Dual vision: Heritage, identity and notions of home amongst second-generation South Asian Muslims in the UK.

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Abstract

British South Asian Muslims are a frequently maligned group, as is evidenced by post-Brexit violence, the rise of Islamophobia, far-right riots in the summer of 2024, and dominant discourses about the wearing of certain stigmatised garments. In post-imperial British society, this group is potentially vulnerable on three fronts: for being non-White, Muslim, and migrants (or members of migrant families). Given these circumstances, how do they experience life in Britain today and what is the impact on their sense of self, their goals, and their participation in society?

The concept of *'home'* is a complex and often painfully elusive one for migrant families and creates a generational divide which is not experienced in non-migrant families. Buffeted by the forces of society's majority and minority cultures, each succeeding generation reshapes and retunes their notions of *'home'*. This qualitative study used reflexive thematic analysis to examine the impact of displacement through migration on second-generation South Asian Muslims. In 46 life-story interviews, participants described their parents' migration experiences, the impact of this on their own lives, their experiences growing up, living and working in Britain, and their sense of place and identity in the UK today. Whereas other studies focusing on this social group almost exclusively target adolescents or women in prescribed communities, participants in this study came from all over Britain, were aged between 20 and 57 (mean age of 35.3 years), with a female to male ratio of 73:27%. The parents of these participants originated in Pakistan (69%), India (18%) and Bangladesh (13%).

These narratives highlight how second-generation South Asian Muslims are searching for the security of *'home'* and an authentic sense of self; the multiplication of displacement experiences echoes and reverberates through migrant families and impacts personal identity, relationships, education, career choices, language, religious observances and parenting. Participants described the barriers they face as well as the support and impetus they receive in the contexts of family, community and society at large. The search for *'home'*, as a place where they can *'fit'* and be at ease in society and in themselves, was described by participants as a lifelong pursuit, a constant battleground intimately entangled in concepts of loss and regeneration, and a perpetual recalibration of outsider/insider identity. *'Home'* is a challenging notion, but something to be endlessly sought by the children of migrants.

This thesis is dedicated to my father

Altaf Sheikh Hussain

(1941-2014)

A first-generation Pakistani migrant sent to England in 1960 as a punishment for running away from home.

Word cloud from RQ1 'Home' coded data.

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Special acknowledgement and thanks are extended to my supervisor, Professor Kathryn Asbury and to my partner Iddy, who have both supported me throughout this long journey. Kathryn has been a wonderful mentor, teacher, advisor and role-model; I am thoroughly in awe of her consistent kindness, patience, razor-sharp intellect and mysterious ability to somehow always make the other person feel bolder, brighter and gifted. Iddy is at the heart of everything that I do; he was the one who (twice) encouraged me to make the leap and change career when he saw what I needed, he has created a space for me to pursue what I love, he has never wavered, and this thesis (like so many other things in my life) would not exist without him.

I thank my mother who, having left school herself at sixteen, maintained an unswerving dedication to the education of her daughter (against many odds), without which it is unlikely I would be where I am today.

And I must especially mention my daughter, Zubeida, who is always such a powerhouse of joy in my life that she fuels all I do.

I also thank all those participants who shared their stories with me so generously.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as references.

A small portion of the transcription of interviews was undertaken by a handful of GenOmics and Life Stories (GOALS) lab team interns. The sections that were transcribed by lab interns were minimal and mostly related to the pandemic related interview question; this data was used solely for Chapter 7. All transcription excerpts were carefully proofread and checked by the author. My special thanks to Emily Gander who completed the majority of this work.

List of abbreviations and glossary

Abbreviations

P(number)	Interview participant and a number allocated to differentiate/anonymise the individual
Q(number)	Questionnaire respondent and a number allocated to differentiate/anonymise the individual

Glossary

South Asian	For the purposes of this study this refers to people originating from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh.
Migrant	Individual born in one country, settled in another voluntarily. ('*First-generation*').
Migrant family	Family containing foreign-born parents.
1.5 generation	Foreign-born individuals who arrive in country of settlement before the age of six. (De Feyter, Parada, Hartman, Curby, & Winsler, 2020).

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview of project

This project originally began as a mixed methods study entitled *'Migration Stories'* which intended to investigate the educational, occupational and mental health outcomes of South Asian Muslims in the UK via an online questionnaire and one hundred life-story interviews from first- and second-generations of this ethno-religious group.

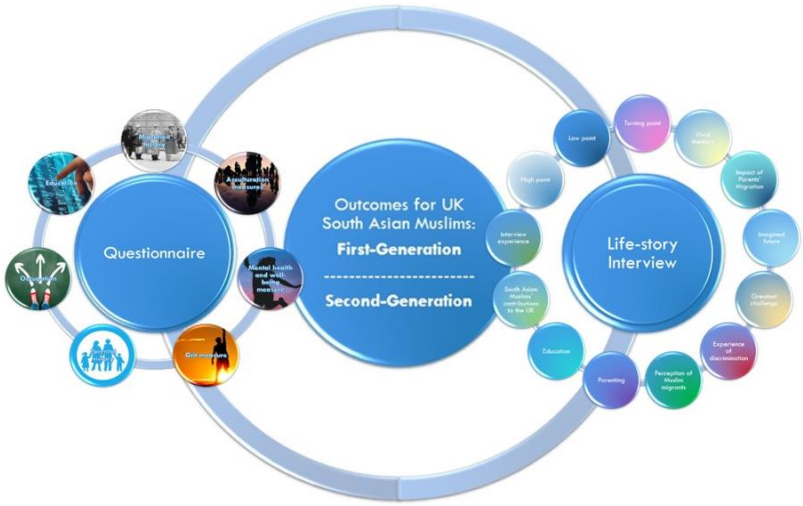


Figure 1: Illustration of the components of the 'Migration Stories' project.

This project proved too large for a PhD study, and the parameters were revised. The current *'Dual Vision'* study takes a portion of the data from the life-story interviews of second-generation participants and explores their views on the impact of migration on their own and their parents' lives.

Figure 2: Illustration of the components of the 'Dual Vision' project.

1.2 Positioning of the researcher

The researcher is a critical instrument in the process of any investigation. It has become an indispensable aspect of their role to provide contextual information in order to situate themselves in relation to the inquiry, the participants and the data that they are to be involved with (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020). This is especially necessary when undertaking qualitative work employing reflexive practices such as thematic analysis, which is the case here. The contextual information provided delineates the lens through which the data has been viewed and processed (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The thrust of this research, its implementation, and my consequent reading of the data is coloured by my personal and professional history; these have created my interests and my understanding of phenomena.

I am a socialist, a feminist and a fifty-seven-year-old woman. I have been a secondary school English teacher, a social worker, and am now a psychologist. I am a parent, daughter, sister and partner. I believe in social change, and ungenerous, closed-mindedness makes me sometimes angry, sometimes sad. I am hopeful. These are some of my positions.

1.2.1 Biographical outline

I am the daughter of a middle-class Pakistani man who, when a teenager, was sent to Britain as a short-term punishment by his authoritarian, army officer father, and a white working-class British woman whose plans to join the RAF and see the world were abruptly cut short by the swift succession of falling in love, marriage and motherhood. In his late teens, my father was sent away from his comfortable middle-class home in Sialkot in order to work for his uncle in the British midlands and learn some obedience and conformity. Instead, he soon found an excuse to leave his uncle's employment and head to London where he built a free and independent life for himself as the 1960s took off. Five or six years later, he met my mother and the rest is history.

I grew up moving between the very white world of 1970s Britain, and the raucous, vibrant environment of my father's family and friends. I was generally very happy, but I also knew there were problems and awkwardnesses surrounding me; things did not really fit as neatly as they should. I was happy with my Pakistani and my English families alike, but they were just that – two very separate entities. My Pakistani family were loud, expansive, tactile, joyous, teasing and busy; there was always music playing, a superfluity of relations, new clothes and bangles, spontaneity, an abundance of food, late nights, and a language spoken that I only partially understood. Only every third word meant something to me; it was like looking at a garden through the cracks and chinks in a wall. My English family were a more sparse selection of individuals, quietly affectionate and keen to wrap me in flannel pyjamas, *'Crossroads'* and *'Sale of the Century'*, domestic chores, treats and gentle kindnesses. For all their love of me, neither side

of the family understood the other; there was tolerance but no meeting point between them. As each side of the family reassured me that I wasn't truly like the *'other lot'*, they made it clear by doing so that I was too different therefore to be fully one of *'our lot'*. Thus, I lived in a bubble separate from each side, bouncing between the two, never fully part of either.

During my childhood (and early adulthood) I met no-one from a dual heritage background. Being *'half-caste'* was a label planted in my head, a label sometimes hurled at me across a playground, something reinforced by the treatment I received from those I loved, and something that firmly cast me in the role of *'other'*. With the exception of my brother, I traversed a landscape barren of anyone like me. My father's migration, and my parents' decision to unite had brought me to this point. Everything I was and experienced came from those original decisions. The situation was further exacerbated by my parents' nomadic lifestyle; in my first eighteen years of life, we moved house more than twenty times, and I attended over thirteen different schools. Day-to-day life was not unhappy, but I was thoroughly an outsider and belonged nowhere. Over the years, I have fluctuated in my opinion about the need and desirability of belonging, but it is inescapable that my entire life has been characterised by a constant recalibration of those needs and desires. I have always looked at the world with an outsider's eye; sometimes this has felt like a deficit and sometimes a strength.

In migrating across the world, in settling down with someone from an alien culture, in moving his family from place to place around the UK and northern Europe, in not teaching his children to be confidently bilingual, and in speaking very little about his upbringing and homeland, my father omitted to look ahead at the impact his decisions would have on the identity of his children. Equally, in living my childhood in a society that made no space for people like me, and openly vilified or rejected people like my father, or the choices made by my parents to be a *'mixed race'* couple, Britain failed to instil in me a sense of my rightful place and a positive acceptance of me as a British citizen. As a consequence, issues of identity and agency, in the context of culture and migration, are as central to my life as they are to this research.

As an adult, I have always had a strong social conscience and chose my areas of work accordingly. I went into both teaching and social work with high ideals aiming to educate, empower and liberate. I was a member of a socialist activist group for many years, and have taken on many roles in the voluntary sector (in Women's Aid, environmental groups, learning support, adoption services, and school governorships). This focus on education, activism and social advancement is thoroughly embedded in my perspective on life and my areas of academic interest.

1.2.2 Insider/outsider

Considering the subject group of this study, it is important to state that I am an atheist. I always have been an atheist, my parents were atheists and I was brought up in and around a family of mostly unapologetically secular Pakistanis who were *'Muslim'*, in the same sense that many of the indigenous British (especially in the 1970s and 1980s) would identify as being *'C of E'* without doing a great deal about it.

I possess elements positioning me both inside and outside of the ethno-religious group I am working with. Being of South Asian heritage, possessing a Muslim name, and being able to speak a little Urdu and Punjabi, I could therefore be perceived as an *'insider'* by interviewees. This insider status contributed to creating a comfortable space in which participants felt able to express themselves freely and led to a trustful atmosphere during the interviews. It also allowed for an easy shorthand in communication, with shared references and assumed shared perspectives on such things as family life, discrimination, and Middle Eastern politics. Not only was this important for the course of the interview (conducted by telephone, so lacking physical cues and reinforcements), but for the 'takeaway' culmination of experience that the interviewee can reflect on following the interview and hopefully feel at ease with.

These insider elements are balanced with various outsider characteristics which no doubt give me a little distance and contribute to maintaining professional detachment. This balancing act between the two positions is something that was never intended to mislead or deceive the participants; it led to effective rapport-building in a limited timeframe, I allowed the participants to make any assumptions they chose, but I answered completely honestly when asked direct questions about my heritage.

My positionality as a researcher encompasses many things. I have a strong interest in identity, culture, the impact of migration, belonging, resilience, social justice, empowerment and having a voice. Being the daughter of a South Asian Muslim migrant many of my experiences are relevant or similar to the participants in this study, but plenty are also distinctly different. All of these characteristics inform and drive the research that I undertake.

1.3 Terminology

1.3.1 Migrants

There is a great deal of emotive language used concerning the movement of individuals from one country and culture to another. Words such as émigré, immigrant, refugee, traveller, asylum seeker and expatriate all carry distinctly different and powerful connotative meaning. There exists a wide array of words in common usage to refer to this phenomenon (see Figure 1), their number and inconsistent use can be problematic for academics and non-academics alike who wish to avoid being reductive or oppressive (Hannigan, O'Donnell, O'Keeffe, & MacFarlane, 2016). This study uses the term *'migrant'* in an attempt to strike as neutral a tone as possible in this fierce battleground of ideologies, identity and politics. The term is applied to all those who leave the country of their birth (and origin of their legal citizenship and nationality) to settle in a different country and culture. There is a distinction to be made between voluntary and non-voluntary migrants (although the dividing line is by no means a simple one), but participants in this study fall broadly into the former category (as individuals in potentially more vulnerable groups (such as asylum seekers) were not approached to participate). Furthermore, for the purposes of this literature review, *'migrant'* will refer to those undertaking voluntary migration unless otherwise stated.

Figure 3: Word cloud: terms used to describe those who relocate from one culture/country to another; the larger the font size the higher the frequency of usage (Hannigan et al., 2016, p.6).

1.3.2 Generational Status

This study defines the generational status of migrants along fairly conventional lines: first-generation migrants are individuals who were born outside of the country that they have subsequently settled in (and at birth have the original country's citizenship); second-generation migrants are those individuals who have one or two parents born outside of the country of settlement, but who were themselves born

in the country that they are currently settled in (Callahan & Humphries, 2016; Gambino, 2017; Heath, Rothon, & Kilpi, 2008; Lauderdale & Heckman, 2017).

Additionally, the term *'1.5 generation'* migrants is increasingly being used by authors (M. Boyd, 2009; Louie, 2001) as a convenient method of indicating the youth of the first-generation migrant who arrived in a new country as a child and subsequently had most of their upbringing and education in that 'host' nation with its adoptive culture.

1.4 Research questions

These are intentionally designed as open questions in keeping with the nature of an exploratory study:

RQ1: How do second-generation South Asian Muslims in the UK describe the impact of migration on themselves and their parents?

RQ2: How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact them as South Asian Muslims?

Chapter 2: Context and history: British South Asian Muslims

"We are here because you were there."

Ambalavaner Sivanandan

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 Introduction

British South Asian Muslims are under pressure. As members of migrant families, as a non-White ethnic group, and as adherents to perhaps the most vilified religion on the planet at present, they are under pressure. With that comes a good deal of scrutiny, and this scrutiny tends to adhere to certain prescribed discourses. Since the Salman Rushdie affair in 1988 (Anthony, 2009), Muslims have often been represented as narrow-minded, intolerant extremists who would sanction the violent death of transgressors without mercy or demur (Kumar, 2020). And since the 9/11 attacks in the US and 7/7 in the UK, Muslims have frequently been portrayed as a threat and ever-present danger lurking within otherwise safe, democratic, forward-thinking western societies (Jamil, 2020).

> *"…in media and political rhetoric, Muslims are predominantly perceived as a homogenous group, to be distinguished within an artificial spectrum of 'extremist' and 'moderate', where their nationalist loyalties are always suspect as a result of their religious affiliation" (Saeed, 2016)*

These media representations have been, and continue to be, enormously damaging to the real lives and experiences of British South Asian Muslims, and have had serious repercussions on them as individuals and as a community (Sales, 2012). Such conditions engender two key questions: how are these representations maintained in the face of common sense, empirical data and individuals' lived experience; and how can such prejudices be combatted both by South Asian Muslim communities themselves and by society as a whole?

This ethno-religious group faces hostility on three fronts: for being migrants, for being South Asian and for being Muslim. Historical, philosophical, societal and political perspectives are discussed here to outline the conditions and circumstances South Asian Muslims find themselves living in in Britain today.

2.1.2 Demographics

The past sixty years have witnessed a gradual rise in diversity in Britain. In 1961, 5% of the resident population of England and Wales were born outside of the UK, rising to 6.4% in 1971, 6.7% in 1981, 7.3% in 1991, 8.9% in 2001, 12.4% in 2011, and 14.4% (9.5 million) in 2021 (ONS, 2013; Rienzo & Vargos-Silva, 2022). During this period, India (and Pakistan) have dominated the ranks of origin countries for migrants to the UK; a pattern which has continued to this day (see *Fig. 1*).

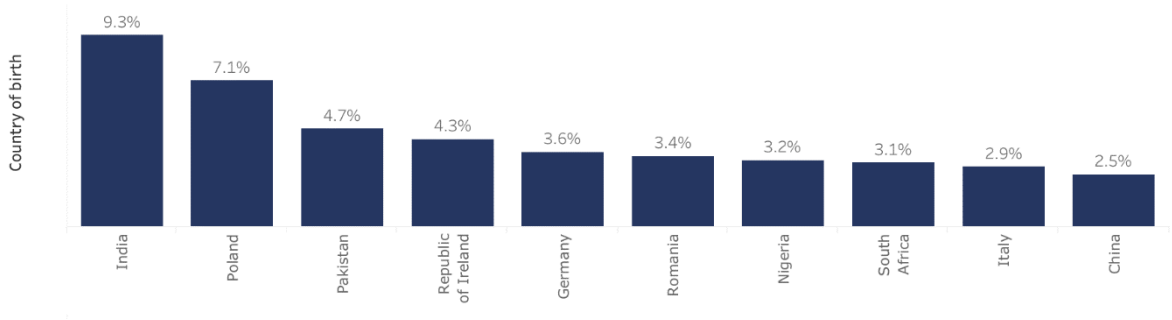


Figure 1: Top ten countries of birth among UK migrants (for the year ending June 2021) taken from 'Migrants in the UK' (Rienzo & Vargos-Silva, 2022).

According to the 2021 census, the second most common ethnic group after *'White British'* (74.4%, 44.4 million out of a total population of 59.6 million in England and Wales), was *'Asian, Asian British'* (9.3%, 5.5 million) (see *Table 1*). And whereas the *'White British'* population is showing a steady decline (87.5%, 45.5 million in 2001; 80.5%, 45.1 million in 2011), the Asian population has demonstrated the largest percentage point increase of any ethnic group (7.5%, 4.2 million in 2011: risen by 1.8%). The *'Asian'* category in the census does include *'Chinese'* and *'Other Asian'* (they constitute 2.3% of the usual resident population of the UK), but, combined, these groups show just 0.1% increase since the 2011 census, whereas the Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani populations continue to grow at a higher rate. These three South Asian groups together constitute almost half of the total ethnic minority population of the UK, with Indian (3.1%, 1.9 million) being the largest of the three, followed by Pakistani (2.7%, 1.6 million) and then Bangladeshi groups (1.1%, 0.6 million) (ONS, 2022a). It is clear that the South Asian population of the UK is a significant one.

Table 1: Population of England and Wales by (selected) ethnicity over time (ONS, 2022).

Ethnicity	2021%	2011%	2001%
White British	74.4	80.5	87.5
Asian	9.3	7.5	4.4
Indian	3.1	2.5	2
Pakistani	2.7	2	1.4
Bangladeshi	1.1	0.8	0.5
Asian other	1.6	1.5	0.5
Mixed White/Asian	0.8	0.6	0.4

With regard to religion, it is interesting to note that Britain is now no longer a Christian dominated country (see *Table 2*). Although just 94% (56 million people) of the population of England and Wales chose to respond to the religion question in the 2021 census, 46.2% (27.5 million) described themselves as Christian, 37.2% (22.2 million) indicated *'no religion'*, and the next largest group *'Muslim'* constituted 6.5% (3.9 million) rising from the 4.9% (2.7 million) of the 2011 census (ONS, 2022b).

Out of the Muslim population of England and Wales, the majority (59.7%, 2.3 million) originate from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh (MCB, 2024). Although there is a huge disparity in numbers between the UK's two largest religions, Islam is the only one which is currently on the rise. This trajectory is likely to continue as Muslims constitute a much younger demographic compared to the majority population; for example, there are almost double the number of under-sixteen-year-olds in Muslim families than there are in the overall population. Over 90% of Muslims have English as their first language (or speak it with great fluency), 51% are British-born, and 75% identify as British (MCB, 2024).

Table 2: Religious composition of England and Wales, 2011 and 2021 (ONS 2022b)

Religion	2001 (n)	2011 (n)	2021 (n)	2001 (%)	2011 (%)	2021 (%)
Christian	37,338,485	33,268,056	27,522,672	71.8	59.3	46.2
No religion	7,709,267	14,115,359	22,162,062	14.8	25.2	37.2
Not answered	4,010,658	3,976,542	3,595,589	7.7	7.1	6.0
Muslim	1,546,626	2,720,425	3,868,133	3	4.9	6.5
Hindu	552,417	817,679	1,032,775	1.1	1.5	1.7
Sikh	329,355	423,345	524,140	0.6	0.8	0.9
Jewish	259,930	265,073	271,327	0.5	0.5	0.5
Buddhist	144,448	248,580	272,508	0.3	0.4	0.5
Other religion	150,720	240,849	348,334	0.3	0.4	0.6

Clearly, there is not an equal distribution of Muslims in communities of each of the origin countries concerned in this study (see *Table 3*). According to the 2021 census, 92.6% of those of Pakistani origin, 92% of Bangladeshi, and just 13.2% of Indian origin identify as Muslim. Decades of research have demonstrated that socio-economic conditions and outcomes of Indian communities diverge dramatically from those of Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups (Heath & McMahon, 1997; McNabb & Psacharopoulos, 1981; Mirza & Warwick, 2022). Consequently, given the small proportion of Muslims amongst those of Indian origin, when discussing socio-economic issues within this study the focus will be on South Asians in the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities as they represent the majority of British South Asian Muslims.

Table 3: Excerpt from Appendix I: Ethnic representation of Muslims in England and Wales (adapted from sources ONS 2021; MCB 2024).

	2021				2011			
	All	Muslim	Muslims as % of All Population	Muslims as % of Overall Muslim Population	All	Muslim	Muslims as % of All Population	Muslims as % of Overall Muslim Population
Asian/Asian British:	**5,515,426**	**2,550,022**	**46.2**	**65.9**	**4,213,531**	**183,560**	**43.4**	**67.6**
Indian	1,864,318	246,968	13.2	6.4	1,412,958	197,161	14.0	7.3
Pakistani	1,587,822	1,470,775	92.6	38.0	1,124,511	1,028,459	91.5	38.0
Bangladeshi	644,882	593,136	92.0	15.3	447,201	402,428	90.0	14.9
All South Asian	**4,097,022**	**2,310,879**	**56.4**	**59.7**	**2,984,670**	**1,628,048**	**54.5**	**60.2**

Both in terms of ethnicity and religion, South Asian Muslims are a significant sector of society, and have an important stake in Britain. Their presence in considerable numbers in the UK is owed predominantly to the labour related migration of the 1950s and 1960s, and family reunification between the late 1960s and mid-1980s.

Today, despite being long-established in British society, South Asian Muslims are frequently the target of right-wing extremist groups and politicians, and are more generally often treated with varying levels of anxiety or suspicion. South Asian Muslims' ethnicity, religion and migration-related status are each potentially stigmatising in a society that is at best ambivalent about the benefits of migration and often amnesic about its own colonial history (Abrams, Swift, & Houston, 2018; Modood & Salt, 2011).

2.2 A Historical Perspective

2.2.1 India[1]

In order to understand the position of South Asians in Britain it is necessary to have a sense of the relationship and history of these two regions. This section briefly sketches out the historical dimensions of the Indian subcontinent in order to convey an idea of its wealth, power and lost dominance in the world. A dominance that it is certainly currently re-establishing ("How strong is India's economy?," 2024; Mandal, 2024). These highs and lows impact how South Asians in Britain are positioned in society, their sense of identity, and how they feel about themselves and their fellow British citizens.

India has a recorded history that stretches back at least four thousand years and has seen civilisations rise and fall. The Indus Valley Civilisation flourished there between 2600-1900 BCE in northwest India (predominantly in what is now Pakistan), the Vedic era (1500-500 BCE) saw the beginnings of Hindu and Buddhist religions and the earliest evidence of studies into mathematics and astronomy (Wood, 2007), the Mauryan Empire (c.320-230 BCE) saw the emergence of city state kingdoms, was centred in modern day Patna (Bengal), and was considered by Greek sources to be one of the most magnificent cities on earth (Dyson, 2018). During this time, increasing numbers migrated from the region of present day Iran to India, beginning the 'Indo-Aryan' era; the population grew and the caste system (borne out of Hinduism) became well established (Bhatia & Ram, 2023). The population of the Indian subcontinent at this time is estimated to be around 15-30 million (Dyson, 2018).

Sind and the Punjab were conquered and annexed by Darius of Persia in 518 BCE, until overthrown by Alexander the Great in 326 BCE after which the northern regions became Indo-Greek kingdoms for three hundred years, whilst retaining strong Persian connections in language and culture. The earliest trade routes to the Mediterranean were established and coastal settlements grew in importance, organisation and economic heft as trade flourished. Small numbers of Jewish settlers arrived in southern India during this period, and the Silk Road trade route began around 100 BCE (Wood, 2007). The Indian spice trade with Rome lasted for about 500 years, and was at its zenith around 100 CE. The Kushan Empire (100-300 CE) oversaw the flourishing of art, literature, engineering (major dam building) and the first Buddhist missionaries departed for China. During the Gupta Empire (300-550 CE), Kalidasa, the renowned Sanskrit author, wrote plays and poetry, the Kama Sutra was composed, and Aryabhata described the orbits of the planets (ibid.). Although built in the third century BCE, the great Buddhist monastery Śrī Nālandā Mahāvihāra (located in Bihar, northeast India) arguably became the world's first university began in the

[1] The term 'India' will be used rather loosely here; it will often refer to the Indian subcontinent or the countries of what is now Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. (Post-1947 references will refer to the current, post-Partition nation state of India specifically).

fifth century CE; for eight hundred years this became a renowned centre of learning for religion, philosophy, medicine, art and architecture (Pintu, 2018).

Between 600-700 CE, the first Muslim traders from Arabia arrived bringing Islam to India and the first mosque (the Cheraman Juma Masjid) was built in Kodungallur, Kerala. At this point in history, the Indian subcontinent was still made up of many separate 'kingdoms' which generally functioned independently of one another. Estimates of population size of the subcontinent vary enormously and are thought to fall somewhere between 30-86 million at this time (Dyson, 2018). The southern Indian Cholan Empire (871-1279 CE) reached its height in the tenth century, and was known for its wealth and militaristic expansionism (briefly moving into Malaysia and Indonesia). Sikhism was founded in the fifteenth century by Guru Nanak in the northwest of India, and the majority of Sikhs still live in the Punjab to this day (Wood, 2007).

The Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526), five dynasties based in Delhi, introduced the Persian language, arts, law and advanced agricultural methods. Ethnic and linguistic pluralism particularly marked this era; Muslim rulers presided over a majority non-Muslim population and there is evidence of cultural melding even to the extent of shared religious practices (Jalal, 2000). Under the Mughal Empire (1526-1858) pluralistic society and religious tolerance continued. The great wealth and security of the Mughals allowed for the development of strong central political and administrative systems, the economy grew exponentially and at its height the Mughal Empire incorporated most of the Indian subcontinent which at the end of the sixteenth century had an estimated population of somewhere between 116-145 million people (Dyson, 2018). A series of increasingly brutal and destructive succession conflicts, civil wars, and a crushing Persian invasion (in 1738) led to the Mughals' decline as the empire shattered into minor states and principalities (Dalrymple, 2020). This weakened India was in no state to resist the lures or the threats of the East India Company as its power and influence rose to dominance through the eighteenth century.

This swift gallop through the history of India can do little more than convey a handful of notable events, and with it hint at the might, wealth and status of the subcontinent before the British arrived in force. It is a grandeur and a history that South Asians understand as their context and their origins, maybe especially so for those living in the diaspora. Regional identity and loyalty, caste awareness and a long history of comfortable inter-faith, culturally-blended living are long-standing archetypal mindsets that South Asian migrants brought with them on their travels and resettlement in the twentieth century (irrespective of more recent, short-lived sectarian events).

2.2.2 India and Britain

The East India Company was launched in 1600, and mostly through piracy, low-level corrupt dealing and the initial indifferent tolerance of the vast and mighty Mughal empire gained a toe-hold in the Indian subcontinent (Dalrymple, 2020). It was not until the eighteenth century when Mughal power collapsed, that India, shattered into a multitude of competing principalities, became vulnerable to the East India Company's political machinations, rogue trading, amoral ruthlessness, and straightforward violence which ultimately wrested control from the Indian authorities in key areas of wealth and influence such as Delhi, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa; these were the principal areas that contributed to India producing almost a quarter of the world's GDP while Britain created 1.8% (ibid.). With growing wealth, the acquisition of an enormous and highly paid sepoy[2] army, the East India Company (EIC) drained these areas of wealth and resources which they then used to acquire further territory, wealth and power.

To give some idea of the scale of the wealth taken by the British via the EIC, it is estimated that Robert Clive (Governor of Bengal, 1755-60) had a personal fortune amounting to £234,000 in 1760 which made him the richest man in Europe; after the Battle of Plassey he sent the EIC £2.5 million (equivalent to £263 million today); the EIC customs duties alone paid the crown an annual income of £887,000 (over £93 million today); at this time the annual revenue just from Bengal was Rs25 million (equivalent to £325 million today) (ibid.). By the early 1800s, the EIC, a private company, had taken control of Mughal India, and with an annual expenditure of £8.5 million (equivalent to £890 million today) had built most of London's docklands and was responsible for almost half of Britain's trade (ibid.).

Even at times of cataclysmic famine (in Bengal 1770, Madras 1782-3, Chalisa 1783-4, Doji bara 1792-2, Agra 1837-8), severe enough to cause the deaths of an estimated 10 million people[3], the EIC continued to vote itself enormous dividends (Tharoor, 2017). This brought the Company, and thereby the British economy to the point of collapse; the state intervened to prevent their demise and took over the EIC's holdings in India. Almost instantly the British establishment set about rewriting the blood-stained history of state-sanctioned plundering, looting, mass exploitation and terrorising of civilians that had characterised the EIC's actions for the previous two hundred and fifty years. Subsequently, the Victorians successfully created distinctly more heroic and benevolent narratives to explain their presence in India whilst ignoring the injustices and barbarities that continued to be conducted there under British rule (Said, 1978; Sanghera, 2021).

[2] Indigenous, locally raised, highly paid recruits trained in Western warfare and armed with newly developed European military hardware (Dalrymple, 2020).

[3] Further famines occurred in Orissa (1866), Bihar (1873-4), Southern India (1876-7), across all India (1896-1900), Bombay (1905-6), and Bengal (1943-4); between 1770-1900 it is estimated that 25 million died, and 35 million died in the twentieth century famines (Tharoor, 2017).

Apologists for Empire often cite the building of railways, the rule of law, modern state administration and systems of education as the benefits bestowed upon the Indian subcontinent by the British. However, it is self-evident that these are all important components for a comfortable and efficient way of life for the ruling elite (Tharoor, 2017). Troops and resources could be moved swiftly and economically about the country, the masses organised and controlled through unified bureaucratic systems, and indoctrinated through the education system.

From the Indian perspective, certain key events became defining moments in their relationship with the British, and continue to resonate to this day. In 1857 the first War of Independence (known by the British as the Indian Mutiny) was fought, and, in victory, there followed a mass killing spree by the British (known for decades after as the 'Devil's Wind'). It centred in Lucknow, Kanpur and Delhi where over 100,000 men, women and children were killed, and many more raped, wounded and abused (Tharoor, 2017). The brutality and wide-ranging ferocity of the British reprisals for the Indian Revolt was on an unprecedented scale (people were hung, shot, bayonetted, forced to lick up the blood of the British civilians killed in the Bibigarh[4], men were sewn into pigskins or blown from the mouths of cannons). These events transformed the outlooks of both the British and the Indian populations; the British felt that 'the natives' were dangerous, could not be trusted and had to be kept down, and to the Indian population these horrors became embedded in the shared consciousness that led to a justifiable terror of the consequences of any future uprising or insubordination (Dalrymple, 2006). After this point the British state took control from the EIC, and there was a complete realignment of the elite and influential classes; culture shifted from Mughal-dominated law, arts and sensibilities to British-stamped education, social structures, laws and language dominance (Tharoor, 2017). This, together with an influx of British troops who supplanted the previous sepoy army of the EIC, led to a high Victorian period of no resistance from the native population and a flourishing of British systems and values together with a rise of Hindu culture to fill the vacuum left by the absence of Persian traditions. Mughal culture, clothing and aesthetics were cast off in favour of the British language, literature, and dress. The caste system came more to the fore as a part of Hindu culture, and the British utilised this as another means of subjugating and exploiting the Indian population.

For centuries, despite temporary unifying structures imposed by Mughal emperors, the people of the Indian subcontinent had lived in an ununified country comprised of more than three hundred and fifty separate princely states, with people speaking over two hundred different languages, and identifying primarily with their region above religion or caste. In the second half of the nineteenth century, censuses imposed by the British in every region of India required people to declare both religion and caste, and the British enthusiastically set about creating imagined anthropological divisions between 'superior' and

[4] The massacre of 73 British women and 124 children in the Bibigarh gardens in Kanpur in 1857 triggered the Revolt.

'inferior' castes and religions, focusing on which attributes made these 'types' martial, loyal, intelligent, devious, swift-footed, active or lazy, and consequently which type of work, or position in the army would be appropriate for them. These attitudes became so established that Indians themselves internalised them, and, post-independence, employed the same principles in army recruitment (Barua, 1995). For the British this was an invaluable tool in their 'divide and rule' policy, but for the Indian population it was disastrous in fostering dangerous sectarianism in the pressure-cooker interwar years, in the independence movement, only to come to full fruition in 1947 (Jalal, 2000).

Three other major events are important turning points when considering shifts of perspective in the relationship between these two countries: the Partition of Bengal (1905), post-World War One treatment of the Indian population culminating in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre (1919), and Partition (1947). All three events are profoundly felt to this day by many South Asians.

In 1905, George Curzon, Viceroy of India (1899-1905) attempted to deal with unrest in Bengal by partitioning the region (approximately the size of France and with a population of over 80 million) along religious grounds, thus stoking antagonism between communities and planting the seeds for Hindu-Muslim separatism. This action also became a catalyst for the Swadeshi ('Free India') movement. The long-term repercussions were profound in that it engendered a fierce communal divide on the grounds of religion that would sharpen during the following decades as the Hindu-led nationalist movement grew in strength, and eventually resulted in the cataclysm of violence that was Partition in 1947 (Ray, 1977; Tharoor, 2017). This divide has reasserted itself in present day India. To this day those in South Asia and the diaspora live with the aftermath of these events.

This is also true of India's experiences following the First World War. India's contribution to the British war effort was immense. During World War One, 1.2 million South Asian recruits fought as part of the British Indian Army (400,000 of whom were Muslim). Over 47,000 were killed and 65,000 wounded fighting in Europe, East Africa and the Middle East. Following this enormous sacrifice, there was a general expectation that some reparation (possibly in the form of granting dominion status), or at least a reversion of the repressive Defence of India Act[5], would be forthcoming given the scale of the contribution (both in resources and lives) made by Indians in a British war. Instead, the wartime constrictions were extended and tightened by the Rowlatt Act[6]. This met with almost universal outrage, providing "*provocation for a thousand mutinies*" (Jalal, 2000; p.200), sparking a previously compliant

[5] A temporary law intended for the duration of the War giving extensive, swingeing powers to deal with everything from dissent to criminal or anti-war behaviour with penalties ranging from fines, imprisonment without trial, to execution (Ilbert, 1917).

[6] The Act was passed despite unanimous opposition by Indian council members, it effectively placed the Indian population under martial law in an attempt to suppress the growing nationalist movement; those suspected of dissent could be imprisoned for two years without trial.

Gandhi into action, and triggering a mass 'prayer day' (a national strike without the name). As a response, when crowds gathered at the Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar on 13th April 1919 to protest peacefully, orders were given to shoot directly into the assembled civilians; accounts vary, but an estimated 600-2000 were killed, and approximately 1500 injured (Anand, 2019). These events generated enormous rage against the injustice of the British army's actions and they have gone down in history as an unaddressed atrocity committed by the British. To this day, (together with steadfast calls for the return of the Koh-i-noor diamond), an apology for this event is a central reparation for colonisation looked for by South Asians all over the world. This built great expectations in 2019, the centenary year of the massacre, that the British state would make an official acknowledgement and apology; previously, there had been highly critical responses when successive royal and ministerial visits to Amritsar (in 1997, 2013 and 2016) resulted in no recognition of the crimes committed there in the name of the British state (Burns, 1997; McTague, 2013). This continues to be a highly emotive issue awaiting redress (Sandford, 2023; Shekhar, 2017; Tharoor, 2016).

The greatest hammer blow in Anglo-Indian history fell when the British relinquished the colony in 1947: the Partition of India. The subcontinent was divided ostensibly to provide separate homelands for Muslims and Hindus, creating (West) Pakistan, a reduced India, and East Pakistan (later to become Bangladesh). It is important to remember that in the same way as violent protests followed the First World War, Partition came two years after the end of the Second World War, and similarly found a large number of trained (and unrewarded) ex-soldiers, in the country. During World War Two, India had sent an unprecedented number of volunteers (2.5 million) to fight for the British army, air force and navy; 24,000 were killed, 65,000 wounded, and 80,000 taken as prisoners of war (APPG, 2017; MCB, 2014). Vast resources were diverted into the war effort; the entirety of India's timber, wool and leather output, and the majority of its steel and cement production went into Britain's war efforts (APPG, 2017). Through taxation and 'war gratuities' £13.1 million was paid to the British, but it has been estimated that a total of £142.6 million (equivalent to approximately £66 billion today) was taken in currency and resources during the war years (Tharoor, 2017).

India had suffered great losses, had been drained of resources and, in addition, was rife with long-fostered factional, religious, and caste-bound divisions. The devastating social schism that was Partition, tore through India, uprooting 15 million people, its largescale inter-communal violence leaving 2 million dead, and untold numbers of traumatised survivors (Haq, 2022). The first of those migrating to the UK in the post-war years carried their experiences of the catastrophic rupture with them, and this unprecedented upheaval certainly provided the motivation for some to migrate out of the subcontinent (Peach, 2006), with a proportion choosing to migrate to the *'mother country'* who had dominated life in India for generations and who were about to throw open the doors to welcome members of the newly

formed Commonwealth. There is evidence to suggest that those who migrated prior to Partition exhibited greater liberality of outlook and were less likely to be defined by religious-based constructs of ethnicity; instead they assumed a *'pan-ethnic'* identity beyond language and religious affiliations (Shankar & Balgopal, 2001). Whilst those who experienced the mayhem, slaughter, terror and loss of Partition prior to migration have been marked by that trauma to this day (Yusin, 2009), and are more likely to have absorbed the ethno-religious divisions of the Indian subcontinent fostered by the British *'divide and conquer'* strategy of subjugation.

The complex intricacies of the allegiances, aspirations, hostilities, injustices, and cultural boundaries bred through the years of the Raj are inextricably intertwined with the estimated £35.4 trillion[7] extorted from the Indian sub-continent (between 1765 and 1938) and cannot be overstated or simply described (Chakrabarti & Patnaik, 2017). Suffice it to say, for the purposes of this study, that such an intertwining of these two nations' histories led to a complex relationship and powerful channels of identification between India and Britain. And the life-stories and experiences of the first-generation to migrate the UK will inevitably colour those of their children and the narratives they bring to this study.

2.2.3 Migration

South Asians in Britain do not have a comparable iconic starting point in popular consciousness as do those of the *'Windrush'* migration from the Caribbean, although they were contemporaries in responding to the British call across the Commonwealth dominions for additional labour to rebuild Britain following the devastation of the Second World War. As is the case with Afro-Caribbean minority groups, South Asians arrived in the UK earlier than is commonly supposed. People of African and Asian descent have been resident in these islands for centuries, dating back to Roman times, and certainly prior to the naming of these then obscure and unremarkable territories now known as Britain (Olusoga, 2016).

South Asians have traded with Europeans for at least 7000 years (Giumlia-Mair, Jeandin, & Ota, 2009), and trade means movement. From the start of the eighteenth century, small South Asian communities were in evidence in Britain as Indian sailors (lascars) and domestic staff (ayahs) who had arrived through the previous century began to settle and establish themselves independently in London (Visram, 1986). The end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth witnessed an increase in the numbers of students travelling from India to England to gain qualifications in medicine, law and engineering (reaching a peak of 1,800 in 1885, and continuing at that level for another ten years). The additional status that British university qualifications bestowed was important for career advancement in India, but equally so there was a desire to fulfil an idealised notion of life in Britain, romantic notions

[7] The full, up-to-date amount is estimated to be over £50 trillion (Iyer, 2023).

which had been generated by the Indian education system steeped in British history, hierarchy, and literature (Lahiri, 2000).

Such feelings ran deep across Indian society and seeped into succeeding generations. It was further, and dramatically, galvanised into action when the 1948 British Nationality Act redefined Commonwealth citizenship as being on a par with *'British subjects'*, and effectively cast aside restrictions on freedom of movement between all countries of the British Commonwealth. As such, the Act could be seen as an unintentional legislative basis for the creation of a multicultural Britain (Panayi, 2010). There soon followed the first of three major waves of migration from South Asia to Britain. The first wave comprised predominantly of single men, the majority of whom arrived with a simple plan: to work in the UK for a set number of years and then return home. However, the nature of the British response to this migration wave changed the course of those plans, and resulted in the majority of these migrants unexpectedly settling in Britain permanently and raising families here.

Although the 1948 British Nationality Act was essentially designed as a mechanism to encourage (White British) migrants to return *'home'* from countries such as Canada, South Africa and Australia in order to repopulate Britain following the Second World War (Patel, 2021), it had the unforeseen effect of throwing open the gates for non-White citizens of the Commonwealth to migrate to the UK. Consequently, there was effectively freedom of movement around the remnants of the British empire between 1948 and the enactment of the Conservative Government's 1962 Immigration Act which reinstated restrictions on migration. Ironically, considering his notorious *'Rivers of Blood'* speech in 1968, it was Enoch Powell as Health Minister who oversaw and was highly instrumental in promoting the migration of nurses from the Caribbean and doctors from the Punjab between 1960 and 1962 (Howard, 2012; Tomlinson, 2018).

However, a series of Immigration Acts (1962, 1968, 1971) incrementally transformed non-White members of the commonwealth from *'citizens'* to *'immigrants'*. And yet it is notable that the 1962 Act had the unanticipated consequence of accelerating permanent migration dramatically. This occurred when lone male economic migrants suddenly discovered that the doors to the UK were about to close and that they had to make a final decision to jump one way or another. Many decided that they were not financially secure enough at that point to return home and so sent for their families to join them in Britain instead before the impending restrictions made that impossible. Thus, those in government who had wished to curtail immigration had inadvertently caused an enormous upsurge in the numbers migrating, and powerfully consolidated the South Asian communities of the UK with a second wave of migration centred on family reunification (Luthra & Platt, 2017).

That is not to say that migration was easy for South Asians between 1948 and 1962. Apart from the personal losses, sacrifices and precariousness inherent in migration itself, governmentally enforced fiscal restrictions handicapped these travellers still further; it meant that those migrating from Pakistan could

only bring £5 into the country with them, and for those from India it was limited to £3. Once in the UK, these non-White British citizens found that although there was no official colour bar, there was one in practice. There were no laws in place to prevent employers from rejecting non-White workers, or landlords from turning away non-White applicants for accommodation. In Britain, anti-racist campaigns had to fight for laws to establish rights for non-Whites, as compared to the US where the fight was against racist laws actively permitting discrimination (Street, 2008).

In 1965 the Labour Government passed the Race Relations Act which promoted integration together with a limitation on the numbers of migrants granted entry to the UK. This was considered by some to be a liberal response to managing migration (Bleich, 2005), but in fact it was used as a means of shutting down growing anti-racist campaigns (specifically targeting Black Power activists) in the UK as it imposed tailored restrictions on free speech and what was to be considered incitement to violence (Lasson, 1987).

The 1968 Race Relations Act finally made it illegal to refuse housing, employment or services on the basis of colour or race, but although it established these rights the subsequent amendments made to the legislation ensured that its power was limited. The new law recognised the increase of open and public forms of discrimination and attempted to supply a means of combatting this via the opportunity to bring legal proceedings where racial offences had taken place, and to direct public funds to support ethnic minority groups who were living in poor conditions and unable to move beyond very limited incomes (Sooben, 1990). However, the level of proof required to go to law (together with prohibitive costs) meant that this route was beyond the reach of most ordinary people. Furthermore, the government, in attempting to direct funds towards ethnic minority communities living in poor conditions, found themselves having to circumvent a political backlash by Enoch Powell's supporters and thus decided to redesignate those funds to *"urban areas of general social need"* which led effectively to a compensation programme for white people living in multi-racial areas (Glazer & Young, 1983).

Enoch Powell was an influential figure at this time as he stoked and fuelled both racism and anti-migrant paranoia; but his impact has survived his era and has bled into the succeeding six decades of political discourse and policy-making as well as providing pseudo-respectability for far-right groups founded on racism. His legacy becomes more significant when considering developments post 9/11 and during the Brexit era, and so warrants a little more detail here. Enoch Powell, Conservative MP and government minister (1950-74), famously foretold that continued migration to the UK would inevitably lead to great misery, discrimination, violation, neglect and violence, although he argued that the "persecuted minority" (Powell, 1968) concerned in that scenario was actually the White British (majority) population. The infamous '*Rivers of Blood*' speech was one of many he gave on the subject of immigration, and each ignited a spree of racist violence on the streets; establishing a pattern of incitement and violence that has been repeated through succeeding decades. The speech itself, and its repackaged arguments, have

been reiterated by right-wing politicians and white supremacist groups alike, repeating the same cycles of harassment, persecution and violence against minorities periodically ever since (Bourne, 2008). Powell objected to any legislation designed to minimise discrimination against non-White ethnic minority groups; he characterised them as an "alien" threat rather than recognising them as a sector of British citizens requiring protection. Powell galvanised popular racism, provided a scholarly veneer for these views and initiated the political practice of focusing on the "numbers game" when debating and migration legislating (Sivanandan, 1998). His legacy continues to pervade British politics, and has been seen in its most vitriolic forms when protective, anti-discriminatory legislation has been proposed, or, especially in recent years, when governments have become vulnerable and unpopular, and attempted to garner support of the White majority via the lowest of common denominators (Tomlinson, 2018). In the 1960s and 70s, with violence stoked and fermenting on the streets as a matter of course against non-White ethnic minorities, Powell and his supporters created a dangerous and hostile environment for many wishing to migrate to the UK.

The impetus for the third wave of South Asian migration to the UK began in the 1970s due to events set in motion in the first half of the twentieth century. The same concepts of racial hierarchy which were so popular with the British in India were also applied in Africa, and it had been decided to propagate this by encouraging South Asians to take the business and administrative posts in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda that British authorities considered the indigenous African population too inept to undertake. In this extended policy of racial hierarchy in East Africa, South Asians constituted the middle layer of the *"colonial sandwich"*. They were positioned as *"nearly on par with the natives"* but retained a minor level of privilege and advancement by demonstrating adherence to these imposed social structures and observing a level of loyalty to the British elite on whom they depended (Brah, 1996). When Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania (then Tanganyika) gained independence in the early 1960s, South Asians were offered British citizenship and the right to settle in the UK. This became more imperative in 1972 when Idi Amin expelled all South Asians (regardless of whether they had attained Ugandan citizenship). Many, now at least a generation away from their experience of living in the Indian subcontinent, found it more natural to move to Britain than to *'return'* to Asia. The British government reacted to this new stream of South Asians in a highly repressive manner. The 1971 Immigration Act *"surrendered to racism"* (Panayi, 2010: p.63) by closing the doors on open immigration, and stipulated that only those with grandparents born in the UK could freely migrate to Britain. As 1971 was also the year of the Bangladesh Liberation War which led to ten million East Bengali refugees leaving Bangladesh, there was a (relatively moderate) upsurge of Bangladeshi migrants to the UK (see Table 4). This was responded to with the 1981 British Nationality Act which reversed the British citizenship status awarded in 1948, and reduced all members of the Commonwealth to the unexceptional status of *'foreigners'* as stipulated in the 1919 Aliens Act (ibid.).

Table 4: Growth of the South Asian population of Great Britain, 1951-2001 (Peach, 2006: p.134).

Year	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Total South Asian
1951	31,000	10,000	2000	43,000
1961	81,000	25,000	6000	112,000
1971	375,000	119,000	22,000	516,000
1981	676,000	296,000	65,000	1,037,000
1991	840,000	477,000	163,000	1,480,000
2001	1,000,000	747,000	280,000	2,027,000

From the beginning of the three waves of South Asian migration, during the initial post-war period when migration was encouraged by the British government, contradictions, hypocrisy and discrimination were deeply embedded within the policy. Post-1945, approximately 200,000 Eastern Europeans were welcomed to Britain, at the same time as a few hundred migrants aboard the Empire Windrush were described as an *'influx'* and treated with hostility (Tomlinson, 2018). Notions of race and superiority swiftly came to the fore in attitudes to migration in social and political discourses, so much so that Winston Churchill even contemplated adopting the *'Keep Britain White'* slogan for his 1955 general election campaign (ibid.). Ideas about hierarchies of race were integral to the successful rationalisations supporting the British empire's invasion and brutal subjugation of over a hundred different countries around the world (Dorling & Tomlinson, 2019). Those deep-rooted prejudices were not only hard to shift in the post-war decades, they continue to prove themselves both unexpectedly enduring (especially in subterranean partisan caverns), and swiftly resumed and propagated when mainstream political expediency demands.

Of the 3.9 million Muslims in the UK, 60% (2.3 million) originate from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh (ONS, 2022b). The majority of the first-generation migrants who established these communities in Britain came mainly from rural areas (predominantly in and around the Punjab, Mirpur, Faisalabad, Gujurat and Sylhet) impoverished following the decimation of world wars and Partition. They settled largely in major industrial towns and cities in Britain, often seeking employment in mills and factories (in the Midlands, Lancashire and Yorkshire) and more general employment in London. They moved into terraced housing stock vacated by previous generations of now established migrants of other ethnicity, which provided effective spaces for packing in large numbers of people (Nasser, 2003). The culture shock must have been immense.

Participants in this study reference their parents' experiences of arriving in Britain, and how those experiences impacted them, their children and their communities. In doing so, participants reference Partition, colonialism, the caste system, the Bangladeshi War, famines in the Indian subcontinent, the financial need of family 'back home', the treatment of South Asians in Africa, the hostile reception received on arrival in Britain, Enoch Powell, discrimination and violence on the streets, damage done by Britain as an imperial power, and what is owed to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh; these are live subjects in South Asian families, and although they may not be at the forefront of day-to-day living, they are family experiences and narratives that continue to mark South Asian Muslims living in the UK today.

2.2.4 Orientalism and Islamophobia

Orientalism and Islamophobia often mark how South Asian Muslims are treated in the Occident. It is necessary therefore to present some of the key positions and arguments that characterise these concepts.

2.2.4.1 Orientalism

Edward Said's seminal work 'Orientalism' (1978) argued that those living in the 'West' (the Occident) do not live in the unbiased, clear-sighted, balanced and neutral environment that many believe. Instead, he argues that science, culture, politics and every other realm of human endeavour is shaped or tainted by an ideology that positions Asia and the Middle East as 'Other', 'Alien', exotic, dangerous, under-developed, often infantile and certainly inferior; the Orient represents all that is fundamentally in opposition to everything prized and experienced in the Occident. Said demonstrated how racist or romanticised writings influenced ideologies, galvanised by economic gain, and resulted in worldviews that were very useful in justifying everything from ridicule and prejudice to crusades, theft, appropriation, and Empire.

The 'Orient' is never clearly defined geographically, but the *"semi-mythical construct"* has been used predominantly to refer to Egypt, the Levant, the Middle East, and South Asia[8]. Needless to say, this covers an array of culture, languages, landscapes, customs, political regimes and religions, and yet they are often considered as one unvarying, ageless entity without distinction or meaningful identity. It provides the West with a useful antithetical abstract notion to define itself against.

[8] Said's orientalism is very much positioned around Islam, but study in this area has since broadened to encompass East Asia, particularly China and Confucianism (Dirlik, 1996); (Kluge, 2019).

Orientalism is not restricted to, but is often dominated by, a focus on Islam (positioned as the antithesis to Christianity). Muslims are often presented as unfathomable and barbaric; these are tropes that can easily be found in present day politics, but also have centuries of history behind them. Said contended that Islam embodied *"a real provocation"* to Christian Europeans. Islam was centred in regions bordering Europe, shared important religious testaments, revered lands adjacent to (or on top of) Biblical lands, had a celebrated history of scholarship and scientific advancement, and *"unrivalled military and political successes … [which] outstripped and outshone Rome"* at its height (Said, 1978; p.74). Supressing knowledge, exploration and recognition of these academic and historical achievements reduces the power and scope of the 'Eastern', Asian, Muslim people; it minimises and curtails their identity, it undermines their position, negates any respect or understanding, and provides comfortable justifications for colonial rule, subjugation, and contemporary foreign and domestic policies of discrimination or oppression.

Said's work was seminal in shaping post-colonial theory and has influenced many disciplines of academic study from the arts to the sciences. But it also shines a light on the political and personal treatment of people who have travelled from the poorly defined yet generally untrustworthy and potentially threatening 'East' (with alien appearances, languages, clothing, cultures and religion) to take up space and resources in Britain. Such attitudes owe a great deal to a long-held orientalist traditions in literature and historic scientific endeavour, but also to contemporary representations in film, television, and video games, as well as news reports and political rhetoric (Abbas, 2007; Tell MAMA, 2023)

2.2.4.2 Islamophobia

The last twenty-five years have seen a burgeoning in the conception, propagation and use of the term *'Islamophobia'* (Najib & Teeple Hopkins, 2020). Despite being a frequently contested term, countering anti-Muslim prejudice has been and continues to be extremely relevant and important in a world where anti-Muslim discourses have become rife and many governments have weaponised such attitudes in both foreign and domestic politics (Elahi & Khan, 2017; Runnymede Trust, 1997; UN, 2024).

In 1997, the Runnymede Trust produced the first major study examining the nature and impact of Islamophobia in Britain. It defined the term as referring to an *"unfounded hostility towards Islam"* leading to the *"unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities, and to the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs"* (Runnymede Trust, 1997: page 4). The authors clarified their definition by propounding that prejudiced or *'closed'* views about Muslims are characterised by seeing Islam as *'monolithic and static'*, as separate and *'other'*, inferior to alternative religions, aggressive and dangerous; and where Muslims are considered to be manipulative, untrustworthy, their views are unheard, they are not given space for fair debate, and where discrimination and/or anti-Muslim discourse

is normalised. Definitions of Islamophobia have been debated and refined over the years, but this starting point set out the parameters of the concept and the nature of the stigma strongly.

Social, often media-driven, discourses on Islamophobia regularly concentrate on whether or not Islamophobia can be considered as serious an offence as racism. However, there is substantial evidence to support the argument that in many Western countries certainly including Britain, *'Muslimness'* is conflated with *'South Asianness'*; which goes some way to explain the numerous attacks on Sikhs during waves of anti-Muslim violence (APPG, 2018; Awan & Zempi, 2020). Many argue that given the socially constructed nature of 'race' in the first place, there should be no difficulty in recognising Islamophobia (and anti-Semitism) as being on a par with racism as it is often directed at non-White Muslims and ascribes to them particular characteristics and behaviours that are considered problematic or dangerous (Meer & Modood, 2012). Islamophobia is generally understood as a manifestation of dislike or hatred for a group of people on the basis of their religion, and in real world scenarios is often conflated with racism against people of that religion originating from Africa or Asia (Ingham-Barrow, 2018). Given traditions of clothing from these societies which entail certain easily identifiable items (such as head coverings), Muslims can be easy targets for assault on the streets. Muslim names are also easily recognisable frequently triggering negative assumptions against those applying for housing, employment, medical care or educational advancements (Khattab & Modood, 2015; Tell MAMA, 2023). Ultimately, Islamophobic discourses seek to deny the heterogeneity of Muslims, and specifically for this research, the heterogeneity of British South Asian Muslims. As with those denominated as 'Christian' the term covers the full gamut of spiritual and political beliefs; this, naturally, is equally true of Muslims (Meer, 2014). For the purposes of this study, the Runnymede's (2017) updated definition will be taken as a useful, working interpretation of the term when discussing the experiences of British South Asian Muslims today; they summarise it as *'Islamophobia is anti-Muslim racism'*, but expound the definition as follows:

> *"Islamophobia is any distinction, exclusion, or restriction towards, or preference against, Muslims (or those perceived to be Muslims) that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life."*
>
> *(Elahi & Khan, 2017)*

The term's earliest cited use began after World War One, it gained more specialist usage from the mid-1980s via the works of Edward Said, started to enter popular parlance in the 1990s, and proliferated with a vengeance following 9/11 (Vakil, 2010). For most of the twenty-first century there have been deliberate attempts to conflate Islam with terrorism which has created an atmosphere of 'high alert' that has been

used as an ongoing excuse for extremely repressive legislation in the UK and around the world (Alam & Husband, 2013; D. Kumar, 2020). Invasive surveillance legislation, policies targeting women's clothing (especially focused on headwear) have been the result and given oxygen to xenophobic and racist anti-immigration protests and legislation (Ingham-Barrow, 2018).

Islamophobia tends to be manifested in essentially two inter-related, but differentiated ways: there are political discourses related to the *'global war on terror'* in its various forms, and there are the day-to-day assumptions and discriminations inflicted upon Muslim communities in Europe and America due to being deemed to possess values that are at odds with those of 'Western' societies (Najib & Teeple Hopkins, 2020). A strong and growing body of literature provides substantial evidence of the difficulties, inequalities and prejudice experienced by Muslims, and with the addition of 'race' (as is the case for South Asians) the discrimination and injustice intensify (APPG, 2018; Jayaweera & Choudhury, 2008; Stevenson et al., 2017). As with anti-Semitism, the racialisation of ethno-religious identity lies at the heart of Islamophobia, and centres on false or fabricated premises of danger, disgust and fear of the unknown, the 'other' (Ingham-Barrow, 2018). Such impulses are inextricably woven into Britain's colonial past and such legacies can only be dismantled through examination, openness, inclusive representation and a commitment to change (Patel, 2022). Each new study in this area contributes to that essential drive to dismantle the machinery of historic oppression.

In Britain today, South Asian Muslims experience everything from day-to-day micro-aggressions to physical violence and systematised inequality (Ameli, Ahooei, Shaghasemi, & Rahimpour, 2011; Sayyid, 2018). In addition to this, Muslims are often required to justify themselves by making declarations condemning the actions of extremist political sects or individuals with serious mental health issues who present themselves as defending Islam when undertaking violent crimes (Meer, 2010). The fact that this is regularly done to Muslims, but not, for example, to Christians when violent atrocities are committed by those nominally identifying with that religion, highlights the pervasive nature of Islamophobia in telescoping all members of the world's second largest religion into a two-dimensional stereotype. Such reductionist tropes are dangerous and destructive, and are regularly used to vilify Muslims around the world (Pew Research Center, 2017).

The Shamima Begum controversy highlights the precariousness increasingly felt by those with a migrant parent, but intensified enormously for those from a South Asian Muslim background. In 2019, when Sajid Javid, as Home Secretary, rescinded Begum's citizenship because of choices made by her as a young teenager to join the Syrian ISIS community (despite evidence that she was a victim of grooming and trafficking), he effectively validated a notion of two-tiered citizenship, as inflicting such a penalty would be unthinkable where a White British citizen is concerned (Ahmed, 2023). It illustrates differing public perceptions of citizenship; for White British citizens their status of British nationality is an immutable fact,

a *'right'*, no matter what crime they might commit, but for those with non-White skin it is a *'privilege'* which can be removed. And in today's political climate it is particularly non-White Muslims who are especially vulnerable to such abuse and castigation (Webber, 2022); in Britain it is predominantly the South Asian Muslim who is under the microscope in this context.

During the COVID-19 pandemic there was a surge in Islamophobia (MEND, 2020). At a time when communities were pulling together in a way unprecedented since the Second World War, Muslims found the rhetoric of Islamophobia taking another turn (Poole & Williamson, 2023). Phrases such as *'Muslim pandemic'* began to gain greater traction on social media sites, Muslims were accused of receiving preferential treatment in terms of burial or the opening of places of worship, older images of Muslims praying in London streets were circulated during the period when people were being asked to remain at home in order to suggest that they were jeopardising the health of people in their communities (TRT World, 2020). The Economist (2020) ran an article comparing the spread of *'radical Islam'* to the Coronavirus as *"a no less dangerous contagion"* and compounded by the large accompanying photograph of a burqa-clad woman standing in the shadowy entrance to an alleyway in a run-down part of town in order to emphasise seedy and ominous behaviour. Despite the disproportionate numbers of South Asian Muslims affected by the virus, they were still represented in the media as 'other', 'different', 'suspect' leaving the way open for political scapegoating, and the perpetuation of racist discourses (Poole & Williamson, 2023).

Despite all of this there remains a good deal of resistance in majority society discourses against an outright acceptance of Islamophobia as straightforward racism. Meer and Modood (2012) argue this is due to four principle reasons: firstly, that religion is chosen and not a condition or quality that an individual is born with (a position which leads to a well-worn trope of perceiving Muslims as possessing a *'victim mentality'*); secondly, Meer and Modood highlight a resistance amongst the *'British intelligentsia'* to religion as a whole, and a tendency to prefer to view the denigration of Islam as valid fodder for debate rather than as instances of discrimination; thirdly, contemporary society is much more comfortable with ethnic identities than religious ones (especially when considering adherents to a religion associated with oppressive behaviours); and fourthly, the frequent framing of Muslims with terrorism or crime, leads to the perception of this religious group as something to be feared rather than protected as a disadvantaged minority. All four discourses are referenced by the participants in this study, and British South Asian Muslims continue to be harassed, discriminated against and attacked due to the strong currents of anti-Muslim racism filtering through almost every walk of life in Britain today.

2.3 An International Perspective

British South Asian Muslims do not see themselves solely in terms of their immediate families or even their communities. There is a strong cultural emphasis on the importance of extended family, but also on fellowship and unity as a religious group. These are concepts, feelings and responsibilities that cross national boundaries.

2.3.1 Diaspora

The term 'diaspora' has historically been associated with the forced displacement of people, but now encompasses all those with a common point of origin who have migrated, settled and then usually raised children in new locations around the world. The diaspora can include more than one succeeding generation of the original migrants; it encompasses all those who retain collective memories, shared homeland idealisation, and commitment or interest in the country of origin (OECD, 2012). The intergenerational sharing of narratives powers diasporas, and is an essential component in the construction of identity for individuals, families and communities.

Diasporas are increasingly being recognised as powerful entities potentially contributing to the social and economic development of their origin countries, and the South Asian diaspora is one of the largest in the world. Although it is hard to precisely quantify, the population of the South Asian diaspora is estimated to be somewhere in the region of 44 million (Shah, Roy, & Ahluwalia, 2023). Every year vast amounts of money are sent 'home' to support family networks from members of the diaspora dispersed around the world; in 2023 $26.5 billion was sent to Pakistan, $22 billion to Bangladesh (and $119.5 billion to India) in remittances (Ratha, Chandra, Kim, Plaza, & Mahmood, 2024). The diaspora is powerful, influential and dynamic; it can impact the culture and economy of both the origin and host country. Modes of acculturation are therefore important (and will be discussed in Chapter 3). What is significant here is to understand the power of the diaspora in uniting South Asians across the world, especially in the face of hostility or discrimination. This sense of unity contributes to a resilience in combatting difficulties, but it can also be a community who can choose to take action to support its members when marginalised or threatened.

South Asians use the term 'desi' to refer to aspects of culture that originate in the Indian subcontinent. The term 'desi' (as with the term 'South Asian') does not go unchallenged, as it attempts to encompass the enormous heterogeneity of religion, culture, food, clothing, customs, language as found across the vast regions of Pakistan, India and Bangladesh (complicated further by those who include Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Afghanistan and others in these terms). However, they nonetheless have meaning

for the various communities that fall into these categories, and remain steadfastly in common usage. Migration creates a diaspora, but the diaspora also nurtures and maintains the links, language and culture of the place of origin. The diasporic relationship with the homeland and the new land of settlement is dynamic and constantly evolving, whilst retaining at its core an identity rooted in narratives and idealisations (Taylor, 2014). Consequently, embedded within the diaspora are perpetual tensions and conflicts related to the concept of 'home' and 'self', which participants of this study discuss contending with throughout their lives.

2.3.2 The Ummah

Within Islam there is the concept of the 'ummah', a broad, worldwide community of Muslims strongly affiliated to one another because of their shared religion despite the heterogeneity of ethnicity, language, culture and level of personal observance which exists amongst Muslims. This is a cornerstone of Muslim identity and is a constant driver for unity and community (Kabir, 2010). As with the diaspora on a secular level, the ummah on a religious level, draws people together across national boundaries, bestowing a sense of connection and identity. And similarly, when experiencing hostility or oppression this international community is impacted as a group and can find ways to support those feeling the brunt of anti-Muslim action. This is seen most profoundly and consistently in the treatment of Palestinians by the Israeli state, the anger this generates across the world, and the identification that Muslims generally feel with their plight. Other groups may politically support the Palestinian cause (this is especially evident at this time with Israel's current policy of regional decimation in Gaza), but for Muslims this is also an internalised issue which resonates (usually to a significantly lesser degree) with how they feel they themselves are treated because of their religion (Casey, 2016). Thus, this aspect of their identity provides a protective layer for those experiencing racism or exclusion (Meer, 2010). This sense of having a global community as an integral part of religion and culture is comparable to that of Judaism, where there is also a strong sense of loyalty and communalism across a worldwide religious group underpinning centuries of oppression.

Transnational communalist perspectives are not necessarily a threat to national cohesion, Modood (2018) argues that such identities (such as membership of the diaspora or ummah) do not have to be seen as exclusivist, but can be overtly called upon to promote and support multicultural agendas within nation states by giving Muslims a sense of assurance and agency. Dikici (2022) suggests that the integration processes of Muslim migrants can only be fully understood by taking account of both their national and transnational contexts.

Ultimately, the concept of and affiliation to a global community can be pivotal to Muslims in social bonding, the expression of political solidarity, unity, group protection, identity, and a source of personal strength in the face of hostility (Alexander, Redclift, & Hussain, 2013).

2.3.3 Transnationalism

The term *'transnationalism'* has been used by a range of disciplines to explore the multi-level impacts of crossing borders. In the field of migration studies, transnationalism centres upon individual and social identity construction drawing upon literature rooted in anthropology, sociology, psychology, economics, history, law and post-colonial studies. In a seminal work, Vertovec straightforwardly describes the concept as referring to the *"multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states"* (Vertovec, 1999, page 447), but it is a phenomenon which remains prominent in diasporic communities in general and is a defining feature in the lives of many (if not most) British South Asian Muslims (Sabah Khan, 2024).

These are ties of an emotional, economic, religious and social character, maintaining connections across national borders and profoundly shaping family life. These connections can be exhibited in terms of remittances, emotional support, caregiving, arranged marriages, religious observances and cultural transmission; they influence identity development, kinship obligations, intergenerational relationships and socioeconomic status (Ballard, 2003; Vertovec, 1999).

From a sociological perspective, transnationalism amongst British South Asian Muslims has traditionally been seen as a means of maintaining cultural and religious identity as members of a diaspora, embedding families in wider kinship networks beyond national boundaries (Gardner & Grillo, 2002). A central facet of this (particularly among British Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities) is to maintain the practice of transnational marriage with spouses selected from the country of origin (and often from extended family), thus reinforcing familial ties, preserving cultural traditions and frequently aiming to control the socialisation of the next generation (Werbner, 2013).

Transnationalism in general (and transnational marriage in particular) can often be expressions of how parents and elders retain authority over major life decisions, and can thus lead to friction, conflict and acculturative stress for the second-generation (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006b; Gardner & Grillo, 2002). Where the older generation might well prioritise cultural and religious continuity, the younger, British-born members of the family tend to be negotiating a variety of cultural contexts and constructing hybrid identities; behaviours which frequently introduces a dissonance to traditional value systems and affects family dynamics (Ballard, 2003; Husain & O'Brien, 2017; see Chapter 3). Inter-generational

tensions are common as a consequence and impact many aspects of family life as well as individual identity formation (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005).

These frictions and pressures can have mental health impacts on the second generation when conflicts arise between their parents' transnational expectations (such as the support of extended family abroad, marriage arrangements, religious adherence, career choices, the definition of gender roles) come up against the values and wishes of their children (Banerjee & Khandelwal, 2023). Such expectations are often gendered and tend to impose undue restrictions on the autonomy of women in particular, especially when it comes to issues related to marriage and family status; intensified expectations concerning modesty, familial loyalty and marriage can lead to psychological pressures and family conflict as women negotiate a sense of cultural obligation and personal autonomy (Gilbert, Gilbert, & Sanghera, 2004).

However, transnationalism can also be a source of psychological resilience and social capital (see Chapter 3). For those experiencing discrimination, racism and marginalisation in the UK, the maintenance of strong ties to the homeland can offer an important source of community belonging, cultural pride and identity coherence (Phillips, Davis, & Ratcliffe, 2007). Cross-border kinship ties provide more than a form of collective identity, they provide emotional support and a sense of continuity when experiencing major life transitions such as birth, marriage and bereavement. Furthermore, religious networks can reinforce these connections and provide psychological anchoring for those experiencing socio-political hostility in their adopted country (Redclift & Rajina, 2021).

Transnational families often possess qualities, synthesised skills and knowledge systems (such as language proficiency, religious identity, and 'transnational literacy') borne out of living between cultures and social systems, and referred to by Erel (2010) as *'migrating cultural capital'* all of which allow them to navigate their home and host countries. In this way, transnationalism whilst being a potential source of friction across generations, can also be a resource to draw upon in terms of self-esteem, adaptation and social mobility.

It has been argued that as migration patterns develop, and second- and third-generations become more integrated into the adopted nation, *sustained transnationalism* (involving regular remittances and 'homeland' travel) is moving into more of a *symbolic transnationalism* where there is a greater degree of selectivity in maintaining links through religious and cultural practices, online communication, and irregular travel (Gardner, 2012; Miah & King, 2023). Symbolic transnationalism represents a significant shift in the nature of diasporic identity, moving away from more concrete and practical ties into those that are increasingly abstract and romanticised by those born and raised in Britain.

Simultaneously, the rise of Islamophobia has provoked a revitalisation of diasporic solidarity and re-emphasised the centrality of Islamic identity for many. In this context, the institution of family (and kinship community) provide a vital source of nurturing and transmission of cultural values, as well as a refuge for those experiencing marginalisation.

Ultimately, these ties are not static. For British South Asian Muslims transnational family relations are dynamic, context-dependent and thoroughly embedded in the processes of racialisation, gender politics and intergenerational negotiation. The interplay of transnationalism and family relations shapes sociocultural structures of kinship and psychological experiences of identity, belonging and well-being. Whilst it can reinforce cultural continuity and offer emotional security, transnationalism can also generate intergenerational friction, identity conflicts and mental health challenges. An integrative approach is necessary to understand how individuals navigate these macro-level social norms and micro-level psychological experiences in the context of shifting diasporic realities. British South Asian Muslims are navigating complex intergenerational, gendered, migration-based power dynamics whilst managing dual cultural expectations, and experiencing both stress and resilience in their transnationalistic lives. Such a perspective challenges the homogenised view of this social group and instead places the emphasis on their agency, adaptation and contestation within transnational kinship practices.

2.3.4 International Politics

British South Asian Muslims are part of transnational communities (such as the diaspora and the ummah) whilst being anchored in the country of settlement and retaining important aspects of their country of origin as part of their identity. From this complex vantage point there is a tendency to be more informed and aware of the treatment of South Asians and Muslims across the world. There is often a strong tendency to stay abreast of political developments in the home country, and also a sensitivity to maltreatment around the world of the groups they identify with. Given the current political climate, this tends to be focused predominantly on the treatment of Muslims around the world, as in many countries their presence has been problematised.

In quick summary, such a perspective would be alert to the treatment of Palestinians in Gaza (Tondo & Taha, 2024), Uyghurs in Xinjiang, China (Amnesty International, 2021), Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar (Human Rights Watch, 2018), anti-Muslim ‘pogroms’ in India (Ellis-Petersen & Hassan, 2023), and more than two decades of illegal detentions in Guantanamo Bay (Amnesty International, 2023). In addition to this, there is the plethora of anti-Muslim legislation across states in America (UC Berkeley, 2024), in Australia (Hurst, 2021) and across twenty-eight European countries (including the UK) to prohibit the

wearing of certain garments for women (OSF, 2022) impacting work, education and leisure experiences of individuals, as well as 'draconian surveillance measures' under the guise of anti-terrorist measures (Amnesty International, 2017) affecting whole communities as well as individuals. All of which leads to fears in some quarters of there being a Muslim 'cleansing' taking place across significant portions of the world (Dabashi, 2018). Such a perspective sometimes creates a sense of being under siege, and leads many British South Asian Muslims to experience disproportionate levels of anxiety (Karasz et al., 2019; Shahid, 2023). For some this may lead to anger and a sense of injustice, for others a general sense of insecurity and vulnerability.

2.4 A British Perspective

2.4.1 Structural inequalities

It is generally accepted that structural inequalities and institutionalised discrimination exist in British society today. There is copious evidence to support this (Edmiston, Begum, & Kataria, 2022; Khan, 2020; Runnymede Trust, 2023; Stevenson et al., 2017; Wrench & Modood, 2000). Those from minority groups are particularly vulnerable to this, and for an ethno-religious group such as South Asian Muslims arguably doubly so.

British South Asian communities exhibit persistent intergenerational disadvantage (National Equality Panel, 2010). Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities are particularly vulnerable, as opposed to Indian communities who are the most financially and socially successful ethnic minority group; although there is some evidence to suggest that Indian Muslims do not do as well as Indians of other faiths. This supports an ever-growing body of evidence indicating the existence of a *'Muslim penalty'* (see Chapter 3).

For many decades, British South Asian Muslims have had poorer educational and occupational outcomes, are more likely to live in deprived areas, in over-crowded and poorer quality homes, and experience greater health problems with insufficient medical support as compared to other minority and majority groups (MCB, 2024; National Equality Panel, 2010; ONS, 2014; Shankley, Hannemann, & Ludi, 2020). Occupational outcomes are linked to educational achievement and this is lowered by economic disadvantage which is a predominant feature of Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities (Cabinet Office, 2017).

More than 50% of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis live in the most deprived fifth of areas in England (PHE, 2017). Whereas 1.7% of White British households suffer from over-crowding, these rates soar to 13.5% for Pakistani, and 22.5% for Bangladeshi families; in terms of ethnic group ranking, Bangladeshis

experience the most severe rates of overcrowding, with Pakistanis fourth highest (after Arab and Black African families) (English Housing Survey, 2023). These communities largely live in clustered locations due originally to the restricted choices available to migrants arriving in the 1950s-70s, and then compounded by persistent inequalities and discrimination exhibited by society and institutions related to housing options and practices (Finney & Harries, 2015). These groups are more likely (than all save Black ethnic minorities) to have larger families, and are at greater risk of poverty (K. Stewart, Patrick, & Reeves, 2023). Two thirds of Pakistanis and almost 90% of Bangladeshis experience poor economic conditions and fall into the lowest third for income (Zilanawala, Sacker, Nazroo, & Kelly, 2015).

Work related inequalities abound when considering British South Asian Muslims. The first-generation South Asian Muslims were granted work in a limited number of occupations, and this led to them gathering in certain areas, and building tight-knit communities to support one another. They began by taking on predominantly factory work in textile and metal industries, and this led to them settling in larger numbers in Yorkshire towns and in the midlands. Gradually, a certain proportion began their own business (often shops or restaurants), but the rest were hard hit when manufacturing industries went into decline in the last two decades of the twentieth century (Peach, 2005). A minority of South Asian Muslim women took on work outside the home, and to the present day the economic activity rate of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women remains the lowest across all ethnic groups in the UK. Employment patterns are changing with the second and third generations, and although the educational and occupational outcomes for British-born individuals of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage remain in the lowest bands, there is nonetheless an upward trajectory and an expansion into the professional classes (Cheung, 2014; Clark & Drinkwater, 2007; Johnston, Sirkeci, Khattab, & Modood, 2010; Khattab & Modood, 2015).

However, 33.9% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi workers are employed in the lowest-paid, 'elementary' industrial and service jobs, and are three and four times respectively more likely to have unprotected, insecure work than their White British counterparts (Oskrochi, Jeraj, Aldridge, Butt, & Miller, 2023). Despite the fact that Pakistanis and Bangladeshis (and Black Africans) have higher proportions of university graduates than White British, they are far less likely to attain professional status employment. Bangladeshis in particular, when considering both professional and non-professional work, receive substantially lower incomes than all other ethnic groups. This cannot be attributed to straight-forward racism as working-class Indian graduates are almost twice as likely to attain professional status as their Bangladeshi counterparts (Social Mobility Commission, 2023).

South Asians (and African) families average the largest households in the UK, and often include multi-generational family members (Jivraj & Simpson, 2015). A tenth of Pakistanis and one in seven Bangladeshis live in households consisting of three or more generations (Harrison, Finney, Haycox, & Hill,

2023). These communities have the highest birthrates (across all minority and majority groups); it has been suggested that this results from a combination of cultural adherence to models of marriage and motherhood for women, starting families earlier and having a significantly younger demographic profile (Shankley et al., 2020). There are clear disparities between post-natal outcomes by ethnicity, with Pakistani families (along with African and Caribbean groups) experiencing the highest infant mortality rates in the UK (ibid.).

South Asian Muslims are the subjects of inequalities in the health care system, which have lifelong impacts. Although the combination of universal access and standardised treatment practices have improved equality of access to primary health care, secondary health care provision is far more problematic with substantial evidence to suggest that all ethnic minorities suffer poorer access and outcomes in almost every aspect of general practice and dentistry services (Chouhan & Nazroo, 2020). There is substantial evidence indicating that migrants experience multiple health inequalities; they face barriers rooted in language and cultural differences, urban deprivation, and institutional discrimination (MacIntyre, 1986; Nazroo, 2003; Marmot, Allen, Boyce, Goldblatt, & Morrison, 2020; McAuliffe & Oucho, 2024). These inequalities were certainly exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic (see Chapter 7[9]).

Systemic flaws persist throughout the health service however, and many medical and race equality organisations maintain that these will continue until minority groups are fairly represented in decision-making boards and processes, and attain levels, grades, salaries and positions of seniority that more proportionally reflect their numbers within the NHS workforce (Iacobucci, 2020).

Mortality and morbidity data has found clustered health conditions centring on certain minority groups: all non-White groups exhibit higher rates of diabetes, heart disease is significantly more prevalent amongst Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, Muslim children suffer higher rates of congenital anomalies and disability, and there are higher suicide rates amongst South Asian (especially Indian) women (Chouhan & Nazroo, 2020). However, although relatively few health studies have focused on economic inequalities, there is evidence to suggest that these rates can be explained by socio-economic rather than cultural or genetic factors; for example, Nazroo (2001) found that wealthier South Asians exhibit low rates of cardiovascular disease and suggested that in general 'race' should be considered as a marker of increased health risks only in that it indicated likely social and economic disadvantage. As Dogra (2023) argues health programmes and targeted interventions tend to fall short for British Muslims as they fail to listen to, integrate with or effectively utilise the strengths of the communities they wish to impact, but primarily because they avoid straight-forwardly acknowledging the relationship between health inequalities and

[9] The results chapters (5, 6 and especially 7) contain some discussion of health issues in the lives of British South Asian Muslims, but due to the tight parameters of the data drawn upon here (see Chapter 4 for details), a more nuanced discussion of inter/intra-generational health related experiences falls beyond the remit of this study.

discrimination, racism and Islamophobia in British society and its health institutions (Iacobucci, 2020). These latter three factors lie at the heart of structural, socio-economic inequalities experienced by British South Asian Muslims. The COVID-19 pandemic threw a spotlight on the severity of inequality experienced by marginalised groups in the UK (see Chapter 7). Living in overcrowded homes, in deprived conditions, unhealthy and segregated environments, working long hours, often with fewer protective practices and poorer conditions, often experiencing racism, abuse and insecurity these are all factors which seriously impact the lives and well-being of South Asian Muslims. These experiences and the additional hostility, suspicion and stigma enveloping the lives of many British South Asian Muslims create vulnerabilities across a range of mental and physical disorders affecting every stage of life from birth to death (Shahid, 2023). Many health care policies hope to address health inequalities by focusing on access and language concerns, but ultimately avoid the larger socio-economic issues.

Through the majority of the last four decades, Bangladeshi and Pakistani youth have experienced significant economic and educational disadvantage (Dwyer, Modood, Sanghera, Shah, & Thapar-Björkert, 2011; Gillborn & Mirza, 2000; Heath & McMahon, 1997). However, the disadvantage seems to be more nuanced in education than in other areas of life in that it appears to be life-span related. Pre-school children from ethnic minorities begin at a far lower point, with only 6% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi children achieving cognitive ability scores in the top fifth as compared to 21% of White children (Cattan et al., 2022). At 4-5 year olds the attainment gap closes to less than ten percentage points by ethnicity with White British, Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups more likely to underperform (Indian and Chinese more likely to overperform) when assessed for developmental attainments (Mirza & Warwick, 2022). By Key Stage 4 (14-16 years) the situation has changed dramatically; recent years have seen rapid improvements in educational attainment particularly for Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups the bulk of whom (along with Black Caribbean students) have consistently underachieved for decades, but are now achieving a 6% point above White British students (ibid.). When considering eligibility for free school meals as a marker of deprivation, South Asians significantly exceed the attainment of five or more GCSEs when compared to White British students; in 2021-2, 22% of White British, 41% of Pakistani, 53% of Bangladeshi and Indian students attained this pass rate (Social Mobility Commission, 2023). All minority ethnic groups are more likely to attend university than their White British equivalents, but they predominantly gain acceptance from less selective or prestigious universities, and there remains significant attainment gaps between these students at this level (Mirza & Warwick, 2022) indicating that structural racism persists in higher education.

Additionally, educational attainment demonstrates a polarisation of experiences for ethnic minorities, and this is particularly the case for Muslims, Gypsy Travellers, and Black Caribbean youth (ibid). In England and Wales, 25.3% of Muslims have no formal qualifications (18.2% for the overall population),

but there was only a slight difference in attainment at degree level or above, in that 32.3% of Muslims hold such qualifications compared to the 33.8% of the wider population (ONS, 2023a). Modood (2004) developed his concept of *'ethnic capital'* (see Chapter 3) to account for the 'over-achievement' of some minority groups at university level. However, it is clear that educational and occupational outcomes are strongly related to socio-economic status and cycles of deprivation in the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities are severely retarding factors. This becomes even more concerning and problematic in the light of data showing that Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups experience the greatest *"long-range downward mobility"* (45% and 40% of these populations respectively) or all ethnic groups (Social Mobility Commission, 2023).

British South Asian communities exhibit persistent intergenerational disadvantage. Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities are particularly vulnerable, as opposed to Indian communities, which, many commentators argue, supports the *'Muslim penalty'* hypothesis (Heath & Martin, 2013; Longhi, Nicoletti, & Platt, 2013) which will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

In addition to these multi-faceted and multi-layered disadvantages, British South Asian Muslims live their lives amidst heightened surveillance, suspicion and securitisation focused on them as a potential threat to society (D. Kumar, 2020). Beginning in the 1980s with the Rushdie affair, and cemented by the events of 9/11 and 7/7, they have been cast in the roles of dangers from within, backward religious fanatics, and unknowable 'others' (Ali, 2020). South Asians who were once seen as a homogenised group in Britain, have now splintered into their separate religious identities as a consequence of these discourses and fears generated within society and further propagated by the media. And the heightened surveillance and suspicion of *'Islamists'* has left British South Asian Muslims prey to miscarriages of justice, attacks on the streets, the normalisation of verbal abuse, restrictions of movement, impeded social and career advancement, victimisation in school, and general insecurity and fear impacting their own mental and physical health (Qurashi, 2018; Sian, 2017).

All this is in the context of increased hostility to migrant families and heightened racism as encapsulated by the phenomena of *'Brexit'*, and facilitated by a political landscape which has lurched dramatically to the right over the previous decade (Tell MAMA, 2023). The 2016 referendum stands as a nexus for discontentment and opportunism, where recession and austerity politics meet right-wing extremism. From the initial phase of campaigning in 2015 onwards, the referendum became less about a country extricating itself from a set of European trade agreements and became far more focused on migration (partially obscured by debates about national sovereignty), and *"overtly racialized* [by the] *Islamophobic campaign rhetoric of Nigel Farage"* epitomised by his infamous *'Breaking Point'* poster (Stewart & Mason, 2016; Creighton & Jamal, 2022; page 1055). As Sivanandan stated in the introduction to an IRR report (Burnett, 2016) *"Whatever else Brexit means or does not mean, it certainly means racism"*. He argued

that Brexit *"*[elevated] *institutional racism to fully-fledged state racism"* and concealed its complicity in the rampant post-referendum violence that followed (Sherwood, 2016; Tell MAMA, 2017) by classifying it as individualised hate crime and a law and order issue, rather than an expression of the xenophobic policies adopted by a government bent on *"making nativism the state ideology"* (ibid. page 2). This dogged obliviousness amongst government politicians in particular, and their determination to detach their own rhetoric and policy decisions from the violence on the streets has been prominent since the referendum result (Burnett, 2017) and has been called out yet again more recently by eighty anti-racist and migrants' rights organisations following a spate of racist rioting across the UK in August 2024 (Runnymede Trust, 2024). A key feature of the racist violence seen over this period is that it all too frequently targets South Asian Muslims in particular (Peerbacos, 2024).

Since the 1980s, Muslims have been represented in discourses centring on their inability to integrate, opposition to 'Western' values, and being inextricably linked to conflict, violence and terrorism (APPG, 2018; Poole, 2011). Consequently, they present as easy targets to racists (especially so when traditional, gendered and/or religious clothing makes them identifiable in public spaces). These are racist factions are prepared to take any and every excuse to increase assaults on this highly heterogenous ethno-religious group whether it is a national referendum result, crimes committed by a minority sect of political extremists, a violent act by an individual who is mentally ill, or even the murder of three young children at a dance class by a British youth of Christian, Rwandan heritage. News images of attacks on mosques, Muslim cemeteries, migrant centres and hostels have become all too familiar over the past two decades (Khaleeli, 2016; Shuiab Khan, 2024; Muthiah, 2024; Spalek, 2002).

The Conservative party has a long history of racist attitudes and Islamophobia in particular (Hope Not Hate, 2020; Kentish, 2018; Perraudin & Murphy, 2019), but has consistently refused to accept responsibility for generating a rise in confidence of far-right groups (Jones, 2023; Waterson, 2023), their persistent self-serving expediencies in attempting to garner electoral support during consecutive insecure terms in office (Olusoga, 2024), and the unapologetic statements and gaffs made by prominent members of the party which target Muslims (Jones, 2016; Parveen, 2019).

Brexit, a raft of anti-migrant legislation, Islamophobic policies around women's dress, and the Prevent programme together create a fertile ground for far-right politics and a hostile environment for British South Asian Muslims. The greater the prominence of right-wing politics (which foregrounds the importance of cultural assimilation and restrictions on migration) together with heightened surveillance and securitisation focused on non-White Muslims, the more difficult it is to address racism and discrimination built into the institutionalised fabric of society and promote the well-being of all (Chouhan & Nazroo, 2020).

That is not to say that British South Asian Muslims sit quietly under these conditions and assume a mantel of victimhood. The heterogeneity of this ethno-religious group means that they exhibit every imaginable response to these challenges and oppressions, and this will be determined by many factors such as age, experience, class, education, social and economic resources, health, self-efficacy, and political literacy (Kabir, 2010). There exists now a plethora of research, lobbying, political and support groups and networks initiated and run by South Asian Muslims as well as those focused on celebrating the contributions and achievements of these communities (Elshayyal, 2018). The voices of British South Asian Muslims have gained in confidence with each passing decade, as second and third generations grow to adulthood as British citizens and, with increasing agency, stake their claim to be understood as thoroughly English, Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish; looking ahead to the day when such claims are no longer considered to be a matter of contention.

Chapter 3: Psychological Perspectives on Migration

3.1 Introduction

In the last ten years, right-wing populist politics has gained ground significantly in many parts of the world. It has been consistently rooted in anti-immigration rhetoric and policies (Laubenthal, 2023); migration has become a focal point in both social and political discourses. With approximately 280 million migrants in the world (IOM, 2024), an understanding of the manner in which individuals, minority groups and nations are impacted by migration has never been a more imperative subject for investigation, analysis and real-world intervention. In the context of Britain, Brexit and the rise of Islamophobia, these questions become increasingly pertinent aspects of life for South Asian Muslims in the UK.

3.1.1 Migration, Psychology, Identity

There is substantial evidence to confidently assert that culture strongly influences the behaviour, expectations and identity of individuals (Berry, 2021; Triandis & Brislin, 1984). The fundamental question is whether individuals who have migrated retain their previous culture fully intact, wholly adopt the new culture or adapt in ways that fall between these two extremes? Empirical evidence indicates that the latter tends to be the case, but variations between these polar opposites (and their causal factors) impact individuals and communities profoundly and are important to understand in order to promote effective public policy in such areas as diversity, immigration, health and education.

Many dominant narratives in British society suggest that South Asian Muslims act as a homogenous group in opting to keep themselves apart from mainstream culture, and that they prefer to maintain traditions that are at variance with 'Western' behaviour and perspectives. There is plenty of evidence to challenge such narratives; the literature extant in this area depicts a far more complex situation with multiple factors determining which transitional route or strategy individuals opt for when negotiating their way between cultures (Bhatia & Ram, 2009; Nandi & Platt, 2015; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2007; Sam, 2018). This study explores the nuances and complexities of these on-going processes of transition, living between cultures and developing new identities.

3.2 Cultural Transitions

Many theoretical concepts have been proposed in an attempt to describe and explain the manner in which migrants adapt to a new country and its culture. These various perspectives often illustrate something about the time and the culture that they arise from as much as the phenomenon they attempt to elucidate.

Many of the models and frameworks discussed below are predominantly rooted in American research; in particular, the bodies of literature relating to assimilation (sociological perspective) and acculturation (psychological perspective) are very dominant in this field. These frameworks continue to be tested and developed by researchers internationally, but, even so, are very much centred on North America and latterly Europe and Australia, and tend to omit Asia, Africa and South America which in fact contain the largest populations experiencing inter-cultural transitions (Berry, 1997). Therefore, it is possible that there are factors expounded in the current dominant literature which are not universal to all migrants, and further wide-ranging research in this highly topical field is essential.

3.2.1 Assimilation

Early assimilation models were popularised from the 1920s in the US and tended to favour a linear approach which focused principally on the actions of the individual migrant. Later developments in assimilation theory acknowledged the importance of the host society when examining the transitioning processes of migrants (Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016). Whereas previously first-generation migrants were expected to shed their adherence to their original heritage by stages as they lived within a new and different society, some assimilation models acknowledged that the process might take more than one generation to accomplish and was dependent on the societal structures of the host nation (Laubenthal, 2023). There follows a summary of three primary models of assimilation. How individuals, groups and societies handle cultural transitions affects issues of identity, trajectories in life, and socio-economic outcomes for individuals, and impacts social cohesion and economic growth on a societal scale.

3.2.1.1 Linear Assimilation

In the US, linear (or straight-line) assimilation, which is predominantly associated with Warner and Srole (1945), became the orthodox paradigm applied to migrant cultural transition for a number of decades; it was initially associated in the 1920s with the Chicago School of Sociology and was then developed further in the 1960s. It principally suggested that first-generation migrants struggle greatly and are least likely to be successful in their new country, but with each subsequent generation there is a steady increase in academic and occupational achievement with the third-plus generation being much more successful than

the first and second (M. Boyd, 2009). A key feature of classic linear assimilation is that the individual's original culture would be eradicated stage by stage, and that the individual would diminish in ethnic distinctiveness as the process continued (Waters, Tran, Kasinitz, & Mollenkopf, 2010). An upwards socio-economic trajectory under these circumstances was taken to be an indication of assimilation and successful integration into the new society (Alba & Nee, 2003). However, this model did not take into account that those migrating to the US in the 1920s were generally rural workers and significantly under-educated when compared to, for example, those migrating (from all parts of the commonwealth) in the 1960s or those arriving in the twenty-first century to the UK. This model is rooted almost entirely in a socio-cultural perspective and omits discussion of variations in economic climate which may have a profound impact on the occupational origin and development of migrants and minority ethnic communities (Gans, 1992).

3.2.1.2 The Racial/Ethnic Disadvantage Model

This contradicts the linear assimilation hypothesis' expectation of successive socioeconomic advances with each new generation. Instead, this model suggests that the path to assimilation for many migrant groups becomes blocked due to discrimination and institutional barriers to employment and advancement. For the first generation this may not appear to be so evident as they are more likely to be making comparisons to homeland conditions where the struggle for socio-economic advancement may be severely restricted, but the disparities between minority and majority groups are more likely to be apparent to the second- and third-generations, and may then lead to a development and intensification of ethnicity-based identity politics (Brown & Bean, 2006). These are highly pertinent issues for many British South Asian Muslims in general, and for many of the participants in this study.

3.2.1.3 Segmented Assimilation Model

The segmented assimilation model was developed in the 1990s as an alternative to the linear model and was rooted in studies investigating the adaptation of black migrant youths in American inner-cities and particularly focused on the second-generation of migrant families (Portes & Zhou, 1993). It is a paradigm which combines elements from both classic assimilation theory and the ethnic disadvantage model, and suggests that distinctly different outcomes are possible for the second-generation in migrant families. It acknowledges two important factors: one is that society is not an undifferentiated entity, but contains various 'segments'; the other is that most migrant groups are disadvantaged by structural barriers in the host society. The key questions then become to which segment of society the second-generation will assimilate, and what are the conditions and structures that ethnic groups experience within the new, host society (Portes, Fernández-Kelly, & Haller, 2005)? The second-generation can follow three possible

pathways: upward assimilation, downward assimilation, and upward mobility rooted in persistent biculturalism (Waters et al., 2010). In the context of this theory, the second-generation becomes a critical junction point for a trajectory that will greatly influence following generations.

This model emphasizes the role of parental human capital, integrative structures of the host nation, and family structure as central factors influencing assimilation. It focuses on identifying the contextual, structural and cultural factors which lead to successful or unsuccessful assimilation (Brown & Bean, 2006). The extensive body of research that has grown up in this area (particularly in the US) has focused on delineating *'modes of incorporation'*, analysing the political and cultural responses of the host nation and how these shape migrants' experiences of cultural transitioning (Waters et al., 2010). This is particularly pertinent to this study; the *'climate'* migrants enter when relocating to a new country may well have profound impacts on their sense of self as well as on the perception of their behaviours (and rights) by members of the host nation.

Assimilation models are highly pertinent where the ghettoisation of ethnic groups is a feature of society, which may explain the dominance of American literature in this area. However, Britain is not immune to this phenomenon, and the social *positioning* of migrants and their families is also central to acculturation theory.

3.2.2 Acculturation

In the field of intercultural psychology, acculturation has generated a vast body of research. In one of the earliest reviews of the phenomenon it is defined as follows:

> *"Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups."*
>
> *(Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936, p.149).*

Acculturation is an umbrella term encompassing the processes and changes which occur on both a societal and individual level when different cultures come into contact through the movement of people (see *Fig.1*). From the earliest studies in this field, researchers have emphasised the dual-level impact of acculturation on groups as well as individuals within those groups. Research in this area has led to two central questions: how do people acculturate (cultural/group level), and how do they adapt to the process of acculturation (psychological/individual level) (Berry, 2003)? Interestingly, these two questions

appear to be connected in that how well an individual adapts to the process seems to be strongly connected to the manner in which they acculturate (Sam & Berry, 2010).

A dominant framework of acculturation in this field was developed by Berry (1997); it outlines varying ways in which groups and individuals live together and react to one another when originating from different countries and cultures.

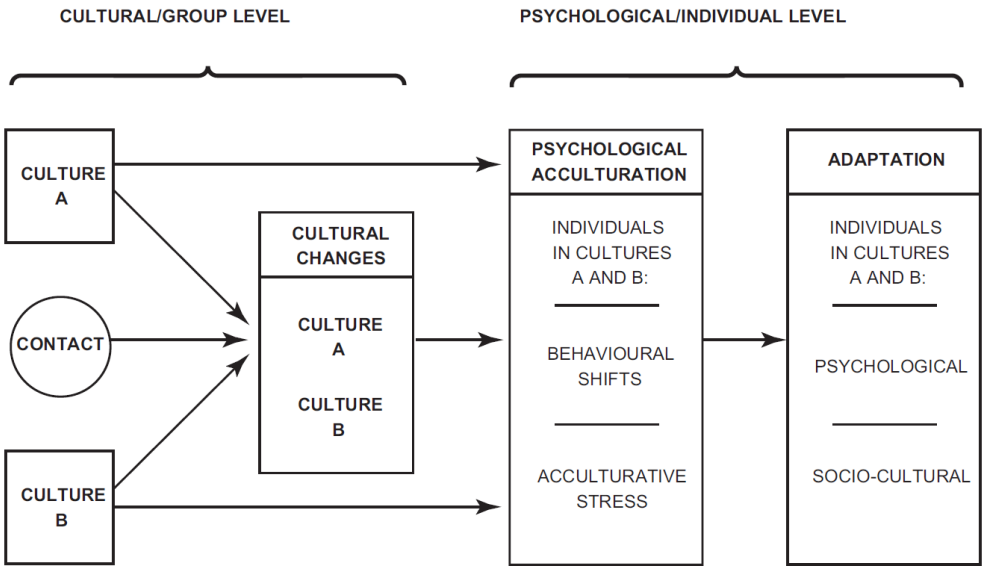


Figure 4: Framework for conceptualizing and studying acculturation (Berry, 2003).

Acculturation *"is a process, not an isolated event"* (Thurnwald, 1932), and there are broadly four types of acculturation; ***integration, assimilation, separation and marginalisation***. As a dual level process, impacting individuals and groups, it affects both minority and majority groups to varying extents; both are effectively changed by intercultural contact (Berry, 1997). On the individual level, each type, or strategy, of acculturation reflects the degree to which a person adheres to their heritage culture, or embraces the behaviours, values and assumptions of the majority culture in their adopted country. Acculturation, or ***psychological acculturation*** as it is termed when considering it on an individual level, impacts people in widely differing ways highly influenced by ecological and cultural contexts. However, not everyone originating from the same cultural group will opt for the same strategy or change in the same way; individuals can experience completely different changes when acculturating to the same new society (Nauck, 2008).

Berry (1980) argued that the acculturation process could potentially impact an individual on many levels including biological, physical and social. When considering the psychological aspects of the process, they tend to fall into three broad areas. Ward, Bochner and Furnham (2001) discuss acculturation as an active method of dealing with change, and identified three key components to the process; they designated

these as the 'ABCs' of acculturation (*affect*, *behaviour* and *cognitions*) to highlight that it is how individuals feel, behave, think/perceive which determines the nature and results of inter-cultural contact. These are domains where qualitative methodologies, and narrative interviews in particular, can be especially adept at delivering rich data. The 'ABCs' in turn provide a prism through which to examine the three key areas concerning acculturation outcomes; how individuals are impacted in terms of *stress and coping*, *culture learning*, and social (self-) identification (these are expanded upon below).

3.2.2.1 Strategies of acculturation

Each acculturation strategy is determined by the degree to which an individual wishes to preserve their heritage culture and identity, and to what extent they wish to blend into the culture and practices of the wider society around them. Accordingly, people divide into one of four trajectories: integration, assimilation, separation and marginalisation.

Integration allows the individual to maintain their heritage culture whilst engaging on a daily basis with the new dominant culture; participation in mainstream society is balanced with a wish to value and preserve their ethnic identity. This type of acculturation lies at the heart of concepts of multiculturalism.

Roy Jenkins, as British Home Secretary in 1968, declared that integration should be considered –

> *"not as a flattening process of assimilation but as equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance"*
>
> *(as cited by Modood, Jan, & Meer, 2012, page 153)*

Modood et al. (2012) described this emphasis on respect and tolerance as a *'powerful ideal'* established in the early stages of Britain's development towards multiculturalism, and noted with regret that it does not reflect the reality of how diversity is handled and exhibited in society today.

Although ***'assimilation'*** is a term which has been used by some quite interchangeably with *'acculturation'*, or has been described in the past as a phase in its process (Redfield et al., 1936), current intercultural psychologists favour using the term to describe a type of acculturative development. In this context, it refers to the approach employed by those who do not wish to closely maintain their heritage culture and instead choose to adopt the new, dominant culture of the host society.

Separation is a method of acculturation that is characterised by a choice to strictly adhere to the heritage culture and a tendency to avoid interaction with the new culture. There is evidence to suggest that certain ethnic groups in certain settlement conditions designated by the host society, follow a pattern of enclaving in a separatist fashion (Berry et al., 2006b). This is an accusation often levelled at British South

Asian Muslims usually from right-wing sectors of society who remain rooted in strongly stereotypical views and lack any serious reflection on the conditions experienced by these groups in British society that might push some of them in this acculturative direction.

More extreme still is ***marginalisation***; this is a strategy which seeks to reject cultural affiliations entirely. The heritage culture is increasingly disregarded (this is often under pressure to do so), and yet little desire is exhibited to be involved in the dominant culture (often due to experiences of prejudice or discrimination). This form of acculturation is often associated with stigma and poor psychological well-being (Berry & Sabatier, 2011).

However, these types of acculturation are not considered to be permanent or conclusive; individuals can move between these various strategies, especially when triggered by a critical event or experience such as the 9/11 Attack or increased occurrences of Islamophobia (Sirin & Fine, 2007).

Numerous studies have been undertaken across the world with many different acculturating groups in an attempt to identify both patterns in preferences across types of acculturation and a relationship between acculturation strategy and outcomes. Berry (2003) found that generally the most preferred strategy was integration and the least preferred was marginalisation, with assimilation and separation varying according to migrating group and country of settlement. In 2006, a seminal study investigating the acculturation of 7000 young migrants across 13 countries found this pattern of preferences was upheld when looking across all migrant groups and settlement locations, although inter-group data showed some variations in these patterns which appeared to be related to the nature of the host society and its reception of specific groups. Turkish migrants mostly preferred separation (40.3%, n=714), and the Vietnamese group (n=718) almost equally preferred assimilation (25.6%) and integration (33.1%) dependent on whether the adopted country was or was not historically a *'settler society'* (such as the US, Canada or Australia) or a northern European country with more restrictive migrant legislation (Berry et al., 2006b). The more restrictive the host society, the more skewed the acculturation strategy toward retention of heritage culture, and the greater the move towards ethnicity-related identity politics.

Acculturation strategies, as laid out above, might lead to the assumption that the individual or ethnocultural groups decide how they are going to engage with the new culture, but inevitably a great deal is determined by the values and norms of the receiving society. This will be reflected in that country's legislation as well as experienced by the migrant in day-to-day interactions amongst individuals and possible systemic discriminations. Various theoretical models have been proposed to delineate the host society's expectations of migrants' acculturative strategies with a view to predicting potential problems with the process (Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Senécal, 1997; Navas et al., 2005; Navas, Rojas, García, & Pumares, 2007); in respect of which, Navas et al. (2005) found that social capital factors were decisive to acculturation strategy outcome (as will be discussed further below).

3.2.2.1.1 Terminology

As has been indicated earlier, the term acculturation has been used interchangeably with others and sometimes applied as separate concepts, thus potentially causing some confusion for those exploring this area. Early alternatives such as *'culture-change'* and *'diffusion'* (Redfield et al., 1936) have mostly given way to more recent terminology such as *'multiculturalism'* or *'integration'* (Sam & Berry, 2010). Other terms have come to be used in society at large which describe these four acculturation strategies effectively, although communicating a less neutral tone (see *Fig. 2*).

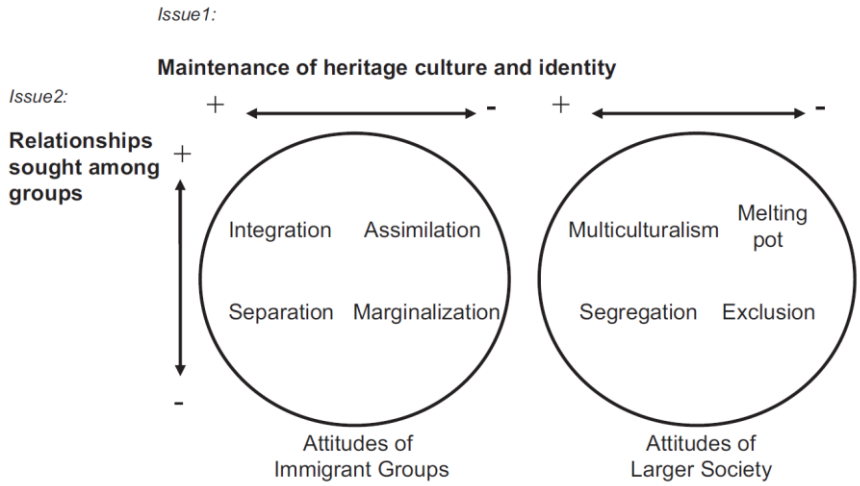


Figure 5: Academic terminology relating to acculturation strategies in ethnocultural groups and the equivalent terminology within society at large (Berry, 2003).

Such variations in terminology need to be borne in mind when working with the authentic voices of participants in interview-based research, and when exploring discourses within society as a whole reflected through the media.

3.2.2.2 Types of Adaptation

Although closely related to acculturation, adaptation is not a synonym. Within Berry's framework, it refers to the manner in which an individual reacts to the process of acculturation; it is the consequent personal outcome of this experience in terms of affective, behavioural and cognitive change (Ward, 2001). ***Adaptation*** is considered in two domains: the psychological and the social. It focuses on the individual's *psychological well-being* and their *sociocultural competence* and can be examined in the context of personality differences as well as in terms of behavioural and cognitive changes (Sam & Berry, 2010). In terms of this study, how an individual responds and adapts to the process of acculturation should be reflected in the nature as well as the content of the narratives participants choose to relate.

In order to investigate the changes that occur within an individual during acculturation, researchers involve participants at varying points in the acculturation process to locate directly observable changes (such as dress, food consumed or language developments), to more complex pressures for change (in values or endeavours) which may lead to anxiety, distress or depression. Adaptation has been taken variously to refer to overall health, stress management, language and literacy aptitude, sense of acceptance, and sociocultural proficiency (Demes & Geeraert, 2014). How an individual adapts can be divided into the psychological (matters relating to their well-being or sense of self-esteem) and the socio-cultural (social competency enhanced by learning a new language for example) as outlined below.

3.2.2.2.1 Psychological Well-Being and Sociocultural Competence

Early acculturation theories initially began by focusing predominantly on negatives and deficits in relation to migrants' well-being (Motti-Stefanidi & Coll, 2018). Studies in this area focused on mental health outcomes such as anxiety and depression (Close et al., 2016). Research into socio-cultural competence has focused on finding ways of measuring those skills most adaptive to life in a new culture (Sam & Berry, 2010). Such studies have predominantly concentrated on communication, norms and values, behaviour problems, and educational outcomes. These two types of adaptation (the psychological and the sociocultural) are interconnected; both result from an interaction with the host culture, and an individual is more likely to develop sound interpersonal relationships, cultural competency and social acceptance if they are in good mental health (Oppedal, Røysamb, & Sam, 2004).

Research aiming to establish how well people adapt is problematic as, ideally, it requires a reliable measure as well as an effective comparison group. Both components are in short supply as test measures carry culturally loaded information, and it is a contested topic whether subjects should be compared to non-acculturating members of their own heritage group, other groups acculturating in the same society, or members of the majority culture whose families have been established in that society for a significant period. Added to which, information on these groups is not always easily available; ethnic groups may not be welcoming to researchers, and there are further ethical and practical complications which then arise concerning insider/outsider status of researchers and the impact of this on data collected. Thus far results from studies of this kind have been mixed (Koneru, Weisman de Mamani, Flynn, & Betancourt, 2007; Kunst, 2021).

When considering research examining the psychological adaptations experienced particularly by children and adolescents, Sam (2006) questioned the reliability of such studies given the context of the developmental changes experienced by all people at these ages (which bear some similarities to the acculturative processes). He argued that an interactive perspective might be more useful where acculturative variables are considered embedded within the child's developmental processes, or at least

interacting with them as the child progresses. In adopting an interactive, life-span perspective, Sam emphasised the difficulties in predicting the outcomes of adaptations experienced by young people caught between cultures.

As with acculturation in general, psychological and sociocultural adaptation are not fixed, but are susceptible to change; they are fundamentally influenced by life events, personality and support networks (Ward, Fox, Wilson, Stuart, & Kus, 2010). It has been suggested that acculturation processes and outcomes should be investigated in different contexts and environments where levels of well-being, coping mechanisms and social competence may vary (Chirkov, 2009). This becomes even more crucial for those with multiple identities (ethnic, religious, migratory) where negative attitudes from the majority society create additional barriers to integration and leave individuals having to negotiate aspects of their identity on a day-to-day basis (Verkuyten, Thijs, & Stevens, 2012) as is the case for many British South Asian Muslims.

3.2.2.2.2 Stress and Coping

Acculturation, as expounded by Berry, Kim, Minde and Mok (1987), considered the process to be one which involved a series of stressors which might impact the individual physically, psychologically or socially. These stressors could lead to feelings of confusion, anxiety or depression, and might further involve experiences of being marginalised and alienated all of which could have both short and long-term impacts on the individual's well-being and sense of self (Phinney, Horenczyk, & Vedder, 2001; Sam, Jasinskaj-Lahti, Ryder, & Hassan, 2016).

> *…mental health problems often do arise during acculturation; however, these problems are not inevitable, and seem to depend on a variety of group and individual characteristics which enter into the acculturation process. That is, acculturation sometimes enhances one's life chances and mental health, and sometimes virtually destroys one's ability to carry on; the eventual outcome for any particular individual is affected by other variables that govern the relationship between acculturation and stress.*
>
> *(Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987, p.493).*

Many researchers have investigated the variables that may predict positive and negative outcomes from the acculturation process (Berry, 2001; Bobowik, Basabe, & Páez, 2015; Neto & Wilks, 2017; Vazsonyi, Mikuška, & Gaššová, 2017; Waters et al., 2010). Pre-existing factors have been examined such as age, sex and social support (Berry, 2006), and researchers are beginning to explore those factors which are generated through the process of acculturation, such as the impact of prejudice and discrimination in

terms of social and community-based treatment, and employment, housing and financial conditions (Alba & Nee, 2003; Leszczensky, Stark, Flache, & Munniksma, 2016; Motti-Stefanidi, Pavlopoulos, & Asendorpf, 2018; Sobolewska, Galandini, & Lessard-Phillips, 2017).

Both the acculturation process and acculturative stress are dependent on the ecological context, so parenting, schooling, community and workplace conditions exert significant influence over these processes, as (at a societal level) do public discourses and governmental policy (Ward & Geeraert, 2016).

3.2.2.2.3 Culture Learning

Rooted in social psychology, and heavily influenced by Argyle's (1969) work on interpersonal social skills, the concept behind culture learning theory is that individuals experiencing acculturation often lack the skills required to interact with the new culture successfully (Sam & Berry, 2010). The resultant difficulties then require the individual to learn culture-orientated behaviours and skills (such as language, but also more general social conventions and values) in order to negotiate those social obstacles (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006a; Bondy, Peguero, & Johnson, 2016; Lee & Ciftci, 2014; Navas et al., 2007). There are verbal and non-verbal codes of communication and interaction to be learned that constitute a key element of culture learning (Ward & Geeraert, 2016). These behaviour shifts (see Figure 1) have led to research in this area developing in two directions: the socio-psychological features of cross-cultural contact with an emphasis on the modes and impact of communication (Gallois, Ogay, & Giles, 2005); and an examination of different cultures' styles of communication (and embedded value systems) with an aim of predicting adaptation into the new society (Ward & Kennedy, 1999). It has been argued that second language aptitude, and communication skills in general, are central to cultural learning and thereby to socio-cultural change even largely predicting the success or otherwise of the individual's acculturative adaptation (Masgoret & Ward, 2006).

3.2.2.2.4 Social Perception

This area of the 'ABC' model is concerned with how people perceive and understand themselves in a cultural context. This is central to the current study. Although cognitive processes are involved in perceptions of stress during acculturation, it is predominantly referred to here in consideration of how individuals process information about their own and others' cultural groups, and where they place themselves in these contexts (Church, 1982; Liebkind, Jasinskaja-Lahti, & Mähönen, 2009; Marjoribanks, 1997). Research in this area originates in the social identity theory of Tajfel and Turner, (1979). At the heart of this influential theoretical construct lie the questions '*Who am I?*' and '*Which group do I belong to?*'. The theory explores why and how individuals identify with certain social groups and the significant

positive relationship between group identity and an individual's sense of personal well-being (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). In acculturation studies, the focus is on how groups and individuals define their identity in relation to their ethnic group and the new majority culture (Phinney, 1990).

A development in this area, *Bicultural Identity Integration* (BII), is a framework advanced to explore the individual's perception of how their dual cultural identities intersect. Studies have found that individuals who rate highly on BII, find it easier to integrate both cultures into their daily lives and tend to see themselves as part of an emergent 'third' culture (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). This perspective was held by many of the participants of this study; they discussed their identity as being separate from that of their parents and mainstream culture, and one which embraced an alternative, new option distinct from each.

3.3 Alternative perspectives on cultural transition

3.3.1 Immigrant paradox

Historically, acculturation theory has presupposed a multi-dimensional impoverishment of migrants as they move from one country to settle in another (Feliciano & Lanuza, 2016). It was considered that first- and second-generation migrants would develop problems related to their mental health and well-being, together with low achievement in the realms of education and occupation (Gans, 1992). However, an increasing number of studies over the past two decades have found that despite experiencing a variety of stressors in the process of acculturation, migrants report and exhibit better levels of mental health and well-being (Moore, 2017), lower rates of anti-social behaviour amongst adolescents (Blake, Ledsky, Goodenow, & O'Donnell, 2001), and higher levels of academic achievement (Pong, Hao, & Gardner, 2005) than their non-migrant peers. There is evidence to suggest that the latter tendency peaks in second-generation migrants, and across all categories such differences reduce with each succeeding generation until becoming indistinguishable from native-born peers as the individuals concerned assimilate into the dominant culture of the new society.

3.3.2 Immigrant Optimism

The socioeconomic downward spiralling of generations of migrants feared by some early American theorists investigating forms of accommodation without assimilation (Alba, 1990; Gans, 1992; Waters, 1990) and the ethnic disadvantage model has been countered by increasing numbers of studies which have repeatedly observed patterns in migrant children outperforming their non-migrant peers. These

studies have found, particularly when socioeconomic factors are taken into account, that first- and second-generation migrant children are actually exceeding academic expectations (Glick & White, 2004; Suárez-Orozco, Rhodes, & Milburn, 2009), and that second-generation migrants appear to be out-performing the previous generation (Gambino, 2017; Kirui & Kao, 2018; Modood, 2004).

In a frequently cited study, Kao and Tienda (1995) tested the above-mentioned models of assimilation and first hypothesised that what they termed *'immigrant optimism'* was a pivotal factor in the academic performance of migrant children. This US study involved 24,599 eighth-grade students from 1,052 schools (together with the responses of their parents and teachers) and found that second-generation migrants are best placed to attain higher academic achievements (than non-migrants or first-generation migrants); these students benefitted from the combination of high parental expectations and optimum language skills. Kao and Tienda described immigrant optimism as the migrant's conviction that *"Although [they] find themselves at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder initially, they generally expect that they or their offspring will eventually experience upward mobility."* (Kao and Tienda, 1995, p.5). The authors suggested that immigrant optimism is the product of a combination of factors: that voluntary migrants are a self-selected group inclined from the outset to adapt to a new society; and that consequently any initial difficulty or set-back is viewed as temporary and met with stoicism or creative solutions. These are outlooks which are strongly represented in the interview data for this study.

Similarly, a study exploring immigrant optimism across four American universities found that migrant parents delivered very similar messages to their children about educational aspirations, although middle-class and working-class families varied in possessing very different assets to support this (for example, engaging private education or utilising community-based resources), the result in each case produced higher academic achievement than their non-migrant peers (Louie, 2001; Mirza & Warwick, 2022; Rosenbaum & Rochford, 2008).

Fernández-Reino (2016) investigated whether the disproportionately high number of first- and second-generation migrants entering higher education could be explained as a pre-emptive attempt to combat perceived discrimination in the labour market (Leslie & Drinkwater, 1999). In a UK-based study, Fernández-Reino used the *Longitudinal Study of Young People in England* (LSYPE) and the *National Pupil Database* (NPD) to test whether students anticipating employment-related discrimination make different choices to those who do not, and whether prior academic expectations significantly correlate with attainment. She found that students' perception of labour market discrimination did not affect the choices made at fourteen or sixteen years of age, although she argues that this could be due to an expectation of discrimination whether entering skilled or unskilled work. Instead, Fernández-Reino found that across the board in all ethnic groups strong expectations were significantly related to academic achievement, thus supporting the immigrant optimism hypothesis rooted in parental expectation and

values. Similar experiences of first-generation parenting were strongly reflected in the narratives related by the second-generation participants of this study.

3.3.3 The influence of migrant parents on family outcomes

A small but growing area of research has found evidence to suggest that migrant families exhibit differences in family functioning and parenting styles as compared to those within the dominant culture (Rumberger, Ghatak, Poulos, Ritter, & Dornbusch, 1990; Sue & Okazaki, 2009). Kao and Tienda (1995), who focused predominantly on the mother-child bond in migrant families, found that children of first-generation migrants were more likely to academically outperform their non-migrant counterparts, and proposed that the mothers in these families engendered aspirational and optimistic motivations in their children that yielded these successes. The evidence suggests that distinct differences in parenting within migrant families leads to higher academic attainment in their children (Pasha-Zaidi, Afari, Sevi, Urganci, & Durham, 2019; Sue & Okazaki, 2009).

Kao (2004) posited that this difference might be due to the characteristics of parent-child relationships and the influence of optimistic parental aspirations in migrant families. Boyd (2009) found that amongst second-generation migrants some sub-groups experienced higher than average success rates which she attributed to particular family values, such as respect for authority, perceiving the host nation to be offering myriad opportunities, an emphasis on educational goals, and retaining optimism about their children's potential achievements.

In a longitudinal study tracking eighth grade students to university, Feliciano and Lanuza (2016) found that members of migrant families demonstrated higher academic expectations and achievement than their non-migrant peers, and a proportionally higher number of them moved on to post-graduate education. They attributed this to the self-selecting nature of migrants, optimism embedded in a belief in the opportunities available in the new country, high expectations communicated to their children, and what several researchers have referred to as a *'dual frame of reference'* as significant factors (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Ogbu, 1993). Feliciano and Lanuza suggest that children in migrant families adopt a commitment to education as a repayment to their parents for the sacrifices that they make for their children. Additionally, they argue that such drives and influences are all the stronger when the child speaks their heritage language; in these cases, the child tends to have access to a wider range of individuals in the family and community who reinforce these high expectations, and this appears to correlate with the higher academic aspirations of those individuals who fall into this category. Feliciano and Lanuza suggest that these factors contribute to a cultural capital unique to migrants which motivates and directs their academic endeavours.

3.3.4 Traits, Capitals and Dynamics

Model and Lin (2002) suggested that three *'causal rubrics'* influence the manner and extent of reception and assimilation that a migrant experiences via the host nation; these are *"ethno-religious traditions (culture), family resources,* and the *selectivity of migration"* (p. 1068). Ethno-religious traditions stand outside an individual's socioeconomic status and take the form of cultural and religious values and practices; family resources encompass social, financial and human capital; and selectivity of migration refers to the circumstances that led to the migration being voluntary or not. These domains are complex and yet crucial to understanding an individual's transition into a new country and culture, and a measure by which strengths and vulnerabilities can potentially be established.

It has been observed that children tend to acculturate faster than adults; they are swifter in learning a new language and adapt with greater ease to new cultural values and behaviours which can lead to an *acculturation gap* within families and consequent conflict (Birman, 2006). Studies exploring this acculturation gap were sparse when Birman was writing, but since 2006 there has been some development in this area (Basáñez, Dennis, Crano, Stacy, & Unger, 2014; Kim, Chen, Wang, Shen, & Orozco-Lapray, 2013; Marsiglia, Nagoshi, Parsai, Booth, & Castro, 2014; Rasmi, Chuang, & Hennig, 2015).

Several authors have considered the role of cultural capital in *immigrant advantage* (Feliciano & Lanuza, 2016; Modood, 2004). Bourdieu (1986) first proposed this concept as a means of explaining social assets that individuals carry with them which are unrelated directly to economic value. This refers to skills, education, knowledge, and community integration that endow a person with fluidity or status within social relationships and structures. Feliciano and Lanuza (2016) take a broad view of cultural capital and suggest that culture is a resource which migrant children utilise effectively when engaging with their families and communities, in experiencing their parents' high expectations and emphasis on education, and by being bi- or multi-lingual. They point out that non-migrant children will have their own cultural capital, but that the emphases of this may fall in different areas, and thus help to explain *immigrant advantage* in academic performance. Further, they suggest that strong family obligations can be a form of cultural capital, and, if so, could explain differences in levels of interest in school between migrant and non-migrant students.

Despite the influential nature of Bourdieu's work on social capital, Franceschelli & O'Brien (2014) argued that subsequent research has focused almost exclusively on education at the expense of familial sources of cultural transmission as initially outlined by Bourdieu (1986) who proposed that these domains were twin generators of social capital. In order to redress this imbalance, Franceschelli & O'Brien (2014) investigated the intergenerational transmission of values and practices within fifteen South Asian Muslim

families by undertaking fifty-two semi-structured explorative interviews. They used the term *'Islamic Capital'* to refer to the way Muslim parents instil a moral code with their children intertwined with high aspirations, a disciplined approach to schoolwork and studying at home, an emphasis on relationships with parents and an adoption of parental norms and values. This management of culture and heritage, filtered through family dynamics, was a central area of interest in the life-story interviews of this study.

3.4 Intersectionality

In 1989, Kimberle Crenshaw established the concept of 'intersectionality' to highlight the blindspots in the American anti-racist and feminist movements, and to present a more nuanced and multilayered understanding of the nature of identity. She observed that anti-racist groups tended to omit gender politics, and feminist groups ignored the importance of race (and class). Intersectionality has become a vital framework through which to explore the multiple, overlapping social identities that people experience (such as class, gender, sexuality, 'race', and religion) and which often greatly determine both their experience of and treatment by society. It is a term that is useful when examining the lived experiences of British South Asian Muslims who exist in a society that frequently negatively interrogates their status, 'race' and religion.

Crenshaw argued that there is a tendency to place people in inflexible groupings which encourages ill-informed assumptions, and the damaging neglect of important needs or rights. South Asian Muslims encompass a diversity of language, regional identity, history and culture, and yet they are often presented as a monolithic entity. Ignoring these overlapping identities within marginalised groups leads to complicated impacts on individuals' sense of belonging and agency both within mainstream society and local communities.

South Asian Muslims tend to experience multiple marginalising 'markers' related to their 'racial' minority status, their religion, and often their membership of lower socio-economic groups. Without an intersectional approach comprehension and effective intervention will be limited. For example, an emphasis on 'Muslim identity' with regards to this group might lead to mistakenly homogenising the differing experiences of those from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, or the different experiences of men and women; and an emphasis on 'South Asian' may underestimate the impact of Islamophobia.

Gender constitutes an important variable. South Asian Muslim women are perceived through various potentially distorting lenses. The tropes of orientalism and Islamophobia cast women into roles of allurement, passivity, or even threat which eradicates their agency and reduces them to two-dimensional creations inspired by colonialistic fetichism or post-9/11 paranoia (Mirza, 2013). At the same time,

women in some South Asian Muslim community spaces can experience restrictive patriarchal norms and socio-cultural expectations regarding their life choices, marriage, and dress (Afshar, 2008). An intersectional framework allows researchers to consider both sets of readings and power structures, enabling a more effective analysis of the situation.

Additionally, socio-economic factors are central to understanding the position of South Asian Muslims, many of whom live in deprived areas with limited access to good health care, education and employment prospects (see Chapter 2). These factors rooted in structural inequality and systemic discrimination cannot be disentangled from their 'racial' and religious identities (Anthias, 2013; Khattab & Modood, 2015). Consequently, an intersectional perspective highlights how classism, structural racism and Islamophobia combine and interact to shape the lives of British South Asian Muslims.

Intersectionality is central in understanding identity formation and resistance to expectations and stereotyping. Each new generation internalises a multitude of influences and often adopts hybrid identities where home expectations, religious commitment, culture, and societal pressures towards assimilation are individually negotiated (Fletcher, 2011; Kaplan & Chacko, 2015). Reductive representations can be challenged through political and cultural positioning; this can be reflected in fashion, art, music, political activism, life choices and media engagement, and can be viewed as an expression of intersectional agency and empowerment (Rashid, 2023; Ward, 2013).

British South Asian Muslims' lives are typically marked by chronic stressors associated with racism, socio-economic disadvantage and Islamophobia, the accumulation of which can result in anxiety, depression and variants of poor mental health (Jaspal & Coyle, 2009). Intersecting stigmatisation (for example, religious visibility in terms of dress or name and 'racial' framing) can create *'unique vulnerabilities'* that draw upon more than either 'race' or religion alone (Crenshaw, 1991; Tufail, 2015).

Researchers and policy-makers who ignore intersectional perspectives risk advancing reductive readings of this section of society and may consequently implement ineffective or even harmful interventions (Awan, 2012). For example, this becomes especially important when considering counter-extremism policies which target Muslims and propagate inaccurate and damaging assumptions which subsequently alienate sectors of society and can lead to individual injustices due to a failure to recognise the diverse experiences and politics within these communities.

Ultimately, intersectionality moves beyond being a useful theoretical tool to constituting an essential methodological and ethical framework when researching British South Asian Muslims. It is an approach which facilitates a focus on the complex nature of identity, the interweaving of discrimination and oppression, and systems of resilience which are integral to these communities. In focusing on

intersectionality, studies such as this can make more nuanced and effective contributions to debate and policy.

3.5 Summary

This study is not concerned with investigating exactly how participants acculturate or assimilate into British society, but it is focused on contextualising and exploring the matters of identity, upbringing, achievement and discrimination raised and described by participants in their life-story narratives. As such, the various models, frameworks and theories outlined in this chapter provide valuable perspectives through which to examine the experiences related in the interview data gathered here. Certain commonalities are evident in the paradigms delineated in this chapter: namely that contextual factors (such as the impetus for migration, and the reception and structures offered by the host country) are of paramount importance in determining how people and groups transition between cultures and the impact that consequently has on their well-being and future outcomes. It is also important to take into account that cultural transitions are ongoing, and not finite. Greater positive transitions are made in societies with fewer oppressive structures, and are linked to improved well-being and economic outcomes for individuals which leads in turn to multiple socioeconomic benefits for the country as a whole (Bregman, 2017; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). Unfortunately, the lived experiences of many British South Asian Muslims do not tend to match the uncomplicated positivity of such a template. Their experiences tend to be fraught with challenges and barriers to be negotiated, and their courses defined by a combination of factors related to personality, parental influences, capitals, community, identity, networks and resources. Although the distribution and interaction of all such factors vary by individual, general trends and consequent insights are nonetheless evident in the data under examination.

Chapter 4: Methods

4.1 Methodology

4.1.1 Aims and approach

This study has a phenomenological base in that it seeks to explore the nature of the lived experiences of second-generation South Asian Muslims in the UK today. It uses life-story interviews as a method of investigation, which permits a richness of data that is advantageous when seeking to explore the complexity and nuance of lived human experience.

4.1.1.1 Context

This study has undergone a number of revisions and adaptations. Originally this research was designed as a mixed methods project; with the umbrella title of *'Migration Stories'*, and data were collected via a questionnaire and life-story narrative interviews. The original intention was to conduct one hundred interviews from an equal number of first- and second-generation British South Asian Muslims and to analyse these interviews using a narrative identity framework (Adler et al., 2017; Adler, Lodi-Smith, Philippe, & Houle, 2016; McAdams, 1995; McAdams & McLean, 2013). The original research questions were concerned with examining narrative identity variables (such as *'agency'* and *'communion'*), concepts of *'grit'* (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009), and *'immigrant optimism'* (Kao & Tienda, 1995) and their possible associations with mental health and well-being, educational and occupational outcomes for South Asian Muslims in Britian today.

In total, 64 interviews were conducted and 257 lengthy questionnaires completed, all of which presented an enormous wealth of data. By stages it became clear that this was far too large a project for a single PhD study, and the scope of the project and expanse of data utilised had to be reduced to a more manageable amount.

Due to a combination of pragmatic reasons and a wish to platform the voices and narratives entrusted to me via in-depth life-story interviews, it was decided that the final project would be a wholly qualitative study which would focus on responses to seven of the twenty-nine scripted questions from just the second-generation participants. With 46 participants for a qualitative study exploring the experiences of second-generation Muslims in the UK, this remained nonetheless a substantial and challenging project to undertake.

4.1.2 Decolonisation of research

Research of any kind should not be conducted without addressing the current debates around decolonisation, but this is most certainly pertinent when the groups concerned have a colonialist history.

Universities are core institutions within society and it cannot be ignored that Britain has a long, intertwined history between academia and imperialism (Bhambra, 2022). One of the aims of the decolonization of research movement is to reverse the power dynamic between scholars and research participants; instead of (white) researchers being placed as experts gathering data from 'informants' from certain populations, (indigenous, or in this case ethnic minority) people are positioned as experts in their own lives and experience, and researchers as those ready to learn (Tuhiwai Smith, 2021). This perspective is a central value of this project; conducted as it is by a non-white researcher committed to situating and amplifying the voices of South Asian Muslims as authentically as possible.

> *"Decolonisation is a process which engages with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels. For researchers, one of those levels is concerned with having a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations and values which inform research practices."*
>
> *(Tuhiwai Smith, 2021; p. 22)*

The extension of this position is to empower social groups and ethnic minorities to initiate their own research projects, priorities and funding. Such research remains close to the narratives of the participants' and their social group, gathers data in a manner sensitive to cultural protocols, and analyses the data valuing the perspective of all elements of that social group. It is arguable that decolonization goes beyond this, repositioning the researcher to become a proactively anti-racist scholar, educator and activist; and that this is accomplished through a lifelong commitment to *'learning, unlearning and relearning'* which generates action out of research, and focuses the researcher on collaboration and social responsibility (Datta, 2018).

Thambinathan and Kinsella (2021) highlighted the moral imperative of adopting decolonial approaches particularly when working directly with groups with a history of colonial oppression. They proposed specific ways in which qualitative researchers could inform and adapt their practice with these values in mind. They recommended a fourfold approach: 1) exercising critical reflexivity, 2) reciprocity and respect for self-determination, 3) embracing *"Other(ed)"* ways of knowing, and 4) embodying a transformative praxis. This emphasis on openness, reflexivity, respect and reciprocity and a drive towards social change is central to the ethos of this research.

4.2 Research Design

This is a qualitative study examining specified segments from forty-six life-story interviews with second-generation British South Asian Muslims (see Table 2). From the outset, this project was designed to be

exploratory in nature, and (notwithstanding the nature of the life-story interview structure) a fairly open format for participants to highlight whatever issues or aspects of life were important to them; they were in charge of the narrative they chose to share. The data collected from this process were then to be scrutinised via reflexive thematic analysis as developed by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2022). The intention was that the (relative) openness of the interview format would be complemented by the ongoing reflexivity of the researcher to gain as unencumbered a view as possible of the data provided.

The nature of the interview was to present a series of open questions that allowed the participant to give responses that were as wide-ranging as they chose them to be. These semi-structured interviews followed a script largely based on McAdams' (2008) Life-Story Interview template. It was supplemented with additional targeted questions concerning discrimination, migration stories, education, COVID-19 and the social perceptions of migrants (see Table 1). Data were collected (for both the questionnaire and interviews) between November 2019 and January 2021.

*Table 1: The subject of the questions or prompts employed in the interview (*those marked with an asterisk follow McAdams' life-story script).*

	Topics of interview prompts
1.	A high point*
2.	A low point*
3.	A turning point*
4.	A vivid childhood memory*
5.	A vivid adult memory*
6.	Parent's migration story and impact of being the child of a migrant
7.	Imagined future*
8.	Greatest challenge to date*
9.	Experience of discrimination
10.	Perception of a) migrants, b) Muslim migrants, c) contributions of South Asian Muslims to society, d) impact of COVID-19 on South Asian Muslim communities
11.	Parenting a) mother's parenting style, b) father's parenting style, c) own ideas about parenting
12.	Education a) importance to self/parents, b) influential person, c) parental expectations
13.	Life theme – choosing a single word to sum up their life*
14.	Reflections on the experience of this interview*

Due to the particular paradigmatical nature of this research, IPA (Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis) was considered as a possible analytical approach. However, on reflection it was decided that certain key criteria and characteristics of the methodology did not fit well with this study; specifically, that IPA tends to take an idiographic approach using smaller corpuses (with generally fewer than ten participants), and focuses predominantly on past experiences rather than eliciting present-day views and

concerns. Given these considerations, thematic analysis appeared to be a preferable approach when dealing with a larger number of studies covering a range of experiences, present perspectives and future imaginings.

4.2.1 COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic struck in the early stages of data collection. Although it was not originally a part of the plan for this research, as events unfurled, it appeared highly pertinent to ask participants about how they felt they, their families and their communities were impacted by the pandemic. Consequently, an additional question was inserted into the interview script, and the same open question on the subject added to the questionnaire. The COVID-19 question was put to 24 interview participants and 147 questionnaire participants, who, in line with the original premise of the research, were from both first- and second-generation respondents. The chapter analysing the data from this question is the only section of the study that utilises two sources of qualitative data (the spoken interview responses, and the written responses in the online survey) and from two generations of British South Asian Muslims.

During the peak of the pandemic, opinions and politics became polarised. With many aspects of life stripped back and laid bare, it was a time when intense and unprecedented conditions often led people to focus more intently than usual on matters of identity, social status, self-efficacy, future prospects, barriers in society and justice. This concentrated snap-shot of people's understanding of themselves and their lives and the implications beyond the period of the pandemic is discussed in Chapter 7.

4.3 Procedure

A variety of methods were used to recruit participants (as explained below). The majority of participants received details of the study online and used a Qualtrics link to access the questionnaire. All participants in this study completed the questionnaire prior to taking part in an interview.

The questionnaire asked initial questions to ascertain that the potential participant met the basic criteria for the study (being over eighteen years of age, being Muslim (or from a Muslim background), originating from South Asia (either themselves or their parents) specifically Pakistan, India, or Bangladesh, and permanently living in the UK). Following this the questionnaire presented the participant with the detailed information about the study and a consent form (Appendix II(iii)). Participants were then asked if they would be interested in taking part in the interview stage of the research, and those who chose to opt in were asked to complete a contact form (Appendix II(iiib)). The information conveyed in the

questionnaire explained that the interview would take place by telephone at a time convenient to them, it would last approximately one hour, and all interviewees would receive a £5 Amazon voucher.

Those participants who opted to take part in an interview were contacted by email. Initially an email was sent thanking them for participating in the project, outlining the nature of the interview, and arranging an appropriate time for the interview to take place. Following their response to this, a second email was sent confirming an appointment time for the telephone interview, and asking the participant to complete a timeline prior to the interview appointment (this second email contained an exemplar timeline, a blank timeline, instructions to assist in its completion and a prompt sheet to have ready for use in the interview itself (Appendix II(iv)). It was also explained in the second email that the timeline, although important, was private and for their sole use (it would not be requested or become part of the research data). On the day of the interview, a brief, third email was sent to remind the participant of that day's appointment, and to remind them to be somewhere quiet, secluded and comfortable (if possible) for the interview itself. After the interview, a fourth email was sent to the participant, thanking them for their participation, offering them information about sources of support if necessary, a feedback form to comment on their experiences in the study, and encouraging them to pass on details of the study to their family and friends' networks (Appendix II(vi)).

The interviews were all conducted on the telephone by the researcher herself, and were recorded with the full knowledge and sanction of each participant. A script was used to create consistency in these semi-structured interviews (Appendix II(v)), but the researcher could follow the narrator and ask follow up questions where appropriate. The script was based on McAdams' (2008) Life-Story Interview template, but modified to address the research questions for this study, and adapted to flow more naturally for a British audience.

Following the completion of the interview, the recording was saved to a secure shared Google drive to which a very restricted and carefully monitored number of people had access. These comprised of the researcher, her supervisor and three University of York GOALS lab interns who contributed to the transcription of the interview recordings. These interns had all signed confidentiality agreements to protect the data they handled (Appendix II(vii)). The majority of the interviews were transcribed by the researcher, and the sections undertaken by the interns were carefully checked against the recordings by the researcher. The transcriptions were edited to ensure that identifying information was removed in order to protect the anonymity of the participants (who were referred to by code: the letter 'P' for 'participant' followed by a number). Only the researcher had access to the names and contact details of interviewees, and these were kept secure on a password protected computer.

After the interview there was a three-week period during which each participant had the opportunity to request to view and comment on the transcript of their interview, before it was fully anonymised and the

data entered into NVivo to begin the process of analysis; no such requests were made. Inductive coding was then applied to the data, and reflexive thematic analysis procedures were followed to develop themes (as expanded upon below).

4.3.1 Recruitment

The initial aim of the recruitment process for the wider *'Migration Stories'* project was to obtain 100 participants (ideally equally divided between first- and second-generation South Asian Muslims. To this end, the Qualtrics survey was the filtering process to ensure that all participants were over eighteen years of age, had Pakistani, Indian or Bangladeshi heritage, were Muslim (or members of a Muslim family), and were settled in the UK on a long-term basis. The study was modified at the point where 64 interviews had been completed, and only the second-generation participants' data was utilised (with the exception of the COVID-19 analysis presented in Chapter 7).

Recruitment began in November 2019 and was managed through social media, 'fishing' emails, cold-calling organisations, leafleting in communities with large Muslim populations, and personally taking advertising materials to businesses, municipal buildings and institutions. These activities were undertaken over a period of months to avoid a sudden surge in unmanageably high numbers of participants at any one time, and due to practical considerations as all such activity was performed by one person alone. University Islamic societies, Islamic schools, Muslim and multi-cultural support groups, local government departments, multi-faith groups, migration research and support groups, mosques, GP surgeries, community centres, libraries, small businesses in Asian areas (in Keighley, Bradford and Hull), and individual academics working in related areas of research were contacted and asked to circulate information about the study. These methods were met in general with a positive response. All participants, whether they chose to be interviewees or not, were encouraged to pass on details of the study to their family, friends and acquaintances who met the criteria for the study. A moderate snowballing effect was evident from this, and might have advanced further if world events had not intervened and lockdowns restricted and transmuted the processes of recruitment.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, strategies for participant recruitment were severely hampered. It was initially intended that recruitment would take place via personal contact with a range of work-places, social centres, community groups and mosques as well as through social media. Due to the pandemic, recruitment was predominantly managed via social media (mostly through *'Twitter'* connections, and to a lesser extent *'Facebook'*). This inevitably limited the range and reach of recruitment.

4.3.2 Participants

The majority of studies involving South Asian Muslims in the UK tend to focus on (hijabi) women or (male) adolescents; it is rare to find research that examines the views and experiences of both genders across an age span of decades as is the case in this study. In most instances, participants are found amongst school or university age populations, or else through female-based networks. The participants in this group represented a greater range of ages, backgrounds and occupations than is usually found in studies investigating issues related to South Asian Muslims. Furthermore, qualitative studies often tend to be on a smaller scale, and therefore do not obtain the range of views and experiences that are gathered here.

The participants for this study were self-selected. Once they passed the initial eligibility questions regarding age, origin, religion and settlement, all those who volunteered to be interviewed were interviewed.

Table 2: Summary of second-generation interviewees (by sex, country of origin, age, self-reported class, and self-identification as a migrant or member of a migrant family).

	n	Sex		Origin			Age							Class			"migrant"	
		Female	Male	Ban	Ind	Pak	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	Working	Middle	Other	Yes	No
Second-Generation interviewees	46	33	13	6	8	32	17	13	9	7	0	0	0	23	22	1	29	17

The majority of the participants were of Pakistani heritage (70%), and 72% identified as female. There was an almost equal split between those who considered themselves as either working or middle class, and 63% thought of themselves as either a migrant or a member of a migrant family. Participants' ages ranged from 20-57 years, with a mean age of 35.3 years. This is a highly educated sample, 96% of which have experience of higher education, and 41% of post-graduate education. (See Appendix III(i) for a breakdown of gender, country of origin, age, self-reported class and migrant status, and employment by each individual participant).

4.3.3 Interview schedule

The interview was semi-structured in that it followed a set script (Appendix II(v)), but the interviewer would ask follow up questions dependent on where the participant led the narrative. On these occasions, it was left to the interviewer's discretion to balance the relevance of the information given, against the general time constraints of the interview itself; participants were told that the interview would last for approximately one hour, but many of interviews over-ran to some extent, and the researcher would

consult the participant during the course of the interview to gauge their willingness to proceed with this in mind.

The full schedule consisted of twenty-nine questions under fourteen topic areas (see Table 1), but a specified segment of the data has been used for this study (see below). As has been stated, the script was based on McAdams' (2008) Life Story Interview, and it is the nature of McAdams' prompts to be very open in order to give the interviewee the maximum leeway to respond which enhances the richness of the data. His questions ask participants to describe certain types of memories such as a 'low point', a 'high point', a 'turning point'. In the script for this study, some of McAdams' prompts were omitted and others were inserted in order to more effectively address key aspects of the research questions; prompts on the subject of migration, discrimination, parenting and education in particular.

The interview schedule contained several questions that would potentially lead participants to talk about sensitive or painful subjects. Although they were free to include or omit whatever they chose, the fact that they were also encouraged to not simply outline but to describe the events with as much detail as possible drew in an extra layer of intimacy and potential vulnerability. It was therefore important for the care of the participant that they were reminded that they could end the interview at any point if they wished to and that they should only share what they felt comfortable relating. Participants were reminded of this at the start of the interview, and during the course of it if they showed signs of distress. It was also important for the comfort of the participant and the successful outcome of the interview, that the researcher could put the interviewee at ease and, in a relatively short space of time, build some rapport and trust. Thorough preparation, a carefully prepared and rehearsed script, a calm and friendly manner, an alertness to mood or emotional changes, professional communication skills, a sense of humour, the reflection of genuine interest, and a respect for the trust exhibited in sharing such personal narratives all contributed to the development of ease and rapport.

4.3.3.1 Participants' feedback forms

At the end of the process, all participants were sent a feedback form attached to the final email; ten participants completed these (Appendix II(viii)). The feedback comments about their interview experiences were extremely positive. Participants expressed positive comments about the management and nature of the interview, they reported enjoying the experience of reflecting on their lives, they appreciated being listened to attentively and given the space to speak freely, some found it therapeutic, some particularly noted that a comfortable and empathetic atmosphere was created which increased their willingness to share their feelings and memories, one participant highlighted that this process made them feel that their 'migrant's' story had value, and another felt that it forced them to seriously reflect

on their place in British society. Altogether, participants appear to have felt valued, heard, encouraged and safe when relating their life stories.

4.3.4 Data

As has been explained above, this study used a portion of the data collected for the wider *'Migrations Stories'* project. The following topic area responses (from 46 participants) were used:

1. Migration experience:
    a) parent's migration story
    b) impact of being the child of a migrant
2. Experience of discrimination
3. Perception of:
    a) migrants
    b) Muslim migrants
    c) contributions of South Asian Muslims to society
    d) impact of COVID-19 on South Asian Muslims

These sections were chosen because they were well placed to draw in narratives that focused on the experiences, identity and positioning of South Asian Muslims in Britain today which directly tapped in to the foci of the research questions.

4.3.5 Transcription

Verbatim, orthographic transcriptions of the relevant sections of all 46 interviews were produced predominantly by the researcher (and those undertaken by interns were carefully checked against the recordings by the researcher herself). An exemplar of a transcript is available (Appendix III(iii)).

The transcripts aimed to present the words as spoken during the interview, and to convey some indication of the mood and reception of the dialogue by use of emphases, and indications of key reactions (such as lengthy pauses or laughter). Names of people and places were removed and represented merely by an initial letter to aid clarity, although on very rare occasions a place name was retained because it was integral to the impact of the narrative (and did not identify any specific individual).

The process of transcription itself is an extremely valuable one as it provides the first step in becoming familiar with the data. During the interview, the researcher experiences the initial impact of what is being communicated, but their attention is split between this and managing the interview process. Consequently, the information and impressions that are gained during the interview can be significantly

different to those gleaned on listening to the recording, and then writing down every detail of the exchange. The physical pace of transcription forces the transcriber to focus on the minutiae and nuance of everything that is said. It was therefore also very important to make margin notes of all ideas and impressions in the act of transcribing, and to recognise that this process is the first step to analysis in that it is an *interpretative act* (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4.3.6 Analysis

This study adopted Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2022) reflexive approach as a basis for the thematic analysis to be conducted. This involved following their six-step model (see Table 3), which can be broadly separated into two cycles; the initial open coding cycle, and the identification of patterns or themes. Saldaña (2015) draws distinctions between over twenty-five different types of codes that a researcher might use during the first coding cycle from straightforward *descriptive* codes to *protocol* and *magnitude* codes. The initial phase of coding for this study involved a variety of code types with different functions as prompted by the data in combination with the perception and responses of the researcher. The emphasis was on having as open an approach as possible in order to enhance the inductive coding phase.

Table 3: Phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Having gained some initial familiarity with the data through the interviewing and transcription phases of data collection, repeated active reading of the transcripts led to the generation of codes, which were then sifted through in order to define code clusters to be developed into themes. Throughout this process there were sub-cycles where the durability and accuracy of codes was examined, reconsidered, redesigned and reallocated in order to ensure the 'meaningfulness' of the final themes. Braun and Clarke (2019) emphasized that thematic analysis should be a continually reflexive and fluid process, during

which all codes and potential thematic clusters should be considered to be flexible and adjustable in the new light shed by each re-reading of the data. This is the method emulated here.

In reflexive thematic analysis, coding is the first step after initial immersion in the data (via repeated reading of transcripts and/or listening to the original audio recordings). In contrast to coding reliability approaches (coming from a positivist tradition), reflexive thematic analysis is openly acknowledged to be subjective, organic and entirely acceptable to be undertaken by a single coder. Essentially this is because the reflexive thematic analysis approach does not consider this form of analysis to be reductionist or merely descriptive. This process places the onus on the researcher to be very clear about their stance and perspective in relation to the study and the issues arising from it (see *Positioning of the Researcher* in Chapter 1); it is important to acknowledge the lens through which the researcher cannot help but view the data whilst consistently attempting to keep such tilts of perspective to an absolute minimum by remaining as close as possible to the data when coding.

The coding and analysis were undertaken in three separate units each related to a specific research question; the first two related to RQ1, the third to RQ2. Each unit has its own *'Findings'* chapter, where the results of the analyses are discussed in detail.

4.3.7 Coding

4.3.7.1 Inductive Coding

Inductive coding was used in this study in order to develop themes that are strongly linked to the data themselves, and which may move the analysis into new and unexpected areas unforeseen by the researcher and not strictly limited to the study's theoretical domains (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Although taking an inductive approach here, it is not an atheoretical one; the researcher's philosophical and theoretical perspectives are inevitably present and will necessarily have an influence on the manner in which the analysis is accomplished. Epistemological, paradigmatical and ontological assumptions are unavoidably present whenever research is being conducted. As a consequence, some care was taken to reflect on and describe the positioning of the researcher in relation to the data during the analysis process.

The data was coded inductively, clusters of codes were evident, and potential themes were generated. These themes were checked against the original codes in detail and across the entire data-set; where they tallied with the data and held integrity, they will be incorporated into a thematic 'map' (see exemplar in Appendix IV(i)). Via an iterative process of continual analysis and refinement of the detail of each theme, an overall 'story' became increasingly evident in the data, and themes became more clearly defined.

4.3.8 Reflexivity

Positivist epistemology focuses on discovering *the* 'truth' in any given experimental situation, whereas qualitative work tends to be orientated around understanding situated meaning with an awareness that there is no one truth, but multiple truths embedded in life experiences and seen through subjective lenses (Braun & Clarke, 2022). It is the researcher's role to acknowledge their own subjectivity and critically interrogate the data, their handling of the data, and the meanings they glean from it. This level of reflexivity is a necessary constant when conducting reflexive thematic analysis. This means that the researcher's positionality is central to the analysis as their subjectivity is de-problematised in this methodology and is instead seen as an asset, the key resource through which knowledge is generated (ibid.). For this reason, the *'Positioning of the Researcher'* section is located front and centre in Chapter 1.

4.4 COVID-19 Data Sub-project

4.4.1 Rationale

This began as an opportunistic additional question inserted into the original questionnaire and interview schedule based on sudden and unpredictable world events. When reviewing the data obtained it seemed far too valuable a snapshot of conditions and experiences of British South Asian Muslims, and too powerful a distillation of their perceptions and concerns to omit from the study.

There were 24 interviewees who were asked the COVID-19 question and 147 questionnaire respondents. It seemed most effective to combine the data from both sources for this sub-project, and thus step slightly beyond the bounds of the data being analysed for the rest of the study. Similarly, as the maximum amount of input on this topic seemed appropriate, data from first- as well as second-generation South Asian Muslims was included in this sub-project.

4.4.2 Procedure

In July 2020, the following open question was added to the interview script and the online survey:

> *"From your own experience, how do you feel the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted South Asian Muslims?"*

The transcripted data and the written responses from the questionnaire were collated and subjected to the same process of coding, clustering and theme development in accordance with reflexive thematic

analysis as has been described above. The only difference with this work was that a GOALS lab intern worked on the data in parallel with me, she transcribed some of the COVID-19 segments of interviews, and we discussed our impressions of the data at each stage of coding. I led the coding work and developed the themes, and we discussed the boundaries of these themes and how effective and encompassing we felt them to be.

4.4.3 Participants

There were 171 participants for this portion of the study, and their demographic information can be found in Appendix III(ii). A quarter of the participants were first-generation, and there was a fairly even proportion of males to females (44:56%). 74% described themselves as practicing Muslims, and 88% had higher level education. Participants' ages ranged from 20 to 79 years, with a mean age of 39 years. In terms of country of origin, 61% were Pakistani, 24% Bangladeshi, and 15% Indian.

4.5 Ethics

Ethical approval was given by the Education Ethics Committee at the University of York in July 2019, before recruitment or data collection began.

4.5.1 Informed consent

All participants completed a written consent form prior to the interview (see Appendix II(iii)). As outlined above, participants' first step into the project was via an online questionnaire, the opening stages of which comprised of detailed information about the research and a consent form to be completed before the participant could proceed.

The information outlining the purpose of the study and its potential impact on the participant was described as clearly and concisely as possible, avoiding challenging vocabulary or jargon to widen its accessibility. There are inevitable caveats to this as it nonetheless demanded a reasonably sophisticated level of literacy to absorb the full details of the project and its implications for the individual deciding whether or not to take part. Headings were used to break up the text in a helpful manner, and a relaxed and friendly tone was employed, together with reiterations welcoming direct contact with the researcher (or their supervisor) if the participant had any queries or concerns.

The consent form itself was designed as a series of nine statements, each requiring a completed tick box, in the hopes that participants would read each one individually and be fully aware of what they were

agreeing to (especially how their data would be handled and what redress and input was available to them if required).

Given the very personal territory to be covered in the life story interviews, it was essential that as much information and protection as possible was made available to participants in advance.

4.5.2 Confidentiality and rapport

Many sensitive topics were covered in the life story interviews and it was essential that participants felt as safe and reassured as possible. Careful consideration about data management was essential, as was openness about these procedures with the participants. This was established in the information and consent stage of the process, but reiterated to some extent at the beginning of the interview itself. Participants were assured that only the researcher would have access to their personal details, that the recordings would only be used for transcription purposes and that identifying information would be anonymised in the transcript.

It was important that participants felt as comfortable and well prepared as possible for the interviews. This was done through emails which arranged the interview time and also outlined what to expect, preparatory materials, and advice that they take part in the zoom call when they are in a comfortable, quiet place, away from interruptions and ideally with a warm beverage to hand.

During the interview itself, the researcher aimed to convey a warmth and reassurance throughout (whilst maintaining a professional manner); rapport was built by the pace of the interview, allowing participants the time they needed to express all they wanted to say, humour where appropriate, and being able to pick up on cultural cues and references.

The shape of the interview schedule itself was designed to assist with the emotional journey that participants tended to experience. It began with a happy memory to set a level of comfort, and ended with reflective prompts asking for a single word or phrase to describe their life so far, and their feelings about the interview experience itself as a 'cool down' phase of the process.

There are further related questions about the nature of information that is shared through extended interview. There is a certain degree of rapport and trust that is developed through the interview process, and, in addition to this, I am aware that as I have a Muslim name myself this may well colour how I am perceived by participants, and it is certainly the case that during the interview exchanges several participants indicate that we have a level of shared experience and understanding which appears to have enhanced their ease and comfort in disclosure of personal information. This is something which benefits the study, but it is also something that it was important not to take advantage of.

4.5.3 Debriefing, signposting and feedback

At the beginning and end of the interview participants were asked if they wished to ask any questions about the study. All participants were provided with details of support services that they could access if they felt unsettled or distressed by their experiences (see Appendix II(vi)a). And all those interviewed were encouraged to complete a feedback form to give them the opportunity to express any issues or concerns they might have following their participation in the study (see Appendix II(vi)b).

4.5.4 Data Management

The data produced by this study comprised of audio recordings, transcripts and completed questionnaires which were stored on a password protected computer. Transcripts and digital recordings were stored on a Google shared space during the transcription phase which could only be accessed by named members of the GOALS Lab team who had signed confidentiality agreements. While the study's supervisor had access to all files, interns could only access the specific interview and transcription they were working on.

Only the researcher had access to the participants' names and contact details (and this information was stored on a password protected computer). Each participant was given a code number and this was used as the title of their data file. Under this coded system their questionnaire, interview transcript and audio recording were linked together. Any information in the interview transcripts which, despite anonymization might prove identifiable will be redacted before being submitted to the University of York Repository (WRRO).

4.6 Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in August and September of 2019 and this report refers to some aspects of the wider project which are no longer pertinent to the parameters of the current study. (For this reason, extended references to the piloting of the questionnaire's measures are not relevant here and have been omitted). At this stage, the research was designed as a mixed-methods project, and the plan was to interview participants face-to-face, rather than by telephone. The interviews took place in person in a domestic setting, and participants completed paper questionnaires rather than online versions.

4.6.1 Participants

Three participants took part in the pilot study. These participants were identified through personal links and they did not fall into the category of participant required for the main study. They will be referred to here as PSP01, PSP02 and PSP03.

Initially, it was intended that an 82-year-old Muslim woman who migrated to the UK in the 1960s from Hong Kong would participate in the study, however on further discussion with the individual in question and her daughter, it was decided that this would not be appropriate due to her vulnerability. At the time of the study, she was struggling with newly awakened trauma concerning miscarriage and loss of a child in her twenties. It was therefore deemed inappropriate to involve her in a study probing 'low points' in one's life, when the subject (though occurring six decades ago) was very much a current focus of painful introspection (for which she was receiving professional counselling). Due to these circumstances, it was important not to proceed with the invitation to take part in the study. An important principle of research is to aim to do no harm to those who come into contact with the project. In this case there were clear potential risks for the participant, so that all plans for her involvement had to be halted.

The following three participants were recruited:

PSP01 was a 48-year-old British-born, non-practicing Jewish woman whose parents (one a teacher, the other a barrister) migrated from South Africa to the UK in 1964. She had an HND in journalism, and worked as a freelance voice-over artist and singer. She identified as middle class, and as a member of a migrant family.

PSP02 was a 27-year-old Egyptian, Muslim man who moved to the UK at the age of thirteen with his father (who had worked as a trader and taxi driver in Cairo). He considered himself a migrant and was unsure about how he identified by class status. He had experienced further education studying ICT at college. He was bilingual with Arabic as his first language, and describing his English language skills as 'fairly good'. He was self-employed running a phone shop business.

PSP03 was a 51-year-old Spanish woman of no religion (brought up within Catholicism) who moved to the UK at the age of twenty as a student, and later married and settled here. Her parents were both teachers, and she was educated to doctorate level and worked as a university researcher and lecturer. She did not respond to the class or migrant status questions on the survey.

These participants represented a range of first- and second-generation members of migrant families from diverse areas of the world, and diverse religious backgrounds. They were people who had experience of migration at different periods, acculturation, race, and the politics as well as the personal impacts of resettlement. Participants were purposely sought who were not South Asian Muslims as it was deemed more practical to invite them to participate in the main study.

4.6.2 Preparation

It was necessary to design 'bespoke' materials for the pilot study participants as they did not fit the origin and/or religion categories for the main study. The measures which formed a significant portion of the questionnaire were modified to refer to the correct religion and country of origin for each of the pilot study participants. Additionally, the timeline exemplar was adjusted so that Muslim names were replaced with mainstream culture-appropriate ones. This latter adjustment, although not wholly necessary, was done to create an ease of flow for the participant when reading the exemplar, to avoid jarring cultural references which might, for example, be especially potent for a Jewish reader encountering Muslim names. Without wishing to make assumptions about an individual's upbringing or political stance, it seemed best to attempt to keep such materials as neutral as possible.

4.6.3 The Interviews

After conducting the first interview a number of issues became immediately apparent. Firstly, the script (despite repeated amendations to improve flow and precision) remained cumbersome and unnatural sounding. It therefore required further streamlining. One area that felt particularly awkward were the number of questions contained in a prompt. The script was based on McAdams' (2008) life-story interview (although it had been adapted to meet the research questions for this study). A feature of McAdams' script appears to be to have multiple questions at the end of each prompt which often are rephrased repetitions of each other, or if asking for different points of information seem difficult for the participant to absorb and retain in the process of attempting to respond and give their narrative. Consequently, it was necessary to eradicate repetitions, and stagger questions where appropriate to facilitate full answers from the participant and avoid overloading them with items to remember during the interview.

It was also clear that the participants were anxious to perform 'well', give 'good' answers and please the researcher. It was necessary to emphasize that there were no wrong answers, and that the purpose of the process was simply to gather narratives (and views).

Small practical considerations also quickly became evident. For example, it became clear that it would be extremely useful for the researcher as well as the participant to have copies of the interviewee's prompt sheet (Appendix II (iv)) as each narrative prompt requests the same generic multi-part answers. It is easy to forget one part of the response required, and the participant would frequently check with the researcher whether or not they had covered all parts of the multi-item prompt.

More profoundly in terms of addressing research questions, it became clear after the first interview that there were insufficient prompts to address research questions related to parenting strategies, family structures and values that related directly to migrant families and may be specific to them. As a good deal of the rationale behind this study is rooted in the notion that there may be certain characteristics which are distinctive to migrant families, and particularly in relation to their approach to academic achievement, there needs to be some direct probing of these issues as well as the indirect and more general prompts that allow the participant to choose the areas which their experiences and sense of self would naturally lead them to focus on.

4.6.4 Transcription

The transcription of the interviews prompted an array of questions and decisions to be made. For instance, it would have been impractical to have attempted a phonetic transcription of the kind employed by linguists, so it becomes necessary to draw certain lines of expediency. One of these is to avoid the inclusion of tone or emphasis. And yet, such aspects of human communication in this context can be extremely valuable. With PSP01 a sudden intake of breath when asked about the death of her father, her mouth becoming audibly drier when speaking of being sent away at a crucial time, emphasized the emotional intensity of the experience. When PSP03 spoke of her husband telling her to hurry up and give birth to their first child as he was worried about missing the World Cup imminently to be screened on television, it is her tone which clarifies that she found this amusing and not deeply hurtful and traumatic.

In addition, there is the question of how many half-started and broken phrases and words should be included? To exclude some can make the text easier to read and handle for analysis and improves its clarity without being untrue to the original intent of the speaker (if done lightly and with great care). For example, text such as -

> *Well, there's all the obvious ones, there's the - you know, the meeting - you know, the fact that he hasn't met R___ . I just think, oh they'd get on so well together! They've got loads in common, I think they're very similar, I just think it's not that surprising I married someone like R___, he's very, you know, he's got lots of similar qualities to, I think, the person that my dad was, in that, you know, he's like peop - you know, he's like one of these people that everyone likes, that people go to, that kind of ask his advice, that was what my dad was like, I think, from what I can remember, and what I hear about him.*
>
> *(PSP01 Transcript, p.4).*

Could be presented in a 'cleaned up' version, without losing its veracity:

Well, there's all the obvious ones, there's the fact that he hasn't met R___ . I just think, oh they'd get on so well together! They've got loads in common, I think they're very similar, I just think it's not that surprising I married someone like R___, he's got lots of similar qualities to, I think, the person that my dad was, in that he's like one of these people that everyone likes, that people go to, that kind of ask his advice, that was what my dad was like, I think, from what I can remember, and what I hear about him.

On the other hand, every break and repositioning of self through the structure of the sentence conveys the emotional journey through the responses and conveys a great deal of information about the participants state of mind at key points in the interview. Related to this is the extent of use of punctuation. It is not practical to omit punctuation, but as soon as it is employed decisions are being made about meaning and intent. This becomes especially evident where a participant appears to break off and rethink what they wish to say, or is struggling with an emotional response, or is exclaiming in surprise or happiness.

For discourse analysts such as Schegloff (1997), any editing of the verbatim speech of participants runs the risk of *'a priori'* assumptions being made and detracts from the full truth of the speaker. However, it is generally accepted that the act of transcription itself is a form of interpretation, and the question is ultimately one of degree (Billig, 1999). Pragmatic considerations have to vie with notions of purity or realism in all such qualitative studies.

4.6.5 The Script

Although talk of 'scenes' and 'chapters' is integral to McAdams' life story interview template, it appeared to halt or confuse some of the participants. The first interview was with a fairly well-educated, articulate person who speaks English as a first language, but who nonetheless struggled with certain phraseology within the script. The main stumbling block for her was the reference to *'scenes'* when discussing their life-story. Such terminology originates in McAdams' (2008) Life Story Interview template, where the participant is encouraged to view their life-story as a literary work containing chapters and scenes. This appeared to jar PSP01, and drew attention to the artificial construction raising questions about its usefulness in the process. Although desirable to retain this element in the script, the number of references to *'scenes'* and *'chapters'* was reduced, and a sentence inserted emphasizing that it would be beneficial to speak about the memory in as much of a story format as possible, because there were many occasions when the participant was missing this central structuring characteristic in their responses. Accordingly a similar addition was made to the prompt sheet. This seemed to eradicate problems of

understanding and flow in the script even in the case of PSP02 whose first language is Arabic and who was not then an entirely fluent English speaker.

Equally, the first run through of the interview highlighted some unnatural sounding aspects of the script and was an impetus to sift through the text yet again to eliminate elements which use overly complex vocabulary or syntactical constructions which may sound more natural to American, rather than to British, ears. This script was required to be understandable and engaging to people from a variety of backgrounds and experiences and with varying degrees of proficiency in the English language, and consequently various minor amendments were required. For example:

> *"…do you discern a central theme, message, or idea that runs throughout the story? What is the major theme in your life story?"*

Became –

> *"…do you think there is a central theme, message, or idea that runs throughout your story as a whole? If you could choose a single word to sum up the theme of your life, what would it be?"*

Although the amended version is slightly extended in comparison to the original, it appeared to convey greater clarity, ran more smoothly in practice, and seemed to help participants to respond without requiring further explanation.

The script seemed to successfully elicit data which addressed the research questions. For example, PSP03 spoke fairly extensively about the impact of discrimination, the 2016 Referendum and Brexit on her life:

> *PSP03: ….it felt like we were a big – like Europe was like a big country, so you could just move around and just, you know, enjoy all the possibilities….*
>
> *SSI: What a wonderful feeling –*
>
> *PSP03: What a wonderful feeling looking back!*
>
> *(PSP03 Transcript, p.4)*

It was found that the script did not always lead participants to narrate stories, and instead they sometimes opted for broad generalisations when relaying information about their lives. A sentence was inserted stressing that it would be beneficial to speak about the chosen memory in as much of a story format as possible (and a similar addition was made to the prompt sheet). This resulted in an improvement in the use of detail and narrative structure when describing key scenes and events.

The experience of conducting the pilot study drew attention to the excessive 'wordiness' of the original script: the length of it, the awkwardness to say certain sections out loud, some unnecessary repetitions of questions and the use of overly complex language which might not be easily understood by all participants especially those for whom English was a second language. These areas were addressed and amended as a result of the pilot study.

4.6.6 Conduct

The pilot study highlighted a number of matters concerning my conduct as an interviewer. With my experience as a teacher and social worker I believe I have effective interviewing skills, but I have found in these narrative interviews that it can be quite difficult on occasions to strike the right balance between attempting to set an interviewee at their ease so that they are comfortable to speak at length on intimate subjects, and refraining from potentially tampering with their perspective and ideas by reinforcing their own statements with overt support –

> *PSP03: ….you hear about things that have happened, racist attacks, or xenophobic attacks on people that speak other languages, and that's a bit scary. So, it makes you more self-conscious when you're outside and you're speaking, or in the bus –*
>
> *SSI: So, you feel vulnerable?*
>
> *PSP03: You feel more vulnerable, yeah. Not because of anything that happened to me, but because of the atmosphere, the things you read in the newspapers.*
>
> *SSI: Is that since the referendum?*
>
> *PSP03: Yes.*
>
> *SSI: So, before that you weren't feeling that way - ?*
>
> *PSP03: No.*
>
> *SSI: It's just definitely since –*
>
> *PSP03: Yes.*
>
> *SSI: Yes, unfortunately I think that's quite a widespread feeling, isn't it?*

PSP03: And you can feel it, I mean some people say it's racist attacks, but you know people from Poland they are not a different race, it's xenophobia, it's not liking people from anywhere.

[PSP03 p.11].

It is crucial to have a professional distance, but in order to build sufficient rapport with the participant for them to feel safe in relating personal experiences and perceptions, verbal and non-verbal cues (in face-to-face interviews) become very important. They encourage the interviewee to open up, and can convey a sense of being 'sanctioned' to proceed with a narrative or expression of views. The interviewer has to walk a careful line of facilitation; it is as important not to indicate negativity about views that differ from their own as it is to avoid positively reinforcing perspectives that they happen to concur with. It can be difficult to strike a balance between rapport building and professional neutrality.

McAdams emphasised how important it is to let the narrative flow uninterrupted; that the interviewer must not attempt to assist in organising thoughts and narrative structures and must request any clarifications or elaborations with a supremely light touch (McAdams, 1993). However, this has to be balanced by the pragmatic considerations involved; in McAdams' life story work he had the opportunity to meet with participant multiple times and conducted several interviews with each. For this study, there was just one interview per participant which was approximately an hour long and therefore a tighter structure with more direction in places was necessary to give scope to address the research questions in the limited time available.

The pilot study proved extremely useful in highlighting areas where the script needed adjustment as well as testing its effectiveness in drawing out ideas pertinent to the study's research questions. It provided valuable practice in undertaking an interview with this format, and in highlighting certain areas where the interviewer would have to tread warily in order to avoid biasing the participants' responses.

4.7 Strengths and Limitations

The interview participants encompassed a wide demographic range including geographical areas around Britain, age, gender, education, marital status, employment status, perceived class, levels of religious practice, and visibility of 'Muslimness'. The interviews were reported by participants to be a powerful means to elicit their views of their lived experiences as citizens of the UK. The interviews appeared to have successfully facilitated the sharing of extremely personal and intimate thoughts and experiences,

but allowed participants to decide upon the level of intimacy for themselves, in the knowledge that they could call a halt to proceedings at any point.

The pool of participants available for this study were limited for a number of reasons. Without funding and resources (beyond those of the researcher herself), there are immediate limitations to what can be achieved in terms of advertising a project. With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, contacts were made primarily through social media, personal contacts, and 'cold-calling' (by email and telephone) various groups and individuals and requesting them to circulate the information amongst their contacts. Within those parameters recruitment was also limited to those who had a certain competency in speaking English. Although great pains had been taken with the language as well as the construction of the questionnaire, after many revisions it remains evident that a fairly competent level of fluency in English is required to answer some parts of the questionnaire which is the gateway to the interview. Given the inherent literacy requirements and the means by which the study was advertised, the sample has a definite bias towards the well-educated; 96% of the main sample, and 88% of those in the COVID-19 sub-project had experience of higher education.

In recruiting, communicating with and interviewing participants, I am aware that I possess a name and a heritage which instantly communicated a level of reassurance and often camaraderie to participants. Often during interviews, a sense of ease was experienced because I understood a Punjabi phrase, or aspect of life that might have needed clarification by a non-South Asian researcher. This level of insider status aided the smooth running of the interview, contributed to levels of trust and good humour, and probably led to more expansive narratives than might otherwise be the case.

Chapter 5: Findings (Part One) – Gendered Pathways

"Something that's always been in my mind is how my parents struggled here." [P46]

RQ1: How do second-generation South Asian Muslims in the UK describe the impact of migration on themselves and their family?

The current chapter focuses on the importance of gender in determining the migration experiences of the participants' parents, the impact of that on the second generation, and the expectations hard-wired into their upbringing and subsequent adult lives in the UK.

This chapter is based on the responses given in the life-story interview to the following questions:

1. Can you describe an event which was influenced or shaped by the fact that you are the child of a migrant?
2. Why did your parents migrate to the UK? What was their migration story?
3. Do you feel that there are differences in how people see Muslim migrants as opposed to migrants in general?

These questions were designed to focus in on the real-life impact of migrant family status on the participant; to encourage them to explore views on migration and how they have been personally affected by their parents' decision to migrate.

Gender appears to have been a key defining feature of most of the first-generation migration stories as retold by their children and these experiences have profound implications for the second-generation in migrant families in the UK. Such experiences have ramifications on the boundaries and expectations placed on the female and male children of South Asian Muslim migrants.

Table 4: Overview of themes and sub-themes for RQ1 'Gendered Pathways'.

Themes	Sub-themes
Stepping out of the known world	Impetus to migrate
	Yearning to return home
	Loss and sacrifice
Matriarchs and Patriarchs: Pioneers in an alien land	Revisioning marriage on alien soil
	Inner and outer world hardships
Mother's sacrifice and father's duty: searching for the right path forward	Balancing duty and desires
	Living with parents' gendered expectations

When participants described their parents' migration stories it became clear that there were certain commonalities related to each gender's impetus to migrate. Gender determined their path to the UK, and their roles and experiences once here. More than this, these life-defining experiences (in combination with cultural norms and values) appear to have had long-term repercussions on the upbringings experienced by their children as well as the gendered expectations placed on the second generation. Many participants questioned these expectations in relation to themselves and, accordingly, made decisions as to whether their children, the third generation, should follow these traditional routes. On the whole, the second generation tended to wish to liberate their own children from such expectations and it is possible to use this as one measure when discussing acculturation and the dominant values of the majority culture in the UK.

5.1 Theme 1: Stepping out of the known world

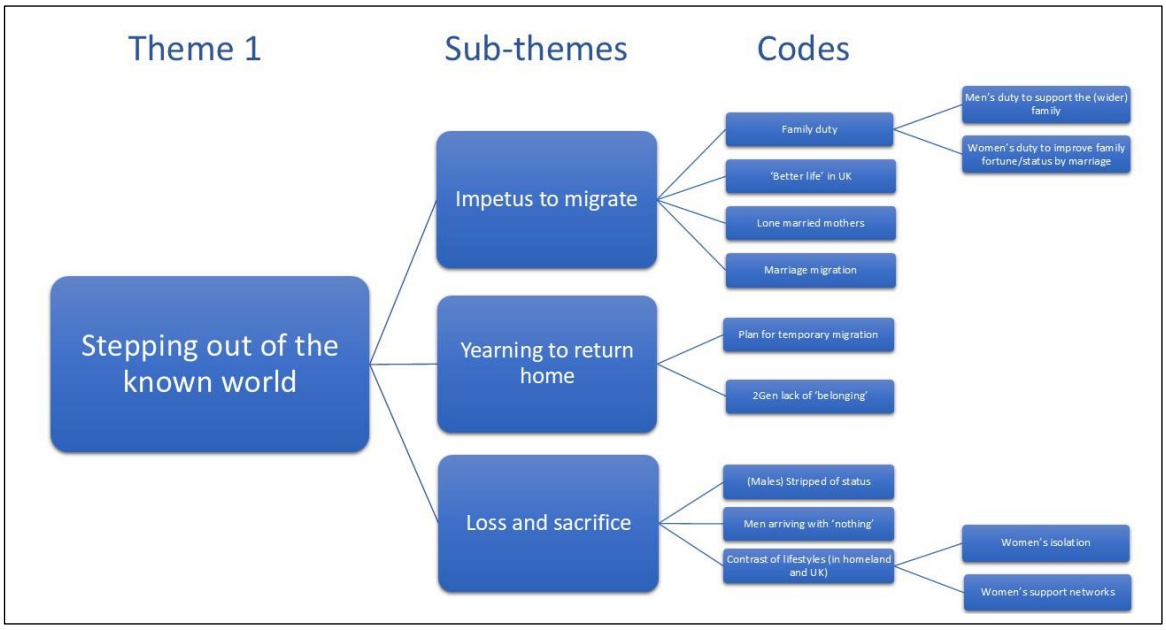


Figure 6: Construction of Theme 1 for RQ1 'Gendered Pathways'.

This first theme focuses on the motivating factors that led individuals to leave their home country, their culture, their families and social networks and travel across the world to an alien territory (see Figure 1). Although the impetus to migrate was frequently economic in nature, the migration itself tended to take on certain distinct characteristics based on the gender of each parent. Fathers were frequently described as making a lone migration and undergoing many hardships and deprivations in order to establish themselves and pave the way for others to join him. In contrast, mothers were described far more passively; their migration occurred *because* they married a man who had migrated and not because they themselves instigated the action to depart. Many participants alluded to a kind of limbo existence for the mothers who were left waiting in their home county until their husband had enough money or security to call them to the UK where their adult lives would essentially begin. Consequently, the motivation to migrate could be quite different for men and for women, and the examination of these narratives raises questions about agency as well as interpretations of 'success' for these intrepid voyagers.

Behind the overarching notion of migration being a search for a *'better life'*, the impetus for fathers to make this change ranged across a spectrum from collective to individual benefits; participants describe what is perhaps a surprising array of specific motivations, including communally-rooted desires to secure a better income and educational opportunities, highlighting a sense of duty to the (wider) family:

"He was sent here basically to find work; that was the main reason he was here. To try and improve their circumstances in Pakistan. That was why a lot of people did come over here." [P16]

"He was literally like 'You've got to get me there, you've got to get me there, I want to go there and I want to become a surgeon, a world-class surgeon, and be able to earn loads of money and come back to India and sort everybody's marriages!'." [P51]

In a few, rare examples, an individualistic pursuit of hedonistic freedoms was seen as the key driver by the second generation, but this was only ever the case with men. It was rare to find any parallel case of agency among the accounts of migrating mothers (whose strongest form of agency took the form of having a contingency plan if the marriage failed, and this was found in one case only). In this example, all sense of agency is with the father (even in relation to the non-South Asian women in his story, who become simply a facet of his temporary lifestyle choices):

"My father arrived … as a bachelor in the swinging sixties, a member of the Playboy Club, living 'the good life'. He had two German fiancés one after the other, both of whom he eventually didn't marry…". [P31]

Such deviations from the norm tended to be the case only with those from middle (and higher) classes. For working class men, the motivation to migrate was generally more overtly pragmatic and community orientated. In such cases for young men, the choice was frequently taken out of their hands and their family (or a tacit, but overwhelming, sense of duty) would motivate the move across the world in an attempt to find new sources of prosperity to benefit those left behind.

"… my father came here to work. They grew up really poor in Bangladesh, my grandfather was a potato farmer and they invested all their hopes and all their money into sending my dad here so that he could improve the life for his family, you know, his siblings and his parents." [P62]

"My father's family were quite money obsessed. So, they sent him over just to earn money for them." [P45]

In many cases the parents expected the move to Britain to be temporary; the plan was generally to work hard in the UK for a set number of years, ensure the family's security and prosperity and then return to the home country.

"his mindset was always to make those 'big bucks' and move back to Pakistan." [P60]

The idea of returning to the home country was seen as a powerful one for both genders of first-generation South Asian Muslims. Some families made a number of lengthy visits to the home country throughout the participants' childhoods, some made one significant visit *'home'*, and others described their parents' long-held plan to return to their country of origin once they felt financially secure or perhaps in retirement. Only a few indicated that their parents considered the migration as permanent. This preoccupation had powerful impacts on the second generation; it created confusion about their identity and generated a sense of displacement, it had practical impacts on their standard of living and personal freedoms during their childhoods, and it created multiple long-term insecurities in their relationship with their parents. In addition to all this, a preoccupation with the homeland meant that first generation migrants would be more likely to exhibit a *separatist* approach to acculturation (Berry, 2003) which is generally borne out by participants' accounts. A tendency of this kind to adhere most strongly to a heritage culture at the expense of interacting with a new culture could be argued to have a more serious impact on first-generation women who were often described as house- or community-bound and consequently had reduced contact with mainstream British society which might well have compounded vulnerabilities in terms of language acquisition and heightened anxiety about contact with the majority culture.

> *"Growing up, I felt like she stayed more or less in the home; her English wasn't very good, so she was kind of isolated, but she could do the day-to-day stuff." [P08]*

This parental isolation and disconnect from the wider (non-South Asian) community affected the second-generation in many ways during their childhoods and influenced their development into adults. As children they were often expected to take on adult information or responsibilities when acting as translators for their parents, their parents tended to be less involved in school or community matters, and they were very conscious of stigma related to a lack of language skills in their parents (these matters are explored in detail in Chapter 6 on *'Home and Identity'*).

For women, the impetus to migrate to the UK generally took the form of travelling with or joining their husband as an integral part of fulfilling their matrimonial (and familial) duties.

> *"My mother didn't have any plans to come to the UK at all, and the only reason why she did was because she married my dad." [P06]*

Prior to their arrival in the UK, these women often had little or no experience of living with their husbands; they tended to have had arranged marriages and may have had a short period of time living with their husbands in the home country before the man left for the UK, or they may have travelled across two continents to meet their spouse for the first time and marry in a foreign country (without their family or communities to hand). Such beginnings to married life must have been fraught with challenges, and yet

most of the participants described little of these experiences of their mothers. The emphasis of description in their parents' migration stories tended to fall on the experiences of their fathers rather than their mothers. This may be due to the stoical taciturnity that many participants reported concerning their parents' willingness to discuss their migration experiences and early days in the UK. It may be due to the fact that it is easier to recount a series of concrete actions, trials and difficulties overcome by their fathers as they established a home and income, than the perhaps more nebulous internal trials and difficulties experienced by their mothers.

There are many shades of motivation which provided the impetus for certain individuals to give up all that was familiar in favour of an uncertain future in an unknown land. Participants described their parents' decisions to make that life-defining leap in ways which divided along the lines of gender. Their fathers were generally sent ahead to clear the way and set up a base camp, and the mothers tended to follow some time later in order to support their husbands, build families and cement budding communities. The initial leap into the unknown, the conditions receiving them and the consequent lives built all had profound outcomes impacting the lives of the second generation.

5.2 Theme 2: Matriarchs and Patriarchs: Pioneers in an alien land

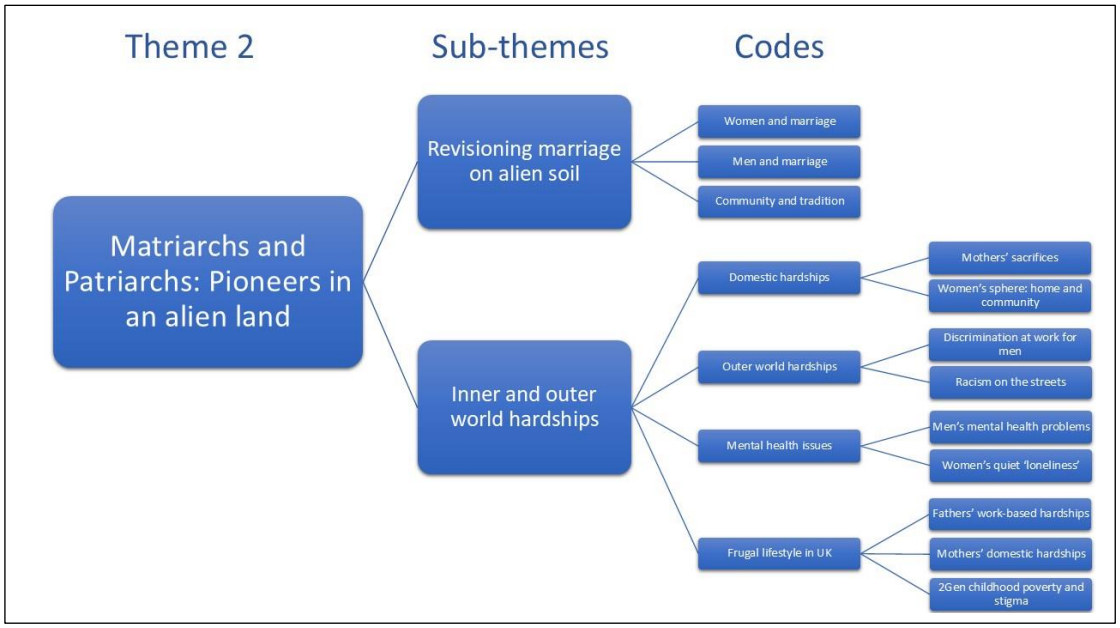


Figure 7: Construction of Theme 2 for RQ1 'Gendered Pathways'.

These men and women who migrated to the UK might not have felt particularly powerful in themselves at the time of migration and in the early years when they were working hard to establish themselves, but in the accounts given by their children they take on iconic positions within the family. The hardships endured and the sacrifices made by these parents are compelling facets of the relationship between the generations. The mothers dominated the domestic arena, whilst the fathers tended to be described as more distant authority figures navigating the more dangerous outer world, beyond the home and the safety buffer of the South Asian community. However, whilst admiring the strength and stoicism of their parents, second generation participants also observed and experienced the fault lines running through family relationships which attempted to adhere to transplanted cultural values that did not accord with the environment migrant families found themselves in. For men and women, these stressors and pressures expressed themselves in different ways, beginning with what brought these parents together and where they found themselves building a life together.

> *"My mum came because she got married to my dad. And it was seen as a great opportunity for her; lucky to marry someone who's basically gone abroad and is basically earning – compared to Pakistan – what is a lot of money. But I know from my mum's side that she experienced a lot of loneliness, a lot of difficulties." [P64]*

In many accounts there are references to *'difficulties'*, *'hardships'* and even *'loneliness'*, but these are details that do not tend to be expanded upon. Given that many participants cite their parents' unwillingness to dwell on negative aspects of the past, it may be that they were simply not given any further details themselves rather than that they are choosing not to share them. It is, consequently, left to the imagination to attempt to reconstruct some notion of the experiences of these young women and its impact on their personalities, lives and futures. That said, some informed conjectures can be hazarded. Serious trials and hardships often have long-term effects on people of all ages, but many (if not the majority) of the participants' parents began their married lives during adolescence; a time when profound physical, cognitive and social changes are taking place, and adversity or isolation can have serious long-term consequences (Blakemore & Mills, 2014; Orben, Tomova, & Blakemore, 2020). Brain formation is highly influenced by environmental factors such as nutrition, social interaction, stressors, education (Blakemore, 2018), and this will inevitably impact that individual's future outcomes, as well as influence their values and approaches to parenting; this becomes highly pertinent when considering the experiences of young adult migrants and their role as parents to the participants of this study. Some of these marriages involved girls rather than women (as judged by a contemporary Occidental perspective), and certainly individuals in the adolescent stage of development –

"She was married very, very young at fourteen. I'm assuming that that's just the thing that they did at that time. She thinks it obviously shaped her; she had quite a sad life." [P60]

"Being a Pakistani girl, getting married very young, then coming very young to a different country where everything is just about twelve-hour work shifts and struggling to make ends meet." [P64]

These young girls and women found themselves in alien territory thousands of miles away from their family, social networks and all that they had grown up with, and whether they found themselves living in a predominantly white area or a South Asian community in Britain, they would be unlikely to have experienced anything of the kind before. In addition to this, they would have to find ways of managing adult responsibilities in the new society, as well as accustoming themselves to married life and all that that entails.

"… he got married before he left at sixteen and my mother was young, she was fourteen getting married. But then they sent him from Bangladesh and then he came back once she was older and he'd made some money. She remembers basically feeling unhappy …. She was on her own a lot. They brought my first cousin – my dad's brother's son – along, claiming that he was my mother's son, to improve the family life of yet another brother, but it meant that my mother was there with a child that was not hers. She was a young woman looking after a child that's not hers in a country that's foreign to her with no support system around. She remembers it as being a very scary time; she would just lock herself in whatever flat she was living in. My dad worked extremely long hours; she was lonely, very depressed, she's scared even now of being on her own or in the dark." [P33]

Such accounts highlight a number of important issues: the isolation of a teenager stripped of her family and support, transplanted to alien territory, and left alone with sudden child-rearing responsibilities; the awesome responsibility of raising someone else's child when perhaps unwilling (and unprepared) to do so; the set of conditions that led that other family to decide that sending their son thousands of miles away with a young couple was the best option for his future, and accepting the personal loss this entailed; the lack of agency and resources of a woman in this position; and the invisibility of such a woman (living in fear and struggling with depression) to support services. Added to this are the economic pressures on a husband who would have to leave his wife to struggle on under such conditions as their survival relied on him working *"extremely long hours"*. And finally, there is the impact of all this on the young boy who presumably had no agency at all when being sent away from his family home (and country) to live under these conditions with no knowledge of when he would next see his parents, and with enormous

expectations on him to thrive and build a life that would improve the prospects of that family back home. The account suggests a lack of agency on the part of the young woman, but also the phrase *"they sent him"* indicates a similar lack of agency for the young man. Altogether, it is a daunting array of challenges, deficits and vulnerabilities for all concerned, and a situation to be potentially compounded later on by each pregnancy and the successive births of additional children.

As a minor caveat to one part of this catalogue, it is also important to remember that this narrative is recounted by a thirty-eight-year-old university graduate and member of the professional classes, who has strongly imbibed the majority culture's perspective on individualism, in contrast to her parents (and the young nephew) who presumably had a more collective-based perspective and may not have perceived the responsibility for raising the young boy as so peculiar and onerous a task in itself, although the act of managing it in reality, under such alien circumstances, may have had proved fraught with unexpected additional burdens. It may be safely assumed, however, that experiences such as these (especially at such a crucial time of life for the parents themselves) and borne by each gender in different ways, must have had long-lasting impacts on many aspects of their psychological development and well-being, which would in turn shape the kind of parents they would go on to be and the type of upbringing their children would experience.

It could be argued that women faced the greater burden as they often had to manage the domestic work of home and family in addition to working outside of the home (often in low paid textile related employment). Women nonetheless tended to be the key parent present in the home, and this raises the question of the quality of attachment and nature of the relationships between children born in the early years of a marriage in a new country away from the network of support more traditionally available to South Asian women as young wives and mothers. A large number of participants do describe growing up with a feeling of distance from their fathers (and in some cases, observing distance between their parents) that may have its roots in this early beginning where young brides and/or mothers migrated to Britain with, or in order to meet, their husbands, and begin to build a life with a man who was possibly relatively unknown to them. Despite general 'western' assumptions, such a scenario is fundamentally jarring to the concept of an arranged marriage which places its emphasis on the union of two families rather than considering marriage to be a contract solely between two individuals (Pande, 2014). However, in the context of migration the couple is stripped of their requisite familial network and left to establish themselves as two lone individuals; the problems and challenges spiralling out of this situation are compounded when these individuals find themselves having to manage the impact of this in alien territory. It is interesting that there is a void in the participants' narratives about this aspect of their mothers' experiences, and this appears to be mirrored in a similar void in the extant literature on the subject of South Asian arranged marriages in the context of migration.

Those economic pressures on husbands and fathers to work excessively long hours in order to support their families frequently resulted in an increased distance from domestic life which appears to have taken a toll on the attachments developed between some fathers and their children.

> *"As a child, obviously, you don't know what your dad goes through but I've got a lot closer to my dad in the adult years; as a child there was a bit of separation …. I just used to see my dad going in and out of work as I came back from school. So, I didn't get much time with my father, and the times that I did get it was always something strict like 'Oh, turn off your Megadrive', 'Go read namaz', do this, do that, there was a lot of demands rather than anything else." [P37]*

This somewhat daunting image of a distant father, master of the household but mostly absent in domestic life is fairly common in the participants' accounts, and, as P37 states here, a child's perspective can be limited, but occasional glimpses of the toll this took on the fathers in these households is provided too.

> *"… he put himself under a lot of stress, and unfortunately … he ended up having a nervous breakdown. … I don't think he was treated adequately, and, as a result, he then suffered another nervous breakdown after my sister was born. So, in close succession he had two nervous breakdowns. That left him completely lacking in self-confidence, of being able to do anything ever again. He just was at rock bottom." [P25]*

> *"My dad had an anger problem, so he was very angry all of the time probably at life and the way it had turned out, but obviously that got transferred on to us, so it was a very angry household. It was just horrendous." [P40]*

These extreme examples may indicate something about the intense pressure being placed upon migrant men. The combination of work and family pressures in an alien setting and (especially for the first wave of settlers) lacking the social networks and support systems they were accustomed to must have been extremely difficult to endure. Such pressures would be intensified by their daily obligation to enter a frequently hostile outside world:

> *"They do talk about the National Front or what my dad likes to call them 'the skinheads', and how they used to have some trouble with them." [P60]*

> *"… there would be graffiti saying 'Go home!' in pejorative tones, you know, so it was very direct; his was very physical, very direct." [P08]*

Participants describe their fathers' experiences of being physically attacked, having verbal abuse hurled at them, being rejected from social venues, as well as experiencing racism and discrimination at work. There are distinctions drawn between the experiences of working-class and middle-class men in these

accounts, but neither manual labourers nor professional men appeared to live with any great degree of security.

On arrival, working class men would be likely to experience barriers from the outset:

> *"… they used to look for houses and it saying 'No blacks, no Pakis, no dogs, no Irish', and seeing we're classed as dogs! And he remembers that. And they'd open the door and say 'Nah, no Pakis' blatantly!" [P42]*

Many moved into shared accommodation as a first step. Sometimes this would be with relations and sometimes this would mean moving into multi-occupational homes comprised solely of single, shift-working men where conditions were very basic and life was dominated by long working hours, the sharing of sleeping quarters, and all were focused on living frugally in order to send money home and to save for the future.

> *"… he lived in a house with a lot of other young men who were all here for the same reason, so they were all sharing the same experience. Learning the language and working many, many hours, sharing a room with lots of other people and learning how to fend for themselves, learning how to cook, learning how to clean for themselves." [P16]*

This excerpt especially serves as a reminder of the youth and inexperience of a large proportion of these men; for many this was their first experience of living outside of the parental home and all the protection that that entailed. Some were as young as fourteen in beginning such a life of rigour and labour:

> *"… my dad at fourteen, he was having to go to a factory and earn a living…. It was quite a hard life…. My dad told me things were difficult. Life was tough and they worked really hard." [P64]*

A key facet of these experiences is the emphasis on the inordinate amount of hard work required of their fathers to establish themselves in such unwelcoming conditions; participants describe the enormous, unrepayable debt that they owe their parents for the unremitting labour and commitment they devoted to the task of raising a family in an unfamiliar and generally unsupportive environment.

> *"… he works his socks off, doesn't matter how much he's in pain or how tired he is, it's survival 'I'll make sure my family have got a roof over their head and are being fed'." [P54]*

For middle-class men, their experiences differed significantly in terms of the employment they undertook and their home living conditions, but although they did not entirely escape racism and discrimination on

the streets and at work it appeared to have less of an impact on those who had other forms of social capital to draw upon:

> *"My dad came to the UK initially for his - because he's a doctor, and so he was coming for educational purposes. And so being an international student, it wasn't really an issue for him … because he was there for a very specific purpose and he intended to leave." [P06]*

Entering a country as an international student has a very different status and set of connotations to arriving as a migrant, despite the fact that given the right set of circumstances and change of agenda one can morph into the other. However, given this social status a hostile reception from some quarters can register very differently on someone who has the additional protective factor of a university community as their milieu. It is not that racism and discrimination does not exist in such institutions, but that the status of being not only a student but a trainee doctor carries significant social capital protection.

An individual's personality is not only highly influenced by environmental factors, it mediates how environmental factors will be interpreted and experienced (McCrae et al., 2000); there are various personality facets that can be protective to an individual in a potentially hostile environment:

> *"My dad is like a very warm, friendly person who's like 'Yeah! Everywhere I've gone I've made friends and people have liked me, and I haven't found that my 'Pakistaniness' has been a problem really'! …. I think he's probably just been oblivious to people like not being kind or warm or open to him. And also, I think, that even though he describes his general everyday experiences with people as fine, I think in terms of his career trajectory he's found it a real struggle, and he definitely relates that to being an immigrant. He's basically never been able to get a permanent job, he's been a locum his whole time in the UK, and that's part of the reason why we've moved house so much, because he's just always been moving from job to job. He must have worked at something like twenty-five hospitals in the UK over the past thirty-whatever years." [P57]*

Although this father is experiencing rejection and obstruction in terms of his career, his personality traits, relative economic security and social status presumably all combine to protect him from the full impact of such discriminatory treatment.

Examples of middle-class first-generation South Asian Muslim migrants are rare in this cohort; the majority are working-class, and were therefore most vulnerable (economically, socially and psychologically) to the full impact of hostile treatment when migrating to the UK. Men were exposed to such experiences in the workplace and on the streets, women might be similarly exposed but they tended to have an insulating layer of protection in the form of family and community.

Although plenty of first-generation women worked in the UK (some in factories and mills, then later in family businesses), the workplace tended to be embedded in the South Asian community or comprised of a high proportion of South Asian workers. Keyes (2006) argues that social well-being (rooted in social integration, acceptance, contribution, actualization and coherence) is generally overlooked in favour of psychological well-being when considering an individual's general health and well-being. It could be argued that in a situation as fraught with insecurities and hostilities as that of a South Asian Muslim migrating to the UK, where psychological well-being might well be considered vulnerable to severe abrasion, having a strong community would be a hugely important protective factor. Such a community has the potential to provide a sense of belongingness (social integration), confidence and trust in others (social acceptance), contribution to a social good (social contribution), optimism about that community's future (social actualization), and an appreciation of social life (social coherence). Keyes (2006) argues that eudaimonia (internal harmony and thriving) consists of both public and private positive functioning; that social well-being is as important as psychological well-being. Keyes further argues that the former tends to be ignored due to a disproportionate emphasis on the internal, private lives of individuals. However, it may be that the evident resilience of South Asian Muslim migrants is that they originate from and carry the values of a culture that is more communal than individualistic, and when transplanted to the UK successfully embed themselves into a strong community of their own making where Keyes' five principles of social well-being are able to flourish.

In that context, the development of such a community might well be considered to be a crucial factor in the successful migration and thriving of the South Asian Muslim community. Participants were critical of some aspects of the community, but they were also clear about the role of women in building that community and recognise some of its protective features:

> *"… it was only when the wives came over, and then my mum started to be friends with the other wives and stuff and that's when C_____ started to have its own little community..." [P24]*

In microcosm, P24 gives the example of a small group of Pakistani men (including her father) who moved to a town where there were no other Asians; the men lived frugally and kept to themselves, going from home to work, and had little success in speaking with the locals. It was only as the women arrived that a community began to be established, from which confident social interaction grew.

> *"I think if the community wasn't here, they wouldn't have felt welcome at all. But because the community that was already here was almost like a protective blanket for them, because whoever would come from abroad (from Pakistan or India), the community that was already here from there, for them it was like another member of the family had come. Obviously now we have people that have two, three, four*

generations of families here that have built up over time, but at that time it was literally the single person or a couple that was here. So, everybody would rally round each other. I think that is the aspect that kind of made them feel welcome." [P16]

The women who would be raising children, cooking food (sourcing ingredients which were obscure to British palettes), working and socialising together were the dynamic foundations of these communities.

For the first-generation South Asian Muslim migrants (and especially for those in the working-class) certain gender-based roles were assigned partly rooted in cultural values, partly in practical considerations. Men tended to scout out the territory in the first instance, and having established some form of secure domestic arrangement, would bring home a wife to begin the family-building process. The man would then work long hours (due to ungenerous remuneration), the woman would raise the family, and often worked (in the textile industry either in factories or from home, or in family businesses) but was primarily based in the home. The women built social communities and networks of support but often clung to the security of those communities rather than exposing themselves to the wider society. The degree to which men remained a part of this tight-knit community tended to depend on the type of work they did, and their class and educational status. Within the community, traditional ideas and perspectives seem to have been reinforced, which provided comfort and security but prefigured complications for the second-generation. Where their parents pursued a separatist approach to acculturation and kept themselves aloof from majority culture, there tended to arise a fear and suspicion of mainstream values (and the British themselves), and a fear that these would form a corrupting influence on their children. Consequently, the second generation were placed uncomfortably astride two cultures, often at variance with one another, and this raised problematic notions of identity and acceptance which many participants describe as a key feature of their lives to this day.

5.3 Theme 3: Mother's sacrifices and father's duty: searching for the right path forward

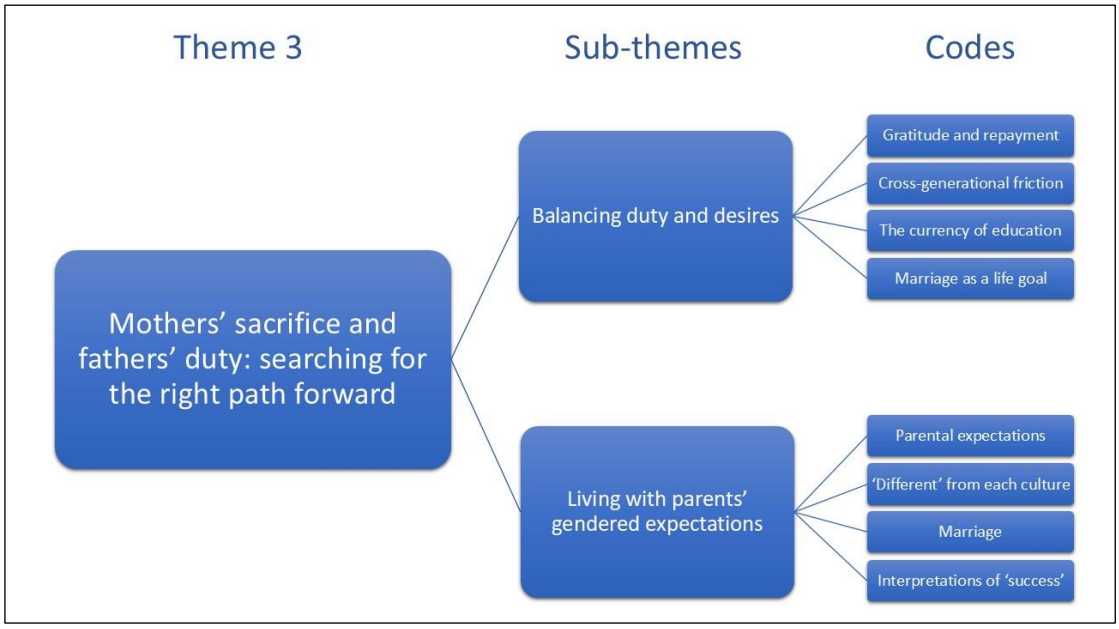


Figure 8: Construction of Theme 3 for RQ1 'Gendered Pathways'.

Throughout the interviews with second-generation participants, it became clear that there were certain experiences and concerns that each gender had in common, and that these seemed to stem from the perspectives and experiences of their parents. This final section of the chapter will focus on how the gendered experiences of the first generation impacted the experiences of the second, and how participants deal with gendered expectations when parenting the third generation.

The discussion of themes 1 and 2 (above) has outlined the differing conditions and environment that the participants' mothers and fathers found themselves in as a result of their gender, and how this influenced their approach to acculturation. Each parent's relationship with the mainstream British culture would inevitably have a deep impact on their children's lives. It might determine such things as the participants' experiences of school, socialising, media access, personal independence, romantic relationships as well as the development of their general values and perspective on life. Early acculturation theory posits that with each succeeding generation minority groups blend into the majority culture until they are no longer distinguishable from it (Herskovits, 1937). Recent work in the field of acculturation suggests that the process is more complex and that *acculturative* (movement towards the majority culture) and *enculturative* (movement towards the heritage culture) change can be observed across attitudinal, behavioural and value-based domains (Locke, 1998; Lopez-Class, Castro, & Ramirez, 2011). Markers of this process were found in the interviews with these participants, and the more distinct gendered

demarcation of the first-generation was nonetheless exhibited to varying degrees in certain domains for the second generation.

Participants discussed their parents in relation to gender in two ways: their parents' experiences (that they either observed or were told about) and how this impacted their own feelings and ideas; and the parenting and expectations placed upon them by those parents due to gender. Both powerfully influenced the lives and outlooks of these second-generation South Asian Muslims, affecting their sense of identity and acculturative/enculturative processes.

5.3.1 Balancing duty and desires

All of the participants described the hard work of their parents, and many grew up in frugal households where money was not squandered on fripperies, but saved and/or sent *'home'* to family, and/or put into a family business, and/or invested in their education. In most cases, participants allude to these tendencies in their parents as the reason why they too have a strong work ethic and avoid extravagances. Many describe vivid personal hardships that their mothers underwent either for the benefit of her children, or the family's *'greater good'*:

> *"… prior to that we didn't have a washing machine, my mother washed our clothes in the bath because money had to go and be saved towards Bangladesh. We lived in a three-bed house growing up, we didn't have a hoover because money had to go towards Bangladesh." [P33]*

> *"… she never complained … when I delve into my deep memories … I* **[remember]** *'Actually yeah, she didn't have a coat!', she maybe wore a cardigan, and wrapped round a dupatta[10] to keep herself warm so* ***we*** *were warm, you know, so they'd put their money towards* ***our*** *clothes." [P42]*

Similarly, there were examples of their fathers' hard work and sacrifices; these narratives tended to focus on the father encountering situations that challenged his status as effective provider.

> *"… my dad had a late-night conversation with my mum saying that he felt small that he couldn't get his child the one thing that he wants for his birthday because of how much it is financially. He was quite mad at himself, my mum was saying that he felt really, really down that day. So, what he did is for two weekends he did an extra shift to get*

[10] A broad scarf usually made of a thin, gauzy material, worn by women with a shalwar kameez (tunic and trousers).

extra money – he put in two days extra worth at work, and he used that money to get me that Godzilla toy." [P37]

In these examples of parental sacrifice, a key difference is that the woman endures the hardships and the man has some agency (in this case to choose to work extra shifts in order to buy a special gift for his son). With the second generation many women described their family-orientated battles to attain a degree of agency whether in terms of education, careers or marriage, whereas the men tended to talk about social and cultural barriers rather than obstructions placed on them by their own families. Consequently, the women tended to talk about their desire for and strategies used to gain greater autonomy and thus move out of the sphere of traditional female roles and towards the values of majority culture. Whereas the men did not describe similar experiences of subterfuge and careful planning to obtain freedoms, they were generally more interested in an enculturative approach and tended to be consolidating traditional values in their families and the responsibilities they adopted.

Although participants are agreed in feeling that they owe a debt to their parents for their hard work and endurance, many women in particular felt that education became their best option in order to avoid a similar future of exploitation and drudgery. The opportunity to obtain a good education was reiterated many times by almost all participants as a key driver for their parents' migration, but although seen as requisite for the sons, opinions varied for daughters. For sons, a university education was a key signifier of a successful outcome for those parents; it is seen as much as a means of attaining a good career, as it is a status symbol in itself and badge of success. For daughters (especially those from a working-class background) it was seen as desirable in order to enhance their status in the marriage market rather than an end in itself for the benefit of the woman concerned.

"There was a mentality in our family that the girls do well – they must do well. Before you leave this house, you must know how to drive, know how to sew, and have a degree. I don't know why. My dad had those three tick boxes ***[laughing]****!" [P52]*

It is interesting in this example that it is the father's, rather than the mother's, directive; P52 goes on to explain that her father felt strongly that his daughters should have a level of independence to protect them from any reversals or difficulties in their futures. There are examples in these interviews of parents of either gender wishing to provide similar safety nets for their daughters, but in all cases these were contingency plans, the primary plan for their daughters' best outcome being that of marriage.

Daughters often had to operate within a narrow range of opportunities with generally very little envisioned for them beyond an advantageous marriage; consequently, keeping the daughters at home, occupied with domestic responsibilities and away from the corrupting influences of mainstream culture

was often a central preoccupation for parents, and particularly mothers as they tended to be present more often in the home to oversee their children.

Some women found their path to education barred by their mothers

> *"… oh my God, it was a nightmare getting my mum to send me to college! 'No, you're not, you're not!' – because she knew that I was a bit of a rebel now... I had to get my tutors to ring up and say 'No, it's just a girls' course'." [P46]*

> *"I always felt that she was limiting me 'Don't do this', 'Can't do that', 'You have to get married', you know, 'Where are you working?', 'What do you need A' levels for?', 'What do you need to drive for?' – that's all I ever felt from her. But looking back it probably just felt like – it's probably just pangs of jealousy that she couldn't articulate, that I got a life that she didn't get but would have wanted." [P33]*

The poignancy of this last observation is very powerful and encapsulates the enormous loss of potential which is intertwined with migration; many participants described the skills and attributes of their parents which they were never given the opportunity to develop and explore, and consequently never permitted to flourish and grow into their full, potential self. For the fathers this is clear to understand and appreciate, however for mothers it is a little more nuanced. For many of the first-generation, working-class women described by their children, the scope of their lives was very limited in their home country and it is unlikely that they could have pursued an education (and its consequential benefits) if they had not migrated. But, having migrated, the contrast between the opportunities available to females in the first and second generations must have grown starker as the years progressed and daughters grew into womanhood.

Participants' accounts diverged between those whose mothers in particular felt that education for girls was superfluous and likely to be detrimental in terms of their marriageability (as they may be perceived as lacking traditional values), or simply considered it an indulgence that was not necessary in their own lives and so should not be necessary for their daughters; and those mothers who felt it important that their daughters should have an extra layer of security for their futures (perhaps because they themselves had had to struggle on without it). Either way, for many first-generation women their own experiences of arranged marriages (and matrimony in general) seemed to have a definite impact on their appreciation of the education of daughters. For the daughters themselves, many female participants highlighted the positives of having had migrant parents in terms of the additional freedoms that this has given them –

> *"I think if we were still in Pakistan, I wouldn't have been allowed to go to education, you know in my twenties; I probably would have been married before I was twenty-one. Yeah, even just simple things like being able to have a driving license, being able to go*

wherever I'm wanting to go. These little things, I guess, maybe we take for granted. If my parents weren't in the UK, I might not have been able to have a driving licence, I might not have been able to have the freedom to go and see my friends whenever I want." [P35]

The idea that parental migration enabled the second generation to access opportunities beyond certain gendered expectations was a common theme amongst female participants, but it was not the case with the men. Such a difference among the genders suggests very different approaches to parenting daughters and sons that would be rooted in the experiences and cultural values of the first generation.

5.3.2 Living with parents' gendered expectations

In describing their lives and their experiences, the majority of participants talked of the recognisably traditional roles that their parents expected them to follow. Men were expected to lead the family, providing financial security and a moral code for the next generation to adhere to. Women were expected to assume domestic caring roles of wife, mother and daughter-in-law. A large number of participants appeared to be following these pathways, but many questioned the relevancy of traditional values being nurtured by migrants in the UK when in the origin countries substantial social changes had occurred, and (especially in the cities) greater liberality is becoming the norm.

Many of the women's narratives focused on questions of personal liberty and choice. None more so than in the discussion of marriage. Male participants did not allude to anxieties about marriage in the same way as was experienced by women. For men, work, social status and security were the key areas eliciting anxiety; for women, there was anxiety about the desire to delay settling down, the perceptions and assumptions of non-South Asians about their marriages, and insecurities about the acceptance of non-traditional partners.

"… being the child of a migrant, you can't just marry anybody, because there were certain expectations. You had to marry someone of the same culture or the same colour or something like that …. Yeah, your entire life is shaped by the fact that they [her parents] *are from another country." [P47]*

"… [I knew] *that in the cultures from which my parents came you wouldn't go and choose your own partner, go out with them, have a relationship and then get married, that wasn't part of the agenda …. So, in that moment I understood that what I was doing was completely breaking all the rules …" [P01]*

A handful of female participants had partners who were not of South Asian or Muslim background, and in all but one case this proved an issue of difficulty, contention and frequently ostracization for these women which is not uncommon in South Asian communities in general (Anitha & Gill, 2009). The anxiety, anger and distress caused by rigid parental expectations was described as profound and long-lasting. This would be true for men too, but, in these interviews, it was not a subject raised by the male participants, despite being such a prevalent concern amongst the women. There might be a number of reasons for this difference between men and women: sons are frequently placed in positions of power and augmented respect within South Asian households (Kang, 2006; Ramji, 2007); women seem to be ostracised far more often by their families than men (Mirza, 2012); men might be less willing to discuss this aspect of their lives with a female (possibly Muslim-identified) interviewer; men who have not made these traditional choices in terms of marriage and family commitment may have been less likely to put themselves forward as participants in a study focused on the British Muslim experience. Such gender differentiation in South Asian families has been identified as leading to higher levels of anxiety, depression and identity conflicts in women (Shariff, 2009).

The primary expectations placed upon both male and female second-generation South Asian Muslims were resoundingly to *'be successful'* as a means of vindicating the life-changing decision their parents made in migrating to Britain. Participants interpreted this as attaining a good marriage for women, and attaining a good income and status for the men; all other aspects of life were negotiated and fine-tuned in individual families with these prime goals in mind. This also appeared to be the way that most participants evaluated their own achievements and level of success even though in some cases they might intellectually disagree with those priorities.

Such notions of *'success'* relate strongly to the survival level needs of migrants, but for those born in the UK increased levels of security and opportunity may well weaken the logic behind these priorities. It is at this point that culture and community combine to create additional pressures on the second generation to conform to traditions built up in societies without state-engineered safety nets.

Male participants prided themselves on their status, hard work and ability to provide for their family (notwithstanding that these are values highlighted in the majority as well as minority culture).

> *"… you're thinking 'Wow – I'm in a bank, I'm in a good career!'. My parents were happy like 'Oh, my son works in a bank!'." [P37]*

> *"I was in a profession where you're respected … and I felt more important – and as privileged as other people…. and by this time, I was very vocal about who I am and my identity." [P60]*

It is interesting to see the relationship here between status, respect and identity security, whereas female participants in prestigious positions (in medicine or academia for example) continue to experience anxiety in relation to their position in the workplace, the family and their own identity.

> *"Even in my speciality of _____ medicine, it is very white and I've always felt a bit like 'Oh, I don't think they quite like me' or 'I don't quite fit in' or whatever. And … I'm realising 'Well, actually, it's because they're all white middle class'. And I've been trying to fit myself in to their kind of framework, and I don't fit." [P55]*

This suggests that even in situations where women are attaining material success they may be experiencing higher levels of anxiety and identity insecurity, problems which a wealth of literature on the subject attests is rooted in the nature of the parenting experienced (Humera Iqbal & Golombok, 2018). Such a gender-based distinction seems to point to variations in parenting by gender, and this is likely to incorporate both the expectations raised and the opportunities offered to the child.

5.4 Discussion

This chapter has focused on gendered pathways through migration to the UK, and how participants describe such pathways influencing their parents' and their own experiences. These migration narratives were heavily shaped by the parents' gender with the men arriving first to, as it were, scout out the territory and establish themselves in generally spartan circumstances, to be followed by their wives (often years later) who would raise families, build communities and frequently take on paid employment, too. Such narratives intersect powerfully with class. Middle class migrants (although in a minority) divide into those who arrived in fairly affluent circumstances, and those who came from families with a history of affluence who had either lost their money (in some cases due to Partition) or simply did not have enough to support every member of the family. A distinguishing feature between middle- and working-class migrants was their level of education which tended to align with more liberal notions about life, ambitions and parenting which would necessarily profoundly impact their children. However, in most cases, irrespective of class there were differences between the genders when it came to the motivation to migrate. Men tended to migrate for economic reasons seeking to improve the fortunes of the extended family left behind and the future family they intended to create; women tended to migrate to join their husbands and thus fulfil their matrimonial obligations. In the majority of the migration stories, it was only the men who were described as having any degree of agency in regard to this life-changing decision to migrate; women were generally described as having no say or choice in the matter. The first generation would see this gender dynamic replicated many times throughout the South Asian

community, and, thus established, would become embedded as a norm to be applied to the second generation.

It may be due to this lack of, or limited, agency that the desire to return to the homeland remained a potent driver throughout the lives of these migrants. Whether envisioned as visits *'home'* with a view to remaining in the UK at least until retirement, or whether the plan was to work in Britain for a limited period and then return permanently to the country of origin with plenty of evidence of wealth and success, that aspiration remained strongly embedded in the lives of these participants and their families. This created identity confusion and a sense of displacement for most participants (and is considered in more detail in Chapter 6 *'Home and Identity'*). It is relevant here only in the sense that this enculturative (or separatist acculturative) approach could be argued to be fuelling the first generation's tendency to impose gendered expectations on their children which align strongly with the values (often held in aspic) from the country they left, and to reinforce their need to have certain gender-defined types of *'success'* overtly demonstrated by their children.

First-generation women were often described as keeping very much within the home or the community, and rarely having experience of mainstream British culture. Consequently, these women had often developed anxieties about the majority culture and feared its impact as a corrupting force on their children. Furthermore, having lived these somewhat insular, domestic-dominated lives, they tended to believe that their daughters could do no better than to follow in their footsteps. Most of these families lived in South Asian communities which would reinforce these tendencies in the first-generation parents, and police the second-generation's adherence to such values.

It is significant that many of these parents married very young, and tended to be in the adolescent stage of life when embarking on major life experiences such as migration, poverty, marriage, exploitative labour and parenthood. Such challenging and potentially traumatic experiences will have affected their development and outlook, and contributed largely to the types of parents they would become; it is not unreasonable to suppose that where migration strips away every crutch and security that the individual relied upon and held dear, traditional values and community-based social capital may be the principal qualities remaining to them to forge ahead with.

In many cases participants described their fathers as being rather distanced from family life and this was always framed in the context of the father's hard work and commitment to providing for the family. In the few examples where parental mental health issues were discussed or problems with anger management, it was always in relation to the father. Although the mothers might be described occasionally as having an unhappy or a lonely life this was never framed as *'depression'* or any other identifiable mental health issue, and more generally mothers were described as hard-working, long-suffering, busy and generally nurturing. In this context, the men appeared to be more vulnerable and

isolated away from the heart of the family. This cannot be unconnected to the amount of visceral and often violent racism that they were exposed to, and especially the impact of working in hostile environments away from community-based workplaces where the women tended to congregate, and instead having to face the hostility of mainstream society.

In dealing with the plentiful hardships of life, both parents were described as being constrained by economic, social and cultural barriers, however the economic ones predominated in narratives about fathers, and social and cultural difficulties were central to descriptions of their mothers. Their fathers tended to be depicted with a level of agency, although of a limited nature. Their mothers were generally described as lacking agency, and admired for their endurance. It would be interesting to explore in more detail the impact of such experiences directly with the first generation and investigate how this might have affected their psychological well-being, personality development, and value system. However, in the meantime, with the testimonies of their children it is possible to make some deductions based on the values and key tenets communicated to the second generation.

Female participants in particular described their lives in terms of freedoms permitted, denied and fought for; it is noticeable that male participants described the conflicts they experience as being away from home and family, and centred far more in the organisations where they study and work in mainstream society. These factors are mediated by class and parental education, but it was not unusual to find female participants citing their mother as a key obstruction to their autonomy; this was often the case in relation to higher education and fears about the daughter's consequent marriageability. Women in this study had been allowed varying degrees of freedom in relation to educational or occupational opportunities, but the predominant parental concern was to retain sufficient control over their choices so as not to allow their position to be marred on the marriage market. For their sons, greater freedom in these areas was recognised as a route to material success and therefore constituted an enhancement to their matrimonial assets. This key difference between the treatment of sons and daughters may well be considered as a reflection of their parents' own experiences of marriage intertwined as it must be with their consequent experiences of migration.

Participants described important areas of their lives in the context of gender. Ultimately, their focus when discussing gender was on agency, with women discussing agency in the context of education and marriage, and men with regards to their engagement with educational and occupational institutions. These become pivotal junctions for deconstructing and understanding their approaches to acculturation and enculturation, but the origins of these matters could be argued to reside deep within the gendered migration stories of their parents.

Chapter 6: Findings (Part Two) - Home and Identity

"I'm forty bloody years old with two teenage kids – and I'm still confused as to what I am!" [P51]

RQ1: How do second-generation South Asian Muslims in the UK describe the impact of migration on themselves and their family?

Second-generation South Asian Muslims in this study described their lives in terms of challenges, barriers, aspirations and displacements. Central to all of this was a continuing quest to establish themselves and find a comfortable space in society where they could feel accepted. The participants fell across a spectrum from those who feel they have a well-deserved place in British society to those who feel that they will never be accepted. In this context, participants felt themselves to be profoundly marked by their parents' triple outsider status of *'South Asian'*, *'Muslim'* and *'migrant'*.

Table 5: Overview of themes and sub-themes for RQ1 Home and Identity.

Themes	Sub-themes
Early 'otherhood'	Marked by parental boundaries
	A stigmatised childhood
	Seeking to belong
Pitching the boundaries	History in the 'here and now'
	Resolving parental perspectives
	Standing with the community
	This is not a safe place
Calibrating 'home'	British like me
	Living with uncertainty

6.1 Theme 1: Early 'otherhood'

This theme explores the early roots of being *'othered'* by mainstream society. Participants described their lives as being populated by barriers. This theme spotlights the origins and early experiences of that sense of being outside of the mainstream. It is concerned with the engendering of those barriers and hurdles that, by the participants' own accounts, characterise the life experiences of British-born South Asian Muslims, and particularly focuses on the impact of such challenges during the formative years of childhood.

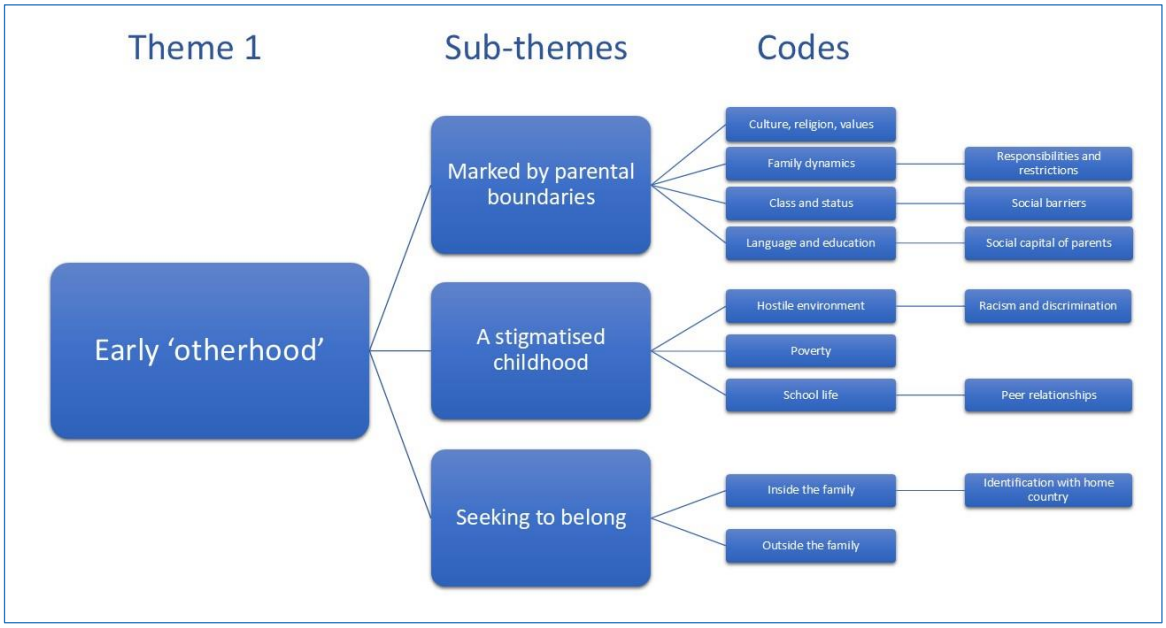


Figure 9: Construction of Theme 1 for RQ1 Home and Identity.

6.1.1 Marked by parental boundaries

There are many ways in which second-generation South Asian Muslims described themselves as being marked by their parents' culture, religion and values. Many participants felt that these aspects of life were intensified by that initial decision to emigrate. Growing up as a member of a minority community within a majority culture brings the imported culture, religion and values to the fore by contrast. Social borderlines are drawn by heritage and language, and these frequently intersect with class boundaries. All of these factors have an effect on family dynamics, which in turn create profound impacts on the childhoods of the second generation. This British-born generation reported growing up in homes with cultural values that did not match those experienced in the wider community, and led to questions about their identity and status often characterised by insecurity and conflict.

6.1.1.1 Culture, religion and values

Many participants described the breadth of cultural difference that their parents arrived with when migrating to Britain. This was generally described in terms of being surprised or unprepared; this was as much with regards to climate, shopping without bartering, living expenses, sourcing ingredients, opening a bank account, social etiquettes and navigating the bureaucracy of organisations as it was to the unexpectedness of encountering racism and discrimination when looking for work, accommodation, or simply walking down the street. Culture shock took many forms:

> *"They arrived in the country [on] the 15th December at Tilbury Docks, and it was snowing and they'd never seen snow before so they were really excited. And they all invested in a big warm coat that they'd never had before. It was quite exciting, but the excitement soon wore off because the days were so short, especially at that time of year, and they'd never experienced that before. So, when it came to four o'clock, they all thought it was bedtime and that they had to go to bed and go to sleep!" [P03]*

> *"… my dad used to work, and my mum didn't at the time work initially, and then she said 'Oh no I couldn't speak English', but dad said 'No. I'm not doing it for you – shopping – you go. How else are you going to learn?'. So, my dad put her in the deep end, in a sense it was good. At first mum would say* ***[heavy accent:]*** *'How much?', and then gradually my mum could stand there and barter with them* ***[laughing]****. And that was another thing people weren't clued up on! My dad used to say 'Don't do that, because they don't do it here. There's a fixed price and that's it'." [P46]*

Participants described a vast array of personal, social and cultural challenges set before their parents due to being migrants. Their parents' responses to these trials and encounters impacted the level and nature of assimilation participants later strove to make. The majority of participants whose parents had battled with poverty and deprivation described their families as not straying far from minority communities.

> *"I just think they didn't have the skills really, and they didn't have any kind of education. They just weren't able to adapt very well. They stayed within their own little pockets, with people that was similar to them, and tried to carry on as if they were still living in India, I guess!" [P40]*

Others, often of a more middle-class upbringing, described their family's and community's nurturing of heritage culture in a far more positive light:

" … in those days there were the qawwalis[11] and the Sabri Brothers and going to mushairas[12] – I grew up going to mushairas pretty much every weekend. My father wrote poetry as his hobby, so that was what we did. But it was all very much in the Indian, Pakistani, Hyderabadi community. We didn't mix outside – we didn't need to, really. Everything was well contained; all his friends were doctors or lawyers or barristers or that kind of thing." [P31]

These motivational differences between South Asian Muslim migrants for adherence to minority communities impacted their children in different ways. Participants who described their parents as taking the former route tended to speak more disparagingly of minority communities in favour of the majority culture, and those whose parents chose the latter and tended to engage with minority community groups through cultural activities appeared to have more positive feelings and a pride in their heritage.

"I think over my teenage years I've tried to hide the more – tried to be a bit more British and tried to sort of hide the Pakistani elements of my life. I was loathe to bring my friends home, because of the way my dad spoke, or the food that my family would eat." [P09]

*"… when I got married to my **[non-Asian]** husband, my mum actually took him to her side in East London, and so he got to meet my uncle and my aunt and their children, and … we got to go to **[my cousin's]** wedding which was amazing, especially for my husband as he got to see this beautiful Pakistani-Kashmiri wedding which I kind of grew up with. And he actually met somebody who knew me as a child and … it just took me back to some of the happier times where I felt comfortable with the older generation, especially the comfort with the women. You know, they always came together, they cooked, so we were all part of that, either playing or running around or helping in the kitchen making endless samosas **[laughing]**!" [P08]*

Participants described their experiences of culture principally in terms of food, clothing, language, (occasionally shared media), parental values, and community. In a few cases, religion would be described as taking a central role in their upbringing, but more generally it was not directly alluded to in the context of childhood narratives. The exception to this was where religious observance marked the separateness,

[11] Qawwali is a form of devotional singing (from Sufi Islamic traditions); poetry is sung accompanied by musicians creating powerful rhythms, together with clapping and chanting, to build a passionate, almost trance-like state.
[12] A gathering of poets who perform their work, often love poetry in the form of ghazals (sung poetry); Persian tradition.

or 'otherness' of the participant and their family; most commonly in contrast to a wider non-Muslim, non-Asian community, but sometimes in contrast to those in their own network or wider family –

> *" … me and my family we were the religious ones, basically, the practicing ones out of all my extended family. So, we grew up wearing the hijab, and my parents they put us in Islamic school as well. We really enjoyed it, we enjoyed that whole lifestyle …. I think they looked at my parents and they would compare their kids to – or maybe their parenting to my parents' parenting. My parents raised us in terms of Islamically they – I feel like they raised us right. They didn't beat us into submission … it wasn't like a toxic environment. Religiously speaking, we weren't forced to do anything. It was a very loving environment. And it went right for us; I'm very confident in my Islamic identity, in my religious identity. And their kids, they would try to like beat their kids into praying and obviously that's not right; you can't beat your kids into praying and beat them into loving their religion.". [P62]*

Participants in this study indicated a range of religious adherence from atheist to non-practising to practising Muslim, but with all these shades of religiosity none depicted a childhood where religion was presented as a negative force in their lives (even in the cases where participants had chosen to reject religion in later life). In addition to this, participants tended to describe any negative behaviours from others as centring on race and status rather than religion during their childhoods.

6.1.1.2 Family Dynamics

Participants emphasized the importance of family (both immediate and extended) and the communal aspects of life as they were growing up. Central to their experiences in childhood was the absolute authority of their parents, and the parents' relationship with majority culture. Both of these aspects of family life were described as having powerful effects on the participants' understanding of self, in terms of their perceived status and position within the family and society as a whole.

The majority of participants emphasized the power and authority of their parents throughout their childhood (and well into their adulthood). There was a strong expectation that the children would obey their parents' overt and inferred injunctions. This is not to say that there was no infringement of these diktats, but they were rare and frequently enveloped in feelings of guilt. The parents were often described as being at odds with the influences of mainstream culture and extremely wary of the influence of this culture on their children.

"I think my parents felt really threatened by the culture here. There was a lot of – as we were teenagers – scared that bad things were going to happen and we weren't going to do their bidding. Yeah. I think the lack of education is a big thing." [P40]

It is interesting that this speaker relates such perceptions to a lack of education on the parents' part; this implies that limited education restricts an individual from exploring the unknown and tends to bias them towards the safe and the familiar. Such vulnerabilities and deficits could be exacerbated by extreme threats to the children's sense of security and rooted identity in Britain when parents felt overwhelmed by cultural differences:

"… when things became hard here, when my eldest sister and my mother were at loggerheads all the time … my mum took us all to India. And she said 'This is it. We're going to stay here; we're not going back'. She just had had enough and just said 'I can't deal with her anymore; I can't deal with the situation there; it's too hard to raise these kids there. They need to come here and learn how children should behave, because here parents aren't questioned. Their authority is sacrosanct. It's just not up for discussion'." [P25]

It is possible that there was a higher level of adherence to parental authority in these migrant South Asian families due to a mixture of cultural inheritance, unity in the face of adversity and a strong sense of debt to their parents for the sacrifices and hardships they endured in order to establish their family in the UK. This complex combination is reported by many participants, but it had a range of repercussions for the second-generation (as will be discussed below). Many felt that their sense of family unity was intensified by a perception of hostility in mainstream culture to South Asians and/or Muslims and/or migrants. An enhanced family focus was also often enhanced by participants' experiences of multiple moves within the UK due to the instability of work for their parents (directly related to their migrant status).

"I used to think, until the age of eight, I used to think that it was normal that you changed school every year. I thought that was the normal thing." [P51]

In addition to this, many participants described amputated family lines to their extended family, which would be likely to intensify the importance of immediate family relationships. This was driven home particularly when it came to the death of a grandparent who might be little or entirely unknown to the participant due to living in the home country. The participant, in observing their parent's grief for that grandparent often experienced their own sense of loss and dislocation for the relationship(s) they did not have.

" … thinking back to when my paternal grandmother passed away (I think I was around eight or nine at the time), I hadn't really met her much because she lived in Pakistan. I

didn't really have much contact with my family in Pakistan. I think I'd only seen them once or twice in my life at that point. So, it was quite strange being around them, my father was really upset and he was very, very close to his family in Pakistan. It was really strange because I kind of knew who she was, but didn't really. I knew I should be sad, because it was my grandmother but it was kind of – I don't know – it was quite strange because I felt like I didn't really know her. I just knew that she was my grandmother." [P09]

The disconnect for the participant is evident here. To witness a parent's distress tends to be difficult and painful in itself, but to understand yourself to be locked out of those natural family connections and responses by circumstances outside of your control is difficult to process when attempting to understand oneself and one's place in the world. This common feature of life for the children of migrants is another characteristic that distinguishes them from the norm of their non-migrant peers.

Another common difference relates to domestic responsibilities placed on children and youths in South Asian families. Many participants talked about additional duties that were placed on them due to being the children of migrants and members of a minority community. As children, many were expected to take on responsibilities of caring for younger siblings, extensive household chores, and working in family businesses. They often made essential contributions to the maintenance of home and income, as the family sought to securely establish themselves.

Frequently, the issue of language arose in participants' accounts of their parents' abilities to advance and improve their material position and security.

"I can remember early experiences of poverty and stuff. Again, I would put that down to the specific circumstance of being in a migrant household where the parents have limited English and limited qualifications and skills in the middle of a recession, and having to cope with circumstances that perhaps non-migrants wouldn't have had to. I mean, sure, job loss happens to everyone, but I don't know that our circumstance was not made worse by the fact that perhaps my parents didn't know where to go; couldn't be signposted properly to somewhere that would have been better." [P28]

In many cases, participants recounted their role as translator to their parents who might otherwise have struggled to negotiate routine encounters with service providers and bureaucratic officials. They also describe witnessing their parents being effectively held back by limited access to resources or opportunities as the language barrier minimised their contact with mainstream society.

"And there was a massive language barrier as well. Neither my mum nor my dad have got really good English. My dad's is passable, but it's not so good by any stretch of the

imagination. My mum never actually learnt English properly; she can just get by. So, they were received really by other migrants, other Pakistani families and people, but by wider society – not great." [P64]

By being thrust into the role of translator, children were often exposed to information that under other circumstances would be considered inappropriate for them to hear (Maiter & Stalker, 2011) -

"I just remember the translating. Even the doctors, going to the doctors, one of your questions was 'Did you have to translate?' and yeah, we did. Back then, I don't think we thought it was abnormal because the other Asian girls that I knew (there was maybe about four of them) did the same thing." [P24]

"At eighteen when I was married, I was living in Pakistan … but then my dad he has severe mental health issues, he got arrested and was sectioned off. They needed somebody to appeal that or to go around and find out what's happening etcetera. I had to come back … because my mum doesn't speak English very well – that was a role that I had to take on. So, when I came back, I had to go to the mental health meetings, I had to go to the police station a few times, in fact over the years it was quite a lot of times, and that was a role that I had to take on because nobody – because my mum didn't speak English and there wasn't really much other help. … I feel that at eighteen other people wouldn't have had that responsibility, where I did because of the lack of language skills." [P48]

These participants were clearly aware that these extra responsibilities of being their parents' translators was something specific to their experience as children of migrants, and consequently another type of experience that differentiated them from their non-migrant peers. Participants also associated their parents' lack of proficiency in English as something which curtailed social integration and resulted in stigmatisation.

"… sometimes it's little things, like you go to parents' evening and you're embarrassed about your parents coming to see your teachers because they don't know English very well. Or you don't want them to talk to any of your friends because you're embarrassed." [P49]

"Growing up, I felt like ***[my mother]*** *stayed more or less in the home; her English wasn't very good, so she was kind of isolated, but she could do the day-to-day stuff." [P08]*

"Just going to the post office and stuff, there – even other brown people – there was this one Indian woman that worked at the post office for quite a while, she was very rude to ***[my mother]*** *because she didn't speak English that well …. They were not as accepting and not as willing to communicate because of her limited English skills." [P48]*

An array of mostly negative feelings seems to be engendered by such circumstances: social discomfort, guilt, shame, pity and possibly condemnation or anger. However, the sensation of being marked out because their parents were not proficient in the key social skill of language seems consistent. Sometimes participants felt abandoned to face challenging situations on their own because of their parents' lack of language and/or access to mainstream information.

"… you're kind of left to your own devices of how to navigate those spaces; there's only so much support that your parents can give you, because they don't – they can't – understand what higher education is like and things like that." [P30]

One participant described the difference between how her parents handled teachers' inaction about bullying when she, the eldest child, was at school and her parents had limited English skills, as compared to later when her younger siblings found themselves in similar positions

"… when they were having problems at school, my mum by that time was a little more assertive, she was more confident in speaking, her English was a lot more better, and if she knew something was not right she wasn't afraid to challenge it." [P26]

Participants often described their parents as standing outside of mainstream society, and, by extension, feeling themselves to be in an ambiguous position too, lacking the unconscious 'right of entry' experienced by their non-migrant peers. Limited formal education, limited knowledge of societal systems, and limited English language skills were frequently cited as significant barriers experienced by the parents of these participants and impacted their children in a variety of ways. Difficulties in any or all of these areas led to parents being held back in low paid intensive work, restricted in leisure time to spend with their children, and socially annexed from mainstream society.

6.1.1.3 Class and status

For migrants, the issue of class and status is not straight-forward. Many participants have described their parents' status in Pakistan, India or Bangladesh as being in a low-wage bracket (whether from urban or agrarian backgrounds), although there are a number of participants who describe a more affluent background. In either case, government-imposed currency restrictions in the 1950-60s meant that migrants (irrespective of background) arrived in the UK with very little financial protection; those from

Pakistan were permitted to bring £5, those from India a mere £3. These financial limitations combined with 'migrant' status and the concomitant race-driven restrictions in housing and employment tended to compress the span of class and status markers perceivable in the South Asian migrant population.

Participants reported experiencing class and status issues in a number of ways. Several described a sense of lowered status connected to numerous 'intra-Britain' moves or mini-migrations; such upheavals were intimately related to the pursuit of employment.

> *"I also think that because of our constant moving around as well within the UK ever since me and my sister were born, and because of my dad's job – I think that's also kind of made us sort of like migrants as well; we keep moving around, don't really sit still for too long." [P23]*

> *"I think in terms of his career trajectory he's found it a real struggle, and he definitely relates that to being an immigrant. He's basically never been able to get a permanent job, he's been a locum his whole time in the UK, and that's part of the reason why we've moved house so much, because he's just always been moving from job to job. He must have worked at something like twenty-five hospitals in the UK over the past thirty-whatever years." [P57]*

It is interesting to note that this experience crosses the boundaries of labour-intensive and professionally skilled employment. These mini-migrations highlighted differences between themselves and their non-migrant peers to participants, and the impact to salary and job security for their parents necessarily impacted their standard of living and, potentially, their opportunities, prospects and outcomes.

Parental income and employment were described as powerful indicators of status. For some, migration marked a material decline from the rank and position previously held.

> *"They were both from very well-to-do families in H_____ in India, and their own story was that of migration, because in 1947 when India broke free from the Raj and the creation of Pakistan took place, some of my dad's family went to Pakistan, but some of my dad's family stayed in India. But they lost everything, because where they came from was an independent state, it wasn't part of the wider India. So, dad's dad, my grandfather, was like the Chancellor of the Exchequer of H_____, but when that was all amalgamated into the main body of India they lost all of their land, wealth, titles, everything. So, they did go from riches to rags. It was a real fall from grace, because they had no other skills and nothing else to do. My dad came here because he wanted to be able to study and become a qualified accountant and then go back and carry on living the life that he was used to." [P25]*

This, as might be assumed, is a rather more unusual family history. In most cases where participants described a decline in status it concerned a drop from the professional classes to manual labour as British society failed to sufficiently recognise their parents' qualifications or take appropriate account of their experience.

Some participants described in detail the hardships they observed their parents undergoing and therefore the extra responsibilities and sensitivities they developed in response to that:

> *"I remember that it was huge for me when I found out that my mum gets something like seven pence to put a zip on! Trouser zips were seven pence in the early eighties. … So how many seven pences is she making in a day to make a 'good' wage?'. And, then eyesight, to sit on a machine – your back – your upper back – you know, I used to think about all that. I remember … my mum used to come home from work, and I'd take her socks off, I'd put Vaseline on her feet ..." [P42]*

Such behaviours and responses were firmly associated with experiences of hardship and deprivation, and consequently markers of class and status as well as setting these participants apart from the norm.

Participants also spoke of status in terms of the locations they lived in. This might mean specifics such as living above the family business, or a sense of ghettoising migrant families is certain geographical areas.

> *"… we all lived on top of a DIY shop which my dad owned. When we were little, we used to play with the copper pipe fittings; we used to put rings on our fingers and we used to say 'These are my gold rings!' me and my sisters **[laughing]**." [P52]*

> *"I think … unless you are a very select privileged few … you're going to be put into a subsection of society where your immediate access (as in your local areas) will be with other migrants. So, like in my parents' area it's full of Pakistanis, Bengalis and Arabs. … no matter where you are coming from, you're going to be chucked in to that basket to be with other immigrants' area or neighbourhood rather than spreading it out into different sort of areas. There's a section of the map that gets provided and given as a starting off point. And I think it's mainly to do with lower class areas or a lot of migrant-influenced areas." [P37]*

> *"… we're an ethnic minority community we're most likely to live in areas that are industrial, post-industrial, working-class communities where there are health problems etcetera." [P58]*

Some participants spoke of living in white areas (often working-class estates), but more frequently described growing up in South Asian urban communities. This tended to occur (and still occurs with new

waves of migrants) due to a mixture of affordable housing and a drive to gain the security of a shared culture and community (Mirza & Warwick, 2022; Nasser, 2003). The former reason indicates the economic status marker. Together, participants generally spoke of these conditions as enhancing feelings of low status and *'othering'* from white working-class peers, as well as wider mainstream society as a whole.

> *"… living in the North living in a very socio-economically deprived area you also didn't fit in in England. And so, it's just that feeling of you don't belong anywhere. And feeling bad, feeling deficient in whatever sphere." [P55]*

> *"A combination of racism and always feeling like I was an outsider; never feeling equal." [P40]*

Many participants identified class and status markers as compounding cultural differences in creating a gulf between themselves and non-South Asian Muslims.

> *"I didn't have a pony, we didn't have a bookshelf where I could read books, … I never went to the cinema, I had no social life, being on holiday wasn't a thing, it was just so – I think the difficulty in relating to people who are … indigenously British – how unrelatable my life experience to them was. It's the pinnacle of how my life has been different as a migrant. And I still experience that now, because my life **is** different." [P60]*

This strongly felt contrast indicates something about the lifestyle and status of those around him; the lack of points of connection to non-migrant peers was felt by many participants to be a key problem and sense of loss that they battled with in their lives. Different approaches were cited as attempts to combat these difficulties (as is discussed below). However, central to all these aspects of status was the message that many of the participants received in one form or another and profoundly marked their sense of self, potential, and determination –

> *"**[My parent's]** view was very much that you needed to be significantly better than indigenous people because you're going to face obstacles all along the way. … **[They]** had always said to me, 'Just be aware that when **you** go down, there's no coming up'." [P43]*

This was said by a practiced doctor, who found it proved to be so true in his experience that he continues to convey this message to similarly placed student doctors who he tutors.

Growing up with this perception of the limitations and inherent dangers of your status in society is a profound marker in the identity of these participants. The message might be delivered via their parents, but it was a summary of the experiences of both generations reflected back and encapsulated in this

principle. Such messages might hone the drive and determination of the second generation to strive for success, but it would inevitably instil in them simultaneously a consciousness of the precarious nature of their position in society as the children of migrants.

6.1.2 A stigmatised childhood

The majority of participants described aspects of their childhoods which left them feeling stigmatised. These feelings began as they moved out of family and community spaces into those dominated by majority culture; whether walking in the streets or going to school, participants quickly began to identify behaviours from non-Asians that made them feel negatively judged due to perceived differences. As they grew up, this *'othering'* became a regular part of life.

6.1.2.1 Hostile environment

Participants describe their childhoods as marked to varying degrees by stigma in the form of hostility shown to them for their position and perceived identity in society. Participants' experience of a hostile environment during childhood came to them in two ways: the experiences related to them by their parents' generation, and their own lived experiences as British-born South Asian Muslims. Although there were some exceptions where participants reported their parents experiencing broadly positive treatment on arrival in the UK (compliments on their clothing, interest in their 'exoticism'), the general view conveyed was that of a hostile environment with, in the most positive accounts, a sprinkling of individual acts of kindness and understanding.

Participants talked about their parents' experience of a hostile environment in terms of vicarious anger and sadness about what their parents had to contend with and tolerate, and how those experiences shaped their parents' understanding of 'white' society and learned to be wary of certain areas of life that might be detrimental to the well-being of their children.

> *"… he's very aware of … well, not aware, I'd say paranoid about racism in the country and racist people. I think as a taxi driver as well, they experience a lot of that behaviour, so I do get like – whatever I'm doing, whether it's playing football or going out to work – 'Be careful of these racist people'. Because I'm working as a teacher, he's always asking me if kids are racist to me* ***[laughing]****, and I'm like 'Chill out'. And I play basketball as well, and he goes 'People aren't racist to you, are they?' and this and that. He's very like … over-protective about that I'd say. But I think that's understandable considering … the job that he does – especially where we're from in H_____ – the stereotype is*

that if you're Asian you either own a shop or you're a taxi driver. And I think he's experienced quite a bit of racism …" [P13]

As indicated here, the second-generation might have a different attitude to racism than their parents in that they expect not to be deterred from continuing with normal life because of it, or to feel under persistent threat. The implication here is that the parent's experience of racist hostility is so extreme that they cannot envision their child passing through contact with White society unscathed. And yet, although some participants spoke of not being greatly affected by racism the majority described its ubiquitous nature, and every participant had at least one account of an abusive encounter. Many participants felt that the nature of racism had altered; they considered that racism was expressed more overtly for their parents' generation, and tended to take a more covert form for their own (this will be further discussed below).

When speaking of their childhood, participants described myriad encounters with racist abuse. They were often aware, as children, of abuse experienced by their parents either in the early days after their arrival in the UK, or as the participants were growing up. This would inevitably affect their own sense of security and place in British society. They described their fathers in particular as having to face verbal abuse as they walked the streets (or when enquiring for work or accommodation), and these sometimes resulted in physical attacks.

*"He said that there was one time when he turned up at the bus depot to open up in the morning and take one of the early buses; on a winter's morning, it was bitterly cold, it was really dark and he said he had some money on him and … he was jumped for his money and he just fought tooth and nail because he'd worked so hard to get this money together, and he said 'I was **not** going to hand it to them'. That was, I think, quite traumatising for him, that was perhaps the moment when he realised that he wasn't particularly welcome." [P15]*

Women tended to be slightly removed from mainstream society due to often being centred in the home and local community, but were also easily spotted and targeted due to their clothes:

"… once they were in England they didn't feel very well received, they got quite a lot of name-calling 'Go back to your country!'. They obviously didn't have western clothes; my mum would wear a shalwar kameez, and they would tell her, you know, 'Oh, go back to where you came from!' or they'd say names like 'Paki' and stuff like that." [P23]

As couples, and later as families, participants described attacks on their parents' visible signs of growing establishment or potential affluence in the form of property or businesses:

"I do know from my dad that there was often times when they suffered a lot of racist abuse, at that time with the family business. I think it was more they had a lot – they did certainly suffer abuse." [P26]

"… they were shutting up the shop one night and my dad got attacked for no reason. And my mum had to kind of step in and try and – she couldn't break it up, but she was trying to defend him and … this was the kind of thing that they went through. Or people would come in the shop and start swearing at them and shouting at them and treating them like dog's dirt, like they were some second-class citizen." [P35]

"With my dad … he was a taxi driver for a few years, and his car would get smashed and burgled and all this sort of stuff. That happened quite a bit. Our house would get egged occasionally as well, and we weren't really sure what to do about that." [P49]

"He had said that he had got racist abuse especially at work, he worked at F____, he worked as an ice cream man where people would racially abuse him saying 'Oh, you shouldn't be selling ice creams' and all that type of stuff. We owned a fish and chip shop in B_____ where we've had windows smashed in. So, all these kinds of stories that you hear from the seventies and eighties, the racism, yeah, my parents experienced all of that." [P54]

Participants themselves experienced direct racism during their childhood, they described events such as being followed home by a group of verbally abusive teenagers, being spat at repeatedly and having to wash the spit off their coat, being set upon by gangs in shopping centres or on the way home from school, dealing regularly with verbal abuse at school (mostly by fellow students, sometimes by teachers), experiencing verbal and physical attacks at football matches, and generally often being made extremely aware of a hostility to their presence (even from adults who were in a position of *'loco parentis'*):

"I remember some of the teachers being quite critical of us, like 'Oh, she's one of those; the ones who will go to Pakistan for years and years, and we're meant to teach them when they come back!'. You can see the shutters coming down almost." [P28]

Some participants found that their parents attempted to cocoon them from the perceived threats of the indigenous British, and this would reinforce family bonds where the threat was equally perceived by the child, and tended to distance them if not equally perceived. Others became increasingly aware during their childhoods of their parents being ill-equipped to protect them; sometimes this was due to parental disengagement and focus on earning a living, sometimes it was a status-bred excess of deference to those in authority (such as doctors or teachers), and sometimes perceived as a deficit in the parents' education or language skills interconnected with curtailed social skills in environments outside of their minority

community. It was not the case that all participants reported feeling this level of hostility and threat in their day-to-day life, but the majority reported some level of animosity, unfriendliness or distancing on regular occasions most frequently related to their identity as a South Asian (rather than as a Muslim).

6.1.2.2 Poverty

As has been indicated already, there is a clear overlap between migrant status and (lower) working-class life. At this intersection, common features include financial and employment insecurities, poorer housing, sparser health care, social amenities and educational opportunities, but there were also key differences related to language barriers, racist discrimination, early involvement of children and young people in domestic responsibilities, (a greater reliance on the family unit to keep home and, where relevant, the family business running), a strong emphasis on education, and the responsibility of the young to improve their family's fortunes and status.

That being said, such messages were not necessarily overtly stated, but they became increasingly well understood as the children grew up in difficult circumstances and understood their parents' motivations -

> *"We didn't really know the struggle – didn't understand the struggle as much. You don't really as kids – it's very hand to mouth. Staying in one room to keep warm. I remember having baths in the kitchen sink with the gas meter sitting there and sitting on our hands to keep warm next to the gas heater. Paraffin heaters were a thing then – you know those sorts of memories. Hardships – although it was our house – but, being cold, being – not hungry, I don't remember being hungry, but I remember being cold. But that's what our parents' generation did to give us better lives, so we're able to stand proud about who we are." [P42]*

There is clear pride here where the speaker indicates that their parents had bought the house, they were not tenants, and that this was done at a time when they had extremely limited resources and lived frugally, but all with the aim of creating a better future for the family.

The drive to improve family prospects did not stop at the immediate family in the UK; it was common for participants to describe living with a level of poverty in order for their parents to consistently save money to send to extended family in the home country, and/or to set aside for their return 'home' (often in the form of building property for this retirement).

> *"… we went **[to Bangladesh]** in 1994, prior to that we didn't have a washing machine, my mother washed our clothes in the bath because money had to go and be saved towards Bangladesh. We lived in a three-bed house growing up, we didn't have a hoover*

because money had to go towards Bangladesh. … our lives here were actually in poverty and actually quite … not very good quality lives at all." [P33]

It is unsurprising that such extremes of frugality might cause feelings of resentment or regret for the second-generation who often had to experience immediate scarcity for a distant family or a distant future. This would often be especially potent when comparing themselves with their non-South Asian peers.

6.1.2.3 School life

In relation to school, participants described maltreatment not only from their peers, but from their teachers, too. From the first years of formal education, they experienced racism, discrimination and stigmatisation (the ages are given here to show how negative experiences of this kind have been occurring over decades, and cannot be isolated to a specific period).

"When I started school at five years old, I didn't particularly enjoy school; there was a lot of bullying, there was a lot of name-calling.... A lot of teachers – particularly my teacher when I first started school – was quite hostile and she wasn't particularly empathetic or understanding of what was going on. Very often she accused me of just making things up." [P26: aged 35]

It is striking both that professional teachers should behave in such a manner, and that so young a child should be exposed to such a hostile environment, and then have to navigate their way through that terrain with possibly no external support. Participants were exposed to behaviours which isolated and stigmatised them, sometimes in very frightening ways –

"I still remember being absolutely terrified of him, and him saying to me 'I don't think you should be in this class; this is the top set. And I will do everything I can to make sure that you're not here'. And I can remember an occasion in a maths lesson where I just kind of lost track of what was going on and it was too complicated, I didn't have the background knowledge, I couldn't do it. And he came up to me with a big, thick, hardback textbook in his hand (it was open) and he just slammed it shut in my face an inch from my nose and said 'Listen, numbskull!' and I can't remember what the rest of that rant was, but yeah, that. And it was not something that would happen to – I didn't feel it was something that would have happened to a white child." [P28: aged 43]

In this case, the participant strongly associated her experience with a hostility felt be teachers towards students whose parents took them back to South Asia for a month or two at a time and which impacted school term times; she described several of her teachers as resenting having to teach children under such circumstances and letting that feeling seep into their dealings with the child concerned. It has been reasonably common for South Asian parents to do this in order to maintain family ties (often to attempt to instil traditional values in their children) and the costs involved in such travel means that it cannot often take place and lengthier stays are more economical. It is another aspect of the lives of migrant families which is not always well understood by mainstream society or accommodated by its institutions.

There are also examples of teachers intending to be kind, and yet nonetheless perpetuating stigma.

> *" … when I was in Year 5 – you know when you're doing work and your teacher comes over and checks everyone's work informally – I must have made a grammatical error on whatever I was writing and my teacher said 'Oh, in English, we write it in this way'. And I remember thinking 'Oh, but I always write in English!'." [P30: aged 23]*

This type of 'low level' racism is extremely effective in teaching people, especially children, about their 'otherness' as perceived by the majority culture. What may have been intended as a kind and supportive interaction resulted in a revelation of that teacher's racial profiling of students which then impacted that individual profoundly (as demonstrated by them retaining the memory of the event so clearly for fourteen years).

> *"The school that I went to was quite Christian, the head teacher [was] not the most welcoming of other faiths – but the rest of the school was fine; the students were great, the teachers were really, really nice … but I think you kind of get relegated to being like, you know, 'you follow the faith, so you must know everything about it', but you're just thirteen **[laughing]** and answering every single question under the sun! You're like 'I don't know – I'm not a scholar!'. But … I think it's just curiosity more than anything … I don't think there's been outright discrimination." [P23 – aged 21]*

Despite this participant's feelings that this was not an act of discrimination, it is a fairly common occurrence for some teachers to take a reductive approach of this kind. Students from minority groups, perhaps especially minority religions, can often be put under an uncomfortable spotlight of this kind, and left feeling ignorant and inadequate.

Many aspects of school life were experienced as stigmatising for South Asian Muslims:

> *"I think that it really hit home … when I went to secondary school, when I was out of that comfort zone, when I realised that I was different, I was the child of a migrant. I*

wasn't as proficient in reading as others in the school, I hadn't had the same experiences as them … we didn't have a bookshelf where I could read books…" [P60 – aged 30]

Participants often described feeling out of place or criticised for not conforming to certain norms; for the traditional clothes they wore on non-uniform days, or cultural artefacts brought in for 'show and tell' sessions, or for packed lunches containing curry sandwiches and samosas, or for having 'difficult to pronounce' names. A multitude of stigmatising behaviours were experienced during school years and first-generation parents tended to be slow to intervene -

"And when I often talked to my parents about these things now, and I say 'Why didn't you talk to the teacher about these kinds of things? Why did you not raise these concerns when you knew that I was getting bullied?'. I think my parents … I don't know if it was a lack of confidence of confronting a teacher about these kinds of things. My dad hadn't went to school for very long in Pakistan, but my mum spent quite a lot of time in Pakistan and I think the way she was raised was the teacher's word was 'it', whatever the teacher said was true and you wouldn't challenge your teacher." [P26 – aged 35]

Whether it was due to excessive respect for the judgement of the professional classes, feeling daunted due to their own limited formal education, or the demands of labour-intensive work, many second-generation South Asian Muslims felt that they were on their own in having to deal with the many challenges of school life, and, in many cases, this too marked them out as different to their indigenous peers and intensified the stigmatising affects of these experiences.

6.1.3 Seeking to belong

"I had an upbringing within the UK of two different cultures; and what I mean by that is, at home I had this Pakistani-Kashmiri slash Muslim upbringing, but my schooling system, my outside-the-household was very much like the British mainstream upbringing." [P08]

These early life experiences exposed spaces in the home, on the streets, in school, within families and within communities where participants felt themselves to be indelibly marked as the children of migrants. They carried a multitude of spotlighted characteristics that separated them from their indigenous peers, and others that were distinctly different to their own parents and wider families. Participants described being acutely aware of these differences, and discussed how these experiences impacted them.

6.1.3.1 Inside the family

For many of the reasons already discussed, a large number of participants described quite an insular experience of growing up in a South Asian Muslim family. This cocooning insularity was intensified by parental fears about a society they themselves did not feel a part of –

> *"I think they found it very strange. Because there was a lack of education, they were not able to integrate in any way, shape or form …. I think my parents felt really threatened by the culture here. There was a lot of – as we were teenagers – scared that bad things were going to happen and we weren't going to do their bidding. Yeah. I think the lack of education is a big thing." [P40]*

This participant considered that her parents' limited formal education hindered them from a more open-minded exploration of the new society they found themselves in, and that their consequent ignorance of that society led to unnecessary anxiety about their children. This was not an uncommon attitude amongst this sample, and a number of participants described ways in which they veered from their parents' authority as a consequence:

> *"I think more clearly in teenage years, but definitely at university; I think getting that first bit of independence and going out a bit more, it's something I did hide from my family at the time, because I knew they'd be really disapproving of it. I think I've still carried on some of those habits into my adulthood." [P09]*

The need to obscure and withhold certain aspects of their lives from their parents is perhaps a common feature of an individual's development into adulthood, but in the case of British South Asian Muslims it appears to be more accentuated. Some described upbringings that systematically discouraged self-expression or individualism. One participant drew a striking parallel between feeling muted in the home and in the outer world:

> *For me it's more about being affected by racism. A combination of racism and always feeling like I was an outsider; never feeling equal. A combination of how I was brought up which is to always not speak up and not be confident and not be supported and then on top of that having to face the same thing outside, which is … yeah, racism – though people might not think that they're doing it, but, well, there's been lots of it really." [P40]*

Although this may illustrate one end of the spectrum (and allowing for differences in gendered upbringings), there is definitely a sense of circumspection and self-repression shared amongst participants in their relationships with their parents; a good deal of this comes from cultural norms and values, as well as a respect for what their parents have committed to establishing a life in Britain.

Whatever the impetus for these feelings, they place additional stresses and complications on the second-generation as they attempt to locate a comfortable position between cultures.

> *"Within our family we were not Pakistani enough **[laughing]**, you know. We weren't wanting to go to Pakistan; our loyalties lay elsewhere, especially for me and my younger brother, we definitely feel more comfortable in this culture and you were made to feel bad about that. But then equally, obviously, living in the North, living in a very socio-economically deprived area you also didn't fit in in England. And so, it's just that feeling of you don't belong anywhere. And feeling bad, feeling deficient in whatever sphere." [P55]*

For second-generation South Asian Muslims finding a comfortable sense of acceptance and belonging is not as straight-forward a process between generations as it might be within indigenous families in Britain.

6.1.3.2 Outside the family

Many participants described a powerful need, particularly during their childhoods, to seek acceptance and conform to the norms of mainstream society. They spoke of many barriers to this, some coming from their families and communities, and some from the wider society itself. Parental restrictions about socialising (particularly outside of the family or community) hampered their involvement with peers and led to feelings of shame or isolation:

> *" … things like going to sleepovers at people's houses, I had to fight really hard to get my family to let me go. Going to house parties and things like that (if it was at a boy's house) I'd have to lie and say it was at a girl's house. So, I'd have to hide things from my family and also hide things from my friends about how my family were." [P09]*

Being forced into subterfuge, lying to loved ones, and managing two increasingly separate worlds creates great burdens for young people to attempt to deal with, and has long-lasting effects on their relationships and image of themselves. In wanting to blend in with their non-Asian friends, participants felt that they were inescapably marked by features of their upbringing and domestic life. Their very identity became uncomfortable –

> *"I felt that I didn't fit in because of - there wasn't that many people that looked like me. And my name as well, everyone found it really weird my name. But then there was other things, like if I wore Asian clothes on non-uniform, they would find that really weird - so I stopped wearing Asian clothes on non-uniform days. I started wearing English clothes just to fit in. I always told my mum to make me English sandwiches –*

'Don't put any curry in [laughs] or any samosas in or anything like that' because I didn't want to get judged or someone say anything like 'That's weird'." [P39]

"I look back on my life and I remember being in shalwar kameezes, climbing trees and having rips in them and thinking 'Oh God, why can't I just wear jeans like the other kids?!'." [P08]

Participants describe a lack of agency in decisions made both in the home and in the wider world. In the home it was very dependent on their parents, and outside of home they were at the mercy of forces equally beyond their control.

"The constant battle between your parents want you to be a certain way and you're exposed to things outside of the way that they want you to be in the wider culture. And as you get older, all the structural racism you face, all the stupid comments people lob at you, and all the judgements and everything else because you're from an ethnic minority." [P40]

Participants depict their lives as being characterised by outside forces, restrictions, and judgements. In the midst of which they are nonetheless attempting to find safe harbour and a sense of belonging, and, given their history and current societal structures, this continues to prove elusive.

6.2 Theme 2: Pitching the boundaries

Theme 2 is concerned with participants' descriptions defining the landscape of modern-day life for British-born South Asian Muslims; this landscape is demarcated by many boundaries (as opposed to barriers), they draw significance around particular key aspects of their lives. Participants described their lives as being highly influenced by parental values, minority communities and mainstream society steeped in race-orientated history. As these influences are often at variance with one another, pulling the individual in different directions, experiencing the impact of these forces can be uncomfortable, demanding and complex in nature. Having described these forces (particularly their genesis in childhood in theme 1), this theme delineates their impact. History, community and the seeking of resolutions mark out central areas of what it means to be a British South Asian Muslim.

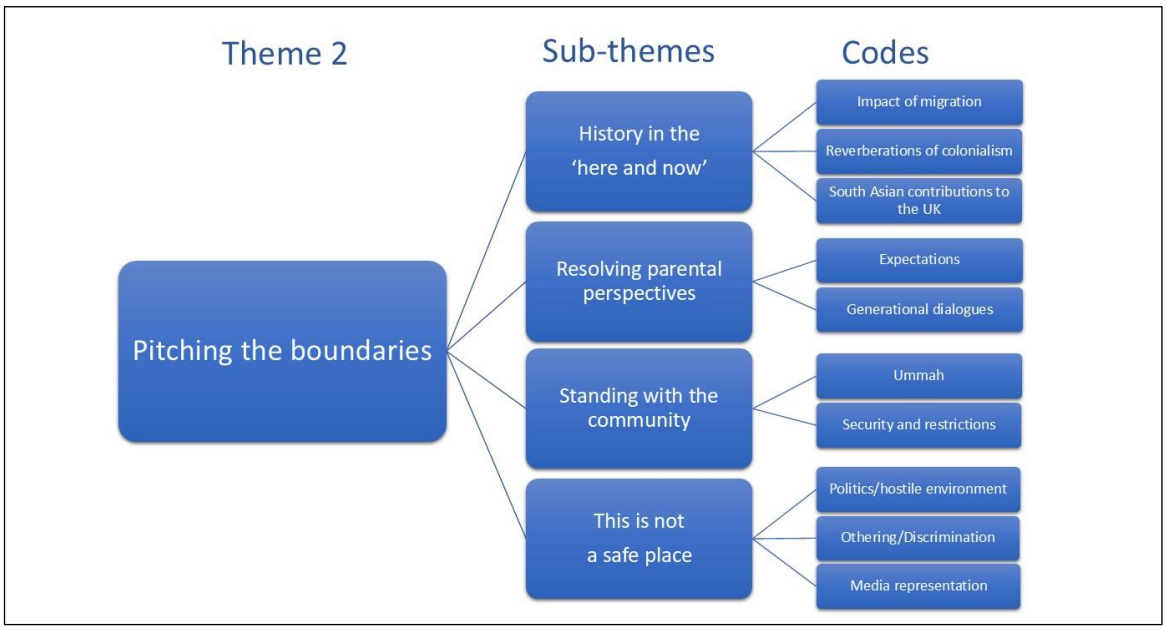


Figure 10: Construction of Theme 2 for RQ1 Home and Identity.

6.2.1 History in the 'here and now'

For South Asian Muslims their very presence in the UK is inextricably linked to Britain's history, and specifically to its imperial past. All British citizens move about and live their lives amongst the intangible memories and echoes, and the extremely tangible evidence of that past which are solidly built into the customs, institutions and wealth of this nation. Migration and colonialism are an interwoven phenomenon played out on a daily basis in the lives of British South Asian Muslims.

The decision of their parents to migrate impacted their children in many ways. It placed them between two cultures, and distanced them from some wider family connections. Because of the attitudes of majority society it also led to them experiencing stigma, reduced socio-economic status, and often further dislocation through multiple mini-migrations within the UK. The all-pervasiveness of being the child of a migrant was strongly felt by participants –

> *"The fact is, that when you are born of migrant parents every day of your life is pretty much impacted, influenced, informed by that." [P01]*

> *"I'm not quite sure if it is one specific event; it's more a general feeling of consciousness, or being overly conscious that am I being looked at differently, because I'm not originally from here or mainly things like that." [P04]*

"It's really, really hard to pinpoint a specific thing and say 'That's because I'm the child of a migrant' when really your entire experience is shaped by that." [P28]

Many participants made links between their parents' motivation in migrating and the values they then instilled in their children:

"I think historically, like my dad's generation where they strived to be a bus driver, a doctor, the engineers, the nurses, the backbone of this country, which they were told to come over to this country and contribute to the economy, I think them instilling those values in my generation which is now the second generation and we're subsequently instilling that into our third-generation children, I think the economy owes the South Asian community a lot!" [P42]

The idea of parental sacrifice and profound contribution to the society they settled in is a powerful one for the second-generation, and generates a pride that they are keen to pass on to the next generation. There are strong narratives within South Asian families that highlight these aspects and are intimately interwoven with major events in history:

"[My father's] family history is that the majority of males in his family were killed by the Hindus because they were identified as a Muslim family, so to escape further persecution his family jumped on the first train. And he says that the Indians were entering the house from the front and so the womenfolk had to leave from the back of the house; whatever clothes and things they could grab, they left the house, jumped on the train and moved to Pakistan. I think my dad – he didn't really talk about his life in Pakistan much. He grew up in Lahore, but then he moved to the UK in 1962 and it was just economic reasons, to make a better life for himself. He came with £5 in his pocket and an old beat-up leather suitcase … And that was it. He literally came here to make a better life for himself." [P42]

Partition narratives were not often shared with their children, but where they were they became part of the family mythology and identity; a source of pride for all the descendants of those caught in the maelstrom of such catastrophic events. It is curious, perhaps, that such destructive fallout of British policy could coexist with a willingness to migrate to the 'mother country' in order to rebuild it. Such narratives of fathers arriving in the UK with few resources, but a willingness to work hard and a faith in a better life were not uncommon. Such narratives reverberate transnationally and through the decades:

"I think the one thing I see very often, uniting them all, is this attitude that Britain is the chosen land. I think it comes from the old commonwealth and colonial attitudes really. Everyone everywhere just seems to think coming to the UK is the promised land. And

that's something, especially when I went to Bangladesh in 2020 – they rely on information that they might have had from people in the seventies, or basing it on the image of the returning visitors (to Bangladesh or Pakistan or whatever) have tried to portray - 'I've made it'. You know, they come in with the brand-new clothes and loads of money and gifts; it looks like you've made it and just reinforces the idea that it is the land of milk and honey." [P33]

This, for many families, continues to be a powerful motivator and source of pride and achievement to which many resources are devoted (see Chapter 5). A by-product of these ideas is the continued mythologising of Britain and the nature of life for South Asian Muslims which the second-generation find increasingly jarring when comparing these narratives to their actual lived experiences.

British South Asian Muslims have a sense of pride in their history and their family's achievements and are becoming increasingly vocal about wishing to stake a claim in society and have acknowledgement for their contribution to society and their place in the nation's history books.

"There's a dark and depressing history to it, obviously, with the war-crimes that were committed in India at the time, but, I guess, at the same time, you experience that our grandparents coming here they have been able to contribute in terms of leaving something for us, their families, but also it's a part of – it's a strange relationship, like, yes, there's good and bad to it, but they have been able to introduce culture and a lifestyle that is experienced by a different part of the world." [P58]

"the biggest cash-cow was South Asia. And that's more heart-breaking when you're of South Asian origin to know when I go back and I see that poverty … that frightening poverty is a reminder of 'Look what the system of colonialism did!'. Also militarily – the First World War, the Second World War – I wish there was Hollywood films like 'Saving Private Ryan' and 'Dunkirk' that had the superstars – the Asian and Caribbean men (I don't know, starring Idris Elba or someone) showing the contribution from these places! I dare them to do that!" [P44]

The second-generation are distinct from their parents in that they feel a degree of entitlement that the first-generation have never experienced. They can look back at the history, valuing their parents' and their community's contributions, and survey their cultural heritage interwoven into every aspect of British life:

"British culture has obviously been shaped so much by – it's been shaped by like what Britain has done to the world (like in terms of colonisation), that's shaped it, and then

it's also obviously been shaped by people moving here, like everything – music, art, cinema, books – everything!" [P57]

6.2.2 Resolving parental perspectives

Despite the loyalty and respect that most participants expressed towards their parents and all that they had experienced in building new lives in the UK, they also described the tensions and differences in perspective that persist between the generations.

Participants considered that their parents held certain high expectations of them that they struggled to fulfil or conform to at times. These expectations often centred on relationships, education and occupations. There remains a strong expectation that the second-generation will maintain a 'racial' and cultural purity when choosing marriage partners; parental expectations weigh heavily when this is not the case –

"… that decision to get married to him, when he asked me that day, the decision to say 'Yes, I would love to!' really brought that – the fact that – I'm making a decision as the daughter of two Muslim parents…. And making this choice … was an incredible moment for me because I never thought that that would be how my life would play out. But somehow, in that moment, I had the clarity of thought to think 'No, I actually want to do this, I'm going to go for it!' I knew … in that moment I understood that what I was doing was completely breaking all the rules for what my family expected of me." [P01]

The natural happiness of accepting a proposal was almost eclipsed by the tremendous anxiety around what *'breaking the rules'* would mean for her once her family learn of this decision; to fail to meet these firmly instilled expectations required a great deal of bravery.

Expectations placed on the second-generation come in many forms. There are certain commitments required of the eldest child –

"Being the eldest child of an Asian family, it is my responsibility to look after my parents now that they're old. Now that my father's passed away, I live with my mum so that I can take care of her." [P47]

Within South Asian Muslim families, eldest sons and daughters tend to have an array of extra responsibilities and expectations placed on them with regards to their siblings as well as their parents.

There are also strong expectations placed on the second-generation to be successful in education and occupation.

"[They] want their children to be better than they are in a monetary sense. Some are just basically about the money; so, build a shop, build another shop, have a chain, before you know it you've got a packed supermarket – you know. Others go down the classical education route, you know, do medicine and do engineering…" [P51]

The latter option has become almost a comical cliché amongst second-generation South Asians, but the professions favoured by first-generation parents remain the most stable, lucrative, high-prestige ones in medicine, engineering and the law. This places high expectations on their children, but it is an ambition which serves the dual purpose of providing security for the family and signalling to all that their migration has culminated in visible success.

The children of migrants each have to decide to what extent they will abide by these and other expectations; this is a common parent-child dynamic regardless of culture or background, but in the case of South Asian Muslims it has perhaps more profound repercussions. It can impact the financial security of the family in the UK and 'back home', it is potentially damaging to their parents standing in the community (in both countries), it can be detrimental to marriage prospects across the family as a whole, it can often be felt (by both generations) as a failure to fulfil their role in repaying parents for the sacrifices they made, and can ultimately be seen as essentially discrediting their parents' whole purpose in migrating. The two generations live in a kind of dialogue on these matters, with the second-generation recalibrating and redrawing the boundaries in their bi-cultural world.

A mixture of guilt and responsibility is evident in many of the attitudes expressed by the participants about their parents' generation:

"Obviously, they've experienced negativity also, especially more the earlier ones, when they first came, so that's in them, they've seen that and I guess that's spurred them on to work even harder to ensure that their children – meaning myself – meaning us – don't experience that … I think they've kind of made it easier for us to grow up in this country through their hard work and effort, organising communities and associations that's made it easy." [P21]

Participants were also aware of their parents' frustration with their behaviours when their lives appeared to be so easy and indulged –

"My dad would talk about how he would cycle two miles to school and he'd have – it would always be a guilt trip when you're a teenager! – ***[strong Asian accent:]*** *'Why aren't you studying? We used to have candle and we used to sit there and I used to write everything out. You have everything, you have TV, you have everything!'." [P51]*

Such inter-generational frustrations are not difficult to understand, but participants tended to describe any such clashes as matters that they had to simply manage and not complain about as nothing they were experiencing compared to what their parents had come through.

> *"So, I'm thinking maybe that's why I don't talk about memories of being called a 'Paki', because it doesn't matter, teek hai[13], you're here, just get on with it, get on with it. I guess that's what made me the person that I am, and the outlook that I have now. You know hamdullah[14] it is quite a positive, quite an optimistic outlook – 'It doesn't matter, it's not a big deal, get on with it, help others when you can'. But that stems from their way of dealing with their hardships, I think." [P42]*

Such modifications of attitude, inter-generational frictions or misalignment, and the seeking of some kind of balance or comfortable resolution seem to be permanent features in the lives of second-generation South Asian Muslims. One participant suggested that part of the reason for this might lie in the first-generation maintaining an internal 'high alert' when the need for it may have passed:

> *"I think a lot of parents and a lot of children of migrants from South Asian communities have come here and they literally haven't stopped! We literally have not stopped to look around at all and say 'Hang on, actually we're a part of here now', and start enjoying stuff." [P52]*

This is a powerful notion, and if it can be trusted and acted upon might have the potential to lead to a transformation of anxieties and expectations for both generations. To do so would require some significant changes across society regarding attitudes to South Asian Muslim communities, and their place in society.

6.2.3 Standing with the community

Community is an important resource and sanctuary for migrant groups; and the more hostile the wider society, the more important it becomes. Small community outposts were vital to the first-generation when the first wave arrived in the UK, and these grew into increasingly confident and established groups who stand together in the face of rising Islamophobia. These spaces are important to many, and for many different reasons, but individuals' relationships with their communities can vary, and ambivalent feelings can be found amongst the second-generation in particular.

[13] Punjabi phrase meaning 'alright' or 'fine'.
[14] Arabic term meaning 'praise God' or 'thanks be to God'.

Community means a number of things to the second-generation. Initially Participants described it as an important buffer for their parents on arrival to the UK, and a vital resource for finding their feet in the process of settling. This was especially emphasized in narratives about their mothers –

> *"… they had people in the community and I think that really helped her because they had been here longer than her, a lot of the women, and they showed her how to do things." [P16]*

> *"Mum, when she arrived with my sisters and brother, she said that they'd moved to S_____ and it was mostly Indian and Pakistani families that they had mixed with quite early on. So, she had the safety of that." [P15]*

> *"Primarily she spent the majority of her life raising myself and my younger sisters. So, she wasn't in the public eye as someone who's working is…. And if she were to speak with other people, they would probably be people in the Pakistani community. And so there wouldn't be any kind of threat of racism or bigotry or anything like that." [P06]*

Community provided a combination of practical advice and support as well as protection to the outside forces of racism and abuse. This creates an image of these communities camped in hostile territory, holding together to keep safe.

> *"I think if the community wasn't here, they wouldn't have felt welcome at all. But because the community that was already here was almost like a protective blanket for them, because whoever would come from abroad from Pakistan or India, the community that was already here from there, for them it was like another member of the family had come. … And I think my mum didn't really interact with the people here apart from the Asian families for a while. She probably started interacting when we started school." [P16]*

It is a serious indictment on British society that so many participants expressed this view that there would have been no welcome for South Asian migrants if they had not generated it for themselves. This excerpt also highlights the slightly ambivalent feeling that many second-generation have which is that whilst the community provided an important refuge and resource, it also inhibited their parents (and particularly their mothers) from socialising in the wider society, improving their English skills and gaining greater independence. However, the sense of family highlighted above was central to views on community –

> *"… the community often becomes the family because you don't actually have blood relatives necessarily around you. I know that the 'aunts' and 'uncles' that I grew up with in B_____ were not my aunts and uncles, they're not blood relatives, but they*

are probably better known to me than my blood relatives ever will be. So, I think that that tends to be quite noticeable amongst migrant families." [P15]

For a culture so rooted in family, one of the greatest hardships was often the distance from blood relatives; it is a powerful aspect of community life for South Asian Muslims that they chose to recreate that for themselves in the best way they could through this form of bonding in a foreign land.

"Which I don't blame why there are a lot of communities that are very close knit and tight knit that are quite isolated; because you want to feel some sort of sense of belongingness. And even in my own research, I've encountered it within my interviews as well and by my own personal experience that you do want to stay within your own community, you don't want to go outside. And I think it's that fear, because once you leave you have to think about the challenges [involved in] where you're going to go, to the corner shop or whatever, if you're going to face anything, if anyone's going to say anything … there are certain parts of S_____ that I wouldn't go to by myself, that I would be scared to go to because of fear of being attacked or racially abused." [P58]

Many participants stated that outside of community areas they were living in a state of alert, braced for negative encounters. The level of alert varied based on area and context, but that approach to daily life was strongly ingrained for many.

A number of participants drew attention to the notion that South Asian communities are more variable than they may at first appear.

*"I married an Indian man…. My brother's married to a Pakistani lady so his kids are very Pakistani in their culture and tradition, my kids feel very Indian in their family, my sister's married to a Punjabi he's from Germany so her language is Punjabi, her in-laws are Punjabi, their food is very Punjabi; so, we've got these three siblings who are very different within their own in-laws and where we go on holiday back home. It's weird, it's very strange I think – it's a happy – you kind of just go with it, don't you, you don't really … it's our normal **[laughing]**!" [P42]*

To some these cultural differences may seem minor, but it is evident that within the South Asian community such differences can be significant. Historically the South Asian Muslim community did not used to be especially distinct from the wider South Asian community; there was a greater feeling of unity in the face of the more immediate concern of how mainstream society viewed and treated them.

"… the first fractures in all this start to happen with the Rushdie affair. Because … the initial Asian solidarity that was there, you will see now that Hindus and Sikhs are trying

to - they don't like the term 'Asian' anymore, because they feel it lumps them together. And so that's why 'British Indian' and 'British Pakistani' and 'British Bangladeshi' because the sub-plot to it, it's basically saying, 'Well we're not Muslim.' [P43]

The break-up of this perceived solidarity is compounded by the assumption of a hierarchy that places *'Muslim'* on the bottom rung.

"It's that idea that Muslims are kind of masked; this whole idea of them being an enemy, that they don't want to integrate, they don't want to mix. Sadly, I don't think some Muslims help themselves; that is exactly the message they give. And … I do think it is more noticeable in certain northern towns where a lot of Muslim families just seem to segregate themselves. It seems to be less the case in London and some of the home counties; I think in these places people tend to mix more with a range of different people from other backgrounds. I just think that that hasn't helped." [P15]

It is clear that community means many different things to the second-generation participants, it provided protection, solace, resources, connection, but it also raised certain questions that are more difficult to resolve.

This type of community can be seen as the secular form, there is also the international, spiritual community of the Ummah, which participants described in far less ambivalent ways.

" … if you go to the mosque during Ramadan time, it's that kindness. You might be sitting next to a Somali sister, an Iranian sister, an Afghani sister, a Chinese sister, a white, blonde Muslim – yeah? Because we all come from different backgrounds, it's the kindness and love; you have different stories, you come from different backgrounds, somebody might be a migrant, a refugee, an asylum seeker – but it's the love for each other, not looking at those barriers to being there at that same place at the same time. Those things bring people together more than anything else. The love for your children, the love for your family, those solid family values that you all have together, when you break it all down, I think they're all the same." [P42]

The welcome across national boundaries is key, as is the emphasis on seeing all comers as the same, with the same fundamental concerns and values. The focus on family here emphasizes what lies at the heart of this seeking of unity. For many, this spiritual welcome goes hand in hand with the secular one; both combine to embrace new arrivals:

"I think sometimes when people come here who are Muslim, they are looking for that kind of kin, that kind of brotherhood, otherwise they feel a bit like a fish out of water,

they don't know what to do. Because until you go 'I'm Muslim too', they go 'Oh really! Oh my goodness!', and then they feel like they can open up to you a lot more. They relax then. Because I feel like they're on tenterhooks all the time really – similar to how we are sometimes." [P53]

Into this backdrop and context comes the British government's often harsh and intrusive *'Prevent'* policies and the surveillance and securitisation of British Muslims. The media may often attempt to polarise the government and South Asian Muslim communities in this context, but participants expressed a far more nuanced interpretation –

"I would say that it goes both ways. People in this country should recognise that the vast, vast, vast majority of Muslims do not endorse any of these things and that they are just here to live their lives, and live peacefully and just get on about their daily lives. And that's what they want to do. At the same time, these things that are happening are still happening. And even though it's a very small proportion, the severity of this situation is so strong, and the fact that there is very little want for change in these communities (at least that we can see publicly) is a little bit concerning, because it gives the impression that the Muslim community knows about this but doesn't care. Even though we do care about this stuff and we're doing our best to rout out and expose this stuff." [P06]

Some participants were concerned about the role communities play during security alerts related to violent acts in society. The combination of different motivations within the community is expanded upon here:

"And sometimes – and this is going to sound really awful – sometimes you get more support from the other side than you do from your own communities, and the reason why I say that is because fear can sometimes affect those communities, you know, the negative experiences and backlash they get, they might be talking to each other and they might become afraid and become very insular, when actually if you have a mixture that are outside that kind of ethnicity or that religion or faith-based background, they can help you to become less fearful, and put things into perspective and you realise 'It's not okay!'." [P08]

This example of bi-culturalism coming in to play is an interesting one; her mainstream British connections and cultural can be employed to give her perspective on her heritage community's stance and actions. Moving between the two helped her to find a position from which to gain a greater understanding.

Such events can also put pressure on fissures within the wider community to less positive outcomes:

"I do recognise that, but it just seems to me that if you say to a standard white person that you're an immigrant they just assume 'Muslim'. I've even heard after terrorist attacks of Sikhs going around with little badges saying 'Look, I'm brown, but I'm not Muslim', which I thought was … well, 'Thanks for the solidarity, lads!'." [P51]

Communities and boundaries are important to second-generation South Asian Muslims, but they are not simple or fixed. They are in flux. Participants were reflecting on the nature of these communities and their relationship to them, but they made it clear that these relationships were contingent on the actions and attitudes of the wider society.

6.2.4 This is not a safe place

There are many reasons why British South Asian Muslims do not feel that the UK is an entirely safe place for them. Through their childhood they have had to adapt to certain barriers and identity-shaping experience of stigma. In adulthood the arena has widened; more threats and concerns are visible, but there is also a greater sense of agency.

The national and international political landscape is a worrying one for Muslims.

"I think Islamophobia has increased. Hate crimes towards people of different religions has increased. And I guess, it's since Brexit, it's since Trump." [P58]

"I do think Muslim migrants tend to be regarded with a lot of hostility. That's probably due to Islamophobic rhetoric: the media, the prime minister." [P23]

Participants were strongly aware of the rise in Islamophobia since the Salman Rushdie affair, 9/11, 7/7 and Brexit. Each event seeing a dramatic hike in violence and anti-Muslim rhetoric.

"I hate the term 'Islamophobia' but it is real, it exists and it's insidious in the way that it drips through into people's psyches. And there have been a lot of Sikh and Hindu people who have been attacked because people have just equated them – 'brown person' – they have been attacked because people have equated them with Muslim people, that in itself shows how if you're Muslim you're bad." [P01]

It is a frightening situation for many. Some participants found the rhetoric being employed about Muslims as very reminiscent of the racist discourses prevalent in the 1930s about Jewish people.

"There's a lot of similarities with anti-Semitism prior to the Second World War. I don't speak of these things lightly, because the Holocaust was, alongside what happened in the Congo and elsewhere, it's one of those horrific crimes that we can't let go of… [but]

the rhetoric, I feel, is the same. I strongly believe that Fascism doesn't start in concentration camps, it ends in concentration camps. That's the scary thing." [P44]

Many participants expressed frustration that anti-Semitism is considered to be an act of racism but the same is not accepted in society where Muslims are concerned, even when such behaviours are becoming so prevalent that politicians overtly indulge in them.

"I do worry sometimes, that [we have] a more far-right government in place. I feel like we've got a prime minister that has made multiple jokes, which, I am going to say, is racist and I hate the fact that we can say that something's antisemitic and it's been investigated, but we can't say something's Islamophobic because Islam's 'not a race'! So, they can't be deemed a racist." [P24]

The frustration is evident, and illustrates one of the reasons why Britain does not feel like a safe place for Muslims. Political discourses feed off of and in return further galvanise representations of (South Asian) Muslims in the media. This was seen by participants as being a central engine for the negativity currently in society.

"… the media has so much to do with what goes on and probably people's opinions wouldn't be as harsh as they are if the media hadn't portrayed it that way." [P32]

"In this country I think that the media are very good at being on the borderline racist – politely racist as I like to call it – and just things like Brexit kind of gives people more of a licence to say how they're actually feeling. I do feel like people are quite racist in this country, but they kind of keep it to themselves. But when you see the media publishing stories the way they do, and the types of headlines that they put out, people feel more confident in sharing their racist and not nice thoughts." [P13]

Participants described many ways in which they felt this boosted vein of racism found expression in their day-to-day lives. Most participants spoke about clear connections between what was presented in the media and how people then behaved. Above all, it contributed to making them feel far more vulnerable in society.

"I do think that the media have a lot to answer for when it comes to Muslims. Every time there's some sort of attack, you kind of just anxiously await the details about – was it a Muslim person? You automatically just kind of sink lower down in your chair and think 'Oh God, it's just going to get worse for us now!'." [P16]

"I do, I worry about my mum. I worry about my sisters who wear the hijab. I worry about my niece who wears a hijab… it's going to come to a point where you have to

either – to integrate you have to lose a bit of your identity, and I don't think that anyone should do that." [P24]

Participants expressed anger and despair about the current climate of Islamophobia as propagated through the government and the media. They described ways in which it impacted their daily lives and resulted in a sense of vulnerability and heightening concern about where these developments are leading society. A few felt hope that good sense and justice would ultimately prevail, others expressed concerns that possibly they would have to build new lives elsewhere, in countries that might feel more secure. The majority came to no clear conclusion; they expressed their anxieties and seemed to be bracing themselves for what might happen next. What was clear was that this lack of security was constantly being reflected on and factored in to how South Asian Muslims proceed to live their lives in Britain today.

6.3 Theme 3: Calibrating 'home'

'Home' is a powerful and emotive notion. It incorporates a sense of belonging with feelings of safety and security. The third theme draws together participants' descriptions of how they navigate the challenges and barriers erupting in their paths as the children of South Asian Muslim migrants in the UK. It focuses on their understanding of their place in society, and their perception of themselves as citizens, members of a community and family members, together with how they envisage the future and the impact of their status for the next generation. To be *'home'* is to find yourself in a secure position, founded on respect and acceptance and confident in continued security for the generation to follow. For South Asian Muslims this is a basic tenet of citizenship which the majority of participants found to be painfully elusive. Participants described the varying extents to which they have attempted to achieve this. Far too often such advances appear to depend on an Occidentalist interpretation of South Asian Muslims' behaviour, and places the onus on them to find ways of managing discriminatory incidents rather than having a secure space allocated to them by right as an acknowledged part of standard British society.

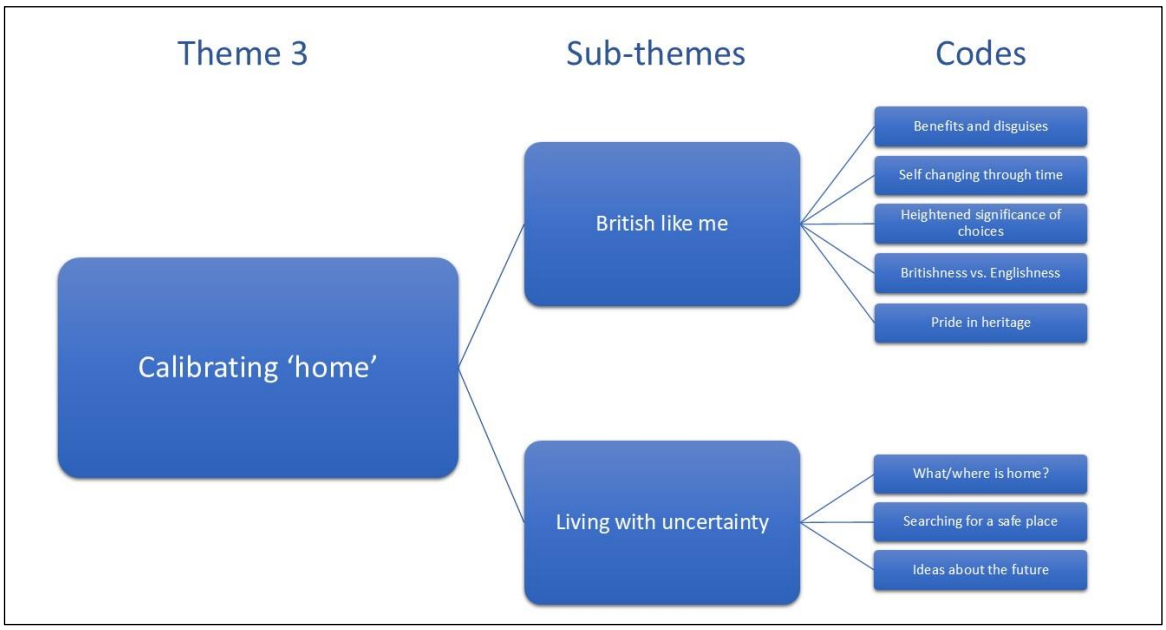


Figure 11: Construction of Theme 3 for RQ1 Home and Identity.

6.3.1 British like me

> *"… somebody said to me about a year ago 'Why do you want to be British like us?' and I thought 'How do you respond to that?', and I thought I don't really have the words, and I'm … I felt a bit cross when she said it, so I just sort of looked at her and carried on working thinking 'Oh, I'm not going to respond to that until I feel a little calmer because it's pointless getting into an argument with somebody who doesn't know any better'. [P32]*

This participant was evidently shaken and angered by her colleague's question. She could not find the words she needed and had to control her response in order to manage the situation. She carried the event with her for over a year. The unspoken response was that she did not want to be British in her colleague's way, she was already British in her own way.

Indigenous Britons find it impossible to effectively define what it is to be British. For British South Asian Muslims there equally can be no one definition, but a certain terrain with certain questions arose as participants of this study contemplated the issue.

Some participants spoke about the attempts to 'be more British' by hiding or obscuring aspects of their lives. This often centred on attempting to distance themselves from facets of domestic life, or their parents in particular, that they felt uncomfortable with.

"I just didn't feel comfortable saying 'Pakistan', so what I used to say was that my mum was from Scotland. … And I told my mum about it, and my mum was very – she was upset about it, but I guess she kind of understood where I was coming from. …. And that is one of the things that I kind of regret as well, I wish I was quite proud of my mum being from Pakistan." [P39]

The rejection of such core aspects of life and identity would have a multitude of internal ramifications for the individuals concerned as well as their families in perceiving these choices. Such actions were common to participants as a reaction to the stigma they experienced. These harmful processes were entered into as a means of constructing a more British identity, and consequently attempting to edit and disguise their real selves.

For many, even into adulthood they find themselves making frequent judgements about what aspects of themselves to reveal and what to hide as they move between situations. One woman who spoke about hiding details about her life at university from her parents explained that this had continued into the years that followed:

"I think I've still carried on some of those habits into my adulthood. And I do feel like sometimes I don't really fit in in either category; I don't feel like I fit in with my family, but then sometimes I don't feel like I fit in with my white, British friends. I fall between the two." [P09]

Her British friends remain a separate entity to her, and to whom she cannot be entirely herself. Many participants felt that there would always be a significant difference between themselves and White British citizens –

*"I think the difficulty in relating to people who are indigenously British – how unrelatable my life experience to them was. It's the pinnacle of how my life has been different as a migrant. And I still experience that now, because my life **is** different. The difference now compared to when I was in secondary school is that I've learned to accept it, be proud of it and embrace it." [P60]*

Many participants seemed to be able to embrace their 'Britishness' when they felt they had a comfortable hold on how to manage their bi-cultural identity.

"I've been trying to make a concerted effort to be 'a British Muslim', you know, that 'the Muslim' is the identity part and 'Britain' is where I'm from." [P51]

One participant found she experienced a turning point when she responded to some bullies at school shouting racist abuse at her and her brother:

"My feelings were 'No – I'm not having that!', from that age. It was a defining moment for me at school; 'No, I'm not a 'Paki', you're not going to call me a 'Paki', I'm British!' and I felt very British and I still feel very British." [P42]

Feeling British seems to correlate closely with feeling confident about oneself and one's place in the world. Each individual will reach that point at different points in their lives and for a different combination of reasons, but the search and consistent reassessment of all the factors contributing to that sense of ease and confidence appear to be the common thread through these second-generation narratives. For many, Britishness appears to be a goal that is worked towards rather than something entirely bestowed by place of birth. The very fact that British South Asian Muslims do not feel that they have comfortably acquired it by birth indicates the dislocation that is imposed upon them by society.

The notion of 'Englishness' is even more difficult as for many it is a term that has been hijacked by those on the far right:

"I think more and more now I feel like 'Will we ever be accepted as British – not even British – English. I have a bit of a problem with the word 'English'. I feel like I can't rightly use that as my identity. As the locals have been calling as 'British' – and 'English', I don't know why 'English' makes me feel - like I imagine the English flag waving in a garden or somebody who's like the BNP or racist or whatever. I just can't identify with the word 'English' I feel more comfortable with the word 'British'." [P16]

6.3.2 Living with uncertainty

The establishment of one's sense of national identity goes beyond the text on a passport; it is a quest for a sense of home and belonging. For British South Asian Muslims there are difficulties in resolving these points when moving between cultures. 'Home' becomes the place where you are accepted for what you are, and to comprehend that fully assumptions about culture and biases have to be addressed both by individuals and across society:

"it really affects the workplace, it affects our trajectories, it affects our sense of self. For me it's a two-pronged stick; my own personal development, but that's affected by what's going on in society; so obviously I already had a sense of being otherness or not being equal and not being able to speak up within my own family environment and this reinforced on a wider, societal scale." [P40]

Deciding where they belong is particularly difficult for those who were brought up with confused allegiances.

"We grew up not 'believing' – that's the wrong word – but actually knowing, like with the kind of certainty that you know you've got two hands that we were not here to stay; that we were going to eventually (when my parents had enough money) we were going to go back to Pakistan and live there forever. That that was our forever home and that this bit here was just a temporary, transient thing." [P23]

For some there was a confusing about where *'home'* was because their parents had very definite plans to return to their homeland (whether or not these plans were ultimately realised; as discussed in Chapter 5). For others there was confusion in comprehending that their parents had different allegiances, and a different sense of home to themselves.

"But the reality is I'm not going to go anywhere, because this is my home and there might be passing fancies, but I have to make this work – I don't have a back-up. Whereas maybe my parents still think – I mean my parents do – they've got a home now, they've got a place where they go and stay for six months of the year; when they get cold here, they go back to India. But we don't have that, I don't have that option." [P25]

Such differences between close family members can be destabilizing and difficult to manage, and raise more (often unresolvable) questions about where they truly belong. These conflicting notions are exacerbated by anxieties about the future:

"And, I mean even now, my dad will – even before Brexit and everything – my dad would still be like 'Oh, one day they're going to kick us out – you say that this is your country but they're going to kick you out!'. So, he still has that mindset of 'This isn't a safe place that we've settled in necessarily'." [P55]

For the first-generation if the situation seems grim, they know that they have a home to return to (although many have found it difficult to adjust to homelands that have changed and moved on in their absence). However, for the second-generation that option does not exist –

*"If somebody says to me in the street 'Go back to where you came from!', I'm like 'Well, what do you mean S_____ **[British town]**?', because I don't really think I have an affinity – I haven't been back to India since I was twelve or eleven. And I don't have another place I can call home. And my children definitely don't have another place they can call home…. So, this is it!" [P25]*

It is, in fact, when considering the third-generation that the second-generation often feel more certain as to their place, and where they have to belong out of necessity.

"I've been trying to make a concerted effort to be 'a British Muslim', you know, that 'the Muslim' is the identity part and 'Britain' is where I'm from. … I actually feel worse for my kids because they don't even have the language. I only speak Urdu – with some fluency – as does my wife, I can have a full conversation, I can read and write badly, but I can read and write it. My kids on the other hand, even if they're watching a Bollywood film, they'll watch it with subtitles." [P51]

It tends to be a fairly common pattern that each generation is losing language and literacy facility, and the regret is palpable as these are fundamental access points to a culture and sense of belonging. Uncertainties abound, in the present and in the future, for second-generation South Asian Muslims, their life-stories catalogue lives of bicultural oscillation

6.4 Discussion and conclusions

Identity and notions of *'home'* are interlinked as our sense of where we belong is a short-hand for a complex set of identifying features about ourselves. In addition to this, how rooted we feel in a particular family, community, society and culture taps straight into our sense of security and, therefore, happiness.

Growing up in homes with cultural values and behaviours that did not match those of mainstream society led participants to question their identity and status, and where these cultures were presented as being at odds with one another, this often made them feel that choices had to be made to go one way or another. This binary view was encapsulated in the notorious *'Where are you from? No, where are you **really** from?'* question which has become a target of mockery, and yet persists as a weaponised form of rejection or dislocation to ethnic minorities.

"I always feel very confused about it, because I don't know what to say. I don't know if I should say E_____ because I was born here … or if I should say L_____ because I grew up there, or the Northwest because my parents are living there, or if I should just say Pakistan (because I've never grown up there, but my parents have) and so I just … I really don't know how to answer that question, and I don't like that question because it's so confusing…. I just tend to say 'I'm from England', I don't specify where. But even that's not a good representation of my identity because I don't see myself as fully English. So, it's a very confusing question. I don't like it at all." [P23]

The result is that it forces the recipient of such a question to repeatedly interrogate themselves about where they belong, where is home, where do they fit? A large proportion of these second-generation

participants are left grasping for a satisfying answer to this question, whilst feeling justifiably offended that it should be asked in the first place.

They are forced to concede that even their own parents are at odds with them on this core subject. Although their parents occupy an 'outpost' position far from their homeland, they tend to identify themselves with that origin country (even though the allegiance they feel might be for a version of that country which has disappeared over the course of intervening decades). For their children, they often feel adrift and searching for a place to rightly call *'home'*. Generally, this takes the form of an internal search and struggle, but this is to underestimate the power of society's positioning of ethnic minorities as a whole, and South Asian Muslims in particular. Structures in society promote racism and discrimination, and to omit this when considering the nature of 'belonging' for South Asian Muslims is to omit a central piece of the puzzle. The second-generation grow up in a world of barriers and boundaries; some instigated by their parents, some by communities, institutions and society at large. Each individual has a path to tread in order to learn, reflect on and constantly recalibrate matters of identity and where they feel they belong.

A common experience for second-generation British South Asian Muslims is that of absolutist parental authority; a ubiquitous norm reinforced by the wider family, community and South Asian media, and extending well into adulthood. As their parents' perspectives and values often contrasted significantly to those of mainstream society, this led to additional difficulties for their children in terms of socialising and identifying wholly with majority culture. Many participants described how they felt a main motivator of parental strictness originated in their parents' fears about how British culture would warp and harm their children. In fact, parents often sought proactive methods of reinforcing culture and traditions with their children, sometimes through media (films in particular), sometimes community involvement, and sometimes long trips 'home' to give them a sense of life in their 'true' country, their 'true' selves.

Many participants spoke about the sacrifices that their parents had made and the debt they felt was incumbent on them to repay. This was often a powerful unifying force, intensifying the family bond, especially in the face of any external hostility. This was enhanced still further when families made multiple 'mini-migrations' within the UK. Being the child of migrant created many experiences of loss and dislocation: through geographical moves, multiple school starts, bereavement of unknown (or barely known) near relatives in the home country, and witnessing parental grief on this account from the outside (due to a lack of direct connection with the deceased). The past decade has seen a growth in studies examining transnational relationships in families divided by migration, but the literature is in its infancy and very little attention has been paid to the impact on the second-generation in migrant families (Zontini & Reynolds, 2018). These are major dislocations to experience in the early stages of life. These early life experiences revealed the various ways in which second-generation South Asian Muslims differed from

their parents and their indigenous peers. This set up questions for them about their identity and they found themselves struggling with finding a comfortable space for themselves across these different contexts and situations.

Participants highlighted various ways in which their childhoods and young adulthoods differed from those of the indigenous British around them and thus made them feel dislocated from the norm. Whether this took the form of cultural practices,

Many participants described experiences of separateness from parents who were often working too hard to be present for social activities in the home, or feature in their school lives; the latter tending to be due to multiple reasons related to their parents' level of formal education, English language skills, and therefore social ease in more formal settings. Participants also described situations where they were more exposed (or exposed at an earlier stage of life) to experiences outside those normally known to their non-migrant peers. They were more likely to experience a lower standard of living, extra domestic responsibilities, work responsibilities, and a variety of situations related to having the role of translator for one or both of their parents. Regardless of class status, they were also more likely to experience dislocation in the form of 'mini-migrations' within the UK, which was usually related to a lack of parental job security connected with their migrant status. These were early *'othering'* experiences which became integral to their sense of self.

In adulthood, participants often developed a stronger sense of admiration of their parents accomplishments and stoicism, a greater appreciation of their own place in history between Britain and their heritage country, an increasing familiarity with ethnicity-related power imbalances based on their experiences as university students and in the workplace, further disillusionment when observing politicians' domestic and foreign policy decisions and rhetoric, living with increasing levels of Islamophobia and negative representations in the media, and being unable to avoid the knowledge that Britain does not provide a safe space for South Asian Muslims. It is perhaps unsurprising that participants generally reported a sense of ambivalence and insecurity about their place in mainstream British society.

Participants have demonstrated that questions about identity and status are complex and on-going for them at all ages of life. They continue to work through the varying images of themselves that are projected back at them by parents, peers, employers and society as a whole. Increasingly, participants indicated that they feel less of a need to travel a binary route and choose one culture over another. Increasingly they are gaining the confidence to say that they are British in their own bicultural way, not choosing but having both, identifying with both, and claiming their right to be British in their own way. This is an intricate and constantly evolving construct, but it is ultimately rooted in a sense of entitlement to be thoroughly a citizen of the country they were born into, a country built on international networks, and motored by the sweat and dedication of generations of migrants.

Chapter 7: Findings (Part Three) - A Racialised Pandemic

"You can see what it is. It doesn't see you're black, you're white, you're American, you're Chinese, you're Pakistani, you're Indian – it catch you!" [P59]

RQ2: How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact South Asian Muslims in the UK?

7.1 Context

In 2019 a new virus (SARS-CoV-2, Coronavirus, COVID-19) began to seep into public and political consciousness, on 10th March 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) officially announced a state of pandemic, and on 23rd March 2020 the British government declared the first national lockdown. At the time of writing, the most recent WHO count (dated 24th March, 2024) states that there have been over 775 million reported cases of COVID-19, and more than 7 million deaths worldwide. The UK has experienced the sixth highest death toll in the world with the total currently standing at over 232,000. Through the course of 2020-2021, South Asians had the highest (age adjusted) COVID-19 mortality rates in the UK. Bangladeshi[15] men were the most vulnerable, being 3.6 times more likely than White British men to die from the virus, (followed by Pakistani men at 2.6 times). For women there was the same pattern; Bangladeshi women were 2.8 times (and Pakistani women 2.3 times) more likely to die from the

[15] In order to compare British South Asians Muslims to the White British population, only Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups are being used in the comparison here as the majority of these populations are Muslim, whereas only a small minority of British Indians are Muslim.

virus than White British women. Muslim men and women faced the highest mortality rates in the UK until the Omicron variant period began (in January 2022), which led to a gradual reduction and moderate levelling out of these severe disparities (ONS, 2023b).

7.2 The study

Data collection for this research project began in November 2019. A few months later it became evident that the world was about to experience a pandemic on a scale not witnessed for a hundred years, since the influenza epidemic of 1918-19. One of the impacts on the data collection process for this study was that in July 2020, an additional question was inserted into the interview schedule *('How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact South Asian Muslims?'*). In February 2022, the same question was added to version two of the questionnaire which was then being reissued as part of a second wave of data collection[16]. Consequently, this analysis rests on the data collected via interview between July 2020 and January 2021, and by questionnaire between February 2022 and January 2023. Twenty-four interviewees answered this question, as did 147 questionnaire respondents (a demographic outline of the participants can be found in Appendix III(ii), and their numerical reference here is preceded by a *'P'* or a *'Q'* to indicate whether they participated in an interview or questionnaire respectively).

7.3 Findings

With the onset of the pandemic, trends soon began to be reported concerning increased susceptibility to the virus among certain sectors of society. The alarm this raised, together with corroboration from personal experiences and observation, heightened awareness amongst these groups that they were facing serious risks. From the early days of national lockdown, it became clear that South Asian (and Black) communities were experiencing particularly high infection rates, which developed into high mortality rates. This inevitably impacted how South Asian Muslims coped with living through the pandemic, how they felt themselves to be viewed and treated, and how this changed or reinforced their personal outlook and sense of identity.

An analysis of the data identified three themes: the first focuses on the nature of the suffering experienced by British South Asian Muslims, the second addresses pre-existing structural inequalities which they saw as intensifying during the pandemic, and the third concerns the strength and resilience of this ethno-religious group and how they reported seeing the future before them.

[16] This PhD study uses a small portion of the entire dataset acquired for the research project as a whole; this means questionnaire and interview data (see *Chapter 4: Methods* for a fuller explanation). With the exception of the present chapter, the rest of the thesis uses prescribed sections of the interview data only.

Table 6: Overview of themes and sub-themes for RQ2 A Racialised Pandemic.

Themes	Sub-themes
Disproportionately hard hit: we suffered	Bearing the brunt of the pandemic
	How do we retain who we are?
	Underserved and overlooked
We are second-class citizens	"We do the donkey work"
	Not considered "a viable voting population"
Looking up and out	Finding a way, making a start
	Glimmers of light
	Envisaging change

7.3.1 Theme 1: *Disproportionately hard hit: we suffered*

British South Asian Muslims endured an exceptionally high rate of COVID-19 cases, and subsequently a high death rate, together with additional burdens and suffering linked to their identity, culture and perceived position in society. Participants described the pain they, their families and their communities experienced whilst having to deal with a range of extra challenges that were not inflicted upon the indigenous majority population.

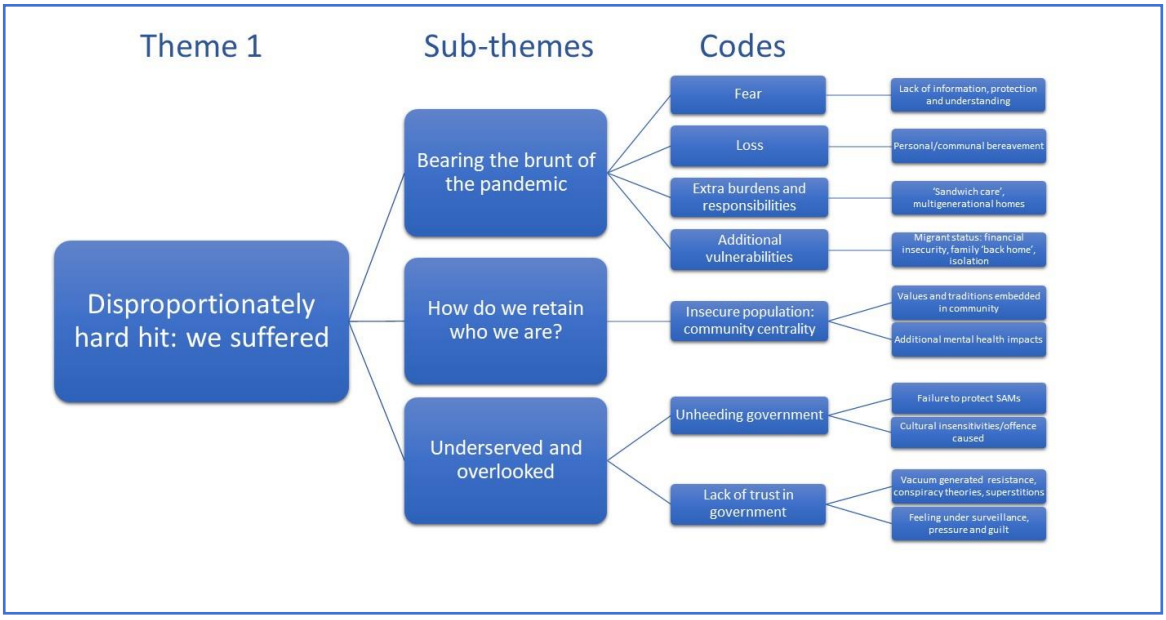


Figure 12: Construction of Theme 1 for RQ2 A Racialised Pandemic.

Across the accumulated 171 responses to the question *'How do you feel the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted South Asian Muslims?'* the clear, overwhelming reaction was that this community had been hit harder by the pandemic than any other community participants could cite. Some put all South Asians into the same category, while a few broadened their comments to include all minority ethnic communities, but the majority considered that the combination of race and faith made their situation all the more difficult, complex and exposed to criticism and suspicion. They perceived their sufferings to be severe, and heightened by public disparagement and governmental neglect.

7.3.1.1 Bearing the brunt of the pandemic

It was felt that over and above the universal impacts of the pandemic as experienced by British citizens, there were additional hardships that converged on the South Asian Muslim community and remained specific to them.

At the beginning of the pandemic, and especially during the first lockdown, news reports and personal experiences combined to reinforce the idea that South Asians were contracting the virus and dying in greater numbers than other groups, (Black communities ran a close second) (C. Boyd, 2020; Merrifield, 2020; Parveen & Wassan, 2020). This led to an intensification of fear, anger, and stress, all of which inevitably impacted the mental health and general well-being of this group.

> *"I was really, really scared, because a lot of people in my community were dying and every week [we] were hearing something, and I still had to go to work and I was really scared that I was going to bring something home." (P47)*

Many of those working with White colleagues (or for White employers) felt there was a lack of understanding of their situation in the face of news-sourced statistics which in the early days appeared to indicate that there was a genetic, 'race'-related vulnerability for some non-White groups, or, later, that social and historical conditions meant certain groups were in more serious danger. Consequently, the risk of *'bringing something home'* had greater ramifications for South Asian Muslims who often live in significantly different domestic configurations to their average White counterparts.

> *"It's been difficult. We come from large families and have even bigger extended families. We're raised and encouraged from a young age to visit, help and keep our ties strong. Some have parents living with them, some have in-laws, so the family unit isn't always, husband, wife and kids. So, the responsibility, mentally and physically has been strained." (Q102)*

"…because we're larger families, there's often children who are now going to school and grandparents at home who are high risk." (P50)

The fairly common experience of three generations living together in one household was cited as leading to an array of additional problems when attempting to address the needs of potentially vulnerable elders, school-age children and adults in frontline work. Families of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin have a propensity to live in multigenerational households, with 30% and 16% respectively living in overcrowded conditions in the UK (ONS, 2020a). In addition to the difficulties of managing the needs and safety of various generations under one roof, migrant families (whether first- or second-generation) tend also to have strong ties to the members of their family who live elsewhere in the world, and especially those *'back home'*. These stretched, long-distance families inevitably experienced greater stresses and distresses at this time of crisis:

"We've had just tensions about the older relatives, how can we keep them safe? And then the older relatives, for me, in Bangladesh because they haven't got our health care system; it's just constant worrying, and phone calls, and so-and-so has passed away, and just the collective grief has affected the community as well." (P62)

Community impact is profound and far-reaching for South Asian Muslims; it is local and transnational (Bates, 2000). It is interesting to see here that 'community' can transcend the present, physical location of its members; beyond family ties, there is a strong sense of diasporic identity amongst South Asians, and these connections intensify at times of trial and difficulty (MCB, 2020).

For those who have recently migrated, there were the additional burdens inherent in setting up a new home in a foreign land, these considerations became increasingly difficult to manage during the restrictions of a pandemic, and were easily be overlooked by the majority population.

"we are already an isolated people; we do feel isolated in a new place (as anybody else would) …. I appreciate that everyone must have been impacted by it, but I think we, as migrants (not just Asians), I think any migrants are maybe more severely impacted by this loneliness as compared to people who already have their roots in this place and have a much larger community to identify with." (P61)

Not all South Asian Muslims are settled in families (or communities) that were established in the 1950s onwards. Some are here as the first representative of their family (as with P61 above), and for them, half a world away from home and loved ones, the suffering, anxieties and precariousness of living through lockdowns in a global emergency was severely intensified.

Participants felt that South Asian Muslims bore the brunt of the pandemic as they had to continue working in frontline positions whilst the infection rates and death toll of members of their community rocketed (ONS, 2020b; PHE, 2020). In addition to both personal and communal bereavement, they often carried the extra burdens and responsibilities of living in multi-generational homes, as they attempted to protect the generations above and below them on a daily basis. Being members of tight-knit families stretched across disparate continents around the world resulted in further stresses and fears for loved ones unable to access appropriate protection and health services. And for those South Asian Muslims who were newly established in the UK, they were at great risk of many extra vulnerabilities associated with migration (such as financial precariousness, isolation and loneliness).

8.3.1.2 How do we retain who we are?

Participants considered that South Asian Muslims suffered more during the pandemic than the majority population due to their specific additional responsibilities, vulnerabilities, and the scale of loss they experienced. It was also felt that this suffering was heightened due to the restrictions of lockdown on a group for whom communal focus remains inherent to culture, religion and identity, as opposed to the more individualistic orientation of the wider, majority population of Britain.

There were considered to be significant differences between the structure and strains on indigenous British families and those experienced by South Asian Muslims; these differences were felt to be integral to culture and identity, and their continuance was central to sustained well-being and good mental health:

> *"for some of my English friends [it] hasn't been that difficult because there were very few family members in the first place and they're joined in bubbles and there is nobody else. And they normally wouldn't have gone out and seen any other family members. Whereas in a lot of Asian families I know, we meet each other on a regular basis or we meet in larger groups or we come from larger families. So, not meeting up has really affected mental health. I know grandmas and grandads have been really upset that they haven't seen their grandkids for days and so many of them have said, 'If this is the way to live, I'd rather die'. And they weren't saying it lightly... And children have not seen their cousins, who they're used to seeing on a regular basis, and aunties and uncles* [which] *has had a massive impact." (P50)*

Family and community are both essential to the well-being and maintenance of 'self' for most South Asian Muslims (Bhugra, 2004; Halima Iqbal, Lockyer, Iqbal, & Dickerson, 2023), in fact the line between these two is not as clearcut as it might be for those outside of this group. Becares & Nazroo (2013) describe

the importance of the *'ethnic density effect'*, where living within an identifiable, shared ethnic community space acts as a protective buffer promoting increased social capital and improving health outcomes. South Asian Muslims, (see Chapters 3, 5 and 6) are exposed to varying levels of insecurity as members of British society (modified by a range of variables such as generation, geographical location, religious observances, outward presentation). As migrants, Muslims, and being non-White they are vulnerable to attack on three sides. In such hostile conditions, community inevitably becomes of vital importance as a protective entity; historically, and to this day, it is a place of safety, comfort, and solidarity. It is felt to be important that the communal values, duties and responsibilities promoted within the family, are further extended to encompass the community those families are geographically embedded in, as well as the wider, South Asian Muslim diaspora (Lewis, 2007; Mondal, 2009), and the worldwide Muslim community, the ummah (Modood, 2013). It should be noted however that (as discussed in Chapter 2) British South Asian Muslims, although often presented as a homogenous group contain a great deal of heterogeneity, and those adherences may vary in strength dependant on generation, phase of life, integration and fluctuations between acceptance and hostility from the majority population. As a consequence, the protective 'buffering' of community for its members may also vary, but at a time of crisis its importance and potency is likely to be enhanced; such appears to be the case for the participants in this study who represent a wide range of demographic characteristics and yet habitually emphasised 'community' in their responses.

Key features of religious observance are frequently intertwined with communal ceremonies and activity. The closure of mosques was felt to create an enormous vacuum at the heart of South Asian Muslim communities –

> *The mosques have closed down, that's one thing. And that's affected the – it's not just prayers – that's affected the community; we don't have a space to just hang out on Friday. That's affected every strand of the community (P62)*

This was not just a case of losing the opportunity to socialise, but of being isolated from main sources of identity and cultural reinforcement. Minority groups (especially those in hostile environments) have limited sources for this vital maintenance of positive identity reinforcement through mutual understanding, shared values, language, customs and sympathy (Bhugra & Becker, 2005).

Many South Asian Muslims found themselves disconnected from their routine and a central network of support when mosques became inaccessible and social gatherings were prohibited. The absence of these foundation stones of culture and community constituted a heavy and multi-layered loss. In terms of religious duties, social interaction, and group identity this vacuum had far-reaching implications for South Asian Muslims and left many feeling adrift and helpless, disconnected from their fellows and unable to complete fundamental cultural traditions which are the hallmark of South Asian Muslim identity.

7.3.1.3 Underserved and overlooked

Many participants considered that, prior to the pandemic, South Asian Muslims had occupied an insecure position in society and, especially in the context of rising Islamophobia, had a somewhat precarious relationship with government and the establishment (APPG, 2018; Runnymede Trust, 1997). Such perspectives appear to have sharpened during the course of the pandemic. Participants stressed that they were underserved and overlooked by a government who did not choose to hear or attend to their needs, and who consequently generated feelings of distrust amongst South Asian Muslims, to the extent that when a national emergency arose there was a strong response of disbelief and resistance amongst many sectors of the community. This, in turn, ultimately further endangered the safety and well-being of South Asian Muslims.

Many respondents referenced structural inequalities in society as the normal context in which South Asian Muslims (and other minority groups) find themselves living in Britain both currently and historically. There was a strong sense that material needs had been overlooked by successive governments, and that the situation was compounded by prevailing widespread hostility to, and suspicion of, Muslims. The perpetuation of these negative views of South Asian Muslims did not appear to be mitigated by their evident suffering and losses during the pandemic, even when widely reported in the media (Giordano, 2021; Knapton, 2020; Mullin, 2020; Parveen, 2020).

> *Muslim minority doctors were the first to die on the front line of the UK in the pandemic. It feels like despite our efforts nothing will change the Islamophobic narrative. (Q55)*

It was clear that members of the community felt endangered and deserted –

> *I feel like not enough has been done to protect the South Asian community as a whole despite us being one of the most vulnerable. (Q107)*

> *We've just had to fend for ourselves. (Q19)*

This last comment highlights a sense of abandonment by the authorities who should have been protecting every British citizen. A strong sense of being neglected, of being an invisible population in the midst of a national emergency, runs through the data. A variety of responses to this situation are described by participants: many felt frightened, many angry, others despairing or bewildered. Participants spoke of the limitations of services and of the government's failure to understand where the gaps in provision were falling when it came to their community.

> *my mum got a lot of track and trace calls after me and my sister tested positive, yet not a single one of them even after speaking to her on several occasions thought to get an interpreter or to get somebody who actually spoke Punjabi or Urdu to call her. So, there*

is that lack of information because of the language barrier. I think people are not really trying to do as much, and I would have really thought they'd have that in place. (P48)

That sense of surprise that language barriers had not been addressed as an obvious and essential component of care from the authorities in charge, also demonstrates an instinctive, unthinking confidence that a paternalistic government exists to cater for all its citizens. This expectation that such things would be addressed is more likely to be found in second- or third-generation members of a migrant family, who, born in the UK, have been brought up increasingly influenced by mainstream culture with their white, indigenous peers and imbibed a sense of ownership and entitlement with them, only to be let down when events demonstrate those structural inequalities embedded in society. This, not unnaturally, can lead to a growing sense of anger when reflecting upon the status and position of their underserved community.

Many have died. There is a growing recognition we are discriminated against. (Q123)

This sharpened awareness of discrimination added to the suffering, difficulties and barriers experienced by South Asian Muslims during the pandemic. Altogether there was considered to be a lack of awareness of the extra burdens that families in multi-generational homes were facing, a lack of provision of safety measures for so many of the community who were working in frontline positions in the health and service industries, and a lack of provision of information in forms that would be accessible to those who may have limited English or literacy skills. Added to these practical short-comings was the lack of cultural sensitivity, such as an obliviousness to the impact of Ramadan (and the everyday challenges of fasting) for frontline workers –

During Ramadan, I saw no understanding and support of how working within secure mental health services 8-10 hours a day and wearing a mask was challenging. No acknowledgement at all was given, apart from a risk form to identify me scoring 1 due to my ethic background. (Q111)

This tick-box highlighted a lack of understanding of the augmented physical difficulties endured by those fasting and dealing with thirst exacerbated by long hours of wearing a mask in the workplace. This relatively small example is quite a telling one nonetheless as it highlights the gulf of understanding between majority society and the day-to-day experiences of a significant minority population.

Many respondents spoke of the great insensitivity of banning Eid celebrations (twice during the course of 2020), and especially of announcing the second lockdown the day before Eid celebrations were due to begin. This was received as a 'punishment' from an unsympathetic government and as a calculated strategy to offend Muslim communities.

we have often been made the target. Last minute decisions about Eid and Ramadan cancelled, whilst other religious festivals still continued (Q111)

It indirectly comes to suggest something … that we are the problem. And it's not healthy and it's not fair; our community faces so much stigma and so much prejudice and experience of racism as it is, to put that out there – I feel like COVID-19 has been heavily racialised … racialised towards Asian Muslim communities because we're 'not following lockdown restrictions', but I never saw any Muslims out on the beaches! (P58)

The images of White British people crowding onto beaches, or re-entering pubs and restaurants jarred severely for these communities who felt that they had been stripped of these essential religious observances and celebrations.

Another key area of insensitivity that caused even more distress to the community and individuals alike were the restrictions surrounding funerals. Naturally, at the height of lockdown, restrictions on attendance of the dying and the funerals themselves were intensely painful and difficult for people of any or no faith, but the omission of family and communal funeral rites for South Asian Muslims had additional profound impacts. Certain sensitive rituals such as family members washing the body, shrouding the loved one in a white cotton 'kafaan' (a length of cloth wrapped multiple times around the body), and making a personal farewell during these processes are religiously crucial, intimate, and spiritual practices when people die. Moreover, Islamic funerals place great importance on the prayers that are said and the gathering of the community to witness and play their part in the process. Funerals tend to be large scale events, with people often attending in their hundreds to the extent that if the funeral rites are not fully observed the whole community is held to be responsible. It is also the community's responsibility to speed the deceased on their way to heaven by swift burial, correct rituals and, most importantly, prayers. It is often believed that the greater the number of people praying for the deceased, the swifter their transition to heaven, hence the need for large numbers of attendees. Schools of thought vary, but some Muslims (especially those influenced by Sufism) believe that it is equally important for the soul's passage to hold collective readings of the Quran during the following forty days of mourning, and to provide food to neighbours and the poor (Azhar, 2020). There is a definite emphasis on social interaction being integral to the funeral rituals and ultimate care of the deceased's soul. In such a context, the lockdown restrictions on funeral participation and completion of rites were simply devastating to the many South Asian Muslims whose family and community members died during the pandemic.

I think this has been a massive, massive issue. It's had even a massive impact on me personally, my family personally, never mind Muslims as a community…. the whole burial rites, the whole funeral procedure, we as a people we rely on our community

massively, whether it's our neighbours or extended family, even people who aren't our blood relatives we rely on them massively, and the way we overcome grief in death is that the community comes together and that hasn't been happening either…. from death to the point of burial has probably taken twenty-four hours and it's all done. What do you cling on to? I think that's been the biggest issue, it's an ongoing issue, and it's something that the establishment doesn't appreciate or even take into consideration. And I think there's better ways around that. That's coming from somebody who works in the health care sector. (P60)

The combination of high death rates and the denial of essential funeral rites led to agonised experiences beyond that normally encompassed by bereavement, as the living considered they were prevented from giving the essential assistance needed to the souls of the dead and this had serious mental health impacts (Dogra et al., 2023). Participants described these serious omissions of understanding and empathy from the establishment as leaving South Asian communities reeling in pain and despair.

how do we preserve our values, and our heritage and our religion and our traditions whilst trying to understand this new Coronavirus and the restrictions that it puts on our communities and on the wider picture…? (P42)

[The South Asian community] has [been] greatly impacted by both the fatalities as well as a complete breakdown in the way we live. (Q67)

Such collisions between the state's proscriptions and their essential needs as perceived by these communities resulted in fundamental self-questioning about what it is to be Muslim when vital religious responsibilities are forcibly suspended. This question of loss of identity and fears about the community's future combined with guilt and shame for effectively abandoning the deceased and of breaking tacit promises for the completion of funeral rites for every member of the community weighed heavily on many. At a time of universal fear and anxiety, together with intensified hardships for this ethno-religious group, this perceived betrayal of the dead and the threatened loss of community cohesiveness was clearly distressing in the extreme.

In addition to this perceived lack of cultural sensitivity, the government was seen by many as being negligent by not immediately closing down mosques in order to protect Muslim communities (thus leaving it to individual mosques' leadership committees to make the decision of whether to close or not, and to what degree). Many felt that this oversight or indecisiveness jeopardised the health and safety of British Muslims.

despite lockdown, the government didn't shut mosques in this lockdown, which I find – and many medical colleagues have said as well – you just can't explain it.

Unfortunately, because of that, many mosques are refusing to close; they're like 'The government thinks it's safe', and we're like 'Well, we, as medics, don't think it's safe'. We're just exasperated watching from the sidelines as people are still going to Friday prayers and will therefore contract the virus and will therefore die in quite large numbers. (P64)

Many participants considered that governmental ineffectiveness (through delayed action or confused messaging) further exacerbated South Asian Muslim's insecure relationship with government and the establishment, and that this in turn led to distrust which created a fertile ground for the spread of alternative explanations of the pandemic to flourish.

I would say that most people have taken it quite seriously and have adhered to those rules, however we have had a lot of …. conspiracy theories against COVID – there is that scepticism and that misinformation and I think particularly amongst the older generation when they get sent these [WhatsApp] messages, you know, 'How to protect yourself against COVID' with some kind of traditional medicine or something, they've taken that on to be truth. I think there's a lot of confusion around COVID within the South Asian communities …. These kind of home remedies and traditional healing – … do this prayer, do this dua[17] and you'll be protected. So, there's a lot of that going around as well. (P53)

Numerous accounts described generational differences in attitudes to the COVID-19 pandemic. In many cases, the older generation (the first generation who migrated to the UK) were often said to have expressed scepticism about the reality of the health crisis and considered that it was imaginary, exaggerated, or something that only affected White people. Others stated that it was a manufactured virus intended to kill off non-Whites and therefore that the vaccine should not be taken as it came from the same dangerous source. Others described it as a punishment from God, which should therefore be submitted to. The second-generation respondents strongly expressed their opinion that these misconceptions resulted from poor communication from the government combined with the longstanding environment of structural racism that South Asian Muslims have endured for decades.

for somebody working in health care, the information flow from the state to people who may not comprehend English in the best way, has been very poor. And then unfortunately, that gap in knowledge has been filled by conspiracy theories or lack of understanding and people are not taking it seriously until somebody very close has passed away. I think they've been let down. (P60)

[17] A prayer, supplication or invocation to God.

> *[S]outh [A]sian [M]uslims often have a larger degree of mistrust in the government than white [C]hristian '[B]ritish' citizens because of the discrimination they face from said government. So, it goes without saying that these communities then had less uptake of testing or vaccine/boosters because of their disillusionment from UK politics/trust in government. There was attempt to remedy this by having vaccine centres in mosques, but overall, [it] puts a small bandaid on a large wound that is the weight of racial capitalism and [I]slamophobia on [S]outh [A]sian [M]uslims. (Q139)*

It is important to note that such experiences of 'racial capitalism' do not merely date back to the first migrant wave in recent history of the 1950s-1960s, but extends back beyond that over the previous two hundred years of British imperialism and exploitation (Sanghera, 2021; Tharoor, 2017). Many participants expressed their views about how South Asian Muslims were underserved and overlooked during the pandemic in terms of both short- and long-term historical contexts; that South Asians experience present day impacts from both Britain's colonial conduct, and constructions of social discrimination which have been present for the past seventy years (see Chapter 2). These transgressions and shortcomings of the British state led to a lack of trust and ultimately to a reluctant uptake of vaccination once it became available (especially in the first year), and consequently further heightened the risks for South Asian Muslims (Akbar, Singh, Deshpande, & Amoncar, 2022).

Interwoven into this unsettled and insecure relationship with the British government and the awareness that some members of the South Asian Muslim community were sceptical or resistant to pandemic regulations was the extra pressure of feeling under surveillance -

> *I think everybody's been uber-responsible because they know that they might get picked up on things; the media might jump on them. (P51)*

> *SA people in general often shouldering blame when this exists across society. (Q110)*

Awareness of external scrutiny creates additional layers of anxiety, and can cement the negative aspects of relationships between minority groups and majority society (Shain, 2013). There is a sense that the South Asian community were having to cope with a superfluity of burdens during the pandemic and that there was no official awareness or appreciation of this, and consequently a significant deficit of appropriate support.

> *It's really difficult because we live in tight-knitted communities where we have an elderly person or parents to take care of and look after, and then we have to go home, feed the kids or look after the family or – we have other responsibilities. It's really, really difficult to manage, and I don't think people are taking that into account. (P58)*

These extra responsibilities generated a sense of guilt and attendant helplessness exacerbated by the extreme conditions of the global emergency, and this inevitably had consequences and complex impacts for health and well-being.

> *I think there is just so much stress in our communities, so much financial struggle and so much exploitation and so much hard graft – and I worry what that does to people's immune response, and what it does to people's health. (P57)*

Being underserved and overlooked for a community who suffered a disproportionate level of COVID cases and death, and were nonetheless required to cope under an array of additional burdens was immensely difficult for British South Asian Muslims. This experience had multiple impacts. It affected how they saw themselves, making it difficult to maintain protective elements of social and religious life by reinforcing traditions and values. It affected the mental health of many; the acknowledgement of which required a revolution of thought in a population who traditionally have had strong taboos surrounding mental health issues. High levels of bereavement, the challenges of multi-generational homes, frontline work, migrant related factors (insecurity, lack of documentation, isolation), language barriers, disruption of core community activities, cultural insensitivities by those in power, discontinuance of important religious rites, and a sense of being under surveillance placed an immense load on British South Asian Muslims. It resulted in increased distrust and a dangerous disconnect with the authorities managing the pandemic, all of which placed this community in even greater danger.

7.3.2 Theme 2: *We are second-class citizens*

The pre-existing structural inequalities in society as experienced by ethnic minorities and migrant groups were exacerbated and spotlighted during the pandemic, with particular negative impacts affecting and sometimes targeting South Asian Muslims.

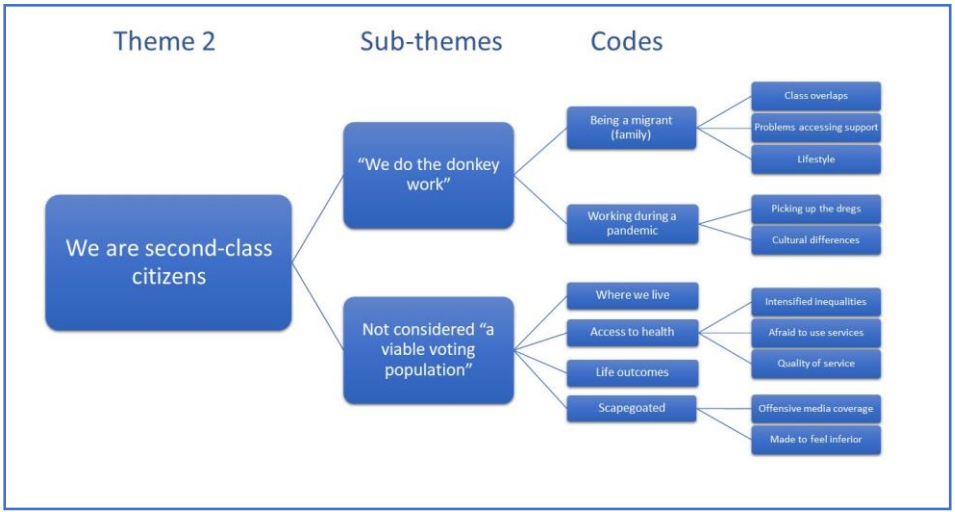


Figure 13: Construction of Theme 2 for RQ2 A Racialised Pandemic.

7.3.2.1 "We do the donkey work"

Participants strongly expressed the view that there were certain characteristics and aspects of life that were intertwined with being either a migrant or a member of a migrant family. During the COVID-19 pandemic, work and status were more enmeshed than ever before and together had a powerful connection to people's sense of safety (for themselves and their families). Whether or not an individual could work from home, and whether or not one's employment was secure came to be of crucial importance when negotiating life during a pandemic, and particularly through lockdowns.

Disproportionate numbers of British South Asian Muslims often found themselves working in frontline positions, and the predominance of this was fundamentally related to being a member of a migrant family (Dogra et al., 2023), and the limited occupations that were open to the first-generation, and then to certain identifiable trends in frontline work and preferred professions taken up by the second generation (Longhi et al., 2013).

> *I think that so many South Asians do essential work. So many of our parents are working in the NHS or selling food in markets, they're running corner-shops and supermarkets, they're working as cashiers – I think immigrants have been forced to do the essential dirty work. (P57)*

The first-generation who initially worked predominantly in mills, factories and public transport, moved on to set up their own businesses (often shops and restaurants), as well as working in other public-facing positions such as taxi-driving (Peach, 2005). A proportion of their children, the second-generation, have begun to move into more professional areas of work, but even in these situations the work tends to be public-facing (predominantly in health care, education and hospitality sectors) (Cheung, 2014). There is a strong emphasis in these families on fulfilling parental dreams of 'success', giving the first generation's sacrifices and hardships meaning, and of cementing their 'right to be here' by choosing work that 'gives back' to society. These workers were heavily relied upon during the pandemic; they were vital in providing ongoing care and essential services during lockdowns. They were asked to risk their health (and that of their families) to meet fundamental needs in society.

> *we contribute to the running of this country. Very few of us have got jobs where we have the luxury of being able to work from home. We were doing the jobs that nobody else wants to do and that basically serve the rest of the country. So, basically, we're still out there in the face of the virus. (P64)*

> *having worked on the front line in the NHS, South Asian Muslim colleagues I have worked with myself were pressurised into working despite risk factors, without adequate PPE, and died. (Q62)*

Migrants potentially have other complications and vulnerabilities to negotiate; for example, their residency status might be at issue or their access to the safety net of social support –

> *not everyone has documentation, and not everyone can get benefits as well, and that puts you in even more exploitative working conditions. (P57)*

Such risks of exploitation due to precarious social status may not disappear even after decades of habitation in a country together with long-term experience in a well-respected profession such as medicine.

> *My father-in-law is a GP, a retired GP. He was working the most dead-end places, where no person would want to go, because essentially that's what migrants have done. Essentially, the jobs no-one wanted, they took the lowest wages. They went to the most unglamorous and horrible places. … If you say, 'How has COVID affected us?' it's exposed the fact that number one, we are the frontline workers at the very frontline. So, whether it's bus drivers, taxi drivers, care workers, GPs, we're the people seeing the brunt of the public being exposed to COVID. (P43)*

Even in one of the most prestigious professions, those of migrant status were seen as being relegated to a second-class position, and given the least appealing work, in the most exposed positions. A combination of the migrant family's drive to secure their position in society by taking on essential work, systemic prejudice embedded in social structures, and governmental disorganisation at the time of crisis, led to South Asian Muslims being exposed and vulnerable due to their occupations and domestic compositions.

> *A lot more of us work in the care sector, in the NHS sector and teachers or teaching assistants working in a lot of the jobs where we haven't been furloughed. We have worked all the way through; a lot of my family has, a lot of my friends have worked all the way through. So, we've been at higher risk of losing lives. (P50)*

> *I think there are multi-generational English households that probably haven't suffered in the same way that South Asian households have and I think that's because of the kind of jobs that people are doing and the kind of exploitation that they're suffering (P57)*

A large proportion of South Asian Muslims find themselves categorised as working class, which is not surprising for migrant families, who, by their nature, are frequently beginning their lives in a new country with limited material resources (regardless of the status they held prior to migration). The pandemic highlighted every vulnerability, and those with limited resources faired worst in a variety of ways (Dogra et al., 2023; Marmot, Allen, Goldblatt, Herd, & Morrison, 2020). Consequently, ethnic minorities shared

the hardships and dangers of the White British working class, but did so without some of the safety nets or cultural acceptance of that sector of society.

> *the outcome and the disproportionate impact [on South Asian Muslims] is a reflection of our struggles within society. (Q12)*
>
> *it's exposed the infrastructure of our system, the infrastructure of our regions, the infrastructure of how we function. The people that will suffer the most are working class. And if you're a black or brown, non-white, or non-English (which could be any colour, any skin tone) working class, then you will suffer heavily. (P44)*

South Asians from Bangladesh and Pakistan are 45% and 46% respectively more likely to live in poverty than the indigenous population (for Indians the rates are more in line with other ethnic groups at 22%). With the exception of Black ethnic groups, Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups experience the highest levels of unemployment in the UK (DWP, 2015b; Li & Heath, 2020). Those of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin earn respectively around 18% and 11% below minimum wage (for Indians it is around 2% below), and with larger as well as extended families to support the impact of this is even more grave. As these communities tend to live in urban areas (in larger cities with a higher cost of living), have a larger households and more dependents to provide for, and, in common with other minority groups tend to have fewer savings or assets as compared to their White British counterparts, the impact on their finances during the pandemic would have been severe (DWP, 2015a; O. Khan, 2020).

There are long-standing barriers to South Asians claiming benefits and social security support; together with a fearfulness related to a lack of knowledge of how the system works, there are potentially language and literacy issues, and especially for older (female) South Asians who may not have appropriate documentation (such as National Insurance numbers), or may be afraid of how such applications might affect residency status. Consequently, take-up of social security benefits remains low amongst South Asians (Platt, 2007).

For all these reasons, South Asians who were already experiencing financial difficulties and job insecurities due to their position in society and migrant status, experienced a redoubling of those pressures during the pandemic. This, in conjunction with the demanding nature of the work they were doing, the reduced status of the work, the increased exposure and the lack of appropriate protection meant that British South Asian Muslims had disproportionate burdens placed upon them during the pandemic with minimal recognition or support (Marmot, Allen, Goldblatt, et al., 2020).

7.3.2.2 Not considered "a viable voting population"

The majority of participants expressed strong views about socio-economic conditions and challenges for South Asian Muslims in the UK. There were considered to be powerful connections between environmental factors and life-outcomes for members of these communities. Many felt angry that these long-standing problems had not been addressed by those in power, and thus left them extremely vulnerable in the face of a health emergency.

Political will, processes and aptitude came to be of central importance during the pandemic. These seemed to be absent when it came to addressing the plight that South Asian Muslims found themselves in, which in turn made them feel that they were not considered important enough, in a political sense, to be heard by politicians.

The majority of British South Asian Muslims (within the terms and definitions of this study – see glossary) originate from Pakistan and Bangladesh, and it is well established that there are distinct socio-economic differences between these populations and those of Indian origin in the UK (Li, 2018; Modood et al., 1997; Peach, 2005; see Chapter 2). Thus, many respondents (being of Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin) focused in their comments on the poorer living conditions and consequent poor long-term outcomes endured by British South Asian Muslims, which they connected to greater hardships during the pandemic.

> *we're an ethnic minority community; we're most likely to live in areas that are industrial, post-industrial, working-class communities where there are health problems etcetera. (P58)*

> *Health inequalities, where there's poverty, where there's any community suffering already will suffer more. (P41)*

As expressed earlier, many respondents expressed their view that living in multigenerational homes contributed to extra burdens and levels of stress experienced by South Asian Muslims, but they often also went on to set that in an inequitable socio-political context which had direct repercussions on their safety during a health crisis.

> *We tend to live in more crowded areas where it's difficult to have infection control at the best of times. (P64)*

Often living in less desirable urban, industrialised areas meant that many South Asian Muslims also experienced more depleted services in terms of housing stock, general infrastructure and maintenance, and access to health services (BMA, 2022; ONS, 2020a). Ethnic minority groups remain significantly over-represented in such areas, and the worst White majority area has better facilities by comparison (Bécares, Nazroo, Albor, Chandola, & Stafford, 2012; Roe, Aspinall, & Thompson, 2016). In addition, Bangladeshi

and Pakistani communities are two of the three ethnic groups who experience the lowest levels of 'belongingness', trust and satisfaction with the environments they reside in (Roe et al., 2016).

> *[We] Live in more deprived areas and with less good paid or secure jobs so more likely to also get Covid, lack of opportunities and will face more further inequality. Mental and physical health impact as well. (Q99)*

> *We have seen a lot of deaths within the community due to underlying health issues. All to do with living in deprived areas, poor health, no access to good healthcare, overcrowding living conditions etc (Q81)*

Generational poverty is a major issue for Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities with all the attendant vulnerabilities that brings with it (K. Stewart et al., 2023); prior to the pandemic 52% of Bangladeshis and 47% of Pakistanis were living in poverty, conditions which are likely to have worsened as a result of the pandemic (Mirza & Warwick, 2022). As Stewart et al. demonstrate, there is a significant correlation between large families (three or more children) and economic hardship, and those of Bangladeshi or Pakistani origin are especially vulnerable due to the large proportion of their families who fall into this category.

> *A lot of South Asians work in the retail and hospitality sector or as taxi drivers, essentially insecure and low-paying jobs. The pandemic meant that they were unable to work or earn a living, affecting entire extended family households. (Q18)*

Many respondents commented on the financial hardships and insecurity they and those around them were experiencing during the pandemic:

> *A lot of people who worked in taxi industry have lost earnings. Alot of desperation for money. (Q40)*

> *Lots of [South Asian] Muslims do low paid jobs work in industry worth there was no work available during lockdown these people were financially desperate (Q56)*

> *Many Muslims continuously worked throughout the pandemic, many taking the frontline. This was not appreciated but instead blamed for high numbers by citing large family gatherings etc. (Q111)*

Participants described multiple pressures affecting British South Asian Muslims: they worked on the frontline, they struggled financially, they had insecure employment, and they felt they passed under the radar of government and employers alike.

Urban, deprived areas are more likely to contain inhabitants dealing with complex pre-existing health issues, and the most likely to have underfunded and overstretched health services (Marmot, Allen, Goldblatt, et al., 2020). In addition, it is recognised that South Asians have high prevalence rates for certain conditions such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease both of which were high risk categories during the pandemic (Raleigh, 2022).

> *through neglect of local healthcare in said deprived areas as well as the fact that class is communicated through health, and more [S]outh [A]sians have more complex health issues than white people, causing their likelihood to die from covid even higher. Thinking about how diabetes is one of the diseases that makes covid more dangerous, and that [S]outh [A]sians are at least x6 more likely to have diabetes because of how British Empire deprived them of food to extreme lengths through various famines (including the Bengal famine under [C]hurchill which was the only man made famine recorded to date and essentially was a murderous project that killed 3 million people), there are so many links to be drawn from the history of [B]ritish colonialism, the stress of racism and islamophobia, both in the physical and mental sense, predisposes [S]outh [A]sian [M]uslims to death. (Q139)*

There is evidence to show that mass starvations and poor living conditions through generations of oppression under British imperialism has had long-term impacts on the health of South Asians which can be seen in their descendants to this day (Tharoor, 2017). Such vulnerabilities and co-morbidities seriously increased the risks for a group already vulnerable in a number of different ways.

Furthermore, this accumulation of risk came at a time when the NHS was experiencing unprecedented pressure and, under such circumstances, inequalities in all services (including health) intensified. Participants alluded to experiences when they or members of their family encountered difficulties accessing services; and for some, these barriers began early, in the very terminology employed when attempting to disseminate government guidance and regulations:

> *I think language has been an issue, so understanding the news and what the terms like, 'pandemic' and, 'self-isolation' and, 'shielding', and all those things, what they meant has been difficult for some people. (P50)*

Language barriers and the poor circulation of information were key issues for some participants, (especially when referring to the experiences of their parents' or grandparents' generation). However, ultimately, resistance to government messaging was borne out of a pre-existent atmosphere of distrust, sparse and under-resourced local medical centres in deprived working-class areas, geographical

limitations for people attempting to access health care, and heightened fears concerning perceived race-related susceptibility to the virus. All of these factors led to delays or even refusals to enter medical centres where some felt that they might be exposed to greater danger.

> *They generally live in more deprived areas so a pandemic on top of existing poor outcomes was always going to make things worse. E.g. living in a poorer area means access to healthcare is already an issue but with Covid it has become almost impossible to get an appointment with a GP. The vaccine rollout has also been disorganised and very slow in areas where the Muslim population is high. Walk-in clinics are few and far between. Living in extended family networks meant a higher number of deaths. (Q18)*

In addition to poorer health services, poorer home conditions, poorer local infrastructure, the exposure of frontline working, and poorer financial supports, there were the additional struggles and barriers for South Asian Muslim children of school age struggling to keep up with their studies at home, which equally went unaddressed by those in power.

There were many immediate and short-term effects of living through a pandemic, but one of the major long-term consequences is forecasted to be a decline in the educational (and subsequently occupational) outcomes for children already living in deprived circumstances, and this is expected to have further long-term impacts on the generation that follows (Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020).

> *the pandemic has however worsened disparities. Prior to the pandemic, South Asian Muslims such as British Bangladeshi/Pakistani students were disproportionately behind in education and we can see that the disadvantage gap has widened in the pandemic, leaving our children even further behind. (Q103)*

Many Bangladeshi and Pakistani students would not have had access to the quiet study spaces, the technology and the adult support that more affluent students would have access to. Government intervention would be crucial in attempting to mitigate the damage that was done.

> *With schools, pupils have suffered because there isn't the funding to help make up for lost days of education. Parents are not wealthy enough to pay for private tutoring. (Q18)*

With such additional set-backs being inflicted upon social groups who already have a history of poor educational and occupational outcomes, the future of that cohort of students was seen as being seriously jeopardised by their pandemic experiences. Given the youthful demographic makeup of these communities and the high proportion of households with children, South Asian Muslims had to face the

complications of greater infection risks when schools reopened, as well as suffer the long-term detrimental consequences of home-schooling during lockdown periods. In the maelstrom of inordinate pressures, South Asian Muslims felt they looked in vain for assistance from their government.

Another serious concern expressed by many participants in this study was that not only was the government not hearing or addressing their needs, but that they were in fact actively targeting South Asian Muslims to gain political support from the majority population.

> *… we are made to feel it is our fault. The issue isn't us, it's structural inequality and state violence that has meant we have been badly effected by covid. We have at times, been blamed for spreading COVID, not been allowed to celebrate EID. This govt has deliberately targeted Muslims along with migrant and racialised communities. (Q17)*

> *Asians were blamed for spreading the virus (whilst the government were having their parties!). (Q33)*

Participants felt that South Asian Muslims were being unfairly, and hypocritically, blamed for a reluctance to abide by social distancing rules and hesitancy to be vaccinated. They offered a range of responses to these allegations which ranged from complete denial that this was the case at all, to a concession that some parts of the community did not believe that this dangerous virus truly existed, that others felt that this was a ruse to harm South Asians (and that the 'vaccine' was designed to purposely harm certain races), that this was an invention to attack certain communities' culture (or existence), that it was in fact another permutation of Islamophobia in action. The second-generation respondents did emphasise that the majority of hesitancy and disbelief in the seriousness of the virus, came from the elder generation. In general, this first-generation is more likely to have a lower level of formal education than their children, poorer English language skills, and possibly a greater susceptibility to traditional cures and superstitions (Dwyer et al., 2011). Participants also highlighted that when blame about virus spread was being distributed, double standards seemed to be in place:

> *I know many white people who have chosen not to get the vaccine yet the propaganda seems to be that Muslims and in particular Asians are choosing to not take the pandemic seriously. (Q76)*

Throughout the course of the pandemic, it was felt that the government not only ignored the multiple urgent needs of South Asian Muslim communities, but actively disseminated prejudicial notions which targeted these communities through the powerful machinery of the national media.

Many participants perceived the media as being the mouthpiece for the anti-South Asian Muslim governmental stance.

> *I don't want to go all weird about the whole thing, but it is strange that whenever there's any news about Coronavirus it's the areas where Muslims are that are mentioned the most. Literally it's always Blackburn, Darwen, Bolton, Bradford, Leicester, Birmingham – right? … I remember, somebody sent me a thing of 'Look at all these BBC pages talking about Coronavirus rates rising, you can always see a hijabi in the picture' – BBC news, Daily Mail … wherever it was, it was there. Right? They only stopped when the rates in the northeast went up, because the northeast has a very low proportion of Muslims …. up until that point there was a little bit of, you know, 'Is it these guys that are doing it?'; they're all living together, they're not socially distancing, they're not this, they're not that – you know. (P51)*

The Muslim Council of Britain has set up the 'Centre for Media Monitoring' to gather data related to media reporting of Muslims and Islam. Their report examining the representation of Muslims in news reports during the pandemic cites numerous articles which used images of hijabi women when delivering negative news about COVID-19, and a range of news stories where the 'race' and religion of Muslims was foregrounded in contexts of blame and disaster, and contrasted these to similar narratives concerning non-Muslims where ethnicity and religion were never mentioned (CfMM, 2020). Such articles support participants' impressions that many British media outlets had an anti- South Asian Muslim agenda.

> *A lot of times when I looked at the news I'd always see if it was related to COVID-19 I'd see a woman in a hijab or I'd see an Asian person…. I looked on the news, and it actually got to a point where I stopped looking because it would make me feel really angry, because people would have – there were representations about Muslims being the problem, or Asians communities being the problem because we're not following lockdown regulations. And all this obviously actioned by the government, a Prime Minister, who would put lockdown the day before celebrating Eid. (P58)*

The offence and anger caused by the government twice cancelling Eid with almost no notice, was expressed by many contributors. As explained above, this was interpreted as a great insult to Muslims, and a supremely inconsiderate act. In the context of the re-opening of pubs, restaurants, beaches and the 'Don't cancel Christmas' campaigns which appealed to other sectors of society, the mis-handling of Eid restrictions seemed to clarify to South Asian Muslims how little importance was placed on their needs and wishes. Many felt targeted, singled out for negative treatment and injurious representation.

> *what I hear on the streets sometimes is "Well, you people just mix don't you, and don't stop from mixing, and you still go visit – " … I think that attitude towards them has affected them the most and you always feel inferior again – it's that feeling of being inferior again. That feeling of 'you're to blame' for this and 'that's why we've got an increase in Bradford for instance, it's because the South Asians are continuing to not follow the rules and mix with one another' – even though the mosques have been closed. And I know for a fact that the people around where I live have kept themselves to themselves, we've been really reluctant to let our children mix even (P41)*

The use of the word 'again' is particularly telling here, as is the connection between blame and being made to feel inferior. Many respondents reported taking objection to media-driven narratives that attempted to cement links between COVID-19 and South Asian Muslims themselves through imagery used in news reporting, as well as the unfounded stories circulated about their communities being responsible for increased infection rates due to behaviour patterns being presented as dangerous and foreign (in every sense of the word) to majority society.

> *Muslims unfairly targeted for high case rates in some areas. Eid and other festivals not allowed to be celebrated in 2020 and restrictions tightened the day before. Muslims are not seen as a viable voting population. (Q124)*

This last point indicates both anger regarding the inactivity of the government where it matters, and exasperation that British South Asian Muslims are still not taken seriously as citizens with electoral clout.

Participants felt that their communities were increasingly being positioned as outside of the mainstream or majority society; being presented as people who were not worth listening to, with problems that did not need to be addressed, and that they were guilty of intentionally making the situation worse by not adhering to the pandemic guidelines and restrictions. It was felt that a government that could quite openly assume this perspective was one that did not care about these communities, and felt confident that they were safe from any negative backlash from such a powerless demographic.

The positioning of this group as 'second-class' citizens was inflicted upon both genders, but British South Asian Muslim women had additional challenges to manage. Mothers tended to be the key parent managing home-schooling pressures, and rises in domestic abuse cases across society during the pandemic were well-publicised (Gill & Anitha, 2021). However, the complex and injurious experience of the pandemic for South Asian Muslims, also highlighted other vulnerabilities:

I think they have been targeted as a 'problem' group or a 'group' who are more likely to die of disease associated with being South Asian. Having said that, there were efforts made to produce leaflets and videos in a language that would help non-English-speaking South Asian people. Although my mum who is a first-generation immigrant to the UK, cannot read or write her own spoken language. This is a reflection not just that culturally women are homemakers and do not go out to work, and second, she could not afford to go to school. (Q146)

Although there is an acknowledgement that some limited attempts were made to inform non-English speakers, these attempts also indicate that in a community who already feel like 'second-class' citizens, women can often fall below this status by having additional lacks and vulnerabilities. Two such were evident in the data: one was that first-generation South Asian women might well have poorer language and literacy skills (due to the constraints of their upbringing, and their more limited social interaction in the UK as adults). This pre-existing deficit handicapped some women during the course of the pandemic by limiting the information they had access to, and this ultimately potentially jeopardised their health and safety. Another difference between the genders as they lived through the pandemic was that women often found themselves prohibited from attending the mosque once restricted re-opening began:

You know, we have an allocated floor for ladies, but since COVID-19, we don't let any lady in – ladies' prayer – they can pray at home. They are not allowed in the mosque until we re-open and this COVID period is gone, because we have a one-way system and it's difficult for us to manage as well, we need a lot of people to do that, and besides you are going to create more problems – even now we have, on Sunday, we've got three separate prayers, and we have about nine hundred people on just one day. But … all in proper guidelines. (P59)

Outside of lockdowns there was limited access to mosques, but this seems to have been organised on an individual basis with each mosque making its own decisions about how to manage congregational worship. This speaker clarified that in the mosque that he managed women's prayer was seen as a superfluous activity which could just as well be conducted at home, whilst large numbers of men (approximately nine hundred) had a system of communal prayers facilitated for them. The impact of this on devout Muslims should not be underestimated.

I don't know what's going on with the community anymore [now that mosques have reduced access]. That central part of the community is not accessible to so many people. It's still open, but Mums who have young kids are excluded from that and so many other people. (P62)

Again, women (automatically linked with childcare responsibilities) are reported as being excluded from mosque attendance, and there is an acknowledgement here of the loss inherent in being barred from this important social and religious activity.

British South Asian Muslims of both genders and all ages expressed views related to feeling of lesser importance, of being treated as second-rate, of experiencing poorer living conditions and services, being judged, blamed, scapegoated and under critical surveillance. Because they felt they experienced some portion of this in common with other ethnic minorities, there was a definite consensus that they were living through a racialised pandemic, but because a great deal of the media coverage (and some key governmental decisions) seemed negatively focused on South Asian Muslims in particular, their experience of the pandemic was that it ultimately fanned the flames of Islamophobia.

7.3.3 Theme 3: *Looking up and out*

Whilst steeped in a global emergency, British South Asian Muslims nonetheless made pro-active decisions, found positives, and looked forward to advances and improvements that could be made after the pandemic.

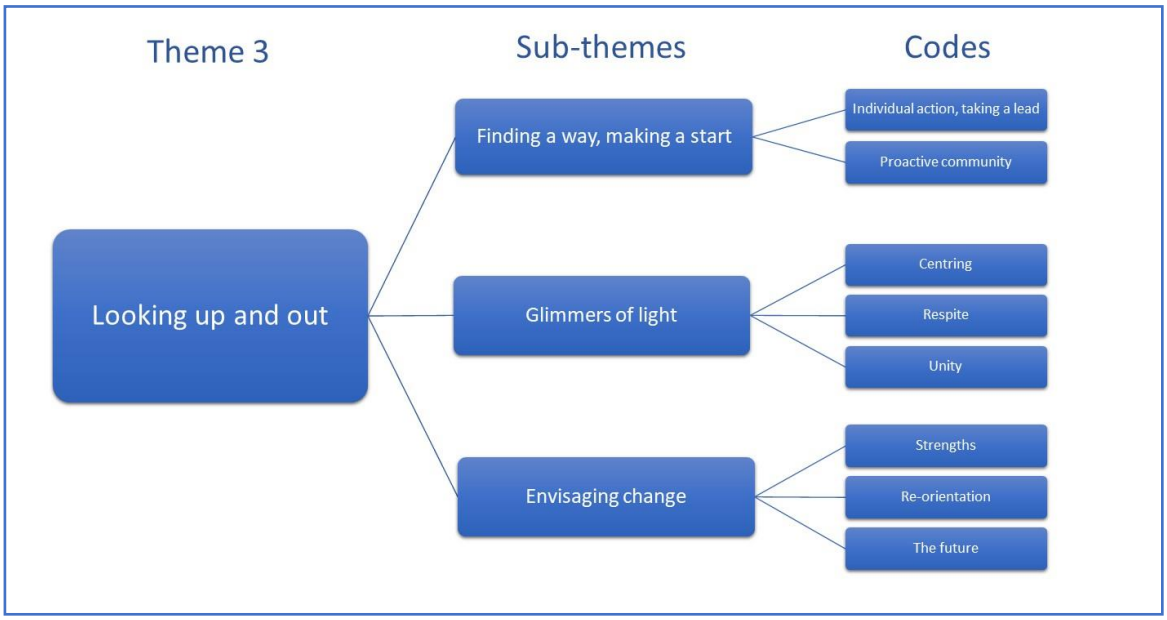


Figure 14: Construction of Theme 3 for RQ2 A Racialised Pandemic.

7.3.3.1 Finding a way, making a start

During the height of the pandemic, British South Asian Muslims found themselves in a situation where they had to deal with additional disadvantages and risks as compared to those faced by the general majority population.

…. a lot of BME people are being ignored and there's so much more we can do, but it's about … making sure everyone is treated equally, but also realising that people aren't going to have the same access to material like other people. It doesn't work like that; that's not how society has been functioning. (P49)

With the recognition that some sectors of society were beginning from a lower base and that social structures might be weighted against them, it was also clear that there was more to be done, that improvements were possible whether on an individual and community level or, looking to the future, on a societal level.

Participants gave various examples of how individual actions during the pandemic could be impactful in protecting others.

Because I'm an employer I went into lockdown two weeks before Boris Johnson announced it. (P43)

during the last lockdown period we closed our – I was the first one to lock the mosque a day before the government announced. We did not open the mosque when they gave us the permission for individual prayer; we said 'No, for individual prayer we are not going to open'. We opened when we were able to do the congregation prayer. (P59)

Taking an early lead in closing workplaces and places of worship were important proactive steps adopted by certain members of the community to protect others, and thus they assumed a responsibility that often those in power hesitated and vacillated about.

In the midst of the maelstrom of misinformation and the energetic circulation of conspiracy theories and superstitious interpretations certain individuals chose to go out of their way to attempt to correct misapprehensions:

I remember going to the barbers once and there was a lot of denial going on – 'Oh, bro you know I think this whole Coronavirus thing is just them trying to kill Asians, innit?'. And you're kind of like 'Mate, I work in a hospital, do you want to come and see the bodies?' – 'No, it's not as bad as what they say, you know, man' – 'No. It is as bad as what they say. Trust me. I'm there'. (P51)

Medical professionals in the community expressed their frustrations in trying to combat such attitudes, but nonetheless felt that it was down to them to rebalance such discourses which were prevalent during the pandemic. However, the urge to take positive action was not limited to a single profession or group of people –

I feel like now, although we're going into a second wave, I feel like when it calmed down a lot of people from South Asian communities were like 'Okay, right, we've had a big shock, it's not to do with 5G or whatever', I think they've kind of started looking around going 'Okay, we've had a big loss, we're in shock, but what do we do now?'. I think they're more willing to accept the situation, and more willing to assess where they can make a contribution. (P52)

There is a sense that the community perspective was shifting and consolidating, readying to act. It is important to note that at different phases of the pandemic, reactions changed and developed. The initial shock and wild or poorly informed reactions were succeeded by acceptance of the nature of the situation and a wish to act and make a positive contribution, to begin to build a way forward in small individual as well as communal (and societal) actions.

One example cited by a participant was the setting up of 'mosque radio' in order to unite the community, boost spirits and keep people informed –

I know our mosque radio is still on, it's been on since March, even though they weren't giving the congregational prayers at the mosque, they were still introducing on the radio about that COVID-19 in both languages, in English and in Urdu, and they were saying about 'When we re-open the mosques , we do not want you to come in without masks' they've given strict instructions on the radio about where the hand sanitisers will be, that you must come with a mask, if you do not come with a mask you will not be allowed in, people that are vulnerable please don't come to the mosque, we don't want to take responsibility for you, you should be praying at home. (P46)

In such ways, people found practical methods of dealing positively with the difficulties and fears engendered by the pandemic; their small-scale, proactive and supportive behaviour helped them to find ways of managing the crisis, finding routes to cope, and strategies for a way forward.

7.3.3.2 Glimmers of light

Such enormous, life-changing and challenging experiences encourage reflection, and participants found new understandings and appreciations in a number of areas. A common focus was the impact on family relationships:

I think it has really shifted family dynamics, heightened tensions between differences of opinions but also would argue it's brought families closer together and developed a deeper understanding between one another. (Q116)

The greater (and inescapable) proximity of family during lockdowns inevitably led to additional frictions, but running parallel to that was sometimes a recognition of the positive effects of such enforced closeness, and that it could improve relationships.

> *It's brought families closer together. … In the family, we've always been close, but now looking out for each other's mental health has become more prioritised …. So, we're all really being there for each other and supporting each other in ways that it just wouldn't have happened before. (P62)*

A key thread that ran through many of the responses relates to mental health. South Asian Muslims are a group who have a well-established resistance to the acknowledgement of mental health problems and/or the take-up of related services (Vyas, Wood, & McPherson, 2021), so it is significant that many participants speak of how their experiences during the pandemic not only heightened their own awareness of the importance of mental health, but that they also saw positive change in their families and communities in this regard.

Others highlighted how experiencing lockdown had other perhaps unlooked for positive side-effects:

> *Muslim families are all about community and I think it's been hard but a breather for the younger generation not expected to keep up formal duties. (Q127)*

This comment, although humorous in one respect, also draws attention to the potentially burdensome nature of living within a strong communal environment with ingrained and additional responsibilities on all its members. In certain phases of life, such responsibilities can feel onerous or oppressive, so to be freed from that by being in lockdown is an example of an unexpected benefit and a very positive interpretation of highly testing events.

For the devout, lockdown provided a space for reflection and a more thorough completion of religious devotions.

> *I think it has had a positive effect as it has let us be able to practise our deen[18] better. For example I'd be able to read all my prayers on time, able to read more of the Quran instead of wasting so much time on commuting etc. And as working from home could take quick prayer breaks whereas during breaks at uni, not really enough time to go to the prayer room etc etc. (Q112)*

This conjures a clear image of how obstructive time-frames and routines in non-Islamic countries can be for practicing Muslims who wish to adhere conscientiously to prayer times and religious duties. And how

[18] Religious obligations, religious identity.

liberating lockdown could therefore be as a consequence. Others felt that religion helped them to cope with the challenges of a pandemic, but that ultimately culture, community and a sense of engrained fortitude brought them through the crisis:

> *I think as much as we have been impacted, I think there is also this strength that comes from perhaps our culture and the way we've been brought up and our closeness. And also, I think faith because we have deaths of people that we've known in the family, many of them, but you have that element of, you know, 'It's God's will'…. it's almost that acceptance of 'Okay, it's happened', you know, you move on and you don't sit and question. (P55)*

This sense of, 'the worst has happened, and now you need to act' relates to the 'grit' and resilience that are key to undertaking the act of migration. The uncertainties of life, tribulations, challenges and the awareness that at any moment all could be lost is familiar territory to migrant families. The migrant parents have lived through the full blast of it, and their children with the ricocheting echoes. The resultant effect is to have built in to the family, and the wider community as a whole, a sense that you take the blow, you struggle on, and you build everything up again from scratch. That grit and that unity is central to what South Asian Muslims recognise as culture and community.

> *In terms of the positives, the pandemic has highlighted the beauty of community amongst the South Asian diaspora in Britain. As a British Bangladeshi, I've seen the support and help that the members have given each other in this difficult period. (Q103)*

It is remarkable that during a period of fear, anxiety, hardships and mistreatment British South Asian Muslims could find inspiration and a sense of reinvigorated pride in their community and cultural identity.

7.3.3.3 Envisaging change

Given the parameters of the question that participants were asked (relating solely to their experiences during the pandemic), and given that the interview participants were almost entirely responding during 2020, and the questionnaire responses were only a little removed from peak pandemic experience (by being solicited in 2021), it is perhaps unsurprising that just a small number of participants explicitly looked to the future, but what was said about life beyond the pandemic was illuminating.

As has been discussed above, a number of participants spoke of how South Asian Muslims have an inner strength whether derived from their heritage and upbringing by migrant parents (or being migrants themselves), their community reinforcing those values, or their religion which helped them withstand

and persevere through this global crisis. These strengths can be described as 'cultural capital' and considered integral to British South Asian Muslim's sense of identity.

By contrast, a good deal of attention was given by participants to the growing acceptance of mental health issues in South Asian Muslim communities, and the important relationship between mental and physical well-being.

> *I believe that this pandemic has opened up the eyes of South Asian Muslims who are experiencing mental health issues and complications due to their own health risks and there is a movement happening to bring further attention to the fact that it is not a western phenomenon (mental health) but one that we all are susceptible to. (Q105)*

This appears to be a significant step forward. The prospect of South Asian communities beginning to open up and discuss mental health issues without stigma or clouded by superstitions is an immensely positive one. Many contributors to the study felt that the pandemic had stimulated a considerable shift in this area and that it boded well for the future.

A great deal of the participants' focus was on the cultural and socio-economic structures that penalise migrants, those of minority backgrounds, and Muslims.

> *it's made us think about the structural causes of that, and actually are we this oppressed kind of disadvantaged group and actually how fair is that. Definitely for me personally, it's completely transformed what I'm researching, so going from medicine research to inequalities, because I'm like 'Gosh! I didn't appreciate it!' and that's me as a health care professional who likes to think about these things. It really has been transformational, it really made it visible. (P55)*

For this individual, the pandemic experience was transformative in that it changed the direction of her professional life, but for the majority of respondents the experience was also revelatory to varying degrees. It is as if the COVID-19 pandemic powerfully clarified the position that British South Asian Muslims saw themselves in; it dramatically highlighted (or strongly reinforced) social inequalities, and recalibrated how these communities felt they were considered by the majority society. These messages were often hard to stomach, but they pointed the way for an ideological direction of travel –

> *it tells you that the infrastructure is not COVID-proof, we don't have a welfarism …. I'm going to paraphrase Nelson Mandela here, 'Poverty, like racism, is manmade'. It's manmade. And if we get rid of poverty and we all strive to have a welfare system – shelter, food, hygiene, sanitation, clothing, even those basics – then we can, hopefully, be prepared for any crisis come what may. But this tells you that even the one-*

percenters, the elitists, will be affected. We need them, but they need us. We need each other. (P44)

Such a blueprint for the future seems morally incontestable, and utterly necessary as a strategy to protect every citizen in the nation. Looking up and out of the morass of fear, chaos and anxiety forged by the pandemic, these participants were able to look to a future where the direction of travel had been clarified, and their very experiences through the pandemic had demonstrated the imperative nature of social change.

7.4 Discussion and conclusions

The virus which was first detected in 2019, and engulfed the world in 2020 has had a multiplicity of impacts, some of which may only become apparent in the years to come. All groups, all sectors of society across all nations were affected by the pandemic to some degree, and in most cases to an enormous extent. It soon became apparent that prior good health, housing, environment and facilities, income, services, logistics and communication, together with a perceptive and decisive government were all key to survival and infection control. Significantly, societies with greater equality fared better than those steeped in inequality (Ataguba, Birungi, Cunial, & Kavanagh, 2023). Out of 38 OECD countries, the UK has the 8th highest level of income inequality and has experienced the 6th highest mortality rate due to COVID-19 (232,000 deaths; 325 per 100,000 population), as compared, for example, to Norway which ranks as one of the world's most economically equal countries, coming 28th on the OECD ranking of income inequality and having had a significantly lower COVID-19 mortality rate (75,000 deaths; 96 per 100,000) (John Hopkins University, 2023; OECD, 2022; WHO, 2024).

The relative income hypothesis (RIH) proposes that in developed countries, income disparity is more influential in determining health outcomes than absolute levels of income (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). Already by 2020 there existed a substantial body of evidence to indicate that there is a greater prevalence of health (and social care) problems the more unequal a society is. When making international comparisons, the UK performs poorly across a wide range of health and social issues such as: rates of life expectancy, infant mortality, obesity, depression, mental illness, substance abuse, problem gambling, intergenerational poverty, social mobility, imprisonment, child well-being, educational attainment, teenage pregnancy, civic participation, status anxiety and women's status all perform well below the levels attained in countries with greater wealth equality (Forster, Kentikelenis, & Bambra, 2020; Graafland & Lous, 2019; V. Patel et al., 2018; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2018). The evidence strongly indicates that where societies have severe income disparity, conditions worsen for all members of society, but the

vulnerable suffer disproportionately. *'Double disadvantage'* is sustained by those of low socio-economic status who have any additional 'minority' status such as ethnicity, disability or being female (Sutton Trust & Social Mobility Commission, 2019). The evidence would suggest that people in these situations would suffer a host of extra disadvantages in the advent of a pandemic.

British South Asian Muslims are predominantly comprised of those of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage, and research literature consistently places these communities at the most disadvantaged end of societal and well-being measures. They live in the most deprived areas (Jivraj & Khan, 2015), with the fewest facilities (PHE, 2017), are considered 'hard-to-reach' populations (Oskrochi et al., 2023) with poor educational (Moffat & Yoo, 2020; Shain, 2020) and occupational outcomes (Longhi et al., 2013). This strongly suggests that these communities would be at high risk during a health emergency; the evidence of this study indicates that they suffered greatly during the pandemic.

7.4.1 Theme 1: Disproportionately hard hit: we suffered

British South Asian Muslims reported suffering extra burdens and challenges above and beyond those experienced by the general population. These included information and language barriers, lack of understanding from White colleagues and employers, lack of appropriate support and protection, high levels of personal and communal bereavement, pressures of managing infection control in (often overcrowded) multigenerational households, vulnerabilities related to migrant status (language, paperwork, isolation, loneliness, fears for distant family, social and cultural barriers), a disconnect from government rooted in a history of discrimination (with attendant fears, distrust, targeting, surveillance, and scapegoating), governmental neglect, cultural insensitivities and offences, prohibitions on key religious rites and practices, a high proportion in frontline work, the lack of financial support, lack of security, lack of safety, lack of working from home opportunities, undertaking the least preferred employment (regardless of status of work or profession), a large proportion living in poor housing, deprived neighbourhoods, with poor health services, and being poorer and less likely to be able to provide educational support and equipment for homeschooling children.

These experiences provoked fear, loss, anger, stress, guilt, mental health impacts, threatened identity fragmentation, and, in a few, created a catalyst for inspiring superstitions and the dissemination of dangerous misinformation which also put themselves (and others) at risk.

Participants indicated that there were some generational differences when responding to the pandemic. The majority of the respondents were second-generation South Asian Muslims, and many alluded to some of the elder generation being susceptible to alternative interpretations of what was occurring and how best to deal with it. It is perhaps unsurprising that this should be the case. Being first generation

migrants predominantly from rural, working-class origins (see Chapter 2), they were more likely to have limited formal education, a greater investment in traditional folklore and remedies, poorer English language skills, and were less likely to receive comprehensive governmental health messaging, or follow scientific developments in viral technology and infection prevention.

Although South Asian Muslims were heavily criticised for poor adherence to social distancing and for vaccine hesitancy, it is perhaps easy to forget that at the time there was resistance to taking the pandemic seriously from a variety of different sectors across society, and a strong anti-vaccination campaign that transcended 'racial' or cultural boundaries. A study examining vaccine hesitancy in the UK and the US found that a range of subsets of the population were sceptical or resistant to vaccination programmes during the pandemic; they cited marginalised groups such as those living in rural or remote areas, those on low incomes, minority groups and adolescents (Wood, Juanchich, Ramirez, & Zhang, 2022).

Meanwhile, the second-generation, with varying types and degrees of acculturation, were more likely to have dual allegiances (to minority and majority cultures), to hear more of the mainstream information and attitudes, have a higher level of formal education, and therefore be more compliant to pandemic guidelines and restrictions.

This also places greater pressures, responsibilities and anxieties on the second-generation, who were then expected to inform, defend, protect, and sustain the older and younger generations. They had to know who to trust and to provide care and emotional support for all whilst potentially being pulled in two directions by their dual cultural allegiances, and manage their own personal fears and anxieties. In this context, mental (and consequently physical) health came under threat, and it is notable that so many respondents speak of a greater openness about mental health issues in their families and communities, where previously this had been a major taboo. It seems that this is an important development, and an opportunity that should be grasped by service leaders and built upon before the old norms are reasserted.

A substantial body of work has found that good mental health is promoted by individuals being situated within strong networks. Community involvement builds different forms of capital and creates individual and communal resilience to combat challenging situations and deprivations and provide mechanisms to protect against deteriorations in mental health which have knock-on effects on physical health (McCrea, Walton, & Leonard, 2016; Southby et al., 2022). Many participants focused on the importance of community and drew connections between communal activity, personal well-being and their sense of self. They described increases in fear, anxiety and pain at the suspension of community interaction (whether this was weekly mosque attendance, major religious celebrations or the completion of important rites). Social and cultural capital is attained through these processes, and this is integral to sustaining a sense of identity and resilience (Abu-Ras & Itzhaki-Braun, 2023).

With these resources removed or seriously compromised during lockdowns, British South Asian Muslims reported struggling to maintain their sense of self and value systems as they felt stripped of vital communal and spiritual supports. Consequently, cultural insensitivities from external sources were felt with redoubled force. This was especially the case with the cancellation of Eid celebrations and the severe restrictions concerning funerals, both of which were handled in what was deemed to be a high-handed and offensive manner by the government and the media.

The anguish of not only the bereaved, but of someone who has been forcibly divorced from the core rituals and symbols of traditions that imbue a sense of identity and wholeness was evident. Geertz (1973) described culture as:

> *… a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life. (p.89)*

It is no small thing to have these core cultural signifiers abruptly severed; it causes disturbing challenges to core value systems and can leave individuals reeling, despairing and seriously impede their coping mechanisms at a time of crisis.

At the same time, as communities and individuals were experiencing deterioration in resilience, those (especially of the second-generation) who might look to the promised paternalism of their government to protect them, found themselves to be members of a community which appeared to be neglected by those in authority, and unheard when suffering. Second-generation South Asian Muslims, having a stake in majority culture (as well as their minority heritage culture) found themselves in freefall when it came to the pandemic crisis; they discovered that support was not equally there for members of their community as it was for others securely rooted in majority culture, and that even more seriously, their ethno-religious identities were being targeted and labelled as problematic.

7.4.2 Theme 2: We are second-class citizens

Public Health England states that ethnic minorities, and Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities in particular, are prey to a maelstrom of health and social vulnerabilities all of which put them at greater risk during the pandemic. Poor housing, income inequality, types of occupation, use of public transport, historic negative experiences of health services, and comorbidities raised the risk levels for these communities and also made them less likely to seek care when needed (PHE, 2020).

There was a strong feeling among respondents that South Asian Muslims were placed in dangerous positions during the pandemic, that they were unprotected with limited, or entirely lacking, functional

protections in place for them, and that their danger and sacrifice had been overlooked. By April 2020, South Asians (10% of NHS workers) constituted 36% of the NHS workforce deaths (71% being of ethnic minority groups) (Cook, Kursumovic, & Lennane, 2020). The tendency for Pakistani and Bangladeshi families in particular to live in multigenerational homes, meant that exposure to the virus was more frightening and more dangerous for these frontline workers than for their White British counterparts who would not be forced into jeopardising the health and safety of extended family on a daily basis in the same way (Dhillon, Breuer, & Hirst, 2020; ONS, 2020a). There was a strong feeling that this, too, remained unrecognised by wider society. Bangladeshi and Pakistani key workers were two of the three groups most likely to have received no or inadequate personal protective equipment (PPE), and 20% of Pakistani and Indian workers (higher rate than that of White British) reported that their complaints about the lack of PPE were ignored (Marmot, Allen, Goldblatt, et al., 2020). Employment and working conditions constituted one of many key areas where South Asian Muslims felt their pandemic experiences highlighted their inconsequential status in wider society.

It is well-documented that most children's education (and development) was negatively impacted by the emergency restrictions imposed during the pandemic (Farquharson, McNally, & Tahir, 2022). However, those living in deprived circumstances received the greatest disadvantages from the loss of social interaction at school, poorer studying conditions at home, the lack of technological and educational resources, together with a likelihood of poorer online provision than schools based in more affluent areas (Marmot, Allen, Goldblatt, et al., 2020). Mothers especially felt the pressure and the responsibility of managing and supporting their children's home-schooling, and experienced heightened distress, depression and loneliness during the pandemic (Suleman et al., 2021), and student health and well-being was seriously compromised, as well as widening the learning and attainment gaps between children of lower- and higher-income families (Benner, Rojas, Kim, Hou, & Coulter, 2023; Milanovic, Blainey, Hannay, & Wood, 2023; Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020).

Historically, both educational attainment and employment pathways have carried 'ethnic' and 'Muslim' penalties (see Chapter 2), in that achievement and success has been disproportionately limited in these areas particularly for those of Bangladeshi and Pakistani heritage (Clark & Drinkwater, 2007; Khattab, 2009; Khattab & Modood, 2015; Li & Heath, 2020). The repercussions of educational deficits during the pandemic could be profound and long-lasting across these two communities. To compound the situation, they constitute a significantly younger population than that of White majority society, and consequently a greater proportion of the Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities were in full-time education during lockdowns and periods of restricted access to schools and universities. Around 60% of Bangladeshi and Pakistani adults live in households with at least one child as opposed to 29% of White British adults (Haque, Becares, & Treloar, 2020). Studies have shown that although the attainment gap has been

closing in recent years, South Asian Muslims from these communities continue to perform poorly in primary and secondary school education, and despite being disproportionately highly represented at university, they are under-represented at elite universities and experience 'unexplained' ethnicity-related attainment gaps in higher education (Mirza & Warwick, 2022).

Structural inequalities of these kinds (related to housing, health, education and work) have marked and continue to mark these communities. These deficits and vulnerabilities built out of discrimination at all levels ensured that British South Muslims experienced great hardships during the pandemic, and, given the nature of prejudice, had very limited recourse, voice, or power to redress the situation or protect themselves.

There was a strong conviction that South Asian Muslims were often being scapegoated by a government which was perceived to be either ineffective and insufficiently in control of the situation (Hughes & Gross, 2023; Kettle, 2023), or irresponsible and keen to find easy targets who would distract the attention of the British people (Sultana, 2020). In the context of flourishing Islamophobia (Abrams et al., 2018), and post-Brexit witch-hunts for those who are perceived as not having a 'right' to live in Britain (Creighton & Jamal, 2022), South Asian Muslims provided an easy target. When this coincided with an imploding Conservative party (The Economist, 2022) and a failing and self-serving cabinet (Iacobucci, 2021; Wise, 2021), the context was ripe for such easy pickings.

Negative narratives about South Asian Muslims, whether overt or covert, fuelled Islamophobia during the period of the pandemic, and created additional pressures and anxieties that affected the mental and ultimately the physical health of these minority communities.

> *"The effects of racism and social determinants of health are intertwined. Racism both shapes social determinants of health and has its own effect on the health of ethnic minorities."*
>
> *(Razai, Kankam, Majeed, Esmail, & Williams, 2021).*

Dominant discourses have real-world impacts on the health and well-being of individuals in the communities being targeted. News reports and tabloid articles successfully broadcasted negative perceptions of Muslim communities rooted in racial prejudice. Images of mosques or hijabi women in general news articles about the virus made subliminal connections between the disease and South Asian Muslim communities; inflated news stories about Eid celebrations, or vaccine hesitancy in these communities compounded panic about the virus being out of control because of this inferior, alien or dangerous sector of society (rampant 'super-spreaders'), and provided ample fodder for right-wing extremists' propaganda and aggression (Tell MAMA, 2023).

Participants described how negative representations of South Asian Muslims and a climate of blame made them feel inferior and stigmatised. Perceptions of inferiority are immensely dangerous to the individual as they can have far-reaching and profound repercussions for that person's mental health (Jaspal & Lopes, 2021). It has also proven dangerous for sectors of society to be convinced that another sector is inferior, as it can culminate in governments sanctioning abhorrent treatment of those branded deficient or second-rate (as seen in recent years in India and China with government-sanctioned violence against Muslims) (A. Kumar, 2023). The fraught questions of equality and citizenship for migrants and ethnic minorities cannot be resolved while powers of authority are using (or, at the very least, permitting) the media to target a specific minority group in an attempt to blame them for viral spread rather than looking to government action to control it.

7.4.3 Theme 3: Looking up and out

In the midst of the most testing times of 2020, British South Asian Muslims created new ways of supporting one another in their local communities. This resilience was also demonstrated in how individuals found positive outcomes from a negative situation. Whether this took the form of helping others by making timely decisions as employers, mosque administrators, operators of a community radio stations, or community or family members this led to practical aid and positivity in a bleak and frightening time as well as reinforcing a social identity structured around migration, community and self-efficacy (Fischer, Ai, Aydin, Frey, & Haslam, 2010).

Resilience is a multidimensional phenomenon and can be viewed at an individual or a collective level. It is related on an individual level to personality characteristics (such as determination, robustness, perseverance, confidence, compliance and competence), and on a communal level to well-functioning support networks and bonding with others (Dutton & Greene, 2010). Participants gave examples of how they found inner strength to cope with the pandemic from characteristics passed down by their parents and very much seen by them as associated with an extra level of hardiness related to being a migrant in a hostile environment. They also spoke of how important community was to them and how they felt the impact of slurs cast against that community. Hargreaves (2016) argues that in the case of British South Asian Muslims, that which places a target on their back also makes them stronger. In other words, Muslims often encounter prejudice, abuse or attacks because of the minority group they are identified with, but that the community (with its strong religious and social networks) also helps them to create coping mechanisms, develop agency and personal strength. Recent developments in acculturation theory have moved from 'deficit' to 'strengths' models and asserted that a key element of successful migration is the personality trait of self-efficacy, that it is a protective factor for those dealing with

disruption and difficulties, and that higher levels of agency lead to fewer mental health problems under stress, loss, and unpredictable circumstances (Motti-Stefanidi, 2018).

These features, both the personal and the social, might well transform from being protective factors under the extraordinary stresses of migration, to potentially protective factors under the extraordinary circumstances of a pandemic. This is applicable to both the individual and the community. Second-generation participants spoke of these traits of stoicism and resilience being emphasized to them as essential during their upbringing, and something that they cherish and rely upon as part of their identity and culture.

Thus, under extraordinary and testing conditions British South Asian Muslims were able to focus on what they could do for each other and how they could maintain their sense of communal identity when that very entity was under attack from the majority culture. They could sustain each other through the pandemic and also, prior to that, through decades of hostility as Islamophobia waxed and waned about them. In the context of all this, it is striking to find references to both communal and personal acts of resilience and the ability to find positive examples of what the pandemic has given them: such as increased closeness to family, enhanced respect for their community and enjoyment in investing more time in their spiritual activities. In these ways, their positive action also reinforces their identities as South Asian Muslims, by focusing on these networks and their religious selves.

The ability to identify positives during such a bleak and challenging experience as a global pandemic is a testament to the indomitability of the human spirit, but the particular characteristics of these cited positives are integral to the traits and qualities of this specific ethno-religious group.

7.4.4 Conclusions

British South Asian Muslims had pre-existing socio-economic deficits and hardships prior to 2020. Added to which, they had excessive burdens placed upon them during the COVID-19 pandemic. They suffered greatly and disproportionately as compared to the majority population, and they considered their specific needs were overlooked and left unaddressed by the government of the day. Decades of discrimination, and increases in racism and Islamophobia in recent years, had generated a climate of distrust which crystallised due to the shocking experiences of the early months of the pandemic. In some quarters of these communities, this resulted in disengagement and vaccine hesitancy for a period, but this response was inflated and broadcast nationally to unfairly blame and stigmatise British South Asian Muslims as a whole. This has led in turn to increased anger, alienation, and insecurity amongst these communities, especially among second- and third-generations who had previously felt a fair degree of confidence in their Britishness and their assumed equality within society (Rashid, 2023; Vandrevala, Alidu, Hendy, Shafi,

& Ala, 2022). British South Asian Muslims often felt abandoned, left to take care of themselves, and having to re-evaluate their position in British society as a consequence.

The idea of one ethno-religious group being presented as 'the problem', of being seen as out of control, dangerous in spreading disease and death, fits perfectly with extreme right-wing racist propaganda which has been gaining confidence and pervasiveness since the 2016 Brexit referendum. It is often currently used against migrants and refugees, and historically has been used with catastrophic 'success' to persecute other ethno-religious groups such as Jewish populations in the 1930-40s (Meer & Modood, 2012). To avoid such a cataclysmic reiteration of where prejudice, racism, and right-wing extremism can lead, it behoves us all to be vigilant, informed and swift to act when certain communities are reduced to second-class citizenship especially within societies priding themselves on their status as modern democracies.

The COVID-19 pandemic shone a light on societal structural inequalities and exacerbated health inequalities in particular. It also generated an abundance of hard data that it should be much more difficult for those in authority to ignore. Many British South Asian Muslims felt that they were living through a racialised pandemic, one which at times seemed *weaponised* against their communities. Altogether, the experience has underlined the importance of having more equitable living standards, competent government, a well-regulated media, and a highly resourced, fully funded, well run health system trusted by and accessible to all. For ultimately, keeping the marginalised safe and enfranchised, means keeping everyone safe.

Chapter 8: Heritage, identity and notions of home amongst second-generation South Asian Muslims in the UK: Discussion and conclusions

8.1 Discussion

8.1.1 Gendered Pathways

RQ1: How do second-generation South Asian Muslims in the UK describe the impact of migration on themselves and their parents?

Although all of the parents of participants in this study would be classed as 'voluntary migrants' (and not refugees or 'forced migrants'), a common feature of their migration stories, as told by participants, involved a lack of agency. This was certainly and clearly the case for mothers who migrated but also, and perhaps more surprisingly, for many fathers too. Social, economic and family pressures were frequently the impetus for migration, which in many cases was undertaken as a temporary venture. However, even when the migrating individual undertook it in the spirit of permanence, as a life-changing course of action, the impetus and agency behind the decision was generally located elsewhere. This first generation came from communal cultures whose norms and values were rooted in benefitting collectives rather than individual promotion and betterment for its own sake. There was a clear emphasis across all of the narratives in this study on how their parents' choices referenced and benefitted those *'back home'* as a primary objective. Consequently, their success was measured by the money they sent back, the houses they built in the home country, the marriages they facilitated and/or paid for, the relations they took in and supported when they arrived in the UK and the successful, community- and family-minded children they reared in order to continue these commitments and legacies (Peach, 2006; Prilleltensky, 2008). It is perhaps a little ironic that success in these areas was frequently signalled by grand visits home, laden with gifts and dressed in finery, a display of affluence for which these families in their UK-based everyday lives had to tolerate sometimes great levels of deprivation.

Participants described their mothers and fathers as having had quite different motivations to migrate, and different experiences of migration itself. Fathers were presented as active, lone outriders setting up a base camp in the UK, whilst mothers were described as passively waiting to be called to join their husbands. Far less detail was given about their mothers' experiences than their fathers, although there were oblique references to the length of time their mothers lived without their husbands, sometimes raising children, sometimes living in a state of limbo in an odd married-but-single state. There appears to be a gap in the literature concerning the experiences of women from the first migration wave in the 1950-60s; their marriages (often at very young ages), child-rearing, and long periods of waiting before making that journey to meet a husband who they may not have seen for many years, or may never even

have known extensively prior to reunion. Glimpses of those experiences are given here, but the full impact can only be guessed at. Such experiences would have a profound affect on the couple and their creation of a life together in an alien land (Karasz et al., 2019). And it was these experiences that would determine core features of their psychological adaptation, their approach to parenting and the lives of their children, the contributors to this study.

The first-generation experienced marriage in a significantly different way to previous generations. Although the majority had arranged marriages, in their cases they were at first in a limbo of separation, and then stripped of the family union and automatic support networks that marriage usually entailed. Instead, they were moved out of the communal structures they were accustomed to and found themselves in a far more individualistic society where marriage suddenly narrowed down to a relationship between two people alone. This would be an enormous culture shock with a multitude of practical ramifications, especially for young people beginning to raise families on their own and in alien territory (Alexander, 2013). It is no surprise then that tight-knit support networks grew amongst these migrant settlers, communities built and nurtured predominantly by women to provide each other with practical help, but also to stand in place for what had been lost (Bates, 2000).

It should not be forgotten that migration entails multiple losses (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). There are the immediate and obvious losses of the family, friends and community an individual is leaving behind, the loss of their homeland, and the loss of the life they would have had, the connections they would have made (Prilleltensky, 2008). For all that a chief reason for migration was (and remains) to seek a *'better life'* (usually meaning better income, and therefore better lifestyle), the process often entails the loss of an individual's personal potential to develop and flourish. Most (working-class) migrants had to take low-level, intensive manual jobs (Li, 2018) which made them extremely unlikely to pursue other interests or opportunities; participants spoke of seeing their parents' talents and inclinations muted or wasted. They described parents with higher qualifications in their homeland that went unrecognised and unused in the UK, parents with artistic or academic tendencies who had no scope to develop them, mothers who would have liked access to education, or simply to have had access to personal time and enough freedom to explore and discover what they could be beyond workers and parents. These represent enormous losses to the individuals concerned, but also to their families, communities and society as a whole. The nature of this loss, this unrealised resource, intersects with a similar lack of freedom and opportunity for the lower working classes, but it is a tighter straight-jacket for South Asian migrants who tend to have dependent wider families who are financially reliant on them as well as a knowledge that there are fewer safety nets in place for them than their white working-class equivalents (TASC, 2018). Some participants described their parents' anger or resentment when contrasting the freedom and opportunities available to the second-generation with what was denied to them, contrasts which were usually starker for women

who were conscious of their mothers' very home-centred lives, experiencing little beyond the domestic and community boundary. This study represents a highly educated sample of second-generation migrants; the overwhelming majority had experience of higher education. However, it was notable that many of the women who took part described their mothers' anxieties or opposition to their continued education, which they often considered to be an indulgent frippery or something which would hinder their daughters' marriage prospects. There was a tendency to resist rather than celebrate their daughters having access to an opportunity that had not been available to them.

Participants frequently described themselves as having assumed quite traditional gender roles in terms of marriage and family dynamics as prescribed by their parents, but many of the female participants questioned the continued relevance of the more conservative practices when these were no longer commonly adhered to in their parents' country of origin. They felt that their parents' values and expectations often reflected a world that had vanished over the years of their residency in Britain.

In spite of the evidence of some maternal resistance to higher education for daughters as described above it is interesting to note that some female participants (especially those with families from rural backgrounds) also made a point of stating that they owe their current independence and education to their parents' decision to migrate as they consider that their lives would have been limited to the world of marriage and child-rearing if not for that. Their current agency appears to be a key feature of their identity, and one that they strongly connect to living in the UK.

It was clear in the stories participants (particularly female participants) shared that maternal experiences of migration had a significant impact on the lives that daughters built for themselves, which were sometimes more conservative and traditional than they may have been had they stayed in South Asia. However, being raised in a culture that afforded different opportunities for women mixed with these maternal experiences and values allowing girls a degree of agency that made their experiences very different to those of their mothers, and that they appreciated and valued this while also appreciating and valuing the sacrifices their parents had made to make this possible.

8.1.2 Home and Identity

RQ1: How do second-generation South Asian Muslims in the UK describe the impact of migration on themselves and their parents?

From the outset, participants described major differences in their own and their parents' concepts of home and their attitudes to living in Britain. This divergence between generations, known as the *acculturation gap* (Birman, 2006), refers to the tendency for children to acculturate faster than adults, and to demonstrate a greater facility for language learning and adaptation to new cultural behaviours, a

process which often leads to conflict between the generations (Telzer, 2011). *'Home'* is a nebulous notion, but a powerful one; it represents where an individual experiences a sense of belonging and is integral to their notions of identity (Brah, 1996). In migrant families there tends to be a clear divide between generations, and *'home'* resides in very different geographic, cultural and imagined spaces (Taylor, 2013). Participants clearly valued many aspects of their heritage, but they conveyed an awareness that the cultural values and behaviours passed on to them from their parents did not encompass their whole identity but only a portion of it, and they were clear that they equally could not be wholly defined by British majority culture either.

Participants shifted between their two cultural identities, not entirely comfortable with either, and reassessing their position in different contexts and at different times. The second-generation appear to move away from binary options and to increasingly identify with a third option of biculturalism, a form of elective acculturation which *"[oscillates] between acculturation and maintenance"* (Dey, Balmer, Pandit, Saren, & Binsardi, 2017; page 794). In biculturalism each individual chooses the balance of heritage culture to maintain, and majority culture to adapt to, for themselves (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). These choices are derived from their life experiences, their upbringing and their treatment by the majority culture and society at large. In their narratives, participants shared and explored some of the experiences that contributed to their form of biculturalism, including barriers experienced in both.

Participants described their lives as being populated by barriers. As children, the majority of their barriers were felt to be in the home; domestic norms and parental customs were often described as being at variance with aspects of majority culture that the participant wished to partake in. They also frequently described experiencing a level of muteness at home in having at least one parent who they found it difficult to communicate freely with; this might be due to a family culture of 'respect', the physical absence of the parent due to work, or the parent's non-engagement. Areas of friction ranged from the wearing of Western clothes to greater liberality in socialising with peers to making choices about their education. As they grew into adulthood these barriers tended to move out of the domestic sphere, and were mostly evident in external institutions and society as a whole. Participants particularly cited the discrimination they had encountered at work and racism that was aimed at them in person or via the media (Clini & Valančiūnas, 2021). These barriers, whether constructed by parents wishing to protect their children and preserve traditional values or by societal structures and discourses, all signified to the second-generation that their space in society was ambivalent and thereby forced them to question and recalibrate aspects of their identity when buffeted between cultures, social forces and the expectations placed upon them (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2007).

Ultimately, participants described a number of ways in which they felt dislocated and exposed due to being the children of South Asian Muslim migrants. A sense of dislocation came in many forms originating both within the home and outside of it: a degree of muteness in the home with parents; distance (both physical and emotional) from extended family; a lack of intimate knowledge of their parents' homeland; dislocation from school and peers by regular house moves, or by lengthy visits to heritage country; jarring disconnects with peers due to differences in upbringing, parental restrictions, or cultural dissonance; dislocation from mainstream culture and a sense of belonging every time someone questioned their name or asked them where they are *really* from; and consequently, a dislocation from the *Britishness* they know themselves to be entitled to. In addition, participants described an array of situations that left them feeling exposed to experiences that would generally be unknown to their non-migrant peers. For example, they were (and continue to be) often needed to act as translators for parents, required to deal with school life without parental support or intervention, given domestic and childcare responsibilities for younger siblings, expected to work from young ages in family businesses, as well as having to experience an array of racist behaviours in daily life.

Dislocations and early exposures of this kind have inevitably left their imprint on the second-generation (Franceschelli & O'Brien, 2015), but out of this they find a way to build bicultural identities that are new, bold and asserting their place in British society (Husain & O'Brien, 2017).

> *"[South Asian Muslims are] involved in a process of mutual integration shifting away from essentialist definitions of family, culture and belief and towards a recognition of fluid spatial boundaries and overlapping cultural spaces creating a more hybrid society of re-negotiated non-essentialist identities." (ibid., page 27).*

This approach supports the development of a complex but coherent identity and participants described how this supported a strong sense of what it feels like to them to be British. It is not a finished process, it is ever developing, a continuing recalibration as contexts, politics and climates change.

8.1.3 A racialised pandemic

RQ2: How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact them as South Asian Muslims?

Participants strongly felt that South Asian Muslims' experiences during the pandemic were marked by a disproportionately high rate of infections and subsequent deaths (see Chapter 7.1), and that the support they received was tempered by the position of South Asian Muslims in society and the extent to which their voice as a group is heard. They perceived their sufferings to be severe, and heightened by public disparagement and governmental neglect. As the pandemic progressed, it soon became apparent that sound infrastructure (in terms of health services, housing, community services, strong communication

links and technology) lay at the heart of good infection control, and that contraction and survival rates improved in relation to superior socioeconomic status. This meant that communities who were living with higher levels of deprivation, such as South Asian Muslims (regardless of generation status), had poorer outcomes and were at greater risk. These concerns were strongly represented in the data gathered, and there was a great deal of anger expressed about social inequalities in the UK.

Empirical data indicates that COVID-19 outcomes worsened in more unequal societies. At this time Britain was the eighth highest country for inequality amongst (38) OECD countries, and experienced the sixth highest mortality rate due to COVID-19 (John Hopkins University, 2023; OECD, 2022; WHO, 2024). During the pandemic, matters relating to social injustice suddenly became extremely stark and clear. At the height of the pandemic, a commonly heard mantra was *'Build back better'* and there seemed to be a good deal of hope and determination that if there was going to be a return to normality, society would inevitably have to make fundamental changes because inequality had become too obvious to ignore. Unfortunately, those ideas have not materialised.

8.1.4 *How do these data, taken together, relate to issues of identity and cultural transitioning?*

Participants in this study demonstrated both *acculturative* (movement towards the majority culture) and *enculturative* (movement towards the heritage culture) tendencies (Inman, Howard, Beaumont, & Walker, 2007). There is some indication here that there may be differences between genders in that many of the women who took part spoke of ways in which they worked for increased autonomy in aspects of their lives (for example, relating to their pursuit of education or social life), whereas many of the men were concerned with notions of how to consolidate and pass on traditional values, were very aware of familial responsibilities and often felt guilty about the loss of cultural facets (particularly heritage language skills). The picture is not simple and clearcut however, as both genders exhibited facets that pulled towards minority and majority cultures at different times and when considering different domains such as attitudes, behaviours and values and this is in keeping with extant literature (Locke, 1998; Lopez-Class, Castro, & Ramirez, 2011). In other words, there persists a tug of war within second-generation South Asian Muslims between their two cultures, which is unlikely to ever become fully resolved but this biculturalism will vary by domains and phases of life. Further research in this area would be beneficial; it would be useful to discover if this changes by gender, age, era of parental migration and, especially, under conditions of stress and/or political oppression. The literature suggests that both internal and external factors affect acculturation (Berry, 2003), but more recent research is placing a greater emphasis on the role of majority society upon these processes in individuals and groups (Celeste, Brown, Tip, & Matera, 2014). This could have important policy implications, particularly for governments who wish to promote integration.

Another aspect of the first-generation's migration experience that is frequently overlooked is the fact that most of them did not believe that they *were* migrating. Migration is a term that assumes permanent resettlement, whereas these migrants were mostly assuming a temporary stay for a few years to raise funds and then a triumphant return home. The fact that the majority remained in Britain does not fundamentally alter that mindset, which sets them profoundly apart from their children who grew up straddling two cultures and with allegiances to both. The rift within families between these two perspectives is another under-researched area, and one that this study has begun to unpack from the second-generation's point of view. In this study, it is evident that these very different concepts of *'home'* have created identity confusion for the second-generation, and a sense of displacement that they have continued to wrestle with through their lives. It would be interesting to understand this rift from the perspective of the first and third generations too.

When describing their childhood experiences, many participants referred to the impact on them of their parents' traditional value systems combined with their very high expectations. Sometimes these were seen as problematic aspects of their lives and sometimes as drivers for their achievements or family-orientated outlook on life. Franceschelli & O'Brien (2014) refer to this combination of Muslim based moral code and high aspirations as *'Islamic Capital'* which, they argue, propels the academic achievement of children in South Asian Muslim families and reinforces the transmission of culture and heritage between generations. Examples of this process, and the potency of parental value systems were seen in the narratives of this study's participants.

The most powerful expectation that the first generation appears to have placed on the second is to be *'successful'*. For women, this took the form of a *'good'* marriage to the right sort of family. For men, success meant a good income and status. This, in part, was required to maintain and protect the family, but essentially to vindicate the first-generation's decision to migrate. Whether participants felt they had met these expectations had powerful effects on their sense of self-esteem, their happiness and their sense of self.

Female participants tended to experience criticisms or anxieties about issues relating to personal liberty and choice (in particular concerning marriage), whilst men expressed anxiety about work, social status and family security. A handful of women in this study had chosen partners from other heritage backgrounds and had been rejected by family members as a consequence; ostracization is something that tends to happen to women more than to men of South Asian heritage (Anitha & Gill, 2009; Mirza, 2012), and has been found to lead to high levels of anxiety, depression and identity conflicts (Shariff, 2009).

When examining narratives about the first-generation's migration to the UK, a central difference between the genders was that men were depicted as having agency and women as being passive, patient

and domestic. The anxieties and pressures experienced by the first-generation in their early adulthood especially, and the common intention not to remain in Britain indefinitely makes it easily comprehensible that many of this generation chose the separatist approach to acculturation (Inman et al., 2007). This, together with pre-existing cultural inclinations, seems to have set up a template of what was to be expected of the second-generation. However, especially in the case of their daughters, brought up in or adjacent to mainstream British culture, this generation has, to varying degrees, challenged these expectations to attain their own agency where their mothers especially had very little or none.

Female participants described the majority of their conflicts as centring on the home, whereas men experienced them outside of the home, centred far more frequently in organisations where they worked or studied. Women often cited their parents, but specifically their mothers as being the main obstruction to their autonomy (often in relation to education) motivated by concerns about their daughters' marriage prospects. Issues relating to agency were most potent for women in the context of education and marriage, and for men in relation to their engagement with outside institutions, these then become pivotal junctions for deconstructing and understanding these participants' approaches to acculturation and enculturation (movement towards majority and minority cultures respectively).

8.1.5 Strengths and limitations

The size of the sample for this study is particularly good. It is unusual for a qualitative study of this kind to have as high a number of participants as are represented here. However, because of issues arising during the recruitment process (as explained in Chapter 4), and because those from a lower socioeconomic status within this group are particularly *'hard to reach'* (Nazroo & Karlsen, 2006), the sample here is biased towards the well-educated, although evenly balanced between those who consider themselves working-class or middle-class. These may then be considered as some of the *'more successful'* South Asian Muslims and their narratives may have significant differences to those who have not been as fortunate in this regard. Future studies would benefit from a more even spread across educational and occupational variables. This is a cross-sectional study and therefore is limited in that there is no developmental point of comparison. However, the sample does benefit from a wide range of ages amongst participants, which allows for some comparison across four decades, even if it does not allow for the examination of personal change per individual. The sample benefits from drawing participants from across England, Scotland and Wales, as such it avoids any dangers of localised or community-based niche values, opinions and experiences. As it covers such a wide geographic area, it is possible (as far as a qualitative study sample size will allow) to draw conclusions related to a national rather than a parochial outlook.

The sample for the COVID-19 sub-project also has the same benefits and reservations as the sample for the main project; even with the additional 147 questionnaire respondents (and the reduced interview sample) it still is skewed towards the well-educated, and covers a broad geographic range across the UK. It is important to mention that the data collected for the sub-project covers slightly different periods of time. These responses were gathered between July 2020 to January 2023; both streams of data began in July 2020, but the final interview was completed in January 2021, whereas the questionnaire remained open until January 2023. Consequently, respondents were expressing their views about pandemic experiences with varying amounts of information and hindsight, and accuracy about their experiences from the apex of the pandemic. One notable feature of the responses over time is that they appear to focus more firmly on the issue of structural inequalities being the root cause of much that South Asian Muslims had to suffer.

When examining the second-generation's accounts of their parents' migration, all parents regardless of the era of their arrival in Britain were considered together. The conclusions drawn from these data about, for example, the extreme youth of many of the women in particular, may not be such a prevalent factor if examined by decade of migration. It may also be the case that the impact of yearning for home might be somewhat mitigated by the modern world's easier access to international travel.

8.1.6 Future research

It is in the nature of exploratory research to have a strong focus on the next step, narrowing and refining the lens of future studies.

As has been stated above, the disparity of perspectives between first- and second-generations in relation to their presence in the UK and their different concepts of home and belonging is a fundamental fault-line in South Asian Muslim families and is an extremely under-researched area. In this study there have been the beginnings of examining the question from the second-generation's perspective, but further cross-generational research would illuminate the subject further, especially if participants were drawn from the same families. Such research would provide a useful insight into acculturative preferences and modes of psychological adaptation in a more nuanced form which could be very useful to social policy makers and community builders alike.

When considering the youth, limited agency and the hardships endured, especially in the first wave of migration, there are clear suggestions from the data here that the psychological well-being of the first-generation may have been compromised, which would then impact their development from adolescence to mature adulthood. This would inevitably affect all aspects of their lives, their choices and their parenting, and given that mental health remains a fairly taboo subject in South Asian communities, it may

well open up what has been alluded to in the data for this study as mothers' quiet endurance and unspecified 'difficulties' and fathers' distance and reserve within the family.

8.2 Conclusions

Britain's colonial history is inescapable when it comes to working with any South Asian group, but with Muslims there is an additional line of connection and conflict running all the way back to the crusades of the Middle Ages and orientalist revisionings. The history of the British in India, the stolen wealth and resources which fuelled Britain's ascendency, the cultural interchange and anglophile hierarchical structures, the ambivalence, reverence and rage directed at the British, and the enormous sacrifices through two world wars all testify to the irrefutable intertwining of these two nations. The generation who came to Britain in the 1950s-60s had memories of Partition, and in many cases had already experienced one major relocation. In Chapter 5, many participants spoke of their parents often having a level of reticence about their difficult, early years in the UK, understandably it appears to be even more the case in relation to Partition. However, in the minority of narratives where these events are shared with the younger generation, they become integral to that family's pride and sense of identity. Ironically, these transnational narratives firmly root South Asian Muslims in British history, and consequently have the potential to bestow a sense of place and entitlement with them. This would be cemented if the national curriculum encompassed teaching about Britain and Empire (especially from an Indo-centric perspective), and gave ex-colonial migrants the recognition they deserve.

At present, governmental, health, and social service policies aimed at British South Asian Muslims tends to treat them as one homogenous group, this study highlights the enormous difference between first- and second-generations (and alludes to further important differences with the third-generation). To interact with these groups effectively requires, amongst other things, a far more finessed approach. Equally, any notion that British South Asian Muslims can be reduced down to certain stereotypes to be used for political gains is flawed and deplorable.

A major impetus behind this research was the desire to bring the authentic voices of ordinary South Asian Muslims into the all-too-frequently negative discourses surrounding this ethno-religious group. The more contact there is, the more listening done, the more these damaging discourses should become obsolete. It should not be surprising to anyone that British South Asian Muslims are as heterogeneous and ordinary as any other group, but sometimes the primal force and intimacy of narrative can convey this truth more powerfully than numerous political arguments are able to. Not that this project aims to present an explanatory 'apology' on behalf of this group, the onus is not on them to justify themselves

or prove that their hands are 'clean', rather the responsibility lies with the majority society, with the state, not to oppress and scapegoat a minority group for the sake of political expediency. The more evidence there is of how misplaced these attempts are the better. This project hopes to contribute one more tiny pebble on the scales, as we all work together towards a just tipping point, towards a fairer society.

The participants of this study are members of one of the most vulnerable ethno-religious groups not only in the UK, but across the world. Their experiences of stigmatised childhoods, their parents' drive to better themselves and their families, their transnational outlook, their management of conflicting forces and expectations from minority and majority cultures, the negotiation of the barriers and boundaries marking out their lives, their willingness to question structural inequalities and discrimination, and their focus on the future and the next generation, are all principal features of this cohort and generation. This study has explored some key aspects of their lives as narrated through life-stories. It has gathered data from men and women of ages across a span of four decades, of a range of professions, and located across England, Scotland and Wales. The data gathered have drawn attention to gender-orientated migrations, multi-dimensional experiences of loss, generational differences in acculturation and psychological adaptation, the protective qualities of community, gendered parenting pathways, and the multiple dislocations experienced by the second-generation.

Second-generation South Asian Muslims have been profoundly shaped by their parents' decision to migrate to the UK. For many, this decision although intended to be merely a temporary expediency for economic reasons, was for most a permanent, life-defining move. This initial act led to a sense of dislocation for their children both within the home and outside of it. They were witness to their parents' strong connection to a homeland that could not be theirs in the same way. Their identities formed around two disparate cultures, and it was left to them to fashion a bridge across the two. The lives of second-generation South Asian Muslims reverberate with competing notions of *'home'*; they may not be able to ultimately resolve these oscillations between the two, but it has given them bicultural vision for the future.

Appendices

Appendix I: Ethnic representation of Muslims in England and Wales (in 2021 and 2011)

Appendix II (i): Ethical approval

Appendix II (ii): Recruitment material

Appendix II (iii): Information and consent form

Appendix II (iv): Prompt sheet, timeline and exemplar

Appendix II (v): Interview schedule

Appendix II (vi): Closure/support material sent to participants

Appendix II (vii): Confidentiality form completed by interns working with interview data

Appendix II (viii): Participants' completed feedback forms

Appendix III (i): Interview Participants (demographic characteristics)

Appendix III (ii): COVID-19 Question Participants (demographic characteristics)

Appendix III (iii): Exemplar transcript

Appendix IV (i): Exemplar thematic map.

Appendix I: Ethnic representation of Muslims in England and Wales (adapted from sources ONS 2021; MCB 2024).

Ethnic group	2021				2011			
	All	Muslim	Muslims as % of All Population	Muslims as % of Overall Muslim Population	All	Muslim	Muslims as % of All Population	Muslims as % of Overall Muslim Population
White: Total	**48,699,247**	**226,233**	**0.5**	**5.8**	**48,209,395**	**210,620**	**0.4**	**7.8**
English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	44,355,038	90,939	0.2	2.4	45,134,686	77,272	0.2	2.9
Irish	507,465	1,386	0.3	0.0	531,087	1,914	0.4	0.1
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	67,767	455	0.7	0.0	57,680	378	0.7	0.0
Roma	100,980	2,028	2.0	0.1	-	-	-	-
Other White	3,667,997	131,425	3.6	3.4	2,485,942	131,056	5.3	4.8
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: Total	**1,717,975**	**142,045**	**8.3**	**3.7**	**1,224,400**	**102,582**	**8.4**	**3.8**
White and Asian	488,225	56,265	11.5	1.5	341,727	49,689	145.0	1.8
White and Black African	249,596	23,078	9.2	0.6	165,974	15,681	9.4	0.6
White and Black Caribbean	513,042	5,527	1.1	0.1	426,715	5,384	1.3	0.2
Other Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	467,112	57,175	12.2	1.5	289,984	31,828	11.0	1.2
Asian/Asian British: Total	**5,515,426**	**2,550,022**	**46.2**	**65.9**	**4,213,531**	**183,560**	**43.4**	**67.6**
Indian	1,864,318	246,968	13.2	6.4	1,412,958	197,161	14.0	7.3
Pakistani	1,587,822	1,470,775	92.6	38.0	1,124,511	1,028,459	91.5	38.0
Bangladeshi	644,882	593,136	92.0	15.3	447,201	402,428	90.0	14.9
All South Asian	**4,097,022**	**2,310,879**	**56.4**	**59.7**	**2,984,670**	**1,628,048**	**54.5**	**60.2**
Chinese	445,619	1,890	0.4	0.0	393,141	8,027	2.0	0.3
Other Asian	972,785	237,253	24.4	6.1	835,720	194,485	23.3	7.2
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British: Total	**2,409,280**	**416,327**	**17.3**	**10.8**	**1,864,890**	**272,015**	**14.6**	**10.1**
African	1,488,381	378,219	25.4	9.8	989,628	207,201	20.9	7.7
Caribbean	623,119	7,167	1.2	0.2	594,825	7,345	1.2	0.3
Other Black	297,780	30,941	10.4	0.8	280,437	57,469	20.5	2.1
Other ethnic group: Total	**1,255,619**	**533,505**	**42.5**	**13.8**	**563,696**	**290,289**	**51.5**	**10.7**
Arab	331,843	277,737	83.7	7.2	230,600	178,195	77.3	6.6
Any other ethnic group	923,776	255,768	27.7	6.6	333,096	112,094	33.7	4.1
	59,597,547	**3,868,132**	**6.5**	**100.0**	**56,075,912**	**2,706,066**	**4.8**	**100.0**

Appendix II (ii): Recruitment material

a] Promotional poster:

b] Business card:

UNIVERSITY of York

GOALS
GenOmics And Life Stories

I am a PhD researcher at the University of York. I am looking for people to take part in a study which will investigate **how Muslims feel about living in the UK today**. I am interested in the migration stories of South Asian Muslim migrants to the UK, and their children.

This would involve you completing a questionnaire (approximately 15 minutes) and, if you are willing and are selected, being interviewed by telephone.

Please complete the questionnaire here (even if you prefer not to be interviewed):
https://york.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bayEcGf56VCN6sZ
(or request the link or a paper copy from ssi505@york.ac.uk).

Participants needed for *Muslim Identity* study.

You can help us to understand the experience of being a Muslim in the UK today.

Please contact:
ssi505@york.ac.uk

WHAT WILL THIS INVOLVE?
Complete an online questionnaire.

If selected, volunteer to be interviewed about some aspects of your life story (and receive a **£5 Amazon voucher** as a 'thank you' for being interviewed).

Are you Muslim?

Did you - or your parents - move to the UK from South Asia (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Bengal)?

Are you over 18?

If so, please take part in this study and have your voice heard!

Appendix II (iii): Information and consent form

Migration Stories: Is migrant identity associated with educational, occupational and mental health and well-being outcomes in first- and second-generation UK Muslims?

Dear Participant,

You are invited to consider participating in a research project entitled: Are autobiographical memories of transitions in life associated with mental health and well-being in first- and second-generation migrants? Before deciding whether you want to take part, please read this information sheet carefully and let us know if anything is unclear or if you would like further information on any aspect of the study.

Purpose of the study
The study is designed to explore associations between your memories of key transitions in your life and aspects of your mental health and well-being, as well as your occupational and educational outcomes.

What would this mean for you?
This study involves completing a questionnaire before taking part in a telephone interview with one researcher who will ask you questions about transitions that you have experienced related to migration. An electronic version of the questionnaire will be sent to you up to ten days before the interview (although a paper version can be posted to you if requested). This should take approximately ten minutes to complete.

At an agreed time, the interviewer will telephone you and conduct an interview which is expected to last approximately one hour, but this may vary. The interviewer will ask about specific memories of your (or your parents') move to the UK and will ask you to recount those memories in as much detail as possible. It is up to you which memories you choose to share. The interview will be recorded and transcribed. All identifying information will be removed during the process of transcription and data entry.

Participation is voluntary
Participation is optional. If you do decide to take part, you will be given a copy of this information sheet for your records and will be asked to complete a participant consent form. If you change your mind at any point during the study, you can withdraw your participation without having to provide a reason. Just tell the interviewer if you would like to stop and you will not be asked why. We understand that in some cases the interviews could bring up difficult memories and that you may want to take a break, or to end the interview. This is fine and you should just let us know. Also, we can point you to appropriate sources of help and support if indicated.

Processing of your data
Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the University has to identify a legal basis for processing personal data and, where appropriate, an additional condition for processing special category data. In line with our charter which states that we advance learning and knowledge by teaching and research, the University processes personal data for research purposes under Article 6 (1)(e) of the GDPR: *Processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest.* Research will only be undertaken where ethical approval has been obtained, where there is a clear public interest and where appropriate safeguards have been put in place to protect data. In line with ethical expectations and in order to comply with common law duty of confidentiality, we will seek your consent to participate where appropriate. This consent will not, however, be our legal basis for processing your data under the GDPR.

Anonymity and confidentiality
The data that you provide (i.e. questionnaire and audio recordings of the interview), will be stored by code number until they have been matched to each other and fully anonymised. Any information that identifies you will be stored separately from the data during this period. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time during data collection and up to three weeks after the data has been collected, at which point the data will have been fully anonymised. Before this time, you are welcome to request to view the transcript of your interview. If you would like to view your transcript or to withdraw from the study please contact Salma Sheikh-Iddenden at ssi505@york.ac.uk.

Information will be treated confidentially and shared on a need-to-know basis (in the event that you disclosed a risk of harm to yourself or others we would have a duty of care to inform the appropriate agencies). The University is committed to the principle of data protection by design and default and will collect the minimum amount of data necessary for the project. In addition we will anonymise data wherever possible.

Storing and using your data
We will put in place appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect your personal data and/or special category data. Data will be stored in secure filing cabinets and on a password protected computer. Anonymised data will be kept indefinitely.

The data collected may be used in anonymous format in different ways. Please indicate on the consent form attached if you are happy for this anonymised data to be used in the ways listed.

Sharing of data
Non-anonymised data will be accessible to Salma Sheikh-Iddenden. Anonymised data may be used for future analysis and shared for research or training purposes. If you do not want any of your data to be included in information shared as a result of this research, please do not sign the consent form.

Transfer of data internationally
Data will be held within the European Economic Area in full compliance with data protection legislation.

Your rights
Under the GDPR, you have a general right of access to your data, a right to rectification, erasure, restriction, objection or portability. You also have a right to withdrawal. Please note, not all rights apply where data is processed purely for research purposes. For information see: https://www.york.ac.uk/recordsmanagement/generaldataprotectionregulation/individualrights/

Questions or concerns
If you have any questions about this participant information sheet or concerns about how your data is being processed, please feel free to contact Salma Sheikh-Iddenden (ssi505@york.ac.uk), PhD supervisor Dr Kathryn Asbury (kathryn.asbury@york.ac.uk) or the Chair of Ethics Committee (education-research-administrator@york.ac.uk). If you are still dissatisfied, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@york.ac.uk.

Right to complain
If you are unhappy with the way in which your personal data has been handled, you have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office. For information on reporting a concern to the Information Commissioner's Office, see www.ico.org.uk/concerns.

We hope that you will agree to take part. If you are happy to participate, please complete the form attached and return it by email to ssi505@york.ac.uk prior to the interview date arranged, or bring a printed copy with you on the day itself.

Please keep this information sheet for your own records.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Yours faithfully,

GOALS
GenOmics And Life Stories

Salma Sheikh-Iddenden,
GOALS Lab,
Department of Education,
University of York.

Migration Stories: Is migrant identity associated with educational, occupational and mental health and well-being outcomes in first- and second-generation UK Muslims?

Consent Form

Please read the following statements and tick or highlight each box if you are happy to take part in this research.

☐ I confirm that I have read and understood the information given to me about the Migration Stories research project, and I understand that this will involve me taking part as described above.

☐ I understand that the purpose of the research is to explore associations between autobiographical memories of life transitions with measures of mental health and well-being in first- and second-generation migrants.

☐ I understand that data will be stored securely on a password protected computer and only Salma Sheikh-Iddenden and a small team of student research assistants will have access to any identifiable data. I understand that my identity will be protected by use of a code for a short time (three weeks) before being fully anonymised.

☐ I understand that participation in this study is voluntary.

☐ I understand that my data will not be identifiable and the data may be used in presentations that are mainly attended by university academics; in grant applications; in publications and in training sessions for students and researchers.

☐ I understand that anonymised data will be kept indefinitely in the University of York's data repository.

☐ I understand that data could be used for future analysis or other purposes, for example research or presentations.

☐ I understand that I can withdraw my data at any point during data collection and up to three weeks after data is collected after which the data will be anonymised.

☐ I understand that I will be given the opportunity to comment on a written record of my responses; I can do so by contacting Salma Sheikh-Iddenden (email below) within three weeks following the interview date.

NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

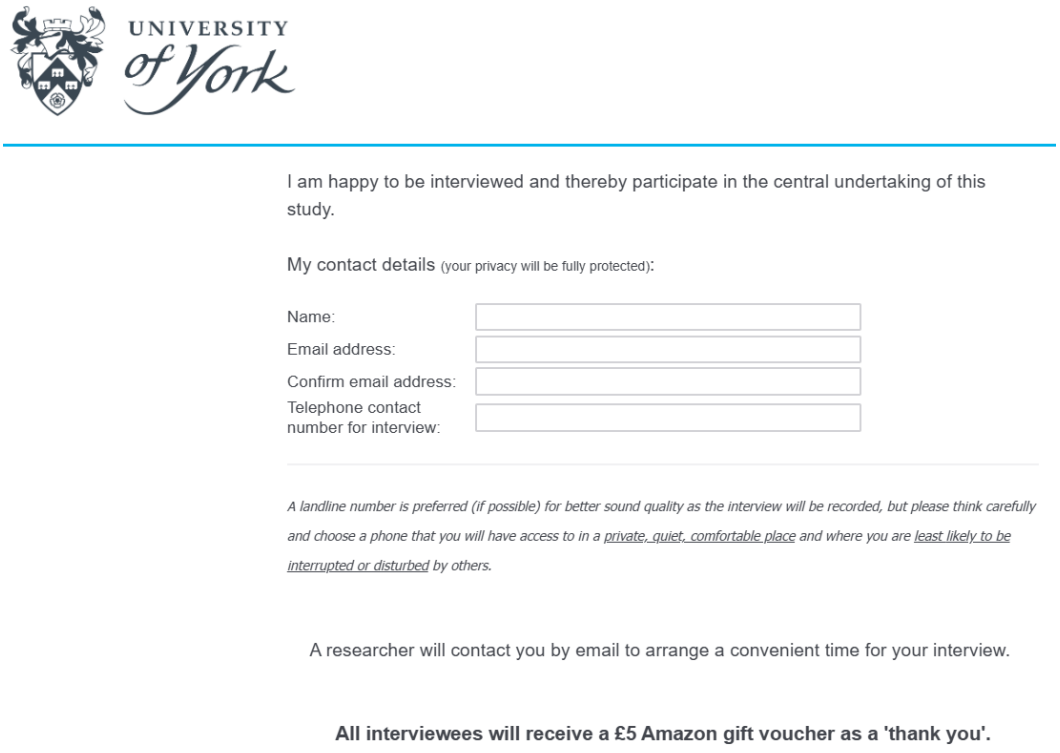
Email address: _____

Telephone contact number for interview: _____

(A landline number is preferred for better sound quality as the interview will be recorded, but please think carefully and choose the phone that you will have access to in a private, quiet, comfortable place where you are least likely to be interrupted or disturbed by others).

Please return this form by email to Salma Sheikh-Iddenden (ssi505@york.ac.uk).
Paper copies can be returned in the pre-addressed envelopes provided.
Thank you for participating in this study.

b] Screenshots of the interview opt-in pages from the Qualtrics survey.



I am happy to be interviewed and thereby participate in the central undertaking of this study.

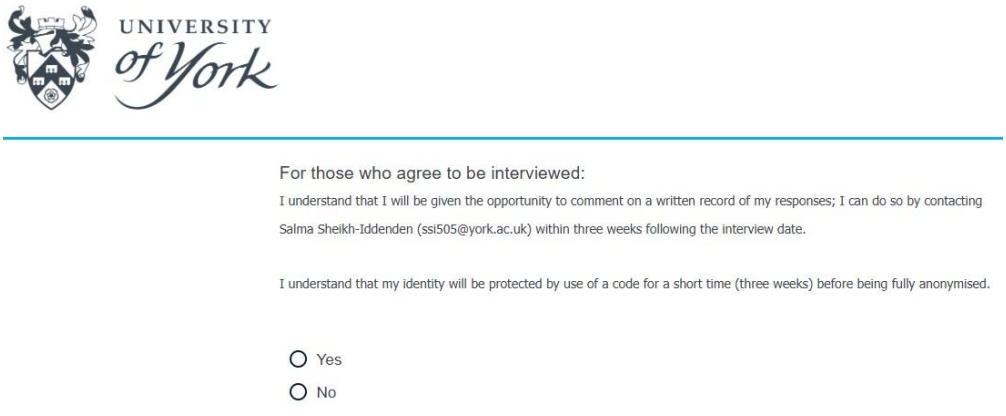
My contact details (your privacy will be fully protected):

Name:
Email address:
Confirm email address:
Telephone contact number for interview:

A landline number is preferred (if possible) for better sound quality as the interview will be recorded, but please think carefully and choose a phone that you will have access to in a private, quiet, comfortable place and where you are least likely to be interrupted or disturbed by others.

A researcher will contact you by email to arrange a convenient time for your interview.

All interviewees will receive a £5 Amazon gift voucher as a 'thank you'.



For those who agree to be interviewed:

I understand that I will be given the opportunity to comment on a written record of my responses; I can do so by contacting Salma Sheikh-Iddenden (ssi505@york.ac.uk) within three weeks following the interview date.

I understand that my identity will be protected by use of a code for a short time (three weeks) before being fully anonymised.

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Dear

Thank you for completing the questionnaire and volunteering to be interviewed for the *'Migration Stories'* study. We are interested in people who have migrated themselves, but also in the impact of migration on their children. Consequently, yours will be a valuable voice to add to this research into Muslim identity following migration.

The interview will last about one hour. All interviewees so far have reported finding the process to be an interesting and illuminating experience. At a time agreed between us, I will telephone you and we will have a comfortable talk over the phone; I will simply ask you to tell me some stories about aspects of your life from childhood to adulthood, as well as your views on certain topics. All of this will be conducted in a relaxed, informal manner.

The next step is to arrange a time for the interview to take place. Please could you let me know which days (and times of day) are best for you. I am happy to arrange the interview outside of office hours; whatever is most convenient for you. Please choose a time (or a selection of times) when you can be alone, relaxed and unlikely to be interrupted for about an hour.

Thank you,

Salma Sheikh-Iddenden.

P.S. This study relies on people spreading the word to friends and family who fit the criteria. Please keep the ball rolling by sending on this link (and the attached poster) to all UK-based adults that you know from a South Asian, Muslim background.

https://york.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bayEcGf56VCN6sZ

I would be especially grateful if you could pass this on to (or share the Facebook page below with) your parents, as well as any other first- (and second-) generation members of Muslim families who you know. Thank you!

Appendix II (iv): Prompt sheet, timeline and exemplar (materials sent out to participants prior to the interview).

a] Prompt sheet:

Participants were encouraged to keep this sheet to hand during the interview, so that they could use it as a guide to help them respond to each prompt as fully as possible.

Tell us your story:

What happened - when and where, who was involved?

What were you thinking and feeling?

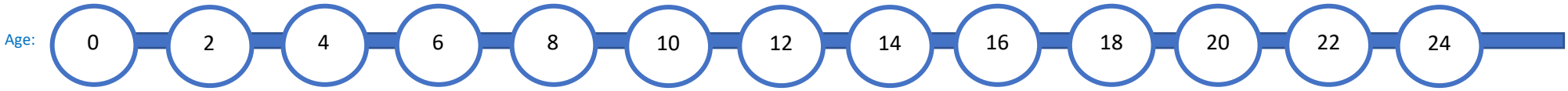
Why is it significant to you?

What does this event say about you and your life?

b] Timeline:

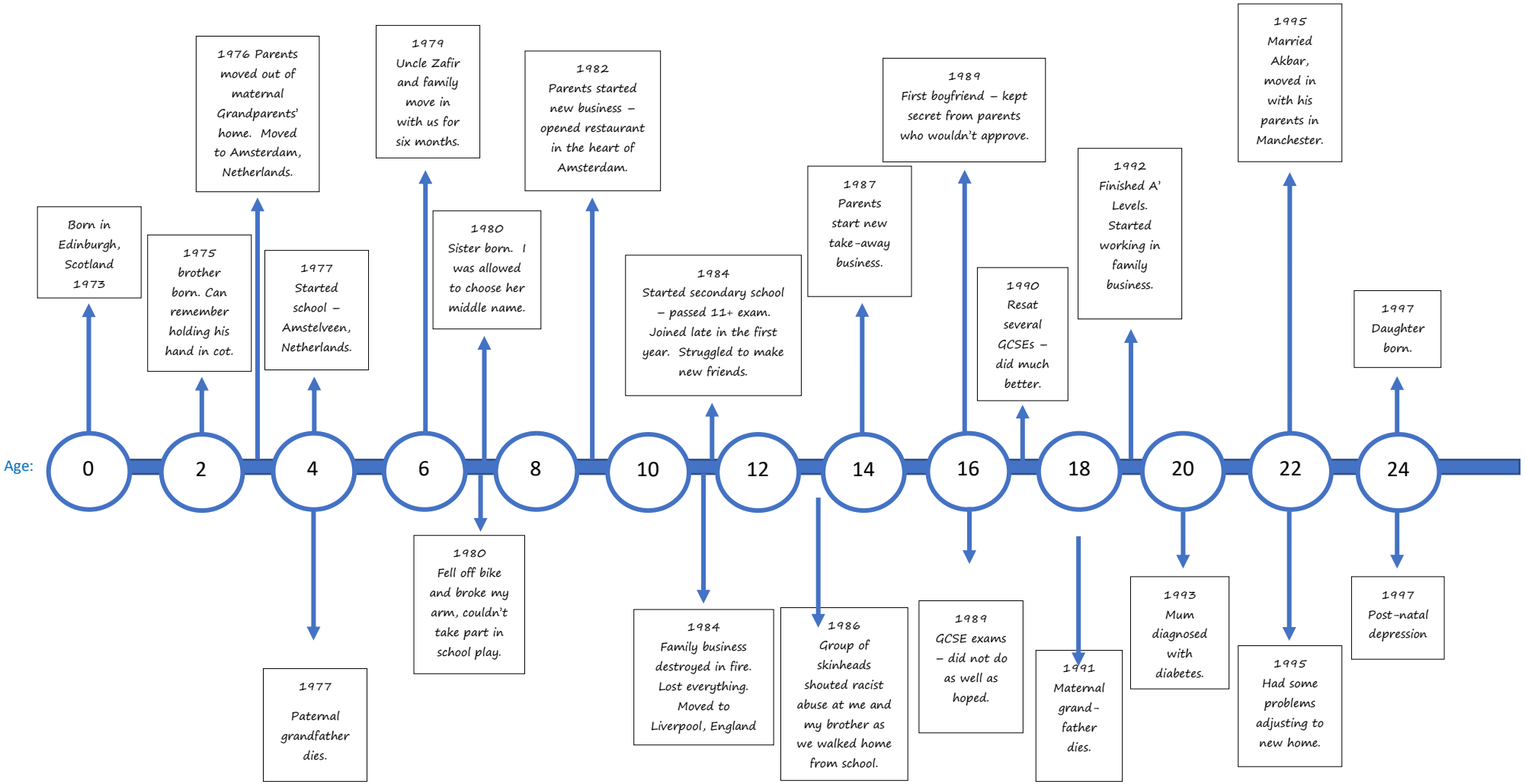
Participants were asked to sketch out key events in their lives on the timeline as an aid to refer to during the interview. (The age span covered up to 76 years which was the age of the oldest participant).

Timeline of Your Life



Timeline Example

(This is an example of the types of things that you may wish to put on your timeline. Yours does not have to be as full or as detailed as this!).



Information and helpful hints about your timeline:

1. **Why are you being asked to complete a timeline?**
   - This timeline is private. You will not be asked to show it or give it to anyone.
   - This is designed as a useful aid in preparing for the interview; it will encourage you to look back over your life so far, and it will be a handy prompt sheet if you feel you might forget something in the interview.

2. **What should you include?**
   - When you look back on your life so far, what are the key events that occur to you?
   - Note down any events that stand out in your memory, good or bad.
   - Have a look at the example timeline if you are stuck for ideas.

3. **How should you fill it in?**
   - This can be done on a computer or by hand – it is up to you.
   - Please include a year or your age wherever possible. This will help you to order your memories.
   - It might help you to write positive memories above the line and negative ones below the line as in the example, (but this is entirely up to you).

4. **What should you do once it is completed?**
   - Please keep it safe and ready for your use in the interview.

Thank you!

Appendix II (v): Interview schedule

The headings (in blue) were not read to the participant, nor were the notes boxes at the beginning and end of the script. The questions in smaller type were asked only if needed when a participant needed encouragement to expand on their responses.

Prior to interview:

Check that the participant:

- has the prompt sheet in front of them.
- has completed the time-line and has it before them.
- is somewhere comfortable.
- is unlikely to be interrupted/disturbed.

Script:

Introduction

This is an interview about the story of your life. As a social scientist, I am interested in hearing your story, including parts of the past as you remember them and the future as you imagine it. The story is selective; it does not include everything that has ever happened to you. Instead, I will ask you to focus on a few key things in your life – a few key scenes, characters, and ideas.

There are no right or wrong answers to my questions, and this is not a therapy session. Your task is simply to tell me about some of the most important things that have happened in your life and how you imagine your life developing in the future. I am collecting people's life-stories in order to explore the different ways in which people live their lives and understand who they are. One of the aspects of your life that I am particularly interested in hearing about is your experiences as a migrant to the UK/ as the child of someone who migrated to the UK. I will guide you through the interview so that we finish it all in about one hour.

Everything you say is voluntary, anonymous, and confidential.

There will be about fifteen questions or prompts for stories during this interview. We are going to talk about the past, the future, and a few issues related to living in the UK. I think that you will find this an interesting and thought-provoking experience – and hopefully an enjoyable one, too!

Do you have any questions?

Please have your timeline in front of you, so that you can refer to it if needed.

You will also find the prompt sheet useful when describing each story from your past.

A. Key Scenes in the Life-Story

I am going to ask you to focus in on a few key scenes that stand out in your life-story.

A key scene would be an event that happened at a particular time and place. Consider a key scene to be a moment that stands out for a specific reason – perhaps because it was especially good, bad, vivid, or important.

We will begin by looking closely at six key scenes. For each of these events, please describe what happened in as much detail as you can, (when and where it happened, who was involved, what you were thinking and feeling during the event, and why it was important to you). The more you can describe it as a detailed story the better. Please be as specific as possible.

Don't forget that these questions are listed on your prompt sheet to help you remember them.

1. High Point

We will start with a high point. Please describe a scene, episode, or moment in your life that stands out as an especially positive experience. This might be ***the*** high point scene of your entire life, or else one particularly joyous, exciting, or wonderful moment in your story. Please give as much detail as you can about this experience.

2. Low Point

The second scene is the opposite of the first. Thinking back over your entire life, please identify one scene – or experience - that stands out as a low point, if not ***the*** lowest point in your life story. Even though this event is unpleasant, it would be helpful if you could provide as much detail as you can about it.

[Interviewer note: If the participant balks at doing this, tell him or her that the event does not really have to be the lowest point in the story, but merely a bad experience of some kind.]

3. Turning Point

We are now going to think about turning points. In looking back over your life, it may be possible to identify certain key moments that marked an important change in you or the course of your life. Can you think of one particular event or experience that you now see was a turning point in your life?

4. Vivid Childhood Memory

We're now going to look at an early memory that stands out vividly in some way. Think about your childhood or teenage years. This can be something positive or negative, happy or sad. Please describe what happened and why it was important.

5. Vivid Adult Memory

Moving ahead to your adult years, please identify one scene - not described so far - that stands out to you as especially vivid or meaningful whether positive or negative.

6. Migration Experience

Migration is a feature in your family history; the upheaval, the journey and the way in which a new country receives people from other countries are all significant elements of such an experience.

Thinking back over your life, can you describe an event which was influenced or shaped by the fact that you are a migrant/the child of a migrant? Please describe the experience in as much detail as you can, and explain **why** it is important.

Why did you/your parents migrate to the UK? What was their/your migration story?

(How has your parents' decision to migrate to the UK affected your life?).

- Do you think that arriving in the UK in the sixties (seventies)/after 9-11/during the Brexit era has shaped their/your experience?
- Can you describe a specific moment or event when you felt this to be the case?

Moving now from the past to the future….

Part B. Future Script

1. The Next Chapter

Your life-story includes key scenes from your past, as you have described them, and it also includes how you see or imagine your future.

Younger participants.

a) Mentally travel thirty years into the future and imagine your future self. What will you have done or accomplished? What will your situation be like then (in terms of home, family, relationships)? What will be important to you?

Older participants.

b) What is to come next in your life-story? Please describe your plans, dreams, or hopes for the future, and why these things are important to you?

Where do you see this future taking place?

C. Challenges

We will now focus on the various challenges, struggles, and issues that you may have encountered in your life.

1. Life Challenge

Looking back over your entire life, please identify and describe what you would now consider to be the single greatest challenge that you have ever faced. What is/was that challenge or problem? How did you deal with it? And in what way is it significant to you?

2. Discrimination

Again, looking back over your life, can you identify a scene or incident in your life when you experienced prejudice or discrimination of some kind?

(Did you experience intolerance or unfair treatment because of ideas that people had about you?).

If so, please describe one particular experience in as much detail as you can and explain why you feel the people involved behaved in the way that they did.

(How did you deal with what happened?
What does this say about you as a person?
What effect did this experience have on you?).

3. Migrants

- Thinking now about migrants in general. Are there any characteristics that you feel most migrants have in common – no matter what their background or religion?
- Do you feel that there are differences in how people see **Muslim migrants** as opposed to migrants in general?
- What do you feel South Asian Muslims have contributed to the UK?
- From your own experience, how do you feel the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted South Asian Muslims?

4. Parents

Moving on to ideas about parenting, what do you think are the important things that parents should pass on to their children?

How would you describe your mother's parenting style? What was important to her when bringing you up? What were her main concerns and values?

How would you describe your father's parenting style? What was important to him when bringing you up? What were his main concerns and values?

IF A PARENT: Has this effected how **you** are as a parent?

IF NOT A PARENT: Has this effected your own ideas about parenthood?

5. Education

Thinking specifically about the role education has played in your life-story; how important has this been for you and your parents?

Can you think of one particular incident that was important in the progress of your own education? Who decided the outcome of that question or event?

Did your parents have particular ideas about what your education should be like and what it should lead you to?

D. Life Theme

Coming towards the end now, looking back over your entire life-story with all its chapters, scenes, and challenges, extending back into the past and ahead into the future, do you think there is a central theme or idea that runs throughout your story as a whole? If you were to choose a single word to sum up the theme of your life, what would it be?

(For example, peace, renewal, justice, family, freedom, happiness, love, growth and change).

E. Reflection

And, finally, many of the stories you have told me are about experiences that stand out from daily life. For example, we have talked about high points, turning points, losses, values, migration and family. Given that most people don't share their life-stories in this way on a regular basis, could you reflect for one last moment on what this interview has been like for you. How has it affected you? What were your thoughts and feelings during the interview?

Thank you for taking part in this interview.

Post-interview:

Reminders:

- Will receive an email with details for £5 Amazon voucher.
- Can request transcript any time during next three weeks.
- Recommend others to study? Parents?
- How did you hear about this study?
- Results/reports – notifications Twitter/feedback form request.

McAdams, D. P. (2008). The LSI. Evanston, IL: The Foley Center for the Study of Lives, Northwestern University. Retrieved from http://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/foley/instruments/interview/

Appendix II (vi): Closure/support material sent to participants

a] Signposting document

Sources of support

If you have been distressed or disturbed by any issues that have arisen during the course of this interview, there are sources of help available to you. There are many groups and agencies who offer support and counselling, and these specialise in a range of areas.

Listed below are some useful contacts to help you find the support that is right for you.

(This is not an exhaustive list, and inclusion does not mean an endorsement of any specific group or agency).

Therapy and counselling are available free of charge through the NHS. This can be accessed by:

- Your GP. You may wish to see your GP and outline your needs and concerns and they can refer you to a suitable service.
- Self-referral. Many areas around the UK run services which you can contact directly in order to refer yourself to a therapy service. Your GP may provide you with the contact details to get you started, or you might find the right service for you through IAPT: https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Psychological-therapies-(IAPT)/LocationSearch/10008

Charity and third sector therapists

Some community and charity sector organisations may offer free or low-cost talking therapies. For example:

- Your local Mind, local Rethink Mental Illness, or local Turning Point branch may be able to offer you talking therapies. Sometimes these local organisations may also form part of a local IAPT service with the NHS.
- Mental Health Matters (MHM) offers a telephone counselling service and talking therapies in some areas.
- Anxiety UK offers talking therapies for anxiety. There is a fee but they do offer reduced costs for people on a low income.

Specialist areas

Bereavement counselling

Cruse Bereavement Care offer support, advice and information when someone dies. They provide national and local services.

Face-to-face, Email and Website support: www.cruse.org.uk

Cruse for children and young people: www.hopeagain.org.uk

Cruse Freephone Helpline: 0808 808 1677

LGBT Foundation - Specialist Support for LGBT Groups (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender)

LGBT Foundation is a national charity delivering advice, support and information services.

Helpline: 0345 3 30 30 30

Email contact: helpline@lgbt.foundation

Website: http://lgbt.foundation

Helplines and listening services:

Many national and local organisations run helplines that you can call in a crisis. Talking to a trained listener could give you some support and help you make sense of what's happening for you.

- **To talk about anything that is upsetting you**, you can contact Samaritans 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You can call 116 123 (free from any phone), email jo@samaritans.org or visit some branches in person. You can also call the Welsh Language Line on 0300 123 3011 (7pm–11pm every day).
- the **Muslim Women's Network Helpline** provide a counselling service on a range of issues. The counselling can be offered face-to-face or telephone / Skype; it is culturally sensitive and can also be (Islamic) faith based if required. http://www.mwnhelpline.co.uk/issuesdetail.php?id=49
- The **Muslim Women and Families Helpline**: Islamic Counselling Service in the U.K., offering a limited hours advice, support and counselling service. The Helpline has trained volunteers in Islamic Counselling and is a free service - 0208 904 8193.
- **If you're experiencing a mental health problem or supporting someone else,** you can call SANEline on 0300 304 7000 (4.30pm–10.30pm every day).
- **If you're under 25**, you can call The Mix on 0808 808 4994 (Sunday-Friday 2pm–11pm), request support by email using this form on The Mix website or use their crisis text messenger service.
- **If you're a student**, you can look on the Nightline website to see if your university or college offers a night-time listening service. Nightline phone operators are all students too.
- **For more options**, visit the Helplines Partnership website for a directory of UK helplines. Mind's Infoline can also help you find services that can support you.

Private therapists

If you decide to explore private therapy, it is recommended that you look for a therapist using the online search function of a reliable website which only lists therapists who are **registered with a professional body.** For example:

- the Counselling Directory – for all kinds of counsellors and therapists
- the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) – for all kinds of counsellors and therapists

- the British Association for Behavioural & Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP) – for cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) practitioners
- the UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) – for psychotherapists
- the British Psychological Society (BPS) – for local therapists
- Muslim Counsellor and Psychotherapist Network https://www.mcapn.co.uk/counselling-directory
- Pink therapy – for therapists with LGBTQ+ experience.

b] Feedback form

Feedback on the *Migration Stories* study

Giving feedback is entirely optional and you can write as much or as little as you choose.

Thank you.

Did you receive all the information you needed before agreeing to take part in the study?
Questionnaire: Ease of use, clarity, sensitivity of questions?
Interview: Positives and negatives about the interview itself?
General comments about participating in this study as a whole:

Appendix II (vii): Participants' completed feedback forms

Ten participants returned feedback forms. (Each form is linked to the participant by their 'P' number).

P12:

Did you receive all the information you needed before agreeing to take part in the study? Yes all the information was very clear
Questionnaire: Ease of use, clarity, sensitivity of questions? Questions were very clear and concise, tone was sensitive and appropriate
Interview: Positives and negatives about the interview itself? overall positive experience, very insightful look into my own life. Thought provoking questions. Only downside was that the sound wasn't very clear
General comments about participating in this study as a whole: I enjoyed participating in this study as I don't usually get a chance to talk about my life in such a way and I appreciated that someone would listen to my story as a migrant and thought that my experience was valuable to their knowledge. When the study is complete I would like to read the finished version. .

P16:

Did you receive all the information you needed before agreeing to take part in the study? Yes I did, everything was received well in time to be completed.
Questionnaire: Ease of use, clarity, sensitivity of questions? The questionnaire was very easy to use and complete. The questions were all relevant to the topic and sensitive to the issues raised.
Interview: Positives and negatives about the interview itself?

The interview was conducted very well, the interviewer gave sufficient time for me to speak & it was very useful to have my timeline in front of me so I could easily answer the questions. There was no particular negative aspect.
General comments about participating in this study as a whole: It was quite therapeutic to be involved in this study, as we don't really look back on our lives very often. Completing the timeline made me think about my life experiences and was a good act of reflection for me.

P47:

Did you receive all the information you needed before agreeing to take part in the study? Mostly. I think it would have been nice to know what the questions were before the interview, so I could have articulated my answers better, sometimes when im put on the spot I find it hard to gather my thoughts correctly.
Questionnaire: Ease of use, clarity, sensitivity of questions? It was a bit longer then I would have liked as I remember thinking it would only take a minute but then realised there were a lot more questions and pages to fill in then I had originally anticipated.
Interview: Positives and negatives about the interview itself? I really enjoyed it overall, it was nice taking a break from the daily gruel and just sitting for an hour talking about me, something i don't usually get to do. Talking about negative things are always difficult but its my reality and im a big girl. It was nice talking about my childhood as it bought up memories I rarely think about, its like a different lifetime ago, the world has changed so much you forget what it was like and its nice to go back to that .
General comments about participating in this study as a whole: It was a lovely experience, the interviewer was lovely and she dealt with the responses in the appropriate manner and with the correct sensitivity and that definitely made it easier to open up and talk about the many issues that were bought up.

P50:

Did you receive all the information you needed before agreeing to take part in the study? I would have appreciated a bit more about the specific study to understand what was relevant.
Questionnaire: Ease of use, clarity, sensitivity of questions? The questionnaire was fine aside from the question asking about my mother formal education, which was nil and then asking me at what age her formal education stopped.
Interview: Positives and negatives about the interview itself? I enjoyed reliving my parts of my life and I will go onto type them up to contribute towards my autobiography.
General comments about participating in this study as a whole: A very positive one. I would like to receive links to the study once it has been completed. Thank you.

P51:

Did you receive all the information you needed before agreeing to take part in the study? Yes
Questionnaire: Ease of use, clarity, sensitivity of questions? After a little explanation i understood it
Interview: Positives and negatives about the interview itself? No real negatives. Best thing was the ability to tell my atypical migration story
General comments about participating in this study as a whole: I would love to see a copy of the completed thesis and associated articles at my email ******@gmail.com

P52:

Did you receive all the information you needed before agreeing to take part in the study? Yes, It was a nice experience
Questionnaire: Ease of use, clarity, sensitivity of questions? Yes , they were fine
Interview: Positives and negatives about the interview itself? Yes positive, no issues
General comments about participating in this study as a whole: Thank you for calling

P53:

Did you receive all the information you needed before agreeing to take part in the study? Yes. The email I received prior to my interview with the prompt sheet and timeline exercise was very helpful in recalling certain memories and experiences.
Questionnaire: Ease of use, clarity, sensitivity of questions? The questionnaire was very straightforward. The questions themselves were clear and provided some understanding of the purpose of the study.
Interview: Positives and negatives about the interview itself? I quite enjoyed looking back at my experiences as a child of Muslim South Asian migrants. Though there were some negative memories, recalling them as an adult and talking through them really pushed me to thinking about my place in British society and how this has been affected by my race and religion. The interviewer herself took a great interest in what I had to say, which was really encouraging in telling my story.
General comments about participating in this study as a whole:

As I have come to learn about the purpose of this research, I am very interested to know the results, particularly as I hope that my contributions would have helped towards the study. I would really appreciate it if I were able to read the outcome of this research upon its completion. I would also like to thank Salma for giving me the opportunity to contribute my voice to this study and creating the opportunity for others to participate in such a wonderful project.

P56:

Did you receive all the information you needed before agreeing to take part in the study? Yes.
Questionnaire: Ease of use, clarity, sensitivity of questions? It was straightforward and clear to me.
Interview: Positives and negatives about the interview itself? Expectations were correctly set at the beginning Plenty of time was given to answering the questions. Empathy in was apparent to some of the more personal responses Overall a well constructed interview.
General comments about participating in this study as a whole: It's a subject I tended to stay away from and got on with my life. It was interested to see there was a study being conducted as reality and perceptions of living in the UK have changed over the last decade for migrants and muslims. I am interested and reading the full report/thesis when complete as it will give me a better understand of what the wider group of migrants and muslims have said.

P60:

Did you receive all the information you needed before agreeing to take part in the study? Yes
Questionnaire: Ease of use, clarity, sensitivity of questions? Easy to follow, nice flow, sensitivities taken into account
Interview: Positives and negatives about the interview itself? Opportunity to self reflect and delve deeper into issues and experiences Time line tool is very useful, however for a tech person like me, the document was difficult to complete in the format provided. This can be improved.
General comments about participating in this study as a whole: Enjoyed the experience, good luck!

Appendix II (viii): Confidentiality form completed by interns working with interview data.

GOALS GenOmics And Life Stories

University of York

Confidentiality Agreement for the Transcription of Qualitative Data

Name of Study:	**Migration Stories: Is migrant identity associated with educational, occupational and mental health and well-being outcomes in first- and second-generation UK Muslims?**

In accordance with the Research Ethics Committee at the University of York, all participants in the above-named study are anonymised. Therefore, any personal information or any of the data generated or secured through transcription will not be disclosed to any third party.

By signing this document, you are agreeing:

- not to pass on, divulge or discuss the contents of the audio material provided to you for transcription to any third parties
- to ensure that material provided for transcription is held securely and can only be accessed via password on your local PC
- to return transcribed material to the research team when completed by the agreed deadline and do so in password protected files
- to destroy any audio and electronic files held by you and relevant to the above study immediately after transcripts have been provided to the research team, or to return said audio files.
- to assist the University where a research participant has invoked one of their rights under data protection legislation
- to report any loss, unscheduled deletion, or unauthorised disclosure of the audio material to any third parties, to the University immediately
- only act on the written instructions of the University/researcher
- to, upon reasonable request, allow the researcher, or other University representative, to inspect the location and devices where the audio material is stored to ensure compliance with this agreement
- to inform the University's Data Protection Officer if you believe you have been asked to do something with the audio material which contravenes applicable data protection legislation
- to not employ any other person to carry out the work on your behalf.

Your name: _____

Your signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix III (i): Interview Participants (demographic characteristics)

a] Demographic information by individual participant:

ID No.	Sex:	Origin:	Age	Identifying as migrant?	Class	Occupation:
P01	F	Pak	52	Y	MC	Local Govt Officer
P02	F	Pak	30	Y	MC	Support Work
P03	F	Pak	57	Y	MC	Osteopath
P04	F	Ind	24	Y	WC	Tutor
P05	F	Pak	20	N	WC	Telephone Interviewer/student
P06	M	Pak	20	N	MC	Student
P07	M	Pak	48	N	MC	Self-employed – business
P08	F	Pak	37	Y	*Other*	Executive Assistant
P09	F	Pak	23	N	MC	Civil Servant
P13	M	Pak	22	N	WC	Teacher
P15	F	Pak	50	N	MC	Teacher
P16	F	Pak	40	Y	WC	Administrator
P17	M	Pak	20	Y	MC	Student
P20	F	Pak	44	N	MC	Project Manager
P21	M	Ind	42	Y	WC	Civil Servant
P23	F	Pak	21	Y	MC	Student – pt volunteer
P24	F	Pak	32	N	WC	IT Consultant
P25	F	Ind	44	Y	MC	Teacher/Writer
P26	F	Pak	35	Y	WC	Civil Service
P28	F	Pak	43	Y	WC	Home maker
P30	F	Ban	23	N	WC	Student engagement officer
P31	F	Ind	41	Y	MC	Medicine
P32	F	Pak	50	N	MC	Local Government
P33	F	Ban	38	N	WC	Speech and Language Therapist
P35	F	Pak	29	Y	WC	Carer
P37	M	Pak	28	N	WC	Digital Analyst
P39	F	Pak	26	Y	WC	Studio Assistant Embroider
P40	F	Ind	39	N	MC	Research Scientist
P42	F	Pak	51	N	MC	Community Engagement Officer
P43	M	Pak	52	Y	MC	GP

P44	M	Ban	37	Y	WC	Customer Service
P45	M	Pak	26	Y	WC	Student
P46	F	Pak	57	N	MC	Debt Solutions Advisor
P47	F	Ind	36	Y	WC	Microbiologist
P48	F	Pak	27	N	WC	Call Centre Agent
P49	F	Ban	25	Y	WC	PhD student
P51	M	Ind	40	Y	MC	Doctor - Consultant
P52	F	Pak	39	Y	WC	Careers Advisor
P53	F	Ind	34	Y	WC	PhD student
P54	M	Pak	33	Y	WC	Marketing
P55	F	Pak	37	N	MC	Clinical Lecturer
P57	F	Pak	27	Y	MC	Charity worker
P58	F	Ban	29	Y	WC	Graduate Teaching Assistant
P60	M	Pak	30	Y	WC	Pharmacist
P62	F	Ban	29	Y	MC	Student until recently
P64	M	Pak	41	Y	MC	Doctor

b] Whole group demographic information:

	Second Generation (N=46)	
	n	%
Sex:		
Female	33	71.7
Male	13	28.3
Other	0	-
Age:		
18-29	17	37.0
30-39	13	28.3
40-49	9	19.6
50-59	7	15.2
60-69	0	-
70-79	0	-
Heritage:		
Pakistan	32	69.6
Bangladesh	6	13.0
India	8	17.4
Religion:		
Practicing	36	78.3
Non-practicing	8	17.4
Lapsed	1	2.2
Atheist/Agnostic	1	2.2
Education:		
No formal qualifications	0	-
GCSE or equivalent	0	-
A' level or equivalent	2	4.3
Bachelor's degree	19	41.3
Master's degree	15	32.6
Medical or law qualification	2	4.3
Other qualification	6	13.0
PhD	2	4.3
(Self-reported) Class:		
Working	23	50.0
Middle	21	45.7
Upper	0	-
Other	2	4.3

Appendix III (ii): COVID-19 Question Participants (demographic characteristics)

a] Interview participants:

	First Generation (N=6)		Second Generation (N=18)		Total (N=24)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex:						
Female	4	66.7	11	61.1	15	62.5
Male	2	33.3	7	38.9	9	37.5
Other	0	-	0	-	0	-
Age:						
18-29	0	-	6	33.3	6	25.0
30-39	2	33.3	7	38.9	9	37.5
40-49	2	33.3	2	11.1	4	16.7
50-59	0	-	3	16.7	3	12.5
60-69	1	16.7	0	-	1	4.2
70-79	1	16.7	0	-	1	4.2
Heritage:						
Pakistan	4	66.7	11	61.1	15	62.5
Bangladesh	0	-	4	22.2	4	16.7
India	2	33.3	3	16.7	5	20.8
Religion:						
Practicing	5	83.3	15	83.3	20	83.3
Non-practicing	0	-	3	16.7	3	12.5
Atheist	1	16.7	0	-	1	4.2
Education:						
No formal qualifications	0	-	0	-	0	-
GCSE or equivalent	1	16.7	0	-	1	4.2
A' level or equivalent	1	16.7	0	-	1	4.2
Bachelor's degree	0	-	6	33.3	6	25
Master's degree	1	16.7	8	44.4	9	37.5
Medical or law qualification	1	16.7	1	5.6	2	8.3
Other qualification	0	-	2	11.1	2	8.3
PhD	2	33.3	1	5.6	3	12.5
(Self-reported) Class:						
Working	3	50.0	8	44.4	11	45.8
Middle	2	33.3	10	55.6	12	50.0
Other	1*	16.7	0	-	1	4.2

**Participant responded "Neither".*

b] Questionnaire respondents:

	First Generation (N=36)		Second Generation (N=111)		Total (N=147)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex:						
Female	16	44.4	64	57.7	80	54.4
Male	20	55.6	46	41.4	66	44.9
Other	0	-	1	0.9	1	0.7
Age:						
18-29	8	22.2	33	29.7	41	27.9
30-39	6	16.7	30	27.0	36	24.5
40-49	10	27.8	34	30.6	44	29.9
50-59	5	13.9	12	10.8	17	11.6
60-69	6	16.7	2	1.8	8	5.4
70-79	1	2.8	0	-	1	0.7
Heritage:						
Pakistan	28	77.8	61	55.0	89	60.5
Bangladesh	3	8.3	34	30.6	37	25.2
India	5	13.9	16	14.4	21	14.3
Religion:						
Practicing	27	75.0	79	71.2	106	72.1
Non-practicing	6	16.7	18	16.2	24	16.3
Lapsed	0	-	3	2.7	3	2.0
Atheist/Agnostic	2	5.6	8	7.2	10	6.8
Other	1	2.8	3	2.7	4	2.7
Education:						
No formal qualifications	1	2.8	1	0.9	2	1.4
GCSE or equivalent	1	2.8	1	0.9	2	1.4
A' level or equivalent	2	5.6	13	1.8	15	10.2
Bachelor's degree	17	47.2	47	15.3	64	43.5
Master's degree	10	27.8	35	31.5	45	30.6
Medical or law qualification	2	5.6	3	2.7	5	3.4
Other qualification	0	-	5	4.5	5	3.4
PhD	3	8.3	6	5.4	9	6.1
(Self-reported) Class:						
Working	15	41.7	65	58.6	80	54.4
Middle	21	58.3	45	40.5	66	44.9
Upper	0	-	1	0.9	1	0.7
Other	0	-	0	-	0	-

c] Combined (all contributors to the COVID-19 data):

	First Generation (N=42) 24.6%		Second Generation (N=129) 75.4%		Total (N=171)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex:						
Female	20	47.6	75	58.1	95	55.6
Male	22	52.4	53	41.1	75	43.9
Other	0	-	1	0.8	1	0.6
Age:						
18-29	8	19.0	39	30.2	47	27.5
30-39	8	19.0	37	28.7	45	26.3
40-49	12	28.6	36	27.9	48	28.1
50-59	5	11.9	15	11.6	20	11.7
60-69	7	16.7	2	1.6	9	5.3
70-79	2	4.8	0	-	2	1.2
Heritage:						
Pakistan	32	76.2	72	55.8	104	60.8
Bangladesh	3	7.1	38	29.5	41	24.0
India	7	16.7	19	14.7	26	15.2
Religion:						
Practicing	32	76.2	94	72.9	126	73.7
Non-practicing	6	14.3	21	16.3	27	15.8
Lapsed	0	-	3	2.3	3	1.8
Atheist/Agnostic	3	7.1	8	6.2	11	6.4
Other	1	2.4	3	2.3	4	2.3
Education:						
No formal qualifications	1	2.4	1	0.8	2	1.2
GCSE or equivalent	2	4.8	1	0.8	3	1.8
A' level or equivalent	3	7.1	13	10.1	16	9.4
Bachelor's degree	17	40.5	53	41.1	70	41.0
Master's degree	11	26.2	43	33.3	54	31.6
Medical or law qualification	3	7.1	4	3.1	7	4.1
Other qualification	0	-	7	5.4	7	4.1
PhD	5	11.9	7	5.4	12	7.0
(Self-reported) Class:						
Working	18	42.9	75	58.1	91	53.2
Middle	23	54.8	55	42.6	78	45.6
Upper	0	-	1	0.8	1	0.6
Other	1	2.4	0	-	1	0.6

Appendix III (iii): Exemplar transcript.

P54

SSI: Salma Sheikh-Iddenden
P54: Study Participant 54
Blue text: Interview script.

SSI: Migration is a feature in your family history; the upheaval, the journey and the way in which a new country receives people from other countries are all significant elements of such an experience. Thinking back over your life, can you describe a specific event which was influenced or shaped by the fact that you are a migrant/the child of a migrant? Please describe the experience in as much detail as you can, and explain **why** it is important.

P54: **[0:26:56]** I guess, for me, the strong point that sticks out, that makes me feel a little, that I don't belong here, was, I guess probably like a lot of people, it was the Brexit vote and when that came out. For me, I've been very much a person where I may be the son of immigrants, but I was born here, I'm British, I'm English and that's who I am. But for me I thought there was no chance whatsoever that the British public would vote *'Leave'* at the whole EU Brexit process. During that time, it is Ramadan and we were breaking our fast and we all looked at it and it was forty-nine or forty-eight – it was very, very close – and I was like *'Oh, wow!'* and then when we woke up in the morning and they had actually voted to leave and of course you see all the messages on social media saying like *'We've got our country back!', 'Immigrants get out!'*, this and that. For me that was like *'Okay, I don't actually feel like I belong here no more'*. And having that feeling, you don't feel safe. I guess, since then, for me I've been quite open with my work and this conversation that I have in work, we had a conference and I explained it is something that I don't feel that this is my country any more. And it doesn't feel safe, I don't feel comfortable, and how can me and my wife plan to always live here, raise our kids here and so on and so forth. But the first time after this and we still have it as an option *'Do we want to move away to more of an Islamic country?'*. So that's always an option now. Before it never was, but for us it is now. And I know other people are feeling it – my parents are already – well, they're moving back to Pakistan in a few months, and I know my oldest brother is considering moving to more of a Muslim majority country as well. So, it's not just affected me and I know many others. But yeah, that Brexit vote, and you still see it now with – albeit whatever your personal views are – with Boris and his policies and Trump and racism and the far right just seems to increase now even more – and more and more. I don't feel safe in this country the way things are going. And I think once Brexit officially happens, it's just going to kick it up another gear, and I do fear for my kids and family. And I've had to convince my wife that as sad as it is to say it, but the girls would need some sort of martial arts training to help protect themselves, because I can't be there all the time. And I've asked for my wife to do that as well. And that's the reality that we live in. We've kind of accepted it. It's extremely unpleasant. It can be an unpleasant feeling, and difficult

SSI: thinking about migration from a different angle now, I believe your parents came to the UK in 1978, could you say a little bit about what brought them to the UK and what kind of reception they had when they got here?

P54: They were newly married; I think they were only married for a few years before they came. I think my father came first for a year or so, and then my mother came and they were living with my uncles and aunties in B_____ at the time. They came to better their lives, obviously job security and being able to provide for their family. My father's siblings (as well as my mother's siblings) already came earlier to the country … in the textile field in B _____. My father doesn't speak of his experiences often, his first earliest – because obviously they were very close and obviously with the B_____ community there was the **[inaudible]** was starting to increase ever so slowly in that period. He had said that he had got racist abuse especially at work, he worked at F____, he worked as an ice cream man where people would racially abuse him saying *'Oh, you shouldn't be selling ice creams'* and all that type of stuff. We owned a fish and chip shop in B_____ where we've had windows smashed in. So, all these kinds of stories that you hear from the seventies and eighties, the racism, yeah, my parents experienced all of that. My father is very much – and I think I'm very similar – *'People always have an opinion of you but if you know who you are and are true to yourself, then that doesn't matter'*. And he's always been like that, you know, *'People say what they want, if it's not true then you shouldn't get upset'*. But their ultimate goal was just to raise their family and be able to provide for their family here and have a better life. Pakistan is great but at that time in terms of raising a family it wasn't the best, in terms of education and all that kind of stuff.

When living with my uncles and aunties, my mum told me that her and all the ladies traditionally would have to cook for everyone. There was four or five households in two houses; so it was over twenty, thirty people in two households. The one that I remember was in S_____ where my uncle and my three cousins they live still not that far from us, and we grew up together, and we're still very, very close. For us that was more – you live with big families, your uncles and aunties and all sorts – and you experience all sorts of different stuff. And for us, me and my cousins and most of my brothers, we'd just go and play and cause a bit of chaos. Me and my cousins, we were notorious for getting into trouble, because we were quite adventurous in terms of we'd like to go out and climb on stuff and buildings and cause mischief and so on and so forth. We accidentally almost set the house on fire as well, which was amusing at the time, but yeah, not the most sensible thing to do. But, for me, I'm much closer to them than any other part of the family, because I've grown up with them, living in the same household. So, yeah, it's very, very normal for us. Before my Grandma passed away (she passed away in March a few years ago), but she had stayed with us for a year and a half prior to that, so for us having uncles and aunts staying over with us for months and months is normal. It's amazing because you can build that relationship instead of only seeing family when there's weddings or funerals or that type of stuff. You build that relationship.

SSI: Again, looking back over your life, can you identify a scene or period in your life when you experienced prejudice or discrimination of some kind?

P54: **[0:44:37]** Oh, I've got so many to choose from! I would go to what I love, which is football. I became the school football team captain quite early on and I remember one game when we went to a school and we were playing and I was the captain. And, obviously, at the start you do the coin toss for who starts and kicks off and picks sides – and I remember this so clearly! Just before, I was standing at the **[inaudible]** line, just before the referee called out the player, their captain was walking in as well and he literally said *'We're going to smash this Paki's team!'*. And I was like – I was thirteen, fourteen – and I'd experienced racism before growing up within that environment, but that for me was kind of my safe zone, I guess, because it was all different people from different cultures, religions and so on and so forth, and for me it's kind of like – I took that really, really personally. Normally I wouldn't because it was so normal. You'd experience

it so often you'd think *'Oh, alright, you're a racist, well done'* kind of thing. But for me, it was very, very personal, I was determined to make sure that we won that game and, in a sense, embarrass him and his team. I know for a fact that the referee that was there, he was stood a lot closer to him and he was facing that way, and I know that he heard what he said and nothing was done. Like I said, I took that very, very personally and I was going to do everything in my power to make sure that we win to prove the point *'You can say what you want, it's not going to bring me down'*. And it, yeah, it was very emotional that day, that game. And I gave it everything just to prove a point that *'You can say what you want, it's not going to put me down. It's not going to make you a better person'* and all that stuff.

SSI: I have to ask what the score was?

P54: I don't remember – but we won, two-nil or three-nil, but we definitely won! I made sure we won that **[laughing]**.

SSI: Thinking now about migrants in general: Are there any characteristics that you feel most migrants have in common – no matter what their background or religion?

P54: **[0:47:13]** The first thing that comes to me is kind of survival, isn't it? The majority of migrants that's come from war-torn countries, countries that had no hope for survival or job security or to raise a family or things like that, for them it's *'I'm going to risk everything – and my life – to get to a country where I know I can be safe and be able to get a job, be able to feed myself and my family'*. I think characteristics of doing anything and everything to better your life and your family's life – it's one characteristic that they all have. And I think it's very similar to my father; he (sorry to slightly go off topic) but he works his socks off, doesn't matter how much he's in pain or how tired he is, it's survival *'I'll make sure my family have got a roof over their head and are being fed'*. And that's a migrant's view; they're not coming here for a holiday; they're coming here to live because where they're living is absolutely dire and they are not safe there ultimately.

SSI: Do you feel that there are differences in how people see Muslim migrants as opposed to migrants in general?

P54: **[0:48:40]** Yeah, I think so. I think … if you see a migrant who isn't black or brown the perception is there's nothing really negative to say, they're kind of just *'Oh, they're taking our jobs'* in a sense. But especially the Polish and the Bulgarians, they'll come in and they work really, really hard, and I know a few personally, and they've told me their family's stories and the racial abuse that they get, but **[inaudible]**. But if there's say a Muslim migrant if they have a beard or they're brown or they're black and you can tell that they're a Muslim it's *'Oh, he might be a terrorist!'*. So, they're painting two brushes onto this individual; that *'They're here to take our jobs and take our money and taking all our benefits'*, as well as *'They might be a terrorist as well'*. So, I think for Muslim migrants it's even more challenging when they're here.

SSI: And comparing the period when, say, your parents arrived to today, do you think there are changes in perception that have happened between then and now?

P54: I think it's very similar. I feel that when my parents arrived here it was more of a *'Go back to your country'* kind of thing, that still is here – those types of comments and that perception, but it's fear as well now, as in we might cause trouble and take all their money and stuff. Back then it wasn't as much I don't think. It wasn't about *'Oh, you're taking our jobs'*, it was more about *'Oh, actually, you're different and I don't want you here'*. But now it's more of a *'They're taking our jobs, they might be terrorists, they cause trouble'* – all the usual brush set gets painted over them. I think it's intensified a lot.

SSI: What do you feel South Asian Muslims have contributed to the UK?

P54: **[0:50:54]** Perhaps mostly the food, the curries, the herbs, the spices and that type of stuff. And I kind of – this is going to sound really, really bad, some part of it – you do get the cases in Bradford and Birmingham where the Asians stick to Asians kind of thing; they'll stay within their little area. From one aspect you can understand that because that's where they feel safe, but looking at it from outside the perspective is *'They don't mingle with anyone else, they stick to themselves'* and that type of stuff. So that can cause a bit of *'They don't do anything for us'*, but in terms of bringing over – it's very similar to Eastern Europeans, it's the hard work … working hard, trying to provide for your family, obviously the food, the culture, the clothing, the new culture … all that type of stuff.

SSI: How do you feel the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted South Asian Muslims?

P54: **[0:52:17]** I, obviously, I take this quite … it's – the difficulty with South Asians is … (this is from my experience), they don't listen especially to government advice. Slightly off-topic, but they're very much *'The government don't do anything for Asians'*, but when advice has been given, it's being ignored. My family have very much ignored this. They've been going to each other's houses and doing the usual stuff as if nothing is going on. And especially after lockdown – after restrictions were eased for a few days – my wife's family were telling us *'Oh, so and so came last week during lockdown and this person came and that person came and then we went to this house and that house'*. And we went to this market where they do grocery shopping and literally there was no social distancing, there were no masks, no screens, no gloves, no hand-sanitiser, nothing!

South Asians have a reputation of just not listening to anyone else except for them! Very, very, very opinionated; everyone else is, kind of, wrong. So, yeah. My mum had planned to go to a wedding obviously once the maximum of fifteen or thirty and I said *'You aren't going, because there is no way or chance that they're going to have the minimum of fifteen people, because we're Asians first of all'*. But she went and there were quite a lot of people there. And there was no social distancing, there was no hand-sanitiser again, they were all unmasked, they were all kind of – yeah, on a usual round table of eight people it was completely normal as if nothing had happened and this is my frustration with a lot of Asians who do these types of things; they're happy to have the council house and the benefits that come with it, but don't listen to very simple guidelines to save, not just themselves, but others around them. Within these communities I know – I mean, my father's cousin passed away yesterday through COVID-19, so … and my wife's uncle has passed away from COVID-19 and that is because they had mingled when they shouldn't have when they were very high risk. They don't listen and their very opinionated and it's really, really

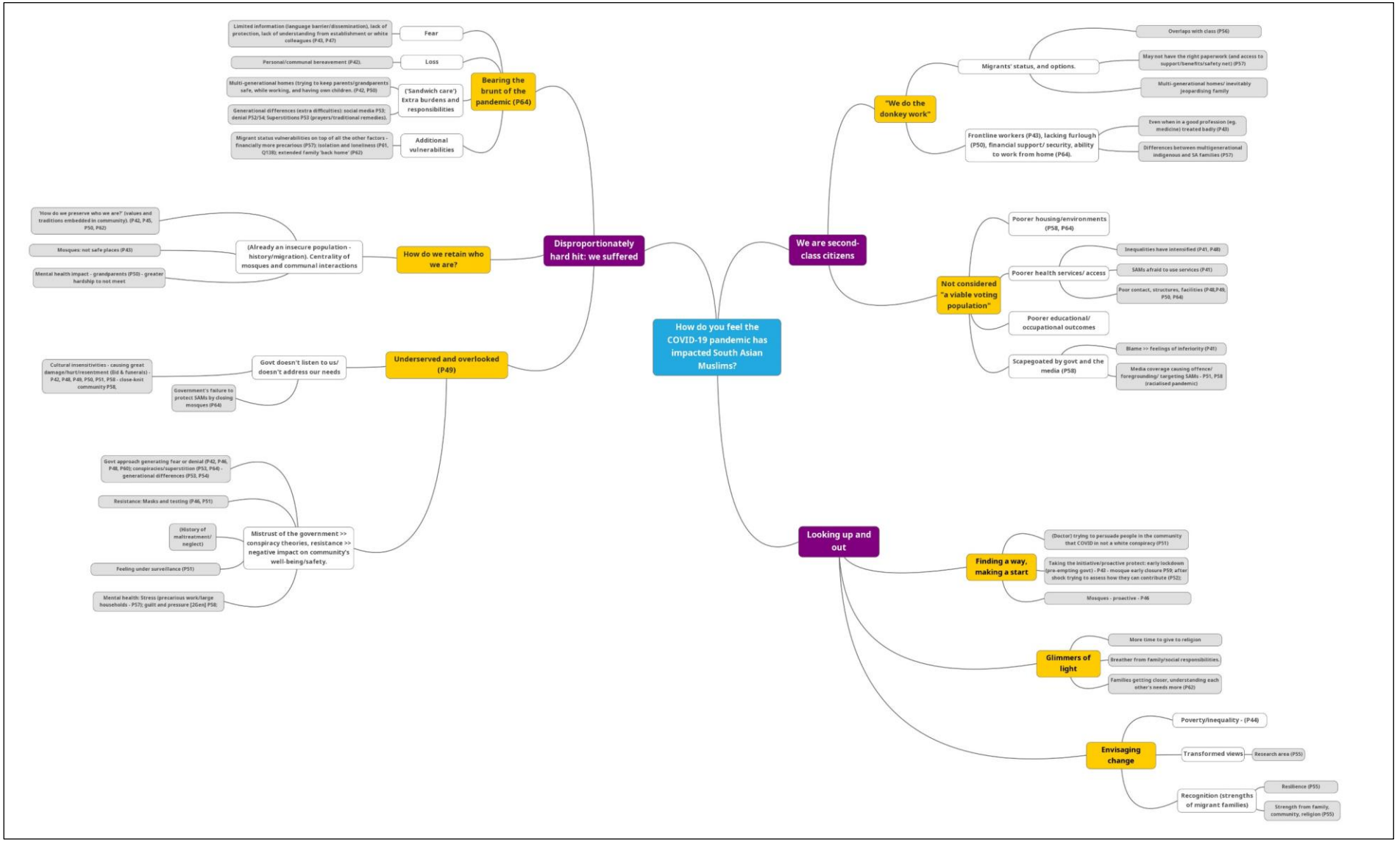
difficult to make them understand; it's like *'Oh, nothing's going to happen! It'll be fine'*, that's always the mentality.

SSI: Is anything changing when people are experiences those losses, those bereavements?

P54: For my wife's family, her immediate family, it was a very, very – a lightbulb moment, that we should actually not stay at her parents. Her father, he's got quite a lot of health issues and he is restricting people coming to his house now, but it's sad that it has to take that for people to take the advice that's been given. Until something happens, Asians will very much say *'It'll be fine – just get on with it'* kind of thing. Although studies show that minorities are the highest at risk of fatalities from COVID-19! Yeah, it's difficult.

I think it's very much an attitude problem. I'm sure that all the families who come up to the house are keeping on top of it, being told by their sons and daughters who do speak English what is going on and that type of stuff. And I think that's – I personally don't think that that will change. I think it's more that attitude than anything else, but it may help with the message. To put it into perspective, it's something – I work for a charity – it's something that we're doing as well, because we help a lot of foreign migrants as well and we're speeding up our process of getting literature that is in different languages (in Swahili, French, German and all that type of stuff) as well. It needs to be done, but I feel it's more of an attitude thing as well.

Appendix IV (i): Exemplar thematic map.



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