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Being Nepali in Doncaster: Negotiating New Understandings of Identity

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Candidate Declaration

I hereby declare that:

1. I have not been enrolled for another award of the University, or other academic or professional organisation, whilst undertaking my research degree.

2. None of the material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

3. I am aware of and understand the University's policy on plagiarism and certify that this thesis is my own work. The use of all published or other sources of material consulted have been properly and fully acknowledged.

4. The work undertaken towards the thesis has been conducted in accordance with the SHU Principles of Integrity in Research and the SHU Research Ethics Policy.

5. The word count of the thesis is 79,703.

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Abstract

Nepali diasporas are prominent but under researched. This thesis focuses on the identities of a group of Nepali migrants in Doncaster, and the extent to which their homeland habitus dictate positionality of 'self' and 'collectiveness' in their adopted land, and among the Doncaster Nepali diaspora and wider society. Drawing on life history narratives from 17 in-depth interviews across a period of three years, I explore how migration experiences shape knowledge and realities among this emerging, Nepali-born population. I consider how some aspects of historical Nepali social practices remain immovable outside the country of birth (caste and ethnic differences) while others are challenged (gendered identities). Both present notions of identity as lived experiences which are negotiated and adapted to the social environment and context.

Being Nepali is deeply rooted within the norms and values of individuals' experiences pre-relocation. Doncaster's Nepali diaspora continues the ethnic and caste divide obstructing attempts between different cultural Nepali groups to cohere. Instead, the emphasis is on differences and not similarities of shared identity. Preference is given to 'fitting in' with the customs and practices of the host nation. Respondents no longer see Nepal as a homeland they can relate to and find themselves in a diasporic community that does not meet fully their communal needs and expectations.

This research uncovers a new understanding of a diasporic community in the UK. Individuals navigate their way around past exposure of culture in their country of birth, negotiate the outcome of migration and the impact this has on identity formation. This process creates individualised understandings of being Nepali. Older migrants, parents and grandparents, seek to pass an emphasised version of Nepali-ness to the next generation.

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Chapter One: Introduction

> *'Coming to the UK I did feel different to everyone else. I had spent almost 21 years in Nepal so everything I knew and had learnt up until that point was from a Nepali angle. Adjusting to life here [in Doncaster] was difficult but it helped being able to speak Nepali with other family members who were here [in Doncaster], and practice Nepali customs and values I was familiar with. Having said that, when there weren't many Nepalis here [in Doncaster], it made things easier for me. If it wasn't for that, things might have been a lot different'*- Anonymous, 2010.

1.1 Rationale of Research

The focus of this research is the negotiation of identity among a group of Nepalis who have relocated from Nepal to Doncaster. My interest in the Nepali[1] community in Doncaster, my hometown, came in part from my Master's degree research. I attempted to highlight the struggles and issues faced by a South Asian woman who had moved to the UK after living in Nepal for more than 20 years. The primary aim of this was to establish how the journey she had undertaken had impacted her self-identity as a Nepali woman resettling in British society. Findings from this research uncovered notions of culture shock, the negotiation of various forms of identity, and self-esteem issues.

My Master's research also made me consider my own cultural heritage. Coming from a background which encompasses both British and Nepali values[2], geographical relocation from the country of birth was something I had always been acutely aware of, although it was not something I had directly experienced. I had a sense of knowing what it was like to engage in an alien environment, and regular family holidays to Nepal solidified this. A sense of excitement and anticipation followed by apprehension accompanied every trip

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[1]In the research and literature I reviewed during this study, and in the language used by my sample, I found 'Nepali' and 'Nepalese' were used interchangeably. Both refer to the same thing, referencing various aspects including the citizens, language, values and customs of descendants originating from the country of Nepal. For consistency purposes I have mostly used 'Nepali' in these instances and only deviate to 'Nepalese' if it is used by an author, scholar or any of my participants.

[2]I am UK born and raised by parents who grew up in Nepal and have been settled in Doncaster for almost 35 years.

to Nepal. Going to Nepal meant acclimatising to the weather, food, general culture and the constant requests to *'say something in Nepali, it sounds funny in your British accent.'* As a child I found it amusing; as an adult, it was annoying. But my stays in Nepal were always temporary; no more than three or four weeks. I always knew I would eventually come back to the UK, back to my home in Doncaster. As a child I often wondered how I would cope if circumstances dictated the need for me to relocate and settle permanently in Nepal. Now, as an adult who has spent the best part of 30 years in the UK, I *know* I would struggle.

Also, growing up in South Yorkshire in ethnically diverse Doncaster, I became aware of white friends and acquaintances using *'Asian'* as an umbrella term for anyone who had brown skin colouring. I had groups of friends who would sit together and talk about impending Eid[3] celebrations whilst others planned weekend trips with family to the Gurdwara[4]. I soon realised I had no one to share my excitement about festivals such as Dashain[5] and Tihar[6]. As a result, aspects of my Nepali identity became stagnate, unchallenged and dormant. It became limited to family and family only. Solely interacting with family members and not being able to develop features of my Nepali-ness beyond those boundaries shaped my thinking and behaviour about *being Nepali*. I embark on this doctoral journey with those attitudes and values at the forefront of my own personal understanding. This research frame uncovers the behaviours and attitudes of individuals who have lived experiences in both Nepal and the UK as a means of filling in gaps of knowledge specific to Nepalis and Nepali diaspora, as well as discovering how this resonates with what I know to be *being Nepali.*

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[3] Eid marks the end of the Islamic month of fasting and is celebrated by Muslims around the world.

[4] A place of worship for Sikhs.

[5] Dashain (or Dushera or Bijaya Dasami) is a festival celebrated by Nepali Hindus and symbolises the victory of good over evil. For some this celebration is represented through Goddess Durga's defeat of a demon and for others, its significance is on Lord Ram's victory over Ravana.

[6] Tihar, also known as Deepawali, is celebrated across five days by Nepalis and Hindus to worship the Goddess of wealth and prosperity, Laxmi, as well as welcoming the Festival of Light.

My own situated position, therefore, both as a researcher attempting to explore multiple identity forms of Nepali diaspora in Doncaster, and as an 'insider' (Paechter, 2012) operating within, across but also outside the boundaries of identity markers (Cohen, 1985; Anthias, 2016) is another facet to this research. It presents an emotional grounding which, according to Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen and Liamputtong (2009, p. 61) is lacking where *'researchers' experience of undertaking qualitative research'* is concerned. This retrospective element not only helps facilitate a more holistic understanding in a study that is sensitive in nature (Paechter, 2012) - where I am able to remove myself from the research environment, conditioning and respondents and truly reflect on what has been researched (Melrose, 2002) - but also provides further contribution to learning. The rationale behind this thesis addresses this gap in knowledge as well as my own justification for undertaking this study.

Relocating to a different geographical land requires physical movement from one area to another. This movement of individuals and groups is known as human migration. The term migration is often used interchangeably with diaspora (Shuval, 2000), which refers to the displacement of people who aim to maintain, create or invent ties to their homeland in their adopted land (Safran, 1991). Diaspora is underpinned by specific characteristics as a result of resettlement. Community is understood through ethnic-consciousness, social relationships and networking opportunities in the adopted land with a like-minded population (Safran, 1991; Clifford, 1994). To study this effectively, academics have suggested understanding diaspora as a socially constructed formation (Brubaker, 2005). The mechanics of its construction are dependent on time, place and identity (Wimmer & Glick-Schiller, 2002), suggesting it is constantly in flux and therefore difficult to define and categorise. Community is therefore seen as playing a significant role among diasporas in *'generating people's sense of belonging'* (Crow & Allan, 1994, p. 6) outside the homeland as it illuminates a sense of belonging through community organisations (Cohen, 1985; Block, 2008). According to Gupta and Ferguson (1997, p. 39), the homeland:

> *'…often serve[s] as symbolic anchors of community for dispersed people. This has been long true of immigrants who use memory of place to*

construct their new world imaginatively. "Homeland" in this way remains one of the most powerful unifying symbols for mobile and displaced people.'

The symbolic nature of diaspora is acknowledged by Gupta and Ferguson (1997) as a collective association by those who have experienced something similar. Turner and Kleist (2013) consider diaspora as often aligned with collectivism and cohesion but argue this is not always reflective of actual diasporic outcomes. Instead, they posit diaspora underlines division and those who are part of a diaspora are just as likely to share aspects of *'sameness'* with those outside the group in the adopted land. This unearths the subjective framework in which diaspora is understood. How people adapt to a new culture is imagined through the experiences of and exposure to the homeland, but also how this is negotiated as an outcome of the movement itself. It is because of these subjective experiences that researchers and academics rely on personal narratives to comprehend the impact of migration and diasporic journeys (Bressey, 2005; Blunt, 2007).

According to Finney and Simpson (2009) migration is central to local ethnic diversification and population change. Ethnic paradigms are synonymous with distinct boundary formation (Barth, 1969) and gives rise to exclusion (Rex, 1973) which is likely to impact diasporic settlement in the host country. Nonetheless, ethnic and diasporic identity heavily depends on the convergence of shared common ground amongst individuals and groups, and it is through these very similarities they look to *'shield to protect, preserve and maintain the ethnic culture'* away from the homeland (Gautam, 2013, p. 7).

Research into South Asian[7] migration and diaspora is vast and mostly found in relation to the economy, political science and history (Bruslé & Varrel, 2012).

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[7]I have used *'South Asian'* or *'South Asia'* throughout the thesis to provide context of Nepali representation where there are gaps in knowledge specific to Nepal or Nepalis. My use of these terms derives from the United Nations World Population Prospects' definition of *'Southern Asia'* which collectively identifies a geographical space consisting of the following countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal (United Nations World Population Prospects, 2017). I acknowledge this covers a broad spectrum of countries with inevitable differences in cultural formation and identity. However, the purpose of this research is not to uncover regional

There has been wide dispersion of South Asian diaspora across the globe (Shukla, 2001). Its prominence as a phenomenon in a globalised world (Robertson, 1992; Clifford, 1994) has raised questions over Nepal's absence within the migration discourse and the lack of attention it has been given by scholars and policy makers (Pillai, 2013). This is despite the Nepali diaspora contributing approximately a quarter of Nepal's GDP through financial remittances (Pillai, 2013). This admission underlines a gap in potential crucial knowledge. Not only does it suggest a lack of research within this field about Nepali experiences, but it also highlights the actual volume of Nepali migration. If there has been an increase in Nepalis leaving their country of birth, which has approximately 27 million people (Subedi, 2015), it is important to consider the factors pertaining to this movement and establish how it may impact an individual or a community away from their homeland.

The focus of this study makes this an important but emotive topic of research (Crowther & Lloyd-Williams, 2012). It uncovers how identity is understood and operationalised over an individual's lifetime as a result of migration. The dichotomy of belonging and difference (Cohen, 1985; Anthias, 2016) is perhaps an inevitable yet overarching paradigm to this experience. Before I present my aims, objectives and research questions, below I provide a brief overview of two key components on which this study is based: the collective population (Nepalis) and location of fieldwork (Doncaster).

1.2 Nepal: Who are Nepalis?

The sovereign state of Nepal is located in South Asia between two economic giants; China and India (see Appendix 1 for map of Nepal). Nepal has invented and reinvented itself throughout history, from the rule of the Thakuri Kings in the 12th century to the Malla dynasty (Winkler, 1984). Whelpton (2005) suggests Nepal's current form emerged in the late 18th century after the small kingdom of Gorkha took control of land in the Kathmandu Valley area, submerging its terrain and forming what is now known as Nepal. Whelpton (2005, p. 4) further

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similarities and differences of diasporic journeys and identities. References to South Asia or South Asian communities are used for indicative purposes only, to foreground any patterns or trends which may aid understanding towards Nepal and Nepalis.

identifies what he describes as *'an important motif in the history of modern Nepal'* which pronounces the collective identity of the population through *'shared characteristics, including a particular brand of Hinduism and what is now known as Nepali language.'* He goes on to acknowledge that this collective identity led to fractions as it excluded certain sections of the population and distinguished elitist groups. This distinction essentially defined the ethnic and caste boundaries and differences. In the National Planning Commission Secretariat (2014), it was reported Nepal comprised of 125 different ethnic groups. Some scholars have focused on the lack of minority representation in decision-making roles as the primary reason for disharmony in the country today (Shrestha, 2016).

Nepal's attempts to progress and develop were hindered by a devastating earthquake in April 2015, claiming over 8,500 lives (Ulak, 2015) and leaving the country facing immediate uncertainty. It was feared tourism, one of Nepal's largest industries, would be negatively impacted, causing job losses and compounding Nepal's economic troubles (Ulak, 2015; Beirman, Upadhayaya, Pradhananya & Darcy, 2018).

1.3 Introducing the Doncaster Context

Doncaster is a town in South Yorkshire, England, with an early history linked to the Romans (Barber, 2007). In the 20th century, Doncaster had a proud mining heritage and has a wholly white working-class foundation. In the mid-1980s it suffered under Thatcher's government, leading to high levels of unemployment and deprivation (Standing, 2014). Since the turn of the 21st century and in line with global migration, Thorleifsson (2016) posits Doncaster as a multicultural town which includes the UK's biggest Roma and Traveller populations. She suggests the myriad ethnicities, religions and languages found in the town today has left many Doncastarians questioning their identity, with migration growth identified as one of several *'key factors nurturing the rising appeal of UKIP's nationalism'* (Thorleifsson, 2016, p. 567). According to the 2011 UK census, Doncaster recorded its population at 302,402 (Office of National Statistics, 2012). Within that, 320 individuals identified as belonging to the Nepalese ethnic group (including Gurkha). Adapted from this dataset, Chart 1 provides a

breakdown of Doncaster's South Asian representation in accordance to the United Nations World Population Prospects' (2017) definition.

Chart 1: Breakdown of South Asian[8] Representation in Doncaster, 2011 census

Category	Percentage
Nepalese (incl. Gurkha) and variations there of	5.6%
Pakistani, and variations there of	48.1%
Indian, and variations there of	33.3%
Iranian, and variations there of	4.2%
Afghan, and variations there of	3.9%
Sri Lankan, and variations there of	2.8%
Bangladeshi, and variations there of	2.1%
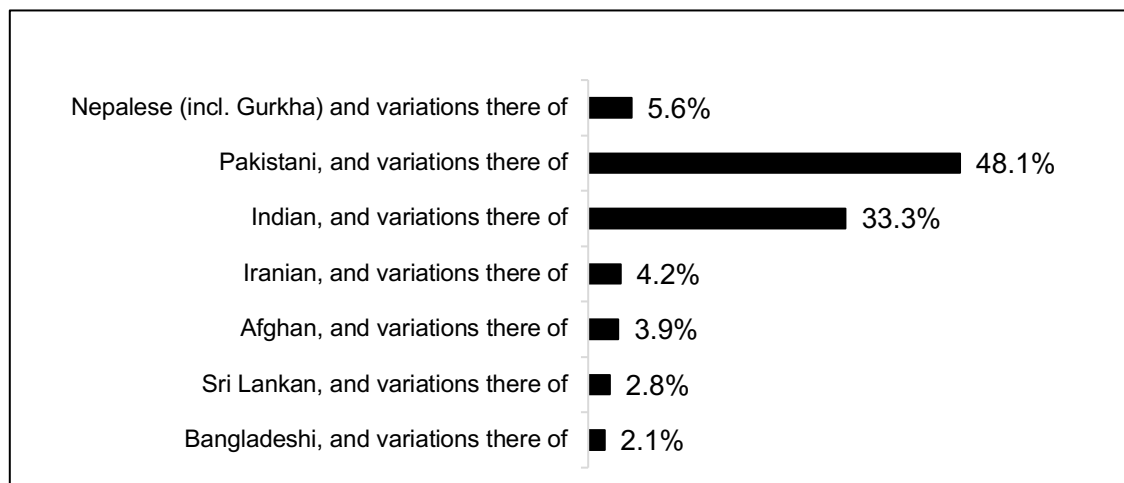
Chart 1 positions all variations[9] of the Nepali population in Doncaster as the third most representative South Asian community, after Pakistani and Indian groups. The growth of Nepali representation in Doncaster is something I have noticed in everyday life; I hear the language spoken more in public places and especially since the establishment of The British Gurkhas Community. Initial research of secondary sources confirmed this to be the case, which heightened my intrigue to study the emergence[10] of this population and how they identify themselves away from their country of birth.

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[8]No written representation of Bhutanese or Maldivian in 2011 census.
[9]The reference to 'variations there of' in the chart refers to combining all relevant variations of each ethnic grouping as categorised in the census, including: White, Mixed/multiple ethnic group, Asian/Asian British and Other ethnic group.
[10]I use this subjectively as the classification of Nepalis living in the UK may have previously been underreported, as suggested by Adhikari (2013) i.e., indicating they are 'Other Asian' but not specifying their Nepali background, for example. The use of secondary sources in these instances is for indicative purposes only.

1.4 Aims, Objectives and Research Questions

So far, I have introduced key components and concepts by which this research is framed. The primary aim of this research is to investigate how individuals belonging to a Nepali background (those born in Nepal) have negotiated their identity as a result of geographical relocation (from Nepal to Doncaster). These participatory markers present ideas of what it means to be part of a community - a population occupying a specific geographical space, brought together by shared cultural beliefs and practices (Redfield, 1960). The concept of community and what it entails has developed over time. Early anthropological literature defines community as a shared relationship between social groups and individuals either out of choice or requirement (Redfield, 1960; Bates & Bacon, 1972) and grounded by common social traits, including gender roles and occupation (Bates & Bacon, 1972). In recent times, communal selection and acceptance has evolved to consider imagined and constructed membership (Seton-Watson, 1977; Anderson, 1983; Cashman, 2011) to endorse a sense of collective belonging. Using both early and more contemporary definitions, this research also attempts to recognise the significance of community amongst this group of Nepalis in Doncaster, what it means to them, the extent to which it is desired, the boundaries of communal membership and how, if at all, it is achieved.

Therefore, endorsing a social constructionism paradigm and qualitative methodological approach, my research draws on the experiences of 17 individuals to analyse the outcome that migration away from the country of birth has on shaping identity. Uncovering this impact gives a greater understanding of identity conceptualisation and how it is accomplished in interactions with others (Goffman, 1959; Carter & Fuller, 2015) and in the awareness of diaspora (Cohen, 1997; Gilroy, 1999; Vertovec, 1999). Building on existing literature within a specific theoretical and philosophical framework, I examine how identity is constructed based on fluidity and flexibility, including the dynamic of power relations. I also reflect on how exposure to two different cultures can result in a sense of liberation and freedom for some, and restriction and limitation for others. I centralise the act of migration in maintaining, developing and creating identity experiences by which a minority group can navigate a sense of 'self' and 'collectivism'. In doing so I reflect on my own identity position as both a

researcher and Nepali self, and how this impacts the undertaking and eventual empirical research findings. I address the following research questions:

- To what extent do individuals develop a new understanding of (Nepali) identity?
- How do these understandings deviate from what they had previously understood to be their (Nepali) identity pre-relocation?
- What role has resettlement in Doncaster played in their understanding of self (as an individual)?
- What role has resettlement in Doncaster played in their understanding of Nepalis as a collective group?
- How do these individuals negotiate and/or navigate how they present themselves within 'British society'?
- What is the significance of maintaining links to Nepal for individuals who construct a life outside their country of birth?

1.5 Thesis Structure

This thesis begins with a grounding in the key theoretical debates and definitions that underpin my research. Chapter Two reviews the existing relevant literature and is split into two parts. Part I starts by conceptualising and theorising identity. The research is positioned within a social constructionist framework, discussing identity formation as a transient construct that is operationalised to fit different contexts and environments. This leads to a discussion of national identity and how these affiliations are formed, and then on to the prominence of ethnic nationalism. The final section introduces a theoretical framework for migration and diaspora, and critically assesses the reasons for transnational movement and the possible outcomes for individuals and groups.

Part II of the literature review focuses on Nepal and begins with an overview of migration from historical patterns to more recent trends, suggesting employment and education opportunities as primary drivers for outflow. Then, a discussion of the three fundamental identity markers found in Nepali literature - gender, caste and ethnicity; these are central to understanding and conceptualising identity in

this research group. I argue the significance of each in positioning Nepal as a nation flawed by disproportionate representation and the consequential promotion of prejudicial attitudes and values.

In Chapter Three, I outline the methodology and methods used in this research. I reiterate my ontological and epistemological stance of social constructionism, arguing realities and knowledge are considered within the framework of subjective constructs which validates, and explains, my use of a largely qualitative approach. I define my research design as a case study and incorporate findings from initial exploratory research, discuss the usability of life history narratives to elicit in-depth, rich findings. I explain my rationale for participant selection criterions, introduce my final sample, and explain how narratives were obtained and how I performed analysis. In considering ethical principles, I reflect on the research process, acknowledging difficulties in recruiting respondents and the positionality of my role as not only a researcher, but of someone researching aspects of her own self-identity.

The next three chapters form the body of analysis in this study. Chapter Four reveals the extent to which caste and ethnic disparity play a part in the sample's understanding of what it means to be Nepali. It is mostly derived from respondents' early life experiences in Nepal where the influence of caste and ethnic differences can be found in everyday life. This chapter explores the strength of those experiences and how they have formed a basis by which individuals conceptualise and operationalise their caste and ethnic identity in Doncaster. Findings demonstrate a role reversal where historically marginalised minority groups in Nepal enjoy significant numerical representation and therefore perceived domination in Doncaster. This chapter suggests pocket communities are conceived and favoured with little desire to assimilate under a collective Nepali identity. Instead, greater consideration is given to adhering and assimilating to the host country's ways, where respondents believe there are higher levels of tolerance for 'being me'.

In Chapter Five, I identify the importance of gendered identity in Nepal and split the analysis, focusing separately on the experiences of women and men. I examine how each gender (re)negotiates traditional stereotypical views which

are driven by circumstances. Centralising the work of Pascal (2003) and early learning, the chapter explores the growth of women after relocation in aspects of self-identity and self-worth. I suggest women experience fewer restrictions post relocation and increase their decision-making powers. Conversely, men navigate an inferior role compared with their gendered experiences in Nepal. The final section discusses marriage, specifically arranged marriage, highlighting the vast difference in matrimonial experience between the two genders.

Chapter Six examines how respondents relate to their definition of Nepali identity and values dependent on age of arrival into the UK. I argue there is greater urgency among the childhood migration group who are likely to need and want to maintain links to Nepal in order to fully understand their sense of 'being'. Both adult migration groups navigate a more measured outlook towards Nepali-ness, which I believe is the outcome of experiencing a balance of time in Nepal and the UK as their identity negotiations are comparatively more informed.

And finally, Chapter Seven, the conclusion, reflects on the overall research. I revisit the research aims, objectives and questions and discuss the challenges of meeting these and adapting to changes at various junctures throughout the journey. I argue that Nepali identity among a diasporic group can only be understood within the context of their environment and for that reason I explore what it means to be Nepali from a dual perspective; being Nepali in Nepal and being Nepali in the UK, specifically Doncaster. I discuss the situated position of my own identity as a researcher with links to the research frame as a contribution to learning for others to follow, gaps in my study and outline prospective lines of enquiry for further research in the future.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction: Overview of Part I and Part II of the Literature Review

This chapter presents the literature and theoretical debates which structure and frame my research. Migration into the UK has increased significantly since the mid-1990s (Office of National Statistics, 2015) as individuals and groups search for what they believe to be a better standard of life away from their country of birth. Drivers for this include the prospects of enhanced access to work and education, with relocation decisions being made from both individual and family perspectives (Massey et al., 1993; 1998; Hagen-Zanker, 2008). The two main elements of this research are migration (including diaspora) and identity (before and after relocation from Nepal). The scale of migration-related emergence, causality, development and outcome encompasses a wide range of possibilities. This thesis attempts to uncover the forms of identity the respondents in this research had established in Nepal and how this unravels in a new social environment.

I have divided this literature review into Part I and Part II. In Part I, I review the theoretical foundations of this research. I begin by introducing the notion of identity, the various forms of its conceptualisation, and the critical approaches to the understanding of this concept. I adopt, among other approaches, a social constructionism perspective for its understanding of the social world through subjective agents who constantly adapt and interpret the social context of their environment (Goffman, 1959). I argue the importance of this approach to my research, specifically for the unfixed, fluid nature of identity that it signifies, which heavily underpins my research. I also present the work of Bourdieu (1986) and consider aspects of his social theory in communicating identity as a marker by which individuals and groups can be distinguished. Then I approach the concept of national identity, exploring its historical emergence and debating its definition in an attempt to understand how affiliation to a nation is constituted. This draws out prospective links about national sentiment, which groups who have left their homeland may share. Finally, I move on to a critical theoretical overview on migration and diaspora, suggesting reasons for relocation,

examining how it impacts individuals and groups, and outlining the potential implications for their lives and identity.

In Part II of this review, I move away from broad theoretical approaches and focus on Nepal. I begin by presenting research and studies on Nepali migration and diaspora, and elucidating key findings which reveal three key elements of identity formation – gender, caste, and ethnic identity. Subsequent sections then examine each element in turn. Firstly, I present an understanding of gender and identity from a South Asian regional perspective, using examples of gender-based migration. This is followed by an examination of the focus and prevalence of gender bias in Nepal, which provides an understanding of why some Nepalis choose to migrate. Finally, I discuss the formation and development of Nepal's caste and ethnic make-up, and how these are markers of discrimination in Nepali society.

2.2 PART I Literature Review: Theoretical Framework

> '*If now I am interested… in the way in which a subject constitutes himself in an active fashion, by the practices of the self, these practices are nevertheless not something that the individual invents himself. They are patterns that he finds in his culture and which are proposed, suggested and imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group*'- (Michel Foucault, 1991, p. 113).

2.2.1 Introducing Identity

The way individuals identify themselves is not easy to define or quantify and this has been studied at many different levels within academia. This research is fundamentally encompassed within the fields of social sciences and humanities and, from these disciplines alone, there are different interpretations about race, gender and sexual identity, state sovereignty, and national and ethnic identity (Fearon, 1999). Gleason (1983, p. 931) argues the meaning of identity had become '*more and more cliché, its meaning grew progressively more diffuse, thereby encouraging increasingly loose and irresponsible usage.*' Its underlining broad concept brings together beliefs, expressions, practices and qualities that help differentiate an individual or group from others. In this way, identity becomes part of the lived, everyday life experiences of individuals, from the ordinary to the complex (Jenkins, 2008). It is on this basis that the following chapter explores how identity is applied and used to explain the intricacies of an individual's sense of self.

This research places primary focus on identity because it aims to uncover how a group of Nepalis have evolved after relocating from their homeland to Doncaster, and how its members have maintained and challenged their definitions of 'self', both singularly and collectively. Various forms of identity are understood as the basis of personal, phenomenological experiences (particularly versions of ipse identity, as explained later in this chapter) that continually change and fluctuate. This frames the argument by which some scholars reference identity – as a fluid and transferrable marker (Barth, 1969; Hall, 2000). The changes that occur are often dictated by the social environment individuals or groups find themselves in (Goffman, 1959), making the context of these developments equally significant. Before applying these

principles to my empirical findings and exploring the relevance of these interpretations, it is important to signpost the main theory that underpins it – social constructionism.

Social constructionism suggests humans actively construct and reconstruct the world, making the society we live in open to interpretation. This is negotiated by individuals and groups alike, endorsing higher levels of accurate and true reflections of everyday life through lived experiences (Murphy, Dingwall, Greatbatch & Parker, 1998). The development of this theoretical premise comes from Schutz (1962) who argued that society is the product of humans who create a reality which is relevant to them. He summarises:

'[T]he social world is not essentially structureless. It has a particular meaning and relevance for the human beings living, thinking, and acting therein. They have preselected and preinterpreted this world by a series of common-sense constructs of the reality of daily life, and it is these thought-objects which determine their behaviour, define the goal of their action, the means available for attaining them - in brief, which help them find their bearings within the natural and socio-cultural environment and to come to terms with it' (Schutz, 1962, p. 6).

Schutz (1962) considers the use of structures within the construction of realities, focusing on the conscious experiences of individuals and how they apply the realities in a wider context. The idea that structures provide an agenda by which human beings abide, or otherwise, is revisited later in the chapter. Schutz's theory is further developed by Berger and Luckmann (1966) who argue that the subjective nature of man-made structures, and therefore the 'truth' as we know it, is variable. The paradigm they introduce theorises that the social reality of the world encompasses independent subtle realism (Hammersley, 2000) and these realities and 'truths' are understood through actual, everyday life experiences (Berger & Luckmann, 1991).

With the formations of social constructionism in mind, the next part of the literature review theorises how identity can be operationalised in a broad sense. The chapter moves on to theories and critical discussions about how identity is considered alongside an individual's unique characteristics. Subsequent analytical chapters identify the dominant forms of distinctiveness in relation to

migration and examine the influence of geographical movement on individual and collective perceptions.

2.2.2 Theorising Identity

The origin of the word 'identity' comes from the Latin *idem*, meaning 'the same' in English. Pellauer and Dauenhauer (2016) cite the work of French philosopher Paul Ricoeur who posits the idea of the '*capable human being'.* Ricoeur (1978) suggests humans possess both strengths and flaws and it is through them that we develop a sense of responsibility. However, Ricoeur's conceptualisation ignores the idea that social agents are fully engaged and responsible for their 'self' early in their lives. Instead, he suggests that self-understanding and knowledge come about through individuals' interactions and integration with society and other individuals at any given time. Through his research on the significance of narrative identity and selfhood, Ricoeur makes the following comment:

'Idem identity is the identity of something that is always the same which never changes, ipse identity is the sameness across and through change. Self-identity involves both dimensions: I am and am not the same person I was ten years ago. It is the existence of ipse identity that a self is better thought of in terms of the question "who?" than in terms of the question "what" is a self' (Ricoeur in Pellauer & Dauenhauer, 2016, para. 25).

Ricoeur's development of idem and ipse identity stem from what he believed to be the over-simplification of numerical and qualitative identity[11] when referring to the self (Glas, 2003). Ricoeur found past understandings of personal identity failed to fully acknowledge the importance of selfhood as a prominent feature of identity (Romano, 2016), leading him to differentiate between idem and ipse, and thus giving two contrasting modes of identification. Idem identity presents a more rigid and objective form. It asks what the self already consists of and, in doing so, accentuates identity as a continued and ever-present marker which distinguishes one individual from another (Beller & Leersenn, 2001). These markers are likely to be born out of pre-existing societal constructs, labels created to categorise individuals and groups, and they reinforce the rigidity of

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[11]Qualitative identity refers to identity that shares mutual properties with some variation around the degree to which they are identical, numerical identity suggests one of the same; they are one as opposed to two (Glas, 2003).

these labelled constructs. Within ipse identity, there are four divisions: singularity of self (how self defines self over time), practical (what is valued by self), biographical (self-reflection of life), and qualitative (what self is like) (Kaufmann, 2010). The crux of ipse identity is based on the affirmation of one or more of these divisions, regardless of change of any kind.

Although the discussion on identity presented so far is based around philosophical ontological definitions, its premise helps to formulate a significant understanding of an interchangeable term often used within social sciences. Idem and ipse identities need to be understood and looked at almost as a co-dependent bi-dialectical relationship (Wiercinski, 2013). Idem identity comprises distinguishable characteristics which are largely fixed and part of our everyday identity (used to group individuals into categories based on shared, same traits). Ipse identity is a self-construct reaffirming an individual's own positioning, manifesting identity through narratives which are individualistic in nature (Kaufmann, 2010). Both are the basis of the empirical work in this thesis.

Thus, narrative identity is an evolving life story offered by individuals to present a complete account of their being, and it is often suppressed or ignored (McAdams & McClean, 2013). The reconstruction of life events in a timely, chronological fashion from the past to the present effectively sees parts of a narrative (or various life stages) as more than discrete moments in time. These events are a continual flow of episodes which unite various fragments of our existence to help frame our reality and identity. This idea is a holistic approach to understanding the social world. In order to recognise how social realities are understood and how they shape our identity, it is important to understand how they are interpreted.

The first exploration of the holistic approach in a social context was posited by Durkheim (1893) although the term 'holism' was initially coined in the work of Jan Smuts in the 1920s (Poynton, 1987). Durkheim's (1893) holistic approach is based on society functioning unanimously with all parts converging to become a whole, a society where the collective holds greater value than the individual. Conversely, Weber (1930) suggests the independence of individuals' behaviour is key when attempting to understand social phenomena. Durkheim (1893) and

Weber (1930) present opposing social theories: one suggests collective reasoning as a way of understanding how society functions, and the other suggests autonomy, indicating a methodological dichotomy. Returning to a social world interpretation, Smuts' definition (1926) extends Durkheim's functionalist approach and redefines the world according to three entities: matter, life and mind (Russell, 2016).

Smuts (1926) places the interconnectedness of key agents at its core, advocating that although each entity serves a purpose, its full value can only be seen through these singular entities coming together as a collective whole. Although Smuts' use of holism is largely applied to science and medicine (Russell, 2016), it forms a basis from which other disciplines can develop a trajectory to relate to wider principles. From a sociological perspective, it adds to the debate of how structures are used to perceive social situations. Extending the approaches of Durkheim (1893) and Weber (1930), social theorist Bourdieu in Inglis and Thorpe (2012, p. 213) describes *'…the conjunction between how social structures act on individuals in that [social class] group, and how individuals actively respond to…those structures.'*

Bourdieu's influence in social theory is important as it paves the way for two key contributions – cultural capital and habitus – to explain how social inequalities are repeatedly reproduced (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014). Deriving from what many believe to be a Marxist standpoint (Rasmussen, 1981; Ferry & Renault, 1990), Bourdieu's idea of cultural capital was first conceptualised in the mid-1960s after his research into the interrelationship between education and social and cultural reproduction (Bourdieu, 1973; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). This research suggests that the education system, as an institution, legitimises domination through class and cultural milieu. Furthermore, Bourdieu (1986) argues that the format and structures imposed by educational institutions are constructed around the acquisition of key skills, knowledge and behaviour, and consequently disadvantage groups who lack the socioeconomic status to contend with this. The emphasis schools[12] place on achievement and merit is

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[12]Claussen and Osborne (2013) suggest this outcome is not specific to schools but applies to any institution where there are attempts to inform, i.e. the workplace, and therefore understand human behaviour.

indicative of cultural capital and not natural talent (Keskiner, 2015). Therefore, schools accentuate social inequality as those with a high socioeconomic status retain superior cultural capital compared to those with a lower status. This disparity is born out of initial socialisation within close family circles, and conceived as primary habitus (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Bourdieu's definition of habitus was developed as a way of solving the dualism of subjectivism-objectivism; agency and structure (Brubaker, 1985). It encompasses aspects of cultural capital and is fundamentally embedded within family rearing (Power, 1999; Edgerton & Roberts, 2014). In a broad sense, habitus is *'the characteristic ways of thinking, feeling, acting and experiencing shared by all members of a certain group of people'* (Inglis & Thorpe, 2012, p. 213). For Bourdieu (1986) the habitus is learned but the characteristics that manifest during primary socialisation in childhood (often driven by familial ideals and values) typify a certain cultural grounding for the individual, both mentally and physically. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) suggest these features – which range from language to taste, from perceptions to reasoning – are likely to go undetected because they are mostly understood through the individual's dominant society where they find like for like with those who share a similar habitus. Only when this is challenged, i.e. when individuals are away from the dominant framework that endorses this habitus, does self-realisation of primary habitus become apparent.

The paradigm in which the habitus is centred suggests both a '*structured structure'* and a '*structuring structure'* (Bourdieu, 1992), implying that the habitus is fundamentally linked to social class, and that this defines our understanding of what is achievable within our class boundaries (Rehbein, 2011). Bourdieu goes on to argue how the production and reproduction of structures and practices can be applied through the adaptive nature of habitus:

> *'…habitus, as the product of social conditionings, and thus of history… is endlessly transformed, either in a direction that reinforces it, when embodied structures of expectation encounter structures of objective chances in harmony with these expectations, or in a direction that transforms it and, for instance, raises or lowers the expectations and aspirations.'* (Bourdieu, 1992, p. 116).

Therefore, Bourdieu's habitus is not static and it enables individuals and groups to adapt, in moderation, to new circumstances (Reay, 2004). Bourdieu's development of self through habitus encourages a foundational sameness which helps promote a sense of belonging to a wider community. Shared cultural and social capitals legitimise commonalities between groups (Adams, 2006) which is operationalised in what Bourdieu (1977) describes as *'fields'* – constant existing boundaries (Adams, 2006) – whereby different social groups face challenges of different *'fields'* within their present surroundings. This helps define the dominance of the habitus and how individuals and groups utilise the habitus to conform or confront these challenges.

The foundations of early socialisation are crucial in Bourdieu's theoretical standpoint, but his rigid focus on this is one of several criticisms against his work. His notion of habitus is regarded by some as rendering all human activity down to pre-determined external causality (social class) involving little or no individual agency, where structures perform an arbitrary function with no accountability outcome (Jenkins, 1982; King, 1999; 2000). This is in contrast to Giddens (1984) who projects social structure as both the incentive and result of social action (Barley, 2014).

Furthermore, Bourdieu's stance that behaviour derives from practical schemes rather than consciousness dilutes the connection of reflexivity in social life (Giddens, 1991; Sweetman, 2003). This reductive approach presents a theoretical framework which can be applied to the wider world in a simplistic way, overriding the complexities and intricacies that make up an individual's identity. Bourdieu's emphasis on disposition – the natural and inherent drive to act or behave in a certain way – negates the centrality Goffman (1959) gives to social context and how it is used to understand the self. The symbolic interactionism from which Goffman's work stems[13] is incorporated within a social constructionist outlook and focuses on the interpretation of individuals'

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[13]This label of adopting a symbolic interactionist approach was rejected by Goffman (1969) because of gaps and limitations within the perspective. He utilised different theories to garner significance in multiple social settings (Psathas, 1996). However, his work contained themes which epitomised symbolic interactionism theory (identity and shared meaning) making Goffman a crucial figure within the philosophy (Carter & Fuller, 2016).

interactions in society (Carter & Fuller, 2016). Through this interplay – as described in his theory, Dramaturgical Analysis – Goffman (1959) explores identity as a transient form where individuals (actors) act (perform) in society (on stage). The elicitation of these performances is determined by particular aspects of the identity the individual wants to portray, and is modified according to the social environment they occupy at the time (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2017).

Goffman's contribution to the sociological field has been criticised for its narrowness and lack of reference to power and social stratification (Gouldner, 1970). However, the shortcomings of both theoretical arguments by Bourdieu (1973) and Goffman (1959) complement each other when combined. This leads to an inter-theoretical understanding of the foundations of identity and the social world. One way in which the social world can be understood by individuals and groups is by seeing the world from a cultural perspective, through cultural identity.

One of the earliest definitions of culture to include humans emerged in the 19th century to describe Western civilisation (Goldstein, 1957). As this notion grew, culture established itself an as attribute of the aristocracy with political and economic hierarchy underpinning cultural power (Schech & Haggis, 2000). When culture is coupled with identity, as discussed earlier in this chapter, it presents a sense of collectivism where individuals share cultural features of identity such as ethnicity, religion, nationality and gender (Hofstede, 2001), and self is realised through shared common ground. Hall (1994) subscribes to the notion of identity as limitless and offers two explanations of cultural identity. The first positions the concept as a reflection of similar and shared practices which sanction the collective make-up of individuals as one people. The second moves away from the idea of mutual historical and ancestral values, for example Hall (1994, p. 225) insists on the differences embodied within cultural identity, recognising *what we have become'.* Only through this approach can we really understand the role played by the past in building a sense of cultural character:

> *'Far from being externally fixed in some essentialised past, they are the subject to the continuous "play" of history, culture and power. Far from*

being grounded in a mere "recovery" of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past' (Hall, 1994, p. 225).

Hall's work on cultural identity is strongly linked to diaspora. His attention to migration movements and the assuming of different identities at different times (Hall, 1996) was central to his discussion of the Caribbean diaspora experiences and how cultural identity is produced by history and culture. Culture and cultural identity feature prominently within what theorists and scholars reason to be the crucial formation of individuals' and groups' collective identity as a marker of same and otherness. The following section identifies how this fits in with a broader marker of identity: national identity.

2.3 Nation, Nationalism and National Identity

The terms nation and nationalism have been described as in conflict with one another. There is ambiguity surrounding '*whether one believes that nationalism creates the idea of nations or that nations develop the ideas related to nationalism'* (Barrington, 1997, p. 712). Barrington (1997) cites the definition used by Anthony Smith (1991, p.14) in describing a nation as a '*named human population sharing historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties.'* Smith's work on the significance of ethnic derivation as key to illuminating why nations were created is central to his ethnosymbolism theory. He argues ethnic identity underpins nations and national identity, producing a united cultural identity (Guibernau, 2004) which:

> *'refers not to a uniformity of elements over generations but to a sense of continuity on the part of successive generations of a given cultural unit of population, to share memories of earlier events and periods of history of that unit and to the notions entertained by each generation about the collective destiny of that unit and its culture'* (Smith, 1991, p. 25).

The focus of Smith's view and the grounding of ethnosymbolism have been described by critics as peripheral due to their omission of a nation's specific political agenda (Guibernau, 2004). Despite criticism, Smith's theory of nation and how it is embedded within cultural processes is something found in other

definitions of nation (Barrington, 1997) where cultural prominence is regarded as intrinsic in national identity formation. For others who place less emphasis on culture, a nation is fundamentally identifiable through the claims of individuals and groups to a territory (Noida, 1994). There are boundaries and limitations to these territories, but the nation's actuality is *'predicated upon the collective consciousness constituted by the belief that there is a territory which belongs to only one people and that there is a people which belongs to only one territory'* (Grosby, 2002, p. 27).

Belonging to a nation through territorial affiliation has incumbent political undertones which need to be considered. In the aftermath of decolonisation, the decolonised population related to political growth and progression as a system of order and unity during a period of change and instability (Bendix, 1964). Over time as groups emerged with specific political agendas, this system encouraged civic development through a process known as nation-building. Nation-building refers to the process by which nations independently construct aspects of national identity often through the governing classes (Mylonas, 2012). It implies the construction of an environment through common symbolic, cultural, economic and social markers (including emblems, ancestral traditions and national language), which are accessible and recognisable to the whole population (Elgenuis, 2011). The process of nation-building is an attempt to homogenise different groups in society. Azar (1990) suggests that for these differences to coexist in relative harmony, social conflict would need to be removed and this can be negotiated through political representation and participation (Fisher, 1997).

Away from political power and its agenda, Grosby (2002) refers to the collective ideology that sharing geographic territory can establish bonds in a nation. The cultural landscape and natural resources of a country play an integral role in forming culture and identity because they lead to *'unsubstantiated conclusions about self-sufficiency and security'* (White, 2007, p. 36). It is from this territorial base that groups can form another collectively cohesive national identity. The symbolic memories of landscapes and natural resources bind individuals outside the distinctiveness of an ethnic, religious or political agenda (Meinig, 1979), an idea likely to be pertinent to this research.

Gellner (1983) claims nationalism creates nations and not the other way around, suggesting nations become entities through the ideologies of nationalism (Kumar, 2010) which link to form what we recognise as a nation. Nationalism can also be understood in terms of the dichotomy of civic and ethnic nationalism. This distinction within nationalism helps clarify the ambiguity of the term and led to Alter (1994, p. 8) describing this division as '*one of the most famous contributions to enquiries into nations, and one which is still most illuminating.*' Civic, or liberal, nationalism is framed around a philosophy of liberal values created by political institutions of the state and endorsed by fellow citizens (Stilz, 2009). According to this view, in order to effectively promote citizenship, much is dependent on the willingness of individuals to follow the nation's civic constitution and beliefs. Habermas (1998) affirms that migrant groups in particular should not be expected to assimilate with the host country's cultural disposition. Instead, they need to abide by its political or democratic practices (Lecours, 2000). Ethnic nationalism incorporates not just culture but also religious and ethnic identity (Muller, 2008). Through its rigid and divisive nature of inclusion and exclusion (Lecours, 2000), ethnic nationalism has been found to exacerbate issues faced by minority ethnic groups within a nation (Smith, 1994). When this is the case, the term ethnic moves from a narrow description of religion or ethnicity to an extensive one, encompassing all birth-ascribed identifiers such as caste, race, language and linguistics (Horowitz, 1984). So, a nation may have a dominant ethnic group who are heavily represented in powerful, decision-making positions, leading to the exclusion of those who are part of the same nation but underrepresented in influential and authoritative roles (Varshney, 2003).

The definitions of nation and nationalism provide an understanding of how the collective (whether civic, cultural or natural resources-based) can demonstrate certain features of a national identity. Seton-Watson (1971, p. 3) suggested the concept of nationalism could be questioned because the creation of national states are the outcome of national movements which are '*unsatisfied, whether because their claims have been refused, or because their national consciousness is still in process of formation, or because their spokesmen are themselves uncertain of their identity'.* This led him to query the foundations of a nation and how it may be perceived by the population:

'All that I can find to say is that a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation, or behave as if they have formed one. We may translate "consider themselves" as "imagine themselves"' (Seton-Watson, 1977, p. 5).

Following on from Seton-Watson's account of how nations are formed, Benedict Anderson (1983) developed his concept of 'imagined communities' in his analysis of nationalism. Anderson (1983) puts forward the idea that not everyone in one nation can connect or interact with one another, creating what he believes to be abstract or 'imagined' communities as a result. Hobsbawm (1983), like Gellner (1983), believed nationalism allowed for nations to construct and evolve over time and, in doing so, Hobsbawm (1983, p. 1) suggests nationalism is the product of '*invented traditions'* constituted by values and behaviours stretching from the past to the present day. He categorises these invented traditions in three groups:

a) '*those establishing or symbolising social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities*
b) *those establishing or legitimising institutions, status or relations of authority*
c) *those whose main purpose of socialisation is the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour'* (Hobsbawm, 1983, p. 9).

So far, this literature discussion has presented relevant arguments for my research about the inclusive and exclusive nature of nation and national identity (Bakke, 2000), highlighting elements of cohesion as well as disparity. The make-up of national identity, therefore, is paradoxical. On the one hand, it fulfils a role of collectiveness, emancipating the oppressed through a revolution against power dominance. On the other hand, belonging to a country invariably disseminates division based on each group's cultural uniqueness (Mba, 2018). This has led some scholars away from an understanding of nations as all-involving, all-encompassing political manifestations, and to shift the emphasis towards other types of political formations, including regionalism or cosmopolitanism (Beck, 2006; Kešić & Duyvendak, 2016). The implications here are a perceived lack of tolerance shown by the 'homogenous nation' for the differences generated by geographical and cultural otherness, raising the question of the voluntary-ness of nationalism. To do something voluntarily means acting on one's own free will with the freedom of choice to make an

informed decision without influence or constraint. Bakke (2000, p.7), in questioning the notion of a voluntary national identity, argues that '*in the early stages of the nation-forming process, national identity was more "voluntary" than later*' when the crux of the nation's beliefs and values, and the operationalisation of its systems, had been established.

Though there are both positive and negative permutations around national identity and how it manifests and is operationalised, its relevance remains significant, particularly in the setting of geographical movement and global assimilation (Bowen & Gaytán, 2012). Globalisation is generally understood to be a cross-border outflow of dimensions including import and export, finance and ideas of governance, culture and people (Castles & Miller, 2009). Although globalisation has paved the way for greater tolerance and acceptance of national identity through the interaction and interconnectedness of populations around the world (Smith, 2007), there are concerns that it undermines the nation and national identity (Hobsbawm, 1990). When we consider globalisation we also include the cross-border movement of people. This movement, known as diaspora, will now form the next part of this literature review and will explore in detail how it is important to the study of the Nepali diaspora.

2.4 Migration and Diaspora

Diaspora alludes to the transnational movement of a population away from the land where they have been predominantly based, their country of origin, taking with them their social, political and economic affiliations (Vertovec, 1999). The first large-scale, mass movement was thought to be the dispersion of Jews from Israel as a punishment for deserting tradition Jewish values (Cohen, 1996). The connotations surrounding the exile of this group led to early negative associations of diaspora. Not only did the dispelled have to contend with banishment from their homeland but they also had to negotiate the immediate issues of relocation to a new country (Chand, 2013). However, the term has developed over time and the reasons for leaving the homeland have varied accordingly (Cohen, 1996) and are discussed below.

Firstly, economic theorist Ravenstein (1976) observed the trends of groups of people and how they moved from heavily populated, poor, low-wage areas to

more desirable and affluent areas over the span of a century. This formed the basis of modern-day migration studies in its recognition of the push-and-pull factor of migration. The push factors to leave a country are usually forced and include social and political oppression and poor living standards. The pull factors for moving to a specific country are predominantly voluntary and self-determined and include the prospects of employment and an improved standard of living (European Communities, 2000). The influence of Ravenstein's work is linked to economic drivers, but the interdisciplinary nature of migration studies and the rate at which migration has grown has allowed for other factors, such as family, to be integrated.

Ravenstein's neoclassical economic approach involves an individual's rational, single-mindedness in their pursuit of equilibrium (Colander, Rosser & Holt, 2004), and has been criticised for its lack of succinct definition (Arango, 2000) and insufficient empirical validation (Massey et al., 1998). Acknowledgement of the role of the family, the second consideration for geographical movement away from the homeland, and its significance in migration-based decisions is also missing. Much emphasis is placed on the unilateral decision-making process by which the individual chooses (or not) to migrate, but the new economics theory of migration moves away from independent decision-making to interdependence (Stark, 1991). Greater importance is placed on other tangible variables such as family, household finances, and the political and economic stability of the homeland; these become significant influencers in making the decision to emigrate (Massey et al., 1993).

A third approach focuses on what maintains and extends migration rather than the causality of movement (Boyd, 1989). This network migration theory leans towards the pull factor of relocating (Castles & Miller, 2009). In this postulation, the idea of networks is binary; the allure of the host nation can be found via historic colonial and trade links or through crucial ties to family, friends or fellow immigrants already established in the host destination (Martinez-Brawley & Zorita, 2014). These ties explain why, during early outflow movement, some areas become densely populated with new migrant arrivals compared with other spaces in the same vicinity - the sense of familiarity allows arrivals to more easily acclimatise to the new ways of the dominant society (Martinez-Brawley &

Zorita, 2014). These vital connections help migrants to settle because *'…they lower the costs and risks of movement, and increase the expected net returns of migration. Network connections constitute a form of social capital…'* (Massey et al., 1993, p. 448).

Based on the three theoretical overviews outlined, a combination of push and pull inferences need to be understood and accepted when attempting to understand migration and diaspora (Portes & Böröcz, 1989). The intersection of various factors means diasporic evolution is now positioned around journeys involving *'settling down, putting roots down elsewhere'* (Brah, 1996, p. 182) and within these journeys a number of conditions need to be analysed. One consideration would be the extent to which traditional norms and values can be maintained post relocation which, in the South Asian milieu, is customarily believed to be sustained by the women in a household (Acharya, Mathema & Acharya, 1999).

Extending various aspects of cultural identity, as referenced earlier in the chapter, is one of several tasks identified by Vertovec (1999) in his summation of diasporic ideology. Vertovec (1999) identifies three core principles commonly associated with diaspora in modern times, particularly within the South Asian context: diaspora as a social form, as a type of consciousness and as a method of cultural production. Diaspora as a social form is similar to the network migration theory previously discussed where there is an attempt to maintain links to the homeland and seek shared identities in the new host country with others who can relate to a historical, political and geographical sameness (Vertovec, 1999). This 'sameness' is sought from an underlying co-ethnic cohesion perspective which buffers the impact of being away from home and maintains a sense of collectiveness commonly found in groups who share the same ethnic background. Furthermore, ethnic markers help create boundaries of membership which become specific to particular diasporic groups, asserting territorial supremacy and selective membership (Story & Walker, 2016). This derives from a classical notion that diaspora populations are removed from a *'specific centre'* and therefore:

'…retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland - its physical location, history and achievements… they believe they are not - and perhaps cannot be - fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it… they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity…' (Safran, 1991, p. 83/84).

This implies that collective groups who are brought together through the mutual experience of diaspora are, from this social perspective, likely to resist assimilation into the host country and harbour a desire to return to their homeland (Berns-McGown, 2008). This suggests that this diaspora group will continually feel like *'the Other'* (Said, 1978). Unlike Said's suggestion that this outsider label was imposed by the West, Safran's deliberation suggests an element of self-infliction; new arrivals actively choose to restrict assimilation by exaggerating allegiances to the home nation as a way of filling in the void of its absence. Affiliation and involvement in homeland politics (Sheffer, 2003) and economic strategies are also considered key social markers that add to the diaspora meaning (Vertovec, 1999).

Diaspora as a type of consciousness (Cohen, 1997; Gilroy, 1999) postulates the outcome of its movements as a strong, collective consciousness about a homeland that is shared with diaspora members in the new country (Cohen, 1997). It is *'entirely a product of cultures and histories in collision and dialogue'* (Clifford, 1994, p. 319) and can manifest in what Clifford (1999, p. 264) describes as the *'co-presence of here and there'*, where people feel they are neither here (host country) nor there (homeland). This disruption means a *'linear history is broken, the present constantly shadowed by a past that is also a desired, but obstructed, future: a renewed, painful yearning'* (Clifford, 1999, p. 264). This consciousness of *'multi-locality'* (Vertovec, 1999, p. 285) and spatial awareness resonates with Bourdieu's (1986) idea of the primacy of habitus, as referenced earlier in the chapter, which highlights how the environment of an individual's initial socialisation underpins the emergence of the habitus. Koppedrayer (2005) suggests that diaspora groups have the ability to metaphorically transfer between the two host and home positions.

Existing between cultures, literally and metaphorically, problematises what some would believe is the core of identity; it implies an unstable and unsettled identity formation which, beyond individual scenarios, becomes a *'heuristic device for analysing complicated entanglement'* (Ang, 2003, p. 149). However, according to Hall (1990) diasporic consciousness works as a method of identity production and reproduction which is driven by recognition of difference:

> *'You have to be familiar enough with it to know how to move in it. But you have to be sufficiently outside it so you can examine it and critically interrogate it. And it is this double move… the double consciousness of the exile, of the migrant… who moves to another place, who has this double way of seeing it, from the inside and the outside'* (Hall & Sakai, 1998, p. 363/364).

Rather than describe the position of the migrant as a disadvantaged one, Hall and Sakai (1998) advocate the privilege of diasporic hybridity. The rate at which diversification transforms offers diaspora groups and individuals numerous possibilities and puts them in a position of strength (Weiner, 2018).

Hall's negotiation of cultural consciousness leads to Vertovec's final principle, the mode of cultural production within the context of globalisation (Vertovec, 1999). Cultural symbols, meanings and images play an integral part in the formation of identity and evolve from aspects of identity, including language, race and religion (Cohen, 2004). This is essential for ethnic groups (Gans, 1979; de Vos, 1995) to maintain expression of their cultural heritage, particularly those who have left their homeland (Chiang, 2010). However, the development of global communications and networks have revolutionised the interconnectedness of global cultures so much so that *'territories cannot contain cultures'* (Hannerz, 1996, p. 8) and therefore *'different groups struggle to define issues in their own interest'* (Moon, 2002, p. 16). This underlines the fluid nature of identity (Barth, 1969; Hall, 2000) and how it can be constructed within transnational movement. It also questions how the modernisation of the global world can contend with cultural differences (Welz, 2004) not only from the perspective of the host nation, but also from diaspora communities who, as this principle suggests, have to negotiate their original cultural values and transfer them to a new, adopted country.

These three diasporic conceptualisations have identified possible issues when attempting to negotiate arrival into new territories and culture. The disorientation brought on by being in between two worlds heightens the likelihood of culture shock as individuals attempt to (re)negotiate their identities. Oberg (1960, p. 177) refers to culture shock as a *'disease'* and describes it as, *'loss of well-known cultural signs and symbols, causing individuals to experience anxiety, frustration and helplessness.'* Despite culture shock being mostly associated with negative outcomes, Adler (1975) argues it can be a tool in learning and developing personal growth. He suggests encountering another culture demonstrates an individual's ability to *'understand the roots of his or her own ethnocentrism… experiencing new and different dimensions of human diversity, the more one learns of oneself'* (Adler, 1975, p. 22). The process of assimilation is a crucial one, regardless of whether culture shock produces positive or negative consequences. Assimilation can broadly encompass one of three outcomes as identified by Portes and Zhou (1993): straight-line, upward and downward spiral adaptation. Kivisto (2017) identifies the problems faced by indigenous ethnic groups who are likely to be perceived as unassimilated in both their homeland and their adopted country; they are minorities within minorities post-relocation.

The outcome of migration is movement and establishing a base away from the homeland. Research studies have shown the likelihood of migrants to settle in ethnic concentrations (Bartel, 1989; Borjas, 2000; Putman, 2002) to help alleviate homesickness. Rex (1973) suggests this is done to the detriment of integrating into the host community and further accentuates differences between natives and settlers. Using Indian diaspora as an example, Gautam (2013) tracks early Indian settlers in the 1960s and 1970s in the Netherlands and Germany, describing their initial struggles to openly practice aspects of their Indian identity. Over time and with the introduction of Indian associations and organisations in both host countries, Gautam (2013, p.24) notes a shift, with greater acceptance by the host nations towards Indian diaspora and in turn, greater drive by the settlers to *'fit in'* – encouraging Indians to learn the country's official, primary language. Though these steps helped promote a sense of cohesion between the natives and settlers, Gautam (2013, p. 26)

argues it did little to alleviate traditional discriminatory acts or thinking within the diaspora:

> *'…the factions within the associations, based on the hierarchy of the "caste model" have shattered the image of "Indianness" and created a split among Indians. For example, Sikh Gurudwaras in the Netherlands are divided on the basis of the caste system'* (Gautam, 2013, p. 26).

The notion of 'fitting in' is intrinsically linked to what it means to be part of a collective identity – a community. 'Community' has multiple meanings ranging from shared common interests and characteristics to a bond understood through geography and territory (Willmott, 1986). Although the nuances of community cover a broad spectrum of *'social arrangements'*, it ultimately ties links and structures between groups whose *'experiences generate a sense of belonging'* (Crow & Allan, 1994, p. 1). This sense of belonging is key because, according to Block (2008), it is borne out of isolation. He argues that we live in a fragmented society of which isolation is a product. Being a member of a community helps alleviate this solitude and promotes social identities (Crow & Allan, 1994) which is especially important among diasporas.

Cohen's (1985) work around attachment develops this idea of community further. He underlines the important symbolic role community plays in affirming one's sense of belonging; a group can share common ideas, but that same idea can distinguish them between other members of the same group. In this way Cohen (1985, p. 12) argues community *'implies both similarity and difference…the opposition of one community to others or to other social entities'*, leading questions to be asked on the boundaries of identity. The boundaries of identity are not always explicit and can exist within the minds of individuals, making it a precarious marker. Boundaries define who belongs to a specific community and who does not – it is the nature of the relationship shared between people that holds weight and promotes a sense of belonging (Lee & Newby, 1983). This network is particularly important for diasporic groups who are looking to establish their identities in the host land.

Focusing on UK literature, Sagger, Somerville, Ford and Sobolewska (2012) identify three markers which measure integration into the host nation;

recognition that integration outcomes are dependent on aspects such as educational levels and employment, unity shown in local spaces and neighbourhoods and the degree to which migrants feel 'British' or demonstrate they 'belong' to Britain. The latter raises questions around what it means to be British, how this can be identified and how 'belonging' to Britain can indeed be measured. According to Cohen (1994, p. 7) Britishness is a *'fuzzy'* concept, making its conceptualisation *'fit'* into notions of national identity (civic or ethnic) difficult to do. He argues until recently, *'the British/English managed perfectly well without a strong national identity'* (Cohen, 2000, p. 575) and their aspirations to advocate one now only highlights the vagueness of British identity and values. Crick (1993, p. 71) suggests *'British',* as a sense of dual nationality, amongst those commonly residing on the islands of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, is *'an important one but a far narrower set of relationships'* whereas *'Scottish'* for example *'implies a comprehensive culture.'*

Attempting to assess and define British identity, Kiss and Park (2015, p. 4), in the British Socials Attitudes surveys in 1995, 2003 and 2013 asked how important the following statements were *'for being truly British':*

- *'To have been born in Britain*
- *To have British citizenship*
- *To have lived in Britain for most of one's life*
- *To be able to speak English*
- *To be a Christian*
- *To respect Britain's political institutions and laws*
- *To feel British*
- *To have British ancestry'*

The findings revealed the most important aspects were being able to speak English, having British citizenship and respecting Britain's political institutions and law – all three factors were represented by at least 75% of respondents who took part. In the last wave of research in 2013, the findings saw a considerable shift in significance of being able to speak English (10% increase) and the importance of living most of one's life in Britain, up by 8% to 77%.

Analysis from Kiss and Parks (2015, p.4) based on this survey data indicates the non-fixed, fluid conceptualisation and operationalisation of *'being truly British.'* The rise in importance given to 'living most of one's life in Britain' as a true mark of Britishness, it can be argued, is reflective of the times. In the mid-2000s, there was a notable increase in net migration to the UK (The Migration Observatory, 2019), suggesting this might be a reason why residency garnered much traction in the 2013 dataset. This ambiguity of what it means to be 'British' therefore, further problematises what migrants and diaspora groups are faced with. What are these groups integrating into? Mulvey (2013) argues that migrants accept uncertainty about their host nation's identity because in leaving their homeland they become less certain about their identity of origin.

This last section of the literature review has shown there are existing approaches to understanding reasons for migration, the outcome of this on diasporas and the implications of fitting in into the host nation. My research has drawn on these approaches to help inform the empirical findings, as well as to fill in gaps of knowledge specific to Nepalis and Nepali diaspora. The next part of the literature review centralises research carried out in Nepali migration and diaspora.

2.5 PART II Literature Review: Cultural and Political Context

> *'Migration has become an integral aspect of the development discourse in Nepal'* - (Bandita Sijapati, Ashim Bhattrai & Dinesh Pathak, 2015, p. 1).

2.5.1 Nepali Migration and Diaspora

When the peace agreement of 1816 was negotiated and approved at the end of the Anglo-Nepal war[14], there was significant movement of Nepalis out of Nepal (Adhikari, 2012). This was primarily driven by employment opportunities and India was a main destination, specifically the British-Indian Army. Aside from India, the supplements of agricultural programmes in Burma and the neighbouring areas of Assam and Darjeeling also generated interest, attracting peasants in particular (Paudel, 2014). But according to Gurung (2004) a notable dispersion trend wasn't seen until the 1980s when Nepalis began to migrate beyond India to Malaysia and the Gulf. Movement to the Gulf countries coincided with an oil boom as the host economies needed to find unskilled and semi-skilled workers (Gurung, 2004). Since then, the distribution of Nepali nationals around the world has steadily increased, with a growing representation in developed countries such as Australia, Japan, Hong Kong, the US and UK (Jones & Basnett, 2013). Recent data indicates a drop in the number of labour permits given out in Nepal from 519,638 in 2013/2014 to 382,871 in 2016/2017 (Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2018).

The emergence of both domestic (settlement in Terai[15] area) and international migration has resulted in a geographical shift in Nepal, with over half the population now settled away from the mountainous areas (Subedi, 2015). The outpouring of Nepalis from their birth country over the past decade has led to questions about the state of the country, suggesting migration is hindering the progression and development that is much needed in this South Asian region

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[14]This agreement between the East India Company and Nepal, known as the Treaty of Sugauli, resulted in Nepal losing one third of its terrain to British jurisdiction (Shrestha, 2018). The Nepal-Britain Treaty of 1923 dissolved Britain's interest in the South Asian country, allowing Nepal to become an independent sovereign land (Hussain, 1970).

[15]Terai, also spelled Tarai, is a region of outstretched land of southern Nepal and northern India.

(Poudel, 2016). Nepali academic Dhakal (2011) suggests that encouraging those who have left their native land and settled in a developed country to return to Nepal is both unrealistic and impractical. Yet, he believes measures can be put in place to help utilise the experiences of migrants, as he explains:

> *'A country should use a variety of means to tap its Diasporas knowledge and intellectual capacity… At a time when the differences in the standard of living between countries is remarkably large, it is prudent to utilise Diaspora potential from where they live and where they work using distance education and distance collaboration approaches through institutions made specifically to foster such cooperation and collaboration.'* (Dhakal, 2011, para. 4).

In a study on Nepali diaspora in the US by Nath (2009), education was identified as one of two inherent motivating factors for the rise of movement. The opportunity to develop academically was considered by Nath (2009) as essential for those deciding to leave their country of birth, as the opportunities for an improved life and further education are largely unavailable in Nepal. The second motivator is economic progression and financial stability, a goal which is not sustainable in Nepal. Through a series of interviews with Nepali migrants in San Antonio, Nath (2009) found that the incorporation of symbolic artefactual decorative pieces and a native language were significant practices in these migrants' attempts to maintain a Nepali identity in the US. His respondents accepted they were away from their birth country but were proactive in striking a balance between the home and host lands. This was done to keep their memories of Nepal alive and to pass on Nepali cultural values to their children. These ties to Nepal were strengthened by establishing organisations headed by migrant Nepalis and running language classes. As well as educational and work opportunities, Bohra-Mishra (2011) suggests that networking with other migrants and Nepal's problematic socio-political structures are other drivers to relocate.

In his research examining the growth of Nepali representation in Australia, Pariyar (2018, p. 4) identifies Nepalis *'as the fastest growing migrant community'* in the country between 2006 and 2016. His primary concern is exploring the significance of caste presence in conjunction with migration. His findings suggest the Nepali population in Australia is younger, more highly

skilled and better educated than in Britain. In his UK research, Pariyar (2016) focuses his study on the most accessible Nepali group - retired Gurkha soldiers. There was a significant emergence of Nepalis in 2009, after settlement rights were granted for pre-1997 retired Gurkhas, and this coincided with visa clearances for students and their dependants to come to the UK for educational purposes (Adhikari, 2012). Pariyar (2018, p. 12) finds greater opportunity for migration among *'the urban middle class',* meaning a significant volume of the Australian migrants were likely to belong to high-caste groups. Because of this, their version of Nepali-ness - dictated by caste and ethnic beliefs and values - took precedence in Australia. However, in the UK there was a higher proportion of Nepalis belonging to ethnic groups traditionally associated with Gurkha fighters and so their form of Nepali identity is widely celebrated in Britain (Pariyar, 2016). The make-up of Nepal's caste and ethnic framework will be explored later in the chapter.

2.5.2 Gender and Migration

Unger (1979) pushed for a clear distinction between sex and gender and suggested gender be used when distinguishing between the outcome of sex differences, *'…those characteristics and traits socioculturally considered appropriate to males and females… [Gender] may be broadened to include both attributions made by others and assumptions and suppositions about one's own properties (gender identity)'* (1979, p. 1085/86). For the purpose of this study, I have used Unger's (1979) definition of gender as a variable to present research findings. It is gendered characteristics resulting from social, cultural and environmental factors which draw out the key differences in men and women's experiences.

Gender roles in society present a structure where individuals are expected to act or behave in a certain way based on their assumed gender identity and shaped on cultural and societal expectations Acker (2006). How individuals perceive and assimilate with these gendered roles is constantly being challenged, and gender-role expectations are likely to vary in different countries, societies, and cultural and ethnic groups. Afsar (2011) examined gender and migration movement among two South Asian populations, Bangladeshis and Sri Lankans. Her research aimed to highlight how gender relations impact the

migration process and what prompts the decision to migrate. Relying heavily on secondary, empirical resources to validate her findings, Afsar concludes the following:

- There are higher rates of migration among women in lower socioeconomic groups than men.
- Prior to relocation, Sri Lankan women faced more gender-based violence and discrimination in the workplace than men, despite higher achievements in literacy and healthcare.
- A major pull factor for migrating women is the chance to provide their children with better education opportunities (Afsar, 2011).

Afsar (2011) also suggests men and women typically conform to traditional gender stereotypes in their allocation of earnings post-relocation. She explains that '*…women tend to remit money mostly for daily needs, health care and education, while men spend their money on consumer items such as television sets and cars…*' (2011, p. 401). She concludes that there is a lack of research and representation of gender outcomes as a direct result of migration, even though *'…the feminization of migration has become increasingly visible and well-documented'* (2011, p. 405). The gaps present an imbalanced view on gender and migration inequality because despite awareness of it, not enough research has been conducted to understand gender bias as a result of migration experiences.

Research into South Asian diasporas in the Global North often presents the reasons for migration within the context of familial needs (Gardner, 1995; Mand, 2002), focusing on the dominant decision-making male with the female partner portrayed as a *'trailing wife' or 'trailing mother'* (Stockdale, 2016, p. 1). Outside social sciences, a more contemporary depiction of the 'trailing wife' and the implications of this status can be found in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003). It highlights issues pertaining to the relocation of a young woman as a dependent of her husband. The protagonist, Nazneen, is in her late teens when she leaves Bangladesh for a new life in the UK, after an arranged marriage to a man almost twice her age. She arrives in Brick Lane and the story unfolds,

describing how she deals with the adversities of adjusting to Western society while maintaining links to her native land.

In the UK, research has concentrated on religious representations of South Asian groups, including Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, and how they process change as a result of migration (Werbner, 1990; Ballard, 1994; Gardner, 1995; 2004). Through the celebration of religious rituals and festivals, these studies draw attention to women's maintenance of their cultural identity within the framework of British society (Werbner, 1990). Adapting their dominant cultural identity to fit in with a new environment allows women to reinvent aspects of tradition (Bhachu, 1991) and, as Mand (2002) suggests, helps effect subtle changes to historical gender roles. This echoes the work of Hussain (2005) who explores culture and ethnicity among South Asian women as a result of their diasporic journey. These findings suggest that despite limited opportunities for work and education, relocation helps to endorse women as *'the centre of the household'* (Hussain, 2005, p. 22) allowing them to become more assertive post-relocation.

Dale (2008, p. 3) suggests that *'many South Asian communities have high marriage rates and, for women in particular, marriage is at an early age.'* Shaw (2001), as referenced in Dale (2008), examines marriage among British-born Pakistanis in relation to immigration. She describes this arrangement as a *'strategy'* to *'continue the earlier phase of male-dominated migration within the constraints of immigration control'* (2001, p. 317). She finds that marriage is considered primarily on the basis of the family's collective needs, and this consideration is more prominent among girls and women than boys and men. Young women are more likely to feel the weight of family expectation to agree to this commitment to preserve the family honour.

2.6 Nepal's Gender Bias

'Raising [and educating] a girl is like watering your neighbour's garden' is an age-old Nepali proverb that encapsulates the general thinking and practices in Nepal. Its meaning, as described by Lundgren, et al. (2013, p. 128) is *'while a*

Nepalese girl contributes immensely to her family's welfare, she is not worthy of investment' as she is destined to leave her paternal home after marrying.

Women in Nepal have endured many hardships and this suffering largely stems from gender discrimination, which remains a dominant presence in Nepali society. An example of this gender-based imbalance is found early on as Nepali girls can only secure citizenship through their father or their husband (Chickera & Harrington, 2017), rendering them invisible in society. Dependency on a man is embedded from the outset and this form of subordination is hard to negotiate as Laczo (2003, p. 77) demonstrates:

> *'after the age of 16, both men and women must apply for a Certificate of Citizenship, to ensure their citizenship rights are protected. However, while this process is relatively straightforward for a young man, it is not so for a woman, whose application must be supported by either her husband or father.'*

Citizenship should bring a sense of inclusiveness and freedom, but it has had the opposite effect on women in Nepal. As a result, Laczo (2003) suggests women are more likely to be subjected to violence and discriminatory behaviour.

Women in Nepal also suffer significant discrimination in the area of education. They are expected to take on a heavy workload of domestic chores from a young age, usually to the detriment of their schooling (Levison & Moe, 1998). Less money is likely to be spent on girls compared with their brothers, even in families who consider education important (Khanal, 2018). Girls are less likely to be encouraged to take their education to a higher level as societal norms dictate they should be married by a certain age (Khanal, 2018). Baral (2017) argues that the prevalence of gender-based prejudice is higher in Nepal's rural areas. He suggests *'backward'* thinking further subordinates women in these areas of Nepal because *'gender quality and equity'* is considered destitute and unworthy, obstructing women's development and anchoring them to the role of domestic homemaker (Baral, 2017, p. 142).

According to Aguirre and Pietropaoli (2008) the Maoist insurgency in Nepal in the mid-1990s, which led to the death of thousands of civilians, helped bring some form of empowerment to women. The conflict allowed women to move away from traditional, pre-assigned roles and challenge those in power and authority. Aguirre and Pietropaoli (2008, p. 361) suggest the outcome of these changes meant many women *'became active outside the home, asserting their rights as citizens. Many women had no choice but to become primary decision-makers and heads of households. In negotiating to survive the conflict, women were empowered through social, economic and political exposure.'*

Away from Nepal's gender bias formation, the next section looks at the social norms surrounding caste as these also have a profound impact on individuals' life experiences in Nepal.

2.7 The Caste System in Nepal

The foundation of the Nepali caste system is based on the Hindu caste stratification. In its general sense, caste is described as a *'named group of persons characterised by endogamy, hereditary membership, and a specific style of life which sometimes includes the pursuit by tradition of a particular occupation usually associated with a more or less distinct ritual status in a hierarchical system'* (Béteille, 1965, p. 46). Caste is ascribed at birth with very little opportunity of mobility (Berreman, 1967; 1972, Dumont, 1980; Grunlan & Mayers, 1988). It is one of the earliest forms of hierarchical divisions and is generally used to indicate an individual's position in society. Pitt-Rivers (1973, p. 93) suggests *'it is understandable therefore that the Portuguese should have used the word casta, given its sense of lineage or breed, to describe the castes they encountered in India…when they arrived in India, and thereafter gave the Hindus a privileged position in society.'*

'When thinking about India it is hard not to think of caste' (Dirks, 2001, p. 3). The modern-day caste structure is largely attributed to the East, specifically India, and is thought to derive from the Manusmriti[16] - an ancient text outlining

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[16]Manusmriti literally translates into the first man/lawgiver, 'Manu' and 'Smriti' refer to a collection written texts, teaching Hindu practices (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2018).

the 'laws' of Hinduism, and how Hindus should conduct themselves morally and socially (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2018). Scholars have largely ignored Western ideologies and practices of caste-based hierarchy, instead choosing to concentrate on Indian culture and society because of the caste system's overt prevalence (Oman, 2018). Oman challenges the dominant view that caste-based discrimination is linked to India by highlighting the European emphasis on work and lineage:

> *'…even in Europe, certain genuine hereditary caste distinctions have at various times been maintained by law… in England [an] ancient enactment required all men who at any time took up the calling of coal-mining or drysalting, to keep those occupations for life, and enjoined that their children should also follow the same employment'* (Oman, 2018, p. 64/65).

The origins and longevity of the caste system is one[17] of five fundamental *'peculiarities'* identified by Fárek, Jalki, Pathan and Shah (2017). They argue an overall agreement has yet to be settled by those who study this stratification mode, making this status-defining model complicated. One aspect accepted by many is *'the existence of the immoral caste system across India (or as some prefer, South Asia), albeit with some regional variations'* (Fárek et al., 2017, p. 2). Given the caste system's prominence in everyday life and the lack of empirical work outside South Asia, all references to the caste system in this research are based on theories and findings pertaining to India/ South Asia.

The Manusmriti is thought to have emerged around 200 BC (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2018). According to Hindu mythology, the universe was created by Lord Brahma and Manu is revered as the first man on Earth. Humanity manifested from Lord Brahma himself, from various parts of his body (Woodburne, 1922). In citing the Rigveda[18] Woodburne (1922, p. 526)

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[17]The other four aspects of general disagreement around the caste system as identified by Fárek et al., (2017, p. 2) are: *'how castes are different from other types of human groups…and how they are to be classified; the relation of the caste system to ordering social hierarchy; the constitutive and necessary properties of the caste system; and its relationship to social conflict.'*
[18]The Rigveda is one of four ancient, sacred Hindu texts written in Sanskrit which is *'an anthology of songs and poems. It contains diversified elements of poetry, mythology, religious beliefs, magic and, primarily, invocations of songs and praise to various gods'* (Nicolás, 2003, p. 11).

describes how groups of beings emerged from Lord Brahma: *'The Brahman was his mouth; the Kshatriya was made from his arms; the being Vaishya [came from] his thighs; the Sudra sprang from his feet.'* Lord Brahma's anatomical spawning of man determines the hierarchical structure of Nepali's caste system. The Hindu[19] hierarchical structure, the Varna system (Sharma, 1977), consists of four main strata: Brahman (Priests and Scholars), Kshatriya (Rulers and Warriors), Vaisya (Merchants and Landowners) and Sudras (Peasants and Servants) (Subedi, 2010), as presented in the hierarchical triangle below, Image 1[20].

Brahmans are the ruling, most important class in Hindu society, and are predominantly associated with religious purity, knowledge and wisdom (Smith, 1994). Kshatriyas are synonymous with protection, power and discipline - all key attributes when governing society through rule, leadership and responsibility of fortification (Smith, 1994). Vaishyas are merchants and traders, and deemed exploitable, while Sudras, who have no rights, are considered only fit to serve the other classes (Gopalakrishna, 2013).

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[19]As my data relates to how the caste system operates outside of India, I refer to Hindu, and not Indian, structures and society.

[20]The size of the triangle and its sections are not proportionate to population size. The purpose of this figure is to illustrate the Hindu caste hierarchy and follows the format adopted by many to depict caste standings.

Image 1: Hindu caste hierarchy
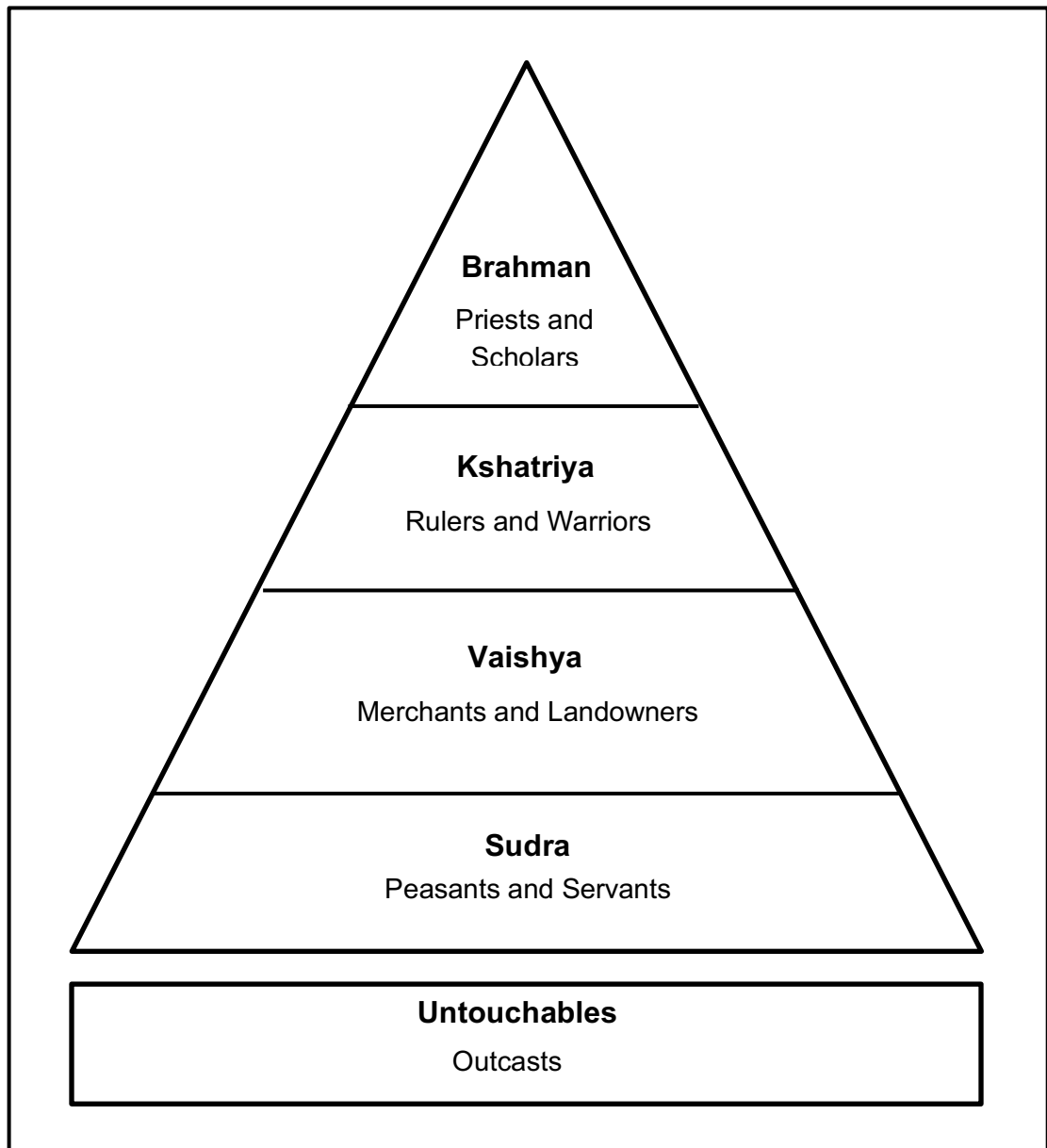
Moving on from mythological and religious assumptions, the first formative and practiced social gradation, according to Woodburne (1922), came when the Aryans migrated to India. Before, Woodburne (1922, p. 525) explains, *'there is no evidence of such a rigid stratification of society as characterises the caste system.'* He suggests this taxonomy introduced another indicative distinction between castes - skin colour. Aryans had lighter skin than the aborigines, and this formed links around caste and colour, as he informs:

'The Rigveda and Avesta[21] both portray the life of the people of that age, and they give no indications of any divisions beyond the ordinary classes of priests, nobility and peasantry. However, the migrations into a country already populated gave rise to a new line of social cleavage, namely, between the Aryan invaders who were white, tall and cultured and the aborigines who were short, dark and primitive' (Woodurne, 1922, p. 525).

Although the religious/mythical understanding of caste may differ in its narrative and origin to that of the modern-day system, they are effectively the same in practice. Both result in a segregation of society where individuals are defined as either 'pure' or 'pollutant' (Marglin, 1977) on a hierarchical scale. This distinction is crucial in establishing boundaries between different groups of people (Shah, 2007), which determine how society functions:

'Ideas of purity/impurity were present all over Hindu society for centuries: in domestic as well as public life, in exchange of food and water, in practicing occupations, in kinship and marriage, in religious action and belief, in temples and monasteries, and in myriad different contexts and situations. These ideas played a crucial role in separating one caste from another, and in arranging them in a hierarchy' (Shah, 2007, p. 355-356).

French anthropologist Louis Dumont's (1980)[22] work emphasises the importance of the purity scale in caste structures. Whether a group is classified as pure or pollutant is determined by where their caste falls in the hierarchy (purity descending to impurity) and the groups are distinguished by the giving and accepting of food, and the proposition and acceptance of marriage. In short, this structure dictates who an individual can eat with and who they can marry (Iwanek, 2018). In his analysis of the Indian caste system, Dumont (1980) emphasises religious hierarchy, particularly the status of Brahmans and Kshatriyas. He explores how these two Hindu castes are distinct - unlike other systems which congregate religious (Brahman priests) and political (Kshatriya rulers and royalty) strata - but are interdependent as neither can function legitimately without the other (Subedi, 2013). Dumont (1980) suggests that purity in the caste system has greater power than political/economical standing,

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[21]Avesta is the main and holy source for collective teachings of Zoroastrianism, and is written in Eastern Iranian language (Boyce, 1984).
[22]Louis Dumont's *Homo Hierarchicus* was originally published in French in 1966. I have referred to the English translated version by George Weidenfeld and Nicholson Ltd, 1980. My interpretation of Dumont's work is based on this translated, revised edition of the book.

which has led to criticism of his work. Although other scholars do not refute the importance of purity in caste construction, they argue it is a direct consequence of the power monopoly held by the elite castes. Marglin's (1977) main criticism of Dumont's work is the exclusivity with which he defines power. Marglin (1977, p. 269) puts forward the following assessment:

'One of the difficulties in Dumont's…use of the term "power" is a seeming lack of awareness of the many possibilities of differentiation that such a notion can be subjected to in the Hindu context.'

Despite this, the backbone of Dumont's ideology can be found in Nepal's hierarchical positioning of individuals and communities. The Nepali Civil Code, Muluki Ain[23], was commissioned by the then ruler of Nepal, Jung Bahadur Rana in 1854 (Pradhan, 2015). He introduced a place in the caste system for the non-Hindu population, paving the way for a heterogeneous society by allowing non-Hindus to identify as Nepali. Table 1 depicts Jung Bahadur Rana's ethnic/caste stratification. Traditional alcohol consumers – known as *Matwali* – belong to lower and untouchable (or impure) caste groupings – while traditional non-alcohol consumers – *Tagadharis* – are deemed purists[24] and placed in the upper echelon of society (Dhital, Subedi, Gurung & Hamal, 2001). Broader caste groups can be divided into specific ethnic sub-groups but, as Pradhan (2015, p. 11) explains, placing certain groups into this rigid hierarchy was initially problematic:

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[23]Muluki Ain, which translates into 'Nation's Code', was implemented by Jung Bahadur Rana after a visit to Europe in the 1850s. The Ain codified laws into written text which, according to Pradhan (2015, p. 10) was part of a wider strategy *'of imposing greater and more direct control over the whole kingdom and the intensification of Hinduisation.'* The laws stemmed from the Hindu religion and practices, and covered a spread of matters including inheritance and inter-caste relations (Pradhan, 2015). In August 2018, after more than 150 years, Nepal's national civil code was replaced by separate criminal and civil codes. Previously, both aspects were codified together (Maharjan, 2018).
[24] *'"Pure" in a puritanical sense, as they were religiously restricted from consuming alcohol, certain meat and certain foods. Strict adherents of the Tagadhari codes do not consume any form of meat: they even avoid garlic and onion'* and maintain the sacred thread, the janai, which is *'put around the neck and wrapped around the waist'* (Shrestha & Bhattarai, 2017, p. 209). The janai is only worn by men and traditionally only removed to be replaced by another.

'…particularly because some of the groups were not "castes" under any definition of the word. The first, fourth and fifth categories incorporated the Hindu caste groups proper, with the exception of Europeans and Muslims. The second and third categories (matwalis), on the other hand, were ethnic groups now known as adivasis/janajatis, who were in general outside the pale of caste hierarchy until then, with the exception of Newars. Some of these groups were classed as "enslavable" and others as "non-enslavable". The Newars of Kathmandu Valley were structured internally along the lines of religion (Hindus and Buddhists) and had a complex caste system, which required them to be dispersed among four of the five categories. The five categories, then, represented permutations of the two basic caste and non-caste groups, which were structured and ranked according to the norms of high-caste Parbatiya[25] Hindus.'

This extract from Pradhan's (2015) analysis of the Ain emphasises how heavily religion underpins the caste/ethnic structure. It is largely dictated by Hindu religious and legal texts such as the Manusmriti (Hofer, 2004) and the general Hindu ideology. Gurung (1997) suggests that open acknowledgement and conformity to Hindu norms and values were expected of all (including non-Hindus). Therefore, non-Hindus had very little choice but to become immersed in the dominant culture through the *'imperceptible absorption of Hindu customs such as festivals Dashain and Tihar'* (Gurung, 1997, p. 511), exposing themselves to the exclusivity of the hierarchy. This underlines the domination of Hindu practices in Nepal. Diverse groups of Nepalis are dictated to and told which religion and practices they must adhere to in order to attain a position of power.

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[25]Parbatiya refers to the hill population of Nepal who migrated from the west and the south of the country. Parbatiya is the collective name given to the Nepali-speaking Brahman (Bahun), Kshatriya (Chhetri), Thakuri and Dalit population (Mandal, 2013).

Table 1: Caste/ethnic groups, Muluki Ain (Legal Code of Nepal), 1854 (National Dalit Strategy Report Part I, 2002)

Hierarchy	Caste/Ethnic groups
1	*Tagadhari (Twice-born castes, wearers of sacred thread)* • Upadhaya Brahman - Parbatiya • Thakuri - Parbatiya • Chhetri - Parbatiya • Rajopadhyaya Brahman - Dev Bhaju • Madhesi Brahman - Indian Brahman • Sanyasti - Parbatiya • Jaisi Brahman - Parbatiya • Newar Hindu - Shrestha, Joshi
2	*Na Masine Matwali (Non-enslavable alcohol drinkers)* • Hill tribes - Magar, Gurung, Sunuwar, Rai and Limbu • Non-Hindu Newar - Shrestha, Vajracharya, Skakya, Maharjan and various Newar service castes
3	*Masine Matwali (Enslavable alcohol drinkers)* • Hill tribes - Bhote (including Tamang, Sherpa), Chepang, Gharti, Hayu and other Tibetan culture affiliation • Tharu, Kumal
4	*Pani nacalne choi chito halnu naparne (Water unacceptable/ impure but touchable castes)* • Newar - Khadgi, Kapali, Rajaka, Tamrakar • Muslim • Westeners/European (Mlecha)
5	*Pani nacalne choi chito halnu parne (Water unacceptable/ impure and untouchable castes)* • Parbatiya Hill Dalits - Kami, Sarki, Damai, Badi, Gaine • Newar - Dyahla (Sweepers), Chamar (Sweepers, Scavengers), Pode (Scavengers)

Table 2 provides a breakdown of the distribution of Nepal's population from 1971 to 2011 by religion, which shows Hinduism as the dominant religious following. Although the number of Hindus has more than doubled in 40 years and is still very much Nepal's dominant religion, the overall percentage of Hindus has slowly declined since 1981 - 89.5% in 1981, 86.5% in 1991, 81% in 2001 and 81% in the 2011 census. The table shows how this can be attributed to the growth of other religions. Since 2001, four more religious groups have been identified: Sikh, Bahai, Prakriti and Bon. Not only does this suggest growing religious diversity in Nepal, but also the possibility that minority populations feel able to display their beliefs without fear of repercussions. This may be due to government attempts to homogenise society with the introduction of movements such as the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN), as discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

Table 2: Distribution of Nepal's population by religion, 1971-2011 censuses (Population Monograph of Nepal, Volume II, 2014)

Religion	1971 census	1981 census	1991 census	2001 census	2011 census
Hindu (% of overall pop.)	10,330,009 (89%)	13,445,787 (89.5%)	15,996,653 (86.5%)	18,330,121 (81%)	21,551,492 (81%)
Buddhist	866,411	799,081	1,439,142	2,442,520	2,396,099
Islam	351,186	399,197	653,218	954,023	1,162,370
Kirat	-	-	318,389	818,106	807,169
Jain	5,836	9,438	7,561	4,108	3,214
Christianity	2,541	3,891	31,280	101,976	375,699
Sikh	-	-	-	5,890	609
Bahai	-	-	-	1,211	1,283
Prakriti	-	-	-	-	121,982
Bon	-	-	-	-	13,006
Other	-	365,446	26,416	78,994	-
Unstated/undefined	-	-	18,138	-	61,581
Total population	1,155,983	15,022,839	18,491,097	22,736,934	26,494,504

This section has shown the complicated nature of the Nepali caste system hierarchy, and the religious make-up of the country. The following sub-section looks at the ethnic make-up of Nepal; knowledge of ethnic representation helps to develop an understanding of identity perceptions among Nepalis who have relocated.

2.7.1 Ethnicity in Nepal

There has been much debate in the social sciences about whether ethnicity is an ascribed or interchangeable form of identification. From the early days of describing ethnicity as a *'fixed, fundamental and rooted'* (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998, p. 41) acquisition gained at birth, to its highly subjective and flexible

development as a result of individual circumstances (Barth, 1969; Gans, 1979), research suggests people have some choice about how and when to exercise their ethnic identity (Waters, 1990).

Ethnic identity can be broadly viewed as belonging to a group with a shared national or cultural background. Ethnic groups are differentiated by symbolic, racial and cultural factors (Cheung, 1993), and emphasis is mostly placed on the differences between ethnic groups, not the similarities. Trimble and Dickson (2010) note that race and ethnicity have been used interchangeably for years. The connotations around race were discernible to a certain degree in terms of physical attributes, including skin colour (Omi, 2001). It wasn't until Max Weber, as quoted in Roth and Wittich (1978, p. 389) published his book '*Economy and Society*' nearly a century ago that this distinction was made clearer. Weber proposed blood relationships were not necessary for ethnic identification, instead ethnic groups are *'human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation…'* Invariably, this propagation can only be sought in institutionalised multi-ethnic societies, channelled through '*parliaments, assemblies or bureaucracies*' (Varshney, 2007, p. 279).

Findings from research conducted by Gellner (2007) challenge this idea that ethnic equality is promoted through institutionalised, multi-ethnic societies in Nepal. In his report Gellner (2007) reinforces the ethnic and caste divide, which is almost immovable in its significance and awareness among the masses:

> *'In Delhi it is possible to meet people who claim that they simply do not know what their caste is. Their parents never told them and they never asked. This is unimaginable in Nepal. In Nepal, as nearly everywhere in India, everyone knows what caste or ethnic group they belong to… It is largely taken-for-granted fact of life that everyone has a caste or ethnic identity. Not only do people themselves always know what their own ascribed identity is supposed to be, others usually know too, simply from their surname'* (Gellner, 2007, p. 1823).

Gellner (2007) points out the contradiction between the aim of the unsaid, unwritten ideology to unify different groups of Nepalis and the divisive results it

produced. He notes that *'the kind of national identity that was propagated in schools and through government organisations was experienced as highly exclusionary by lower castes, by ethnic groups (janajatis), by religious minorities (Buddhists, Muslims, and increasingly now by Christians) and by people of Indian ethnicity'* (Gellner, 2007, p. 1823). The lack of ethnic representation in legislative power-building positions revealed the drive for a collective national identity as meaningless. Geller (2007) also describes the years from 1960 to 1990 in Nepal as *'nation-building'* and suggests this has led to ethnicity-building and new group identities. Geller's conclusions present a scenario of caste and ethnic marginalisation in Nepal that continued even at the height of transformative change. Bhatta[26] (2013, p. 183) believes factors which have reinforced ethnic and religious divides between Nepalis are *'likely to lead towards progressive dilution of sovereignty and national identities, weaken state institutions'* and stall further attempts to create a more equal society. Going forward, he suggests the eventual outcome will result in increased conflict and violence.

Bhatta's theory is validated based on most recent statistics available from Nepal which demonstrates conflict between different caste and ethnic groups. An in-depth, analytical report of the 2011 census, National Planning Commission Secretariat (2014), found that caste and ethnic identity remains a significant part of everyday Nepali society. The report also found groups who outwardly claim they don't follow a caste system, conversely exercise caste principles in their daily lives. The inference here is caste and ethnic differentiation is so intrinsically embedded into the population's thinking and practices, that it is becoming increasingly undistinguishable as a form of discrimination because of its commonality and occurrence. In Nepal's Human Rights (2012) documentation, it was reported caste-based violence was widespread in Nepal, in spite the passing of the Caste Discrimination and Untouchability Act in 2011.

In their research on perceptions of social change in Nepal, Aasland and Haug (2011) report the contradictory state the country finds itself in when negotiating its traditional social hierarchy. Based on results from Center for Nepal and

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[26]Bhatta's (2013) article is based on the post-2006 state-building process in Nepal.

Asian Studies (CNAS) and Social Exclusion Survey of 2890 households, Aasland and Haug (2011, p. 185) suggest there is contention, firstly, *'Nepalese society is marred by unchanging ethnic and caste divisions that effectively prevent excluded groups from upward economic mobility and inclusion…secondly, down plays group boundaries and maintains that Nepalese society is changing through processes of modernisation, such as urbanisation, migration and mobilisation…'* Although Aasland and Haug (2011) conclude their findings generally support positivity around socio-economic changes being undertaken in Nepal, they emphasise the need for political leaders and policy-makers to endorse an *'all inclusive'* attitude going forward, where access to state improvements are not discriminated by ethnic, caste or geographical location.

State prejudice against civilians by geographical location (particularly inhabitants of the Terai region) and more broadly, minority ethnic groups and lower castes, had been on-going for decades. It wasn't until the 1990s when strong opposition to these discriminatory ways came to the forefront. According to Hangen (2007: viii) the NEFIN movement of the early 1990s aimed to, *'increase the social, economic, and political power of these people, revive their religions, languages and cultures, and end the dominance of the high-caste Hindus.'* In doing so, it helped vocalise and raise awareness of the prejudice these minority groups faced, which up until this point had been largely ignored. NEFIN challenged the national collective identity mainly held by those in the Kathmandu Valley region (Hangen, 2007). Since this movement, which unified marginalised people and communities to advocate for an inclusive state (Gurung, 2010), there have been wider acknowledgement of specific cultural groups outside Nepal's traditional mainstream. Post 1990, census data collected in Nepal suggests a shift in key areas - aspects of social identification where minority groups were absent (underrepresented and marginalised) are now growing.

Tables 3 to 5 below are taken from the National Planning Commission Secretariat (2014) and present data from Nepal's censuses. I have provided figures, where applicable, from censuses that pre-date the NEFIN movement to help understand the impact this may have had. That is not to say the NEFIN

movement alone should be considered as the only reason for these changes[27].
Table 3 shows progressive increase in the total number of ethnic/caste groups
reported in the nationwide decennial survey, doubling in size from when it was
first captured[28] to the most recent available reporting. Overall there has been a
growth in the number of different ethnic/caste groups identified and particularly
within the Terai region. This is emphasised by the decrease in percentage of
those who are categorised as 'other' in the general population, indicating
heightened official recognition of the diversity of Nepal's population in more
recent times.

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[27]The prejudice encountered by indigenous groups in Nepal had previously
been reported and attempts to dissolve the injustice they faced had been made.
In 1963, Nepal's Civil Code was updated to, *'abolish untouchability, apart from
the caste - and creed - based occupational discrimination* (International Labour
Office Nepal, 2005, p. 7) but in spite of this amendment, the country continued
to operate and segregate its population on this basis.
[28]Dahal (2003) suggests prior to 1991, recording the caste/ethnicity of Nepali
citizens was considered problematic because of its potential undermining of
Hindu nationalism, Nepal's growing diversity and the instability of politics and
governance.

Table 3: Ethnic/caste features reported in the 1991-2011 censuses (Population Monograph of Nepal, Volume II, 2014)

Region	1991 census	2001 census	2011 census
Total ethnic/caste groups reported	60	100	125
Mountain	3	2	9
Hill	27	45	55
Terai	29	50	61
Addition of ethnic/caste groups from previous census	Not applicable	40	25
Ethnic/caste groups listed in the previous census were not reported in the following census	Not applicable	1	2
Ethnic/caste groups' population counted in "other" category (%)	4.44	1.80	1.04
Number of ethnic/caste groups whose population size declined than the previous census	Not applicable	9	10

Table 4 provides a breakdown of reoccurring ethnic/caste groups over the last three waves of census data collection. The table suggests overall, these ten ethnic/caste groups have maintained their positions of numerical representation, with very little variation. Chhetris remain the most dominant ethnic/caste group recorded.

Table 4: Population size among Nepal's ethnic/caste groups reported in 1991-2011 censuses (Population Monograph of Nepal, Volume II, 2014)

Numerically dominant ethnic/caste groups by number	1991 census (pop. size)	2001 census (pop. size)	2011 census (pop. size)
Chhetri	2,968,082	3,593,496	4,398,053
Brahman-Hill	2,388,456	2,896,477	3,226,903
Magar	1,339,308	1,622,421	1,887,733
Tharu	1,194,224	1,533,879	1,737,470
Tamang	1,081,252	1,282,304	1,539,830
Newar	1,041,090	1,245,232	1,321,933
Kami	963,656	895,954	1,258,554
Musalman	653,055	971,056	1,164,255
Yadav	765,137	895,423	1,054,458
Rai	525,557	635,151	620,004
Total (10 groups)	**12,919,815**	**14,675,439**	**18,209,196**
Nepal	**18,491,097**	**23,151,423**	**26,494,504**

Based on the above, Table 5 below is additional analysis I have done to provide a clearer understanding of Nepal's caste hierarchy (using the labels as defined in Table 1) and merging this with the ethnic/caste group breakdown (Table 4). The purpose of this is to offer further insight into how ethnic and hierarchical status relate to one another when population representation in Nepal is concerned.

Caste/Ethnic hierarchical structure and dominant ethnic/caste groups, combined	1991 census	2001 census	2011 census
Twice born caste, wearers of the sacred thread: Chhetri and Brahman-Hill	5,356,538 29%	6,489,973 28%	7,624,956 29%
Non-enslaveable alcohol drinkers: Magar and Rai	1,864,865 10%	2,257,572 10%	2,507,737 9.5%
Enslaveable alcohol drinkers: Tharu and Tamang	2,275,476 12%	2,816,183 12%	3,277,300 12%
Water unacceptable/impure but touchable: Musalman	653,055 3.5%	971,056 4%	1,164,255 4%
Water unacceptable/impure and untouchable: Kami	963,656 5%	895,954 4%	1,258,554 5%
Nepal	**18,491,097**	**23,151,423**	**26,494,504**

In the 2011 census, the Chhetri and Brahman-Hill ethnic/caste groups make-up approximately 29% of Nepal's overall population. This remained fairly consistent, comparatively, to the two previous censuses and underlines the ruling power of domination of those belonging to the twice born caste, as the next biggest representation is amongst those defined as enslaveable alcohol drinkers, third in the overall hierarchy of five.

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[29]The statistics generated here are solely representative of the secondary sources I have used to provide some quantitative analysis and should only be considered with that in mind. I have no ownership of the secondary sources used and the data I have amalgamated is for indicative purposes only.
For the purposes of this extra analysis, I have excluded two ethnic/caste groups that are shown in the Top 10 numerically dominant groups as per Table 4. 'Yadav' are not shown in the original Muluki Ain hierarchy and 'Newar' are represented in three out of the five hierarchical categories. With the information provided, there is no way of distinguishing between them.

The distribution of population by religion, one of Shrestha's (2003) indicative measures of holistic inequalities in Nepal, was shown earlier in the chapter (see Table 2) and presented a significantly large representation of self-defined Hindus. Another measure he exemplifies is language. The 2011 census recorded 123 native languages in Nepal - first language acquired from parents - and from its data collection, found Nepali being spoken as first language by almost 45% of the overall population in Nepal. In second, with around 12%, was Maithili. Table 6 presents the top ten first languages spoken by the population in Nepal.

Table 6: Top ten primary languages of Nepal (Population Monograph of Nepal, Volume II, 2014)

No.	Language	Speakers	%
1	Nepali	11,826,953	45%
2	Maithili	3,092,530	12%
3	Bhojpuri	1,584,958	6%
4	Tharu	1,529,875	6%
5	Tamang	1,353,311	5%
6	Newar	846,557	3%
7	Bajjika	793,416	3%
8	Magar	788,530	3%
9	Doteli	787,827	3%
10	Urdu	691,546	3%

Table 6 shows Nepali is overwhelmingly spoken as the first language by Nepalis in Nepal, with just under half the population doing so. Furthermore, around a third of the population speak Nepali as a second language. Like caste/ethnic barriers (and perhaps as a result of language association to caste and ethnicity), there has been some contention around the use of certain languages in institutions. Despite reforms put in place in the early 1990s to

provide more ethnically representative changes to Nepal's socio-political structures, the 1999 Supreme Court ruled, *'the use of ethnic languages such as Nepal Bhasa[30]and Maithili in government offices is unconstitutional and illegal'* (Kramer, 2007, p. 189). This led to mass demonstrations on the streets of Kathmandu by members of the public[31] and raised serious questions amongst civilians to the government's attempts and commitment to build a nation for all (Shrestha, 2016). It was deemed another example of duplicity on the part of government and policy officials, leading to social commentators in Nepal contemplating a country on the verge of de-nationalisation:

> *'Ethnic nationalism is on the rise in Nepal…Nepal is host to 62 "nationalities". None of these nationalities, including the predominant Khas population, speaking Nepali (Khas) and practising Hinduism - can be considered as a single majority group. The Khas, however, remain determined to propagate their language, culture, and religion through their control over state institutions. While ethnic mobilisation in Nepal has largely, to date, avoided bloodshed, the frustration of minority nationalities, ethnicities, castes, and tribes is an important factor behind the growing popularity of the Maoists' "people's war"'* (Shrestha, 2003, p. 22).

The deflection away from national collectivism is evident in Shrestha's analysis of Nepal at the time of his writing. He writes about the divergence of Nepal's, *'62 nationalities'* and irregularities surrounding welfare, leading to violent demonstrations in Kathmandu after a Supreme Court ruling imposed language restrictions. He suggests the escalation of ethnic nationalism as a direct result of inequalities consistently faced by minority groups, such as the recognition (or not) of minority languages. Ethnic nationalism (also known as ethno-nationalism) relates to the preference or loyalty shown towards an ethnic group as opposed to a nation. Ethno-nationalism is often the result of economic modernisation which curtails the upward mobility, as ascribed by society or the state, leading minority groups towards separatist nationalist movements

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[30]Nepal Bhasa is more popularly known as Newar - the language spoken predominantly by Newari communities.

[31]This Supreme Court ruling was addressed and eventually overturned in the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007. Under Language of the Nation', Clause 3, it writes, *'Notwithstanding anything contained in Clause (2), nothing shall be deemed to prevent the using of any language spoken as the mother tongue in a local body or office. The State shall maintain records by translating the languages so used in the official language'* (The Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2063 (2007)).

(Fearon & Laitin, 2003). Walker (1994), regarded as a key figure in coining the contemporary use of ethno-nationalism, infers the importance of sentiment behind ethno-cultural divide which, he believes, is natural in distinguishing political affiliations. Walker Connor's development of ethno-nationalism was based on Western Society during the 1960s and 1970s (Lecours, 2007). Thinking more specifically about South Asia, ethno-nationalism is largely attributed to this region as a consequence of colonial rule these countries endured (Jetley, 1999). In Nepal's case, ethno-nationalism advocates citizens' rights to cultural self-determination; equal opportunities and rights to deviate away from the dominant power of the nation to develop and study their own, (usually) minority language (Gurung, 2010). For Nepal there is an overarching ethnic/caste power at play which, despite various attempts, subdues the prospects of a large-scale identity that the masses can relate to. Not only has there been focus to streamline religion and language in-favour of the ruling class (caste and ethnic) majority, but to do so to the detriment of minority and often marginalised groups' cultural values.

It can be argued, therefore, the discriminatory ways of the caste system have remained consistent; it continues to dominate the way of life in Nepal. As demonstrated throughout this chapter, changes and amendments to reduce inequality have been hard to come by and attempts to overcome them have been met with further issues. When individuals return to their country of birth, they are surrounded by some level of ethnic, caste or racial prejudice. It, therefore, makes it difficult to evolve thinking and move away from traditional and mostly negative connotations of caste and ethnic differences. For this reason, it raises questions around how Nepalis position and describe themselves in the wider context and whether a broader, collective identity is even possible within a society that is seemingly driven by caste and ethnic differences.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter was split into two sections as a way of presenting literature pertinent to significant aspects by which this research is positioned. In Part I I critically outlined key theoretical debates in a broad sense which illuminated the focus of Nepal and versions of Nepali identity uncovered in Part II. The first

section uncovered definitions and meanings of identity which has helped prise out key understandings of how identity has been, or can be, used. Heavily underpinned by social constructionism, coupled with Bourdieusian theory, identity is largely interchangeable and fluid by nature and an individual or community can have many identities - shared or otherwise. However, there are some exceptions to the notion of unfixed, transient identities. Though it is discerned as a marker by which an individual or community can be easily identified, its multiplicity means there are some differentiation. These different modes and levels of identity are determined by the social and environmental context of that specific time (Goffman, 1959). However, as Bourdieu's work suggests, the initial grounding of identity is found in one's early years and is compounded by the habitus. The dominant identity by which individuals' uniqueness is labelled and assigned by others is referred to by Barley (2014) as the dominant status. Voluntarily achieved or involuntarily ascribed, the dominant status is the primary trait that supersedes all others an individual may hold, invariably leading to biased attitudes, breakdown of social relationships and the acceptance of this label by the subjected individual (Becker, 1968). It is through these labels individuals and groups navigate versions of their identity. This was found particularly within the conceptualisation and operationalisation of national identity and what it means to belong to a nation.

How national identity is understood, be it territorial, political or based on landscape, was found to hold less weight, or rather, each of these facets were found to be submerged by ethnic undertones (Smith, 1998; Guibernau, 2004; Elgenuis, 2011; Meinig, 1979). This introduced the notion of ethnic nationalism (Lecours, 2000; Smith, 1994; Horowitz, 1984) and underlined the importance of ethnic identity as an essential marker by which a national group can be effectively assumed, and helped navigate my literature analysis towards Nepal's ethnic and caste structures. The next section reviewed examples of migration and diaspora from a theoretical grounding. I used the work of Vertovec (1999) to streamline how I presented diaspora as his research is generally focussed around South Asian migration movement. Vertovec's findings outlined three principles (social form, consciousness and production) within diaspora ideology.

The final part introduced the idea of 'fitting in' into the host nation and the challenges migrants and diaspora communities faced. The focus shifted towards the possible difficulties of integrating in Britain, given the vague and abstract concept of what it means to have a British identity (Cohen, 1994; 2000). These aspects engaged my thinking towards the possible reasons and outcomes of diaspora and particularly, the impact this could have on an emerging population away from the homeland.

Hall (1994; 2000) and Smith (1994; 1998) influenced the direction and formulation of the second half of my literature review chapter. Analysing literature based on gender discrimination in Nepal found in Part II would suggest that it is very much explicit and continually being practiced. It is preconditioned by the default of Nepali norms and values which are evident in many aspects of everyday life; from self-identity being dictated to and curtailed because of enforced co-dependency on male figures, to limited resources and opportunities given to women (Laczo, 2003; Chickera & Harrington, 2017). Recent reforms and amendments have been enforced to challenge these outdated and restrictive ways, but even within diasporic journeys, women are predominantly found to be 'trailing' their husbands (Stockdale, 2016; Suman, 2018) inferring that the decision to migrate, or otherwise, it largely out of their hands.

Aside from gender bias, reviewing literature pertinent to Nepal also discovered the inequalities faced by groups in Nepal because of their, often intersecting, ethnic and/ or caste positions. Those belonging to lower ethnic and caste groups are disadvantaged in terms of access to provisions and opportunities, resulting in disruptive and occasionally violent protests (Shrestha, 2003). They feel ignored, under-represented in high profile seats and because of this, made to feel unworthy.

Given what has been presented within the literature review, this thesis, in focussing on the transnational movement of a group of Nepalis from Nepal to Doncaster aims to ask and uncover the following research questions:

- To what extent do these individuals develop a new understanding of (Nepali) identity?

- How do these understandings deviate away from what they had previously understood to be their (Nepali) identity pre-relocation?

- What role and impact has resettlement in Doncaster played in their understanding of self (as an individual)?

- What role and impact has resettlement in Doncaster played in their understanding of Nepalis as a collective group?

- How do these individuals negotiate and/or navigate how they choose to present themselves within 'British society'?

- What is the significance or relevance of having or maintaining links to Nepal as individuals construct a life outside their country of birth?

After outlining my methodology and research design in the next chapter, these questions will be explored in the remaining chapters of my thesis.

Chapter Three: Methodology

> *'…people are essentially context-bound, that is, they cannot be free from time and location or the mind of the human actor. Researchers must understand the socially constructed nature of the world and realise that values and interests become part of the research process'* – (Graham Gibbs, 2007, p. 8).

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology used during fieldwork to answer my research questions. It begins by positioning this research within an ontological and epistemological framework, showing the importance of constructionism, relating it to my own research and grounding the use of qualitative methodology. Then, I reflect on my findings from two exploratory studies. Firstly, I undertook a study of everyday life, recording observations made during a three-week holiday in Nepal in 2014. This was an active step I took to understand the context in which my respondents had been living, through immersing myself back in that environment. Secondly, I conducted two interviews with members of London-based Nepali organisations, to capture how they promoted aspects of Nepali identity in their respective spatial boundaries in London. Both helped inform and formulate initial ideas for my own empirical data collection. I go on to describe the methods used to obtain the data: life history interviews and secondary data analysis, including the selection criteria for potential respondents. In doing so, I explore the benefits of a narrative life history approach in eliciting findings from my sample. The next section covers the ethical principles I considered before starting my research, before moving to explain the process of narrative translation and transcription undertaken and how this facilitated analysis. Lastly, I critically examine my role as a researcher, demonstrating the extent to which that supported the data collection. Finally I consider the shortcomings in the research design.

3.2 Ontological and Epistemological Positionality

Social constructionism is the ontological stance of this research; that perceptions and the reality of 'being' are generated by individuals, built up and revised over time through experience, reflections and interactions with others.

This position counters objectivism, which implies that *'social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors'* (Bryman, 2004, p. 16), suggesting daily activities are external and beyond the influences of individuals and groups. To present the differences between the two viewpoints, Bryman (2004) gives an example of cultures and subcultures, which loosely fits this research. From an objectivism perspective, he suggests cultures are a framework into which individuals are socialised in order to complete a function, whereas social constructionism underlines an emerging reality that is constantly reformed to create an actuality. I relate this ontological premise to the reality of identity and culture. For my Nepali-born respondents, the construction of reality away from Nepal is the 'actuality' and relocating to Doncaster revises some aspects of their self-identity.

My epistemological position, concerning the generation of knowledge, is also based on a social constructionism stance. This stance describes knowledge as a product of human activity related to social structures, context and environment (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Burr, 2007). The ever-changing, fluid construction of identity means there is no objective, quantifiable way to measure reality (Harrington, 2005). This ontological and epistemological alignment dictated the methodologies adopted for this research. Therefore, I use life history interviews as the primary methodological approach, to gain an understanding of the formations and outcomes of Nepali migration. The other methodologies - researcher's observations and the analysis of secondary, quantitative data - supplement the main contextual findings.

As my ontological and epistemological standpoints rely on interpretation, my methodologies are predominantly qualitative. The focus of in-depth, qualitative research allows for a better understanding of individual and community interpretations, which are particularly important when attempting to uncover socially constructed realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). According to Wicks and Whiteford (2006), there are four key dimensions of qualitative research which demonstrate how individuals create their own realities: context specifics, emic perspectives, iterative nature and power relations. These four distinct yet inter-related aspects influenced my decision to adopt a qualitative approach to

address, explore and understand the impact of migration and its effect on culture and identity.

Learning about the environment and context in which people live is central to qualitative research when interpreting human behaviour and identity. It individualises context which helps elicit rich findings from markers such as gender, ethnicity and social status (McAdams, 1988; Bruner, 1990). Context helps to derive meaning from respondents' realities. This is integral to my research as the circumstances that precede migration are fundamental in building an understanding of how relocation impacts on notions of identity. The focus on context as a key component ties in with Goffman (1959) and his conclusion that identity changes are framed around the social environment of individuals and groups. From a narrative paradigm, life history is situated in the unique context of the narrator, but is also placed within the social, cultural and economic structure of a specific time and place (Zilber, Tuval-Mashiach & Lieblich, 2008). The narratives demonstrate how strong a role context plays in the realisation of self for individuals and communities.

Emic and etic perspectives derive from the work of Pike (1967, p. 37) who distinguished between the two concepts; emic perspectives concern *'behaviour from inside the system'* and etic looks from *'outside a particular system'*. The emic perspective is largely synonymous with ethnographic research where the researcher observes and interacts with participants in their natural environment (Hammersley, 1992). Although I have not adopted a strictly ethnographic approach[32], the emic assumption that culture, in its various forms, is a series of interconnected parts merging to create a holistic system (Morris, Leung, Ames & Lickel, 1999) is germane to this research. This resonates with Durkheim (1893) and his theory that the function of society needs to be considered beyond its individual, independent parts. Furthermore, Rosa and Orey (2012) stress the importance of the researcher's exposure to the culture being studied, as the researcher should be familiar with the cultural values and expressions of the sample. I was able to accomplish this through my family background and several visits to Nepal prior to conducting this research.

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[32]Goodenough (1970) suggested that the core principles within the emic viewpoint could be utilised in an interview setting.

Iterative nature and power relations were also considerations in my choice of qualitative methodologies, emerging after the life history narratives had been collected. An iterative framework of qualitative data analysis is both flexible (Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010) and reflexive in nature (Harper, 2003; Bruce, 2007). It follows a repeatable data collection method which can adapt to any changes that might occur throughout the data-gathering process. Berkowitz (1997, no page number) suggests it is *'a loop-like pattern of multiple rounds of revisiting the data as additional questions emerge, new connections are unearthed, and more complex formulations develop along with a deepening understanding of the material.'* The purposive sampling framework can also be adjusted accordingly (Mills et al., 2010), allowing for inductive analysis (Patton, 2002). My fieldwork took place over three years and during that time I saw shifts in the respondents' thinking. I devised an interview guide (see Appendix 2) based on Atkinson's (1998) recommended categories for undertaking life history interviews. Initially, for example, if respondents discussed their perceptions of Nepal's current political and economic state but could not attribute their perceptions, I directed them by asking if it they believed it was an outcome of the Nepali royal family massacre in 2001[33]. But as I continued to collect data, respondents were able to offer views in line with current developments in Nepal at the time of research. This example shows how the adaptive nature of qualitative methods are particularly useful for this research. Throughout the fieldwork, I was mindful of the researcher-respondent relationship, how it might be construed by the participants and the impact it might have on overall findings. This is the fourth dimension referred to by Wicks and Whiteford (2006) - power relations - and will be revisited further on in the ethical considerations section.

The interpretative paradigm that qualitative research occupies in Wicks and Whiteford's (2006) four principles inevitably places emphasis on the meanings derived from performing research and explicating findings. The social

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[33]On 1st June 2001, Crown Prince Dipendra, heir to the throne, reportedly massacred his family. 11 members of the royal family died in the shootings and the ramifications of the incident have been significant. Since then, there has been a Maoist rebellion, the country has become a republican democracy and the monarchy has been abolished (Tharoor, 2009).

constructionism underpinning interpretation - the phenomenological standing of the consciousness and the self-awareness of human behaviour - creates an *idea* of reality. These interpretative characteristics are well suited to a case study format. Much debate has been levelled at how case studies should be positioned; whether it should be considered a research design (Stake, 2005; Baxter & Jack, 2008) or a research method (Gerring, 2004). According to Yin (2003) a case study design can be used in the following instances:

- If the research is to answer *how* and *why* questions.
- If the attitude and behaviour of the sample cannot be influenced.
- If context is important to answer the research questions.
- If, at the start of the research, it is difficult to discern between the phenomenon being studied (in my case, identity) and context.

Based on Yin's summary, I decided to use a case study format as the research design and life history interviews as a method to execute the design. A case study is a description-laden model used to explore individuals, groups or a phenomenon (Sturman, 1997). Miles and Huberman (1994) argue it is essential to identify the case being studied. The purpose of this design is to facilitate analysis by identifying the variables and structures of a case to gauge how it works or develops (Simons, 2009). To define the *'unit of analysis'* (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 25) researchers must consider what is being analysed. My study relies on individual narratives from participants who have experienced the process of migration. My principal interest was not the decision-making behind the migration, although I anticipated it would be uncovered in the research findings. Instead, it focuses on the experiences of individuals before and after relocation and the shaping of their identity as a result of these lived experiences. In that sense, my *'unit of analysis'* is individual experience and narrative. Bryman (2004) suggests a case study is also an association with a community, organisation or location. This resonates with my research of a Nepali community in Doncaster and provides another reason for my choice of research design. My work attempts to build on the understanding of a community away from its country of birth, to explore whether homeland-linked organisations rouse a sense of cohesion, and how this is operationalised in Doncaster.

But there are limitations with a case study design that must be considered. Hamel (1993) points out that case studies have been criticised for their narrow scope and usability, their lack of applicability to contexts beyond the research area. Shields (2007) and Simons (1996) suggest that such criticisms inevitably raise issues regarding reliability, validity and ability to be generalised. Furthermore, Flyvbjerg (2006) postulates that the speculative nature of a case study design means it can only be used to generate initial thoughts; it does not have the capacity to evolve and test theory. However, in the case of this research I choose to view this latter criticism as a strength, as the conjectural nature of case studies generates extensive, rich data among an under-represented population in a relatively under-researched area.

3.3 Methods

3.3.1 Immersion in Context: Researcher's Observations and Reflections

I draw on my own personal reflections from a three-week trip to Nepal in 2014, keeping a diary, talking to locals and making notes throughout. On my return, I interviewed members of two Nepali community organisations in London to understand the extent of cohesion among the capital's Nepali community and with wider British society, and how these organisations contributed to this cohesion. The evaluation of secondary data sources established the degree of outflow from Nepal. Findings from the two pilot studies helped frame my initial understanding of Nepali identity in the homeland and away from it, and they informed my choice of methodology. Before looking at the life history approach in detail, I reflect on my findings from the exploratory research.

Once the aim, objectives and framework of this research were established, I realised I needed to experience and understand the current environment in Nepal. So, I conducted preliminary research in Nepal by interviewing family members and charting my experiences and observations in a diary with accompanying photos. In her research on young people's identities in contemporary Europe, Bagnoli (2004) encouraged reflexivity among her participants by asking them to keep diaries of their weekly activities, which

provided her work with holistic and operational perspectives. Similarly, I wanted to capture the essence of Nepal in the current climate of my research and observe it as a relatively detached researcher (I have a Nepali family background, but I have never lived in Nepal).

One of the first things I noticed as soon as I left Tribhuvan International Airport were the physical changes to the capital, Kathmandu. I saw new developments and dramatic changes to the infrastructure; roads were dug up and houses demolished in an attempt to build a *'new capital'*. However, I was told by many local people that the city had been in a *'work-in-progress state'* for more than a year. Stacks of concrete blocks and bricks were strewn across the walkways, and large potholes were a common sight. The rebuilding of Kathmandu - initially a welcome development - had left the city and its residents in disarray and confusion:

'The government and hierarchy were quick to dig things up in their weak attempts to create a 'better Nepal' but these plans are baseless. There is no means to an end. Plans are made and action taken quickly without thinking of the consequence. Look around. Everything is so disorganised.'

'Don't know when they'll clean the streets up and start rebuilding. We, the people, don't know anything.'

There appeared to be a lack of communication between those in charge and the general population. When I asked who was in charge of the rebuilding, I was greeted with looks of confusion and apprehension and told: *'Whoever wants to be in charge is in charge'.*

During my three-week stay, there were several instances when I couldn't leave the house because, as I was told, '*Nepal aja bandha cha'* [Nepal is closed today]. I learned that curfews[34] were imposed regularly and had been prevalent

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[34]Curfews are typically imposed during the night and residents must remain indoors. At their height between 2001 and 2006, curfews were consistently enforced during the daytime, meaning the regular closure of shops, schools and the airport (Spillius, 2001). They were imposed by the government in retaliation to people's protests against Nepal's sociopolitical and monarchical powers (Pokharel & Sengupta, 2006).

in Kathmandu since the mid-1990s when the Maoist insurgency[35] began. The Maoist rebels sought to overthrow the Nepali monarchy and create a People's Republic. This civil unrest claimed around 13,000 lives over a 10-year period.

Image 2: Limited resources: queues of people wait to top up their gas supply in Kathmandu.

Photograph: Griha Laxmi

Image 3: Kathmandu residents had to find cooking alternatives because of a lack of gas.

Photograph: Biva Poudyal

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[35]The Maoist insurgency, the *'People's War'* against the state in 1996, was in retaliation to historical oppression and inequality faced by groups of the population in power and poverty (Mahat, 2005).

Curfews had become a way of life in Nepal and people were surprised if they weren't imposed at least once every couple of weeks. Schools and shops were closed, public transport stopped, and people stayed in the house for fear of facing abuse in the street. I asked who enforced these curfews:

'If there are disputes between castes, then one group can choose to force a curfew. If one farmer has a disagreement with another, he can choose to impose a curfew on the grounds that his "type" of farmer is not respected in this country. It is ridiculous.'

'They think they're standing up for their rights, to better themselves, to better their country, to be heard, but it's a joke.'

Image 4: Public display of unity: a group of Nepalis in Chabel, Kathmandu, form a 'julus'[36] to protest the constant disruption to daily life.

Photograph: Puja Subedi

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[36]Julus is the Nepali word for march.

As I witnessed the constant disruption to daily life, I wondered if the instability of the government was part of the reason people in Nepal migrated.

'I guess when the youth of today see this kind of thing on a day-to-day basis, they want to go and find a better life for themselves outside of Nepal. Is that the right thing to do? I don't know. Nepal is such a beautiful country and can offer some people so much. All it needs is a group of people to settle things down and try running the country the proper way; democratically. Maybe then will things calm down? But let's see. I don't see that happening for a while yet.'

3.3.2 Exploratory Research: Nepali Communities in London

After this trip to Nepal, I travelled to London to interview members of two Nepali organisations to begin to the process of uncovering what it means to be Nepali outside of Nepal before I collected my own empirical data. CODEC UK (Community Development Centre UK) and NBC UK (Nepalese British Community UK) were established in the capital to help the Nepali community integrate and maintain aspects of their culture and identity. I asked senior members of both organisations to help me understand why they had been created, how they had developed, and how they interacted with the surrounding Nepali community. I was aware of a similar body in Doncaster - The British Gurkhas Community Doncaster - and wanted to understand how such establishments can help establish community cohesion away from the homeland. The information provided by CODEC UK and NBC UK helped shape my approach to my research interviews. Below is a description of the two London organisations.

Both CODEC and NBC are charitable organisations established in the mid to late 2000s. The objective of both is to provide a support network for those who identify themselves as Nepali within the context of British culture. Both make the link to Britain clear with the inclusion of 'UK' and 'British' in their titles. Ganga Rana, the Social and Cultural Unit Coordinator for NBC UK, told me the organisation name was chosen to emphasise their values of acceptance and inclusion:

Ganga Rana: *'The idea is that we are Nepalese but we're also British too because we're living in the UK. It's about getting the right balance and not forgetting either. We're British but we're Nepalese too, we're Nepalese but*

we're British too; that's the idea. And because of that, we decided the best name for the organisation would be Nepalese British Community.'

The British Gurkhas Community Doncaster incorporates both British and Doncaster in its title. Image 5 shows an invitation to the community's 2013 Dashain gathering (a 15-day national Nepali festival celebrating the victory of the Hindu goddess Parvati). The inclusion of Gurkhas rather than Nepalis in the title is striking. Gurkhas are soldiers from specific caste and ethnic groups in Nepal and it can be argued that the omittance of 'Nepali' in this community group's name and the inclusion of 'Gurkha' creates a division. The implication is that this group does not welcome all Nepali community groups, and this issue was raised by the respondents in this research.

Image 5: A Dashain invitation flyer from The British Gurkhas Community Doncaster

Bishnu Wagle, the Civic Enforcement Officer at CODEC UK, and Ganga Rana both stressed that integration is key in their organisations, and members of all castes and ethnic groups are welcome. Bishnu believes this inclusion has helped the organisation evolve into a positive community force. This inclusive ethos is echoed by Ganga:

Bishnu Wagle: *'We sell tickets at the gates, at every event we host and all are welcome to come. In our Teej[37] celebrations, for example, we had members of the English community come along too. There are no restrictions whatsoever. This is a multicultural society we live in. The government themselves address the UK as a multicultural nation. There is a general feeling that everyone must respect all cultures, faiths and religion. Even if they want to come and join and be a member of CODEC UK, there are no restrictions.'*

Ganga Rana: *'The society we live in is a multicultural one. If you take this local area for example, South Harrow, the local high school has children from all over the world and if you asked each what their mother tongue is, you would easily get at least 30 different spoken languages. Therefore, in the society we live in, if we, only the Nepalese community, were to promote our language and way of life, it would cause serious problems. Because of that we integrate with all and build our relationships with all. If we're on good terms and keep good relationships with the African community, the Eastern European community etc. then they'll be on good terms with our Nepalese community and more accepting too.'*

Both Bishnu and Ganga explained how the associations provide monetary support to members, organise social events and English language classes, and teach young people about the culture and heritage of Nepal. Both organisations also raise money to send back to Nepal:

Bishnu Wagle: *'What we did almost a year and a half ago, we managed to save two lakh four thousand Nepali Rupees [approximately £1700] and put that money towards building an old age home for the elderly in Nepal. I, myself, went to Nepal with that money and started the building process with an inauguration. That is being built in Biratnagar[38].'*

Such initiatives help maintain links between Nepal and the UK community. The findings from this London pilot study were considered in my empirical research into how Nepali migrants in Doncaster negotiate and maintain links with the homeland. Ganga explained how NBC has flourished and helped to cement strong friendships among its members:

Ganga Rana: *'I mean, I have met and become friends with people that, had I not have joined NBC, I probably would never have come across. Good friendships have been made through NBC.'*

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[37]Teej is a festival observed by Hindu women and marks the union of Goddess Parvati with her husband Lord Shiva (Bhatnagar, 1988).
[38]Biratnagar is a city in the Morang district of Nepal.

These are the organisational perspectives of two organisations in London, with much bigger urban community than Doncaster. Whilst these accounts encouraged ideas and question areas I could ask and develop during my own empirical research, I was aware they might not reflect what I would find in Doncaster.

The two exploratory studies used qualitative approaches to elicit areas of significance in my empirical research. They also raised questions about the concept of identity and directed my thinking towards identity as an operational marker - how it functions in lived experiences. It was also important to think about migration as a phenomenon within a Nepali context and this was done by analysing secondary data, which brought a quantitative element to this qualitatively driven study. Secondary data examination refers to data that has been previously collected, typically allowing analysis of both qualitative and quantitative datasets (Donnellan & Lucas, 2013). The use of quantitative secondary data is within the remit of a social constructionist grounding because of its interpretative nature (Creswell, 2013); how this data is used and presented is driven by the researcher's interpretation. This study's social constructionist underpinning endorses the use of qualitative methodologies that encourage relationships between the researcher and their subjects (respondents), audience (colleagues and scholars) and society at large (Given, 2008). The subjective nature of interpretation and the deviation from the sources' original purpose has been questioned (Mauthner, Parry and Backett-Milburn, 1998) but this has been countered by the prospect of multi-reflexivity (Mason, 2007) and the positive impact of re-contextualising previously gathered data (Broom, Cheshire & Emmison, 2009). My secondary datasets supplement my primary data and largely comprise Nepali census and migration statistics over specified time periods.

3.4 Life History Narratives

In broad terms, a life history approach provides insight and helps track change over time, allowing the researcher to understand any developments in their interviewee's narration of their lives (Rosenthal, 1993). The use of life history methodology in qualitative research has fluctuated since it first emerged in a study by Thomas and Znaniecki (1918) examining Polish immigrants in the

USA. In this work, Thomas and Znaniecki are concerned with *'individuals'* *adaptation to the new mode in relation to broader social groups to which they belonged, namely the family and the community'* (Sinatti, 2008, p. 1) with emphasis on the movement away from behaviour and social organisation. At the time, their research was considered pioneering for its rich data, supplemented with the use of personal narratives, letters and autobiographies, and biographical case studies to illustrate the impact of transition (Sinatti, 2008). These research artefacts exposed the study to much criticism - Blumer (1939) suggests that introducing these human elements compromises the reliability, representativeness, testability, and adequateness of research.

Allport (1942) distinguishes between several types of autobiographical, life history writings in his psychology work on the study of human nature, and I use his comprehensive biographical form. This captures respondents' whole lives from their earliest memories to present day, providing a holistic *'picture of variety, roundness, and interrelatedness of life'* (Denzin, 2009, p. 226). The interrelatedness aspect is especially important to my research as I aim to uncover how different, independent parts of individuals' lives converge to create multiple identities. A comprehensive life history usually combines other data sources to complement life narratives, including diaries, photos and other personal documents (Plummer, 2001). I contemplated asking respondents if they would be willing to share images and personal effects during their interviews. However, as some of them were initially reluctant to participate in this research, I decided against the idea in case it deterred them further.

Therefore, a biographical approach in the form of life history interviews was used to give respondents an opportunity to articulate how they defined, interpreted and comprehended their environments. According to Atkinson (1998) a life history approach was first adopted to help understand human experiences and how people narrate their lives. With analysis, life history narratives highlight the connections participants make when accounting for their past, present and future (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Atkinson (1998) devised a catalogue of questions to capture elements of the past, present and future from interviews, which I adapted to construct a loose structure for my interviews (see Appendix 2). This flexible structure was used as a reference point during the

interviews to ensure key life moments were not missed, while allowing narratives to flow and giving respondents autonomy in the presentation of their lives (Morris, 2015). For this research, the following categories were taken from Atkinson (1998, p. 43-53) to assist in the chronological mapping of crucial events and times in the respondents' lives:

- *Birth and family of origin*
- *Cultural settings and traditions*
- *Social factors*
- *Education*
- *Relationships*
- *Historical events*
- *Retirement*
- *Vision of the future*

Criticisms have been raised about the life history approach as a data collection method as it relies significantly on memory which can be unreliable and misrepresentative. Howarth (1998) argues subjects can present themselves in an overtly positive way while Portelli (1997) explores the likelihood of mixing up and misremembering instances, which can produce inaccurate accounts. Furthermore, researchers need to be mindful of respondents recalling arduous or painful times (Morris, 2015). Not only is this potentially distressing for the narrator, but it raises concerns around the reliability of their accounts. Hobsbawm (1997) suggests this can lead to interviewees exaggerating specific moments in time as personal memory is *'a remarkably slippery medium for preserving facts'* (Hobsbawm, 1997, p. 206). These limitations are hard to measure which reinforces the subjective nature of this methodology. To avoid causing distress during my data collection, I verbally reaffirmed respondents' rights to pause or withdraw at any point during the interviews. Respondents were also given a paper copy of the brief and debrief (see Appendix 3 and 4), which included the right to withdraw. To help limit the effects of memory misrepresentation, I included a mix of ages and backgrounds in my sample to strengthen and validate my findings. Context is key to understanding experience, and a life history approach illuminates this as it tracks different

periods of time in respondents' own accounts of their lives. Topical life history, which focuses on specific fragments of an overall life (Ebaugh, 1988; Berg, 1995), is relatively devoid of context in comparison and unlikely to present a full picture. Context with a full biographical account helps the researcher to understand their respondents and discern, to some extent, between fact and fiction. I concede that my overall sample size was not large enough to consider all the potential limitations of life history interviews as a primary source of data. But this is outweighed by the need to give respondents the freedom to tell their stories in their own way.

This approach highlighted key patterns and trends from life history narratives which could be grouped together, addressing similar characteristics of experience in Doncaster's Nepali community, while also understanding the differences and outcomes it had for individual respondents. The narratives drew on individual accounts of *'past experiences as a source for understanding change and continuities in society across time and within generations and epochs'* (Bornat, 2012, p. 1). The life history narratives therefore allowed respondents' identities to be located through their life journey and their understanding of self, and scoped how their identity is operationalised to 'belong' which as Anthias (2016, p. 177) suggests, *'questions the actual spaces and places to which people are accepted as members or feel that they are members.'* This membership can be voluntary, involuntary or imagined (Anderson, 1983) but it is through these shared connections that a sense of belonging is created.

3.5 Respondents

3.5.1 Selecting Research Respondents

Purposive sampling was used to select respondents. This type of sampling often goes together with qualitative research and considers the objectives of the researcher within the wider framework of the research purpose. It is a form of non-probability sampling determined by grounded theory and the central characteristics of the potential sample (Curtis, Gesler, Smith & Washburn, 2000). Purposive sampling signifies the importance of a case study design, determining *'why particular people (or groups) feel in particular ways, the*

processes by which these attitudes are constructed, and the role they play in dynamic processes within the organisation or group' (Palys, 2008, p. 697). This method was appropriate as my fieldwork attempts to uncover the reasons for negotiating identity and interpret how these attitudes have been constructed, developed or lost over time.

Potential respondents had to meet the following requirements in order to be considered for the interview sample:

- To have relocated from Nepal to the UK, specifically Doncaster.
- To be living in Doncaster at the time of the interview.
- Be over 18 years.

The rationale for these criteria was to gather a location-specific sample - Nepal as the homeland and Doncaster as the adopted land - and to understand any differences relevant to identity as a result of geographical relocation from Nepal to the UK. I decided to consider all of Nepal as my homeland category, rather than examining respondents' local area as it would further complicate my prospective sample. Respondents had to be living in Doncaster at the time of interview (although no restriction was placed on the amount of time they had lived in the South Yorkshire town) as my aim is to establish how identity is positioned among an emerging population in a specific locality. And finally, the decision not to interview individuals under 18 was primarily made on ethical grounds. Although recent literature suggests an increase in child-based research (Bell, 2008), it requires further levels of precaution (Thomas & O'Kane, 1998; Hill, 2005) beyond what would be considered ethical for adults. Given the sensitive nature of this research (the lived experience of relocation) I decided not to include children in the final sample make-up.

Table 7 provides an overview of the key demographic information captured about each interviewee to help reveal themes during the analysis stage. The table assigns each respondent with a pseudonym[39] and identifies gender, age,

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[39]After encountering some participatory issues (discussed later in the chapter) and due to the sensitive nature of what could potentially be revealed, I made it clear to respondents their identities could be concealed to protect them, if they wished. Respondents were given the option to have their real names assigned

occupation at the time of interview, years living in the UK, at what age they migrated to the UK, whether they have any form of UK education and their caste/ethnic group. These variables were answered by the respondents themselves when consenting to participate in the research. After respondents had been briefed about the research, all were asked to complete a participant consent form (see Appendix 5) which included the demographic information detailed below. The form included instructions and guidance written in English and Nepali to cater for both language preferences and where respondents indicated language was a problem, I asked the questions and recorded their responses.

My awareness of the growing Nepali population in Doncaster and how ethnically diverse the community is helped inform my research questions (as detailed in Chapter One). I was keen to understand the differences in experiences of different Nepali groups pre and post relocation and anticipated ethnic diversity within my research sample would occur naturally. This was not achieved to the extent I had initially hoped as Table 7 below indicates, only three caste/ethnic groups are represented in this study. Access and barriers to respondent participation is discussed later in the chapter (see 3.9). Obtaining representative samples in migrant and ethnic minorities' research is challenging because of lack of availability and accessibility (Lynn, Nandi, Parutis & Platt, 2018). For this reason, qualitative researchers in this field favour building on networks and snowballing through contacts to gain participants (Drinkwater & Garapich, 2011; Font & Mendez, 2013), placing emphasis on quality and not quantity of insight. I too relied on this technique, choosing to focus on my links to the Nepali community in Doncaster and fashioning respondents in that way. Although the Nepali community in Doncaster is emerging, it is a relatively small-scale group comparatively to other minority ethnic groups (see Chart 1) and the wider population in Doncaster.

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to their narratives, or a pseudonym. I explained to each prospective respondent how the narratives would be used (i.e., full interview transcripts included in the appendices and excerpts included in the main body of the thesis). Overall, respondents chose not to reveal their real names so these have not been captured and included in this research. Instead, each participant has been given a pseudonym and is referred to by this name throughout the thesis.

Table 7: Respondents' Profile

Name	Male/ Female	Age	Occupation	Caste/ Ethnic group	Years living in UK	Age arrived in UK	UK Educa- tion
Amar	M	55-64	Retired	Newar	36	25	No
Bina	F	35-44	Kitchen porter	Newar	13	24	No
Chandni	F	55-64	Housewife	Newar	30	30	No
Deepak	M	55-64	Retired	Brahman	41	22	No
Eshwar	M	35-44	Analyst	Newar	30	10	Yes
Falak	M	35-44	House husband	Newar	13	25	No
Gita	F	35-44	Manager	Newar	30	8	Yes
Himani	F	55-64	Housewife	Brahman	34	25	No
Indra	M	65+	Retired	Newar	46	29	No
Jeewan	M	35-44	Teacher	Newar	38	3	Yes
Kriti	F	65+	Housewife	Newar	40	34	No
Leela	F	35-44	Housewife	Newar	14	21	No
Malina	F	35-44	Housewife	Gurung	13	31	No
Nitin	M	35-44	Accountant	Brahman	15	28	No
Ojaswi	F	45-54	Housewife	Brahman	33	21	No
Pari	F	35-44	Nurse	Brahman	16	20	No
Rabia	F	35-44	Nurse	Brahman	13	25	No

3.5.2 Introducing the Research Respondents

In total, 17 respondents took part in this research and the fieldwork took place between September 2015 and September 2018. Each interview was completed

at a venue pre-agreed by respondents[40] when they first agreed to participate in the research. The demographic details in Table 7 present categorical and continuous variables. These independent variables were self-defined by respondents themselves to eliminate any assumptions or guesswork on my part (Salkind, 2010). Recording this information also tracked prospective relations with dependent (identity and movement) variables to facilitate analysis.

Amar arrived in the UK in 1977, leaving his wife (Chandni) and two children (Eshwar and Gita) behind in Nepal. His brother (Indra) sponsored his work in restaurants. With minimal education but some work experience in Nepal, Amar talked about facing relatively few language barriers in the UK because of the nature of the work he found. Amar mentioned his frustration with Nepal's current political and economic instability.

Bina got married in Nepal in 2000 and joined her husband (Eshwar) in the UK shortly after. She spent most of her early life in a predominantly Newar area of Kathmandu and describes her early years in Nepal under the influence of family elders who placed a greater importance on household chores than education. At the time of interview, Bina was a housewife with three children, living with her parents-in-law.

Chandni spent most of her childhood raising her four siblings and doing household work. After marrying (Amar) she arrived in Doncaster with her two children (Eshwar and Gita) and reflects on issues she encountered being away from her family. Regular trips to Nepal and the growth of her own family, children and grandchildren, now makes Doncaster feel like home.

Deepak grew up in Kathmandu and took his education up to college level (British equivalent of A-Levels) before moving to London in 1972. He went to Nepal in 1978, married (Himani) and came back to the UK, settling in Doncaster. He spent his working life mostly in restaurants and talked about the welcoming and tolerant nature of British society towards people from different cultures.

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[40]For non-family members, this was largely at their residence and for family members, my home.

Eshwar arrived in Doncaster as a 10-year-old boy after some exposure to Nepali education. Eshwar's drive was to achieve outside the norm of Nepali work parameters (dictated by caste status), which directed his choice of profession. His decision to marry a Nepali woman (Bina) was heavily influenced by his grandparents and he mentioned he once considered retiring in Nepal.

Falak left Nepal after marrying his British-based wife (Gita). He completed his college education in Nepal before relocating. Being away from his family was Falak's biggest obstacle and he directly linked this to the time it takes to adapt to life in the UK. At the time of interview, Falak was a house husband.

Gita moved to Doncaster as an eight-year-old with her mother (Chandni) and brother (Eshwar) to reunite with her father (Amar). She talked about her awareness of her Newari identity, which became stronger as she got older and had her own children. Gita identified language as a key marker for her Newari/Nepali identity.

Himani grew up in Kathmandu with seven siblings. She talked about her desire to continue her studies in Nepal and how she was discouraged by her mother. Himani arrived in Doncaster after marrying (Deepak) and mentioned the lack of work opportunities as a result of her domestic role. Having little or no interaction with wider society, Himani describes her children as her *'friends'*.

Indra was the first to arrive in the UK out of my sample. He came in 1969, leaving his wife (Kriti) and children behind in Nepal. He spent most of his teenage and young adult life working in Nepal, supporting his parents and siblings. Once in the UK, he worked in London for several years before settling in Doncaster. At the time of interview, Indra was retired.

Jeewan came to the UK aged three, the youngest migration age in the sample. His early memories of Nepal are both vivid and vague, and his eagerness to retain links to his birth country can be seen in some of the decisions he has taken such as marrying a Nepal-based woman (Leela) and actively learning the Nepali language. Jeewan has been a schoolteacher for approximately 14 years.

Kriti spent most of her early life looking after her siblings. By the time she was 16, both her parents had died. Kriti married (Indra) and moved to the UK when she was 34 (the oldest migration age in the sample) with her youngest child (Jeewan). She left her four other children in Nepal before they joined her several years later. Kriti's narrative is centred on family ties before and after relocation.

Leela grew up in Kirtipur[41] with her parents, grandparents and four sisters. Before marrying (Jeewan) and moving to Doncaster, she worked in Nepal as a garment quality officer for approximately five years. Leela was the most reserved of all respondents and was a housewife at the time of interview.

Malina is the only representative of Gurung ethnicity in this research. She spent her early years in Nepal in a large, extended family and helped with harvesting and farming. After marrying and moving to the UK, Malina spent 11 years in London integrating with the local Nepali community before relocating to Doncaster. She talked about the differences in the London and Doncaster Nepali communities. At the time of interview, Malina had been in Doncaster for two years and was looking for employment.

Nitin was accustomed to moving before coming to the UK. As a child he moved from his village to Kathmandu for further education, going on to Chennai, India, before returning to work in Kathmandu. He married his British-born wife and settled in Doncaster after a brief stay in London. Nitin recounted past experiences that helped him to adapt and assimilate, but nonetheless insisted on the importance of his Nepali identity.

Ojaswi started working in Nepal aged 15 to contribute towards the family finances. She described the modest environment she grew up in and attributed paid employment to the sense of independence she had acquired before leaving Nepal. After marrying, she moved to the UK and settled in Doncaster where she became a housewife with limited work opportunities. Her main familial ties in Doncaster are through her husband's family.

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[41]Kirtipur is a city in Kathmandu Valley that is predominantly populated by Newars.

Pari reflected on her time in Nepal with a conscious awareness of the country's discriminatory practices, including the pressure to get married. After completing her training in nursing, she worked for a year before marrying and moving to London and then Doncaster. Pari described finding her *'true identity'* in the UK where she has greater independence and freedom.

Rabia highlighted the significance of education in her family and explained how it shaped her outlook and her search for a life partner. She decided to pursue nursing as a career in Nepal despite disapproval from her brother and society in general. Rabia talked about the struggles of *'fitting in'*, particularly in the structures of a British working environment, despite several years of training and employment as a nurse in Nepal.

The individual narratives of my respondents are very personal. Details of life in Nepal, access to resources, institutions and provisions, and the make-up of the family group varies between each account. Reasons for migration and the circumstances of their arrival in the UK also differ. All this detail enhances the richness of the findings and enables comparisons between the respondents' accounts. Significantly, arranged marriage was common to all respondents. This is explored further in Chapter Five Gender Identity.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

As with any empirical research, ethical considerations had to be met, pre-empting potentially sensitive or contentious issues. This issue is particularly relevant to this research as I actively sought personal and sometimes sensitive information from respondents in their life history accounts. Non-malfeasance is the overarching principle in this study. As a researcher, it is my obligation to ensure my respondents are not harmed in any way. For this reason, I had to be clear and transparent with respondents and disclose why and how their data would be used. According to Diener and Crandall (1978), ethical principles in social research need to consider if there is potential for harm to participants, a lack of informed consent, an invasion of privacy, or any deception involved. To meet these standards, I adhered to the ethical guidelines of both the British Sociological Association and Sheffield Hallam University (SHU). Before

conducting these interviews, I was aware of ethical considerations through my experiences in higher education and the nature of my employed work[42]. To ensure I was up-to-date with the latest principles, I attended an ethics workshop hosted by SHU in November 2013, which covered ethical procedures and data storage.

Power relations are one of four dimensions mentioned by Wicks and Whiteford (2006) in their recognition of qualitative research outcomes. Valentine (2002) claims researchers must negotiate a power balance between themselves and their participants. If the researcher is perceived by participants as superior or inferior, the findings may not be a true reflection of their experiences. From a social constructionist perspective, power relations refer to the relationship between the researcher and the respondent. Social constructionism moves away from a traditional set-up where *'the roles of researcher and subject are mutually exclusive: the researcher alone contributes the thinking that goes into the project'* (Reason, 1994, p. 42) to a dynamic which co-constructs knowledge while maintaining a balanced relationship (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In recounting their life narratives, there were occasions when respondents became visibly upset. On those occasions, I reassured them, offered them support and suggested stopping the interview. I was empathetic towards respondents which helped alleviate any tension. This chapter has already highlighted several occasions where I had to be ethically aware: establishing fully informed consent through full disclosure of the research aims and objectives; specifying how the data would be used; and making respondents aware of their right to withdraw at any time. This empowered respondents; it gave them a choice and reassured them about confidentiality. Also, O'Connor and O'Neill (2004) suggest creating a safe and secure ambience to help relax respondents, particularly those who share potentially upsetting personal experiences. This was pertinent to some of

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[42]At the time of this thesis, I was a research executive in market research, which I had done for approximately seven years. The role included actively conducting research in several capacities such as one-to-one and group formats. This work enhanced my communication and research-based thinking and skills, and it incorporated ethical principles. The Market Research Society's (MRS) Code of Conduct sets out the professional standards by which all practitioners must adhere (MRS, 2019) and includes obtaining voluntary informed consent, transparency during data collection and respecting confidentiality.

my respondents who talked about the prejudice they faced in Nepal and in the UK, and I made sure I created a safe, calm environment for them to talk.

Ideas of anonymity and confidentiality were also extended beyond my sample. During interviews some respondents referred to family members by name and I substituted these names for the relationships shared between them. This ensured the identity of those individuals remained anonymous as they had not given permission for their personal details to be disclosed in this research.

3.7 Translation and Transcription of Life History Narratives

The next step in the methodological framework was to produce and format the empirical data in an accessible way. I wanted to ensure nothing (in terms of words or utterances) would be missed during interviewing which could be vital to the analysis stage. In order to facilitate this, all interviews were audio-recorded using a digital voice recorder. From my work and previous academic research, I understood how significant and time-consuming the transcription process can be. Although Agar (1996, p. 153) claims *'transcription is a chore'*, I believe it enhances the understanding of participants' experiences and helps identify commonalities and trends across the accounts.

Participants were given the option[43] between English or Nepali language for the interview. By giving respondents this choice, it eliminated any awkwardness for interviewees who did not speak fluent English. My fluency in Nepali allowed me to approach prospective respondents more easily and I did not have to rely on outside help for translation purposes. Therefore, I translated (where applicable) and transcribed all 17 interviews.

The final transcripts include laughs and pauses, which appear in square brackets. I felt these additions would allow further analysis of the respondents' narrative framing. Laughter, for example, could signify a respondent's joviality, or their attempt to recount a feeling or experience that may have been hard to put into words, or an expression of the significance of a specific topic area. Pauses were noted to elicit understanding of how interviewees remembered

[43]During the initial meeting when respondents were given information about the research.

their life story. All these nuances were considered during the transcription of the interviews. These were fully transcribed verbatim, including interview extracts in the main body of the thesis also. In instances where sentences did not flow, or were missing basic words, I added them to the narratives in square brackets.

3.8 Thematic Analysis

Once all transcripts were done, I moved on to the analysis. The semi-structured interviews based on life history narratives, that is *'the search for and analysis of the stories people employ to understand the lives around them'* (Bryman, 2004, p. 412) produced a range of themes and sub-themes within the framework of each narrative. This is distinguished as thematic analysis by Riessman (2004).

The use of thematic analysis to examine the scripts ensured the experiences of all those who participated in the research, whether explicit or implicit, were distinguishable. This is in reference to what Braun and Clarke (2006) refer to semantic and latent themes. Semantic themes are rigid in nature and not considered beyond what respondents have unequivocally offered, whereas latent themes uncover more than what is said as they *'identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations - and ideologies - that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data'* (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). Both were found in my data. Some interviewees were open and forthcoming in their biographical accounts; others were more reticent and reserved, referring to certain subjects implicitly. During analysis, these were identified within other respondents' more explicit narratives. One example of this is the views on the Nepali caste system and its prevalence and acceptance in and out of Nepal. Some respondents were forthright in their opinions about caste segregation, stating how these *'traditional'* views have remained with them despite being away from their homeland and, as a result, have impacted their attitudes towards other Nepalis in Doncaster. Others made subtle references but did not articulate their thoughts explicitly. Respondents' expressions of their views were as interesting as the opinions they held, and this is further discussed in the following chapters.

Thematic analysis was employed in this research to uncover themes which, on their own, would have little significance but when combined, they form important

data. For example, the use of certain words or phrases when referring to a specific topic was noted on the interview guide, marking it as a point of interest or noting a similarity with a previous interviewee. I had the option of using the NVivo software to draw out ideas but decided against using this analytical tool. Instead, I preferred to immerse myself in the rich data and identify emerging patterns of interest.

This research outlines multiple experiences in the form of life history interviews and then critically evaluates some common themes between interviewees. It is important to note that not all respondents experienced or made inferences about all the themes discussed later in this thesis. These are the themes that I have deemed to be substantive in the search for answers to my research questions on the negotiation of identity among Doncaster's Nepali community. There is an element of subjectivity here as those themes deemed significant are based on my interpretation of what is relevant to the study topic. I moved away from the interview guide in the analysis and found trends from the narratives themselves, something which Clarke and Braun (2013) suggest is often foregone when qualitative researchers base their themes around the discussion points that dictate their research. I was mindful of this as my interview guide was used as a template, a checklist, to ensure key points were covered if respondents' narratives substantially moved away from my general structure. The key, broad themes that emerged from the analysis were:

- How life was lived and experienced in Nepal.
- How respondents have adapted and adjusted as a result of migration.
- Respondents' idea of the homeland they left behind versus the *'homeland'* they now return to visit.

Interwoven within these are several analytical categories which will be explored in the following empirical chapters: caste and ethnicity, gender identity, and migration age.

3.9 Reflexivity

In this section, I reflect on my role as the researcher and the impact it had on this study. Not only does this allow for critical examination, but it also acknowledges the preconceptions I brought to the research and how they impacted findings. Reflexivity as a research tool directs the researcher to ask 'what' their research findings are and 'how' they have reached that conclusion (Hsiung, 2008). In doing so, the researcher must consider their position within the research context and the degree of influence they have in the researcher-participant dynamic during fieldwork (Berg & Smith, 1985; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Adapted from the work of Berg and Smith (1985) and Denzin and Lincoln (2005), I considered the following questions in operationalising reflexivity:

- How has my personal background influenced the research subject area and process?
- What values or preconceptions did I bring into the research and how were these perceived by respondents?
- What impact did my gender, race, ethnicity and caste have on developing a relationship with my sample?
- How did my familiarity with respondents help or hinder data collection?

One of the first problems (and biggest in terms of sample numbers and variance) I encountered with the fieldwork was getting participants to agree to take part in the research. Predictably, there was stronger resistance among those outside of my family circle. The main obstacle was trying to convince members of the community about the aim of my research, and how valuable their insights were to the study and the subject of migration as a whole. Despite having several contacts within the wider Nepali community in Doncaster, there was a sense of reluctance, almost a fatalistic attitude of 'what good can sharing my life experiences do?' Despite my Nepali language fluency, attempting to overcome this barrier was difficult. Although I was able to interview a mix of respondents in terms of gender, age and time spent in the UK, the final sample (as shown in Table 7) lacks full representation of caste and ethnic groups, highlighting the difficulty of any such sample (ethnic minorities and migrants)

being representative (Drinkwater & Garapick, 2011; Font & Mendez, 2013). Before I began interviewing, I anticipated that some respondents might change their minds and drop out of the scheduled interviews. Even so, I was surprised at the number of times this happened and this prolonged the data collection process. Nonetheless, I managed to interview 17 respondents out of my initial target of 20.

Furthermore, having obtained insight from senior members of Nepali organisations in London in my exploratory research (as detailed earlier in this chapter), I had hoped to include representation of similar organisations in Doncaster. I had anticipated their support would give me access to a community I had no links with and an opportunity to examine how members of this group negotiated their identity and assimilation into UK life. Based on the willingness of Bishnu Wagle from CODEC UK and Ganga Rana from NBC UK, I had hoped to achieve the same relationship in Doncaster. However, I was met with reluctance from members of The British Gurkhas Community Doncaster.

Another difficulty was the absence of representation from younger age groups. The youngest age group in this research is 35-44, and the findings could have benefited from interviews with people aged 18-24 and 25-34. I suspect their feelings, knowledge and involvement in Nepal before and after relocation would have been different to the older age groups. The settlement rights of pre-1997 retired Gurkhas was extended to their dependents (Adhikari, 2012), which resulted in an increase of young Nepalis in Doncaster, something I noticed at community events. I had hoped they would be willing to participate in this research, given that many were in college or university education. But again, I was met with reluctance.

Building a relationship with prospective research respondents is clearly crucial. It is interactive in nature and helps build an open line of communication between interviewer and participant (Buckle, Dwyer & Jackson, 2010). During the interviews, several respondents referred to me, the researcher, when describing their journey. This was partly because I interviewed some family members and their memories and recollections occasionally intertwined with my upbringing. But mostly there was an acceptance among interviewees (including

non-family members) that I *'got it'* (i.e. had inside knowledge). I shared a relationship to some level with all the respondents and so they felt comfortable enough to share their narratives. I believe this was largely down to sharing a similar racial background to non-family respondents. This was reinforced by respondents sometimes looking for my agreement on their perspective, saying *'you know how it was'* and *'you know what I mean, don't you?'* Racial sameness allowed for a shared reality, which I believe helped respondents to tell their stories. This connection of sameness is what Attia and Edge (2017, p. 33) refer to as *'stepping up to be an active part of [the] contextualised action'.* While I fulfilled the *'insider'* role in a racial capacity (and perhaps in a gender capacity when interviewing the women who shared more sensitive and personal experiences than the men), I felt the *'outsider'* label was still prominent in relation to our ethnic differences. This is exemplified in my inability to pierce the ethnic barrier in Doncaster's Nepali community to gain a more diverse sample. There were occasions in the interviews with non-family members where they referred implicitly and explicitly to the differences in our ethnic backgrounds. In retrospect, I believe the ethnic differences trumped all other obstacles I faced during this research journey.

In the light of this, I present my self-reflexive role and interaction in this research as two-fold to highlight the relationship between myself and my final sample: family (all belonging to the same ethnic group) and non-family members (friends and those in the wider community). As previously alluded to in this methodology chapter, I faced different kinds of challenges when collecting data from family and non-family members. This is discussed in the following section, assessing how I overcame these obstacles in order to obtain my final data.

3.9.1 Self-reflexivity: Family Respondents

My final sample consisted of six family members. Approaching family to take part in the research was predictable; some were forthcoming, and others were sceptical. My research looks specifically at a growing community, an emerging population with certain central variables such as land of birth, transnational movement and settlement in Doncaster. Therefore, to exclude family members as part of the sample would have left a wider gap in my attempts to study my community. Furthermore, Bennett (2018) posits family narratives in research

helps illuminate the unknown which can accentuate a feeling of belonging. This was particularly pertinent for me as this journey was not only about me as a researcher, but me as an individual with ties to Nepal. These ties had been primarily defined by family away from a research framework. Larossa, Bennett and Gelles (1981, p. 303) suggest that qualitative techniques used in family research impose '*unique constraints and raises distinctive ethical issues*' for the researcher, especially if their own family members are part of the research. I attempted to overcome the idea of risk-benefit equation - balancing the '*risks of a subject's involvement in the research against possible benefits of the project*' (Larossa et al., 1981, p. 305) - by allowing the flow of interviews to occur at speeds the respondents felt comfortable with. However, the topic area of my study was emotive. I asked respondents to talk about their past and present lives, which I rightly anticipated would lead to the disclosure of information of which I had not previously been aware. In those instances, I gave respondents time to reflect and choose whether they wanted to continue with the specific narration.

There were occasions when I felt uncomfortable listening to family members talk about difficult periods in their lives, which were sometimes linked to my childhood. These situations served to heighten my awareness of my role of a researcher in a research setting (Berg & Smith, 1985). I was conscious I had to maintain a level of professionalism and objectivity as I was aware my reactions could change the course of narrative. Therefore, I was careful to negotiate any bias I may have been unconsciously emanating towards family members. This difficulty was outweighed by the benefit of a family connection that meant respondents were open about their feelings around caste and ethnic and gender differences.

3.9.2 Self-reflexivity: Non-family Respondents

Convincing non-family members to make up the remainder of my sample (11 non-family participants) was more difficult than I anticipated as the non-family respondents had been family friends. Many of them were considerably older than me which led to them adopting a teacher-like role, particularly when describing their early life in Nepal, with remarks such as '*I don't think you can imagine what it was like*' and '*that's how things were back then*'. Interviewing

non-family respondents brought a different set of challenges. In maintaining good practice as a researcher, I was especially conscious of not causing offence through my probing of what I believed to be key lines of thought. This was particularly the case when respondents talked about the caste and ethnic differences in their own experiences. I found family respondents to be more forthcoming with their views on caste and ethnicity, but I felt non-family respondents were sometimes hesitant. If they made comments about the caste and ethnic divide which they believed might offend me or my family (non-family respondents comprised members of a lower ethnic group to my family), they were quick to reassure me that their views were not directed to us personally. Some validated this by saying *'I know you and your family aren't like that'* or *'I hope you don't mind, I know you're not like that'*. Such comments clarified that respondents were aware of my background during the data collection process, and this may have restricted or inhibited their views on particular topics.

Also, most non-family respondents asked for the interviews to be done in Nepali even though Nepali is not their primary language. Except for one non-family participant, all classed their first or second language as Newari, which I cannot speak. Among those who said Newari was their primary language, all could communicate effectively in Nepali – the only other language I can converse in besides English. I found it difficult to negotiate the dialect of some respondents during the interviews, and during the translation and transcription stage. I had to listen to parts of some interviews several times to fully understand what some respondents were saying. This added to the overall time taken to complete fieldwork.

3.9.3 Self-reflexivity: Selfhood

According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), social researchers inevitably become part of the environment they are studying but can be placed as an insider, outsider or a combination of the two (Eppley, 2006). I began this research firmly believing I was an 'insider' – someone who has existing knowledge on the field being researched (Hodkinson, 2005), and someone who could elicit authentic, lived findings (Acker, 2000; Hodkinson, 2005) based on my own Nepali background and association. I believe, however, the outcome of this research has raised questions around my understanding of *being Nepali,*

which had been relatively unchallenged and mostly limited to interactions with family in Doncaster prior to this study. Retrospectively I can say this was something I took for granted and has made me curious and reflect on what it means to *be Nepali* – an unintended consequence of this research journey.

Undertaking this study has brought my own identity into consciousness. To fulfil my role as a researcher I had to operationalise my identity in a way that I hadn't had to before – to actualise identity. My identity became a fluid, transferable marker (Barth, 1969; Hall, 2000), navigating as an 'insider' to meet the expectations of my participants to realising myself to be an 'outsider'. I had to reconcile the primary aim of this research, understanding the concept of identity among an emerging community in Doncaster and more broadly, the UK, to allow respondents to tell their story (Paechter, 2012) whilst managing my 'insider' knowledge and expectation of what I knew to be my Nepali identity. Switching between insider/outsider meant I had to perform a role dictated by the social environment I was in (Goffman, 1959; Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2017) - what identity I was able to show and enact as a result of my understanding of *being Nepali.* By the end of the research I realised my Nepali identity to be a hybrid of the insider/outsider dichotomy.

4.0 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the use of methodology in this research, presenting arguments and counter-arguments for usage and corroborating these within the overall grounding and framework. Adopting a social constructionism ontological and epistemological stance meant a focus on uncovering knowledge as a construct beyond objective signifiers. This permitted the understanding and role of context and environment as drivers for behaviours and attitudes, which I believe could only be elucidated through rich and qualitative research methods. I argued that by using a case study research design, my study gives a grounding for various identity formations among Nepali participants in Doncaster. I acknowledge my sample is not representative of the Nepali population in Doncaster in terms of numbers, or caste and ethnic groups. But these limitations became a finding and provided scope for discussion with respondents in interviews.

By adopting a case study design, I have underlined two independent yet inter-related components of a qualitative approach: reflexivity and power relations (ethical considerations). I had to contend with my position as a researcher who knew all my respondents to some level, which presented unique challenges. This raised ethical issues around the awareness of self (researcher) and of the respondents. This research has not only uncovered an understanding of participants' identities, but has done so in light of their particular relationship to me and my own selfhood.

Using narratives in the form of life history interviews covered the entirety of an individual's lifespan as it presented values, attitudes and behaviours and tracked how and why these changed, if at all. This helped devise three empirical chapters: Chapter Four caste and ethnic identity, Chapter Five gender identity and Chapter Six age identity.

Chapter Four: Caste and Ethnic Identity

> *'In recent years, caste/ethnicity has become a major variable in understanding the process of social inclusion/exclusion and the level of socio-economic development of the people in Nepal…caste/ethnicity and religion data have become instrumental in understanding the interethnic and interreligious relationships among various groups of people'*- (National Planning Commission Secretariat, 2014, p.1).

4.1 Introduction

When I visited Nepal in 2012 and 2014 (see Chapter Three for my diary/insight sub-chapter which informed the question areas for empirical data collection) it became apparent there was a lot of uncertainty in people's daily lives. The year 2006 marked the end of the 'People's War' against the Nepali state, ten years after majority control of rural areas was gained by the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist, who formed the 'People's Government' (Basnett, 2009). Despite this victory, disharmony prevailed as curfews continued to be imposed by different groups demonstrating their grievances and consequently disrupting everyday life. It wasn't until 2015 that Nepal's then President, Ram Baran Yadav, signed a much-delayed constitution. Although this pleased the majority, ethnically marginalised groups feared the constitution would not favour them as it had been *'rushed through by established parties which - including the Maoists - are dominated by high-caste leaders'* (Haviland, 2015, para. 8).

During my 2014 trip I asked a family in Nepal why these curfews were being imposed. One of the men told me, *'because an individual belonging to a particular caste woke up this morning and said he wasn't happy about something…and now a curfew has been enforced.'* I learned this was a common occurrence, often leaving Kathmandu in a state of inactivity. This made me question what it meant to be Nepali. What does it mean to be Nepali in Nepal? How is Nepali-ness understood and practiced outside Nepal? Does a Nepali national identity exist alongside the ethnic and caste distinctions that dominate Nepal's political and cultural life? Or is this identity determined by the intricacies of ethnic and caste nuances?

This chapter reveals how Nepalis living in Doncaster define and express their ethnic and caste identities, and how this impacts their perceptions of what it means to be Nepali. This will be analysed and considered in conjunction with the argument that *'social hierarchies based on ethnicity and caste are distinct features of Nepalese society…despite the abolition of formal hierarchies in 1963 and the affirmation of equality of different groups before the law'* (Aasland & Haug, 2011, p.185).

4.2 Caste and Ethnic Identity: Analysis of Findings

In some instances my research findings identify an explicit presence of caste and ethnic discrimination when respondents talked about their early life in Nepal. In others, the prejudice is more implicit. This mirrors and validates the findings from the National Planning Commission Secretariat (2014) outlined in Chapter Two. It found some members of the Nepali population said they didn't conform to a caste structure, but still adopted caste-based values. Respondents talked about the discriminatory comments and practices they grew up with, largely administered by household elders. I asked Pari about Bhaktapur[44] and the people she grew up with, and she makes caste distinctions very early in her response:

Pari: *'The area was all Brahman and mostly of people who shared the same surname as us. But a bit further down there were Chhetris[45], there were Damais[46]. It was a very traditional upbringing. So, we used to have tailors coming to our house and they would stay there all day to make made-to-measure clothes. Especially during winter months, they would come, and we would give them things to lay outside so they could work, because they weren't allowed inside the house, of course, because we are Brahman and they were of lower caste.'*

'Even the dishes [pause] things that they ate with, they were separate. My grandma never brought the dishes they used into the house. Those were there for them, only Damai people. So, the tailor had one plate, one bowl and one drinking glass.'

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[44] Bhaktapur is one of three royal cities in Kathmandu Valley, located in the Bhaktapur District and on the east of Kathmandu Valley (www.Bhatkapur.com/).
[45] Chhetri is a Nepali ethnic grouping traditionally consisting of military elitists and governors.
[46] Damai is a Nepali ethnic grouping traditionally consisting of tailors and musicians.

'We had a very big house and they [tailors] were only allowed outside. We had quite a big front porch and we [with the tailor's son] would play together there. I knew I was not allowed to bring him inside the house. After they had finished their work, the tailors would wash their dishes and my grandma would wash it again after they left and then would put hot coal [pause] so she used to put hot coal in the dishes they used, to make it purer? I don't know.'

'I remember that really clearly and I used to think that they [tailors] are people like me, so why is grandma doing that? I did ask that question and I was told, "they are Damai" and that was it.'

The reference to purity resonates with the work of Dumont (1980) whose work emphasises the importance of the purity scale in caste structures. Distinguishing between 'pure' and 'pollutant' establishes boundaries between different groups of people (Shah, 2007). Pari explained how strict her family was about adhering to caste and ethnic restrictions, particularly her grandmother, and how all family members were expected to obey them. Pari suggested these limitations were not confined to home life and extended to the outside world. She said her first understanding of caste divisions was when she realised the differences in the type of work carried out by *'those people'* who would come to her house *'to dig the fields and do labour work',* compared with the jobs carried out by her family and friends. She signified the operationalisation of the caste system around occupation – one of four categories used to traditionally determine how people were assigned their caste position (Raj, 1985).

Pari: *'So even when we went to the temple, everybody had the same God. Our village had this temple and everyone went to that temple. I was told by my grandma that if I ever touched them [lower caste], I would have to wash everything when I came home. I never told [her] that I mixed with them or touched them [laughs]. Well we went to the same temple so you were bound to bump into each other. It was quite a busy temple and especially during festivals, it was always busy. You could not avoid touching other people. So I just wouldn't tell my grandmother. I didn't think it was acceptable. I don't think I was strongly opinionated back then but for some reason I knew it wasn't right. So I just carried on as normal and I didn't tell my grandmother, she didn't need to know that. Even though they would say "it is a sin" or something like that, I never believed that.'*

This example by Pari is a powerful one. Not only does she express her disdain at her grandmother's rules and her anti-conformity to Nepal's stringent ways, she uses God and religion as a way of exemplifying the hypocrisy of the state.

Mentioned in Chapter Two, Nepal has a large Hindu population (Table 2) and a temple is a place of worship and sanctuary which is open to all. As Pari said in the above extract, everyone has *'the same God'* but despite practising the same religion, lower castes were still considered inferior and remained outcasts in that environment.

Rabia also recounted her experiences of caste and ethnic disparity in Nepal before relocating to the UK. She talked about her early memories of these differences and how it shaped her thinking:

Rabia: *'At home we used to have shutters which we would rent out and people opened shops and various things like that. One was a fabric shop and this Damai guy rented the shutter from us; he was a tailor. So if we gave him tea or snacks or anything like that, we would do so using other or different cutlery and plates - ones that we wouldn't use. The plates and bowls would be made out of aluminium and we would only use those for them. After they would finish using, they would wash them and leave them out to dry and we would wash them again and bring them back in, but not mix with the plates and bowls and cutlery we used.'*

'I grew up in a mixed community of different castes dominated by Bahuns[47]. I grew up seeing lower castes do jobs that involved handling dirty things such as emptying toilet pits, carrying heavy loads and doing extra, hard work. Despite doing all that, very rarely could they afford their own place, so they often found or were given shelter offered by higher castes; Bahuns and Chhetris. If they had their own place, it often looked run down and [you] wouldn't even dare to drink water from there, purely because everything looked dirty. So like I said, in our house people used to rent out rooms and shutters and my mother would always ask their caste before letting out. I remember this one time my mother accidentally rented out a room to this lower caste couple and it was a very big deal. The man had lied about his actual caste and when the local community found out, the whole community gathered and they got kicked out immediately.'

'From my point of view, if I saw someone who was quite dark in colour, I thought they belonged to a lower caste. That's the way people used to talk, they would say, "look at her, just like a black Damani" so even when passing comment, people made the association between colour and caste.'

Rabia's association of darker skin with a lower caste resonates with Woodburne's (1922) historical suggestion that power relations were symbolised

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[47]Bahun is the informal name ascribed to Nepali speaking Hill-Brahmans who are predominantly represented in the Tagadhari twice-born strata of hierarchy (Sherchan, 2001).

and distinguished by the light skin colour of Indian colonisers compared with the darker skin colour of the colonised people. Before relocating to the UK, Nitin said he associated white skin with superiority and high class:

Nitin: *'When living in Nepal, if you go to Thamel[48], you would see tourists and a lot of white people and you wouldn't know where they came from; Canada, America, England or Denmark - they all looked the same! In Nepali culture, we consider tourists like God. They used to stay in five-star hotels, they used to have ice cream, they used to do things that I couldn't afford to do myself. So, we used to think they were all really rich, that white people were rich and wondered what poor white people looked like.'*

Like Rabia, Nitin's impressions of what rich and poor people look like were based on skin colour. Both Rabia and Nitin also associated skin colour with caste and social hierarchy. The origin of skin colour discrimination is contested but is heavily linked to South Asia (Banks, 2015), particularly India. According to Sim and Hirudayaraj (2016, p. 38), skin-based discrimination in India *'is a customary practice perpetuated by cultural beliefs and values, social institutions, and the media.'* Colourism is *'the tendency to perceive or behave toward members of racial category based on the lightness or darkness of their skin tone'* (Maddox & Gray, 2002, p. 250). The perceived superiority of being lighter or white can be linked to the exploitation of the black population at the height of slavery which helped to construct labels of the white population as *'high class'*, *'dominant'* and *'masterful'.* This inferred they were the *'owners'* of non-whites and therefore *'being white was valued in a manner similar to the value associated with the possession of property… because whites had privileges that native Indians did not. In short, whiteness has a value, it is exclusively possessed and therefore it is desired'* (Bhattacharya, 2012, p. 120).

This idea of light skin as valuable is what Pari and Rabia refer to when they discuss the treatment of lower caste groups in Nepal. Lower castes and ethnic groups are considered unworthy by those who hold superior caste positions in society. These thought processes continue to form part of everyday practice and thinking in Nepal, which maintains caste inequality and reinforces restrictions. The examples given by Pari and Rabia are insular in the sense they

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[48]Thamel is the centre of Kathmandu's commercial and tourist centre, boasting bars, shops and eateries (Thapa, 2016).

are about their local communities. They are not able to compare experiences of caste and ethnic differences with other parts of Nepal. I coin these examples as 'pocket generalisations' - i.e. something that becomes further simplified because of its singular outlook. Although these references are necessary to provide context for further analysis, the extent of Nepali discord by ethnic and caste divisions is exemplified by two respondents in particular - Nitin and Ojaswi.

Nitin and Ojaswi spent most of their childhood and early adult life in Madhesh, Terai[49] and both moved to Kathmandu before permanently relocating to the UK through marriage. Nitin and Ojaswi talked explicitly and implicitly about how they felt different to people who had spent most of their lives in Nepal's capital and explained some of the difficulties they encountered:

Ojaswi: *'Nepali is the language that is spoken throughout Nepal but there are a few, everyday things that are different. Now Gaur[50] is in the countryside so based on that [pause] some of the food was different but even if it was the same food, the way you cook it was different in Gaur to what it was in Kathmandu. There were some members of [my husband's] family that would tease me for the way I used to cook or the way I used to say particular words [pause] it was different to how they would cook and speak. They used to call me "Madheshi" sometimes. I don't think they meant it in a horrible way, but it did make me feel different to them. Because there were more of them, I did feel outnumbered, and their attitude was that their way was the right way.'*

The experience of feeling like an outsider was echoed by Nitin who moved to Kathmandu to study after spending most of his early life in Itahari[51]:

Nitin: *'When I moved to Kathmandu [pause] the people there and the society there was more closed. They don't accept people from the outside, they don't accept people from different parts of the country. Like for example, if you look at the Newari community, they speak Newari language. If you look at the*

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[49]Madhesh specifically refers to the Terai region of Nepal. Kumar (2007) suggests over time, there has been a shift in preference amongst various outlets preferring to use *'Madhesh(i)'* rather than *'Terai'* to distinguish the habitants of the region. He argues that Terai is mostly associated with the geographical terrain of the area and the term fails to present the, *'historical significance, historical usage, cultural and better representative connotation, representation of specific national locality, and freedom'* (Kumar, 2007, para. 5) that *'Madhesh(i)'* encompasses.
[50]Gaur is in the Rautahat District of Nepal in Madhesh.
[51]Itahari is in the Sunsari District of Nepal in Madhesh.

Marwari[52]community, they speak Marwari language and if you look at the Nepalese community in Kathmandu itself, they think of you as coming from the mountain area, so we are "mountaineers". Because of that our cultures don't match, the way we talk don't match. The speaking etiquette is different and that differentiates you between upper and lower class.'

'So, in Kathmandu, if they know you are an outsider then there are elements of discrimination; social discrimination.'

The disharmony Ojaswi and Nitin refer to is very much present between people living in the Terai region and the rest of Nepal. Upreti, Paudel and Ghimire (2012, p. vii) explain, *'the people in this region had long been commonly suffering from the ignorance by the establishment and regional elites in terms of esteem, identity, recognition and redistribution'* which has led to much controversy. According to Miklian (2008), these divisions stem from the state's attempt to unify all ethnic groups of Nepal through policies favouring the upper caste Pahadis[53], which forced the people of Terai into further submission. Furthermore, *'a government-sponsored resettlement program in the mid-1980s financed migration of Pahadis to the Terai in an attempt to solidify control over the valuable agricultural and industrial region'* (Miklian, 2008, p. 3). There is an underlying contradiction in the make-up of Nepal's societal framework and how the state wants to portray Nepal. On the one hand, there have been attempts to create a homogenous civilisation by diversifying regions such as Madhesh/Terai but on the other hand, a rigid structure remains which continues to discriminate pockets of the population according to ethnicity.

Ojaswi and Nitin use food, language and regional differences to explain some of the difficulties they faced adjusting to life in Kathmandu. These aspects were highlighted by Trimble (2005) as key influencers distinguishing different ethnic and cultural groups. Nitin and Ojaswi's experiences of these aspects confirmed they were unlike the mainstream community and it was down to them to adapt, as Nitin recollected:

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[52]Marwari(s) are people who traditionally originated from Jaipur, India. Marwari is used to refer both to the people and the language with large settlements of Marwaris now found in Nepal (Shakya, 2014).
[53]Deriving from the meaning 'hill', Pahadi refers to the inhabitants who reside in the Himalayan hill region of Nepal.

Nitin: *'So there are always differences. Even in your collective homeland, there are going to be differences and clashes. Now to reduce those gaps, it will take time and [pause] you almost have to convert yourself, the individual, because it is a lot harder and difficult to convert the ways and thinking of a society.'*
'So the best thing to do is look for like-for-like. So when you are looking for somewhere to rent, choose an area that have people you are compatible with, similar background…So it was quite difficult to adjust but you do eventually adjust.'

In the UK, Nitin practised this approach to help him assimilate into a new country. He looked for job opportunities in London and started work in an accountancy firm with people from ethnically and racially diverse backgrounds. Nitin said this helped him gradually adapt to a new culture:

Nitin: *'I didn't want the fact that I came from Nepal to be a big thing… principally the job is the same. I would have taken any accountancy work at the time but I knew in London, the population was going to be quite mixed and I I knew that was going to be in my favour. There were six people in the room in the London office. One was from Bangladesh, two from Nepal, one from Zimbabwe, one from Ghana and one from Italy! So, it was like having the whole world there!'*

'So, we used to sit there and talk. I felt so good, I miss that atmosphere, I felt so good [at] that time. The environment in the entire room was just so fantastic, so electric. We used to fight, talk and have discussions. The room was soundproof so no one could hear. No one judged anyone because we were all facing the same thing [pause] English wasn't our first language, we were all in an adopted country and we all just came together. I can't tell you how much that helped me settle. There was that same feeling of freedom I had when I first started earning in Kathmandu. It was a similar feeling but for very different reasons.'

Nitin's joy at being accepted by his work colleagues and what this meant to him is evident in this account. He described a sense of freedom, almost as if a metaphorical weight had been lifted off his shoulders by making friends in a new country. He went on to say he wasn't in that job role for very long but that he progressed, he *'shot up…flew up'* after the experience, and this demonstrated the importance of fitting in and peer approval. Nitin said he was mindful of what a work life in the UK would entail and recounted unsuccessful attempts at finding work in Doncaster. He described his apprehension about integrating into UK society, and his concern about his language skills:

Nitin: *'The feedback I was getting was positive but I wasn't getting a chance; they never invited me for an interview. At that time [pause] I felt a bit of difficulty*

[pause] I had some difficulty with pronunciation. The way people here spoke English, I couldn't understand, at that time. I think even when I used to speak to my wife; I was struggling and hardly understood. You could've said anything about me and I wouldn't have known [laughs].'

Nitin's narrative suggests a shift away from the awareness of regional caste and ethnic differences he experienced in Nepal. In the UK, this aspect of his identity, his belonging to the Madhesh/Terai area, became irrelevant. Nitin developed his own identity and roots in London, and eventually in Doncaster, and his employment status helped him to do this. For Ojaswi, things were different. Unlike Nitin, she did not pursue work in the UK and her primary avenue of integration was through the family she married into. In her account, she explained the culture shock she experienced at the airport on her first visit to the UK, and the unfamiliarity of everything around her:

Ojaswi: *'Even to go to the toilet I wasn't really sure how because I had never sat on a toilet seat. In Nepal, especially in Gaur, we didn't have toilet seats. Now when I was in the airport, I didn't know how to go to the toilet [laughs] so that was a big worry. I just didn't know how to flush, I had no idea. Also, you had to slot some money in the airport toilets and I didn't know how and all this time, I was desperate to go to the toilet…I saw the toilet sign then realised you needed 20p. So what to do? Then I came to [my husband] and he gave me 20p. I still wasn't sure how to use the flush so I did what I could.'*

'A few days later I mentioned to my sister-in-law about the toilet incident. Her husband heard and made some joke about "Madheshi not knowing what a toilet looks like." In that case, I guess he was right. He, in particular, always made reference to me being from Madhesh.'

Highlighting Ojaswi's Madhesh link compounded her position as subordinate within her extended family. She represented the minority who are marginalised in Nepal. She was made to feel like an outsider in what should have been a welcoming environment. Not knowing how to use the UK toilet facilities was a daunting and uncomfortable experience for Ojaswi, and she used this example to highlight the continuity of Nepali caste and ethnic divisions outside Nepal. In her interview she said her brother-in-law, mentioned in the extract above, had been living in the UK for several years before she arrived. So despite not living in Nepal for a number of years, when the opportunity arose, he chose to focus on traditional ethnic and regional differences.

This example sheds light on the perceptions of Nepalis by other Nepalis, despite sharing common bonds of nationality and migration. While there are some sentiments of acknowledgement and respect for the wider Nepali diaspora in Doncaster, there remains a 'them versus us' attitude and mentality. Respondents differentiated between the traditions and customs of ethnic groups. When Bina was asked about the prevalence of the caste system in Nepal today, she said:

Bina: *'I don't think [the caste system] is followed as strictly as it has been in the past. People don't really talk about "castes" as such these days. Nowadays it seems like there is just one caste. The idea of different castes doesn't seem as important in Nepal now.'*

However, when she was asked about the general integration of the Nepali community in Doncaster outside her circle of immediate family and friends, Bina reacted less diplomatically:

Bina: *'I do enjoy and like speaking to people from my Nepal but [pause] I don't like getting too close to them, especially to these lahure[54]women.'*

Chandni expressed a similarly contradictory outlook. When asked about her awareness of the caste system in Nepal while growing up, she described how strict it was but said things had changed:

Chandni: *'People from the lower caste couldn't even drink water if they went to someone's house who belonged to a higher caste. Sometimes if a lower caste person accidentally touched the food of someone belonging to a higher caste, they would throw the food away. [But] the idea of caste and the caste system is no longer a big thing in Nepal. You hear about inter-caste marriages that are done with great pomp and celebration.'*

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[54]Lahure is an informal term often used in Nepal to identify and describe an individual employed by the Nepali Army, more commonly referred to as Gurkhas in the UK. Colloquial in its usage, the term has garnered negative connotations which are primarily underpinned by the practices and lahure culture often associated with the army. Recently, concerns have been raised around the disillusionment of Gurungs - the ethnic group most popularly affiliated with the army (Upadhyay, 2015); with suggestions of loss of Gurung identity as a result of the lure of becoming a lahure (The Himalayan Times, 2005) and the lack of representation within the education sector (Gurung, 2011).

But when asked about her interactions with other Nepalis outside her family and friends, Chandni said she did not enjoy socialising with them:

Chandni: *'The community organises a Dashain[55] party every year. I have been to a couple but they're only interested in their own things and celebrating in their own way, so I don't enjoy it. Although festivals like Dashain is celebrated by all in Nepal, it's quite diverse in the sense that different groups celebrate it in their way. At the [Doncaster] Dashain programme, lahures only show and celebrate it in their way. For non-lahures, that's quite boring and I don't enjoy it.'*

The examples above demonstrate a complex understanding of Nepal's caste and ethnic identity from the point of view of the Nepali collective. To understand the apparent detachment, I asked respondents why their feelings towards Nepalis from different castes living in Doncaster were less favourable. In his interview, Jeewan suggested language as a reason for the continuation of the rigid barriers between different castes and ethnic groups. He came to the UK when he was three and encountered language difficulties early on. He initially spoke Nepali but his father wanted them to speak Newari[56] at home because *'we are Newar.'* Jeewan described the problems he faced during subsequent trips to Nepal because of this language choice. When I asked him if the caste system still existed in Nepal, he replied:

Jeewan: *'Of course it [does]. Oh massively. I know when I go to Kathmandu, and I go almost every year…I know the person working in the shop is Newar, I will ask them something in Newar but they will speak to me in Nepalese. And I'll say to them, "hang on, you know Newar, talk to me in Newar" and it'll take them a while to give in and talk Newar. It's like they [pause] they're embarrassed to do it or there's this unwritten rule that in the capital you have to speak Nepalese.'*

Jeewan recalled an incident at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu, further validating his reasoning that language is a factor in ethnic identity and domination:

Jeewan: *'In the airport all of them speak Nepalese and basically they are very disrespectful and belittle Newar. The way that I have got over that now, is that I speak to them in English, and that has worked a treat. They feel intimidated by me as opposed to me feeling intimidated by them. A power role if you like.'*

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[56] Newari is Tibeto-Burman language of Newars.

This suggests that facing discrimination in his birth country has fuelled Jeewan's indifference towards the wider, non-Newar Nepali community in Doncaster. Jeewan likes the idea of a Nepali identity which he can exercise when away from Nepal but questions the idea of what it means to be Nepali when, in his own words, he feels *'belittled'* using his native language in his native country. Jeewan's view captures the sentiments of the majority interviewed in this study and is representative of my sample set. When talking about the Nepali community in Doncaster, he clarified how the differences between Nepali ethnic groups have influenced his sense of belonging and identity:

Jeewan: *'I've got to be honest and I'm not trying to be funny, but I still don't feel that they [other Nepalis in Doncaster] are part of who I am. I am Newar. I know we are all Nepalese but [pause] call it a caste system or what have you, but because of the problems I have had with my passport and the attitudes of some that I have seen… [pause].'*

'Even when I do go to those parties, I feel kind of isolated and don't know the language enough to be able to communicate and I don't feel we have the same bond, if that makes sense?'

'It's nice, don't get me wrong. It's nice to see a lot of Nepalis around but to me, it still feels like they are just [pause] this is a strange thing to say, but they could as well be from another community, like Indian or Pakistani or from another European country. To me, I don't feel as passionate or as patriotic towards them. I don't know if that sounds bad, I don't mean it in a disrespectful way whatsoever and I'm not saying that I dislike them, it's just that I don't feel as part of them as I would like to be, if that makes sense?'

Gita mirrored this thinking when she talked about incorporating Nepali culture into her family life in Doncaster. She acknowledged the wider Nepali culture but was quick to make a distinction:

Gita: *'Even though it is Nepali culture, their Nepali culture seems to be different to what I know as Nepali culture.'*

Jeewan and Gita's responses suggest disengagement because of the diversity associated with *'being Nepali'*. Jeewan said some Nepalis may as well come from a different country, given the lack of mutuality. Gita, who clearly distinguished her idea of Nepali-ness from those of other Nepali groups, added:

Gita: *'The main thing is how they talk to people, they just talk down to you and I just can't be dealing with that. They seem to think they are better than the rest, maybe because there are more of them in terms of numbers. You now have a lot more ex-Gurkhas and their families settled here now and to me, it just feels like they think they're superior. Don't get me wrong, I know they have served the country and for that I am very proud and grateful. They deserve the right to live here for what they have done for the country. I have no issues about that at all. I will go as far as saying that they have put Nepal on the map. People now think about Nepal and Gurkhas and no longer think of us as Asians or foreigners sponging off the government. But if we are talking about mixing together and being all friendly and everything then… [pause]. We all might be Nepali but we have very little in common.'*

Gita highlights the contrast in the cultural behaviour of different pockets of Nepalis. Her thoughts are underpinned by ethnic and caste associations; the *'lahure'* association. Gita postulated that her reluctance to mix with other Nepali groups such as the Gurkhas was because of these differences, despite her acknowledgement of them and gratitude that Gurkhas have '*put Nepal on the map'* and elevated Nepalis' position in society.

Britain's link to the Gurkhas goes back approximately 200 years. The war between British India and Nepal ended with Nepal's resounding defeat in 1816 but in the aftermath *'the British authorities were forced to acknowledge and respect the fighting spirits and martial qualities of the sturdy and fearless Gurkha highlander'* (Tiwary & Tiwary, 2009, p. 802). The British authorities began recruiting these impressive fighters and so the alliance between Britain and Nepal was established, and the Gurkhas fought for Britain in both world wars (Simpson, 2008). The increase in Nepali migration to the UK in recent times can be largely attributed to the settlement rights of ex-British Gurkhas. Since 2009 when further settlement rights were granted to all Gurkhas with a minimum of four years' service, there has been a large influx of Nepalis into this country, making them one of the fastest emerging minority groups to settle in the UK[57] (Adhikari, 2012).

The fight for the settlement rights of the Gurkhas generated much public and media attention, and was championed by the actress, author and activist

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[57] As well as the settlement rights of ex-Gurkhas, this period also saw an influx of students, along with their dependents, allowed entry to the UK for education (Adhikari, 2012).

Joanna Lumley. Since then, North Yorkshire, Hampshire and Kent have all seen high levels of Nepali resettlement near army barracks (Sims, 2008). In terms of the growth of Nepalis in Doncaster, the 8th Battalion The Rifles covers the North East, Yorkshire and the West Midlands, and has a unit in Doncaster. I asked a source[58] why he thought the Nepali population had grown in Doncaster. He said the number of Nepalis in Yorkshire had grown in general over the past decade, and Doncaster was seen as an affordable area with better job prospects compared to York, for example. He also said word of mouth played a part as Nepali people recommended Doncaster to family and friends.

The ethnic groups that traditionally formed Gurkha regiments include Gurung, Limbu, Magar and Rai (Sims, 2008). In her report '*Soldiers, Migrants and Citizens - The Nepalese in Britain*', Sims (2008, p. 9) claims the Gurkha community in Hounslow *'felt themselves to be a distinct community as a result of their shared experiences of migration to serve for the British Army.'* Her findings suggest this commonality is stronger than sharing a homeland. Although my research sample is not ethnically representative of historical British Gurkha recruits like Sim's (see Chapter Three where this is discussed in more depth), my findings also revealed that the bonds created by the Gurkha community in Britain make integration hard for non-Gurkha Nepali groups. This division is dictated by culturally embedded caste and ethnic differences which have remained post relocation. I asked Deepak how he perceived Nepali groups in Doncaster and he was quick to identify the disassociation with the lahure group on multiple levels:

Deepak: *'There's a difference in mindsets too [pause]. My wife's nephew is also studying at the moment and he tried to get in touch with some Nepalis outside our family circle, in Doncaster, in order to do some research. They were all so reluctant, didn't even acknowledge him. He had offered to help them with any language problems and things like that. They were scared. They think that the Brahmans and Chhetris are really clever and they're coming here, offering to help us, when they're really trying to rip us off.'*

'It's not really their fault, to be fair. Things like that happen in Nepal. Those lahures are quite innocent and naïve and in the past, Brahmans and Chhetris in

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[58]This source was a Nepali friend of a friend who served for the British Gurkhas. He has settled in the UK, lives in York and therefore was not included as part of my research sample.

Nepal have been doing that to them, they have been taking advantage of them because they think they could, they had a right to do so. In Nepal it was all about who was on top, who was higher. So Brahmans and Chhetris would take that to mean they could treat others however they wanted, and especially lahures. So because of that, lahures feel scared.'

'[They are] ex-army and they've only ever known one thing; the army. Because of that I think they're quite stuck in their ways. They've grown up in an environment where they only listen to the person in command and always do what they say. So when they come out of the army they're naïve and not clever as to what happens in the real world.'

Deepak's admission pinpoints the oppression experienced by lahures at the hands of Nepal's hierarchy. Consequently, they are reluctant to assimilate with other Nepali groups. If lahures in Doncaster are reluctant to integrate with other Nepali groups because of the historical caste framework, then it can be likewise argued that the non-lahure community in Doncaster may be uneasy with the lahures' domination of organised cultural events. Bina and Chandni expressed this earlier, and it was reinforced by others. Falak, for example, said he would like to see Nepali groups integrate more in Doncaster to discuss matters in Nepal, to hold Nepali language classes and to teach children about their ancestry and heritage. However, as he and Amar explained, there are ethnic and caste challenges to this aim:

Falak: *'But practically, I'm not sure it would work. Nepalis are Nepali, but the different groups of Nepalis are different; language, beliefs and generally how we are. For example, I am Newari and I don't have much in common with lahures, and there are a lot of lahures in Doncaster now. So when you have events that Nepalis gather for, you will always get some groups that are unhappy.'*

Amar: *'When I go out shopping and I see and recognise other Nepalis then I say "namaste, namaste*[59]*" but that's about it. You see a lot more Nepalis in Doncaster these days, especially lahures. They are nice enough and I like to see that there are more Nepalis but we are so different. And do you know what? You can really see these differences when we have these cultural programmes. Sometimes I don't really understand because they show and do things that their community knows, but not other Nepalis.'*

Although the differences between different ethnic and caste groups are mentioned by all respondents during their interviews, I suggest that interviewees from the Newar ethnic group are more likely than the Brahmans to

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[59]Namaste is used as a greeting.

be unfavourable towards the lahure community. A couple of reasons can be offered for this. Firstly, as highlighted in Chapter Three, my relationship with the respondents[60] may have impacted how they talked about the Brahman community. The Newars in my sample were aware of my caste and ethnic positioning[61] and may have been reluctant to say something they considered offensive towards me. They may have been less inclined than the non-Newar respondents to say anything negative about Brahmans, instead making lahures the focus of their contention. I picked up on this several times when conducting the interviews. It made me aware of my position within the research context and the influence I was having in the researcher-participant dynamic (Berg & Smith, 1985; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The examples below are snippets from Newar respondents who, when asked about their interaction with the wider Nepali community, referred positively to relationships with my family and compared this with unfavourable views about lahures:

Chandni: '*I have a really good relationship with your mum and go and visit her, and she comes to see me too. We're not family but she is a good friend of mine, like my sister… I know there are a lot of Nepalis, especially lahures, in Doncaster… [but] I'm not really interested in making friends with lahures.*'

Bina: '*The white people from here [pause] if you talk to them, I really enjoy it because they don't judge you and they don't make you feel bad about yourself, but Nepalis [pause] I'll tell you this one really bad thing amongst Nepalis [pause] they are very critical and judgemental. That's how I feel you see… Lahures are judgemental; they think they are the best - that's the attitude they have. You don't get that from others, like your mum and dad, they are like my auntie and uncle.*'

Jeewan: '*I have known you for a long time and your family are really nice and not everyone is the same [pause] and with other members of the community, they are beautiful people and I shake their hand and have gotten to know some of them really well. But I don't feel like I am really part of them as much as I would do if they were Newar. The ex-army group are nice enough but they are not what I have come to know as Nepali.*'

Secondly, the Newars who took part in this research and the ethnic groups who became lahures belong to the same hierarchical sub-strata, i.e. grouping two

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[60]My final sample set is comprised of family and family friends, all of whom I was well acquainted with prior to conducting this research.
[61]According to the caste/ethnic hierarchy as shown in Table 1, I belong to the first tier 'Upadhaya Brahman - Parbatiya' strata.

(see Table 1). It can be argued, therefore, that the Newars in this research feel threatened by the growing number of lahures in Doncaster and that they are more likely to exhibit resentment towards this representation of Nepali-ness because they belong to the same tier. This resonates with findings from Bennett (2018, p. 453) who suggests an *'oppositional "them and us" sense of identity'* is likely to emerge if a group feel change is occurring which is likely to disrupt their sense of continuity. There is a feeling of not wanting to be outdone by this new wave of Nepalis who, unlike the Newars, are recent settlers in Doncaster, changing the past to become modern (Back, 2009). What emerges from the empirical data is a feeling of rivalry from the Newars, a competitive urge to outdo the lahures.

This finding is not uncommon when researching a specific community within a broader population who have some common or shared identity. For example, Gayer (2007) looked at the community in Southall, west London. The inhabitants largely shared a Punjabi identity, but this was overridden by rivalry and conflict that was escalating back in India[62] as well as, *periodic episodes of tension in the diaspora itself'* (Gayer, 2007, para. 17). Interestingly, Gayer found a certain group within this community who harboured *'extremely ambivalent tendencies regarding the modes of identification and mobilization of its members'* (2007, para. 18). These were the British-born citizens. Their mixed or ambiguous tendencies promoted some aspects of their Asian background but rejected the idea of communal integration with others who identified as Punjabi. The extent to which my research sample exhibit Nepali-ness from a migration age perspective is the focus of Chapter Six. What Gayer (2007) identifies is the difference in findings between citizens who were born in Britain and those who not.

My findings suggest the key principles of traditional caste and ethnic structures are still prevalent among the diaspora in the UK, despite a physical move away from the state that perpetuates these differences. Three respondents who relocated to the UK as children demonstrated comparatively stronger feelings about caste and ethnic disparity. The viewpoints of Jeewan, Eshwar and Gita

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[62]Further compounded by the ever-present conflict between India and Pakistan (Gayer, 2007).

centre around their tri-identities as British Newari Nepalis. While most of my participants grew up in an environment where caste and ethnic variances were a part of everyday life, Gita, Eshwar and Jeewan only experienced this when visiting Nepal or, more recently, as a direct result of the growing and diverse Nepali community in Doncaster. This lack of daily exposure to caste differences challenges their identity further because they struggle to understand and accept the prevalence and prominence of these differences in Nepal. When they face discrimination in Nepal because of their *'inferior'* Newari social standing, it causes confusion and bitterness towards other Nepalis. Although these three are not actually British-born, as Gayer (2007) identified in his report, they have spent most of their lives in Britain and show a similar lack of interest in communal integration while still maintaining a sense of Nepali-ness. The extracts below from Eshwar and Gita support this finding:

Eshwar: *'I really don't see the point of widening my circle. I am happy with the friends that I've got. I don't want a complicated life. When you start mixing with Nepalis, there's all that "I'm better than you, you're worse off than me" mentality that they have brought with them from Nepal. That was based on what you were told you had to be, what you had to work in, all those years back. To me that's crazy. I'm an analyst and from a Newar background. I'm sure that would confuse them all.'*

Gita: *'For that reason of having very little in common, I don't really want to pursue getting to know them. I have enough going on at home and work life [laughs], I don't need to be making links with people who are going to put me down because of my background.'*

It raises the question of whether a sense of community can be expected among a diaspora where caste and ethnic dissimilarities are maintained and practiced. The following section explores the idea of community cohesion and what this means for Nepalis in Doncaster in light of caste and ethnic representation.

4.3 Nepali Community within a Community: Analysis of Findings

Social identity theory seeks to understand the psychology of intergroup discrimination (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). It suggests there are various forms of 'self' that an individual can adopt, and these variations are widely determined by our group membership. Individuals who categorise themselves in groups

achieve positive self-esteem, using collective terminology like 'we' and 'our' instead of 'I'. One of the key variables identified by Tajfel and Turner (1979) for in-group favouritism is the extent to which individuals identify with an in-group and internalise that group membership as an aspect of their self-concept. The idea of self-concept - how someone perceives and evaluates themselves - can help promote a sense of community. The chapter has suggested collective references have caste and ethnic undertones and the notion of community is embedded within this framework. This led me to question how experiences of integration might differ between a large and well-established diasporic framework and a slowly emerging, smaller one. Is integration into a smaller community easier if an individual has previous experience of immersion in a large community?

Malina, the only respondent in my sample who classified her ethnicity as Gurung, drew on her experiences as part of a Nepali community in London, where she first settled after leaving Nepal. At the time of the interview, Malina had been living in Doncaster for a couple of years after 11 years in London. She said it took her several years to overcome homesickness and it was the care and support of her Nepali friends in London that helped her feel settled in the UK. In her interview, Malina compared her time with the Nepali community in London to the one she is part of in Doncaster. I asked her about her interactions with other Nepalis in Doncaster:

Malina: *'There isn't much to be honest. We haven't been here that long but when I have tried to meet the other Nepalis here, I have found them to be not very [pause] I don't know, not as welcoming. I don't know. Maybe because they have their own circle and they have known each other for a long time now. Who knows? But that's what I think. Maybe they don't know enough about me, enough about us, and that's why they aren't forthcoming.'*

'I have not been able to understand it either. I mean, we are still new to the community but from the little time and interaction I have had with them, it seems they are not interested. The Nepalis in London, even if you haven't known them for long or are meeting them for the first time, they were always quick to invite you to their house. They are really friendly.'

I asked Malina why she thought Nepalis in London were friendlier than in Doncaster. She replied:

Malina: *'I don't know. I mean, maybe because Doncaster is a small town and those that came to Doncaster together have stayed together. When I first came here, I would go for walks to familiarise myself with the streets and roads and if I bumped into Nepalis during my walks and started talking to them, I would get the feeling that they didn't like it.'*

In her reflections about settling in Doncaster, Malina makes no reference to caste or ethnic differences. Even when she talks about Nepalis not being approachable, she doesn't distinguish them by their caste or ethnic allegiance. This may be because her first experience of a Nepali diaspora community was in London where there is a larger population than Doncaster and therefore a greater tolerance of diversity. Malina's experience echoes that of Nitin who described how much he enjoyed working in London and how it helped build his confidence - and this was primarily because of the diverse group of people he worked with. Findings suggest that resistance to integration with the wider Nepali community is underlined by ethnic and caste divisions but linked to two other factors; Doncaster's small-town set-up and the family.

Firstly, the small-town set-up. When I came across a leaflet (see Image 5) promoting a cultural event programme for Doncaster's Nepali community, I questioned whether the organisation name 'The British Gurkhas Community Doncaster' would unify the wider community (see Chapter Three). Given my respondents' views about how these events only represent certain ethnic groups, I suggest this organisation signifies an exclusiveness to those affiliated with Gurkhas. Creating a local organisation with the aim of bringing together a growing minority group is a good idea in theory. It is likely the absence of 'Nepal' in any form in The British Gurkhas Community Doncaster organisation name has increased my respondents' feelings of disassociation from their nationality. Before embarking on this research, I believed Doncaster's small-town set-up would favour the Nepali population and help create a tight-knit bond among an emerging community and, in doing so, would overcome any barriers towards integration. However, the exclusion of the word Nepal in the Doncaster organisation's title vindicates the thoughts of many respondents in this research; being Nepali is very insular. The growth of an emerging population in a town, as opposed to a city, might intensify ethnic and caste divisions. Groups distinguished by caste and ethnicity have their own versions of being Nepali and

this is practised to the detriment of homogenisation. So are the divisions among Nepalis in Doncaster amplified by an exclusive organisation like The British Gurkhas Community Doncaster? Would a more inclusive organisation help change Nepalis' perceptions of other Nepalis? Below are some illuminating comments:

Pari: *'Like obviously, even though we are Nepali, the cultural differences are massive still. Because they are Gurungs, they have different ways of doing things and they are from especially the army side. We can't relate to that.'*

'Even when we go to Nepali party, we sit on our own tables and interact with families that we know. We don't really [pause] and I think them, they see us as, "other people, these are not us" kind of attitude. Even at the Nepali organisation events, you can clearly see everyone sticking to what is familiar and the events they hold are very much for them, like the organisation's name would suggest.'

Indra: *'Doncaster is changing too. The community is growing and Nepalis have made an organisation which is good. I am a member too. I don't get involved in organising and things like that but I go. The organisation is run by ex-lahures, which is good, but I don't agree with the name. There is more to Nepal than Gurkhas and no "Nepal" in the name which makes it confusing for outsiders too.'*

Eshwar: *'Doncaster is a small town. You already have the other established ethnic communities like Indian and Pakistani. Then when you think about the Nepalis in Doncaster and how different they all are [pause] keeping them all happy is a tough job, so you're bound to make some unhappy. I think because of that, there is always going to be a rivalry edge.'*

The absence of 'Nepal' in the organisation's name is picked up by several respondents and they use this point to illustrate their inability to *'relate'* to what they believe the organisation stands for. Yet it does not necessarily deter them from attending the organisation's events. Instead they use the events to reaffirm existing links with family and friends, as Pari suggests. Choosing not to interact with this organisation at all could be seen as an act of defiance. Respondents imply they have the right to attend but their unwillingness to mix with other Nepali groups at community events demonstrates a *'rivalry'* and a 'them versus us' attitude. These distant relationships and the lack of dialogue between the different castes and ethnic groups prevent the cohesion of Nepalis in Doncaster as a whole. The current set-up of The British Gurkhas Community Doncaster seems to have created even more divisions.

In my findings, the family network and support system emerged as a significant factor in adjusting to life in the UK and providing structural ties to Nepal. Some participants suggested there was no need to create links with other Nepali groups as their social needs were fulfilled by family relationships. Strong family ties are an important aspect of my respondents' identity so it is unsurprising to find narrow thoughts and practices around caste and ethnicity in these findings. Some respondents said the acceptance of inter-caste and inter-ethnic relationships in Nepal was becoming more common. But inter-caste and inter-ethnic relationships were not something they had personally experienced. All respondents had spouses belonging to the same caste and ethnic grouping. Lack of opportunity to mix with other castes and ethnicities meant respondents were more likely to resist wider integration with other Nepalis, and be less tolerant of the idea. The comments below illustrate this:

Leela: *'It was an arranged marriage and it was decided by my grandad because he was the eldest in the family. He considered everything like if my husband belonged to the same caste, if he came from a good family. If my husband wasn't from the same caste, my grandad would not have taken it further. I was the oldest child in my family and grandad had to think about my sisters too.'*

Kriti: *'Three of my children married Newari partners and two of my children married British people; I have one daughter-in-law who is white British and a son-in-law who is white British. They are lovely people and they are accepting of our religious and cultural beliefs as much as we are of theirs. So yes we do, we celebrate Christmas too as well as our festivals.'*

There is little desire to build Nepali links outside family and friends who share the same ethnic and cultural background. Conversely, narratives show an acceptance of British '*white people*' is more desirable than Nepalis from other ethnic groups. The following section looks at this distinction in more detail, exploring how individuals' versions of Nepali identity has been received by the host country and how this has been perceived by respondents.

4.4 Nepali-ness within the Host Nation: Analysis of Findings

Before I started collecting my empirical data, I thought my research sample might demonstrate some resistance towards assimilation into British culture. I suspected this issue might make some respondents question their Nepali identity and the cultural values they brought with them to the UK. However, not

only do respondents talk about their shared experiences and interactions with the wider *'English'* public in a positive way, they also express gratitude for being accepted and allowed to show their Nepali-ness. This was indicated earlier by Kriti who spoke about her family's acceptance of the white, British partners of her children. Himani also reflected on why she likes the British community and *'the way they do things'*:

Himani: *'If we wear our traditional dress, a kurtha surwal[63], to an English person's party, they won't say anything negative. If anything, they give compliments and say nice things. Many years ago, during the summer, I would sometimes go shopping wearing a saree[64]. People at the shops would give me compliments and say nice things about my saree. A couple of weeks ago I went to Asda and was wearing a pote[65] around my neck. It was quite bright and colourful and the cashier asked me where I had brought it from and said it was beautiful. People here are very respectful.'*

For Himani, acknowledgment and positive remarks about her clothes and the features of her appearance which signify her cultural background is a form of acceptance. The examples she gave - kurtha surwal, saree and pote - are all traditional symbolic items for a Nepali Brahman woman. The garments represent modesty and are comfortingly familiar for Himani as she wore them in Nepal before moving to the UK. The pote is a symbol of marriage. It is empowering for Himani to be able to display her cultural dress and its significance without being made to feel inferior. Such experiences allow individuals to practise symbolic ethnicity which, according to Gans (1979), enables them to easily express their ethnicity. It can be argued this is a kind of coping mechanism for diasporic communities, allowing them to feel the comfort of their homeland in their adopted land. Himani emphasised the sense of freedom she feels to practice her faith and culture without fear of being ridiculed:

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[63]A kurtha (or kurta) is a loose-fitting upper garment that can be worn by both men and women. It varies in length and style is influenced or dependent on the region of country. A surwal is a form of trouser that is often worn with a kurtha.
[64]Saree is an item of women's clothing traditionally worn in South Asia. The saree is usually a single piece of material that is typically wrapped around the waist and draped over one shoulder. It is worn with a blouse and petticoat.
[65]Pote are colourful glass beads often worn by women as a necklace. Pote are synonymous with marriage and traditionally help to distinguish between married and unmarried women.

Himani: *'At the end of the day, we have managed to maintain our culture and identity through our family that has grown over the years. Be it big or small, we have been able to celebrate our festivals and parties without worrying about what people will say or think. Everything is a lot more settled and comfortable here. No one is passing judgement on what you're wearing, what you're eating and how you're doing certain things.'*

These sentiments were echoed by Deepak who talked about the tolerance of a multicultural, multi-ethnic British society, and highlighted the opportunities it has afforded his family:

Deepak: *'My children grew up here, in a country with good educational foundation which have set them up for life. Doncaster is a fairly quiet town but has developed over the years which have given them the opportunity to grow and socialise with people from different backgrounds and different countries. That's what is great about the UK. It is a hospitable and welcoming country and because of this, my family and I have been able to live a happy life.'*

The idea of freedom of expression emerges in many of my respondents' narratives, particularly when they talked about post-relocation experiences. Pari, for example, referred to herself as an *'in-betweener'* - unable to fully identify as Nepali or British. Pari is acknowledging membership within her adopted home whilst maintaining links to her country of birth. This sense of belonging advocates inclusiveness and not exclusivity (Anthias, 2016). It trumps what Clifford (1999, p. 264) describes as the dilemma faced by diasporas of the *'co-presence of here and there'* whereby groups are unable to forge a consistent platform to practice identity as *'the present is constantly shadowed by the past.'* Instead, Pari and other respondents see this as an opportunity not only for themselves, but their families also (see Chapters Five and Six where this is discussed further). This is another indication of how identity markers are fluid in conceptualisation and operationalisation (Barth, 1969; Hall, 2000). Pari she enjoys the freedom to be vocal in the UK, something not generally encouraged in Nepal. She believes this has quite literally given her a voice:

Pari: *'I find it very easy to express… So yeah, verbalising something [pause] nobody really says "I love you" in Nepal. In English, everyone is so vocal and I like that about here… I like the fact that you do that here and it never happened in Nepal. You can express your opinions and emotions so openly.'*

The accounts of Himani, Deepak and Pari refute the work of Safran (1991) who suggests from a social perspective, diasporas feel alienated and insulated from the host society, with the desire to return home overriding any attempts to assimilate into the host country (Berns-McGown, 2008). Instead, narratives from this research suggest an opportunity for individuals to carve out a multi-purpose and functional identity in Britain.

Gita reflected on her journey from Nepal to Britain as an eight year-old and her introduction to a UK education in Doncaster. I asked if she felt different from other pupils because of her background:

Gita: *'To be honest, I don't think it ever really got to me. Maybe other people noticed I was different because I know obviously, we had English difficulties. We used to have special [pause] I don't know what you'd call it, tuition, extra help. We used to have this teacher, [teacher's name given], she used to take me, my brother, my cousin and there were some other Asian people who, I think, lived on the same street as us, went to the same school. They were a bit older than me but, at certain parts of the day, we would spend time with [teacher's name given] and learn English and stuff like that.'*

Gita's comments can be seen as submission, rather than acceptance. She acknowledged she was different but didn't allow herself to be bothered by it, inferring she chose to ignore the issue. This can be linked back my earlier suggestion that some respondents contend with a tri-identity. As a child, Gita developed an understanding of being *'different'* in Britain and as an adult she also had to negotiate her Newari roots. Jeewan suggested something similar when asked about being different to his peers:

Jeewan: *'It's strange actually. I have never [pause] I have always had white friends up until quite an old age…There wasn't many Asian people in the school as I remember most of my friends were white. My best friend for years, up until the age of 16 or 17 was white.'*

'The strange thing is, I remember this white friend saying to me that they don't think of me as being foreign or anything. I remember them saying that I was just me. That person was saying that they didn't even think of me being brown or another colour or what have you. I always remember that.'

This comment is a significant one from Jeewan. He presents this incident as a positive; acceptance by his peers despite his ethnic and racial background.

They saw him as 'one of them', effectively colourless, and this approval helped him to assimilate. Jeewan's childhood in the UK was spent knowing he was different. He experienced the difficulties his parents faced adjusting to life outside Nepal as well as his own insecurities around schooling (see Chapter Six where this is explored further). Being accepted by his white friends signalled for Jeewan a closing of a metaphorical void – placing him within the boundary line of his peers and not beyond (Cohen, 1985; Anthias, 2016). His inference of acceptance by this group can be linked back to comments made earlier in the chapter by Nitin and Rabia who associated white skinned people with the historical classification of high class and superiority (Woodburne, 1922). Jeewan suggests he hasn't been allowed this type of acceptance by the wider Nepali community in Doncaster, despite being born in Nepal and spending his early life there.

Jeewan's admission, however, introduces the complex idea of 'whitening' non-whites and accordingly, ex-nominating their culture without their consent. Richard Dyer (1997, p.1) questions the absence of recognition of white people as a race and suggests *'As long as race is something only applied to non-white peoples, as long as white people are not racially seen and named, they/we function as a human norm. Other people are raced, we are just people.'* He explains how there is a principal acceptance among the white population of the colour or racial distinction of non-whites, but an absence of distinguishing *'the whiteness of the white people we know'* (Dyer, 1997, p. 2). Dyer (1997) cites the work of American feminist and social activist Gloria Watkins, widely known as bell hooks (1992), who notes the frustration of white liberals when their skin colour is referenced. She suggests a contradiction in white people who seek to play down their whiteness in the interests of collectivism but in doing so promote their white supremacy. She explains:

> *'Often their [white people] rage erupts because they believe that all ways of looking that highlight difference subvert the liberal belief in a universal subjectivity (we are all people) that they think will make racism disappear. They have a deep emotional investment in the myth of "sameness", even as their actions reflect the primacy of whiteness as a sign of informing who they are and how they think'* (hooks, 1992, p.167).

Dyer (1997) argues the overwhelming representation of the human race is largely presented as the dominant ideology without specifically acknowledging this as the philosophy of the white public. His primary concern is to treat, understand and express the whiteness of white people in the same way as people readily use colour to distinguish between non-whites. He describes the absence of white imagery in areas such as literature and the media as a 'privilege' acquired by the white population in Western society. This privilege normalises the disproportionate representation of non-whites.

What Dyer (1997) and hooks (1992) discuss is what I suggest Jeewan experienced with his white friend. The friend is making Jeewan part of the dominant white culture by rendering him colourless. This helped Jeewan 'fit in' but he said he found it *'strange'* because he knew he was different to his friends. Dyer's (1997) concept of whitening non-whites is an important one. It presents another form of discrimination which minority ethnic groups may have to tolerate in order to be accepted in their adopted homeland. Therefore the challenge is attempting to understand self-identity in a new environment while negotiating how to retain and practice aspects of a culture which is different to the wider society. One way familiarity can be maintained is through contact with members of the same community who share common cultural practices and beliefs, in this case, the wider Nepali population in Doncaster. Findings from this chapter suggests caste and ethnic differences are a significant part of what respondents know about Nepal; they were brought up with lived caste differences as part of their everyday lives.

Himani and Jeewan's experiences, as described by them earlier in this section, present two very different ways that members of the Nepali community have adapted to life in Doncaster. Himani talked about an appreciation and acceptance of the way she dressed and Jeewan described a negation of his ethnic and racial identity. Although one was an approval and the other a denial, the outcome was effectively the same - integration into a new society which helped alleviate the pressure of being 'different'.

Despite preferring to connect with British society and people rather than other Nepali groups, the majority of my respondents had no difficulty reconciling with

their national identity. The differences between ethnic and caste groups, in *'being Nepali'* mattered a lot to my respondents. I deliberately structured my sample so all interviewees not only had a singular, mutual standpoint (all from Nepal) but they had also relocated to the UK from their country of birth. This helped with analysis, enabling comparisons of experiences with a default variable across all respondents. Other common themes were also pinpointed when attempting to understand how identities can shape an individual's self-perception. The main commonality was the passport respondents held – this was significant in their identification as *'being Nepali.'* At the time of the interviews, all respondents had been living in the UK for at least 13 years. Despite this, the majority (15 out of 17) said they felt Nepali because they still had a Nepali passport[66]. The affiliation here is more to do with the physical geography (Haas, 1986) of Nepal; the land of their birth allowed them to identify as 'Nepali.' That is their birth right and they have an official documentation that confirms this:

Jeewan: *'The way I see it, where you are born is your motherland and it is where you are from. You can only have been born and lived in that country for two weeks, but I still feel I am connected there.'*

4.5 Conclusion

Nepal is a multi-ethnic society exemplified by the diversity of cultural practices, religions and languages. Its multiplicity within these core structures of society suggests a liberal state that endorses change and freedom. Nepal was a constitutional monarchic society until 2008 when it became a republic, prompted by the royal family massacre in June 2001. The premise of becoming a republic is underpinned by democracy - leaders are nominated and elected by the general public. However, research into daily life in Nepal in addition to the empirical findings from this study suggest an imbalance of representation and power. Ethnic and caste discrimination is still very prominent in Nepal. Although legal acts and sanctions have been put in place to eradicate the discriminatory outcomes of these traditional structures, ethnic and caste disparity continues to play a significant part in 'normal' Nepali society.

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[66]Two respondents were unable to answer this question definitively, instead, choosing to describe their nationality as neither British nor Nepali.

Ethnic and caste identifications are perceived and lived. They are interchangeable and often determined by the context and environment of that time. In Chapter Two I explained how identity in a general sense is perceived as fluid and determined by many factors, making it largely unfixed. But when researching caste and ethnic identity specifically, individuals and groups are presented with a rigid social hierarchy which is very difficult to overcome. The intricacies of this inequality and how individuals and groups feel about it is apparent in some accounts but less so in others. Therefore, despite its fluidity in relation to where, when and how it might be used, ethnic and caste identity, as exemplified by respondents in this research, is a lived contradiction. It is largely considered immobile but transferrable depending on social context, as Goffman (1959) suggests. Its prominence remains an integral part of how individuals understand what it means to be Nepali. The findings of this research show that *'being Nepali'* is a fragmented concept. While there are similarities between different Nepali ethnic groups and castes, members of these groups focus largely on the differences. This focus comes from seeing and hearing about caste and ethnic differences while in Nepal, from 'learning' that people from certain castes were specific 'types' with particular jobs and so forth.

Here I suggest there is a challenge to a traditional social hierarchy which respondents feel threatened by. There is a growing concern about the over-representation of certain ethnic groups in Doncaster who are considered inferior and uncivilised in Nepal because of their caste and ethnic position. In Doncaster, members of these groups hold positions traditionally associated with higher castes such as being the creators of a 'national' organisation and their group domination of this organisation. In doing so, they present a version of what it means to be 'Nepali' that my participants are unfamiliar with, resulting in resentment and a lack of desire to integrate. For some, the differences relate to how religious and cultural festivals are celebrated in a communal setting. For others, the disparity in language and general engagement is too much to overcome. Table 1 shows where ethnic groups are placed according to Nepali hierarchy and this explains the thinking behind the idea that those affiliated with the army are 'punching above their weight' in Doncaster. Again, I must stress that my final research sample is not ethnically representative of the Nepali

community in Doncaster. My findings are based on the narratives of two ethnic and caste groups - Newars and Brahmans.

This chapter has highlighted that identifying as 'Nepali' is mostly associated with being from Nepal, the homeland. The significance of holding a Nepali passport despite living in the UK for a number of years also emerged strongly from the narratives. Conversely, the annual events organised by the Nepali organisation (The British Gurkhas Community Doncaster) have created a sense of unfulfillment among respondents - a belief of 'their' as opposed to 'our'. This widens the gap between the different ethnic groups and reduces the possibility of a relationship between them. In turn, this leads to high levels of disassociation, particularly among those who relocated from Nepal in childhood. This disassociation is not a rejection of their version of a Nepali identity but a lack of familiarity with the type of Nepali-ness promoted by other groups.

My respondents demonstrated more willingness to assimilate into British society than to create ties with other Nepali ethnic groups. For most of them, adopting 'British values' means less restriction and more freedom to be themselves. This freedom is considered important and something participants had not experienced in Nepal, but it is also something they are less likely to do with other Nepalis in Doncaster because of perceived judgement. In this way, respondents in this research were always likely to favour the host nation. Although some narratives suggest a degree of ambiguity or confusion around assimilation, this acceptance of 'host' values is better suited to selfhood away from the intricacies of Nepali caste and ethnic formation and association. What facilitates the operationalisation of this identity further is the non-fixed, *'fuzzy'* concept of Britishness (Cohen, 1994, p. 7). All respondents in this research have moulded and shaped what they believe to be a sense of 'Britishness' differently because the concept is open to interpretation. This appears to have helped this Nepali community in Doncaster because it moves away from the rigid characteristics of what it means to belong to a specific caste or ethnic group. Belonging, therefore, is located and relative (Anthias, 2016). Not only do respondents find this empowering but it helps them 'fit in' with the host nation and gives them an opportunity to be the best versions of their 'real' selves. There is a feeling among those who were constrained by caste and ethnic ties

in Nepal that they have largely been able to leave that behind. Instead, they have been able to push boundaries and create prospects in a society which has been generally accepting of them for who they are without the pressure of caste and ethnic links.

Findings from this chapter have shown how respondents conceptualise and operationalise their caste and ethnic identity, which encompasses features of both idem and ipse identity. Caste and ethnic identity are a manifestation of personal selfhood (Romano, 2016) that is foregrounded by the habitus – driven by respondents' familial ideas and values during primary socialisation (Bourdieu, 1986). In Doncaster caste and ethnic identity is functional because it comprises of distinguishable characteristics which are mostly fixed, rigid and part of everyday identity (idem) – setting apart different groups, yet its reaffirming nature makes it an individualistic self-construct (ipse) (Kaufmann, 2010). The development of self through habitus (Bourdieu, 1986) does encourage a foundational sameness but in this research, it is limited to caste and ethnic sameness only. Despite no longer living in Nepal, respondents actively choose to integrate with individuals who offer an extension of the way of life pre relocation. However, caste and ethnic boundaries remain exclusionary (Cohen, 1985) and limiting to non-members in Doncaster, leading individuals to seek belonging within the host nation too.

In his work *The Origins of the Caste System in India*, Raj (1985) suggests four categories in determining how people were assigned their caste position. These are racial; occupational and economic; migrational movement; and religious beliefs. All these aspects were mentioned with some degree of variance by respondents as factors which differentiated them from other Nepalis. Therefore, despite sharing some common social identity features (being born in Nepal, migrating to the UK, and settling in Doncaster) the differences between Nepalis in Doncaster play a large part in their reluctance to fully engage and integrate as one. My findings suggest the traditional caste and ethnic underpinnings have travelled with the respondents and are operational in Doncaster.

Chapter Five: Gender Identity

> *'Raising [and educating] a girl is like watering your neighbour's garden'* – Nepali proverb. (Source unknown, quoted by Rebecka Lundgren, Miranda Beckman, Surendra Chaurasiya, Bhawna Subhedi & Brad Kerner, 2013, p. 128)

5.1 Introduction

Nepal is still largely considered a patriarchal society in which *'a woman's life is strongly influenced by her father and husband'* (Acharya, Mathema & Acharya 1999, p. 7). Marriage is believed to be a particularly significant moment in a woman's life where she becomes part of another family, fulfilling the duties that this new form of identity brings. Men are traditionally and stereotypically considered the head of the household and the predominant breadwinners. But what happens when there is a change in environment and culture? When there is a move to Western social context with comparatively fewer gender-based barriers? How does physical relocation to an alien set of cultural values impact on how identity is shaped? This chapter will attempt to answers these questions in relation to the Nepali diaspora in Doncaster.

Smith and Byron (2005, p.1) claim *'South Asia is the region with the most severe anti-female discrimination in the world'* with preference given to sons over daughters driving the gender bias. This stems from the traditional belief that sons should provide financial support for parents, particularly in old age, and carry on the family name for future generations. Financial support facilitates long-term care with extended families remaining an overarching family formation in South Asian regions (Yeung, Desai & Jones, 2018). Daughters are married into new families, which carries financial implications as the daughter's parents traditionally bear the cost of weddings and dowry-giving customs (Arnold, 1997). When analysing India's 2011 census, Jha et al. (2011) found an increasingly disproportionate male-to-female ratio of children between 0-6 years:

> *'Census revealed about 7.1 million fewer girls than boys aged 0-6 years, a notable increase in the gap of 6.0 million fewer girls recorded in the 2001 census and the gap of 4.2 million fewer girls recorded in the 1991*

census' leading him to surmise an *'increased prenatal sex determination with subsequent selective abortion of female foetuses'* (2011, p. 1921).

The repercussions of the gender bias can be identified from birth. Paradoxically, some research suggests that despite the inferior labelling of girls and women, they hold a position of supremacy in decisions ultimately impacting their lives (O'Neil & Domingo, 2015). In South Asian communities this can be seen in the home. Women, particularly the matriarch, control the daily running of the household and have significant influence on the children in the house. This is a form of dominance over the household patriarch and an under-researched subject area. Men rarely have the same level of presence in the family home as their decision-making powers focus on external affairs (Fikree & Pasha, 2004). Smith and Byron (2005) researched whether women's exposure to power in the home decreases the likelihood of gender prejudice against young girls. The research features samples from Pakistan, Nepal, India and Bangladesh and focuses on whether a shift in discrimination can be seen in the areas of health and nutrition, i.e. whether women's increased levels of power and decision-making have positive nutritional influence on their daughters than their sons. The study concluded that *'for the South Asian region as a whole, an increase in women's relative decision-making power - if substantial - may indeed be an effective force reducing gender discrimination against girl children'* (2005, p. 24). However, in Nepal (and to a lesser extent in Bangladesh) women's decision-making powers were not statistically significant, implying little impact on the childhood health and nutrition of girls. This is in contrast to Pakistan where the findings revealed that an increase in women's power did benefit young girls.

Findings in this chapter are based on consideration of Nepal's patriarchal framework and the historical perspective on women's roles. Analysis of respondents' accounts explore the extent of gender-role conformity in their experiences and the impact on gender roles when away Nepal. The chapter separates the accounts of Nepali women and men, detailing their gender identity before and after relocation. Although this chapter presents the findings in a structured and cohesive manner, there are inevitable overlaps, which further demonstrate the power relations in gender roles.

5.2 Female Roles and Identity: Analysis of Findings

Ten out of the 17 respondents who took part in this research were women. These women are grouped into two main post-relocation categories: the homemaker and the employee. This distinction was made after respondents completed a participant consent form (see Appendix 5), specifying their current occupation and work status. Some respondents had worked before moving to Doncaster but were no longer in employment at the time of interview. But any references to work relevant to the analysis were captured and presented as findings.

With the exception of Gita who relocated as a child, all the women in this sample were based in Nepal until their early 20s and their earliest concepts of 'self' and identity were formed there. A common and prominent theme in these women's recollections is helping out with household chores and caring for the wider family. When asked about her childhood family life, Chandni was quick to specify the dynamics of her family and the scale of her responsibilities from a young age:

Chandni: *'I was the oldest of five children; I had two younger brothers and two younger sisters and we all lived with my mum and dad. From the age of five or six I started looking after the children, my siblings. I learnt household chores from a young age and that's what I did. I didn't go to school. There was no need for me to go to school. There were local schools close by but I didn't get the opportunity to go.'*

'From the age of seven or eight years I started to help out in the kitchen and would make food like rice and vegetables. My mum was really happy that I started to help out with household work from a young age. We had our fields so my mum and dad would go work in the fields and prepare crops. So from a very young age, I was responsible for looking after the house and taking care of my brothers and sisters.'

Chandni's admission that there was *'no need'* for her to go to school and that she *'didn't get the opportunity'* to go has sacrificial undertones. She negotiates her missed opportunities by focusing on a positive – how she helped to support the family – and emphasises her mother's gratitude. This is how Chandni accepts her circumstances unlike Kriti, who talked about her childhood hardships with a sense of incomprehension: '*I can make no sense of when I stopped being a child and when I became an adult.'* Her mother died when she

was eight and Kriti had to care for her younger siblings in the midst of the family's desperate economic and financial condition:

Kriti: '*I raised my siblings almost on my own. My youngest brother [pause] because we were quite poor and would struggle for food and drink, he died. He died because he was not able to drink milk. And do you know where he died? He died on my back. I was carrying him on my back whilst doing the housework when he died.*'

The misery of Kriti's reality is compounded by her lack of control over her circumstances. Like Chandni, she had no opportunity to go to school and had to take on family responsibilities from an early age. After marrying at 17, times were still tough for Kriti and she explained how she had to pick up new skills such as knitting clothes and working with crops to help provide for her family. I asked Kriti how she managed to learn these skills:

Kriti: '*It was just the community I grew up in, everyone does everything for himself. So from working out in the fields to everything else, you have to do it yourself. It is quite a close knit community so you watch others doing it; your friends and family, and you learn it just like that. Things like digging up fields, sewing clothes etc., I picked up from watching others. That's how it works. It's not like it is here where [UK] you can go for training and learn like that, back in Nepal and during my time, you learnt these skills from friends.*'

Bina also experienced tragedy as a child when her father died and she described how this led to significant changes in her life:

Bina: '*When I was really young I had a lot of fun. I guess that was more normal because I would play all the time, not listen to my parents [pause] normal things that all children do. But after my dad died, things changed and we all had to become more reserved in everything we did. Because of that, I didn't venture out much either. Before I got married, the only area I was aware of was Jaya Bageshwori[67] and that was it.*'

She went on to explain how she had never been interested in going to school and how she and her sister were not '*forced to carry on with education*'. Instead they learned '*how to do household work from a young age*'. Although these circumstances were not unusual in Nepal in the 1970s and 1980s when these women were children, the demand and weight of expectation on them hinders

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[67]A residential area in Nepal's capital, Kathmandu.

their growth in other areas. A recent report by UNICEF (2016)[68] found that girls worldwide spent 160 million more hours a day doing household chores than boys. Data suggests that in South Asia (and in the Middle East and North Africa) in particular '*girls aged 5-14 spend nearly twice as many hours per week on household chores as boys of the same age*' (UNICEF, 2016, para. 27). The report discusses how the type of chores girls are tasked with solidifies gender stereotypes and narrows their perception of self in adulthood. Also, the lack of appreciation for the work they do has negative repercussions. The report explains how '*household chores are usually not valued by the family and community the way income-earning activities are, rendering the contributions of girls less visible and less valuable, and having lasting effects on their self-esteem and sense of self-worth*' (UNICEF, 2016, para. 31). This outcome can influence girls' interest in education as well as their access to it. The findings of this research show that the educational gap in these respondents' childhoods is felt more keenly after relocation. In Nepal, this educational gap is perceived as an ordinary part of life and consequently the women didn't think to challenge it. After relocation, the implications of this gap become paramount as Bina's comments demonstrate:

Bina: '*I don't like speaking English in front of my family or speaking to white people in English [laughs]. Sometimes my husband's friends might come round, who are white, and I feel really embarrassed speaking to them in English [laughs].*

'*I don't know, I just do. Maybe because what I say might not be the right way of saying it, or I might say something with the words in the wrong order, just things like that. So because of that, I don't really like speaking in English in front of them.*'

Malina: '*I came here in 2004. I came here but faced a lot of problems because I had no education and could not speak or understand the language. It was hard [pause] even now things are hard with all that. I can't go anywhere by myself.*'

Bina and Malina experienced very little educational learning in Nepal and spent most of their childhood doing housework. Like all the women referenced so far

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[68]The report sets about targets for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for The 2030 Agenda, with particular focus on empowering girls who are still most likely at risk to suffer and experience inequalities and disadvantages (UNICEF, 2016).

in this chapter, Bina and Malina come from lower castes in Nepal's hierarchical structure and this is another explanation for their lack of drive to pursue education (see Chapter Four). Their comments resonate with the UNICEF report findings (2016) and underline the significance of formal education.

The importance of early years education has generated much discussion with '*the period from about ages two to six been viewed as a time of great growth in cognitive abilities'* (Woolfolk & Perry, 2012, p. 64). Cognition relates to how an individual perceives and processes their environment. Developing his work on the back of Piaget (1950), psychologist and philosopher Lev Vygotsky (1962) theorised that cultural and social settings were significant factors in a child's cognitive development. This is ultimately sought through interaction with skilled adults and peers. During the early years, this type of interaction is generally experienced for the first time in school, outside the family set-up. This suggests that early years relationships help establish formative cognitive skills and are underpinned by education.

Pascal (2003, p. 7) outlines three core measures of early learning in her work exploring '*what constitutes effective learning for children from birth through to eight years of age (early childhood)'.* She suggests that emotional wellbeing, social competence and self-identity, and attitudes and dispositions to learn are connected and fundamental in shaping what she describes as '*a framework for an effective learner'* (2003, p. 22). Image 6 is taken from Pascal's research and demonstrates the outcome of these three principles.

Image 6: A framework for an effective learner (Pascal, 2003)

Social Competence/ Self- Concept

The child is able to: establish effective relationships; empathise; take responsibility; be assertive and have awareness of self & self-worth

Attitudes and Dispositions to Learn

The child shows: independence; creativity; self-motivation & resilience

Emotional Wellbeing

The child shows: emotional literacy; empowerment; connectedness and positive self esteem

Pascal's (2003) framework is not absolute and cannot be holistically applied to this research. There are fundamental differences in our samples and methods - she observes and interacts with children and their families and I dissect themes and commonalities from interviews with adults; Pascal's participants are from the UK and mine moved to the UK from Nepal. Nonetheless, her findings provide a background of understanding about how early-years learning can impact individuals. The respondents in this research who received little or no education as children in Nepal - Bina, Chandi, Kriti and Malina - are all lacking[69]

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[69]Deciding whether respondents lacked or possessed, increased or decreased as a result of their (or lack of) education is subjective. This assignment is based on my interpretation of the feedback they gave during their respective interviews. This categorisation allows the findings to be grouped in this way for generalisations.

in Pascal's three core measures as adults in the UK. After moving to the UK, they experienced increased emotional wellbeing but reduced social competence/self-concept and attitudes to learn. At the time of their interviews, these respondents described their employment status as a *'housewife'*. Chandni and Kriti who were slightly older had had some experience of working in the UK. When she came to Doncaster, Chandni found work in a Chinese food factory, her first experience of paid employment. She said she didn't face many problems at work as her co-workers were in a similar position to her and English was their second language. Her sister-in-law found work at the same factory, making the transition to the working world more comfortable. But after a few years of employment, the decision to leave was taken out of her hands as she explained:

Chandni: *'…but then things changed and my husband started saying I shouldn't work anymore and so did my son. The main reason was because it was very far but also it was difficult to pay taxes so, I stopped. I did enjoy working and not being able to work made me miss Nepal and my family more.'*

It is not clear whether Chandni fully understood the reasons given by her husband and son as to why she should stop working. Nonetheless, Chandni conformed to their wishes rather than asserting her desire to continue with something she enjoyed. So after a brief spell of working in the UK, Chandni became a housewife. She went on to suggest that ending her employment limited her opportunities to develop English language skills in the UK. Malina's initial reluctance to stay in the UK is framed around homesickness and her lack of communication skills. Despite making Nepali friends when she first moved to London and understanding the opportunities for her and her family in the UK, she still wanted to return to Nepal. Her sense of helplessness and lack of control over her own life is clear:

Malina: *'But you know what? I didn't know how to buy or book a ticket. I wasn't working and I had no clue how those things worked. If I did, and if I could've booked my own ticket, I probably would've gone back to Nepal.'*

The experiences of these four women suggest limited development opportunities pertaining to self; an extension of their time in Nepal. As discussed in Chapter Two, girls and women in Nepal are restricted and are

subordinate to men early on; securing citizenship through their father or husband (Chickera & Harrington, 2017). This dependency is hard to negotiate (Laczo, 2003) as it is an involuntary ascription to Nepal's discriminatory ways. The initial grounding of identity is formulated during one's early years and compounded by the habitus (Bourdieu, 1986). This is particularly significant for these four women as their exposure to the Nepali habitus was greater, and this habitus reinforced gender-based imbalance. This therefore became their predominant internalised status (Barley, 2014), a status of the subordinate, an identity they continued to accept post relocation (Becker, 1968). This can't be solely attributed to a lack of education but it has played a part in their inability to want or need progression, which compounds their homesickness. Conversely, spending time at home with their children and grandchildren gives them the opportunity to pass on their Nepali-ness to future generations. This also helps them maintain links to their homeland, as Kriti and Bina explained:

Kriti: '*Even my son, my youngest, he speaks to his children in Newari. The kids understand it, but they reply in English. So all my kids know how to speak Newari because I have managed to keep it going and still speak Newari at home. So does my husband. It is really useful and it's a good thing to be able to speak different languages.*'

Bina: '*Since coming here [to the UK] I haven't really missed celebrating festivals because we celebrate festivals like Dashain at home. Even though my children were born here [UK], they take part and enjoy it too.*'

Although self-progression remains largely static for these women, a sense of accomplishment is achieved through family relationships. They nurture their families with native language skills and the Nepali customs and values they deem important, and these are accepted by their children and grandchildren. The experiences of three of the other women in my research (Himani, Leela and Ojaswi) are comparatively less extreme to those who had little or no early years' education. These women studied at least until their SLC[70] examination and two of them were in paid employment before relocating. Himani, Leela and Ojaswi were more conflicted than the other respondents, having experienced a level of

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[70]School Leaving Certificate or SLC as it is commonly referred to, are the final examinations taken by students at the end of their secondary school education and is the UK's equivalent to General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSEs).

education and/or work in Nepal before settling in Doncaster as housewives. These women described their education and working status in Nepal:

Himani: '*None of my sisters are that educated and out of the five of us, I am the one that took my studies the furthest. May be because of that, my father really showed a lot of love towards me. I think he felt like at least one of his daughters took education seriously and did her best.*'

'*Well [pause] I was at school until class 10 and gave my SLC exams. I passed the SLC exam through second division. My biggest desire then was to go to college and study further. I went to college and completed my first year.*'

Leela: '*So I passed my SLC exams and then started working. I worked as a Garment Quality Officer where I would check the quality of clothing, making sure it was all ready, right and perfect before sending it away. What we would produce in the workplace would be sent out to the UK and America so I had to make sure quality control was perfect. As well as that, I also did some knitting work. I would knit jumpers, cardigans, hats and things like that. I would get paid monthly. Where I worked was an hour away from where I lived so I would travel to and from work on the bus. I really liked working because I enjoyed knitting.*'

Ojaswi: '*I did well in the exam and passed through second division and my mother and father were very, very happy. There weren't any colleges in Gaur but my parents wanted me to study further. My two sisters didn't continue with their studies because of my father's financial condition but he was adamant I should continue with my education.*'

'*And so when I was younger, we weren't in the best condition money wise. Just from my father's job alone we had to look after everything. Even to get my sister married we had to get a loan and because of that, my father's pay was cut. When I started working, it helped my mother and father out. My sisters were married and my brother was still young [pause] and whatever I earned I gave it to my father and my mother.*'

There is a clear sense of pride and achievement in these women's accounts, illustrating characteristics of Pascal's (2003) early learner principles such as emancipating responsibility, independence, resilience and empowerment. Himani and Ojaswi mentioned their fathers' pride in their achievements, which boosts their self-esteem, especially considering Nepal's patriarchal structure. They had the advantage of being the younger daughters and, unlike their older sisters, were encouraged to develop their education. It is interesting to note that Himani, Leela and Ojaswi grew up in families with a large female presence – Himani and Leela had four sisters and Ojaswi had three. They felt added pressure to make the most of their opportunities and were more likely to receive

support from their father and conversely, felt discrimination from her other family members, as Himani explained:

Himani: '*But my mother, she was really strict. My second brother and I gave our exams [pause] probably the A-Level equivalent to what it is here [pause] and I passed and my brother failed. I remember my mother saying "it would've been better if he passed instead of you." That is the truth.*'

'*[My mother] said something like "you're going to get married and go to someone else's house anyway. If your brother had of passed, that would've been better." Can [pause] can you imagine how much that hurt me when she said that? She really used to make [pause] just make it so obviously different between her daughters and sons.*'

Her mother's dismissal of Himani's achievement, and her hurtful suggestion that her brother would make better use of the qualification, underlines the gender disparity these women grew up with. Himani's comments above clearly demonstrate the preferential treatment given to boys and this treatment is inferred by many of the respondents. Society sets a benchmark for gender discrimination and this is reinforced by family members. In the UK, these women found themselves largely sidelined. Although they had experienced formal learning and work in Nepal, circumstances in the UK did not allow them to pursue this kind of progress. In the main, this was dictated by their husbands' views and the plethora of domestic tasks they were expected to carry out. Leela was reserved throughout her interview and often hesitant to answer questions. Her husband, Jeewan, was open and spoke confidently about his experiences. When he talked about choosing to marry a Nepali woman and passing on his Newari values to his children, Jeewan confirmed he did not want his wife to work:

Jeewan: '*As a teacher I guess it is nice that I can give them [family] that time. She [wife] doesn't work and I don't want her to. Well, I mean, if she did want to work then I wouldn't stop her but we both understand that this time now, as the children are young, we need to spend as much time as possible as a family. When I am on school holidays which we get a lot of, as you know, I am able to spend it with the family.*'

Jeewan's admission centres around his own beliefs about what will benefit him and his family. He attempts to justify his belief that his wife shouldn't work by citing his desire for his children to have strong links to their Nepali heritage.

Although he recognises his wife '*was very homesick*' and, as a result, *'she'd cry and obviously miss her friends and family'*, his reluctance to help alleviate her homesickness is an extension of the oppression endured by women in Nepal's rigid patriarchal system. Oppression is a form of control exercised by an individual or group which constrains a sense of freedom and opportunity. Cudd (2005, p. 21) suggests this '*harm condition*' has repercussions as '*psychological forces oppress one through one's conscious mental states, that is, emotionally or by manipulation of one's belief states so that one is psychologically stressed, reduced in one's self-image, or otherwise psychologically harmed.*' For Leela, relocation to the UK was the first time she had been away from Nepal and explains how her initial excitement was short lived:

Leela: '*At first I was really excited and enjoyed it but after a while, I was sitting at home not doing anything. I had no one close to me in terms of family and friends. We hadn't been married long so I didn't know my husband's family too well and I missed my own family. All I wanted to do was cry.*'

Despite her educational qualifications, Leela becomes a housewife in the UK and this is not her decision. It is made for her by her husband, resulting in a loss of the autonomy she had in Nepal. Her helplessness is underlined when she concludes that '*after a while, I got used to it',* suggesting she learned to cope with her circumstances rather than proactively seeking to change them. Himani and Ojaswi also wanted to work or study when they came to the UK. Both talked about how their family circumstances prevented them progressing in this area:

Himani: '*I was educated and from my point of view, I wanted us both [husband] to take our studies further and both of us to work, find a job that reflected our education. That's what I wanted. We had children and as the children got older, their demands got bigger and money became an issue. In the end I just stopped thinking about further studies or about getting work.*'

'*Even after I had my third child I still wanted to go back to Kathmandu. I would say to my husband, "if you want to stay here then that's fine, you stay here [pause] and I'll go back, earn a living and raise my three kids." I thought if I went back to Nepal, I could get a job as a teacher at a local primary school which would have good pension scheme and benefits. I was educated so I thought I could get a job like that.*'

Ojaswi: '*I did work as a teacher in Nepal, but there was no job for a Nepali teacher here [UK]. Even so, I thought I might be able to find a job where there were lots of Asian people, in noodle factories and places like that, so I asked a few friends but how could I go? [Their] dad would go to work at 10 o'clock in the morning and would come back for lunch at two o'clock in the afternoon before going again. We had children, three children, so who would look after them?*'

Against their wishes, these women became entirely reliant on their husbands as they were expected to look after their children full time. Both women attributed their repressed status in the UK to the type of work their husbands did (this is discussed in more detail later in the chapter) and their alcohol consumption:

Ojaswi: '*It was hard because [pause] he did like to drink and drink quite a lot sometimes. I think it might have been because of the work he was mostly involved with, working in restaurants, that isn't a healthy working environment. Sometimes if I would go out shopping leaving [the children] at home [pause] by the time I got back, he would be drunk and [the children] all would be waiting by the window, waiting for me to come home. That was really hard [pause] and I used to get upset first, and then angry.*'

'*I started learning how to drive…Yes there were money issues and language problems but when I would come back from driving lessons, [the] dad would be there drinking. He would drink every opportunity he got; at work, with his brothers or when he was at home. That made things really hard for me. I never told my family back in Nepal about it. What would be the point? They would just worry. I also didn't want to have a negative environment at home because of [the] kids. I didn't want [them] to be unhappy because of [the] dad's behaviour. Nowadays he hardly drinks. If it was like that before, maybe it would have pushed me to find work and become more independent, I don't know.*'

Himani's reflections reveal similar problems. She admitted that her husband's drinking and her lack of independence made her consider returning to Nepal, even after being in the UK for several years. I asked her to explain why she felt like this:

Himani: '*Because [pause] they all used to drink [pause] drink alcohol [pause] my husband and his brothers. Can you imagine [pause] I had all these expectations and all these dreams [pause] coming to the UK, I thought things would be a certain way [pause] and it wasn't. They would drink all the time and not care about the children…If I asked him something about the kids or if something needed doing, he had a poor attitude, like he didn't care. My husband would only be happy if I let him drink [pause] and that's it.*'

'*There was a time when my husband would work in London and we stayed here [Doncaster]. He would come to Doncaster every couple of weeks to visit us but*

come back drunk [pause]. The kids would get excited because their dad was coming home after two or three weeks working away and they would sit around waiting for him [pause] and he would come back drunk. What kind of impression does that make or leave on the kids? They were at an age where they were slowly starting to understand, especially the oldest two [pause] and [pause] they would be upset and angry. I was put in a difficult position. I know what my husband was doing was wrong. What do I do? Do I shout at my husband and turn the children against him or do I just let things be? I was also wary and conscious of the impression it would have on the children if they saw us fighting.'

Both Ojaswi and Himani tolerate their husbands' behaviour to protect their children. They are trying to cope in an unfamiliar environment and this fuels their decision to adopt a submissive role. Language difficulties and a lack of job prospects force Ojaswi and Himani to accept their situation. The narratives above contain many pauses and this subject area was clearly difficult for the women to recount. This may be partly due to the intimate nature of their admissions and sharing details of their husbands' alcohol dependency with someone [the researcher] they knew personally. This was another occasion where I was very aware of my role as a researcher in a research setting (Berg & Smith, 1985). I ensured the narratives continued without any disruptions or didn't distract with questions that were not pertinent to the stories being told. This was in spite of having considerable, personal insight and experience of what was being narrated (Paechter, 2012).

In Nepal, the consumption of alcohol is an identifying caste characteristic in the traditional hierarchy[71]. Both Ojaswi and Himani, and their husbands, belong to the Brahman strata. The Tagadharis are considered the purest of all Nepalis and wearing the sacred thread identifies them as superior in Nepali society, coming second only to God (see Chapter Two for more detail). Traditionally, drinking alcohol is against the Tagadharis' elitist code as it is believed this reduces them to the same level as the rest of the population who are allowed to drink. In recent times, this restriction has been relaxed and alcohol is readily available in Nepal regardless of caste or ethnicity (Parajuli, Macdonald & Jimba, 2015). The growing drinking culture in Nepal is attributed to the cultural shift of the 1990s when Western ideologies and globalisation started to emerge in

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[71]Adapted from the Manusmriti Code. This is explained in more detail in Chapter Two.

everyday life (Acharya, 2002). Minority ethnic groups in the UK are still less likely than the white population to be regular or heavy drinkers, most likely for cultural and religious reasons (Johnson, Banton, Dhillon, Subhra & Gough, 2006). However, Hurcombe, Bayley and Goodman (2010) found:

> *'Over time, minority ethnic groups who have settled in a new country may start to adopt new attitudes and behaviours, and their drinking rates may start to reflect rates found in the general population of that country… Stress associated with migration has also been linked with increases in levels of drinking among certain minority ethnic group. The experience of moving to a new country can be affected by factors such as people's access to education and employment opportunities, socioeconomic status, and peer influences and lifestyle choices'* (Hurcombe et al., 2010, p. 5).

Himani and Ojaswi both made sacrifices for their children's benefit after relocation because of their husbands' drinking which, as Hurcombe et al. (2010) suggest, is often found among minority migration groups. They faced gender discrimination in Nepal and believed coming to the UK would provide opportunities for them to grow and develop as individuals. But their family circumstances made this impossible. Adopting a sacrificial role to appease family is synonymous with the matriarch in the South Asian context. Riaz (2013, p. 165) suggests '*sacrificial motherhood'* relates to the morals a good mother should possess. These morals are generally detrimental to her own ambitions and redirect her focus on raising her children in a particular way (Chaze, 2017). This '*sacrificial motherhood'* aspect is part of Himani's and Ojaswi's identities. They endured their situations for the good of their children and, despite some hard times as a result, they feel vindicated by their decision. They have given their children a foundation for the future that might not have been available to them in Nepal. These women have also formed very close bonds with their children who are now adults, and these positives compensate for their personal sacrifices, as they explained:

Ojaswi: 'I*f [my] kids are able to find a good job, live nicely then that's really good. Coming here has benefitted us, it has given [my] kids the opportunity of a good education. In Nepal because of the expense around education, [they] might not have had the same opportunity. [They've] had the chance to eat well, drink well, wear good clothes which might not have been the case had we stayed in Nepal. So in that sense, I don't regret coming here.'*

Himani: '*[My children] became my friends. My oldest son studied away from home, my youngest son [pause] really supports me a lot and always has done. Even now, we get along really well and he's almost 28 years old. My children have become my support and friends now. If something has happened or something goes wrong, my daughter will ring and ask me about my day, what I've been doing and things like that. The life I have now is completely different to the one I had when my children were younger.*'

Out of the women in this sample, Pari and Rabia took their education the furthest in Nepal. They completed primary and secondary schooling, which helped develop their personalities and identities, as per Pascal's (2003) model (see Image 6). Examples of this development can be found early in their accounts. Pari recollected that despite being immersed in a traditional Nepali upbringing, she recognised the discriminatory ways of Nepali society from an early age:

Pari: '*But I was quite vocal with my mum and sister, saying that because we are girls, we are made to do chores and things [pause]. At that point I was 11 or 12 when I was telling her that I didn't appreciate her treating me that way…I was getting older, in my teen years, I wasn't allowed to go to certain places but my brother was. So I started to feel that I wasn't allowed to go to certain places because I am a girl.*'

Pari didn't blame her parents for this; she put it down to '*societal framework, a cultural thing'.* Both Pari and Rabia said a shift in thinking had begun to emerge in Nepal as they were growing up. A report complied for UNESCO[72] Kathmandu (2013) compares literacy rates between males and females aged five and over. The table below provides an overview of the literacy rates by census year – the latest national data available.

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[72]UNESCO is The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It aims to promote equality primarily via educational outlets and international networks (UNESCO, 2019).

Table 8: Literacy status in Nepal by age five years+ (UNESCO, 2013)

Census Year	Total %	Female %	Male %	Gender gap %
1952/54	5.3	0.7	9.5	8.8
1961	8.9	1.8	16.3	14.5
1971	13.9	3.9	23.6	19.7
1981	23.3	12.0	34.0	22.0
1991	39.6	25.0	54.5	29.5
2001	54.1	42.8	65.5	22.7
2011	65.9	57.4	75.1	17.7

The table above shows that between 1981 and 1991 – around the time Pari and Rabia began their early schooling in Nepal – there was a notable rise in female literacy. Pari and Rabia are two of the youngest female respondents in my sample and their educational experiences reflect this rise. Their parents perceived education as important regardless of gender, which allowed them to develop, as they explained:

Pari: '*Education was quite an important aspect, growing up, education was the most important thing. So my dad would always say, "you have to do well, education is important" and that came from my dad. He was quite strict with us [pause] he was in a government job then and he would sit with me in an evening, with my brother and sister, and would go through books with us, help us with our homework. He did that as a routine, probably until I was in Year Three and then we knew it had to be done, we carried on from there ourselves.'*

'*He never treated us any different and my dad always said it doesn't matter what you are, you have to do well. I never found that [discrimination] from my dad, that he treated us any different.'*

Rabia: '*I think my mother was the driving force behind that [having an education]. She would always say that she never got the opportunity to study and learn the alphabet and would say to us, including my grandmother, they would both say that we didn't have to worry about the housework and that they would look after all that. All they wanted from us was to study and do well.'*

The family support these women received helped them progress and encouraged independent, assertive thinking (Pascal, 2003). Rabia explained that when the subject of marriage came up, she knew exactly what type of partner she wanted. So when she met a prospective partner for the first time she was clear about her intentions:

Rabia: '*…we had met in the park and when we met in the park I told him about my background and explained that education was very important to me. And I explained I was looking for someone who was career orientated and had a good career. So I made that point very clear to him.*'

This is distinctly progressive thinking compared with the other women in this sample who inferred their satisfaction with their families' decisions about a choice of partner. It is indicative of generational differences and, as suggested by Rabia and Pari, being vocal about their preferences which older women were less likely to be. This is a form of empowerment – controlling one's own life choices to benefit the self. Having an individual identity or being able to carve out an element of individuality whilst still living in Nepal is a key distinction between the accounts of Pari and Rabia and the other women in this research. It can be argued that their ipse identity – a self-construct of individualistic positioning (Kaufmann, 2010) – is comparatively stronger than the other women before relocating to the UK.

Both Pari and Rabia went to college to study nursing and had some experience of employment in Nepal before relocation. Although their paths were different – Pari first enrolled in English before trying nursing whereas Rabia went straight into nursing when this career was suggested to her – both referred to the negative perception of nursing in Nepal. This is despite Prakash, Yadav and Yadav (2018) suggesting a steady increase in numbers taking up the profession since the 1990s. They argue that '*nursing has turned into a progressively more eye-catching occupation for women in Nepal*' (2018, p. 214) as it opens doors for women to work. It is an opportunity to be paid for the kind of care-based work that women have historically been associated with in South Asia, and presents possibilities to move abroad. Pari explained her father had always wanted her to go abroad and nursing was the best way to do this. When a

prospective marriage proposal came from someone in the UK, Pari decided to take it as a way to facilitate her move from Nepal:

Pari: '*He was from the UK and because of that it made things easier for me in that sense, I suppose. So yeah, I was thinking of Australia but, UK it was. All my friends at the time were trying to move abroad…So, getting married and coming here [UK] was going to be easier. So it was positive more than a negative, I think, but nobody asked me if I wanted to go to the UK. I think it was expected of me when I got married because he was already based here [UK].*'

Pari infers that it was her decision to get married and this was partly based on the location of her prospective partner. Nonetheless, the choice of where she would live after marriage was out of her hands; this decision was made by her husband (the outcome of this is discussed in the third analysis section of this chapter). In interview, Pari and Rabia talked about the problems they faced in choosing to pursue nursing:

Pari: '*…nursing was not considered a good profession to go in to. As a nurse you had to do night shifts [pause] and people wouldn't know if you were actually working or doing something else. So it wasn't considered good for character, especially for girls, because they used to say nurses don't get married off and they don't get married into good families.*'

'*…I went into nursing and I remember my neighbour coming home and telling my parents "you need to take your girl out of nursing because it won't be easy to get her married otherwise." My mum was in a right dilemma because there were so many people telling her that it's not a good thing for a girl because she won't get married into a good family and all that but my dad was adamant that I would finish my education and would think about everything else after. So it was my dad who insisted first and then even I said I wanted to finish my education.*'

In spite of Pari's own wish to continue with nursing, the final decision was taken by her father. On the one hand, this demonstrates a form of liberal thinking by her father as he wanted to enhance Pari's independence and her prospects in life. On the other, it can be seen as further endorsement of the patriarchal structure of family life in Nepal – Pari's future was not within her control and only after her father took a stand did she confirm she wanted to carry on with nursing. In Rabia's case, her older brother was not happy with her choice of career, he thought being a nurse would adversely affect her chances of finding a good husband, as she explained:

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Rabia: '*So when I first started nursing, my oldest brother had just finished engineering from Russia and had come back to Nepal, working in Chitwan.*[73] *So he had no idea I had enrolled into nursing and my father [pause] well both my parents considered nursing to be a good job and profession so they didn't really say anything about my choice… So nurses in Nepal are expected to make beds, clean beds, look after patients, patient care and all things like that. My brother got really annoyed and said "out of all the professions in the world, you had to choose nursing". He really didn't like it. He said he thought I would study law and become a lawyer but instead, I have chosen to go into nursing. He said that I wouldn't find a decent guy to marry me.*'

Again, the framing of the patriarchal structure is clear when considering Rabia's brother's view on her career choice – her marriage opportunities are his priority, not her wishes. Rabia explained the reasoning behind his thinking and the negative perceptions of girls who go into nursing in Nepal. This approach is similar to the prejudicial views of men who go into the army and adopt an 'uncivilised and unruly' lahure culture (Upadhyay, 2015). Rabia explained how nurses are perceived:

Rabia: '*…girls who went into nursing were considered spoilt and maybe characterless. Nurses had to do night shifts and because of the shift work pattern [pause] there was a perception that nurses got up to no good. I guess [pause] they made comparisons between nurses and prostitutes. So that was the thinking of many people, including my brother.*'

The sexual inferences made by Pari and Rabia when talking about their chosen career path by others (family members, neighbours and the extended community) are contradictory to Nepal's collective thinking and its relative conservatism. This conservative stance upholds its patriarchal framework and maintains strict cultural practices that keep women in a specified place. For example, the topic of menstruation is considered taboo in Nepal. Traditionally, females in Nepal are expected to follow strict behaviour rules during menstruation, including not touching other people, especially men, and not entering places of worship or eating areas. In rural areas of Nepal, females are sometimes forced to sleep outside during menstruation[74], away from the family, as they are perceived as 'contaminated'. This practice has parallels with the discrimination of lower castes and ethnic groups who are considered impure,

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[73]Chtiwan District, Province 3, on the foothills of the Himalayas.
[74]In 2017 Nepal officially outlawed banishing women and girls to sleeping outside in huts during menstruation (Pokharel & Gurung, 2017).

highlighting the treatment of marginalised groups in Nepal (see Chapter Four). Labelling women and girls as untouchable during this time is common among Hindus (Bennett, 1983) and this objectifies them and reinforces their subordinate role in Nepali society. Menstruation is a biological process which enables a woman to reproduce and childbearing is considered paramount for women in Hindu scripture (Ramusack & Sievers, 1999). So there is a contradiction in this practice of shunning menstruating women – they are vilified for their ability to fulfil their most prized role. This is another example of identity as a lived contradiction. Interestingly, none of the women in my research talked about their experiences of menstruation in Nepal. This might be because they perceive this topic to be too intimate to discuss, or because the treatment of menstruating females is so ingrained in Nepali culture that it was not considered worthy of mention.

The sexual objectification that Pari and Rabia faced in a profession mainly associated with women demonstrates how gender disparity leads to inequality (Acharya, 2006). According to Åshild (2010), gender disparity impacts directly on the participation levels of women in the education, economy, health and social care sectors. This can be seen in Nepal where women who attempt to forge a career and become independent are often obstructed by society's views. With family support, Pari and Rabia were able to overcome some of these prejudices but they still faced presumptive attitudes and behaviour as a result of their job. Rabia described working in Jomsom[75] as '*a real eye opener'*, and mentioned incidents of sexual harassment from soldiers stationed nearby. There is a sense of apprehension in her words as she recalled the remoteness of the area:

Rabia: '*There was an army camp really close by so there was a lot of teasing and flirting, people pairing you up with others and things like that. That did make me feel uncomfortable at times because I wasn't used to that kind of behaviour. Where we were working, the camp was quite mixed, a mix of men and women but [pause]. It was a very remote area and you would get the army guys hitting on you. They grew up in Nepal too and were aware of what people said and thought about nurses.'*

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[75]Jomsom is in the Mustang District and one of the most remote areas in Nepal.

In their accounts, Pari and Rabi mentioned difficulties adapting to the UK's modern working practices but make no references to gender discrimination. Pari explained how working in London made assimilation easier as most of her colleagues were also *'foreign.'* Through work, both women were able to maintain some form of independence after relocation. They were earning their own money, meeting new people and integrating into a way of life outside of Nepal. However, they implied this freedom came at a cost as they are not able to give all their time to their families. Both women had children after settling in Doncaster, and both made it clear in their interviews how much they wanted their children to know and understand their Nepali heritage. They also underlined the importance of passing on their culture as another way for them to maintain links to their homeland. Rabia admitted it was difficult to strike a balance between working and ensuring her children created links to their Nepali background:

Rabia: *'I'm not sure if it's because I am a working mum but [pause] I definitely have the intention and want them to know the language, understand the culture. Sometimes I will remind my oldest son to do something, do puja[76] and he will do it. But maybe because I am not able to fully give them that because of work [pause] I don't know.'*

Pari also expressed a desire to instil in her children the values she learned growing up in Nepal. I asked her to clarify what she meant when she said '*I still want them to have a Nepali identity'*:

Pari: *'Just to know where we come from and what it was like. I want them to know what it was like for me growing up. I want them to know a bit about the religion, a bit about the culture and the values my parents taught me; be honest, do well in education, just because you are here, you can't do what you want... I don't want them to take anything for granted. I don't want them to think the government will provide for them and that they don't have to study hard. I don't want them to think that because that's not the concept we grew up with, I grew up with. For us, if we didn't earn then we didn't have anything. I want them to know that.'*

Both Pari and Rabia signal their intentions to maintain aspects of their Nepali-ness and transmit it to their children. Both women portray themselves as the primary provider of this cultural transmission, not their husbands. These working

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[76]Puja is a Sanskrit, Hindu term used to describe the act of worship or prayers of deities.

mothers face a daily dilemma, a pull between their work and home lives, which is not experienced by most of the other female respondents who rely comparatively heavily on other family members for income. Gita, a working mother who came to Doncaster as a child, expressed her frustration with this dilemma:

Gita: '*I just wish I could speak to my kids in Nepalese. They understand but they can't [pause] they feel embarrassed speaking that language. If any Nepalese people come here that speak Newari, I can speak to them but I think eventually, with my kids, they'll end up losing it which is a bit of a shame really.*'

These accounts show that working migrant mothers have to be selective in their maintenance of a cultural identity within their family. They want to impart their version of a Nepali identity to their children but do not have enough time to negotiate this alongside their children's dominant upbringing in the UK. As a result, the working women in this research demonstrate a strong fear of losing their Nepali identity, compared with the housewives in the sample. Their Nepali identity is connected to their childhoods, and it is very important to them that their children have an understanding of their Nepali values and customs.

5.3 Male Roles and Identity: Analysis of Findings

Seven out of 17 participants in this research were men. With the exception of Falak and Nitin who arrived as dependents of their wives, all the others came to the UK for work or arrived as children with their families. All the male respondents recalled their time in Nepal before relocation as simple and care-free, suggesting they had far lower levels of pressure and expectation than the females:

Falak: '*Going to school was a fun time because, because you got to spend time with your friends and have a good time. But at the private school you were always given a lot of homework. So by the time you got home and finished your homework, there was no time to play with your friends. So going to school meant you could play with your friends during break time and things like that.*'

Jeewan: '*…I do remember feeling free and you run around the streets and even when you were young, there was no fear of [pause] you know, you don't feel intimidated. There was quite a lot of, you know, hustle and bustle but, you know, you never felt threatened. Like I said, you felt quite free and that felt quite nice. That's one thing I really remember, from a young age.*'

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Unlike the women in this sample who spent a significant amount of their childhoods doing domestic chores, the men refer to a sense of freedom primarily associated with childhood and school. Their educational backgrounds are mixed – two left Nepal as children and completed their studies in the UK; three completed college in Nepal; and two respondents, Amar and Indra, came to the UK with very little formal education. Amar explained this was not his choice. He had begun work at an electrical factory in Nepal but this job required some technical knowledge and he needed to go back to school. But this was not an option, as he explained:

Amar: '*I went back to school but my parents didn't allow me to continue with schooling and education. The main reason for this was because my brothers didn't have any education to their name so they didn't allow for me to continue.*'

After failing to pass his SLC exam, Indra found a job as a cook at a five-star hotel in Kathmandu, which paved the way for his move to the UK:

Indra: '*When I first came to the UK, I started working in London, in Fulham, and worked there for seven years as a cook. That was the work permit I came to this country under.*'

Deepak, who finished his college education in Nepal, also found work as a chef in the UK. Amar, Indra and Deepak were employed in South Asian-style restaurants and this kind of work contradicts the typical Nepali male stereotype as domestic roles are generally associated with women. Labour market trends suggest Nepali migrants '*are typically males from working-age groups with low levels of educational attainment and skills qualification*' (Sijapati, Bhattrai & Pathak, 2015, p. XI). This infers their post-relocation options are limited to unskilled or semi-skilled labour. However, this type of restaurant work meant the men were able to adapt quickly to UK life as many of their co-workers were also from South Asia and they shared similar cultural markers and language knowledge, as Deepak explained:

Deepak: '*I didn't have a lot of experience or practice in terms of speaking the language prior to coming to this country [UK]. I could read and write a little but because I had no practice in speaking English, that was a little difficult. But, because of the nature of the work I was doing, a lot of the people I would have to speak to were Indian, so that wasn't too bad. I could speak and understand Hindi so that made things a bit easier.*'

Amar: '*I didn't face any problems with language whilst working because of the type of work I did. I mostly worked in Indian restaurants and takeaways and because I could speak and understand Hindi and Nepali, that really wasn't an issue.*'

This work allowed the men to bring their families from Nepal to the UK, something they are proud of as it helped give their children '*better lives.*' This was the main pull factor for the majority of men in this research. The primary driver was economic stability; the prospects of employment and an improved standard of living (Ravenstein, 1976; European Communities, 2000). Despite this pride, the nature of their jobs meant working long hours and less time with their families. As detailed in the previous section, Himani implied the children's '*better life*' was largely provided by the matriarch as she had full responsibility for raising the family. Himani also admitted she was unhappy with her husband's working lifestyle and the effect it had on the family:

Himani: '*I'll be honest with you, I didn't like the job my husband was doing…My husband worked in restaurants, as a chef, and would work late into the night. It wasn't just that [pause] it was the people he was mixing with too.*'

'*[I] would spend the morning looking after the kids, sending them to school doing all the housework and making lunch…Feeding us, giving us clothes [pause] there's more to life than that. He wouldn't spend any time with the children. Sometimes I would say "why don't we go somewhere, take the kids out?" and he would just ignore it or say "where can we take these small kids? Let's wait until they're a bit older, then we'll go".*'

For Amar, Deepak and Indra, the work they found in the UK helped them to quickly assimilate. Amar and Indra had experience in restaurant work prior to relocation, Deepak picked up the skills once he arrived. But it was a relatively smooth transition; working with colleagues from similar backgrounds who they could communicate with helped them to settle. But it was not so easy for the working women. Pari and Rabia had been employed as nurses in Nepal before relocation and they eventually secured nursing work in the UK. They had to learn a range of new work-related techniques, and they had to overcome cultural barriers which Rabia described as a particularly difficult time in her life:

Rabia: '*It was only when I came to Doncaster to work in Norton at a care home that I really struggled. On top of that, I came to the care home as a nurse which meant I was the one in charge. I had to deal with some chavvy workers and had*

to make them do their work. There were a couple of workers who were very dominant personalities and quite chavvy. I had to deal with their personalities…I used to feel so nervous on my work days…So work like lifting and moving patients [pause] rather than asking for help, I would do it all myself because I used to feel quite scared asking the others to do their job, or even asking for help.'

'It wasn't just communication issues. By then, my level of English was definitely good enough to communicate… I [pause] I guess I felt like an outsider…Every day I felt sick. As soon as I got to the care home, I would go upstairs, go to the toilets and I would vomit. I would vomit and loosen my bowels and then I would come downstairs and start working.'

Rabia became visibly emotional as she remembered this time. Her account suggests work colleagues with '*dominant personalities'* made her feel inferior and this impacted on her physically and emotionally. So the working women in this research had a harder time adjusting to life in the UK compared with the working men. Unlike the women, the men were sheltered from the full onslaught of British culture. They worked with South Asians, communicated in a familiar language and enjoyed aspects of Nepali culture in their work life. But these initial positives ultimately hindered their progress in the adopted land, particularly in attitudes and dispositions to learn (Pascal, 2003) (see Image 6). They were reluctant to develop outside their 'norm', to challenge their outlook or better themselves on a personal level. This is explained by Eshwar, a business analyst, who views the typical Nepali mentality as insular and rigid:

Eshwar: '*They [Nepalis] have their old fashioned way of doing A, B, C and D and that's it. Because they're in that rut and don't want to skill themselves to move forward and learn E, F, G and H.'*

'I think my generation are starting to do that but my mum and dad's generation, first generation, to go out there and really, really find a job that is totally different from working in a restaurant. We tried the restaurant, the takeaway business, but to go out there and work for a really big company…I like to think that I've gone out there and done something a bit different, rather than going and finding a restaurant and following my dad and doing the same thing he did.'

Using work as an example, Eshwar is challenging the perceived flaws of his parents' generation, their '*old fashioned way'*, and the caste and ethnic rut in which they are stuck. The post-migration work experiences of Amar, Deepak and Indra are an extension of their life in Nepal. Similarly, their wives remain

housewives in the UK, reinforcing the familiar dynamics they learned in Nepal. In their accounts, Amar, Deepak and Indra are less affected by relocation than their wives. They remember the good times in Nepal and enjoy going back for visits. The Nepali culture they brought to the UK and passed to their children is based on what they left behind - not what Nepal is now. Indra explained the unfamiliarity of his homeland:

Indra: '*But Nepal is no longer the Nepal I left all those years back. I feel Nepalis have tried to modernise society and the culture too much and because of that, it feels strange and unfamiliar. We grew up in large, extended families which you see less and less these days. People are leaving the country to go abroad because they don't have the best facilities for work, education and things like that.*'

Deepak: '*The demands in Nepal are a lot more now too. People like to show off with money they don't actually have to spend. It is very competitive. Children are disrespectful now and have very poor attitude. That is what they think it means to be modern. My kids were raised here [UK] and that's not what they are like.*'

Nitin, Eshwar and Jeewan stayed in education the longest out of all the male respondents. Nitin's father, who also had a strong educational background, moved his young family to the city of Itahari for better schooling. After completing his early studies in Itahari, Nitin went to Chennai, India, where he eventually completed a degree in accountancy. He explained that his initial struggles in the UK centred on negotiating his gendered Nepali upbringing:

Nitin: '*If you look at Nepali culture and customs, and especially from the point of view of a male Brahman, if you live with your in-laws, there is a perception amongst wider society that "oh look, he is still living with his in-laws". So at that time I was quite raw and my thinking was still like that of someone who was living in Nepal. That wasn't a nice feeling and I didn't like feeling like that. I was struggling with myself within myself.*'

The perception Nitin refers to here is a traditional one. Once a daughter is married, she is given away[77] and begins a new life with her husband and his family, typically at his home. Men who live with their in-laws are often ridiculed in South Asian communities and perceived as unable to provide for their wives;

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[77]The giving away of a daughter during marriage is a Hindu tradition and in Nepal is called Kanyadan. This symbolises the daughter leaving her parents' household and beginning a new life with her husband and his family.

it is an attack on their masculinity. When Nitin first moved to Doncaster, he lived with his wife and her parents but could not settle due to these traditional gendered perceptions. So he found work in London and the couple moved away from his wife's family. Only then did he begin to feel '*more comfortable*' about his relocation from Nepal. This demonstrates how deeply ingrained the Nepali gendered outlook is – moving away from the culture which sanctions these judgements does not reduce their power. No one pointed the finger at Nitin, no one teased him for his circumstances. Yet the values he had grown up with in Nepal remained dominant enough to drive significant decisions in his life.

Eshwar and Jeewan moved to the UK earlier than Nitin. Their childhood was split between Nepal and the UK, and their gendered identity is less explicit in their life history accounts. However, they both attribute their Nepali-ness to their family set-ups. Both are married and continue to live with their parents, an extension of Nepali culture. Both recounted how their wives were crucial in helping them to maintain their Nepali identity and values:

Eshwar: '*The parents live with me and they carry the culture with them and it's kind of pushed on the kids and pushed on me. The missus, in the same vein, pushing the culture.*'

Jeewan: '*One of the big reasons why I married a Nepalese woman, if you like, is because I wanted that root. I wanted my children to be pure Newar and, you know, that's one of the big reasons why I decided to go back to Nepal. To get married to a Nepalese.*'

Nepali-ness is created by living with family who express and practise Nepali traditions and customs. Although Nitin's drive to teach his children about Nepali ways is less overt, he understands the importance of giving them the option to learn about their Nepali roots. He explained how he creates an environment for his children to learn without forcing his version of a Nepali on them:

Nitin: '*I thought I should teach them [children] Nepali culture here, from the beginning when they were still young. Then suddenly I realised I shouldn't push them to know something that they don't want to know, and so I changed my mind.*'

'*I haven't tried to push them to learn Nepalese language and this and that, I have let them learn themselves. But I create the environment which motivates*

them, unknowingly, that will gradually motivate them to learn Nepali culture here…You have to give them the environment and gradually they will do it…My eldest son is learning French and German at school, so he will learn Nepali as well. It's just a matter of when.'

The value of a Nepali identity and its recognition in daily life is considered paramount by all the male respondents. However, these respondents differ in how much they actively participate in transmitting a sense of Nepali-ness to their children. Amar, Deepak and Indra were gratified to pass on their Nepali values to the next generation but had very little involvement in the process. Out of all the male respondents, Nitin and Jeewan demonstrate the most proactivity in passing on the values and language of their Nepali identity. They are the dominant spouses in their relationships and this can be seen in their work and family lives. The women in this research also take a proactive role in teaching their children about the values and customs of their Nepali-ness.

5.4 Gendered Identity and Marriage: Analysis of Findings

The previous sections have focused on the contrasting experiences of male and female Nepali migrants before and after relocation. So far this chapter has explored the respondents' time in Nepal and what was expected of them, how their experiences were driven by the gender-role beliefs of the time and how this shaped the identity that each of them brought to the UK. It has also explored, from a gender perspective, how their Nepali-ness has evolved in the culture of their host nation and how they maintain their Nepali links. The respondents' interviews revealed that marriage is another commonality between all the respondents which can be used to further understand and explain the traditional Nepali gendered structure and how this is negotiated.

These research findings show that although there may be some differences in the extent to which gender-based restrictions were applied to respondents – in their education, work or daily routine – having an arranged marriage was the only event that bound all the respondents together. This is regardless of gender, age, ethnicity or caste as Himani summed up:

Himani: '*There were only arranged marriages. No one would think about any other alternative. My marriage was arranged in every sense; completely. I was told someone was coming to see me and it was a potential marriage proposal*

and that if [pause] if my parents were happy with the alliance then it would happen, if they weren't happy with it, then it wouldn't happen. And that was it.'

All respondents who took part in the research were married and their respective spouses were introduced to them by a third party, i.e. an arranged marriage. In Nepal, this process is generally initiated by those outside the immediate family circle who approach close, senior members of a prospective spouse's family (parents or grandparents) about the possibility of marriage. My research sample consists of six couples, which accounts for 12 of the 17 respondents. The significance of marriage as an institution in Nepali culture is clear as is the prominence of arranged marriages. The importance of marriage is particularly prominent among the accounts of the three respondents who moved to the UK as children. I asked these three – Eshwar, Gita and Jeewan – about their arranged marriages, how they came about and how they felt about this process. The accounts suggest differences in how their marriages came about and in the participants' feelings of expectation. Once again these differences can be clearly distinguished in the experiences of men and women. Eshwar recalled the comical ways in which he would be subjected to talks on the subject of marriage during his visits to Nepal:

Eshwar: '*Before getting married and when I would go to visit family in Nepal, I'd have strange family members coming to the house and leaving photos behind and everything else [laughs]'.*

He went on to explain the close relationship he had with his grandparents while growing up and how the seed of marriage was planted from an early age:

Eshwar: '*…one of the key things was my relationship with my grandad and grandparents, who I spent most of my time with [pause]. It's really weird actually because I used to call my mum and dad "auntie and uncle" because I was brought up with my grandparents and so would call them "mum and dad". So my grandparents had always said "it would be great if you could get married in Nepal". …So I've always had it in my head that I would get married in Nepal one day…And that never really changed and I never doubted that at all.'*

Eshwar fondly reflects on the relationship he shared with his grandparents and how this was the reason he eventually married a woman from Nepal. Similarly, Jeewan recounted the experiences that led to his marriage talks, which were less formal than Eshwar's:

Jeewan: '*It wasn't particularly arranged [laughs]. In a way I suppose you would class it as arranged but I had the opportunity to meet girls and get to know them and you know, before I ever decided to get married. It wasn't arranged in the sense that "that was who you were going to marry", it was a case of people who you knew kind of introducing you to people. It then allowed me to go see if I liked them, go visit places with the girl to see if I was interested. You know, we spent a lot of time, well before marriage, to get to know each other and we had the freedom to do it.'*

Jeewan came to the UK aged three and has spent most of his life away from Nepal. Nonetheless, the influence of his homeland is strong and he implies that regular trips to Nepal helped him make the decision to marry. When I asked if he had always known that he wanted to marry a Nepali woman, he replied:

Jeewan: '*Well no, I mean I think it kind of dawned on me at a later age really. I mean I didn't really think about marriage… it got to a point when I was 26, 27 and my parents said I should think about, you know, marrying someone…Prior to that…I was going back to Nepal every year from the age of 22.'*

Eshwar and Jeewan's decision about who they married was ultimately made by them, although it was influenced by their family and their personal ties to Nepal. Gita's experience was different. Although none of these three respondents were given a choice about an arranged marriage, for Gita, the decision was made by her family and only partly influenced by her – an example of gender-based inequality in relation to decision-making. Gita mentioned the pressure she faced before and after marriage, and the adjustments she and her partner had to make. When I asked Gita what was the most important moment in her life, she replied:

Gita: '*…in 2000 [pause] just thought I'd let you know, I had no intention of getting married. I had had some photos sent to me and I said I would think about it, but when I got there, my brother was getting married…I think we got there [to Nepal] on Monday and on the Wednesday, my future husband came to meet me…I don't know [pause] I just thought [pause] now I think about it, I did say "yeah, OK" and then the following week, we were married.'*

Although she had always thought her marriage would be arranged, Gita went on to explain that she '*didn't want it to happen'* because it would mean surrendering the freedom to make her own choices on her own terms. She attributed her submission to the arrangement to her previous unsuccessful matches and the growing pressure from her family for her to comply with an

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arranged marriage. Despite spending more than half her life in the UK, she felt she had to conform to the Nepali cultural obligations, as she reflected:

Gita: *'Prior to all that [getting married], my parents were trying to say "meet this guy" and all that kind of thing. I did meet a couple of guys, a few came up from London to meet me and stuff like that. One came from London and I went to Scotland with him. My parents and everyone thought I was going to marry him…When I went back to Nepal, I said no, there was no agreement to me marrying him…My parents got quite angry with me [pause] my uncle, auntie and even my brother got angry with me saying, "why did you say yes in the first place?" but I never said yes in the first place. Just because I said I'd get to know him, they assumed that meant a "yes".'*

The incident recounted above is an example of the pressure Gita faced, which ultimately led her to agreeing to have an arranged marriage. In her account, Gita admitted that adjusting to married life was difficult but acknowledged that it was harder for her husband. Gita was responsible for Falak's arrival in the UK as he was a trailing spouse – someone whose migration is instigated by their partner (Braseby, 2010). She reflected on their initial adjustment period:

Gita: *'I think looking back at it now [pause] we used to have a lot of arguments and stuff like that…What I probably should've thought about is the fact that all his life he has lived in Nepal [pause] and all of a sudden, I have taken everything away from him. He has come here and he has no family, no friends, nothing like that and it's just me. It was really, really hard. I think there were times, you know, he used to get upset [pause]. To this day he says the first year was probably the hardest, the hardest year and sometimes I think back and think do you know what, I could've been a better wife.'*

Her husband Falak reiterated this struggle in his interview:

Falak: *'Before I came, everyone kept saying how nice it would be here [UK] and how life in the UK is so much better so before I came, I had that thought.'*

'But it was really hard leaving my family. In the first few months I found it really hard because I really missed my family and kept remembering them [pause] that was difficult. Things were so different here and all I would think about was my family and the way I used to spend my time back in Nepal, going out and spending time with my family.'

Falak's homesickness relates to his loss of identity as he tries to adapt to a new culture without his family. This is further accentuated by his circumstances in Doncaster. Despite gaining a college certificate in Nepal, he came to the UK as

his wife's dependent and could not find paid work. At the time of his interview, he described his occupation status as house husband, which has negative gender-based connotations when considered within Nepal's patriarchal framework. Like Falak, Nitin arrived in the UK after marrying his British-born wife. He admitted that he hadn't considered marrying someone outside Nepal until this proposal came along, and explained:

Nitin: '*So my parents asked me to consider getting married and I said that was fine. So she [wife] came to my uncle's house and it was an arranged marriage. My parents asked me what I thought and I said it was fine. So that's how it happened. I never, ever planned for it…But now if I go back to 2001, I think I would've migrated anyway. A lot of people at the time were migrating to Australia and Canada and so at the time, thinking back now, I would've migrated somehow. I know that now but at the time I didn't think like that.*'

In the above extract, Nitin is justifying how he came to the UK by suggesting he would have moved away from Nepal regardless of his wife. He uses this to reaffirm his masculinity, in an attempt to mask what he believes to be an inferior method of migrating. This ties in with Nitin's reluctance to live with his in-laws and his uncomfortableness with this situation (as outlined in the previous section of this chapter). Despite this, Nitin hints at his wife's ascendency in certain areas of decision-making, for example, when she enlisted the help of a recruitment agency to find him paid work and when she suggested they look for alternative accommodation in London instead of flat-sharing. Nitin has spent 15 years in the UK and the sense of insecurity is apparent in his narrative. He attempted to explain his feelings about being in the UK:

Nitin: '*I still feel myself as an immigrant…But I think for my sons [pause] I mean my wife is mixed up in this already because she was born and raised here, I think they will mix up well here but I don't feel or think myself, personally, I don't think I will ever feel 100% accepted here.*'

By admitting that he still feels like an immigrant in the UK, Nitin is attempting to reconfigure his role and identity in his adopted land within the traditional gender stereotype of a Nepali habitus. Nitin and Falak's circumstances and struggles are largely a result of their marriages and their subsequent dependency on their wives. In that sense, their gender identity becomes inferior in this specific context, something against the 'norm' of what they would have experienced in

Nepal. However, unlike the accounts of the women in this research, there is a distinct absence of pressure or expectation in their narratives during the build-up to their weddings.

Pari's reflections on her marriage and how it came about echo the pressure described earlier by Gita. Unlike Gita, Pari had lived all her life in Nepal before getting married and the idea of having an arranged marriage did not come as a shock to her. Pari estimated that family talks around her prospective marriage had been taking place since she was 15. Even so, she was surprised to find her mama[78] waiting for her after work one day with her prospective parents-in-law in tow. She recalled this event clearly in her interview and provided some background context by suggesting she had made plans with friends before she noticed her mama waiting for her with *'this older couple'*. Pari explained:

Pari: '*I was waiting for [my friends], even though I had finished my work. So 3:30pm I leave the hospital and my mama was there. I was quite shocked to see him there and asked him what he was doing here. Mama said casually "I was passing through and thought I would come and say hello" [she laughs].'*

Pari went on to describe how she took her mama to one side and refused to meet the guests he had brought with him once she realised they were there to '*look'* at her as a prospective match for their son. In her tone, there is an element of pride at her ability to stand firm against a situation in which she felt uncomfortable. However, she went on to marry the older couple's son a few months later. In her interview, Pari said her decision to marry partly came down to the pressure of being the oldest grandchild in the family and having had '*so many proposals'* she felt she '*couldn't put it off any longer'*. Another element in 'her' decision-making was a fear she had carried since her teenage years after she was stalked by a boy in college. She wanted to eliminate the possibility of something like that happening again and its repercussions on her family in particular, as she explained:

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[78]In Nepali mama is an age-neutral relation often used to describe your mother's older or younger brother (uncle). Mama is also used by some to refer to their own mother. To avoid confusion in this research mama is used exclusively to denote the uncle relationship of respondents, where applicable.

Pari: '*I had a very bad experience where someone was stalking me for a few months. It scared me. When I went to my first college, this boy became obsessed with me and used to follow me around everywhere… I always felt the pressure there, just in case something happened, my mum and dad would be destroyed. It was a big thing for them that [pause] I don't know, honour of the family? The fear that something might happen to me or that I would do something to make them ashamed [pause] or something like that.*'

This idea of family honour and the implications faced by individuals who are expected to uphold preconceived ideas of integrity is generally associated with South Asian communities (Kay, 2012). Family honour encompasses a belief of continuing the good name of '*the family lineage, the maintenance of individual and family purity, and the resistance to familial and cultural degradation*' (Kay, 2012, p. 80) and is often linked to the behaviour of women or girls. In their accounts, Gita and Pari referred to this pressure of family honour, which played a part in their decision to marry. Rabia first learned of the concept of family honour as an 11 year-old child, and she recalled how that shaped her thinking of gender expectations and limitations:

Rabia: '*So there was this one time when my sister went on a picnic with college. Their bus broke down and so they were late coming home…It wasn't particularly late, maybe around 8 o'clock in the evening but she hadn't arrived…I remember my mother walking around the area really briskly looking for my sister. She spent a good 10 or 15 minutes looking and went as far as the college, thinking maybe she had been dropped off there… So do you know what my mother's thinking was? She said "someone had raped my daughter, what will I do if I live? If she doesn't come home soon, then I am going to jump off this cliff and kill myself". I was holding my mother's hand at the time and I was crying because I could hear her saying all this and I was following her, crying my eyes out, thinking she was going to harm herself.*'

Rabia explained how these kinds of '*societal pressures*' repress women in Nepal. Maintaining family honour and prestige is only achieved if individuals conform to an unwritten code of morals. If they do not conform, they are considered outcasts and shunned by their family and the wider society. The references made by male respondents about marriage are less thoughtful and more regimented. Even though marriage, and usually an arranged marriage, was expected of them too, their experiences in this area appear much less eventful than the women's circumstances. In their interviews, they mentioned marriage almost in passing. There is little significance placed on the customs, build-up and outcome of marriage, and an inference that getting married was

something that would just happen. The differences in men and women's experiences of marriage is reflective of Nepal's patriarchal structure which continually reinforces women's subordinate role. The process of marriage, regardless of generation, highlights a clear lack of gender equality in choice and decision-making in the Nepali culture.

5.5 Conclusion

The chapter separates the experiences of the women and men in this research sample. In doing so, it reveals how women's gender identities have evolved primarily through relocation. Migrating away from Nepal's restrictive environment – where decisions are largely based on the views of male family members and wider societal structures – permits them to develop and grow. They can challenge the prescriptive ideals and customs of their birth country because they are away from Nepal. The women in this research demonstrate courage and determination in this context, especially when considering the added pressure of starting a new life in an unfamiliar culture. This can be seen predominantly through autonomous and independent decision-making, which is centred on the family and the operationalisation of their Nepali identity. Brah has described diaspora as *'settling down, putting roots down elsewhere'* (Brah, 1996, p. 182). A key consideration in diaspora research is the extent to which traditional norms and values are maintained post relocation which, in the South Asian context, is believed to be upheld by women (Acharya, Mathema & Acharya, 1999). The gendered nature of *'putting roots down'* is supported by my research findings. The degree to which Nepali's stereotypical and gendered ideals are challenged is elicited through level of early years learning and educational attainment. On this basis, this research found the following:

> i) Women with little to no early-years education generally settled as housewives after relocation. In doing so, they were able to spend more time with their children, educating them in the aspects of Nepali culture that are important to them. The outcome of relocation is initially regarded as a negotiation process dictated by their circumstances but results in these women enjoying the freedom to make independent and significant decisions. These women are satisfied with the collective growth of their families, which is driven and shaped by them and their Nepali identity.

ii) The three women who experienced intermediate levels of schooling in Nepal (until at least GCSE equivalent) demonstrate higher levels of conflict in their negotiation of migration. They relished the experiences of independence they gained in Nepal through employment and study but struggled to adapt to the role of wife and mother in the UK. These women also exhibit increased powers of decision-making in the daily running of their households, which they regard as an accomplishment away from the homeland.

iii) The women who took their education the furthest in Nepal have achieved the highest level of self-development after relocation. They were able to adapt the knowledge and experiences they gained in Nepal to meet the expectations of British society, especially in the workplace. However, these full-time working mothers worry about losing their links to Nepal as they don't have enough time at home to teach their children about the customs and practices of their Nepali heritage. They fear this will weaken their own links with a Nepali culture and identity and this, in turn, will diminish their children's sense of Nepali-ness.

iv) Nepal's patriarchal framework is still very much embedded in the Nepali culture and identity. Despite this, the progress of some male respondents in this research does not tally with that structure and this has significantly affected their identity. Two relied on their female partners for entry into the UK and three had to undertake work that would be considered beneath them in Nepal. This was largely dictated by a lack of education and skills gained in Nepal before relocation. Though these men did not outwardly admit their submissive status since leaving Nepal, their identity has become singular – limited authority and decision-making in the running of the household and a reduced relationship with their spouses and children.

Though these findings may suggest relatively little progress, these women have pushed back the gender boundaries through decision-making. This is something that rarely happens in Nepal's patriarchal system and therefore it is an assertion of a new form of gendered identity. These women have gained

confidence from their ability to make independent decisions for themselves and their families. This confidence allows them to address incidents from their past, including their experiences around marriage, and helps them to build a future where they set precedents on their own terms.

Chapter Six: Age Identity

> *'The life course of an individual, or of a family, may be conceptualised as a series of interrelated events that are bound up with larger social forces, structures and geographical contexts. The life course paradigm recognises the interplay between demographic, economic and social factors that influence the process of geographical mobility'* - (Anne Green & Angela Canny, 2003, p. 22).

6.1 Introduction

Attempts to understand the outcome of identity when people relocate from their birth country has often been researched within the parameters of social markers such as gender and ethnicity (the two previous chapters explore these areas in detail). There has been some research into this outcome in relation to age[79] by establishing the global views of British-born citizens on multiple identities and cultural retention (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Hall 2002; Alba, Kasinitz & Waters, 2011). But there are gaps in this knowledge; a lack of research focusing on the age of migration, and how this can impact identity when relocating to a new country. How much of their old identity do migrants bring with them at different ages, and how easily do they adapt to new surroundings?

All the respondents in my research sample were born in Nepal and relocated to the UK; these are key common markers I identified early in my research as I wanted a base of commonality from which valid findings could be extracted. One area of these findings is how the age of migrating individuals impacts on their understanding and expression of identity.

Demographic data was collected about every participant in this study, including their age at the time of interview. This was captured with a view to potentially dividing the sample and eliciting trends based on respondents' ages to support any common themes around identity and migration. Initial data analysis suggested distinctive patterns based on age of arrival in the UK, enabling further understanding of how individuals identified *'being Nepali.'* I distinguished three age-based subcategories for analysis: child migration (up to 17 years),

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[79]Predominantly on the basis of age migration and education/learning (Burns & Roberts 2010; Grayson 2014).

young adult migration (18 to 25) and mid adult migration (26 and above). According to The Migration Observatory (2016), migration is a movement mostly initiated by people under the age of 30.

In the first subcategory, a child is defined by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children as someone under the age of 18 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (NSPCC, 2019). Initially I was undecided as to how to divide the two adult subcategories; the youngest adult relocation age in my sample was 20 and the oldest was 34. To allow a more robust analysis, I wanted more than just childhood migration and an 'other' category, so I divided the adult groups into two categories. Table 9 below defines where participants fall in the three categories and shows a break in age in the two adult groups between 25 and 28. Although the distinction is less significant than child and young adult, it signifies a point in time which presents a variation in the narrative. The empirical findings suggest the older age group were more reflective; they contemplated a lived life stage that other respondents had yet to experience – retirement. This focused my analysis on how this life stage is perceived and practiced in relation to a Nepali identity.

Table 9: Migration-age categorisation of research sample

	Age arrived in UK
Child Migration	
Jeewan	3 years old
Gita	8 years old
Eshwar	10 years old
Young Adult Migration	
Pari	20 years old
Leela	21 years old
Ojaswi	21 years old
Deepak	22 years old
Bina	24 years old
Amar	25 years old
Falak	25 years old
Himani	25 years old
Rabia	25 years old
Mid Adult Migration	
Nitin	28 years old
Indra	29 years old
Chandni	30 years old
Malina	31 years old
Kriti	34 years old

The two previous analysis chapters on ethnicity and caste identity, and gender identity present findings that intersect with age. In Chapter Four, the degree to which individuals identify with ethnic and caste disassociation links to their exposure to the dominant society where it is commonly practiced. Therefore, those who left Nepal as young children are confused and hostile towards ethnic and caste-based distinctions because they have had less exposure to them in their dominant society. Similarly, when analysing gender and identity (Chapter Five), women who came to the UK at a younger age challenged the traditional gender-based restrictions imposed on them in Nepal more than women who relocated at an older age. This demonstrates the implicit embedding of age-based thinking in other social markers when considering what it means to be Nepali away from Nepal.

With that in mind, this chapter evaluates the perception of Nepali-ness among respondents and how this is perceived and negotiated in relation to the split of time spent in the UK and Nepal. The findings in this chapter are divided into pre and post-relocation to provide an understanding of how participants' identities changed after relocation, determining the extent to which they accepted or rejected the features of Nepali social markers. Presenting this chapter in chronological order enabled a clear mapping of shifts in thinking and shows how Nepali identity is expressed among Doncaster settlers in relation to the length of time they lived in their birth country.

6.2 Child Migration

6.2.1 Child Migration and Identity Pre-relocation: Analysis of Findings

Children cultivate various forms of identity based on key social markers such as gender, ethnicity and a sense of self (Pascal, 2003). How children form social identities is key to the analysis of the three respondents in this research who relocated to the UK as children. My findings support the view that these key markers shape thinking and evolve a child's social and emotional development (Denham, 1998), forming foundations of awareness often carried into adulthood (Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission, 2015). The impact of this

development is underlined by Yates et al. (2008) where they suggest its significance among young children:

> *'[They have the ability to] form close and secure adult and peer relationships; experience, regulate, and express emotions in socially and culturally appropriate ways; and explore the environment and learn - all in the context of family, community, and culture' (Yates et al., 2008, p. 2).*

Cooper and Collins (2009) explore how children's identity translates to feelings of self-worth and security. The term 'self-worth' is the extent to which an individual feels positively about their 'self' and how this establishes greater self-esteem (Stets & Burke, 2014). Centralising the accounts of children (aged one to 12), Cooper and Collins (2009) discuss how this age group make choices about themselves from a young age and how this is adjusted and adapted to fit the wider society. In doing so, they suggest children constantly seek affirmation and approval and this formulates their sense of worth. Though my sample does not consist of children[80], adopting a life history approach to data gathering allows individual experiences to be collected within a complete historical framework, including childhood memories (Rosenthal, 1993). Such an approach is pertinent to this research, particularly to Eshwar, Gita and Jeewan who were born in Nepal but came to the UK as children. As children they had no choice in their relocation, and Eshwar and Gita had already started school in Nepal. Both described their early memories of being in Nepal:

Eshwar: *'I remember walking to school on a daily basis. I remember [pause] I remember that schools finished early on Fridays. And usually, rather than going straight home from school, I remember going to my grandparents' house. I went there all the time because that's where I enjoyed myself the most, where I had a good time… Every week I did exactly the same thing. I would spend 95% of my time there [at grandparents]; spending as much time there as I possibly can.'*

'The walk to school was 40-45 minutes long… We had to wear school uniform [pause] walking to school [pause] our neighbours were a couple of years older than us and we'd walk to school with them. It was all nice and familiar and that was basically how we got to school. That was our routine.'

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[80]Primarily due to small numbers of children within the Nepali community in Doncaster who would match the pre-requisite of being born in Nepal and then relocating to the UK. Given the reluctance of many adults in the wider community to take part in the research, gaining access and consent for child(ren) participation would have been problematic.

'The school was called Laboratory School and I [pause] I still know where it is. Even when I go back, I know the distance to walk, I know the path I used to walk. I don't think I would lose my way.'

Gita: *'I remember playing on the swings, on the trees. Just generally playing with my friends. Everything was fairly laid back in Nepal for me, growing up. I remember feeling quite safe and happy. There is one thing [pause] one thing that I do remember is that my grandma and granddad used to tell me off. My granddad used to tell me off because he used to grow cucumbers and the moment it would grow to a certain length, I would nip it [laughs] and take it [laughs] and eat it with my friends [laughs]. So I used to get told off about that [laughs].'*

Eshwar and Gita convey a sense of childhood innocence which is reinforced through knowing what to expect. The significance of routine and familiarity during the early years of life allows children to enhance communicative and organisational skills within a familial structure that supports development and interaction skills (Spagnola & Fiese, 2007). This is shown in the empirical findings when Eshwar and Gita talked fondly about spending time with their families in Nepal. A network of family support created an environment in which they could be themselves and establish ties. It is that family unit which, as indicated by Yates et al. (2008), provides them with security and self-worth. When I asked Jeewan about his memories of Nepal before moving to the UK aged three, he recollected:

Jeewan: *'I remember the house. I remember playing in the house and spending time with my grandparents… But I do remember [pause] my grandfather being alive and sitting with him… So I do even remember and have memories of that. My uncle being there. So I do have lots of memories, vivid memories. I remember sitting on the porch with my grandparents and being told stories [pause] and things like that.'*

Eshwar and Gita also recalled spending most of their early childhoods with their grandparents, rather than their parents. This kind of upbringing was fairly standard at the time in the community these three respondents grew up in. The parents of Eshwar, Gita and Jeewan also took part in this research and in their accounts, they recollected long hours of arduous work in the fields cultivating harvest. This type of labour is typical of the caste group they belong to.

Traditionally most Newar groups are associated with farming[81] and older family members are often left to care for the young (Bhandari, 2004). This is typical of agrarian societies who rely on large family set-ups to increase labour hours and enhance agricultural productivity (Lee & Whitbeck, 1990). Eshwar, Gita and Jeewan left the comfort of their grandparents in Nepal, and recounted memories of trying to adjust to life in the UK without them:

Eshwar: *'Of course I was excited [pause] but I remember being very cold and trying [pause] trying to get used to it and adapt the best I could. I definitely missed the presence of my grandparents. Coming off the plane and to the house in Balby[82] and not seeing their faces [pause] I didn't like that. They were always there and I remember thinking they wouldn't be any longer.'*

Jeewan: *'I don't have any real memories of this but my mum used to say when we first got here [UK], and it only used to be the two of us in the flat, I would go around looking for my grandparents, calling out for them. She said I did that for several months.'*

There is a clear sense of loss from these respondents who moved away from their core family set-up. Their understanding of the family dynamic was compromised. The security Eshwar, Gita and Jeewan felt when they were with their grandparents - their primary caregivers - was taken away, leaving them with a sense of abandonment and confusion. This was compounded by being too young to fully comprehend the scale of the change. Despite their young age, the values their grandparents passed on to them made a lasting impression. Eshwar admitted that his grandparents' desire to see him marry a Nepali woman in Nepal was his main reason for doing so (see Chapter Five for full reference).

Gita's first experience of conformity to rules and regulations was in school in Nepal. She recalled her impressions of school life, particularly the disciplinary measures:

Gita: *'I remember we all used to sit on a bench, or rows on a bench I guess. It was blue shirt, like light blue shirt and I used to have my hair in pigtails because*

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[81]There are some exceptions to this where superior financial positioning and religious views held by some Newar groups does not allow them to farm land or part-take in labour-orientated work (Müller-Böker, 1988).
[82]Balby is a suburb in Doncaster.

you couldn't have it down, it had to be pleated with a white ribbon. I remember that. But you all just used to sit in rows.'

'I remember there was one time where we had to make a flower and I didn't draw it properly and I remember getting hit [laughs] with a cane, on my arm. I can't remember if it was my right or left arm but yeah, I remember getting hit.'

These recollections suggest a dominant foundation laid during childhood – the habitus (Bourdieu, 1986) - and, despite being removed from the culture that shaped it, this foundation formed an integral part of their thinking as adults. The key memories of Eshwar, Gita and Jeewan revolve around social interaction with family and peers, and language acquisition. This raises questions about the extent of the impact of childhood migration on aspects of identity generated before relocation, and how this is realised in their new country.

Child migration is relatively under researched with little insight or statistics available by age categories (Rossi, 2009). This is somewhat surprising given the rate at which migration has accelerated since the turn of the millennium and the representation of working-age migrants[83] within that, suggesting the likelihood of children accompanying them (United Nations, 2017). Where research has been conducted, there are gaps in knowledge. This is acknowledged by researchers in one study who present three core reasons why the outcome of migration among children is not adequately understood:

- *'research about child development is seldom connected with the study of migration and economic development*
- *much research that focuses on young people with migration backgrounds is based on case studies that may not be generalised readily*
- *and estimates of world migration streams were not disaggregated by age until very recently'* (Adserà & Tienda, 2012, p. 7).

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[83]According to the United Nation's International Migration Report (2017), almost three-quarters of total, global international migrants were of working age (between 20 to 64 years). In the same document it was reported 14% made up the under 20 years age category.

Although Adserà and Tienda (2012) claim case studies are not easily generalised, it is through such research designs that gaps in knowledge can be filled as it allows the questions of 'how' and 'why' to be answered (Yin, 2003). These questions are crucial to further developing knowledge, and my analysis of Eshwar, Gita and Jeewan's experiences fills some of these gaps. From their accounts, the observations and behaviours of individuals and groups can be formulated (Becker, 1968). The use of descriptive and exploratory case studies allows the findings to be used alongside other research studies with similar objectives (Hakim, 1992). Adserà and Tienda (2012) argue that interest in youngsters who have migrated increases once they enter the labour market - only then do their migrational movements, background and circumstances garner some attention.

During their recollections of early life, the three child-migration respondents mentioned incomplete or hazy memories. Nonetheless, a sense of full and active assimilation into the customs of Nepal is clear from their accounts. This is not surprising as the ways of Nepali society were all they knew as young children. The identities they formed at that stage were shaped by where they spent their early years[84], the memories of extended family and their education in Nepal. These aspects of identity were challenged when they moved to the UK. Although development and adjustment are a part of life for all children, migration to a different culture presents an individual with another significant layer of identity formation to negotiate.

This part of the chapter presents accounts of early childhood memories in Nepal by Eshwar, Gita and Jeewan. These provide a contextual background to the understanding of how their early thinking emerged. The following section will look at their time in Doncaster and how spending long periods of time away from their birth country has influenced their understanding of what it means to be Nepali.

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[84]Eshwar, Gita and Jeewan all spent their early life in Kirtipur.

6.2.2 Child Migration and Identity Post-relocation: Analysis of Findings

As child migration has been overlooked in research, the impact of this psychological journey is relatively unknown, as are any lasting impressions of the 'old' identity. Though the experiences of each migrant child may be different, one commonality that links the respondents in this group is the heightened exposure they face in their adopted land compared with their parents. School is one of the main avenues for helping children integrate and assimilate quickly (Brooker, 2002). This assimilation creates two different environments for a child - one where they learn about the culture of their new dominant society and another at home where their parents are 'lagging behind'. This was one of Jeewan's early realisations in his new environment. He explained how he and his mother came to the UK to join his father, leaving his four siblings behind in Nepal:

Jeewan: *'So when we first came [to the UK] my dad was working in one of the restaurants near Piccadilly. But because it was just me and my mum really [pause] I'm not sure if "scared" is the right word but we didn't really go out anywhere until my dad would come home and then we would go out. During the day or whenever my dad wasn't there, we would pretty much be isolated in the flat and too scared to go anywhere. So we would mainly just stay in the flat. I would normally just watch TV or play with toys in the flat.'*

'It was probably just because my mum didn't speak any English whatsoever. And if we went out and got lost, they couldn't communicate, so I think it was more that, that made her not want to go out with me, just the two of us… I do remember spending a lot of time in the flat.'

In his account Jeewan empathises with his mother's situation and expresses his helplessness by stressing the isolation and loneliness he felt. He was aware the language barrier prevented his mother from going out on her own. It was a sign of being different to others and he explained how it had repercussions for him too:

Jeewan: *'I quite liked education and I quite like learning things. But I always found English a little difficult and I think one of the reasons would've been the fact that when you come home, if they did give you homework… There was no [pause] I never read at home and was never encouraged to read. My parents were quite relaxed about things like homework… But I never remember reading*

that much or being forced to read. It was more just a case of playing with your siblings and just get on with it.'

The lack of emphasis placed on education by Jeewan's parents suggests he had to be independent in his schooling early on. Brooker (2002, p. 21) posits that parental influence on children in education tells us *'a lot about their cultural beliefs and values.'* In Jeewan's case, this includes his parents' language deficiencies, their lack of knowledge about the UK education system, and their own limited educational experiences[85]. Simich-Dudgeon (1986) found migrant parents largely believed involvement in their children's education would cause more harm than good due to their own insufficient knowledge. They believed it was the responsibility of schools to fulfil and enforce the educational role. Although Simich-Dudgeon's finding was based on research conducted in the 1960s and 1970s, it rings true for Jeewan and the other child migrants in this study. Jeewan said he was around 10 when his parents started to take an interest in his educational progress. By then his parents' understanding of the UK education system had developed, as well as their confidence, and Jeewan is now able to express pride in his educational and work achievements. The initial lack of interest in Jeewan's education is a form of culture shock (Oberg, 1960) experienced by his parents. For Gita, her first experience of culture shock was in Doncaster when she learned about the Western custom of eating with a knife and fork. She recounted the conversation with her cousins who had been in the UK *'for a good few years'*:

Gita: *'I remember having this conversation with my cousins when we first got here, that soon we'd be going to school and we'd have to learn to eat with knives and forks. Obviously, we didn't know how to eat with knives and forks [pause] because we ate with our hands. And I remember one of the first things they gave us to eat [pause] it was either eggy bread or toast, but it was bread, and obviously showing us how to eat with a knife and fork… And I remember thinking, when my cousins weren't looking, I'll just pick it up with my hands and eat it! [Laughs]… That was one of the first meals and things I remember [pause] being told to eat using a knife and fork because we had to have school dinners. I can laugh now but at the time, I promise you, I found it all really weird. I didn't understand how people ate like that. It made me even more nervous about*

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[85]The parents of all three respondents here suggested they had limited opportunities and exposure to education in Nepal as children. Instead, greater emphasis was placed on helping run the family home, taking part in household chores and providing financial assistance through employment (see Chapter Five).

going to school. If we didn't have our cousins explaining this to us, we would have gone to school not knowing. Can you imagine how embarrassing that would've been?'

This extract exemplifies the differences in cultural habits between Nepal and the UK. Like many South Asian countries, people in Nepal mostly eat using their right hand[86] instead of cutlery. This practice has links to spiritual cleansing and perceived health benefits (Patel, 2012). Gita mentioned the embarrassment she could have faced at school had it not been for the intervention of her cousins, which also underlines the lack of guidance from parents. She relied on her cousins, who were also children, to provide a level of support to help her fit in. School was cited by all three respondents as their first significant realisation of post-migration change. They had to contend with differences in teaching, learning and general surroundings. When I asked Eshwar about his first day at school in Doncaster, he explained how his mindset was still in Nepal and he used this as a coping mechanism:

Eshwar: *'It was very, very scary because [pause] I'm going to school knowing that I know zero English. I mean, what can you learn in Nepal, especially the English side of it, and the heavy accent that I probably had?'*

'But one of the things I do remember, and I still ask myself now, is [pause] I used to count in Nepalese all the time. I've always counted in Nepalese, in the maths classes [pause] I was good at maths [pause] I found maths easier than English. So I used to do all my sums in Nepali, in my head. I can't remember at what age or at what time I switched over to English now… But I do remember counting in Nepalese to do all my sums.'

Eshwar suggested a struggle to overcome the language barrier but Gita and Jeewan had a smoother transition in this area. Gita was given *'special'* tuition but within a year she no longer needed this help. Jeewan said he believes being able to speak Newari helped him develop his English-language skills more efficiently:

Jeewan: *'At home it was always Newar. I think, after a little while with my brother and sisters, it would have been English and just with my parents it was Newar. My mum's English wasn't great, and she just felt comfortable speaking Newar… But [pause] it never really became a problem.'*

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[86]In Nepali culture specifically, the right hand is used to consume food while the left is used for the toilet.

'It's a strange thing, language. Your brain, when you're young, automatically knows what's what. At school you wouldn't talk Newar, your brain would just know what English is and what Newar is and would just come out fluently. I don't ever really remember it being a problem where I struggled to speak English because of my Newar, and I never struggled to speak Newar because of my English… It's like a process. I think the younger you are when you do that, your brain will adapt to it.'

Speaking their native language at home in the UK allowed these three respondents to maintain aspects of what they considered to be a Nepali identity. Their youth helped them adapt and switch between the two cultures, partly because of their desire to fit in and partly because school gave them daily exposure to the new cultural values of the dominant society. These respondents took comfort in seeing other children at school who had also relocated from South Asia; they realised they weren't the only ones who were *'different'* from the majority. Therefore, the transition from childhood to adulthood was made through positive negotiations of their new dominant society while maintaining Nepali ties in their family life. The pull of both cultures is demonstrated in Jeewan and Eshwar's accounts:

Jeewan: '*…in the back of my mind, I still want to retire in Nepal. That is the goal. Obviously I am hoping to have enough so that I can visit back here, from what I earn here, if I wanted to.*'

Eshwar: '*Before I got married, during my early 20s, I thought I would work really hard here, earn as much money as I can and eventually go and retire in Nepal when I am in my 50s or 60s. I honestly had that thought.*'

These examples show a negotiation process in their thinking as they attempt to reconcile the opportunity for financial gain and a career in the UK and the desire to go back to their roots in Nepal. In their accounts, Eshwar, Gita and Jeewan reflected more on aspects of their Nepali identity after they got married and had children. Until then, their version of a Nepali identity is somewhat dormant and less explicitly projected. Before analysis, I hypothesised that conflict between the respondents' dual Nepali and British identities would be a crucial negotiation process among the research sample. However, this is not strictly reflective of Eshwar, Gita and Jeewan's journeys; dual identity conflicts emerge as they grow older and become more aware of the version of Nepali-ness they want their own children to follow.

Family influence and expectations, cultural traditions, and personal preferences all play a part Eshwar, Gita and Jeewan's decisions to get married. All three married Nepali partners who had lived in Nepal all their lives. This is not uncommon among the Nepali diaspora; marrying Nepali partners is a reinforcement of a particular identity and set of values which can be extended to their children. This desire to pass on the perceived values and identity of a non-dominant culture can create more conflict as children may not want to embrace or practice them. In his account, Jeewan acknowledged the commitment and sacrifices his parents made in order to accommodate their family:

Jeewan: '*It has always been a problem for my parents, even now. I can see that they want to retire in Nepal, they want to stay in Nepal but they've still got this bond of the grandchildren being here and us, their children, are here. So they have these ties that stop them from doing that. They have to sacrifice their lifestyle, their friends, the country they grew up in, in order to spend time with their grandchildren.'*

'*What I wanted to do, to get married to a Nepalese person, my kids probably won't have the same desire or ideology. I think they will end up with a non-Nepalese and their children will be less and less so and the culture and the ties will be broken, unfortunately. That is a big shame and a big worry but we have to accept whatever happens and live with it, I suppose.'*

Jeewan fears the traditions and knowledge of Nepali culture in his family will disappear eventually because his children's version of it is dominated by their country of birth - the UK. Despite Jeewan's efforts to express his Nepali identity by living with his parents, marrying someone from a Nepali background and speaking the language, he worries about his children's connections to Nepal. Existing between cultures, literally and metaphorically, problematises what some would argue is core to identity formation; it suggests an unsettled identity (Ang, 2003). Gita, Eshwar and Jeewan appear largely to have reconciled this instability by embracing what they perceive to be their individual Nepali identity in their dominant society (Britain). Yet their recognition of the difference in the attitudes of their children, who are reluctant to adopt and practice elements of Nepali identity, is a cause for concern. The undertones of Eshwar, Gita and Jeewan's accounts are that they are in a position of privilege as they are able to exercise diasporic hybridity (Hall & Sakai, 1998); and this is something they want their children to experience also.

The importance of a Nepali identity to these three respondents is clear – they try to forge a multi-layered cultural existence by preserving links to their country of birth. This is demonstrated in their narratives by their desire to learn more about their heritage, develop their Nepali language skills and create an environment which encourages their children to establish bonds with a Nepali culture. Gita explained how her children were embarrassed to speak in her native language, Newari. She blames herself for their embarrassment because of her '*automatic*' switch to English at home for ease of communication. I asked if she thought language classes would help reduce this embarrassment:

Gita: *'Yes but for me too. I'd be interested in something like that definitely; I think that would be something really good. I know when I was younger, obviously, in Nepal that's what we were taught and we were taught in Nepali to read and write and things like that. Now [pause] I look at it and know it is Nepali but I couldn't tell you what it is. When I try and write my name now, I don't know whether it is right or wrong. I'd be interested in it, definitely, and I'd like my kids to have a go too. It's just for them to understand our culture.'*

Gita's desire to fill in the missing gaps in her Nepali identity is further exemplified when she is asked how she would like to develop stronger ties to her homeland:

Gita: *'I have asked my parents about the history side of things and they don't know much. I think that's quite sad in a way and I don't think there are that many Nepalese books out there for you to read to say "this is how it all began". I really don't know anything about the historical side of things. I would like to know more stuff like that.'*

This part of the chapter has demonstrated the strength of the bond that Eshwar, Gita and Jeewan's feel for their Nepali identities despite spending the majority of their lives in the UK. This bond has deepened over the years; they are proud of their Nepali identity and keen to maintain and express its values. As their British-born children adopt a new cultural identity, they fear the dilution of a Nepali culture in their families. The next section of this chapter analyses the accounts of those who migrated later in life as young adults.

6.3 Young Adult Migration

6.3.1 Young Adult Migration and Identity Pre-relocation: Analysis of Findings

Nine out of the 17 respondents in this research were aged between 18 and 25 when they moved to the UK. According to Pascal (2003) some identity characteristics developed in childhood are formed on a basis of social competence and self-concept, attitudes to learning and emotional wellbeing. Unlike the previous group who experienced relocation at an early age, these respondents spent their childhood and teenage years in Nepal. Therefore their immersion in Nepali culture can be considered comparatively fuller, including a higher awareness of financial, economic and social constraints. Accepting these constraints as a norm is a common finding in this cluster of respondents who have first-hand experience of them. In their accounts, Ojaswi and Bina explained some of the harsh realities of their childhoods:

Ojaswi: '*The house was wooden and nice. In our neighbourhood, our house was considered to be in good condition and through tuition, my father looked after us well. My father worked very hard. He bought one piece of land and grew vegetables on it and we would eat those vegetables. We were a big family and just had my father's earnings. Times were very tough. Growing our own vegetables meant we could eat. Otherwise [pause] otherwise it would have been very hard. Some points during the year we would experience droughts, other times flooding. It would cause issues, externally, to our house and our garden. Things were not easy for that reason too.*'

Bina: '*I guess my childhood was pretty standard - I enjoyed playing, argued with my mum [laughs]. I got older and started school. I only stayed on in school until class eight… I've got an older sister too and she didn't progress in her education either. Instead, we learnt to do household chores [pause]. I guess those were the times back then [pause]… So things on schooling and education didn't go further than that.*'

'*I just stayed at home. If we went out, there would always be the need to spend money, for whatever reason, and back then, things weren't easy in terms of money, expenditure and things like that. My family didn't have the capacity to spend a lot of money so we were quite restricted and because my dad passed away at an early age, we had to lead a simple life. So that's how my childhood was spent.*'

Despite these hardships, respondents were mostly able to interpret their situation as 'normal' and this was largely down to the community they belonged to. They were surrounded by people in the same socio-economic sphere, from similar ethnic backgrounds and often the same caste. For example, Falak and Leela both talked about growing up in communities of fellow Newars. Chapter Four discusses the implications around ethnic and caste standings and how this traditionally correlates to employment status. This means most people in the neighbourhood carry out similar jobs and have a similar level of resources available to them. Therefore, there is a lack of judgement about the status of others in the neighbourhood. The examples of deprivation given by Ojaswi and Bina are relative to their current understanding of living standards, not to their understanding at that time.

Going to school was a change in routine from the respondents' home life and their experience of this was mixed. Some enjoyed the challenges of learning while others were uncomfortable with the pressures that came with it. School was a social occasion for some respondents, a way to enjoy time with friends, while others struggled to transfer their communication skills from family to peers. This resulted in despondent behaviour and negative associations with education. For two respondents - Rabia and Pari - their first experience of significant change was as a result of moving schools. Although changing schools is less impactful than migration, the accounts below highlight how a significant change can impact children's idea of self. Rabia's parents took her out of an under-performing school to a *'better'* one but for Pari, the loss of her father's job meant her parents could no longer afford to keep her in an *'expensive'* school. Both explained how this change was felt:

Rabia: '*It was really odd when I went to that [new] school. I was used to doing my own thing because like I said in that other [previous] school, I had no one around me who was my age so I didn't know what it was like to have friends. So by the time I got to that [new] school, it must have been year eight, all the other girls had their own circle of friends, they all had their own best friends and I felt like an outsider. And then years eight, nine and ten [pause] at that age girls, in particular, are quite bitchy and they were all competitive in studying too. The girls were all clever and they used to compete amongst themselves during exam and results time.*'

'*So I did struggle to make friends in year eight, the first year I started at that new school. After that, year nine, I started making a few new friends and had a couple of best friends, I would say. Well, in between the bitchiness and competitive natures, I don't think I made any healthy friendships but it was enough to have a few people I could hang around with.*'

Pari: '*I went to that [new] school and it was a shock because they knew you as a student, whereas in my old school, they didn't, because there were so many students, they had no time to pay attention to each individual child.*'

'*On the first day or the first week of school, I still remember it was monsoon season. And there was this tree and I was stood there admiring the flowers on the tree, outside the classroom [laughs]. I had no idea what was going on in the classroom, so I carried on looking and staring. The teacher came up to me and asked what page number we were on but I had no clue [laughs]. So I sort of pointed, I thought I would guess and have a try, but obviously I was wrong…So I got it wrong and she slapped me. She slapped me on my cheek so hard that I thought "oh my God, people actually slap you if you don't pay attention." That was the first time it had happened to me, from a teacher. I had never had any sort of punishment from anybody, really.*'

Both Rabia and Pari experienced culture shock (Oberg, 1960) when they moved to different school. Rabia went from a relaxed setting to a more aggressive and competitive environment where she failed to make any *'healthy friendships'*, and Pari recalled the shock of her first encounter with physical discipline. Even though they remained in the familiar environment of Nepal's educational curriculum and language, the support of friendly faces and peers was missing. Research has shown that forcing children to move schools can lead to negative outcomes, including a drop in educational performance (Mehana & Reynolds, 2004). Both Rabi and Pari eventually adjusted to their new surroundings but a period of adaptation was needed to overcome the shock of a new environment.

As seen in previous chapters, the role of the family is highly significant in the respondents' lives. They credit their development of key values to the household elders, their parents and grandparents, and reflect on childhood memories of siblings. Being part of a large family was a formative part of all the respondents' identity, especially during their early adolescent and teen years. Himani and Amar remembered the support they received from older siblings:

Himani: *'Growing up I think my biggest supporter, the biggest support came from my eldest brother… Back then parents were quite strict about sending you out, or giving you permission to go on picnics organised by the college and things like that. But my oldest brother would always help me. If I needed pocket money or anything like that, he would be the one giving it to me. It was all down to my oldest brother [pause]. Sometimes I would get ready for college and just walk around, in and out of rooms because I needed something. My brother would notice this and ask "how much money do you need? I think you need money today" [laughs].'*

Amar: *'We are four brothers and we were very close. I was the third child and really looked up to my older brothers. So much so, after watching my second brother knit clothes for a living, I copied him and learnt from him to do the same.'*

Familial relationships were dictated by Nepal's social hierarchy where older family members imposed restrictions mirroring that of Nepali's wider societal structures. Himani had strict parents and sought the relief of her older brother's affection and approval. There was no money for Amar to pursue any educational opportunities, so he followed in his older brother's footsteps to earn a living. The bond between the siblings is a mentor-student dynamic which highlights the scale of what the respondents left behind when they relocated. With the exception of Deepak and Amar, whose brothers had already relocated, the other 15 respondents left their immediate family behind.

Some of the respondents experienced the working world in Nepal before their move to the UK and contributing financially towards the household is reflected on with great pride. In her account, Ojaswi explained the financial difficulties her family faced as her father was the sole breadwinner, earning a modest salary. They relied heavily on homegrown crops for food. Ojaswi received basic schooling and then began working as a primary school teacher aged 15. She explained how happy she was help towards the household expenses:

Ojaswi: *'My father, bless him, would give his earnings to my mother also, as would I. I looked after the spending though… I would go to India and get the shopping done there.'*

'My first wage was NRs[87]255 [per month]. After two years or so, the teachers suggested I train as a scout and because of that, I managed to get work as a

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[87]Nepal's currency is Nepali Rupees (NRs).

scout too. From there I would earn NRs 200 [per month] and would give that to my mother to use as well. That extra money I was earning was really helping my family. I was happy to help in whatever way I could.'

Acharya (2012) cites findings from Nepal Rastra Bank[88] in its household budget survey between 1984/5 - around the time Ojaswi was employed - and suggests an annual minimum income of NRs 1971 was needed per adult. This figure was calculated on the minimum calorific daily intake for adults (2250) and provides some context to Ojaswi's financial circumstances at that time. There were five people in the house, which means Ojaswi's household needed a minimum of NRs 9855 a year to fulfil basic living requirements. Ojaswi's pay equated to an annual salary of NRs 5460 so her contribution towards the household was substantial, and this was lost when she married and moved to Kathmandu. Pari, Ojaswi and Amar all experienced employment in Nepal and knew the significance of money and its impact on the family before relocating to the UK. The size of the respondents' families added to the pressure to earn a regular income. Living with joint or extended families was considered a norm within many South Asian cultures (Mirande, 1991). Some have suggested that these large family set ups are now less prominent in South Asian regions (Vatuk, 1972; Uberoi, 1994). Although Table 10 below shows a steady decline in family size, the average household size in Nepal did not drop significantly between 1991 and 2001:

Table 10: Average household size, 1991-2011 censuses (Population Monograph of Nepal, 2014)

	1991 census	2001 census	2011 census
Average	5.6	5.4	4.9

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[88]Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), Nepal's independent central bank, was first established in 1956. Its primary services include enabling safe and efficient payment procedures; preserving constant prices to allow progression within Nepal's economy and promoting awareness amongst the public of Nepal's banking policies (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2019).

The approximate working years of the respondents were between 1991 and 2001, when the number of people living in the average household was at its peak. Table 11 below provides details of the respondents' household numbers and the age at which they started paid work. Table 11 includes only members of the young adult migration category who experienced some form of employment before relocation.

Table 11: Household composition and status during employment

Respondent	Number of family members in household	Approx. number of years worked in Nepal	Age at which respondent left Nepal
Ojaswi	5	7 years	21 years
Amar	6	12 years	25 years
Rabia	6	6 years	25 years
Pari	7	1 year	20 years
Leela	9	5 years	21 years

The breakdown above shows the young age at which these respondents took on a level of responsibility for the family finances and how long they worked in Nepal. With the exception of Pari, four of the respondents contributed to the family finances for more than five years. The significant shortfall in family income that their relocation resulted in raises questions around the perceived benefits of migration for the family members left behind. However, one of the most valued aspects of migration is thought to be the inflow of remittance as a result of relocation[89]. This is one of the main advantages of working-age family

[89]Remittance refers to money sent by migrants back to the families they left behind in their homeland. The most recent findings relating to remittance and migration were compiled by Knomad (2018). It was reported remittance inflow to South Asia grew by 5.8% in 2017. In the same year, *'as a share of gross domestic product (GDP), the top recipients were smaller countries - the Kyrgyz*

members relocating to countries with increased earning potential (Ravenstein, 1976; O'Reilly, 2015).

Lokshin, Bontch-Osmolovski and Glinskaya (2010) found that a fifth of the poverty reduction in Nepal between 1995 and 2004 could be attributed to labour migration and the resulting remittance. But this has to be considered against the loss of *'local earnings and inputs of the migrants'* (Murard, 2016, p. 1). In the young age category only Deepak, Amar and Rabia migrated for work opportunities. The others relocated to join partners who had already established a base in the UK. Some respondents from this migration-age category went on to earn a living in the UK and had opportunities for remittance but there are gender-based implications around this. Among some ethnic groups in Nepal, it is considered immoral for families to accept monetary help from daughters, especially after marriage[90]. Once a woman is married, her duties and responsibilities towards her immediate family become diluted. There is a central cultural belief among Nepalis that women should focus their thinking and earning power (where applicable) around their husband's family. For this reason, many families are reluctant to seek financial help from their married daughters.

This group of young adult respondents had more to lose as a consequence of relocating. This loss can be understood from a self-identity perspective, and from a family point of view. During their time in Nepal, they established foundations of 'self' in childhood and developed some skills in the areas of education and employment. Their attitudes and behaviour, and their learning and work skills were introduced and honed within Nepal's cultural framework. The reasons why people migrate from their birth country are varied - some relocate for work and education opportunities (Colander, Holt & Rosser, 2004;

Republic, Tonga, Tajikistan, Haiti, Nepal and Liberia.' Nepal's overall GDP percentage was 29% (Knomad, 2018, p. 4).

[90]This is something I was aware of growing up in a Bahun, Nepali household. It is considered unprincipled for elder members of the family to use money from daughters to assist in matters that were traditionally the responsibility of the men in the family. For example, sons are expected to take on the responsibility of their parents' funeral rites (Brunson, 2010). In circumstances where daughters have contributed financially towards this expense, the family will generally unburden themselves by paying back the money.

Nath, 2009) and some move to join family or spouses (Castles & Miller, 2009; Martinez-Brawley & Zorita, 2014). There can be single or multiple reasons and relocation affects individuals in different ways. The following part of this chapter moves on to the respondents' journey once they arrived in the UK, analysing whether the values and skills they developed in Nepal proved to be helpful in their new lifestyle and routine, or if they conflicted with the host nation's system.

6.3.2 Young Adult Migration and Identity Post-relocation: Analysis of Findings

At age 20, Pari was the youngest of the young adult migration group to arrive in the UK. She, along with Bina, Himani, Ojaswi, Leela and Falak, arrived post-marriage as dependants of their spouses. The dynamics of their spousal relationships are discussed in Chapter Five from the perspective of gender expectations learned in a strong patriarchal society versus the reality of matrimonial life. Unlike the child migration group whose early memories of British life largely centre around education and school life, this group offer a very different insight.

The young adult respondents' expectations of life in the UK was mainly dictated by what they learned from the media. References to seeing London on television and in films and the prospects built around these depictions were mentioned by a couple of respondents. Pari, who had read some English literature during her schooling in Nepal, described her disappointment at not being met with her perceived idyllic vision of UK life:

Pari: *'I had read quite a few English stories, books by Charles Dickens and that sort of thing and it explains how the setting is, doesn't it? I always visualise everything in my head and for some reason I thought about this big garden, this big, massive lawn with white garden chairs and tables. I remember my mother-in-law and father-in-law explaining what you [researcher] guys are like, what your [researcher's] parents are like. I always pictured your [researcher's] dad sat in the back garden on this white garden chair [laughs]. I don't know why white [laughs] but that's how I pictured it and that's what was in my head. I imagined big houses and lots of space.'*

'When I got here it was a terraced house, a two-bedroom terraced house with a kitchen and living room…and the bathroom was so tiny, you couldn't even turn. That was a big disappointment.'

Similarly, Rabia and Himani were dissatisfied and upset by what greeted them in Britain. Like Pari, they talked about the standard of housing they had imagined and how the reality did not meet these expectations:

Rabia: *'Coming to the UK, I came in 2005 and I didn't like it. When I was in Nepal and thought of the UK, I would think of fairgrounds and lights, everything is lit up and everything is achievable. But my first experience of the UK was Southall and I thought "oh my God, is this the UK?!" My first impressions of the houses here were small [pause] I felt really claustrophobic so all in all, it wasn't a very good first impression.'*

Himani: *'I had these thoughts beforehand, trying to imagine how my husband and his family were living in the UK; the kind of houses they had, the lifestyle and all that.'*

'I had wondered what the house would be like, how it would look and all that kind of thing [pause] and to this day I have not seen a house like that. It was a really small house with small rooms and the two of us had to sleep on a single bed.'

Despite a disappointing start to life in the UK, this group had little time to dwell on it. Some had limited opportunities to acquaint themselves with a new culture (housewives in particular, see Chapter Five), mainly because of language difficulties. For others, it was imperative to find their feet quickly and begin looking for work. The implications of language barriers and the limited opportunities for improvement in this area were mentioned by several respondents in this migration-age category. Research in second language acquisition among immigrants is generally considered from two perspectives; sociological and linguistic. Sociologists have investigated this through the prisms of educational skills and the length of stay in the adopted country, whereas in linguistics, the emphasis is placed on the individual's migration age (Stevens, 1999). For the purposes of my analysis, it is important to consider both. Respondents mentioned the limited opportunities in Nepal for developing English language and writing skills and how this put them at a disadvantage. Even among those who were more confident speaking English, they still had difficulties dealing with different accents and dialects.

Acquiring a primary language during early childhood has been described in many ways including acquisition tongue and native language (Sinha, Banerjee, Sinha & Shastri, 2009). From linguistic point of view, all respondents in this migration-age category were adults when they arrived in Britain and their language skills were predominantly based on their country of birth. Some have argued that acquiring a secondary language in adulthood is more difficult and takes longer than native language acquisition (Wang, 2003), making full competence impossible. This perceived age-based detriment coupled with a lack of opportunity and motivation is identified in respondents' accounts. Bina had very limited educational opportunities before relocation and she revealed the problems she faced when she first came to the UK:

Bina: *'I guess the biggest thing was language [pause]. But, because I was at home most of the time and not working, what could have been the biggest obstacle for communication probably didn't turn out to be that big a deal. Because I was at home, I didn't really have to speak to anyone and didn't have the need to go out. So that wasn't too bad.'*

'I did go to college [pause] I went for three or four months but studying is not really my thing. I can't do it. I did try but whatever I would learn at college, I would come home and forget.'

Bina's lack of previous exposure to education, her position as a housewife and her restricted environment eclipses her drive to develop her language abilities. Her failed attempts to learn English link to her upbringing where she talked about her family's lackadaisical approach to education in Nepal. This approach stays with her when she arrives in Doncaster, undermining her confidence and limiting her desire to progress on this level. Another reason for Bina's lack of motivation to learn English is the family support network which enabled her to rely on her husband and sister-in-law, both of whom had lived in the UK since childhood. She explained their influence in potentially problematic areas such as helping her children with homework. Their help protects Bina from everyday language-related problems, but it also impedes her progress in this area.

Leela, Himani and Ojaswi experienced similar problems to Bina. Although Himani and Ojaswi demonstrated a greater drive to learn English, the outcome was the same because they didn't go out to work. It was different for Rabia who

came to the UK under a work visa. Unlike the other women in this category, Rabia had the added pressure of searching for work (the second most important consideration among these respondents after relocation). Rabia needed to find work as soon as possible so she could sponsor her husband who was still in Nepal. Rabia trained as a nurse in Nepal and worked for six years before relocating. Her efforts to learn English were initially successful and she said it helped her to learn with others who were in a similar position:

Rabia: *'I went to Sunderland where I took classes and that was fine because I just had to concentrate and listen. When I did that, I was able to understand quite well. Then I went to London for training because that's where my adaptation[91] was and the majority of nurses were foreigners. I understood what they were saying and they all understood what I was saying so communication levels were consistent because no one's English was great.'*

This initial success gave Rabia a false sense of security. Her language skills faltered as she became comfortable in her surroundings and got by with a limited knowledge of English. Her progress slowed, particularly in spoken English, and she considered this adjustment period from an emotional perspective:

Rabia: *'There was the pressure to find work and then language was an issue too. Even speaking to you [researcher] and the others at the start, I struggled. Even now with you [researcher] all [pause] I guess because I started speaking to you [researcher] in Nepali when I first arrived, I feel more comfortable speaking to you [researcher] in Nepali than I do English. When people would speak and say something, I would always question myself and wonder if I had heard correctly or not. I was always quite nervous, in case I got anything wrong or said something wrong. I hated that feeling, especially because my work involved a lot of technical thinking. I had that fear of getting things mixed up or wrong for a long time, mainly because of language difficulties.'*

Rabia's difficulties can be attributed to the age she relocated rather than a lack of motivation or limited exposure to the new language. Her language skills had been fully established in Nepal as a child, making it more difficult for her to become proficient in a new tongue. This problem was echoed to some degree by all the respondents in this migration-age category although it was revealed in different ways. For some, it was a journey of self-progression and for others a

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[91]A programme which supports and guides international nurses during initial training and adaptation (Nursing Times, 2008).

necessity to facilitate an extension of Nepali identity to the family. English language skills were not essential for the type of work Amar sought but he needed to understand the differences in working conditions between Nepal and Britain. Adapting to this quickly was necessary for Amar who had left his wife and children behind in Nepal and was keen for them to join him as soon as possible. In his interview, he recalled bittersweet memories of this time; his drive to succeed in the UK was borne out of a frustration at not being able to complete his education in Nepal. He wanted to give his children the best possible opportunities, even if it meant making sacrifices:

Amar: *'It was hard and difficult [pause] but I knew it would benefit them all in the long run. I had left them for roughly five years or so but I knew this was the best thing. I was able to come here knowing my family were back in Nepal and was able to concentrate and work fully, to save enough money to give them a better life. And then, for them to come here and progress further in life.'*

'My children are happy and content in life now. They work in offices, are doing well in life and have their own families. They look after us too [pause] what more can parents ask for? I am content too.'

Amar assesses the hardships he faced during his early years in the UK and concludes the negatives were outweighed by the possibilities of a brighter future in Britain for him and his family. The emphasis on family remains strong. All the respondents in this study are parents and the prospect of giving their children the best start in life is the driving force behind their adoption of the British ideology. Respondents appreciate the inclusiveness of this ideology - the mixture of different people and the freedom to exercise their Nepali-ness. In this migration-age category, Leela is the least accepting of her adopted country although she still concedes the positives for her family. I asked here where she considered her home to be:

Leela: *'I would still say Nepal, even though I have been living here for over 13 years. It doesn't matter that I have been here 13 years because I grew up in Nepal. Those were the most important and best years and those are the times I can't forget.'*

'The first time I went to London city, I remember thinking "wow" and that this was amazing. I saw so much and such different things. I remember thinking it was very big and lots of different things going on. Also, the number of different people from all around the world. I had never seen anything like that before.

People speaking different languages and walking up and down the street, walking as one. I remember thinking a place like this seems so tolerant of different cultures would be a great place for my family to grow.'

Leela envisages the society she wants to see her family grow up in, which is in stark contrast to the realities of Nepal. Despite her reluctance to accept Britain as her home, she acknowledges the practical benefits the country can offer her family and these are more important than her personal reservations. The previous two analysis chapters on ethnicity and caste, and gender identity present the reality of Nepal's stringent, one-dimensional governance and thinking. Although changes have been made in recent times, many more changes are needed before the country's practices can be considered democratic (Haviland, 2015). For the respondents, moving away from Nepal highlighted the shortcomings of their homeland and gave them greater insight into their individual sense of Nepali-ness. This insight has been, and will be, continually developed as the respondents make regular return visits to Nepal throughout their lives.

The young adult respondents have returned to Nepal on numerous occasions and many of them said it was their preferred holiday destination. Visiting family is cited as the main reason for the regular trips, which are seen as a way of refreshing old ties. These respondents were old enough to understand what they were leaving behind when they relocated from Nepal unlike the three who arrived as young children. So it is not surprising that the lure of familiar territory features prominently in the respondents' accounts. However, on more recent visits to Nepal, respondents have noticed a range of social, economic, environmental and political changes, making the country they left behind almost unrecognisable:

Falak: *'Because of the political instability of the country, all young people want to try and escape as quickly as possible and look for alternatives outside of Nepal. In some villages [pause] you can come across some villages in Nepal where there aren't any men and there are only women because the men have left, migrated, for work. It is sad because Nepal is losing the core generation of now because they leave to go abroad where there are better opportunities for education and work. These people then don't come back.'*

Himani: *'I don't miss the [Nepali] culture now. When I go back to Nepal for holidays, I see how much things have changed and don't really miss it. Things have changed so much [pause]. From the first time I went to go visit to the last time I went, which was over a year ago, things have changed so much [pause]. The country, the people, our family, our neighbours [pause]. Before, a lot of people lived in joint families [pause] no matter how many sons they had, everyone wanted to live under the same roof, that's how it was. That doesn't exist anymore. People now think if you live separately, that's the best way. Back in my times, things were so much better. You don't get that these days in Nepal.'*

'The kids in Nepal like to show off and they don't think about their family, their earnings and status and things like that. There's a lot of competition between people; if someone gives a wedding party at a certain hotel, then the next family who have a wedding in the family have to give a party at the same hotel. It's very competitive and has been like that for years now. I personally don't like that. People should only do things that are within their capabilities. I don't understand the need to show off and make out you're better than everyone else.'

The respondents are struggling to identify with their homeland's changing social landscape because they have been away as these changes have occurred. They each spent at least 20 years in Nepal before relocation and in a comparatively short space of time, it has become unrecognisable. The reconstruction of Nepal is a consequence of external factors including the influence of migration (Adhikari, 2012). When migrants return to Nepal (for long or short visits), they bring new or refined ideals shaped by their time away. This is evident in their outlook, demeanour and philosophy and these new ideas can influence family members still living in Nepal, as some of the respondents infer.

The respondents begrudge these changes and developments in Nepal even though some left their country of birth because of a lack of opportunities. They have improved their fortunes and prospects away from Nepal but don't want Nepal to change with the times. Their accounts show that life was hard at times in Nepal — opportunities were restricted and inequalities were unchallenged, ultimately leading to relocation for them. But this was the Nepal they knew, the one that shaped their values and identities. Now their home nation feels as different as their adopted nation did when they first arrived, and this confuses their sense of Nepali-ness. Their idea of what it means to be Nepali has been diluted and becomes less apparent every time they visit.

The narratives from this group suggest they are more likely to demonstrate inconsistencies in their idea and expression of Nepali-ness compared to the other migration-age categories. This is down to the relatively equal split of time they spent in Nepal and the UK compared with the child migration cluster. This young adult group feel conflicted about to how to define and express their identity. All respondents' accounts suggest a dual identity in some capacity, explicitly and implicitly. The extracts below demonstrate this duality as Pari attempts to reconcile the Nepali values of her upbringing with her hopes for her son:

Pari: *'I was having [a] conversation with my son yesterday. He was on his PlayStation and we were talking and I said that I wanted him to try different things and to explore different things, he is like that anyway. But in doing that, I don't want him or my children to forget that my parents come from Nepal and it is different. I want my children to know they are fortunate to have that.'*

'I think my values are different to my parents now because they had a different upbringing to what I did. For me, it has changed a lot since coming here. I think emotionally and mentally I grew up a lot here than I did in Nepal. That's why I don't think I am completely Nepali. I did have the going to the temple, being a daughter, being a teenager there, being a girl, I did all that, being a daughter-in-law, having that experience. As a human and an individual, I did a lot of growing up mentally here.'

The inference in the first part of Pari's account suggests her Nepali upbringing was repressed to some degree, and so she is keen for her son to spread his wings and make the most of life's opportunities. Pari presents contradictory desires, which demonstrate her confusion and struggle with the dual aspects of her identity. On one hand, she wants to make her children aware of the Nepali values she was raised with but on the other, she distances herself from those values, suggesting she can no longer identify with them. Her idea of being Nepali is now quite different to her parents' version. Rabia further illustrates this conflicted state in her reflections on what identity she will pass on to her children:

Rabia: *'I don't think there is a solid Nepalese identity that I can then say to my children "you are Nepali and you should be like this"; I don't think that at all. But I do think it is better for them to know another language, for their benefit...It is about trying because we can't do any more than that.'*

This is what Hall (1990) identifies as diasporic consciousness, a method of identity production and reproduction which put migrant groups in an advantageous position.

This section of analysis has shown the dilemmas faced by those who experienced migration as young adults aged between 18 and 25. This group left the life they had created in Nepal and moved to the UK for work opportunities and prospects, sometimes to the detriment of their Nepali identity. The next section analyses findings from the final age category - the mid adults who left Nepal when they were over 25.

6.4 Mid Adult Migration

6.4.1 Mid Adult Migration and Identity Pre-relocation: Analysis of Findings

The second adult age-migration group is similar to the first in that they had a greater exposure to a Nepali way of life than the childhood age-migration group. The early years reflections of these respondents present a childhood largely engulfed by tragedy and contention. Kriti's earliest childhood memories include the death of her mother and younger brother. As the oldest child in the family, the care of her other siblings and the household chores fell to her, bringing her childhood to an abrupt end. She shared her experiences of this time:

Kriti: *'I went through a lot when I was a young girl. My childhood was very difficult. I don't know how or when I grew up, I don't know when I was a child - it's all mixed up and blended into one. I can make no sense of when I stopped being a child and when I became an adult. That was the childhood I had.'*

Malina's childhood was dominated by the plight of her mother who suffered emotional torment at the hands of her mother-in-law. Malina explained her mother's torment as a way of contextualising the environment she grew up in:

Malina: *'They [my grandparents] had a lot of chicken and cows and would do a lot of harvesting throughout the year. If anything went wrong at the farm, my grandmother would blame my mum or her siblings, saying that they were the devil [pause]. She wasn't very nice to them. My mum did have it tough, especially when she first got married. My grandmother used to blame her for*

anything that went wrong. She had no one to go to. She would just sit and cry with her siblings.'

This extract describes the backdrop to Malina's childhood. She lived with a large extended intergenerational family and battled with very traditional Nepali thinking and practices in her everyday life. Despite the tribulations, family life was central to Malina's understanding of her identity as a child:

Malina: *'As the family grew, my sisters started having children, my sister-in-laws started having children. In one year we would have as many as five pregnant women living at home! [laughs] It was chaos! [laughs]. We used to have baby cots here, there and everywhere. Children crying and moaning all the time. If one fell ill, then of course others became ill too. That's how it was. Can you imagine, when I was 13 years old, I had 19 nephews and nieces! [laughs]'*

Collective living was an integral part of Nepali life when these respondents were young. This was extended beyond the family circle to the wider community, cementing relationships even after dispersion. Nitin spent most of his childhood in Itahari before moving to Kathmandu to study, then on to Chennai, London and finally Doncaster. Despite so many moves throughout his life, the relationships Nitin formed in Itahari are fundamental to his identity. His memories of Itahari are unique and special:

Nitin: *'…I grew up in Itahari. Like for example, you [researcher] grew up in Doncaster so you [researcher] feel like this is more like home for you where you are socially recognised and accepted here. And it's the same for me in Itahari. Like still, for example, even after all these years, people in Itahari still know me - people who were there then and are still there now. When I go back to Nepal, they come up to me and talk to me and we talk about my childhood. It is a really nice feeling. These kinds of links are not easily forgotten.'*

Using his knowledge of my (the researcher's) background, Nitin illustrates the depth of his association with Itahari, and its importance and relevance to him. The bonds he created are unforgettable and intrinsically linked to his childhood memories. Nitin's feeling of acceptance in Itahari, even after living away for so many years, comes across strongly. Other respondents in this migration-age category also recalled the support of their local childhood communities.

The pre-relocation findings from this group are broadly similar to the younger adult group. Before relocation, life was consolidated around the family. Experiences varied to some degree depending on the opportunities for education and work. With the exception of Nitin, the respondents in this categorisation had little or no opportunity for schooling in Nepal. This may be reflective of the time - Nitin is younger than the others and recognition of the importance of education had grown somewhat in Nepal during his childhood. Or the increased opportunity for education could be related to his ethnic or caste milieu. The next section explores the outcome of relocation on the lives of the older migration-age group.

6.4.2 Mid Adult Migration and Identity Post-relocation: Analysis of Findings

The difficulties of the early days in the UK were particularly apparent among this group. Respondents were accustomed to large family and community support networks and had much less post-relocation support. Some left their parents behind, others left their children. The blow of separation was difficult for the respondents, especially in the immediate aftermath of relocation. Respondents sought familiarity to help them through the transition, but this was not always easy accessible. Chandni talked about how she struggled during her first few months in the UK as poor communication channels at that time meant she had little contact with her family back in Nepal. Her sense of feeling overwhelmed is clear:

Chandni: *'It was difficult to keep in touch with family back in Nepal though…Before, they would send letters from Nepal and it would take almost two months for it to arrive here. Every day I would look at the door, every morning, to see if the post had arrived and if there were any letters from Nepal [pause]. Whenever a letter would arrive, I would cry so much [pause]. I found out my mum passed away from a letter [pause] [crying].*

Learning of her mother's death through a letter was very difficult for Chandni to negotiate and she became upset during her interview as she recalled this time. Chandni explained that she *'became a lot happier'* when her brothers moved to the UK. Although she had always been with her husband and children in Doncaster, it took her brothers' presence to make the UK feel like home. Also,

subsequent advances in technology and social media helped her maintain links with her family in Nepal. Relocation away from their country of birth was especially difficult for the women in this migration-age category from an emotional and psychological perspective. Chandni struggled to deal with the magnitude of the change and what she had left behind in Nepal. She had helped to raise her siblings in Nepal and her misery was compounded by the absence of a large family group. Chandni suffered with emotional insecurity until she was reunited with her brothers who were a key part of her former life. Malina also had deep family connections and she talked about the build-up to her relocation, providing context for her circumstances:

Malina: *'You know what, I had no idea. I didn't know what the UK was. When my husband was away with work and spent months and months away in Dubai and Malaysia, you wouldn't think he had been abroad. He wouldn't bring anything back with him, wouldn't really talk about what he did and how he spent his time. I found out that I was coming to the UK and that was OK. I didn't know anything about it to have any opinion or feelings. I didn't understand.'*

'But the whole process of getting the paperwork ready took a long time too. I mean I had never done anything like this before. I was being told what to say, what proof of paperwork to bring. During that time, if I am being completely honest with you, I didn't even know my own date of birth. It was only when I was sorting all this out that I found out my date of birth.'

Malina's feeling of indifference towards moving is caused by a lack of knowledge and information. She had no way of assessing what life abroad would be like, despite her husband working outside Nepal for many years. Homesickness and helplessness settled on Malina. For the first three years she was adamant about returning to Nepal and was reluctant to buy a house in the UK. But when her daughter was born, she started to feel differently:

Malina: *'I mean, my sons were older and you know what boys are like, I knew whatever the circumstances, when they were old enough, they could look after themselves. It's different for a girl, when you think about your daughter. So for her sake, I started to change my thinking and you know what happened? I started to miss Nepal less and less. It got to a point where if I was able to bring my mother here, to the UK, I would probably not even consider going back. So that's when I changed my mind about buying a house.'*

Wanting to do the best for her daughter motivated Malina to overcome the psychological and emotional impact of her relocation. She actively decided to

make the best of her situation and opened herself up to the possibility of assimilating in London, then Doncaster. Moving from London to Doncaster to start all over again made it difficult for Malina to put down roots and build a life. She made the move to Doncaster at an age when she needed stability for herself and her family, which made it even more difficult.

Relocating to the UK at an older age than the other respondents in this research sample meant this group experienced the prospects of ageing and retirement in the UK. Kriti and Indra are the two oldest members in the sample, both are over 65. They talked about making trips to Nepal to alleviate homesickness, something they were unable to do at first because of a lack of money. Over time, visits to Nepal become a regular part of their lives. They described the significance of Doncaster in the later years of their lives:

Kriti: *'I love Nepal, don't get me wrong. It is my country of birth and I do have strong connections to it. But at the moment, I would say wherever my grandchildren and children are living and staying, then that is home. Home is here [Doncaster]. I like going to Nepal, staying there for two or three months and then coming back. Wherever my children are, that is home. That's all I want now.'*

Indra: *'No I wouldn't because I have no desire to leave Doncaster. I am happy here and settled here. I have four children now; my two sons both live in Doncaster, one daughter lives in Manchester and the other in London. They come and visit us and everything has worked out well.'*

'I do miss Nepal and still have strong ties to the country and because of that, my wife and I go nearly every year and spend three or four months out there. I do enjoy going to Nepal. I mean, I have retired now so do get bored. Sometimes here [Doncaster], I don't know if it is morning, afternoon or night. It all blurs into one. When I was working, I wouldn't realise and the days would just pass by because I would be busy. Now, things do drag a little. If you sit around all day, you are bound to feel bored.'

'[When I go to Nepal] I go and do some work around the house, like painting. I do it all myself, don't get workers in, even now and at my age.'

Although Kriti and Indra attribute their contentment in Doncaster to their children and grandchildren, there is a key difference in their accounts - Kriti is more content than Indra. In her interview, Kriti explained how she raised five children almost single-handedly while her husband went out to work. Her children have

been her life's work; being a mother is an integral part of her identity and she is fulfilled by remaining close to her family. For Indra, retirement in the UK has been less fulfilling. His life has revolved around work since he was a teenager in Nepal. He came to the UK as the sole breadwinner for his family and working in an Indian restaurant (in a similar environment to his job in Nepal) allowed him to do this quickly and effectively. Although Indra's boredom at home in Doncaster is manageable because of his frequent trips to Nepal, he has limited his options in later life by not developing his English language skills or any interests outside of work and family life in the UK. When Indra goes to Nepal, he picks up his hobbies in the comfort of familiar language and surroundings. He enjoys his lifestyle in Nepal and wants to spend more time there.

Dolberg, Sigurðardóttir and Trummer (2018) acknowledge the growth of older immigrants in Europe and identify the neglect this group are likely to face. They suggest that labour migrants who have aged in the host nation and those who migrated later in life are likely to struggle as they near retirement. They concluded there was a distinct lack of policy to ensure the care of older immigrants:

> *'The host country should consider the entire life course of immigrants' lives and the lives of their relatives. Stereotypical generalisations about older adults and failure to take into account the later phase of immigrants' lives represent an exclusion of older immigrants and therefore, in our opinion, might be referred to as ageist'* (Dolberg et al., 2018, p. 186).

The conclusions from Dolberg et al. (2018) present Indra's boredom as a problem with wider implications. Though Indra does not explicitly suggest he has been discriminated against in the UK, he no longer feels useful there and his feeling of inadequacy can be attributed to a lack of integration opportunities in his host country. Instead, he seeks the familiarity of Nepal to occupy his time and boost his self-esteem. Nepalis in Doncaster are an emerging and growing community and they need to be included in appropriate age-related activities after their work life has ended. Although I hoped for a representative sample across age groups before setting out, it was not a primary variable by which I looked to divide the interviewees. That came once analysis had begun. So, there is a gap in this research in the understanding of how individuals or groups

who migrate at a later stage in life deal with the prospect of ageing away from their country of birth. Indra's musings are just one example. While some of the other respondents mentioned possible aspirations to retire in Nepal, it was done so without gusto and in the knowledge that it was not imminent. The nature of this research sample means multiple experiences of this have not been gathered.

Nitin's exposure to and involvement in British society has been greater than Indra's. He has not been in the UK as long as Indra but he is married to a British-born wife and the nature of his profession has given him certain acculturation advantages over others in this group. Nitin described his ideal future and outlined the problems he perceived in Nepal with discrimination and prejudice by bureaucrats. He admitted the continuance of the age-old thinking by rule enforcers would be be difficult to eradicate, but going back to Nepal remained a goal for him:

Nitin: *'When I retire in this country [UK], I won't have to fight for certain things like my rights for a pension. I have worked hard so will be entitled to it. In Nepal, it's not like that. If you can speak the language and have an understanding of how things work then old age life is good here [UK]. [But] I have all that but in the back of my mind, I would love to go back to Nepal when I am of retirement age. Family, friends and gatherings [pause] that's what you look for when you are getting old.'*

The comfort of Nepal overrides Nitin's concerns about how it functions. To understand this apparent conflict in his thinking, I asked Nitin how he identifies himself now, after 15 years in the UK:

Nitin: *'If you ask me [pause] if I was to fill out a form then I would tick on the Asian British box, Asian origin. I still love my country, I love where I am from. Obviously [pause] I always think of Nepal in the back of my mind… I don't think I am accepted one hundred percent by the society here. I will never feel that way because I don't think that is going to happen but at the same time, I don't feel like I am neglected because I work alongside British people here. They like me, they respect me and I respect them. I felt a bit of discrimination [pause] a little [pause] a little bit of racism at the beginning when I was new and I didn't know what to do. But now I can defend myself because there are rules and regulations that I can talk about too. These rules and regulations safeguard people and can be useful, should a situation arise.'*

Nitin's reply and his awareness of these guidelines is almost passive-aggressive. It demonstrates his confidence in potentially tackling anything unwelcome that might come his way. He has the same knowledge as everyone else and will use it to defend his Nepali identity if necessary. Nitin came to the UK in his late 20s and has had the opportunity to scale heights which, as he admitted himself, would have been difficult to achieve in Nepal. But this does not dent his sense of Nepali-ness. Taking a literal step away from Nepal has enhanced the fervour of Nepali association among this group.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has used the age when respondents relocated to the UK as a marker to present findings, splitting the empirical data into three groups - child migration, young adult migration and mid adult migration. Analysing each group's pre and post-relocation experiences provides a fuller picture of how the respondents' Nepali-ness has fared in Britain. It helps to establish the extent to which Nepali identity existed pre-relocation and how this was accepted post relocation. There are gaps in the current literature on the impact of migration age on identity and post-relocation experience, particularly in relation to how children convey their identity from their birth country to a host nation and the implications of this on later life. This chapter fills some of these gaps.

Respondents who relocated in childhood are more aware of their dual identity than those who moved at an older age. This awareness is initially peripheral due to the time they have spent away from Nepal but takes a more central role after they start their own families. Their efforts to maintain links to Nepal are more proactive compared with the other respondents. One reason for this is the need to identify with where they come from. Eshwar, Gita and Jeewan are nostalgic about the time they spent in Nepal, how it formed their identity early on and the extent to which they have operationalised that Nepali identity formation in Britain. It ignites hazy but real memories of how their early years were spent and they are intrigued at what they feel they missed out on. There is a sense of guilt among these three respondents and, consequently, a strong desire to develop their Nepali identity and pass it on to their children. Enhancing

and actively expressing their Nepali-ness is viewed as a way to compensate for the short time they lived in the homeland.

Another reason is the weight of expectation felt by Eshwar, Gita and Jeewan. Unknowingly they feel pressurised to continue some version of Nepali norms and customs because their parents expect them to do so. As children they knew they were different to their peers and those differences were accentuated when they came home from school to a reality that was very different from their host nation's culture. Their post-relocation home life where they spoke the Nepali/Newari language and grew to understand the limitations of their parents who were also new to the country added to the burden of expectation. Eshwar, Gita and Jeewan were raised in a typical Nepali way but this occurred within the framework of British society where this type of upbringing is viewed as strict and rigid. This demonstrates the need for further research on the effects of childhood migration, particularly when attempting to understand the nuances of an emerging ethnicity in a host country.

The two adulthood age-migration groups present a more balanced outlook on their time spent in Nepal and the UK, making their recollections more authentic and realistic. The similarities between the two adult groups can be seen clearly in their early years' experiences and recollections of Nepal. Although both adult cohorts experience migration later in their lives, members of the young adult group are more philosophical in their outlook and about the extent of their Nepali-ness. For them, *'being Nepali'* is not necessarily linked to the time they physically spent in Nepal. They apply the values and ideals they grew up with in Nepal in a way that fits with their post-relocation circumstances. Consequently, they are more measured and less subjective about their feelings towards Nepal. Although there is clear evidence of happy and fulfilling times spent in Nepal, the concept of a Nepali identity among them is transitioning as their awareness of what they understand to be British norms and values emerges. The version of Nepali identity they have created post-relocation is enough for them, making this diluted form of Nepali-ness easier for their children to accept and conform to. This dilution is perpetuated by the changes they see occurring in Nepal every time they return; it is becoming less recognisable as the country they left behind. These respondents feel Nepal is becoming an amalgamation of Nepali

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and British values and rather than accepting this as a form of modernisation, these respondents feel increasingly disconnected to their birth country.

For the oldest migration-age cohort, adjusting to different cultural norms and a new way of life is harder. The process of acculturation is difficult for them to negotiate and they maintain higher levels of Nepali identity compared with the other two groups. Findings from this group also introduce the concept of ageing and retiring away from Nepal and the problems it raises for some of them.

Both adult age-migration groups contain respondents who are over 55 (six out of 14) and it is important to consider this alongside their age of migration. These older respondents demonstrate more consideration of their Nepali-ness on the following matters:

> i) Seeing their children instil aspects of Nepali culture in their everyday lives and extending it to their grandchildren.
>
> ii) Continuing to make frequent trips to Nepal.
>
> iii) Having a holistic understanding that Nepali and British ideals and values can co-exist in their lives; they don't have to be mutually exclusive.

Respondents in the youngest and oldest age-migration groups demonstrate the greatest desire to maintain what they believe to be their version of Nepali-ness. For the child migration group, there is a need to fill in gaps of knowledge and understanding to build a familiar Nepali identity. The mid adult accounts reveal the importance of preserving a Nepali identity they have nurtured over many years. Both groups exhibit the need to protect their Nepali identity whereas this is less evident among the young adult age category.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

> *'But even in Nepal, you don't just talk to anyone on the streets, anyone on the bus just because they are Nepali, do you? In Nepal you have your heritage, something built by your ancestors and that is the path you walk down and from that, you associate yourself with people who walk along a similar path too. That was an easy path for me to walk down [in Nepal]. So coming here [UK], either I've not been able to create that path that other Nepalis have seemed to have done...or I've not been interested to do it outside the family circle because I don't have any common ground with the wider [Nepali] community here. I'm not sure which one it is'* – Rabia, research respondent.

7.1 Nepali Identity: a Summary

This study has explored the identity negotiations of a group of Nepalis in Doncaster. In doing so, it has shown what *being Nepali* outside Nepal means, with the emergence of new identities within old classifications related to caste and ethnicity, gender and generational perceptions. Some respondents attempted to challenge these classifications, particularly when discussing caste and ethnicity, and gender. Participants in this research alluded to these aspects when distinguishing cultural differences between groups of Nepalis based on their place in Nepal's caste hierarchy. Oppression and gender discrimination were experienced by all women in this research sample before relocation to the UK. Opportunities were few and far between for the women; they were marginalised by society and, to different extents, restricted in their family life. Unlike their male counterparts, who expressed a sense of freedom in their accounts of daily life in Nepal, the women talked about being constrained by family and societal structures.

Understanding and negotiating identity formation as a result of migration is a complex and multi-faceted undertaking. To look at these facets as merely positive and/or negative would be simplistic and only skim the surface of what is a tangled, and sometimes contradictory, belief of Nepali-ness. The empirical data revealed multiple layers of what it means to be Nepali. By that, I understand that various identity forms have developed over time as a direct result of a social context and environment (Goffman, 1959). In my research, the personal narratives demonstrated temporal continuity as respondents reflected on their past, present and future. The life history interviews captured the journey

of individuals in their own words, their own voice and their own narratives. The analysis chapters (Four, Five and Six) uncovered differences in respondents' experiences of Nepal and Doncaster. For that reason, I conclude the findings are two-fold. The first addresses what it means to be Nepali in Nepal (pre-relocation) because it is this sense of Nepali-ness that respondents brought to the UK. Their thinking, practices and beliefs were shaped before relocating to Doncaster. Furthermore, the narratives suggest that frequent trips to Nepal are part of the respondents' diasporic settlement as they help maintain links with the homeland. Most respondents cited family ties as the primary reason for making these regular visits. The second part affirms how that Nepali-ness is transferred to the UK, specifically to Doncaster. These are discussed further in 7.3 and 7.4 of the conclusion.

7.2 Revisiting Aims, Objectives and Research Questions

In my thesis I set out to investigate how individuals belonging to a Nepali background (those born in Nepal) have negotiated their identity as a result of geographical relocation (from Nepal to Doncaster). Before undertaking this doctoral research I knew I wanted to explore the concept of identity and to do so among Nepalis. The research undertaken during my Master's degree (described in Chapter One) helped to inform the direction of this doctorate.

As I discussed in Chapter One, my exposure to Nepali culture had been limited, (restricted to family members) and transitory (holidays to Nepal). This meant that aspects of my Nepali identity remained hidden, or less apparent to me and to others in everyday environments such as school and work life. I did the exploratory part of the research to understand better the context of my participants' lives, when they started to fashion their identities in the UK. Whilst this added to my understanding, and my participants perceived and treated me as an insider, I began to discover I wasn't - feeling more of an outsider. There was a glaring gap in my appreciation of what they had experienced, lived and held onto, and their presumed Nepali-ness of my identity.

In formulating my research questions, I focussed on the role and impact of migration in realising how individuals and (collectively) groups understood what it means to be Nepali. This simple focus was largely dictated by Nepal's

absence within migration discourse, despite Nepali diaspora contributing to a quarter of Nepal's GDP through financial remittance (Pillai, 2013). My decision to carry out a PhD also coincided with a spike in Nepalis (ex-Gurkhas, in particular) migrating and settling in the UK (Adhikari, 2012). Figures taken from the 2011 census, and depicted in Chart 1, show Nepalis as the third most represented South Asian group in Doncaster.

I asked questions relating to respondents' lives pre and post-relocation to ground any changes:

- To what extent do individuals develop a new understanding of (Nepali) identity? How do these understandings vary from what they had previously understood to be their (Nepali) identity? (see section 7.3)

- What role has resettlement in Doncaster played in the understanding of self (as an individual)? What role has resettlement in Doncaster played in the understanding of Nepalis as a collective group? (see section 7.4)

- How do these individuals negotiate and/or navigate how they present themselves within 'British society'? What is the significance of maintaining links to Nepal for individuals who construct a life outside their country of birth? (see section 7.4)

Ethnic groups which traditionally formed Gurkha regiments include Rai, Limbu, Magar and Gurung (Sims, 2008) and my awareness of Doncaster's ethnically diverse Nepali population helped inform my research questions. I set out to understand the differences in experiences of different Nepali groups and believed ethnic diversity within my sample would transpire naturally (see Chapter Three). When this didn't happen (particularly in the case of the Gurkha group), I chose to revise my research angle and take this to be a finding in itself – leading me to reflect on my own position within this research framework.

A case study design worked really well as it helped distinguish the individual and overlapping paths taken by each respondent with others in the sample. My own personal journey was informed by the case study design as it allowed me to reflect and ask questions about my own identity which now, having

completed the research, I realise was dormant. My experiences of being Nepali and the context of my identity is individual and unique – realised through interviews. Being an insider was not an easy position or mantle to hold.

Sections 7.3 and 7.4 now reflect on the empirical findings which answer my key research questions on what being Nepali means.

7.3 *Being Nepali* in Nepal

The rate of migration from Nepal has been increasing since the 1980s (Gurung, 2004) and suggests people are in a hurry to leave. My respondents left Nepal many years ago and most of them are negotiating the Nepal of their childhoods and the new Nepal they now see developing. Being Nepali in Nepal during the respondents' early years meant restrictions; constraints of age, gender, caste and ethnicity meant the 'self' and personal identity were secondary considerations. It meant conforming with the prescribed majority with little room for self-identification. Some respondents are distinguished by having little or no education which determined – and was determined by – their societal status. Childhood was generally centred on living in large, extended families. The role of the family was considered the most influential source of learning, shaping identity and knowledge. Running the family household, including allocating and performing domestic chores, was mostly assigned to women who often had to negotiate different identity roles. This led to conflict in the formation of their self-identity as the role of primary caregiver became a dominant identity. In Nepal, the men took active roles in all aspects of decision-making, reinforcing the patriarchal values of the country and women's positions as subordinates.

The impact of globalisation has not bypassed Nepal. In this study, respondents used words and phrases relating to a new, modernised Nepal and the hostility towards this unrecognisable nation is evident at times. It is no longer the Nepal they knew, the place where they spent their childhood years. However, comments around the country's political instability and the influence of the West were contradictory. On the one hand, respondents were unhappy with the emergence of new, modern Nepali values, while on the other, they were happy their host nation incorporated those modern values. But their gratitude for the permissive values of the host country has not extended their tolerance to

Nepali's ethnic and caste groups. Like gender, ethnic identity is understood to be a social construct by my respondents – a construction based around traditional values that segregate the population in Nepal. Respondents were immovable in their understanding and implementation of caste and ethnic divides. In Nepal, caste and ethnic identity remains a topic of contention. Despite attempts to reduce segregation based on this identity marker, it remains starkly evident (Shrestha, 2016) with violent clashes and protests against ethnic and case-based discrimination still being reported (Shrestha, 2003). When respondents were living in Nepal the inequality of caste and ethnic divide was arguably greater, making their exposure to it greater. This was implied in nearly all the narratives, with respondents suggesting caste and ethnic differentiation was embedded in everyday functioning of society, meaning they left Nepal with that at the forefront of their conceptualisation of *being Nepali*.

In Nepal, therefore, power is knowledge (Foucault, 1977) and is exercised to the detriment of the marginalised, subordinate groups. Given the diversity of Nepal's make-up, this is unsurprising. Respondents considered their local neighbourhoods a significant space in their childhood for access to help and support. These areas mostly reflected individuals and groups of similar backgrounds to them. This suggests little opportunity to intermingle beyond the parameters of comfort, i.e. with those from different social and cultural backgrounds. What this also implies is a lack of know-how. Respondents had very little experience of integrating with others. Some had exposure through school and work, but this was generally limited to a narrow timeframe. Not knowing how to accommodate other versions of a Nepali identity that deviate from what each person knows to be *their* Nepali identity might explain a reluctance to interact with others post-relocation. It is with this anchoring disposition that respondents migrated from Nepal to the UK.

7.4 *Being Nepali* in Doncaster (and the UK)

Personal and self-identity is found to be negotiated to largely fit in with the respondents' social context after relocation, just as their identity before relocation was dictated by their social environment. However, how they perceive the wider Nepali contingency in Doncaster is much less adaptive; they prefer to maintain the traditional practices of differences found in Nepal.

Part of *'being Nepali'* in the UK is an acceptance by the wider society, i.e. non-Nepalis, and this enables the respondents to practice the customs, values and culture of their homeland. Respondents' comments showed their appreciation of the host nation and what they believe to be the British ideals of tolerance and diversity. They expressed the freedom they feel they have in Britain to be themselves without any significant constraints which, as the analysis chapters suggest, means enforcing their version of Nepali-ness. This is a luxury they were not allowed in Nepal because of its static and influential discriminatory belief system. This is seen most clearly when analysing gender and women's experiences. Moving to the UK empowered nearly all the women to differing degrees; some gained greater opportunities for work on their own terms and others experienced heightened autonomy around decision-making at home. That is not to say they did not experience any problems after migration, and the nature of these challenges was often based on their individual experiences in Nepal. Some women talked about a lack of employment opportunities because of their insufficient educational levels or the commitments of their domestic role in the family. As a result, many struggled with communication; the English language is not known to most of the women in this study. But rather than seeking familiarity through other Nepalis who speak the same native tongue, there was greater potency among these women to nurture family links and instil their Nepali values in their children. For the men, language was less of a constraint because of the nature of the work they found with other South Asian colleagues. However, this ultimately distanced them from British society as there was no need to mix with anyone outside their work and family circles. Assimilation into British society is less evident in the male respondents; the women who maintain stronger family links experience greater exposure to perceived 'British values' and a way of life through their children. Therefore, men were found to exhibit higher levels of Nepali-ness compared to women post-relocation.

The prominence of the dominant status (Barley, 2014) remains within ethnic and caste relations. It is dormant for the most part because respondents largely limit their circle to family and close friends, but it emerges significantly at the prospect of interacting with those outside their own ethnic and caste stratus. Research studies have shown the likelihood of migrant groups to settle in ethnic

concentrations (Bartel, 1989; Borjas, 2000; Putman, 2002). This is true of Nepalis in Doncaster with a large concentration of the community in a specific spatial area in the South Yorkshire town. Yet my findings refute the claim of Rex (1973) who suggests this is done to the detriment of integrating into the host nation. Instead, differences are accentuated by cultural factors (Cheung, 1993) which does little to alleviate traditional prejudicial behaviour or thinking within the diaspora. Caste and ethnic differences are a social reality that is reproduced away from Nepal in Doncaster because it goes against the grain of what my sample know to be the norm. In Nepal, respondents were accustomed to following the ways of hierarchy as instilled in them by family and wider society. Because its presence is so evident in everyday Nepali life, it is taken for granted, even customary. Among the traditional high caste in Doncaster, there is a perceived risk of being overthrown by the high numbers of middle and low castes.

Respondents who left Nepal as children demonstrated greater conflict in negotiating their Nepali ties. Though they sought to maintain and develop their Nepali identity to a greater degree than the older migration-age respondents, they found the prejudice around caste and ethnic, and gender identity difficult to understand. This made them more likely to question how their identity, predominantly influenced by British culture with a strong Nepali presence, fits in to the broad (because of diverse spectrum of Nepali-ness) yet narrow (rigid and strained) understanding of what it means to be Nepali. The fractious caste and ethnic relationships they witness in Nepal, and in Doncaster to a lesser degree, compound their confusion.

As the title suggests, this study has explored a Nepali community in Doncaster in their understandings of what it means to be Nepali, reflecting the limitations of access and participation in the research. Community as a principle, through the works of Anderson (1983) and Cohen (1985), shifted thinking towards a denotation of communal interest, an inference of collectiveness rather than actual interaction. This supports the more contemporary definition and use of community (Cashman, 2011) and is true of the findings from this study. The notion of community cohesion in the Nepali diaspora in Doncaster is predominantly seen through an ideological lens as a conceptual idea. The

community plays a role in affirming individuals' sense of belonging but specifically within the boundaries of difference (Cohen, 1985). While respondents hinted at this concept being a positive one, few participated in community activities - the caste and ethnic divisions maintained through migration are ultimately seen as too big a barrier to overcome. In this way the sense of belonging among this Nepali 'community' in Doncaster is framed by isolation and solitude (Crow & Allan, 1994). It makes the idea of a collective identity a lived contradiction.

Being Nepali can therefore be singularly defined as a set of structural and pre-defined categories, the foundation of which is cemented by the geographical land of birth (Meinig, 1979; Safran, 1991; White, 2007) and the participants habitus that was formed there (Bourdieu 1973; 1986).

7.5 Moving Forward: Future Research

Given what has been discussed above, I now suggest how this study can form the grounding for further research.

The Nepali population in Nepal is ageing. Not only have improvements and access to healthcare facilities resulted in increased life expectancy (Chalise, 2006), but the younger generation are actively seeking opportunities outside Nepal to gain better prospects for themselves and the next generation. In the short term, this could mean that the older generations in Nepal continue to maintain traditional, restrictive thinking and practices, while the younger generations face the prospect of negotiating these cultural values in a new society. This illuminates potential question areas for future research as well as a focus on sample make-up. An element missing in this research is the scope of identifying respondents from both extremes of age categories. Only two respondents fell into the 65+ age range and there were no respondents under 34, meaning gaps in knowledge about the groups which can maintain (older generation) or challenge (younger generation) the trends of discourse. Furthermore, an extension of this would be to collate the views of British-born Nepali settlers to see the extent to which their identity values differ from Nepali-born settlers, particularly within a family context. As I uncovered in the analysis chapters, family life is central to a Nepali identity in Nepal and the UK and it

transcends gender and caste-related differences. The respondents often expressed how they want their children to understand the family aspect of their ancestry and how they, as parents, can help with that realisation. Respondents demonstrated a keenness to promote Nepali identity so it would be insightful to gather the views of the British-born generation to see how they negotiate this within their dominant British upbringing.

This study has focused on an emerging Nepali community in Doncaster. The exploratory findings from the two London organisations provided a platform to begin to understand conceptualisation and operationalisation of Nepali identity in the UK outside my (the researcher's) lived definitions and interactions. I was not able to interview members of The British Gurkhas Community Doncaster, and in London, I did not speak to Nepali residents living in the catchment area where CODEC UK and NBC UK operated. To understand the depth of the Nepali diaspora in the UK and what this means to identity formation, profiling two similar spatial areas where Nepalis have converged would illuminate other, less explored aspects. In the 2011 census, it was reported that more than 6,000 Nepalis were living in Rushmoor, Hampshire, and, according to the annual ONS (Office for National Statistics) study on happiness and wellbeing *'the sudden increase in the Nepalese population…put a strain on public services'* (Neate, 2018, p. 7) in the town. Although my research has not sought to understand policy implications around Nepali diaspora in Britain, it would be useful to use this study in Doncaster as a basis to explore how towns with Nepali-strong communities accommodate this growing population. If, as I have suggested throughout this thesis, Nepalis want to emerge from the shadows of their South Asian counterparts, it is crucial to think about the long-term strategies in place to cater for their specific needs in local spaces.

The research has also touched on how Nepalis perceive the dominant culture they find themselves in and it is largely positive. However, this research did not include members of the dominant culture to gain an understanding of their views on the growing Nepali population. If policy and practical measures are going to be implemented to advance assimilation in the adopted country, it is important to consider how this can be achieved alongside British values in decision-making settings and roles. This could potentially lead to discussions on

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the management of caste perceptions and relations. Would Nepalis extend caste classifications, which have remained an integral part of their conformity to Nepali ideals post-relocation, to their British counterparts? How would that align in accordance with the top-down formation by which Nepalis abide, as depicted in Table 1 making British people *'impure but touchable'* castes? The relationship between Nepalis and other communities could be another line of enquiry in establishing what it means to *be Nepali* in the UK.

7.6 Final Thoughts

This thesis builds on early, foundational awareness of Nepali identity outside of Nepal from the likes of Nath (2009) and Bohra-Mishra (2011) who focus on Nepali diaspora in the US, and Pariyar (2018) who studied Gurkha identity in the UK. My focus has been specific to how Nepali identity is perceived within a specific town and the impact of this on both macro and micro levels. Nepali migration has been prevalent for decades (Gurung, 2004; Adhikari, 2012; Paudel, 2014) but relatively ignored compared to the scale of research into other South Asian communities. Migration invariably leads to adaption and adoption of identity forms. Bhabha, in Rutherford (1990), gives value to creating a *'third space'* to accommodate hybrid identities as this would allow new identities to emerge. An example of this in the current research is the gender-based discrimination women experienced in Nepal. It is found to be less prominent in Doncaster as the women navigate away from the land that fastened those traditional shackles. This is facilitated through exposure to Western society which comparatively disseminates gender equality and opportunities, resulting in women overcoming gender-based power relations. However, discrimination based on race and ethnicity is mentioned by some respondents not only within the confines of Nepali communities, but as a result of racist behaviour by members of the traditional British population. While racism remains an issue on any level, it continues to justify migrants' indifferent views towards those who originate from the same country and limit opportunities for cohesion.

This study highlights the need to focus attention towards Nepalis who have experienced geographical movement but to do so with ethnic and caste implications in mind. This research has indicated the acceptance of other ethnic

minority groups will be welcomed if there are greater representations within organisations which classify themselves as belonging and representing *'Nepali people'.* This is particularly significant for diasporic groups in small town settings because the numerical population is not dense enough for multiple organisations to co-exist and characterise ethnic diversity. As shown in the interviews conducted with members of Nepali organisations in London, the importance of such associations has reaffirmed the essence of *being Nepali* specific to particular cultural and ethnic backgrounds by *not* segregating its Nepali outreach by ethnic distinction, i.e. Gurkha. The two London organisations appear to promote diversity and inclusiveness through the celebration of various Nepali cultural backgrounds. In this way, the organisations appear to be educating some ethnic groups about other Nepali cultures which they might not have known. Taken at face value this is commendable but as mentioned earlier in the chapter, I only spoke to members of the organisation and not the wider Nepali community in London. Their institutional narratives need to be considered as an attempt to position themselves positively in my eyes.

In Doncaster, Newar respondents, for example, talk about wanting to learn the Nepali language to help them communicate effectively when they visit Nepal. Some suggest an interest in attending language classes in Doncaster but are cautious because of what they believe to be the unaccommodating ways of Doncaster's Nepali organisation and its current ethnic representation. It is important to note that this indicates a willingness to learn more about other Nepali cultures, something which can be used to encourage integration and assimilation.

The broad purpose of this research is to provide a voice for an emerging national population in the UK (Adhikari, 2012) by attempting to understand how their identities conflate. Even as a doctoral thesis, not all questions can be answered, even if the subject area is niche and nuanced by default, making scope for further research a great possibility. As someone who has always been aware and proud of my dual heritage, I found the research principles fulfilling in many ways. Mostly because they opened my eyes to the intricacies of discrimination which, with hindsight, I admit I was naïve not to see. I had never really considered *being Nepali* is any more than being Nepali; sharing a

collective identity with those who have some links or affiliations towards Nepal. In that sense, some might say my thinking was ignorant and typical of someone who belongs to the Brahman high caste; a lack of awareness towards the root cause of exclusivity that enforces divisions. I have now realised that *'some links or affiliations towards Nepal'* is a throwaway comment because it underplays the precarious way in which Nepal, as a country and society, continues to function. And it is through this precarious doctrine that Nepalis attempt to construct a sense of self, and of other Nepalis, as a result of being a fractious, diasporic community.

This doctoral journey has been a long and challenging one, both professionally and personally. Generating the research sample, conducting the fieldwork, analysing the findings and writing up, whilst managing my role as a research executive outside the PhD bubble proved difficult and at times, taxing. On a personal level, I had the privilege of engaging with 17 respondents as they shared their journeys from childhood right through to present time, narrating emotional and sensitive moments in their lives along the way. At times I found this difficult to negotiate and found balancing my role as a researcher against my personal relationship shared with a respondent a difficult task. One thing that did become apparent as data collection developed, however, was my sense of duty towards each participant. The value of what they shared, affording them anonymity as a result and putting this written discourse together was my obligation and responsibility in giving them a voice; individual and collective.

In Chapter Five I reference the work of Pascal (2003) who outlines three core measures of early learning; social competence/self-concept, attitudes and dispositions to learn and emotional wellbeing. Pascal (2003) uses this model to ascertain an *'effective learner'*, understanding how early-years learning can impact on individual development. Although I highlight the differences in Pascal's usage of the framework and how I apply it in my research (see Chapter Five), I drew on the outputs she identifies and applied it to myself. Throughout this research I have implicitly and explicitly realised and explored my dormant identity - facets of my Nepali identity which over the years, prior to this research, have been diluted or ignored and find myself agreeing with research (Barth,

1969; Hall, 2000) which argues that our identities are ongoing, influx and a process of transformation.

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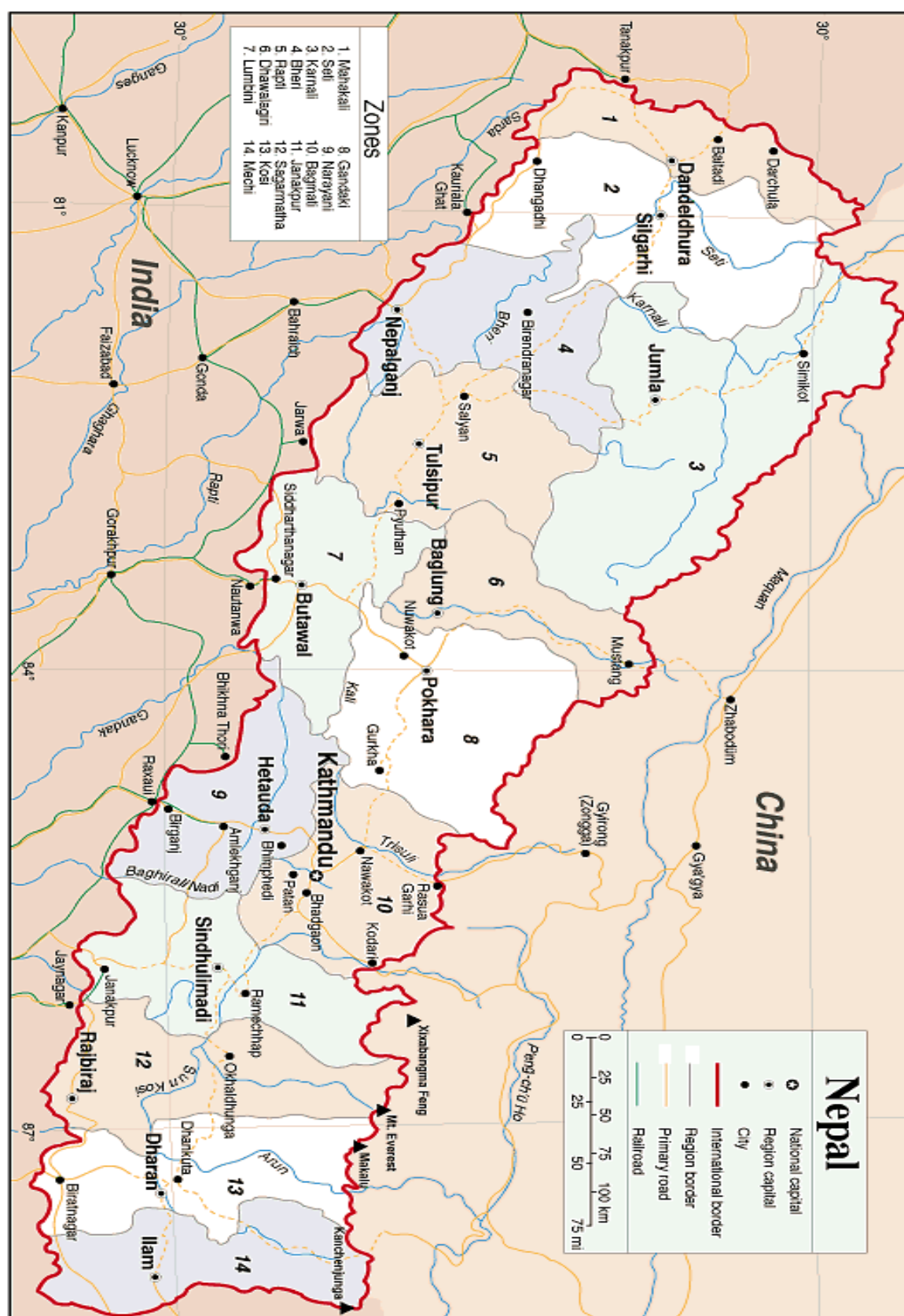
Appendices

Appendix 1: Map of Nepal

Appendix 2: Interview guide

Appendix 3: Interview brief

Appendix 4: Interview debrief

Appendix 5: Participant consent form

Appendix 1: Map of Nepal

Source: Global City Maps, (2018).

Appendix 2: Interview guide

Themes and Topics: Life History Narrative

Question categories:

- **Birth and family of origin**
    - Where were you born?
        - Can you tell me what it was like growing up in…?
    - How would you describe your family?
        - How was it growing up in your household?
        - Relationship with parents/siblings?
    - What were your dreams/ambitions as a child?

- **Cultural settings and traditions/ spiritual awareness**
    - Village/Town/City grew up in- description and thoughts
    - Caste
        - Which caste?
        - Discrimination between different castes in community/society?
    - Religion/festivals
        - Description of religious background
        - How you celebrated festivals?

- **Social factors**
    - Can you tell me about the house you grew up in?
        - Physical features.
    - What did your father do for you? And mother?
    - Day-to-day routine/ way of life

- **Education**
  - What do you remember most about school/education?
    - Best memory?
  - Your attitude towards formal education? Parents attitude towards formal education?
    - Thoughts on the Nepalese (village/town/city) schooling structure/format (then)?

- **Work and love**
  - What kind of employment/work did/do you do?
    - How did you end up in this kind of work?
      - What was your role? What did your duties include?
    - How long did you work at that place of employment?
  - How did you meet your husband/wife?
    - Arranged/love marriage?

- **Historical events/ periods**
  - Birendra crowned King of Nepal (February 1985)
    - Thoughts? How did this impact you/your surroundings/community?
    - Any visible changes- positive and/or negative?
  - Nepalese Royal Family Massacre (June 1st 2001)
    - Where and how did you hear about the Royal Family massacre?
  - Nepal earthquake/blockades
  - Other historical events/periods?

- **Major life themes**
  - Transition/relocation to UK
    - First thought/memory when decision made to leave Nepal: why/when/where?
    - First thought/memory when first arrived in UK?
      - Any other family members?
    - Why Doncaster?

- **Retirement/ Vision for the future**
    - When you think about the future, what are your thoughts and feelings?
        - How do you hope to achieve this?
    - Thoughts on Doncaster?
    - Do you have any fear and worries? Why?

- **Closing questions**

*NOTE: Incorporate questions around move from Nepal/ transition at relevant life stage: i.e. education/work/marriage etc.

**NOTE: Interviews to be conducted in Nepalese and later translated into English. Both Nepalese and English transcripts of each interview will be available and form part of the appendices.

Useful phrases/ probing:

- "Can you tell me what happened…"
- "Can you tell me how that situation developed…"
- "Can you remember how you felt when…"
- "You said '…………' do you remember anything else/ more about…"

- Have any photos/images that you would like to show?
    - Representation of Nepal/ your culture

Appendix 3: Interview brief

<h2 style="text-align:center">Brief</h2>

- My name is Puja Subedi. I am a PhD student at Sheffield Hallam University from the department of Psychology, Sociology and Politics. My Director of Studies is Dr. Rinella Cere.

- The focus of my study is looking at the Nepali community based in Doncaster who have experienced geographical relocation; from Nepal to the UK. Through interviews, I am looking to gain insight into your life experiences pre and post relocation.

- The interview will be conducted in either English or Nepali; please make your language preference clear.

- The nature of the research means there is a possibility of re-living and revealing sensitive and personal aspects/experiences of your life. If at any point during the interview you feel uncomfortable/ would like to pause, please make myself aware and we can halt proceedings until you feel comfortable.

- The interview will be tape recorded and an informal guideline will be used throughout the interview. However, feel free to elaborate or extend your view/ideas where you deem appropriate.

- The recorded tape and any other information gained from the interview will be used for the sole purpose of this project only and not in any other context. There may be potential for further research in the future. However, I would like to make clear the data/information you provide for this study will only be used in the future should you give consent. You will be asked to indicate your preference in the 'Participant Consent Form'.

- You will remain anonymous. However, you will be given a choice of whether you would like to be referred to in the research/ study by your real name or a pseudonym, i.e. false name. But, with your consent, your age, occupation, religious views and ethnic background will be asked. This is so comparisons can be made when analysing findings.

- On completion, the interview will be transcribed by myself, the researcher, and will be part of the final research study, as part of the appendices.

- I will now be in touch in 3 days' time to seek your decision about taking part in this study. If you do not wish to take part in the interview, please do not hesitate to say so.

- For your information:
  - This study has been considered and given ethical approval by Sheffield Hallam University.
  - A paper copy of this brief will be made available, for your records.
  - A signed paper copy of 'Participant Consent Form' will be made available, should you decide to take part in this study, for your records.
  - My (researcher) contact details can be found below

- Would you like to ask any questions?

- Thank you for taking the time to listen to my proposal.

Puja Subedi

Sheffield Hallam University
Phone: 07871245602
Email: psubedi@my.shu.ac.uk
Director of Studies: Dr. Rinella Cere
Director of Studies email: scsrc1@exchange.shu.ac.uk

Appendix 4: Interview debrief

<div align="center">

Debrief

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- Thank you for taking part in the interview.
- I would like to reiterate your rights to anonymity and confidentiality.
- The interview will now be transcribed by myself.

- Would you like to view the transcript or final study after completion?

- Would you like to ask any questions?

- Once again, thank you for your time. It has been greatly appreciated. Have a good day.

<div align="right">

Puja Subedi

Sheffield Hallam University
Phone: 07871245602
Email: psubedi@my.shu.ac.uk
Director of Studies: Dr. Rinella Cere
Director of Studies email: scsrc1@exchange.shu.ac.uk

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Appendix 5: Participant consent form

स्वीकृती / Participant Consent Form

सोधेको कुरा हरु यो रिसर्च को लागी मात्रै हो /The details provided below will be used for this study and this study only:

नाम / Name: श्रीमान या श्रीमती / Male or Female

घर को ठेकाना / Address: जागिर या काम / Occupation:

फोन नम्बर / Telephone: धर्म / Religious beliefs:

जन्म भुमि / Birthplace: जात / Caste:

उमेर / Age group: १८ – २४ / 18-24   २५ – ३४ / 25-34   ३५ – ४४ / 35-44   ४५ – ५४ / 45-54

                    ५५ – ६४ / 55-64   ६५ – ७४ / 65-74   ७५ + / 75+

1. म यो रिसर्च बारेमा भाग लिन्छु / I agree to participate in this research ☐

2. म यो आफ्नो खुशीले गर्न लागेको / This agreement is of my own free will ☐

3. मेरो मनमा आएको कुरा सोध्न पाए / I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the research

   एस बारे मलाई इच्या लागेन भने जवाब नदिए पनि हुन्छ / I am aware I can withdraw from the research at any ☐

4. यो रिसर्च बारेमा सबै कुरा मलाई जानकारी छ. रिसर्च गर्ने मान्छेको पनि सबै जानकारी छ । / I have been given details

   of the aims and objectives of the research and have been provided with contact details of the researcher ☐

5. यसमा मेरो लेखेको गोप्य कुरा हरु अरुलाई थाहा नदिनुहोला / All **personal** details provided by myself will remain

   confidential and will not be made aware publically ☐

6. म अनुमति दिन्छु यो रिसर्च बारे पछि अरुलाई पनि चाहेमा एस बारे जानकारी लिए हुन्छ / I give permission for the

   results of this research to be used/ refer to in future research/study ☐

सहि / Signature: ………………………….... मिती / Date: …………………... नाम / Name: ……………………...

रिसर्च सहि / Researcher Signature: …………………... मिती /Date: …………………... नाम / Name: ……………………...

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