they are not actually problematising the act of taking a selfie, but rather its implications for how a student might be valued in terms of their chances of successfully achieving a more top class identity.

Furthermore, neoliberalism is an ideology that implicitly creates and causes social justice (Harvey 2007). However, my participants' views and strategies are not a result of their actions as free agents, but are heavily informed by the wider structure, which they believe is rigid and fixed around them, and by what they and their parents have witnessed in the west, about the west.

A deeper analysis reveals that all the dentistry, medicine and law students from the three remarkably different middle class groups lack agency and control over their decisions with regard to social mobility beyond success at school. This seems true even for those whose parents are in the medical and legal professions, because indeed, they strategize not expecting the help of the

British state, which gives the impression that they do have agency in their subject decision making, but these processes were dominated by those who they considered dominant.

As Bourdieu quite rightfully asserts, money is not the resource that can facilitate success in social mobility in western capitalist countries (Bourdieu 1986), as knowledge and access to contacts are also important, although more difficult to attain than economic capital. Thus, although these students' views reflect a sense of confidence in terms of being able to afford private forms of education, health and travel, many may be unable to access success in their chosen fields beyond qualifying for their degree, or their research journey may require further unforeseen negotiation. The key disparity between the least disadvantaged students in this study at middle class universities is that they appear to have the money to access and secure other aspects of social mobility. The conclusion to this chapter reflects on the evidence presented and discussed before inferring findings about the study.

7.6 Summary of the analysis

The British Indian ethnic group's higher representation in medicine associated and law course has been raised as a concern within British educational research, but a theoretical and empirical focus to attempt to explain or identify the processes underpinning it was lacking. By employing a narrative form of semi structured questioning, to explore British HE students' wider understandings of success, the findings have provided us with one of the first most dynamic understandings of decision making processes. The analysis presented in this chapter depicted British Indian medicine and law students' decision making and thought processes about what to apply for, including how best to qualify for middle-class post compulsory educational pathways. The analysis also revealed the degree of heterogeneity of British Indian dentistry and pharmacy students, and the ways in which cultural and social capital is available unequally to them, consequently affecting the way they mobilise the capitals they have available. The three different groups within the sample capitalised on different degrees of appropriate cultural and social capital, with those in the first group able to have first hand, immediate insider knowledge of the courses they were studying, and those in the second two groups achieving a broader or no such cultural and social capital. However, the analysis also revealed that those in the most advantaged middle-class group were unable to operate innately as first class middle-class citizens that white British individuals could idealise and follow, providing in-depth reasons for why this was: because they felt there was a natural reasons for why non-white students can only access traditional vocational courses. The key aspects of the views expressed by the three different groups of British Indian dentistry, pharmacy and law students can be summarised as follows:

1. British Indian medicine and law students play a role in the maintenance of the white western social class hierarchy system, but this arises out of a naive belief that struggle, and strategizing is normal and natural.
2. British Indian medicine and law students trust and have faith in the meritocracy system but acknowledge inequality is socially constructed and that humans are supposed to strategize in order to see the effects of meritocracy.
3. British medicine and law students of Indian origin consider the British class hierarchy and whiteness to be natural and other ethnic groups especially minority groups are seen as social constructions, and its members need to therefore strategize, negotiate and take risks to succeed.
4. British medicine and law students of Indian origin understand that white British individuals from professional and upper class backgrounds strategize about their employment choices less; which is natural because they are from the dominant race/ethnicity (which implies that high achieving BME groups cannot be simply labelled as 'successful' and as model minorities)
5. British medicine and law students of Indian origin are a heterogenous group with regard to their socio-economic and educational backgrounds/upbringings, and consequently their decision making processes and the resources they draw upon are also heterogenous.
6. British medicine and law students of Indian origin are subject to inequality and domination, which they create for themselves by misrecognizing the reasons for applying for certain subjects as an outcome of their backgrounds rather than of the state's agenda.

In brief, the specific ways in which these students strategize to become successful include:

- An explicitly instrumental approach to HE and social mobility,
- A lack of social capital for many;
- A lack of ease about concern for salary and income in the future,
- A strong work ethic being required;
- Race and ethnic specific middle-class employment e.g. medicine, law and accountancy being the main ones;
- An effective strategic plan, a constant review of subjects at school - and not being able to enjoy subjects or explore their personal interests; a sense of loyalty to their parents by considering strategies for social capital within the area where their parents are;
- a sense of loyalty to their ethnicity;
- a lack of cultural and social capital in a wider set of occupational sectors; and

- a sense of feeling that they were second class middle-class citizens

The key thought process which the Indian group may persistently engage in renders them more successful than other British Asian and black groups in attainment of a degree. However, the Indian group appear to have internalised the view that white British students and individuals are meant to be above them and consider this as natural. Although they are described as successful, they are also subject to inequality and being dominated. The next chapters consider the underlying meanings, implications, empirical and theoretical contributions of the study, before considering its key limitations and suggestions for policy recommendations and future research.

Chapter Eight: Discussion and Lessons learned

8.1 Introduction

This chapter commences with a discussion of the research questions drawn up for this thesis, including a brief discussion of their development. Secondly, it examines the key findings in the literature concerning specific subjects selected for study by minority ethnic groups. Thirdly, there is a consideration of Bourdieu's concepts in guiding the analysis, and the contribution my findings have made to those concepts. It also considers the implications of the current study. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of this thesis, along with suggestions for future research.

8.2 Overview of the research set up

The central focus of this current thesis has been *middle-class* students of *Indian* ethnic origin living in Britain. This group was selected for study for the following reasons: firstly, due to having been defined in the literature as being more 'successful' and a 'model minority' in comparison to other British Asian, and Black minorities, particularly in relation to educational outcomes, including the ability to access Russell Group universities, competitive degree courses and graduate level jobs; secondly, in response to the current discussion concerning the over-representation of British Indian students on medicine/dentistry, pharmacy and LLB law courses. The current researcher recognises that this discussion has previously been based largely on statistical trends, rather than the decision making processes in relation to students' 'choice' of such subjects. The focus of this thesis has therefore been to understand British Indian students' motivation for choosing to study subjects related to medicine and in LLB law, including the kinds of universities they select. This research therefore explored these students' broader understandings of success. The study employed a Bourdieusian overall theoretical and conceptual framework to identify the heterogeneity between British Indian students qualifying for medicine and law, revealing a number of different decision making processes influenced by different socio-economic and educational backgrounds. The research questions established at the beginning of this research were as follows:

1. *How do British Indian dentistry, pharmacy and LLB Law students define the phrase 'being successful'? (Primary research question)*
2. *Which factors do British Indian dentistry, pharmacy and LLB students associate with being successful and how?*

3. *What do British Indian dentistry, pharmacy and LLB students understand about the meaning of success? And does their understanding influence their decision to apply for specific courses and specific universities? If so, how?*

This thesis found that British medicine and law students from an Indian background understand 'success' as a process of constant struggle, viewing themselves as second class top citizens aiming to gain access to a white top class group, due to considering this group to be the natural and legitimate model of success. For these students, this process involves ensuring qualifying for vocationally oriented degree courses (i.e. in dentistry, pharmacy, law or accountancy) compatible with their A level grades at a Russell Group university. However, it was observed that they do not tend to focus on the employability potential related to attending such universities, or gaining knowledge and advice about the Russell Group application procedure. Instead, the decision to apply for a specific university tends to be influenced by the way they understand success. This thesis identified the factors British Indian students generally associate with the process of being successful as including: (1) having consistent access to money through a professional job (i.e. rather than a reliance on being paid monthly wages); (2) qualifying for a specific top class occupation; (3) having been born in the UK and being Westernized; (4) having age-motivated goals; and (5) participating in healthy competition within the Indian community. However, it also found that these students tend to struggle to access their definition of success, particularly when they are the first in their family to follow a path that includes HE.

8.3 Interpretation of the findings in relation to previous literature

8.3.1 My findings and those of others focusing on the discourse of 'model minority' and 'successful minority'

The introduction to this thesis established that British Indian students tend to be considered a more successful model minority in comparison to other ethnic minorities originating from the Indian sub-continent. This understanding was based on comparisons of statistical trends relating to the relative performance of different British Asian groups. In the literature, British students of Chinese and Indian origins are generally considered to be the most successful ethnic minority groups. Direct questioning of British Chinese students and their parents led Archer and Francis (2005, 2006), Archer (2008), DeWitt et al. (2011) and Wong (2015) to conclude that such students strategize extensively while still at school to qualify for medicine and law career pathways. However, it also revealed that their teachers considered this to be constructed in an unhealthy manner, even when these students obtained outstanding grades for all subjects. These studies

questioned the label of a 'successful model minority', considering this to have the potential to obscure the stereotypes and inequalities such young people can experience as part of their strategizing. The findings of my own study supported this argument. It employed direct questioning of British Indian students, who were found to strategize extensively when it came to their career decisions. My study findings accord with research into British Chinese students originating from non-professional parental backgrounds, as they (like the students in my least advantaged group) were forced to strategize in order to achieve their goals. My findings, along with those concerning British Chinese pupils and their families, thus deconstruct the 'model minority' and 'successful minority' discourse of previous literature (Heath and Ridge 1983; Cheung and Heath 2006, 2007; Heath et al. 2008; Li and Heath 2016), which has been utilised to homogenise Indians and Chinese students as being more successful than students from other minority groups.

This initial body of empirical findings identified the lack of homogeneity between the students and families within these groups. I found that the methods used by British Chinese pupils and their parents to choose a subject and qualify for a competitive degree course was similar to those of the least advantaged students in my own study. These decision making processes appeared to be frequently influenced by a sense of desperation, particularly when it came to courses allowing entry into to medicine. On the other hand, in my own study, almost all of the British Indian students from the most advantaged backgrounds (including attending fee paying schools) had access to the 'right' cultural and social capital. It was significant that the students and parents from both of these model minorities appeared to be prepared to make a considerable investment in the use of private tutoring.

My findings, along with those of Archer and Francis (2006) and Wong (2015) and DeWitt et al. (2015) identified a number of different methods employed by these groups to achieve success. As discussed in the previous chapter, the disadvantaged students in my own study tended to rely extensively on tutoring to compensate for their lack of cultural and social resources inside the home. By contrast, the students in Archer and Francis' (2006) and Archer et al. (2009)'s study were heterogeneous in terms of their experiences related to gender, i.e. teachers considered the excessive study patterns of Chinese girls (which formed part of their strategizing) as being in danger of compromising their health, accompanied by their obsessive exercising, which, in extreme cases, could become their only form of social life. My own findings, together with the outcomes from previous research, have revealed both the cost related to remaining part of a model minority and also the 'second class' success identified by the participants in both the current study and that of Archer and Francis (2006). These findings revealed that the British Indian students in my study

tended to view themselves as successful when validated by white middle class individuals, while the British white teachers in Archer and Francis (2006) unfavourably compared the success strategies of British Chinese pupils with those of white middle class students. I feel that the focus on success in my own study can be seen as broader in scope than the previous empirical research into the views of British Chinese students. This has therefore enabled me to examine my participants' motivation for their strategizing, rather than following traditional approaches to investigation model minority groups' in relation to success as Francis and Archer (2005) and Archer and Francis' (2006) did.

8.3.2 The current findings and those of previous research concerning first time HE entrants

Both the sample description and the findings of the current research reveal that, although all of the participants had qualified for competitive and highly challenging degree courses, many were the first in their family to attend university. I found their motivation lay in initiating the process of achieving success by qualifying for a course enabling them to access a specific higher professional role. I also found that students for whom HE was a new experience (and whose parents were unable to transmit the 'right' cultural and social knowledge) were not typically associated with success, i.e. Pavan, Tessa, Lali, Sonam and Jasraj. As noted in the findings chapter, these participants can be seen as sharing similarities with British students in earlier studies, for whom English HE was also a novel experience (e.g. Archer et al. 2003; Leathwood et al. 2003; Moreau and Leathwood 2006; Reay et al. 2010; Bradley and Ingram 2013). However, the participants in my study were economically advantaged and so able to afford some of the 'cultural capital' required to qualify for competitive degree courses, including extensive use of private tuition. The students in the studies undertaken by Archer et al. (2003) and Moreau and Leathwood (2006) were concerned with the implications of the lack of an HE background for their ability to form friendships and understand the language of teaching at HE level. However, those in my own study were more concerned with *the degree itself*, and saw HE as an important means of accessing a top class occupation. They thus tended to lack any concerns when it came to whether their way of life or their habitus would accord with the demands of British HE. It can therefore be concluded that the participants in my study were more advantaged than those of earlier studies lacking a HE background, in particular due to having the confidence, and the financial background, to strategize. However, and as importantly, they can also be seen as similarly disadvantaged, specifically when it comes to their need for self-reliance to develop their cultural and social capital throughout their university years (i.e. by joining a Sikh society or law society).

Empirically speaking, my findings, along with those of earlier research, reveal that first time HE British entrants do not perceive the purpose of HE, or strategize, in an identical manner. This appears to arise from different approaches to the meaning of success. Jasraj, Pavan, Lali and Vikram's reasons for qualifying for HE also differed from first time HE entrants in previous empirical research, with each stating that their parents had offered a considerable degree of verbal encouragement and stressed the importance of strategizing and qualifying for higher professional careers. This kind of advice was also noted by Basit and Tomlinson (2012) in their research into British students from Pakistani and Black backgrounds, whose families made up for the absence of the 'right' cultural and social capital through the use of verbal encouragement. The students from the least advantaged backgrounds, especially those who were studying LLB Law, can be considered and compared with the LLB Law students in Thatcher (2016) research whom were also from non HE and professional backgrounds; however, those students reasons for applying to law did not arise out of a fear of downward social mobility that would arise out of race. The participants in my own study remained the most advantaged with regard to their backgrounds in comparison to those working class British Asian students in Basit and Tomlinson (2012)'s research, disadvantaged than those in Thatcher (2016's), but advantaged in terms of economic capital background. My participants' overall remained deeply invested in ensuring they secured a law degree, or one associated with medicine, in response to how they understood success, i.e. wishing to be accepted by (or associated with) a certain class.

8.3.3 Being in the top class (money, occupation, top class identity)

Savage (2000b: 38) stated that class remains a major organising feature of contemporary society and that the associated cultural and social capital have become increasingly significant for the understanding of social life. Even though my participants strategies and construction of the meaning of success was informed by a fear of racism and ethnic minority discrimination, it was because they observed that placing emphasis and value on the class hierarchy in British society was necessary. It informed their career and subject strategies. The empirical research undertaken by Savage et al. (2012, 2013) and Sayer (2005), Tyler (2008), Savage (2014) and Ingram and Ward (2017) considered cultural and social indicators of class as being influential in understanding experiences of education, employment and opportunity for social mobility. My participants appeared to have internalised the class hierarchy of the British society, along with its class divisions and the value placed on specific forms of cultural and social capital, which also promote the potential for social mobility. It is all what they had observed in society and their interpretation

of their observations of British society was that peoples class backgrounds determines their chances of social mobility which they considered as a natural order of things. This suggests the need to extend class-based explanatory frameworks built on cultural and subjective class indicators, in order to examine how class is maintained as a key concept in English social life. The findings suggest that (unlike the use of a cultural and subjective class lens), applying traditional categorisations of social class (i.e. socio-economic and parents' education) to the persistent educational outcomes (including Russell Group entry) of ethnic minorities, tends to obscure the processes employed.

Moreover, the experiences of men and women living on council estates, as studied by McKenzie (2015), were described as being devalued, therefore experiencing barriers to a positive experience of education and employment. This was particularly due to their habitus failing to allow them to conform to the attitudes of the dominant group, unlike the case for British Indians in my study whose habitus informed them to do everything possible to conform. The adults in McKenzie's (2015) study were from white British, Caribbean, and White and Caribbean mixed backgrounds who, despite considering the white middle class to be more 'successful', chose to not conform. My findings suggest that, although some British citizens are unable to access dominant methods of social mobility, they tend to preserve their values and prevent the dominant group from entirely dictating the extent to which they strategize. This reveals the different degrees to which the structure is internalised as normal between groups. For instance, my students internalised the structure far more as natural. The findings thus contribute to contemporary empirical research concerning specific groups' experience of accessing social mobility at an everyday level, in particular in relation to Bourdieu's concepts. My own findings (along with contemporary empirical studies considering how British citizens seek value and discuss feelings of value pertaining to class) reveal that different ethnicities demonstrate diverse experiences of the process of accessing value and strategize accordingly.

However, the subject and career decision-making processes of the British Indian students in my own study, as well as those of British Asian students of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin and British students with no experience of HE and originating from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Dale et al. 2005; Shah et al. 2010; Bhopal and Khambhatia 2015; Basit and Tomlinson 2012; Modood 2012), are both relatable *and* distinct. My students understood success as becoming second class middle class citizens, demonstrating a more noticeably conscious consideration of class than other British students. Those in the current study understood the notion of success through the lens of the white middle class population. By contrast, the British textile and fashion

students in Ahmad et al. (2003), as well as the British Indian students pursuing social sciences and Education degrees in Bhopal (2011a), tended to strategize in relation to their academic attainment and knowledge of how this might be enhanced, i.e. none cited tutoring as a core aspect of their everyday life. The British graduates and HE students studied by Ahmad (2003), Shah et al. (2010), Bhopal (2010, 2011), Khambhatia (2014) and Scandone (2018) desired to access professional jobs, but did not share the same understanding of the means, nor did they follow a severely structured decision-making process commencing early at secondary school. This is particularly notable with regard to the participants in my study, who (like the British minority HE students from Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian backgrounds) lacked any direct access to the 'right' cultural and social capital. The students in Bhopal (2010), Khambhatia (2014), Ahmad et al. (2003) and Scandone (2018) expressed the view that courses associated with medicine required the attainment of specific school grades in specific subjects. In addition, they felt these were overly unrealistic to achieve, and that pressure from family and community was unfair. My students' responses tended to diverge from the experiences of Pakistani British HE students in Shah et al. (2010), or British Indian students of lower socio-economic background in Bhopal (2010). They also demonstrated little awareness of the way British Indian parents and students from lower socio-economic Indian backgrounds relate specific careers with opportunities for social mobility, as seen in the studies of Khambhatia (2014) and Bhopal and Khambhatia (2015).

The students' understanding of successful social mobility in the UK focussed on pursuing a subject for which they had enthusiasm, and which was supported by their parents. The findings strongly suggest a heterogeneous strategizing for HE choices among British HE students within the Indian group. This differs from previous empirical studies on British Indian students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, which reported a variety of opinions when it came to subjects, careers and strategies. My findings suggest that British students' experience of education and career planning should be considered in relation to their: (1) specific ethnicity; (2) socio-economic background; (3) education background; and (4) specific subject areas. I believe that the perceptions of Pavan, Lali, Jasraj and Vikram differ from the British Indian working class students in Bhopal (2011a) and Khambhatia (2014) due to my focus being on establishing why they strategized to follow specific subjects and/or careers. Having considered the findings in relation to previous studies on British HE British Asian groups (including those of an Indian background), I wish to consider the findings in relation to previous studies on the strategies used by British Black families to access and sustain their children's attainment in British schools, HE and professions.

As noted in the literature review, a number of researchers have begun to recognise nuance in relation to minority ethnic groups in the UK who tend to be associated with educational failure and the 'wrong cultural' behaviours and attitudes, i.e. those of a Black background. My own findings accord with this approach. As discussed in the previous chapter, my participants considered the cultural tastes of Black British young people as an obstacle to succeeding in the English educational system and labour market. Both Rollock et al. (2012) and Vincent et al. (2012) argued that, because of the subtle experiences of inequalities related to racism and class (including in relation to salaries), Black pupils and their parents in professional roles still feel 'unsuccessful' and never truly cease strategizing, even when in established careers.

The British Indian students in my own study were also highly conscious of this aspect, as demonstrated by their desire not to rely solely on monthly wages. For my least advantaged British Indian participants, this fear began at school and during discussions with their parents. Some of the others in my study were advantaged in having access to tutoring in science and mathematics at home and had also experienced the level of income enjoyed by medicine and law professionals. It was the moderately, and least advantaged, who were forced to consider more consciously about how to prevent disadvantage, both financially and symbolically. My findings (along with the views of Chinese parents and pupils and those of Black families in previous studies e.g. Becky and Francis 2005 and Archer et al. 2009) emphasise that minority ethnic families in the UK seem to retain a level of anxiety when sustaining their professional careers, or when helping their children strategize to access professional roles in their chosen field. However, previous studies have demonstrated that British Indian students qualifying for medicine and law appear to strategize more structurally and intensively than other British BME HE pupils.

The ethnic minority students in the current study (as well as in previous studies in the literature, also suggest little inclination for relocating to another Western capitalist countries. This diverges from the approach of British White HE students in Brooks and Waters (2009), who sought to find more conducive locations to achieving professional and social mobility. For instance, Brooks and Waters (2009) revealed that white British students struggling to secure places at prestigious universities can find their equivalent in other Western capitalist countries more suitable. The participants in the current study considered themselves to be dominated by British white students from middle class backgrounds, however those in Brooks and Waters (2009) appeared to strategize to access British social mobility. This could be partly due to British Indian students considering their race and ethnicity (i.e. being none-white and of minority status) as meaning they were only able to qualify for specific courses.

As discussed in the literature review in chapter three, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black and Chinese groups all hold high aspirations in terms of desire to achieve in science, but Indians and Chinese are the only two groups who successfully and routinely achieve higher grades in all core subjects. Meanwhile, other minority groups tend to aim high, but find their grades do not match their intentions (Archer et al., 2009; DeWitt et al., 2011, 2015). In the current study, although we saw aspirations for science based careers and attainment to qualify for medicine and law courses were successfully achieved, this achievement and the associated success in qualifying for science related degrees was subject to significant strategic aspirations. The characteristics associated with 'aspiration' proved complex. Furthermore, the findings of my study enforce those in several other studies, which report that a focus and commitment to studying science and choosing to pursue a science focused career is often determined before the age of 13/14, and that encouraging children to pursue science after this age is often problematic.

Further, my findings demonstrate that British Indian students appear to have begun focusing on either following their parents' tendencies in terms of desire to pursue medicine careers, or had decided to focus specifically on core subjects, especially the sciences in early secondary years. Thus, it is questionable, and important that we note the context in which these decisions were formed, there is hardly any passion or time to explore English (in Sonam's case), or philosophy (in Arjun's case), or music (as expressed by Jasraj). Although Sonam and Jasraj focus on salary, attaining a more elevated socio-economic profession that would prevent them from downward social mobility proved fundamental, as they were the first in their family to pursue these routes. An important point here is that these challenges and compromises were considered as personal matters.

8.3.4 Being British born and Westernised

This study found that the participants focussed on being British born and Westernised, as this was seen as facilitating becoming a second class middle class citizen, along with being associated with whiteness. A number of British theorists have considered race as more significant than social class in terms of the differences/inequalities between ethnic groups when it comes to educational success (Modood 2006; Rollock 2006; Bhopal 2017). The current findings indicate that the research focus and/or questions tended to influence the degree of significance accorded to race or social class when analysing the processes of educational and occupational destinations for a

particular group. The focus of this current study was to explore 'successful' British Indian students' understanding of success, and how they ensured they were able to qualify for competitive courses.

The focus on social class was considered central to the way these students understood the meaning of success, as well as determining cultural class indicators as an analytical tool with which to understand the resources they accessed. My participants did not consciously associate whiteness with race, but rather as a reality impossible to adapt, with any hierarchy or stratification system being also considered natural. They considered class to be a factor relating to success, but made no explicit focus on whiteness. Therefore, they sought to qualify for their notion of success through the resources they considered able to enhance top class production and reproduction.

This study therefore chose to consider the participants' focus on whiteness through the concept of habitus. A number of other British non-white students, including in Bathmaker et al. (2016), have spoken about their conscious fear of experiences of racism and racial inequality in British education. However, my participants considered this to be an aspect students should choose to overlook, because they viewed becoming a second class top class citizen to be more significant, particularly as this was seen to represent success. The participants in Bathmaker et al.'s (2016) qualitative study found that British HE students from Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black origin sought out a sense of blackness or Muslim identity to which they could relate whilst at Russell Group universities. In addition, they were actively aware of the lack of a non-white racial identity or solidarity at these universities. However, this aspect was not emphasised by my own participants, who recognised the importance of certain societies, but only as a means of building networks for professional support, rather than as a method of questioning the culture of Russell Group universities. My students therefore conceived of race in the context of constructing a space enabling them to fit in with the dominant group, i.e. white western students.

The Pakistani British HE students in Shah et al. (2010) and Scandone (2018) remained close to their Islamic identity throughout their HE education. They did not view being born in England and conforming to a western ethnicity as a source of advantage, but rather something that should recognise their values, providing HE experiences to accommodate their religious views. These Islamic British students appeared to be more questioning when it came the role of the state. Thus, it seems that the deeper a student internalises whiteness as the dominant race (and thus the natural example of success), the more deeply and structurally BME students work for acceptance. This study found that methods employed by the Indian and Chinese groups when it came to strategizing and emphasising qualifying for medicine and law appeared to reflect this type of internalisation.

8.3.5 Age motivated goals (settling down, home and property ownership)

My participants emphasised that marriage (including securing a match reflecting the same ethnic and class background) was a significant aspect of achieving a fuller sense of success. This factor was discussed in the chapter on the historical and cultural context and, from the first documentation of the experiences of former British Indian migrants, has been associated with the wider values of British Asians. However, although my female participants considered it to be important to be married by the time they reached their early or mid-thirties, they only wished to consider settling down once they had accessed a profession associated with medicine or law. Being accepted and perceived as successful in their chosen field reflected a deeper sense of satisfaction than marriage. Previous research (e.g. Bhopal 2010, 2011; Khambhatia and Bhopal 2015) found that education allowed female working-class British Indian students to marry in their late twenties, rather than following their mothers in marrying in their late teens or early twenties. The British HE participants in Bhopal and Khambhatia (2015) were focused on gaining a HE level of education, rather than conducting a more structured and nuanced analysis of ensuring more control when they became wives, particularly in relation to their in laws. Although Bhopal and Khambhatia (2015) found their participants' strategy to become more assertive as wives to be an improvement on the status of previous Indian migrant mothers in the UK, the females in my study suggested a further development in the way they strategized the power balance with their in laws.

Similarly, home and property ownership were noted as core indicators of accumulating economic capital. This finding confirms previous geographical social mobility studies (Robson 2003; Butler and Hamnett 2011) drawing on statistical trends concerning housing in relation to specific ethnic groups. These studies identified that British Indians are more likely to own their home outright and also to rent out properties. These studies can, however, be seen to lack a context when focussing on British Indians regarding themselves as economically stable. The British Indians in my study also emphasised a desire to move out of their familial homes and follow their parents in investing in housing in rural areas, particularly as property ownership remains a core method for British Indians to attain economic wealth. A great deal of analysis of official statistics by Platt (2005, 2007, 2011) and with her colleagues (Nandni and Platt 2010) consistently found British Indians to be more economically stable than any other British Asian and Black ethnic group, as well as the least likely to rely on state benefits. Such economic stability was highlighted as being sustained primarily by means of careful career planning. Thus, my findings are amongst the first to add context to the

high level of British Indian home ownership, accompanied by their low rate of dependency on the state.

8.3.6 British Indian ethnic group competition (healthy competition, having a healthy blend of western and eastern values)

The conceptualisation of success held by British students of Indian origin suggests the creation of a subjective objectivity, i.e. the students' beliefs concerning success values the objective (i.e. the structure and field). The theme of 'having a healthy blend of western and eastern values' and 'competition' has been a subject of interest over many decades, affecting and shaping how minority ethnic students from British Asian ethnic groups make educational decisions regarding subject routes and whether to pursue college or university (Archer and Francis 2006a, 2006b; Modood 2006, 2012; Archer et al. 2014). Specific ethnic and working-class populations (i.e. Indian and Pakistani working-class young women) have suggested parental and community pressure damages their occupational aspirations (Bagguley and Hussain 2007; Hussain and Bagguley 2007). Similarly, my own findings also revealed that British Indian middle-class students strategies for accessing Russell Group universities and traditional courses were influenced by a sense of loyalty to, and competition with, other British Indian families. However, the key difference within my analysis is its potential to indicate the aspect underpinning such competition within the British Indian community as a conformity to the white western ideology of success ideology. This can be seen as arising from being seen as natural and the most likely to bring economical and symbolical returns than remaining within the bounds of their ancestral nation. For instance, academically successful British Pakistani students studied by Dwyer and Shah (2010) and Mellor (2009) felt that commitment to their loyalty towards being Islamic and being Pakistani came first. This differed from the students in the current study who felt the need to sacrifice time spent on community and religious activities to enhance their probability of becoming employable within the white dominant field, without questioning whether the structure needs to strategize or conform to their community, which was influenced by the students' belief that the white ideology was natural and universal. The students in Shah et al.'s (2010) study had also internalised that attendance at British universities and a degree are essential to employability, and they did acknowledge that accessing contacts and networks for advice is important, but that the social capital they had access to and trusted most was their friends, family, cousins, and advice from Pakistani students who had been to university. None of their parents were in a position to provide this information, given that they held almost identical employment and educational backgrounds to Vikram's, Jasraj's, Tessa and Pavan's for instance. The perceptions expressed by my participants concerning the relationship

between British ethnic minority values and traditions (and in particular religious rituals), have not been previously identified as an obstacle to the process of accessing social mobility in the UK. My findings therefore add a novel insight and context relevant to considerations of future trends pertaining to British Indian students' educational outcomes, as well as trends in relation to the following of medicine and law.

8.3.7 Applying to Russell Group universities

The empirical findings contribute to the literature concerning the 'student as consumer' (Smetherham 2003; Brown and Lauder 2009; Cranmer 2016; Tholen 2017). These studies have expressed growing unease at the way British HE students are being encouraged to treat British universities as products, to be assessed according to their personal goals. My findings suggest that the discourse of the student as consumer has the strength to convince some that the choice of university is best selected in terms of a service, i.e. courses in medicine and law. However, my findings suggest that this discourse might be most effectively evaluated when British HE students are analysed according to their cultural and social capital background, alongside their choice of career or subject. Similarly, the increase in tuition fees has been seen as a concern for most British HE students lacking a HE background, but who consider gaining a degree as significant for enhancing their job prospects (Bathmaker et al. 2016; Ingram and Ward 2017; Scandone 2018). However, my participants did not appear to feel themselves affected by such an increase, as they were able to take advantage of a strong economic background while (in the case of the least advantaged students) building their cultural and social capital, or when finding a placement (i.e. in the case of Arjun who worked in his father's pharmacy). British white students considered this to be a pressure associated with completing a degree (Tomlinson 2008, 2012; Abrahams 2017; Ingram and Ward 2017). My findings appear to be novel in the sense that my participants made explicit reference to the benefits of comparing universities and valuing them according to their scores. Bathmaker et al. (2016) found that minority ethnic students with no HE background, but committed to gaining a degree, stated that their university decision-making processes tended to be influenced by the culture and atmosphere of an individual university, rather than solely the subject to be followed. By contrast, the participants in my study considered the value of their degree and subject knowledge against the historical and cultural background of the university. Thus, my findings suggest that decision-making processes when it comes to the selection of degrees and universities appears to be influenced firstly, by whether British students participate in HE with or without a clear understanding of the career they wish to pursue, and secondly, the extent to which they are committed to the white race and the values of its middle class populations.

8.3.8 University education and strategizing beyond the degree

The findings also engaged with a recent strand of empirical research investigating the current value of a degree, i.e. Tomlinson (2012, 2017), Macfarlane and Tomlinson (2012, 2017), and Hinchliffe and Jolly (2011). In doing so, it provided considerable insight into how subject and ethnicity specific (e.g. Indian medicine and law) students prepare for employability, encouraging an ethnically informed and nuanced understanding of the nature of graduate employability preparation as formed in conjunction with an understanding of the link between employability, and ethnic specific (e.g. White, Indian) graduates' profiles of cultural and social capital. I felt that many students appeared to have an under-developed grasp of the current challenges of this approach in terms of employment. Many from the moderately advantaged middle-class group, as well as the least advantaged middle-class group, lacked access to experienced mentors capable of offering guidance concerning the fields of medicine and law in western capitalist nations. The students from the moderately and most advantaged middle-class group, despite having direct insider knowledge, experienced barriers to applying for work placements in their chosen field. Typically, white middle-class students in England employ this strategy routinely (Brooks and Waters 2009; Tomlinson 2008; Bathmaker et al. 2016; Ingram and Allen 2018). The students reported minimal consideration of mutual students; i.e. those studying the same subjects at Russell Group universities, who would be in competition after graduation. Empirically speaking, the findings reported in this thesis contribute to an understanding of how 'successful' British Indian students deconstruct the meaning of 'success' as it is understood and lived. The findings thus offer some balance between how British Indians are conventionally researched and interpreted and the real processes they undergo. The findings relate in an abstract manner to the experiences of previous British students from Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds. For example, they determined that most minority ethnic students and their families tend to experience anxiety when attempting to access a profession and/or educational attainment. In addition, the Indian group (like that of the Chinese) appear to strategize more deeply and structurally than other minorities in order to align themselves with the dominant version of success.

This thesis therefore provides one of the first sets of empirical findings reflecting nuanced information regarding the process of educational success for students from this ethnic group. This is particularly relevant as, to date, this group had relied on speculative interpretations, such as community pressure, unrealistic goals, and lack of understanding about science related careers, as well as by means of superficially formed stereotypes, which are also applied to Chinese students

(Archer and Francis 2006a, 2006b; Wong 2015), such as: (1) 'a success story' (Kirkup 2015; Li 2018) and (2) 'thrivers and strivers' (Abbas 2002, 2004; Gillborn 2003). The theories and concepts considered in Chapter Two played a key role in guiding me to make these empirical contributions.

8.4 Theoretical reflections and contributions

Chapter Two included descriptions of Bourdieu's overall theory of social class reproduction, alongside his concepts concerning cultural and social capital, habitus, field and symbolic violence. The thesis demonstrates that, in general, my findings tend to accord with these theoretical concepts, which emphasise subjective and cultural indicators in relation to the socio-economic and educational background of an individual's parents. Despite the students in this study having qualified for identical courses, Bourdieu's theory, explored in chapter two, allowed me to firstly, consider *why* they qualified for these courses in *such different* ways, and secondly develop a nuanced understanding of why students fail to benefit *equally* from their degrees. Such theoretical tools allow a clearer understanding of the role played by their parents' jobs and education. Applying a micro level cultural perspective on class enabled a deeper understanding of the challenges, methods and investment required to take degrees in medicine or law.

Chapter Two demonstrated that the theory of social class reproduction includes the suggestion that, in Western capitalist countries, parents having professional and higher professional posts are better able to equip their children for improved experiences and courses, as well as upward social mobility. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, the students in this study experienced very different levels of advantage in the family home. The explanatory scope of the three aspects of capital, habitus and symbolic violence is discussed below. Bourdieu (1992) predominantly subscribed to an epistemology of qualitative reflexivity, believing theoretical concepts should be 'polymorphic, supple and adaptive, rather than defined, calibrated and applied rigidly' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 23). He also provided 'open concepts designed to guide empirical work' (Bourdieu 1990b: 107). The concepts of capital, habitus and symbolic violence have enabled me to initiate a theoretical examination of a long-standing discourse associated with Indians' educational, employment and economic status. The analysis suggests that Bourdieu's concepts are not rigid and deterministic (Thatcher et al. 2016). They enabled me to draw out an ethnic context (i.e. Indian ethnicity) through a distinct ways of thinking about success and social mobility can be understood, and through a distinct way in which the reproduction of social class is maintained in England. Strategizing is one level of trying to access social mobility in England; internalising all challenges and struggles as normal is another level of strategizing, including considering minority ethnic groups as obstacles to upward social mobility can be considered as a distinct pattern of thought

and interpretation of society, which students in earlier literature, including Chinese students do not straightforwardly, nor at this level seem to relate with.

Bourdieu's (1986) concept of cultural and social capital enabled me to identify British Indian students qualifying for the same course as students who tend to strategize in a different manner. In addition, they supported the deconstruction of homogenous abstract views concerning the concept of being 'successful'. This study investigated the reasons influencing the selection of a class destination (i.e. being accepted to take a medicine and law degree), including whether this was expected by the participants as it reproduced their parents' positions, or whether they were the first in their families to attend a Russell Group university. Some of the students taking part were 'fish in the water' whilst many were 'fish out of the water' (Reay et al. 2010; Clarke and Zukas 2013). When introducing Bourdieu's social theory in chapter two, we established that pupils who are subsumed by the 'model minority' are typically analysed using objective and binary measurements of what comprises social class. Applying Bourdieu's social theory has expanded our understanding about why British Indian students are inclined towards a narrow set of subjects, which previously have not been subjected to a theoretical examination analysing the students as individuals as members of the structure, and as a group. The research enabled me to analyse academic attainment among the model minority, and provided a systematic theoretical approach to explaining why certain processes and decision making applied to some subjects and not to others.

We saw that although the students' do express their individuality and personal choices (expressing interest in music, philosophy, English), their subjectivity is constrained by objective structures. The habitus of students' within the most, moderately and least advantaged groups vary. The findings show their habitus comprises elements of individuality and describes how they students compare themselves with others in the structure. For instance, on one hand they have personal preferences for certain subjects and career paths (individuality and agency) (English, journalism, music, humanities), and a desire for greater equality between white British middle class individuals (Pippa Middleton, Jonathon Ross) and themselves in the way middle class destinations are acquired, e.g. for some they have to get the grades (as Bhavni said), and for others it is almost a result of inheritance of skin colour and middle class background (Pippa Middleton). On the other hand, at the same time, they reduce themselves to being subject to the education and employment fields (structure). The element of structure in the students' habitus can be applied to different societies operating within the same structure. For instance, although they made decisions to pursue certain routes and strategize more than British White individuals', they also made decisions by comparing themselves to the British Indian structure. This shows that their habitus represented

a weak make-up of individuality and of their personal desire and is strongly influenced by objectivity. Applying habitus to the findings enabled us to recognise that family and community background play a key role in the extent to which these students pursued medicine and law, whilst school teachers also encouraged the students to pursue certain courses by not providing feedback in English (to Bhavni), or by having low expectations (to Jasraj) when qualifying for a law degree. British Indian students from the most, moderately and least advantaged group applied to LU or MU according to their habitus. They had an awareness of which social fields would be suitable for them, and which would not.

The volume of the 'right' type of knowledge and educational background, and of connections and networks varied considerably between the students. At least three different volumes of the 'right' type of cultural and social capital were identified among students qualifying for competitive courses. Applying social and cultural capital to the findings exposed the differences with regard to level of strategy within the students' capacity to qualify for a medicine and law degree. Applying symbolic capital to the findings, revealed some students to have far more symbolic capital in the law or medicine discipline, whilst others whom experienced a much slower progression to graduate law jobs.

8.4.1 Social class reproduction

Bourdieu's (1983) theory of the social reproduction of class enabled me to create a nuanced understanding, highlighting that British Indian students are reproduced as being more dominant and middle class than other British Asian and Black groups. However, the nature of this middle class production remains complex. The findings show the danger of homogenising Indians in Britain, including their educational and employment destinations, and the processes associated with these destinations. Based on this sample of middle British students of Indian origin, middle-class production is challenging and subject to an intense degree of strategizing and involves risk taking for the students whom had no middle-class background. Middle-class reproduction within this sample is also not homogenous. Those in the prestigious middle-class group and the moderately middle-class group were from either a traditional or non-traditional form of middle-class working background, which significantly impacted on the quality of the 'right' social and cultural resources they can access and therefore mobilise beyond graduation. These particular minority ethnic students tended, when discussing 'success', to focus on class (including 'top class'). Bourdieu's (1986) concepts facilitated the use of key perspectives to illuminate different decision making processes within the British Indian group, including how these might continue to present this ethnic group as being more successful in their educational outcomes. The findings therefore

offer a unique context through which to understand an alternative process of middle class reproduction and outcomes. The diverse middle-class student sample in this study elaborated on what it is to be a 'successful' Indian student. Bourdieu's theory of social class reproduction supported an exploration of British students' success strategies, motives and beliefs about success. Explorations of middle-class Indian British students' strategies, and the wider meanings of success when studying specific vocational middle-class degrees at Russell Group universities with contrasting historic, culture and class profiles, has revealed a process of middle-class reproduction, which brings to light that the production of middle-class students is built and developed according to consistent, deliberative and restricted middle-class aspirations. It has also highlighted that finding a place within a white western economic nation involves in-depth strategies constructed according to careful measures of how ethnicity, and being non-white, works with the influence of the socio-economic background surrounding them.

8.4.2 Habitus

These British Indian students' perceptions were extremely intertwined with what Bourdieu defines as 'illusio', i.e. 'a state of being invested in the game and understanding (although subconscious) of the stakes' (Bourdieu 1998: 66). I found that students whose decision-making may have been overlooked as *naturally* middle-class (i.e. because they had secured a place on a competitive traditional degree course at a Russell Group university), were very much invested in the process, despite their lack of access to the 'right' cultural and social resources. Through their risk management strategies, they revealed a conscious awareness of the mechanisms at play. The habitus concept allowed me to recognise that these students felt the need to commence the process of career planning from an early age, while at the same time understanding that those lacking a HE background were obliged to strategize more deeply and specifically. Thus, inherent to the motivation for these middle-class Indian British students to pursue particular subjects at degree level was a habitus leading them to understand that being successful required early strategizing and planning, including committing to extensive revision for examinations.

The habitus of these students also led them to recognise that certain cultures are compatible with certain jobs. This shaped their subject choices and led them to view the Indian as subordinate. This habitus therefore appeared to prevent them from understanding success in a broad manner, but rather to view education and schooling as functional, i.e. as a means of securing grades to qualify for a narrow route to success. Thus, the concept of habitus was understood as deterministic,

influenced by an understanding of the requirements inherent on being Indian in the UK. It revealed a way of thinking, including demonstrating why some begin their planning during their early years at a secondary school. Their habitus informs them to build strategies to suit their perceived level of subordination, i.e. below white middle class individuals. The concept of habitus enabled me to recognise how these students understood being none-white as a barrier to success in careers in the humanities, philosophy and music.

The current findings revealed that a way of thinking contextualised within an understanding of being subordinate adds complexity to the reproduction of advantage. Habitus forms a transformative concept when considering how British Indian students relate the professions of law and medicine to success, controlling their conception of success, including their focus on being top class. Habitus thus revealed that they are not planning for, and thinking of, success in a manner independent from the wider structure, because their habitus views the structure as natural and their subjectivity as objective. This reveals a need for an extension of understanding concerning the working of power and subordination, in order to examine ways of understanding the role and purpose of education and social mobility from the perspective of different ethnicities (Scandone 2018).

8.4.3 Symbolic violence

Bourdieu stated that: ‘the most privileged individuals (...) remain the most attached to the former state of affairs, [and are] the slowest to understand the need to change the strategy and so fall victim to their own privilege’ (Bourdieu, 1986: 24). This observation was reflected by the most advantaged group of British Indian students in my study, who tended to consider their decisions *as choices*, having internalised that (because they satisfied the dominant group) they were able to access competitive courses and top class routes. I found no evidence that they victimised themselves, because, they failed to recognise the drawbacks of the current state of affairs (Bourdieu 2003). Rather, they internalised their parents’ lack of the ‘right’ cultural and social capital as arising from personal weakness. The findings suggest the scope of symbolic violence as an explanatory tool in understanding why British Indian undergraduates pursue medicine and law rather than music or philosophy. The act of internalising this attitude towards subject as a ‘choice’ reveals the role played by ethnic minorities in reproducing themselves as inferior to the white middle class, thus exposing symbolic violence as crucial in British Indian student’s choice of subject and/or career.

The British Indian students in this study revealed themselves as both subject to, and allowing, symbolic violence by: firstly, being complicit in their own subordination and secondly, by considering the subordination of others as socially constructed. The methods used by my participants to understand and strategize for success meant that they can be seen as successful from the perspective of the dominant group, while at the same time being implicitly dominated, i.e. conforming to white top class success ideology.

The notion of symbolic violence assisted me in drawing out why almost all these students chose to strategize, i.e. their understanding of success was drawn from the point of view of British people who were white *and* from top class backgrounds. The extent to which the students in this study had internalised this perspective can explain why they strategized to become more educationally successful. This may also be the reason for individuals with Indian ethnicity outperforming those from other British Asian groups. Symbolic violence was beneficial for identifying British Indian students who had made the decision to qualify for a medicine and law degree as *second class middle class citizens*. It also implied that (despite their ability to transmit dominant forms of cultural and social capital to their children) the parents of those in the most advantaged group may also have understood themselves as *second class middle class citizens*. For example, these British Indian students and their parents often failed to pursue subjects in which they had demonstrated a degree of skill, due to misrecognising middle class individuals from the white race as those who have the power to make such an undertaking. British Indian parents and students of medicine and law appear complicit in their own struggle to qualify for (and secure) higher professional roles in medicine and law. Thus, it can be considered that power of the state is maintained when students and their parents are complicit in their decision making processes, i.e. according to whether they consider their ethnicity as natural or as subordinate and inferior.

8.4.4 Cultural and social capital

For many of the students of medicine and law in this study, there appeared to be a lack of any transmission of the 'right' cultural and social capital (i.e. middle-class forms of employment), while others experienced transmission of the 'right' skills, contacts and networks. This complex situation led me to recognise that, even for participants having first-hand access to the 'right' social and cultural resources, this was only in a specific and limited occupational context, i.e. in terms of science, mathematics and the knowledge of the grades and subject knowledge relevant to pursuing medicine and law. Bourdieu's capital framework enabled me to identify and recognise in the data,

the heterogeneity of cultural and social capital as it influences these particular British students. Applying cultural and social capital in addition to economic capital, provided an important opportunity to allow us to see and establish that the students did not and will not beyond graduation be able to access cultural and social capital equally, and nor will students from the moderately and least middle-class group be able to invest and develop their cultural and social profiles equally. The most advantaged middle-class group have the highest level of cultural and social capital, based on their parents' jobs and educational background, albeit perhaps slightly outdated in terms of the current competitive market. However, this group of students still have key foundations and adequate knowledge to access contacts. They will also be mobilising them differently and at a different pace than students from other groups might. This theoretical framework can therefore assist in avoiding any overlooking of the differences between these students' access to strategies enabling them to strengthen their networks and connections.

This concept proved useful when problematizing the behaviours of British Indians as homogeneous and when discussing how they qualify to attain dominant educational success. Some only have private tutoring to capitalize on, whilst others receive private tutoring and have parents employed in higher professional science related or and/or law based careers. They all aspire to a specific version of symbolic capital, because they have internalized themselves as secondary to the white middle class group. This means, they do not consider themselves to be of a model ethnicity, and so strategize to find a second class role in the educational and occupational field. This also occurs because their opportunities to secure a dentistry, pharmacy or law work placement or contract are based on how much of the 'right' social and cultural capital they have access to, including the credibility of their degree according to the status of the Russell Group university. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge the concept of British Indian success as it influences model minorities.

8.4.5 Economic capital

A review of empirical studies discovered that pupils from British Asian communities typically participate the least in extra-curricular activities, although tutoring outside of school is popular amongst British Asian communities (Modood 2006, 2012). The contextual and findings chapter established that private home tutoring was indeed a resource that the students' parents deliberately invested in. Doherty and Dooley (2018) indicated that in Australia, personal tutoring is a booming industry, but also that this is most evident amongst families of high socio-economic

status than pupils from non-professional backgrounds (Entrich 2018). In the USA, Lareau (2003) observed that private home tutoring is becoming common practice for middle class parents, wishing to make a 'concerted cultivation' strategy to improve their children's grades. Similarly, Vincent and Maxwell (2016) employed the concept of 'intensive parenting', managing middle class parents from professional socio-economic backgrounds, based on the understanding that their salaries afford additional support. However, in my study, it emerged that British students with Chinese backgrounds (Archer and Francis 2006a, 2006b; Archer 2008) use private tutoring a services. This was commonest among non-professional parents who are self-employed and wish to invest in their children throughout their primary and secondary education, while they are in fulltime mainstream education. In the case of the students in my study, economic capital was a concept determined most useful for understanding the means by which British Indian students from non-professional and lower professional backgrounds assisted in their children's academic attainment in core subjects, rather than students from higher professional backgrounds, whose parents were familiar and confident about supporting mainstream education while also overseeing the tutoring process. The findings suggest that parents of higher socio-economic statuses are not necessarily exclusive in terms of their capacity to access additional support for their children. However, that is not to say that all students from lower class backgrounds, including their parents, choose to capitalize on their economic capital as intensively as those from British Chinese backgrounds seem to.

I found Bourdieu's (1986) conceptualisation of economic capital beneficial for identifying the methods employed by students lacking any HE background to qualify for economic capital, i.e. regular private tuition. It was notable that tutoring enabled them to secure the grades they needed to qualify for prestigious universities and competitive degree courses. Being in a position where they could capitalise on a substantial degree of economic capital advantaged them, and allowed them to secure 'success' in dominant forms of education such as school grades. The concept of economic capital thus revealed that economical advantage allowed these students to gain outstanding grades in English, Mathematics and Science to compensate for their parents' lack of insight into the British education system. This financial route to Russell Group universities and traditional courses set these students apart from, among others, British HE students in Shah et al. (2010), Bhopal and Khambhatia (2015), Basit and Tomlinson (2012) and Scandone (2018). The British Indian students from the most advantaged group also aimed to reside in areas they considered inhabited by the middle classes. Economic capital can thus be seen to act as a form of protection, enabling individuals to afford services to qualify for highly competitive degree courses. At the same time, these participants viewed their financial advantage as a resource they could

easily accumulate through home and property ownership. However, the upbringing of these Indian middle-class students also suggests that their parents possessed legitimate forms of social capital, and the habitus to secure the services of effective tutors. Social capital is significant in scaffolding neoliberalism, employing money to resolve educational gaps and promoting school grades. This observation led me to the conclusion that private tutoring (Maxwell and Vincent 2016; Dang and Rogers 2008; Maxwell 2016) should be offered as a free resource by state schools, or to match tutors with households, based on parents' socio-economic capital.

Bourdieu's (1986) conceptualisation of economic capital therefore offers a means of understanding how those with no background or in medicine, law or HE, or professional employment in the public or private sector, are able to qualify for medical courses. This financial investment tends to be obscured by the discourse concerning British Indian success, and has thus tended to be overlooked in the literature. The findings suggest that British Indian ethnic minority students work with their parents to convert existing economic capital into the hiring of regular and intensive private tutoring where required. They thus tend to encounter different experiences in the labour market, including strategizing beyond their degrees to secure employment. Thus, the differences in volumes of cultural and social capital in the family background suggest that their medicine and law degrees may not be given equal value by potential employers.

8.4.6 Challenges working with Bourdieu's concepts

Bourdieu's tools tend to present a binary picture of middle and working class groups, which can belie the heterogeneity often present within these groupings (Ingram 2014; Abrahams et al. 2015; Thatcher et al. 2016; Scandone 2018). In comparison to the definitions of his overall theory and concepts found in Chapter Two, he spends little time exploring cross cutting factors in relation to a child's social class, i.e. race, immigration and ethnic background. The findings concerning the British students in the current study have identified that they are able to qualify for middle class routes to success, but also that this involves considerable compromise, having sacrificed enjoyable aspects of their schooling, by having to prepare for, and think about social mobility from an early age. The fact that their parents could capitalise fully on their economic capital to afford tutoring and tuition fees to secure them places at Russell Group universities, sets them apart from working class students from the same ethnic group who also have no HE background. However, these students could not take advantage of the full range of subjects that they wanted to consider. Bourdieu's ideas do not account for this kind of complexity, i.e. the type of strategizing undertaken

by British Indian students to qualify for different middle-class/top class destinations. The students also felt a sense of responsibility towards their communities, suggesting a complex approach. This study found that they viewed competition within their community as encouraging them to remain focused on their goal, i.e. to qualify for medicine and law degrees. Furthermore, there was no evidence of any of the participants being prepared to fully step out of their comfort zone to explore their employment horizons or consider wider life experiences, i.e. unfamiliar life journeys. These students were neither fully advantaged nor disadvantaged. They did not (as discussed in Chapter Three) conform to traditional working class British students' experiences of strategizing, and tended to hold onto their community and parental security. Bourdieu's (1993) overall theory does not consider these subtle influences of Indian ethnicity on the processes of middle class reproduction within the Indian group. However, it did provide the tools to produce an entry level nuanced understanding of their perspectives and assisted in revealing the challenges, heterogeneity and the students' potential naivety in considering themselves as inferior and second class citizens.

The middle-class label eradicates differences within a large and diverse group of the population, pursuing middle-class occupations and different habituses. Subtleties and finer gradations have previously not been discussed in relation to Indian students' stronger and persistent representation in the domains of medicine and law and in pursuing social mobility routes considered legitimate within the whiter western success ideology. The theory could not assist much in explaining the *degree of* strategizing and negotiation and of active thought that certain middle-class students from professional middle-class backgrounds, and those that those from moderately middle and least middle class students, implement. Concepts that allow capital frameworks to be used to comprehend students pursuit of middle-class routes needs to account for their role as non-white. A Bourdieusian lens did enable me to uncover the inequalities that specific middle-class students within specific ethnic group are subject to. Although the theory did not fully encompass how the Indian community competes internally to pursue British forms of middle-class employment, and the students consideration of subordinating Muslim students religious values, the *main essence* of Bourdieu's social theory enabled me to draw out the belief that is underpinning the construction of those themes: i.e. that the inevitable and ultimate goal is to achieve a British dominant version of social mobility. The findings report implications for the nature of middle-class reproduction, and especially the nature of middle-class reproduction within specific occupational fields. There are differences in how belief informs white western success ideology, and the strategies to achieve it as transmitted to students. These differences are important, because they demonstrate that not only is middle-class reproduction heterogeneous, and variable for non-white

ethnic groups (Rollock et al. 2013), but it is produced within specific middle-class habituses; i.e. ones that are developed with ethnicity and race in mind. It is a middle-class habitus which tells the student that their choices are restricted, and they can only strategize in relation to particular middle-class occupational sectors and so must not lose out in family life and an original sense of locality. Indian middle-class reproduction is diverse and complicated. How the Indian group stays ahead and remains educationally successful has not been the subject of either empirical or theoretical attention. The findings demonstrate that generating understanding of the causes and nature of inequality must involve contextualising class theories, capturing implicit resources and factors (habitus) and maintaining inequality within a specific occupation/subject, ethnicity and class. Archer and Francis (2006) referred to 'diasporic habitus' in relation to the attitudes of Chinese parents, i.e. an upbringing specific to a minority ethnic culture. The application of social class reproduction theory has enabled me to identify the factors contributing to the inequality of a specific ethnicity. They demonstrate that contemporary causes of inequality are complex, including how cultural and social capitals are built, strengthened and mobilised. My findings suggest a new way of considering the ethnic nature of power relations in Western capitalist countries.

8.5 Limitations of this study

Whilst the findings add depth to what was previously understood about British Indian students they need to be recognised as advisory and suggestive. Because of the nature of the methodology employed, they cannot be applied to all British students qualifying for dentistry, pharmacy and law degrees. This is because the key aim was to produce a detailed insight into students' underlying thoughts, necessitating a relatively small sample as is common in qualitative research.

Nevertheless, the insights gained from this smaller sample have expanded on what was formerly a simplistic and overly-generalised understanding of the British Indian group's 'outperformance' of other BME. The focus included widening understanding of how 'educational success' is secured by British middle-class students in the contemporary, competitive, uncertain and insecure British labour market. A greater length of time would have allowed for a more in-depth consideration, potentially including a far higher number of interviews with students who were the most, moderately and least advantaged. This study has limitations.

The focus was on responding to a long-standing discourse (the Indian group being a 'model and successful' minority) in relation to a persistent and recurring concerns raised in British higher educational and ethnicity literature (Indian students' narrow career paths, over-representation

and over-crowdedness in medicine courses particularly, and not others). There was no conceptualisation of success, of the model minority – and not in relation to HE subject trends that was gained from direct evidence. Therefore, the design of the research aim was to begin an investigation into this based on direct evidence. The findings demonstrated that the ‘model minority’ and ‘successful minority’ labels are best used in context, specifically in the context of the understanding that underpins these strategies as they refer to the different levels of cultural and social resources available in the home and the understanding of success that the participants’ view as natural. With the help of several of Bourdieu’s theoretical concepts, the findings provide an initial evidence base for this through the lens of a particular model minority in relation to a specific HE context. As a result the investigation has not been able to expand this understanding of British Indian medicine and law students beyond including how their habitus and different volumes of cultural and social capital contributed to preparation of their UCAS form and the preparation they did for university interviews including and how their parents engaged with parents evenings, at which, for instance, Jasraj felt that his teachers had low expectations of him. This would have enabled a wider contribution about how habitus and different capital volumes prepare British Indian students to study medicine and law. However, what the findings have offered is novel and significant, because they are the first set of findings to expose British Indian students whom otherwise would have been passed over as ‘successful’ and buried under the ‘model minority’ discourse. In particular the findings show that there are remarkably different resources available to British Indian students, and in addition to this they consider it normal to restrain their individual preferences. Based on my earlier engagement with the literature on minority ethnic groups in British education and employment through my undergraduate and Master’s degree dissertation and the time spent engaging with the literature during this study, I feel that the research focus was a novel one, and sought out a detailed conceptualisation of success, beyond educational success. This study was designed to address a specific and unaddressed HE context in detail, and so understandably this resulted in limitations in that the study was not able to explore in detail these students’ engagement with learning, to gain a richer understanding of the impact of these students’ parents’ remarkably varying socio-economic, education relationships and credentials in.

A further factor that may be considered as a limitation was the exclusion of academically successful British students of Indian origin pursuing degree courses that are not vocational, such as Classical Arts, English, or History of Art. However, the literature refers to medicine associated and law degrees as courses reflecting over-representation, which prompted a focus on these areas. At the same time, and the socio-economic diversity within the sample was significant for considering the

heterogeneity of British students of Indian origin qualifying for medicine and law degrees. The findings should, therefore, be applied as a source of guidance and as indicative of possible directions for future empirical research; i.e. for formulating research questions or research aims focused on educationally successful British Indian pupils and students, and/or educationally 'unsuccessful'/'low performing' British Indian pupils and British Indian graduates in relation to types of capital and resources.

8.6 Implications for policy and practice

We have considered how the findings connect with previous empirical findings and with Bourdieu's social theory. The thesis now turns to considering what the findings can offer to policy and practice. The literature review in chapter four revealed that the subject and career decisions made by minority ethnic groups were pathologized as 'too low', 'too unrealistic'/'too high' and/or 'too narrow', requiring that they be 'raised', 'stretched' or directed towards 'more realistic' goals (Basit 2012; Crozier and Davies 2006; Gorard et al. 2006; Archer and Francis 2006a, 2006b; Hart 2013; Morrin 2015). In line with the indications provided by a number of reports (Halliday and Wymer 2011; Alexander and Arday 2015), policies acknowledge the need to go beyond a focus on 'raising aspirations', and state the intention to work towards: *'the provision of effective information, advice and guidance through schools and further education sectors and into and beyond HE'* (BIS 2014, p. 10). Yet, when ascribing this to the purpose of allowing students to make informed and appropriate 'choices' they reveal how *traditional* conceptions of 'individual choice' still dominate frameworks designed to further the understanding of education and career pathways in England. Attending a prestigious university, home ownership, business and entrepreneurship, professional employment, especially in the fields of accountancy, culture and arts, medicine and law are considered as successful indicators of social mobility (Millburn, 2009: 85; Hymas 2019).

The findings of this study challenged understandings of 'choice' and individual agency. My participants did not 'choose' to apply for study dentistry, pharmacy and law. Rather, they used a significantly strategic decision making process regarding their school and subject choices. These had to be formed and constructed from an early age, with a target occupation in mind. This occupation was also subject to a critical assessment of the value of different degree courses in specific subjects on the labour market, as seen through the context of ethnicity and race, and narrowed the possible choices to very few subjects including dentistry, pharmacy, law, optician or accountancy. This should leave schools and policy to consider that 'model minority' students in England consider the process of schooling in a constrained way. The 'narrow', 'high', 'unrealistic' career aspirations interpretations associated with Indians and ethnic minority young people in

England are more generally out of touch with this reality. My findings present complex reasons and an insight into the subconscious anxiety of British Indian medicine and law students. They presented a cultural and subjective understanding of their reasons, for which policy ideas regarding 'choice' are unable to account. The findings show that, although the participants demonstrated different levels of privilege when it came to their resources, British Indian students qualifying for particular vocational competitive courses must not be confused with having the privilege of 'choosing' any course, as they were found to lack any belief in such a choice. Their 'aspirations' were controlled – as informed by habitus, and as such should lead policy to deal with the complexity around the definition of the term 'aspiration'. Not all students from professional middle class backgrounds aspire. Thus, drawing on Bourdieu's conceptual insights, the findings of this study reveal the socially located character of education and employment aspirations and paths.

The reproduction of the British Indian ethnic group as more capable of securing graduate jobs (Rafferty 2012) appears flawed, and an under-representation of what came to light via the findings. Similarly, as media representations of the British Indian group as the 'most successful' at securing professional jobs as doctors, dentists, pharmacists, as barristers and lawyers show (e.g. Kirkup 2015), is not reflected in what the dentistry, pharmacy and law students British Indian students in this study experienced. Policy and practitioners need to systematically construct strategies within the labour market, and in schools as a way for minority ethnic students to build confidence and have faith that considering arts and humanities will not disadvantage them in the labour market, despite having strengths in particular subjects. The degree of negotiation and strategizing the minority ethnic students apply to succeed in the white dominant order, reveals little sense of agency and little trust and faith in their potential. Policy makers need to consider and account for the concerns that middle-class minority students who do access *the professions* have, also whether medicine and law courses are 'realistic', in terms of constructing 'narrow' career aspirations, and recognising under-representation within the arts, culture, journalism and music. Furthermore, the popularity of private tutoring as a strategy needs more focused attention. It was considered as almost the only strategy for many of the students in my study in assisting them to qualify for a medicine or law degree. It almost acted as a source of parenting. How model minorities strategize is not homogenous and the strategies they adopt – tutoring being a popular one needs to be noted as insufficient by policy as it cannot make up for the full range of the 'right' cultural capital.

Schools' careers services and teachers should emphasise progress in humanities and arts subjects at school, and take care to praise skills shown by ethnic minorities when it comes to art, writing, drama and associated subjects. This would encourage students from ethnic minorities to pursue

these subjects at degree level. At the same time, careers services at schools should play an active role in seeking work experience opportunities in arts and humanities subjects, and introduce ethnic minority students to organisations and charities focusing on arts, English, journalism and associated courses. Government policy around social mobility and educational policy does not necessarily consider students' and their families' lives, or how being British influences the strategies and level of effort families, ethnic groups employ. Those who can afford it, struggle to identify the 'right' cultures and social capital that are central to success within the context of English social mobility. However, those whom can access such capital, need to contextualise it around their ethnic and racial identity. Social mobility policy needs to be put in place to consider realistic definitions and strategies for accessing the professions and also to take responsibility for ethnic minority students' narrow career aspirations and choice of subject disciplines. The findings here serve as important contextual evidence, particularly given the ongoing barriers to accessing the most prestigious sectors, i.e. medicine and law. Malik and Wintour (2012) noted that:

It is deeply regrettable that I see no great galvanising effort to change for poorer students or working class students who want to pursue professional medicine jobs. It is deeply regrettable and unfortunate because the medical sector knows what it needs to do, but, frankly, it is not doing it. We won't get a more mobile society unless we create more of a level playing field of opportunity. (Malik and Wintour 2012, The Guardian)

This echoes Millburn's (2009: 36) view that the medical sector does not appear to welcome "schemes for diversity and widening participation for poorer students attending state schools". My findings show a 'level playing field' is not simply about looking at social mobility issues for students and individuals from working class backgrounds, in comparison to those from middle-class backgrounds. Trying to achieve a level playing field requires looking at the binaries within middle class and working class groups (Bathmaker et al. 2016). Creating a level playing field for medicine and law occupations for instance, needs students to also account for the context in which those who do pursue medicine courses choose to do so, especially when their aim is to avoid downward social mobility. My findings argue that creating a level playing field does not mean defining students as working class based on socio-economic status, but in context of ethnicity and race.

My findings also demonstrate a lack of knowledge and insight into the reality of the labour market, in which British medicine and law students from minority ethnic backgrounds (e.g. Indian) remain unequal when it comes to available knowledge, contacts and networks. They can be seen as failing to become attractive to employers, partly because of their lack of knowledge concerning the challenges faced in acquiring appropriate skills. In terms of policy, the task of creating a level playing field requires nuanced understanding of the nature of medicine students backgrounds,

including, developing a strategy around creating equitable access to knowledge, networks, and skills related to a diverse range of medical sectors and capitals relevant to the professions. In addition, Millburn (2009) also noted:

It is not that it can't be done, the question is whether the medical profession wants to do it. What I am asking is as much national effort to be applied to diversify the socio-economic profile of the [medicine] profession as has been applied to the gender and race profile.... the legal profession shows a proportionate representation of socio-economic profile. (Millburn 2009: 36)

The findings, together with the current climate the ethnic minority students in this study are facing, suggest the need to regard race, ethnicity and the nature of students from 'disadvantaged backgrounds'. The other dimension policymakers need to consider with regards to race concerns the investment made by students in tutoring and academic success, because of viewing the medical profession is the only one available. This infers the need for additional policies concentrating on expanding the definition of the professions to include specific forms of arts and media. Schools and colleges should therefore collaborate with the appropriate organisations, in order to raise pupils' awareness of the arts, literature and drama. In addition, such organisations should be encouraged to recognise BME students as potential candidates. The interaction between schools and a wide set of occupation-specific contacts should be considered prior to the post-compulsory phase of education, in order to allow students to make informed choices. It is thus vital for schools to consider an emphasis on core activities and subjects focusing on teaching humanities, as well as science and mathematics, using a vocational curriculum. This would enable BME students to observe how specific subjects can be pursued a higher level, thus assisting them in considering other subjects.

The use of Russell Group league tables to select universities can be seen as implying a lack of choice. My findings identified that the British Indian students in this study lacking any family background in HE tended to rely on league tables to inform their decision-making processes. The findings suggest that the government's confidence in supporting the 'student as a consumer' idea, as a way to build a competitive labour market requires students to be complicit. In the findings the only British Indian students who could be interpreted as employable in their chosen fields, and as ideal HE customers, were those with parents in traditional medicine and law occupations, and therefore from the most advantaged middle class group. I felt that the remaining students (particularly those within the moderately and least middle class group) could have benefitted from the availability of richer information and coaching from school careers advisors and subject specific tutors. This was particularly relevant when looking for skills and interests at a professional level, rather than relying on tutoring and low levels of the 'right' cultural and social capital to

simply access courses resulting in entrance to the professions. The students who come across as the most effective consumers for the labour market were those who understand what takes to be successfully marketized. Their perspectives demonstrated that they had great confidence in their HE institution, but they also seemed to demonstrate little understanding about how their courses worked, and how the labour market would perceive them. Based on these findings there appears to be a gap in university's engagement in making students on medicine and law courses aware of occupations in these sectors at a lower level, and by educating them through seminars about the current reality of the English law, dentistry and the pharmacy sector to help students from families with low cultural and social capital (for instance in the case of Jasraj or Pavan). Policymakers need to realise that not all students who buy into the idea of investing in a degree from an English university, including a Russell Group university, are doing so because they have support behind them. I consider this to remain an under-developed understanding of the reality of Russell Group accredited degrees. Rather, the social capital they need, and particularly the confidence levels and resilience to build social capital is a growing concern amongst UK graduates.

The findings show a level of understanding about British Indians regarding their 'success' in securing graduate jobs, revealing a complex situation, which includes examples of inequality in relation to resources, and a naive situation for some students whom might not be able to 'afford' success after their degree. The findings also call for a serious review of the implications of employing the terms 'model minority' and 'successful minorities'. Social mobility policy needs to work from subjective analyses of the experiences and decision making processes of 'successful minorities', rather than reply on official statistical trends. Otherwise, policy may misuse certain ethnic minorities as means of problematising others, particularly when 'successful' minorities' destination of social mobility and subject choices fail to facilitate social mobility.

The findings also reveal a significant insight into the tutoring market in England. Accessing tutoring was an essential strategy for the students in the final group. Paying for tutors for core subjects for those in compulsory education revealed a lot about scope for development in English tutoring. However, the findings also reveal the significance of economic capital as a resource to kick start progress into conventional social mobility routes: access to a Russell Group education. Schoolteachers need to provide information and advice to parents about paid and unpaid memberships and programmes that could benefit and compliment skills for students wishing to pursue HE in the UK. For example, Pavan might have benefitted from specific advice on how to gain the skills and experience necessary to complete law modules. In this sense schools seem to give limited input when helping to prepare students. When conducting research with 'successful' ethnic

groups on a personal one- to-one level, we see how lack of the 'right' cultural and social capital influences students who might otherwise be seen as middle-class by schools, based solely on their school grades. Furthermore, some of the students' views demonstrated a lack of trust, embarrassment or fear of working in retail, or doing shift work. Students need to be provided with a real and honest understanding and interpretation of the stratification of HE in England, so they could interpret HE universities based on the value and exchange taking place in their courses, rather than according to how students dress, and their lifestyles. Although the students had internalised the white western version of success as the natural one, they had also internalised the stereotypes associated with certain universities.

This study challenges the concept of Indians being 'naturally' middle-class (Mascarenhas-Keyes 2008; The Policy Exchange 2014). The findings reveal that the Indian British students from higher professional backgrounds in this research did not feel naturally middle-class, which restricted their options. Nor did they experience themselves as the middle class group those aspiring to become middle class should admire. The findings also add a significant context to speeches pertaining to British Indians, which are usually dramatized in the context of political visits and international days, or in policy reports from major think tanks focusing on British ethnic minorities including: The Integration Hub, The Policy Exchange. We have seen that when the structural and cultural processes at work in generating exclusion from certain social environments are not explicitly recognised, they can be easily overlooked and internalised as a sense of self, generating in turn further practices of self-exclusion.

The latest review into 'opportunity and integration' commissioned by the government (Casey 2016) specifically focuses on the attitudes and practices of Muslims as a group, comparing and contrasting them with those of the whole population. Bangladeshis and Pakistanis are discussed in the media more saliently with regard to phenomena relating to identity. The findings of this study suggest that it has been necessary for Indians to distance themselves from South Asian and non-western white traditions, cultures and beliefs by a deep internalisation of the white western success ideology as natural one. It is perhaps worthwhile to note the reasoning behind Indian students 'over-representation' and attraction to conventional white western social mobility routes; i.e. it is an outcome of the habitus of what they witness in white western structures and society. It is not a conscious choice, and in fact there is no choice over what they decide. Their destinations cannot be taken for granted and labelled as 'success'. Rather it is important for policy makers and politicians to learn from other ethnic groups' reasoning and thought processes so they see that 'sacrifices' of one's ethnic background arise out of fear of being rejected by the white structure.

My findings also seem to draw attention to a range of recent political speeches consciously acknowledging the rise in financial and economic inequality in England based on heightened uncertainty about the future for economically insecure British citizens (see for instance Collier 2018; Lightfoot 2018; Bush 2018). These speeches specifically refer to housing as a particular example. The recent crisis those who rely on the state are facing, is the rise in privatisation in housing, property and land ownership (Brett 2018). Home ownership was considered a key component of this broadly middle-class group's 'success' strategies beyond degree completion. In *The New Enclosure: The Appropriation of Public Land in Neoliberal Britain*, Christopher Brett (2018), Brett raises concern that:

If today the government could take one single action that would do more than any other to help arrest the intensification of Britain's housing crisis, halting the sale of public land would be it. This land should be protected, treasured, and used for public benefit, before it is too late...no wonder there's a housing crisis in the UK. (65).

The understanding of success presented in the findings, along with the sacrifices internalised as natural by these students, can only be revealed as unnecessary if policy can find ways to reverse these students' misrecognition of the nature of 'success'.

8.7 Suggestions for future research

The focus and findings of this research have initiated the development of a complex and more nuanced understanding about the British, identifying gaps in the literature demanding a more detailed understanding of British Indian students' educational and post compulsory education decision making processes. Based on these findings and their implications, it appears worthwhile to undertake an empirical examination of resources that academically successful British Indian pupils, sixth form students and university graduates are exposed to outside their time at school. This will continue building a nuanced understanding of the implications of cultural capital for middle-class Indian students wishing to achieve a white western conventional ideas of success. This would enable broader construction of Indian specific middle-class identity. I am conscious that the participants did not factor in alternative aspects, shaping definitions of middle-class identity in their understanding of success, i.e. arts, leisure and music. This leaves scope to investigate this concept in a separate study, addressing the potential for Indian middle-class families and students to create an expanded middle-class and ethnic-specific understanding about the meaning and process of 'success' in England. It would also be worthwhile to examine the meanings, strategies for success, expressed by Indian middle-class students studying subjects considered to be markers of privilege and elitism (i.e. classical subjects, Art and English), Latin and classical subjects:

recognised as markers of a particular privileged form of intelligence (Abrahams 2013; Abrahams et al. 2015). This was also suggested by Rahul, who pointed out that Philosophy and Music tend to benefit white middle-class students, while Medicine and Law (Richardson 2008, 2015) appear to be the only subjects enabling middle-class minority groups to preserve their middle-class status. Other significant contributions capable of ensuring a deeper understanding of British Indian 'success' would be an insight into the views of British students of Indian origin who: (1) live on council estates; (2) live in economically deprived neighbourhoods; and (3) whose parents are state dependents. In addition, it would be beneficial to examine the experience of those whose parents had arrived in the UK as immigrants, rather than (as with most of the participants in the current study) as very young children. It would be particularly beneficial to examine those from such groups who have managed to access *the same courses* the students in this current study, particularly who may prove open minded about non-traditional and vocational pathways to social mobility. This would allow a detailed comparison of the aspirations and strategies of class-specific Indian British students. It would, however, be vital to employ a larger sample in order to undertake a more profound examination of the experience and views of success held by occupation/subject specific Indian middle-class populations, along with working-class British Indians. This would facilitate a discussion of the complexities both in how success is defined and lived.

8.8 Thesis conclusion

The findings of this current study suggest the existence of a distinctive approach to success undertaken by British Indian students, as well as the degree to which they strategize. However, the findings also identify that the conceptualisation of British Indian students as 'successful' fails to recognise the degree of effort required to achieve their aims, as well as their propensity to unknowingly exclude themselves from mainstream middle class choices. Furthermore, a reliance on 'a successful educational destination' to understand British Indian students has been shown to overlook many of the processes reflecting the degree of unknowing violence these students are forced to endure. My findings demonstrate that *a wider empirical focus on 'success'* when researching different groups of students serves as useful means of generating widespread and nuanced data concerning the nature of inequality in the UK. In addition, they show that it is not necessarily beneficial to focus on class *outcomes/destinations* for specific ethnicities when considering the status of any ethnic minority group in the UK, as students applying for identical courses are not necessarily homogeneous. In particular, it is not necessary to compare data with

that of other ethnic minority groups, unless the understanding of difference is contextualised by the processes employed by groups of individuals within that ethnic group.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that socio economic background forms only a small part of British Indian students' journey to educational success. Although the findings cannot claim to have clarified all the different processes occurring within the journey undertaken by British Indian students to become educationally successful, this study has demonstrated that English HE is a novel and foreign experience for a group of British Indian students who can easily be perceived as 'successful' and as naturally middle-class.

The findings of this study have thus revealed a more nuanced interplay between Indian ethnicity and social class in relation to HE subject choices. This includes a deconstruction of the meaning of 'success' in relation to Indian students 'over-representation' on courses focussing on medicine and law. I have also considered how the findings contribute to, and engage with, a western theory designed to consider how academic success is secured. It was observed that Bourdieu's concepts were significant for identifying the broader meaning of students' motives and helped to see any inequality present within the process of their 'success'. As in previous studies, no data was found to suggest that the (Indian) model minority's experiences and decision making processes are not useful for building a wider understanding of the nature of exclusion and inequality. The results of this study suggest that four factors may underlie the reasons for British students of Indian origin emphasising a narrow set of medicine degrees and LLB law: (1) being consistently in the top class; (2) being British born and Westernised; (3) the significance of age motivated goals; and (4) competition between Indians in Britain. These factors reflect British Indian students' understanding of the resources and knowledge to which their parents have educational and occupational access. In addition, they reflect a method of becoming second class middle class citizens, which my participants viewed as an effective means of achieving success. I close the study by reflecting on it.

Reflection

This study examined the strategies and decision making processes for success according to how British Indian students, who can generally be defined as *unequally* middle class, understand the meaning of success. The most attractive factor about this ethnic group in terms of a focus on inequality and social mobility, were the explicit references made to them as successful as to other Black and British Asian groups - but their success to date had not come under empirical or theoretical focus. Their 'success' in comparison to other British Asian groups had become normalised and naively overlooked by researchers. The students' approaches to becoming successful revealed inequalities despite the research being conducted within a limited and highly specific HE context. What was discovered went above and beyond the simplistic suggestions and understanding posed in studies of British sociology of ethnicity and race in education and scholarly debates in the review and within political speeches about Indians considered in the introduction chapter. Specifically, this study investigated what British students Indian ethnicity *are thinking* and/or doing, which is leading them to remain at the top as a group, in comparison to Black and Muslim practicing British Asian groups.

The study confirmed that stereotypes about why ethnic inequalities in education and social mobility exist do not arise from any specific approach to social mobility that is unique to the Indian community; rather they are deeply rooted in British Indians' *subjective* constructions of class, ethnic and racial identity. They believed that the white government's approach to social mobility was not socially constructed, but naturally present which all citizens should therefore submit to and do what is necessary within their power to succeed within that structure. I have brought to the fore new misrecognitions about 'minority students', and specifically about 'successful' British Indian students and provided original insight into the ways in which white western success ideology is maintained. Class, as it emerged, is constructed at the individual level - but also uniquely within specific ethnic contexts and specific middle-class backgrounds *within that* ethnic group. The study illustrates that without understanding how students and pupils and individuals experience social mobility within specific class, racial and ethnic contexts, we cannot fully understand the elements that contribute to inequality.

I would also like to use this reflection piece to critically reflect and acknowledge any unconscious bias in the analysis and discussion chapter. For instance, in the findings and discussion chapter as

part of a social scientists role we saw that these BME students did not realise that they are contributing to the maintenance of society, and in reproducing themselves as an inferior group of individuals and not as legitimately middle class. The reality is however that subconsciously as an individual, outside of my position as a social scientist in this research, *I also contribute to inequality* by wanting to succeed in the white western success ideology, despite being advantaged enough to understand the entire process of why I have not been able to access it to date. In the introduction of this study, I acknowledge that I was disadvantaged from accessing the resources and connections from childhood that lead to a straightforward journey towards conventional western social mobility. Consciously reflecting on this now, it is clear that the reason I considered myself disadvantaged was because I considered *being advantaged* to mean being successful in accessing the white western social mobility. I therefore related my upbringing and the working class cultural and social capital with disadvantage - rather than embracing it.

The other aspect I wish to reflect on in my role as a social scientist in this study, is my use of the terms 'middle class' and 'working class'. I consider it important to be reflexive about the use of these terms in any study that aims to contribute to becoming inclusive. This line of thought is similar to the way the terms 'BME' and 'minorities' are disputed; for instance, it is becoming important to define and acknowledge the limitations of defining students as BME or minority ethnic without the acknowledgement of its limitations; it has been referred to as 'insulting and patronising' by ex-cabinet minister Priti Patel and that its use means that BME individuals individual merits are noticed second after they are noticed as BME (e.g. Sandhu 2018; Okolosie et al. 2015). For the same reasons, I considered it important to reflect on the way I define my participants e.g. as most, moderately or least 'middle class' may be offensive to those participants if they were aware of the way I perceive. I feel that by reflecting on the language and definitions we adopt in the design and writing stage, we are conscious and more likely to be cautious of the context in which we use them.

By considering my participants as 'least', 'moderately' or 'most' advantaged, shows that I am also in a way admitting that those that are 'least and 'moderately' advantaged in the sample *are* less likely to be successful in accessing the professions. It shows that I too have accepted and internalised that the competition between graduates and those qualifying for the professions is natural because I considered which students show less evidence of displaying employability skills, when it is the government's task to strategize accordingly. More importantly, I have only come to strengthen my level of sociological thinking about the state of education, inequality and also to have the confidence to critically reflect on my role as a social scientist at this level, through the journey I

have been through during this PhD. Through this PhD, I have better understood the obstacles placed in my own path in trying to 'achieve' aspects of a white western conventional social mobility that we all wish to be accepted in. Bourdieu's ideas, including the work of specific sociologists such as Mike Savage, Lisa McKenzie, Nicola Ingram, Imogen Tyler, Jessie Abrahams, Jenny Thatcher have enabled me to understand the reasons why I experienced a highly complicated process in arriving at a point of engaging in academic research at PhD level. Undoubtedly, through conducting this study, and the stages of examination has strengthened my understanding about the nature of academic study in England, and has helped me to truly understand and know my classed and ethnic identity.

It will take many more decades and centuries of empirical, theoretical, methodological including epistemological development using complex contexts before its impact begins to alter social mobility definitions. Those truly concerned with questioning and making social mobility and education definitions more inclusive, need to learn from those whom can be considered as very advantaged in becoming employable in the professions and those who are not within different ethnic, racial and class contexts to fully appreciate its mechanisms. In reflecting on the study, Owen Jones words in, "*Social Mobility is a dead end*" come to mind:

Society as it is currently structured depends on millions of people working in cleaning, care work, waste bin men, supermarket retail and local community café' jobs. Yet the cult of social mobility has contributed much to today's rampant sneering at working-class Britain, because everyone is supposed to escape such occupations and become middle-class.... Social mobility provides no answers. It's time we abandoned it (2011)

Despite the focus of this thesis, I hope that one day research focused on conveying nuanced understandings about social mobility to achieve wider meanings of success will be redundant.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethics approval confirmation and consent form

On 9th March 2015 message received from ergo@soton.ac.uk to jkk1g13@soton.ac.uk:
 Submission Number: 12400
Submission Name: Perceptions of success amongst a selected group of British Indian undergraduates

This email is to let you know your submission was approved by the Ethics Committee.

You can begin your research unless you are still awaiting specific Health and Safety approval (e.g. for a Genetic or Biological Materials Risk Assessment)

Comments

1. Thank you for making the requested changes. Good luck with your study.

2. Consent form is now O.K. thanks.

Click here to view your submission

 ERGO: Ethics and Research Governance Online <http://www.ergo.soton.ac.uk>

DO NOT REPLY TO THIS EMAIL

Consent form

Study title: British Indian undergraduates' perceptions of success

Researcher name: Miss Jatinder Kang

Ethics reference: 12400

Please initial the box (es) if you agree with the statement(s):

Data Protection

I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study.

Name of participant (print name).....

Signature of participant.....

Date.....

(For concerns and complaints) Research Governance Contact number: 023 8059 25058/0238059 2884

Appendix B: Letter of consent

Study title: Perceptions of success amongst a selected group of British Indian undergraduates

Researcher ethics reference number 12400

Dear interested participant,

Thank you for your interest in taking part in this study.

As you know my name is Jatinder Kang, and I am a PhD student at the School of Education, at the University of Southampton. I am currently undertaking research on how Indian British-born undergraduates understand the idea of success. If you are British-born, of Indian ethnic background, aged 18-21 and studying law, dentistry or pharmacology, you are eligible to take part. My research is being supervised by Professor Kalwant Bhopal, at the University of Southampton also at the School of Education.

As stated in the information sheet, you are being asked to take part in a conversation styled interview. In addition to the central topic of success I will also ask you questions in relation to your education history, details of your current course, and your plans after university, ethnic identity, as part of the PhD research. All the topics that you will be interviewed on have been gained from a search on existing published research. You have full right to withdraw from the study, refuse to take part in any part of the study, and to terminate the interview. Your decision to do this will be respected. So that I, the researcher can analyse your responses and not be busy taking notes in the interview, I will digital record our conversation/the interview, but the recording will not include your name.

The responses that you give to the interview questions will be labelled with a code or pretend name instead of your real name. I may be able to identify your response with your real name when I listen to the tape recordings if I recognise your voice, but I will never use it inappropriately or refer to it in any part of the PhD study or for any other purpose.

The results will be written up as part of my PhD research study. The results may eventually be published in journals, but these will not refer to your identity. It is hoped that taking part will give you a valuable experience. If you wish to take part in this study, please sign and return the reply slip by email/ scan it to me at j -----@soton.ac.uk or send me a picture of your consent form using SMS.

Please express interest and your consent by 23/10 /2015.

Many thanks

Miss Jatinder Kang (PhD researcher)

Appendix C: Eligibility criteria poster

(ATTACHED WITH INFORMATION SHEET)

Are you all of the following?

A full-time undergraduate

Of Indian ethnic background

Aged 18-21

Studying dentistry, pharmacology/pharmacy or law

If YES, then you are invited to participate in a PhD research study. For more details see information sheet below or contact Jatinder Kang on 07727057034 or email at jkk1g13@soton.ac.uk

Appendix D: Participant information sheet

Study Title: Perceptions of success amongst a selected group of British Indian undergraduates'

Researcher: Miss Jatinder Kang

Ethics number: 12400

Please read this information carefully before deciding to take part in this research. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What is the research about?

I am a PhD student at the University of Southampton. My study is researching and interested in how British-born undergraduates who study pharmacology, dentistry and law and who have Indian ethnicity think about the idea of being successful. The study has passed ethical clearance. This means that it has been checked by the University's ethics committee and has been confirmed as safe. This research will make an important contribution in directing the future of academic research, and non-university-based researchers and higher education policy makers to understand BME/minority ethnic undergraduates better by bringing them close to students' thoughts

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you attend one of the universities which are near to my (the researcher's) residence where British-born undergraduates from an ethnic group are highly concentrated and secondly because you are studying a subject where Indians and other UK domiciled students from other ethnic groups are highly represented on.

What will happen to me if I take part?

I am inviting you to take part in an interview. The interview will take one hour or less. In this interview I will ask you approximately 12 open ended questions. These topics may be divided into two or three topics to help me manage the interview. The topics will reflect the themes of degree subjects, applying to go university and general information on family, the school you went to. I have identified these topics as important in the existing published literature on minority ethnic communities and students. Therefore, I would like them to play a role in my research on students from the Indian ethnic group in Britain.

I would also like to inform you in advance that I may request further clarification or explanation from you on the responses you give. Please do not feel as if your answer was incorrect or correct, because this is not the case at all. There is no right or wrong answer. You can refuse to do so however. I would also like to inform you that I will travel to an appropriate location which is convenient for you. You will only be asked to take part once and therefore will not be asked to meet me again for the purpose of this research.

Are there any benefits in my taking part?

There are no paid benefits to you in taking part in this study. However, you may enjoy the experience and may find that the experience was valuable to you in ways which may help you in other ways. However, it is important for you to be aware that your involvement will benefit those scholars, university teaching staff, researchers who have a responsibility to be up to date with research on minority ethnic students and communities.

Will participation be confidential?

Your participation is strictly confidential. Your identity such as your real name will only be used by me for purpose of administration. I will never discuss your participation with anyone else. Your original name is only required on the consent form and on a list which I keep which has all the participants original names. These are not used in any part of the study.

Are my responses anonymous?

Your interview question responses will be tape recorded and your name will be exchanged with a code or pseudonym (a pretend name chosen for you). Readers will not be able to identify you. When I listen to the tape recordings, I may recognise your original identity based on the recognition of your interview responses, but I will never disclose it in the PhD study or for publication of articles in the future relating to this study.

How will the data be used?

The information and responses you give to me, will be used only for the purpose of writing up my PhD study, and for writing articles for publication in the future about this study which will not make any reference to you.

What happens if something goes wrong?

It is unlikely that something will go wrong. But in the unlikely case of any concerns or complaints, that you may have, you are kindly asked in advance to contact the Head of Research Governance on 023 8059 8848. Or you may also email the ethics general enquiries team at rginfo@soton.ac.uk and/or telephone them on 023 8059 5058. These teams/persons are not related to me (the researcher), to my supervisors or any other person involved in the study. They are also not involved with the actual study.

Are there any risks involved?

It is highly unlikely that there are any risks involved if you take part. The risks would never be attached to confidentiality and to anybody but me (the researcher) having access to your interview responses. Any other risk would be a matter of chance such as either me or you needing to pause or terminate the interview should you, or I, be experience an unforeseen health/medical emergency during the interview.

If you wish to be a participant in this research, please express your interest by 23rd October the latest by sending me an SMS, telephoning me or by email.

Researcher's telephone number 07727057034 and email address:

jkk1g13@soton.ac.uk

For my own reference (add supervisors' details when I receive this back). (For concerns or complaints) Research Governance contact details - rginfo@soton.ac.uk 023 8059 5058/Head of Research Governance 0238059 8848. Address:

Research Governance Office, George Thomas Building 37
Room 4079, University of Southampton, Highfield, Southampton SO17 1BJ

Appendix E: Letter sent to six course directors at two universities

Dear Name of Head of Faculty/ Undergraduate course leader/director

My name is Jatinder Kang and I am a PhD student at the School of Education at the University of Southampton. I am currently undertaking research on how success/being successful is understood by Indian UK home first degree students and who are studying the following subjects: Dentistry, Pharmacology and Law.

Thus, I would like to ask you if you could please assist me by emailing the attached single document that is the selection criteria and information sheet and the informed consent form to full time UK home undergraduates in your faculty, with a brief note in the email directing students to read the attachments. I am very mindful that you have limited amount of time to send the email who those who fit the criteria, which is why I am asking you to send it to all UK domiciled undergraduates and from there, the students will be able to decide whether or not they wish to take part if they believe they reflect the selection criteria. The students will have sufficient information, so they have enough information in deciding whether or not they wish to take part.

I would like to inform you that I am not carrying out any unethical work because the study has passed ethical clearance. I am doing this piece of research purely on the basis for my doctoral study. Although my research may sound as if I am invading students' privacies, I would like to inform you that this will never be my intention. I hope this information helps you. If it does not then may I please suggest that you ask me for more information either via email or by telephoning me, as I will be very happy to help. Alternatively, if you know of another colleague who can assist please could you either email me their name/contact details or forward this letter onto them including the attachment. I would be highly grateful for your support in this request.

Kindest Regards and many thanks

Jatinder Kang (PhD student, School of Education, University of Southampton).

07727057034

Jkk1g13@soton.ac.uk

Appendix F: Example of pilot interviews

(Razia, a PhD Education from our school)

P = participant

JK: thanks for agreeing to take part

P: you're very welcome

JK: Could you tell me a little bit about yourself please?

P: Yes. Sure. I'm doing my PhD err third year finishing, hopefully, I came to Southampton in 2012 for this PhD. As you know I'm from Pakistan, that's where I was also brought up, my parents and all my family are there, I'm a bit of a loner here but it will be worth it in the end. JK: You said you are from Pakistan and that's where you were brought up, could you say a little bit more about that.

P: Ah yeah, so I was born in Pakistan, went to school there, college and I lived with my parents and my siblings, sister in law, all my family, and basically they are all still there and I was given the opportunity to further my education because I was the only one that studied at the highest level in Pakistan, so my parents said I am still young, so it is a good age to get as much education done as possible now.

JK: Could you tell me what you mean by highest level?

P: I wanted to study after school, after college, and become a teacher, like practitioner, and my other sisters were not really that ambition, they were happy to finish school, do some home tutoring in people's homes and they are happily married but I wanted to be something and educate myself as much as possible before I go down the road of marriage.

JK: We'll come back to that, you mentioned something about while you are still young, and a good age to get as much education done

P: I am sure you know this, but it may be different for you because you are born here, I don't know, but completing your education before you say, I don't know, before you are thirty for example is good for Asians, and also boys I think, because you can't do the same thing afterwards. JK: What makes you think that?

P: Like I am doing a PhD now, once I have completed it, I have it, my husband my future in laws can't take that away from me, and they may like the fact that my wife or my daughter in law has a PhD, she did all her education, so now she can just focus on her job.

JK: So, what are you planning to do once you complete your PhD?

P: Go back to Pakistan probably, probably settle marriage, get some funding and maybe return after a year or two, not sure, something like that.

JK: Could you tell me more about why you would like to return to the UK? P: Well there are far better opportunities for work, a career, although it would only be on the basis of marriage, because my family or siblings are happy and settled in Pakistan, and one sister is happy in Canada.

JK: Could you tell me what you mean by on the basis of marriage and better opportunities?

P: Well, I think if you want to have a long term career and be career focused, it is good to settle in a country in which you can comfortably do that, because in Pakistan, I would have a good job yes, my PhD would get recognised, but it still doesn't promise a long term career and opportunities to apply in other places, like universities, not as much as in the UK. JK: And you mentioned on the basis of marriage?

P: Because of course at some point soon I would need to get married, and it would be good to find a match who is like native Pakistani in the UK, hardworking and

understanding, then I could just focus on my career in the UK. Yeah, no disrespect or offence to anyone, of course, I know everyone is different, but I personally think it is better to marry at a reasonable age.

JK: What do you think is a reasonable age?

P: Mmmm, by 28 or 29, Definity before 30, no offence to you, we are all different and have different way of life.

JK: Could you tell me why you think marriage and marriage at this age is important?

P: That's an obvious one, you can't, or I don't want to find boyfriends until I find the right one. I would be happy to be introduced to someone by my family, siblings, someone who knows me, and I trust, and I don't want to be over 29 when I get married, of course I want to have a career, so I fulfil my wishes, but also, I want to do it in the right way, for me that is thinking of settling too. There's no reason not to want to get married, and besides I don't want to be an outcast in family and relatives.

JK: Okay, we will come back to that a bit later, I remember you said something about being a loner here?

P: Ah, that was just that I don't have no family here, just living on my own, but that's not an issue with me, I have a few people who I am close to and my focus is on my work. I go back often to Pakistan during holidays, actually I went back a little while ago, as you know for data collection

JK: Can I ask you how would you describe your ethnic identity?

P: I'm Pakistani and Muslim

JK: Could you say a little more about your ethnicity and how you feel about it P: I feel Pakistani, I was born into a Pakistani family, into the Pakistani culture, and I am happy about that.

JK: What do you refer to when you say Pakistani culture?

P: Just typical things like, well example, Ramadan, family closeness, food, I suppose that's the same in every culture, it's hard to explain what's unique about the Pakistani culture. I think what I am trying to say is that I know I am Pakistani, because I feel Pakistani, or more-so, I think it is because of the religion, I am proud to be Muslim. I have never really thought about it.

JK: Okay, we may come back to this, but could you explain your reason for choosing education?

P: I knew for some years that I wanted to explore and grow my knowledge in education. I think for me it was about raising awareness about its importance to those around my area in Pakistan, that more people to study and more girls should aspire to study especially. I used to tutor in Pakistan, so did my sisters, and I worked in the college, so I decided I want to focus on teaching and grow in that field. But the problem was just funding, so my father said that we will get funding.

JK: Raising awareness about its importance, could you elaborate on that please?

P: You know that countries like Pakistan, and also India, Africa no matter how advanced some areas are, there can never be enough encouragement that children should not stop studying, or think they have to, at least not just because of shortage of money, they should look at a subject they like and grow in it and explore ways to cover the costs. This is why I did tutor, to encourage children, to focus. With girls, the number one priority for parents will always be marriage, even for the parents that are educated. I just believe is studying education as a subject is important for those from countries that are not economically stable like the UK or America or European countries.

JK: Why do you think the number one priority for Pakistani parents is marriage? P: I think it is the same for most Asian cultures, like even for your Punjabi Sikh culture, but I think it is more important in Muslim cultures, because they do not like the idea of a woman unmarried sitting at home all her life, regardless of the fact she has a PhD for example., & having lists of boyfriends like the gora's (White people) is Definity not the way our culture considers the future of their daughters, and also sons I think. At least if you have a good education, they research and look for someone as decent as you. That's another important reason why education is important. JK: Did you consider other subjects?

P: Not at all, well my brother said I should study medicine, typical subject, but that subject never crossed my mind, it doesn't interest me unless I need medicine. I said why don't you?

JK: you said medicine is a typical subject, who is a typical subject for?

P: I think all over the world, but Asian people win a jackpot if their children study medicine.

JK: And what about university, why did you select Southampton?

P: It was purely related to the funding, it wasn't like a conscious decision, I had never come to England, so it didn't bother me, there was Warwick and Southampton, but it was something related to money side of things I came to Southampton. I know it is Russell Group, something I didn't know much about at all, I think it means it's a very good university for research, so obviously that will hopefully contribute to which opportunities I get after the PhD. JK: How would you describe the term being successful?

P: Wow, that's quite a difficult question you know JK: Why do you feel that?

P: Because being successful is something everyone wants to be an example of but there's no proper book or criteria to show what you need to be successful. Obviously, people will always think a person who has a lot of money and owns lots of things to show that they have a lot of money will be automatically seen as successful. But there are people who have money who don't show it and flash it about, so they are also successful, but no one will say it. So, I think it comes down to just do your own thing and having a good balance of the things you need in your life and the things that you want

JK: Could you tell me what you refer to when you say the things you need and the things you want?

P: Education is Definity one thing and the first thing I think everyone needs, I need, in order to even begin to start describing myself as successful. I think I also need my family's support, if I didn't have them, I would not be able to imagine continuing my education. At the moment, I don't need to worry about things like buying a house and a car, but those things will be on my list of need one day, because I don't want to live in a flat or in rented accommodation all my life., & even for that I will need a good education behind me and the help of my family.

JK: So, what you need to be successful depends on the stage you are in your life?

P: yeah Definity, at the moment, I need my PhD and my family behind me to start preparing. I think I am already successful, because when you are fortunate to have something some people don't have, that is also a sign of being successful.

JK: when you say you want to have a house and a car, is that something you need or want or both?

P: ah (slight pause) want (slight pause) because living in rented accommodation for now is fine, because people will not judge you because I am a student, but if you live in

rented accommodation forever, especially once you are married, it doesn't look good, it looks like you are poor and still not stable, like you don't have money, even if you have but don't want to flaunt it. My parents would want me to live in a house, whether that is with my husband's family in Pakistan or whichever country I settle in.

JK: when you say it doesn't look good, could you tell me who it doesn't look good to?

P: it doesn't look good to the people my parents know because they will want to know how their children are doing, that are living abroad, and they look up to those people who have children studying in university abroad, so ownership of house would definitely be something I have to consider as part of feeling successful.

JK: You also mentioned having a car

P: Yes (slight pause) I would need and also want, need in the sense sometimes you really do not want to travel on public transport, and (slight pause) want a car in the sense, I would also want a car that is reasonably looking nice and not too old, but that is a dream at the moment.

JK: So are you saying that the things you definitely need to be successful is your PhD, to settle down before you are thirty was it you said, by getting to marry, and then to work towards house ownership and a car.

P: yes definitely, the likelihood of the last two will be determined by the kind of fortune my future husband is destined with.

JK: Is there anything else you want to say about being successful?

P: Err, no (slight pause) except that it is a good way to help people reflect on their plans and ah (slight pause) what our purpose of living is. I don't think it's a concept that we think about as much as we should perhaps, I mean at the end of the day everything we do.

JK: I think I have covered everything I needed to, thank you for your time, I appreciate it.

End of recording

Appendix G: Interview guide

Title of research: British Indian dentistry, pharmacy and law students' perceptions of success

1. Welcome, introduction and reminder about the purpose of research
2. Ask participant to read and sign consent form if they agree.
3. Explain to the participant again about the use of digital recorder and whether they give me consent to record our conversation.

Use these questions as a guide.

As long as each of these questions are covered, the order of these questions can change depending on each participant's responses and what they say when their initial response to a question is probed upon.

Section A Warm up, contextual/bibliographical questions.

Ask these to gain some background about the participant so that when I analyse the data, I can use the answers to these to understand the participant's background.

1. Could you tell me a little bit about yourself (Begin all interviews with this question)? Probe if needed on parent's occupation and education, country of birth.
2. How do you describe your ethnicity?

Section B (for purpose of answering RQ1 and RQ3)

- When I say being successful, what instantly comes into your head?
- What age were roughly you when you became aware of this term?

Explore

- Have you been taught anything particular about this term?
- What do you understand about being successful?

4. What do you think makes a person unsuccessful?

Section D (for purpose of answering RQ2)

- How was the decision made to apply for dentistry/pharm/law? Probe
- Did your school influence you in any way to apply to dentistry/pharm/law? Probe if needed
- Did anything else influence you to apply to dentistry/pharm/law?

Probe if needed

- Why did you apply to LU/MU? Probe ☐ Did your school influence you in any way to apply to London/West

Midlands University? Probe if needed

- Which subjects did you study at GCSE and A level and why?

Appendix H: Extract taken from research diary

Interview with Bhavni

Bhavni was keen and enthusiastic about meeting me to take part in the study. She made some interesting comments about the research whilst we were walking to the venue where the interview was going to take place. Even when we got to the venue it felt as though Bhavni had already mentioned some of the points/factors that I wanted to explore with her during the interview. After I finished informing her about consent form, right to withdraw and about the use of the recorder, which she agreed, the pace of her speech dropped until the question on why she chose dentistry was asked. There was an obvious difference in how the use of the recorder once I mentioned its use slowed down the pace of Bhavni's speech. To some extent this worried me a little and made me want to ask Bhavni again whether she was sure she was happy for me to record the interview, but it didn't because she had already given her consent. After this, Bhavni's speech was as it was before the interview started and I noticed how some of the points that she briefly mentioned in passing of comments such as (being an Indian girl and Dad is very close to her) re appeared in the course of the interview without any prompt. I think perhaps the reason why Bhavni may have spoken about how her gender or the fact that her gender does influence the course she chose was impacted by the fact we both shared the same gender and ethnicity. This is especially given the fact that after the interview she told me that she was actually curious about how her older sister and parents might define being successful. She also opened up about other aspects of her personal life after the interview (which Bhavni agreed for me to use as data). She told me she actually was seeing somebody during the earlier weeks of her course and that her mother and father wanted Bhavni to make it last with this person and how she felt optimistic that it will. I felt that this interview went quite well.

Interview with Arjun

At the beginning of this interview, I was a little anxious about how this interview would go. In contrast to how Bhavni interacted with me in relation to the study before the interview began, Arjun seemed quite reserved and would only speak when asked something. I felt as though I could not build rapport as easily with Arjun because he had a more objective outlook to the arrangement than Bhavni did. Once I went over the purpose of the study, the participant's right to withdraw, consent form and the use of the recorder, Arjun asked me questions about where the idea of exploring being successful came from and that it was a rare topic but eye-catching. This felt like the ice-breaker for me because Arjun commented on the study without any prompt and to me it sounded like a positive comment.

In all honesty, I felt a little surprised and astonished when Arjun told me that both of his parents were doctors and that they both held medicine degrees from Russell Group universities in the UK and that he was attending the same university. I am not sure, but I felt as though this may be due to the existing literature has never shown such a case. Arjun's responses were quite detailed and lengthy, but I personally felt it quite difficult to not note that his response had little facial expression like the vast majority of the other participants. And, although most of the others had also talked about comparison and competition at their own accord, Arjun made rather strong points about his feelings on this and to me it almost felt like the responses that would follow would be affected by the slight aggression and irritation that I noticed when he spoke of

comparison and competition. He then made a comment that clicked and instantly went hand in hand with his irritation of being compared (he wanted a quite private life). Although my focus on probing and prompting was dictated by my research questions, I wandered whether there was a link there and the extent to which he is compared with others and whether there is a presence of this comparison in his own home. But at the same time, I wanted to steer clear because I was quite unsure of the consequences probing on this could have on Arjun's experience of the interview

Appendix I: Example of interview transcript

(Arjun dentistry, LU, M, British Hindu Punjabi father works as a doctor in the UK and abroad, mother works as a doctor originally from Birmingham)

J: Could you tell me a little bit about yourself?

A: about myself? Just like where I'm from and my background?

J: okay, start by telling me a bit about your parent's education and their occupation please thank you?

A: my Mum is a doctor in a hospital and my Dad is a GP, my Dad was born in the UK, and my Mum came from India when she was 10, I think or 12 something like that, so that's where the idea of dentistry comes from. Errm my grandparents also came when they were quite young, and both my maternal and paternal grandparents are in the UK, but they don't live with us like in our house. My Mum and Dad both went to university in London and them both studied medicine

J: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

A: I have two younger brothers; yeah one has started his A levels and one is in year 10. They're both at private school, so did I (NON-STATE SCHOOL EDUCATED).

J: how do you describe your ethnicity?

A: well I put Indian on UCAS form, but I would say British Hindu Punjabi, well I could say Punjabi, but Sikhs are also Punjabi, so that there is no misunderstanding, it's better to say Hindu Punjabi, sorry British Hindu Punjabi, bit of a mouthful

J: So which subjects did you choose in year 9 and for your A levels?

A: biology, maths, chemistry, physics and philosophy and ethics. I really am interested in philosophy, I would have chosen that at university but then I did a lot of research (INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY SEARCH) and I noticed from the assignments and assessment at all universities websites that it was more essay based and focused on an idealistic viewpoint of the world sort of thing. And, I'm a pragmatist, so it wasn't for me to study philosophy at university (KNOWLEDGE OF THE SYSTEM)

J: Did anything have any influence on your decision to choose those subjects for your A levels?

A: I was good at sciences, got A stars and I have always been interested in medicine profession, I mean it's never crossed my mind to not do something medicine related. I won't deny that they do pay really well, but banking pays more, doesn't it, so it's not just money, is also about which professions were good for my ability. But being successful for me is about becoming an established dentist and at the same time, I can afford an average detached house, maintain it and your own family, like my children and wife, and some holidays every year, what more do you need...

JK: right

A: no, I decided I wanted to do dentistry towards the end of year 11 (EARLY CAREER CHOICE) because I wanted to be a doctor, that was my real aim (CLEAR CUT GOALS) I think that was the effect of having both parents as doctors and suppose I have always looked up to them (INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL OCCUPATION) but when I did the work experience, I didn't really like it, so obviously with my parents being doctors and having already studied at London universities, I told them that for some reason I still wanted to do something in medicine or have a medicine career, so I thought about pharmacy and dentistry as well, and I did a dentistry and pharmacy placement and I really liked the dentistry work experience and my parents thought it was a good medicine career too (INTEREST IN THE MEANING ATTACHED TO MEDICINE PROFESSION).. So, my parents knew which subjects I needed for dentistry and I did more research and that's when I knew what subjects to study for A levels.

J: So, you chose those subjects only because you knew you needed them to get into a dentistry course?

A: yep

J: Did your school have any influence on your A level subjects?

A: not at all, in fact my Dad told me not to listen to schoolteachers when they give career advice, because they tried to put him off when he wanted to be a doctor but they didn't put me off, I don't know maybe that's because I didn't really talk about what I want to do in the future a lot at school, although its linked, like I just have never needed to, but my tutor at school knew and a couple of my friends, I think it comes down to you and how led you are.

J: did anything else influence you to apply for dentistry or to be interested in a medicine related career?

A: not really, I suppose like in religions like Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism I know there is this concept Dharam, which means duty to care or duty of care and I think a medicine career, or a medicine related career allows you to fulfil that duty to people. I used to joke with my parents and say I'm going to do French or art at university just to see their reaction

J: and what was their reaction?

A: oh, they didn't react, they know me too well, I think because they knew they had a feeling because I always got top grades (ability in science) in science and I told them I loved science.

J: so, you've already told me why you applied to do dentistry at university?

A: yeah

J: so how did you decide which universities to apply to?

A: I chose this one, Cambridge and Cardiff as my last choice. My Dad went to this one like decades ago, and my Mum also came to this one (FAMILY TRADITION/CC).

J: Cambridge

A: My Mum said [to Arjun] let's leave that one [Oxford], but they kept arguing about it amongst themselves in the kitchen like for many days, because my Mum said leave it and my Dad was saying what's the harm in trying?

J: really?

A: (laughs) yeah, and basically you know I think it goes without saying that again they were the best people to advise me on this too (PARENTS NATURAL SOURCE OF ADVICE ON HE), and this was my first choice and I got in (ACADEMIC ABILITY/GRADES).

J: right

A: I did my own research too, because even though my parents know quite a lot about universities, it is my life, I have to do things myself, because I need to prove to myself that I can study, pass my course myself, become a dentist, and be recognised for me, not through them.... They [parents] can assist though and I welcome their [parents] expertise though

J: okay

A: I just applied for the main ones that have a good reputation for dentistry and obviously they are few of the Russell Group ones. But I wanted to stay in a city because like from London my parents moved to Birmingham (CITY) about six years ago and we've been there ever since, but like for primary school, when I went to primary school we were living in London (CITY LIFE/USED TO CITY LIFE). We also stayed in Canada for a year. But yeah, I wanted to come to this university for two main reasons, it's a city, I think it's the best one for the course, good facilities and training and memories.

J: What instantly comes to your head when I say being successful?

A: well although the first thing that comes to my head is like money and materialistic things, I am not bothered about that, I think it came to my head because society drums it into you that its materialistic things that are important to be seen as successful, but just to prove that I am not money minded, I don't want to be a banker which pays way more than what a dentist is paid. Money is important don't get me wrong, but only enough to not ever get in debt (FEAR OF DEBT AND FINANCIAL CRISIS) not having to borrow from people (SHAME IN RELYING ON OTHERS) even relatives and the career you choose can determine a lot of that.

J: anything else that comes to your head when I say being successful?

A: well....it's very very topical I think this concept, isn't it, like I think it's something that every person, no matter how rich or poor, or what job they do where they are from, will tell you what it means to them. I think well...well... although the first thing that comes to my head is probably money and materialistic things, I am not bothered about that that much...I think it came to my head because society like drums it into you that its materialistic things, that are important to be seen as successful, but something that proves that I don't think money is all you need to be successful, I will see myself successful if I'm a dentist not not a banker...

J: what are your personal aims?

A: I want to find a partner and build a family, just one or two children, not too many, oh and by the way I don't mean marrying like someone who is Indian, I have already told my parents I want to be with someone who is White or European but obviously educated in the UK. It doesn't matter what you do, what job you do, how well you do financially, my Mum says relatives will never be happy, not that I am doing it for them, so I mean I just don't want the headache of a larger Indian family'.

J: could you explain why?

A: I want to have a quiet life, a private life, and I think your children are exposed to two contrasting cultures and parents and have an interesting childhood, but she has to be degree educated, native from the UK. (SAME ETHNICITY MARRIAGE BORING)

J: What did your parents say?

A: They were very understanding, maybe it's because I am not a girl, I don't know they were fine (DIFFERENT EXPECTATIONS FOR MEN AND WOMEN)

J: What else comes into your head when I say being successful?

A: I think it's just those things for me personally, but I think like this all comes under things like class. For instance, if you're a lower-class person then you probably will say money, but not care where it comes from, like you might not say aspiring to become a doctor or dentist, success might mean money and a house and affording a 2-bed council flat. I might be wrong. But for higher class person, like not upper but top middle maybe, like my parents, money is important but so are things like a good profession, high status and a good quality lifestyle.

J: I see

A: but that's me, and you asked me and that's what I think about success, I would go as further as a private life too, my parents support that, I was telling my Mum that I don't want to justify to family and stuff about why I make certain choices, like if I want to marry a White person, that's because I know it will be guaranteed I have a quiet life, I mean it may be a generalisation, but White like middle or just educated White families don't interfere.

A: My Mum was saying something to my Dad the other day, that no matter what you do relatives are never happy, always proving that they can do something better (MAKING RELATIVES HAPPIER/DRAWING THE LINE). I think being successful...for me...is about

fulfilling my personal aims.... things that I see myself doing or having five or ten years down the line. I have to envisage my future roughly to see what being successful means to me.

J: right

A: So, I think now and then I think you automatically worry about what others in the family are thinking (EXTENDED FAMILY PRESSURE/NEEDING TO SATISFY RELATIVES), because my uncle used to compare me with her children, and that is one bad thing about Indian families I hate, they compare British-born children with others in the family and outside of the family. Like why? You must have experienced it, too right?

J: laughs

A: like why? I think competition and comparison are the main strategies Indian people most of them use to be successful or that influences their choices and decisions about what is right, wrong and why. Maybe...I don't know. Maybe it's not true, I mean we don't live around too many Indians or Asians, like we have one Chinese family on our road, one Indian, and the others are White, about ten houses on our road, really quiet, quite dead, but my Mum thinks that you have to have boundaries about what you want in life and keep focused.

Interviewer: you mentioned competition and comparison as strategies?

A: I remember my Mum was saying something to my Dad the other day that no matter what you do relatives are never happy, always proving that they can do something better... You automatically worry about what others in the family are thinking, because my uncle used to compare me with her children, and that is one bad thing about Indian families I hate, they compare British-born children with others in the family and outside of the family. Like why? You must have experienced it too, right?

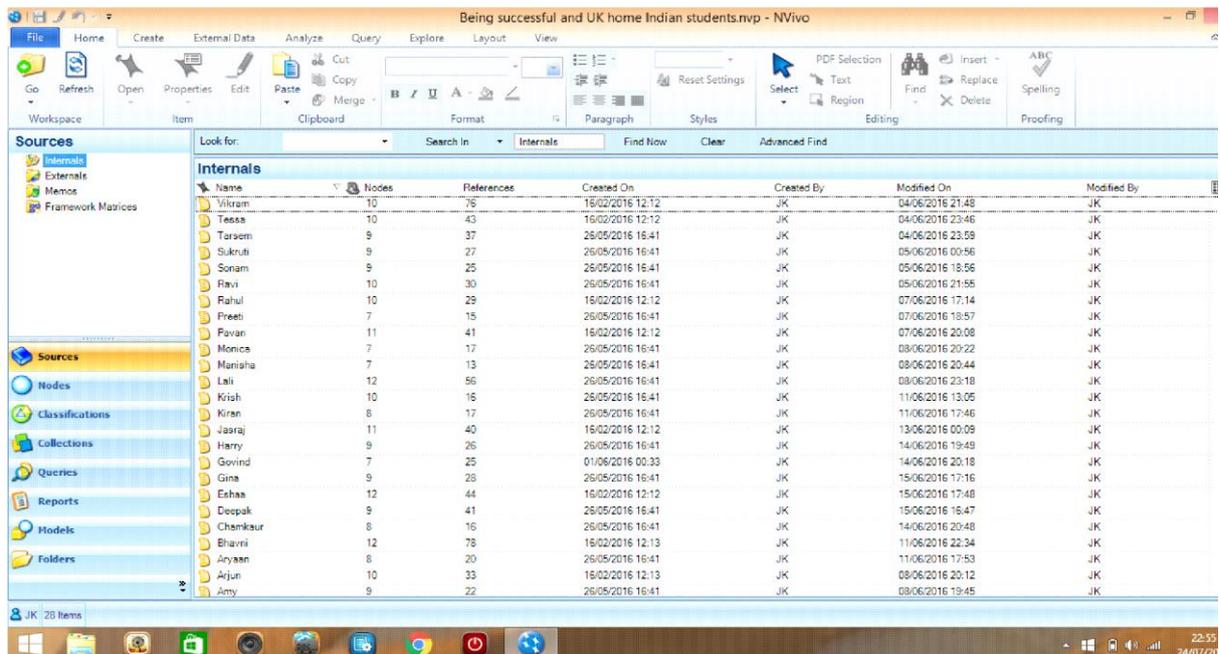
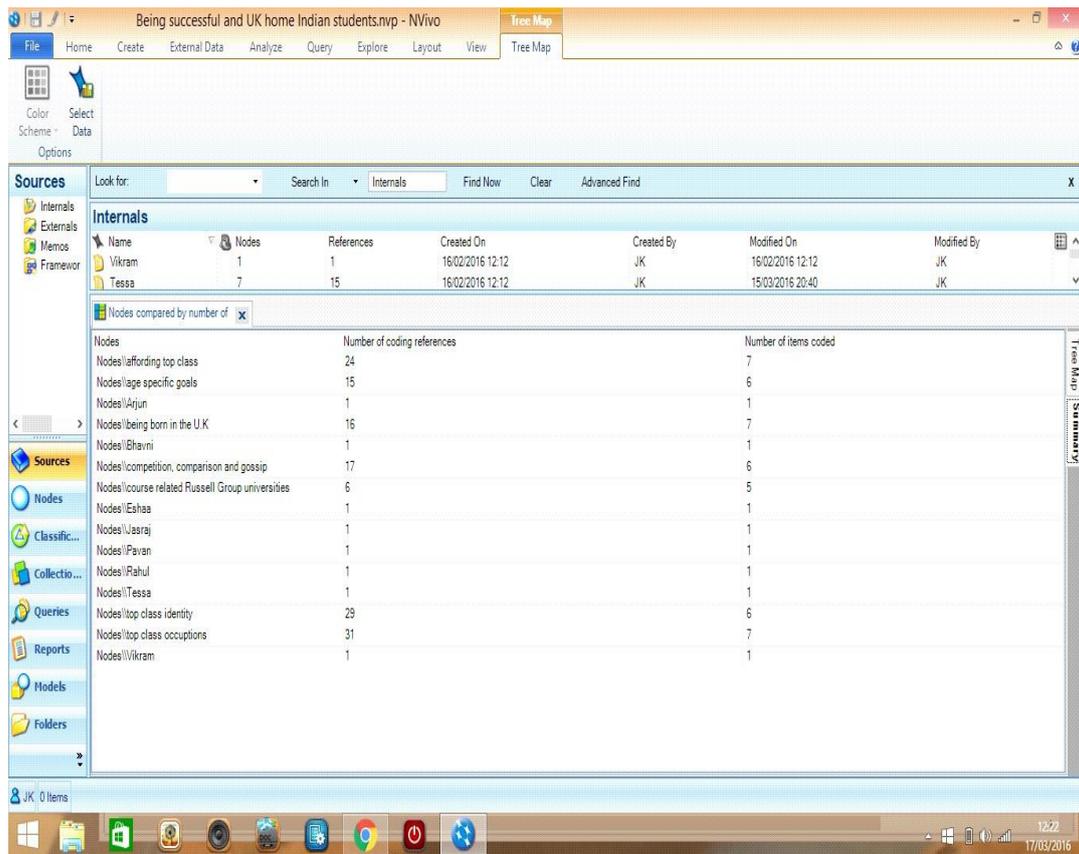
J: If you didn't go to India and didn't make gym your routine, would that make you less successful?

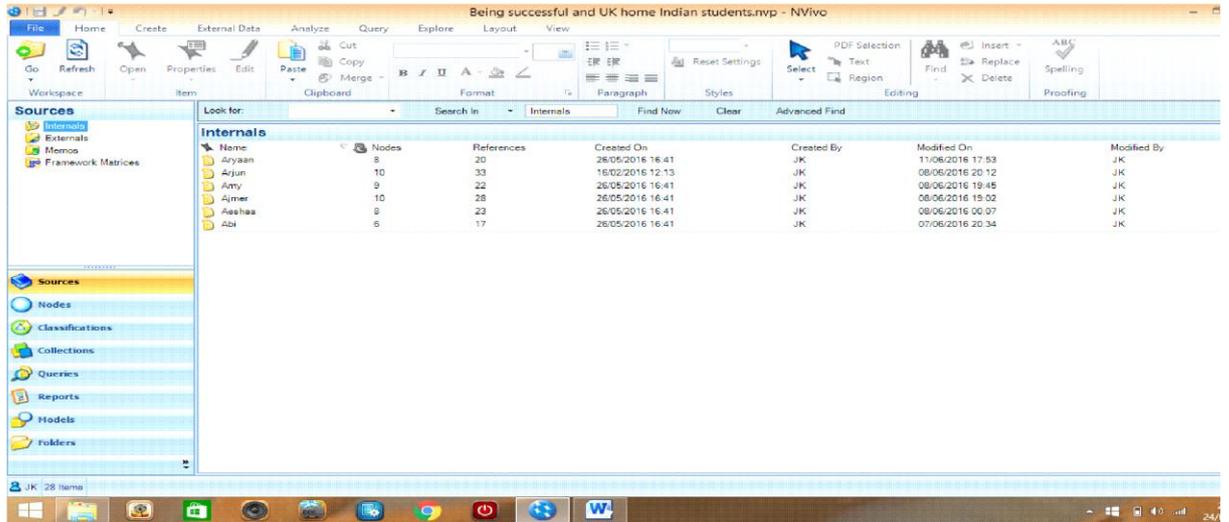
A: well not less successful, probably not really happy inside, so yeah, I think that does have an effect on how successful you are. Because being successful is all round what makes you happy, what is important to you, both personal aims and taking society into account. But I think if you think about your career choice carefully, then you have time and space and happiness for other things in life that are important to you. So, my course will hopefully provide that for me and prepare me to achieve the things that are important to me

J: Is there anything else you want to add or comment on?

A: no, this doesn't feel like an interview, it's like being treated like you're on one of those tv interviews.

Appendix J: Print screen showing categories





Appendix K: Method of searching and reviewing literature

The empirical literature that is reviewed in this chapter was primarily identified using reference lists provided in publications, looking for books and articles that focus on British undergraduates in relation to British minority ethnic groups; the British Asian ethnic category; and studies on class, ethnicity and education. Furthermore, phrases and keywords that appeared relevant such as *British Asian*, and *British Indian* and in relation to *success*, *class* and *education* were typed into online search engines, including Google Scholar.

It was expected that a synthesis or general overview of the British Indian group, and of their education and socio-economic class profile would be gained from the search. The studies that the keywords produced were evaluated individually and coherently, to develop a picture of how existing literature informs us about individual British Asian groups. The search revealed the least researched British Asian groups, and the contexts in which they were studied.

For research to contribute to knowledge in a meaningful way, it needs to start in the context of existing knowledge that is relevant to it. Other researchers have contributed empirically in one way to existing knowledge on the high-achievement of British Indians, and more specifically British Indian undergraduates studying vocational competitive degree courses, which will have some bearing on my research. A literature review requires a direction that is the existing knowledge that is relevant to the research focus.