

Building Social Capital and Education: The Experiences Of Pakistani Muslims in The UK

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ABSTRACT

By critically engaging with relevant debates on social capital, socio-economic mobility and educational aspirations amongst minority ethnic groups, the focus of this paper is to examine the processes and mechanisms in the accumulation of social capital, to demonstrate how, in particular, two sets of interpersonal relationships (between siblings and between co-ethnic peers) facilitate educational aspirations amongst an ethnic group that has traditionally been perceived to be under-achieving. It highlights the complex interplay within the home and between the home and the community, and the potential implications that these have for shaping the educational aspirations of young Pakistani Muslim men and women. This paper draws on empirical research conducted with the Pakistani Muslim 'community' in inner-city Bradford, West Yorkshire, UK; a northern-English city that has experienced large scale public disturbances in 1995 and 2001.

Keywords: Social capital, Bradford, Pakistani Muslims, educational aspirations, family

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INTRODUCTION

In this paper we focus on the Pakistani Muslim 'community' in Bradford, West Yorkshire, UK, which following the urban disturbances of 1995 and 2001, has come under considerable media, policy and academic attention. Subsequent debates centred on issues of social cohesion and causes of the disturbances in 1995 and 2001 (Burllet and Reid 1998; Macey 1999; Allen 2003), official reviews into the disturbances (Bradford Congress 1996; Ouseley Report 2001; Denham Report 2002), media, political and academic representations of young Pakistani Muslim men in Bradford (Alexander 2004), and urban regeneration. More specifically, within such debates, education has come under particular focus to explain the increasing alienation and, in turn, the supposed 'radicalisation' of young Pakistani Muslim men. The media and official reports highlighted that the disturbances in Bradford were in-part indicative of low levels of educational achievement and socio-economic mobility among young Pakistani Muslim men (Sanghera and Thapar-Bjorkert 2007, 2008). Indeed, such concerns have intensified post 9/11 (2001) and since the London bombings (2005).

With these events and debates in mind, this paper draws on three important observations. First, socio-economic indicators in Bradford point towards low human capital and low economic capital, specifically among the first generation immigrants from rural Pakistan. The second observation relates to existing educational research, which highlights that in compulsory education up to the age of 16, Pakistani heritage pupils have underperformed in relation to their white peers. In 2003, for example, in Bradford 30.2 per cent of Pakistani heritage pupils achieved 5 A to C grades at GCSE, which was 9.2 per cent below Bradford's Local Education Authority (LEA) average (Richardson and Wood 2004)¹. However, despite relatively low GCSE attainment levels nationally, Pakistani heritage pupils from working class (manual) men and women have achieved an increased participation rate in higher education (39.7 per cent and 38.2 per cent, respectively) than their working class (manual) White counter-parts (25.2 per cent and 24.6 per cent, respectively)². Third, these statistics problematise traditional class-based explanations of educational aspirations (see Caseen & Kingdon, 2007; Reay, 2006). In relation to Pakistani Muslims, this paper highlights that

¹ More recently, GCSE national results in England indicate that white British pupils achieving 5+ A to C grades is 59.5 per cent compared with 52.7 per cent of Pakistani male pupils. Source- The Department from Children Schools and Families (accessed 11 September 2009) <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/tsgateway/DB/SFR/s000822/index.shtml>

² These statistics are compiled by the Universities and Colleges Administration Service, which manages entrance applications, are of 1998 entrants, cited in Modood (2004: 92).

social class and educational aspirations do not necessarily correlate. Therefore, education seems to serve as a tool for social mobility despite class location.

In terms of social capital, we are interested in identifying why, despite negative social trends (unemployment, poverty, overcrowding), there is evidence of positive (though gendered) educational attainments amongst second generation Pakistani Muslim men and women, and to explore the possible ways in which the social environment within the family and community contributes to educational aspirations. Specifically, we will explore these questions in relation to two interpersonal relationships: between siblings and between co-ethnic peers.

The paper is divided into three sections. In Section I, we engage with relevant debates on *social capital*. The purpose of this section is to present the reasons why a particular body of work is useful for understanding our question of educational aspirations among Pakistani Muslims in Bradford. In Section II, we discuss methodology and the research site. Finally, in Section III we draw on our empirical research in Bradford.

SECTION I

Theorising Social Capital

In terms of defining social capital and in assessing its significance, theoretical approaches have situated the discussion in terms of either: (1) the significance of the 'social structure' and social relations in generating social capital and its relationship with human capital; (2) the usefulness of social capital in promoting democracy and a stable cohesive civic society; and (3) how social networks reinforce and maintain social hierarchy, and thus differential power relationships in society. In this section, we analyze through the work of three mainstream social capital theorists – James Coleman, Robert Putnam and Pierre Bourdieu. We will engage with those aspects of their work that focuses specifically on the dynamics within the family and community, and which are said to facilitate the accumulation of social capital (Baron, Field & Schuller, 2000; Zetter, 2006).

James Coleman (1990, 1988) sought to explore the relationship between social capital and human capital, in particular how the former can contribute in the generation of the latter. Coleman defined social capital by its function as a, 'variety of entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors-

whether persons or corporate actors-within the structure' (Coleman, 1988, p.98). Thus social capital 'inheres in the structure of relations between persons and among persons and is lodged neither in individuals nor in physical implements of production' (Coleman, 1990, p.302).

A key focus for Coleman is the family. He states that, 'whatever human capital exists in the parents, the child does not profit from it because the social capital [strong relations] is missing' (1988, p.111). Therefore, the mere presence of both parents within the family does not necessarily translate into social capital unless there are strong relations between the child and the parents. Coleman in part attributes a deficit in social capital to changing family structures - increase in single parents, absent fathers/mothers, mothers working outside the family, and decreases in extended family households: 'The most prominent element of structural deficiency in modern families is the single-parent family. However, the nuclear family itself, in which one or both parents work outside the home, can be seen as structurally deficient, lacking in the social capital that comes with the presence of parents during the day, or with grandparents or aunts and uncles in or near the household' (1988, p.111).

The generation of social capital within the family has to be supported by social ties outside the family as well (community social capital), which create a social structure of norms and obligations. Coleman describes this as 'inter-generational closure'. In his case study of Catholic schools, which have a low student drop out rate compared to public and private schools, Coleman argues that the 'frequency of attendance at religious services, which is itself a measure of social capital through intergenerational closure...all provide evidence of the importance of social capital outside the school, in the adult community surrounding it...for this outcome of education' (1988, p.114-115). There is an important caveat to this. Portes (1998) emphasises that 'it is important to distinguish the resources (obtained through social capital) themselves from the ability to obtain them by virtue of membership in different social structures' (1998, p.5). This removes the circularity inherent in debates that define social capital as equivalent with resources thus obtained. We would suggest that in the context of Bradford, Portes's observations are significant because the advantages accrued through 'inter-generational closure' can be undermined by structural factors and constraints which may inhibit development (personal, social, economic) and undermine access gained from social and familial ties (see Portes and Landolt, 1996; Anthias, 2007). Also, in areas of socio-economic disadvantage, long term rewards (such as secure employment) may be absent for school leavers and some young people may as a result find it logical to either drop-out or turn to illegal activities. However, structural disadvantage, we would

argue, is not just confined to working class ethnic minorities. A recent UK government report (*Tackling Race Inequality* (DCLG, 2010) cites evidence that those in the growing Asian middle-class also experience overt racial discrimination or 'ethnic penalties' (see also Ramji, 2005; Shain, 2003).

Influenced by Coleman's work, Robert Putnam (1993a, 1993b, 2001) associates social capital with the following components: networks, which together constitute the civic community in the voluntary, state and personal spheres; people's sense of belonging to the civic community, together with a sense of solidarity and equality with other community members; moral obligations, norms of cooperation, 'generalized reciprocity' and trust that rise from social networks; positive attitudes to the institutions, associated facilities and relationships constituting the civic community as well as civic engagement (Putnam, 2001, p.18).

Putnam broadens the scope and reach of social capital beyond the family to include communities, regions, and nations. It is in this respect that Putnam refers to the positive attributes of bridging social capital which is 'good for getting *ahead*', and allows for the formation of horizontal relationships (i.e. the creation of broader identities and reciprocity). According to Putnam, 'bridging networks...are better for linkages to external assets and for information diffusion' in comparison to bonding social capital which is exclusive, 'good for getting *by*', narrower in scope, and good for mobilising solidarity (2001, p.22). Thus, Putnam's bridging social capital is, arguably, in tension with Coleman's emphasis on bonding forms of social capital (Edwards, 2004; Portes, 1998). Within the context of our research, Pakistani Muslims families in Bradford are exemplars of rich 'bonding' social capital that draw on ethnic and religious identities and practices; not only within and between families but also extra-familial friendships fostered by young co-ethnic men and women to generate social resources. That said, bonding capital has been viewed by UK policy makers as insular, fostering exclusiveness, and leading to 'parallel lives' and segregation, while 'bridging' capital is considered to be a necessary prerequisite to tackle issues of segregation and achieve community cohesion (see Cantle, 2001; Ouseley, 2001; Denham, 2002).

Yet, we would contend that it would be short-sighted to suggest that the lack of bridging capital could explain the disadvantaged position of Pakistani Muslims in Bradford since factors such as, *inter alia*, institutional discrimination, racism and the lack of economic opportunities have arguably led to a decline in social trust between and within different ethnic and religious communities (Ouseley, 2001) Therefore, it is important to

understand that some communities invest in bonding capital, precisely because they have been and continue to be excluded from wider civic engagement (bridging) or from accessing formal and informal resources (linking).

From the perspective of our research, there are a number of limitations with Putnam's analysis. The first concerns Putnam's hypothesis that voluntary associations assist in 'civic engagement'. Whilst this may be true to some degree, it is also important to acknowledge potential conflicts between those associations that seek to either maintain structure of power or those that challenge the status quo (i.e. counter-hegemonic struggles and conflicts between different actors in civil society). The latter would include, for example, informal associations – such as youth subcultures or sub cultural public spheres. Frequently, voluntary associations are themselves arenas within which power relations are embedded and they are not neutral or apolitical in terms of the issues and interests that they (dis)engage with in the political arena. In his discussion of the ways in which immigrant communities mobilize specific channels to access resources of social capital, Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) suggest that those with dense networks and associational activity tend to operate in self-serving and thus exclusionary ways. Obviously this is where issues concerning the race/ethnicity, class, gender, and religious composition of a voluntary association become important.

Second, Putnam claims that social capital proves most fruitful where material conditions permit the development of rich forms of associational life; where trust thrives and civic norms prevail. Research in the US, such as *The Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey* (2000), highlights how the decline in social capital or social solidarity is correlated with the worsening position of the disadvantaged. Therefore while social capital can be strengthened at times of hardship, the assumption ultimately is that poverty can potentially erode the fabric of social life and stock of social capital. In the face of persistent unemployment and declining assets, the poor cease to engage in exchange relations and avoid dependencies (financial assistance in case they cannot repay) and resort to 'asocial familism'. If this is the case, then our case study of Bradford - (which is marked by high levels of unemployment, crime, violence, and lack of cohesion) – is antithetical to Putnam's claims. That said, our empirical analysis suggests that despite negative social trends there is evidence of positive educational attainment.

While both Coleman and Putnam were concerned with the depletion of social capital in modern societies, Pierre Bourdieu (1990, 1997) explored how

various types of capital 'assets' could be used to maximise accumulation and which in turn confer power and profit to their holder (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.119). For Bourdieu, social capital has two key elements: first, *social networks*, which can provide actual or potential recognition and access to resources and second, *sociability*, which is the ability and disposition to use and sustain ones network (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.119). Significantly, Bourdieu highlights how various forms of capital could be used in specific contexts to maximise accumulation. Also, social capital could be used strategically to reproduce more of its kind or converted to other forms of capital.

From the perspective of our research, there are two points that we want to stress. First, Bourdieu's principal concern centres on understanding how the dominant class reproduces its domination, and central to this analysis is the family. However, social reproduction theory is unable to explain educational success amongst individuals who lack class-related resources for mobility (both economic and cultural capital). It is important to note that a person's habitus and social field can disrupt over simplistic correlations between economic and cultural capital (see Bourdieu, 1990; Borjas, 1992; Field 2003:14; Reay, 2004, p.432). Second, though Bourdieu's conceptualisation of cultural capital in its 'institutionalised state' indicates the academic qualifications and credentials that a person can acquire, cultural capital is still dependent on the economic capital that a person can possess. This becomes problematic in the context of, for example, Bradford, where members of the Pakistani Muslim community, with little economic capital, are unable to acquire cultural capital in Bourdieu's sense of the term. Consistent with Bourdieu's analysis, then, we are caught in a circular analysis where disadvantage will reproduce disadvantage and there will be no possible way out.

In Coleman, Putnam and Bourdieu's analysis the relationship between social capital and ethnicity is not given particular attention. Moreover, while these theorists recognise that young people's kinship and non-kinship networks are shaped through family interactions in the immediate community, around shared sets of norms, values and beliefs, they fail to account for the active role of young people in the creation and maintenance of social capital. There are a number of American empirical analyses that apply the concept of social capital to understand socio-economic mobility amongst immigrant communities (Bankston and Zhou, 2002; Dika and Singh, 2002; Zhou, 1997; Zhou, 2000; Zhou and Bankston, 1994). Zhou and Bankston (1994) draw on Coleman's analysis to demonstrate how parental interest in their children's education can support/enhance educational achievement even when parents have little human capital; or how ethnic community organizations

constitute 'intergenerational closure' by reinforcing positive values about education amongst working-class Asian Americans. This echoes Coleman's suggestion that the stability and strength of a community's social structure plays an important role in sustaining and reinforcing the growth of social capital in the family. Bankston and Zhou (2002, p.286) begin by re-defining the concept of 'social capital to not only include the resources held by individuals or groups but as *processes* of social interaction leading to constructive outcomes', and explore how social relations within ethnic groups have a bearing on the adaptation in a host society. Second, their research identifies 'ethnicity as a resource', and how ethnicity can provide social capital. Drawing on the experiences of the Vietnamese immigrant community in the US, Zhou and Bankston (1994, p.830) demonstrate how the economic disadvantage (in terms of limited human and economic capital amongst first generation Vietnamese immigrants) was compensated by social capital in the form of family norms, values and networks as well as the broader set of community values and networks which promote particular educational goals.

There are a number of notable similarities between Zhou's Vietnamese community in New Orleans and our case study of Bradford's Pakistani Muslim community: both are immigrant communities; settlement in the host country took place in socially 'undesirable' localities, marked by poor housing and services; both settled in neighbourhoods in which ethnicity was most prominent; both lacked human capital and economic capital; to a large degree, both lacked pre-existing ethnic community networks in the host country; family structures are similar (families were usually large and extended, including minor children, unmarried grown up children, married children and grand children, and grand parents); for both family life is central - 'the family always comes first'; relations within the family and community are established on ideas of mutual, collective obligations to one another and respect, cooperation and harmony within the family and community; and social and kinship relations (see Kao, 2004).

SECTION II

Researching Bradford

The arrival of South Asians in the 1950s and 1960s Bradford was encouraged by the demands in the textile industry in Britain for workers to undertake jobs that were shunned by the indigenous White population, particularly in the textile mills (Lewis, 1994; Shaw, 1998). Today Bradford is one of Britain's most deprived areas, due to a process of long term de-industrialisation and

recessions during the 1970s and 1980s. The Bradford Metropolitan District has a total population of 467,665. An estimated 78.3 per cent of Bradford's population is White and 20.7 per cent visible minorities. The largest ethnic minority group is of Pakistani origin (80,000), the majority of whom are from the rural Mirpur region of (Azad) Kashmir.

Two contemporary trends will have important implications for those living in Bradford. First, there has been a decline in the inner city population and the district as a whole of Whites, Blacks and Indians and an increase the Pakistani population. It is estimated that by 2011, the white population will have decreased by 6 per cent and the Pakistani population will have increased by 71.7 per cent (Macey, 2007, p.169, fn.15). Second, Bradford has a growing young population which will have implications for employment opportunities in terms of the numbers entering/accessing the job market.

Methodology

Funded by the Leverhulme Trust (2003-05), the project, *Gender, Social Capital and Differential Outcomes*, analyzed the question of educational aspirations and mobility of similar migrant groups by engaging with the concept of 'social capital'. The research sample was recruited from a range of locations (local schools, youth clubs, university, college) in four neighbourhoods: in *Manningham* Pakistanis comprise 62.1 per cent of the total population, *Girlington* 60.2 per cent, *Heaton-Oak Lane* 67.3 per cent and *West Bowling*, 37.4 per cent. It is estimated that 90 per cent of residents in these neighbourhoods are Muslims of 'Pakistani heritage'. Lewis (1994, p.62) describes these neighbourhoods as 'Muslim residential zones' and Ouseley (2001, p.16) as "comfort zones" made up of people like themselves'.

In-depth qualitative interviews (July 2004 to May 2005) were conducted by the second author with young men and women belonging to one of the following age-status cohorts:

Cohorts	Interviews - Total 54
School or Further Education (16-20)	40 (M=17, F=23)
University (19-24)	4 (M=4, F=0)
Employed or unemployed - did not attend university (16-20)	4 (M=0, F=4)
Employed or Unemployed University Leavers (19-27)	6 (M=4, F=2)

The interviews were recorded, transcribed, coded and analysed using *Atlas.ti* software. Key themes were identified using a grounded theory approach (Jackson, 2001; Strauss and Corbin, 1999). We have changed the names to maintain the anonymity of our respondents.

There are three epistemological and methodological points that we would stress: a) identity is socially constructed; b) individuals have potentially conflicting and overlapping identities and allegiances; c) individuals and groups negotiate intersectionality simultaneously in relation to inter- and intra-group affiliations.

SECTION III

Family Processes

A number of studies highlight the social capital created by parent-child interaction within the family (Basit, 1997; Francis and Archer, 2005; Goulbourne and Solomos, 2003; Gibson, 2000; Zhou and Bankston, 1994; Abbas, 2002). A number of salient themes about how parent-child relations generate social capital emerge from our data. First, parents used their own experiences of hardship in the UK, to transmit the importance of education intergenerationally. Working class parents have ambitions for upward mobility for their children and regard education as the vehicle for achieving these ambitions (Basit, 1997). More broadly, there was also symbolic importance attached to educational success in that it made parents 'proud' and gained 'respect' within the community. While a large proportion of the respondents' family members had not attended post-compulsory education, they in the main received encouragement and support from the family to continue onto post-compulsory education, including attending university. Second, within the home, respondents interacted primarily with the mother and/or siblings. This was particularly the case for young women who had less opportunity than their male peers to spend unregulated time outside the home (Ali, 1993). Moreover, norms of appropriate gender behaviour might operate to encourage young women to study. The mother was the principal person in transmitting intergenerationally socio-cultural norms and values within the home and providing the 'emotional labour', such as encouragement, support and developing confidence in their children (see Reay, 2000). In a specific case study on Asian immigrant families, Coleman (1988) outlined how a mother can play a pivotal role in the child's education by, for instance, studying school textbooks and assisting with school work. This is an example of where low human capital within the family is transcended by high social capital. Third, a key theme in the interviews with

young men and women was the change in attitudes towards women's education in the community. In our research, fathers played both a motivational and instrumental/practical (e.g. choice of school/college) role in encouraging and supporting their daughter's education. This change can, in part, be explained by a concern amongst parents and young women to maintain a degree of economic independence so as to protect against possible eventualities, such as their future partner being unable to provide for them or the marriage ending (Dale *et al.* 2002). Qualifications were therefore considered to be essential prerequisites for a 'good job'; even though young men and women were well aware of the challenges in competing with White young people in the labour market and often that they had to show that 'they were not just as good but better'. While attitudes towards the education and career aspirations of young Pakistani Muslim women have changed within the community, they however continue to face prejudice and stereotyping within the labour market (EOC 2007). Fourth, parents did not simply exhibit high aspirations for their children, but also fostered the mechanisms to achieve such goals. For example, along with the verbal support and encouragement, parents also provided practical support (e.g. books, computer, internet, tutor, school excursions, and homework space) that enabled children to proceed on an appropriate path.

Siblings Interaction

Sibling relationships are an important aspect of family life, parenting and child development. However, this issue has received relatively little attention in public and social policy discourses since prominence has largely been placed on parents and parent-child relationships. In our research, respondents talked about how they 'looked up to brothers and sisters, cousins and relatives' in 'well respected jobs', which often were well paid, of status and entailed benefits such as a company car and travel opportunities. That these people, brought up in the same environment as the respondents, had made progress, despite relative adversity and discrimination was a source of inspiration and encouragement to the respondents. In this context, siblings became important *role models*. For example, Laila said that,

'my sister is very close to me and she actually has said to me, that I am ...a role model or an inspiration...when I do get the chance I will speak with them and...find out how things are going. Being the eldest, I am sure they know that they can come to me'

Young men and women frequently turned to older siblings and cousins in the community when it came to educational issues (Bagguley and Hussain,

2007; Crozier and Davies, 2006). Sibling involvement was important given the demands of a 'choice' oriented educational system. In many instances, respondents talked about how older siblings took on the role of reading and responding to school letters and reports, checking homework and providing advice on filling in appropriate documentation for university/college courses. Many parents were unable to speak, read or write English or engage in the language's socially exclusive nuances (see Lauglo, 2000) and had very limited knowledge of the education system. This not only limited their interactions with non-Pakistani people but some parents were unable to provide assistance with homework or attend parents evening meetings. In a study amongst working class white and Mexican American high school girls in California's central valley, Beattie (2002, p.414-415) found that older siblings were 'a source of help and inspiration to go to college and important sources of 'insider' information (already known to students whose parents were college educated)'.

Siblings also influenced the educational choices, and where siblings had been through the education system and 'done well', for many respondents continuing in education was considered to be a *natural progression*. For example, Adiba spoke about the role that her elder brother and sister have played in her education, and explained their involvement in terms of:

'I think it was because they have been through it themselves [education] and they understood it more. Em, my sister ... so if I was to say to her, you know, "in English we are reading this book" she'd say "Oh yeah I remember that" and help me to understand it'.

Frequently respondents cited the obstacles (racism and Islamophobia) that they faced if they did not get an education and the role that education could play in overcoming such challenges. In many instances, older siblings and their contemporaries were either unemployed, employed in less desirable menial jobs, or had experienced frequent periods of unemployment. Often, older siblings had left school with few or no formal qualifications. Concentrated in neighbourhoods with lower performing schools, some young men reflected that school was primarily a social experience (see Archer, 2003). Respondents spoke about how older siblings had to face 'tougher times when there was lots of unemployment and racism, they just thought education ain't gonna get you nowhere, but they regret it now'. However, in such circumstances, the academic motivation for some young men and women came from positioning themselves in opposition to older siblings - as something that they were not proud of and the need to seek alternative avenues. In discussing the challenges that face young Pakistani

Muslim men and women in Bradford, Qasim, a 17-year-old student, talked about the need to work together as a community in order to challenge dominant perceptions of the Pakistani Muslim community, which would include,

'I mean like at present...Pakistani Muslims are the lowest of the low. I mean their aspirations for careers and all that is very low, [they] keep reproducing the social vices and everything, and you know, it's partly to take the responsibility in that sense [and] show that there's the other side of the coin as well. That there are people in the Pakistani community that do want to achieve and they do want to raise standards'.

This positioning was evident in many of the interviews with young women in our study, where they discussed how young men were often distracted by a negative peer culture in the community. Nabila, a 17-year-old female, talked about how there were negative role models in Bradford. Apathy towards education and the primacy of 'fitting in' informed the intergenerational influence in which some younger men looked up to older males within and outside the family network. Nabila recalls a classmate,

'All you ever heard from him was weed, weed, girls, weed, BJs [blow jobs] or whatever'. When asked why this was the case, she went on, 'Because of the way some of the Asian lads are like the older ones, the younger ones are going to be like them because they've got cars and like they're doing drugs'

For many young women, education was an opportunity to prove themselves, particularly in the eyes of their parents and community. Also, in many respects the opportunity to enter post-compulsory education was considered in-part to be hard-fought concession that they have won from their parents, and therefore the young women were unwilling to waste such opportunities. Amira highlighted how,

'there's like more job opportunities for women, parents are encouraging women more....there's been an increase in the amount of encouragement

a lot of women get...I think the boys are more naughty if you know what I mean and I think if they aren't successful in something like their GCSEs then they'll give up more...there's a lot of stuff that's going on like violence and stuff and they're getting really influenced by that and they're getting involved in that'.

Many female respondents talked about how they worked harder than their co-ethnic male peers at school, because they recognized the possibilities that an education could provide them in terms of career development, individual ambition and independence. For example, Kamila, a 24-year-old youth worker, stated outlined that,

'...If you do well at school your parents aren't going to mind you going to college...but if you mess about...they are just going to pull you out [of education], send you back to Pakistani to get married, and that's what happened to a couple of girls that I went to school with'.

What Kamila and other female respondents echoed was how educational aspirations are also informed by a careful negotiation of appropriate gender roles and notions of 'respectability'. Frequently, young women assisted each other in such negotiations, especially in terms of presenting education as a 'safe route' for young women to negotiate greater autonomy and independence.

In this complex mixture of expectation, support, motivation and pressure *within the extended and outside the family*, siblings play an important role in shaping the dynamics within the family and in turn actively participate in the generation of social capital. As Edwards (2004, p.8) argues, 'In social capital theorising, socialisation is seen as a one way street, with children as passive "tabula rasa" recipients'. Young men and women are agents of change and embody social capital. Similarly, Morrow (1999; 2001) also argues that in the existing work on social capital, young people are constructed as 'passive recipients of culture' and there is little acknowledgement on how children can actively draw upon their own social capital and in the case of Bradford, can be pillars of support (primarily emotional and financial) for their parents. Therefore, limited economic capital does not necessarily translate into low educational aspirations,

because working class immigrant families are able to mobilize cohesive family and community ties as well as the provision of community educational resources, which collectively serve to reinforce norms and values regarding education. Third, while parents used children as conduits for information, the children were also subject to surveillance, though it was gendered.

Influence of co-ethnic peers in the community

In *The Adolescent Society* (1961), Coleman found that young people were likely to be influenced by their peers on a range of issues, including social participation, social leadership and club membership. Indeed, disapproval from friends was taken more seriously than disapproval from parents or teachers. Therefore, neighbourhoods and wider co-ethnic communities play an important role in terms of moulding the educational aspirations of the respondents. Schools, college, community groups, community leisure centres and Mosques were the prime sites and spaces where interaction took place, though their access was gendered, with much greater, if not exclusive, access warranted to men. Crosnoe (2004, p.269; also see Crosnoe et al., 2003) argues that families and schools are the two primary sources of social capital and that 'close intergenerational relations are channels of information...on how to navigate the educational system and of norms that reinforce conventional behaviour'. In many cases, schools that the respondents either attended or had attended were located in their neighbourhoods and were therefore predominantly Pakistani Muslim in composition. However, we would reiterate that friendships/personal relationships and peer group membership cannot be exclusively dependant on shared ethnic background but 'can also be formed through other types of shared experiences such as semi-formal activities like youth group participation or informal activities such as night clubs' (Reynolds, 2004, p.13).

In our research we found that co-ethnic peers in the community had an important role in influencing the aspirations of young Pakistani Muslim peers. Shakil talked about how a co-ethnic youth worker assisted him in completing a university application and in finding employment,

'...he has helped me on many occasions in the past and he continues to help me, he's helped me in the sense that he has helped me to find employment, which has helped me to keep things ticking over whilst I do

my studies, and that money that I've used to you know help my parents out at home...he's helped with my teacher-training application, so I could get onto the course. He's someone I can talk to'.

Morrow (2001, p.57) has also shown how 'friendship relationships and peer groups provide a sense of belonging...and symbolic capital was clearly related to this sense of belonging'. For example, when asked about the influence of co-ethnic and religious friends on education Adiba said,

'... a positive one, because I find that everyone is going through the same situation. And, yeah, if you're the same age then everyone is faced with the same thing and we can help each other'.

Similarly, Imran talked about a co-ethnic community worker who had been pivotal in his personal and professional development,

'He was the person...who did my statement for the UCAS...he knows me inside out ... he was a friend and that was important in my educational development as well'.

Co-ethnic peers also offered encouragement and support in schoolwork. For example, one respondent talked about how when she became 'lazy and less studious', her close friend took her aside and 'had words'. So there is a mechanism of mutual support that was informed by ethnicity. Adiba continued and said that when a friend is prevented by his/her parent from going to university, co-ethnic friends understand the cultural context in which such decisions are based and can empathise, and can give advice,

'We'll be there to say you know "sit down and talk to them" and, you know, somebody can say "Oh I talked to my mum like this, I said this and she was alright with it". People who are like from the same ethnicity can help you through that'.

Within the community, the spaces and sites for interaction were gendered. A prevailing community view was that inter-gender mixing was generally disapproved and forbidden. At the same time, there was far greater opportunity for young men to socialise unregulated outside the home (Burllet and Reid, 1998). Women, on the other hand, participated in more structured and regulated activities, outside the home, such as belonging to

community groups in their neighbourhood or high visibility Council initiatives (e.g. Youth Bank, Bradford and Keighley Youth Parliament).

Co-ethnic friends also served as an important source of surveillance. Such processes acted as mechanisms for enforcing religio-cultural norms in public spaces. Parents often called on co-ethnic friends to monitor and control the behaviour of children and young persons. Community opinions were important to the young women and men. They were often linked with issues of gossip, which could escalate and bring the women's *izzat* [family honour] into disrepute. In exploring the links between family, ethnic identity and social capital, Goulbourne and Solomos (2003, p.333) argue that '...they provide sanction of membership and acceptable behaviour through the collectivity...they have great potential for democratic participation as well as repression on the bases of gender and age'. We would caution against overly 'romanticized' notions of co-ethnic friendship. As discussed above, friendships could generate negative forms of social capital – 'negative social capital' (Portes 1998).

The social networks with co-ethnic peers also influenced the decisions of many respondents to choose universities that are closer to home and where they are able to commute daily. Along with financial restrictions, in the interviews it became clear that many respondents did not want to leave Bradford and chose to go to institutions in and around West Yorkshire (e.g. universities in Leeds, Huddersfield). Most young people had financial responsibilities towards their families and also wanted to stay in close proximity to their friends who were a source of support, continuity and confidence. Agreeing with critical insights of Edwards (2004) that children and young people are active participants in shaping the nature of family, we would suggest that networks that young people form could benefit the family, which reinforces benefits for people in the family. So instead of looking at unidirectional top-down approaches of parents as imparters and children as receivers were looking at how children make investments for themselves and indirectly for the whole family.

Though the parents did not have direct engagements with the school in relation to educational concerns, they relied on older children within their families and their extended family networks, outside the family. Thus the social capital offered by the extended family (uncles, aunts, elder cousins) compensated for parents low educational and human capital. Educational success of the children was dependant on the efforts within the household and sustainable relationships within the community.

Conclusion

This paper examines the educational aspirations amongst young Pakistani Muslim men and women through an analysis of social capital. What we demonstrate is that traditional sociological theories prove to be limited in explaining educational aspirations amongst working class Pakistani Muslims. Indeed, young Pakistani Muslim men and women are able to mobilise and build social capital in a context of socio-economic marginalization and discrimination, though we must at the same time caution and recognize that ethnic minorities continue to experience 'ethnic penalties' disproportionately.

The relationships that young people develop and mobilize remain overlooked in main social capital literature. A key focus of this paper is to explore how older siblings and others in the community provide the avenues through which to 'tap into' existing relationships and utilise them as resources. We demonstrate how social capital is processual and the ways in which the social environments within and outside the family compensate for low levels of economic and human capital. Importantly, we would emphasize that educational aspirations are not necessarily commensurable to educational outcomes, but aspirations are a measure of how young men and women make the most of their social capital resources that they possess, independent of class.

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