

**The Role of Social Capital in Students' Educational  
Outcomes and School Experiences: Toward a  
Contextualised Understanding**

**Doctoral Degree Thesis**

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## **Abstract**

This PhD thesis investigates the role of social capital in the educational outcomes and school experiences of teenage students. Social capital is mapped in relation to the context of the school, the family and the community, as it is experienced and reported by Year 12 students.

The main focus of the study is on the contribution of social capital to educational outcomes, such as students' exam attainment, their decision to go to university or not and the process followed to choose and apply to universities. In addition, students' experiences within the school are discussed with particular reference to friendship formation. A primary concern of this study is to understand the role of social capital within contextualised frameworks by taking into consideration factors such as the social class, the ethnic background and the gender of the participants as well as the overall ethnic composition of the participating schools.

This research employed mixed methods of collecting and analysing data. A survey questionnaire was administered to approximately 250 students and in-depth, semi-structured interviews were carried out with 60 students. The data was collected from four ethnically diverse London secondary schools.

The findings of this thesis suggest that social capital influences students' education and school experiences to a certain extent, however, it does not work in the same way for all social groups. Conversely, the nature and influence of social capital, as a multi-faceted and multi-dimensional concept, are strongly mediated by social class, ethnicity and gender and in some cases by the ethnic composition of the school. For instance, social class and ethnicity exercise a central role in the way students form their friendships within the schools and the way parents mobilise social capital in order to enhance their children's educational outcomes.

The thesis concludes that these contextual characteristics, namely social class, ethnicity and gender, significantly shape the character of social capital and its influence on students' education and school experiences.

## Declaration and Word Count

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Word count (exclusive of appendices, list of reference and bibliography): 87,507 words

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Papapolydorou', written in a cursive style.

Maria Papapolydorou

## Dedication

*This thesis is dedicated to my parents and grandparents  
for their love and encouragement,  
and for everything they have taught me.*

*It is also dedicated to all the students  
who believe in the value of education, in these difficult times.*

## Acknowledgments

This thesis is a result of research and writing that lasted for approximately four years. The thesis journey as well as its completion would not have been possible without the help and support of a number of people, to whom I would like to convey my appreciation.

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I am indebted to Liz MacLean and her AS Sociology students, who kindly agreed to take part in my pilot study. Their participation, as well as their comments on my questionnaire, was extremely helpful for the final preparation of my data collection tools. Many thanks go to Professor Ken Spours and to Laura Johnson, who helped me access two of the schools on which this study was carried out, at a time when I was facing problems in accessing schools for my research purposes.

It gives me great pleasure in paying tribute to the four schools that participated in my research and which will remain anonymous for confidentiality reasons. In particular, I would like to thank the head-teachers, who authorised my access to the schools, the teachers, who allowed me in their class, and the administrators, who facilitated the smooth running of the data collection. Last but not least, I would like to acknowledge and thank all the students who participated in my research and shared with me their experiences and their views. This study would not have been possible without their contribution and I am enormously grateful to them.

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random times of the day and he kept smiling even when I was grumpy and tired. Anand's love, kindness and compassion have enormously contributed to this work and have made my life better, for which I am hugely grateful.

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## Introduction

This research explores the association of social capital, with educational outcomes and, in particular, the educational achievement, choices as well as school experiences of teenagers. Social capital, as understood here, comprises social networks, norms, values, attitudes and associational memberships/participations. There is a substantial literature on the association of social capital and education, mainly pointing to the direction of social capital's beneficial impact on students' educational achievement. In addition, both the current and the previous governments have been implicitly or explicitly influenced by the social capital rhetoric and have subsequently tailored their educational policies accordingly. During the New Labour government a number of initiatives, such as the Education Action Zones (EAZ), the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) and the Neighbourhood Renewal Initiative, attempted to raise achievement in disadvantaged areas by building social capital. The current Coalition government, although not explicitly referring to social capital discourses, seem to be making some similar assumptions to their predecessors. The 'Big Society' framework, which encourages the involvement of Third Sector organisations in what have been traditionally considered as state affairs, echoes 'Putnamian' (2000; 2003) notions of social capital within a communitarian paradigm. This framework is also mirrored on educational plans which promote the involvement of third sector and other community organisations in the running of schools. This devolution of power, which seemingly targets - *inter alia* - the raising of academic standards, resembles social capital's traditions of New Labour which encouraged partnerships with the community and the building of social capital.

However, despite both governments' attempt to raise educational outcomes in this manner, there has been little research done on the differential effects that social capital has on educational outcomes in relation to different social groups in the UK. On the contrary, at the level of policies, social capital has been often perceived as a 'panacea' for educational achievement (Healey, 2006). This rather uncritical employment of social capital within policy frameworks and the relative empirical paucity regarding social capital's differential nature and impact across social groups comprised the main reasons behind the formation of this thesis' research focus. In light of this, this study explores the nature of social capital across social groups as formed and mobilised within the school, the family and the community contexts, and its influence on students' education.

This study maps social capital and its relationship to school experiences and educational outcomes among working-class and middle-class students of four ethnic groups<sup>1</sup>, namely Indian, White British, Black African and Black Caribbean. We know, for instance, that on average Black African and Caribbean students underperform in relation to their White British fellow-students, while Indian students tend to outperform, even when social class is controlled for (DfES, 2005; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000). How can this be related to the different forms of social capital evident amongst the different groups? To address these questions the thesis explores the identities, attitudes and values of students as well as the effect of family and community social capital. To understand the influence of social capital on the learning of different groups it is also important to understand the social capital interactions between groups in educational contexts. Putnam (2007) argued, quite controversially, that ethnic diversity in U.S neighbourhoods reduces social capital both across and within ethnic groups, even when controlling for income inequality. How far would this apply in other national contexts, and what are its implications for education? If social capital is important for learning, and if schools are considered as communities, does this imply that diversity in school intakes is likely to be detrimental for educational outcomes? This thesis investigates the extent to which Putnam's latest suggestions, and in particular the ethnic homogeneity hypothesis and its theoretical extension in relation to educational outcomes, are valid in another setting such as multi-cultural London. In light of this, the social networks between students are explored with particular reference to their gender, their ethnic background and their social class background.

This research focuses on Year 12 students in four London, co-educational state-schools which were chosen according to the ethnic profile of their intakes. Even though all four schools were ethnically diverse<sup>2</sup> the ethnic balances of their intake were different. The reason behind this choice was the need for comparison of students' social capital in relation to the different ethnic composition of their schools. Mixed methods of collecting and analysing data were employed. A survey questionnaire was administered to approximately 250 students and in-depth, semi-structured interviews were carried out with 60 students.

This thesis comprises 7 chapters. The first chapter critically reviews the different ways social capital is used in relation to education and explains the way social capital is conceptualised in this thesis. It also discusses some findings from social capital research or related areas and sets out the hypotheses of this study.

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<sup>1</sup> Ethnic groups: The way ethnic background is defined in this study is in line with the categories used in the 2001 Census. The way ethnic background is operationalised here is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 (Research Design).

<sup>2</sup> There is no unanimous definition in literature regarding what an ethnically diverse context is. For the purposes of this study a school is ethnically diverse when a single ethnic group does not comprise more than 70% of the overall school population.

The second chapter discusses the main theorists of social capital and explains the theoretical standpoint used in this research. This thesis mainly employs Bourdieu's (1986) elaboration of social capital in conjunction to the other forms of capital (economic, symbolic, cultural) and Miles' (1989) concept of racialisation. This chapter discusses the way these concepts are used in the framework of this thesis.

The third chapter exemplifies the research design of the thesis. It discusses the methods employed for the fieldwork of this study as well as the paradigmatic stance followed. A detailed elaboration of the choice of paradigm and methodology is offered along with a discussion of the way data was collected and analysed. In addition, this chapter considers the ethical challenges related to the research.

The fourth chapter presents evidence from statistical analysis based on students' questionnaire responses. It comprises results from both descriptive and inferential statistics and their outcomes are discussed in relation to the thesis foci. This chapter explores social capital aspects manifested both within the school context and outside, namely the family and the community context.

The fifth chapter discusses the analysis of qualitative data that relates to students' formation and mobilisation of social capital within the school context. In particular, it draws on issues of social class, ethnicity and gender to explore the way students form social networks with other students and whether these are in accord with the ethnic homogeneity argument suggested by Putnam and its theoretical extension. In other words, it discusses the association of students' social capital formation within school with the ethnic composition of the school and subsequently explores whether this relationship has possible effects on students' education.

The sixth chapter focuses on qualitative data analysis that explores the nature, function and effects of social capital within the family and the community context. As above, issues of social class, ethnicity and gender are explored in relation to students' parents, siblings and extended family in order to discuss their relationship with students' education. In addition, students' involvement in the community (i.e. participation in voluntary activities, internships etc.) is discussed.

Finally, the conclusions chapter summarises the main findings of this research and highlights the main contributions of the thesis. It also discusses the possible implications of these findings to policy initiatives and ends with some recommendations for future research.

In addition to offering a new approach to understanding the role of social capital in promoting learning in schools, this research also aims to inform educational policies. As mentioned above,

during the last decade, the government has undertaken a number of initiatives to improve educational achievement by enhancing social capital in communities (Gewirtz *et al*, 2005). However, these initiatives have arguably not taken sufficiently into account the different ways in which social capital impacts on learning in different contexts and how social inequalities shape these (Gamarnikow and Green, 2007; Gamarnikow and Green, 1999; Gewirtz *et al*, 2005). This research examines how class, ethnicity and gender mediate social capital and its role in learning and suggests that social capital is unlikely to work in the same way for all social groups. Conversely, people of different ethnic or class backgrounds incorporate and/or use social capital in different ways and with different results. Social capital is not a 'technicist' variable but one which is strongly contextualized by social frameworks. Overall, the findings of this thesis provide evidence which can be used to enable policies better tailored to promoting learning and equality for different community contexts.

## Chapter 1

### Social Capital and Education: Rhetoric or Tangible Reality?

#### A. Introduction - The Rediscovery of Social Capital

Social capital has become a concept widely used by the academic community. Even though most authors trace the first use of 'social capital' in 1916 in a study by Lyda Judson Hanifan, the term 'social capital' seems to have been used as early as in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A New York Times article published in 1883 used social capital in relation to the topic of husband-snatching. Nevertheless, the first systematic use of 'social capital' for research purposes seems to have been indeed in 1916 by Lyda Judson Hanifan in relation to his research on the social problems faced by rural school communities. The second use of social capital for research purposes was in 1961 by Jane Jacobs' research on communities of New York. Yet, it was not until the 1970s, after Bourdieu's and Coleman's writings, that the emergence of social capital became more perceptible and influential. Even though Bourdieu and Coleman worked at about the same time their conceptualisation of social capital was inherently different and influenced different strands of society. On the one hand, Bourdieu was quite influential among sociological circles – mainly in Europe – and brought the notion of social capital into the focus of sociologists. On the other hand Coleman with his rational choice theory approach became well known among economists and later influential to policy makers. During the following decades up until today social capital has been increasingly employed by both academics and policy makers.

The concept of social capital is used in different ways, however, by different agents. Yet, despite the fact that different researchers operationalised social capital in different ways, it is generally accepted that social capital refers to *social networks* and their accompanying *norms*. The use of *trust* as an additional (see Putnam, 1995) or exclusive (see Fukuyama, 1996) component of social capital is also a way in which social capital has been operationalised. Nevertheless, this operationalisation is contested as it is argued to lead to a tautological fallacy by assuming trust to be both a component and an outcome of social capital (Woolcock, 2001a). This thesis employs a wide definition of social capital which includes many constitutive parts. In particular, for the purposes of this study, social capital is understood to comprise mainly social networks and norms but also the values and the attitudes that characterise these norms and networks and that are relevant to education and schooling. Participations and memberships in groups/associations are also considered as constitutive parts of social capital and are examined here as long as they are relevant to students' education. While trust per se does not constitute part of this thesis' conceptual definition of social capital, it is still explored as a concept that is directly related to social capital, namely as an outcome of the norms, values and social networks. The reason behind the employment of this rather 'inflated' definition of social capital

lies in one of the objectives of this thesis, namely to explore and disentangle the various types and forms of social capital and consider their manifestations independently. This exploratory aim of the study necessitates the adoption of an all-encompassing social capital concept. The way social capital is conceptualised and employed in relation to education is discussed in more detail in the third part of this chapter.

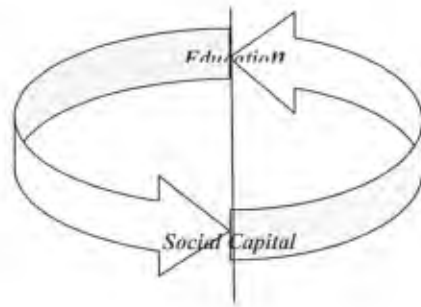
Social capital is a concept of interest within the framework of several disciplines, such as economics, education, health, sociology and politics. In each of these disciplines the function of social capital and thus its effects are seen through a different prism. Nevertheless, it is by and large argued that social capital generates and/or enhances positive outcomes. Several studies suggest that social capital results in higher rates of economic growth, higher educational level, better health (for an overview see Halpern, 2005). Yet, this stance *per se* as well as the arguments employed in its support derives from various premises and ideological standpoints. As a result, the discourse of social capital has generated abundant debates and criticisms from various agents and different disciplines.

This chapter sets the scene in relation to this study's focus. The first part discusses the way social capital has been employed within the field of education. In particular, it considers the way research approaches and governmental policies have influenced the use of social capital while this thesis was conducted. The second part outlines the approach adopted in this study. The third part of this chapter discusses the way social capital related concepts are deployed in the thesis. Finally, the main part of this chapter comprises a critical review of some of the most relevant literature to this thesis' topic and underpins the hypothesis this research is built upon.

## **B. Social Capital in the Educational Discourse**

The relationship between social capital and education is generally understood as a twofold relationship. Social capital is considered as both a generator and an outcome of education. On the one hand, a number of studies carried out in the US and the UK found that the higher the educational qualifications of individuals the higher their social capital in its various expressions (i.e. networks, civil engagement, trust etc.) (Coulthard, Walker and Morgan, 2002; Deviren and Babb, 2005; Putnam, 2000). On the other hand, several studies, also based on the US and the UK, focused on social capital's impact on education and argued its beneficial effect (Bassani, 2006; Coleman, 1988; West-Burnham, Farrar and Otero, 2007). Assuming the validity of both directions within the social capital-education relationship, the latter could be depicted in the figure below.





*Fig. 1: The twofold relationship of social capital and education.*

This study is concerned with the right semicircle of the above figure, namely it considers the influence of social capital on education rather than vice versa. In particular, this thesis focuses on social capital in respect to its relationship with the schooling of teenage students. The interest of this research lies in two main axes of schooling. The first axis regards an examination of the association between social capital and the educational outcomes of individual students. So the achievement of students in various tests and exams is considered with this respect but also students' educational decisions, such as their course choices, university choices etc. The second axis comprises an exploration of students' experiences at school with particular reference to social capital. An important part of the latter focuses on the study of students' inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic friendship formation and the way they are influenced, if at all, in respect to the school's ethnic composition. Friendship formation is also explored in relation to students' gender and social class background. Of course, the second axis might also be seen in relation to the first one, as students' friendships or other school experiences might be associated in different ways with their educational outcomes. Yet, it is believed here that this area warrants independent analysis as it might provide useful insights on issues such as inter-ethnic relationships and trust, levels and expressions of racism, the role of the school and community cohesion.

When disaggregating social capital into its constituents and looking at it in the framework of education, it becomes evident that a number of social capital propositions are not new, at least not entirely, in sociological literature. In fact, the role of social capital, within the context of family and particularly in the form of social networks and norms between parents and children had been discussed by a number of academics much before 'social capital' emerged in the academic terrain. Douglas for example, in his book 'The Home and the School' highlighted the importance of parents' involvement in their children's education, as early as 1964. 'The children whose parents show a high level of interest not only make higher average scores in the tests at eight and eleven years, but also improve the level of their performance between these ages so that they pull ahead' (1964, p. 85). Douglas referred to the effects of parental interest,

expectations and attitudes in relation to the children's educational achievement, something which in the context of social capital can be seen today as relevant or even equivalent to parents-children's networks and family norms.

The concept of 'social capital' suggested for the first time that these existing notions of networks and norms constitute a form of *capital*. That is to say, something which can be used as a means to something else and to which one can invest in. Consequently, *investment* in social capital and high social capital stock is argued to lead to a number of benefits for human beings, in domains such as education, health, career, socio-economic position and elsewhere. Based on this rationale, underinvestment in social capital and low levels of social capital should be expected to have the opposite results. Applying these principles in the realm of education, social capital investment is argued to result in higher educational achievement (Aldridge, Halpern and Fitzpatrick, 2002; Coleman, 1987; Coleman, 1988).

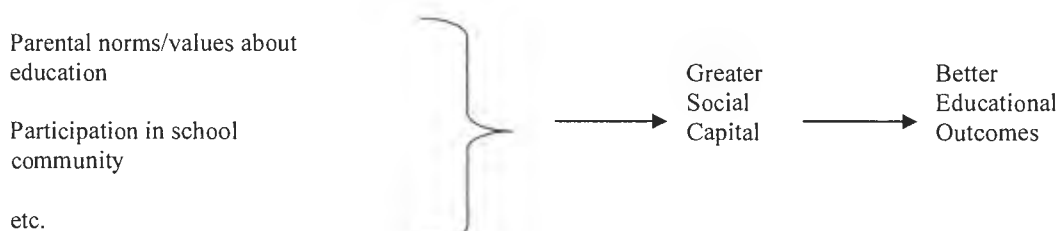
Educational policies under the 'New Labour' government in the UK have been significantly influenced by social capital theory (Gamarnikow and Green, 2005; Gamarnikow and Green, 1999; Gewirtz *et al*, 2005). As a result, a number of initiatives were undertaken during the last decade, in order to improve educational achievement by enhancing social capital in communities. Initiatives such as the Education Action Zones (EAZ), Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) and the Neighbourhood Renewal Initiative attempted to raise achievement in disadvantaged areas by building social capital, particularly in relation to parents. Yet, the way in which 'the notion of 'social capital'' was understood for the purposes of these attempts was as argued by Foley and Edwards 'generally undertheorized and oversimplified' (1997, p. 550). The major influences of educational policies in relation to social capital under the New Labour have been the work and theory of James Coleman and Robert Putnam (Gamarnikow and Green, 2007). Nonetheless, as is extensively discussed in the following chapter, Putnam's and Coleman's theories ignore fundamental issues that shape social reality, such as systematic inequalities. As a result, the educational initiatives that were influenced by these theorists were, as much as their theoretical foundations, blind to inequalities. Despite their proclaimed intention of improving educational achievement through social capital investment, they have arguably not taken sufficiently into account the different ways in which social capital influences schooling in different contexts and how social inequalities shape these. On the contrary, social capital was perceived as a general 'panacea' for educational achievement (Healey, 2006). This approach has important implications not only at the practical level, whereby the targets (here educational improvement) are unlikely to be met but also at the theoretical/philosophical level. The way that New Labour treated social capital by systematically keeping it disconnected from the role of structural inequalities, has implied a shift of responsibility from the state to the individuals and their families (Gamarnikow and Green, 1999), from the macro-level to the micro- and

sometimes meso-level. As Stephen Ball very well articulated ‘the policy work of New Labour has reconstructed the nature of educational problems and redistributed blame...’ (2008, p.157).

This PhD questions the assertion that social capital has a beneficial role on education in all cases and in the same way for everyone, something that educational policies have assumed almost axiomatically. Conversely, it stems from the standpoint that social capital is sensitive to the systematic inequalities that exist at the different levels of society. Initiatives which fail to acknowledge this and insist in seeing social capital out of its context are quite unlikely to meet their targets. The realised tension between these two stances as well as the paradox of Putnam-influenced educational policies is well exemplified by an adjusted figure from Portes (see below).

Portes suggested the possibility of ‘spuriousness’ regarding the social capital impact on political outcomes (2000, p. 5). He argued that other factors, not taken originally into account by adherents of the social capital argument, are likely to explain both the assumed cause, that is social capital, and its outcomes, namely ‘better political outcomes (sound government, effective economic policies, and public programmes)’ (Portes, 2000, fig.1, p. 6). Here, Portes’ figure is adjusted to suite the framework of this thesis. So, educational outcomes replace political outcomes as the effect produced by social capital. An example of parental social networks and norms could act as the assumed cause through which better educational outcomes are achieved. This resonates with educational policies which perceive parental aspirations, participation in the school community etc. to be boosting social capital (social capital investment) and the latter consecutively to be improving educational outcomes (*I. The Social Capital Argument*). The second diagram is an adjustment of the hypothesis proposed by Portes, according to which ‘it is possible that other factors left out from the original reasoning account for both the alleged cause and the effect, rendering the relationship spurious’ (Portes, 2000, p.5). Here the hypothesis is that both parental aspirations/participation in the school community and the form of social capital are influenced by external factors such as social class, ethnicity and gender and in turn influence educational outcomes (*II. The Spuriousness Argument*). In other words, the second diagram suggests that the effect of social capital is mediated by class, ethnicity and gender.

#### *I. The Social Capital Argument:*



II. The Spuriousness Argument:

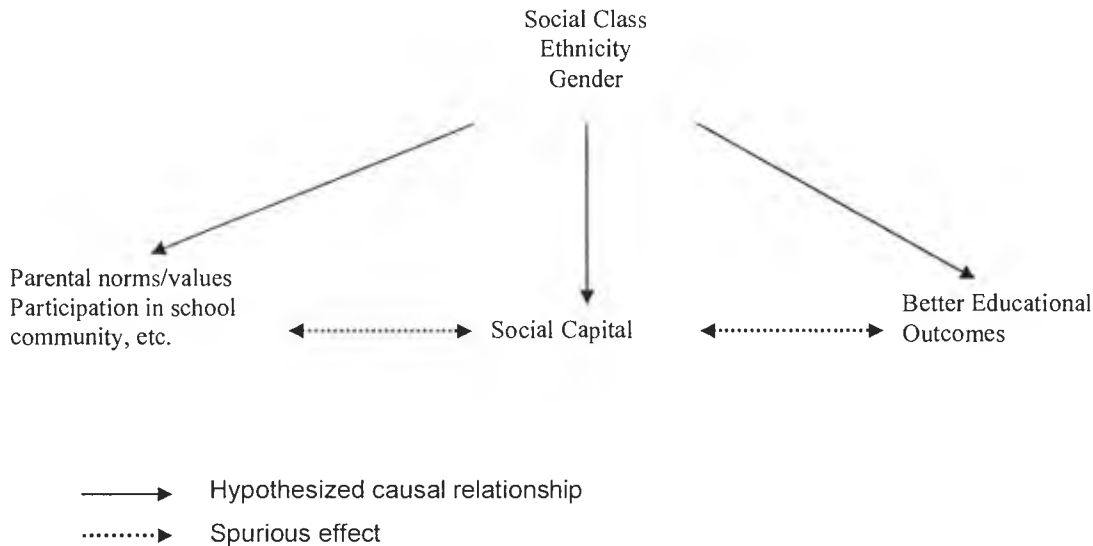


Fig. 2: Adjusted from Portes' figure (*Collective social capital: alternative causal arguments*) (2000, p. 6).

C. This Thesis' Focus

An acceptance of the validity of the second argument, which supports the spuriousness effect of social capital, would imply that the abovementioned educational policies are seriously limited as their theoretical background is slippery. This thesis rejects the first argument (*I. The Social Capital Argument*) on the grounds that social capital is unlikely to work in the same way for all social groups. Indeed a considerable number of studies on related topics provided important evidence regarding the existence of social capital differences across various social groups. The following section reviews some of these studies. All in all, this study's stance is more inclined toward the second argument. Nevertheless, it assumes a less deterministic relationship between social class, gender and ethnicity, social capital and educational outcomes than the one assumed in the second argument. It allows for the probability of at least some limited form of agency to the concept of social capital which therefore implies a non spurious association with educational outcomes. It should be nonetheless emphasised that an analysis that does not take into account the role of social class, ethnicity and gender would be incomplete. In light of this standpoint, this thesis maps the function of social capital across different social groups and considers social capital in its context(s). In doing so the emphasis is laid on social class, ethnicity and gender and the way these interact with social capital as reported by young people. Therefore, this thesis explores the different social capital forms available to students, the way these are shaped by issues of class, ethnicity and gender and the way they are associated with students' schooling (i.e. educational achievement, university plans, and school experiences).

This research draws on students from four ethnic groups, namely White-British students, Indian students, Black African students and Black Caribbean students.

#### **D. Decoding Social Capital**

Social capital has been criticized - not without reason - for fluidity, as it has been used in different ways by different researchers. Social capital is in fact a complex concept (Healy, 2006) whose formation lies in a number of parameters. It is therefore important to denote the way in which this concept is used in this thesis. In order to decode social capital this part exemplifies the different forms and dimensions of social capital as well as the different contexts within which it is examined for the purposes of this study. As has been discussed in the introductory part of this chapter, social capital is understood here to comprise social networks, norms, values, attitudes and associational participations/memberships. These constitutive parts are examined in relation to students' education and are explored within three contexts, namely the school, the family and the community. This section discusses the way these concepts and their various dimensions are deployed in the thesis.

Social capital can be approached at different levels, ranging from a person's individual social capital (micro-level) to a whole state's social capital (macro-level), the latter also associated by some researchers with social cohesion (Zetter *et al*, 2006). An examination of the meso-level and particularly macro-level (Halpern, 2005) of social capital is beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, the main focus is drawn on the micro-level (Halpern, 2005), that is of individual social capital as mobilised within the contexts of the school, the family and the community. In this study community is understood as the frameworks - other than family and school - in which participants are involved. Often a person is associated with more than one community. For instance, some of the participants of this research were active in their neighbourhood (geographic community) by doing voluntary work and participating in other extra-curricular activities. In this respect community refers to the locality in which students live. However, there can be different forms of communities that are not necessarily organised around geographical criteria but rather around social characteristics shared by a group of people. For instance, some of the students-participants reported being active within the framework of their church/temple/mosque society (ethnic or religious community) by attending special Sunday schools or youth clubs. So on this occasion community refers to the particular ethnic and/or religious affiliation of students. All in all, social capital in the context of community, family and school is examined through the lens of the individual and in particular through the lens of students themselves.

Social capital is a multi-dimensional concept and as such it has been broken into three different forms. Woolcock (2001a) first and then Halpern (2005) distinguished bonding, bridging and

linking social capital. Bonding social capital is usually taken to refer to networks within associations or between people with similar characteristics. This definition as applied in this research refers to networks of people from within the same social group, i.e. intra-ethnic or intra-class networks. Bridging social capital is understood to relate to the more distant links between people with different characteristics or from different associations and communities, and is used here in relation to ethnic communities, i.e. inter-ethnic networks. Finally, linking social capital, according to Halpern, can be seen as a special form of bridging social capital that specifically concerns power – ‘... a vertical bridge across asymmetrical power and resources’ (2005, p. 25). In addition, Woolcock (2001b) as cited in Cote and Healy ‘relates linking social capital to the capacity of individuals and communities to leverage resources, ideas, and information from formal institutions beyond the immediate community radius’ (2001, p.42). In this research the concept of linking social capital represents two types of social networks a) the networks between people of different socio-economic strata and/or powerful others and b) the networks between individuals and institutions from which they can yield benefit. For instance, the social networks between two students of different socio-economic backgrounds could be perceived as linking social capital for the lower socio-economic background student to the extent that he/she could benefit from the higher socio-economic background friend’s cultural capital, knowledge of educational matters etc. Equally, the social networks of parents with school staff and/or their participation in the school community is also perceived as linking social capital in as much as it provides them with some form of benefit, i.e. useful information about their child’s education.

The differentiation of social capital into bonding, bridging and linking is useful in making sense of the empirical data and identifying interesting patterns. Yet, these definitions are not wholly unproblematic. The distinction between bonding and bridging social capital is not always set in stone; in certain cases it might be problematic. For example, how could the social networks between a working-class Black Caribbean and a middle-class Black Caribbean person be best defined? Based on the hereinabove definition of bonding, bridging and linking social capital the same relationship is both linking if we take social class as the reference category and bonding if we take ethnicity as the reference category. As most human relationships involve multiple identities, and this is indeed confirmed by data presented in the analysis chapters of this study, the classification of social capital in one of the aforementioned categories is subject to this problem. There are two possible ways to resolve this: we either use different terminologies for some of these concepts or specify the reference category at each time. An example for the first would be using the terms inter-ethnic to correspond to bridging social capital and intra-ethnic to correspond to bonding social capital in relation to ethnicity. An example for the second way would be to use bonding social capital in terms of ethnicity or bonding social capital in terms of social class. Here these terms are used conventionally, mainly in order to be consistent with existing literature. Yet, where there are overlapping identities and there is a need for clarification

alternative terms are used, such as inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic social networks instead of bridging and bonding social capital respectively. Nevertheless, despite all these issues that exist at the practical level, an important question arising from the designation of social capital in its different forms is the impact that the latter has on students' schooling with reference to each social group. Is bonding, bridging and linking social capital equally available to all students irrespective of their social background? And what is the association of each of these forms of social capital with students' schooling? These issues are addressed in the data analysis chapters.

The ways in which social capital could be broken down are not however exhausted by the differentiation into bonding, bridging and linking. Even if we assume that two individuals share the same bonding, bridging or linking social capital this does not necessarily imply that their social capital is identical. There are still other things to be taken into account. Granovetter's distinction into weak and strong ties could be seen as another way of differentiating social capital and in particular social networks. Granovetter's work (1973; 1983) as well as subsequent studies on the same area by other researchers (Lin, Ensel and Vaughn, 1981) suggest that in certain cases weak ties are actually far more effective than strong ties, despite what common logic might originally assume. This study suggests the notions of intensity/density as important for the distinction of social capital. The intensity/density of social capital is argued to be determined by the weakness or strength of the social networks. For example students at school create a variety of social networks which might have considerably different qualities. For instance, social networks between best friends have a completely different nature from those of simple acquaintances. Following on from this rationale and placing it in the context of this thesis the following question emerges: do all students - regardless of their social background - have the same social capital in terms of its density/intensity? And what is the association of each type with students' schooling?

Finally, a significant parameter to be taken into account is the processes/channels through which the social capital influences schooling. For example, so far research put forward a number of processes through which social capital mediates educational outcomes, the main one being parental involvement (McNeal, 1999). In turn, parental involvement itself can be broken down into different sub-processes such as monitoring (Coleman, 1988), academic support, participation in school activities, communication with teachers and other parents etc. The question here is whether the processes and channels through which social capital influences students' schooling are the same for everyone and equally effective for everyone.

After discussing the constitutive parts of social capital, as it is used in this study, the focus now turns to an examination of the channels through which social capital may operate. The purpose of this section is twofold: first, to give an overview of the most important writings with respect to

the different niches of this research and second, to engage in a discussion of the formed hypothesis. Not all literature referenced in this part refers explicitly to social capital; it is nevertheless deemed very relevant and it is used here either because it discusses social networks, albeit not referred to explicitly as 'social capital', or because its theoretical extensions are seen as relevant to this study.

### *The school*

This thesis explores students' social networks<sup>3</sup>, norms, values and attitudes within the context of the school. Research has demonstrated that the educational achievement of students as well as their attitudes and subject choices can be influenced by their fellow-students. Peer networks are very important to the way students see themselves in the school context as well as outside it and are very influential to their self-confidence and esteem. Students with no friends in the school might feel lonely, experience distress and suffer from low self-confidence with unfavourable results on their achievement. Conversely, a number of studies carried out in the US revealed that friendships enable students to see school in a positive way and in turn perform better (Roseth, Johnson and Johnson, 2008; Véronneau and Dishion, 2011; Wentzel and Caldwell, 1997). In addition, certain types of interactions might create and enhance students' aspirations and expectations for educational outcomes. For example, students might be motivated to study more when they know that all their friends intend to proceed to higher education. Therefore, educational outcomes can be positively associated with specific students' interactions that increase motivation for studying by developing educational aspirations/expectations and healthy within-group competition (Gibson, 1988). Conversely, certain expressions of social capital can have negative effects on education as in the case of anti-school gangs whose norms encourage truancy or anti-social behaviour. The negative effects of social capital were referred to by Portes and Landolt (1996) and later by Putnam (2000) as the 'dark side' of social capital. Based on these findings it is expected that certain types of social networks and norms among students might have a positive impact on their educational outcomes and certain others might have the opposite effect. In other words, it is hypothesised that some forms of social capital encourage and promote educational achievement and positive school experiences while some others discourage educational achievement and/or distract students from that pathway.

### *The Family*

Moving on to the family framework, this thesis focuses on two aspects of family life: the role of the nuclear family, namely brothers or sisters and mainly parents and the role of the extended

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<sup>3</sup> Social networks between students and teachers are acknowledged as relevant social capital to students' education and schooling experiences. However, the thesis does not address this issue explicitly.



family, namely aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents etc. Parental contribution to students' educational outcomes is perhaps the most researched area in relation to the impact of social capital on educational outcomes. This has not always been done with an explicit reference to 'social capital' as such. In fact, the role of parental involvement has been researched well before social capital became prominent in academia. So far research has drawn on two main axes: parents' interactions with their student-children in the home and parents' interactions with the school. In relation to the first, family norms and types of interactions between parents and children are argued to be very influential to students' education. The time parents spend with their children and the kind of activities they carry out together are highly significant (West-Burnham, Farrar and Otero, 2007). Parents' attitudes and perceptions about education influence students' achievement through parental expectations and aspirations (Field, 2003; Halpern, 2005; Lareau, 1989). Parental assistance with homework or merely discussion of future educational plans enhances educational outcomes. Also, sanctions, such as monitoring the time children spend watching TV, playing or seeing their friends, are also argued to be significant to how well students do at school (Coleman, 1988). Even though the validity of each one of these propositions/outcomes is separately researched by this study, it is generally expected that certain expressions of social capital that concern parent-students' relationships are influential to their educational outcomes.

Parental involvement in the school is found to be of vital importance for students' achievement. Parents who visit the school regularly to ask about their child's progress and/or to negotiate better educational provision for their child and parents who attend parents' evenings or participate in parents associations are very likely to positively contribute to the educational outcomes of their children (Desimone, 1999; Lareau, 1989). Of course, indicators about parents' participation in the school community could often be misleading if not treated with caution. For example, an indicator measuring the frequency in which parents visit their child's school might not necessarily designate positive parental involvement. It might actually point to the opposite as parents visiting the school often, might need to do so when their child is involved in disciplinary issues, something which is clearly not positively correlated to educational achievement. It is therefore hypothesised that social capital with regard to the school and the parents might have a powerful influence on students' educational outcomes. Yet, this thesis also explores the conditions under which this kind of social capital has a positive impact for students. The latter is discussed below.

### *Community*

Students' networks and norms developed within the community could also be influential to their educational outcomes. Research demonstrated that students' involvement in the community through participation in various extracurricular activities is positively correlated with their school

grades (Hollrah, N.d). One way in which this is achieved is by building valuable social capital. It is hypothesised here that these activities provide students with opportunities to meet other people and acquire positive experiences. For example, students who take part in community activities are given the chance to meet other children and through that socialisation improve their educational performance in the same way they do so by socialising with children from the school. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, students' participation in the community enables them to get in touch with older people, who can advise them on educational matters or simply comprise role models for them (Israel, Beaulieu and Hartless, 2001).

Finally, parents' participation in the community is seen as very important for their children's educational outcomes. On the one hand, parents' own participation might encourage their children's participation. On the other hand, parents' participation in the community brings them in touch with other people with whom they might in turn exchange useful information about their children. Coleman referring to the value of these interconnections suggested that 'social capital in the community exists in the interest, even the intrusiveness, of one adult in the activities of someone else's child' (1987, p.36). This holds true, as parents tend to discuss about their children quite often. Educational issues might come up as a topic of discussion with other people. In this case parents are likely to exchange opinions and subsequently, become familiar with other people's attitudes and strategies toward education and they might be influenced by them, in negative or positive ways. In other cases, parents might resort to some of these people for advice in relation to their child's educational choices. Gibson brings the example of Punjabi students who 'had access to educated individuals through their extended kin group or through' their temple and perceived those people as 'role models' (1988, p. 129). This kind of social capital could be very valuable for children's education especially at times when decisions require certain knowledge to navigate the system.

Social capital is therefore multi-dimensional and can operate in different ways to influence educational outcomes. The various channels through which social capital might function were briefly discussed. Yet, after accepting this multiplicity of social capital, the next question arising is whether each of these dimensions works the same way for all people. The next section reviews and evaluates some of the existing research findings regarding this question and proposes the respective hypotheses.

#### **E. Variations of Social capital across groups**

So far literature – whether explicitly referring to social capital or more generally to networks and interactions - demonstrates significant differences among people on the basis of gender, ethnicity and social class. Despite different researchers stemming from different standpoints there seems to be a consensus in relation to the existence of important social capital variations

among different social groups. This section draws on two aspects: on the social capital patterns and on the social capital impact. These two elements might coincide: for example certain social capital patterns might be unique to a specific ethnic community and at the same time influence their educational outcomes in a unique way. Alternatively, they might exist independently as in the case of two ethnic groups, when the same type of social capital has a different impact. In either case, it is of vital importance to identify these differences as they might contribute to the comprehension of educational outcomes and inform educational policies accordingly.

### *i. Ethnicity*

#### *Students' Friendships*

Studies have shown that people from minority ethnic backgrounds might be more likely to form close friendships with people from within their own ethnic group rather than with people from different ethnic groups (Campbell and McLean, 2002; Connolly, 1998; Connolly, 2000; Gibson, 1986; McLean, 2001; Reynolds, 2007; Solomon, 1992). This pattern resonates with the fact that people who experience hostility or prejudice in their immediate environment feel more comfortable being next to people who experience similar attitudes. Gibson, based on a US study, argued about an 'unconscious formation' of this kind of friendships as 'mutual protection societies' in response to 'the workings of institutional racism, in schools and elsewhere...' (1986, p.118). Reynolds' (2007) and Connolly's (1998) studies in the UK are in accord with this. It can be therefore hypothesised that stereotyping, prejudice or other expressions of racism within the school context - whether overt or covert, intentional or unintentional - tend to reinforce bonding social capital. Another question arises here though: What role does the school ethnic composition have in the formation of inter-ethnic (bridging social capital) and intra-ethnic (bonding social capital) friendships, if any?

Putnam's (2007) latest work is very relevant here, albeit not explicitly related to education, as it discusses the impact of community's ethnic composition on social capital. Putnam (2007) has argued quite controversially on the basis of his area-level data in the US that ethnic diversity reduces social capital both across and within ethnic groups, even when controlling for income inequality. On the basis of these findings Putnam formed the *constrict theory* according to which ethnic diversity has negative implications for both inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic trust. This theory rejects the tenets of two other main theses that discuss the effects of ethnic diversity, namely the *contact thesis* (Pettigrew, 1998) and the *conflict thesis* (Blumer, 1958; Bobo and Tuan, 2006). On the one hand the contact thesis advocates that ethnic diversity encourages inter-ethnic mixing and positive inter-ethnic attitudes. The conflict thesis, on the other hand, argues that ethnic diversity has negative effects on inter-ethnic attitudes and causes mistrust between people of different ethnic backgrounds while it promotes intra-ethnic mixing and solidarity.

Putnam's theory departs from both these standpoints and argues that ethnic diversity is not only bad for inter-ethnic trust, as suggested by the conflict thesis, but for intra-ethnic trust as well. This might have many theoretical extensions in relation to education that are anything but sanguine. First, it implies that multi-cultural schools do not actually promote inter-ethnic networks (bridging social capital) but actually have the opposite effect, namely reducing social capital both between students of different ethnic backgrounds and between students of the same ethnic background. Second, if social capital is indeed important for learning (Coleman, 1988), and if schools are considered as communities, it implies that diversity in school intakes is likely to be detrimental for educational outcomes. Overall, Putnam's most recent findings and a rational combination with Coleman's research outcomes not only suggests that ethnic diversity reduces students' social capital within and across ethnic groups - something that contradicts important pre-existing literature, but also suggests that it is detrimental for educational outcomes.

Letki's (2008) work, which has been perhaps the first important attempt to address Putnam's research question with UK data, tells another story. Her results thoroughly question Putnam's findings that social capital is weakened by ethnic diversity. This proposition has no sound empirical grounds in Letki's research as she finds that ethnic diversity has only a limited impact on social capital, when socio-economic factors are controlled for. On the contrary and despite policy makers' assumptions, it is the socio-economic characteristics of British neighbourhoods that account for most of the difference in social capital. And it is herein that the policy fallacy falls - says Letki: 'There exists a relationship between solidarity, diversity and poverty. Solidarity is undermined by poverty, but the blame is placed on diversity, as a result of the fact that diversity and poverty are strongly associated' (2008, p. 121). This thesis transfers this issue in the school context and tests which of the findings hold true. It also introduces notions of racialisation into the discussion of social capital whereby the relation between poverty and inhabiting racial/ethnic categories could be seen as interrelated.

In addition, literature suggests that peer networks influence educational outcomes in many different ways for each ethnic group. On the one hand, networks among certain ethnic groups encompass a kind of pro-education peer-pressure. Research on U.S Punjabi students found that they 'competed with one another for good grades, teased those who did poorly, and placed pressure on one another to uphold Punjabi standards of behaviour' (Gibson, 1988). Likewise, Chinese students in the UK developed a form of competitiveness, within their ethnic peer-group, toward educational achievement (Archer and Francis, 2007). On the other hand, some researchers found that Black students' attitudes toward schooling were rather negative. In particular, some Black African/Caribbean students and especially male Black African/Caribbean students regarded educational achievement in rather negative terms and this was argued by Solomon (1992) to be related to the fact that Black African/Caribbean students, who achieved

well, were often regarded by their Black fellow-students as compromising with a structure which was inherently opposing to them. So this fear of 'acting white' (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986) along with a conscious or unconscious attempt to 'resist' - to use Solomon's words (1992) - a system which is failing them, seems to have an immediate impact on Black students' achievement. The paradox lies in the fact that a different dimension of social capital, namely educational aspirations, contradicts the low level of Black students' educational achievement, as it is much higher among Black students than White students in both the US and the UK (Rhamie and Hallam, 2002; Strand and Winston, 2008; Yan, 1999). So, alternative theoretical frameworks could be employed for the understanding of these patterns such as institutional racism or individual racism. The extent to which Putnam's constrict theory and its theoretical implications apply in the schools that participated in this research is discussed in more detail in chapters 4 and 5.

#### *Parents' ethnic background: A social capital determinant?*

Parental social capital is perhaps one of the most diverse forms of social capital. Educational norms, perceptions and involvement vary significantly for families of different ethnic origin. For instance, research from the UK and the US demonstrated that parental participation in the school is more limited for Asians than for Whites. Gibson's (1988) research on American Sikh Indians, Archer and Francis' (2007) research on British Chinese and Qian and Blair's (1999) research that included American Asians (using an aggregate of people from all Asian countries) supported this outcome. What is more, research revealed that even when parental participation in the school exists among Asian people, it is less relevant to the children's learning (Desimone, 1999; Qian and Blair, 1999). The latter supports the hypothesis of this thesis that the association of social capital and education is different for different groups. In this case, lack of parental involvement in the school community by Asian parents did not necessarily act detrimentally on Asian students' learning outcomes. This study explores whether there are indeed differences in parental involvement across the ethnic groups under examination. A possible difference of parental involvement across ethnic groups could be seen in relation to two possibilities: first, the thesis allows for the likelihood that certain obstacles might prohibit or discourage ethnic minority people's participation in school activities/events; and second it takes into account that different parenting styles might exist across different ethnic groups.

This thesis also considers the possibility of an interweave between the two factors: school participation avenues might be shut to a great extent, for ethnic minority parents, because they lack knowledge of the educational system; as a result they are forced to develop alternative mechanisms to assist their child's learning. This might hold true not only for Asian parents, as discussed above, but for Black parents as well. As discussed later in more detail, supplementary schools are one of these mechanisms and are strongly related to the joint effort

put by Black families and their community to support students' learning. Indian parents seem to possess similar alternative social capital reservoirs that positively affect their children's educational outcomes. Educational norms within the family are also relevant here. It is argued that Black African/Caribbean and Indian parents might express their pro-educational values in ways other than through their participation in the school community. Monitoring their children's homework and educational performance and expecting them to behave appropriately at school might comprise alternative parental practices that encourage positive educational outcomes. Pro-educational norms among people from minority ethnic communities might actually expand beyond the context of the family. Archer and Francis (2007) introduced a very useful concept, that of 'social competition', which is established among members of the Chinese community and is strongly related to Chinese students' educational achievement. 'Social competition between and within British-Chinese families ... functioned as a source of motivation to high academic achievement and was internalised by pupils, such that personal achievement (or failure) was viewed in collective terms...' (Archer and Francis, 2007, p.138,9). This kind of social capital is argued to drive Chinese students' motivation and aspirations having ultimately a positive impact on their achievement. It is hypothesised here that the concept of 'social competition' might also apply in other ethnic contexts and consequently drive students' educational outcomes.

### *Community*

Participation in the community can be a very important source of social capital generation, as it enables meeting and interacting with other people. Yet, social capital developed within the community, might vary across different social groups, and this might in turn have differential effects on students' educational outcomes. For example, research in Germany showed that different types of parental involvement in the community had an impact on students' track placement. For German parents involvement in sports had a positive impact on their children's achievement whereas for non-German parents it was involvement in religious events that had this impact (Cheng, Martin and Werum, 2007). It is worth mentioning that participation in religious activities is actually a common type of community involvement among some people from minority ethnic groups. McLean (2001) found that participation in religious events was one of the main forms in which Caribbean people in the UK were involved in the community. The same pattern was confirmed by Gibson (1988) regarding Sikh people in the United States. In particular, Gibson (1988) found that this kind of religious participation was not as intense whilst they were in their homeland but actually increased after they immigrated to the US. Coleman (1988), from his research on US-based faith schools, argued that the participation in a religious community has an important beneficial effect to educational outcomes since it prevents school drop outs. Faith schools, argued Coleman (1988), enable parental 'intergenerational closure' - parents knowing other parents - which in turn facilitates the application of positive educational

norms and the rejection of negative ones, such as truancy. It is therefore suggested that participation in a religious community has positive educational outcomes. This study does not look specifically at social capital deriving from religious participation but explores any social capital deriving from community participation whether religious or not. Yet, Coleman's findings are seen with scepticism, mainly because of the way social capital was theorized in his study (see next chapter for this discussion). Rather than accepting that belonging in a religious community - of any kind - has a positive effect on educational outcomes, this research investigates the way in which involvement in different activities within the community influences educational outcomes.

In addition to religious activities, literature demonstrates that there is another institution which is central to the community of minority ethnic people in the UK as well as other ethnic communities in different countries, such as in the U.S: the supplementary school. The supplementary school, in both cases, serves as an additional school for students and has a dual goal: on the one hand it intends to improve students' educational achievement and on the other hand it intends to familiarize them with their own culture via a curriculum which takes into consideration their own history (Hylton, 2000; Zhou and Kim, 2006). It has been argued that the Black African-Caribbean supplementary schools in the UK comprise a reaction to the inability of the broader society to meet the needs of Black people (Hylton, 2000; Mirza and Reay, 2000; Simon, 2007). The Indian community in the UK has developed similar institutions to the supplementary school (Creese *et al*, 2006; Jackson, 1984; Martin *et al*, 2003). These bodies provide students from minority ethnic backgrounds the opportunity to create relationships with other members of their ethnic group. It could be therefore argued that this type of community involvement offers important opportunities for the enhancement of bonding social capital. It is also hypothesised that social capital in the community framework might have a positive impact on students' educational outcomes if supports educational norms, enhances students' skills/knowledge or brings students' in touch with adults who can act as role models.

#### *Bonding, Bridging, Linking Social Capital & Ethnicity*

As argued above, studies have shown that people from minority ethnic backgrounds might be more likely to socialise with people from within their ethnic group than with people from a different ethnic group. This might be due to a number of reasons, not least to the fact that they are likely to find understanding and sympathetic ground from people who experience the same problems. Bonding social capital might indeed serve as a very useful resource, providing people with emotional or other support. Bonding social capital might also be due to a possible social closure among White people (Bonilla-Silva, Goar and Embrick, 2006) that does not allow for non-Whites to enter their socialisation networks. Yet, this is not to suggest that bridging and linking social capital does not exist among people from different ethnic groups. On the contrary,

it seems that both bridging and linking social capital are also evident in people's lives and in certain cases, as shown hereinbelow, they are even strategically pursued.

Studies suggest that people might benefit from linking social capital and in the case of people from minority ethnic backgrounds, from both bridging and linking social capital. Cheng et al's (2007) research found that non-German students in Germany were particularly benefited by two types of ties: the relationship of their parents with 'leaders in their own ethnoreligious community' and the relationship of their parents with Germans who could 'help immigrant parents navigate the educational system' (p.65). In both cases, non-German students' educational outcomes were positively influenced by linking social capital whether situated within or outside the ethnic group. A possible reason for that lies in the fact that middle-class people usually know more about the educational system and are thus more qualified to give influential and positive advice on educational matters. Additionally, since they are very likely educated themselves, they can serve as positive role models as well as to help develop an environment rich on educational aspirations and expectations. Furthermore, studies have revealed some interesting patterns in relation to the types of social networks pursued by some people from minority ethnic backgrounds. In particular, some middle-class ethnic minority people seem to be keen on developing ties with White people. An extract from Campbell and McLean (2002), referring to African-Caribbean people's own views, illustrates this in an exceptional way:

'People also spoke of the way in which social class divided the black community. Middle-class black people were often said to move away from the neighbourhood, preferring to live in more affluent (White dominated) neighbourhoods, and to lose their links with their neighbourhood of origin. Some spoke of the way in which upwardly mobile African - Caribbean people encouraged their children to form friendships with White children, discouraging their children from attending Black dominated youth clubs for example' (Campbell and McLean, 2002, p.654).

Reynolds' (2007) ethnographic research in the UK mentions two analogous cases that exemplify the way social class and ethnicity interact to generate particular forms of social networks. Justin, a Black girl, formed a number of inter-ethnic networks and this was facilitated by her high socio-economic status background which enabled her to generate bridging social capital. Likewise, Anthony was encouraged by his parents to develop friendships with 'successful' students and based on this rationale he was also sent to a private school (2007, p.393). All these examples illustrate the conscious and strategic attempts made by some people from minority ethnic backgrounds to attain linking social capital and often linking social capital situated outside their ethnic community. We can therefore hypothesise, first, that some people from minority ethnic groups feel that potential ties with the dominant group would benefit them and thus knowingly attempt to achieve this purpose; and second, that middle-class people



from minority ethnic groups might logically be more efficient in establishing these relationships than working-class people from minority ethnic groups.

## *ii. Social class*

Reynolds' (2007) and Campbell and McLean's (2002) findings, albeit discussed above in relation to ethnicity, also suggest that there are some genuine social class<sup>4</sup> differences with respect to social capital. This section elaborates the different ways social class might mediate the relationship between social capital and education. A first assumption in relation to how social capital varies across social classes could be that the higher the social class of the person the higher their levels of social capital. Yet, findings on that topic are rather contradictory. On the one hand, research demonstrated that people with low social class backgrounds possessed higher levels of social capital, as measured by informal ties such as friendship and relative networks (Coulthard, Walker and Morgan, 2002; Pichler and Wallace, 2008). This finding automatically cancels the assumption that high social class is associated with high levels of social capital. On the other hand, middle-class people held higher levels of formal social capital, as measured by participation in formal organisations (Pichler and Wallace, 2008; Post and Parks-Yancy, 2004). The latter finding is consistent with the first assumption. These two controversial findings highlight the need for a more detailed investigation of the expressions and dimensions of social capital and their role in relation to people's social class background. Indeed, when assessing the impact of social capital on certain outcomes, it is important to break down the different types of social capital and examine both the frequency in which they appear for each social class, but also the association of each type with the outcome. Several indicators of social capital might be abundant in working-class people but not necessarily relevant to certain outcomes of interest. Friends and relative networks, for instance, might be very useful for working-class people in providing them with emotional support and practical support on their everyday needs but might not be very useful as a resource for helping them find a job, or in the case of students for helping them improve their educational outcomes. On the contrary, the type of social capital possessed by the middle/upper-middle classes is proved far more useful for certain purposes, as in the case of providing them with a prestigious and well-paid job (Post and Parks-Yancy, 2004).

All in all, there are significant social capital differences between social classes - in both 'quality' and quantity levels. This variation is in fact so sound that it does not only emerge at the micro and meso level but also at the macro level. Pichler and Wallace (2008) on their analysis of data from 27 European countries employing the Eurobarometer not only confirmed that social capital

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<sup>4</sup> Social Class: Social class is defined in this study in relation to students' parental occupation in line with the categories defined in the Standard Occupational Classification 2000 of the Office for National Statistics. For further elaboration of the way social class is operationalised refer to Chapter 3 (Research Design).

varies across social classes but also revealed an association of this variation with the countries' overall level of inequality. Their analysis pinpointed that in countries with overall high levels of social inequality, such as the United Kingdom, there is a big gap in relation to the social capital possessed by different social classes. On the contrary, in the Nordic countries, where societal inequality is relatively lower, there is a smaller gap between social classes in relation to social capital. This finding is a very strong indication of the relationship between social class and social capital.

Coming to educational outcomes, it is therefore not surprising that social capital dynamics vary across social classes (Horvat, Weiniger and Lareau, 2003; Lareau, 1989; Ream and Palardy, 2008) with respect to educational strategies and outcomes. It is much easier for the middle-class than the working-class people to mobilise social capital which will have a positive impact on students' educational achievement (Ball and Vincent, 1998; Horvat, Weiniger and Lareau, 2003; Lareau, 1989; Lareau, 2008). This middle-class advantage in relation to social capital possession and employment works on various levels. First of all, middle-class norms in relation to education might be different from working-class norms in a way that causes significant variations to the perceptions of parents and students of different social class backgrounds (Crozier, 1996). Middle-class parents are more likely to have high levels of educational credentials than working-class parents due to the strong correlation between social class and levels of education. This is in turn positively associated with the pro-educational expectations parents have for their children which consecutively might influence the expectations children hold for themselves. According to Crozier middle-class parents tend to have specific pro-educational aspirations and expectations for their children whereas working-class parents 'tend not to hold a specific vision of their child's future' (1997, p.197). This is of course not to suggest that working-class parents do not wish their children to do well at school but rather that their aspirations and expectations are vague.

The expectations of students, whether high or low whether positively or negatively related to their educational outcomes, are not only influenced by their parents' expectations and norms. Their extended family environment as well as the community they belong to could also exercise a role. Here again, parental social class matters. Middle-class parents are likely to have middle-class friends, who like themselves know the educational system very well. They are also very likely to know people who work as educators (Lareau, 1989). The growing up and socialisation of students within a circle of educated middle-class people not only enables them to develop high educational aspirations but might also create a form of responsibility and self-commitment to achieve so as to not 'break the norm' by being 'an exception'. At the same time, interactions within a highly-educated, middle-class environment enable parents to get useful information about the educational system, an opportunity often not available to working-class parents. Ball and Vincent (1998) referred to the exchange of this type of information among middle-class

parents as 'hot knowledge'. In addition, middle-class parents, as a result of their economic and cultural advantage over working-class parents, are more able to encourage and support their children's participation in community activities which, as mentioned above, could be influential to students' educational outcomes. This is a pertinent example that supports Bourdieuan theory (Bourdieu, 1986) on the transformation of one form of capital into another form of capital. Indeed, in this case inequalities are reproduced via a transformation of cultural capital into social capital. The second chapter of this thesis elaborates Bourdieu's stance further.

Finally, overall parental involvement in students' education is more frequent and effective for the middle class than the working class (Crozier, 1997; Lareau, 1989; Reay, 2005; Vincent, 2001). Lareau gives an explicit account of the difference between working-class and middle/upper-middle-class parents regarding their participation in students' education:

Middle-class parents 'have extensive information about their children's schooling, and they are very critical of the school, including the professional performance of their children's teacher(s). Most, but not all, upper-middle-class parents read to their children and reinforce the curriculum at home. Many parents, particularly parents of low achievers, attempt to customize their children's schooling by requesting particular teachers, asking that their children be enrolled in school programmes, and complaining to the principal about the teacher. Some parents also try to compensate for weaknesses in the school programme by carrying out some of the classroom curriculum at home, hiring tutors, and having their children evaluated by educational consultants' (1989, p.8,9).

Some of these differences among parents of different social classes, regarding the way educational interventions are practiced, might be logically explained by financial differentials. Particularly, cases where action is taken to boost child's education through interventions such as home tuition or purchase of extra books are strongly and directly related to the economic latitude of a family. A poor working-class family can clearly not afford to hire a tutor. Therefore the mobilising of social capital to find one is not relevant. Yet, in other cases of parental involvement, such as attending Parent-Teacher Associations and meeting the teachers, the relationship with social class, does not appear to be so explicit. An alternative suggestion is that educational norms differ for parents of different social class backgrounds and this is articulated in the way they form their perceptions and attitudes toward education. For example, research suggested that middle-class parents hold different perceptions from working-class parents apropos of the responsibility for a child's education (Crozier, 1997). On the one hand, working-class parents believe that the school is exclusively liable for students' learning. On the other hand, middle-class parents believe that they are also responsible for the students' learning. As a result, working-class people entrust the school with their child's education, making the school the only 'trustee' and exhibit low or zero intervention in the educational processes. Conversely,

middle-class parents rather than entrusting their child's education to a single provider - school - they are strongly involved in their education and at times even openly condemn the school, expressing their own suggestions and wishes (Crozier, 1997; Lareau, 1989). Apparently this is not merely a matter of perceptions and attitudes; it is also a matter of potential - actual or realised. As Reay (2005) very aptly argued, working-class parents do not feel as 'self-confident' as middle-class parents to get involved in the educational processes. Middle-class parents, due to their cultural and human capital resources as well as to their high status job, which might even be relevant to education, feel confident to speak to teachers or head teachers and express their concerns, complains or requests. Working-class parents on the contrary, are more indecisive and less determined in these occasions.

### *iii. Gender*

Significant gender differences arise when looking at social capital. More specifically, parents' involvement in their child's education seems to be a gendered discourse. Interestingly enough, whereas research demonstrated that men have 'more access to social capital resources on average than women' (Post and Parks-Yancy, 2004) it is mostly women that mobilise their social capital for the benefit of their child's education (Crozier, 1997; Lareau, 1989; Reay, 2005). This might be explained if we consider the gender stereotypes/roles that exist in our society. It is mothers and not fathers that are more strongly associated to child upbringing; and since education is nowadays seen as part of this upbringing it should be expected that gender stereotypes prompt mothers to take the main responsibility of parental involvement in education. What is striking, however, is that even though both working and middle-class mothers are more involved in their child's education than the fathers of the respective social class, it has been found that the gender disparities are more intense among working-class families than middle-class ones (Crozier, 1997; Lareau, 1989). This could comprise an example of the way issues of social class interact with issues of gender.

## **F. Conclusion**

This chapter has given an introduction into this study's topic and at the same time shed some light on the complexities of social capital's operation within the field of education. It has been argued that social capital functions within the spectrum of social reality and not in parallel to it. As a result, social capital inevitably connects to issues of social class, ethnicity and gender which in turn differentiate its nature and function for different social groups. All things considered, it seems that Campbell and McLean hit the mark when saying that 'social capital is not a homogeneous resource equally available to all members of a geographical community, but is shaped and constrained by factors such as gender, ethnicity and social class' (2002, p.655). Since, there is enough evidence to support the hypothesis of the differential impact of

social capital on educational outcomes this study now proceeds to a discussion of the way social capital is theorised for the purposes of this research.

## Chapter 2

### Theorising Social Capital

#### A. Introduction

The first chapter acted as a map of the thesis, in that it discussed the way social capital is used within the educational discourse and illustrated the main themes and hypotheses of this study. Social capital was used as a key part of educational policies in the framework of New Labour's 'Third Way'. Yet, the elaboration of social capital in the view of these policies was often under-theorised as it did not take into account the way social capital is shaped by systematic inequalities, rendering thus its effects spurious - at least to a certain extent. This study takes into account the way social class, ethnicity and gender mediate the relationship of social capital and education and explores the way social capital works for each social group. In other words, it maintains the 'spuriousness' thesis (Portes, 2000), as discussed in the previous chapter, but at the same time allows for the specificities of social capital.

This chapter serves as the theoretical compass of this study as it explains the conceptual prism through which the social capital function within the field of education is understood. Social capital was conceptualised in many different ways and this pluralism of approaches resulted in a plethora of debates and contestations. Some of the main issues that engendered controversies concern the factors that shape social capital as well as the relationship of social capital to other social entities such as social class, gender, ethnicity or even other forms of capital (i.e. economic and cultural). One need not go very far to identify the divergences in the various social capital approaches; they become fairly obvious from a single examination of the three main thinkers of the social capital concept: Putnam, Coleman and Bourdieu. The section below critically explores the main theorists of social capital and proceeds to a discussion of the way social capital is theorised here.

The conceptual framework of this study is informed by two main theorists: Pierre Bourdieu and his work on the different forms of capital and power reproduction as well as Robert Miles, whose work draws on the concepts of racism and racialisation. Drawing on a critical application of the work of these two theorists the chapter seeks to explore the way in which social capital plays out in the field of educational inequalities, mainly at the level of social class and ethnic inequalities. Even though gender issues are not of primary focus for this research they are also discussed in many occasions as they often intersect strongly with social class and ethnicity; an absolute omission of gender issues would render the analysis considerably limited. Yet this study does not claim to explore gender issues in the depth that social class and ethnicity are

explored, not because they are considered insignificant. However the primary variables of interest are those of social class and ethnicity.

Since this study explores issues in relation to educational outcomes it is apt to briefly present the picture of educational inequalities in the UK. Analysis of official statistics revealed that there is a significant gap, across social classes and ethnic groups, regarding students who acquire 5 or more GCSE passes (DfES, 2005; Gillborn, 2008b; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000; Office for National Statistics, 2007). Fewer working-class than middle students proceed to higher education (Archer, Hutchings and Ross, 2003; Reay, David and Ball, 2005); Black African/Caribbean students and working-class students are underrepresented in gifted and talented programmes whereas they are overrepresented in low ability tracks (Gillborn, 2007b; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000). In relation to the ethnic groups that this study draws on, White British students achieve at the level of the national average, Indian students perform well above the national average whereas Black African and Caribbean students perform below the national average (DfES, 2005; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000). Overall, social class and ethnicity are still considered the main predictors of educational achievement at GCSE level, even though the effect of ethnicity weakens considerably when social class is controlled for. The only indicator whose position has actually improved since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is gender. In this case the gap between girls and boys has not only closed but the pattern reversed. It is observed that girls tend to do better than boys, and this is the case across all ethnic groups and for both working and middle-class students (Gillborn and Youdell, 2000). Yet, certain gender constructions according to which girls are better at languages and boys are better at sciences seem to persist (Francis, 2000; Francis and Skelton, 2005). Research revealed that there are still some gender differences in school subject preference (Colley, Comber and Hargreaves, 1994; Francis, 2000) but this is slowly weakening (Miller and Budd, 1994).

## **B. Social Capital Theorists**

Even though the approaches of Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam share some similarities they are generally significantly different in important issues. This part firstly presents the work of Coleman and Putnam. Notwithstanding that this study uses elements from Coleman it mainly adopts a Bourdieuan approach in its conceptualisation of social capital. For this reason, Bourdieu's approach is discussed at the end and in conjunction with this thesis conceptual framework.

### ***i. Coleman***

Whereas Bourdieu was influential amongst sociologists of education in the UK, Coleman's theory of social capital has been much more influential for economists and policy makers. Even

though their research on social capital was carried out almost simultaneously they conceptualised social capital in rather different ways. For Coleman:

'Social Capital is defined by its functions. It is not a single entity but a variety of different 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. Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible. Like physical capital and human capital, social capital is not completely fungible but may be specific to certain activities. A given form of social capital that is valuable in facilitating certain actions may be useless or even harmful for others' (Coleman, 1988, p. S98).

Coleman's approach is fundamentally different from the Bourdieuan one. First of all, his definition of social capital is broader than Bourdieu's. It encompasses not only networks and group memberships, as Bourdieu's definition does, but also norms, sanctions, trust, obligations and expectations which are seen at the level of the individual and also at the level of the community. Coleman considers social capital as a 'public good' not just an individual one, like in the case of Bourdieu and in this sense his understanding of social capital resembles that of Putnam in that they both understand social capital outcomes to benefit the community. What is more, Coleman sees social capital through the spectacles of rational choice theory, which influences his standpoint with an economistic approach. For him all individuals are self-interested and therefore all their actions, including those influenced or informed by social capital, aim at accomplishing self-centred purposes (Coleman, 1990).

Coleman's research draws on education. The main study responsible for his establishment as a social capital theorist is one concerned with school drop-outs rates, as was briefly mentioned in the previous chapter. His research outcomes suggest that catholic schools have substantially lower drop-out rates than all other schools. This, according to Coleman, is attributed to the higher levels of social capital found in the Catholic community. The way in which social capital affects education is twofold: first of all via a strong parent-children relationship and secondly via the catholic community norms which allow for what Coleman called '*intergenerational closure*' (Coleman, 1988). Coleman uses the term '*intergenerational closure*' to describe the phenomenon where parents know the parents of their children's friends. This enables 'a set of effective sanctions that can monitor and guide behaviour' (Coleman, 1988, p.S107). Additionally, Coleman suggested that the beneficial influence of Catholic schools is more effective for students who belong and actively participate in the broader catholic community than those who do not. 'Those students who are most integrated into some religious community, whether connected to the school or not, are more likely to complete high school than those who are not' (Coleman and Hoffer, 1987, p. 139).



Coleman's theory has been very important for the better understanding of the 'social capital' concept and its development in the research field. One of the most significant contributions was that it broadened up the definition of 'social capital' expanding it from simply including networks and group memberships, and associating it to community and public good. Coleman argued that social capital and the benefits that can be derived from it are not just available to the privileged groups but to the disadvantaged ones as well. Moreover, Coleman suggested that social capital is *context-specific* and not always the same for everyone. 'A given form of social capital that is valuable in facilitating certain actions may be useless or even harmful for others' (Coleman, 1988, p. S98). Nevertheless, despite acknowledging the importance of 'context', Coleman did not exemplify the ways in which this context could possibly influence the generation of social capital and its influence on education. For example, he did not discuss the possibility of social capital operating in different ways for students of different social groups. Instead, his research mainly focused on bounded communities, which mostly comprised White Catholic samples. In fact, his rational choice theory approach did not allow for contextual factors such as ethnic or social class inequalities to come into play. The stance that people always behave as rational actors seeking to maximise their profits does not take into account that structural inequalities might influence and/or constrain their actions nor does it acknowledge the fact that people might not always be in position to know what their interest is in order to act 'rationally'. Overall, his approach 'was committed to a particularly narrow version of methodological individualism, a utilitarianism based on a simple pursuit of self interest' (Fine, 2001, p.66). In addition, Coleman's conceptualisation of social capital discusses only the role of adults and marginalises children denying them the possibility of agency (Gillies and Lucey, 2006), even when it concerns the shaping of their own lives.

Another important limitation of Coleman's theory is the overemphasis of the importance of primordial ties, such as family and church, in the creation of social capital.

'Religious organizations are among *the few* remaining organizations in society, beyond the family, that cross generations. Thus, they are among *the few* in which the social capital of an adult community is available to children and youth [...] the social capital in the family and neighbourhood available for raising children has *declined* precipitously' (*my emphasis*) (Coleman, 1987, p. 37).

As far as this point is concerned, Coleman's analysis about the erosion of social capital as a result of the decline of family resembles the pessimism of Putnam (2000) and the conservatism of Fukuyama (1996). Despite the undeniable importance of primordial ties in some contexts, Coleman's overall work seems to considerably overestimate them and, as Portes (1998) argues, this is at the expense of the significance of weak and loose ties. Coleman's assertion that there are currently only a few organisations in the community that are associated with

raising children is rather idiosyncratic and is not supported by research evidence. In fact there are many other organisations today that might be relevant to children's education and leisure time, such as youth clubs, sport centres and community centres, in which children are enabled to develop various skills as well as to socialise with other children and adults.

## **ii. Putnam**

Putnam is the academic whose work has had the biggest influence among policy makers across the world<sup>5</sup> in respect of social capital. Putnam et al's longitudinal research on Italy's regional government highlights the importance of civic community in the performance of the regional government (1993). This first study set the stage for Putnam's later work, namely *Bowling Alone*, and at the same time brought awareness for the issue of social capital on a different framework. Putnam was the first one to see social capital at the level of the state (macro-level) and argued its importance in relation to the functioning of the state (Putnam, 1995; Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti, 1993). In addition, Putnam, unlike Bourdieu and Coleman who saw social capital as an individual good and as a community good respectively, understood social capital as having 'both an individual and a collective aspect - a private face and a public face' (2000, p. 20).

Putnam, sees social capital as the 'features of social life - networks, norms and trust - that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives' (1995, p. 664-65). In *Bowling Alone* Putnam (2000) argued the importance of social capital for institutional performance and democratic structures and argued that social capital in America is declining. Putnam employed in his analysis an impressive range of data, such as voting, political engagement, group membership, trust, informal ties etc. The picture he presents is dreadful: '... a few decades ago - silently, without warning [...] we were overtaken by a treacherous rip current. Without at first noticing we have been pulled apart from one another and from our communities over the last third of the century' (2000, p. 27). The main reasons that Putnam exemplifies as responsible for this decline are the changes in family structure, the influence of television and the 'generational change' (Putnam, 2000, p. 283). Interestingly, Peter Hall's (1999) findings on the UK do not confirm Putnam's findings in the US. Hall argues that there has not been a significant decline in social capital in the UK after the Second World War years.

Even though Putnam's theory has been widely embraced by policy makers and has influenced a number of initiatives which attempted to enhance or regenerate society's social capital, it also received considerable criticism from several directions. Probably its most important flaw is

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<sup>5</sup> Putnam's work became influential not only in the UK and the US but also in a number of other countries. This was partly due to the embracement of his theory by the World Bank (Fine, 2003) and its application in policies that attempted to boost economic development.

related to the fact that it ignores the role of structural and historical factors. As Mohan and Mohan state, Putnam's explanation 'is society-centred and therefore neglects the ways in which social capital can be created (and destroyed) by structural forces and institutions' (2002, p. 195). Consequently Putnam's account does not take into consideration the role of economic inequality (DeFilippis, 2001; Halpern, 2005) and does not acknowledge the role of the state, at least not explicitly (Halpern, 2005; Mohan and Mohan, 2002). Furthermore, there are important questions about the definition and measurement of social capital used by Putnam. As said by Foley and Edwards 'it is not at all clear why voluntary associations should be singularly adept at promoting the attitudes and habits necessary for an engaged 'civil' citizenry' (1997, p. 553). Another point with which there is dissent is related to the actual outcome of Putnam's study that social capital is in decline. Halpern (2005) argued that social capital is not in decline but in '*transformation*'. His proposal is fairly sensible and coherent especially if we consider the generation of new forms of networks through the internet, particularly among the younger generation. Recent research on online social networks found a very significant association between types/components of social capital and the use of Facebook - a social networking website (Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe, 2007). These findings endorse Halpern's suggestion in that they reveal the emergence of new forms of social capital in the framework of the web and therefore suggest social capital's 'transformation' rather than decline. Whereas Putnam does consider these new types of networking he argues that they cannot be taken as equal to face-to-face interactions as the latter are more powerful.

Several researchers underlined a number of inconsistencies in relation to Putnam's findings. Green, Preston and Janmaat (2006) point out that even though education is, according to Putnam, 'a strong determinant of individual joining and trusting' social capital 'is declining so fast in America when education levels are still rising, and most with the younger generations who are precisely the most educated' (p. 29). Another contradiction with respect to Putnam's suggestions was put forward by DeFilippis (2001). DeFilippis, following on from Putnam's findings which argued that social capital is associated with economic development and that social capital is in decline in the US for all socio-economic categories, asks why the American elite does so well financially despite having 'gone through 35 years of civic disengagement' (2001, p. 795). In terms of the community policies in the US, DeFilippis also wonders why social capital is seen as a way of enabling people and communities to move out of poverty whereas affluent people themselves are argued to suffer from low levels of social capital (ibid). The latter might apply to certain Putnam-influenced policy initiatives in the UK that attempted to develop disadvantaged communities by building social capital.

### *iii. Bourdieu*

This research adopts Coleman's suggestion in relation to the 'context-specific' nature of social capital but on its greatest extent draws on Bourdieu's work. The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu was the first scholar who used the term 'social capital' in a nuanced way and is actually responsible for its introduction to the academic research, despite his work focuses more on cultural rather than social capital. Bourdieu's overall work drew on social class inequalities, social hierarchies and power which are largely absent in the work of the above theorists. Central to his work were the concepts of '*habitus*' by what he meant the attitudes and dispositions that agents acquire as part of their experiences, and the concept of 'field' by which he meant the setting in which agents with their possessed '*habitus*' are situated. The different forms of social capital are also situated within the 'field'. Bourdieu distinguished capital into several forms: economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital. In terms of social capital Bourdieu writes that:

'Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group- which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word' (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 248, 249).

Although this thesis draws extensively on Bourdieu's work and particularly on his elaboration of social capital in relation to class inequalities, as discussed below, it does not adopt his definition of social capital, which is seen mainly in the form of networks and group memberships. Instead, social capital, as operationalised for the purposes of this study, includes not only networks and group memberships but also norms and values. Norms and values are not irrelevant to Bourdieu's theory, yet they could be better seen in relation to his concepts of *habitus* or cultural capital rather than in relation to social capital.

Unlike in Coleman and Putnam, social capital in Bourdieu is understood at the level of the individual. Social capital is not entirely autonomous from the other forms of capital and as opposed to economic capital it cannot be obtained once and for all but it needs a constant effort for its preservation (Bourdieu, 1986). The most important capital for Bourdieu is the economic from which all the rest stem from. The latter is very relevant to the approach adopted in this study according to which people's social class background can shape their social capital and ultimately their experiences and achievements. It might be therefore assumed that social capital available to working-class students might not be as efficient in improving their educational outcomes as the social capital available to middle and upper-middle-class students. Bourdieu

says indeed that the more powerful groups have the ability to both acquire social capital and use it in ways that maintain or even improve their position in the hierarchy, and thus subsequently benefit from the advantages of that position (Bourdieu, 1977; 1986).

Furthermore, the way Bourdieu theorises the different forms of capital is particularly useful for this research. Bourdieu suggests that economic capital can convert to a different form of capital (social or cultural) depending on the field in which the desirable end is situated. This is particularly insightful as it allows the performance of economic capital through different channels. In the case of this research the concept of 'capital conversion' is very relevant as in many cases people interchange their social capital employment or even use more than one capital simultaneously in order to achieve better educational outcomes. A pertinent example for that would be parental intervention in children's schooling. When middle-class parents visit the school to express a complaint about their child's education and/or to negotiate better educational provision it is not on their economic capital that they draw but on a combination of their social capital and cultural capital. As argued later in this thesis, research suggests that social capital is used by parents to activate their cultural capital in order to negotiate educational issues. Nevertheless, more often than not both these capitals derive from the economic one. As Bourdieu poses it:

'So it has to be posited simultaneously that economic capital is at the root of all the other types of capital and that these transformed, disguised forms of economic capital, never entirely reducible to that definition, produce their most specific effects only to the extent that they conceal (not least from their possessors) the fact that economic capital is at their root, in other words - but only in the last analysis - at the root of their effects' (Bourdieu, 1986, p.249).

Bourdieu's overall approach to social capital is insightful. Its major strength is that it emphasises the role of social capital on the reproduction of power, as opposed to other theorists of social capital, such as Putnam and Coleman, who ignored this aspect. Yet, ironically this approach has been related to one of the main criticisms that Bourdieu's theory received. Bourdieu's elaboration of social capital has been criticised for being somewhat elitist (Field, 2003; Tolonen, 2007). For instance, Field (2003) argued that Bourdieu considers social capital as a benefit for those advantaged who acquire it but there is actually no discussion in his theory for the possibility that disadvantaged groups could also benefit from social capital. Indeed Bourdieu's research mainly focused on the processes through which the already advantaged people enable to maintain and/or expand their status. Field's analysis could be usefully expanded to examine how all social groups mobilise aspects of social capital. Accordingly, Bourdieu's framework, as employed here, maintains an interest in the crucial role of structural inequalities and power, while at the same time it explores the way social capital works not only for already

advantaged social groups (i.e. middle-class individuals) but for also for other, less advantaged social groups (i.e. working-class individuals).

Overall, Bourdieu's theory seems to be the only theory compared to Coleman's and Putnam's which addresses structural issues of inequality and highlights the constant significance of economic capital in both the generation of social capital and its subsequent utilisation for economic advancement (Gamarnikow and Green, 2000; 1999). Yet, despite being considered by some researchers as the most insightful and sophisticated theory of social capital (DeFilippis, 2001; Portes, 1998) and being extensively used in sociology of education, Bourdieu's theory is rather disregarded by current policy discussions and implementations which involve social capital.

Bourdieu's theory is considered very relevant to the way social capital plays out in the field of educational inequalities. Even though Bourdieu's work mainly focuses on power differentials across *social class groups* in the French context, in this study the Bourdieuan conceptualisation of social capital is also drawn upon to make sense of social capital differentials across different *ethnic groups*. Bourdieu did not explicitly address social capital's role and function in relation to ethnicity, however, this stretching of his theoretical framework is seen as compatible to the overall spirit of his theory and germane to the purposes of this analysis, as issues of power are often implicated not only in social class issues but also in ethnicity related issues. For instance, the mobilisation or absence of mobilisation of social capital by people from minority ethnic groups, whose lives are influenced by racism (i.e. discrimination, ethnic stereotypes etc.), could be analysed through the prism of Bourdieu's theory due to the presence of power. The use of ethnic background though makes analysis more complicated compared to when only social class is employed, mainly because ethnicity often interacts with social class. The work of Robert Miles offers a very insightful framework for the understanding of the way racism relates to social class, making thus possible the understanding of the way ethnicity and social class interact easier. The following sections discuss the way ethnicity is understood and employed in this study and draw particularly on Miles' approach.

### **C. Social Class and Ethnicity Today: Autonomous and/or Inter-related Entities?**

During the last three decades a great deal of research has focused on structural inequalities and the way they are reproduced through the British educational system (Ball, 2006; Reay, 2001; Whitty, 2001). In particular, a number of studies focused on issues of underachievement among students from minority ethnic backgrounds and highlighted how racism, which is embedded in the British society, hampers students from minority ethnic groups and has detrimental effects on their educational outcomes (Gillborn, 1990; Mirza, 1992).

Eight decades after Galton's racist work which advocated the inherent intellectual superiority of some 'races' and the inferiority of some others, and four decades after Bernard Coard's pamphlet whereby the failing of Black students was explained and the education system criticised, new forms of discourses appear to have emerged, whose tenets seem to have similar racist implications to older ones based on eugenics and IQ. Today, as Mirza argued, 'ethnicity and cultural difference have become signifiers for 'race'. This is the new racism' (2007, p.113). Indeed, discourses based on *cultural* differentials, despite using a milder vocabulary which does not explicitly direct to mental superiority/inferiority arguments, often cover tacit messages which in practice are as dangerous as the former. Researchers and policy makers who maintain that certain groups - ethnic or social class ones - do not have the appropriate *culture* to pursue educational excellence or upward-social mobility, fail to acknowledge the socio-economic impediments that these groups might face. This has serious implications for the understanding of educational underachievement as particular groups of people are blamed for their own 'failure'. Inevitably, this 'pathologisation' approach leaves little space for intervention on behalf of the state or other agencies.

Overall, structural factors are taken to be of primary importance here. It is important to take seriously into account the role of socio-economic disadvantage and racism on the various aspects of life and ultimately on the education of secondary school students. Yet the way racism plays out on the field of education is difficult to disentangle as it often interacts with social class issues. As argued by Meece and Kurtz-Costes:

'Because economic status is highly related to educational outcomes and because a disproportionate percentage of ethnic minority families live in poverty, researchers have struggled to determine to what extent economic hardship is responsible for educational disparities between majority and minority groups' (2001, p.4).

This resonates indeed with the case of Black African and Caribbean students which constitute two of the ethnic groups that participated in this study. Black African and Black Caribbean people in the UK have overall less income and are more likely to face poverty than White British people (Berthoud, 1998; DWP, 2003). At the same time, Black African and Caribbean students perform significantly worse than their White British fellow students (DfES, 2004; DfES, 2005; Gillborn, 2007a; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000). The opposite holds true for Indian people: Richard Berthoud's analysis of the income of ethnic groups in the UK found that Indian and Chinese working families had higher income than White British working families (1998, p.15,18). The same pattern appears in the educational outcomes of Chinese and Indian students that tend to outperform their White-British fellow students (DfES, 2005; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000). Therefore a crucial question comes into play: To what extent do students' educational outcomes lie in their economic situation? Several researchers attempted to control - in various ways - for

socio-economic factors, so as to capture the impact of ethnicity alone. For example, graphs in Gillborn's and Youdell's book (2000) show that Black African and Caribbean students from a working-class background perform significantly worse compared to White British students from the same background. So, one could assume that there is something else out there, other than the economic background, that accounts for that difference between Black working-class and White British working-class students. After rejecting cultural or genetic explanations which pathologise people from minority ethnic backgrounds, the most important hypothesis left is that of 'racism' in its various forms, institutional or otherwise.

Yet, has the overall impact of social class been controlled for or only a part of it? Alternative propositions of controlling the social class effect argue that analysis at the individual level and therefore controls of social class effect at the individual level might obfuscate important alternative channels via which social class inequalities might operate. As a result of that, many researchers attempt to control for socio-economic inequalities at the neighbourhood level. And it is indeed demonstrated that lower social class people often suffer from a double disadvantage; not only a disadvantage that derives from their own social class status but also one that stems from their neighbourhood's overall socio-economic position, which in most cases resembles their own. In relation to that, Henly argued, on account of her US based research, that 'African Americans and Whites of similar socioeconomic status live in neighbourhoods of different quality' (1995, p.71) with the former having less chances to live in a middle-class neighbourhood with low crime than the latter. In this case, merely controlling for individual social background would have missed a great deal of information about the overall effect of the context in which people live. Social capital might be one of the ways in which this context effect operates. If it is easier for people to socialise with other people who live near them, and if people tend to get influenced by the attitudes and/or norms of the context in which they live and socialise then living within a low socio-economic status context, is very likely to have a negative effect on them. Overall, it is argued here that the socio-economic effect could be underestimated by analyses which try to control for it at the individual level. Therefore, when exploring different outcomes of ethnic communities it is of vital importance to understand the different levels at which socio-economic factors operate.

An important part of research on ethnic minorities focused on the way racism shapes and/or constraints their lives. A number of academics (Gillborn, 2008b; Mirza, 1992; Troyna and Carrington, 1990; Troyna and Smith, 1983) argued the determinant role of racism - institutional or individual, intended or unintended - in shaping the educational outcomes of Black African/Caribbean students in the UK. Racism affects the education of Black African and Caribbeans in multiple ways: through the curriculum (Coard, 2007; Hylton, 2000), which is often not related to the experiences and interests of Black students, through the low educational aspirations of teachers, through unjustified prejudice etc. Yet, the way racism affects students is



not homogeneous for all ethnic backgrounds. In fact Gillborn argues in relation to teacher expectations that 'in direct contrast to the Afro-Caribbean case, for example, staff tended to assume that Asians were well-disciplined, hard-working students who came from stable families where educational success was highly valued' (1990, p. 100). In this case racial stereotypes work as a positive influence for Asian students - at least in relation to their educational achievement. Whilst this thesis acknowledges the impact of racism on the educational achievement and/or experiences of ethnic minority students, it argues that it might sometimes be complicated to make sense of the way social class and racism operate as distinct entities. Some of the tenets of Robert Miles' work address this challenge by offering the possibility of understanding racism in conjunction to social class within an *intersectional* framework.

#### D. Miles and the Racialisation-Racism Framework

Miles' work illustrates the way racism functions within societies. This thesis employs two main tenets of Miles' approach: a) the distinction between the concepts of racism and racialisation and b) the association of racism and racialisation with the modes of production and their dialectical situation within a historical context. In relation to the first, Miles distinguishes racism and racialisation as two different concepts. He determines racialisation as

'the dialectical *process* by which meaning is attributed to particular biological features of human beings, as a result of which individuals may be assigned to a general category of persons which reproduces itself biologically. This is a *process* which has long history, and has occurred in precapitalist and capitalist societies' (*my emphasis*). (1989, p.76)

Miles also argued for the importance of the 'cultural' element along the side of the 'biological'. Explicitly he mentioned: 'the articulation depends, in part, upon a simultaneous signification of cultural differentiae and somatic futures: the Other is differentiated by skin colour as well as by clothing, diet, language and religion, for example' (Miles, 1989, p.120). This is indeed very relevant in contemporary societies where racism is either grounded on cultural characteristics as such or where cultural characteristics are used as a pretext for biological racism that take the façade of a more 'politically correct' version. A good example for that is the 'pathologisation' of Muslim people after the recent war on terror. This could be also seen as a form of 're-racialisation' whereby ethnic groups that were already racialised as 'Arabs', 'Pakistani' etc. were 're-racialised' as 'Muslim'.

Miles sees racism in relation to the concept of racialisation and suggests that whereas a population that has been the target of racism is *de facto* a racialised population the vice versa does not always hold. In other words, a racialised population does not necessarily receive racism. The difference between the two lies in the function of racism as 'an ideology of inclusion

and exclusion'. So whereas in both racism and racialisation certain characteristics are used to distinguish people as a category, in the case of racism 'unlike the process of racialisation, the negative characteristics of the Other mirror the positive characteristics of the Self. Racism therefore presupposes a process of racialisation but is differentiated from that process by its explicitly negative evaluative component' (Miles, 1989, p.79).

Cole and Maisuria, who drew on Miles' use of racialisation, suggested a useful extension of Miles' concept (Cole, 2008; Cole and Maisuria, 2007) that regards the inclusion of the 'process whereby refugees, economic migrants and asylum-seekers (often white) become racialised' (Cole, 2008, p.124), one could even argue re-racialised as these groups were already racialised. The implications of this concept, that they refer to as 'xeno-racialisation', are very important to understand the way racism operates in modern society as this is often thought to refer exclusively to non-white populations. Cole and Maisuria remind us that certain ethnic populations such as Albanians, Bosnians and Kosovans are also racialised in contemporary UK and discriminated against, despite their 'white-skin' phenotype. In this thesis phenotypical 'whiteness' is understood as one of the possible signifiers of privilege in some circumstances and within certain contexts. Yet, it is also acknowledged that race as a social category, and in turn racialisation and racism, are fluid and changing in nature. For instance, in certain cases, racism would not necessarily relate to phenotypical 'whiteness' but to ethnic, cultural or religious characteristics. This stretching of the concept of 'race' could be seen in relation to Mirza's discussion of contemporary racism:

'Ethnicity and cultural difference have become signifiers for 'race'. This is the new racism. We have moved from biological notions of innate differences in the 21st century. It is as if cultural and religious differences are embodied in nature. In the new cultural construction of 'race', cultural and religious difference is played out when we say '... Blacks are good at sport, not so good at school. Chinese are good at maths, and make good food. Asians are good at business and love family life. Muslims cannot be trusted: they are aggressive, sexist and, under all those clothes, usually a bit wild eyed' (Mirza, 2007, p.113).

So stemming from this conceptualisation of 'race' and racism, the thesis considers the way racialisation and racism, in their multiple deployments and forms<sup>6</sup>, influence students from each ethnic group. The analytical distinction between racism and racialisation allows for the examination of the processes through which these two entities function as well as their outcomes.

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<sup>6</sup> Racism can take many shapes and forms, namely, overt or covert, intentional or unintentional racism, cultural or biological, individual or institutional. For a comprehensive discussion of these forms of racism see Cole and Virdee (2006).

The second important tenet of Miles' theory is the conceptualisation of racism and racialisation in relation to historical and political realities and the modes of production which in turn inform the formation of social class structures and social class relations. Miles argues that

'The process of racialisation and the expression of racism have become, under certain historical circumstances, central to two dimensions of the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production. The first concerns the role of the state in maintaining the conditions for the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production within any historically specific nation state, one aspect of which is the generation and reconstruction of a sense of 'imagined community'. The second concerns the processes by which people are allocated to the various sites of class relations, these sites being structurally determined by the historically specific articulation of modes of production within any particular nation state. Both of these are essential to the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production. Racialisation and racism may be therefore historically specific mechanisms by which these processes may be effected, and in their absence other representational forms will necessarily be present' (1989, p.111,2).

The *dialectic* approach of Miles suggests that racism and racialisation are not understood as autonomous entities. On the contrary, their articulations are considered as 'historically specific' and are examined in relation to 'political and economic relations' (Miles, 1989, p.132). This tenet is not employed here as an attempt to reduce the influence of racialisation and racism - as processes or systems of oppression respectively - in the economic structures of society (class divisions). Miles' approach does not consider racism as deterministically functional to the capitalist modes of production (Papapolydorou, 2010b) but merely as one of its current mechanisms<sup>7</sup>. So the attempt is not to reduce racism to social class relations but to offer possibilities of viewing the two as interrelated, offering thus a possibility for an intersectional understanding of social realities.

'By seeking to contextualise the impact of racism within class relations, one can begin to contextualise the specificity of the experience of racism, *not in order to deny it, but rather in order to simultaneously to highlight and generalise it by means of demonstrating the linkages with other means of exclusion*' (*my emphasis*) (Miles, 1989, p.134).

So, whereas racism and class relations are considered as two different systems of oppression, they are also conceptualised as interacting with each other during particular historical points which often reinforce each other's authority and influence. Therefore, both racialisation and

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<sup>7</sup> According to Miles, racialisation and racism 'are essential to the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production. Racialisation and racism may be therefore historically specific mechanisms by which these processes may be effected, and in their absence other representational forms will necessarily be present' (1989, p.111,112).

racism maintain their ontological and analytical autonomy but at the same time are seen as interrelated with social class. In the light of this, Miles' tenet offers the possibility of an intersectional framework within which to explore the functions and effects of racialisation, racism and social class both as distinct, autonomous entities and as intersecting ones.

The development of Miles' theory intended to elucidate the origins and functions of contemporary racism principally as a macro-level and meso-level phenomenon. For instance, Miles discusses the way racism might influence the employment rates of people from minority ethnic backgrounds and the way systems functional to the nation state operate to generate or regenerate racist discourses (i.e. immigration laws, media etc.). This study does not deal with these macro- and meso-level deployments of racism explicitly and does not argue that it comprises an attempt to validate Miles' tenets through an empirical examination of students' lives. This research however considers the above-mentioned tenets as a constitutive ontological framework within which the analysis of students' individual experiences occurs. So the emphasis here is on the micro-level and through this prism the research focuses on the way social class, ethnicity and in some cases gender come into play, either autonomously or intersectionally in their various permutations, to influence student-related social capital and in turn their education. The following section discusses the way Miles' racialisation-racism could be used as a conceptual tool to understand social capital related to young people at the micro-level.

### **E. When Racialisation Meets Social Capital**

The concept of racialisation is not only important in providing a firm framework for this study to appreciate the way ethnicity operates in the field of education in general. It also offers a sound ground for the understanding of the way social capital plays out across different ethnic groups. The way people construct perceptions about ethnic 'Others'<sup>8</sup> which in turn might influence the social networks they form, the values, norms and attitudes they hold, could be seen as similar to the process of racialisation. Racialisation, as Miles (1989) argued, involves the categorisation of certain people based on some attributes, cultural, biological or other. This process is important in the context of social capital as it informs the way people perceive ethnic 'others' and ultimately relate to them.

A significant advantage of racialisation is that it allows the exploration of the way people ethnically identify others and selves and subsequently form their networks, the latter without necessarily implying racism. For example when a student racialises another student from a different ethnic group on the basis of certain characteristics (phenotypical, cultural or otherwise) it does not necessarily imply that the former student is racist to the latter. It however calls for an

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<sup>8</sup> In this thesis 'ethnic 'Others'' are defined as those racialised different to the self.

exploration of the type of social networks, norms, attitudes that are developed between the two students and an investigation of the extent to which these are informed by the process of racialisation. The process of racialisation might influence social networks between students in a conscious or subconscious way. It might of course be that racialisation is followed by racism - intentional or unintentional - in which case it might be fair to hypothesise that the social networks between students as well as their attitudes toward each other will be shaped differently.

In addition, racialisation, in Miles' theoretical framework, can easily take many directions and does not necessarily relate to 'white supremacy' (see Gillborn, 2008b), that is to originate from 'white' people. Of course 'white' people can racialise ethnic 'Others' and can be racist toward them but what might often be disregarded is that people from minority ethnic groups could also be involved in racialisation processes of people belonging to social collectivities different from their own. For instance, an Indian student might also racialise a White British student as White, a Nigerian student as Black, a Pakistani student as Muslim etc. This study explores the way the social networks of students with racialised 'others' as well as the norms, values and attitudes that accompany these networks are informed by the way racialisation is played out at each context. The hypothesis is that the formation of intra-ethnic or inter-ethnic friendships is related to the process of racialisation. The first step to unravel these complexities in respect to the way students from their social networks is to understand the racialisation processes that relate to them as constructors of racialisation, as receptors or as both. In all cases, however, both White British students and students from minority ethnic backgrounds are viewed as agentic individuals who can be equally implicated in the processes of racialisation within particular contexts. Of course this by no means suggests that racialisation or racism is experienced by people in exactly the same way and with the same effects. This would be a severe inconsistency and distortion of current social reality that ignores the detrimental effects of perennial racism on students from minority ethnic groups (Gillborn, 2008b; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000; Mirza, 1992; Preston, 2007; Youdell, 2003). It does however allow people from minority ethnic backgrounds some agency in relation to their understanding and placing of other social collectivities with regards to their characteristics/attributes. The implication of this understanding suggests that people from minority ethnic groups are not understood as hopeless victims of White British racism, which would be yet another form of pathologisation - but as agentic individuals with the ability to negotiate and renegotiate identities as well as challenge social realities.

Overall, Miles' framework, as understood and discussed here, is considered appropriate for the purposes of this study as it renders possible an analysis that can unravel the complexities related to racism and social class inequalities in the field of education. In particular, Miles' tenets of the racialisation-racism framework and the possibilities they encapsulate for

intersectionality offer the conceptual tools to understand the complex ways in which student related social capital is deployed in relation to ethnicity and social class issues.

## **F. Conclusion**

This chapter discussed critically some of the main approaches of social capital theory and focused on the conceptual framework that this thesis draws on. Two main theories are applied here: Bourdieu's conceptualisation of social capital and Miles' elaboration of racialisation-racism. The former is particularly insightful as it positions social capital in the context of structural inequalities acknowledging a possible differentiation of social capital across different social groups. The latter, is also very helpful in that it places racialisation and racism within a historical context associated to the modes of production and enables the elaboration of ethnicity in relation to social class. Overall, social capital is perceived as one of the mechanisms through which advantage or disadvantage is channelled, just like cultural, economic and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Yet, it is also understood as a possible mechanism by which people might challenge particular situations and on which they might draw in an attempt to shape their lives. The following chapter discusses the way in which this research was designed in order to shed light in the abovementioned propositions.

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## Chapter 3

### Research Design – A Methodological Approach to Social Capital

#### A. Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the study's research design. It explicates the rationale and focus of this thesis, its paradigmatic grounds and the methodology upon which it is carried out. Furthermore, this chapter discusses the ethical challenges that arose when designing and conducting this research, the operationalisation of the key concepts employed and finally the limitations of this project.

#### B. Rationale - Research Focus and Questions

As discussed in the literature review chapter, there has been little empirical evidence regarding the differential effects of social capital on educational outcomes and school experiences, particularly in relation to different social groups. This study addresses questions in relation to the formation and influence of social capital in various groups (differentiated by social class, ethnicity, gender). The main hypothesis of this research is that students with different ethnic and social class background or gender might draw on different forms of social capital, of different density and intensity and through different processes and this might in turn have different effects on their education and the way they experience schooling.

Following on from this rationale, the below research questions have been formulated:

- Does social capital typically have a different form depending on each social group examined here (social class, ethnicity, gender)?
- What form(s) of social capital coincide(s) with good educational outcomes or the opposite, in each social group?
- Through what kind of processes does social capital influence educational outcomes?
- Are there any observed patterns of 'effective - positive' social capital associated with positive educational outcomes? If so, amongst what groups are these most evident?
- How are students' social networks shaped with reference to issues of social class, ethnicity and gender and how do these influence the way students experience school life?
- What are the attitudes of students for other ethnic groups and how are they influenced by the school's ethnic composition?

In order to address these questions the study explores social capital mobilised within three different contexts, namely the school, the family and the community. Social capital mobilised by students themselves is considered of chief importance and therefore examined to a great extent. However, family mobilised social capital, such as parental social capital is also understood as relevant and its influence is explored in chapter 6.

### C. Paradigmatical Standpoint

It is generally acknowledged that social science research is widely informed by ontological and epistemological perceptions. Debates on ontology, namely the nature of reality, as well as epistemology - the relationship between the object of research and the researchers themselves - have long occupied philosophical and academic discussions. The nature of social science research including the research design, data collection and data analysis, is largely influenced by a number of traditions, known as 'paradigms', which assume a combination of particular ontological, epistemological and in certain cases even methodological postulations. According to Guba and Lincoln:

A paradigm may be viewed as a set of *basic beliefs* (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimates or first principles. It represents a *worldview* that defines, for its holder, the nature of the 'world', the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to the world and its parts, as, for example, cosmologies and theologies do (*emphasis in original*) (1994, p. 107).

This research stems from a Critical Realist paradigmatical standpoint. Critical Realism – also identified by some researchers as 'post-positivism' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) - forms a bridge between positivistic and constructivist/constructionist conceptions, modifying and adopting some of their propositions overcoming thus their limitations and turning them to advantage. While, critical realism acknowledges - just like positivism - the existence of a single reality which exists irrespectively of the researchers and their bias, it denies the potential-possibility of a full apprehension of reality (Bhaskar, 1979; 2008). As Scott placed it, critical realism recognizes that 'objects in the world, and in particular social objects, exist whether the observer or researcher is able to know them or not' but 'knowledge of these objects is always fallible because any attempts at describing them needs to take account of the transitive nature of knowledge' (2007, p.14). Critical realism acknowledges the existence of various understandings of reality and how those are shaped by society but does not reduce reality to these understandings. And it is here that the notion of fallibilism exercises an important role in maintaining the two opposing propositions of positivism and constructivism/constructionism, and at the same time sustaining their epistemological compatibility:



It is through fallibilism and reliabilism that realism escapes the epistemological dilemma. It sits between absolutism and relativism. It agrees with positivism that we do indeed have knowledge, but denies that knowledge is infallible. It agrees with constructionism that knowledge is social but does not see this as implying that truth is relative (Moore, 2007, p.35).

Essential to critical realism is the notion of multiple layers of reality. Reality in critical realism is *stratified* in three layers: the *Empirical*, the *Actual* and the *Real*. The Empirical relates to how we understand certain events/actions through our senses, the Actual represents the actual events/actions as they take place in space and time - irrespective of whether we realise them or not - and finally the Real depicts the causes, mechanisms and procedures that generate the events (Actual). So whereas in essence the Real exists first followed by the Actual and then by the Empirical, in practice we begin by the Empirical to realise the Actual and investigate - attempt to understand - the Real. Yet, the understanding of the Real (intransitive world) can only be fallible (transitive view) as there is never one mechanism or process causing the Actual but in fact multiple mechanisms are taking place at the same time, combining their power or even neutralising each other's power. An example, which elucidates the multiplicity of mechanisms, is Miles' (1989) theoretical framework (discussed in chapter 2), as used in this study to make sense of the articulation of racism. As Miles argues

'the articulation of racism always has a number of economic, political, and representational consequences, some of which can be contradictory. Moreover, the nature of those consequences changes historically, partly in accordance with different class interests and strategies, different strategies of resistance, and different material and cultural contexts. Definitions of racism which attribute the ideology with an ontologically and exclusively functional, economic and colonial character systematically obscure its multidimensionality and specificity' (1989, p.134).

This conceptualisation of the articulation of racism is in line with a Critical Realist understanding of reality with regards to the multiplicity of mechanisms and the operation of causality. The operation of causality is another main tenet of critical realism which is strongly related to the general understanding of social reality as an '*open system*'. Social reality encompasses a multiplicity of systems, mechanisms and causes that exist in the world simultaneously - supplementing or counterpoising each other. In fact, Bhaskar argues that not all mechanisms are active but rather possess potential for action, namely '*tendencies*'. Those tendencies 'maybe possessed unexercised, exercised unrealised, and realised unperceived (or undetected) by men' (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 77). Consequently, for critical realists it is extremely difficult to make the sort of *predictions* that positivism endeavours and does not endorse 'a hard

determinism' but rather '(re)directs our attention to an *understanding* and *explanation* of those tendencies' (*emphasis in original*) (Houston, 2001, p. 850).

The approach of Morphogenesis-Morphostasis as developed by Margaret Archer (1995; 1998) is essential to a critical realist understanding of social reality. Archer's work on agency and structure relates to Bhaskar's notion of transformation and reproduction of the social structure. In particular, Morphogenesis could be seen in conjunction to transformation and Morphostasis in conjunction to reproduction. Yet, what is central to the Morphogenesis-Morphostasis approach, unlike Giddens' (1979; 1984) theory of Structuration, is the *analytical dualism*. So, whereas for Giddens 'social systems only exist through their continuous structuration in the course of time' (1979, p. 217) for critical realists, societies pre-exist human actions therefore, structure pre-exists agency and accordingly agency cannot create structure but instead either transform or reproduce it (Bhaskar, 1979). Additionally, Archer maintains the need 'to sustain an analytical distinction between structure and agency if a transformational model is to prove workable, that is to do the work which practising social analysts need it to do' (1998, p. 361).

Stemming from the ontological-epistemological prepositions of critical realism, this study accepts that there is a reality out there which could be mirrored in various cases. A relevant example to this study is the case of educational inequalities. Educational inequalities are easy to realize just by assessing students: some students achieve lower grades than others (*Actual Layer*). The achievement differentials will exist even if students themselves are not aware of them, even if statisticians don't carry out the appropriate analysis to demonstrate this and reports do not discuss this issue (*Empirical Layer*). The Actual exists independently of the Empirical. The reasons lying behind educational inequalities are often multiple and encompass various mechanisms, causes and processes - all situated at the level of the *Real*.

This study takes into account students' views and experiences in relation to social capital (social networks, norms, attitudes, values and associational membership/participation) as well as other issues such as educational outcomes, social class and ethnic background. This is of vital importance for this research as it is acknowledged that the way participants perceive, experience and view the aforementioned issues - all situated at the Empirical Level - comprise part of the reality. In this way critical realism does not allow for 'the importance of human subjectivity' as emphasised by social constructionists and post-structuralists to be undermined (Houston, 2001, p. 848). Yet, unlike post-structuralism/post-modernism and social constructionism this study does not only operate at the Empirical Level. Conversely, it looks beyond subjects' perceptions and experiences (*empirical*) in order to understand the *actual* events, which in this case encompass the types of social capital and the channels through which social capital operates along with their effects. And finally it teases out the *real* causes for those events and the mechanisms-processes through which the former are generated. Such

mechanisms could be material or cultural deprivation as a result of class and gender differentials, racism (institutional or not) etc. It is important at this point to take into account the proposition of critical realism regarding mechanisms and action. It does not necessarily mean that all mechanisms are active in all cases, albeit always present. So in the case of this thesis it does not necessarily mean that class, racism or gender exercise a role, at least not in all participants or not simultaneously. This should rather be a matter of investigation.

By no means do I claim that the results of this research will correspond to notions of 'absolute truth' as following a critical realist ontology the 'Real' is not fully knowable. Yet, the theories at play assume that there is a reality which lies outside peoples' understandings, and even though these understandings comprise a valuable source of information and should therefore keep attracting researchers' attention, reality is not reduced to them. And this gives this study the epistemological and ontological tools to not only understand and map subjectivities and events themselves but also to capture part of what lies behind and explains these subjectivities. Regarding the question of what knowledge or ways of generating knowledge are best, Moore as a sociologist of knowledge himself stated that 'Some knowledge, or ways of producing knowledge, simply are better than others and even when the relativists attempt to deny this fact, they implicitly assume it on their own behalf' (2007, p. 39).

Overall, the Critical Realist approach resolves many problems at various levels of research - ontological, epistemological and methodological. It offers a serious and consistent alternative to naïve realism (empiricism) and absolute relativism. In terms of the methodology, unlike various stands that consider quantitative and qualitative approaches incompatible or at least maintain that they serve different epistemologies (see Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, pp. 4,6), critical realism embraces and welcomes the use of both approaches (Lund, 2005; Scott, 2007) and resolves the dilemma between quantitative or qualitative approach at the very ontological level (Scott, 2007). As Scott argues 'quantitative approaches and qualitative approaches are different symbolic systems, with different logical forms, for describing properties of objects' (2007, p. 15). This proposition taken together with Critical Realism's main tenet of stratified reality and analytical dualism (agency and structure) conduces to the interest of each method addressing different layers or objects of reality. Consequently, 'the focus of investigation is on the vertex of agential and structural objects, or the intersection between the different levels or layers of social reality' (Scott, 2007, p. 15).

#### **D. Case Study**

A case study research design enables an in depth examination of the multiple layers of reality and was thus considered to be in line with the Critical Realist paradigm adopted here. The unit of analysis defining a 'case study' is not a firm one but rather varies according to the research.

Thus, a 'case' can be an individual alone, an institution, a community, a single event or even a whole country (Gillham, 2000; Hammersley and Gomm, 2000). What qualifies a case study research is that it looks into one or few cases in substantial detail. This thesis employs case study research as in depth investigation of the topic is deemed necessary. The thorough examination of social capital components as well as the identification of patterns, relationships and processes that relate to the former requires detailed research of the students' characteristics - perceptions, attitudes and attributes - as well as those of their settings. Answers to 'why' and 'how' questions are difficult to underpin unless a close and thorough inspection is given to the students and their environment. Taking these conditions into account, it seems appropriate to employ case study research. 'The more complex and contextualised the objects of research, the more valuable the case study approach is regarded to be' (Scholz and Tietje, 2002, p. 4). For the purposes of this thesis, a *multiple case study* design is employed. The research focuses on Year 12 students, in four London secondary schools. All four schools are co-educational state-schools with different ethnic intake. Each one of these schools forms a single case study on the grounds of its ethnic composition.

The use of case studies in social science research and its possible limitations are widely discussed in the academic terrain. One of the main issues that arise is that of *representativeness*, that is to say the possibility of generalising the results beyond the research's unit of analysis. Several researchers argued that case studies do not allow generalisability beyond the population of the researched cases but are merely appropriate for the assessment of 'theoretical propositions' (Burton, 2000, p. 225). On the contrary, other researchers argue that general conclusions can be drawn from case study research via theoretical inference (Hammersley, Gomm and Foster, 2000). Acknowledging the limitations of case study in relation to the issue of *representativeness*, this thesis applies two strategies which according to Burton (2000) alleviate the problem: use of multiple case studies and selection of representative choices. Firstly, the use of multiple rather than just one case study increases the units of analysis and therefore makes the results more vigorous and convincing. In this case, the examination of four schools-cases is more likely to produce robust results that could be generalised beyond the population of these four cases, compared to the examination of one single case.

Secondly, the cautious choice of the cases is essential to the results of the research. This is a critical issue but it might be even more crucial within the context of education in the UK considering that a) its educational system is highly segregated (Papapolydorou, 2010a) - as a great number of other types of schools run in parallel to the state funded comprehensive ones - and b) the ethnic mix and socio-economic composition of the school varies considerably depending on the area in which it is situated. As a result, the choice of representative schools-cases is thought to be of vital importance. It is for this reason that the thesis employs four

schools with different characteristics, hoping thus to capture as much of the reality as possible. The reason behind choosing four schools with different ethnic composition is not just the need to make sense of the social capital (norms, networks, attitudes, values) that students from various ethnic backgrounds possess but also the necessity to compare those in both cases where an ethnic group is well represented and underrepresented in the school. The choice of schools is discussed further in the section below (Unit of Analysis). Taken into account the application of multiple case studies as well as their selection criteria, the limitations regarding generalisability are considerably lessened. The use of four representative case studies could be seen as a good balance between a survey and a single case study research.

According to Stake (1994) there are different purposes that prompt researchers to carry out case studies. In line with this, Stake classified case studies into three categories: *intrinsic*, *instrumental* and *collective* case studies. The first type of case study is mainly interested in a single particular case and it does not aim to understand a more general situation beyond the researched case or generate a theory. This thesis' case studies could not be identified as *intrinsic* as the aim is not simply the better understanding of the case studies per se but also the broader comprehension of the phenomenon (social capital relationship with educational outcomes) through the spectacles of the four case studies. *Instrumental* and *collective* case studies are on the other hand strongly related to this research's rationale.

In what we may call *instrumental case study*, a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory. The case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else. The case is often looked at in depth, its contexts scrutinized, its ordinary activities detailed, but because this helps us pursue the external interest ... The choice of cases is made because it is expected to advance our understanding of that other interest (*emphasis in original*).

(Stake, 1994, p. 237).

A *collective* case study is fairly similar to the *instrumental* one with the former being an extension of the latter into more than one cases. This thesis could be considered a *collective* case study (four cases) whereby the above propositions of *instrumental* case study are verified.

A significant debate in relation to the case study research concerns the methods encompassed under the umbrella of case studies. Several academics argue that case studies are merely associated with qualitative methods while quantitative methods have no place there. This thesis takes a different stance. It reckons that 'for the case study researcher all evidence is of some value, and this value (trustworthiness) has to be carefully appraised' (Gillham, 2000, p. 10). Thus, quantitative methods could in many instances have something to offer to case study research and should therefore not be uncritically excluded from it. Besides as Burton argued

'case study research is *flexible* and not necessarily about qualitative research. Case studies *can* and *should* include *numerical measurement*, where appropriate' (*my emphasis*) (2000, p. 217). Accordingly, this thesis employs a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods (mixed-methods) for the research of the four case studies. The emphasis is drawn on the qualitative methods, yet quantitative ones occupy an important part of the thesis and exercise a key role for its results.

## E. Mixed Methods

For the purposes of this study mixed-methods of collecting and analysing data are employed. The number of mixed-method studies in social science research has increased significantly in the last few years as a number of researchers consider the use of more than one method to be more appropriate than monomethod research. According to Teddie and Tashakkori (2003) and Tashakkori and Teddie (2003) there are three reasons for which mixed methods are used: firstly mixed-methods are able to give answers that alternative methods are not able to; secondly, they offer better inferences; and thirdly, they give the chance for presenting multiple views. In the case of this research all three reasons hold true. In relation to the first reason, this study employs mixed methods in order to get answers to various questions that cannot be answered with the use of a single method. So whereas information concerning students' form of social capital, attitudes and values could be taken from interviews (qualitative data) the correlation with educational outcomes is better taken from quantitative analysis of data withdrawn from a survey questionnaire. Corresponding to the second reason, the use of mixed methods is indeed expected to contribute to the provision of more rigorous inferences. The reason for that is twofold: on the one hand mixed-methods allow for an examination of the issue from various angles and at various levels. Finally, the use of mixed-methods in this PhD allows for various voices to be heard, i.e. the voices of students who participated in the questionnaires and those who participated in the interviews.

Tashakkori and Teddie (1998; 2003) as well as other authors (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007) conceptualise the use of mixed-methods research in the framework of a *pragmatical* paradigm. For pragmatists it is the research question which has the primary importance and not the ontological-epistemological assumptions. Thus, in order to approach and answer the research question in the best possible way the pragmatist researcher is free to use multiple-methods and indeed multiple paradigms. The use of multiple paradigms is not considered as incompatibility by pragmatists. This research uses mixed-methods for somewhat different premises than those of pragmatism. As already mentioned in the paradigmatic standpoint part, this thesis adopts a critical realist framework which among others is argued to offer a sound ground for the use of mixed-methods. As Scott (2007) maintains, the use of both quantitative and qualitative data in critical realism is welcomed - and I argue in certain cases even deemed necessary. Yet, in

critical realism the combination of various methods is not only considered at the level of methodology but at the very level of ontology as well. Given that critical realism adopts a belief concerning a stratified reality, each method is used for capturing different levels of reality. So in my case, the interviews are mainly used to capture the *Empirical* level - how students understand the reality through their one experience - whereas the surveys are also used to draw some connections between the empirical and the *Actual*, namely between what people say and think about their social capital and educational outcomes. Ultimately, the two are used to capture the *Real* at the closest possible level.

A questionnaire was administered to 250 students to elicit responses to questions relating to their learning and the nature and impact of social capital on their school and home environments. Quantitative data analysis in chapter 4 offers valuable information about the elements of social capital that are emphasised and/or underrepresented in each group (descriptive statistics) as well as about the strength of their correlation with educational outcomes (inferential statistics). Additionally the research includes qualitative data drawn from in-depth, semi-structured interviews with students. Interviews mainly explore the ways in which social capital is associated with students' schooling. Furthermore, interviews enabled new themes that were not included in the questionnaire to come forward. The fact that interviews were semi-structured and not fully structured enabled the students to express themselves in relation to certain topics and develop their views and opinions based on their experiences. Overall, qualitative data was thought to be particularly insightful in this case for exploring complex processes that are not easily quantified such as those of social networks, norms and values.

This is by no means suggesting that these questions could not have been addressed by a different research design such as a survey or ethnography. Yet, taken everything into account a multiple-case-study research design whereby mixed methods are employed was considered to be the ideal design for the examination of this topic, under these circumstances. The section below describes the unit of analysis on which this research was carried out.

## **F. Unit of analysis**

The greatest part of the analysis in this study lies in the micro-level, as individuals and in particular, students within schools comprise the main unit of analysis. For example, the exploration of the nature of social capital in relation to ethnicity, social class and gender as well as the examination of social capital's role in the educational outcomes and school experiences of students are primarily examined at the micro-level with individual students as the unit of analysis. Nevertheless, some analysis of this research lies in the meso-level with schools being the unit of analysis. For instance, the assessment of the relationship between the ethnic

composition of the school and the overall attitudes and friendship patterns of students is seen as a meso-level analysis. The characteristics of both the school and the students-participants are discussed below with reference to this study's focus.

### Schools

This research is based on data collected from four co-educational, state-secondary schools in London. As already mentioned in a previous section, each school formed a different case study due to the uniqueness of its ethnic composition. The original research design for this PhD had planned to research four schools-cases with the following ethnic composition: one would have an ethnically diverse and balanced intake, whereas the other three would have predominantly White British, British Indian and British African-Caribbean intake, respectively. The reason behind this choice was the need for comparison of students' social capital in both cases of an ethnically mixed and balanced and an ethnically predominant environment. Unfortunately, due to some difficulties in finding schools which were willing to participate in the research, it was not possible to fulfil these exact conditions so the criteria for school selection had to be loosened. In order to maintain a balance between the available schools and some of the original selection criteria, which would enable addressing the research questions, both faith schools and single-sex schools were rejected and finally four co-educational state schools with different ethnic composition were included. Overall, the final selection of participant schools was a compromise between the original criteria set for the selection of schools and the potential of accessibility.

In this thesis these schools are referred to as Chester Central School, Kinderhook High School, Newfane East School and Addison Union School. Chester Central School, Newfane East School and Addison Union School were community schools at the time of the data collection while Kinderhook High School was a foundation school. Even though all four schools were fairly multicultural the ethnic balances of their intake were different as each one of them was situated in a different London borough and reflected the ethnic mix of the area. In Chester Central, White British students formed the majority of the school population, however, Black African and Caribbean students were very well represented in the school and if taken as a single category they were not much less than the White British students. Indian students were underrepresented in the school. Kinderhook High School had a South Asian predominant population. Indian students formed the biggest ethnic group of the school while Black African/Caribbean students were also very well represented. White British students were underrepresented as they comprised less than one sixth of the Indian students. Newfane East School, like Kinderhook High School, had a South Asian predominant population. The two biggest single ethnic groups were the White British and the Indian with the first slightly outnumbering the second. Black African/Caribbean students were underrepresented. Finally,



the ethnic composition of Addison Union School resembled that one of Chester Central School<sup>9</sup>, in that it had a White British predominant population and Black African/Caribbean students were well represented.

### Participants

All research participants were Year 12 students, and were between 16 and 17 years of age. The main focus was on the participants' year group and an attempt was made for students of different programmes of the Year 12 group to participate in the data collection. As a result, the group of participants comprised: a) students studying for their first year of A-Levels, namely AS exams, b) students studying for a Vocational diploma, namely BTECs and c) students doing retake packages, that is resitting their GCSE examinations. Only two out of the four schools included the last two programmes, namely Chester Central School and Addison Union School. Sixth forms in Kinderhook High and Newfane East consisted entirely of students studying for their A-Level exams.

This project's research questions could have undoubtedly been addressed by a different research design. For example, instead of drawing on students as the exclusive source of information one could have drawn on parents, teachers or on some combination of the three. Yet, the choice of students as the single participants of this research was not random but conscious and purposeful. This project includes only students in order to acquire a holistic perspective in relation to students' attitudes, views and experiences. A great deal of research on children and young people is often carried out with people other than children and young people themselves. Research on student-related issues frequently focuses and/or is exclusively drawn on either parents' or teachers' responses in interviews or survey questionnaires. Of course this by no means suggests that teachers' and parents' views do not count or cannot be informative; it is merely argued that students' opinions on issues that regard themselves should be valued just as much if not more. Stemming from this standpoint, all data used here derives from students' responses on the interviews and questionnaires. Naturally, issues regarding other people's actions and views and the way they might come into play, i.e. teachers' attitudes or parental practices, were also addressed. Yet all related questions were posed to students and the information supplied therefore represented students' perspective.

What is more, the year group from which the students would have been drawn on was another important decision to be taken. As already mentioned hereinabove, students of Year 12 were finally included in this research. The reason behind choosing students of that year group was twofold. Firstly, there was the need for a firm indicator of students' educational achievement and

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<sup>9</sup> For this reason, interview data from Addison Union School was treated as analytical counterpoint to Chester Central School's when examining issues related to the school's ethnic composition/diversity.

GCSE results comprised a good proxy for that. Year 12 students already possessed their GCSE results as they had recently sat their exams. Secondly, sixth form students have a lot of free periods during the week which enabled the interviews to be carried out without having to take students out of class or keep them after school. The alternative option of choosing Year 13 students was rejected since most of the Year 13 students were close to their final examinations which would determine their admission to universities and were thus thought to be less willing to spend some of their time for the research purposes. In addition, opting for Year 13 students would have resulted in the automatic exclusion of all Retake students and one year vocational courses (BTECs) students. The limitation for choosing Year 12 students and not younger ones was the exclusion of a range of students from certain social classes and in some cases ethnic backgrounds that either left education after Year 11 or continued on Further Education Colleges and were therefore underrepresented in the research sample.

### **G. Negotiating Access**

Considerable difficulties were encountered in accessing schools for my research, despite trying to approach them in various ways (i.e. emails, letters, PGCE course leaders, other contacts etc). Indicatively, it could be mentioned that out of approximately forty emails sent to different schools only four replied positively and finally only two agreed to participate whereas the rest either replied negatively or didn't reply at all, the latter being the most typical. Ultimately, two of the participant schools were those whose head-teachers and/or sixth form directors replied positively to my email; the other two were schools approached through contacts. The latter was a much easier way to acquire access to schools and even though the same procedures had to be followed it took significantly less time as the confirmation of access was given much more quickly than in the other two cases.

The procedures were explained to the head-teacher and/or the sixth form director who granted their permission to carry out my research in their school. I was then directed to either the head of the sociology department (in two out of the four schools) or in the sixth form administrator (the other two schools) to arrange the procedures of the research. Overall, the whole procedure of trying to gain access to schools from the day letters/emails were sent out until the day I walked in the schools to carry out the research lasted approximately six months.

### **H. Data Collection**

The first visit to each school was done in order to administer the questionnaires to the students. In two of the schools (Kinderhook High and Addison Union) the questionnaires were administered whilst students were in their classroom whereas in the other two schools all students were gathered together in the common room (Newfane East School) and the hall

(Chester Central School). Students received an oral explanation of the purpose and procedures of the research and were given the chance to ask me questions. They were subsequently given a written explanation of the research in a letter which requested their signed consent. Students were informed about their rights both orally and in paper and they were assured that they didn't have to participate if they didn't want to and that they had the right to withdraw at any stage of the research (see ethics section for more details). Indeed a few students decided they didn't wish to participate before I handed in the questionnaires and some others decided so after they went through the questionnaire. Yet these students were not more than five in all four schools. The majority of the students agreed to participate in the research. The whole procedure of questionnaires administration lasted approximately half an hour at each participant group.

All subsequent visits to the schools were done for the purposes of the interviews. Sixth form administrators or heads of the sociology department approached the students and asked them if they were happy to participate in an interview. In Chester Central School I was already present at school whilst the Sixth form administrator was approaching the students and those who agreed to participate had the interview on the same day. In Kinderhook High and Newfane East Schools the day and time of the interviews were arranged in advance and I was informed accordingly via email. Interviews in Kinderhook High and Newfane East were carried out in offices or classrooms but this was unfortunately not possible in Chester Central School where all interviews were carried out in a small secluded section of the common room. Even though the arrangement of the place allocated for the interview did not allow other people to hear or overhear our conversation, both the participant and myself could hear the noise from the common room and in certain cases we even had visual contact with other students who were passing by. This was a major limitation for interviews carried out in that school for two reasons. Firstly, the quality of interview recording was poor as the background noise was sometimes too loud and in some instances overrode the participant's voice. Secondly, both the participants and I were easily distracted by other students who would approach us. Of course, whenever people approached our place to talk to us I would stop the tape recording, explain we were in the middle of an interview and start the tape recording again as soon as they left. The place where the interviews were carried out in Chester Central School was the main reason for the performance of two out of the three focus groups carried out in that school.

Even though the original research design did not include focus group discussions, in the end I carried out three of them in that particular school. In one case I had to turn an individual interview into a focus group interview as the friends' of the interviewee were consistently hiding behind the library shelves and windows and were teasing us. Since politely explaining to them what we were doing and then ignoring them didn't seem to work and getting angry with them was not an option I decided to invite them to the interview after getting the approval of the interviewed student. They agreed and signed the consent form. The second focus group was

done after a girl wanted to sit close to her best-friend whilst the latter was interviewed. From her place she could hear the whole conversation so I invited her to the conversation as well. The final focus group was carried out with two boys who actually approached me themselves and asked to be interviewed together despite none of them had been approached by the administrator for this purpose. All focus group conversations were particularly insightful in giving information about students' attitudes, values and social networks even though they were not as good in relation to their more personal issues, such as relationships with parents, problematic friendships etc. The latter issues were much easily addressed during individual interviews as students naturally seemed to talk more comfortably about their very personal issues when not surrounded by their friends. The interviews lasted on average 50 minutes and they were all semi-structured, in depth interviews. Focus groups lasted slightly more than that.

### Interviews' environment and researcher's positionality: 'Insider' or 'Outsider'?

During the interviews an informal environment of conversation was developed in order to make students feel comfortable. I treated all students with chocolate assortments and placed the box next to them encouraging them to take more whenever they felt like it. I was concerned with the issue of power differential between me as a researcher and the students as participants (Sultana, 2007) since the stage of the research design. This is an issue that perhaps remained until the end - to at least some extent - but I strove to reduce it as much as possible. During the interviews I adopted an understanding attitude toward students and was not critical of them. When students referred to instances that they 'tricked' their parents and/or teachers or did something which could be considered as inappropriate, I took a non judgemental stance. Instead, I tried to be humorous but at the same time not encouraging damaging behaviours, such as truancy. Perhaps the fact that I was not much older than the interviewed students and I relatively looked like some of them in certain ways such as dress code, hair style etc. comprised along with the research design some of the factors that helped students feel comfortable to engage in a conversation.

My identity as a White middle-class individual was another issue I was concerned with especially in light of the interviews I carried out with working-class, Indian and Black African/Caribbean students. Some researchers would argue that a non-Indian person cannot possibly research Indian people (Singh-Raud, 1999) and therefore a non-Black person cannot research Black people as they are clearly positioned as 'outsiders' in relation to the research participants. I appreciate that there might be indeed some limitation in relation to being an 'outsider' researcher but I do not maintain that this is something that cannot or should not be done. Conversely, the identity and/or background of the researcher might imply different limitations irrespective of whether they are 'outsiders' or 'insiders'. Even when researchers carry out research with participants who share the same ethnic background or other characteristics

as there might still be certain drawbacks. For instance, the researcher might be so familiar with the culture, attitudes and lifestyles of participants that he/she might be predisposed in relation to the findings of the research. What is more, the identities of researchers are informed by multiple categories, namely social class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, education etc., which makes it even more difficult to argue that one can only carry out research as an 'insider'. In relation to my own identity, it seems that some of the possible limitations that accompanied my ethnic background were mediated by the fact that students could not easily position me as 'White' as it was quite obvious that I was not 'White British'. A number of students made comments on my accent and asked about my ethnic origin. So in this case, my identity as a Greek-Cypriot female individual who had been living in UK for the past three years rendered my positionality rather liminal in relation to both White British students and students from minority ethnic backgrounds. In relation to my class background, again it was not easy for students to position me as a middle-class or working-class individual as I did not have any particular type of classed accent<sup>10</sup> and my dress code was quite neutral. On the one hand, some students could view me as a middle-class individual due to the level of my educational background, namely a PhD candidate or a researcher. On the other hand, some students could position me as a working-class student due to the student characteristics I was bearing, namely having no job and no income and relying heavily on my parents for support. Despite my attempts to minimise any possible signs of power differentials during the data collection, it could be argued that the way I viewed both the participants and the data collected from them was still informed by my own experiences and therefore my own background. In this case, it is important to acknowledge the possible ways this might influence the data interpretation and dissemination by being self-reflexive.

The interview was most of the times a conversation between the students and me with the students speaking more than me. Based on a general interview guide that addressed my research questions I was posing questions to the students and then let them develop however they wanted. In the case of focus groups I was mostly proposing themes for discussion rather than questions. In both interviews and focus group cases, the emphasis was more on the students' responses and new emerging themes rather than on keeping a sequence of research questions posed bluntly to the participants. Indeed, this seems to have worked out well as a strategy to make students feel comfortable and develop their ideas. In fact, a lot of students at Kinderhook High School<sup>11</sup> when discussing my research methods thought that the interviews I

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<sup>10</sup> Some students spoke about different types of accents (i.e. posh accent) which corresponded to the social class of the individual. Chapter 5 discusses this issue in relation to some interview data. As I did not grow up in the UK I did not develop any of these accents.

<sup>11</sup> About 2 months after finishing my data collection I went back to Kinderhook High School to present the preliminary analysis of my data to two AS Sociology classes that had participated in my research (see next section). During that time I engaged students in workshop activities where we discussed different methodological issues. One activity was about the different types of interviews (unstructured, semi-structured and structured) and as part of that I asked the students who participated in the interviews to state the type of interview I used and support it with arguments.

conducted with them were unstructured and not semi-structured interviews. They based their argument on the fact that I did not hold a piece of paper with questions but I let them talk about their views and experiences and the whole process resembled a conversation rather than an interview. When I told them that the interview was in fact semi-structured and that I did have some original questions in mind they said that they had not realised so.

In addition, students were given a paper and were asked to draw a socio-graph which would include their close friends at school. I showed them a draft that I had drawn myself as an example. Based on the socio-graph I later asked them about their friends' gender, ethnic background and whether they thought they were richer, poorer than them or about the same as them. Following on from that they were given the chance to talk about their experiences and thoughts in relation to a range of topics such as their school's ethnic composition, their friendships etc. At a later stage I gave them a different colour of pen and asked them to add any close friends they had outside the school. A similar conversation followed.

Interviews were seen as a way to empower students by encouraging them to express their honest views and experiences. Indeed, students responded to this call in many instances and expressed thoughts and concerns as well as feelings of bitterness and anger by raising several societal issues such as racism, classism, stereotypes and economic inequalities. All interviewed students were involved in this study as 'active participants' (Alderson, 2005, p.30); this gave students some power over the interview processes and enabled them to express themselves relatively freely. According to Alderson there are advantages when including children - in this study young people - as 'active participants'. Firstly, 'they may enjoy the research process more' and secondly 'the findings may more accurately report their own views and experiences' (2005, p.30). Overall, students seemed to have responded positively to the interviews and were particularly talkative. A lot of the students seemed to enjoy our conversation. Nevertheless, in three cases – each one in a different school - students were not talkative despite being happy to participate in the interview and signing the consent form in the first place. This might have been a result of participants' being shy. I tried to make them feel comfortable and loosen up by talking about other topics (Alderson and Morrow, 2004) that could have potentially interested them. Unfortunately, since students were still giving single-word replies which is a characteristic of closed and not open questions, I thanked them and ended the interview.

At the end of each interview students were given the opportunity to go back to any topic discussed or add something new. Then the tape recording would stop and I would ask students whether there was something they wanted to ask me. Whereas this was done to make sure that students had the chance to clarify any aspects of the research procedure and I therefore expected respective questions, I was finally surprised by the questions students posed. Among those students who posed questions the majority of them asked me personal things. Even

though some of these questions came as a big surprise to me (i.e. Do you have a boyfriend? Have your parents met him? Do you intend to marry him?) I was very pleased that students asked me these questions because it was an indication that they felt quite comfortable talking to me, they had not been bored by our conversation and they felt like knowing more about me. I considered it fair to reply to all their questions, despite some of them being personal, since for approximately one hour they were unfolding their own personal lives, experiences and views to a stranger, myself. It should also be mentioned that I received some really good questions regarding my research from sociology students, who revealed a particular interest in my research methods.

The main criteria for the selection of the interviewed participants were the students' ethnic background<sup>12</sup> and gender. I interviewed approximately 15 students from each school: 5 Indian, 5 White British and 5 Black African or Black Caribbean students with a balanced number of girls and boys participants. Also, in schools where vocational and retake programmes were included a range of students from different programmes were interviewed. Unfortunately, the decision of interviewing only students of these specific ethnic backgrounds resulted in the rejection of a number of students across schools that wanted to participate in the research and showed great enthusiasm to be interviewed. Overall, the willingness of students to participate as well as the actual conversations we had, demonstrated that the majority of the students wanted and sometimes felt the need to communicate their views and experiences and were happy to talk to a researcher in order to do so.

## **I. Ethical Considerations**

Carrying out ethical research is a challenge faced by researchers during various stages of their research project. Acquiring the consent of participants as well as ensuring confidentiality and anonymity comprise the main ethics-related issues that researchers take into account when carrying out their study. These issues are without doubt necessary however not sufficient conditions for ethical research which includes human participants. Carrying out ethical research involves much more than that. Ethical research entails multiple levels and stages of the project including the research design, the collection of data, the dissemination etc (Alderson and Morrow, 2004). Due to this multi-level engagement of ethics with research it is considerably difficult to devote a single section on ethics when describing a project without having to refer to other sections such as the data collection, the data analysis etc. In the case of this study, the ethical challenges that arise when conducting research with young people were considered at all levels.

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<sup>12</sup> Self reported ethnic background.

First, students were regarded as fully competent, 'active participants' (Alderson, 2005, p.30) as discussed above, whose opinions were valued and taken into account. Regarding the acquisition of participants' consent, all people involved in this research, whether in the interview or questionnaire parts, participated in a voluntary way. Even though students might have felt somewhat compromised by their teacher's presence in class I tried to encourage them to refuse participation in the questionnaire if they wished so. They were informed about the research purpose and procedures as well as about their own rights as participants both orally and on paper (see Appendix pages 198-199 for consent forms). Participation was based on the freely given and informed consent of the students. In addition, students were assured that they reserved the right to withdraw at any point of the research and that there would be no penalty if they decided to do so. In this event all data gathered from them would be destroyed. Research participants were also informed about the intended uses of the research such as publications and presentations.

The anonymity and confidentiality of the research was made clear and it was explained to participants that there would be no possibility of their results being tracked back in any way. All data gathered from them would be treated with confidentiality unless it was absolutely and unavoidably necessary to prevent serious injury or illness. Sensitive data such as participants' ethnic/race origins and social class were collected. Yet, all data gathered from participants will be processed and treated according to the Data Protection Act 1998. The real name of all interviewed students was substituted by a pseudonym that students chose themselves at the end of each interview. Even though this was only a small prerogative given to students, they felt satisfied they were given options and at the same time reassured that the anonymity and confidentiality would be respected. The schools' names as well as other names mentioned in the interviews, such as names of teachers, head-teachers, friends, other schools etc were also changed. Regarding questionnaires, students were told to not write their name on the actual questionnaire. Instead each questionnaire had a unique ID number and students were called to write their name and surname along with their questionnaires ID number on a separate form I gave them. This strategy was followed in order to link the students' name with their questionnaire so as to ensure that the removal of data from research and its destruction was possible in case a participant decided to withdraw at a later stage. The form which included students' name and their questionnaires' ID number was stored in a file separate from the questionnaires so as to respect anonymity and confidentiality.

During the interviews some themes which could be considered as sensitive by some students came up. Topics such as parent-teacher relations and friendships could have caused distress or other negative feelings for some participants. All students were told before the interview that they did not have to answer to a question if they did not wish to do so and that they were able to stop whenever they wanted to. Throughout the interview, I was very careful with the tone of my



voice and the way I articulated the questions so as to not cause negative feelings to the participants. Inevitably though, due to the nature of the research focus some students did become somewhat emotional and/or felt distressed at some instances. I assured them that we did not have to go on with this topic if they didn't want to but in all cases they said it was fine. At the end of each interview participants were given a paper with the ChildLine<sup>13</sup> number and were encouraged to call in case they were concerned about any of the topics discussed during our interview and wanted to talk to someone about that. All interviewees were given the ChildLine number regardless of how they looked or behaved during the interview. The reason for that was firstly to avoid stigmatising those students who would get it and secondly to make sure that all people who would potentially need it would get it without my personal judgement being the criterion for that.

Reporting back to the participants was another research aspect that was informed by ethical considerations. Reporting back was perceived as a way to thank schools and participants as well as to acknowledge the contribution of the participants to the research by giving them the opportunity to get informed of and comment on the research findings. All schools were sent a report with the findings and conclusions of the project. Yet, when this happened, the students who participated in the research had already graduated from the school and were difficult to reach. As a result, students were encouraged to keep my personal details and contact me in case they wanted to follow up on the way my research evolved. In addition, I approached the sixth form directors and/or the heads of sociology and I offered to give a presentation of my preliminary analysis findings to the students. Only one of the schools responded positively. My presentation was incorporated to the sociology course of two AS classes whose students were about to carry out their own research. I therefore covered some general aspects of my research other than just the research findings in order to give students an example of a research design and help them with the implementation of their own project. Students were encouraged to ask questions about the research processes and the findings and they were asked to comment on the findings. Importantly, students expressed their views and made several remarks in relation to the presented findings. The overall experience was positive and constructive for both students and me. Students felt they were appreciated and valued since their opinions were asked for and taken into consideration. They also found the description of my research project helpful for their own coursework. I, in turn felt firstly satisfied for being able to be of some help to the students who had kindly participated in my research. Secondly, reporting back to the students was an excellent way to validate my findings (Alderson and Morrow, 2004). The latter was particularly significant for my research as it informed the dissemination of my findings.

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<sup>13</sup> ChildLine is a service provided by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). Children can call ChildLine for free and talk to counsellors about worries or problems such as 'bullying, drugs, pregnancy, HIV and AIDS, physical and sexual abuse, running away' etc. ChildLine guarantees the confidentiality of all calls.

The dissemination of research findings is strongly related to the way participants and the group(s) they represent are viewed. Therefore ethical considerations were seen as very relevant to dissemination. Alderson and Morrow argue that researchers should take into account the possible impact of research on participants as well as those 'in related groups' (2004, p.127). This was a very valid consideration, as this project is concerned with issues of ethnic and social class background as well as inequalities. The challenge here is to be able to put forward the inequalities that characterise participants' lives whilst at the same time avoid stigmatising any of them or the group(s) they represent. It is important to illustrate the arising patterns without implying the inferiority (cultural, genetic or otherwise) of certain individuals or groups of people. Therefore 'positive images' (Alderson and Morrow, 2004, p.128) are used wherever possible. Yet, at the same time patterns of inequality which inform negatively students' lives are also highlighted and the need for a renegotiation of these issues is suggested at several points throughout this study.

## **J. Operationalisation of Concepts**

### ***i. Social Capital***

Social Capital is a multi-dimensional concept and that seems to be one of the main reasons that generate a plethora of debates in relation to the way it should be defined and operationalised for the purposes of research. Despite the numerous debates, there appears to be no consensus in relation to the definition and the operationalisation of social capital. Instead, different researchers/authors perceived and operationalised social capital in different ways. Chapter 2 illustrated the way social capital was understood and used by some of its main theorists and Chapter 1 demonstrated the way social capital is employed here. This part exemplifies the way social capital is operationalised in this study in relation to the data collection.

Social capital is understood as the social networks, norms, attitudes and values that characterise students' lives. So the social networks of students with a) other students, b) friends (within and outside the school), c) family members, d) other adults were examined. The norms, attitudes and values of students and their family were explored mainly in relation to a) education and career prospects, b) inter-ethnic friendships, c) ethnic diversity, d) inter-class friendships and e) inter-gender friendships. The participation and/or membership to associations is also perceived as a constitutive part of social capital. The following indicators were examined in relation to this: a) participation in voluntary activities, b) participation in clubs and societies (i.e. youth clubs), c) participation in other community based centres (i.e. religious group centres), d) parental participation in the school community (i.e. in the Parent Teacher Associations). Trust is not considered to be a component of social capital but it's nevertheless of interest to this

research as an outcome of social capital. All in all, social capital is employed here in relation to three analytical frameworks: the school, the family and the community.

## *ii. Social Class*

Social class has been defined and operationalised in different ways by different researchers. Social class can be either measured by a single indicator - usually occupation - or a composite index of indicators, i.e. status, income, education, occupation. In this study, social class is measured by occupation as a single indicator. According to Rose and O'Reilly it is important to 'keep the idea of social class analytically distinct from the possible consequences which the occupancy of a position may give rise to, e.g. income or housing. This will allow us to examine the mechanisms which link class to outcomes of these alternative indicators (i.e. education, income etc)' (1998, p.30). In addition, Rose and O'Reilly argue that social class is a more informative indicator than any other alternative when it comes to 'questions about how the social structure shapes outcomes'(1998, p.30). Since the influence of social structure is of primary importance in this study, the use of occupation as a sole indicator of social class is deemed the most appropriate approach. The influence and role of education on the outcomes of interest is examined separately by taking education as a distinct variable (see next section).

This study uses the revised Standard Occupational Classification (SOC), as introduced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), for determining participants' social class. SOC is based on a nine category scale constructed to allocate jobs based on four principles: economic activity status, occupation, status in employment and industry (Office for National Statistics, 2000a). There are nine major groups, namely: Managers and Senior Officials (major group 1), Professional Occupations (major group 2), Associate Professional and Technical Occupations (major group 3), Administrative and Secretarial Occupations (major group 4), Skilled Trades Occupations (major group 5), Personal Service Occupations (major group 6), Sales and Customer Service Occupations (major group 7), Process, Plant and Machine Operatives (major group 8) and Elementary Occupations (major group 9). In addition to the nine major groups, SOC 2000 comprises of '25 sub-major groups, 81 minor groups and 353 unit groups' (Office for National Statistics, 2000a).

The social class of student-participants was defined by their parents' occupation. In case of parents having different occupational positions, the highest one was assumed to represent the social class background of the participants. In cases where a student lived with only one parent and had no or limited communication with the other parent, the occupation taken into account was the one of the parent living with the student, even when that was lower than that of the other parent. For example, a student reported that her father was a graphic designer (3<sup>rd</sup> occupational group) and her mother was a teaching assistant (6<sup>th</sup> occupational group). Yet, the

student lived with her mother and was not in touch with her father; she did not meet him or talk to him very often. It was therefore assumed that her social class background reflected more her mother's occupation rather than her father's.

The nine-scale SOC category was subsequently recoded into a four-item category [1 = Upper-middle Class, 2 = Middle Class, 3 = Liminal Classes and 4 = Working Class] for the purposes of quantitative data analysis and into a three-item category [1 = Upper-middle Class, 2 = Middle Class, 3 = Working Class] for the purposes of qualitative data analysis. The four category schema was a result of a three-part derivation process, namely a) from the National Statistics Standard Occupational Classification (NS SOC) (Office for National Statistics, 2000a; Office for National Statistics, 2000b) to the eight-class version of National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS SEC) (Office for National Statistics, 2008), b) from the eight-class version of NS SEC to the five-class version of NS SEC and c) from the five-class version of NS SEC to a four-class adaptation of the NS SEC (see appendix page 228). For the qualitative data analysis a simpler, three-item category scheme was employed.

The three category schema was a result of a four-part derivation process, namely a) from the National Statistics Standard Occupational Classification (NS SOC) (Office for National Statistics, 2000a; Office for National Statistics, 2000b) to the eight-class version of National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS SEC) (Office for National Statistics, 2008), b) from the eight-class version of NS SEC to the five-class version of NS SEC, c) from the five-class version of NS SEC to the three-class version of the NS SEC and d) to an adaptation of the three-class version of the NS SEC where the 'Managerial and professional occupations' category corresponded to the upper-middle class, the 'Intermediate occupations' category corresponded to middle class category and the 'Routine and manual occupations - Never worked and long-term unemployed' category corresponded to the working class category (see appendix page 228).

### ***iii. Ethnic Background***

The way ethnic background is defined and measured varies greatly across studies and there is an ongoing debate regarding the importance and ethical implications of the different categorisations. This study uses ethnicity as both a fixed and a fluid concept. Questionnaires invited participants to identify themselves with somewhat firm and fixed ethnic categories whereas interview conversations allowed the ethnic identification of students to play out and unfold various complexities.

The ethnic classification of participants in firm categories is deemed very important as it allows for certain patterns to become evident. In cases where issues such as educational inequalities

are addressed there is a need for an explicit identification of some groups with certain indicators. Without any type of categorisation, it is difficult to identify patterns of inequality and subsequently address them in an appropriate manner. The ethnic background categories used at the questionnaire were in line with the 2001 Census and included the following categories: White British, White Irish, Black Caribbean, Black African, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Chinese. The following additional categories were also available for the students to choose and specify the exact ethnic background with which they identified the most: Any other White Background, Any other Black Background, Any other Asian Background, Any mixed Background, Any other ethnic Background. Even though this classification reflected the categories of the 2001 Census the allocation of the different ethnic categories into broader ethnic groups resembled more the coding of Higher Education Statistics Agency. In particular, the questionnaire used for this research placed the 'Chinese' category under the Asian group as in the Higher Education Statistics Agency rather than under a separate group named 'Chinese' as in the 2001 Census.

Nevertheless, using fixed categories might often obscure intra-group differentiations that are of vital importance as ethnic groups are often heterogeneous. For instance, the use of a single ethnic category for all Black African students obfuscates the fact that Nigerian students achieve not only considerably higher than other African students but also higher than the national average (DfES, 2005). What is more, fixed ethnic categories do not allow for the overlapping and often shifting ethnic identification that students form for themselves and others to become evident. Students seemed to be holding different perceptions of ethnicity that often changed during the interview. Not acknowledging this tendency would be a great limitation for the analysis. For example, many Indian students referred to other Indian students not as Indians but as Muslims. Further conversation revealed that the interviewed students were Hindu Indians whereas the students they referred to were Muslim Indians. This is a pertinent example where other social elements - in this case religion - come into play and influence the negotiation of ethnic identification. As a result, ethnicity was viewed in this case as a loose category that was often context sensitive rather than as a fixed category. Yet, this is not to deny that several interesting patterns arose from interview conversations by virtue of the fixed categories used in questionnaires. All in all, both ways of approaching ethnicity are important, albeit with limitations; a combination of the two approaches might be able to provide better insights than a single approach would.

#### *iv. Education*

##### Parental Education

The educational level of parents was determined by the highest level of education they reached based on a nine category scale (questionnaire based indicator). The lowest category was 'began but did not complete primary school' and the highest one was 'PhD or MD Graduate'. Students were also given the chance to specify any other form of education that did not fall within either of the given categories. At the interviews students were asked whether their parents had been to university or not and if the answer was negative they often gave the alternative education their parents possessed along with the reason for that. For example a student told me that his mother could not go to university after she had finished secondary school because she had many brothers and sisters and her father could not afford paying for their education at a university level.

##### Students' Education

The educational achievement of students was measured by their performance at GCSE exams (questionnaire based indicator). Students were asked to report all their GCSE subjects along with the grade they achieved. Two indicators are used in relation to the educational achievement measurement. The first one is a dummy variable and regards whether students gained five or more GCSE grades A\* - C. The second indicator is more refined and gives more detailed information about their performance at GCSE level. It counts the average point score of the 8 highest GCSE grades achieved by each student. Each GCSE grade has a different point score: A\* = 58, A = 52, B = 46, C = 40, D = 34, E = 28, F = 22, G = 16 (DCSF, 2008).

Educational achievement was used somewhat differently at the interviews. Students were often asked about their GCSE exams but that was a more general question about whether they thought they went well or not rather than one that required the detailed account of every single one of their GCSE results. The latter approach was considered incompatible with the overall interview genre. Conversely students were asked to express directly their opinion about the influence of certain factors on their educational achievement. In view of the fact that educational achievement comprises a dependent variable in this study, the interest was on the way other factors were associated with educational achievement. The direct judgement of the participants was considered as an appropriate way to approach this question. An additional variable used in relation to educational outcomes was whether students wanted to go to university as well as their choice of degree and university.

## K. Strategies for Data Exploration

Content analysis was employed for the qualitative data exploration. In particular, the analysis was based on thematic coding of the transcribed interview and focus group texts. In thematic coding the 'underlying assumption is that in different social worlds or groups, differing views can be found' (Flick, 1998). This was consistent with the hypothesis of this thesis so this method of analysis was deemed relevant. Interview phrases and/or whole segments were coded in relation to the common topics or themes, such as the types of social capital they brought forward, i.e. inter-ethnic social networks, intra-ethnic social networks. After that, all phrases falling under the same code were re-examined together and evolving patterns were sought in relation, for example, to the ethnic or social class background of the students, or to the ethnic composition of their schools. Often, a single interview segment was given more than one code or even sub-codes which made the analysis of the data even more challenging. Yet, coding was not only based on the original hypothesis of this thesis. New themes and therefore new codes emerged soon after the analysis of the data began. In this case, the new themes were explored across the whole data set and subsequently coded in the same way as codes based on original hypothesis. Atlas.ti, was used for the analysis of qualitative data drawn from individual interviews and focus groups. This was indeed a very useful tool as it saved me a lot of time and effort whilst at the same time enabled me to keep the data analysis neat and easy to handle at all stages.

A main risk when using coding strategies and consequently when using computer assisted data analysis software such as Atlas.ti is that the coded segments might often be seen independently of the rest of the interview. This might prevent the researcher to consider the contextual information available from following or preceding text which can be very insightful in understanding that very segment. In this case the loss of data can influence significantly the trajectory of the data analysis and even the research findings as such. A way to avoid this result is to consider each segment both as an independent code and as part of a greater piece of text which tells a complete story. As Coffey and Atkinson argue 'the data loss is much greater if one does not move from the process of coding to an exploration of how codes and categories relate to the original data, to other data, to theoretical ideas and so forth' (1996, p.46). Therefore, there is a need for a constant move between the data segments and the original transcription text in order to acquire a contextualised understanding of the coded segments used for the analysis.

The quantitative data, drawn from the survey questionnaires, was analysed with the SPSS statistical package. SPSS was used for both descriptive and inferential statistics. Correlation and regression analysis was used to examine possible associations between two or more variables, for instance the relationship between a certain indicator of social capital or a

composite index of social capital indicators (dependent variable) and students' educational achievement or students' social class background (independent variables). Principal Component Analysis was carried out primarily in order to explore the different dimensions of social capital and to reduce the size of the dataset into a manageable unit. The following chapter discusses the analyses carried out with SPSS in more detail.

## **L. Limitations of this Study**

Despite efforts to approach the topic holistically and adopt the most appropriate strategies at each decision level it was still not possible to deal with all the research problems. As a result, this study is accompanied by some limitations. First of all, analysis is mainly carried out on the individual rather than on the community level. Of course, some of the analysis that takes into account the ethnic composition of the schools could be considered as a form of analysis beyond the individual level, as it examines the dynamics of a form of community, namely the school's community. Yet, most of this study's analysis is based on individual characteristics. Possible inclusion of participant's neighbourhood data in the analysis could have offered useful insights into the researched aspects of this study. Unfortunately, the data required for this type of analysis was not easy to acquire. Secondly, all students who participated in this study were Year 12 students. This means that certain social groups that might be underrepresented in post-compulsory education were also underrepresented in the research sample. This is a crucial issue that was kept in mind throughout the analysis of the data.

Thirdly, it is not possible to use questionnaire data regarding the educational achievement of students for strong causal inferences in relation to social capital variables but merely for associations. This is the case because students were asked to report their GCSE results, which was their educational achievement on the year before whereas the rest of the questions were based on their experiences at that year. Despite being unlikely that their social capital changed dramatically within six months, it is still not possible to draw causal inferences using a dependent variable that is chronologically situated six months before the independent variables. Nevertheless, in light of the fact that there is no evidence from either the so far literature or this study to suggest that students' social capital changes dramatically, the educational achievement indicators are used to explore possible associations with various social capital indicators. If there is an association between social capital and educational achievement then causality might also exist. An effort to overcome this limitation was attempted through the questions which were given to the interviewed students. In this case, students were asked about their social capital and their educational achievement at the year of the interview.

Finally, the ethnic categories that this research employed were some times, as in the case of the questionnaires, too broad and did not allow the possibility for internal differentiation. For



instance, all Black African and Caribbean students were collapsed into a single ethnic category, namely Black African/Caribbean. This was mainly a result of the small sample of this research (approximately 250 questionnaires and 60 interviews/focus groups). A more detailed analysis with the use of extended ethnic group categories would be plausible when carrying out large scale research. Large samples would allow for smaller ethnic categories to be well represented in the sample and therefore be analysed as separate groups. Conversely, small sample research, such as this one, does not allow for all ethnic groups to be represented and there is often a need for certain ethnic groups to be collapsed into a smaller number of categories.

**Part A - Evidence from Statistical Analysis  
(Questionnaire Data)**

## Chapter 4

### Social Capital: a Multi-Dimensional and Contextually Sensitive Concept – Evidence from Statistical Analysis

#### A. Introduction – Setting the Scene for the Statistical Exploration of Social Capital

This chapter draws on statistical analysis to unpack the nature of the relationship between students' education, social capital and context. The analysed data is drawn from the responses of 250 sixth form students to administered survey questionnaires. Analysis here is based on quantitative data<sup>14</sup> that students provided about their lives in relation to their school, their family and their community.

The data analysis of this chapter has both an exploratory and an explanatory nature. It is exploratory in that it maps social capital as a concept and discusses its constitutive parts in relation to contextual characteristics, namely gender, class and ethnicity. In addition, the analysis is explanatory as its results suggest some possible explanations for the occurrence of particular patterns. For instance, regression analyses put forward some explanations about the role of social capital in the differential educational outcomes among social class groups.

This chapter comprises four parts. The first part presents the results of Principal Component Analysis that was carried out on social capital variables. Variables that loaded highly on Components were used to form indices (overall 14) which were then employed in the analyses (i.e. regressions, ANOVA etc.) as social capital indicators. Variables that did not load highly on any Component, even after carrying out further Principal Component Analysis, were not discarded but were used as single indicators in the analyses. The second part of the chapter draws on results from Linear Regressions, ANOVAs, T-tests and Pearson Correlations to investigate the relationship of various social capital parameters with contextual factors (social class, ethnicity and gender). The third part explores the association of social capital with educational achievement when controlling for gender, ethnicity and social class. For the purposes of this research question, Linear and Logistic Regressions are carried out on the Educational Achievement indicators and the findings of these analyses are subsequently reported. The chapter ends with some conclusions and reflections on the statistical outcomes.

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<sup>14</sup> It is acknowledged that the decision of merging two already broad ethnic group categories undoubtedly poses both analytical and theoretical limitations in that intra-group differences and complexities might be obfuscated (this issue is also discussed in the methods chapter). Yet, these limitations are somewhat compensated for in the following chapters which draw on interview data and allow for ethnicity to be used not only as a fixed category but also as a loose one.

## B. Filtering Social Capital: Principal Component Analysis

Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is a form of data reduction. According to Jolliffe:

'The central idea of principal component analysis (PCA) is to reduce the dimensionality of a dataset consisting of a large number of interrelated variables, while retaining as much as possible of the variation present in the data set. This is achieved by transforming to a new set of variables, the principal components (PCs), which are uncorrelated, and which are ordered so that the first *few* retain most of the variation present in *all* of the original variables' (*emphasis in original*). (2002, p.1)

PCA can be used for different purposes in social science research. This technique is used here for three main reasons: a) to explore the different dimensions of social capital by building latent indicators; b) to reduce the size of the dataset without missing any useful information; c) and to avoid issues of multicollinearity when using social capital indicators in regressions.

A first principal component analysis was conducted with orthogonal rotation (varimax)<sup>15</sup> including 82 social capital items. Social capital items that were based on dichotomous variables were excluded from the analysis as a separate reduction method was carried out for those (see below). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy<sup>16</sup> was .675, which is higher than the bare minimum of .5 (Field, 2009) and Bartlett's test of sphericity<sup>17</sup>  $\chi^2 (3321) = 5800.904$ ,  $p < .001$ , showed that there were some correlations between the variables included in the analysis since the R-matrix was not an identity matrix. In relation to component extraction, Kaiser's criterion (SPSS default) retained 24 components with eigenvalues over 1 which explained 71.992% of the variance. Yet, taking into account that there were more than 30 variables included in the analysis and the communalities after extraction were not all greater than 0.7, Kaiser's criterion was deemed inappropriate (Field, 2009). The scree plot was somewhat unclear as it provided evidence that could justify retaining 9, 12 and 16 components. As a result, Parallel Analysis<sup>18</sup> based on O'Connor's syntax (O'Connor, 2000) was carried out.

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<sup>15</sup> Orthogonal rotation is used as it is assumed that the underlying factors are not related to each other. The Varimax option is preferred as 'it results in more interpretable clusters of factors' (Field, 2009, p.644) and for this reason it is recommended by Field (2009).

<sup>16</sup> The KMO measure of sampling adequacy 'represents the ratio of the squared correlation between variables to the squared partial correlation between variables. The KMO statistic varies between 0 and 1. A value of 0 indicates that the sum of partial correlations is large relative to the sum of correlations, indicating diffusion in the pattern of correlations (hence factor analysis is likely to be inappropriate). A value close to 1 indicates that patterns of correlations are relatively compact and so factor analysis should yield distinct and reliable factors' (Field, 2009, p.647).

<sup>17</sup> Bartlett's test of sphericity examines the null hypothesis that the population correlation matrix is not an identity matrix. Identity matrix suggests that each variable is correlated only with itself ( $r=1$ ) but has no correlation with other variables ( $r=0$ ). If there are no correlations between variables then PCA is not likely to be appropriate.

<sup>18</sup> Parallel Analysis is considered to be a more validated procedure of determining factors or components than Kaiser's criterion (O'Connor, 2000).

The results of Parallel Analysis justified the extraction of 9 components that in combination explained 45.827% of the variance.

Two additional PCAs were subsequently carried out, after removing the items that loaded highly on components of the previous PCA, for confirmation reasons. For the first confirmatory PCA, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure was .631 ( $> .5$ ), and Bartlett's test of sphericity  $\chi^2 (1081) = 2136.679$ ,  $p < .001$ . For the second confirmatory PCA the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure was .595 ( $> .5$ ), and Bartlett's test of sphericity  $\chi^2 (378) = 811.233$ ,  $p < .001$ . The two PCAs confirmed the results of the first one and in addition offered two new components that had not appeared in the first PCA. As a result, all three PCAs combined gave an overall of 11 components which comprised minimum 3 items and maximum 9 items. Reliability analysis for the components was carried out and all Cronbach's  $\alpha$  were well above .6. Appendix page 229 shows information regarding all the extracted components, namely the number of the item, the component loadings after rotation (in brackets) and the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value for each component (in bold brackets).

For Dichotomous items that were not included in the PCA, bivariate correlations were run. A number of items that correlated highly with each other from the correlation matrix were extracted and reliability analysis was carried out. Three dimensions had Cronbach's  $\alpha$  over 0.7 and were therefore retained as components. The item numbers that constitute these components as well as their Cronbach's  $\alpha$  values can also be found at Appendix page 229. To sum up, based on the Rotated Component Matrix (PCA) and the Correlation Matrix (Bivariate Correlation), 14 Components were extracted<sup>19</sup>. Each of these components is treated as a single scale in the analyses that follows (see next part) and is perceived as a continuous variable to facilitate the analysis and interpretation of results. Possible treatment of the components as categorical variables would have made the analysis more complicated and the results difficult to interpret, especially with regard to the regression analyses.

The fact that certain items clustered on the same component<sup>20</sup> suggests that social capital comprises different elements that are not necessarily correlated. Each component appeared to have distinct and meaningful themes. Below is a table with the themes represented in each component. Components 1 and 3 comprise items that relate to parent's engagement in their children's education, such as discussing homework and grades, attending parents' evenings etc. Interestingly though, there was not a single component for parents involvement but two

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<sup>19</sup> Hierarchical Principal Component Analysis could have been carried out at this stage, namely the 14 existing components could have been included in further principal component analysis or analyses. This would have resulted in second order, third order etc. indicators. However, this method was not considered appropriate due the small sample size and the number of variables available. Further PCA analyses would have probably reduced the data to a non-desirable extent, with the risk of missing important information.

<sup>20</sup> Social capital items that did not cluster on any of the 14 components are not excluded from the analysis which follows but are instead examined separately as unique indicators.

separate, one for mother's and one for father's involvement. This indicates that there might be different patterns of involvement for mothers and fathers. Yet, in the case of the 4<sup>th</sup> component this did not seem to be the case. On the contrary, this component comprises items related to the way both mothers and fathers engage in their children's lives; this component is pertinent to various restrictions and/or house rules (i.e. TV and internet restrictions and participation in the house chores) and could be seen as equivalent to one of the types of social capital exemplified by Coleman (1988), namely parental sanctions. Components 13 and 14 represent the networks that parents use in an attempt to improve the educational opportunities of their children and their career opportunities respectively. The items that cluster around items 13 and 14 mainly suggest a bonding dimension of social capital as they represent networks from within parent's group, i.e. relatives, colleagues, friends.

1	Father's Involvement	8	Sending Letters
2	Family's (parents' and students') Contact with Extended Family	9	Parents' Networks with their Friends
3	Mother's Involvement	10	Students' Do's with Friends (Adult Orientation)
4	Parents' Sanctions - Home Rules	11	Extended Family's Engagement
5	Students' Do's with Friends (Teenagers' Classics)	12	Family Norms Regarding Students' Going to University
6	Parents' Use of Internet (email/chat) to reach friends & relatives	13	Parents discuss & seek advice about their children's education from
7	Teenagers' Competitive Activities	14	People whom parents know that can help their children get a job

Table 1: The 14 Extracted Components of Social Capital

The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> components are both related to the extended family. Whilst the 2<sup>nd</sup> component represents the density of parents' and students' networks with their extended family in various ways, i.e. telephone, visits etc, the 11<sup>th</sup> component corresponds to the engagement of the extended family in students' education and future plans, such as encouragement to go to university, discussions about school grades etc. Component 12 represents a clear dimension of social capital, namely norms, which in this case are related to the education of students and in particular to them going to university. Interestingly, the items that clustered around the 12<sup>th</sup> component represent the norms of the *whole* family around this issue, namely the students' themselves, the parents' and the extended family's norms. The fact that these items were placed in different sections of the questionnaire but yet loaded on the same component and formed a coherent theme - norms regarding university level education - might indicate a consistent behaviour of the whole family around this type of norms. This might suggest that

social capital is a concept that cuts across narrowly delineated contextual boundaries. Conversely, social capital seems to extend beyond traditionally understood and defined frameworks such as conceptions of nuclear families.

Some of the items that loaded on components 6, 8 and 9, such as those indicating parents' networks with their friends are not particularly relevant to the research questions of this thesis. I included them in the analysis to examine whether various demographic differences, i.e. class, gender and ethnicity, would influence them. Yet, interestingly enough these items clustered on separate components despite all referring to means of maintaining social networks. So for example component 6 corresponds to parents' use of technology/internet to maintain their social networks with friends and family whereas component 9 reflects parents' networks with their friends either face to face or via telephone. Finally, the 8<sup>th</sup> component represents the use of correspondence (sending letters) by both parents and students. If we hypothesise that different people might have different means of maintaining social networks, especially taking into account the rapid technological changes that some groups of people might pick up quicker than others, then questions limited to people's face to face networks and/or telephone ones would have probably not captured part of the social networks question.

Finally, components 5, 7 and 10 represent students' networks with their friends in various contexts. Component 5 corresponds to typical things that teenagers do with their friends, such as chat on Facebook, go to the cinema, go out for a coffee etc. Conversely, items that clustered around component 10 suggest networks that take place in a context with an adult orientation, such as going to pubs, clubbing etc. Furthermore, component 7 represents students' networks within frameworks of competitive activities such as sports and computer games. Items comprising components 5, 7 and 10 all represent students' social networks and the density of these networks with their friends. Yet, the way these items clustered around 3 different components with different themes designate the different nature and/or properties of students' social networks with their friends.

To sum up, the results of PCA and Bivariate Correlations as well as the Reliability tests suggest that social capital does not form a 'coherent syndrome' (Putnam, 2000, p.137) as not everything is associated to each other. Conversely, social capital appears to be a multi-dimensional concept. It should be mentioned here that some of the dimensions that became evident in this analysis, such as social networks maintained through Facebook interaction, might be related to the age characteristics of the participants. So it is by no means suggested that the social capital dimensions expressed here could be reflected in all populations. On the contrary, they are understood in relation to the particular contextual characteristics of the research, of which participants' age is a part. The analysis that follows draws on the extracted components as well as on other social capital items to examine the hypothesis that social capital is not the same

across all groups of people and to investigate the association of social capital with the educational achievement of students and their school experiences.

### **Statistical Categories' Elucidations**

Ethnicity was re-coded into a four item category [0 = White British, 1 = Black African and Caribbean, 2 = Indian and 3 = Other Ethnic Background]. This variable was subsequently turned into a series of dummy variables for analysis purposes. The ethnic background categories used at the questionnaire were in line with the 2001 Census and are discussed in more detail in the Research Design chapter. However, since the focus of this thesis lies predominantly on the exploration and comparison of students with White British, Black African, Black Caribbean and Indian ethnic background all students with different ethnic background to these were merged under a single category, namely 'Other Ethnic Background'. This category did not comprise the focus of the analysis or theoretical discussion in this thesis. In addition, the two other ethnic background categories were merged for the purposes of statistical analysis, namely Black African and Black Caribbean. This was done due to the relatively small representation of these two ethnic groups in the sample<sup>21</sup>.

Social Class was recoded into a four item category [1 = Upper-Middle Class, 2 = Middle Class, 3 = Liminal Classes and 4 = Working Class]. This four category schema was a result of a three-part derivation process, namely a) from the National Statistics Standard Occupational Classification (NS SOC) (Office for National Statistics, 2000a; Office for National Statistics, 2000b) to the eight-class version of National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS SEC) (Office for National Statistics, 2008), b) from the eight-class version of NS SEC to the five-class version of NS SEC and c) to a four-class adaptation of the NS SEC of the five-class version of NS SEC (see appendix page 228).

Finally, gender was coded in two categories, where 0 = Male and 1 = Female.

### **C. Social Capital: An Equally Available Property or a Diversely Accessible Resource across Social Groups?**

The first chapter of this thesis drew upon existing literature and formed the hypothesis that social capital is not the same for all social groups. On the contrary different social groups might form and/or incorporate social capital in different ways. This section employs statistical analysis

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<sup>21</sup> It is acknowledged that the decision of merging two already broad ethnic group categories undoubtedly poses both analytical and theoretical limitations in that intra-group differences and complexities might be obfuscated (this issue is also discussed in the methods chapter). Yet, these limitations are somewhat compensated for in the following chapters which draw on interview data and allow for ethnicity to be used not only as a fixed category but also as a loose one.



to address this hypothesis by exploring the relationship between social class, ethnicity and gender on the one hand with social capital on the other hand. As a first step, initial analysis was carried out with Independent-Samples T-Test (for gender), One-Way ANOVA (for ethnicity) and Pearson Correlations (for social class) in order to get a first impression of possible underlying relationships prior to modelling. Regressions of social capital were subsequently carried out on social class, ethnicity and gender.

#### Ethnicity: Evidence from ANOVAs

The ANOVA technique was considered appropriate for the exploration of the relationship between social capital dimensions and ethnicity as the latter variable was categorical and comprised more than two categories. Similar analysis could have been carried out with a linear regression analysis; however ANOVA analysis was preferred here as it is generally a simpler and less complicated technique and was therefore deemed more appropriate for this exploratory purpose. The ANOVA results suggest that ethnicity is strongly associated with a big number of social capital items. The document in Appendix page 230 summarises the results of ANOVA which show the social capital items that varied significantly across ethnic groups.

Following each ANOVA SPSS was used to carry out post hoc tests in order to identify a more precise relationship between ethnicity and social capital. Three different post hoc tests were carried out: (a) Hochberg's GT2 as the sample sizes of the four ethnicity categories were not identical, (b) Games-Howell procedure, in order to avoid any biases resulting from homogeneity of variances problems (Field, 2009) and (c) Dunnett's test which treats one group as a control and compares the rest against it. In this case the control group was White British students. The post hoc results confirmed the significant<sup>22</sup> relationship between ethnicity and social capital and demonstrated the way in which different ethnic groups varied with reference to each social capital item.

A detailed list that summarises the relationship between groups that differed significantly with regards to social capital can be found in the appendix pages 231-232. ANOVA and post hoc tests results include some interesting findings such as the fact that the majority of the social capital differences appeared to exist between White British students and Indians. In particular, White British students scored significantly less than Indians at a number of social capital items such as 'family's contact with extended family', 'parents' sanctions - home rules', 'extended family's engagement with students education', 'number of students considered as friends - loose definition of friendship', 'teacher expectations (university)', 'students own expectations about going to university' and 'engagement in voluntary work'.

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<sup>22</sup> In this study, results are considered as statistically significant when  $p < .05$

Another interesting finding is that Black African and Caribbean mothers seem to attend school parents' evenings less often than mothers of all other ethnic backgrounds examined here, namely White British, Indians and Other Ethnic Backgrounds. This is consistent with existing literature that suggests lower levels of participation in the school community from Black African and Caribbean parents (Crozier, 1996). Yet, this question is also addressed in the regressions section to explore whether this difference is indeed due to ethnicity differences or to other factors.

In addition, ANOVA results suggest that White British students have lower levels of university related norms than students of all other ethnic backgrounds. In particular, all other ethnic backgrounds scored higher than White British on both the item that represents parent's encouragement to go to university and the component item that corresponds to the combination of students', their parents and their extended family's expectations regarding university. This pattern might be understood in the framework of Ogbu and Simmons' (1998) proposition according to which ethnic minorities view school and education as a means for future employment and upward social mobility.

In relation to friendships and acquaintances, there was no significant difference between different ethnic groups in relation to the number of close friends that students had (friends that could be trusted with a secret). Yet, ethnicity seemed to explain a significant part of the variance in the number of acquaintances and loose friendships that students had in the school. Indian students had more acquaintances and loose friendships than Black African and Caribbeans. Also, White British students had less loose friendships than both Indians and Other Ethnic Backgrounds.

Last but not least, the ethnic diversity of friendships seemed to differ significantly across groups. The least diverse ethnic group was Indians followed by White British. Indians were significantly less diverse than all other ethnic backgrounds while White British were significantly less diverse than the Other Ethnic Background group. This pattern might be related to the fact that Indian and White British students formed the majority of the school population in the schools that participated in this research. Evidence from interviews, as analysed in chapter 4 of this thesis, suggested that students belonging to the ethnic group that formed the majority of the school's population might often be more reluctant to mix with students of different ethnic backgrounds compared to students who belong to the minority population of the school. So the fact that White British and Indian students had less ethnically diverse friendships - namely more bonding than bridging social capital – might merely correspond to the existing norms present at the particular schools where a majority of White British and Indian students were found. To reiterate, White British and Indian students might have appeared to have less diverse networks as a result of studying in contexts where they form the majority ethnic population.

## Gender: Evidence from T Tests

Independent-Samples T Tests suggest that there are significant social capital differences between female and male students. Page 233 of the Appendix summarises the relevant statistics regarding all social capital items for which there was a significant gender effect.

Overall, there were 12 social capital items for which female students scored higher than male ones and 8 social capital items for which male students scored higher than female students. On the one hand, girls had significantly higher scores in social capital indicators such as contact with the extended family, parental sanctions and home rules, discussing education with their friends and encouraging each other to do well, going to the church/mosque or temple, doing housework/chores and participating in voluntary or paid work. Also more girls than boys reported that their parents knew the parents of their friends and that their parents discussed about their education with other relatives. Finally, more girls than boys felt that their teachers had high expectations about them going to university.

On the other hand, boys scored significantly higher than girls in social capital indicators such as competitive activities, going out with friends in more adult orientated places (i.e. pubs, clubs), playing in a music band, participating in a youth club. In addition more boys than girls reported that their mother told them to do housework/chores. Finally, more boys mentioned that their parents' boss was likely to help them find a job and that their parents knew someone who was likely to help them find a job.

Based on the T tests' results, it can be argued that social capital does not apply identically to both genders. On the contrary social capital appears to be sensitive to gendered constructs. In particular, a lot of the social capital dimensions that were significantly different across genders were compatible with broader gender patterns and/or stereotypes that characterise our society. For instance, the fact that more girls than boys reported parental sanctions and rules is consistent with previous research which illustrated the differential ways in which girls and boys are socialised by their parents (Chaplin, Cole and Zahn-Waxler, 2005; Hill and Atkinson, 1988; Stromquist, 1990). Also, the fact that more boys' than girls' social networks were embodied in the framework of competitive activities whereas more girls than boys drew on their social networks for educational purposes (i.e. discussions about education, encouragement for educational achievement) underpins the gender stereotypic attitudes and behaviours of students and their parents as discussed in previous studies (Eccles, Jacobs and Harold, 1990; Francis and Skelton, 2005).

The next chapter of this thesis examines in more detail the different ways in which social capital is manifested among female and male students. Drawing on interview data the chapter underpins and discusses the influence of gender constructions on the nature of social capital among female and male students as well as the way this is understood and/or justified by them (i.e. students' attitudes and perceptions about the differential social networks among boys and girls).

#### Social Class: Evidence from Pearson Correlations

Pearson Correlations were carried out to explore the relationship between social capital and social class. Page 234 of the Appendix summarises the results of the Correlations and reports the correlation coefficients for items that were significantly correlated, the level of significance and the sample size upon which each correlation was carried out. Overall, 12 social capital items were significantly correlated with social class.

One of the most important findings that derived from this analysis was that high social class status was associated to more home rules and sanctions as well as more frequent and/or intense parental involvement in students' education at least in respect to some indicators. In relation to the latter, the higher the social class of the parents, the more often parents attended parents' evenings in the school, and the more likely they were to discuss about their children's education with each other and with their children's teachers. Furthermore, parents with a higher social class background were more likely to discuss about their children's education with their friends, colleagues or other parents as well as to seek advice in relation to their children's education from other people, including colleagues, other parents and relatives. These examples demonstrate that middle-class and upper-middle-class parents use their networks to discuss their children's education more than working-class parents. This finding is consistent with Ball and Vincent's research results (Ball and Vincent, 1998) and it is interesting in that the types of social networks within which parents discuss educational issues, i.e. friends, colleagues, relatives, are generally available to all social class groups. Therefore, it is not a matter of possessing the actual networks or not, but it is rather about the nature of discussions that take place within these networks. In addition to discussing about their children's education within their networks, parents with higher social class backgrounds are also more likely to mobilise these networks in order to seek advice and get information regarding a number of education related issues, such as school or university choices.

Social class was also positively correlated to other expressions of social capital, such as networks within the framework of competitive activities (i.e. sports, games) and participation in a band. The latter could be seen as a dimension of social capital that relates to associational memberships (Putnam, 2000). In addition, students with higher social class background were

more likely to have a larger number of other students' acquaintances within the school context. On the contrary, class was negatively associated with two items, namely friends' encouragement to work hard and paid work. It seems that students with a high social class background were not encouraged by their friends to study. A hypothesis that might resonate with this is that upper-middle- and middle-class students are already conscious learners with clear educational targets, so they do not need to be encouraged by their friends. Finally, the negative correlation of social class with the paid work item is sensible, as working-class students might be more likely to face financial difficulties than middle-class or upper-middle-class students and therefore might be more eager to engage in paid work which would provide them with extra money. So it would make sense that working-class students would take up part-time jobs to earn money for themselves and/or to help their families. This is in fact supported by interview data, as a number of working-class students mentioned that they worked to save money for their university studies and some others said that they worked to earn themselves pocket money because they did not want to ask money from their parents.

#### The Effect of Class, Ethnicity & Gender: Evidence from Linear and Logistic Regressions

The three previous sections presented evidence and discussed that social capital is not a uniform property for everyone. Instead a range of dimensions of social capital vary across different gender, ethnic, or social class groups. Yet, the tests carried out in the previous sections could demonstrate the effect of only one indicator at a time. The question that then arises is whether we can be certain that the observed differences, i.e. the mean differences, are exclusively or wholly reflecting the relationship between the examined variables and not that of a third, confounding variable. This limitation is overcome when carrying out regressions, as this type of analysis allows for multiple indicators to be fit in the model and their influence to be assessed controlling for the influence of the other indicators. In this way it is now possible to examine all three indicators, namely gender, class and ethnicity, at the same time and assess their magnitude all other things being equal. This is a very useful strategy in that it allows us to capture the net effect of each indicator keeping others constant.

To examine the research question posed at the beginning of this section - whether ethnicity, class and gender can predict social capital - Multiple Linear Regressions were carried out with different social capital items at a time as the dependent/outcome variable (y) and ethnicity, class and gender as the independent/indicators (X). Social capital items were treated as a continuous variable at this instance. For those social capital items that were dichotomous Multiple Binary Logistic Regressions were carried out, using the same indicators. The tables in pages 235-240 of the Appendix summarise the statistics related to all significant models. Details are given for the beta values and their standard errors, the standardised betas and their significance value, the constant of the model as well as the  $R^2$ . In addition, for the Logistic

Regression, the odds ratio and its confidence interval are reported as well as the goodness of fit.

### *Parental Social Capital*

Regression results seem to confirm the suggestion derived from T-Tests, Pearson Correlations and ANOVAs that social capital can be predicted by contextual factors such as gender, class and ethnicity. An important number of Social Capital items reflecting various dimensions of the concept, were predicted by one or more of the three factors (gender, class, ethnicity). Interestingly though, the simultaneous modelling of more than one indicators which allowed for controls over each other's effects, sometimes resulted in outcomes that cancelled the previous results of T-Tests, Correlations and ANOVAs. For instance, according to ANOVA results, the item that represented the social networks parents possessed to discuss & seek advice about their children's education was associated to ethnicity and according to the Pearson Correlation it was also associated to social class. Yet, Regression evidence suggests that when both factors are entered in the model along with gender then ethnicity is no longer a significant indicator whereas class is ( $p < .05$ ). So all things being equal, the higher the social class background of the parents the higher the likelihood of them being engaged in discussions and seeking advice about their children's education. Yet, in relation to people that parents knew who could help their child get a job in the future, class was not a significant indicator. On the contrary, being Indian as opposed to White British positively predicted this type of social capital ( $p < .05$ ). This might be a reflection of the close knit relations within Indian families (Ballard, 1994) in light of which parents' active engagement in their children's welfare does not cease after children become adults. In addition, as Bacon argues 'one of the central features of the Indian worldview is the emphasis on social relationships over autonomous and separate individuals as the fundamental building block of social life. Individuals have meaning only when they are embedded in the context of social relations' (1996, p.30). As a result, the existence of these norms within Indian families might legitimise parents' mobilising bonding social capital in order to ensure their children's future career.

An additional point in this model was that being female was negatively associated to the outcome variable, that is to say parents were less likely to mobilise their social capital for a female child rather than for a male one ( $p < .05$ ). The opposite was the case when it came to parents' knowing the parents of their children's friends. This item, represents theoretical concepts put forward by Coleman (1987; 1988) who suggested that when parents' knew other parents an intergenerational closure occurred which had a beneficial effect on students education. Yet, this very type of intergenerational closure was more likely to exist for girls than for boys ( $p < .05$ ). It appears that parents were far more likely to know the parents of their female children rather than of their male children. A hypothetical explanation for this might lie on

the gender constructs of our society according to which parents might feel the need to be more protective of their female children rather than of their male ones. Alternatively, girls' social networks might be more accessible to parents rather than boys' ones.

Furthermore, social class was associated with an important number of parental social capital items related to education, specifically, fathers' involvement in education ( $p < .05$ ), parents' attendance to parents' evenings ( $p < .05$ ) and parents' social networks with teachers ( $p < .05$ ). So the higher the social class of parents' the higher the social capital scores. These findings are in accordance with previous research which demonstrated that middle-class and upper-middle-class parents are more involved in their children's education than working-class parents (Crozier, 1997; Lareau, 1989; Lareau, 2008; Reay, 2005). These findings can also be viewed in relation to Bourdieu's work on social capital which suggests that middle-class people draw on their social capital in order to reproduce their status and advantage their position in society (Bourdieu, 1986). In the example of this thesis, middle and upper-middle-class parents made use of their networks to derive useful information that would improve their children's educational opportunities/qualifications, and it could be argued that this is associated with their future class and status.

Yet, an interesting contradiction arises when reviewing the results of regressions in relation to parental social capital and ethnicity. On the one hand, parents from minority ethnic backgrounds seemed to be less engaged in their children's education with respect to some dimensions of social capital. For example being a Black African or Caribbean as opposed to being a White British mother reduced the odds of participation in the school community as well as the odds of discussing about their children's education with the teachers, even when controlling for class which as argued hereinabove had a significant effect as well ( $p < .05$ ). This pattern according to which parents from minority ethnic backgrounds lack participation in the school community is indeed consistent with previous literature (Archer and Francis, 2007; Gibson, 1988; Qian and Blair, 1999). On the other hand though, Black African and Caribbean as well as Indian parents were more likely than White British parents to possess certain types of parental social capital, such as these represented by the following components: 'fathers' involvement in the education of their children' ( $p < .05$ ), 'home rules/sanctions' ( $p < .05$ ,  $p < .01$  respectively) and 'norms regarding going to university' ( $p < .01$ ,  $p < .001$  respectively). A hypothesis for this rather puzzling finding could be that parents from minority ethnic backgrounds are not disengaged from their children's education but merely from some types of participation. In fact they seem to be more likely than White British parents to possess alternative types of engagement. It appears that the kind of parental engagement that is related to school-based social capital, such as participation in parent's evenings and use of social networks to reach teachers, is less frequent and/or less intense among parents from minority ethnic backgrounds than White British parents. On the contrary, parental engagement which is related to a home-based social capital,

such as educational norms and home rules/sanctions, seems to be more frequent and/or intense among parents from minority ethnic backgrounds than White British people. This might be explained by a number of possible reasons. Parents from minority ethnic backgrounds might find it difficult to participate and engage in the life of schools which operate as White Institutions and which might not always address their needs and interests and with which they might therefore feel unfamiliar and perhaps uncomfortable. In addition, parents from minority ethnic backgrounds might find it difficult to employ school related social capital for the benefit of their children as opposed to White British parents who can navigate the system easier.

### *Social Capital and the Extended Family*

Another social capital dimension that appeared to be influenced differently by people from minority ethnic groups and White British was related to the extended family social capital. A Black African, a Black Caribbean or an Indian student was more likely to have frequent social networks with their extended family, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins etc. than a White British student ( $p < .01$ ,  $p < .001$  respectively). In turn, the extended family of students from minority ethnic backgrounds was more likely to get engaged in issues related to their education than White British extended families. This finding opens up possibilities for alternative ways of viewing and comprehending the family structures of people from minority ethnic groups which are sometimes believed to be less efficient or appropriate compared to the respective White British ones. For instance, it has been argued that the relatively increased number of single mother households among Black African and Caribbeans compared to White British was one of the underlying causes of the former's educational underachievement. This was mainly seen in light of the lack of fathers' presence and therefore of male role models. Yet, evidence from regressions of social capital on ethnicity suggests that Black African and Caribbean students are much more likely than White British students to have relatives - other than their parents - who are engaged in their lives and indeed their education. It might be therefore argued that the extended family engagement of Black African and Caribbean parents could compensate for fathers' absence in the household<sup>23</sup>.

### *Social Capital and Students*

It was demonstrated that parental social capital and social capital related to the extended family were significantly determined by ethnicity, class and gender. Students' social capital followed the same pattern. To begin with, being Indian and being a girl seemed to explain the number of acquaintances and friendships students had to a significant degree. It seems that Indian students had more acquaintances ( $p < .05$ ), more loose friendships ( $p < .001$ ) and more close

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<sup>23</sup> This hypothesis could have been tested by running a regression that would control for the single mother families. Unfortunately though, the sample size of this research was too small to yield any meaningful results from this analysis. Perhaps a largest scale research could address this issue more effectively.



friendships/friends that could be trusted ( $p < .01$ ) than White British whereas girls had less than boys in all three respects. In addition, girls and boys seemed to maintain their social networks within different types of frameworks. Whereas boys would engage in competitive activities with their friends more than girls ( $p < .001$ ), girls were more likely to do things such as chat on Facebook, speak on the phone, go to the cinema or hang out with their friends ( $p < .001$ ). Girls' were also more likely to discuss with friends about their education ( $p < .05$ ) as well as be more positively encouraged to work hard by their friends ( $p < .001$ ).

Social capital dimensions related to participation and/or associational memberships seemed to have been predicted mainly by ethnicity. Black African and Caribbean students were more likely to participate in youth clubs than White British students ( $p < .01$ ), and both Black African/Caribbean and Indian students were more likely to attend church/mosque/temple ( $p < .001$ ) as well as get engaged in housework/chores ( $p < .05$ ). Girls scored higher than boys in relation to the last two social capital indicators ( $p < .05$ ). In addition, Indian students participated more often than White British students in voluntary work ( $p < .05$ ). Finally, Black African/Caribbean and Indian students had also higher expectations regarding going to university compared to their White British fellow students ( $p < .05$  and  $p < .01$  respectively).

#### *Social Capital in Ethnically Diverse Contexts*

To examine whether ethnic diversity might be associated with students' formation of their friendships and/or attitudes in relation to students from different ethnic or religious backgrounds the dataset file was split into four subgroups, one for each ethnic group. Subsequently, regression analyses were run with school as the independent variable and friendship formation with students of different ethnic backgrounds as the dependent one. An interesting pattern evolved here. In particular, White British students at Kinderhook High school appeared to have more inter-ethnic friendships than White British students at Newfane East School ( $p < .01$ ). At the former school White British students comprised one of the ethnic minorities of the school population whereas at the latter they comprised the majority. This might suggest that White British students are more reluctant to form inter-ethnic friendships when they form the majority of the school as opposed to the minority of the school. A similar pattern was evident for Black African and Caribbean students, as they seemed to have more inter-ethnic friendships at Newfane East School, where they were underrepresented, compared to Addison Union School where their good representation as an ethnic group at the school population coincided with a low rate of inter-ethnic friendships ( $p < .05$ ).

This finding seems to suggest that students belonging to ethnic groups, which do not constitute one of the largest ethnic groups represented in the school population, are more likely to form inter-ethnic friendships than students who belong to an ethnic groups that is well represented in

the school population. This proposition implies that the effects of ethnic diversity on students' friendship formation with ethnic 'Others' are complex. Students attending an ethnically diverse school are not necessarily influenced in the same way. Instead, it seems that their ethnic background and the extent to which the ethnic group they belong to is represented in the overall school population, might also have an effect. Nevertheless, it would not be wise to draw firm conclusions from this analysis as it was based on a rather small sample size of the population subsets (approximately N=50 for each school). It would however be useful to consider them tentatively and in conjunction to the analysis of qualitative data in the next chapter. Chapter 5 explores the way school's ethnic diversity informs students' friendship formation and school experiences in more depth.

Due to the rather small sample size of the data subsets, as mentioned above, the rest of the analysis here lies in the whole dataset that includes the population of all four schools. Some interesting findings arose. When modelling the ethnic composition of students' friendships for the whole sample it was found that Indian students had significantly less ethnically diverse friendships when compared to White British students ( $p < .05$ ). An explanation for that could be that the majority of Indian students who participated in the research studied in either the predominantly Indian school or the school where Indians were significantly represented. In other words, the results were greatly driven by Indian students who constituted either the ethnic majority of their school<sup>24</sup> or at least an important number of the overall population<sup>25</sup> as opposed to the Indian students who formed the minority of their school<sup>26</sup>. This theme is addressed in more detail in the next chapter.

Regressions did not provide adequate evidence to suggest that the ethnic background of students predicts the perceptions of students about multiethnic friendships. In particular, students' ethnic background did not seem to influence their attitudes around the level of difficulty in establishing multi-ethnic friendships. Conversely, a similar question posed in relation to religion and not ethnicity was significantly predicted by ethnicity. In particular, Indian or Other Ethnic Background students as opposed to White British, were more likely to believe that making friends with students of a different religion was not difficult at all ( $p < .05$  and  $p < .01$  respectively). This finding could suggest some controversy between Indian students' attitudes and perceptions about friendships on the one hand and their actual friendship groups on the other hand. Whereas their friendship groups were less diverse than those of White British students, their attitudes about inter-religious friendships revealed much more tolerance. An explanation for that might be that India is a multi-religious country and therefore Indian students did not all have the same religious background. In fact some of the Indian students who

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<sup>24</sup> Kinderhook High School

<sup>25</sup> Newfane East School

<sup>26</sup> Chester Central School and Addison Union School

participated in this research were Hindus, some Sikhs and some others Muslims. The existence of this religious diversity within their own ethnic community might have contributed to their higher levels of religious tolerance as opposed to ethnic tolerance.

Another interesting finding that emerged from regressions of attitudes/levels of tolerance about inter-ethnic and inter-religious friendships was the significance of class as an indicator. Regression results suggested that the higher the social class background of students the lower their levels of tolerance with respect to both religion ( $p < .05$ ) and ethnicity ( $p < .001$ ), controlling for gender and ethnic background. In other words, middle-class and upper-middle-class students were more likely to believe that it is difficult to make friends with students of different ethnic and religious backgrounds than working-class students. Similar findings were presented by Reay who found that 'despite varying degrees of social mixing with the classed and racialised other ... nearly all the white middle-class young people remain firmly and primarily anchored in white middle-class networks' (2008, p.91). And indeed, both Reay's research and this thesis' findings suggest that middle classes and upper-middle classes possess mainly bonding (intra-ethnic) social capital and little if at all bridging (inter-ethnic) social capital. Yet despite the similarity of the findings in relation to class, there is a difference between this thesis' findings and Reay's research with respect to ethnicity. Whereas Reay's findings reflect the existence of a bonding type social capital among White middle classes and not more broadly middle-class students from other ethnic groups, regressions based on this thesis' data suggest that being White British as opposed to other ethnic backgrounds was not statistically significant when controlling for gender and class in relation to attitudes/levels of tolerance about inter-ethnic and inter-religious friendships. Further on this, the next chapter of the thesis presents evidence from a focus group which demonstrates the existence of bridging (inter-ethnic) social capital among working-class students. This is in line with regression results as it suggests that working-class students, irrespective of their ethnic background, might be more likely to form inter-ethnic friendships than upper-middle and middle-class students. These friendships might be formed on the basis of students' common identity as working-class youth. Combining the two it might be argued that ethnic identity might be more easily pervaded by the working-class identity rather than by the middle-class one, resulting in inter-ethnic friendships being more frequently formed among working-class students than among middle and upper-middle-class students.

This section drew on regression evidence and suggested that an important number of social capital dimensions, ranging from social networks to norms and participations, were significantly predicted by social class, ethnicity and gender. It was also argued that bridging (inter-ethnic) social capital among students as well as attitudes and perceptions that students held about it was influenced by the ethnic composition of the school and by the social class background of

the students respectively. The next section examines the hypothesis that social capital influences the educational achievement of students.

#### **D. An Investigation of the Relationship of Social Capital with Educational Achievement**

Multiple regressions were run to examine whether various social capital dimensions are associated with educational outcomes as measured by GCSE achievement<sup>27</sup>. Two types of indicators are used in relation to GCSE achievement: a) the sum of GCSE scores<sup>28</sup> (continuous variable) and secondly whether students had achieved at least 5 GCSEs including Maths and English with grades A\*-C (binary variable). For the first indicator Multiple Linear Regressions were carried out whereas for the second one Multiple Logistic (Binary) Regression analysis was employed. The Tables in pages 241-243 of the Appendix summarise the statistics related to all the significant models.

Firstly, it is worth mentioning that when the fitted model included only the contextual indicators, namely social class, gender, ethnicity and no social capital indicator, the only significant indicator was social class<sup>29</sup>. The higher the social class of students the higher their GCSE scores sum and the more likely they were to have at least 5 A\*-C GCSEs. This finding is in line with other research that demonstrated the influence of social class on educational achievement yet it contradicts an important amount of research evidence which demonstrated the influence of ethnicity. There might be two reasons behind this disagreement: a) ethnicity might have not been a significant factor in this analysis as students who comprised this sample studied at sixth form level. It can be argued that sixth form is a relatively selective stage as it is post-compulsory and some schools impose selection criteria based on previous academic achievement. As a result, if students from certain ethnic backgrounds which were previously shown to underachieve compared to the national average did not continue their education at the sixth form in a disproportionate number compared to other ethnic groups, then the average achievement for these ethnic groups would possibly increase. b) This result might be a random result of the sample on which analysis was drawn and might not be representative of the population.

A relatively small number of social capital indicators appeared to have a significant coefficient in the models. In particular, only seven social capital indicators were statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Students' acquaintances with other students within school seemed to be related to educational achievement ( $p < 0.01$ ). A hypothesis for that might be that high achieving students might also tend to be popular ones and/or sociable, and this is the reason they tend to know a

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<sup>27</sup> Reported by students in the questionnaire

<sup>28</sup> A\* equals 58 points, A = 52, B = 46, C = 40, D = 34, E = 28, F = 22 and G = 16.

<sup>29</sup> The social class coefficient in this model was relatively low (0.57) but it was significant at the .01 level.

lot of students by their names. According to recent research (Francis, Skelton and Read, 2010) achieving popularity is possible for high achieving students, and this is a result of particular endeavours on behalf of these students.

Furthermore, students' participation in competitive activities outside the school, such as sports and games, was positively related to achievement when class, ethnicity and gender were held constant ( $p < 0.05$ ). In this model gender was also significant, with girls being more likely to achieve better grades than boys ( $p < 0.05$ ). In addition, students' participation in voluntary activities was positively associated with their achievement ( $p < 0.05$ ). This is consistent with the beneficial outcomes of membership to voluntary associations as has been argued by some social capital theorists, such as Robert Putnam (2000; 2003). However, this finding should be treated with caution as this type of social capital, as discussed earlier in this chapter, was both gendered and ethnicised, with Indian and female students being more likely to get involved in voluntary activities.

Students' partaking in adult orientated contexts, such as going to pubs, clubbing etc. was negatively associated with educational achievement ( $p < 0.05$ ). In other words, *ceteris paribus*, students who reported going often to pubs, clubs etc. were less likely to achieve highly in their exams. A hypothesis for that could be that the frequent attendance of adolescents at these contexts might be related to alcohol consumption, which studies have shown to be negatively associated with educational achievement both in the UK (Staff *et al*, 2008) and in the US (Chatterji, 2006). In this model, social class remained significantly associated with educational achievement ( $p < 0.05$ ).

The regression model which included the social capital item representing mother's involvement in student's education produced a rather bizarre result. Mother's involvement seemed to be significantly associated with the educational achievement of Indian students but in a negative way ( $p < 0.05$ ) whereas for students of other ethnic backgrounds it had no effect. Class was also significant in this model ( $p < 0.01$ ). In other words, for Indian students, the higher the involvement of the mother's in their education the less likely they were to achieve. Another research produced a similar finding in relation to parents' assistance with students' homework (Desimone, 1999). Homework checking and homework discussion were two of the items that constituted the component variable used in this thesis, namely mother's involvement. Based on this similarity, I will draw on the hypotheses Desimone put forward in order to better understand this finding:

'The findings might be explained by the common notion that parents tend to check their child's homework only when the child is already performing poorly in school. An alternative hypothesis is that homework monitoring causes negative outcomes through its

role in decreasing maturity growth or the development of independence and responsibility. Helping an adolescent with his or homework every day may be considered developmentally inappropriate, and, consequently, lead to negative outcomes' (Desimone, 1999, p.24).

Nevertheless, Desimone's finding applied to all ethnic groups whereas here the negative association of mother's involvement with students' achievement seemed to apply only to Indians. Accordingly, further research might be required with respect to this issue in order to identify the underlying reasons behind the negative influence of Indian mothers' involvement.

The last two significant social capital items were related to education norms and particularly norms around Higher Education. Firstly, students who were very sure they would go to university were much more likely to get higher grades than those students who were very sure they wouldn't go to university ( $p < 0.05$ ). On the same note, family's norms regarding students' going to university (which involved student's, parents' and extended family's aspirations) were significantly related to educational achievement ( $p < 0.001$ ). This is indeed consistent with previous literature according to which high parental expectations and aspirations regarding going to university influence students' educational achievement in a positive way. It is worth mentioning here that this was the only model where being a Black African or Caribbean student had a negative coefficient. In other words, all things being equal (class, gender and family's norms regarding university) Black African and Caribbean students were less likely than White British students to achieve high GCSE results. When this particular social capital indicator, namely family's norms, was not taken into account being Black African and Caribbean as opposed to White British did not comprise a significant indicator associated to GCSE achievement. This might suggest that Black African and Caribbean students' achievement is more positively influenced by family norms than other ethnic backgrounds. As a result, in the model where family norms are controlled for being Black African and Caribbean appears to be negatively related to achievement as opposed to other models where being Black African or Caribbean had no different effect compared to being White British.

## **E. Conclusion**

This chapter presented evidence from statistical analysis of various social capital indicators. Drawing on Factor Analysis results it was suggested that social capital is not a coherent entity but on the contrary it is comprised of different dimensions that do not all relate to each other. This was indeed confirmed by the exploratory analysis of social capital items as well as by the regressions of social capital which demonstrated that different social capital items were informed by different contextual factors - class, ethnicity, gender - or different combinations of

those. The latter is also relevant to the vulnerability of social capital as a concept since it was shown to be influenced by other factors to an important degree.

In fact, regressions of educational achievement on social capital controlling for other indicators were particularly illuminating with respect to this issue. Firstly, only a small number of social capital items were significantly associated with educational achievement when taking into consideration social class, gender and ethnicity. And secondly, even in those models where social capital was significantly associated with educational achievement there was always at least one more of the other abovementioned indicators with a significant coefficient. So even with a significant social capital indicator in the model, other indicators and particularly class, which was significant in almost all models, were present.

All in all, social capital appeared to have some association with students' educational achievement. However, this association was also shown to be mediated by social class, ethnicity and gender. This limits significantly the possibility of investing in social capital as a remedy for various social situations, or at least the possibility of investing in social capital as a 'panacea' to use Healy's words (Healy, 2006), without taking into account the role of the context. In the light of this, social capital should be treated with caution especially with regards to discourses of educational achievement, and be understood in relation to its context rather than as a substitute to it. The next two chapters explore these issues further by drawing on qualitative data evidence. In particular, the way social class, ethnicity and gender cut across the various dimensions of social capital is addressed and discussed in more depth.

**Part B - Evidence from Qualitative Analysis  
(Interview Data)**



## Chapter 5

# Students' Social Capital in Ethnically Diverse Schools: A Pessimistic Prophecy?

### A. Introduction

This chapter discusses the relationship of social capital with students' school experiences and educational outcomes. The focus here lies in the exploration of social capital within the school context and the discussion builds on qualitative data derived from students' interviews. The aim is twofold: first, to explore whether students' social networks within schools are informed (facilitated and/or compromised) by issues of social class, ethnicity and gender; and second to examine whether Putnam's (2007) rather pessimistic suggestions in relation to social capital and ethnic diversity as well as their theoretical extension are valid in the four schools which participated in this research. The two aspects explored here are not understood as independent from each other but rather as interrelated. To explore the legitimacy of Putnam's (2007) suggestions it is also important to address the first focal point of this chapter, namely the extent to which social class, gender and ethnicity influence students' social capital within schools. If ethnicity and social class are for instance irrelevant to the formation of students' social networks with each other then the examination of Putnam's constrict thesis which argues that social capital is negatively influenced by ethnic diversity, is rendered rather meaningless. The hypothesis derived from Putnam's work implicitly presupposes social capital sensitivity to at least one of the factors examined here, namely ethnicity, as without ethnicity's influence on individuals' social capital it would be difficult to conceptualise ethnic diversity's influence on peoples' social capital. Yet, this does not automatically assume a causal relationship between the two. So whereas, the influential role of ethnicity on social capital is, in principle, considered as a necessary precondition for the influential role of ethnic diversity on social capital, a possible validation of the first hypothesis does not necessarily entail the second one and much less in the particular pessimistic way it is advocated by Putnam.

An extended discussion of Putnam's (2007) argument along with Letki's (2008) counter findings is presented in the first chapter of the thesis. In brief, Putnam (2007) argued that ethnic diversity in US neighbourhoods reduces social capital both across and within ethnic groups, even when controlling for income distribution. Extending this to the school level the rising question is whether ethnically diverse schools erode social capital among students. This is, *per se*, a rather pessimistic hypothesis but it also suggests further negative implications. If ethnic diversity is bad for social capital and since we know that social capital can influence educational outcomes, it could be therefore deduced that ethnic diversity has a negative impact on educational outcomes (if A influences B and B influences C, then inevitably A influences C). This is a rather

pessimistic inference for the inter-ethnic relations of the youngest generation. Nevertheless, Letki's (2008) UK based findings question this inference as she argued that socio-economic inequalities are far more influential on social capital than ethnic diversity and when we control for the former the latter's influence is not that significant. The findings of a relevant research carried out on English primary schools are discussed by Bruegel (2006). Bruegel argues that evidence from her research suggests that ethnic diversity in primary schools creates opportunities for inter-ethnic mixing among students with positive results. These findings are in line with the contact thesis rather than with the conflict thesis or Putnam's constrict thesis. Nevertheless, the extent to which these outcomes could be transferable to older students, i.e. secondary school or sixth form students, could be debatable as primary school students, argued Bruegel (2006), do not have a fully developed understanding of the ethnic or religious differences between them and other students. Older students would be expected to be more conscious of these differences and might therefore respond differently to the possibilities of inter-ethnic mixing. This chapter addresses this issue.

To examine whether Putnam's suggestions and their theoretical extension are valid in a context such as multi-cultural schools in London it is important to address overall four aspects related to the topic. To examine whether ethnic diversity has a negative impact on educational outcomes through social capital, two aspects should be addressed. The first aspect explores whether the social capital available to students through their school friendships influences their learning and/or educational outcomes. If social capital among students exercises no role at all on their education then there is no reason to be concerned about possible adverse effects of social capital erosion on educational outcomes, since the two would be totally independent. Conversely, if evidence suggests that students might influence each other in relation to their education then further exploration of the topic is required. In this case the second step is to explore whether the way students are influenced is conditioned upon their friend's ethnic background. For example, are White British students influenced differently by their White British friends and/or their Black African and Caribbean friends? Is the ethnic background of the friends important? What happens if we consider other student characteristics such as their social class and their gender? If the ethnic background of students is important, irrespective of the other student characteristics, then it would be logical to assume that ethnic diversity in schools might have an impact on students learning and/or outcomes since it enables socialisation of students with people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and potentially allows their differentiated educational influence by them.

In order to examine whether ethnic diversity in schools erodes social capital, two additional aspects have to be addressed. First, it is important to explore whether students form inter-ethnic or intra-ethnic friendships and what their attitudes about ethnic 'Others' are. If students form only intra-ethnic friendships - social networks that correspond to bonding social capital - and/or

have negative attitudes about students from different ethnic backgrounds then it might be legitimate to argue that ethnic diversity in schools erodes social capital across students of different ethnic groups (conflict theory). If students experience difficulty in forming any sort of friendships within their ethnically diverse schools (whether inter- or intra-ethnic) and/or appear to have negative attitudes for their fellow students it would then mean that Putnam's constrict theory could be valid within English secondary schools. It is also relevant here to explore the way students form friendships on the grounds of their social class background and gender. The final aspect to be addressed is the role of the school's ethnic composition. In other words, it examines the extent to which the ethnic composition of the school can inform students' social networks, values and attitudes.

### B. Friends' Educational Influence - 'That little voice that you need...'

Overall analysis of interview data suggests that students' education can be influenced by their school friends. Students mentioned that they influence each other both positively and negatively. Yet, whereas the positive influence of friends touched upon multiple expressions of education such as the learning process, aspirations for the future, university plans and educational outcomes as such, the negative influence had a much more narrow scope. This negative influence mainly concerned distractions during class time and less often about distractions whilst at home doing homework. Importantly, though, the majority of the students reported that they received only positive influences from their friends. Yet, the positive influence of friends was not homogeneous across the sample of interviewed students. Friends influenced each other through a range of channels, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly, consciously and unconsciously. This section reviews the main patterns that arose from the analysis of the discussions with the students.

The extract below shows one way in which students influenced each other in relation to their education.

M: Do you think they (*your friends*) influence you in either a positive or a negative way in relation to your education?

R: Unfortunately positive way! They keep forcing me to do work! (*Laughs*) Because I might sometimes feel a bit lazy and can't bother but they keep kicking me and say 'Go on do it because everybody else is going to do it' and that I'm gonna gain out of it in the long run and 'you would be the one ahead after you do all your work'. [...] **It's like that little voice that you need sometimes to just kick you back up and say 'Yeah! Come on do it!'** (*Laughs*) (*my emphasis*)

(*Rianna, middle-class, Indian girl - Kinderhook High School*)

It is clear that Rianna's friends encourage her to study and prompt her to do work at moments she does not feel motivated. Students can also act as a form of (peer) pressure in reminding their friends about their educational 'obligations'. This often works within the framework of what everyone else does or will do. Rianna's friends, for example, told her she had to study 'because everybody else is going to do it'. So this *rationality reminder* of what most students do in relation to their education, and what therefore everyone should strive to do seemed to comprise a positive drive for students' studying. This kind of drive did not always work in the same way though. It appears that in certain cases, students influenced their friends in a positive way with the former not always realising they were having such an impact on the latter or at least without doing so consciously:

J: If I said I didn't want to go to uni, I'd be quite embarrassed because all of them, all of them (*repeats for emphasis*) want to go to uni so therefore I feel that I have to go to university.

M: So is that a form of pressure... for you to go to uni?

J: Yeah, well... not pressure but ... you know? **I wouldn't want to be the odd one out.** (*my emphasis*)

(*Jasmine, middle-class, Indian girl - Kinderhook High School*)

So as in Jasmine's case, students did not always influence their friends individually and consciously. It was often the case that students' social networks encapsulated a generic influence deriving from what the rest of the friends were doing as a group, without any intention on the group members to exercise any form of influence. Jasmine's friends were probably unaware that one of the reasons she wanted to go to university was related to the rest of them wanting to go to university. So this is an example whereby friends' influence is both indirect and subconscious. It is also important to mention here that influence such as the one Jasmine received, might also imply some collateral negative consequences for the students such as increased levels of stress and anxiety or disappointment. Students, not wanting to feel left out and trying to keep up with the 'norm' of their friend's circle might set overambitious targets for themselves, involve themselves in stressful situations and might easily get disappointed. Luckily extreme cases such as this did not come up in my discussions with students. Nevertheless, a number of students expressed similar feelings to these expressed by Jasmine about not wanting 'to be the odd one out'. These feelings were reported not only in relation to their friends' influence but also in relation to influence they received from their family environment. The latter aspect is discussed in the next chapter.

Finally, the positive influence of friends' social networks was often a procedure without concrete roles as in the two cases presented hereinabove; it did not presuppose the existence of a single 'receiver' (the person influenced) and an 'encourager' (the person(s) influencing) but rather worked as a mutual reinforcement within a certain circle of friends. So rather than a student or a number of students encouraging their friends to do well, either verbally and explicitly as in the case of Rianna, or implicitly through their own choices as in the case of Jasmine, some students held both roles at the same time. James and his friends seem to provide a good example for this type of peer influence:

J: Yeah, we sort of talk about how... Because most of us taken... take... I take at least one subject in common with all of them. So I can... if we do a test or **something, I see how they've done, I see how I've done, compare it, and try and be better than them.**

M: Really?

J: Yeah, **it's a bit like a competition. (my emphasis)**

*(James, upper-middle-class, White British boy - Newfane East School)*

James and his friends seem to influence each other in relation to their education in a positive way; a case that shares some similarities with the other two cases discussed above. So James, like Rianna and Jasmine, appears to be aware of his friends' educational level as well as of their future educational plans (Jasmine) and they all strive to keep up with their friends. Nevertheless, whereas in Rianna's case this comes as a result of encouragement from her friends and in Jasmine's case as a result of her concern about being left 'the odd one out' in James' case it is all about 'being better'. So James and his friends seem to be in a constant competition as to who does better and that, according to him, gives them all a push to do better the next time. The word 'competition' came up from a lot of other interviews (about 25) as students said they compared themselves to their friends and were trying to be better than them.

So for the majority of the interviewed students friends had only a positive influence on their education, albeit through different channels. The rest of the students mainly said that the way friends influenced them worked both ways, namely both negatively and positively. This means that whereas in some cases their friends encouraged them to do well and study the same friends in other instances distracted them from their studying. Nevertheless, most of these people felt that the positive influence they received from their friends was much more significant than the negative influence they received and the negative influence was as Wayne said 'not enough to make a difference'. Finally, a small group of people (approximately 5 of them) said that their friends did not influence them at all and that they were the only people that determined their studying and their education in general.

It is worth mentioning here that a number of other topics arose in my conversations with students with regards to their distraction by other students. Many students said that there was a significant change in relation to the school and class dynamics compared to the previous years. They felt that since they had been to the sixth form the school life was much different as a result of a number of students not continuing on the sixth form. They talked about how their learning was influenced by the absence of some of the students who left their school after Year 11 and how all the students that were left at school (sixth form) were the 'mature' ones or those 'who want to learn'.

Both Louise and Malcolm, whose interview extracts are quoted below seemed to think that friends' negative educational influence used to be more evident in the year before.

Not so much now, because the **worst students have been sorted out**. Last year was quite bad. There was a lot of rule breaking, and a lot of distraction, a lot of fights. **But everyone is mature now. (my emphasis)**

*(Louise, working-class, White British girl - Kinderhook High School)*

Mal.: No, I think it has to do with the school getting rid of all **the loud students that didn't want to learn at the start**.

Mar.: Right. How did they do that?

Mal.: **They just kicked them out** on that stage. **Now all the students who stayed are the ones who are ahead, the ones who want to learn.**

Mar.: Right. What do you think of that?

Mal.: I think it's a good thing, because they were affecting other people's ... achievement hm... and how they did in class.

[...]

Mar.: So do you think they deserved to be 'kicked out'?

Mal.: Yeah I think they did *(in a very serious tone)*. Because **if you affect someone else's education you don't deserve to be here. (my emphasis)**

*(Malcolm, middle-class, Black African boy - Chester Central School)*

Phrases such as 'the worst students have been sorted out' and 'they just kicked them out' illustrate that this 'selectivity' of the sixth form might render some of these findings not applicable to younger secondary school students. For instance, the very low levels of negative educational influence that were reported by the students might not be reflected in earlier stages of their education. Another thing that these extracts suggest is that as far as some students were concerned the selectivity of the sixth form was fair in that it fostered an environment with

more pro-educational norms and less distraction. There was little elaboration on behalf of the interviewed students as to possible reasons behind the distractive behaviour of their former fellow students and as to possible ways the latter could have been assisted with. On the contrary, they appeared to feel both relieved from and benefited by their absence from the school as far as their education was concerned. Yet, different opinions were expressed about this matter by some other students when talking about the social aspect of their friendships. This group of students explained how they felt lonely and out of balance at the beginning of the year when their close friend(s) had to leave the school due to lack of required educational standards.

Summing up, whereas it seems that students influence each other both negatively and positively and in a range of ways, it appears that the main influence for the majority of the students was positive. Yet, having taken into account what students revealed about their educational experiences in the year before and how they felt about some of their fellow-students who were not accepted in the sixth form, one could assume that the way students influenced each other might have been different across educational levels. So perhaps the fact that students received mainly positive influence from their friends was related to the fact that they were in the sixth form, whereby the majority of them aspired to go to university in less than two years from the time of the interview. Accordingly it is wise not to assume that all inferences drawn from this sample could apply to students of other educational levels. Overall, it seems that the dynamics of the school and in turn the norms and social networks among students can differ from year to year especially in transition periods such as the one experienced by the students of this study.

Coming back to the question posed at the beginning of this section, social capital among students appeared to be important for their education as the nature of the social networks and the norms that characterized their school friendships were both educationally relevant and influential. And since this was the case, the hypothesis that ethnic diversity in schools might influence their educational outcomes negatively still stands. For this to be possible though the way students influence each other must be conditioned upon their ethnic background. The next section sets out to explore this possibility along with the possibility that other factors such as social class or gender might have a role.

### **C. Homogeneous Influence or Conditioned Upon? Exploring Social Class, Ethnicity and Gender.**

Interview data analysis demonstrated that the way students influence each other is not homogeneous but that it is strongly related to the type of their friendships. Not all friends had the same kind of influence on students in relation to their education. Overall, it seems that the

most intimate relationships, these of either best friends or boyfriends/girlfriends, were able to exercise the biggest influence whether positive or negative. More distant friends or acquaintances had insignificant or no role at all. So it is the strong, dense and intense ties among students that were able to either motivate them or distract them in relation to their educational matters. This finding is rather incompatible to conclusions drawn from research in other areas, such as occupational status (Lin, Ensel and Vaughn, 1981) and job seeking (Granovetter, 1973; 1983) that advocate the importance and authority of weak as opposed to strong ties. The reason for which the latter finding is not endorsed in relation to the educational influences among students lies perhaps in the fact that the nature of the purpose of the influence at the two occasions is different. On the one hand, the way ties facilitate people to find a job (Granovetter, 1973; 1983) and more specifically to find a high status job (Lin, Ensel and Vaughn, 1981) is an action that takes place once, at a specific time and has no duration. On the other hand the way students influence each other is a constant process that does not take place once and for all but continues along time. So whereas for the first instance - finding a job - it is not necessary to have strong social networks with the person who will help you but it is rather the authority of the person that matters, for the second instance - peer educational influence - a constant interaction between students is necessary. As a result of educational influence being an ongoing procedure that does not happen once in students' life time but rather takes place on a daily basis, the students who exercised the biggest role had to be friends that were close to them. It was therefore the dense, durable and intense social networks that had the strongest effect in this case.

Moving on to students' individual characteristics, namely ethnicity, gender and social class, it appears that whereas students did form friendships on the grounds of these three identities very often (see next section), the way they influenced each other's education was not necessarily conditioned upon all these characteristics. In relation to gender, there was some tentative evidence which suggested that female friends have a different kind of influence than male friends among people who made friends with both genders. This was seen in relation to some stereotypical assumptions about gender that might have then subsequently shaped the educational influence of norms and networks in an indirect way. For example, some female students thought that boys could get more easily distracted than girls. Naomi, talking about her twin brother, argued that boys found it more difficult to focus, they were more easily distracted than girls and they had 'anger management' problems that seemed to interfere with their learning process.

N: No, I think the boys are worse. **Boys are worse.** And I think that's why my mum is so determined for me and my brother to get through school. Because he is a boy, it's harder for... not harder for but because boys have **anger management** and stuff like that, they need to... **they need to be focused more than girls** because girls know that they can focus when they



want but **boys they get distracted**. They get distracted for a very long time. So it's like... he needed to be put on a straight line, to be guided that way. (*my emphasis*)

(*Naomi, working-class, Black Caribbean girl - Chester Central School*)

Naomi draws on her brother's experience to make a broad generalisation that seems to also mirror her mum's view and that reflects some deep-rooted gender stereotypes according to which girls are more focused, more academic and handle negative emotions better whereas boys are less academic, more easily distracted and generally express their negative feelings more than girls. Naomi also says that boys have excessive anger which they sometimes have difficulties in controlling. Overall, she believes that whereas 'girls know that they can focus when they want' boys cannot do the same and therefore need support; they need 'to be put on a straight line, to be guided that way'. Since Naomi has a Black Caribbean background and she talks about her brother, it might be the case that her opinion does not only reflect a gender issue but an ethnicity one as well. Recent research discusses the way Black Caribbean boys as opposed to Black Caribbean girls are often stereotyped as hypermasculine and lacking interest in education (Wright *et al*, 1998; Youdell, 2003). If this holds true here, Naomi's views might echo stereotypes that concern students' identities at intersections rather than a single identity. So an intersectionality framework might be more appropriate here to understand students' attitudes and perceptions in relation to gender and ethnicity. Unfortunately, there was no way to triangulate this (gender-ethnicity intersectionality) with evidence from other interviews so it is not certain whether Naomi's extract reflects attitudes that relate only to gender or to intersections of gender and ethnicity.

Examining the way boys and girls influence each other in light of Naomi's extract, it could be assumed that norms and social networks among girls are more influential toward their education than the respective norms and networks present among boys. This hypothesis would indeed resonate with findings from the statistical analysis, as discussed in the previous chapter, which showed that girls were more likely to talk about their education with their friends and were encouraged by their friends to study hard more than boys did. This finding seems to advocate that certain types of social capital, such as pro-educational norms and social networks, might be stronger among girls than boys. This could be justified by an internalization on behalf of students of stereotypical conceptualizations of gender attitudes toward education, such as the one that assumes girls upholding more pro-academic norms and attitudes than boys (Francis and Skelton, 2001; Francis and Skelton, 2005). As these stereotypes appear to be widespread in society among both parents and teachers, it would be fairly reasonable to assume that they were also embedded – at least to a certain extent - in students' views. This would indeed apply to the majority of cases. Nevertheless, there was also evidence suggestive of students'

occasional rejection of these stereotypes. In particular, some types of social capital available to boys, like James (discussed in the previous section), whose pro-educational friendship norms and social networks influenced him and his friends positively, could be seen as challenging of gender stereotypical functions of social capital. So in these cases, social capital available within male friendship groups had a positive educational influence, but in a more tacit and less verbalised way than in the case of girls, for instance through unspoken competition among its members (as in James' case) rather than through an explicit discussion of education or encouragement of hard working.

The next aspect to be addressed is whether students' influence is related to their friends' ethnic background. Unlike the gender case, there was no evidence from the interview data to support that the ethnic background of students shaped the educational influence they exercised toward their school friends. Among the people who had friends from different ethnic backgrounds, there was no differential influence that could be seen as relevant to their ethnic background, as for instance in the case of gender above. In other words, and to reply to the question posed at the introduction, White British students did not seem to be influenced in any different way by their White British friends than by their Black African and Caribbean or Indian friends. Students influenced each other irrespective of their ethnic background. This is in contrast to what would be expected if we were to assume that ethnic diversity per se is negative for the educational attainment of students, as implied by Putnam's theoretical extension discussed earlier. It seems therefore that as far as education is concerned, ethnic diversity did not seem to have a negative impact, as students' friends influenced their education irrespective of the ethnic group they belonged to. The extended extract below which is drawn from an interview with Mark exemplifies this. Mark is an Indian middle-class boy whose socio-graph comprised of 5 people. Two of them were Indian boys, one of them was a Black African girl and the rest two were White British boys.

M: How do you feel about your friends?

MK: Well, these people (*the two White British boys*) are clever and obviously these people aren't very clever (*the two Indian boys and the African girl*). So in terms of friends these people (*the two White British boys*) are the people I do work with. And these people (*the two Indian boys and the Black African girl*) are more... I'd go out with them, I'd just have some fun.

M: So you'd mostly study with Andy and Collin (*White British*) and then have fun with the rest (*Indians and Black African*)?

MK: Yeah, yeah.

M: Do they all want to university?

MK: Everyone wants to go to university; it's just that they (*the three*) don't put as much effort. He's (*one of his White British friends*) got very big aspirations, he wants to be a prime minister.

[...]

M: Do you discuss with your friends about your education?

MK: I think with these two.

M: (*I name the two White British boys*)

MK: Yeah. It comes up. Otherwise I don't really think so.

M: Not with the rest?

Mk: No.

M: OK. So what kind of things do you discuss with these two (*White British*)?

MK: University, our grades, what we aim to achieve at...

[...]

M: So what kind of things do you talk with the rest?

Mk: With Sunit (*Indian boy - best friend*) it's just cars and... that's it and with these two (*the other Indian boy and the Black African girl*) I just joke around. It's not anything in particular.

M: Do you think your friends influence your education?

MK: I think without Andy (*White British friend*) I'd probably be a lot less enthusiastic about my work.

M: Really?

MK: Yeah!

M: In what way?

MK: Because he's got such high aspirations and that just pulls you along with him. And once you find out what efforts he does to go to uni you think... All right, I need to be a part of all that.

M: How about the other way round? Are your friends distracting you from your studying?

MK: Yeah, especially these two (*Indian boys*). Because we joke around so much, when we are in lessons we don't focus... we don't focus at all.

*(Mark, Indian, middle-class boy - Newfane East School)*

So Mark here seems to be forming 'reasoned' friendships. It appears that he has some things in common with some of his friends and some other things in common with some others, and he is quite aware of that. With the two White British people he shares the interest in studying and doing well at school, with one of the Indian boys, who is also his best friend, he shares his passion - as he explains later on the interview - about cars. Also with his best friend along with the other Indian boy and the Black African girl he has fun, and he jokes a lot. So it seems that his social networks with the two Indian boys and the Black African girl evolve around entertainment and fun whereas his social networks with the two White British people and especially Andy are mainly about education. The way Mark's friends influence him educationally does not seem to be related to their ethnic background. Mark does not seem to be mixing with the White British people believing that they are good students as a result of their ethnic background. As a matter of fact, statistically Indian students perform better than White British students (DfES, 2005; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000) and this was indeed reflected in the results

of Mark's school shown by Ofsted reports. Also Mark's school had an equal number of Indian and White British students in the sixth form, so it would not have been difficult for him to make friends with educationally successful Indian students. Therefore, it seems that Mark did not select his friendship groups based on ethnic characteristics and there was no evidence to suggest that the ethnic background of his friends exercised any role on his education. Had this been the case one would assume that his Indian friends and not his White British friends would have exercised the positive influence on him. Yet, it appears that in Mark's case it was the opposite. Indian students, who are usually stereotyped as being well-behaved in class, motivated and determined students as well as high achievers (Connolly, 1998; Gillborn, 1990), did not only lack these attributes here but conversely held opposite characteristics as they distracted each other whilst in class joking 'around so much'. It would be interesting to establish at this stage whether the social class background of Mark's friends was influential. Unfortunately Mark did not provide this piece of information during his interview so there is no way to say with certainty whether social class exercised some role here.

In other cases, the impact of social class was evident. In Louise's case her friends appeared to be the main form of encouragement and motivation for her education. Louise, a White working-class girl from a very poor family, was growing up with her grandparents. Even though she wanted to go to university she mentioned that she received little encouragement from her family. In fact, she argued, in a rather emotionally loaded way, that her grandparents, who were the closest relatives to her, were not keen on her going to university and tried to discourage her in various ways. For Louise, her friends, who belonged to a higher social class than her, were very influential in providing her with support, encouragement and motivation to do well at school and go to university.

M: Are you a good student?

L: I think so. I have to work really hard to get good grades, whereas I think **they** (*her friends*) **are more naturally intelligent than I am.**

[...]

M: Right. Do you think that your friends or your boyfriend might influence you in relation to your education?

L: I think they definitely encourage me and I would get told off if I wasn't doing enough work.

M: By whom? All of them? (*I point at the socio-graph*)

L: All of them.

M: Including M (*her boyfriend*)?

L: M especially. If I'm not doing enough work he nags me. And because **they are generally more intelligent than** me they kind of set a vow which I feel I have to meet. They just push me. (*my emphasis*)

Louise had close friendships with students from a number of ethnic groups, namely White British, Indian, Chinese, and mixed heritage (Colombian and White British). Her boyfriend was White British. As she says, all her friends and especially her boyfriend encouraged her to work hard. In addition, her belonging in that specific circle of friends where educational norms seemed to have been highly valued, as all her friends were good students, motivated her to study as well. Whereas, the former influence resembles the one expressed by Rianna, in the previous section, whose friends verbally encouraged her to study, the latter influence, resembles Jasmine's case who felt that she had to study in order to not feel left out compared to the rest of her friends. Another important theme that comes up is the way she perceives herself educationally. Even though she admits she is a good student she says that all her friends are better than her as a result of them being 'naturally more intelligent' and she says that twice. So in this case, Louise did not seem to elaborate how the social class background of herself and her friends could have intermediated their educational outcomes but she perceived this to be a result of 'natural intelligence' that she lacked compared to her friends. In general, when talking about education, Louise came across as a student with low self esteem despite her vibrant interest in it. This is also reflected in the extract of one of her best friends below.

M: So do all of your friends want to go to university?

I: Yes, they all want to. But Louise is always worried about how expensive it is and stuff like that. But also her grandparents that she is associated with discourage her because they don't want her to go to uni. They don't want her to move away and become independent.

M: How come?

I: Because, her granny says 'I invested so much time and money on you, I could have left you but I haven't. And now you are going to go and abandon me. And I think that's kind of their thing, they don't want to be left. Probably I could say they care about her but they are really stopping her. She really worries about that. **And you know she is really clever but she doesn't believe she is. And we (her friends) are just like 'you have to go to uni, you have to do that'.**

M: So do you speak to her about that?

I: Yeah! I've spoken to her about that so many times. But I think she has the common sense, she kind of knows what she wants to do now but she is always limited by the fact that she has to be stable... She wanted to be a journalist and then she changed her mind and said she wanted to be a teacher because a journalist is not a stable enough income and stuff like that. And she is like worried about it.

M: Do you think that has to do with her financial situation or... ?

I: Yeah, I think so. Because her grandmother doesn't work, her grandfather doesn't work, her mum doesn't work very often and they've always struggled this way. Her dad's side have a lot but they are not in contact a lot so... So it's difficult.

*(Isabella, White British, upper-middle-class girl - Kinderhook High School)*

Isabella, who is Louise's closest friend, summarises the family situation of her friend as well as the dilemmas she is facing. Louise is strongly discouraged by her grandparents in relation to her university plans. So in her case, social capital within the family context was not particularly encouraging pro-educational decisions, such as going to university. One of the issues that seemed to shape the grandparents' stance was the lack of financial resources and this could be directly associated to their working-class background and poverty. Another issue that appeared to be influential was the 'emotionality' of the grandparents in response to the potential of being left alone after Louise went to university. There were three more working-class students within the interviewed sample who reported that their family was not supporting them going to university based on similar grounds, namely in order to be able to maintain contact with them. It would be interesting here to examine the reason behind the formation of types of social capital among working-class families and their subsequent consequences on students' education. As Isabella suggested, Louise's grandmother resisted the idea of her going to university on emotional grounds – she did not want to be 'abandoned', 'left'. These words carry a very strong 'emotional' significance and might suggest a prioritisation on behalf of working-class parents/guardians of certain types of social capital. In this instance, it seems that the resistance of the idea of university was an attempt to maintain the existing social networks and avoid possible disruption or modification of them in the future. Students' going to university could result in a change of the relationship between them and their family on two main grounds. The first one relates to issues of proximity, as students might need to study in a university situated far from their home town and might therefore be unable to visit home often. This would inevitably result in less frequent contact between family members for at least three years. The second one, which is a more long-term factor, could be related to the possibility of working-class students becoming socially mobile after graduating from university. This could be viewed with suspicion by the family with the thought of alienation. So the idea of students' going to university could sometimes pose dilemmas for the family that do not necessarily lie exclusively in financial reasons but might instead be related to emotional reasons and attempts to maintain certain types of social capital status quo within the family. Nevertheless, this finding does not suggest that all working-class families behaved in this way. Conversely, this example represented a rather small number in the overall sample of working-class students. The next chapter discusses in more depth the various ways in which families from working-class backgrounds mobilise social capital in relation to students' education and argues that these ways are often complex and by no means homogeneous.

Aside of the role of grandparents, Isabella also confirms what is already evident from Louise's extract in relation to the latter's low-self esteem. Louise does not believe she is 'clever' even though according to Isabella she really is. Isabella and the rest of her friends encourage and try to push her to make a decision and go to university. Overall, even though Louise had a disadvantaged background both in terms of her financial situation and in terms of her family encouragement she seemed to be positively influenced through the norms and social networks of her friendship group. The type of social networks she formed with her friends could fall under the category of *linking social capital*, as all her friends were significantly richer than Louise, holding pro-educational norms and being high achievers, and this seemed to have worked as a positive influence for her.

All in all, Louise's overall worries about financing her studies and choosing a stable profession were not atypical among working-class students. According to Isabella, Louise was always limited by the fact that she had to be stable, so despite her original will to become a journalist she then decided that being a teacher would be a more stable profession for her. These issues did not seem to be mediated in any way by Louise's interaction with her friends. Despite her friends' positive influence in relation to her education - studying, getting good grades or even deciding to go to university - which is undoubtedly important there were still issues that linking social capital could not resolve such as financing the university studies or being able to afford a job that she liked without having to worry about stability. In this sense, her friends could not do much to help other than merely show empathy, as Isabella did.

In Louise's case there seemed to be an important benefit yielded from her close friendships with middle-class and upper-middle-class students. What would the outcomes be for middle-class and upper-middle-class students who befriend working-class students? One hypothesis would be that the former student might receive negative educational influence from their social networks with the latter. These examples were not very frequent as students more often than not had friends that reflected their own social class background (see next section). Yet even when they were involved with such groups, surprisingly middle-class and especially upper-middle-class students did not mention any form of negative influence. On the contrary, a lot of them said that their friends' lifestyles and the situations in which it these lifestyles resulted alarmed them and helped them appreciate even more that they did not want to be in a similar situation. For example, one of the upper-middle-class interviewed students said that he did not want 'to end up working at McDonalds' like a lot of their working-class friends who had left school. Some others referred to their friends who worked in KFC restaurants or supermarkets to reflect the same attitude. In this sense, middle-class and upper-middle-class students critically reviewed their friends' state of affairs and perceived them as 'anti-role models' in relation to their educational plans. It seems as though middle-class and upper-middle-class students

possess the mechanisms to *filter* the influence they receive from their social networks in order to guard and maintain their class privileges. The concept of 'cultural omnivore' suggested by Peterson and Kern (1996) as quoted in Vincent and Ball (2007) might be relevant here. Peterson and Kern use this concept to explain a new trend according to which people from high status groups in the US behave in relation to their cultural taste, such as music, art, theatre etc. They argue that there is now a different tendency, compared to earlier times, toward a wider acceptance and knowledge of different tastes that are common among lower status groups. This, Peterson and Kern argue, is a less snobbish consumption of culture and lifestyles on behalf of high status people. Drawing parallels with this, it could be argued that some middle-class and upper-middle-class students could be characterised as 'social' rather than 'cultural' 'omnivores'. So as 'social omnivores' some middle- and upper-middle-class students had friends from working-class backgrounds and were exposed as a result to the social capital available to them, i.e. norms and attitudes, that in turn shaped their lives, and in this case their education. Despite this exposure though, middle-class and upper-middle-class students were well aware of the boundaries between different types of lifestyles and the consequences of each. So it could be argued that this 'distinction' (Bourdieu, 1984) enabled a filtering mechanism of social capital, available to those few middle- and upper-middle-class students, who had working-class friends, which did not permit them to be negatively influenced in relation to their education.

This section discussed the ways students influence each other in relation to their social class, ethnic background and gender. In order to develop these aspects, a number of examples of students who mixed with students from different social groups, whether ethnic, social class or gender, were brought forward. To what extent do these examples though reflect the norm among students' relationships? Do students tend to mix with people who share different characteristics than them or do they tend to stick to same-ethnic, same-class and same-gender people? The next section discusses this topic.

#### **D. Students' Social Networks: Social Class, Ethnicity and Gender**

The previous section mentioned some examples of students who mixed with students from different social groups. This part of the chapter discusses the extent to which this was characteristic of all the student population or only a fraction of it. In other words, this part examines whether the ethnic background, the social class and the gender of students are important factors that shape students social networks within the school. The examination of this topic lies heavily in data provided by students during their discussion of their socio-graphs. As discussed in chapter 3, interviewed students were asked to draw a socio-graph of their close friends. This socio-graph then formed the basis for a discussion of students' friendships, and information was elicited about the gender, the social class and the ethnic background of



students' friends whose names were present in the socio-graph. Overall, the socio-graph method, incorporated in students' interviews, comprised a very useful tool that not only made students feel comfortable but also facilitated the smooth flow of relevant information.

### Gender

There were different friendship patterns in relation to gender among the interviewed students. The majority of them had friends from both genders but a group of students had only friends of the same gender as them. Among the students who mixed, some of them thought it did not make any difference whether their friends would be girls or boys and their friendship would have exactly the same form in either case. Yet for most of the students who had both female and male friends, the best friend was of the same gender. This indicates that even though most of the students were happy to mix with the opposite gender, the strongest ties, the most intense and dense ones, such as these available among best friends, existed in relation to same gender networks. Indeed, some students felt that friendships with boys were qualitatively different than friendships with girls. Girls said that they would only go shopping with their female friends and boys said that they would only play games with their male friends. This is not surprising as shopping and sports are strongly gendered activities and this was clearly mirrored in students' social networks. In fact those students who said they only had same gender friends ascribed their choices to mostly gendered, common interests such as shopping and football.

In addition, a number of girls said that they could not talk about their feelings with boys as boys would not understand them. The fact that girls would be better to talk to than boys was also confirmed by several boys who said that they preferred to talk to and seek advice about their relationships from their female friends rather than from their male friends. Edward exemplifies this tendency very well.

M: (*Looking at his socio-graph*) Ok, are these boys or girls?

E: Mainly boys but there are some girls as well (*he names them*)

M: Ok, so you've got three girls?

E: Four girls. (*out of total thirteen friends*)

M: Four girls. Do you think it's any easier mixing with boys rather than with girls, as a boy, or is it the same? How does it work?

E: I think when you first come to school it's easier to mix (*with boys*) because you have more things to relate to. But I think as you get older you find it easier to be friends with girls because... I don't know... for some people... but for me you can talk to girls who are close to you about several things.

M: Like what kind of things?

E: Like family things...not family things. Well, family things or relationship issues. **And about relationship issues you can get advice and stuff... in a way that you wouldn't really talk to a boy. Because you have this stereotyped view on a boy rather than what you have for a female say.**

M: What kind of stereotypes are you talking about?

E: I mean... How do I put this? Say if a boy wanted... a boy wanted just... a girl... wanted just to have fun with her, for example. Someone who just wants to have a relationship. As opposed to... me for example... who might want to have fun but want to make it serious at the same time, you don't know how they (*boys*) might treat you. They are just gonna pick this part and say **'Oh! Why are you being so silly? There are so many other girls out there'**. But you might not want other girls. But you do want other girls. And then you might not know what to do. And then you've got the girls on the other side saying 'Oh, she is a good girl' and stuff like that and (*girls tell you*) whether it's worth doing this and they might have more information. So it's different areas, if you see what I mean.

M: So you are saying that you would rather talk to a girl about these things rather than to a boy?

E: Yeah, yeah. Because they might have... it might be kind of... weird... **I don't know it's kind of weird talking to one of my (*boys*) friends about something like that. Say 'Chris that and that'. If it was something different, like football or talking about... I don't know... something more serious than this. But not like... it's kind of weird... I don't know... (*my emphasis*)**

*(Edward, Black African, middle-class boy - Kinderhook High School)*

Edward represents the views of other boys who said that they preferred to talk about their family issues and their relationships with their female friends rather than with their male friends as the former were better listeners and were in turn going to advise them better. Talking about emotions or relationships with their male friends seemed to be somewhat of an embarrassing experience for them and they feared that if they did so they would be mocked or undermined by their male friends. Edward and the other boys who expressed similar attitudes to him explicitly echoed gender related stereotypes. Edward for instance felt that his male friends would probably make fun of him for wanting to have a serious relationship with a girl and would consider him as not masculine enough. A true masculine boy should probably think 'There are so many other girls out there' and not worry about a single girl. Conversely girls, being more emotional would listen to him and advise him accordingly. Talking about emotional matters with male friends is 'weird' as opposed to talking about football, which is normal. So talking about emotions and advising accordingly is a feminine attribute whereas a masculine behaviour would imply characteristics such as lack of emotional involvement or worry and engagement with sports talk. Edward reflects a typical pattern among both boys and girls who thought that female friends were better than male friends to talk to about emotional issues. Interestingly,

even though the majority of them acknowledged, implicitly or explicitly, that this was a matter of gender stereotypes and they often felt upset about it, they were still somehow entrapped within these assumptions resulting in the reproduction of the very stereotypes they were illustrating and/or criticising.

In several cases students did not hesitate to express stereotypical assumptions that were even unflattering for their own gender. A number of girls said that it was easier to be friends with boys than with girls as girls were 'gossipy' and 'bitchy' whereas boys were 'less judgmental' and more easy going. Ironically enough all five girls who stated that, had more female girls than boys in their friendship networks and among those who had best friends all were girls. This oxymoron reveals the way in which gender stereotypes engage with and complicate the nature of social networks as well as the attitudes and norms that characterize these networks. Whereas girls attributed some negative characteristics to female people and said it was both easier and better to mix with boys, which as such comprises a stereotype, their actual friendships contradicted that. The latter perhaps depicts other constructed perceptions such as those mentioned hereinabove according to which it is easier for girls to mix with girls and boys to mix with boys.

Overall, the majority of them had both male and female friends. Nevertheless, the small group of students who said they had only same-gender friends and the way some gender stereotypes informed students' networks even when having friends from the opposite sex, suggests that there are still considerable barriers when it comes to friendships between different genders among students. Furthermore, gendered related constructions, such as boys play football and play-station, girls go shopping, seemed to have had a substantial influence on the way students perceived their friends and ultimately on the nature and quality of their friendships.

### Ethnicity

The majority of students (about 45) formed both inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic friendships<sup>30</sup>. So considering ethnicity as the analytical reference point, students' social capital was mainly both bonding and bridging. Nevertheless, there was a group of students (about 15 of them) who had exclusively intra-ethnic friendships. An even smaller group of students (approximately 5) said that they had only inter-ethnic friendships as none of their close friends - included in their socio-graph - had the same ethnic background as them. Even though each friendship group was unique in many ways, some patterns arose in relation to the way students formed their friendships with regards to ethnicity. The responses of students who formed mainly or

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<sup>30</sup> The number of inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic friendships was not always balanced. For some students inter-ethnic friendships, despite present, comprised only a small fraction of their friendship group, i.e. one friend out of a total of 8. Conversely, for some students inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic friendships were relatively balanced, i.e. 4 inter-ethnic and 4 intra-ethnic friendships.

predominantly intra-ethnic friendships fell broadly within one of three thematic categories: *racialisation, racism and repair work*.

*i. Racialisation*

The first group of students, who had either a limited number of inter-ethnic friendships or no inter-ethnic friendships at all, talked about their friendship formation employing a racialisation rationale. Students brought forward the existence of a number of 'barriers' in forming inter-ethnic friendships by drawing on the differences of people who belong to different ethnic collectivities as well as the similarities of people who belong to the same ethnic collectivity. The employment of this ethnicity-related identification mechanism, on the basis of which friendships were formed, could be seen in relation to Miles' (1989) racialisation process. This section discusses some examples that suggest the way in which students drew on racialisation to explain their intra-ethnic friendships and/or the lack of inter-ethnic friendships.

Most students, like James, talked about common interests with same ethnic friends.

M: Do they (the friends in the socio-graph) have a different ethnic background than you?

J: No, they are pretty much all the same.

M: All the same. Right. Do you think it's generally easy to make friends of other ethnic backgrounds or is it any difficult?

J: **I suppose, slightly harder. Because, yeah, we have less in common, yeah, possibly less in common.**

M: What sort of things?

J: **I don't know, like likes and dislikes. We might have different likes and dislikes. Yes, I suppose it would be harder. (my emphasis)**

*(James, middle-class, White British boy - Chester Central School)*

Students seemed to believe that the ethnic background of students exercised a deterministic influence on their interests, their likes and dislikes. James, found it difficult to narrow down his understanding of 'likes' and 'dislikes' and did not define the aspects they concerned. Yet, a number of students were more explicit in talking about their social network choices. Several students referred to cultural barriers that mirrored in events, celebrations etc. For instance, Jasmine, an Indian girl who had only Indian friends, said that her same ethnic networks might have resulted from their common involvement in ethno-cultural events or celebrations.

I don't know how it happened! I don't know. It might be because we have festivals... Indians... and we all go together. With other ethnic cultures you can't do that.

*(Jasmine, middle-class, Indian girl - Kinderhook High School)*

Some other students thought that family norms were the same among people of the same ethnic backgrounds and that therefore rendered a mutual understanding among friends possible. Sean, a Black African boy refers to a number of other factors that he believes come into play in relation to ethnicity.

M: So what is the ethnic background of these friends *(on the socio-graph)*?

S: Oh! They are all mix. A is Black, B is mixed race, C is Zimbabwean, D is White.

M: White British?

S: Yeah! White British. And E and F mixed race.

M: When you say Black you mean Black African, Black Caribbean...?

S: Black Caribbean these two. But the thing is that outside the school is more selective. I have more Black friends outside the school but in this school it's not selective. Because I'm not really picky I don't really care about race.

M: So you think it doesn't make any difference?

S: Not really. Not really. Well... in terms of. It might actually make a difference. **When a Black person enables you to express yourself in... because he knows your experiences because of the way they have been brought up. You can talk about them.**

M: Could you give me an example about that?

S: Like for example if you misbehave and how your parents will react on that.

M: So does this only stand for Black Africans or...?

S: Black Caribbeans is quite similar.

M: Is it?

S: Quite similar.

M: In what kinds of things? You mentioned parents'...

S: Parental practices, basically how we see things, **how we do our sports** and stuff like that.

M: You have common interests?

S: **Yeah, yeah! We've got quite common interests. For example my friends love football and I love football as well. And we like playing as well.**

*(Sean, upper-middle-class, Black African boy - Kinderhook High School)*

Sean believes that Black people can understand each other better because 'of the way they have been brought up'. He mentions as an example the way Black parents would react if their children misbehave. Sean seems to overgeneralise a particular instance of parenting practices to fit a range of different Black ethnic backgrounds. Characteristically he mentions that Black Caribbean parents would behave quite similarly to Black African parents. This is an interesting

point in that the way Sean ascribes similar characteristics to Black Caribbean and African people might reflect the way Black people are generally racialised in society. So in this sense, Sean draws on a particular example of parenting styles to distinguish between Black ethnic groups and ethnic 'others'. This is an example of racialisation (Miles, 1989) of other groups, that occurs with reference to characteristics of the ethnic commonality one belongs to (Black style parenting is different to the parenting of other ethnic groups). Sean also seems to believe that Black people 'do' sports or 'love' football in a different way than other ethnic groups. This might be an example of the way Black people are racialised in the broader society, for instance as being good at sports (Mirza, 2007), that might in turn be internalised by some<sup>31</sup> Black people themselves. Overall, it seems that racialisation informs the way students form their close friendships within and outside the school.

It could be argued that this type of racialisation poses barriers to inter-ethnic mixing that could be to some extent not apt but 'imaginary'. The process through which certain collectivities are attributed specific characteristics leading often to unsubstantiated generalisations, namely stereotypes, seems to be influencing the way students form their social networks. Students grow up to believe that it is not easy to mix with other ethnic backgrounds. Jasmine, for instance, seems to believe that cultural differences, such as attendance of different celebrations or religious events, comprise an obstacle for inter-ethnic mixing, even though possibly a tacit one. Sean appears to believe that it's easier for him to have Black friends as they all love football. The way racialisation leads to ethnic stereotypes seems to be forming 'imaginary' obstacles in relation to the way students form their friendships.

## *ii. Racism*

Following on from the previous section, this part examines whether the barriers of inter-ethnic friendships are always 'imaginary'. Tyronne's experience seems to suggest the opposite.

M: So A (his friend on the socio-graph) is Caribbean. Do you think it's easier being friends with someone from your own ethnic background? Or does it not make a difference?

T: Yeah, because **in a way they know your struggle**. Because if I walk down the street, I can't help feeling that people stereotype me and they see me as like... one of the people from black youths that (are) out in the street... local people on the corner doing drugs and weed and all that kind of stuff... that I don't really do. So... he kind of understands that side of things because he goes through it as well.

M: How about in the school? Do you think that this kind of stereotyping happens here as well?

<sup>31</sup> It should be clarified here that not all Black African and Caribbean students who participated in this research provided evidence to suggest that they internalised existing ethnic stereotypes. For instance, Tyronne's example as discussed later on indicates the opposite, namely that he took offence on the same stereotype and challenged it.

T: It happens as a joke. They say the **stereotypical comments** like 'Oh you are Black that means you can jump higher' (in athletics), **it's as a joke kind of thing.**

M: Right.

T: But... I don't know. It's hard to explain.

M: So you think that your friend who has the same ethnic background might understand you better because he might have experienced the same things?

T: Yeah.

M: Has he experienced something similar? Has he ever mentioned something?

T: I'm not sure. Not in the common room, because he goes to so many different colleges, he's hardly ever here.

M: What do you think of White British people here?

T: They are cool. I know most of them since year 8 and some of them even earlier. We are all cool really. **Apart from instances that they do racist jokes**, there hasn't been really anything else. *(my emphasis)*

*(Tyronne, upper-middle-class, Black Caribbean boy - Newfane East School)*

Tyronne says that he finds it easier to mix with people from his own ethnic background as they understood 'his struggle'. They understood the way he was stereotyped as a Black youth and they knew how he felt. Tyronne here appears to be more conscious and alert to issues of racism than Sean. Tyronne is aware of racism in society and admits that he felt stereotyped and discriminated in his school by some White British students (he mentions that elsewhere in the interview) who were doing 'racist jokes' about Black people. Just like Sean, he uses the example of sports only that Tyronne is aware that this comprises a racial stereotype and that coming out of the mouth of his fellow students in a particular instance and context it was racist. So this type of racialisation here seemed to be perceived in a different way to the one discussed by Sean and this was perhaps related to the context in which it was said and the connotations it implied. A type of racialisation, even if at first glance positive and flattering, could imply some concealed and less overt racist assumptions. For instance, Mirza (2007) and Blair (2001) argued that behind some schools' appraisal of Black students' performance at sports and their active encouragement to work hard toward this direction, underlies the implicit assumption that Black students are less able to excel in academic subjects than students from other ethnic backgrounds. This comprises a racist attitude with detrimental effects on Black students' educational outcomes. Yet, it is not only experiences of racism within the school that seem to influence students' formation of friendships. Tyronne's words give a very vibrant example that echoes the way Black youth is stereotyped outside the school context, namely associated with sub-cultures and criminality (i.e. drug consumption). This kind of racist assumptions, present in the wider society fabric, seems to inform Black students' formation of social networks and attitudes within the school community.

All in all, Tyrone's example seems to demonstrate that when racialisation is followed by racism (Miles, 1989), whether inside or outside the school, the potential of inter-ethnic friendships formation (bridging social capital) is hindered significantly, whereas the opposite, namely intra-ethnic friendships (bonding social capital) are reinforced. Bridging social capital is restricted as a result of the negative feelings deriving from social networks with people, for example White British in Tyrone's case, that were racist. This negative experience might render ethnic minority people tentative to mix with other ethnic backgrounds so as to avoid being discriminated again. Conversely, this might urge them to bond more with people of their own ethnic background who could show empathy to their experiences and feelings. This finding seems to be compatible with Reynolds's arguments:

'The young people valued the 'taken for granted' aspect of their same ethnic friendships, as well as the common understanding that emerged from this. On this note, they believed that they had experienced similar examples of racial discrimination and social exclusion as a result of their racial identity'. (Reynolds, 2007, p.386)

So for Tyrone the barriers of inter-ethnic friendships were anything but 'imaginary'; they were substantial and experienced. Comparing Tyrone's case with Jasmine's and Sean's, we see some important differences. On the one hand, Tyrone thought it was difficult for him to form inter-ethnic friendships as a result of racism he had experienced by White British students as well as racism present in the wider society. On the other hand, Jasmine and Sean thought that inter-ethnic friendships were more difficult to form and/or maintain, not because they had themselves experienced racism - at least they did not report so - but merely because of the differences (racialisation) across ethnic groups. So to what extent does racialisation have the same impact as racism on social networks? A definite answer cannot be given from this research but it is possible that to a certain extent racialisation and racism might result in similar types of networks, namely bonding social capital. However, some nuanced but yet important differences might exist between the two. On the one hand, racism leads to strong emotions about inter-ethnic friendships and seems to create a clear-cut pathway, namely that of intra-ethnic social networks. Tyrone, when asked whether he thinks it is difficult to mix with other ethnic backgrounds he gives a firm positive reply with a concrete supporting argument and he appears to be quite conscious regarding the way this informs his social networks. Jasmine and Sean on the other hand do not seem to be as aware of this. Jasmine in particular seems a bit confused about it ('I don't know how it happened! I don't know. It might be...'). In both cases the way racialisation influenced their social networks is not as firm as the way racism influenced Tyrone's attitudes about inter-ethnic friendships and most importantly did not appear to stigmatise them in any way.



### iii. Repair Work

So students who did not mix at all or mixed little with students from different ethnic backgrounds gave a number of reasons for their choice of friendships that were either implicitly or explicitly related to ethnically related 'barriers', and could be seen in relation to either racialisation or racism. Yet there was also an important group of people whose networks were either exclusively or predominantly same ethnic and who responded in a different way to the ones already mentioned. Some students were not able to say how they ended up having only same-ethnic friends and employed neither racialisation nor racism related arguments to resonate with their friendship patterns. Instead, when asked whether they thought it was any easier to make same-ethnic friends they engaged in 'repair work'.

M: How about their (socio-graph friends) ethnic background. Are they all Indians?

H: Yeah, they are.

M: Do you think it's any easier mixing with people from your own ethnic background?

H: **Yeah, it is because these are the people who are closer to me.** My other friends are black and white... you know they are mixed. It's just that because they have different group friends which... like... **well I do know them it's just that I'm not close to them and I don't really talk to them. I'm not always gonna be with them if you get me.** But otherwise I do have a mixed range of friends it's just that they are not... well I am close, I see them as being close it's just that I don't hang around with them, as much. **Just because I wrote these people down it doesn't mean that I can't talk to my other friends.** Obviously these are my closest friends but if... I don't know... if on an odd day I wanna go and spend some time with my other friends I can, you know. It's just a change of a scene I suppose.

M: Right, right.

H: Because I'm always with these people so... it's like... you know... something different for me and maybe something different for the opposite person as well. But I'm not always with them.

*(my emphasis)*

*(Holly, working-class, Indian girl - Kinderhook High School)*

Holly explains the fact that she drew only Indian friends in her socio-graph in a rather tautological way ('it is because these are the people who are closer to me') and then engages in an attempt to explain how she did actually have other friends who were not Indian ('black and white'). Yet, in doing so she reveals that she does not feel as close to them and she knows that their relationship is not as deep as with the Indian friends with whom she is always together. But she says that if she wants she can still talk to them and hang out with them; there is nothing that stops her from doing so yet this would be 'on an odd day' and not on an average day. Holly's extract reflected the way some other students spoke about this issue as well. From these

expressions two possible trends can be derived or a combination of the two. Firstly, Holly's words might imply that even these students whose socio-graphs revealed that they did not have inter-ethnic friendships - at least not close ones - believed that this was not 'ideal'. This in conjunction to the fact that interviewed people are often aware of what would be a socially desirable answer, might have influenced students to engage in 'repair work' in an attempt to revisit the picture underpinned by their socio-graphs and provide me with a 'more politically correct' one. Secondly, Holly's extract might reflect what her words literally expressed, namely that some students do possess inter-ethnic social networks even though not of the same quality as intra-ethnic ones. Therefore, their inter-ethnic networks were not represented in the socio-graph, which comprised only close friends. In either case, it is important to acknowledge that students appreciate the importance of inter-ethnic relations as without taking these two propositions into account, the messages regarding students' inter-ethnic relations would be more pessimistic.

Variations were not only present among people who had little or no inter-ethnic friendships but also among students who formed inter-ethnic friendships and comprised the majority of the interviewed population. The responses of students who had friends from different ethnic backgrounds broke down into two main groups. One group of students gave specific reasons for which they thought it was good to mix with other ethnic backgrounds and another group of students thought they did not have to give any reason for that as this was an absolutely normal behaviour. Students belonging to the first group talked about how beneficial it was to have inter-ethnic friendships.

No I prefer to mix with other ethnic backgrounds because you **get to know a lot about their culture and the way they live and stuff like that.** (*my emphasis*)

*(Malcolm, middle-class, Black African boy - Chester Central School)*

A: It's probably easier (to have same ethnic friends) because you have somewhat more in common but it's probably better to mix with everyone else because everyone is so different and it's like... better to mix with different rather with same people. I think it's better to mix with different ethnic backgrounds because **you get to know so much more about them and about their personalities.** If you were with someone the same as you it would just be so boring!  
(*my emphasis*)

*(Alexandra, working-class, Black Caribbean girl - Kinderhook High School)*

Both Malcolm and Alexandra believed that it was very useful to mix with other ethnic backgrounds as it provided them with the opportunity to get to know a lot about other people's

cultures. Alexandra says that the opposite, namely mixing only with same ethnic people would be 'boring'. So a number of students, just like Alexandra and Malcolm, believed that inter-ethnic friendships were both interesting and knowledge providing. It is worth mentioning here that the group of students who believed so was the biggest one among all students interviewed (30 students). The majority of students used similar expressions as Alexandra and Malcolm to express how good they thought it was to have inter-ethnic friendships. Even though this is an optimistic tendency as it reflects the willingness of people to mix as well as their positive attitudes toward their inter-ethnic friendships, it might nevertheless conceal some other less positive trends in relation to inter-ethnic relationships. The consistent reference of students to the difference of cultures and ways of life, resembles the racialisation process as discussed above in relation to James', Jasmine's and Sean's extracts, and might also imply students' belief that ethnic groups are intrinsically different to each other. Only that in this case, differences reflected through racialisation processes do not necessarily foster intra-ethnic friendships but open up possibilities for inter-ethnic mixing which are partly grounded on the basis of 'Otherness' exploration. Alexandra explicitly mentions that she finds it better to mix with other ethnic backgrounds because she gets 'to know much more about them and about their personalities'. This might insinuate a belief that people's personalities are determined by their ethnic background. This might be one more expression of the way people racialise people belonging in collectivities other than theirs; in this case the characteristics attributed to 'Other' ethnic groups do not denote specific features as previously, i.e. Black people are good in sports, but imply more generally a differential 'Otherness'.

Unlike the group of students who saw their inter-ethnic friendships through the prism of the benefits of 'Otherness', another group of students (about 10), who also had inter-ethnic friendships, were unable to justify them in a particular way or distinguish them from their intra-ethnic friendships. These students adopted rather opposite attitudes to the students of the first group. So whereas, the first group of students suggested that inter-ethnic friendships were good as they allowed students to get to know a lot about other people, this second group of students maintained that having inter-ethnic friendships was just normal. In addition the latter students seemed to be forming their friendships not in order to know more about other people's personalities but actually based on people's personalities, irrespective of ethnic background.

M: Would you say it's easier mixing with people of your own ethnic background or...?

B: It doesn't make any difference to me... **It's just people. (my emphasis)**

*(Bianca, working-class, Black African girl - Kinderhook High School)*

M: So do you think it's any difficult to have friends from other ethnic background or is it the same?

J: I mean... I don't ... I mean... (*a bit confused*) it's good to have friends from different ethnic backgrounds **but I don't see any difference with it. It's like normal to have friends from different ethnic backgrounds. Because London is such a culturally diverse place that is hard not to know people from different backgrounds and mix with them.**

M: Right, right. Do you think that some people might tend to stick on their own ethnic background...

J: Yeah, yeah. But I don't think that way so...

M: Your school is quite multicultural. How do you feel about this?

J: It's fine! It's like... it's normal for me. (*my emphasis*)

*(John, working-class, White British boy - Chester Central School)*

The way Bianca and John replied to my question expresses perhaps some 'ideal' attitudes in relation to inter-ethnic social networks. They both considered mixing with people of other ethnic backgrounds not only positive but also normal. For John in particular it feels so normal that my question seems confusing and somewhat futile. He thinks that since London is so multicultural it is difficult to 'not know people from different ethnic backgrounds' and most importantly he is unable to see any reason for not mixing with them once you are found in the same context as them. So John believes that people know other people and mix with some of them. Ethnic background does not exercise any filtering role as to with whom they mix.

This section followed a climactic discussion of students' attitudes and the way they mixed with people from different ethnic backgrounds. It started with a discussion related to students who did not mix at all and thought this was difficult and ended with the exact opposite, namely students who mixed and considered this simply normal. Overall, there is not a single pattern that can be applied to the way all students form their friendships in relation to ethnic background and their attitudes for ethnic 'Others'. Instead, ethnicity seemed to be important for students' formation of school friendships but in a rather heterogeneous manner. The factors that shape their attitudes toward people of different ethnic backgrounds, their involvement in racialisation processes and their friendship formation are likely to be multiple and complex, ranging from home-based attitudes and norms to school ethos (Bruegel, 2006) and school ethnic dynamics. The latter issue is explored further in the last section of this chapter by addressing whether the particular ethnic composition of schools informs students' inter-ethnic friendship formation.

### Social Class

Unlike with ethnicity and gender, not many students reported having friends with a different social class background from theirs. Louise's example, discussed in a previous section, was one in only 10 students out of a total of 60 interviewed, whose friends had a different social

class background from them. The majority of students said that their close friends belonged to the same social class group as them. A possible hypothesis for this finding could have been the possible incapacity of students to define and/or estimate the social class of their friends or their socio-economic background in general<sup>32</sup>. Yet, this did not appear to be the case as students here seemed to be very confident about their statements in relation to this issue and when asked to justify they revealed an employment of a number of indicators on the basis of which they estimated their friend's social class background. The extracts below provide some examples of proxies that students drew on to define their friends' social class background.

M: How can you tell, is that a guess or...?

J: Through their house, their parents' jobs. If they get the EMA.

*(James, middle-class, White British boy - Chester Central School)*

M: How do you know they belong to this social class?

J: Well I do because I have known them for quite a few time. Therefore you tend to know.

M: How can you tell this?

J: Because Rania's mum is a single mother, so you tend to know, Dora has a big 7 bedroom house, so you tend to know that. *(laughs)*

M: I bet you do! *(laughs)*

J: And Kiran is always getting expensive clothes and watches therefore you can tell.

*(Jasmine, middle-class, Indian girl - Kinderhook High School)*

In most cases students would employ composite indicators rather than a single indicator. James and Jasmine referred to the most frequently mentioned indicators by the students. The size of the house and whether they were renting it or not was one indicator, parental occupation was another main indicator as well as if the students received EMA (Educational Maintenance Allowance). Also living with a single parent and buying expensive things ('clothes and watches') were two more proxies for social class, employed by some students.

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<sup>32</sup> It should be noted here that it had been originally assumed that some students would not be familiar with the meaning of the concept 'social class' and it was therefore decided to use the terms of 'financial situation', 'richer' and 'poorer' as proxies of social class. Nevertheless, this attempt was soon abandoned as most students ignored these terms and referred to 'social class', even though not a concept used in the interview questions. Since students brought the issue of 'class' back to the discussion it was therefore decided to continue the interviews with this term. Overall, it seems that students were much more aware of the 'social class' concept than what was originally anticipated. This might be related to the fact that interviews were carried out some months after the 2008 credit crunch, which generated a number of discussions, inter alia in the media, about social class issues. This could have brought about more awareness about the concept of social class among students of this age.

Students' social networks were more often than not homogeneous in terms of social class. In cases where students would form friendships with higher classes than themselves (linking social capital) the social class difference was often evident among their networks.

M: How about your friends' financial situation. Would you say they are richer, poorer than you...?

L: Most of them are richer than... No they are all richer than me actually.

M: How can you tell this?

L: For example if there is a school trip or something I have to ask for my parents to give me the money or pay for it myself whereas my friends don't have a problem with that. They can always get the money whenever they need it.

M: Do they?

L: Yeah.

*(Louise, working-class, White British girl - Kinderhook High School)*

In these cases, linking social capital was usually beneficial for the lower class friends belonging in the social network. As already discussed in the second section of this chapter, Louise's friends influenced her positively in relation to her education in that they encouraged her to study and influenced her with their own determination to go to university and study hard. Nevertheless, these kinds of networks were not very frequently evident among students.

What was interesting, though, was that same social class networks often cut across ethnic backgrounds. People of different ethnic backgrounds would belong to the same friendship network which was often organised around their common interests as students who belonged in the same social class. Interestingly, inter-ethnic friendships were somewhat more developed among working-class than middle-class students. This finding is in line with the statistical analysis findings which suggested that the higher the social class of students the more likely they were to believe that making friends with students from other ethnic backgrounds was difficult. A characteristic example of this is a conversation I had with three boys (focus group). This focus group included three close friends, all working-class boys. One had a White British ethnic background, the second had a Black African ethnic background and the third one was from a mixed heritage (Black African and White British) background. The three of them were close friends and parts of their discussions revealed that they shared feelings of contempt for some ('posh') upper-middle-class students of the school. They felt they were pretentious ('too fake') and they 'got on their nerves'. They also talked about their experiences in relation to various types of stereotypes.

J: Yeah. Aha. Because I'm working class and... I just don't see the point. There is this pub that just opened up and I went in there with my brother for his birthday and like... because we are

working class... we were talking and having a laugh and that and they kicked us out. And we were like 'you are kicking us out because we were talking' and they said 'you were too loud'. And we knew... and **we knew** (with emphasis) it was because of where we came from (*area*).

M: But how could they tell? Was it the accent...?

J: No, no. It was just... I can change my voice. If I go to a posh place I can be allocated in that and I can talk how I want to talk. But I know how to talk good as well.

A: Yeah, just like posh people some sometimes when they come across us they know... they'd try and talk like that.

J: Yeah, they'd try it out but you can't talk like that. (*smile*)

G: When you see a normal person and they start trying to act all goody... You know then you'd feel embarrassed for them. They can't do that!

J: Yeah. Yeah.

M: Really in what cases?

J: Like... I've been to many... cause I've got many posh friends I've been to many posh parties and like... and you see some people walking in and just... oh! (*he mimicks voices mockingly*) My God!

A,J,G: (*Laugh and mock*)

[...]

J: I find it funny when some people...

G: It's funny but it's embarrassing.

J: Yeah I actually find it funny because say we go to a party with a lot of posh people and you go and sit on the sofa next to them... All these posh people would get up and move away. And I'm like why are you moving for? And they are like 'Oh because you are gonna rob us'.

M: Really?

J: Yeah, they do. They do.

M: But why do you think they would say that?

J: They can. Because... I sit there and my body posture... I'm open. (*he sits in a certain way to show me - relaxed posture*)

M: So by your body posture?

J: Yeah, I'd just sit there... open. I'd just sit casually. Like that (*he demonstrates*). I'd just sit like that.

A: Just like that, yeah.

J: Yeah and they'd move away. All right then. And when, when they say that I'm like...

G: That's the silliest thing. The silliest thing.

J: I just think to myself because they think that I'm gonna rob them... then I just think to my self I'm gonna rob them for the sake of it. And I've done it.

*Chester Central School - Focus group:*

*James (White British, working-class boy), Andy (Black African, working-class boy),*

James seems to be monopolising the conversation here. He is the poorest of all three students and seems to be the most frustrated and embittered one from the various ways he experiences social class discrimination. Originally, the interview was carried out with him alone but soon after we had begun talking his friends started distracting us, so we invited them to our conversation. Whilst still the two of us, James told me that he was very poor and had suffered a lot as a result of his family poverty. He lived in council housing and was worried a lot about his future; he thought that the only way to get out of the life he was leading at the moment was to go to university. James was one of the working-class students who aspired to go to university and viewed this as a social mobility opportunity. Yet, he was very concerned about how he was going to pay for his university studies and was therefore unsure whether he was going to make it. Overall, James was very emotional and felt strongly about issues of social class and so as soon as the discussion on social class sparked he was involved enthusiastically. The other two boys, even though working-class themselves were not as poor as James and this was perhaps the reason they did not get so involved in the conversation about class stereotypes. They were nevertheless supportive on everything he was saying adding small contributions to the conversation.

The extract from this conversation reveals the existence of a high level of 'class consciousness'<sup>33</sup> among the three friends. The discussion underpins the multiple ways in which working-class people are constructed as 'working class', i.e. through accent and body posture. This could be seen as a form of embodied symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986) which draws on somatic characteristics to define individuals' positioning in certain social hierarchies. The boys are well aware of these hierarchies and the gaps between the various strata and argue that when someone attempts to bridge these gaps by faking attributes will end up being funny ('When you see a normal person and they start trying to act all goody... You know then you'd feel embarrassed for them. They can't do that!'). So differences are not easily bridged even if one tries to. This could be seen in relation to Bourdieu's (1984) 'distinction' concept according to which the tastes of lifestyle differ across people from different class backgrounds and are clearly distinguished. In conjunction to Peterson and Kern's concept of 'cultural omnivore' (Peterson and Kern, 1996) as well as the adaptation given earlier in relation to students social networks, namely 'social omnivore', the working-class students here seem to be both 'cultural' and 'social omnivores' as they possess some friendships with students of higher social class background (even though they don't seem to be very strong) and they also argue that they can

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<sup>33</sup> The term 'class consciousness' is not used here in the Marxian definition, namely people's consciousness about their common class identity in relation to the means of production and their organisation for their own class benefit – 'class for itself'. However, it could be seen in relation to Marx's transitional stage of 'class in itself' as it implies the understanding that people - and in this case the students - have of their belonging in a social class which is different to another social class.



imitate the posh accent. Despite this accessibility to different tastes though, the distinction between them on the basis of social class still exists even when boundary crossing is attempted (i.e. working-class students attending posh parties or posh people attempting to speak in the way working-class students do). A distinction between the different classes is evident to the students. On the one hand, rich and/or posh students are seen by working-class students as 'not normal' and 'goody', the latter having an undermining quality when attempted. On the other hand, working-class students are attributed negative characteristics and they are either confronted (pub incident) or avoided (party incident) as they are seen as criminal and/or undesirable.

This extract as well as the rest of the conversation reveals the great solidarity that was present among the three friends on the basis of their common identity as working-class youth. This is an example where the working-class identity and experiences seem to operate as a bonding mechanism that fosters their friendship. Students undoubtedly have multiple identities, i.e. gender, ethnicity, social class etc. but it seems that in certain cases some identities can cut across others. In this case, the predominant identity was social class and its authority was such that obscured differences grounded on ethnic background, at least as they have been advocated by other students discussed in previous sections. This indeed comes in stark contrast to other students' friendship experiences that drew on racialisation arguments to describe the formation of intra-ethnic social networks.

Another important element that comes out of this discussion is the fact that other people's perceptions about James eventually influenced his action. When the rich people in the sofa moved away of him and explicitly told him that they thought he was going to rob them, therefore undermined him, making him feel like a criminal, he decided that he was going to rob them 'for the sake of it'. And he did. James after that said that he returned everything to them saying that he just wanted to scare them but at the same time proved to them that he had no intentions in robbing them even though he could, in principle. James went on to say that he asked them to not talk to him in that way again and the incident ended there. Even though James gave them back everything he had got from them, his action reveals that the attitudes and views other people held of him influenced him significantly. Their attitudes did not push him to be criminal - he did not intend to keep what he stole from them anyway - but to reaffirm himself. He felt the need to prove that he was not the criminal that they thought he was and that he did not deserve their depreciation.

Overall, social class was a significant identity in students' lives and influenced both the way they related with other people and the way they perceived themselves. Even though not the majority, some students did cross social class boundaries and formed friendships with different social class students. In these cases, lower social class people often drew on this linking social capital

in relation to their education by taking as an example their friends' commitment to education. In addition, a number of students crossed across other identities, such as ethnicity as in the case of the focus group hereinabove, in order to form social networks with same social class students. This networks often led to strong, dense and powerful types of social capital which provided students with emotional support through empathy and solidarity and enabled them to negotiate - rediscovering, reaffirming and/or reshaping - their own identities through discussions and processes that were sometimes humorous and sometimes emotionally loaded, as evident in the extract cited above. The egalitarian character of students' networks signifies the political (Pahl, 2000) and moral dimension of friendship. As Pahl argues 'strong pressures exist in class-structured societies to avoid the formation of friendships between social unequals' (2000, p.162) and this seemed to be perfectly mirrored in the social networks formed among students of this research sample.

### **E. The Role of the School's Ethnic Composition on Students' Social Capital**

A previous section of this chapter discusses the various attitudes of students toward inter-ethnic friendships and the ways these are present or absent in their school life. The ethnic composition of the school seems to exercise a role on the complex way students form their friendships and attitudes with regards to students from different ethnic groups. Unlike Putnam's (2007) argument, ethnic diversity in schools did not appear to have any negative effects for intra-ethnic friendships nor did it discourage students from mixing with other ethnic backgrounds. So neither the constrict thesis nor the conflict thesis, as discussed in chapter one, were applicable in the four schools that participated in this research. According to the conflict thesis we would expect to see a tendency toward intra-ethnic friendships and lack of inter-ethnic friendships whereas according to the constrict theory we would expect to see a general hindering of the institution of friendship and trust both across and within ethnic groups. None of these symptoms applied in this case. Conversely, as discussed earlier in this chapter, the majority of students formed both inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic friendships, tending therefore to provide support for the contact thesis which advocates the beneficial effects of ethnic diversity. Nevertheless, this would oversimplify the role of the school's ethnic composition which shaped students' attitudes and networks in dynamic and complex ways. On the one hand, the majority of the students held positive attitudes for their ethnically diverse school and perceived ethnic diversity as beneficial and valuable. On the other hand, the way students formed friendships was highly influenced by the particular ethnic dynamics of the school that were partly shaped by the specific representation of the ethnic groups that comprised its population. This section explores these two parameters in relation to the school's ethnic composition and teases out the complexities involved.

In relation to the first parameter, as already mentioned above, most of the interviewed students, held positive attitudes about the ethnic diversity of the schools, regardless of whether they formed inter-ethnic friendships or not. They thought that it helped them develop interpersonal qualities of tolerance toward ethnic 'Others' and sidestep negative attitudes that exist in society and often in their own families about racial stereotypes. In particular, a number of students criticised their own families as being racist and said that they felt very happy they were not like these members of their family. They also said that to a great extent they owed their non-racist attitudes to the fact that they lived and socialised for many years in an ethnically diverse environment provided by their multicultural schools.

L: I don't know, I quite like the fact that it's very multicultural. Because... I don't know. Because my parents are quite racist because they went to a quite white school and they've been brought up in a white society. I don't want to be like that.

M: In what way are they racist?

L: Like if there is a black person on TV they'll say something bad about them being black. I don't see the point. The same with Indian people. They don't like living here anymore because it's all Indians. So they want to move out.

M: What do you tell them?

L: I'm constantly nagging them! It doesn't make a difference what colour they are. And then they say 'that's because you have been brought up in a society that is multicultural'.

M: So what do they think of your friends? Not all of them are White British (as I can see from her socio-graph which we discussed earlier).

L: No, they like them.

M: Do your parents like them?

L: Yeah! And they go out for dinners with my friends' parents.

M: Then how come they want to move out?

L: I don't know. They just want to move somewhere predominantly white. I don't know why.

*(Louise, working-class, White British girl - Kinderhook High School)*

Students tended to believe that there is a strong association between one's school's ethnic composition and their attitude toward ethnic 'Others'. Louise for example believes that her parents were racist as a result of their school's being White British predominant. On the contrary, herself having grown up in a multicultural society and an ethnically diverse school has no problems living in an area with other ethnic groups. Louise upholds attitudes that firmly oppose racism and she does not hesitate to get involved in arguments with her own parents trying to persuade them to resolve racial stereotypes they uphold.

If Louise compared herself with her parents' generation, some other students moved one step further and compared themselves to people from their own generation. A number of students contrasted their experiences and attitudes to those of people who did not study in ethnically diverse schools. Ryan, a White British boy with a big number of inter-ethnic friendships, compared himself and his school to one of his friends who studied in a White British predominant school.

R: (talking about his socio-graph friends) And he is Indian, Egyptian and Sudanese, Italian and English, Jamaican, Srilankan, English, White Irish, Spanish and English and African but I don't know where from Africa. And Pakistan.

M: So it's a lot of different ethnic backgrounds. Do you think it's any difficult mixing with people from other ethnic backgrounds?

R: No, not really. But the people...this is my school. But I speak to a lot of people out of my school and they are mostly white. I think it's probably because of the fact that we come to a very multicultural school. Obviously, I don't know... I find it... I can relate to Asian people as easy as I can to White people and as easy as I can to Black people. You see I can name a quite few more very close friends and they are African. I could go on and on and on.

M: Sure. So do you think that the school's ethnic mix might influence?

R: I think it's really good because if you go out to the real world there is a difference of ethnic mix in all London. And if you go to a catholic school you mix only with white people. And I know so many people from catholic schools and they are the most racist people I have ever met.

M: Really?

R: Definitely.

M: In what sense?

R: If he sees an Asian guy in my house and they would be like 'oh, you are mingling with Pakis!' I'm not being... If it is a Black guy he would say 'Oh Niger!' They are so racist, it's unbelievable! *(he sounds frustrated as he speaks)*

M: Are these people your friends?

R: They are my... they are... they are my friends *(he sounds very hesitant to say they are his friends)*

M: from outside the school?

R: Yeah, but obviously I don't promote being racist because if I was racist I'd obviously had no friends from this school. It's not even the fact about that. It's just that I don't see how race makes a difference; your skin colour doesn't make any difference to you. I can be purple and you can be orange, it still doesn't make any difference. We are all people, init?

*(Ryan, middle-class, White British boy - Kinderhook High School)*

Ryan seems to be determined that the boy he talks about is racist because he studies in a white predominant school. He disapproves of his racist comments and he later on says that he openly criticises him so his friend stopped saying racist comments in front of him. He even hesitates accepting that this person is his friend as he does not want to be misunderstood as being racist as well. Students like Louise and Ryan, not only had inter-ethnic friendships but were also openly anti-racists and did not hesitate to engage in discussions with their friends or family in an attempt to persuade them. Another theme that comes out from Ryan's extract is the difference between the social networks formed within the school and those formed outside the school. Ryan says that outside the school he talks to a lot of White people unlike within the school where the ethnic diversity is dense. Sean, a Black African boy referred to similar tendencies and explained that his friendships outside the school reflected the demographics of his area. This was indeed compatible with a number of students who said that whereas they had a lot of inter-ethnic friendships inside the school their friends outside the school were mainly same ethnic friends. This fact is one more reason for which a number of students appreciated their school's ethnic diversity. They felt that their school provided them with the opportunity to mix with other ethnic backgrounds, something which might have not always been possible in their neighbourhood.

Overall students held positive attitudes about their school being multicultural. Yet how did the specific ethnic composition of each school play out on students' social networks? In depth consideration of the interviews and comparison across schools revealed that the ethnic dynamics of the school were very influential in relation to the way students formed their friendship groups. By and large there was a strong interaction between the students' own ethnic background and the representation of their ethnic background in the whole school. Students from specific ethnic backgrounds would behave in a different ways across schools depending on the ethnic composition of the school they were studying in and the way their ethnic group was represented there. In particular, students who belonged to the ethnic minority of the school were often more willing to mix with students from different ethnic groups than students whose ethnic group was well represented in the school. Below, there are three extracts from different students attending different schools. The extracts reveal the dynamic way in which the school's ethnic composition reflected on students' social networks as well as attitudes.

M: How about your friends' ethnic background? Do they have the same ethnic background as you?

C: **No, no. None of them.**

M: Ok, let's see...

C: He is from Ghana... he is Ghanaian. He is from Jamaica, Atash and Azad are Iranian and Vlad is Serbian.

M: And how about yourself?

C: I'm Sikh.

[...]

M: Are there a lot of Sikh students here?

C: No... Not a lot. But I don't really mind. It's not the ethnic background that matters... No I don't mind. (*my emphasis*)

*(Chris, Indian boy, Chester Central School<sup>34</sup>)*

Chris, an Indian boy who sometimes defined himself as Sikh<sup>35</sup> rather than as Indian, has no close Sikh or Indian friends in the school but his friendship circle comprised a number of different ethnic backgrounds. For Chris it does not make any difference what the ethnic backgrounds of his friends are and for that reason he does not mind that there is only a handful of Indians in his school. Other Indian people in the same school had like Chris inter-ethnic friendships and said they did not mind the lack of Indian students in the school as they could socialise with these group of people outside the school through their cultural and/or religious activities and events. On the contrary, they considered important the fact that they were in that school as they were given the opportunity to mix with students from other ethnic backgrounds and develop a better picture of what society outside the school is.

Unlike Indian students in Chester Central School, most of the Indian students in Kinderhook High School did not have inter-ethnic friendships but their social networks included mainly other Indian students. Some of these students thought that it was easier for them to mix with same ethnic students whereas some others did not even realise that this was the case until the time that they viewed the socio-graph that they drew themselves. One student in particular, when I reported back to her class with some preliminary analysis of my data said that it was only then that she realised that most of her friends were Indians and thought this was an important realisation for her. So comparing the two schools, despite both being ethnically diverse, the way they influenced the formation of students' friendship was strongly related to the interaction between students' own ethnic background and their ethnic group's representation in the school. For Indian students, being the minority of their ethnically diverse school encouraged their inter-ethnic social network formation whereas the opposite seemed to encourage bonding social capital.

Isabella's case, from Kinderhook High School, also tells an interesting story.

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<sup>34</sup> Chester Central School: Ethnically diverse. Balanced between White British students who form the majority and Black African/Caribbean students who are very well represented, Indian students: underrepresented

<sup>35</sup> A number of Indian students of the sample defined themselves in terms of their religion (i.e. Sikh, Hindu) rather than in terms of their ethnic origin. Sometimes, when asked to clarify, they would revert to the term 'Indian'. This was an interesting finding as it revealed the complex and non-static ways in which students conceptualise ethnicity.

I: Well... It's more like... I used to be really good friends with students here who are Asian but it didn't use to... It's not a different thing but it is also that you kind of... Me for example back when I was friends with them (*with Asian students*) in year 7 and 8 I used to feel left out of certain things because I couldn't obviously... I didn't know what they were talking about. If they started speaking Gujarati I would feel like 'Oh! That's not very helpful!' But then I think it's also what you do with... what is kind of expected from you. I go out to parties whereas certain people from certain religious backgrounds wouldn't drink. So people have set judgements for you if you get drunk and they don't drink.

(We are interrupted and asked to change a room. We do so and continue our conversation)

M: So you were saying that people set judgements for you. What do you mean?

I: Well... (*she is kind of hesitant*) This is kind of thought and I've heard it said and it's kind of... about the reputation of white girls. It's quite nasty. It's one of the things I've had said, not said to me but some of my friends has said 'Oh...' (*she hesitates*)

M: Like close friends?

I: No, but like her boyfriend (*the boyfriend of Deesha (Indian friend in the socio-graph)*) said to her that his friends were saying that 'Oh! She'd be a bad influence because she is too much like a white friend'.

M: So was her boyfriend Indian as well?

I: Yeah, yeah. So it's like one of these things really. People think certain things of you because of your race and they might not want to associate with you. It's not a general thing. It's not like an upfront thing. I think it's more kind of like a generally picking because you would do certain things and other people wouldn't. It's more like your similarities rather than 'It's definitely by race'. It's more like cultural background. Say if you are generally expected to not do work and just hung out. But you might also do work.

M: So how did Deesha react when her boyfriend told her that?

I: She wouldn't tell us at first. I can't remember exactly but she said something like 'What Hamid (*her boyfriend*) said I can't tell you'. And I was like 'fine'. And she said 'you can't really know, you'd find it really rude'. But then she told us and I was like 'Oh my God! I can't believe that' and she said 'Yeah! I know it's so stupid'. But at the time I didn't think it was such a big deal because I kind of expected it from certain people.

M: So do you think that people tend to associate with people from their own group (religious, ethnic)?

I: I think that people tend to associate with people who have similar beliefs as them. So you are not going to be necessarily hanging out with someone who takes drugs if this is against your religion. That's going to obviously cause tension. But having said that I have a lot of friends who don't drink, don't want to have sex at this age... you know a lot of religious rules. But they are still people I would consider friends. Like Deesha, she wouldn't do any of these things but I would consider her one of my best friends, because of the way she is anyway.

*(Isabella, upper-middle-class, White British girl, Kinderhook High School<sup>36</sup>)*

Isabella's case is attention-grabbing in that it depicts emotions and experiences that have not been voiced by other White British students in different schools. Isabella's socio-graph revealed that she formed a number of inter-ethnic friendships (mainly with Eastern European and South American students and one Indian girl, namely Deesha, mentioned above). Nevertheless and despite her inter-ethnic friendships she still feels that ethnicity is an important factor that shapes networks and attitudes. Isabella admits having felt excluded in her school at multiple levels. First, she says that she had felt marginalised when all her class mates spoke in a language she could not understand. Second, she feels that some of her Indian fellow students hold racial stereotypes for her. They believe that she does not study, that she goes out a lot, consumes alcohol and importantly exercises a bad influence on her Indian friend, Deesha. Isabella feels shocked and hurt by the fact that Deesha's boyfriend tried to distance her from Isabella because she was perceived as a negative influence ('too much of a white friend). Yet, Isabella's educational outcomes appeared to be excellent<sup>37</sup> and she held very high educational aspirations for herself. Her words reveal that racialisation processes might not necessarily comprise a 'privilege' of White British students nor apply exclusively to students from minority ethnic backgrounds. Instead, it appears that White British students might also be racialised by students from other ethnic groups. This racialisation could even ascribe negative attributes to White British (such as they drink and party a lot and don't focus on their education) who might in turn feel excluded within certain contexts, such as schools where they form the ethnic minority of the population, like Kinderhook High School.

The ways social networks are shaped by racialisation are nevertheless much more complicated than that. Isabella, despite being frustrated by the way she was stereotyped by some Indian students, was not only a receiver of racialisation but she also racialised ethnic 'Others' in her own way. It seems that without doing so consciously she held essentialist ideas about students from certain ethnic backgrounds that (she argued) led their lives according to certain religious rules. So she maintains that people who do not drink alcohol or choose to not have sexual relationships at that age abide by particular religious rules. This in itself is an unsubstantiated generalisation that if attributed to ethnic backgrounds, which is what Isabella does implicitly, represents racial stereotypes. So this extract echoes the complicated and sometimes overlapping racialisation processes that inform students' social networks and attitudes. In relation to the way this extract is associated with the school's ethnic composition, Isabella's case as well as similar cases of other White British students of Kinderhook High School were

<sup>36</sup> Kinderhook High School: Ethnically diverse but Asian predominant. Indian students form the majority group, Black African/Caribbean students: well represented, White British students: underrepresented.

<sup>37</sup> Her GCSE grades were all A and A\*.



unique to that school. In no other school did White British students feel stereotyped and/or marginalised because of their ethnic background. So belonging in the ethnic minority of the school's population created new circumstances for them, not present in the other schools.

The final case is similar to Isabella's one, only that here it concerns a Black Caribbean boy, Tyronne. Tyronne, just like Isabella, studies in a school where his ethnic background is underrepresented in the school's population. Tyronne overtly talks about an ethnic segregation among the school community which is reflected in the sixth form common rooms. There are two common rooms in Newfane East School, says Tyronne, one mainly attracts the Asian students and the other one the White students. The existence of these two common rooms was indeed confirmed by a number of other interviewed students in the school. What is interesting in this case is the way Tyronne positions himself in relation to the common rooms.

M: What do you mean by 'our common room'? Whose room is that?

T: I call it 'our common room' because it's the same people that are in there, day in and day out?

M: OK, what kind of people?

T: All the White people.

M: The White people?

T: Yeah. **And I somehow sit in there as well.**

M: Right.

T: But somehow I go out into the playground and play basketball and stuff like that. **Just to get away from everyone.**

*(Tyronne, upper-middle-class, Black Caribbean boy, Newfane East School<sup>38</sup>)*

Tyronne feels that he better fits in the common room with the White people rather than in the common room with the Asian people. This is a rather unexpected statement as one could have thought that Tyronne would identify more with Asian students, under his identity as a non-White person or a person from a minority ethnic background within a White British predominant society. Yet, he refers to the White's common room as 'our common room' which suggests that he does not identify with Asian students but with White ones. This perhaps reflects again the ethnic dynamics of a school which is Asian predominant. Interestingly though, Tyronne does not feel that he completely fits in the White common room either so he prefers to go 'out in the playground'. He prefers to 'get away from everyone', both Asian and White. Tyronne mentions elsewhere in the interview that he often feels lonely in the school as there are not many Black people there and his closest friend who is also Black is not at school during break times as he has to attend classes in other schools. So Tyronne wishes that there were more Black people in

<sup>38</sup> School C: Ethnically diverse but Asian predominant. Balanced between Indian and White British students, Black African/Caribbean students: underrepresented).

his school so as to feel less marginalised. Tyrone's experience of racism within and outside school, as discussed in a previous section, probably contributes to this generation of loneliness and marginalisation. Similar attitudes were not evident among other Black African or Caribbean students in schools where they were well represented as an ethnic group. By the same token students from other minority ethnic backgrounds, who did not experience racism, did not feel marginalised even when they belonged to the ethnic minority of the school, such as the Indian boy, Chris, mentioned above. It seems that the complex ways in which the ethnic diversity of the school might interact with other factors (such as racism), informs students' formation of attitudes and social networks as well as the way they experience school life.

Overall, data analysis in relation to ethnic diversity suggests that the power relations within schools are not firm and unwavering. On the contrary, they can shift and alter depending on the context in which they take place as well as a number of other factors such as racialisation and racism. When it comes to ethnic background issues, power relations might reflect the ethnic dynamics of the context as in the case of the schools but might also be informed by processes of racialisation and experiences of racism. So rather than applying concrete tenets to all cases, this data calls for a careful examination of the way racialisation and racism interact with contexts and in turn inform students' social capital and school experiences.

## **F. Conclusion**

This chapter explored the different types of social capital in relation to students as manifested within their ethnically diverse schools. One of the main aspects examined was the possibility that Putnam's (2007) findings from his US based research, supporting an erosion of social capital as a result of ethnic diversity, would apply to London in the context of ethnically diverse schools. The other main aspect explored was the way issues of social class, ethnicity and gender intermediate the type and/or effects of social capital.

Overall, the analysis of the interview-data suggests that Putnam's (2007) constrict thesis and its theoretical extension regarding education is not valid in the sample examined here and therefore not likely to hold true for ethnically diverse schools in London. Whereas social capital at the level of students' friendships did influence students' education in certain ways, this influence was not associated with the ethnic background of students, once they formed inter-ethnic friendships. So among those students who had inter-ethnic friendships, the influence they received from their friends in terms of their education did not depend in any way on the latter's ethnic background. Therefore, it would be safe to conclude here that ethnic diversity is not possible to be detrimental for students' education - at least not through social capital - since the way students influenced each other educationally had nothing to do with their ethnic background. On the contrary, other student characteristics, such as their social class

background, were fundamentally more influential in shaping their friends' attitudes and practices regarding education.

So from the two first sections of this chapter it becomes clear that ethnic diversity cannot possibly have a negative impact on students' educational outcomes via social capital. Is ethnic diversity detrimental though for students' social capital? And to transfer the exact proposition of Putnam here, does ethnic diversity have a negative influence on students' inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic friendships? In general, there seemed to be no evidence to support that the formation of intra-ethnic social networks, whether friendships or looser and weaker ties, was influenced in any way. On the contrary, students seemed to be advocates of the contact thesis, as most of them spoke in very positive ways about the ethnic diversity of their school and importantly, demonstrated a number of inter-ethnic friendships as well as intra-ethnic friendships. Yet, the way inter-ethnic friendships were shaped by the school's ethnic composition comprises a more complex parameter that cannot be adequately understood through the lens of the contact theory that simply argues the beneficial effects of ethnic diversity on everyone. A closer examination of the data suggested that the role of the school's ethnic composition is significant as it is able to modify the power relations between students accounting thus to some kind of school ethnic dynamics. In particular, people from certain ethnic backgrounds would form friendships and experience schooling largely in relation to the way their ethnic background was represented in the schools ethnic population (whether it was well represented, underrepresented or the majority).

Overall, it seems that students in ethnically diverse schools often challenged notions of racial stereotypes or racist practices and held positive attitudes for their ethnic 'Other' fellow students, whether their close friends or more distant ones. Taken all these positive attitudes expressed by students as well as the fact that the majority of them formed inter-ethnic friendships it would be difficult to argue that ethnic diversity has a negative impact on inter-ethnic networks (as would be supported by the conflict and the constrict theses). On the contrary, in line with the contact thesis, ethnic diversity in schools appeared in many cases to be promoting mixing with other ethnic backgrounds, antiracist values and attitudes and generally social cohesion in the school community. Nevertheless, it seems that there is still a long way to go for all students in multicultural schools to consider all others as 'just people', irrespective of their ethnic background, like Bianca and Ryan did. Racialisation and racism seemed to be present within schools and had a significant influence on the way students formed their social networks and attitudes. Both racialisation and racism seem to exercise a role even though experienced racism informed students' school experiences in a far stronger and pervasive way than racialisation did.

Finally, social capital related to friendship formation seemed to be also informed by issues of gender and social class. In relation to the former, albeit the majority of students had both same- and opposite-gender friends, they still upheld some gender stereotypical views that were perpetuated through their social networks. Regarding social class, not many students had close friendships which crossed different social-class backgrounds; the majority of them formed same-class networks. Interestingly, students of different ethnic backgrounds often set aside their ethnic identity differences to form solidarity groups based on their common identity as working-class youths. In general, social class appeared to be a very significant identity for students that often cut across other identities to inform the formation of strong and dense friendships among students.

On the whole, it seems that the way students experience schooling as well the way they form their social networks, attitudes and values is shaped by issues related to social class, gender and ethnicity (which is often related to racialisation and racism). This illustrates that social capital at the level of students is highly sensitive to other issues and does not act as an autonomous concept - at least not entirely - but it is shaped and/or constrained by these factors, social class, ethnicity, gender and school's ethnic composition. The following chapter of this thesis examines whether this finding holds true in other contexts relevant to students lives, namely their family and their community.

## Chapter 6

### Students' Social Capital within the Family and the Community Context

#### A. Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the social capital types developed within the school context and discussed the way these informed students' school experiences and educational outcomes. This chapter examines social capital within family and community contexts and explores the channels through which it influences students' education. As in Chapter 5, this chapter interrogates the role of social class and ethnicity and, to a lesser extent, gender, and disentangles the way these characteristics mediate the relationship between social capital and education.

The first part of this chapter focuses on social capital developed and expressed within the context of students' families. Whereas a number of researchers focused on the family level in order to examine its association with education, they have mainly done so by drawing on the nuclear family and particularly on parents. Whilst in this chapter social capital related to parents is examined, social capital pertinent to siblings and the extended family is also discussed. In relation to the latter, research carried out in India and the US revealed that the role of the extended family is very important within certain ethnic groups, namely Indians (Larson, Verman and Dworkin, 2003) and Black Americans (Hatchett and Jackson, 1999; Sudarkasa, 1999). In light of this, this chapter looks at social networks and norms related to aunts, uncles, grandparents and cousins and examines its relationship to education.

The second part of the chapter examines social capital types within the community context. As argued in the first chapter of the thesis, community is understood here as the contexts within which students are involved outside the home and the school. Community could be geographically defined (i.e. young people's neighbourhood) and/or it could be socially defined (i.e. the ethnic community, the religious community etc.) Accordingly, community-related social capital could comprise students' involvement in extra-curricular activities, students' engagement in voluntary or paid work, students' participation in religious associations and the social networks and norms developed in these occasions.

## **B. Social Capital in the Family Context**

### ***i. Parental Social Capital and Education***

Evidence from students' interviews suggests that parents are particularly influential to students' education, whether this is educational achievement in exams, the decision to go to university, or their choice of degree and university. Social capital is an important mechanism through which parents attempt to maximise and improve the educational opportunities available to their children. Yet, not all parents possess identical social capital reservoirs and even if they do, they might not necessarily draw on these in the same way. Conversely, parents from different social groups possess different types of social capital and/or they draw differentially on those. In this section I discuss the various channels through which social capital operates to inform students' education and the way social class, ethnicity and gender come into play.

#### **a) Pro-Educational Norms and Sanctions**

Education-related norms were one of the main types of parental social capital that influenced students' education. The educational norms upheld by parents informed not only students' educational achievement at school but also their decision to go to university or not. Pro-educational parental norms were usually translated as high aspirations and expectations that were subsequently instilled in students from a very young age. This, along with parents' constant encouragement, influenced students to study and subsequently to achieve well at school as well as to plan to acquire higher education by going to university. This contemplation of social capital was a central characteristic of upper-middle and middle-class parents. All upper-middle and middle-class students reported in their interviews that their parents held pro-educational norms and that they expected them to not only achieve well at school but also to go to university.

This relationship between social capital and education was much more complicated for the working-class parents who fell broadly into two categories. The first category comprised working-class parents who were interested in their children's happiness and indeed their education but were not necessarily associating this with high educational achievement and/or going to university. The extracts below from the interview with Holly and John contemplate some interesting issues in relation to the norms upheld by working-class parents.

M: Are you doing your AS now?

J: No, I'm doing retakes. I'm doing English for retake and Business.

M: What did your parents say when they found out you had to do retakes?

J: My parents were OK because I'd told them I wasn't gonna pass English anyway. Because I

found it really hard and that next year I can take an easier way of getting the GCSE English qualification. And they were like 'alright'. [...] But my parents are probably happy anyway because my sister didn't come to sixth form. My sister left at Year 10. My mum didn't, my mum left at Year 11... at the end of Year 11. My dad didn't, my grandfather left and went to sea, it was different then, he left and went to sea at the age of 15. My grandmother left but then she went back and she went to university and got a degree in psychology.

*(John, White British, working-class boy, Chester Central School)*

Cause my mum sees it in a way like... it's my life and if I'm not happy in going then 'don't go. If you are not gonna enjoy yourself at uni then don't go. If you think you are then obviously go!'

*(Holly, Indian, working-class girl, Kinderhook High School)*

John's parents exhibit different educational aspirations about their son than those usually exhibited by middle-class and upper-middle-class parents and this seems to be associated with the level of education acquired previously by them and by other members of the family. It appears that out of all the members of John's immediate family it is only his grandmother who went to university and acquired a degree; neither his parents nor his sister went to university. In fact, John's parents seemed satisfied with the fact that he was still in education despite his low GCSE results, and he was thought to be doing well in school relative to his sister who had left her studies before the end of compulsory education. This is in contrast with the attitudes and expectations of upper-middle and middle-class parents who would very often not be happy with any grade less than A. Overall it appears that the social class background of the parents and their own educational experience is influential in that it sets the reference point for their expectations. This by no means suggests that working-class parents lack interest in their children's lives; in fact, during the course of the interview John referred many times to his close relationship with both his parents and to their support in relation to whatever would make him happy. It is in light of this happiness that Holly's mum would like her to go to university. According to her mum she should go to university only if she will enjoy it; if she will not be happy at university then she shouldn't go. Like Holly's mum, many other working-class parents viewed their children's education through the 'happiness spectrum'. The latter is consistent with Crozier's research, whose findings suggested that:

'working-class parents tend not to hold a specific vision of their child's future. [...] That is not to suggest that working-class parents have no interest in their children's education or indeed that they do not have aspirations for them, but rather that their aspirations are unclear. The most common response from working-class parents about what they wanted

from their child's education was that they would 'do well' and be 'happy' (Crozier, 1997, p.197).

While a group of working-class parents - about half of them - exhibited characteristics similar to Holly's and John's parents and their attitudes and visions were in line with Crozier's (1997) findings, another group of working-class parents held different educational norms. The social capital of this second group of working-class parents resembled the social capital of the upper-middle and middle-class parents as far as the educational norms, expectations and aspirations were concerned. In particular, these working-class parents held very high aspirations for their children and greatly encouraged them to both achieve well at school and go to university. In particular, many working-class parents viewed education as a social mobility vehicle and they managed to communicate this approach to their children. Within this framework of pro-educational orientation, a number of working-class parents adopted some restrictions and sanctions within the home context in order to ensure that their children would study and achieve well at school. These restrictions/sanctions, which are in line with Coleman's (1988) definition of social capital, usually concerned the time students were allowed to watch TV and whether they were allowed to go out with their friends. Naomi talked about the way her mum restricted her 'freedom' during exams and how this had a positive effect on her results.

N: When my GCSEs were coming up, I wasn't allowed so much freedom. And I was really, really annoyed. **But** it was better off for me because if I didn't study when my mum was helping me I would have got so much lower than what I got.

M: So it was good for you?

N: It was good. Trust me! Because otherwise I wouldn't be like... getting grades really.

*(Naomi, Black Caribbean, working-class girl, Chester Central school)*

Like Naomi, many other working-class students reported that these parental pro-educational norms and their accompanied sanctions comprised a very important motivation for them and influenced their achievement and educational choices positively. This was true for working-class parents of all ethnic backgrounds but particularly for Black African and Caribbean parents. On average, Black African and Caribbean parents held higher aspirations and expectations for their children's education than White British parents. This was evident from both interview data and statistical data presented in chapter 4. This might be seen again in relation to the anticipation of Black African and Caribbean parents to see their children acquiring social mobility through education. Black African and Caribbean working-class parents faced, in certain cases, a double disadvantage - both in relation to their working-class background and in relation to their ethnic background. The latter is discussed more extensively below. As a result, investing in certain



forms of social capital such as pro-educational norms and sanctions was perhaps viewed as a way to compensate for lack of other forms of social capital.

So looking at educational norms it appears that whereas a group of working-class parents held significantly lower educational aspirations and expectations about their children than upper-middle and middle-class parents, another group of working-class parents seemed to have as high aspirations and expectations as upper-middle and middle-class parents. Yet, the similarities between these two groups end at this stage, namely the pro-educational norms, aspirations and expectations. Other manifestations of social capital varied radically between working-class parents on the one hand and upper-middle and middle-class parents on the other hand. For instance, parental participation in the school community was significantly lower among working-class parents. Also, working-class parents were less likely to draw on their social networks in order to choose their child's school or help with their university decisions. These types of social capital had two things in common: they required parents' intervention outside the context of the household and/or they presupposed the existence of cultural capital. Parental social capital often drew on cultural capital to reach an end or in other words cultural capital was activated by social capital in order to meet a target. This is in line with Bourdieu's (1986) approach which supports the transformation of one form of capital into another. As a result, lower reservoirs of cultural capital among working class parents, constrained their mobilisation of social capital for certain purposes, such as the negotiation of better educational provision for their children.

#### b) School Choice and Social Networks

In the case of school choice, upper-middle and middle-class parents mobilised their social networks in order to investigate the quality of education provided in a number of schools and thereafter decide which one suited their children's needs best. For this purpose, parents asked other parents, contacted the school, attended open days and looked at information available in the internet, such as Ofsted reports, in order to compare the results of various schools. Some of these strategies are evident from Malcolm's and Punit's extracts.

M: How come you came to this school?

P: I just applied to many schools and I got accepted in two. And then... I don't know I just checked Ofsted Reports and I found this one was better... so I came here.

M: Right. So who checked Ofsted Reports? Was it you?

P: My mum did.

M: So she thought this school was better than the other one?

P: Yeah!

M: Why did she think that?

P: Because it got generally better reviews and it got more students who passed their GCSEs with A\*-C grades.

M: Right. Did she ask anyone about this school?

P: Yes, she knew someone in her work whose son also came here and he is at Cambridge now so... it seemed like a good idea.

*(Punit, Indian, middle-class boy, Kinderhook High School)*

Me: Right. So how come you came to this school?

M: I had 2 options. I was going to go to either X school which is a boys' school, which is about 15 minutes from here, or Chester Central School. And I didn't get Kinderhook High School so my parents had to contact the governors to let me in to this school.

Me: Right. So how did you apply? Did you have to sit for exams?

M: You just apply but my parents and I had to go to an interview as to why I should be let into this school.

*(Malcolm, Black African, middle-class boy, Chester Central School)*

From these extracts it appears that both Punit's mum and Malcom's parents mobilised social capital in order to choose the best between two schools. Punit's mum drew on her cultural capital to investigate and interpret Ofsted results and subsequently drew on her social capital asking a colleague of hers whose son had previously studied in the same school and had been successful in going to university. Working in a middle-class environment, Punit's mum had access to middle-class networks and middle-class cultural capital on which she drew for assistance before she decided which school was the best for her son. This is in line with Ball and Vincent's findings about middle-class 'hot knowledge' acquired through middle-class people's social networks (Ball and Vincent, 1998). Malcolm's middle-class parents appeared to be aware of the way the educational system works and they did not hesitate to intervene and challenge this system when it did not meet their interests, by mobilising their social networks. In this instance when their son was rejected by Kinderhook High School - their preferred school - they did not merely send him to the other school available but contacted the school governors, negotiated their decision and were finally successful. This is an expression of linking social capital mobilised by Malcom's parents as they reached up to powerful and influential agents, namely the school governors in order to negotiate their son's access to what they perceived as the best school. These kinds of interventions were very common among upper-middle and middle-class parents whose cultural capital provided them with the confidence to navigate the system through their social networks. Working-class parents did not employ similar strategies when choosing their children's school but they seemed to be abiding by the schools' or the Local Educational Authorities' decisions, without drawing on social capital to appeal those.

Conversely, the criteria for working-class parents' choice of school were often the school's proximity to their house and the number of primary school friends of their children who would also go to the secondary school. From this, it seems again that working-class parents do not have the type of cultural and social capital resources that upper-middle and middle-class parents have to choose and negotiate their child's admission to the best among more than one school. And within this framework of scarce resources, the criteria employed are related to convenience (school's distance from home) and their children's happiness (an adequate number of primary school friends going to the same school). Whilst both of these criteria are important and particularly the latter might exercise an important role to the smooth transition of children from primary to secondary school and might be associated with children's happiness at school, they are nevertheless not sufficiently influential to the educational outcomes of a child.

In relation to the school choice it is worth pointing out here a difference between Black African and Caribbean upper-middle- and middle-class parents and White British upper-middle- and middle-class parents. Whereas they would all be interested in sending their children to a good school and they would draw on the same social capital strategies to achieve so, the Black African and Caribbean parents were often preoccupied with another issue aside from the academic quality of the school, namely the area in which the school was situated. From Sean's extract it becomes evident that his mum was not only interested in getting him in a good school but also in a school which was situated in a 'good' area.

M: Ok Sean, how come you came to this school?

S: I have never actually heard of this school. Because I don't live around here. I live far away. But I think my mum found this school because she didn't want me to go to school around there *(in his neighbourhood)*

M: Why did she not want you to go there?

S: She didn't like the school there because the area was a bit rough. **It was a bit rough there** so... She wanted me to go to a good school.

M: Right. What do you mean by 'rough'?

S: **Crime! It's got a lot of crime.**

M: So there was a lot of crime there?

S: Yeah! And she told me to come here.

M: So your mum found this school?

S: She investigated and found this school and told me to come here. And I'm here.

*(Sean, Black African, upper-middle-class boy, Kinderhook High School)*

Similar concerns about the neighbourhood were also raised by Edward and his parents.

M: How did you decide to come to this school?

E: I don't live in the area. I live in X (*he names the area he lives in – this is not part of the school's catchment area*) which is not... It's a good area but... it's not an area that people are fond of. There are a lot of people who... **there are a lot of gangs around** and that culture so I wanted to distance myself from this but not go too far that would have been far to travel. And K.H was a very good school at the time, one of the best schools in the area and in London, in the top 10 or top 5 per cent. So I applied for it, I got in and I enjoyed it ever since.

M: Ok, so did someone suggest this school?

E: Well, when I was looking at what school I was gonna go I had a booklet. And there were different schools in there. And there were different schools: K was one, S was another one. And these were really good schools but I hadn't heard of them. And I didn't want to go to W because most my friends (*from the neighbourhood*) would go there from after school. And they were that good company and my parents knew that, so they kind of encouraged me to go to this certain school (*Kinderhook High School*), because not many from my area would go to this school so I'd be... **I'd kind of distance myself from the culture, the kind of gang culture and stuff.**

*(Edward, Black African, middle-class boy, Kinderhook High School)*

Previous research in the US (Henly, 1995) revealed that Black Americans are more likely to live in poorer neighbourhoods than White Americans of the same socio-economic background. This might also be the case in the UK as Black African and Caribbean students who participated in this research, like Sean and Edward, often mentioned that their parents and/or themselves were worried about the area in which they were growing up due to it being poor and/or having high rates of crime. Yet, it is only the upper-middle and middle-class Black African and Caribbean parents who employed their cultural and social capital in order to distance their children from these neighbourhoods in order for them to have as little contact with the neighbourhood as possible. Like Sean's mum, who was a teacher and knew very well the way the educational system functioned, many other Black African and Caribbean upper-middle and middle-class parents succeeded in sending their children to good schools situated in good areas, even if that meant that their children would have to travel up to an hour every morning to go to school. The working-class Black African and Caribbean parents, adopted similar approaches to working-class parents from other ethnic backgrounds, as discussed above, and their children consequently did not 'escape' the school within whose catchment area they were residing.

### c) Educational Achievement, University Choice and Parental Social Networks

The deployment of parental social capital for the purposes of a school usually occurred only a couple of times during the course of the students school-life - namely at the choice of primary, secondary school and sixth form. Yet, parental social capital was deployed consistently by some parents throughout the school-lives of their children in relation to other aspects of their education. For instance, some parents provided their children with assistance in their homework and studying in order for them to do well at school and achieve highly at the exams. Students mentioned that they had often resorted to their parents for help when they were unsure how to do their homework or how to approach their studying. Parents in turn would sit and help their children and this was very beneficial indeed as the students argued at the interviews. Even though this is an instance that presupposes the existence of cultural capital on behalf of parents it is also an example of social capital in that parental cultural capital is activated through their social networks with their children and together the two - social and cultural capital - contribute to students' education positively. This is an example of Bourdieu's (1986) notion of capital transformation as discussed previously in relation to the school choice. To reiterate, it is not only important that parents have the actual knowledge to help their children with their education but also that they devote the time to transmit and apply this knowledge through their social networks. Jamal argued that acquiring educational help from his parents is 'the easiest way to learn'. This indeed highlights how beneficial this kind of social networks between parents and students is for students learning.

M: Have your parents helped you with your school work?

J: Yeah, they both did a lot... A big influence!

M: Really? In what way?

J: Because my dad is a mathematician basically and pretty good at it! So he would help me at math problems that I had and my mum helps me with English and History. So...

M: Do you go to your parents often for help?

J: Yeah. If I have a question I always go to my mum and dad. It's the easiest way to learn, yeah. So I always go.

*(Jamal, Black African, middle-class student, Chester Central School)*

Yet, this form of social networks is again informed by the social class background of the parents, particularly because the level of education provided at the interviewed students was quite high since they were all in the post-compulsory level of education. As a result, it was mainly the upper-middle and middle-class parents who possessed the cultural capital and were then able to transmit this through their social networks with their children for the latter's learning benefits. Both of Jamal's parents occupied a middle-class position and particularly his dad was

a mathematician. Jamal grew in an environment where his parents were not only encouraging of pro-educational norms but they were also willing to help him directly with his school work. This was not the same for working-class students whose parents often were very interested in their children's education but could not provide them with any support at home. Bianca, illustrates this very clearly on her interview.

M: Does she (*your mum*) help you out with school?

B: She can't help me out with this stuff. (*laughs*) No one helps me, I'm on my own with this! **They don't have a clue what that is...** (*she emphasises the word 'clue'*) Yeah, but it's OK because I get my own help in this school from the teachers and I know what's going on.

M: Right. Does your mum want you to go uni?

B: Definitely. Everyone in my family wants me to go to university. Because I'd be the only one who has gone and completed and everything like this.

*(Bianca, Black African, working-class girl, Kinderhook High School)*

Bianca's mum had high aspirations for her education and encouraged pro-educational norms in the house. This is evident from the fact that she wanted Bianca to go to university; from other parts of the interview, not included here, it is also understood that Bianca's mum was very interested in her educational outcomes. Nevertheless, because she did not possess the kind of cultural capital that is positively related to educational outcomes, she was not able to provide her with educational support at home. Bianca and Jamal, both Black African students of the same age, describe two different situations in relation to the educational support provided at home. Whereas middle-class Jamal could benefit from his parents' background and expertise in addition to the support provided at school, for working-class Bianca the only educational support was the one provided at school by her teachers. This is irrelevant to the educational norms and aspirations of these two children's parents as in both instances the parents were highly aspirational and they encouraged them to study and go to university. The only difference is that Jamal's middle-class parents could draw on their cultural capital to support their son's education through appropriate social networks at home as opposed to Bianca's working-class mum who did not possess relevant cultural capital and could therefore not build similar social networks with her daughter to support her education.

In a similar vein, the middle-class parents employed their cultural and social capital in relation to selecting a university in which their son or daughter would go after the sixth form. Below there are three extracts of students who have all decided that they were going to university. The similarities between the first two extracts are remarkable as well as the differences between these and the last extract.

M: Right, do you talk about your education with your parents?

R: Yeah!

M: What do they think?

R: They are supportive, that's what I'd think. Because even if I am confused they talk me through what my options are maybe. My mum she helps and she goes at the internet and she looks up things as well with me.

M: What kind of things?

R: Like courses in uni and stuff like that. We talk about options I have with my grades and stuff.

M: With whom do you talk more about your education? Your mum or your dad?

R: With my mum. Because she is at home more as well, my dad is at work sometimes.

*(Rianna, Indian, middle-class girl, Kinderhook High School)*

R: I just want to do something with business. I'm thinking of going to Manchester University.

M: Oh! So you've already started investigating possible universities.

R: Me and my mum are going to go up to the opening days of Manchester as soon as we find out the dates. We just want to do it this year rather than just leave it all next year because I will be stressing a lot next year, I've got lots of things to do, a lot of revising. I just want to get it done with.

M: So you are looking for a degree in business.

R: Yeah, that's what I'm interested in.

M: Is there any other university you are considering?

R: No but basically my mum is on the internet and checks. So this is only from her respect because I don't really know yet because I didn't look at it personally myself but this is what she said. So from what she said I can get in if I get two Bs and a C. And I'm hoping to get that if not higher. (...)

*(Ryan, White British, middle-class boy, Kinderhook High School)*

M: How come you decided you wanted to go to uni?

D: Because I'm doing psychology now so I kind of like it so I decided to try and continue it.

M: What do your parents think of that?

D: Yeah, they don't mind, as long as I'm doing well on what I'm doing they are happy.

M: Do you think they influence you in any way in terms of your education?

D: No, not really. Everyone just leave me to it and let me handle it.

*(Dave, White British, working-class boy, Newfane East School)*

The active involvement of middle-class parents in their children's university choice is evident. Middle-class parents carry out their own research on the internet, they find good universities and they then discuss the available options with their children. In Ryan's case, his mum even planned a visit to the university's open day as early as two years before his actual admission to the university. Middle-class parents can be characterised overall as not only active but as proactive in relation to crucial decisions such as university choices. Just like in the case of homework assistance and school choice, here as well there is an utilisation of their middle-class cultural capital which is then expressed through their social networks with their children as social capital. Working-class parents on the other hand, do not actively engage in the university decision of their children but as Dave argued 'leave them handle it'.

It is worth mentioning here that whereas there were striking differences between working-class parents and middle/upper-middle-class parents in relation to the way they mobilised social capital regarding their children's educational achievement and university choice, there were no differences between parents of different ethnic backgrounds in relation to these forms of social capital. Overall, and as it is evident from the cited extracts, parents of different ethnic backgrounds would employ similar social capital strategies that were consistent to their social class background. This, however, was not always the case with all forms of social capital, and the next section juxtaposes cases where the parental ethnic background was determinant of the social capital parent's employed in relation to their children's education. Nevertheless, as far as university choice and home based assistance was concerned, parental social capital was not informed by ethnicity but mainly by social class.

Conversely, parents' gender seemed to influence the density with which social capital came into play in relation to the aspects discussed in this section. In particular, it seems that it is mainly the mothers who mobilised social and cultural capital to support their children's education at home or to provide them with good university options. This might be related to the fact that more mothers than fathers stay at home as housewives or work part-time and therefore have more time and opportunities for development of social networks with their children. This is supported by Rianna's statement who said that her mum is more time at home than her dad. Another explanation could be that raising children is often assumed to be mainly a responsibility of the mother rather than the father and education is perhaps viewed as part of this gendered process resulting therefore in the mothers' more intense involvement.

#### d) Parental Participation in the School Community

Finally, social capital was deployed in relation to parents' participation in the school community. Parents participated in the school community in a number of occasions such as parents'



evenings, the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), other school events or even sometimes by directly contacting the teachers and the head-teacher. This participation and the social networks they developed with the teachers and the head-teacher of the school enabled them to acquire useful information about their children's education and/or intervene appropriately as they thought better suited their children's educational interests.

The expression of this kind of social capital, namely the parental participation in the school community and their development of social networks with the school personnel, was both classed and ethnicised. It was mainly White British upper-middle and middle-class parents who drew on this kind of social capital in order to benefit from the educational opportunities available to their children. Working-class and Black African and Caribbean parents were less likely to participate in this kind of activities.

The only event that working-class parents seemed to have attended as frequently as upper-middle- and middle-class parents was the parents' evenings. And even on these occasions, the nature of the social networks, which working-class parents developed with their children's teachers, was different to the one developed by the upper-middle- and middle-class parents. In particular, whereas upper-middle- and middle-class parents would ask additional information about their children's education and often guide the teachers as to how they would like them to deal with some related issues, working-class parents would suffice with the information provided by the teachers and then draw on this to deal with their children at home. For example when a teacher informed a middle-class mother that her daughter was not paying adequate attention in class and that she was rather chatty with her best friend, the mother asked the teacher to change her daughter's sit and place her next to another student who was not a close friend of hers. Working-class parents did not often draw on the social networks developed during parents' evenings to ask special arrangements for their children's education. This does not mean that they did not take this seriously but merely that they did not feel as confident as middle/upper-middle-class parents to ask further information and/or to intervene in what they thought was the teacher's responsibility by requesting special arrangements for their children. This could be seen in the framework of working-class parents' entrustment to the schools as institutions and their reluctance to occupy teachers with their concerns (Crozier, 1997). In light of this, working-class parents' participation in the school community is often limited to their attendance of parents' evenings.

In contrast to working-class parents, middle/upper-middle-class parents build on the social networks developed with the teachers and do not hesitate to request special arrangements for their children if they feel something is wrong. In the extract below Isabella describes an incident where her mum intervened in order to negotiate better educational provision for her daughter.

M: Has she (*your mum*) ever called (*the school*)?

I: I think she called up once [...] She called out because I was having problems with English. Because we didn't have a single teacher for a long time and she was worried. And I was getting bad grades and I was like 'no one else in my class is getting good grades' you know. And she was like 'oh well that needs to be sorted out'. So she phoned the head of English and I was 'oh my God this is so embarrassing'.

M: So what did she say?

I: To him she just said like 'What's happening with the teachers? Why is my daughter getting so bad grades? He (the teacher) should have been doing this and this and this'. And I was like 'this is not something you do' because my mum to an extent has a lot of sympathy for teachers and when I complain about them she is like 'but you know they've got this to do, and they've got this to do and they've got this to do' and I'm like 'yeah but they were mean' (*Laughs*) But sometimes I just hate it when she interferes.

*(Isabella, White British, upper-middle-class girl, Kinderhook High School)*

Isabella's mum seems to be very familiar with the way the educational system operates and of the responsibilities of the teachers. So she has taken teachers' side in many occasions when Isabella was complaining by outlining their duties and explaining that what they did was part of their job. Yet, in this instance she thought that there was a fundamental mistake with the school's practices: namely English teachers kept coming and going from her daughter's class and she was underachieving as a result of the lack of classroom stability. At this point, Isabella's mum decided to intervene, 'that needs to be sorted out' and she mobilised her social capital on this direction. Interestingly, she did not phone the English teacher per se, but the head of English in the school by employing linking social capital in order to reach a person in authority and negotiate better educational provision. The upper-middle-class background and the cultural capital possessed by Isabella's mum equipped her with confidence to not only interact with the school authorities but also to interrogate their practices with determination 'what's happening with the teachers?'. As Lareau (2008) argued, middle-class parents watch, wait, and decide when to intervene. And indeed as suggested by Isabella's extract, upper-middle- and middle-class parents do not act spasmodically in relation to their children's education. They rather constantly monitor their progress as well as the school processes and intervene strategically through social capital deployment when they judge that their children's educational outcomes are at stake.

Whereas there appeared to be no difference between White British and Indian parents' participation in the school community, Black African and Caribbean parents seemed to be less engaged in interacting with the school than parents of different ethnic backgrounds. In

particular, Black African and Caribbean parents attended parents' meetings less frequently than White British parents and they were less likely to participate in the Parents-Teachers Association than White British parents. A hypothesis for that could be that schools are White British middle-class institutions which do not address the needs and interests of the Black African and Caribbean communities. It was argued above that working-class parents could not mobilise social capital to navigate the school system due to its function being based on middle-class values that working-class parents did not possess. Likewise, Black African and Caribbean parents could have considered the mobilisation of social capital within the school difficult due to the latter being a White British Institution which does not address their needs and interests. This gap between schools' culture and values on the one hand and Black African and Caribbean communities' needs on the other hand appears to hinder Black African and Caribbean empowerment and participation in the school community.

An event that took place in Chester Central School comprises a very positive example of the potential that schools have to engage people from minority ethnic backgrounds in the school life and promote their participation. Chester Central School – a school with a significant number of Black African and Caribbean students – had organised an event in relation to Black students' achievement and educational opportunities. In the framework of this event, the school invited all the parents to attend and help with the organisation. The invited speakers were Black African and Caribbean people (i.e. a social worker, a teacher) with whom some of the parents were already familiar by being members of the same community. In addition, there were many opportunities for discussion and opinion exchange among the parents and the speakers. From what the interviewed students mentioned, the event was successful in that it was well attended by Black African and Caribbean parents who were also actively engaged in its organisation. For instance, the mum of one of the interviewed students was responsible for the catering of the event.

The success of this event suggests that Black African and Caribbean parents are not disengaged from and uninterested in their children's education but they are in fact willing, in certain contexts, to participate in the school community in order to get informed about issues pertinent to their children's education. Furthermore, the high attendance rates on behalf of Black African and Caribbean parents reveal the importance of the context in which parental participation takes place. In this case, the event was successful as it addressed issues that they were concerned with and that they were interested in discussing, namely the educational opportunities and outcomes of Black children. The success of this event comes in direct contrast to the overall lower rates of Black African and Caribbean parents' participation in the school community and suggests the potential that schools have to empower and engage parents from minority ethnic backgrounds in the school life. It should also be stated here that despite the success of this event in attracting and engaging a significant number of Black

African and Caribbean parents, it was mainly the upper-middle and middle-class Black African and Caribbean parents who attended the event. According to the students, only a limited number of working-class Black African and Caribbean parents attended the event. This might suggest that despite the very nice attempt of the school to overcome ethnicity-related 'obstacles' and to facilitate the development of parental social capital at the school level, which was to a great extent successful, the social class 'barrier' was still a significant impediment. It also suggests that lack of participation in the school community might not only reside within either social class or ethnicity barriers but also within intersections of the two. It would be useful therefore to conceptualise these issues through the prism of intersectionality theories that discuss issues of both social class and ethnicity.

All in all, it appears that whereas parental social capital was a significant advocate of students' educational opportunities, its deployment was more often than not strongly informed by issues of ethnicity, class and less often gender. In particular, parental social capital that presupposed the existence of cultural capital and necessitated its deployment outside the household context, i.e. in the workplace or the school, was mainly a form of social capital employed by upper-middle- and middle-class parents and less often by working-class parents. This might suggest the reluctance of working-class parents to draw on or mobilise certain types of social capital in order to negotiate better educational provision for their children, not due to their lack of interest or motivation but mainly due to 'barriers' related to their working-class background. It should also be mentioned here that the parental working-class background presented these 'barriers' only in conjunction to middle-class contexts and institutions such as schools and education; in other contexts, such as the family or the neighbourhood, parental working-class social capital was very efficient in providing support to their children in relation to other issues such as emotional difficulties or everyday problems. Likewise, Black African and Caribbean parents seemed to exhibit lower levels of social capital related to the school context (i.e. participation in the school community) but not to the family context. This pattern might be seen in light of schools' being White British Institutions that do not often address the needs and interests of non-White British communities. Two different forms of racism that have been discussed by researchers might be relevant here. First, institutional racism, according to which Black African and Caribbean students are pathologised by schools and policies as non-academic, troublesome and lacking discipline (Cole, 2004; Gillborn, 2008a; Mirza, 1992), might implicitly or explicitly discourage parents from participating in the school community. Second, dysconscious racism might establish and exaggerate the effects of institutional racism in relation to parental participation in the school community. According to King, 'dysconsciousness is an uncritical habit of mind (including perceptions, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs) that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as given' (1991, p.135). So the possible acceptance of school staff that racism is no longer a problem in contemporary

educational contexts could also contribute to the perpetuation of the problem by failing to tackle it.

Finally, parental social capital related to students' education was often denser among mothers than fathers, and this was a consistent pattern across all ethnic and social class groups. Indeed, most of the interviewees' references to parental involvement in home work, school choosing and school events was with their mothers. Again this is not to suggest that fathers were disengaged and uninterested but that the responsibility of social capital deployment in relation to students' education lies predominantly with the mothers and this might be viewed in relation to gender stereotypes regarding female parents' responsibilities of children's growing up. Diane Reay's (2004) elaboration of 'emotional capital' in relation to both middle and working-class mothers, is relevant here. Reay (2004) accepts that parental involvement in children's education is gendered with mothers being more involved than fathers and explains that the maternal involvement is in particular mediated by emotions, both negative and positive. 'Guilt, anxiety and frustration, as well as empathy and encouragement were the primary motifs of mothers' involvement' (Reay, 2004, p.61). Although, data from this research is not sufficient to firmly validate Reay's finding, it could be tentatively argued that students' discussions of their mother's involvement in their education seem to be in line with it.

## ***ii. Siblings and Education***

Parental social capital was perhaps the most influential social capital to students' education from within the family context. Yet, many students mentioned that they had been significantly influenced by their brother(s) or sister(s) particularly those who were older than them. Gillies and Lucey argued that siblings 'generate significant social resources for each other' (2006, p.479) and departing from this standpoint this section discusses the extent to which these resources informed their education. It appears that the existence of good relationships of students with their older siblings who had previously been to the sixth form and then to university, were particularly encouraging for students' education. Some students mentioned that their older siblings who were studying at the university at the time of the interview helped them with their school work, with the University choices and intended to help them with their UCAS application. These are examples where social networks as a form of social capital were played out to improve the educational opportunities of students. In fact these practices resemble those undertaken by parents as discussed in the previous section.

Another form of social capital exhibited by siblings was the support of pro-educational norms. This is another form of social capital that siblings had in common with parents. Yet pro-educational norms were sometimes more easily presented and communicated to students from

their siblings than their parents as the former's personal narratives - i.e. achieving well at school and going to university - comprised a more recent and therefore vivid example. These examples of pro-educational norms were infused to students who in many occasions considered their older siblings to be their role models and their greatest educational influence. Maxwell's extract below exemplifies the way in which his brother influenced his education.

Max: *(talking about his brother)* He is like... my role model. Because he's succeeded in virtually everything he's done... which is... a good role model I think.

M: Has he influenced you in terms of how you do at school?

Max: Yeah... he is the voice that always kind of keeps me on track. If I get a bit distracted sometimes or anything like that, he is always there to help me. Oh, he is like a guru!

M: In what way does he help you?

Max: He always tells me what to expect. Because he's done it... His A-Levels... He always tells me that I might struggle in the beginning but if I just keep on revising, keep my head in books and everything I'll be fine. He always has these wise words that boost my confidence. It's just cool.

*(Maxwell, Black Caribbean, middle-class boy, Newfane East School)*

It can be argued that Maxwell's brother was influential to his education in two ways: first, Maxwell's older brother was a high achiever at school and a university graduate. This prior relationship of his with education comprised a good advocator of pro-educational-norms for Maxwell. Second, through his social networks with Maxwell, his brother provided him with support and encouragement. In Maxwell's case this support was mainly situated at the emotional level, as his brother prepared him for all the positive results of education which motivated Maxwell to study and not get distracted. All in all, and according to Maxwell's words, his brother served as a 'good role model' and influenced his education positively.

This type of educational support which derived from siblings' was the same across students of both genders and all ethnic backgrounds. Accordingly, White British, Indian, Black African and Black Caribbean students reported a similar kind of influence from their older siblings. On the contrary, the social class background of the student seemed to be once more influential as far as this social capital deployment was concerned. In other words, it was mainly upper-middle and middle-class students who reported to have received positive educational influence through siblings' social capital. Working-class siblings, who had previously been to university, mobilised the same types of social capital, to support their brother's or sister's education, as upper-middle- and middle-class siblings. Yet, those who had not previously acquired Higher Education did not exhibit the same social capital support.

Working-class students often perceived their older siblings as role models and held very positive social networks with them which were in many cases supportive. Yet this support was often not relevant to education. This might be a plausible finding as working-class students' siblings were less likely to have been high achievers at school and to have been to university and were therefore not equipped to advocate pro-educational norms through their social networks, at least not based on their own examples as Maxwell's brother did. This is not to suggest that working-class students were never encouraged by their siblings to achieve. In some cases siblings who had not managed to go to university encouraged their brothers or sisters to study and go to university by highlighting the importance of education in acquiring a 'good job' and the difficulties they were facing in this respect due to the lack of Higher Education. These examples were often influential to students who perceived these aspects of their siblings' life as 'anti-role models' and they strove to achieve well in order to avoid the life difficulties that their siblings were facing. So, working-class siblings were in certain cases effective in advocating pro-educational norms. Yet, unlike the upper-middle and middle-class siblings, working-class siblings who had not gone to university were rarely able to draw on social capital in order to provide support with university choices and university applications.

### ***iii. Extended Family and Education***

Interviewed students often mentioned the positive educational influence they received from members of their extended family. Relatives such as aunts, uncles, cousins and sometimes grandparents exercised an important educational influence on students, provided that they had close relationships with them. For this type of educational influence to occur, strong and dense social capital was required between students and their extended family members. The close social networks of students with members of their extended family facilitated the transmission of pro-educational norms, high aspirations and expectations. In addition, members of the extended family provided students with practical support in relation to their school work, university choice and applications. These examples for which social capital was mobilised to improve the educational opportunities and outcomes of students were similar to the examples given for siblings' and parents' influence and were therefore equally informed by issues of social class as discussed in the two previous sections. So students' working-class relatives, albeit very often aspirational and encouraging of pro-educational norms could not support the education of the students in a way that upper-middle and middle-class relatives could. The reasons behind this pattern could be argued to be the same as those discussed in the case of siblings and parents, namely working-class people's lack of cultural capital reservoirs and knowledge of the system on which to base their otherwise strong social networks to support students' education. Yet, the principal difference regarding social capital within the extended family context did not concern social class, even though as I argued earlier social class did inform the way social capital was

played out at the extended family level. The most striking variation of extended family social capital occurred across people of different ethnic groups.

Indian, Black African and Caribbean students had on average closer relationships with members of their extended family and they were more likely to be influenced by them than White British students. In particular, Black African and Caribbean students as well as Indian students met their relatives more frequently and they felt closer to them than White British students. For example a number of the interviewed Indian, Black African and Caribbean students asked whether they could add their cousins to the friends' socio-graph they had drawn and explained that they considered their cousins as close to them as their school friends. These close-knit and dense social networks with the members of the extended family were very important for Indian and Black African and Caribbean people in that they provided them with support in various occasions. For instance, a number of Indian students mentioned that their relatives helped them find summer placements and they would help them find a job in the future. This type of social capital was very beneficial for students in that it provided them with work experience which according to them would count positively toward their university applications and could even provide them with a job in the future.

In addition, it appears that various problematic situations that occurred within students' households were shared with the extended family and were dealt by collectively. For example, some Indian, Black African and Caribbean students lived with only one of their parents either because their parents were apart, or because one of their two parents had passed away. In these cases the students talked about the support they received from members of their extended family and the way the latter intervened in a number of occasions to give solutions and maintain a positive environment for them. In many instances, the extended family was a source of emotional and practical support for Indian, Black African and Caribbean people in a way that was not reported by White British students. In fact a number of Indian, Black African and Caribbean students spoke with admiration about their aunts and uncles and considered them as role models, which was not the case for White British students who would mainly perceive their parents or older siblings as role models.

Social networks with members of the extended family were particularly influential to students' education. It appears that the existence of wide family social networks, which were developed beyond the nuclear family, provided Indian, Black African and Caribbean students with a wider spectrum of family social capital support in relation to their education compared to White British students. Rianna's extract below underpins some ways in which extended family social capital was beneficial to Indian, Black African and Caribbean students' education.



M: When did you decide you wanted to go to university?

R: I decided in year 7, how sad is that? (*Laughs*) Although in year 7 I wanted to be a doctor anyway; that biology side has always been there for me. But I always knew I wanted to go to university especially because when I didn't even know what it (*university*) was all my cousins had been to uni, so I knew there is another part of high school, there is a college and then you go to uni.

M: So do you speak to other members of your family about your education?

R: A lot yeah. Because my mum's sister, my aunt she would ask us, actually our families are really close.

M: Do you live nearby?

R: No, we always see each other. We make an effort to go there. [...] So they'd either come to us or we go to them. There is always one weekend that... every weekend we meet each other. And because in their family the youngest is my age and the oldest is oldest obviously, so my cousin who is at uni she would always ask me 'Oh, what are you thinking of doing?' and stuff like that. I'm always being asked and helped and stuff. Because she did maths and I didn't understand maths so I asked her for help and stuff.

M: Do you find that supportive?

R: Yes!

*(Rianna, Indian, middle-class girl, Kinderhook High School)*

The fact that Rianna was in touch with her cousins, who had been to university, instilled in her pro-educational norms from a very tender age. She knew from the age of 12 that going to university is a normal continuation of one's life after college ('there is a college and then you go to uni') and she had positive educational examples - her cousins - to look up to. In addition, she would discuss about her education with her aunt and cousin and she would ask her cousin for help if she did not understand something. So Rianna's social networks with members of her extended family facilitated the transmission of pro-educational norms and provided her with practical educational support. Other Indian, Black African and Caribbean students mentioned that their cousins who were at the time studying or had previously studied at university would help them with their UCAS applications and their university choices.

Despite this being a pattern reported consistently by Black African, Black Caribbean and Indian students, the educational influence which occurred from the extended family social capital appeared to be somewhat stronger and denser for Indian than Black African and Caribbean students. By the same token, this very influence of the extended family social capital had some negative effects for Indian students but not for Black African and Caribbean students. In particular, some Indian students reported that the engagement of the extended family on their education was so intense that it often caused them negative feelings. The constant involvement

of aunts and uncles in their educational outcomes and choices and the sometimes excessively high expectations of the extended family posed a significant burden on Indian students which often resulted in stress and other negative emotions. This is not to say that Indian students did not have positive feelings for their extended family members. On the contrary, they spoke about them with a lot of love and affection. Yet, in some cases the engagement of aunts and uncles in Indian students' education was interpreted as intrusion to their private lives and generated negative emotions. In the two extracts below, Star and Jasmine talk about their feelings and the way they reacted to these instances.

M: So how about when you meet with your family do they ask about your school and how you are doing?

S: Yeah, mainly when you get your results... if they have a son or daughter that have their results as well, they'd basically **compare** what you got.

M: Really?

S: Yeah, she has As and you have Bs... They'd also talk about the subjects you did...

M: What do you think of that?

S: It's all right. I mean it does get a bit awkward because... when you know that you've done really badly... you still have to go and tell them what you get... you don't really want to talk about it.

M: Do they ask you or your parents?

S: They'd sometimes ask my parents and they'd sometimes ask me on the phone, say they want to talk to me and ask me 'What did you get?'

M: What do your parents think of that?

S: Hm... I don't know. I don't think... Because it's been going on for so long... they are just getting used to it. It's just that you know at each instance you get your results you know you are gonna get phone calls.

M: So how about the time that you didn't do that well? What happened?

S: We made it up.

M: Really?

S: Yeah! (*laughs*) That I got As and Bs. That's what you really say.

M: Was it you or your parents?

S: Me, I was just like... you know... make it up... because I don't... I don't really want to tell them that I've got Es and Bs or whatever... Ds...

*(Star, Indian, middle-class girl, Newfane East School)*

M: Do your relatives, like your aunts and uncles, grandparents, ask you about school and your education?

J: Yeah, yeah. All the time.

M: I see.

J: Yeah! But I tend to change the subject!

M: Really? Why?

J: Because I don't want to talk about it to them.

M: What do they ask?

J: They ask what subjects I'm doing and Grades at GCSEs. But I don't tell them my grades at GCSEs.

M: Why?

J: Because they are really **competitive**... with the other kids.

M: What other kids? Of the family?

J: Yeah! With their kids, like my aunties with their children. **But that sucks so I don't tend to tell them... any of my grades.** I don't usually like telling anyone about my grades. Well, just my mum, good or bad (*grades*).

M: Right. Do your relatives ask your mum directly?

J: No they don't ask her after me. My mum wouldn't tell them either because I told her not to.

M: Do they encourage you to go to university?

J: Oh, yes they do encourage me to go to university. All my cousins have been to university so it will look like 'how come Jasmine is not going to university?' so I would look a bit silly. [...] Yeah I would stand out and I'd probably get told off if I said I didn't want to go to university.

M: By whom?

J: My mum, my uncle actually and my mum's older sister they are all actually keen on me going to university so they would talk me into go to university. They are looking at my best interest.

*(Jasmine, Indian, middle-class girl, Kinderhook High School)*

Jasmine exemplifies the two contradicting results that the extended family social capital had on her. On the one hand, her aunts and uncles are genuinely interested in her education and they want her to go to university ('they are looking at my best interest'). This kind of social capital encourages Jasmine to study and do well at school. Also her cousins who have been to university comprise a good educational example for her and this is indeed in line with what a number of other students mentioned. On the other hand, the fact that all of her cousins had gone to university and the fact that she is expected to go as well puts pressure on her as she feels that she would look bad if she didn't go ('I would look a bit silly', 'I would stand out'). Additional pressure is put on her as her aunts compare her exam results to those of her cousins. This process of dealing with educational outcomes in a competitive manner was also identified by Archer and Francis' research in relation to Chinese students and their parents. Archer and Francis argued that 'Social competition functioned as a source of motivation to high academic achievement and was internalised by pupils, such that personal achievement (or failure) was viewed in collective terms...' (2007, p.139). It appears that this concept of 'social

competition' is also present among Indian students and in this case it does not only involve Indian students and their parents but members of the extended family as well. 'Because they are really competitive...' The words 'compare' and 'comparison' appeared very often in Indian students' extracts who described a competitive environment of educational outcomes among their extended family. This competitive social capital, albeit positive in its encouragement of pro-educational norms, seemed to have also generated negative emotions for a number of Indian students. Jasmine's response to this kind of social capital was to cut the information channels denying their extended family any information related to her exams' results. Star opted for a different strategy in light of the pressure of achievement: she lied about her grades saying that she got higher results than what she actually did ('we made it up') in order to avoid possible criticisms of the extended family and/or negative comparisons.

All in all, social capital at the extended family level appears to be an ethnicised form of social capital as well as a classed one which is mainly present among Black African and Caribbean as well as Indian students. Whilst there are significant positive educational effects deriving from this type of social capital for Black African, Black Caribbean and Indian students, there are also some negative implications resulting from this social capital that mainly concern Indian students. Intense pro-educational norms accompanied by overly high aspirations and expectations as well as by a competitive environment among the extended family members seem to comprise a form of 'suffocating' social capital that generates negative emotions for some students.

### **C. Social Capital in the Community Context**

In the previous sections I discussed the way social capital pertinent to parents, siblings and the extended family cut across issues of gender but mainly ethnicity and social class and informed students' educational opportunities and outcomes. Students developed a lot of social networks within the community context through their participation in voluntary or paid work and in extra-curricular activities such as playing football, joining a youth-club, taking dance lessons etc. Unlike social capital situated at the family context, community based social capital was not directly linked to students' education. The links between students' education and the social capital they acquired from the community framework were rather indirect but nevertheless influential in a number of ways.

Students did not associate their participation to various clubs and forums with their educational achievement and neither did they do so in relation to their involvement in paid or voluntary work. Nevertheless, a number of students mentioned that they benefited from this involvement by gaining useful skills and/or knowledge which could be then applied to other contexts. For

example, Bianca talks in the extract below about the benefits which derived from her participation in a mentoring scheme as a mentor of younger students.

B: [...] But on Mondays we do mentoring at school. We stay at school and mentor lower years.

M: Really?

B: Yeah! Some of us mentor and help them with their GCSEs, do coursework, class-work and everything like this.

M: Is that a voluntary scheme?

B: Yeah, we were picked; some of us were picked... Some other kids need help so they got us and said 'why don't you try and do this?' and we got mentoring qualifications, so we passed the 'Mentors' (*mentoring qualification*) and we do that.

[...]

M: What do you think of this mentoring experience? Do you like it?

B: I do, I really do like it because it's helping me for next year when... not next year in 2 years when I'll start doing the social working, counselling and things like this. Because it just shows me about different children and different motivations and what motivates them. Some kids come every week, every Monday. They come every Monday, they'd be regular. It's good. It's just helps you think 'Oh people do care that you are offering to them and that you are helping' so yeah.

M: Does this help you get any skills?

B: Definitely, just how to talk to people, how to answer questions and get them to talk to you a bit more and stuff like that.

*(Bianca, Black African, working-class girl, Kinderhook High School)*

Bianca views her participation in the mentoring scheme as a preparation for her future work as a social worker. In particular she talks about the communication skills she acquired and the understanding of the way different children are motivated to learn. Many other students spoke about the importance of transferable skills they were acquiring through their participation in extra-curricular activities.

Students who worked reported that they had developed important social networks and transferable skills within the context of work. Yet, it appears that the reasons that urged students' to opt for a job and particularly a paid one were not always the same. In fact students' social class background informed their decision significantly. On the one hand, upper-middle and middle-class students would often decide to take up a paid job in order to feel more independent from their parents by getting extra money as well as to acquire experience and skills which would be useful for them in relation to university applications. On the other hand, working-class students would decide to work mainly in order to get more money to buy

themselves things they needed that they would have otherwise not been able to have because their parents could not afford it. The feeling of 'independence' was also valued by working-class students and the skills and experiences that they acquired from their work were also acknowledged. Yet, the principal aim for them was to work in order to get money that would enable them to purchase things which they considered essential. This fundamental difference regarding the reasons that urged working-class and middle/upper-middle-class students to work was also responsible for the differential way in which these students dealt with their work when the latter interfered with their studying. Whereas working-class students would continue to work as they needed the money, upper-middle and middle-class students having the support of their parents would decide to quit their jobs and focus more on their studying. The two extracts below reveal the differences in which two students of different social class backgrounds viewed their jobs.

M: How come you decided to work?

Mia: I just needed to have more money in my bank account. I needed to be more independent. EMA (*Education Maintenance Allowance*) gets you some stuff but it doesn't get you everything. So I just wanted to be more... you know.

*(Mia, Indian, working-class girl, Chester Central School)*

M: Did you decide that you wanted to work?

I: Yeah, I decided I wanted to do it.

M: How come?

I: Because I wanted some more independence as far as having my own money. And I also my friends were doing it so I thought 'ok I might as well'. Because they were doing it and said it was good.

M: What did your parents think?

I: My parents were kind behind it, yeah. They were like 'yeah, you should go and earn some money'. My sister never did that. My sister wasn't very independent and I've always been. But also because I go out a lot compared to my sister and my parents were like 'we are not paying for it. If you are going out so much then we are not paying for it'. But then they got worried when it interfered with my school work and they told me that I should stop. So I did because I just thought yeah it's true and I can't do that. It's my exams now so I have to'.

*(Isabella, White British, upper-middle-class girl, Kinderhook High School)*

One similarity between Isabella and Mia is that they both valued their independence and this was an essential reason that influenced their decision to take up paid work. Yet there were some crucial differences in the way this independence was conceptualised by the two girls. On

the one hand, for Mia 'independence' was viewed as having enough money to buy things that she could not buy with the EMA (Education Maintenance Allowance). Mia lived in a poor single-parent household and she mentioned elsewhere in the interview that she worked four days each week, including both weekend days. On the other hand, Isabella viewed the concept of 'independence' as the ability to go out more often than her sister without being restricted by the budget her parents had set. Isabella worked one day each week. Interestingly, Isabella's parents intervened when they thought that her involvement in paid work was interfering with her education and urged her to quit, which she did. It should also be mentioned here that Isabella also participated in extra-curricular activities, namely Badminton club and literature and art club. Even though the last two activities which required her active participation occupied a significant part of her time she never considered quitting those because as she said 'I can actually do that and I can actually enjoy it whereas everything else is like you have to do it rather than you want to do it'. So it can be overall argued that despite working-class and middle/upper-middle-class students often being involved in similar activities, i.e. paid-work, the rationale behind their decision to do so as well as the way they went about to deal with the work later, varied considerably across students of different class backgrounds. Working-class students often prioritised their need for money and the independence that their work would give them through their salary. Conversely, upper-middle- and middle-class students, whilst also valuing the importance of money and its sequent independence, prioritised their education. And for this reason they were more likely to not only work less days/hours than working-class students but also more likely to quit their job in case it was interfering with their studying.

Another important form of social capital mobilised within the community was the one related to students' internships and/or holiday jobs. A number of students mentioned that they had worked or intended to work for a small period of time in order to build their CV. This CV building was mainly related to students' attempt to submit a strong UCAS application<sup>39</sup> which would then enable them to acquire university admission. A lot of students gained an internship position with the help of their relatives' mobilisation of social capital within the community. In particular a number of students mentioned that their parents, aunts or uncles had contacted people they knew within the community, in order for them to acquire a short-term job or internship. This mobilisation of social capital within the community context was often a classed form of social capital as upper-middle- and middle-class relatives were often more efficient in finding students a position which would be considered as 'good' and 'relevant' within a CV and a UCAS application context. On the one hand, middle-class and upper-middle-class had experience of internship positions such as: administrator in a law office, medical clinic secretary, event organiser assistant. On the other hand, working-class students often found it difficult to acquire

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<sup>39</sup> Students believed that when two applicants who claimed the same university position had exactly the same exam results, the decisive factor for the successful applicant would be their personal statement and their work experience. As a result, students were very eager to acquire internship/short-term work experience which would boost their UCAS application and improve their chance of being admitted to university.

internships or short-term positions, and when they did, their positions were usually considered to be less relevant to their CV building and UCAS applications. Some of the most common short-term job positions among working-class students were those of sales assistants in shops or supermarkets.

All in all, whereas there was no evidence to suggest that social capital acquired and/or mobilised within the community context, i.e. paid or voluntary work, internships and extra-curricular activities, had a direct influence on students' educational achievement, there was indeed an indication for its influential role regarding educational outcomes, such as admission to university. As students argued, social capital relevant to the community context enabled them to acquire experiences and transferable skills which would contribute toward their university applications, i.e. CV building and UCAS applications. So it could be argued that community social capital has an effect on students' educational outcomes in equipping them with transferable skills and useful experience for their university applications.

#### **D. Conclusion**

In this chapter I discussed the various forms of social capital that occurred outside the school framework but nevertheless had an impact, implicit or explicit, on students' education. In particular, I referred to social capital developed within the family context and within the community context. Overall, it can be concluded that whilst social capital can in many occasions improve the educational opportunities available to students and benefit their educational outcomes it is nevertheless a classed, ethnicised and gendered concept. In other words, the manifestations of social capital in relation to students' education are informed by the ethnicity, the social class and sometimes the gender of students' relatives. This is consistent with the findings of the previous chapter which discussed the effects of social capital within the school context.

First, I have argued in relation to family social capital, that working-class relatives do not mobilise social capital in the same way as middle-class and upper-middle-class relatives in order to improve the educational opportunities and outcomes of students. In fact, there are significant social class differences in relation to the social capital deployment at the family level and these differences were only partly related to pro-educational norms and aspirations. So unlike what other researchers found, working-class parents and other relatives were often very aspirational and encouraged pro-educational norms. The difference between working-class and upper-middle- and middle-class relatives lay in the inability of the former to draw on cultural capital resources and mobilise social capital with confidence outside the framework of their house so as to negotiate better education for their children. So it appears that social class differences of social capital were less an issue related to relatives' interest and motivation and



mostly an issue of resources. Social class differences appeared in all forms of social capital examined in this chapter.

Second, certain forms of social capital, namely the participation of parents in the school community and the mobilisation of social networks within this context, were significantly influenced by ethnicity. Black African and Caribbean parents exhibited lower levels of participation in school events and this I argued could be related to the function of schools as a White British institution which maintained White British values and to its failure to address the needs and interests of Black African and Caribbean communities. The positive attempt of one of the schools to challenge this culture and address the needs of Black African and Caribbean communities was successful. This success suggested two main things. First, Black African and Caribbean parents are neither disengaged from nor uninterested in their children's education. Conversely, they are happy to participate in school events that meet the needs and interests of their community. Second, there is a significant potential for creation of spaces within schools that will give the opportunities to parents from minority ethnic backgrounds to engage more actively in the school community.

Another ethnicised form of social capital was the one related to the extended family. For Black African and Caribbean students as well as for Indian students the role of the extended family was very important in influencing their educational outcomes and choices, something that was not so evident among White British students. This might suggest that policy initiatives that draw on Western conceptualisations of 'family' might miss the particular ways in which people from minority ethnic groups function in relation to education and they might misjudge their practices. For example, policies that focus on the role that nuclear family exercises in education would inevitably fail to understand the alternative ways in which non-White British families might operate, namely by drawing on the engagement of the extended family for support.

Third, some forms of social capital which have seemingly a positive effect on students' education might also imply some negative effects. For example, social capital related to the extended family, mainly present among Indian students, can result in both positive and negative ways. Indian students are particularly benefited by the broad family social networks which could facilitate pro-educational norms and on which they can draw for educational support. Yet, in certain cases the density of these networks and the overly high aspirations might also pose significant pressure on Indian students and generate negative emotions.

Finally, social capital developed within the community context, albeit influential to students' educational outcomes and particularly to their university admission, appears to be sensitive to issues of social class. For instance, students' taking up of paid work was underpinned by a different rationale and motivation across different social classes. Whereas the feeling of

independence was prioritised by both working and upper-middle- and middle-class students, the monetary returns of work were far less important for the latter; hence their eagerness to quit as soon as they felt that work interfered with their studying. In addition, the mobilisation of social capital which provided students with internship opportunities was more efficient among upper-middle- and middle-class relatives than among working-class relatives. As a result, the opportunities of gaining valuable experience for UCAS applications were not equally available to all students, but were more easily accessed by middle and upper-middle-class students. Overall, it seems that the way forms of community-related social capital influence students' educational outcomes vary considerably depending on their social class background.

All in all, social capital is a quality possessed by all social groups irrespective of their social class or ethnic background and is indeed influential in people's lives in various instances. Yet, this influence is not always relevant to education. For this relevance to occur, social capital is usually mediated by issues of social class, ethnicity and less often gender. This renders social capital exploitation for educational purposes an unequal battle for people of working-class backgrounds and sometimes for Black African and Caribbean people.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusions - Reflections on the Contextualisation of Social Capital

#### A. Introduction

With this concluding chapter I bring together the most important aspects of the thesis - conceptual, methodological and theoretical, in order to discuss this thesis' main contributions to knowledge and to offer some recommendations for future policy or research in the area of education and social capital.

The first part of this chapter presents the thesis at a glance and resumes some of its main findings. The core finding of this chapter is the sensitivity of social capital to contextual characteristics, such as social class, ethnicity and gender. Unlike some other researchers (*such as Putnam (2000) and Coleman (1988)*) whose work implies a somewhat essentialist understanding of social capital that is not informed by contexts and is therefore easily transferable, this thesis suggests that the contexts within which various types of social capital reside, mightily shape both their nature and their results. The second part of this chapter reflects on the research design adopted here; it discusses the main elements that shaped the methodological approach of the thesis, such as the adopted paradigm and the methods. In addition, it critically reviews some methodological approaches and makes alternative recommendations. The third part of the conclusion extends the discussion in relation to some of the key findings of this thesis and discusses their original contribution to the field. It also discusses the theoretical framework on which this thesis was drawn as well as the developments which have been made in this respect. The fourth part views the findings of this thesis with respect to past policies in the area of education and makes recommendations that could be informative for future educational policies. Finally, the chapter ends with some suggestions for further research related to this thesis topic.

#### B. Summary of the Thesis

This thesis investigates the role of social capital in the learning and school experiences of teenage students. The main focus is on the contribution of social capital to student educational outcomes, and the different ways this occurs within different contexts. Nevertheless, other parameters related to students' education such as their course choices, their decision to go to university or not and the process they followed to choose and apply to universities were also discussed. A primary concern of this study was to understand the role of social capital within contextualised frameworks by taking into consideration factors that characterised the contexts and indeed the very subjects that participated in this research. In particular, the social class, the

ethnic background and the gender of the participants were taken into account as well as the overall ethnic composition of the participating schools.

A multiple case study, mixed-method research design was adopted. Four state secondary schools participated in this research and each one comprised a different case study. Interviews were carried out with 60 Year-12 students and survey questionnaires were administered to approximately 250 students of the same age group. Even though students of all ethnic backgrounds and both genders participated in the survey questionnaire, the interviewed students were purposely chosen among a group of interested students in order to equally represent both genders and four ethnic groups, namely White British, Black Africans, Black Caribbeans and Indians. The quantitative data was analysed with the SPSS package and the qualitative data was analysed with the Atlas.ti software adopting a thematic coding analysis approach. The data analysis and discussion of this thesis is organised in two parts. The first part consists of one chapter, namely chapter 4, which presents evidence from the quantitative data analysis and the second part comprises chapters 5 and 6 which present evidence from the qualitative data analysis.

In short, the findings of this thesis suggest that social capital influences students' education and school experiences. Yet, social capital does not work in the same way for all social groups. An examination of the social capital data at the school context suggests that the kind of influence friends have on a student's education is strongly related to the social class background of both the student and their friends. In addition, the very friendships that students form within schools are also informed by class, ethnicity and gender issues. The ethnic composition of the school is another important factor that seems to shape students' social networks; overall ethnic diversity appears to encourage inter-ethnic friendship formation and positive inter-ethnic attitudes. Looking at the social capital available to students outside the school it appears that certain types of social capital are not equally available to people of all social class and ethnic backgrounds and even if they are available they might not be mobilised or drawn upon in the same way. This directs the attention to the fact that social capital albeit a useful concept cannot be used as a universal 'panacea' in relation to education as it is embedded in contexts and cannot be transferred. Therefore, social capital should be understood in relation to the particular context(s) within it resides. The fourth section discusses the main findings in more detail.

### **C. Reflections on the Research Design**

A retrospective consideration of the research design adopted here suggests that this was overall an appropriate design to employ for the purposes of this study.

### *Participants' Voice and Mixed Methods approach*

Firstly, the thesis adopted a bottom-up approach in relation to the topic of students' education and social capital foregrounding thus students' voices. In doing so all information and evidence used here in relation to students derived from students themselves and not from other people, i.e. parents/guardians, teachers etc. This enabled the young people who participated in this study to voice their opinions, experiences and concerns and allowed the formation of this thesis around the first hand experiences of students.

In addition, the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods in the framework of a mixed-methods approach enabled the examination of the topic from various angles and made possible the collection of data from a comparatively big sample of students. In this way, students were able to give answers in relation to a number of preset questions included in the survey questionnaire but a group of them was also given the opportunity to develop the topics of these questions in more depth and/or even bring up more relevant topics during the course of their interviews. Considering the insights gained by the information students provided in their interviews, I retrospectively believe that a sequential mixed-method approach (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007) could have been preferable to the concurrent mixed-method approach adopted here. In particular, rather than collecting both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time I could have first collected and analysed the qualitative data and then based on the results of this analysis proceeded to the construction of the quantitative tools and in turn to the collection and analysis of the quantitative data. This would have ensured that the themes that had systematically emerged from students interviews had been included in the survey questionnaires and therefore examined in relation to a bigger sample of students. Nonetheless, the sequential mixed-method research design assumes a somewhat ideal research world in that it requires time flexibility and resources both of which are relatively restricted in the course of a PhD study. In particular, this thesis' research design included the decision to collect data over a specific period of the academic year in order to capture students' experiences, beliefs and attitudes at a single time-period. As a result, the pragmatics of the design dictated a rather quick action plan that would have been difficult to implement with the adoption of a sequential approach.

### *Critical Realism – Positionality – Reflexivity*

The adoption of a Critical Realist paradigmatic standpoint offered useful insights into the process of making sense of the data and placing it in relation to the main research question. The Critical Realism framework allowed issues of social capital and education to be understood in relation to the subjectivities of students and their individual experiences (Empirical Level).

This Level was particularly relevant to this study's focus as it drew on young people's narratives, as highlighted above.

Yet, the Critical Realist approach does not limit reality to the way people subjectively understand it (Empirical Level) but takes this to represent merely one part of the whole reality. I, as the researcher of this study, had privileged access to the understandings of many subjectivities that then comprised the focus of my sociological analysis (in the form of data) and enabled me to deduce from them. As a result, I was able to gain some knowledge not only about the way students understand and experience social capital and its effects individually (Empirical) but also about a more generalised deployment of social capital in relation to education (Actual Level) and some of the mechanisms/structures that drive this relationship (Real Level). However, Critical Realism adheres to a relativist epistemology<sup>40</sup> according to which the researcher, as yet another subjectivity, could never capture the ultimate reality but only a part of it. So, I do not argue that with the analysis offered in this thesis I have captured the whole of the relationship between education and social capital or that I have fully answered to the research questions posed in this thesis. Conversely, I am well aware that my positionality, even though it could give me some insights, could not give me the whole reality.

An important aspect of the research design was the acknowledgement of the way positionality influenced this thesis and in particular the collection and analysis of data. I believe that my positionality – understood here as my identity and life experiences - influenced the way students viewed me, particularly during the interview sessions which allowed more personal contact, and perhaps even the kind of information they provided me with. Even though it would be difficult to establish the latter empirically, other researchers' experiences (Singh-Raud, 1999; Sultana, 2007) are consistent with my suggestion, namely that students could have responded differently to a White British, 40 years old, middle-class, male academic than to me as a White non-British<sup>41</sup>, young but not quite at their age, middle-class, female research student.

Yet my positionality was not only significant in relation to the way students viewed me and responded to me. It worked the other way around as well, namely my positionality was significant to the way I viewed students. In particular, the hypotheses I formed, the questions I asked and the interpretation I then made were all informed by my own background and experiences which sometimes rendered me an insider, sometimes an outsider and sometimes

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<sup>40</sup> Critical Realism adheres to a realist ontology (there is a reality) and a relativist epistemology (it is not possible to understand the ultimate reality). Chapter 3 discusses this more extensively.

<sup>41</sup> I use the term non-British instead of Cypriot - my actual ethnic background – as this seemed to be the main characteristic relevant to the students. Students were certain about me not being White British mainly because of my non-British accent but they were not able to position me otherwise in terms of my ethnic background. So prior to me mentioning that I am Cypriot - if asked - students were only able to see that I was White but not White British. In light of this, my ethnic identity could be seen as a 'liminal' in relation to the research participants as all of them could see me as both an insider and an outsider on the basis of either my Whiteness or my non-British ethnic background.

both in relation to the student-participants. The way positionality played out in the course of this thesis and I suspect of any other study was extremely complicated and it is not easy to spell out the exact way it influenced the end result. One of the most complicated ways positionality came into play was in relation to my social class background. Having a middle-class background with my parents educated to university level and having middle-class jobs would clearly make me an insider in relation to middle-class students and an outsider in relation to working-class students. Nevertheless, my close bonds with my grandparents - three of whom were of working-class background – and the exposure I had to both their lifestyles and their life stories gave me some insights into the experiences and problems of working-class people. Even though these insights were far from being similar to the ones I would acquire if I had a working-class background myself, they did indeed render me aware of certain issues related to working-class students and informed my responses to them while at the same time they informed my responses to some issues pertinent to middle-class students.

Overall, it could be argued that my particular identity and background resulted in a crossing of positionality borders when carrying out this research which cannot be easily seen in relation to either the positionality of an outsider or an insider. Conversely, the complexities of my identity and experiences that often rendered me both an insider and an outsider at the same time<sup>42</sup> make it difficult to argue here that I collected better or worse quality data or that my thesis has been either benefited or disadvantaged as a result of my positionality. Yet, I would still like to acknowledge that my positionality shaped to a certain extent both the collected data and its analysis. If this can be considered a disadvantage I can only say to my defence that throughout the course of this thesis I was actively engaged in reflexivity processes, considering how my positionality inevitably informed the research and potentially shaped the power relations between me and the participants. I would conclude that I consider it preferable to acknowledge the role of positionality and discuss its implications through the lens of reflexivity rather than ignore its existence for the sake of 'impartiality'.

#### **D. Key Findings and Original Contribution to the Field**

##### *Main Findings*

The first main finding of this thesis was that social capital, albeit a useful concept and indeed an influential one in relation to students' education, is strongly mediated by contextual characteristics such as social class, ethnicity and gender or a combination of those<sup>43</sup>. So,

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<sup>42</sup> An example of being an insider and an outsider at the same time would be the interviews I carried out with middle-class Black Caribbean boys. In this occasion I was an insider in relation to social class but an outsider in relation to gender and ethnicity.

<sup>43</sup> The contextual characteristics that this thesis focused on were social class, ethnicity and to a lesser extent gender. This is not to say that other characteristics or identities such as disability, sexuality etc would not be

issues relevant to the latter characteristics, such as inequalities and stereotypes, were often evident in the relationship between social capital and education. This finding was consistent across all settings explored here, namely the school setting and non-school settings (family and community) and was confirmed by both qualitative and quantitative evidence. All students - irrespective of their social characteristics - possessed social capital and this was indeed important in many instances of their lives, both within and outside the school. Yet, the *kind*<sup>44</sup> of social capital possessed and/or the way it was mobilised often differed across social groups.

For instance, middle-class students and parents often drew on particular types of social capital resources to advance their position or maintain their privileged position. Conversely, even though a lot of working-class students and their parents viewed education as a social mobility vehicle and occasionally drew on social capital resources to establish better educational opportunities and higher educational achievement, the nature of this social capital and the way it was mobilised varied significantly from the social capital mobilised by middle-class students and parents for the same purpose. For the latter, social capital deployment took place in a strategic and organised manner whereas for the former social capital was drawn upon rather spasmodically and without always achieving the desired result. This suggests that whereas working-class students and their parents are far from being disengaged and lacking interest in education, their position in the social structure did not equip them with the types of resources - inter alia social capital - that were available to upper-middle- and middle-class students and their parents.

In relation to ethnicity, there were no considerable differences across students of different ethnic groups in relation to the way students influenced each other's education. Even though ethnicity seemed to have informed the formation of some students' friendship groups (in the direction of predominantly or exclusively intra-ethnic friendships) there was no evidence to suggest that ethnicity was significant in the way friends' networks and norms influenced each other's education. Conversely, at the family context ethnicity appeared to shape both the types of social capital possessed and the way these were employed for educational purposes. For instance, students from minority ethnic backgrounds possessed considerably denser social networks with their extended family (aunts, uncles, grandparents etc.) than White British people, with Indian students reporting the densest ones followed by students of Black African or Caribbean background. It appears that these extended family-related social networks were very influential to students' education in that they often provided them with emotional and practical support and also created an environment whereby educational norms were highly regarded. Another difference among ethnic groups was the way they mobilised school related social capital with White British parents having denser school social capital than Black African and

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important and whilst I acknowledge their potential importance in informing the relationship between social capital and education it was still not possible to touch upon all issues for the purpose of this thesis.

<sup>44</sup> Social capital is not a coherent entity. Conversely, social capital exists in different types and forms.



Caribbean parents. One hypothesis for this could be that Black African and Caribbean parents are less familiar with the educational structures and feel that the educational system does not meet their needs whereas White British and particularly White British middle-class parents are more confident 'consumers' of education and navigate the educational system more easily.

Finally, social capital seemed to be a gendered concept particularly in relation to the social capital mobilized by parents. It was predominantly the mothers who had the responsibility for students' education and who mobilised social capital in order to enable their children to acquire better educational opportunities. This pattern, which is consistent with previous research done in the United States (Lareau, 1989), was mirrored across all social class and ethnic groups.

All things considered, it could be argued that issues of social class, ethnicity and gender are strong mediators of the way social capital relates to education. Of course, this is not to suggest that the relationship between social capital and education is influenced by structure (issues of class, ethnicity and gender) in a deterministic way. On the contrary, the participants of this study revealed in many occasions that both themselves and their family members are agentic individuals who actively interact with and shape structure<sup>45</sup>. Nevertheless, the results of this thesis suggest that an examination of the social capital relationship with education that does not take into consideration the role of the context would only tell half the story.

The second main finding that can be derived from this thesis when looking at the evidence holistically is the *cumulative* way in which social capital works in relation to education. Both quantitative and qualitative results suggest that it is not merely one type of social capital that influences education but rather a combination of various types mobilized in more than one context (i.e. school, home, community) that jointly work to inform students' education. This innovatively returns to Bourdieu's concept of 'aggregate', which is used on his definition of social capital. In particular, Bourdieu referred to social capital as 'the *aggregate* of the actual or potential resources...' (*my emphasis*) (1986, p.248). This thesis provides empirical evidence to support this notion of 'aggregate', in other words that social capital comprises many types and resides in many contexts. So a possible approach that focuses on certain types of social capital and/or on particular contexts without acknowledging the manifestations of social capital in other forms and occasions would inevitably miss out a lot of the overall nature of social capital and of its relationship with education. For instance, as argued above, Black African and Caribbean parents exhibit less manifestations of social capital at the school level than White British parents but in fact exhibit more in relation to home-based social capital (higher aspirations and expectations) and the extended family. So an examination of the way ethnicity informs the

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<sup>45</sup> The relationship between structure and agency is understood within the framework of morphogenesis, as suggested by Margaret Archer (1995; 1998). The research design chapter discusses this more extensively.

relationship between social capital and education would probably offer a distorted picture of the reality if only focused on the school context.

### *Particular Findings*

One of the more specific findings of this thesis was related to the Putnam's proposed theory regarding the influence of ethnic diversity on social capital and the theoretical extension of this theory, namely then influence of ethnic diversity on education. This study, which focused in four ethnically diverse schools of multicultural London, did not provide any evidence that would support Putnam's argument that ethnic diversity is detrimental to both bonding and bridging social capital (*constrict theory*) (Putnam, 2007) or to students' education. Conversely, the majority of the students seemed to have developed friendships with people of different ethnic backgrounds as well as held positive attitudes for 'Ethnic Others'. The overall picture as presented through students extracts and survey-questionnaire evidence rather supports the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954), namely that the more students mix with students from different ethnic backgrounds the more likely they are to develop positive relationships and inter-ethnic attitudes (bridging social capital). Unlike in the case of ethnicity, students of different social class backgrounds rarely mixed. Students' friendship groups were almost always social class homogeneous and students often emphasised their common identity as middle-class or working-class youth.

Yet the situation within the schools was far from being 'ideal' regarding students' inter-ethnic relationships as some students still formed friendships on the basis of ethnic background. It appears that experiences of racism - intentional or unintentional - albeit not frequent still occur within the schools and have a negative impact on the potential for inter-ethnic friendship formation. In addition, racist incidents occurring outside the school are reflected on the relationships that students from minority ethnic groups form within the schools. In particular, when racialisation is followed by racism - inside or outside the school - the potential of inter-ethnic friendships (bridging social capital) is significantly hindered.

Another important aspect that appeared to influence the inter-ethnic friendship formation was the ethnic composition of the school which managed to shape the power dynamics within this particular context. In other words, what seemed to matter was not merely the ethnic diversity of the school but also the representation of individual students' ethnic group in the school. Students who belonged to the ethnic minority of the school were often excluded by students belonging to the ethnic majority of the school but the former mixed with other students who belonged to other minority ethnic groups. So in this case there was inter-ethnic mixing occurring among students who did not form the ethnic majority of the school. Students who belonged to the ethnic majority of the school were more hesitant in mixing and more likely to have been

racist against and exclusive of the ethnic minorities within the school. All things considered, even though the overall picture was positive with the majority of students having reported at least some inter-ethnic friendships and positive attitudes toward 'Ethnic Others' which seems to be consistent with the contact hypothesis, a closer examination of the situation revealed that the school power relations, which were pertinent to the particular representation of the ethnic groups, determined to a great extent who mixed with whom in relation to ethnicity. So even though the contact theory is supported, there is still a long way to go for students of all ethnic backgrounds to have the same school experiences and form friendships on the basis of which ethnicity would be completely irrelevant.

The way students formed their friendships in relation to social class was less complex than the way they formed their friendships in relation to ethnicity. Evidence from all four schools suggested a rigid pattern of intra-class friendship formation. Interestingly, interview and questionnaire data advocated that students were more likely to form inter-ethnic than inter-class friendships. In fact, one of the focus group interviews I carried out comprised three friends of different ethnic background who seemed to have based their friendship - at least partly - on their common social class identity. Overall, students were very conscious of their social class background and identity and they seemed to be reluctant in forming friendships with different-class students whether lower or higher. Class consciousness seemed to be very strong among students and some of them drew on Bourdieuan (1984) notions of 'taste' and 'distinction' to distinguish themselves from social class 'Others' and justify the social closure of their friendship groups in relation to class. These findings seem to reflect the continuous importance of social class, which albeit absent from some sociological work of our times, still appears to cut across and to be of significant relevance not only to students' educational outcomes but also to their social experiences - within and outside the school.

In relation to education, even though students' friendships appeared to influence their education in various ways, this did not seem to be related to the ethnic background of the students but rather to their social class background. So whereas students would be influenced in the same way by friends of same or different ethnic backgrounds (all things being equal) they would be influenced more positively if their friends came from a higher social class background than them. Another related finding was that middle-class students possessed mechanisms which filtered negative peer influence and did not allow it to influence their education, something which was not effectively done by working-class students who were more prone to negative peer influence. So as far as education related social capital is concerned social class seemed to be more significant than ethnicity.

Finally, certain types of social capital appeared to exert both a negative and a positive influence. For example, a number of students reported the beneficial impact that certain types

of social capital had on their education (i.e. peer networks, extended family networks). On the other hand though, the same types of social capital exerted a lot of pressure on students who then felt high levels of anxiety. So certain types of social capital could be positive for education but have some negative collateral consequences.

The findings of this thesis could be seen as generalisable to a certain extent. For instance, the general findings that concern the qualities of social capital, namely its multi-dimensional but not necessarily coherent nature, as well as the findings that concern social capital's sensitivity on issues of social class, gender and ethnicity are very likely to apply in other educational contexts. In particular, the continuous importance of social class, which is in accordance with previous research findings (see Ball, 2003; Reay, 2001; Skeggs, 2004), could be generalisable to other educational contexts. Nevertheless, it might not be wise to generalise some specific findings that are strongly associated with this thesis' unit of analysis and samples. For example, the fact that ethnicity did not appear to exercise a role on the educational influence exercised between friends might merely be a characteristic of the particular settings engaged in this research, namely sixth forms (year 12) within secondary schools. This might be a result of the selectivity existing prior to this stage of education (right after year 11), which results in a number of students leaving education or continuing in other less academic pathways during year 12. A possible research on lower-secondary school students could have therefore yielded different results with this respect. In addition, some of the findings of this study might be strongly related to the London context within which this research was carried out. The ethnic diversity of this city and the possibilities it offers for inter-ethnic mixing might have influenced the attitudes of the students. So the same research might have produced different results if it had been carried out in a non-diverse rural context. Although such findings, which concern social capital specificities, cannot be transferred beyond the research sample or beyond contexts that resemble the research sample, in a straightforward way, the general findings of this thesis could be generalised to other contexts and expanded upon.

### *Theoretical Developments*

Another way in which this thesis contributes to the field is in relation to the theoretical framework which was employed for the purposes of analysing and making sense of the data. In particular, Miles' theory of racialisation-racism has been adopted and adapted in order to understand social capital manifestations – mainly within the school context, offering in this way the possibility of examining the relationship between social capital and education through different theoretical lenses. It is in fact the first time that Miles' concepts of racialisation-racism have been employed in relation to social capital research. In addition, this thesis placed Miles' theory within a Critical Realist paradigmatic framework, for the first time. Miles' approach was seen here as compatible to Critical Realism mainly due to the former's conceptualisation of

reality which is in line with Critical Realism's tenets. In particular, Miles' theory of racialisation-racism is in accordance with the Critical Realist understanding of social reality as an 'open system' within which multiple mechanisms operate (see section C of chapter 3). Yet, this thesis has not drawn on Miles' theory uncritically but rather adapted some of its tenets to comply with the particular contexts on which this thesis has focused. Miles' theory *per se* does not focus on micro-level contexts as this thesis does, such as the nature of socialisation and friendship formation between individual students of different ethnic and social class backgrounds. It rather focuses on meso- and macro-phenomena, such the employment and remuneration of people from ethnic minority backgrounds, institutional racism etc. So the adaptation of Miles' theory to make sense of social capital issues occurring at the micro-level, comprises in itself a new way of understanding and employing it.

Miles' theory could be seen as an intersectionality theory as it offers possibilities of viewing ethnicity in relation to social class. Even though Miles elaborated this mainly at the macro-level, as discussed hereinabove, its relevance could also be reflected in the individual relationships between students within school contexts. In particular, students' social class identity seemed to cut across other identities and have a pervasive influence in the way they formed their friendships. So a number of friendship groups were both intra- ethnic and intra-class but even inter-ethnic friendships were predominantly intra-class.

Another important tenet of Miles' theory that was employed in this thesis was the distinction between racism and racialisation. For the purposes of this thesis there was an acknowledgement of the interrelation between the two concepts yet the two were perceived as analytically distinct. So according to Miles whereas racism presupposes racialisation, racialisation as such does not necessarily imply the existence of racism. Indeed, the two concepts had different applications and implications in the empirical discourse of this thesis. Findings suggest that whereas only racism is associated with discrimination and exclusion (conscious or unconscious) from particular social networks – in this occasion students friendship groups – racialisation was responsible for lack of inter-ethnic mixing among some students. To be more specific, a number of students who did not form inter-ethnic friendships mentioned that the reason for that was the differences between people of different ethnic backgrounds (we are too different to mix). So racialisation, namely the process in which students perceived people of different ethnic backgrounds to them as 'others' comprised an obstacle for mixing even when there was no racism attached to it. Of course this does not suggest that the effects of racialisation and racism on inter-ethnic friendship formation were the same or carried the same weight. In reality, racism had much stronger and insidious results than racialisation even though it was manifested less frequently. Students who had experienced racism (inside or outside the school context) were consciously less willing to form inter-ethnic friendships. All in all, by employing this theoretical framework of analytical dualism

(racialisation-racism) it has been suggested that not only racism but also racialisation can be problematic in certain occasions and/or contexts such as the one of inter-ethnic mixing, albeit in different ways and different intensities.

Finally, the theoretical framework of racialisation-racism as presented by Miles is not inherently associated with 'white supremacy' tenets (as would be argued for instance by Critical Race theorists (Gillborn, 2006; Gillborn, 2008b; McIntosh, 2003)) even though it does discuss and critique types of racism directed to people from minority ethnic backgrounds. However, this lack of directionality (in principle) allowed for some interesting findings to come up in this research. For instance, students, irrespective of their ethnic background, appeared to be actively engaged in a negotiation and re-negotiation of their identities as well as on the racialisation of others. So racialisation did not appear to be a 'privilege' of White British students but rather a property of all students regardless of their ethnicity. This engagement in the racialisation process was very influential on students' friendship formation. Within certain schools where students from minority ethnic groups rather than White British students comprised the majority of the population, there were some indications that students of White British background were excluded from some minority ethnic group friendship circles (see Isabella's interview extract). This suggests that students from minority ethnic backgrounds are agentic individuals who have the ability to racialise, re-racialise and even exclude ethnic 'Others' within particular contexts. Of course, caution is required here as this does not advocate that exclusion and racism are equally available to everyone within our society irrespective of ethnic background or that they influence everyone equally. This interpretation would have detrimental effects on the understanding of the pervasive and corrosive phenomenon of racism which are directed toward people from minority ethnic groups in our society. This type of racism, which is manifested as institutional racism or individual racism, is a reality that resides within macro-, meso- and micro-levels of our society and arguably affects the lives of people from minority ethnic groups in multiple ways (i.e. employment, education etc.). However, failing to see the potential of students from minority ethnic backgrounds to engage in processes of racialisation and even exclusion – when the contexts allow this – would run the risk of adopting a conceptual framework that would pathologise these students as victims of a White British society who have no agency. Conversely, this thesis' findings suggest that despite the structural and pervasive racism that exists in our society and which targets people from ethnic minority backgrounds with detrimental effects, it is still possible for students from minority ethnic backgrounds to engage in both racialisation and exclusion practices and even reverse the power dynamics of particular contexts (when these are favourable). This goes to show the significant dynamics which are encapsulated within some micro- and meso-level contexts and which ultimately exercise an important role in the formation of attitudes and social networks.

## E. Policy Implications

During the New Labour era, which is when this thesis' data was collected and indeed its greatest part written, social capital was often used as a 'panacea', *inter alia*, in relation to the educational discourse (Healy, 2006). In particular, a number of educational initiatives that aimed at boosting social capital were implemented in order to raise educational achievement. This policy rationale received considerable criticism from academic studies (see Gamarnikow and Green, 2007; Gamarnikow and Green, 1999; Gewirtz *et al*, 2005) for not taking sufficiently into account the relationship between structural inequalities and social capital. This thesis provides *empirical evidence* for the abovementioned criticisms as it suggests that the relationship between social capital and education is informed by students' social characteristics such as their social class background, their ethnic background and their gender. As a result, inequalities related to social class, ethnicity and gender are inevitably reflected on and often reproduced through the relationship of social capital with education. Regrettably, inequalities, and particularly social class related inequalities, have been absent from social capital debates of both the New Labour and the Conservative parties.

Since May 2010 the UK has a coalition government comprised of the Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats. Whether the new government will, just like their predecessors, draw on social capital theories to influence the public domain and more specifically the educational terrain of the country still remains to be seen<sup>46</sup>. For example, David Cameron's 'Big Society' (Cabinet Office, 2010) programme might be viewed in conjunction to New Labour's 'Civil Society' and albeit still too soon for any strong suggestions it might be the case that the coalition government seeks to continue building on the communitarian tradition of New Labour. For a tentative indication of some potential overlaps I quote the Cabinet Office suggestions in relation to people's involvement in communities:

'We will take a range of measures to encourage *volunteering* and involvement in social action, including launching a national 'Big Society Day' and making regular *community involvement* a key element of civil service staff appraisals.

We will take a range of measures to encourage *charitable giving and philanthropy*.

We will introduce a National Citizen Service. The initial flagship project will provide a programme for 16 year olds to give them a chance to develop the skills needed to be *active and responsible citizens*, mix with people from different backgrounds, and start getting *involved in their communities*' (*my emphasis*) (Cabinet Office, 2010, p.2).

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<sup>46</sup> It is worth mentioning that social capital might take various forms and could be well used in the policy arena without necessarily being referred to as 'social capital'. For example, the 'civil society' concept which was broadly emphasised by the New Labour Government encompassed strong elements of social capital theories without nevertheless explicitly defining those as 'social capital influenced or derived'.

This extract appears to be consistent with the overall spirit of communitarianism which seeks, among other things, to encourage the development of social capital within the framework of civil institutions. It seems that the 'Big Society' programme envisions increasing the participation of people in their communities and in Third Sector organisations (i.e. charities and philanthropic institutions). This could be seen in relation to 'Putnamian' notions of social capital (Putnam, 2000; Putnam, 2003).

The reaction of the public and some communities in relation to the overall 'Big Society' programme, so far, seems to be rather sceptical and in cases even condemning (BBC, 2010; BBC, 2011). However, urging to denounce potential educational policies whose spirit resides within the 'Big Society' framework would at this stage be both undocumented and unwise. Yet, it would not be inappropriate to suggest that educational policies planned in the framework of social capital - whether this is explicitly or implicitly evident in their rationale - would benefit from a serious consideration of a) the contexts within which the policies will be implemented and b) the role that these contexts can play in mitigating the desirable outcomes of educational policies, either by neutralising them - fully or partially - or even by reversing them. By neutralisation I mean here a compromise of the anticipated beneficial policy impact and by reversion I mean the result of gaining opposite outcomes than those anticipated, i.e. rather than mitigating educational inequalities to exacerbate them. All in all, a contextualised understanding of the social capital role within educational frameworks would enable future educational initiatives to be better tailored to the needs of students from various social groups.

More specifically, the findings of this research suggest that policies should seek new ways of mobilising social capital resources in the school arena, particularly in relation to working-class and some parents from minority ethnic groups. The fact that an important group of parents – mainly working-class and/or from minority ethnic background – did not mobilise high levels of social capital within the school context despite being very aspirational and engaged in their children's education in other ways, suggests that the reason for this reality might be the existence of issues that pose barriers to their participation rather than the lack of interest on their behalf. In the light of this, policies should provide schools with the appropriate framework that could encourage the inclusion of currently excluded parents within the school community. This could be done by acknowledging and addressing issues that concern particular groups of students/parents and by enabling parents and students to raise their voice about these concerns. When parents know that the school community is one that is genuinely concerned with and respects their own needs and views, they will be more likely to participate and be engaged in the school community. Yet, caution is required here as this kind of initiatives should avoid promoting deficit models (i.e. in relation to underachievement) but rather attempt to highlight positive examples whilst at the same time address the structural obstacles of each case.



One of the findings of this thesis that relates to the social capital mobilised in relation to students' curriculum vitae building, could inform policies relevant to the widening participation agenda of Higher Education. In particular, evidence from students' interviews suggested that the increasing importance of CV building – mainly for the purposes of UCAS applications – urged a lot of the students and their families to mobilise social capital in order to gain internship positions. This finding underlines the growing level of qualifications and experience required by students entering into Higher Education but at the same time suggests that social capital is becoming more and more relevant for this particular case. However, interview data revealed that the mobilisation of social capital for this purpose was significantly classed, with middle-class families being more efficient than working-class families in mobilising their social networks to ensure their children would get the appropriate internship experience to be used for their CV building. This is a factor that could be taken into consideration by both schools and Higher Education institutions. On the one hand, schools could liaise with community partners and ensure that all interested students have equal opportunities of acquiring useful internship experience regardless of their social class background. On the other hand, Higher Education institutions could take the current reality into consideration when reviewing UCAS applications and strive to be inclusive of working-class students in their intakes by adopting a widening participation agenda.

Furthermore, this thesis' findings could inform policies that relate to the promotion of ethnic mixing within school contexts. Student data suggests that ethnic diversity in school contexts benefits the formation of inter-ethnic friendships as well as the development of positive attitudes toward ethnic 'Others'. This could mean that future educational policies should seek to statutorily encourage the ethnic diversity of schools and therefore promote the physical exposure of students to different ethnic background students. This is in accord with the Cattle Report (Home Office, 2001) recommendations. However, there are two significant aspects of this issue that raise considerable doubts regarding both the feasibility of such an implementation and its results.

Firstly, the recent introduction of the 'free schools' development and the continuing promotion of the academy programmes might raise some serious risks for the ethnic mixing of schools. In as much as these schools could attract students from certain social groups – inter alia ethnic groups – and exclude others, the possibility of ethnic mixing and more generally social cohesion could be seriously endangered and schools are likely to face issues of social segregation and polarisation. Evidence suggests that whereas academies have not managed to raise academic standards they did reduce their intake of students with Free School Meals (FSM) eligibility (Gorard, 2009). This is not only likely to increase socio-economic segregation but in some areas

even exaggerate ethnic segregation<sup>47</sup>. In relation to the 'free-schools', even though it is still too early to evaluate their potential outcomes in England, evidence from their model, namely the Swedish 'free-schools', as reviewed by Wiborg (2010), suggests that they are very likely to exacerbate both social and ethnic segregation within schools.

Secondly, evidence from this thesis revealed that albeit school ethnic diversity was positively regarded by students and as reported by them, promoted positive inter-ethnic attitudes as well as friendships, the situation was far from being ideal within schools. Despite the inter-ethnic social networks and tolerance attitudes exhibited by some students, there were other students who were still reluctant to mix with ethnic 'Others' and were either exclusive of other students or had themselves been excluded (directly or indirectly) from certain friendship groups, on the basis of ethnicity. Another group of students considered that ethnic differences, mainly related to culture, comprised an obstacle for inter-ethnic mixing. This denotes that schools ethnic diversity alone, albeit beneficial to a certain extent, might not be able to transform students' attitudes and nature of social networks to the desirable level of social cohesion. Instead, it the physical contact with people of different ethnic backgrounds (schools ethnic diversity) might be more effective when accompanied by a more holistic school approach that actively encourages ethnic mixing and positive inter-ethnic attitudes. This could be done with the aid of a framework that encompasses inter-cultural and anti-racist education. This framework should promote awareness of various cultural differences but should at the same time emphasise the cross-cultural similarities. In this way students would not perceive cultural differences as a barrier to social mixing but rather as a social reality aspect of a culturally pluralistic country. In addition, anti-racist education would enable students to understand societal issues of racism through a critical lens and challenge structures and attitudes that reproduce those. Overall, this holistic framework would prepare students to live in a society where ethnic or cultural differences are legitimised whereas at the same time ethnic inequalities are challenged and fought against.

Finally, policies could focus on alleviating the social class polarisation that exists within schools and which was evident in the friendship patterns of students. In particular, students seemed to be fairly aware of their social class background and formed mainly intra-class friendships. Conversely, inter-class friendships were rather rare among the participating students. Social class inequalities seemed to be mirrored, in this manner, on the students' social networks within schools as well as on their attitudes toward people from different social class backgrounds. As Pahl argues a 'political implication of friendship is that it is fundamentally egalitarian, and one of the strongest barriers to pure friendship is structurally conditioned inequality' (2000, p.162). Therefore, it could be argued that policies which aim at the reduction of social class inequalities

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<sup>47</sup> Ethnic segregation often goes hand in hand with socio-economic segregation as certain ethnic groups are also more likely to occupy certain socio-economic positions than others. For instance, the overall socio-economic position of Black African and Caribbean people is lower than that of White British people (Berthoud, 1998).

would at the same time tackle issues of social class polarisation within schools, and its various manifestations, inter alia intra-class friendships.

## **F. Recommendations for Further Research**

This study has shed light into some of the issues related to social capital and education. Yet, it did not cover the spectrum of this topic exhaustively. For example, even though it was originally my intention to explore aspects of social capital between teachers and students this was not in the end possible due to word and time limits. Nevertheless, students offered a lot of information in relation to the way their social networks with teachers influenced their educational choices and achievement so this could comprise a topic for further research.

Furthermore, whereas this thesis focused on contextual characteristics, namely the social class background of students, their ethnic background, their gender and the overall ethnic composition of the school there are a number of other characteristics and/or identities that could be explored in relation to social capital and education. For instance, the socio-economic composition of the school could be another factor that intermediates the relationship between social capital and educational outcomes or simply informs the kinds of social networks developed among students within the school context. Also, issues related to faith, SEN (Special Education Needs), disability and sexuality could also be taken into account in future research. For example, research could look into the way sexuality, SEN or disability influence the parental mobilisation of social capital and its effectiveness in relation to children's education.

In addition, interviews with students allowed the emergence of new themes and potential topics for future research. For instance, many students compared the attitudes developed by them in ethnically diverse schools to those of other students who were studying in White predominant schools. The interviewed students seemed to have held a set of ideas in relation to the role of ethnically diverse contexts and future research could focus on an empirical examination on the actual attitudes of students who study in White predominant or other mono-ethnic schools. This will allow an exploration of potential differences in students' attitudes toward ethnic diversity but also a comparison of the way they form inter-ethnic friendships - if at all - and attitudes toward 'Ethnic Others'.

Finally, further research could be carried out in relation to the relevance of social capital amid the new educational situations of the country. For instance, will the current discourses of social capital, as discussed in this thesis, be reproduced, disrupted or reinforced in the new 'free school' era? Such a question would require an examination of the importance of social class and ethnicity in the mobilisation of social capital within 'free school' contexts. It would also require an inquiry about the nature of socialisation between students in relation to their social

class and ethnic background. This thesis' results suggest that social class, ethnicity and social capital are intertwined and that social class seems to cut across other identities in relation to friendship formation, as students made friends almost exclusively with students of same social class background. Future research could look into the way this issue will be reflected within the 'free schools' and explore whether social class and ethnic polarisation will increase, as some fear (*see policy implications section above*).

In conclusion, while this thesis has offered answers to some research questions regarding the relationship between social capital and educational outcomes, it seems to have also raised new questions. This might well be an inevitable aspect of social science research as one can never gain full knowledge of a social reality aspect. Research often addresses questions about social issues but there is always scope for more exploration and understanding with regards to the same or relevant topics. Likewise, this thesis addressed the issue of social capital and education and its findings could be useful in filling some of the existing gaps in this area of knowledge. Future research on this area, whatever its particular focus, should take into consideration the importance of the contexts on which it focuses, including issues of social class, ethnicity and gender. The importance of the contextualisation could be seen as a foundation - offered by this thesis - on which future research could be based.

## Appendix

## Informed Consent Form - Interview

You are invited to participate in this interview, in connection with the project about 'Social Capital and Education'. Maria Papapolydorou is doing this study as part of her PhD at the Institute of Education. The broad goal of this research study is to explore the influence of friends, teachers and family on students' educational attainment, attitudes and perceptions. The interview will be tape recorded.

### Withdrawal Right

You are taking part in this interview voluntarily. There will be no penalty if you decide not to participate. You are also free to withdraw from this study at any time. In this event, all data gathered from you will be destroyed.

### Confidentiality - Anonymity

All information gathered from this study will remain confidential and anonymous. Only Maria Papapolydorou and her supervisors will have access to the research data. Your name will not be identified or identifiable in any publication or other piece of work subsequently produced by Maria Papapolydorou.

### Use of Data

Upon completion of the interview, the tape and content of the interview belong to Maria Papapolydorou, and the information in the interview can be used by her in any manner she will determine, including, but not limited to, use in presentations and publications.

### Benefits

This research is expected to yield knowledge about the role of social capital in promoting learning in schools. You may find participating in the interview and reflecting on your friendships to be of interest to you.

### Risks and Discomforts

Potential risks or discomforts include possible emotional feelings of sadness when asked certain questions during an interview. Talking about your friendships and your relationships with other people might feel uncomfortable. You don't have to answer to a question if you don't want to.

### Cost and Payment for Participation in Research

There will be no cost for participation in the interview. Also, you will not be paid to participate in this research project.

### Questions

For any questions concerning the research project, you can contact Maria Papapolydorou (address: Nutford House, Brown Street, W1H 5UL London, email: [mpapapolydorou@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:mpapapolydorou@ioe.ac.uk))

Your signature below indicates that you have read the above comments and agree to participate in this research.

Participant's signature -----

Date -----

Participant's name (print) -----

Researcher's signature -----

Date -----

## **Informed Consent Form - Questionnaire**

You are invited to participate in this questionnaire, in connection with the project about ‘Social Capital and Education’. Maria Papapolydorou is doing this study as part of her PhD at the Institute of Education. The broad goal of this research study is to explore the influence of friends, teachers and family on students’ educational attainment, attitudes and perceptions.

### Withdrawal Right

You are taking part in this study voluntarily. There will be no penalty if you decide not to participate. You are also free to withdraw from this study at any time. In this event, all data gathered from you will be destroyed.

### Confidentiality - Anonymity

All information gathered from this study will remain confidential and anonymous. Only Maria Papapolydorou and her supervisors will have access to the research data. Your name will be linked to this questionnaire by a unique ID number. This information will be stored in a file, accessible only by myself and will be destroyed after the completion of the data collection. Your name will not be identified or identifiable in any publication or other piece of work subsequently produced by Maria Papapolydorou.

### Use of Data

Upon completion of this questionnaire, the questionnaire and its content belong to Maria Papapolydorou, and the information in the questionnaire can be used by her in any manner she will determine, including, but not limited to, use in presentations and publications.

### Benefits

This research is expected to yield knowledge about the role of social capital in promoting learning in schools. You may find participating in the survey and reflecting on your friendships to be of interest to you.

### Risks and Discomforts

Potential risks or discomforts include possible emotional feelings of sadness when asked certain questions. Answering questions about your friendships and your relationships with other people might feel uncomfortable. You don’t have to answer to a question if you don’t want to.

### Cost and Payment for Participation in Research

There will be no cost for participation in the research. Also, you will not be paid to participate in this research project.

### Questions

For any questions concerning the research project, you can contact Maria Papapolydorou (address: Nutford House, Brown Street, W1H 5UL London, email: [mpapapolydorou@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:mpapapolydorou@ioe.ac.uk))

Your signature below indicates that you have read the above comments and agree to participate in this research.

Participant’s signature -----

Date -----

Participant’s name (print) -----

Researcher’s signature -----

Date -----

## Student Questionnaire

*Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research!*

### Some General Information about the Questionnaire:

- This questionnaire is part of my research regarding the influence of friends, teachers and family on students' education. The data from this questionnaire will be used by me in writing my PhD thesis, to help me find out more about students' lives inside and outside the school.
- All your replies are *confidential* and *anonymous*. This means that neither your teachers nor your parents/guardians will see what you write. The only people who will see it will be me and my supervisors. Your name will be linked to this questionnaire by a unique ID number. This information will be stored in a file, accessible only by myself and will be destroyed after the completion of the data collection. Your name will not be identified or identifiable in any publication or other piece of work subsequently produced by me.
- I am really interested in your views and experiences. This questionnaire *is not a test* and therefore will not be used to evaluate you personally. There are no right or wrong answers and I thus hope you will answer each question *truthfully!*
- If you are not sure about any of the questions or how to answer them, please *ask for help*.

.....





**Part 1: I will firstly ask you some questions about yourself.**

1. What is your gender? *(please tick)*

- Female                       Male

2. How many people live in your home (including yourself)? .....

3. Who do you live with at home? *(tick as many options as applicable)*

- my mother/foster mother       my father/foster father  
 my stepmother                       my stepfather  
 my brother(s)                       my sister(s)  
 my grandparent(s)               others *(please specify)* .....

4. My father/male guardian is: *(please tick)*

- full-time employed               full-time domestically active (e.g. houseman)  
 part-time employed and part-time domestically active       unemployed  
 deceased                               retired                               do not know

5. My mother/female guardian is: *(please tick)*

- full-time employed               full-time domestically active (e.g. housewife)  
 part-time employed and part-time domestically active       unemployed  
 deceased                               retired                               do not know

6. What is the **highest** level of education of your father/male guardian and your mother/female guardian? *(tick one box for each column)*

	<b>father or male guardian</b>	<b>mother or female guardian</b>
Began, but did not complete primary school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completed primary school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Began, but did not complete secondary school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completed secondary School	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Further Education Graduate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Began, but did not complete university	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
University Graduate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Master's Degree Graduate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PhD or M.D Graduate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. What is the current or most recent occupation of your father/male guardian? (*example: teacher, hairdressing manager*) .....
- Could you briefly describe what he does? (*example: teaches in a primary school, manages a hairdressing salon with 10 employees*) .....
8. What is the current or most recent occupation of your mother/female guardian? (*example: teacher, hairdressing manager*) .....
- Could you briefly describe what she does? (*example: teaches in a primary school, manages a hairdressing salon with 10 employees*).....

.....

**Part 2: I will now ask you some questions about your experiences at school and your thoughts about the future.**

**Firstly some questions about your friends at school:**

9. *Approximately* how many students do you know at school by their name? .....
10. How many of these students do you consider your friends? (*friend is someone you would choose to spend some time with if you could*) .....
11. With how many of your friends would you share a secret? .....
12. How often do you see your school friends outside the school? (*please circle*)
- (a) three times or more a week                      (b) once or twice a week
- (c) twice or three times a month                      (d) once a month or less
13. How often do you speak with your friends about your education (i.e. homework, exams, plans for university etc.)? (*please circle*)
- (a) never                      (b) rarely                      (c) sometimes                      (d) often
14. Do your friends **encourage** you to work hard at school?
- (a) very much                      (b) a little bit                      (c) not at all                      (d) not sure
15. Do your friends **distract** you from working hard at school?
- (a) very much                      (b) a little bit                      (c) not at all                      (d) not sure
16. Would you say that most of your friends: (*please circle*)
- (a) get better grades than you                      (b) get about the same grades as you
- (c) get worse grades than you                      (d) don't know

17. How many of your friends are the same gender as you? *(please circle)*
- (a) all of them                      (b) most of them but not all                      (c) about half of them  
(d) only some of them                      (d) none of them
18. Would you say that most of your friends are: *(please circle)*
- (a) richer than you                      (b) about the same as you  
(c) poorer than you                      (d) don't know
19. How many of your friends belong to the same ethnic group as you? *(please circle)*
- (a) all of them                      (b) most of them but not all                      (c) about half of them  
(d) only some of them                      (d) none of them

**Secondly, some general questions regarding your views and feelings about your school:**

20. How many years (including the current one) have you been in this school? .....
21. How do you feel most of the time at school? *(please circle)*
- (a) not at all happy                      (b) more or less happy                      (c) very happy
22. How **satisfied** are you with the education you receive in your school (i.e. level of difficulty, learning methods, homework load etc.)? *(please circle)*
- (a) not at all satisfied                      (b) more or less satisfied                      (c) very satisfied
23. Imagine if you lose a **wallet** or **purse** that contained **£20** in the school yard. Do you think that your fellow students will hand it in to a teacher? *(please circle)*
- (a) most of them will do                      (b) about half of them will do  
(c) less than half of them will do                      (d) hardly anyone will do
24. Do you think it is difficult for you to make friends with students of other **ethnic groups**? *(please circle)*
- (a) yes, it is very difficult                      (b) it is difficult, but not very much  
(c) it is not at all difficult                      (d) not sure
25. Do you think it is difficult for you to make friends with students of other **religions**? *(please circle)*
- (a) yes, it is very difficult                      (b) it is difficult, but not very much  
(c) it is not at all difficult                      (d) not sure

**The following questions are about your teachers:**

26. How many teachers do you have? .....

27. How many teachers do you have whose class you are enjoying? *(please circle)*

- (a) none      (b) one      (c) two      (d) three      (e) all or almost all

28. If you had a problem at school with some of your fellow students, would you discuss it with any of your teachers? *(please circle)*

- (a) yes      (b) no      (c) not sure

29. If you had a personal problem at home, would you discuss it with any of your teachers or seek advice from them? *(please circle)*

- (a) yes      (b) no      (c) not sure

30. Have you ever discussed your educational plans (i.e. future career) with your teachers? *(please circle)*

- (a) yes      (b) no      (d) don't know

31. Circle the one you think applies the most in your case.

- (a) Most of my teachers think I can do well in my exams  
(b) Some of my teachers think I can do well in my exams  
(c) None of my teachers thinks I can do well in my exams  
(d) Don't know

32. Circle the one you think applies the most in your case.

- (a) Most of my teachers think I will go to university.  
(b) Some of my teachers think I will go to university.  
(c) None of my teachers thinks I will go to university.  
(d) Don't know

**And finally, three questions about your so far education and your thoughts on your future:**

33. What **GCSE grades** did you achieve? *(Please state both your subject and your grade, example: Maths: C, History: D, Drama: E, Art: A\*)*

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

34. Would you like to go to university after you finish school? *(please circle)*

- (a) yes                      (b) no                      (c) not sure

35. How sure are you that you will go to university after finishing school? *(please circle)*

- (a) very sure I will go                      (b) I will probably go  
(c) I probably won't go                      (d) very sure I won't go

.....

**Part 3: The following questions ask about your friends and your activities outside the school.**

36. How many friends do you have that are not in your school? .....

37. How often do you see them? *(please circle)*

- (a) about three times or more a week                      (b) about once or twice a week  
(c) about two or three times a month                      (d) once a month or less

38. Do you have any friends that are older than 19 years old? *(please circle)*

- (a) Yes                      (b) No

39. How often do you do the following activities after school or in the weekends? *(please tick)*

	never	rarely	sometimes	often
Watch TV / video	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Go out with my friends into town / hang out with my friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Go to the cinema with my friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Go out with my friends for a coffee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Go to a pub with my friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Go clubbing with my friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Go shopping / look around shops with my friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Play console games with my friends (e.g. wii, x-box, playstation)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Play games online with my friends (e.g. World of Warcraft)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Talk to my friends on the phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Send texts to my friends' mobile phones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chat with my friends on facebook, bebo, msn or in chat rooms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Play music in a band	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	never	rarely	sometimes	often
Participate in a choir	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Play an individual sport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Play a team sport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participate in a youth club	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Go to the church, mosque or temple	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Study for school (homework/exams)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read (not for school use)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do housework/chores	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Look after my brother(s) or sister(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do voluntary work (please specify what you do)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work (please specify what you do)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If there is any other activity or hobby you do please state below:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

.....

**Part 4: The following questions are about you and your parents/guardians.**

40. How often does your **mother/female guardian** do the following? *(please tick)*

	never	rarely	sometimes	often
Restrict the time you watch TV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restrict the time you use the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restrict the time you go out with your friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check your homework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tell you to do housework/chores	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trust you to do what she expects without checking up on you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss with you about your day at school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss with you about your teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss with you about your grades	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss with you about your homework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss with you about your plans after finishing school (i.e. finding a job, going to university etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attend parents' evenings in your school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	never	rarely	sometimes	often
Attend school events (i.e. plays, concerts, fairs etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact your school to ask about your academic performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

41. How often does your **father/male guardian** do the following? *(please tick)*

	never	rarely	sometimes	often
Restrict the time you watch TV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restrict the time you use the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restrict the time you go out with your friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check your homework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tell you to do housework/chores	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trust you to do what he expects without checking up on you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss with you about your day at school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss with you about your teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss with you about your grades	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss with you about your homework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss with you about your plans after school (i.e. finding a job, going to university etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attend parents' evenings in your school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attend school events (i.e. plays, concerts, fairs etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact your school to ask about your academic performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

42. Do your parents/guardians know your friends? *(please circle)*

- (a) all of them                      (b) most of them but not all                      (c) about half of them  
 (d) only some of them                      (e) none of them

43. Do you think that your parents/guardians know your friends' parents? *(please circle)*

- (a) all of them                      (b) most of them but not all                      (c) about half of them  
 (d) only some of them                      (e) none of them

44. Does either or both of your parents/guardians participate in your school's Parents-Teachers Association (PTA)? *(please circle)*

- (a) yes                      (b) no                      (c) don't know

45. Do your parents/guardians encourage you to go to university? *(please circle)*  
 (a) they do very much                      (b) they do, but not a lot                      (c) they don't at all

46. Do your parents/guardians expect you to go to university? *(please circle)*  
 (a) yes                      (b) no                      (c) don't know

47. My parents/guardians **discuss** about my education **with**: *(please circle as many as applicable)*  
 (a) none                      (b) me                      (c) each other                      (d) other relatives  
 (e) their friends                      (f) their colleagues                      (g) other parents                      (h) my teachers  
 (i) others *(please specify)* .....                      (j) don't know

48. My parents/guardians have **sought advice** in relation to my education (i.e. school choice, subject choice, higher education) **from**: *(please circle as many as applicable)*  
 (a) none                      (b) each other                      (c) other relatives                      (d) their friends  
 (e) their colleagues                      (f) other parents                      (g) my teachers  
 (h) others *(please specify)* .....                      (i) don't know

49. Do your parents/guardians know **anyone** who can possibly **help you find a job** in the future? *(please circle)*  
 (a) yes *(please tick below:)*                      (b) no                      (c) don't know  
 their boss  
 a colleague  
 a relative  
 a friend  
 other *(please specify)* .....

50. How often do your parents/guardians do the following with their friends? *(please tick)*

	Never	Once a month or less	Twice or three times a month	Once or twice a week	Three times or more a week
Speak to them on the phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visit them or see them in your house	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meet them somewhere else	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chat with them on the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Send them an email	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Send them a letter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



51. How often do your parents/guardians do the following with their relatives (other than those living in your house)? *(please tick)*

	Never	Once a month or less	Twice or three times a month	Once or twice a week	Three times or more a week
Speak to them on the phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visit them or see them in your house	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meet them somewhere else	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chat with them on the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Send them an email	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Send them a letter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

.....

**Part 5: I will now ask you some questions about your extended family. This includes your uncles, aunts, grandparents, cousins etc. It *does not* include your parents/guardians and your brothers or sisters.**

52. How often do you do the following with members of your extended family? *(please tick)*

	Never	Once a month or less	Twice or three times a month	Once or twice a week	Three times or more a week
Speak to them on the phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visit them or see them in your house	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meet them somewhere else	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chat with them on the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Send them an email	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Send them a letter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

53. When you speak to members of your extended family how often do they ask you about your **school** (i.e. your grades, your subject choices etc.)? *(please circle)*

- (a) never                      (b) rarely                      (c) sometimes                      (a) often

54. How often do members of your extended family ask you about your **future plans** (i.e. university, job etc.)? *(please circle)*

- (a) never                      (b) rarely                      (c) sometimes                      (a) often

55. Would you say that members of your extended family generally **encourage** you to go to university? *(please circle)*

- (a) they do very much                      (b) they do, but not a lot                      (c) they don't at all

56. Would you say that members of your extended family expect you to go to university?  
(please circle)

- (a) yes                      (b) no                      (c) don't know

.....

**PART 6: And finally, a question about your religion/belief and a question about your ethnic background.**

57. What religion/belief do you belong to? (tick one box only)

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None   | <input type="checkbox"/> Agnosticism                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Atheism              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christian - Catholic                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Christian - Church of England | <input type="checkbox"/> Christian - Orthodox |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christian - Protestant                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Buddhist                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Hindu                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Muslim                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Sikh                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other religion/belief (please specify) ..... |  |   |

58. Which ethnic group do you most identify with? (tick one box only)

**White**

- British                       Irish  
 Any other White background (please specify) .....

**Black or Black British**

- Caribbean                       African  
 Any other Black background (please specify).....

**Asian or Asian British**

- Indian                       Pakistani                       Bangladeshi                       Chinese  
 Any other Asian background (please specify).....

**Mixed**

- Any mixed background (please specify).....

**Other ethnic background**

- Any other background (please specify).....

*Thank you for completing this  
questionnaire!*

I will send a short report of my research results to your school, right after  
the completion of my PhD thesis!

(2) School ID:  
CC [1]  
KH [2]  
N [3]  
A [4]

Ref. No.: ..... (1) .....

# CODED Student Questionnaire FOR ANALYSIS

*Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research!*

### Some General Information about the Questionnaire:

- This questionnaire is part of my research regarding the influence of friends, teachers and family on students' education. The data from this questionnaire will be used by me in writing my PhD thesis, to help me find out more about students' lives inside and outside the school.
- All your replies are *confidential* and *anonymous*. This means that neither your teachers nor your parents/guardians will see what you write. The only people who will see it will be me and my supervisors. Your name will be linked to this questionnaire by a unique ID number. This information will be stored in a file, accessible only by myself and will be destroyed after the completion of the data collection. Your name will not be identified or identifiable in any publication or other piece of work subsequently produced by me.
- I am really interested in your views and experiences. This questionnaire *is not a test* and therefore will not be used to evaluate you personally. There are no right or wrong answers and I hope that you will answer each question *truthfully!*
- If you are not sure about any of the questions or how to answer them, please *ask for help*.

.....



**Part 1: I will firstly ask you some questions about yourself.**

59. What is your gender? *(please tick)*

- Female [1]                       Male [2]

60. How many people live in your home (including yourself)? ..... [number]

61. Who do you live with at home? *(tick as many options as applicable)*

- my mother/foster mother               my father/foster father  
 my stepmother                               my stepfather  
 my brother(s)                               my sister(s)  
 my grandparent(s)                       others *(please specify)* .....

- Single mother [0]  
 Single father [1]  
 Both parents only [2]  
 Both parents & extended fam. [3]  
 1 parent & extended fam. [4]  
 Extended fam. only [5]  
 Other [6]

62. My father/male guardian is: *(please tick)*

- full-time employed [0]               full-time domestically active (e.g. houseman) [1]  
 part-time employed and part-time domestically active [2]       unemployed [3]  
 deceased [4]                               retired [5]                               do not know [6]

63. My mother/female guardian is: *(please tick)*

- full-time employed [0]               full-time domestically active (e.g. housewife) [1]  
 part-time employed and part-time domestically active [2]       unemployed [3]  
 deceased [4]                               retired [5]                               do not know [6]

64. What is the **highest** level of education of your father/male guardian and your mother/female guardian? *(tick one box for each column)*

	<b>father or male guardian</b>	<b>mother or female guardian</b>
Began, but did not complete primary school [0]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completed primary school [1]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Began, but did not complete secondary school [2]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completed secondary School [3]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Further Education Graduate [4]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Began, but did not complete university [5]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
University Graduate [6]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Master's Degree Graduate [7]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PhD or M.D Graduate [8]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

65. What is the current or most recent occupation of your father/male guardian? (*example: teacher, hairdressing manager*) ..... SOC [1-9]

Could you briefly describe what he does? (*example: teaches in a primary school, manages a hairdressing salon with 10 employees*) .....

66. What is the current or most recent occupation of your mother/female guardian? (*example: teacher, hairdressing manager*) ..... SOC [1-9]

Could you briefly describe what she does? (*example: teaches in a primary school, manages a hairdressing salon with 10 employees*).....

.....

**Part 2: I will now ask you some questions about your experiences at school and your thoughts about the future.**

**Firstly some questions about your friends at school:**

67. *Approximately* how many students do you know at school by their name? .....

68. How many of these students do you consider your friends? (*friend is someone you would choose to spend some time with if you could*) .....

69. With how many of your friends would you share a secret? .....

70. How often do you see your school friends outside the school? (*please circle*)

- (a) three times or more a week [3]                      (b) once or twice a week [2]  
(c) twice or three times a month [1]                      (d) once a month or less [0]

71. How often do you speak with your friends about your education (i.e. homework, exams, plans for university etc.)? (*please circle*)

- (a) never [0]                      (b) rarely [1]                      (c) sometimes [2]                      (d) often [3]

72. Do your friends **encourage** you to work hard at school?

- (a) very much [3]                      (b) a little bit [2]                      (c) not at all [1]                      (d) not sure [0]

73. Do your friends **distract** you from working hard at school?

- (a) very much [3]                      (b) a little bit [2]                      (c) not at all [1]                      (d) not sure [0]

74. Would you say that most of your friends: (*please circle*)

- (a) get better grades than you [3]                      (b) get about the same grades as you [2]  
(c) get worse grades than you [1]                      (d) don't know [0]

75. How many of your friends are the same gender as you? *(please circle)*  
(a) all of them [0]      (b) most of them but not all [1]      (c) about half of them [2]  
(d) only some of them [3]      (d) none of them [4]

76. Would you say that most of your friends are: *(please circle)*  
(a) richer than you [3]      (b) about the same as you [2]  
(c) poorer than you [1]      (d) don't know [0]

77. How many of your friends belong to the same ethnic group as you? *(please circle)*  
(a) all of them [0]      (b) most of them but not all [1]      (c) about half of them [2]  
(d) only some of them [3]      (d) none of them [4]

Secondly, some general questions regarding your views and feelings about your school:

78. How many years (including the current one) have you been in this school? .....

79. How do you feel most of the time at school? *(please circle)*  
(a) not at all happy [0]      (b) more or less happy [1]      (c) very happy [2]

80. How **satisfied** are you with the education you receive in your school (i.e. level of difficulty, learning methods, homework load etc.)? *(please circle)*  
(a) not at all satisfied [0]      (b) more or less satisfied [1]      (c) very satisfied [2]

81. Imagine if you lose a **wallet** or **purse** that contained **£20** in the school yard. Do you think that your fellow students will hand it in to a teacher? *(please circle)*  
(a) most of them will do [3]      (b) about half of them will do [2]  
(c) less than half of them will do [1]      (d) hardly anyone will do [0]

82. Do you think it is difficult for you to make friends with students of other **ethnic groups**? *(please circle)*  
(a) yes, it is very difficult [1]      (b) it is difficult, but not very much [2]  
(c) it is not at all difficult [3]      (d) not sure [0]

83. Do you think it is difficult for you to make friends with students of other **religions**? *(please circle)*  
(a) yes, it is very difficult [1]      (b) it is difficult, but not very much [2]  
(c) it is not at all difficult [3]      (d) not sure [0]

**The following questions are about your teachers:**

84. How many teachers do you have? .....

85. How many teachers do you have whose class you are enjoying? *(please circle)*

- (a) none [0]    (b) one [1]    (c) two [2]    (d) three [3]    (e) all or almost all [4]

86. If you had a problem at school with some of your fellow students, would you discuss it with any of your teachers? *(please circle)*

- (a) yes [2]    (b) no [1]    (c) not sure [0]

87. If you had a personal problem at home, would you discuss it with any of your teachers or seek advice from them? *(please circle)*

- (a) yes [2]    (b) no [1]    (c) not sure [0]

88. Have you ever discussed your educational plans (i.e. future career) with your teachers? *(please circle)*

- (a) yes [2]    (b) no [1]    (c) don't know [0]

89. Circle the one you think applies the most in your case.

- (a) Most of my teachers think I can do well in my exams [3]  
(b) Some of my teachers think I can do well in my exams [2]  
(c) None of my teachers thinks I can do well in my exams [1]  
(d) Don't know [0]

90. Circle the one you think applies the most in your case.

- (a) Most of my teachers think I will go to university. [3]  
(b) Some of my teachers think I will go to university. [2]  
(c) None of my teachers thinks I will go to university. [1]  
(d) Don't know [0]

**And finally, three questions about your so far education and your thoughts on your future:**

91. What **GCSE grades** did you achieve? *(Please state both your subject and your grade, example: Maths: C, History: D, Drama: E, Art: A\*)*

A\* [58], A [52], B [46], C [40], D [34], E [34], F [22], G [16]

.....  
.....  
.....



92. Would you like to go to university after you finish school? *(please circle)*

- (a) yes [2]                      (b) no [1]                      (c) not sure [0]

93. How sure are you that you will go to university after finishing school? *(please circle)*

- (a) very sure I will go [3]                      (b) I will probably go [2]  
 (c) I probably won't go [1]                      (d) very sure I won't go [0]

.....

**Part 3: The following questions ask about your friends and your activities outside the school.**

94. How many friends do you have that are not in your school? .....

95. How often do you see them? *(please circle)*

- (a) about three times or more a week [3]                      (b) about once or twice a week [2]  
 (c) about two or three times a month [1]                      (d) once a month or less [0]

96. Do you have any friends that are older than 19 years old? *(please circle)*

- (a) Yes [1]                      (b) No [0]

97. How often do you do the following activities after school or in the weekends? *(please tick)*

	Never [0]	Rarely [1]	Sometime s [2]	often[3]
Watch TV / video	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Go out with my friends into town / hang out with my friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Go to the cinema with my friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Go out with my friends for a coffee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Go to a pub with my friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Go clubbing with my friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Go shopping / look around shops with my friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Play console games with my friends (e.g. wii, x-box, playstation)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Play games online with my friends (e.g. World of Warcraft)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Talk to my friends on the phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Send texts to my friends' mobile phones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chat with my friends on facebook, bebo, msn or in chat rooms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Play music in a band	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	never	rarely	sometimes	often
Participate in a choir	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Play an individual sport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Play a team sport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participate in a youth club	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Go to the church, mosque or temple	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Study for school (homework/exams)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read (not for school use)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do housework/chores	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Look after my brother(s) or sister(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do voluntary work (please specify what you do)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work (please specify what you do)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If there is any other activity or hobby you do please state below:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

.....

**Part 4: The following questions are about you and your parents/guardians.**

98. How often does your **mother/female guardian** do the following? *(please tick)*

	Never [0]	Rarely [1]	Sometimes [2]	often[3]
Restrict the time you watch TV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restrict the time you use the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restrict the time you go out with your friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check your homework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tell you to do housework/chores	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trust you to do what she expects without checking up on you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss with you about your day at school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss with you about your teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss with you about your grades	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss with you about your homework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss with you about your plans after finishing school (i.e. finding a job, going to university etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attend parents' evenings in your school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	never	rarely	sometimes	often
Attend school events (i.e. plays, concerts, fairs etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact your school to ask about your academic performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

99. How often does your **father/male guardian** do the following? (*please tick*)

	Never [0]	Rarely [1]	Sometimes [2]	often[3]
Restrict the time you watch TV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restrict the time you use the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restrict the time you go out with your friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check your homework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tell you to do house housework/chores	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trust you to do what he expects without checking up on you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss with you about your day at school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss with you about your teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss with you about your grades	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss with you about your homework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss with you about your plans after school (i.e. finding a job, going to university etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attend parents' evenings in your school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attend school events (i.e. plays, concerts, fairs etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact your school to ask about your academic performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

100. Do your parents/guardians know your friends? (*please circle*)

- (a) all of them [4]      (b) most of them but not all [3]      (c) about half of them [2]  
 (d) only some of them [1]      (e) none of them [0]

101. Do you think that your parents/guardians know your friends' parents? (*please circle*)

- (a) all of them [4]      (b) most of them but not all [3]      (c) about half of them [2]  
 (d) only some of them [1]      (e) none of them [0]

102. Does either or both of your parents/guardians participate in your school's Parents-Teachers Association (PTA)? (*please circle*)

- (a) yes [2]      (b) no [1]      (c) don't know [0]

103. Do your parents/guardians encourage you to go to university? *(please circle)*  
 (a) they do very much [2]      (b) they do, but not a lot[1]    (c) they don't at all [0]
104. Do your parents/guardians expect you to go to university? *(please circle)*  
 (a) yes [2]                      (b) no [1]                      (c) don't know [0]
105. My parents/guardians **discuss** about my education **with**: *(please circle as many as applicable)*  
 (a) none [0/1]              (b) me [0/1]    (c) each other [0/1]    (d) other relatives [0/1]  
 (e) their friends [0/1]    (f) their colleagues [0/1] (g) other parents [0/1] (h) my teachers [0/1]  
 (i) others *(please specify)* .....                      (j) don't know [0/1]
106. My parents/guardians have **sought advice** in relation to my education (i.e. school choice, subject choice, higher education) **from**: *(please circle as many as applicable)*  
 (a) none [0/1]              (b) each other [0/1]    (c) other relatives [0/1](d) their friends [0/1]  
 (e) their colleagues [0/1]    (f) other parents [0/1] (g) my teachers [0/1]  
 (h) others *(please specify)* .....                      (i) don't know [0/1]
107. Do your parents/guardians know **anyone** who can possibly **help you find a job** in the future? *(please circle)*  
 (a) yes *(please tick below:)* [2]                      (b) no [1]                      (c) don't know [0]  
 their boss [0/1]  
 a colleague [0/1]  
 a relative [0/1]  
 a friend [0/1]  
 other *(please specify)* .....

108. How often do your parents/guardians do the following with their friends? *(please tick)*

	Never [0]	Once a month or less [1]	Twice or three times a month[2]	Once or twice a week[3]	Three times or more a week[4]
Speak to them on the phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visit them or see them in your house	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meet them somewhere else	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chat with them on the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Send them an email	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Send them a letter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

109. How often do your parents/guardians do the following with their relatives (other than those living in your house)? *(please tick)*

	Never [0]	Once a month or less [1]	Twice or three times a month[2]	Once or twice a week[3]	Three times or more a week[4]
Speak to them on the phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visit them or see them in your house	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meet them somewhere else	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chat with them on the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Send them an email	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Send them a letter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

.....

**Part 5: I will now ask you some questions about your extended family. This includes your uncles, aunts, grandparents, cousins etc. It *does not* include your parents/guardians and your brothers or sisters.**

110. How often do you do the following with members of your extended family? *(please tick)*

	Never [0]	Once a month or less [1]	Twice or three times a month[2]	Once or twice a week[3]	Three times or more a week[4]
Speak to them on the phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visit them or see them in your house	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meet them somewhere else	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chat with them on the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Send them an email	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Send them a letter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

111. When you speak to members of your extended family how often do they ask you about your **school** (i.e. your grades, your subject choices etc.)? *(please circle)*

- (a) never [0]                      (b) rarely [1]                      (c) sometimes [2]                      (a) often [3]

112. How often do members of your extended family ask you about your **future plans** (i.e. university, job etc.)? *(please circle)*

- (a) never [0]                      (b) rarely [1]                      (c) sometimes [2]                      (a) often [3]

113. Would you say that members of your extended family generally **encourage** you to go to university? *(please circle)*

- (a) they do very much [2]    (b) they do, but not a lot [1]                      (c) they don't at all [0]

114. Would you say that members of your extended family **expect** you to go to university?  
(*please circle*)

(a) yes [2]

(b) no [1]

(c) don't know [0]

.....

**PART 6: And finally, a question about your religion/belief and a question about your ethnic background.**

115. What **religion/belief** do you belong to? (*tick one box only*)

- None [0]                       Agnosticism [1]                       Atheism [2]  
 Christian – Catholic [3]     Christian - Church of England [4]  Christian – Orthodox [5]  
 Christian – Protestant [6]    Buddhist [7]                       Hindu [8]  
 Jewish [9]                       Muslim [10]                       Sikh [11]  
 Other religion/belief (*please specify*) ..... [12]

116. Which **ethnic group** do you most identify with? (*tick one box only*)

**White**

- British [0]                       Irish [1]  
 Any other White background (*please specify*) ..... [2]

**Black or Black British**

- Caribbean [3]                       African [4]  
 Any other Black background (*please specify*)..... [5]

**Asian or Asian British**

- Indian [6]                       Pakistani [7]                       Bangladeshi [8]                       Chinese [9]  
 Any other Asian background (*please specify*)..... [10]

**Mixed**

- Any mixed background (*please specify*).....

Any White and Black [11] Any White and Asian [12] Any other mixed background [13]
---

**Other ethnic background**

- Any other background (*please specify*)..... [14]

*Thank you for completing this  
questionnaire!*

I will send a short report of my research results to your school, right after  
the completion of my PhD thesis!

## Variables and Labels used in Statistical Analyses

Item Number	Variable Number	Label
1	Ref.no1	Student reference number - unique ID number
2	SchoolRef2	School Ref number
3	Gender3	Student Gender
4	HousSize4	Household size
5	HouseCont5	Household content
6	FatherEmpl6	Father's mode of employment
7	MotherEmpl7	Mother's mode of employment
8	FathEdu8	Father's higher level of education
9	MathEdu9	Mother's higher level of education
10	FatherSOC10	current or most recent occupation of father/male guardian
11	MotherSOC11	current or most recent occupation of mother/female guardian
12	Fell.stud.nam12	fellow students' know by their names
13	Friendloose13	number of students considered as friends - loose definition of friends
14	Friendclose14	number of students with whom student would share secret - close friend proxy - trust proxy
15	Meetfriends15	how often meet friends outside school
16	Fr.Edu.disc16	how often discuss with friends about education
17	Fr.Infl.posit17	friends encourage to work hard
18	Fr.Infl.negat18	friends distract from working hard
19	Fr.char.edu19	friends' characteristic education - friends' attainment
20	Fr.char.gend20	friends' characteristic gender - how many of the friends have the same gender
21	Fr.char.ses21	friends' characteristic socioeconomic (SES)
22	Fr.char.ethnic22	friends' characteristic ethnicity - how many belong to the same ethnic background
23	years.sch23	years studying in that school (including current one)
24	Feeling.sch24	feeling most of the time at school
25	Satisf.edu25	satisfaction with education received at school
26	Trust.over26	Overall trust in fellow students - purse/wallet
27	Interethn.attit27	attitudes toward inter-ethnic friendships - level of difficulty
28	Interrelig.attit28	attitudes toward inter-religion friendships - level of difficulty
29	Teach.num29	number of teachers
30	Teach.enjoy30	number of teachers whose classes are being enjoyed
31	Teach.trust1.31	trust about within school issues
32	Teach.trust2.32	trust about outside school (home) issues
33	Teach.advice33	Discussed with teacher about educational plans
34	Teach.exp1.34	Teacher expectations (exams)
35	Teach.exp2.35	Teacher expectations (university)
36	GCSE0.36	Sum of GCSE grades – reported
37	GCSE1.37	Average grade on GCSE reported - average point score
38	GCSE2.38	5 A*-C or not
39	GCSE3.39	5 A*-C (including maths and English) or not
40	Aspirat40	Aspirations about university
41	Expect41	Expectations about university



42	Friendout42	Number of friends outside school - non-school friends
43	Meetnonsc.fr43	How often meet non-school friends
44	Friendolder44	Have friends who are older than 19 years old
45	TV45	watch TV/Video
46	hangout46	Go out with my friends into town / hang out with my friends
47	cinema47	Go to the cinema with my friends
48	coffee48	Go out with my friends for a coffee
49	pub49	Go to a pub with my friends
50	club50	Go clubbing with my friends
51	shopping51	Go shopping / look around shops with my friends
52	playstation52	Play console games with my friends (e.g. wii, x-box, playstation)
53	onlinegames53	Play games online with my friends (e.g. World of Warcraft)
54	phone54	Talk to my friends on the phone
55	sms55	Send texts to my friends' mobile phones
56	chatfaceb56	Chat with my friends on facebook, bebo, msn or in chat rooms
57	band57	Play music in a band
58	choir58	Participate in a choir
59	indivsport59	Play an individual sport
60	teamsport60	Play a team sport
61	youthclub61	Participate in a youth club
62	churctc62	Go to the church, mosque or temple
63	studyschool63	Study for school (homework/exams)
64	readnotschool64	Read (not for school use)
65	housework65	Do housework/chores
66	lookaftsibling66	Look after my brother(s) or sister(s)
67	voluntary67	Do voluntary work
68	work68	paid work
69	moth.resTV69	Restrict the time you watch TV
70	moth.resInt70	Restrict the time you use the internet
71	moth.resOut71	Restrict the time you go out with your friends
72	mothcheckhom72	Check your homework
73	mothtellhousew73	Tell you to do housework/chores
74	mothtrustyou74	Trust you to do what he expects without checking up on you
75	mothdiscschool75	Discuss with you about your day at school
76	mothdiscteach76	Discuss with you about your teachers
77	mothdiscgrade77	Discuss with you about your grades
78	mothdischomew78	Discuss with you about your homework
79	mothdiscplan79	Discuss with you about your plans after school (i.e. finding a job, going to university etc.)
80	mothpareven80	Attend parents' evenings in your school
81	mothparevent81	Attend school events
82	mothcontsch82	Contact the school to ask about academic performance
83	fath.resTV83	Restrict the time you watch TV – father
84	fath.resInt84	Restrict the time you use the internet – father
85	fath.resOut85	Restrict the time you go out with your friends – father
86	fathcheckhom86	Check your homework – father
87	fathtellhousew87	Tell you to do housework/chores – father
88	fathtrustyou88	Trust you to do what he expects without checking up on you – father
89	fathdiscschool89	Discuss with you about your day at school – father

90	fathdiscteach90	Discuss with you about your teachers – father
91	fathdiscgrade91	Discuss with you about your grades – father
92	fathdischomew92	Attend parents' evenings in your school – father
93	fathdiscplan93	Discuss with you about your plans after school (i.e. finding a job, going to university etc.) – father
94	fathpareven94	Attend parents' evenings in your school – father
95	fathparevent95	Attend school events – father
96	fathcontsch96	Contact the school to ask about academic performance – father
97	Parknowfrien97	parents know their children's friends
98	Parknowpar98	Parents know children's friends' parents - intergenerational closure
99	ParPTA99	either or both parents participate in PTA
100	ParAspir100	parents encouragement for university
101	ParExp101	parents expect children to go to university
102	Pardiscedu1.102	parents discuss about their child's education with: none
103	Pardiscedu2.103	parents discuss about their child's education with: me
104	Pardiscedu3.104	parents discuss about their child's education with: each other
105	Pardiscedu4.105	parents discuss about their child's education with: other relatives
106	Pardiscedu5.106	parents discuss about their child's education with: their friends
107	Pardiscedu6.107	parents discuss about their child's education with: their colleagues
108	Pardiscedu7.108	parents discuss about their child's education with: other parents
109	Pardiscedu8.109	parents discuss about their child's education with: teachers
110	Pardiscedu9.110	parents discuss about their child's education with: don't know
111	parsougadvice1.111	parents sought advice about their child's education from: none
112	parsougadvice2.112	parents sought advice about their child's education from: each other
113	parsougadvice3.113	parents sought advice about their child's education from: other relatives
114	parsougadvice4.114	parents sought advice about their child's education from: their friends
115	parsougadvice5.115	parents sought advice about their child's education from: their colleagues
116	parsougadvice6.116	parents sought advice about their child's education from: other parents
117	parsougadvice7.117	parents sought advice about their child's education from: teachers
118	parsougadvice8.118	parents sought advice about their child's education from: don't know
119	parknjob119	parents know someone who can help their child find a job in the future
120	parknjobwho1.120	person who can help find a job: parents' boss
121	parknjobwho2.121	person who can help find a job: parents' colleague
122	parknjobwho3.122	person who can help find a job: parents' relative
123	parknjobwho4.123	person who can help find a job: parents' friend
124	parfrphone124	parents speak to their friends on the phone

125	parfrihouse125	parents visit their friends or meet them in their house
126	parfrmeet126	parents meet their friends somewhere else
127	parfrInt127	parents chat with their friends in the Internet
128	parfremail128	parents send their friends emails
129	parfrletter129	parents send their friends letters
130	parrelphone130	parents speak to their relatives on the phone
131	parrelhouse131	parents visit their relatives or meet them in their house
132	parrelmeet132	parents meet their relatives somewhere else
133	parrelInt133	parents chat with their relatives in the Internet
134	parrelemail134	parents send their relatives emails
135	parrelletter135	parents send their relatives letters
136	studrelphone136	students speak to their relatives on the phone
137	studrelhouse137	students visit their relatives or see them in their house
138	studrelmeet138	students meet their relatives somewhere else
139	studrelInt139	students chat with their relatives on the internet
140	studrelemail140	students send their relatives emails
141	studrelletter141	students send their relatives letters
142	extfamilSch142	frequency that extended family members ask about child's school
143	extfamilplan143	frequency that extended family members ask about child's future plans
144	extfamaspir144	Extended family members encourage child to go to university
145	extfamexp145	Extended family members expectations about child going to university
146	religion146	student's religion
147	ethnic147	student's ethnic background

**Dichotomous Variables:**

3, 31, 32, 33, 40, 44, 99, 101, 102-123, 145 (not all are defined as dichotomous in the main dataset as they have elements such as don't know/not sure, so they are only defined and treated as dichotomous in certain circumstances (i.e. factor analyses were they were excluded and then a correlation matrix was created based on those)

**SOCIAL CLASS SCHEME USED FOR THE QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE  
DATA ANALYSIS – ADOPTED FROM THE NATIONAL STATISTICS SOCIO-  
ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATION SCHEME (NS SEC)**

**For Questionnaire Data:**

<b>5-class version of National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS SEC)</b>	<b>4-class adopted schema used for the statistical analysis purposes of this thesis</b>
1. Managerial and professional occupations	1. Upper-middle Class (SPSS <sup>48</sup> value = 4)
2. Intermediate occupations	2. Middle Class (SPSS value = 3)
3. Small employers and own account workers	3. Liminal Class (SPSS value = 2)
4. Lower supervisory and technical occupations	
5. Semi-routine and routine occupations Never worked and long-term unemployed	4. Working Class (SPSS value = 1)

*Adopted from Office for National Statistics (2008)*

**For Interview Data:**

<b>3-class version of National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS SEC)</b>	<b>3-class adopted schema used for the qualitative analysis purposes of this thesis</b>
1. Managerial and professional occupations	1. Upper-middle Class
2. Intermediate occupations	2. Middle Class
3. Routine and manual occupations Never worked and long-term unemployed	3. Working Class

*Adopted from Office for National Statistics (2008)*

<sup>48</sup> Social class in SPSS was coded with values 1 – 4, where 1 = working class and 4 = upper-middle class, to resonate with the ascending order of social classes.

**EXTRACTED COMPONENTS (N = 224)**

	Cronbach's Alpha
<u>Component 1: Father's Involvement - (SC1fathinv)</u> Items: 86 (.538)*, 89 (.778), 90 (.762), 91 (.838), 92 (.802), 93 (.087), 94 (.692), 95 (.517), 96 (.444)	(0.885)
<u>Component 2: Family's (parents' and students') Contact with Extended Family - (SC2extfamcont)</u> Items: 130 (.535), 131 (.769), 132 (.762), 136 (.740), 137 (.854), 138 (.806), 139 (.628), 140 (.516)	(0.875)
<u>Component 3: Mother's Involvement - (SC3mothinv)</u> Items: 72 (.461), 75 (.802), 76 (.830), 77 (.815), 78 (.773), 79 (.735), 82 (.548)	(0.875)
<u>Component 4: Parents' Sanctions - Home Rules - (SC4sanct)</u> Items: 69 (.636), 70 (.713), 71 (.524), 83 (.855), 84 (.836), 85 (.797), 87 (.480)	(0.853)
<u>Component 5: Students' Do's with Friends (Teenagers' Classics) - (SC5friendos)</u> Items: 46 (.633), 47 (.546), 48 (.452), 51 (.714), 54 (.676), 55 (.732), 56 (.485)	(0.728)
<u>Component 6: Parents' Use of Internet (email/chat) to reach friends &amp; relatives - (SC6parInt)</u> Items: 127 (.744), 128 (.725), 133 (.766), 134 (.759)	(0.804)
<u>Component 7: Competitive Activities - (SC7comp)</u> Items: 52 (.638), 53 (.420), 59 (.743), 60 (.786)	(0.693)
<u>Component 8: Sending Letters - (SC8Lett)</u> Items: 129 (.785), 135 (.793), 141 (.658)	(0.783)
<u>Component 9: Parents' Networks with their Friends - (SC9parfrien)</u> Items: 124 (.799), 125 (.799), 126 (.831)	(0.817)
<u>Component 10: Students' Do's with Friends (Adult Orientation) - (SC10frienadul)</u> Items: 15 (.562), 46 (.437), 49 (.838), 50 (.769)	(0.717)
<u>Component 11: Extended Family's Engagement - (SC11extfam.eng)</u> Items: 142 (.805), 143 (.772), 144 (.527)	(0.693)

*\* The numbers in parentheses that accompany the item numbers represent the component loadings after rotation*

THE COMPONENTS BELOW ARE EXTRACTED FROM THE CORRELATION MATRIX (dichotomous Items):

<u>Component 12: Family Norms Regarding Students' Going to University - (SC12normuni)</u> Items: 101, 145, 40	(0.796)
<u>Component 13: Parents discuss &amp; seek advice about their children's education from - (SC13disc.advis)</u> Items: 106, 107, 108, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117	(0.714)
<u>Component 14: People whom parents know that can help their children get a job - (SC14helpjob)</u> Items: 119, 121, 122, 123	(0.705)

**ANOVA RESULTS INVESTIGATING SOCIAL CAPITAL DIFFERENCES BY ETHNIC GROUPS**

	Variable Name	Label	F Ratio Degrees of Freedom (df)	F
1	SC2extfamcont	Family's (parents' and students') Contact with Extended Family	F (3, 200)	12.852***
2	SC4sanct	Parents' Sanctions - Home Rules	F (3, 204)	4.788**
3	SC10frienadul	Students' Do's with Friends (Adult Orientation)	F (3, 204)	5.111**
4	SC11extfam.eng	Extended Family's Engagement	F (3, 204)	4.297**
5	SC12normun	Family Norms Regarding Students' Going to University	F (3, 201)	8.135***
6	SC13disc.advis	Parents discuss & seek advice about their children's education from	F (3, 203)	2.858*
7	Fell.stud.nam12	fellow students' known by their names - acquaintances	F (3, 186)	3.671*
8	Friendloose13	number of students considered as friends - loose definition of friendship	F (3, 187)	7.867***
9	Fr.char.ethnic22	friends' characteristics ethnicity - ethnic diversity in friendships	F (3, 203)	9.175***
10	Teach.exp1.34	Teacher expectations (exams)	F (3, 187)	2.973*
11	Teach.exp2.35	Teacher expectations (university)	F (3, 154)	3.355
12	Expect41	Expectations about university	F (3, 202)	5.993**
13	Meetnonsc.fr43	How often meet non-school friends	F (3, 197)	3.367*
14	youthclub61	Participation in a youth club	F (3, 202)	3.871**
15	churcetc62	Go to the church, mosque or temple	F (3, 203)	22.200***
16	housework65	Do housework/chores	F (3, 202)	3.733*
17	voluntary67	Do voluntary work	F (3, 198)	3.582*
18	mothtellohousew73	Mother tells you to do housework/chores	F (3, 201)	3.486*
19	mothpareven80	Mother attends parents' evenings in your school	F (3, 201)	5.621**
20	fathtellohousew87	Father tells you to do housework/chores	F (3, 193)	5.639**
21	ParAspir100	parents encouragement regarding university	F (3, 203)	7.997***
22	Pardiscedu3.104	parents discuss about their child's education with: each other	F (3, 203)	3.831*

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

## SUMMARY OF ANOVA POST HOC TESTS INVESTIGATING THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ETHNIC GROUPS IN RELATION TO SOCIAL CAPITAL DIMENSIONS

- Family's - parents' and students' - contact with extended family (Item SC2extfamcont): Indian students scored significantly higher than both White British ( $p < .001$ ) and Black African and Caribbean students ( $p < .01$ ) whereas White British students scored not only lower than Indian students but also Other Ethnic Background students ( $p < .01$ ).
- Parents' Sanctions - Home Rules (Item SC4sanct): White British students scored lower than Indian students ( $p < .01$ ).
- Students' Do's with Friends (Adult Orientation) (Item SC10frienadul): Indian students scored lower than White British students ( $p < .01$ ).
- Extended Family's Engagement (Item SC11extfam.eng): Indian students scored higher than White British ( $p < .01$ ) and Other Ethnic Background students ( $p < .05$ ).
- Family Norms Regarding Students' Going to University (Item SC12normun): White British students scored significantly lower than all other backgrounds ( $p < .001$ ).
- Parents discuss & seek advice about their children's education (Item SC13disc.advis): Indian students scored significantly higher than Black African and Caribbean students ( $p < .05$ ).
- Fellow students' known by their names - acquaintances (Item Fell.stud.nam12): Indian students scored higher than Black African and Caribbean students ( $p < .05$ ).
- Number of students considered as friends - loose definition of friendship (Item Friendloose13): White British students scored lower than Indians ( $p < .01$ ) and Other Ethnic Backgrounds ( $p < .05$ ); Black African and Caribbean students scored lower than Indian students ( $p < .05$ ).
- Friends' characteristics ethnicity - ethnic diversity in friendships (Item Fr.char.ethnic22): Indians had less ethnically diverse friendships than Other Ethnic Background students ( $p < .01$ ) and Black African and Caribbean students ( $p < .05$ ) and fractionally less than White British students (the latter was significant in only one out of the three tests, at the .05 level); White British students had less ethnically diverse friendships than Other Ethnic Background students ( $p < .05$ ).
- Teacher expectations about exams (Item Teach.exp1.34): More White British students felt that their teachers had high expectations for them (regarding exams) than Other Ethnic Background students did ( $p < .05$ ).
- Teacher expectations about university (Item Teach.exp2.35): More Indian students felt that their teachers had high expectations for them (regarding going to university) than Other Ethnic Background students ( $p < .05$ ) and White British ( $p < .05$ ) did.
- Expectations about university (Item Expect41): Indian students had higher expectations (regarding going to university) than White British ( $p < .01$ ) and Other Ethnic Background students ( $p < .01$ ).
- How often meet non-school friends (Item Meetnonsc.fr43): White British students saw their non-school friends more often than Indian students ( $p < .05$ ); Also, Black African and Caribbean students saw their non-school friends more often than Indian students ( $p < .05$ ).
- Participation in a youth club (Item youthclub61): White British students participated less often in a youth club than Black African and Caribbean students ( $p < .01$ ).
- Go to the church, mosque or temple (Item church62): Indian, Black African and Caribbean and Other Ethnic Background students reported going more often to the church, mosque or temple than White British students did (all  $p < .001$ ); Black African and Caribbean students reported going more often than Other Ethnic Background students ( $p < .05$ ).
- Do housework/chores (Item housework65): Indian students reported doing more often housework/chores than White British students ( $p < .05$ ).
- Do voluntary work (Item voluntary67): Indian students participated more often than White British students in voluntary activities ( $p < .05$ ).

- Mother tells you to do housework/chores (Item mothtellhousew73): Indian students reported that their mother asked them to do housework/chores more often, compared to White British students ( $p < .05$ ).
- Mother attends parents' evenings in your school (Item mothpareven80): Black African and Caribbean students' mothers were reported to attend parents' evenings less than the mothers of all other ethnic backgrounds, namely White British ( $p < .05$ ), Indian ( $p < .001$ ) and Other Ethnic Backgrounds ( $p < .05$ ).
- Father tells you to do housework/chores (Item fathtellhousew87): Indian students reported that their father asked them to do housework/chores more often, compared to White British students ( $p < .01$ ) and Ethnic Other Background students ( $p < .05$ ).
- Parents encouragement regarding university (Item ParAspir100): Indian, Black African and Caribbean and Other Ethnic Background students reported being encouraged by their parents to go to university more, compared to White British students ( $p < .001$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $p < .01$ ).
- Parents discuss about their child's education with each other (Item Pardiscedu3.104): White British parents were reported to discuss with each other about their child's education more, compared to Other Ethnic Backgrounds ( $p < .05$ ); Indian parents were reported to discuss with each other about their child's education more, compared to Other Ethnic Backgrounds ( $p < .05$ ).



**INDEPENDENT-SAMPLES T TESTS EXAMINING SOCIAL CAPITAL DIFFERENCES OF GENDER**

	Variable Name	Label	Girls' Mean, (SE)	Boys' Mean, (SE)	df	t (sig)
1	SC2extfamcont	family's - parents' and students' - contact with extended family	1.99 (.086)	1.66 (.092)	210	-2.628**
2	SC4sanct	parents' sanctions - home rules	1.18 (.071)	.93 (.061)	216.911	-2.675**
3	SC5friendos	students' do's with friends (teenagers' do's)	2.28 (.040)	1.93 (.051)	198.852	-5.445***
4	SC6parInt	parents' use of internet (email/chat) to reach friends & relatives	.8832 (.090)	1.2170 (.112)	211	2.361*
5	SC7comp	competitive activities	.77 (.059)	1.80 (.060)	217	12.084***
6	SC10frienadul	students' do's with friends (Adult Orientation)	.756 (.070)	.694 (.068)	219	2.159*
7	SC14helpjob	people whom parents know that can help their child get a job	.45 (.041)	.44 (.045)	214	1.996*
8	Fr.Edu.disc16	how often discuss with friends about education	2.51 (.057)	2.20 (.072)	219	-3.339**
9	Fr.Infl.posit17	friends encourage to work hard	2.40 (.058)	2.03 (.050)	-4.808	202.785***
10	Teach.exp2.35	Teacher expectations (university)	2.80 (.050)	2.58 (.062)	-2.788	157.516**
11	band57	Play music in a band	.15 (.049)	.48 (.091)	3.128	155.662**
12	youthclub61	Participation in a youth club	.52 (.079)	.79 (.105)	2.046	191.274*
13	churcetc62	Go to the church, mosque or temple	1.24 (.107)	.85 (.105)	-2.571	216.393*
14	housework65	Do housework/chores	2.08 (.091)	1.78 (.085)	-2.457	215.931*
15	voluntary67	Do voluntary work	1.18 (.136)	.79 (.100)	-2.338	201.626*
16	work68	paid work	1.14 (.139)	.74 (.111)	-2.239	206.711*
17	mothtellhousew73	Mother tells you to do housework/chores	2.18 (.093)	1.83 (.103)	-2.526	207.706*
18	Parknowpar98	Parents know children's friends' parents - intergenerat. closure	1.17 (.096)	.90 (.066)	-2.318	200.832*
19	Pardiscedu4.105	parents discuss about their child's education with: other relatives	.61 (.045)	.46 (.050)	-2.157	215*
20	parknjobwho1.120	person who can help find a job: parents' boss	.04 (.019)	.15 (.037)	2.698	145.740**

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

**PEARSON CORRELATIONS INVESTIGATING SOCIAL CAPITAL'S RELATION  
WITH BY SOCIAL CLASS**

	<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Label</b>	<b>Social Class Correlation Coefficients (<i>r</i>)</b>	<b>N</b>
1	SC4sanct	Parents' sanctions - home rules	.17*	203
2	SC6parInt	Parents' use of internet (email/chat) to reach friends & relatives	.18**	197
3	SC7comp	Competitive activities	.15*	203
4	SC13disc.advis	Parents discuss & seek advice about their child's education	.20**	201
5	Fell.stud.nam12	Fellow students' know by their names	.17*	188
6	Fr.Infl.posit17	Friends encourage to work hard	-.17*	190
7	band57	Play music in a band	.19**	203
8	work68	Do a paid work	-.16*	197
9	mothpareven80	Attend parents' evenings in your school	.15*	200
10	fathtellhousew87	Father tells you to do housework/chores	.18*	193
11	Pardiscedu3.104	parents discuss about their child's education with: each other	.15*	201
12	Pardiscedu8.109	parents discuss about their child's education with: teachers	.18*	201

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

**RESULTS FROM MULTIPLE LINEAR REGRESSIONS OF SOCIAL CLASS, ETHNICITY  
AND GENDER ON SOCIAL CAPITAL ITEMS**

Models with Outcome Variable (y)	Indicators (x)	B	SE B	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>
<b>SC1fathinv</b> (father's involvement)					.07
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>0.51</b>			
	Social Class	0.13	0.06	.15*	
	Ethnicity - Black	0.36	0.18	.17*	
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.31	0.15	.18*	
	Ethnicity - Other	0.00	0.15	.00	
<b>SC2extfamcont</b> (family's -parents' and students'- contact with extended family)					.19
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>0.98</b>			
	Social Class	0.08	0.07	.08	
	Ethnicity - Black	0.56	0.20	.22**	
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.93	0.17	.44***	
	Ethnicity - Other	0.57	0.16	.30***	
	Gender	0.28	0.13	.29*	
<b>SC4sanct parents'</b> (sanctions - home rules)					.14
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>.36</b>			
	Social Class	0.15	0.05	.20**	
	Ethnicity - Black	0.40	0.15	.20*	
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.47	0.14	.28**	
	Ethnicity - Other	0.33	0.14	.21**	
	Gender	0.21	0.10	.15*	
<b>SC5friendos</b> (students' do's with friends (teenagers' do's))					.11
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>1.83</b>			
	Social Class	0.03	0.04	.05	
	Ethnicity - Black	-0.01	0.11	-.01	
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.04	0.09	.03	
	Ethnicity - Other	0.06	0.09	.06	
	Gender	0.32	0.07	.33***	
<b>SC6parInt</b> (parents' use of internet (email/chat) to reach friends & relatives)					.05
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>.69</b>			
	Social Class	0.17	.081	.16*	
	Ethnicity - Black	-0.22	.237	-.08	
	Ethnicity - Indian	-0.06	.206	-.03	
	Ethnicity - Other	-0.08	.191	-.04	
	Gender	-0.26	.152	-.13	
<b>SC7comp</b> (competitive activities)					.40
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>1.57</b>			
	Social Class	0.04	0.05	.05	
	Ethnicity - Black	0.02	0.15	.01	
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.17	0.13	.09	
	Ethnicity - Other	0.24	0.12	.14*	
	Gender	-1.02	0.10	-.63***	
<b>SC8Lett</b> (sending letters)					.04
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>0.36</b>			
	Social Class	0.00	0.06	.00	
	Ethnicity - Black	0.39	0.17	.19*	

	Ethnicity - Indian	0.13	0.15	.08	
	Ethnicity - Other	0.01	0.14	.01	
	Gender	-0.07	0.11	-.05	
<b>SC10frienadul</b> <b>(students' do's with friends (Adult Orientation))</b>					<b>.07</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>1.68</b>			
	Social Class	0.03	0.06	.04	
	Ethnicity - Black	-0.29	0.16	-.15	
	Ethnicity - Indian	-0.46	0.14	-.27**	
	Ethnicity - Other	-0.14	0.13	-.09	
	Gender	-0.12	0.11	-.09	
<b>SC11extfam.eng</b> <b>(extended family's engagement)</b>					<b>.08</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>1.47</b>			
	Social Class	0.02	0.05	.02	
	Ethnicity - Black	0.34	0.15	.18*	
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.42	0.13	.27**	
	Ethnicity - Other	0.08	0.12	.05	
	Gender	0.10	0.10	.07	
<b>SC12normuni</b> <b>(family's norms regarding students' going to university)</b>					<b>.12</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>1.80</b>			
	Social Class	-0.01	0.02	-.03	
	Ethnicity - Black	0.18	0.05	.28**	
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.19	0.05	.36***	
	Ethnicity - Other	0.14	0.04	.28**	
	Gender	0.02	0.03	.04	
<b>SC13disc.advis</b> <b>(parents discuss &amp; seek advice about their child's education)</b>					<b>.08</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>0.11</b>			
	Social Class	.043	0.02	.18*	
	Ethnicity - Black	-.090	0.05	-.15	
	Ethnicity - Indian	.014	0.05	.03	
	Ethnicity - Other	-.057	0.04	-.12	
	Gender	.039	0.03	.09	
<b>SC14helpjob</b> <b>(people whom parents know that can help their child get a job)</b>					<b>.05</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>0.56</b>			
	Social Class	.016	0.04	.03	
	Ethnicity - Black	.067	0.10	.06	
	Ethnicity - Indian	.174	0.09	.17*	
	Ethnicity - Other	.010	0.08	.01	
	Gender	-.152	0.07	-.17*	
<b>Fell.stud.nam12</b> <b>(fellow students' know by their names)</b>					<b>.12</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>4.69</b>			
	Social Class	0.32	0.24	.10	
	Ethnicity - Black	-0.32	0.21	-.13	
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.45	0.18	.23*	
	Ethnicity - Other	0.24	0.17	.13	
	Gender	-0.25	0.13	-.15	
<b>Friendloose13</b> <b>(number of students considered as friends - loose definition of friends)</b>					<b>.12</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>2.93</b>			
	Social Class	0.28	0.29	.07	

	Ethnicity - Black	0.09	0.26	.03	
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.88	0.22	.37***	
	Ethnicity - Other	0.52	0.20	.23*	
	Gender	-0.30	0.16	-.14	
<b>Friendclose14 (close/trusted friends)</b>					<b>.09</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>1.66</b>			
	Social Class	-0.02	0.27	-.01	
	Ethnicity - Black	-0.15	0.23	-.05	
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.60	0.20	.28**	
	Ethnicity - Other	0.34	0.18	.17	
	Gender	-0.29	0.14	-.15*	
<b>Fr.Edu.disc16 (how often discuss with friends about education)</b>					<b>.04</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>2.41</b>			
	Social Class	-0.03	0.05	-.05	
	Ethnicity - Black	-0.20	0.15	-.11	
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.07	0.13	.04	
	Ethnicity - Other	-0.04	0.13	-.03	
	Gender	0.21	0.10	.16*	
<b>Fr.Infl.posit17 (friends encouragement to work hard)</b>					<b>.13</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>2.33</b>			
	Social Class	-0.09	0.05	-.15	
	Ethnicity - Black	-0.05	0.13	-.03	
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.10	0.12	.07	
	Ethnicity - Other	-0.03	0.11	-.02	
	Gender	0.35	0.09	.29***	
<b>Fr.char.ethnic22 (ethnic diversity of friendships)</b>					<b>.12</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>2.10</b>			
	Social Class	-0.04	0.08	-.04	
	Ethnicity - Black	0.32	0.24	.11	
	Ethnicity - Indian	-0.41	0.21	-.16*	
	Ethnicity - Other	0.56	0.194	.24**	
	Gender	0.02	0.15	.01	
<b>Interethn.attit27 (attitudes about inter-ethnic friendships)</b>					<b>.11</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>3.31</b>			
	Social Class	-0.15	0.04	-.31***	
	Ethnicity - Black	-0.11	0.10	-.09	
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.04	0.09	.04	
	Ethnicity - Other	0.12	0.08	.12	
	Gender	-0.10	0.07	-.11	
<b>Interrelig.attit28 (attitudes about inter-religion friendships)</b>					<b>.09</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>2.97</b>			
	Social Class	-0.07	0.03	-.18*	
	Ethnicity - Black	0.12	0.08	.14	
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.17	0.07	.22*	
	Ethnicity - Other	0.20	0.06	.28**	
	Gender	-0.01	0.05	-.01	
<b>Teach.exp2.35 (Teacher expectations (university))</b>					<b>.12</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>2.22</b>			
	Social Class	0.10	0.05	.19*	
	Ethnicity - Black	0.15	0.13	.10	
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.22	0.11	.19*	
	Ethnicity - Other	-0.05	0.118	-.05*	
	Gender	0.18	0.084	.18	
<b>Expect41</b>					<b>.10</b>

<b>(Expectations about university)</b>					
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>2.04</b>			
	Social Class	0.03	0.06	.04	
	Ethnicity - Black	0.40	0.16	.20*	
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.48	0.14	.29**	
	Ethnicity - Other	0.07	0.13	.05	
	Gender	0.13	0.11	.09	
<b>Meetnonsc.fr43 (How often meet non-school friends)</b>					<b>.09</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>.91</b>			
	Social Class	0.25	0.10	.18*	
	Ethnicity - Black	0.38	0.28	.11	
	Ethnicity - Indian	-0.56	0.25	-.19*	
	Ethnicity - Other	0.01	0.23	.01	
	Gender	-0.18	0.19	-.07	
<b>band57(Play music in a band)</b>					<b>.08</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>.12</b>			
	Social Class	0.13	0.06	.16*	
	Ethnicity - Black	-0.05	0.17	-.02	
	Ethnicity - Indian	-0.23	0.15	-.13	
	Ethnicity - Other	-0.01	0.14	-.00	
	Gender	-0.27	0.11	-.18*	
<b>youthclub61 (Participate in a youth club)</b>					<b>.07</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>.35</b>			
	Social Class	0.03	0.08	.03	
	Ethnicity - Black	0.69	0.22	.26**	
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.35	0.19	.16	
	Ethnicity - Other	0.40	0.18	.19*	
	Gender	-0.26	0.14	-.13	
<b>churcetc62 (Go to the church, mosque or temple)</b>					<b>.20</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>-.096</b>			
	Social Class	0.06	0.08	.051	
	Ethnicity - Black	1.37	0.22	.45***	
	Ethnicity - Indian	1.14	0.20	.44***	
	Ethnicity - Other	0.90	0.19	.37***	
	Gender	0.35	0.15	.16*	
<b>housework65 (Do housework/chores)</b>					<b>.06</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>1.43</b>			
	Social Class	0.04	0.07	.037	
	Ethnicity - Black	0.45	0.21	.173*	
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.38	0.19	.171*	
	Ethnicity - Other	0.27	0.18	.133	
	Gender	0.28	0.14	.148*	
<b>voluntary67 (Do voluntary work)</b>					<b>.06</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>.45</b>			
	Social Class	0.06	0.10	.044	
	Ethnicity - Black	0.11	0.30	.030	
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.67	0.26	.222*	
	Ethnicity - Other	0.27	0.25	.097	
	Gender	0.29	0.20	.110	
<b>mothpareven80 (Attend parents' evenings in your school)</b>					<b>.12</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>2.14</b>			
	Social Class	0.10	0.07	.10	
	Ethnicity - Black	-0.70	0.21	-.26**	
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.25	0.18	.11	
	Ethnicity - Other	0.00	0.17	.00	
	Gender	0.01	0.14	.00	

<b>fathellhousew87 (Tell you to do housework/chores - father)</b>					<b>.16</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>-.28</b>			
	Social Class	0.31	0.15	.24*	
	Ethnicity - Black	1.70	0.98	.53	
	Ethnicity - Indian	3.04	0.97	1.19**	
	Ethnicity - Other	0.03	0.74	.01	
	Class by Ethn.Blac	-0.40	0.30	-.40	
	Class by Ethn.Ind.	-0.62	0.27	-.88*	
	Class by Ethn.Oth.	0.09	0.22	.13	
<b>Parknowpar98 (Parents know children's friends' parents - intergenerational closure)</b>					<b>.04</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>.82</b>			
	Social Class	0.03	0.07	.03	
	Ethnicity - Black	0.05	0.21	.02	
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.08	0.18	.04	
	Ethnicity - Other	-0.16	0.17	-.08	
	Gender	0.30	0.14	.17*	
<b>ParAspir100 (parents encouragement for university)</b>					<b>.11</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>1.19</b>			
	Social Class	0.05	0.04	.09	
	Ethnicity - Black	0.38	0.13	.24**	
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.42	0.11	.31***	
	Ethnicity - Other	0.37	0.10	.30***	
	Gender	0.09	0.08	.08	
<b>Friends' characteristic: ethnicity (level of inter-ethnic friendships) reported by White British students</b>					<b>.12</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>1.61</b>			
	Chester Central School	0.44	0.31	.21	
	Kinderhook High School	1.22	0.45	.37**	
	Addison Union School	0.45	0.33	.20	
<b>Friends' characteristic: ethnicity (level of inter-ethnic friendships) reported by Black African and Caribbean students</b>					<b>.38</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	<b>4.00</b>			
	Chester Central School	-1.14	0.97	-.49	
	Kinderhook High School	-1.40	1.03	-.43	
	Addison Union School	-2.48	0.97	-1.10*	

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

**RESULTS FROM BINARY LOGISTIC REGRESSIONS OF SOCIAL CLASS, ETHNICITY  
AND GENDER ON SOCIAL CAPITAL ITEMS**

Models with Outcome Variable (y)	Indicators (x)	B (SE)	95% CI for Odds Ratio			$\chi^2$ (df)	R <sup>2</sup>		
			Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper		Hosmer & Lemeshow	Cox & Snell	Nagelkerke
<b>Pardiscedu3.104</b> (parents discuss about their child's education with each other)						14.97 (5)	.06	.06	.10
	Constant	-0.58 (.64)							
	Social Class	0.31 (.17)	0.98	1.37	1.9				
	Ethnicity - Black	-0.72 (.47)	0.19	.49	1.23				
	Ethnicity - Indian	-0.08 (.42)	0.40	.92	2.09				
	Ethnicity - Other	-1.08** (.40)	0.16	.34	0.74				
	Gender	-0.03 (.31)	0.53	.97	1.79				
<b>Pardiscedu8.109</b> (parents discuss about their child's education with teachers)						14.69 (5)	.07	.07	.10
	Constant	-2.02 (0.79)							
	Social Class	0.43* (0.21)	1.03	1.54	2.31				
	Ethnicity - Black	-1.44* (0.68)	0.06	0.24	0.90				
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.01 (0.43)	0.43	1.01	2.36				
	Ethnicity - Other	-0.61 (0.43)	0.23	0.54	1.27				
	Gender	-0.10 (0.35)	0.46	0.91	1.80				
<b>parknjobwho1.120</b> (person who can help find a job: parents' boss)						8.89 (5)	.07	.05	.10
	Constant	-1.16 (1.04)							
	Social Class	-0.10 (0.28)	0.52	0.90	1.57				
	Ethnicity - Black	-1.39 (1.11)	0.03	0.25	2.18				
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.15 (0.65)	0.32	1.16	4.18				
	Ethnicity - Other	-0.30 (0.63)	0.22	0.74	2.55				
	Gender	-1.37* (.57)	0.08	0.26	0.78				

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001



**RESULTS FROM MULTIPLE LINEAR REGRESSIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL, SOCIAL CLASS, ETHNICITY AND GENDER ON EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT**

Models with Outcome Variable (y)	Indicators (x)	B	SE B	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>
<b>GCSE0.36</b> (sum of GCSE scores)					<b>.08</b>
	<b>Constant</b>				
	<b>SC7comp</b> (Competitive Activities)	292.36	13.41	.23*	
	Social Class	31.73	9.08	.14	
	Ethnicity - Black	16.76	26.65	-.09	
	Ethnicity - Indian	-30.17	22.87	.04	
	Ethnicity - Other	10.32	21.78	-.04	
	Gender	-10.06	21.80	.22*	
<b>GCSE0.36</b> (sum of GCSE scores)					<b>.07</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	384.29			
	<b>SC10frienadul</b> (Students' dos with friends (adult orientation))	-25.59	12.12	-.16*	
	Social Class	19.05	9.13	.16*	
	Ethnicity - Black	-38.91	27.05	-.12	
	Ethnicity - Indian	3.84	23.57	.02	
	Ethnicity - Other	-4.43	21.55	-.02	
	Gender	13.69	17.16	.06	
<b>GCSE0.36</b> (sum of GCSE scores)					<b>.09</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	330.53			
	<b>Voluntary67</b> (Do Voluntary Work)	15.65	7.47	.16*	
	Social Class	18.04	9.34	.15	
	Ethnicity - Black	-34.42	27.58	-.10	
	Ethnicity - Indian	6.560	23.38	.03	
	Ethnicity - Other	-6.34	21.86	-.03	
	Gender	13.48	17.36	.06	
<b>GCSE0.36</b> (sum of GCSE scores)					<b>.07</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	49.47			
	<b>SC12normuni</b> (family norms regarding univ.)	162.23	36.04	.34***	
	Social Class	18.50	8.80	.15*	
	Ethnicity - Black	-57.59	26.60	-.18*	
	Ethnicity - Indian	-13.89	23.19	-.05	
	Ethnicity - Other	-22.89	21.49	-.09	
	Gender	15.45	16.47	.07	

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

**RESULTS FROM MULTIPLE LOGISTIC REGRESSIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL, SOCIAL CLASS, ETHNICITY AND GENDER ON EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT**

Models with Outcome Variable (y)	Indicators (x)	B (SE)	95% CI for Odds Ratio			$\chi^2$ (df)	R <sup>2</sup>		
			Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper		Hosmer & Lemeshow	Cox & Snell	Nagelkerke
<b>GCSE3.39 (5 A*-C GCSE Maths &amp; English)</b>						<b>12.14 (5)</b>	<b>.06</b>	<b>.07</b>	<b>.10</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	-0.62 (0.69)							
	Social Class	0.57 ** (0.19)	1.22	1.77	2.56				
	Ethnicity - Black	-0.11 (0.56)	0.30	0.90	2.66				
	Ethnicity - Indian	0.46 (0.55)	0.55	1.6	4.62				
	Ethnicity - Other	-0.09 (0.46)	0.37	0.91	2.24				
	Gender	-0.00 (0.38)	0.48	0.10	2.09				
<b>GCSE3.39 (5 A*-C GCSE Maths &amp; English)</b>						<b>22.20 (6)</b>	<b>.11</b>	<b>.12</b>	<b>.18</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	-2.28 (0.91)							
	<b>SC7comp (Competit. Activ.)</b>	1.05** (0.35)	1.43	2.85	5.67				
	Social Class	0.58** (0.20)	1.21	1.79	2.63				
	Ethnicity - Black	-0.17 (0.58)	0.27	0.85	2.63				
	Ethnicity - Indian	.019 (0.57)	0.40	1.21	3.70				
	Ethnicity - Other	-0.43 (0.49)	0.25	0.65	1.71				
	Gender	1.14* (0.55)	1.05	3.08	9.08				
<b>GCSE3.39 (5 A*-C GCSE Maths &amp; English)</b>						<b>21.33 (6)</b>	<b>.12</b>	<b>.12</b>	<b>.18</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	-1.31 (0.77)							
	<b>Fell.stud.nam12 (school acquaint.)</b>	0.01** (0.00)	1.00	1.01	1.01				
	Social Class	0.55** (0.20)	1.17	1.73	2.57				
	Ethnicity - Black	-0.25 (0.60)	.24	0.78	2.50				
	Ethnicity - Indian	-0.09 (0.59)	.29	0.91	2.91				
	Ethnicity - Other	-0.48 (0.51)	.23	0.62	1.69				

	Gender	0.31 (0.41)	.62	1.37	3.02				
<b>GCSE3.39 (5 A*-C GCSE Maths &amp; English)</b>						<b>26.00 (8)</b>	<b>.13</b>	<b>.14</b>	<b>.20</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	-1.20 (1.17)							
	<b>Expect41 (univ. expectat.)</b>								
	Expect41 - 1 (probably not)	-0.08 (1.17)	0.10	0.93	8.97				
	Expect41 - 2 (probably yes)	1.34 (.098)	0.56	3.83	26.15				
	Expect41 - 3 (very sure yes)	2.29* (1.02)	1.34	9.86	72.67				
	Social Class	0.59** (0.20)	1.22	1.81	2.68				
	Ethnicity - Black	-0.74 (0.62)	0.14	0.48	1.61				
	Ethnicity - Indian	-0.07 (0.61)	0.28	0.93	3.04				
	Ethnicity - Other	-0.22 (0.49)	0.31	0.81	2.13				
	Gender	-0.12 (0.40)	0.40	0.88	1.95				
<b>GCSE3.39 (5 A*-C GCSE Maths &amp; English)</b>						<b>9.00 (8)</b>	<b>.10</b>	<b>.11</b>	<b>.17</b>
	<b>Constant</b>	-1.30 (0.89)							
	<b>SC3mothinv (mother's involvement)</b>	0.62 (0.20)	1.26	1.85	2.72				
	Social Class	0.38** (0.44)	0.61	1.46	3.48				
	Ethnicity - Black	1.54 (1.33)	0.34	4.65	62.76				
	Ethnicity - Indian	3.02* (1.45)	1.20	20.44	349.28				
	Ethnicity - Other	1.60 (1.07)	0.61	4.97	40.49				
	SC3mothinv by Black	-1.05 (0.74)	0.08	.35	1.49				
	SC3mothinv by Indian	-1.57* (0.77)	0.05	.21	0.95				
	SC3mothinv by Other	-1.13 (0.63)	0.10	.32	1.10				

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

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