THE NATURE OF TRANSFER EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS LEAVING COMPULSORY SECONDARY SCHOOLING TO CONTINUE FURTHER EDUCATION. A COMPARISON OF ETHNIC MINORITY AND ETHNIC MAJORITY EXPERIENCE.

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Abstract

THE NATURE OF TRANSFER EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS LEAVING COMPULSORY SECONDARY SCHOOLING TO CONTINUE FURTHER EDUCATION. A COMPARISON OF ETHNIC MINORITY AND ETHNIC MAJORITY EXPERIENCE.

This thesis outlines contemporary transfer experience for students continuing education at sixteen, subsequent to experience of full-time compulsory education. There is a special concern to contrast experience along lines of ethnicity. This thesis utilises research evidence gained between 1997-1998 as well as enlisting support from other studies and theoretical models.

Questionnaire responses of 315 Year 11 school students and 210 college students are used to develop the picture of transfer experience. More detail is gained from interviews involving college students and teaching staff.

Evidence is considered in relation to two dominant themes; Student Orientation and Student Identity. Student Orientation discusses motivations for choices, peer relationships, tutor relationships, adjustment and satisfaction. Student identity explores the importance of ethnic identity, self-esteem and locus of control within the transfer context.

Overall, a period of adjustment and evaluation is involved in this phase of transfer and the experience is positive for most. However, exploration of peer contact reveals a greater sense of isolation among minority ethnic groups. Students from minority ethnic groups also tend to attach more importance to ethnicity. Conversely, various configurations emerge concerning self-esteem and locus of control. However, no single ethnic group demonstrates any propensity to positive or negative extremes. A review of research and theoretical models has led to the conclusion that ethnic identity, self-esteem and locus of control are flexible, inter-related and often contingent upon social context. An appreciation of these characteristics assists in explaining inconsistent results that emerged.

This thesis aims to highlight similarities as well as differences in experience and promotes an understanding of this inconsistency in relation to flexible notions. Consequently, a strong challenge is made against essentialist and stereotypical philosophies.

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1 Introduction

1.1   *How this thesis was arrived at*

I originally embarked upon research with a desire to explore transfer experience at the post sixteen phase with special interest in any ethnic diversity in experience. This began with a student-centred methodology, aiming to gain a sense of student experience and opinion and this has been preserved throughout this research; as reflected in the emphasis on student expressions rather than my own interpretations of student behaviours.

Once engaged in research, I found that there was a paucity of literature exploring transfer at this phase and specifically, an absence of any exploration concerning ethnicity. My own minority positioning also reinforced interest and concern here. In the earlier stages of research I favoured the view that ethnicity was aligned as an antonym for race. However, research practice and a broad review of literature were to alter this position. My theoretical understanding of ethnicity was to broaden into an appreciation of multiple and flexible identities, the full detail of which can be seen in the review of literature that follows.

There was also a desire to explore how far common notions of differential experience were reflected in reality. This prompted exploration of self-esteem and locus of control as these conditions are often presented as symptoms as well as causes of differential experience.

In summary, research within this thesis reflects a theoretical as well as a personal journey. En route, students and staff revealed unseen avenues and a broad range of literature unlocked a variety of pathways, so helping to challenge common sense assumptions including my own.

1.2   The aims of this thesis

Enduring changes to student trajectories that began to take effect from the late 1970s have now made post sixteen education a rapidly expanding sector. The former trend of obtaining employment or work-based training after the compulsory phase has been replaced by a tendency for sixteen year olds to enter further education. This change has been concurrent with a sharp decrease in employment opportunities for young people and an expansion in full-time post compulsory education. Therefore, there is a need to not only understand, but also to evaluate the nature of this experience and to recognise the implications of it.

Whilst reviewing the literature relevant to transfer from secondary schooling at age sixteen, it was difficult to find examples from any educational phase that gave more than the briefest attention to contrasting experience across lines of ethnicity. A number of studies related to career choice and employment rather than further education experience (Bynner, 1988, 1989; Bynner and Roberts, 1989 and Banks et al, 1992). Where ethnicity had been discussed in connection with the post sixteen sector, it was often linked to differences in qualifications (Drew, 1995 and Gillborn and Gipps, 1996). Where ethnicity had been discussed in its own right, this had been primarily in relation to the area of racism (Mac an Ghaill, 1988; Troyna, 1984 and Troyna and Hatcher, 1992). Consequently, this thesis has attempted to offer an innovative slant in that it sets out a theoretical approach to ethnicity and ethnic identity and applies this to the specific context of post-sixteen transfer. It is hoped that the results of this will further an understanding of contrasting as well as similar experiences for ethnic minority and ethnic majority students. This thesis also aims to provide further insight into the separate areas of ethnicity and transfer experience, each in their own right.

The theoretical underpinnings of my approach are located in the broad area of ethnic and racial studies as well as from literature relating to educational contexts. In order to provide an overview of my approach to ethnicity it has been necessary at times to utilise findings from compulsory phases of education as well as looking to the growing field of research in higher education. The most prominent of transfer studies involve transition from primary to secondary schooling or mid-schooling transfer at the secondary phase (Delamont and Galton, 1986; Measor and Woods, 1984 and Youngman, 1986). Furthermore, where post-sixteen transfer has been the subject of major investigation, entry into employment has tended to be explored as opposed to further education (Bynner and Roberts, 1989 and Banks et al, 1992). However, in recent years, there have been crucial studies that have contributed to the understanding of post-sixteen transfer for contrasting ethnic groups. The majority of these studies are not dedicated to the exclusive exploration of transfer but provide invaluable insight into this area.

This thesis aims to contribute to current research at two levels. Firstly, there is an endeavour to provide a theoretical framework for understanding ethnicity. This framework is constructed as a means to further an understanding of contrasting experiences among ethnic minority and ethnic majority students. In undertaking the review of literature for this thesis, theoretical insights into ethnicity were not difficult to find. The selection reviewed was deemed the most fitting in terms of explanation and notoriety in the limited space available. However, as prolific as the literature was concerning ethnicity, there was little in the British context that set out a theoretical framework and tested this in the context of further education. It is also important to reiterate once again that exploration concerning transfer of students from compulsory secondary schooling to further education proved to be an under-researched area. Consequently, application of theories of ethnicity to the specific phase of post-sixteen transfer experiences was rare.

This thesis treats ethnicity as a flexible 'entity'. Ethnic identity is seen to be dependent on past and present experiences. Ethnicity is also considered to be one of

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many identities. Hence, the importance of ethnicity is subject to change as it interacts with other identities and experiences.

The second major aim of this thesis is to explore student experience and identities in specific relation to post sixteen transfer. This involves a review of relevant literature as well as analysis of fieldwork evidence gained between May 1997 and June 1998. The range of issues involved in student experience and relating to issues of identity have been incorporated into one of two general themes. These themes are Orientation and Identity. There was no sharp disjunction between the themes of *Student Orientation* and *Student Identity*; both were imbricated within one another. They both contributed to the shape and definition of the choices and experiences involved for those students undertaking post sixteen transfer from school to college.

Orientation of students refers to student trajectories as well as to the commitment and satisfaction students felt regarding their current position. The literature that is reviewed relates directly to student trajectories; investigating the process of choosing a particular college and type of course. Satisfaction, commitment and aspirations of students are also contrasted. Fieldwork also aimed to reveal those instrumental in aiding students' decision making in relation to transfer.

Student identity is discussed with regard to ethnic identity and aspects of self-concept. The aim of this thesis was to explore whether ethnic identity contributed to differential experience and in turn whether this experience affected outcomes. This was also regarded as an important dimension as recent research in post sixteen education is extremely thin in this area. It was necessary at times to look to other educational phases in order to develop a fuller understanding of the nature and impact of ethnic identity. General and theoretical literature was also reviewed in order to evaluate the nature of ethnicity and with an aim to understand how far it can be said to impact upon behaviour. In the review of literature, ethnic identity is discussed not only in terms of educational context but also in a substantive context.

The theoretical framework adopted in relation to ethnicity supports the notion that individuals do not have single identities but several. Therefore, it was a matter of integrity and clarity that ethnicity should have been related to other identities so that its relevance could be regarded more sharply. Consequently, ethnic identity was contrasted with the importance of gender and other identities. Furthermore, aspects of self-concept were included, as individual disposition, particularly low self-esteem, has been frequently cited as an explanation of differential educational experience, particularly in relation to students from contrasting ethnic groups. Hence, self-esteem and locus of control were explored. The primary aim here was to arrive at a closer understanding of actual rather than assumed differences in self-esteem and locus of control between and within ethnic groups. Gender differences in self-esteem and locus of control were also considered.

The cumulative results of theoretical and fieldwork study support the conclusion that it is difficult to predict differences between ethnic groups on the basis of ethnic group membership alone. Unpredictable results that have emerged in terms of personality measures serve as a strong example of this. Paradoxically, the perceived importance of ethnicity tends to be stronger among students from ethnic minority groups. Both observations fuel theoretical underpinnings of the flexible quality of ethnicity. Furthermore, when exploring transfer at this stage, social interaction proves to be a central ingredient of differential experience. The nature of social interaction was found to have implications for differing levels of adjustment between contrasting ethnic groups. Feelings of isolation and exclusion were more apparent among students from ethnic minority groups. Where students perceived social exclusion this constrained interaction. Consequently, this undermined levels of satisfaction felt by students and also lessened opportunities for sharing subject knowledge in the classroom. Both effects also had the potential to influence progression and retention in post compulsory education.

Fieldwork undertaken between May 1997 and June 1998 was very much student-centred; observations and interviews with students were followed up with tutor discussions. A student-centred approach was preferred for two reasons; firstly, in

order to obtain a first hand account of student perceptions of their experience and secondly, because post sixteen research tends to concentrate on management issues rather than on student experience (Elliott, 1996). Consequently, absent from many of the descriptions and discussions regarding post sixteen experience and ethnicity were the voices of those students who were the subjects of research. Between September 1997 and June 1988, perceptions and experiences of 27 students from 4 colleges were charted through a series of semi-structured interviews and observations. Interviews with teaching staff were also undertaken. Staff interviews were primarily conducted in order to provide opportunities for verification as the research aimed from the outset to be student-centred. However, there was the further advantage of staff interviews providing contrasting perceptions of the transfer experience and perhaps providing explanation for various routines and practices affecting experience within this first year. This broadly ethnographic approach was supplemented by questionnaire data compiled from the responses of a total of 525 students. 315 Year 11 students completed questionnaires. 210 students at the end of their first year in post-compulsory education also completed questionnaires.

1.3   The structure of this thesis

The remainder of this thesis is divided into four chapters: Chapter 1, *Review of literature*; Chapter 2, *Methods of collection and analysis*; Chapter 3, *Analysis and discussion of fieldwork data* and Chapter 4, *Conclusions*. The framework concerning ethnicity was developed in conjunction with a review of relevant literature. Therefore, one role of the *Review of Literature* presented here is to demonstrate the essential characteristics of this framework. This is an important role as the framework is applied throughout the thesis to evaluate other research and to interpret fieldwork findings. In the *Review of literature* the themes of *Student Orientation* and *Student Identity* are also evident and are used to discuss previous studies. *Methods of Collection and Analysis* outlines research design and discusses methods of collection and analysis used to guide this thesis. The themes of *Student Orientation* and *Student Identity* are re-visited and extended in Chapter 4 in *Analysis of fieldwork findings*. Revealing and understanding the experience of students from contrasting ethnic groups was one of the central aims of this thesis. This is further developed

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through discussion of differential and similar experiences that are unearthed in the light of research findings. *Conclusions* represents the final chapter of this thesis. This chapter deals with implications of research findings. The theoretical framework concerning ethnicity is also evaluated in this section. It is also germane to identify further research that could assist in advancing the understanding of post sixteen transfer. Hence, attention is also dedicated to this aim in the concluding chapter.

2 Review of literature

When minority and majority groups are compared across an array of social and economic dimensions, various ethnic minority groups surface as severely disadvantaged (Brown, 1984; Jones, 1993; Amin and Oppenheim, 1992 and Office for National Statistics, 1997). There is also convincing evidence that minority ethnic status is subjected to stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination (Skellington with Morris, 1992; Littlewood and Lipsedge, 1982; Hood, 1992, Cashmore 1987 and Solomos, 1993). Differences in outcome for contrasting ethnic groups are also evident at various educational phases including secondary education, further education and higher education (Gillborn and Gipps, 1996; Drew and Gray 1991 and Modood and Acland, 1998). Differences in educational experience have also been charted (Mac an Ghaill, 1988, Mirza, 1992 and Drew, Gray and Sime, 1992). Discussion concerning perceptions of self (Bagley, Mallick and Verma, 1979; Tashakkori and Thompson, 1991 and Bekhuis, 1994) also generates important information demonstrating contrasting trends between ethnic groups. These factors suggest that an exploration of ethnicity is warranted across all manner of social dimensions. Therefore, an important part of this research has been to examine impacts of ethnicity upon student decisions and experience in transferring from secondary school to full-time further education. However, any exploration involving ethnic contrasts should be guided by a comprehensive understanding of the nature of ethnicity. In order to achieve this aim, attention has been dedicated to conceptualising the nature of ethnicity. This is dealt with in the first part of this literature review. The second section of this review involves discussion of contemporary research that provides impressions of student orientation and student identity within minority and majority ethnic groups.

2.1 Theorising ethnicity

For a number of ethnic minority groups in Britain, ethnicity is embedded in a context of disadvantage and discrimination. Hence, disadvantage and poor social status combine to situate minority groups at a differing axial position than those from the majority group. This should not be confused with any suggestion that members of ethnic majority groups possess a homogenous culture and unified interests; it is simply to declare that ethnicity does not have the same weight for minority and majority groups. In this thesis ethnicity is treated as a social and fluid entity. The background to this approach is demonstrated through two key points. Firstly, the formation of ethnic identity is acknowledged as reliant on flexible and complex interactions between past and present social experiences. This fluidity allows a multitude of expressions to emerge. Secondly, the existence and development of ethnic identity is placed in relation to other identities rather than being presented as a singular process.

2.2 Terms of reference

The terms race and ethnicity are often used interchangeably, although both have been marked by distinct traditions. In his article entitled, *Race ends here* (1998), Paul Gilroy argues against the reification of race by academic writers. He argues that historically, race has been regarded as an absolute identity. He asserts that scientific and cultural changes undermine this approach. Gilroy's article is very much tied to the sociology of the body and he argues that body imaging is one of the latest assertions to disavow raciology. Scientific and technological changes resulting from the revolution in molecular biology allow physical appearance to be accessed at unprecedented depths. Gilroy also argues that the present digital age is also contributing to changes in the approach to race as this enables body and health to be imaged differently. He writes:

> These new ways of seeing, understanding and relating to ourselves point to the
> possibility that the time of 'race' may be coming to a close (p840).

However, Gilroy argues that despite such influences on our visual perceptions, race has still not diminished in terms of its social functions. Therefore, he argues that scholarly debate regarding ethnicity should not continue to utilise conservative and

flawed terminology such as 'race'. Instead, ethnicity is considered an appropriate alternative.

Body-Gendrot (1998) is critical of the use of the term ethnicity and makes direct criticism of the position adopted by Gilroy. She accepts that race has no basis in biology, but argues that it remains a critical social marker.

> Skin colour is a visible marker for differentiation and power hierarchization, as red hair was in Ancient Egypt. Cultures select different markers, mistakenly attribute various 'essences' to them and labelling rules henceforth. In the UK and in the USA *consciences collectives* are not colour-blind (p852).

Body-Gendrot asserts that the sustained belief within popular discourse that physical characteristics signify social, intellectual and cultural attributes justifies continuing references to 'race'. However, it is not always necessary to adopt terms of reference that are marred by conservatism and lack of clarity simply because they are commonly used in popular discourse. Furthermore, Body-Gendrot's recognition that 'race' is a social rather than biological marker is not new and this recognition is not rejected through use of the term 'ethnicity'. The biologists Huxley and Hadon (1935) identified the ineptitude of phenotypic categorisations, recognising that these classifications were socially rather than biologically significant. As early as 1935, they argued for the use of the term ethnicity to capture the relationship between phenotypic and social differences.

Throughout this thesis, I have used generic terms of ethnic in preference to race. This has been in order to escape the highly connoted phrase of race that continues to exist in popular culture (Banton, 1998). Also, in constantly applying biological terms of reference belonging to conservative ideologies this could reinforce a sense of inevitable and unassailable difference between groups (Fenton, 1999). There is no denial that a 'racialised' context of ethnicity exists where social differences are linked to physical markers such as skin colour. Neither does the use of the term ethnicity seek to evade an exploration of social relations. Instead, the term ethnicity is used to capture the impression of social and cultural affinity among those who feel a sense of exclusion as well as inclusion. Ethnicity is also used as a reference point

for contrasting differences in experiences and identity between minority and majority groups. These differences are situated in shifting social contexts and relations.

Furthermore, ethnicity is considered to refer to a range of cultural markers including such as language, skin colour and religion. Use of the term 'race' suggests that skin colour is singular and has primacy, aside from emphasising perceived biological rather than social or cultural difference. However, interplay between several cultural factors may define an ethnic group such as religion and place of origin; skin colour is not always the key factor in ethnic group formation or definition.

Within this thesis, reference is made to a variety of ethnic groups. Where research is directly referred to, the term of reference is taken from the author. The term black is used by many authors to identify African American and African Caribbean people in the United States and Britain, respectively. Asian is used as a broad term to describe those with parents and family originating in the Indian sub continent although some have recent roots in East Africa, particularly Uganda and Kenya. Ethnic minorities with family roots in Asia, other than in the Indian sub-continent, are referred to by specific country of origin such as Chinese or Vietnamese.

2.3 Flexible identities

In his conference paper *New Ethnicities* (1992), Hall has pointed out the way in which past and present both influence ethnic identity formation that results in complex 'hybrid' identities. In the nineteenth century hybridity was used as a physiological adjective, relating to the union of distinct racial types. This carried the strong connotation that any mixing of races would result in physiological and social regression. However, in the last decade, cultural critics such as Hall have appropriated the term to reflect the cultural hybridity that is regarded as a phenomenon of much European and American culture. In its contemporary sense, hybridity refers to the way in which ethnic groups retain elements of culture from their parents and adopt many of the cultural elements that are common to the society that they themselves are familiar with. In this approach to hybridity, identity is an amalgam of present and past and there is no sense of older identities being any more

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or less authentic. Hall also refers to the contribution of diaspora experience in the formation of multiple identities. Past reflections are drawn upon in terms of cultural roots and taken from traditions such as African art and Asian filmmaking in contemporary contexts. However, it is now the case that many black people also feel rooted in British society, re-kindling debate regarding what it means to be British and specifically to what degree being British plays in black identity. Hall notes that Gilroy's text, *There Aint no Black in the Union Jack* (1987) takes up this issue, recognising that the parameters of discussion have changed because the identity of black people in Britain has gestated along with everyday experiences of British life.

Changing experiences are at the centre of concepts of hybrid identities (Hall: 1992, Gilroy: 1987, 1998 and Cashmore et al, 1998) and hyphenated identities (Rattansi, 1994). Hybrid identity essentially expresses what Hall outlined, the existence of long-standing and deep-rooted identities imbricated within new identities born of new experience. In terms of ethnicity, this involves attachments ethnic groups may feel with country and/or culture of origin, and at the same time describes attachments to the country of immigration that has developed out of recent experience. The concept of hyphenated identities is another expression of hybridisation, in that individuals have come to describe themselves in terms such as black-British or African-American. This is a binary expression denoting past cultural/national roots plus present placement. It is evident that an overlapping definition is being advanced in terms of individual identity, a definition that follows the pattern of that described in hybrid identities.

In *Changing Ethnic Identities* (1994) Modood, Beishon and Virdee provide further evidence supporting the notion of hybrid identities. They point out that between the 1950s and 1980s migration to Britain from the West Indies and South Asian sub-continent was significant. The most substantial immigration of people from the Caribbean took place during the 1960s whereas the most significant phase of South Asian immigration took place during the 1970s for Indians and during the 1980s for Pakistanis. Family reunification continues for Bengali families, hence, the Asian population in Britain tends to be younger than the white population, whereas the

African Caribbean population tends to share similar age distribution characteristics as the white population. Modood et al (1994) argue that Caribbean and South Asian migrants have become permanent residents across Europe and have social and economic needs as well as cultural identities. They argue that this presence can no longer be considered as that of transient guest workers. They contend that with the onset of each generation, it is likely that identities will change as each generation decides how far to adapt or maintain the identity of its parents. The past-present dimension that incorporates experience of everyday life in Britain is also part of the process that Hall (1992) describes in the formation of hybrid identities.

Rassool's research into the nature of ethnicity among pupils in an inner-city comprehensive lends supportive evidence to the notion of hybrid and flexible identities (1999). Rassool (1999) explored the life histories of Asian and African Caribbean pupils. The term 'black' was used to describe these students in order to symbolise their common experience as the 'other'. Students discussed their view of themselves as citizens, their cultural identity, their hopes and their aspirations. Rassool argues that ethnic minority groups, and African Caribbean males in particular, are often characterised as underachievers. This is often attributed to explanations drawing on language deficits, cultural differences, family structure and social adjustment to British society. Rassool argues that such explanations are rooted in cultural determinism and pathology of immigrant life. She states that such perspectives stand in contradiction to those of individuals from minority groups who now have very different experiences, as Britain is the birthplace for the majority of ethnic minority young people, it is where their self-concepts and attitudes have been defined and shaped. Rassool presents a flexible image of ethnicity and observes attitudes that conform to Hall's concept of hybrid identities. One example of this was the discovery of friction between Muslim pupils and recently arrived Somali refugee pupils. The majority of the Muslim pupils had been born in Britain and had a less traditional interpretation of the religion, whereas the Somali pupils were more likely to hold conservative interpretations of the Muslim religion. Rassool argues that the experience of living in Britain for a longer period led to these differences between both sets of pupils.

However, Rassool (1999) expresses caution in transposing simplistic past-present models onto the experience of ethnic minority groups. She found that among those pupils interviewed, three had a mother and a father from contrasting geo-cultural backgrounds. For example, Arun's mother was Indian and her father was Kenyan; Maria's mother was Colombian and her father African Caribbean. Luke and Luke's (1998) research based on the Australian context also confirms the complexity of ethnic identity formations. Their research was based on families with parents from Anglo-Australian and Indo-Asian backgrounds. Tizard and Phoenix (1993) also make similar observations in their research involving students from mixed parentage families in Britain. Rassool (1999) argues that such a background encourages complex identity formation. She argues that this militates against a simplistic transposition of a past-present model of identity where single, constant traditions are merely passed on. The contrasting traditions of both parents as well as experience of everyday life in Britain are recognised as influential. Rassool also argues that the process is not necessarily linear, developmental or well balanced. For example, personal histories may involve experiences of discontinuity, disruption and displacement. She contends that such complex experiences result in the creation of differing bases for identity between and within ethnic groups.

Various authors describe the way in which experience of racism influences ethnic identity. The contemporary philosophy of cultural racism suggests that essential characteristics define various ethnic groups. Many commentators argue that this is the most prevalent form of racism in contemporary society (Gilroy, 1987, 1998, Hall, 1992, Modood et al, 1997 and Mac an Ghaill 1988).

Kibria argues that a multitude of ethnic identities are now recognised such as Asian, Hispanic and black rather than simple dichotomies of black and white. Kibria argues that these labels are set in a racial context and are ascribed with certain essential attributes in the same way as categories based on phenotypic differences also are. This constitutes cultural racism and it 'uses cultural difference to vilify, marginalise or demand cultural assimilation from groups who also suffer colour-racism'

(Modood et al, p6). However, cultural racism precipitates a range of reactions from ethnic minority groups in order to challenge and survive the stereotyping and discrimination that it embodies. The identities that emerge embrace efforts to assert power over the definition of social space and of self. Varied identities emerge out of this constraining context and this in itself is a fundamental challenge to essentialist notions concerning culture and ethnicity.

Mac an Ghaill (1988, 1994 and 1996) describes cultural expressions of ethnicity that emerge as responses to teacher ideology and practices. Mac an Ghaill's (1988) text is dedicated to three groups of students; a group of African Caribbean and Asian female students in attendance at an inner city sixth form college, one group of African Caribbean males and one group of Asian males from an inner city comprehensive school. Responses of the female students are characterised as resistance within accommodation. African Caribbean males were referred to as Rasta Heads and Asian males were referred to as Warriors. Both of these terms reflected the oppositional identity and practice that had been adopted by these two groups of male students. For the Asian and African Caribbean female students in this study, the strategy undertaken to survive schooling was described as a mixture of accommodation and resistance.

> On the one hand, they reject the racist curriculum; on the other, they value highly
> the acquisition of academic qualifications. Theirs is a strategy that is anti-school
> but pro-education (p11).

Mac an Ghaill argues that these students were strongly opposed to racism but wished to succeed academically. Mirza (1992), Fuller (1982) and Anyon (1983) also present a similar argument.

Mac an Ghaill (1988) devoted the majority of his text to oppositional responses. He argues that Rasta Heads responded to racist stereotyping through visible forms of resistance. The behaviour, dress and speech of African Caribbean male students directly challenged the cultural hegemony that teachers wished to impose within the school. Disruption and verbal challenges were made with the intention of directly opposing teacher ideologies. Asian males were also resistant to racism but Mac an Ghaill argues that their resistance was invisible to most teachers, primarily because

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attention was focused so strongly on African Caribbean students. When any of the Asian 'Warriors' were reprimanded, teachers tended to regard this as an individual action and judgements were not generalised. Hence, Mac an Ghaill argues that the image of the conforming and high achieving Asian student framed teacher responses. This stereotype was continually reproduced as deviance and was attributed to individual rather than collective practices.

Although racism formed an important influence in framing ethnic identity in Mac and Ghaill's research, there were varied responses to this. The accommodating resistance of the females and the direct challenges by the males further exemplified the flexibility in ethnic identity, bending in response to the social context of racism. The dress and speech of the Rasta Heads also drew on perceived African Caribbean symbols of culture and resistance, thus merging past and present influences. Mac an Ghaill's text provides an example of the social construction of ethnic identity in demonstrating how ethnicity is interwoven into the issue of cultural racism.

In summary, these studies demonstrated that the interaction of past and present influences contributed to the formation of hybrid identities. General everyday experience of life in Britain has meant that ethnicity has become redefined for many ethnic minority groups as contemporary influences are embraced alongside past influences. In some cases cultural expressions of ethnicity have become less marked. Generational shifts in the way in which ethnicity is embraced adds a further dimension to the past-present interaction. The interaction of past and present grows in complexity where each parent passes on contrasting cultural traditions. However, the existence of racism in contemporary experience also has the potential to reinforce earlier cultural expressions associated with specific ethnic minority groups such as Rastafarianism. The result of these past-present interactions is captured in the concept of hybrid identities. This concept recognises the fusion of past and present influences that results in a contemporary re-working of ethnic identity.

2.4   Multiple identities

Hall (1992) argues that contemporary analysis of ethnic identity needs to consider the relationship between ethnicity and other identities as 'the black subject cannot be represented without reference to the dimensions of class, gender, sexuality and ethnicity' (p255). Treating ethnicity as a dominant and isolated identity has also been challenged by contemporary methodologies such as post-modernism (Rattansi: 1994) and feminism (Mirza, 1992; Wallace, 1997 and Ware, 1994). These methodologies have helped to encourage a consideration of multiple identities that are not necessarily dominated by ethnicity. Discussion of male identities has also generated explorations of inter-relationships between ethnicity and gender, particularly concerning African Caribbean male identity (Alexander, 1996; Wright, 1998, Mac an Ghaill, 1988 and 1994, and Sewell, 1997). Therefore, Hall argues that the existence of multiple identities needs to be acknowledged as issues such as gender and sexuality also define the experience and attitudes of black people and are imbricated within racial and ethnic identities.

Bulmer and Solomos (1998) acknowledge the existence and complexity of identities. They suggest that ethnicity is one of the many important components of identity.

> Each of us lives with a variety of potentially contradictory identities, which battle
> within us for allegiance: as men or women, black or white, straight or gay, able-
> bodied or disabled. The list is potentially infinite, and so therefore are our possible
> belongings. Which of them we focus on, bring to the fore, identify with, depends
> on a host of factors. At the centre, however, are the values we share or wish to
> share with others (p826).

Bulmer and Solomos (1998) argue that this multiplicity in identity means that for an individual, identity is never just a simple matter of one dominant social or physical marker such as ethnicity. Contemporary life is regarded as far more complex. Bulmer and Solomos also stress that ethnic identity should not merely be regarded as a response to social influences and pressures. It should also be recognised as an expression of individual choice and application.

> Identity is not simply imposed. It is also chosen, and actively used, albeit within
> particular social contexts and constraints (p826).

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Bulmer and Solomos argue against treating ethnicity and identity as though it is entirely imposed by others. They recognise that a degree of individual choice is exercised although this is bounded by the parameters of social context.

Rassool (1999) also contends that ethnic identity formation is intersected by other factors such as gender and argues that this was clear in her study where girls from minority ethnic groups expressed their attitudes to education and work. The girls in Rassool's study regarded themselves as females living in a different time to their parents. For example, Maria was opposed to the constraints of girls in Colombia who she argued were only permitted to undertake housework and prevented from pursuing an education or career. Many of the girls expressed high aspirations for a professional career as education and professionalism were regarded as a means of re-working and re-defining the self. Consequently, one common reaction to racism and sexism was to study hard and challenge stereotypes in this way. Students showed an awareness of prejudices in general and were aware of prejudices within their own ethnic group. In this article, Rassool challenged a linear and stereotypical view of identity and argued for a consideration of class, community, gender and ethnicity when considering social and political identities.

In a similar approach to Hall (1992), Rassool (1999) argues that identities are not unitary or fixed. Individuals are seen to have multiple identities and these shift and intersect according to social experience:

> Subjectivities (...) forged in an ongoing dialogue between past and present
> (Bhabba, 1994) are contingent; they are always in the process of becoming. In
> terms of this 'black', 'immigrant', 'ethnic minority', 'migrant' or refugee'
> identities cannot be viewed as fixed states of 'being'; they are continually being
> shaped within and through everyday interactions with the social world. These
> multiple identities further intersect with social class, gender and generational
> variables (p26).

Hall identifies social class, gender and generational variables as important influences on individual identities.

Wright et al (1998), provide a further example of the way in which ethnicity intersects with other identities. They focus specifically on the formation of male identities among African Caribbean young men within an educational context. They argue that ethnic identity and male identity are inextricably bound. Hence, Wright et al argue that discussion of identity regarding African Caribbean males should involve a consideration of both ethnicity and gender. They argue that when African Caribbean males are compared with African Caribbean females, the outcomes, perceptions and identities associated with each gender are different and this demands investigation along gender lines. However, the experience of African Caribbean males does not mirror that of white males, hence Wright et al also justify investigation along lines of ethnic group. Wright et al explore African Caribbean male identity, noting typologies of masculine identities by authors such as Mac an Ghaill (1995; 1996) and Connell (1989, 1995). These typologies suggest that there are various masculine identities available to males in an educational context. However, Wright et al contend that ethnic and class bias exclude African Caribbean males from access to some forms of masculinity. Wright et al support Connell's argument that although African Caribbean masculinities are not necessarily oppositional, they are not valued as highly as white working class masculinities or 'dominant' masculinities. They argue that this justifies the need to consider African Caribbean masculinity in relation to ethnicity as well as gendered identities.

In *Educating Muslim Girls* (1998), Haw et al provide further evidence of multiple identities. They attempt to unpack complexities involved in the overlapping concerns of religion, ethnicity and gender. There is acknowledgement of the difficulties encountered in forging a satisfactory theorisation and solution to the education of Muslim girls in Britain. Haw adopts a post-structuralist and feminist position, recognising the existence of multiple and fragmented identities. She argues that these identities conflict with the pedagogy of mainstream state education more so than with the ideals and practices of single sex Muslim schools. Haw argues that within female Muslim schools, security and affinity are forged on the basis of shared religion, gender and ethnicity. She argues that this provides a conducive environment for Muslim girls to explore gender identity and ethnicity. Whereas the

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co-educational state education system was thought to disempower Muslim girls. She supports this with comparative observations between the Muslim girls school of Old Town High and a mainstream state school.

> It would seem that the staff and students in Old Town High feel 'comfortable' and confident enough to shift their discursive positionings with respect to the discourses of 'race' and gender as and when the particular moment requires it. This is in contrast to the staff of City State, who appear to be immobilized by many different concerns in their dealings with Muslim students (p134).

Haw argues that the staff at Old Town High, a school for Muslim girls, had a much more flexible approach to ethnicity and perceived less conflict between school values and parental/cultural values concerning gender. Haw argues that this approach affected the way that Muslim girls dealt with their multiple identities.

> Muslim students in Old Town High (...) are potentially better placed to challenge this (disempowered) positioning than their counterparts in City State. Here the idea of equality in difference is central, for it is in Old Town High, where the Muslim students are comfortable in their difference, that there is the potential for the process of exploration and questioning and challenging from within an Islamic framework to begin (p134).

Haw argues that staff at Old Town High provided the confidence and security for Muslim girls to question, endorse and challenge all aspects of their positioning in relation to wider society and to their own group. She also recognised that this approach was not free from difficulties. The dominance of religion within schooling is potentially problematic as there is scope here for bitter conflict between identities such as religion and gender.

Two important points emerge from Haw's analysis. Firstly, Haw has characterised identities as flexible rather than fixed. Secondly, where this flexibility was acknowledged by teaching staff, it appeared to encourage discourse that questioned the social positioning of Muslim girls by Muslim girls themselves. There was potential for this questioning to occur across a number of dimensions, including ethnicity and gender. Haw also recognised that the dimension of ethnicity created different positionings for Muslim females than for white females. The question of gender also generated different positionings for Muslim females compared to Muslim males. Rather than regarding girls as a single oppressed mass, Haw's

analysis identified different positionings on the basis of gender as well as ethnicity and recognised that religion also had an impact on identity.

The recognition of multiple identities does not undermine the importance of ethnicity; rather, it allows an appreciation of the dynamics of identity. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that multiple identities interact in social as well as personal worlds of individuals. Stereotyping and discrimination within society are not only applied to singular identities, interactions of ethnicity and gender for instance are regularly drawn upon. Personal identities also utilise a multitude of dimensions. An appreciation of multiple identities allows an exploration of differing outcomes within ethnic groups that may concern identities other than ethnicity. Recognition of multiple identities also avoids valorisation of ethnic traditions and responses that are detrimental to other identities such as gender identity and sexuality.

2.5   Concluding comments

Throughout this theorisation, the overall concern has been to provide a comprehensive understanding of the nature and importance of ethnicity. The approach that has been adopted centralises the flexible and social nature of ethnicity. Two major points have demonstrated this approach. The first area explored was the flexible formation of identity and secondly there was recognition of multiple identities.

The flexible nature of ethnicity emerges from the impact of past and present influences. Past and present influences are not regarded in a limited sense of linear, bi-polar transmissions of ethnicity. The theorisation here supports the notion of contemporary experience amalgamating with past histories and past imaginings. It is not only the current generation who experience this amalgam of past and present. Each generation is subject to this process regardless of whether they have experience of immigration, as all social systems are subject to change although the rapidity and extent of change varies. Also, the past is not necessarily a stable past. For many immigrants the past has involved family dislocation, diaspora experience and blends

of cultures and ethnicities. The experience of immigration adds a new dimension to the process as this precipitates experience of contrasting cultures, divergent ethnicities and new experiences of everyday life. As each generation becomes more rooted in everyday experience in Britain the interplay between present and past will change. However, an extremely important factor in everyday experience of ethnic minorities is the influence of racism. Contemporary racism has a cultural form and insists that essential and unassailable differences exist between ethnic groups. The reactions and ideologies that emerge from this approach impact upon ethnic minorities to different degrees and there are varied responses to this. Real and imagined histories are drawn upon alongside present experiences of racism and these combine to develop contemporary expressions of ethnicity. Aspects of oppositional culture also emerge as do accommodating and conforming forms of identity. Hence, the interplay of past and present highlights the social and flexible nature of ethnicity. The interaction between past and present also demonstrates that ethnic identity formation is a two way process. It involves responses to social context as well as individual perceptions of what constitutes ethnic identity based on past and present influences and experiences.

Finally, the existence and development of ethnic identity is not regarded as an isolated process, it is placed in relation to other identities. In particular, the relationship between ethnicity and gender has been explored. There is recognition that in lived realities, ethnicity and gender are often linked in the stereotypes and discrimination of others. The responses to this become articulated in ways that draw upon gender identities and ethnic identities. The concept of multiple identities also reflects an awareness of the totality of identities that individuals possess. For instance, sexuality, gender, and social class are all important terms in which individuals define themselves and are defined by others. This inescapable feature means that it cannot be assumed that ethnicity operates independently or always takes precedence over other identities.

The flexibility of ethnicity and the existence of multiple identities keenly suggest that ethnicity is a social, fluid and complex entity. Therefore, it is not possible to use

ethnic group membership as a reliable forecaster of ethnic identity formation or particular behaviour patterns. This thesis supports a flexible view of ethnicity whilst recognising its continuing importance to identity, perceptions and outcomes.

A note on the development of this framework is appropriate here. The theoretical consideration of ethnicity that now frames this thesis evolved out of research practice and a very broad review of literature. My original position was based on a notion of ethnicity as consistently and predominantly centred by skin colour. The limited range of ethnic categories used within the early questionnaire approach is evidence of such thinking. Concentration on skin colour throughout this thesis is also part reflection of my original perspective, as well as consideration of pragmatic constraints. However, useful insight was gained at the level of skin colour difference despite limitations.

2.6   Student Orientation

This thesis is concerned with the contrasting perceptions and experiences of minority and majority students during the transfer process. My approach to ethnicity has been framed above and this shapes the attitude to ethnicity throughout the rest of this thesis. The remainder of this review is divided under the broad headings of *Student Orientation* and *Student Identities*. Contrasts are conducted along lines of ethnicity in order to provide a review of experience and perceptions of minority and majority students.

2.7   Contrasting post-sixteen transfer experience

The first theme concerning *Orientation* involves exploration of student destinations and aspirations. A detailed understanding of post-sixteen destinations has evolved from general national surveys to the emergence of data that is sensitive to contrasts of ethnic origin. This review presents strong examples that embrace a multifaceted analysis of research that also includes contrasts among the post-16 destinations of ethnic groups and the context surrounding these destinations. Current attitudes to destinations and longer-term aspirations are also explored here.

2.7.1 Increased participation in education after sixteen

Ethnicity has proved to be an important factor in the destinations of young people leaving compulsory schooling. This has led Drew (1995) to comment that:

> Once attainment was taken into account, ethnic origin was the single most important factor in determining the chances of staying on; it outweighed all other socio-economic characteristics (p180).

Other research by Gray and Sime (1990), Drew, Gray and Sime (1992) and Gillborn and Gipps (1996), are examples of large-scale investigations that have explored school leaver trajectories along the specific lines of ethnicity. In the absence of such studies, a generalised picture of student trajectories has often been presented. Consequently, where a general picture has been used as a foundation for policy formation, this has had the effect of marginalizing the issue of ethnicity. For example, Gillborn and Gipps (1996) argue that considerations concerning ethnicity have been absent from policy formation since the Swann Report of 1985. They argue that important issues are unveiled when ethnicity is explored which is why research should centralise such explorations. This literature review begins to meet this aim by reviewing research that has contributed to a greater understanding of general as well as ethnically diverse student trajectories and aspirations. In the course of this exploration, influences on destination and aspirations are outlined. This section also includes a review of studies that have contributed to an understanding of life at college for students, across factors such as relationships with tutors and peers, satisfaction with learning contexts and retention issues.

2.7.2 Destinations

Using data collected in the 1970s, Kerchoff identified two major pathways (1990). The first incorporated those who left school early to enter full-time work and also engaged in further education on a part-time basis. The second included those who stayed in education until the age of sixteen and obtained full-time employment immediately after leaving school. This group did not tend to engage in any part-time further education. In essence, Kerchoff argued that students tended to leave school and enter full-time employment rather than engage in full-time education. Kerchoff also identified three major influences on the destinations of school leavers; individual

characteristics, prevailing conditions in post compulsory education and the labour market and finally, events relating to entry into adulthood such as teenage pregnancy. Later studies have shown variations to the major pathways identified by Kerchoff (Banks, et al., 1992). However, later commentators confirm that conditions in education and the labour market are important influences on post-sixteen destination in a contemporary context as they had also been in Kerchoff's analysis (Banks et al, 1992; Hagell and Shaw 1996; Payne et al, 1996 and Mirza, 1993). Drew (1995), Modood and Acland (1998) and Jones (1993) go further and discuss specific implications for ethnic minority groups due to conditions in post-compulsory education and the labour market. This work was useful in drawing attention to general trends within the further education sector, but only a very broad picture was gained, failing to chart nuances in direction across ethnic lines.

When Banks et al (1992) reported their findings on behalf of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) 16-19 Initiative; they were able to provide a more up to date picture of student destinations. Their research was carried out in the late 1980s involving two groups, one group of 15-16 year olds and another group of 17-18 year olds. A total of 5,000 young people were involved. The report by Banks et al was concerned largely with the transition from school to work, but they noted that an important cleavage had emerged in the trends of school leaver destinations. Banks et al noted that the percentage of young people entering the labour market varied from 15% to 20% across contrasting regions but this group formed a minority of all sixteen year old students. The majority of students did not enter the labour market. However, there was a marked contrast in their destinations. Between 17% and 33% of young people involved in the research participated in some form of work-based training scheme. 40% to 60% of school leavers in this study entered full-time post compulsory education. This was in contrast to the findings of Kerchoff who had identified two dominant pathways and each involved entry into full-time employment. Banks et al (1992) summarised the trajectories of school leavers into five categories and these were dominated by educational destinations. 37% of sixteen year olds undertook two year full-time further education courses and this was the prime trend. Secondly, 12% of school leavers undertook one year full-

time education courses. Thirdly, 25% of students undertook YTS and later found employment. Fourthly, 5% of students undertook educational courses followed by YTS. Finally, 21% of school leavers did not participate in education and did not undertake YTS. This included those who were unemployed and those who went straight into employment at sixteen. However, the principal trend was towards full-time further education in the first year of leaving school. This was in stark contrast to the over-riding engagement in immediate employment at sixteen that was revealed in Kerchoff's research.

In *Opportunity and Disadvantage at Age 16*, Hagell and Shaw (1996) explore differences in attainment and contrasting educational experiences across the dimensions of social class, gender and ethnicity. Their research was based on the questionnaire responses of 1,601 students over a ten month period. These sixteen year olds were in their first year of transfer, having left school in Spring/Summer 1993. It should be noted that this research targeted inner city areas hence, some of the findings by Hagell and Shaw do not necessarily concur with national figures. However, Hagell and Shaw wished to explore how common experiences of schooling and local labour market conditions would affect young people in the year immediately following compulsory education. They revealed that the overwhelming trend in post-sixteen destinations was towards further education. 73% of their sample stated that they were engaged in full-time further education, compared to only 12% who were involved in education as well as other activity and 16% who were undertaking alternative routes. Hagell and Shaw contend that this narrow range of destinations reflects the increasingly constrained choices of school leavers. They maintain that this situation has arisen due to the absence of local labour market opportunities. Unemployment is not regarded as an economically rewarding option as reforms to social security claims in the early 1980s suppressed the eligibility of most 16 to 18 year olds. Hence, the former trend of entering full-time employment at sixteen has ostensibly been replaced by post compulsory education or training.

Hagell and Shaw argue that white and African Caribbean students follow very similar pathways. These two groups were reported to have the lowest proportions

following a full-time education pathway and the highest proportions following an alternative pathway such as employment or work-based training. Similarity is stressed between the pathways of these two groups rather than the differences in comparative ratios. This prompts Hagell and Shaw to dispute differences emphasised by Drew (1995) concerning marked differences in the trajectories of contrasting ethnic groups. However, although similar patterns can be discerned in the destinations of white and African Caribbean students, this masks the scale of differences between these two groups. Hagell and Shaw readily acknowledge that ethnic minority groups were far more likely to pursue further education than others and this is an important difference that cannot be ignored for the sake of generalisation. The similarity in general pathways that they identify are important to acknowledge, but this does not cancel out major differences. Furthermore, Hagell and Shaw could be accused of underplaying contrasting destinations between white students and Britain's largest ethnic minority group. Asian school leavers predominantly undertake further education as opposed to employment or work-based training in contrast to white school leavers. Such differences cannot be ignored and the pathways of smaller minority groups cannot be employed to generalise all ethnic minority pathways.

In *Education and Training for 16 to 18 Year Olds* (1996), Payne with Cheng and Witherspoon, present a national picture of the pathways young people seek following compulsory secondary education. This report was based on information from the 1995 Youth Cohort survey, that involved 18 000 students. Payne et al provide an overview of educational and vocational orientation after secondary school. What Payne et al present is a changing picture of young people's orientation over the last twenty years. It is evident that there has been a definite increase in the percentage of young people undertaking full-time education. In 1985, 57% of pupils left school at age sixteen (DfE, 1995). By 1995, this pattern had changed with 70% of sixteen year olds now staying on at school after age sixteen (DfE, 1996). This approximate increase of 13% reflected a prevailing trend by the majority of sixteen year olds who now undertake post-compulsory education. This corroborates the overall trend detected by Banks et al (1992).

Further evidence of the dominance of this trend is found in national figures provided by the Department for Education and Employment (1998a). At the end of 1997, 69.3% of 16 year olds were in full-time education, 9.8% in Government Supported Training, 2.2% in employer funded training, and 4.6% in other education or training (1998a). It is apparent that the majority of sixteen year olds now undertake full-time education rather than work-based training or employment.

This increase has persisted for over ten years. In 1987, only 48.5% of sixteen year olds participated in full-time education whereas figures for 1997 showed a 20% increase. However, this increase in education has coincided with an overall decrease in the participation of sixteen year olds in Government Supported Training. In 1987, 25% of sixteen year olds were involved in this form of training compared to only 9.8% in 1997. Implicit to increased post-sixteen educational participation is the fall in youth employment (DfEE, 1998a).

In *Student Decision Making and the Post Sixteen Market Place* (1996), Foskett and Hesketh characterise post-sixteen education as an expansionist market. They argue that it has expanded over the last decade and its dynamic is contrived to stimulate this growth. For instance, they point out that the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) required that student enrolments increase by 28% between 1992/3 and 1996/7 (FEFC, 1995). Further education institutions had to attempt to reach this target in order to secure funding from the FEFC. Foskett and Hesketh also recognise that the post-sixteen labour market has shrunk during the last ten years and this has widened the potential market for further education institutions. They maintain that these factors have combined to stimulate growth in post-sixteen education.

Within the general destinations of school leavers, Payne et al also gave consideration to gender differences. Before the 1970s, boys were more likely to stay on than girls were. However, they found that girls are now more likely to stay on at sixteen than boys. This difference continues but the gap is narrowing with increases in both male and female participation in post-compulsory education.

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Table 1   Activities in the first year after compulsory schooling by sex, 1989-94

	Full-time education (%)		Full-time job (%)		YT/YTS (%)		Base N	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1989	43	53	25	20	27	20	7,227	6,889
1991	53	64	19	13	19	14	7,410	7,101
1992	61	71	13	8	17	12	12,726	12,197
1994	69	75	9	6	14	10	9,197	8,824

(Source: Payne et al, Education and Training for 16 to 18 Year Olds, 1996, table 1.2.)

Using Youth Cohort Study data, the information provided by Payne et al (1996) provides a contemporary portrait of destinations. There is a clear indication of an increase in full-time education participation and a decrease in participation in full-time employment and government training schemes for sixteen to eighteen year olds. As already noted, the gender differences in male and female participation in full-time education are both rising. However, the gap between male and female participation is closing. In 1989, 10% more females engaged in post-compulsory full-time education. By 1994, this gap had narrowed to only 6%. Hagell and Shaw (1996) also discussed gender differences in their research and discovered that girls were more likely than boys to continue education after sixteen. They found that 78% of girls continued full-time education after sixteen compared to 73% of boys. Gender differences also occurred within course participation. Females (39%) were slightly more likely to undertake A Levels than males (33%). Females were also more likely to undertake higher-level vocational qualifications than males. Approximately 10% of males undertook Advanced GNVQ and NVQ 3 equivalent qualifications compared to 12% of females. However, 20% of males undertook NVQ Level 1 and 2 equivalent courses compared to 17% of females (DfEE, 1998b)

The studies reviewed so far have contributed to the formation of an overall picture of post sixteen trajectories. There is strong evidence of increasing participation in further education after compulsory schooling. However, absent from the studies reviewed so far is a detailed insight into ethnic contrasts in post sixteen destinations. The Swann Report (1985) formed the first government report to discuss differential attainment between contrasting ethnic groups. In doing so, it highlighted the lack of

statistical data gathered by local education authorities and pointed to the lack of research concerning differences in educational experience and outcome across ethnic groups. This report also recognised as early as 1985, that variations across majority and minority ethnic groups were becoming established in post-sixteen education. It was noted that of the five Local Education Authorities (LEAs) with the largest ethnic minority populations, 33% of Asian students and 28% of African Caribbean students commenced post compulsory education at sixteen compared to only 17% of other groups. Despite these observations, large-scale quantitative research contrasting the trajectories of ethnic groups did not fully emerge until Drew, Gray and Sime's seminal research in 1992.

Drew, Gray and Sime (1992) verified the same trends in post-compulsory education that had been noted in the earlier Swann Report (1985). Utilising YCS data covering the period from 1984 to 1989 Drew, Grey and Sime explored the trajectories of students between the ages of 16 and 19. This research involved a sample of 28,000 young people; 9,000 of whom were of Asian origin, 5,000 were of African Caribbean origin and the remaining 14,000 were white. Drew recognised that staying on rates were higher for ethnic minorities than for white students noting that 67% of Asian students and 51% of African Caribbean students stayed on. This was compared to only 37% of white students staying on. Using data from the 1988-1990 Labour Force survey, Jones (1993) concentrated on ethnic differences in education, housing and unemployment. In regard to education, Jones also found that participation in further education was particularly high for ethnic minorities with the exception of African Caribbean males. This observation was also noted in an earlier study by Craft and Craft (1983). Their research focused on students from a single education authority in Greater London who were participating in further education during 1979. Craft and Craft noted that only 44% of white students stayed on, whereas 50% of African Caribbean and 80% of Asian students stayed on.

Later official sources reinforce Drew's (1995) observation concerning differences in the level of participation in further education across contrasting ethnic groups.

Table 2   Participation in post-compulsory full-time education by age 16, Spring 1994

England and Wales	% within each group
Indian	95
Other Asian	89
Black	86
Pakistani/Bangladeshi	80
Other ethnic minorities	75
White	71

(Source: Youth Cohort Study, DfEE, *Social Focus on Ethnic Minorities*, 1996, table 3.2)

Table 2 illustrates that ethnic minority groups are far more likely to participate in education whereas white sixteen year olds are the least likely of all groups to undertake further education at this stage. Research by Modood et al (1997) confirms similar trends.

Drew (1995) also highlighted the importance of exploring interactions of identities. He discovered significant ethnicity-gender intersections in post-sixteen educational involvement. He found that although girls from most ethnic groups were more likely to stay on than were boys, girls from Asian ethnic groups were less likely to continue education after sixteen than boys were. The largest gender differences related to young people of Caribbean and Pakistani origin. There was an approximate difference of 10% between the staying on rates of Caribbean males and females and between the staying on rates of Pakistani females and males. Caribbean males were less likely to stay on than females and an inverse trend applied to Pakistani females. The differences between other ethnic groups were less marked and ranged between approximately 1-4%.

Drew (1995) and Gray and Sime (1990) suggested that different ethnic groups undertook contrasting avenues on entry to post-compulsory education as they noted a tendency for African Caribbean students to undertake vocational courses. Drew also maintained that African Caribbean students were the least successful academic achievers at sixteen and so would not be well placed to immediately undertake

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A Levels. This could have the effect of pushing African Caribbean students towards vocational courses. Drew (1995) also maintains that participation in vocational courses reflected a concern with labour market opportunities by African Caribbean students. Drew contends that these concerns are triggered by relatively low levels of employment and unequal opportunities of access to employment. Meager and Williams (1994) echo this concern in their research as they point out that African Caribbean sixteen year olds are the least likely ethnic group to gain employment. The desire to gain access to the labour market through enhancing work-related skills is perhaps perceived as being more readily facilitated through vocational courses rather than re-sitting GCSE courses. In contrast to the course choices of African Caribbean students, Drew (1995) established that Asian students were more likely than any other group to undertake re-sits to improve on results gained at age sixteen. Hence, by the age of eighteen, African Caribbean students are the most qualified in vocational terms and Asian students most qualified in academic terms. Connolly and Torkington (1992) also observed similar patterns as Drew and concluded that students from contrasting ethnic groups held different perspectives regarding the functions of post-sixteen education. They maintain that African Caribbean students were more likely to consider further education as a means of gaining vocational qualifications and Asian students were more likely to treat it as a means of garnering academic qualifications. However, Drew expresses a degree of caution in assuming that all African Caribbean students favour vocational courses and all Asian students prefer to undertake re-sits. Cross et al (1990) also express caution in characterising students on this basis. Their research revealed that stereotyping of this nature was common among careers officers. Furthermore, Drew points out that limited research had been conducted into participation in further education at the time of his research. Therefore, it was difficult to provide a far-reaching account even though his research provided modest evidence pointing out differences between ethnic groups.

There is some support for findings by Drew, Gray and Sime (1992) in official figures using information from 1993/4 in England and Wales and from 1994/5 in Scotland. These statistics indicate ethnic differences in terms of the type of courses that students are likely to undertake at sixteen. It is clear that all ethnic groups were more

likely to engage in vocational rather than academic qualifications. However, 26% of white students and 22% of African Caribbean students undertook vocational qualifications, so making them the most likely of all groups to undertake a range of GNVQ and NVQ qualifications. In contrast, 33% of Chinese students and 33% of Asian students undertook academic qualifications and so emerged as the most likely of all ethnic groups to undertake GCSEs and A Levels (Office for National Statistics, 1996).

Table 3   Percentage of enrolments on further education courses in the United Kingdom by ethnic group, 1993/94

	Academic courses %	Vocational courses %	Other courses %
African Caribbean	23	59	18
Asian	33	50	17
Chinese	33	44	23
White	25	62	12

(Adapted from: Office for National Statistics, *Social Focus on Ethnic Minorities*, 1996, table 3.3.)

There are differences between ethnic minority groups here and contrasting patterns between minority students and white students. White students are the most likely of all groups to undertake vocational qualifications. In terms of employment opportunities, white students are also the best placed as this group has the highest rate of employment and the lowest rate of unemployment (Jones, 1993). Meager and Williams (1994) also concur that at the age of sixteen, white school leavers are the most likely group to gain employment. Although course trends are similar between white and African Caribbean students, this may be motivated by distinct concerns that have emerged from dissimilar social positioning. These differing trends across ethnic groups may also be a reflection of GCSE grades. Indian students and Other Asian (largely Chinese) students gain the highest GCSE grades and are more likely than other groups to gain access to academic courses (*Social Focus on Ethnic Minorities*, 1996).

Drew (1995) stresses that attainments at sixteen have a fundamental influence in terms of the choices available to young people. He maintained that the insistence

upon five GCSE passes at grade C or above effectively excluded capable young people from academic study and had specific implications for students from ethnic minority groups. Students from African Caribbean backgrounds and Bengali students in particular were the least likely of all ethnic groups to obtain these grades. Therefore, their course choices were immediately constrained by their grades. There is a pressure towards vocational course choice and later on possible disadvantages in access to higher education as this is facilitated more effectively with academic qualifications.

Gillborn and Gipps (1996) have undertaken one of the most important reviews of research aimed at capturing an accurate portrait of educational outcomes and trajectories across contrasting ethnic groups. *Recent Research on the Achievements of Ethnic Minority Pupils* (1996) is based on a comprehensive collection of data from 34 local education authorities. These authorities embraced the largest concentrations of Britain's ethnic minorities. In this text, Gillborn and Gipps highlighted contrasting differences between white students and students from the two main ethnic minority groups in Britain, South Asian and African Caribbean students. An initial discovery was the paucity of data as well as the lack of standardisation in the way authorities collected information relating to ethnicity. Despite these difficulties, Gillborn and Gipps outlined ethnic differences in destinations of students at sixteen.

Gillborn and Gipps (1996) recognised that ethnicity was a determining factor in staying-on rates. Like Drew (1995), they found that ethnic minorities were more likely to stay on than white students. Social class position of ethnic minority students made little difference to this trend. In some cases, working class ethnic minority students were more likely to stay on than white students from the same social class. Gillborn and Gipps attribute this increased participation to greater level of parental support for further education among ethnic minority groups. Other commentators have also advanced this explanation (Basit, 1996, 1997; Drew, 1995; Siann and Knox 1992 and Mirza, 1992). Like Drew (1995), Gillborn and Gipps also suggest that staying on is a reaction by ethnic minorities to the high level of youth unemployment. Gillborn and Gipps observed that African Caribbean students do not

tend to gain as many GCSEs as white and Asian students and so were less likely to be eligible to take up A Level courses at sixteen. Consequently, white and Asian students were more likely than African Caribbean students to undertake two or more A Levels on entry into further education and African Caribbean students more likely to undertake vocational courses. Gillborn and Gipps argue that South Asian students were more likely than other groups to undertake re-sits and additional GCSEs before going on to A Levels. Hence, by the age of 18, South Asian students were the most academically qualified of all groups. These differences have implications for access into higher education. Like Drew (1995), Gillborn and Gipps assert that recent reforms have failed to challenge such persistent differences of outcome and opportunity.

2.7.3   Major explanations for increasing participation

Banks et al (1992) cited three major factors that influenced student direction immediately after compulsory schooling. These were educational achievements at the end of secondary schooling, labour market opportunities and social background. Kerchoff (1990) had noted similar influences in his earlier study. However, Banks et al went further than Kerchoff and investigated the differences in school leaver trajectories whilst considering social class and other inequalities. They noticed that the higher social class school leavers were from, the more likely they were to continue into post-compulsory education. Banks et al regarded this as the most beneficial pathway, one that would provide students with long-term labour market advantages. Those who found immediate employment benefited economically in the short term but this benefit declined over time. Those regarded as being in the worst position were those school leavers who went directly into vocational training, as this tended to include those who had few educational qualifications and those who had been unable to gain access into the local labour market. Although Banks et al were able to offer some insight into the socio-economic differences that affected the pathways of school leavers this report neglected an investigation of ethnic differences.

Micklewright (1989) and Micklewright, Pearson and Smith, (1990) also discussed social class differences in trends. They noted that the gap was narrowing between

middle class and working class pupils in terms of staying on rates. Like Banks (1992) and Kerchoff (1990), Micklewright and others maintain that unfavourable conditions in the youth labour market are influential and largely responsible for this increase in working class staying on rates. However, although recognising that working class participation has increased, The *Guardian* newspaper noted that David Robertson's report to the Dearing Committee (1997) stated that social class differences persisted in the participation of students in continuing education. Robertson argued that people from backgrounds in the lower three of the five social classes were only 70% as likely to continue in further or higher education than those from the top two social classes.

Hagell and Shaw explored some of the reasons for commitment to full-time education but did not explore these by ethnic group. The three most common responses were; 'I wanted to improve my qualifications' (53%), 'I want to go to university eventually' (49%) and 'I need more qualifications for the job I want' (44%). These reasons all related to the enhancement of qualifications. Hagell and Shaw demonstrate that reasons for remaining in education were also related to actual and perceived local labour market conditions. Students who stated that, 'It's better than being unemployed' (17%), and 'I couldn't find a job' (6%), reflected such concerns.

Payne et al surmise that students are increasingly pushed towards taking on further education after sixteen due to several inter-related factors. These include changes within the labour market and an increase in A-C grades obtained at GCSE and changes to educational provision, particularly the expansion of vocational qualifications. This comprises the fastest growing area of post-sixteen education.

Drew (1995) cites three major influences affecting the decision to continue education after sixteen. Firstly, there are the individual aspirations of students, which embody their experience of school and expectations concerning further education after sixteen. This was seen to affect the level of commitment felt towards education. Secondly, the advice and pressure that was presented by various sources such as

family, careers advisors and peers was also considered influential on post-sixteen trajectories. Thirdly, Drew maintained that conditions within the local labour market were also influential. For example, poor employment opportunities could encourage participation in further education after sixteen. However, financial necessity could also pressurise students to seek employment if they were from households that suffered high unemployment. Drew recognised that these factors were applicable to all sixteen year olds. However, he defined a major source of difference as the way in which employment opportunities varied for young people from different ethnic backgrounds. Using figures quoted from the January edition of the 1987 Employment Gazette, Drew noticed that more than 30% of African Caribbean men, 28% of Indian men, 37% of Pakistani and Bengali men between the ages of 16-24 were unemployed. This was set in comparison to only 20% of white men within the same age category. Drew argues that this is the fundamental factor that drives young people from ethnic minority groups to stay on. The acquisition of qualifications and skills are perceived as being able to improve employment prospects or occupational status. Research by Eggleston et al (1985) also asserts that unequal unemployment opportunities exaggerate the tendency for some ethnic minority groups to continue education after sixteen. Other commentators have also suggested that increased participation among ethnic minority groups is due to the recognition of racism within the labour market. One response to this is to delay entry into employment (Basit, 1996; Siann and Knox 1992; Mirza, 1992 and Penn and Scattergood, 1992). This is complementary to the aim of improving labour market position by increasing educational qualifications.

Understanding the context of post-sixteen decision-making also contributes to an appreciation of transfer experience. Eggleston et al (1986) tracked 800 ethnic minority and white students from secondary schools and throughout their first year of post compulsory education. Research was conducted at various further education institutions including school sixth forms and further education colleges. Eggleston et al recognised that staying on rates were particularly high for ethnic minority students. They attempted to account for this by arguing that relatively poor employment prospects encourage ethnic minorities to defer entry into the labour market. Using

evidence from the 1981 Labour Force survey, they note that 56% of African Caribbean males, approximately 50% of Asian males and only 36% of white males, were employed in manufacturing and transport industries. Eggleston et al maintain that this level of exclusion from employment has the effect of pushing individuals into further education. Cross, Wrench and Barnett (1990) also suggest that discrimination and inequality operate in the labour market, resulting in a 'push' towards further education for young people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Connolly and Torkington conducted research in Liverpool in 1992 that formed a special extension to the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)16-19 Initiative conducted by Banks et al (1992). The large-scale research of Banks et al was important in presenting a contemporary and very general portrait of post-sixteen trajectories. Research by Connolly and Torkington was specifically concerned with the transition of African Caribbean school leavers into the local labour market. Their attitudes were found to have implications for participation in post-compulsory education. 134 African Caribbean young people were interviewed and their responses compared to white peers interviewed for the ESRC 16-19 Initiative. These young people were more likely than their white peers to have a negative view of school and were disillusioned with employment prospects due to the operation of racism. Their parents also suffered from higher rates of unemployment than others in the same age group. These young people were also less likely than even the least qualified of white Liverpudlians to be unemployed. However, Connolly and Torkington (1992) reported that there were varied reactions to social positioning as some respondents attributed value to qualifications and others viewed qualifications negatively. Therefore, it should not be presupposed that labour market conditions would have a one-dimensional effect on educational participation. It may be that high unemployment levels incite an urgency to secure employment and contribute to family income rather than consistently pushing young people towards education. This is further corroborated by figures provided by Drew (1995) and Gillborn and Gipps (1996) who all suggest that African Caribbean males are less likely to participate in further education than African Caribbean females, and yet unemployment is higher for males than females within this ethnic group. Connolly

and Torkington also noticed less enthusiasm among African Caribbean males towards education and suggest that this was a reflection of negative experience at secondary school. Therefore, such experience should also be regarded as influential on the decision to continue education after sixteen alongside labour market explanations.

Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (1996) maintain that it is important to be aware of social and economic context to post-sixteen trajectories. They contend that subjectivities of sixteen year olds should be considered and within this they specifically challenge the notion of the 'discouraged worker'. This concept refers to a shift in the direction of young people who would formerly have sought employment in traditional industries but now turn to further education at 16. The restructuring of industry in the early 1980s and 1990s is thought to have driven employment downwards and precipitated youth unemployment (Roberts, 1995). Service industries that have arisen in place of traditional industries are characterised as reliant on female centred labour and mature workers (Hutton, 1995). Those who stand in defence of the 'discouraged worker' approach, argue that these factors have had the net result of increasing further education admissions among all sixteen year olds (Ashton et al, 1988, Raffe and Willms, 1989, Gray et al, 1992 and Furlong and Biggart, 1995). Haywood and Mac an Ghaill argue that such an approach as the 'discouraged worker' presupposes that the single variable of labour market conditions is solely responsible for the decision of young people to enter further education. They argue that young people do not all share the same identity and not all will be affected by changes in the labour market in the same way. They have a particular interest in expressions of masculinities in this changing social and economic context. They argue that one cultural by-product of the desegregated local labour market has been the emergence of new masculinities. Haywood and Mac an Ghaill contend that identities and subjectivities need to be more fully explored. They argue that it is not necessarily a question of young people being forced into post-compulsory education; there is a sense in which young people may be aiming to secure an identity within changing social contexts and seek this in further education. Haywood and Mac an Ghaill describe this process as 'self-production', a term

borrowed from Knights and Willmott (1986). This signifies a means of recognising agency in the choices of young people at sixteen rather than characterising destinations as products of social compulsion. Although Haywood and Mac an Ghaill concentrate on white working class masculinities, they argue that other identities that are related to social divisions such as ethnicity and sexuality also require consideration.

Commentators such as Erikson and Jonsson (1996) refer to cultural differences in explaining the differential pathways of school leavers. Erikson and Jonsson's position is located in the broad frame of Rational Action Theory and this is one of the most popular explanations of differences in destinations and outcomes. Their approach is rooted in Boudon's (1974) theory of cultural reproduction. Boudon cited education as a fundamental form of cultural capital that enabled the reproduction of social class divisions. This was largely based on the correlation observed between educational qualifications and employment status. Boudon noted that the level of educational qualifications obtained by individuals and extended experience in education, both correlated positively with occupational status, socio-economic status and employment opportunities. He maintains that middle class families generally have higher levels of education that have required extended contact with the education system above that of working class families. This variance is held responsible for decisions relating to choice of educational institution, subject choices and course choices at sixteen. Erikson and Jonsson argue that middle class parents are able to offer advice concerning matters such as what college should be attended and what course should be studied because of their relatively higher qualifications and their extended experience in the education system. Conversely, working class parents tend to have achieved lower qualifications and tend to have had less experience within education. Therefore, they are unable to provide the same level of advice as middle class parents.

Erikson and Jonsson (1996) reinforce Boudon's approach, maintaining that cultural norms and values are passed from one generation to the next. They also add that these norms and values are reinforced through a calculation of net gains; a

consideration of what means are required to protect economic and social position. This concern is integral to decisions concerning pathways at the point of educational transition. For middle class young people, this generally involves continuing education after sixteen along the same route as parents. Traditional middle class occupations in professional and managerial positions tend to require this extended educational experience. However, working class occupations require lower qualifications and this involves less time spent in education. According to Erikson and Jonsson, this accounts for the weaker tradition of full-time education after sixteen among working class young people. Consequently, levels of involvement in post-sixteen education continue to differ between middle class and working class young people.

Goldthorpe (1998) has developed the concept of net gains further in recognition of agency on the part of individuals. He maintains:

> I assume that actors have goals, have usually alternative means for pursuing these
> goals and, in choosing their courses of action, tend in some degree to assess
> probable costs and benefits rather than, say, unthinkingly following social norms of
> giving unreflecting expression to cultural values (1996, p485).

Goldthorpe (1998) argues that even when individual motivations are taken into consideration, working class experience in the education system remains weaker than that of middle class students, as middle class students spend more time in education and emerge with higher qualifications.

Rational action theory attempts to decipher cultural dynamics of enduring social differences. However, the scope of this approach is arguably too narrow. Rational action theory relies on arguments of mono-cultural transmission of values and has a primary focus on social class differences. This results in an inability to provide a full explanation of reasons for choice and contrasting differences in destinations. Rational action theory is dependent on a static model wherein cultural values are passed on from one generation to the next and the values reinforced by pragmatic assessments that occur in stable contexts. Although social class differences in educational outcome and destination are well documented (Micklewright, 1989; Micklewright et al, 1990; Hagell and Shaw, 1996 and Drew, Gray and Sime, 1992),

the socio-economic context of actual destinations is arguably undergoing change. Hutton (1995) and Green and Rikowski (1995) provide evidence suggesting that the context of post-sixteen choice has experienced change necessarily creating a degree of instability. Rational action theory also argues that destinations replicate family patterns and consequently reproduce familial social class position. However, there has been an increasing presence of diverse family structures including a growing number of households headed by lone parents. For instance, in Britain during 1972, two parents headed approximately 92% of households with children. This compares to a decline to 80% of children in Britain residing in households with two parents between 1995-96 (*Office for National Statistics*, 1997). Other changes to family structures have also occurred such as increases in the divorce rate and the associated increase in stepfamilies. These changes may have altered and complicated the chain of transmission of cultural capital that is assumed within rational action theory. This simple chain is also called into question when considering the change that has occurred in student destinations. Unprecedented proportions of working class students now participate in post-sixteen education although this still does not equal middle class participation. This provides a contrast with the experience of many working class parents rather than a replication of experience.

Rational action theory rests on an assumption that single cultures are transmitted across classes and result in the reproduction of social class hierarchies. However, this principle can be challenged at a number of levels. Firstly, sub-cultural theorists such as Willis (1976) have aimed to demonstrate that working class students are not entirely passive and accepting of dominant cultural norms. In *Learning to Labour* (1976), Willis demonstrated that students are capable of constructing alternative hierarchies and value systems of their own in rejection of school culture. Brown's *Schooling Ordinary Kids* (1987), sought to explain the cultural value systems of the majority of school children. Brown contends that contrasting attitudes to school were evident among students from similar socio-economic backgrounds. Some pupils wanted to leave school and go straight into work, others wanted to remain in education, as they perceived this as a means of achieving social mobility. Others wanted to continue in education in order to gain more satisfying occupations than

those of their parents. However, this diversity is ignored in mono-cultural explanations of the transmission of values.

Mirza's study of working class African Caribbean females also illustrates that interactions between social class and ethnicity can impact on orientation. In *Young, Female and Black* (1992), she argued that emphasis for success is placed on African Caribbean women. She maintains that this is reflected in the high education and career aspirations of the young women in her study. Cost-benefit analysis was involved to a degree as many of these young women intended to go into traditionally 'feminine' areas of study and employment as this was regarded as the most effective route to mobility. However, these young women sought mobility rather than social class reproduction. Mirza argues that destinations of young people are also influenced by the gendered and racially segregated labour market. She stresses that this is primarily responsible for influencing pathways after sixteen. Mirza also (1993) takes issue with the notion that African Caribbean females were more successful in education and employment due to the presence of strong role models in the form of their mothers. She challenges the position adopted by some commentators that the presence of strong mothers are primarily responsible for the aspirations of African Caribbean females (Fuller, 1982; Sharp 1987; Phizacklea 1982, 1983 and Dex 1988). Fuller receives particularly sharp criticism as her work assisted in popularising this explanation of differential experience, attainment and aspirations. The logic of rational action theory would also support Fuller's approach, wherein parental values are accepted and translated into appropriate action. At the time of Mirza's research (1993), the majority of black males in London occupied semi-skilled and skilled manual positions compared to the majority of black females in London who occupied non-manual positions. Mirza contends that these material differences shaped the aspirations and perceptions of African Caribbean school students who were on the verge of transfer. She argues that these local labour market conditions are far more influential than family structures, values and practices. Furthermore, Mirza (1992) illustrates that there is an important interaction of identities and this is further complicated by contextual considerations.

The challenges garnered against rational action theory demonstrate that there are numerous influences on the decision of young people to continue education after sixteen. Whilst appreciating the existence of enduring social class differences within education, this should not exclude considerations of other important social divisions. It is important to explore differences across ethnic groups for instance, but there is no scope for this within the boundaries of rational action theory. Some commentators have noted that racism and prejudice within employment for instance, obstructs access for young people from minority groups (Drew, 1995; Penn and Scattergood, 1992). Consequently, they are deterred by perceptions of discrimination and prejudice in the labour market. Therefore, they delay this encounter whilst building a buffer through the accumulation of qualifications (Penn and Scattergood, 1992 and Mirza, 1992). Furthermore, the basic effects of positive or negative school experiences are ignored in terms of influence on the decisions of young people in pursuing further education at sixteen. Research by Wrench, Hassan and Qureshi (1996), and Wrench, Hassan and Owen (1996) suggest that such experiences are important considerations. GCSE attainment at sixteen has also proven significant in regard to destination and course choice (Hagell and Shaw, 1996; Drew, 1995 and Gillborn and Gipps, 1996). The final criticism of rational action theory is the assertion of the direct and unwavering link between education and employment. Gleeson and Hodkinson (1995) criticise this association. They argue that education has an intrinsic value for some individuals and is not necessarily or consistently linked to career aspirations. Gleeson and Hodkinson challenge what they see as the drive towards new vocationalism, where the value of education is constantly tied to employment rather than fulfilling a range of interests and needs.

2.8   The context of student destinations

It is important to recognise that student aspirations are framed by contemporary social contexts, some of which include local labour market conditions, masculine and feminine subjectivities, dominant and sub-cultural values, racism and discrimination and calculations of benefit. However, the aspirations of students and experiences of students are also important to reveal in order to gain a fuller picture of the post sixteen transfer process. It is evident that individual hopes of students and

aspirations of parents are robust even in the face of disadvantaged social positioning (Drew, 1995). The role of careers advisors is also considered by some commentators to be of influence on student choices. Earlier educational experiences also influence student aspirations and destinations. Current educational experience is influential also and carries with it a number of implications for student retention. Support networks that are available to students also have an influence on framing post sixteen choices.

2.8.1   *Individual hopes and aspirations of students*

In terms of the individual hopes and aspirations of students, Mirza (1993) discusses the thoughts of 62 African Caribbean girls between the ages of 15 and 19 who were observed over a period of eighteen months in urban areas throughout London. Mirza found that the career aspirations of these girls were high, with all of them aiming for upward social mobility. They invested strongly in the idea of meritocracy and perceived education as a means for advancement. Consequently, there was little awareness of discrimination within the labour market. These findings also resonate in Basit's (1996) research. Basit also found that Asian girls had high aspirations for their educational careers they were also largely unaware of the prospect of discrimination. Mirza's research had shown that the career choices of African Caribbean girls related to material concerns aimed at enhancing socio-economic position in accordance with the aim for upward mobility. Basit also found that girls were motivated in their career choice according to what professions held high status. This also applied to Muslim girls in research conducted by Siann and Knox (1992). They found that aspirations among this group of females were high with many hoping for material advancement. Muslim girls were more likely than ethnic majority girls to choose a career on the basis of good pay. Like the African Caribbean girls in Mirza's study, Siann and Knox found that Muslim girls also had faith in the idea of meritocracy. The parents of the girls were aware of inequalities particularly in the labour market, but tended to believe that qualifications would shield their children from prejudice and disadvantage. Furthermore, Siann and Knox maintain that an additional factor exists in the development of aspirations and choices of Muslim girls. Familial consideration was cited as a key factor in career

choice. Siann and Knox adopt the approach of Jeffery (1976), who asserts that the concept of 'Izzet', family honour, is fundamental to Muslims. Muslim girls were more likely than ethnic majority girls to choose a trajectory in order to please parents. Siann and Knox argue that this may relate to the issue of 'Izzet' within Muslim families where collective honour and status are highly valued.

2.8.2 Parental influences on aspirations

Overall, parents are supportive of student aspirations and choices (Drew, 1995 and Foskett and Hesketh, 1996). Basit's study involved interviews with 24 Muslim girls aged between fifteen and sixteen years old, their parents and teaching staff. Basit indicated a number of factors influencing decisions to continue in education or seek work at age 16. She refers to the 'migrant effect' (Mirza, 1992) in that parents frustrated with their own progress project their aspirations onto their children. Consequently, education and training are promoted as routes to mobility. Basit argued that girls in general seek upward social mobility and the Muslim girls in this study were not an exception. She observed that Muslim girls had aspirations to participate both in further and higher education and also had strong parental endorsement of these aspirations. Most Muslim girls in Basit's research wanted a career before and after marriage. Most parents were also keen for their daughters to undertake careers that were different to their own. Basit argues that parents promoted education due to their own qualification deficit and their concomitant position in the labour market. Among the Muslim girls in this study, Basit found that nearly half of their fathers were unemployed and the overwhelming majority of mothers were housewives. She maintained that this fuelled high career aspirations among Muslim girls, as they did not wish to struggle economically as their parents had. This is echoed in several studies such as those of Penn and Scattergood (1992), Mirza (1992), Siann and Knox (1996) and Siann et al, (1990). In all of these studies the students viewed education as a form of economic insurance and their parents also shared this approach. Teachers in Basit's (1997) study also identified this instrumentalist approach to education among Muslim girls.

The Muslim girls in Basit's research aspired to a range of careers but some of their parents' ideas were narrower (1997). Other families were accepting of the careers chosen by their daughters even though this may have been dissimilar from parental ideals. Basit found that there was some variance in terms of parents' attitudes towards Muslim women working. However, where there was disagreement within families, the person in favour of post compulsory education and careers for women was usually able to persuade the other that it would be beneficial. Basit argues that this negotiation challenges the stereotyped view of imposing and immovable Muslim parents who either coerce students into post sixteen education or prevent girls from undertaking this route.

Drew (1995) found that family encouragement to continue post compulsory education was particularly marked among Asian and African Caribbean students. 70% of Asian students, 66% of African Caribbean students and only 48% of white students stated that they had received parental encouragement to stay on. With specific reference to Asian students and parents, he noted that there was a great deal of agreement between parents and students regarding the decision to continue in education. Although 70% of parents had encouraged their children to stay on, 85% of students actually stayed on. This strongly suggests that Asian students are not generally resistant to the idea of staying on or unduly pressurised by parents. Hence, this provides further confirmation that Asian parents and students are commonly in agreement rather than at odds over the issue of staying on; a situation that has been observed by Basit (1996), Mirza (1992) and Siann and Knox (1992).

Siann and Knox (1992) argue that education contributes to family honour as it is credited as being able to enhance labour market position. Therefore, parents are willing to support the pursuit of further education for this aim. Hence, formal education is appreciated for its instrumental value rather than for its spiritual value. Spiritual education is perceived as the responsibility of the family.

Some of the teachers in Basit's study (1997) argued that parents promote high aspirations regardless of the ability of the individual child. However, Basit's

research found parents to be supportive of the aspirations of their children as opposed to bullying. For example, Basit found that some teaching staff expected that Asian parents in particular, pressurised students to study medicine regardless of ability. However, Basit found that only 3 out of 24 parents held this aspiration for their daughters. Two of the daughters involved here persuaded their parents that they would be more suited to alternative courses. Again, this indicates a level of support and negotiation in student trajectories as opposed to less democratic enforcement which Asian parents are at times stereotyped as presenting. Other commentators also regard Muslim parents as supportive of post-compulsory education and careers for Muslim girls (Brah and Minhas, 1985; Salik and Kelly, 1989, Verma and Ashworth, 1986 and Drew, Gray and Sime, 1992).

Siann and Knox were eager to challenge the stereotype projected by careers advisers and some teachers who felt that parental pressure was the reason for the particularly high percentage of Asian students continuing in education after age sixteen. 69 female students were interviewed, 37 of who were Muslim. Their ages ranged from 13 to 16. Previous research by Siann et al (1990) presented evidence in support of the idea that Muslim girls view the idea of further education and employment positively, and also, that Muslim parents were supportive of education for girls. Siann and Knox emphasise the support of Muslim parents for their daughters' education, but also stress that we should not ignore the cultural and religious context in which aspirations and support are set.

Siann and Knox found that when students were questioned about influences on their career choice, the parents of Muslim girls proved to be important. In 47% of cases Muslim girls chose what career they undertook although their parents indicated their preferences. This was higher for Muslim girls than ethnic majority girls (19%). Ethnic majority girls were more likely to say that their parents were interested but they were allowed a totally free choice (47%). This position was much less likely to be adopted within Muslim families (28%). Hence, Muslim parents appeared to have a different involvement in career making decisions but their role was not generally imposing. 11% of Muslim girls reported that they were not free to choose, compared

to 3% of ethnic majority girls. Therefore, although parents were involved in the decisions of their daughters' career choice at some level, the nature of involvement varied between minority and majority ethnic groups. Siann and Knox (1992) argue that this is due to the differing cultural contexts relevant to each group. They maintain that the issue of 'Izzet' is a significant factor for Muslim families. They argue that the need for immigrant families to establish economic security may also heighten aspirations.

Foskett and Hesketh (1996) also comment on the role of parents in general in shaping transfer decisions. Foskett and Hesketh (1996) maintain that parents were central in terms of initiating discussions about post-sixteen intentions and supportive during the first year of the transfer process. However, at age sixteen, 70% of the 1,284 students in this study stated that their decisions to continue education were made alone. Those students, who stated that their parents were solely responsible for decisions about post-sixteen trajectories, formed only 2% of responses. Middle class pupils and girls were more likely to be represented within this figure. Foskettt and Hesketh argue that the influence of parents may be under-represented here because students may be reluctant to admit this situation; the possibility also exists that pupils have forgotten parental influence. Foskettt and Hesketh also suggest that decisions regarding transfer can be conceptualised in two ways. The *composite consumer* approach and the *framed field* both impact on student choices. The composite consumer refers to the negotiated decision-making between parents and students. The balance of power within this process varies from case to case. Within the framed field, pupils make a particular choice but parents have the right to veto decisions that they are very opposed to. Hence, the decision is constrained in the sense that pupils are able to make a decision but in relation to permitted options allowed by parents. This approach would seem to concur with the points made in relation to the decision-making processes described by Basit (1996) and Siann and Knox (1992).

Basit (1997) argues that career choice is a complex matter for all young people, but for Muslim girls in particular, there are additional religious and cultural dynamics

that require attention. Other evidence from Basit (1996) and Siann and Knox (1992) supports the idea that parents are likely to endorse career choices for girls where these choices are perceived as safe and respectable and where these aspirations do not contradict religious or cultural mores. Basit found that the Muslim girls in her study bore no bitterness towards their parents if they held contrasting aspirations. Some stated that they changed their minds about their future course of action if this would make their parents unhappy. Not only does this relate to Foskett and Hesketh's framed field, it also compliments the suggestion of Siann and Knox (1992) and Jeffery (1976). All explain the phenomenon of 'Izzet', the importance of overall family status in Muslim considerations.

2.8.3   Influence of careers advice on aspirations

Overall, Payne et al (1996) found that two out of three students thought that the careers advice they had been given was useful. However, they note that the value of careers advice was perceived differently across contrasting student groups. For example, students who demonstrated positive attitudes to school in general were more likely to value careers advice than those who held negative attitudes. Girls were also more likely than boys to express favourable opinions regarding the advice received from Careers Officers. In terms of ethnicity, students from minority groups were found to be more likely to value careers advice than white students.

A number of authors discuss dissatisfaction with the way teachers and careers officers receive ethnic minority aspirations (Brah and Golding, 1983; Mirza, 1992 and Basit, 1996). Cross, Wrench and Barnett (1990) examined the nature of careers advice ethnic minorities received and the decisions these young people went on to make. Hence, the decision of students to participate in post compulsory education is one of the key areas of investigation. In this research, 300 African Caribbean and 700 Asian students responded to questionnaires and a small amount of qualitative data was also gathered. Cross, Wrench and Barnett were concerned with what teaching staff and careers' advisers perceived as 'over-aspiration' among Asian students. Cross, Wrench and Barnett found that there was a perception among many advisors that Asian pupils were frequently and unduly pressurised by parents to

continue education after sixteen. Asian students were also assumed to be harbouring unrealistic hopes that did not take account of limited opportunities within the labour market. This attitude was found to be pervasive among advisors even though Asian students often scored the highest attainment levels at sixteen. As a result of this stereotypical view of over-aspiration, many careers' advisors discouraged Asian students from continuing education after sixteen. Brah and Golding (1983) made similar observations in their earlier study. Mirza (1992) and Basit (1996) echo this concern in later studies also.

Brown (1984) also discusses the perception of over-aspiration among teachers and careers' officers and relates this to limitations placed on ethnic minorities within the labour market. Consequently, when ethnic minorities express aspirations that challenge existing boundaries they are accused of being unrealistic. Research by Siann and Knox (1992) also suggests that the perception of over-aspiration is illusory and is fuelled by a lack of conviction that ethnic minorities are able to fulfil aspirations that go beyond stereotypical imaginings. Siann and Knox found few differences in the career choices of Muslim girls compared to ethnic majority girls. When the aspirations of all respondents were measured against their projected grades, 6% of Muslim girls and 14% of ethnic majority girls were considered to have unrealistic aims, to be over-aspirational. This militated strongly against the idea that Muslim girls were harbouring aspirations which they had little chance of achieving. Muslim girls proved to be more 'realistic' in their aspirations than ethnic majority girls were.

Basit's (1996) observation of careers interviews and the comments of some of the Muslim girls in her study, suggested that careers advice was deflationary and therefore it was not well received by students. 'Realism' was emphasised and no encouragement was provided to attain individual aspirations, Muslim girls were simply alerted to areas of skill and labour shortages. The girls in Basit's study felt that advisors distinguished between bright Muslim girls who were assumed to have aspirations and 'others', who were assumed to be interested in being housewives in the same tradition as most of their mothers. This approach by careers advisors also

assumed that career and marriage were mutually exclusive, whereas Basit found that many Muslim girls had hopes of both. Basit suggests that even though formal careers' advice exists, it is not a motivating force for students from ethnic minority backgrounds. Wrench, Qureshi and Owen (1996) found that African Caribbean and Bengali males also expressed feelings of disappointment with the careers advice they had received.

2.8.4   Aspirations for academic study

Foskett and Hesketh (1996) reveal a further dimension of student aspirations in relation to course choices. They noted that students began to ratify course choices in Year 11 and most of them expressed a desire to undertake academic courses rather than vocational ones. 62% of students expressed a desire to undertake chiefly academic courses with only 29% intending to pursue vocational courses. Foskett and Hesketh argue that it is important to note that these figures reflect the aspirations of students rather than reality. Although students aspired to undertake A Levels, this was dependent on how well they performed at GCSE. For example, in 1995, DfEE statistics showed that only 36% of all post-compulsory students participated in A Levels. This was less than the percentage of students hoping to undertake A Level study. National figures demonstrated that 30% of students participated in vocational courses and this was a closer match to actual numbers of students that aspired to undertake such courses in Year 11 (DfEE, 1995). Access to A Level courses tended to require higher GCSE grades than vocational qualifications. Therefore, more students were likely to be prevented from undertaking A Levels than vocational courses on the basis of GCSE results.

2.8.5   Labour market conditions and aspirations

Penn and Scattergood (1992) concluded that interactions of ethnicity, social class, gender and school effects are influential on the trajectories and aspirations of Asian school leavers compared to white school leavers. A total of 327 students were surveyed and 127 Asian students were identified from this sample. Their research was conducted in Bolton where the ethnic minority population comprised mainly

Muslims from the Punjab and Kashmir who had begun to settle in the area from 1945 onwards. Bengali and East African families were also significant minorities within the community. The majority of Asian males employed in Rochdale were located in the textile industry. However, Penn and Scattergood claim that Asians were barred from skilled positions within this industry through the operation of racial discrimination and unequal access to the apprenticeship system. The recession of the 1980s further eroded the socio-economic position of Asians in Rochdale. The virtual collapse of the textile industry meant that by 1986, over 50% of Rochdale's unemployed were from ethnic minority backgrounds, the majority of whom were Asian males. The majority of Asian females were unemployed and had been since leaving school. However, Penn and Scattergood argue that despite this disadvantaged social positioning, Asian parents had an attitude of economic instrumentalism and high aspirations for their children.

Differences in the aspirations of Asians and non-Asians were detected in this study. The majority of Asian and non-Asian students aspired to higher status positions and among all groups there was the desire to continue in education beyond the age of sixteen (64%). However, 81% of Asian students wished to continue in education regardless of occupational aspirations, so placing them in excess of the overall percentage. Asian students were also more likely to want to go on to higher education than non-Asian students were. Penn and Scattergood also noted a class effect on student aspirations among white students. Students from white middle class backgrounds were more likely to want to go on to higher education compared to white working class students. However, the aspirations of working class Asian students were far more similar to those of middle class non-Asian students, there was a stronger desire to extend education. Penn and Scattergood argued that the response of Asian students to post–compulsory education is due to an amalgam of factors. The combined effects of high aspirations common to immigrant families coupled with poor employment possibilities common to Asian families in Rochdale, resulted in a tendency for Asian students to pursue education as a means of gaining access and advancement within the labour market.

2.9 Student responses to experience

The scope of options at sixteen and future aspirations both feed into one another to influence the trajectories of school leavers. However, the decision to continue education after sixteen is also influenced by educational experience. Secondary school experience and experience in further education institutions can have important effects on the level of commitment to post-compulsory education. The positive or negative nature of experience, satisfaction with education as well as availability of support networks are all significant factors.

2.9.1 General responses to experience

British research by Payne et al (1996) and Hagell and Shaw (1996), indicate that in general, students report positively about school and tend to have positive attitudes towards education. However, these studies have not systematically explored differences in the attitudes of ethnic minority and ethnic majority students.

2.9.2 Attitudinal responses to experience

Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey (1998) argue that when experience is contrasted across ethnic groups, the attitudes of ethnic minorities are often characterised negatively. They are resistant to theories of oppositional culture that generalise assumed negative attitudes. Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey argue that oppositional culture has been used as an explanation for different educational trends and outcomes. They use Ogbu's (1974) thesis to demonstrate the overall shortcomings of such an approach.

A central element of Ogbu's thesis is the distinction between voluntary and involuntary minority groups. Involuntary minority groups are those who have histories of slavery or colonialism that led to migration. Voluntary ethnic minority groups are those that migrated without duress such as Chinese groups. Ogbu argues that voluntary groups make favourable comparisons between themselves and those who remain in their country of origin. They perceive greater opportunities and are keen to take advantage of such opportunities for advancement. However,

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involuntary minorities are said to perceive psychological vulnerability, as they were not brought into society to achieve advancement. Involuntary minorities also tend to contrast their position with the majority population and this does not result in a favourable comparison. This has the effect of generating resentment and fuelling the notion that social positioning is due to ethnic group membership. Furthermore, involuntary minorities perceive a sense of limited employment opportunities. Therefore, they do not assert the effort to gain social advancement, as there is a sense that this will be denied. In terms of education, ethnic minority students are seen to recognise limited career opportunities. However, the consequent lack of motivation and rejection of schooling results in a reinforcement of disadvantaged social positioning. Ogbu is able to make a link between agency and structure in the sense that social conditions are related to individual actions and vice versa. However, Ogbu's thesis rests on a relationship between perceptions of labour market opportunities and varying resistance to education according to ethnic group membership. Using data from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS), Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey discuss the attitudes and aspirations of 2,197 African American students, 653 Asian American students and 13,942 non-Hispanic white students. These groups were chosen as the greatest representatives of involuntary, voluntary and majority ethnic groups in America.

Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey reject the oppositional culture approach across four main dimensions. Firstly, they reject the argument that African American students perceived less benefits to education and poorer labour market opportunities compared to majority or voluntary ethnic groups. Not only were African American students more likely to report that education was important to having a job, they were also more optimistic regarding their chances of acquiring a job. Secondly, Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey do not detect any greater resistance to education among African Americans compared to other groups. However, they suggest that resistance needs to be measured with some care. African American students reported that they did less homework than white students and tended to report being in trouble more often than white students did. Also, teachers identified African American students as the most disruptive and the least committed group. However, Ainsworth-

Darnell and Downey found that overall, African American students expressed far more positive attitudes to school than white students. For instance, African American students were more likely than white students to claim that teachers had treated them well and less likely to agree that it was permissible to break school rules. There was only one exception among nine items to which African American and Asian students expressed more negative opinions than white students. African American and Asian students were less likely to agree with the statement that 'discipline is fair'. Overall, African American and Asian students demonstrated more positive attitudes to school than white students which does not suggest greater resistance to schooling. The third dimension explored by Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey was popularity/rejection among peers of the good student. The strongest interaction between popularity of the good student and ethnic group was found among African American students; African American students were particularly popular if they were perceived as a very good student. The final dimension explored by Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey was the issue of resistance as an explanation of differential outcomes between contrasting ethnic groups. Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey found that where African American students had equal grades as white students, their attitudes were far more positive than those of white students. Also, where their attitudes were measured as being equal to white students, it was discovered that their grades were far lower. Hence, it is evident that African American students tended to express agreement with pro-school attitudes more so than white students even when their grades were lower. This does not support the theory that oppositional culture characterises specific minority attitudes.

However, Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey maintain that research needs to concentrate on a representative sample of students rather than the most extreme. If a general explanation of differences in educational outcome is offered, this must be able to explain mainstream as well as acute responses. However, this is not achieved by theories of oppositional culture alone. Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey found that frustration, pessimism and resistance characterised the responses of African American students who dropped out of school between the ages of 12 to 15.

However, where African American and white dropouts were compared, African American students still emerged with more pro-school attitudes than white students.

Drew (1995) also noted that the attitudes to education of people from ethnic minorities tended to be more positive than those of white students. For example, when asked various questions about the value of school, ethnic minority groups were less likely to say that school was a 'waste of time' and they were more likely to say that school taught them things 'which would be useful in a job', compared to white students. In addition to this, Drew notes that ethnic minority groups were more likely to be working class; a group that he claims often tend to hold less positive views regarding education. However, ethnic minority students contradicted this pattern. The students interviewed in Drew's research were positive about their educational experience. This sharply contrasts with the findings of Wrench, Hassan and Owen (1996), who reported high levels of dissatisfaction with educational experience and a reluctance to participate in post compulsory education among African Caribbean males. However, research involving Bengali males showed a diverse range of positive and negative attitudes to school (Wrench, Qureshi and Owen, 1996 and Wrench, Hassan and Owen, 1996).

Research by Witherspoon, Speight and Jones (1997) also discussed attitudes of ethnic minority groups towards education and school achievement. 86 African American students between the ages of 12 to 18 years old were involved in this study. Witherspoon et al (1997) argue that a number of attitudes exist within the ethnic minority student population in terms of achievement as well as ethnicity. Most students expressed support from both parents and peers towards education. Also, there was no evidence of a dominant ethnic identity that rejected achievement.

These findings suggest that a variety of attitudes to schooling exist among ethnic minority groups. There is little evidence to support the theory that ethnic minority students characteristically demonstrate oppositional culture. As Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey (1998) and Wright et al (1998) suggest, this is perhaps characteristic of the most disaffected of students. There is also a strong suggestion that ethnic

minorities often have more pro-school attitudes than white students. The positive attitudes of ethnic minority groups may fuel the popularity of continuing education at the age of sixteen.

The idea that oppositional culture is a dominant response is also undermined by the knowledge that there is a greater likelihood of students from ethnic minorities to continue education after sixteen (Drew, 1995 and Gillborn and Gipps 1996). Research concerning student aspirations also demonstrates strong ethnic minority interest in education (Mirza, 1993; Siann and Knox, 1992 and Basit, 1996). However, oppositional responses do exist even though these seem to apply to small numbers of students. Mac an Ghaill's (1988) research assists in understanding the nature and causes of such response.

Mac an Ghaill recognises that oppositional responses are not dominant responses within ethnic minority groups, but he argues that racism is an important part of students' experience and feels that it is important to uncover some of the cultural responses that emerge. Hence, Mac an Ghaill focuses on the role of stereotypes and racist practice in generating oppositional student responses. He maintains that within the context of the classroom, discrimination and disadvantage operates through expressions of racialised teacher ideologies. It is in response to teacher ideology and practices that differing cultural expressions of ethnic identity emerge. He also illustrates interactions between ethnicity and other identities. Mac an Ghaill also observed contrasting responses between ethnic minority males and females and also revealed differing responses among males. The response of females was characterised as a quiet resistance that accepted mainstream meritocratic ideas. The response of Asian and African Caribbean males were perceived as more public and more confrontational.

2.9.3   Effect of school experience on trajectories

Wrench, Hassan and Owen (1996) and Wrench, Qureshi and Owen (1996), selected data from the Youth Cohort Study and focused on the experiences and attitudes of African Caribbean and Bengali young men, respectively. Both groups are

particularly vulnerable to lower educational attainment and high unemployment compared to other males from all other ethnic groups. Experience and attitudes to education and employment were explored and implications for post-sixteen trajectories were noted.

In *Ambition, Marginalisation: A Qualitative Study of Underachieving Young Men of Afro-Caribbean Origin* (1996), Wrench, Hassan and Owen argue that ethnicity is an important factor to explore when considering the aspirations of young people and their trajectories. They argue that African Caribbean boys in particular, are often subjects of stereotyping. Consequently, attitudes, attainment and actions of African Caribbean males are often interpreted within the framework of these stereotypes in popular discourse. Wrench et al argue that African Caribbean males are among the least qualified of students upon leaving school at sixteen, a point echoed by Drew (1995) and Gillborn and Gipps (1996). They also argue that the disadvantages associated with poor qualifications are further compounded for this group of males, due to the existence of prejudice and discrimination within education and the labour market. Wrench, Hassan and Owen (1996) contend that under the age of 25, and across all age groups, African Caribbean males are the most likely to be unemployed.

Wrench, Hassan and Owen (1996) discovered that out of 50 students involved in their research, many of them felt regret about school because of their lack of application. They now considered that their own lack of commitment was a major factor in their poor achievement, as they did not recognise the importance of qualifications at the time. Truancy was not a major feature for most of the sample. The curriculum was also criticised for its lack of relevance to black students. A minority of those interviewed felt this could have been redressed through incorporating pertinent units into syllabuses such as history or religious education. Research conducted by Allen (1998) between 1989 and 1993 also discovered that students from minority groups were largely satisfied with university life but felt that the introduction of positive education concerning minority groups and countries of origin would have been useful. Most students agreed that the presence of more black teachers would have helped them to feel less alienated at school. However, one

student did not feel as though this would have significantly changed the experience of school. As far as racism at school was concerned, students identified teachers as the main source. Such sentiments regarding teacher racism are also expressed in Mac an Ghaill's research (1988).

One of the conclusions drawn by Wrench, Qureshi and Owen (1996) in this study was that school experience affected attitudes to education and attainment at sixteen. However, the direction of this influence was negative, as African Caribbean males in this study were very sceptical about participation in post-compulsory education.

Connolly and Torkington (1992) received mixed reports from African Caribbean males concerning their experience of, and attitudes towards education. Some reported poor experiences of school life including stereotyping and teacher racism whilst others reported positive experiences. Attitudes to education and employment were diverse as some males attributed value to education as a means to economic advancement whilst others were strongly resistant to participation in further education and viewed qualifications negatively. The parents of these African Caribbean males experienced the lowest levels of occupational status in Liverpool and the highest levels of unemployment within the city. In spite of this predominant positioning mixed reactions were apparent.

Although the most vulnerable ethnic minority students may demonstrate pro-school attitudes, the experience of racism often emerges as an important theme within their educational experience. Scott's (1990) research focussed exclusively on the experiences of African Caribbean secondary school students. He found evidence to suggest that racism was a common factor in their experience particularly where African Caribbean students existed as a small minority. Where African Caribbean students existed as a larger minority, racism was weaker. In this research, 608 students completed questionnaires and some of them were also interviewed. Nearly half of the students surveyed recorded some form of racial harassment from other students. It was felt that many teachers allowed the use of pejorative language. Teachers were also perceived as holding stereotypical views concerning the abilities

of black students. For example, a number of young people claimed that teachers often assumed that black students were academically poor but proficient at sport. The school curriculum also attracted criticism as some students regarded it as alienating and partisan, ignoring such areas as black history and providing a one-sided and stereotypical view of poorer countries.

In, *Higher Horizons: A Qualitative Study of Young Men of Bengali Origin* (1996), Wrench, Qureshi and Owen explore the attitudes of 50 Bengali young men. Wrench, Qureshi and Owen (1996) recognise that Bengali young men are often at the lower boundaries of educational attainment. Their research highlights the importance of understanding the social context of decisions and attitudes concerning student trajectories. They argue that the attitudes of young men from Bengali family backgrounds are often regarded as a partial reflection of regionalism that is widespread in Bangladesh. It is assumed that this regionalism has been transposed onto a British context. Wrench et al point out that Sylhet was formerly the educational centre of Bangladesh. However, as employment opportunities decreased in this region, even those who were highly qualified found it difficult to obtain work and this contributed to a waning belief in the value of formal qualifications.

The young people interviewed by Wrench, Qureshi and Owen did not have strong oppositional views to school. Generally, they reported that they enjoyed their school experience. The final two years of secondary education were described as enjoyable by most, although disheartening for others. Many of those interviewed had obtained less than four GCSEs at grade C or above and this relatively poor level of success at GCSE was attributed in part to the attitude of teachers. These teachers were identified as stereotyping Bengali students as academic 'failures'. Those teachers who encouraged and pushed students were praised highly. Stereotyping by teachers was identified as problematic by students in Mac an Ghaill's research (1988) and is also echoed in research by Mirza (1992), Wright (1992) and Wrench, Hassan and Owen (1996). The Bengali males in this study subjected the curriculum to similar criticisms as those made by African Caribbean young people (Wrench, Hassan and Owen, 1996). The omission of Bengali history and culture from the curriculum was

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regarded as demotivating. However, most of the Bengali young men in this survey felt that racism within school was less marked than outside of school. Students in Rassool's (1999) study reported a similar situation. However, Bengali males commented on harassment from gangs within school. Many of them pointed out that racist harassment came from black and white students. Some felt that this experience was alienating and disturbing to the extent that it undermined achievement.

The majority of this sample decided to attend college at the age of sixteen. Most chose GNVQ courses in preference to GCSE re-takes as vocational qualifications were regarded as a means of gaining work-related experience. In this research, the students emphasised the support of their parents for education. Despite the poorer economic circumstances of the majority of this group, they maintained that their parents had supported the idea of gaining qualifications. However, financial pressures within the family served to 'push' some students into work immediately upon leaving school even where parents had not encouraged this.

Varied attitudes emerged in these interviews involving Bengali young men. Wrench, Qureshi and Owen (1996) found that although their educational achievements and financial backgrounds were relatively poor, this did not stimulate oppositional approaches in all of them. Economic position and positive educational experiences also influenced trajectories. Wrench et al also concluded that attitudes to education in Bangladesh were not necessarily transposed onto the British context in which these young men lived. However, educational experience was found to be influential.

2.9.4 Course switching as a response to negative experience

Course switching during the first year is one response to negative student experience. This is anticipated to an extent and is often permitted during a formal period of induction. Wardman and Stevens (1998) outline a number of factors that influenced course switching during the first year. They noticed that motivations for switching varied across different course types. A total of 208 students were involved from a range of courses; 52 A Level students, 60 GNVQ students, 48 NVQ students and 48

YTS students. The most striking contrasts were found between GNVQ students and A Level students.

A Level students were the most likely to express difficulty with course demands in the transition from GCSE. This related to concerns of falling behind with course requirements. Wardman and Stevens argue that a substantial proportion of students who switched courses had been those permitted to undertake A Levels even though they did not obtain the traditional requirements of 5 GCSE passes between grades A to C. Approximately one third of students who switched from A Level to other courses fell into this category. Furthermore, the remainder of A Level course switchers had achieved average as opposed to outstanding results at GCSE. Consequently, the students able to take advantage of relaxed entry requirements for A Level study were more vulnerable to dropping-out.

GNVQ students formed the group more likely to express objections in relation to heavy workloads. Dissatisfaction with course structure was also registered along with complaints regarding the lack of practical content within courses. Students who had switched from GNVQ courses also cited ease of the course as a justification for switching. GNVQ students were more likely than other students to complain of deficient organisation of courses. This was exemplified through such incidents as timetable clashes and high levels of teacher absence. There were rare occasions when the subject experience of teachers was also called into question.

Overall, GNVQ students produced a wider range of complaints than A Level students. All students criticised levels of difficulty regardless of course type or GCSE grades. Students with average results found A Levels difficult but also tended to find GNVQs less than challenging if they transferred from A Levels. This suggests that initial support for students is required at A Level. GNVQ students also need support where they complain of excessive course demands.

2.9.5   Implications for student retention

Martinez and Munday's, *9000 Voices: Student Persistence and Drop-Out in Further Education* (1998), represents a rich body of contemporary research into student choice and experience. In this study student retention was used as a barometer of satisfaction and commitment to college career. It was evident that withdrawing from courses within the first year was usually a response to negative experience. *9000 Voices* was a reference to the 8 500 students and 500 staff who were involved in the research conducted by Martinez and Munday. Students and teachers participated in interviews and completed questionnaires over a period of one year. A range of students were included, to incorporate those on full-time or part-time courses, students undertaking vocational courses or A Levels, school leavers, mature students and day release students; however, the majority of students involved in this study were school leavers enrolled on full-time courses.

Although considerations pertaining to ethnicity were made throughout the study, ethnicity was not found to have any consistent impact upon student behaviour in specific regard to retention. Martinez and Munday found that there was little variance regarding retention figures across ethnic groups. No single ethnic group consistently appeared to be over-represented or under-represented in retention figures. For example, over-representation in retention figures related to Bengali students in one college, to African Caribbean students in another college and in yet another institution, white students were over-represented in poor retention figures. Positive retention rates were also subject to such inconsistency. Hence, Martinez and Munday concluded that local conditions must be considered when explaining retention rather than imposing general explanations and causes for student dropout rates on the basis of ethnic minority status alone.

Martinez and Munday found that males were slightly more likely to drop out of college than females. Out of the 1,360 students recorded as dropping out, 760 were male and 600 were female but there was no statistically significant difference here. Therefore, retention could not be regarded as a gender specific issue.

Martinez and Munday (1998) learned that satisfaction with college life was an important element affecting retention. They went on to consider specific factors that contributed to differing levels of satisfaction. One of the conclusions they drew here was that personal factors such as financial position were not key differentials between students who completed courses and those who withdrew.

> This survey provides support for the view that the personal circumstances of
> students are not, on their own, good predictors of drop-out. They also suggest that
> the student experiences of college are highly significant (p40).

Martinez and Munday found that it was satisfaction with experiences of college that influenced the decision to complete or withdraw from a course. Such factors as tutorial assistance, friendship formation, dissatisfaction with course choice emerged as significant. They discovered that overall students were satisfied with tutorial help. However, the minority who were not satisfied with tutorial assistance were over-represented in withdrawal figures. Those students who dropped out of college were also less likely to feel that they had made friends quickly. In terms of course choice most of those who dropped out felt dissatisfied with help received from the college in choosing an appropriate course to suit individual needs and indicated that they had not been fully aware of course demands and content until the course was underway.

Martinez and Munday revealed that the most common reason offered as an explanation for withdrawing from courses was to undertake employment. They also found that the highest proportion of students switching from any course type went on to undertake employment. Martinez and Munday (1998) outline two major implications that emerge from the switch from education to full-time or part-time employment. Firstly, further education may have been an unsatisfactory experience and so students leave altogether rather than embarking on an alternative course. Secondly, students may simply take up further education until satisfactory employment can be found. They argue that if such perceptions prevail in the attitude to education, then Britain has not yet moved far enough in accepting and valuing the concept of lifelong learning. This in turn does not augur well for the enhancement of local and national skills bases through extended education.

Students who received extra support for developing language and learning skills were all less likely to drop out than students who did not receive any such support. This has an implication for ethnicity, as those students for which English is a second language belong predominantly to ethnic minority groups. This could account in part, for the relatively high retention rates of specific ethnic minority groups that Martinez and Munday identified in one college. Martinez and Munday also suggest that parents from ethnic minorities may have a stronger commitment to education than parents from within the white population. Penn and Scattergood (1992); Mirza (1992; 1997; 1999); Siann and Knox (1992) and Basit (1996) also support this idea.

2.10   *Student support networks*

Martinez and Munday's (1998) research pointed out the importance of support networks within further education particularly in the form of tutors and peers. The majority of students in their study regarded social and learning environments favourably. However, dissatisfaction with social environment and lack of friendship formation were significant factors amongst students who withdrew from courses.

Claes and Poirier (1993) provide strong argument in support of Martinez and Munday's assertion that social relationships are an important component of student satisfaction and adjustment. Their review of research over the last decade illustrates a correlation between adolescent friendship and coping mechanisms. Furthermore, Youniss and Haynie (1992) maintain that popularity status among adolescents is associated with positive social behaviour and acquisition of social skills. Hence, students who do not develop friendships may not only endure isolation, but may also fail to develop the fullest range of social skills and coping mechanisms. Research from Claes and Poirier suggests that isolation does not provide a positive experience for students as it undermines the opportunity to mediate adjustment to college through social relationships.

Writing by Hartup and Lougee (1975) refers to the importance of peer modelling, the role of peers in providing support and positive models for one another. However, Hartup and Lougee explain that at times, parents are more influential and in other

contexts, peers are more effective models. The role of peers and parents are not set as antagonistic dichotomies but as complementary support structures. In various contexts, students identify parents as an appropriate and authoritative reference group to a greater extent than peers. Hallinan and Williams (1990) provide further insight into peer and parental support roles. They assert that trust and solidarity are basic foundations of positive relationships, but these features take time to develop and solidify. Compared to well-established and robust relationships with parents, peer relationships formed within the first year of transfer were relatively new. Therefore, it would not be unusual for students to rely on parental support to a greater extent than on recent friendships.

Claes and Poirier (1993) recognise the value of student support but maintain that parental influence and backing is a primary element in student support networks. They argue that parental influence on adolescents is usually more predominant than peer influences, which are only predominant when relationships between parents and adolescents have collapsed.

Foskett and Hesketh (1996) maintain that parents 'play a key role in both encouraging and supporting pupils' transition from compulsory into further education'. Hence the central role of parents is not simply confined to decision-making, a supportive role is also played as Beinstein Miller and Lane (1991) also suggest. In their article, *Relations between young adults and their parents* (1991), Beinstein Miller and Lane found that parents provided advice and guidance to students. Mothers in particular were involved in providing support to students. This study involved students in late adolescence, mainly aged 17-18 years old. Fathers were drawn upon less frequently and their role was not as diverse as that of mothers. This may partially reflect changing family structures where there are a growing number of households headed by lone parents who are predominantly mothers. Beinstein Miller and Lane consider that peers are also an influential source of support although parental support is more marked.

2.11   Summary of Student Orientation

It is evident that students are more likely to undertake education at sixteen rather than enter full-time employment or training. This trend is even more marked when ethnic group is taken into consideration. Those from minority ethnic groups are more likely to continue education at sixteen. Full-time employment and training are more likely for white school leavers although the major trend for this group is also entry into post-sixteen education.

It appears that the aspirations of students have proven robust to negative experiences and to sometimes discouraging careers advice. The role of parents is also considered important; buffering and encouraging aspirations to continue education after sixteen. Labour market conditions have also been considered in relation to increasing post-sixteen education. A number of commentators have sought to establish a connection between a decline in youth employment opportunities and the contrasting expansion in further education. Both phenomena operate alongside one another and it is likely that this is more than a matter of coincidence. However, subjectivities and individual aspirations of students also play a role in fuelling post-sixteen trajectories.

The experience of compulsory and post-compulsory education for students appears to generate a range of responses. There appears to be no uniform response stemming from either positive or negative experience. There are certainly contrasts in experience between ethnic groups and one of the starkest is that of racism or discrimination. However, even where such negative experience occurs, this does not necessarily lead to homogeneous responses of rejection and opposition. The notion of flexible and complex identities is particularly important to understanding such varied attitudes. Ethnicity is not always the defining identity for individual students; other identities may be important or complex interactions may exist. The context of attitudes also needs to be considered. The perceived importance of education for example is sometime strong amongst minority ethnic groups and this may strengthen positive views towards education even in the face of negative experience. Parents also play a role in reinforcing this perception. The role of parents has also been highlighted as central to student decision-making and support. Peers have also been

identified as an important foundation for students within post-compulsory education, providing a key role in students' adjustment and coping.

2.12   Student Identities

Attention is now turned to the theme of *Student Identity*. Included in this is an exploration of friendship. This is an important area as it serves as a barometer of diverse or mutual networks that can help inform an impression of students' ethnic identity. The proximal constructs of self-esteem and locus of control are also examined within this section. The personality constructs of self-esteem and locus of control are also discussed in relation to students from minority and majority backgrounds. The review of research in this area has also been useful in dispelling certain myths and stereotypes whilst establishing a clearer understanding of the relationship between self-esteem, locus of control and ethnicity in the transfer context.

2.13   Ethnicity and friendship formation

It was established earlier on in this review that friendship formation affected the satisfaction and adjustment students feel during post-sixteen transfer (Martinez and Munday, 1998; Claes and Poirier, 1993; Youniss and Haynie, 1992 and Hartup and Lougee, 1975). The ethnic characteristics of friendships between children and adolescents are also widely documented (Deegan 1996; Verma, Zec and Skinner 1994; Clark and Ayers 1992; Hallinan and Williams, 1990 and Rubin 1980). It is a common strand of these studies to note that same ethnic group friendships are more common than mixed friendships. Clark and Ayers (1992) note that where African Caribbean students are in a minority, this forces one of two options. The first is to form cross-ethnic friendships and the second option entails that students have an ethnic-specific selection of friends. Clark and Ayers point out that early adolescent African Caribbean females are more likely than any other group to form cross-ethnic friendships. This contrasts with African Caribbean males who tend to form same ethnicity friendships. Grant (1984) also noted a similar phenomenon in his study of junior high school students. Here, African Caribbean females were found to have

more cross-ethnic friendships than African Caribbean males or any other group within the classroom.

2.14 Gender and friendship formation

Although ethnicity is an important feature of friendship formation, gender has also proven to be important (Youniss and Haynie, 1992). Other theorists have identified gender as a far stronger social influence on friendship formation than ethnicity (Bukowski, et al, 1993; Hallinan and Williams, 1990 and Cauce 1986). Cross-gender friendships are reported to be rare in children's relationships as well as those of adolescents and adults. It is evident that friendship formation tends to occur along lines of mutuality in regard to ethnicity and gender and this yields important implications for students who find themselves within a minority. The absence of opportunity to form friendships with mutual peers may mean that students within an ethnic or gender minority will be vulnerable to social isolation. This could limit the opportunity to develop peer support networks. Consequently, student satisfaction and adjustment to college could be undermined to the extent that students become vulnerable to dropout.

2.15 Self-esteem

A number of investigations have demonstrated that levels of self-esteem are associated with social adjustment (Rosenberg, 1965; Coopersmith, 1967 and Bannister and Agnew, 1976). Therefore, self-esteem was included in this research as an important personal dimension to experience. Self-esteem has also been linked to negative experience among minority ethnic groups in popular and academic discourse. Therefore, there was a concern to investigate the strength of such claims.

Within popular discourse, there is an assumption that low self-esteem is characteristic of African Caribbean students in particular. It is assumed that low social-image of minorities within a majority culture, has impressed a poor self-image upon African Caribbean young people.

Many pupils from Afro-Caribbean backgrounds suffer from low self-esteem. Having an ethnic minority person within the school raises the children's esteem significantly in motivating them to learn (1998, 2).

Further assumptions flow from the perception of low self-esteem among African Caribbean students. It is surmised that low levels of self-esteem lead to social mal-adjustment and poor academic performance as suggested in the quote above taken from Kingston's article in the Guardian newspaper (27th October, 1998). Consequently, the negative educational experience of African Caribbean students has sometimes been attributed to poor self-esteem embodying feelings of low self-worth.

Despite the positive intent that often lies behind such an approach, the accuracy of portraying minority students as a group that consistently experiences low self-esteem is questionable. A review of published findings has demonstrated that the relationship between ethnic group membership and self-esteem is complex . In some studies, ethnic minority students emerged with low self-esteem; in other studies, the reverse is true and ethnic minority students display high levels of self-esteem. The theoretical background of self-esteem and evidence from national and international studies strongly suggests that self-esteem is not contingent upon ethnic origin.

2.15.1   Classical theories of self-esteem

Discussion of self-esteem has a long history as does the attempt to provide a universally accepted definition. Psychologist and philosopher William James commented on the existence of self-esteem as early as 1890. James argued that the existence of self-esteem rested on the unique ability of humans to regard self as object, which enabled individuals to assign and analyse their individual attributes. James described self-esteem as the correspondence between an individual's 'successes' and their 'pretensions'. This distinguished between 'I' (self-image), and 'how I would like to be' (ideal-self). How an individual's perception of personal qualities matched with their ideal is the essential idea behind James' approach. The process of self-evaluation is fundamental to this approach. Individuals who are satisfied with the correspondence between their self-image and ideal-self are classed as having high self-esteem. Those with an incongruent self-image and ideal-self are

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defined as having low self-esteem. James argued that differing levels of self-esteem affected attitudes and behaviour in different ways.

James' (1890) approach demonstrates two sides of self-concept, the biographical and the situational. Situational components of self-concept are those that are fluid and subject to social and environmental context, space and time. James regarded self-esteem as a situational component that was subject to change according to social context. He argued that each individual carried a general perception of self and this constituted the biographical aspect of James' approach. This self-feeling is general and stable because it is autonomous from any factors that arouse satisfaction or dissatisfaction. James regarded biographical components of self-concept as extremely stable and robust to temporal and spatial conditions. James' position was a pioneering approach setting cornerstones for the theory of self-concept and self-esteem that endure in contemporary theory. James asserted that self-esteem is a situational component and therefore unstable component. The instability arising from influences of social context. Therefore, the researcher needs to consider the social environment of the individual as well as internal factors. The researcher also needs to identify those aspects of social context that impact upon the self-concept of the individual.

The work of Cooley (1902) also contributed to the development of the concept of self-esteem. He argued that the formation of self-esteem relied on two principal factors. Like James, Cooley argued that self-evaluation was important for the development of self-esteem. In the process of self-evaluation, individuals perceived themselves as objects and were able to assess their attributes and compare these with a personal ideal. Cooley progressed from this point to highlight a second important factor in the development of self-esteem. He argued that the way others perceived and responded to the individual was an important influence on self-image and self-esteem. For instance, if others judge individuals to be worthy of respect, then those individuals will also come to view themselves in this way and this will enhance self-esteem. Cooley referred to this reflected appraisal as the 'looking-glass self' in reference to the way that the opinions of others are reflected in an individual's self-

image. According to Cooley, an individual's self-evaluation is important, but this does not have as much power to influence self-esteem as the perceptions and responses of others.

G.H. Mead (1934) argued that human beings were able to reflect upon whom they were as they had the capacity to see themselves as object. James (1890) and Cooley (1902) expressed a similar approach. However, Mead's work is distinct as he centralises the importance of social interaction in shaping self-concept. Mead argued that self-concept is a reflexive process rather than a structure. He argued that humans are able to engage in 'internal conversation' with self. This enables the individual to evaluate their self-image with their ideal-self. However, Mead argues that self-concept is primarily developed through adopting roles of the other. In the process of social interaction and in imagination, individuals situate themselves in the role of others. They engage in an internal conversation and attempt to anticipate the perceptions of others. Through constantly placing self in the role of other, individuals experience a range of perspectives that are used to evaluate their own actions and the role of other becomes internalised. Consequently, social action is guided and modified according to the rules we associate with the role of other. The behaviour of young children is guided by specific roles, but older children and adults reach a stage when they can evaluate their own behaviour according to the generalised other. For instance, adults will assume the role of a 'typical' teacher or 'people in general', rather than anticipate the perspective of specific individuals.

The theories of James (1890), Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934) have contributed to an understanding of self-concept and self-esteem in contrasting ways. James introduced the idea of self-evaluation; Cooley argued that the perceptions of others were important and Mead argued that social interaction was important to evaluations of the self. The specific contributions of James, Cooley and Mead laid the basis for discussion of self-esteem. These ideas are continued in contemporary discussion regarding self-esteem.

2.15.2   Contemporary theories of self-esteem

It is important to note Rosenberg's contribution to the concept and measurement of self-esteem. Accepting the classical exposition of James (1890), Rosenberg (1965 and 1979) argued that the formation of self-esteem is stimulated by the ability of individuals to regard self as object. He argued that individuals are able to form attitudes to self just as they do towards any other objects. Rosenberg contended that the development of self-esteem requires an element of evaluation and he referred to this as 'self-estimation'. According to Rosenberg, self-estimation can occur across a number of specific dimensions but not all dimensions are equally important. It is the individual who determines the personal importance of each dimension. Therefore, when Rosenberg designed his measure of self-esteem, he created a global measure that would plot an individual's overall level of self-worth. This was in preference to designing a number of specific measures for specific dimensions that would be of varying importance to each individual. He designed a ten-item scale entitled the New York State Self-Esteem Scale (1965), now commonly referred to as the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

Rosenberg defines self-esteem as 'self-acceptance, self-respect, feelings of self-worth' (1965: 31). According to Rosenberg, high self-esteem is a reflection of self-value which should not be confused with feelings of superiority or greater ability. Conversely, low self-esteem is to hold self in low regard, to have little respect for self and to feel dissatisfied with self. Rosenberg argues that low self-esteem is roused by fear of failure and fear of inter-personal criticism. He went on to use his global measure to identify behavioural effects of high or low self-esteem. He found that adolescents with high self-esteem tended to aspire to leadership roles in school groups. These students also participated more fully in social interaction and enjoyed social attention. However, those individuals with low self-esteem often regarded themselves as unpopular and attributed little value to their own achievements. Such students were reluctant to undertake any public or interactive engagements, perceiving these as forms of self-trial. High self-esteem emerged as an indicator of positive social and emotional adjustment and as an indicator of social and academic

confidence. However, students with low self-esteem were more likely to feel anxiety and isolation when faced with social and academic challenges.

Coopersmith (1967) authored a well-acclaimed and popular measure of self-esteem in the form of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. His theoretical approach has also contributed to the development of the concept of self-esteem. Like Rosenberg, Coopersmith's approach is reliant on the individual being able to treat self as object and an evaluative element is also involved. Coopersmith states that in summary, 'self-esteem is a personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds toward himself' (1967: 5). Coopersmith maintained that there are two dimensions to self-esteem, subjective expression and behavioural expression. Subjective expression relates to an individual's evaluations of their perceived abilities, accomplishments and attributes. Behavioural expression involves individual experiences and the interpretation of these experiences by others.

Coopersmith (1967) identified four distinct variables that affect levels of self-esteem. These were successes, values, aspirations and defences. Self-evaluation is at the heart of classical notions regarding self-esteem, and Coopersmith's theory shares this focus. Self-evaluation of individual successes has a strong influence on the development of self-esteem. Secondly, the value attached to success depends largely on social value that is attributed to it. If the success has low social value, then it will be unlikely to have much value placed on it by the individual. Coopersmith argues that individuals tend to be influenced by the values of their group rather more so than internal and independent values. However, evaluation of success is not influenced by social value alone. Personal aspirations also influence the way in which individuals measure success. The final variable, defences, relates to the opposite of success. 'Defences' refers to the ability of the individual to defend their self-image against perceptions of failure and uncertainty.

Coopersmith's Self Esteem Inventory uses over fifty statements and respondents have to indicate whether the statement is 'Like me' or 'Unlike me'. In 1967, he used this inventory in a study involving several hundred nine to ten year old boys. From

this research, he produced a characterisation of individuals with low self-esteem and high self-esteem that was very similar to Rosenberg's. Coopersmith found that social awkwardness and isolation were common for students with low self-esteem. These children were less communicative and less participative than their high self-esteem peers. Many of them were self-conscious and sensitive to criticism. These children also predicted lower scores for their academic achievement even though there was no ability difference between these students and their high self-esteem peers. Conversely, the high self-esteem children coped with criticism, were confident in their own judgements, they expected to succeed, enjoyed social interaction and participated in learning activities. However, Coopersmith asserts that self-esteem is bi-directional in nature. He contends that whilst self-esteem is influential on attitudes and behaviour, self-esteem is also influenced by behaviour. Therefore, theory and research should resist basing hypotheses on the premise that a specific dimension of self-esteem or global self-esteem is solely responsible for specific attitudes and behaviour.

Bannister and Agnew (1976) have also contributed to the contemporary concept of self-esteem. They argue that individuals constantly compare themselves to others in order to gain a relative perspective of their abilities and attributes. However, they argue that at times unfavourable social comparisons are made. For instance, students gain a measure of their academic ability by comparing themselves with others in their class. This is a favourable comparison as it involves a contrast between similar students. However, comparison between first year students and second year students would be considered as unfavourable as differences would be expected in terms of the knowledge and experience between these two groups. According to Bannister and Agnew, where unfavourable social comparisons are internalised and used to inform self-image, this can lead to the development of low self-esteem.

Classical and contemporary approaches to self-esteem rest on the notion that self-esteem is important to the development of individual attitudes and behaviour. Self-esteem is regarded as having the power to encourage confidence or distress among individuals. Attention is now turned to look at results of self-esteem studies. In

keeping with the central concern of this thesis, differences between students from contrasting ethnic groups are explored.

2.15.3   Self-esteem and ethnicity

A number of studies have focused on differences in self-esteem between ethnic-minority and ethnic-majority students. However, the sum of British and American findings amount to a contradictory picture. Lack of consistency in this evidence undermines the assertion that ethnic minority groups are prone to low self-esteem.

Jones' (1977) study involved over 1600 white and African Caribbean school students based in London secondary schools. Jones found that white students had higher levels of self-esteem than African Caribbean students. He argued that global self-esteem of students was influenced more by academic success rather than physical attractiveness. This was based on the awareness that African Caribbean students tended to be more involved in sports activities than white students but African Caribbean students showed lower levels of self-esteem. African Caribbean students were also concentrated in lower ability groups than white students. Those white students who were good at sport and showed higher levels of self-esteem also tended to be positioned in higher bands than African Caribbean students. Jones concluded that high self-esteem was a function of academic attainment.

However, Jones made no recognition here of the implications of cultural values on these students. Commentators such as Wright (1999) and Banks et al (1992) have raised the issue that African Caribbean students are often stereotyped as excellent sports people. Hence, this may undermine the value of sport for African Caribbean as well as white students. Consequently, the value attached to sport is not necessarily equal to that attached to academic status. Therefore, physical ability is not necessarily going to impact upon global self-esteem to the same degree or in the same direction that academic self-esteem might. Jones' approach rests on the assumption that physical self-image is as important to individuals as academic self-esteem. Coopersmith's contribution to the theoretical understanding of self-esteem

also calls such an assumption into question. Coopersmith maintains that social values will impact upon individual values and perceptions of self-worth.

Like Jones (1977), Lomax (1977) also conducted his research in the London region. However, these results were significantly different to those of Jones. This study involved white and African Caribbean girls. African Caribbean girls formed the largest ethnic group within this school. Lomax found that African Caribbean girls showed the highest levels of self-esteem within the school. Later research by Khalid (1988) focused on Pakistani school students in Scotland, within a context where Pakistani school students were in an extremely small minority. However, this study established that minority status did not necessarily have a negative impact on self-esteem as the majority of all children displayed high self-esteem.

Whereas Jones (1977), Lomax (1977) and Khalid (1988) found significant differences between ethnic groups, Louden's (1977) use of the Rosenberg self-esteem measure found that there were no significant differences in the levels of self-esteem between white, Asian and African Caribbean students. However, Lomax found that there were significant differences in self-esteem between males and females and this trend persisted across all ethnic groups. Bagley, Mallick and Verma (1979) arrived at very similar conclusions. They measured the self-esteem of adolescents using the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI). However, they found no significant differences in levels of self-esteem across white, Asian and African Caribbean ethnic groups. Asian students and white students showed comparative scores. Bagley et al discovered gender differences in self-esteem scores, with boys scoring higher levels than girls. This also applied across all ethnic groups as it did in Louden's study (1977). However, African Caribbean males showed the lowest levels of self-esteem among all groups. Their scores were lower than white males and white females. Conversely, the scores of African Caribbean girls were equivalent to those of white girls. Hence, Louden's research identified the importance of exploring gender as well as ethnic differences.

Examples from the British context do not provide conclusive evidence that low self-esteem is characteristic of any ethnic group. American self-esteem studies also show inconsistent results. Halpin, Halpin and Whiddon's (1981) research involved 128 white students and 97 Flathead Indian students at junior and senior high schools in America. Their results showed higher self-esteem scores for white students. Similar results were found in the Dukes and Martinez (1994) study. This involved an exploration of the self-esteem scores of 18,612 senior high school students. White students were found to have higher levels of self-esteem than African American, Hispanic, Native American and Asian minority groups. The results were also explored for any ethnicity-gender interaction. It was found that white males achieved the highest scores, followed by African American males. Native American females and Asian females achieved the lowest scores.

The results of Bekhuis' (1994) study of 13,022 students, provides a sharp contrast to the findings of Halpin, Halpin and Whiddan (1981) and Dukes and Martinez (1994). Bekhuis' research has provided evidence to suggest that African American secondary school students often display levels of self-esteem that are more positive than those of the majority population. The data for Bekhuis' research was taken from the High School and Beyond database and 25% of the sample used were African American. Students' self-esteem had been tested using four items from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. These items were, 'I take a positive attitude toward myself', 'I feel I am a person of worth, on an equal plane with others'; 'I am able to do things as well as most other people' and 'On the whole, I am satisfied with myself'. Bekhuis found that African American secondary school students displayed very high levels of self-esteem. She argued that ethnicity in itself was not the main determinant of self-esteem, whereas social context within a school was viewed as fundamental to establishing positive self-esteem. Wood, Hillman and Sawilowsky (1992) also provide evidence of higher self-esteem among ethnic minority students. The Piers Harris Children's Self-concept Scale was administered to 196 African American adolescents. Students were aged between 14 and 15 and all were regarded as underachieving. However, results for global self-esteem and across all six

dimensions of self-esteem within the Piers-Harris measure, were far higher than the expected norms for this age group.

Wylie et al (1979) conducted an extensive review of thousands of studies concerned with self-esteem among minority and majority groups in America. Jewish, African American and Hispanic minority groups were included in many of the studies reviewed. Gender differences in self-esteem were also explored. Wylie et al concluded that groups affected by disadvantage and discrimination did not show any consistent patterns in self-esteem scores. His evidence contested any consistent association between low self-esteem and membership of a minority ethnic group. Later research by Hirsh and Rapkin (1987) also found that there were no significant differences in the self-esteem scores of white and African American high school students.

Large-scale research by Tashakkori and Thompson (1991) yielded a number of interesting results which adds yet another dimension to the picture of self-esteem and its relationship to ethnicity. 7,193 white males, 7,528 white females, 2,400 black males and 2,797 black females were tested and the results compared across ethnic and gender groups. The first test was conducted in 1980, the second in 1982 and the final test occurred in 1986. Tashakkori and Thompson found that African American adolescents achieved higher mean scores in all three tests than white students. However, these differences were minimal and were not significant once the data had been aggregated. Interaction between self-esteem, gender and ethnicity produced differences that are more robust. African American female students achieved far higher mean scores than white females. However, differences between African American and white males were small.

Graham (1994) provides a comprehensive review and critique of self-esteem and locus of control studies conducted across the thirty-year period between the 1960s and 1990s and makes specific reference to studies involving African Americans. She refutes the characterisation of African Americans as having poor self-esteem that is identified as a demotivating condition. Conversely, Graham argues that self-concept

is high among African Americans. Of the 16 studies reviewed by Graham that related to self-esteem among African Americans, most of these reinforced the notion that African Americans tended to have high self-esteem and this did not fluctuate greatly even when socio-economic status was considered. Also, even where academic performance was relatively lower among African Americans than white students, African American students still gained more favourable self-esteem scores.

British and American research evidence has not presented a clear or conclusive relationship between self-esteem and ethnic origin. Contradictory evidence has emerged, with some studies showing a positive association between membership of a particular minority group and high self-esteem. Other studies suggest that there is a negative association between low self-esteem and minority group membership. Other studies suggest that there is no association between self-esteem and membership of a minority group. Further, no identical patterns emerged that could be applied to all ethnic minority groups. Those studies that considered self-esteem, ethnicity and gender, added yet more complexity to the exploration of self-esteem and ethnic group membership. At times, these gendered differences showed parallels with the majority group and on other occasions, prominent differences were revealed. Consequently, the sum of contradictory British and American research is unable to verify any consistent association between self-esteem and ethnic origin in either a positive or negative direction. It is my contention that this contradictory evidence has emerged because of the nature of self-esteem itself. In the earliest writings of James (1890), self-esteem was defined as an unstable factor. It is subject to differences in personality as well as in social context. This accounts for the mass of contradictory evidence that has emerged around the issue of self-esteem and ethnic group membership. It is not possible to predict consistent results for a factor that is constantly affected by personal and social context. However, it is possible to attempt to explain how these different results have emerged. Speculation could be advanced around a plethora of individual differences that affect self-esteem. However, such differences are not necessarily observable. Instead, discussion should be confined to the observable social context of ethnicity and how this may affect self-esteem within minority ethnic groups.

Crocker and Major (1989) have specifically explored the relationship between self-esteem and groups that experience social stigma. Stigmatised social groups were defined as those that are perceived negatively by majority groups, are subjected to stereotype and frequently experience disadvantage. Ethnic minorities were identified as one such group. Crocker and Major aim to explain why self-esteem can be high among this group. They found that individuals from ethnic minority groups effectively defended their self-esteem from social stigma. Individuals attributed the negative feelings of others as a response to ethnic minority group membership rather than as personal antipathy. Consequently, the negative responses of others were not received as a personal rejection. Therefore, the negative responses of others were not internalised and self-esteem was defended.

Rosenberg (1981) argues that the relationship between self-esteem and ethnic group membership can be more clearly understood if simple assumption and misapplication of concepts give way to erudite research. As Rosenberg noted, 'many writers have simply taken it for granted that people ranking low in the various prestige hierarchies would tend to have lower self-esteem' (1981: 604). Firstly, the concept of reflected appraisal presented in the work of theorists such as Cooley and Mead, argues that individual's form an evaluation of self, based on the level of respect that others inspire. The area of contestation here, is who those significant others are. Rosenberg argues that in the case of minority students, significant others are likely to include parents, family and peers from the same ethnic group. These significant others will view the minority group through their own perspectives and not through those of the majority. For example, Prager, Longshorn and Seeman (1986) recorded high levels of self-esteem for African American minority students. They argue that these students are educated in a context of informally segregated schools. Prager, Longshorn and Seeman regard this consonance as providing the basis for positive self-image through the reflected appraisal of others within the same group. They argue that this consonance provides a source of support for minority students and promotes positive self-image and positive self-esteem.

Rosenberg (1981) argues that the concept of social comparison is also misapplied. He maintains that when individuals from ethnic minorities engage in social comparison, they do so by contrasting themselves with others from their own ethnic group rather than with the majority population. Rosenberg argues that where the necessity arises for social comparison with the majority group then self-esteem of minority students is negatively affected (Rosenberg and Simmons 1972). However, Rosenberg asserts that such comparison is rare.

There is some research evidence to suggest that even where comparisons between minority and majority ethnic groups are undertaken, self-esteem for the minority can still be defended. Rickman's study (1983) was concerned with exploring the stereotypes of 48 black college students. The point was to find whether stereotypes involving black and white people were attributed with positive or negative value. This study also involved historical comparison, as it investigated how far stereotypes had changed over the last forty years. Rickman states that his comparison is made against research conducted by Bayton, Smedley and Bayton (1941) some forty years earlier. Rickman found that the stereotypes attributed to black people were more positive than the stereotypes that students attributed to white people. Also, the stereotypes attributed to black people had improved over the last forty years, a conclusion drawn from the comparison of stereotypes in the Rickman study (1983) and the Bayton, Semdley and Bayton study (1941). Conversely, erosion was evident in the stereotypes attributed to white people over this forty year period. Rickmans' study suggests that black people perceive their own ethnic group more positively than they perceive the majority group. Therefore, if individuals from minority groups make comparisons between themselves and the majority, individuals from minorities will not necessarily begin with a negative or relatively lower perception of their ethnic group. Research by Triandis et al (1982) shows similar findings to that of Rickman. Triandis' research involved a total of 154 Hispanic and Anglo US navy recruits rather than students. Each recruit had to indicate how likely a trait was for a particular ethnic group on a scale ranging from 1-10. Hispanic and Anglo recruits all attributed more positive stereotypes to their own ethnic group (auto-stereotypes) than they did for any other group (hetero-stereotypes). Even among adults then, there

appears to be a tendency for individuals to attribute more positive traits to the ethnic group to which individuals belong.

Brigham's research demonstrated that ethnic minority students were aware of extreme forms of stereotyping (1973). However, this awareness should not be confused with an internalisation of stereotypes. Research by Rickman (1983) and Triandis et al (1982), has already demonstrated that ethnic minority groups tend to possess a more positive view of their own ethnic group. This appears to be a robust position that holds regardless of the stereotypes held by other groups. The combined evidence of positive trait attribution within the group and awareness of negative trait attribution outside of the group is evidence that individuals from minority groups do not always accept negative stereotyping of their group and do not necessarily internalise a low social status that is attributed to them by others. Therefore, self-image is not over-whelmed by negative trait attribution as this is rejected and supplanted by positive trait attribution within the group.

Smedley and Bayton's research (1978) contrasted the stereotyping of black and white college students. 74 white students and 154 black students were asked to attribute traits typical of white lower class, white middle class, black lower class and black middle class people. Out of a list of 80 traits, students were asked to rate a maximum of five traits ranging from –5 (unfavourable) to + 5 (favourable). White students attributed more favourable traits to middle class people. White students in this study did not attribute less favourably to black people. In contrast, black students rated middle class people slightly more favourably than lower class people but not to the same degree as white students had. Also, black students rated those traits attributed to black people more favourably than those attributed to white people. White students appeared to base their social image more on social class than ethnicity whereas for black students, ethnic group membership proved more salient than social class differences. This fortifies the argument that minority ethnic groups may be able to defend their self-esteem due to a positive image of their own ethnic group.

In short, there is research evidence that strongly suggests that individuals from minority groups tend to have more favourable opinions of their own group than those held by the majority group. There is also evidence to suggest awareness of negative stereotyping does not prevent individuals from retaining positive views of their ethnic group. This evidence also demonstrates the rarity of unfavourable comparisons between ethnic minority and ethnic majority groups. As a consequence of these factors, global self-esteem can be protected for minority groups that have low social status within the majority culture.

Explanations of the contradictory evidence here can be related to influences of social context on self-esteem. The way in which individuals effectively protect self-esteem through perceiving rejection as group directed rather than individually directed; the way in which consonance creates the conditions for the development of positive self-esteem and the way that comparisons are made within groups rather than between contrasting groups. All of these means protect self-esteem and all are reliant on the social context of ethnicity.

This review has attempted to explore the complexity of self-esteem and its relationship to ethnic group membership. Theoretical writings have presented self-esteem as both an individual and social condition. Also, contradictory research findings have highlighted an unstable relationship between self-esteem and ethnic origin. Therefore, any policy that takes self-esteem or ethnicity as its focus needs to recognise the influence of individual difference and social context on the development of self-esteem. Policy cannot afford to focus on the individual alone, as social context is also vital in shaping self-image. Further, diverse social contexts appear to provide conditions that are more conducive to the development of positive self-esteem. These conditions are lack of isolation and the existence of significant others who have a positive social image of ethnic minority groups. Policy and practice can aim to foster such conditions. However, unequal social, educational and economic status of ethnic minority groups or socially disadvantaged groups will position these groups in a situation where they will fare worse in comparisons with others . These unfavourable comparisons could be significantly undermined if the

material basis of such comparison were eroded. There are commentators who develop this point further (Mirza, 1999 and Stone 1981). They argue that self-esteem hides issues of resource allocation, access and power. Both note that there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that working class or black students have lower self-concept. There is also recognition that the reverse may be true. They argue that projects aimed at improving self-image alone are misdirected as they ignore the real need to improve the material experience of black students. Both agree that social class and social context are more influential in shaping outcomes and experiences than self-concept.

A final note here concerns the issue of self-esteem and implications for the nature of ethnicity. The contradictory findings of research have been stressed throughout this review of self-esteem. So far, this has been entirely attributed to the instability of self-esteem. I maintain that self-esteem is an unstable factor and reassert that ethnicity is unstable also. The contradictory evidence apparent in self-esteem illustrates that the significance of ethnic group membership is able to shift. At varying times, ethnic effect proves to be positive, negative or insignificant. Also, differences as well as similarities are found between contrasting ethnic minority groups. These results further attest to the non-essential nature of ethnicity, the importance of which is fashioned by social context.

2.16 Locus of control

Considerations of locus of control have been included as an important dimension to the self, and as a compliment to considerations of self-esteem. There is much evidence to suggest that locus of control and self-esteem are important motivational factors (Coleman et al, 1966; Phares, 1976; Findley and Cooper, 1983) as well as indicators of social adjustment (Lefcourt, 1976; Bledsoe and Baber, 1978 and Friedberg, 1982). The concept of locus of control is briefly outlined, followed by research evidence concerning the relationship between locus of control, self-esteem and ethnic group.

2.16.1   Defining locus of control

The production of Rotter's monograph in 1966 popularised the concept of locus of control. However, discussion of locus of control occurred before this work. Phares discussed expectancy levels according to skill and chance as early as 1957 and Rotter himself had produced an earlier article in 1958 in conjunction with James. Rotter's (1966) concept of locus of control embodies how far an individual believes that 'his own behaviour or attributes' are responsible for a particular reward 'versus the degree to which he feels the reward is controlled by forces outside of himself' (1962: p1). Two states of locus of control are described; these are internal locus of control and external locus of control. Internal locus of control describes a sense of control through personal action whereas individuals with external locus of control perceive that they have very little control over their lives. For instance, chance, luck, more powerful others and religious forces may be perceived as having more power than individual action. Nowicki and Strickland (1973) add that locus of control is an unstable factor, that it is subject to change according to varying social contexts.

There is overall agreement regarding characterisations of those with internal or external locus of control. Externals are regarded as having less social confidence and competence and are more prone to anxiety. Phares (1976) contended that externals needed affirmation from others to confirm the appropriateness of their behaviour. Traub (1982) argued that externals were less assertive, more anxious and less capable of cogent analysis than internals. Conversely, internals were regarded as confident in social environments, more attuned to social situations and psychologically well balanced. Lefcourt (1976) maintained that internals had a higher degree of social competence, demonstrated by greater confidence and greater participation in social activities. Friedberg (1982) argued that internals engaged more in achievement-oriented activities, had high self-esteem and showed more positive psychological adjustment.

2.16.2   Locus of control and ethnicity

Reviews of locus of control and ethnicity have illustrated that there are significant differences in locus of control across contrasting ethnic groups. Lefcourt (1966), Phares (1976), Hui (1982) and Dyal (1984) are among the most notable in stressing such differences. However, not only does Hui (1982) note differences, he maintains that there is evidence of external locus of control among socially deprived groups across a number of social dimensions. For instance, when results are compared across different social classes, it emerges that those from working class groups are more likely to have external locus of control. When results are compared between black and white ethnic groups, it emerges that black people are more likely to have external locus of control and white people more likely to have internal locus of control. Support for Hui's position is mirrored in Rotter's earlier work (1966). Du Cette, Wolk and Friedman (1972), Phares (1976) and Louden (1977) also reflect Hui's position in relation to research concerning the greater externality of African Caribbean people compared to white people. Nowicki and Strickland (1973) also observed such differences across ethnic groups and among socially disadvantaged groups in general. Wade (1996) also formed similar conclusions, as his research found greater externality among black and female students.

Research by Sastry and Ross (1998) makes an interesting point in regard to locus of control and cultural differences. They explored the impact of perceived control on anxiety and depression among Asians and non-Asians. The study involved Asian Americans as well as Asians resident in Asian countries including China, India and Korea. Sastry and Ross found that Asians in general tended to have less sense of personal control than non-Asians. Sastry and Ross explain that Asian cultures tend to stress collectivist responses to family and community life. Hence, high levels of personal control could be interpreted as a violation of social norms. Sastry and Ross also found that a lower sense of personal control among Asians had a weaker association with psychological distress than it did among non-Asians. In essence, the lower sense of personal control in Asians did not result in anxiety and depression to the extent that it did among non-Asians.

Graham (1994) argues that the Coleman Report of 1966 generated the popular belief that African Americans tended to have external expectancies. Coleman's report on behalf of the Equality of Educational Opportunity Study (EEOS), argued that expectancies among African Americans was the primary source of influence accounting for differences in African American attainment. Graham argues that this approach fitted neatly into 'Powerlessness' structural models that enjoyed popularity at this time. Groups with poorer socio-economic status were regarded as being without power or influence to subvert their disadvantaged position. This positioning was assumed to be due to the intensity and strength of hierarchical social structures. Graham makes specific reference to the approach of Dyal (1984) in highlighting this response. Dyal's review of locus of control studies led him to the conclusion that those groups subject to poorer social positioning were also more likely to express external expectancies. Hence, it was asserted that personal expectancies were influenced by the reality and rank of social positioning. However, Graham's review of 16 studies that compare minority and majority locus of control scores, found equal numbers of studies suggesting external expectancies as those suggesting internal expectancies for African Americans. She concludes from this that there is no conclusive evidence that minority status correlates with expectancies in any direction.

2.16.3   Locus of control, self-esteem and ethnicity

So far, this review has discussed self-esteem and locus of control separately. However, there is strong research evidence suggesting that the two are closely related. Rotter (1966) developed his approach to locus of control to relate it to self-esteem. He argued that external locus of control was used as a defence of self-esteem by some individuals. To attribute failure to external forces was less distressing than to attribute failure to personal shortcomings. Other theorists embraced this position. For example, Hochreich (1975) asserted that external locus of control was used as a defence of self-esteem for those individuals with low interpersonal trust. However, those students with external locus of control and high interpersonal trust were regarded as true externals, as external expectancy was not being used as a defence mechanism, it was a genuine reflection of an individual's

sense of control. In order to test this prediction, Hochreich carried out two experiments to see whether two groups would emerge showing defensive external expectancies or true external expectancies. Two experiments were carried out involving the presentation of stories that were read to graduates. The first story involved achievement and non-achievement and the second story involved failure and success. Hochreich predicted that defensive externals would attribute less influence to the hero of the story, particularly in achievement situations. The results from 120 graduates reinforced Hochreich's predictions. However, the second experiment involving 120 female graduates only, could not confirm her prediction. These results suggested that the relationship between locus of control and trust may vary across genders. There is also evidence to suggest that locus of control levels are at times affected by defensiveness particularly in relation to achievement. Davis and Davis (1972), Gregory (1978) and Phares (1976) also assert that external locus of control can serve as a defence mechanism for some individuals.

Lefcourt (1976) is one of many theorists who also helped to establish the salience of the relationship between self-esteem and locus of control. He asserted that where self-esteem was high, locus of control tended to be internal and individuals attributed success and failure to their own actions, skills and abilities. These individuals also have the confidence in their own actions to be motivated towards success. However, where self-esteem was low, locus of control tended to be external and individuals attributed success and failure to such factors as chance, luck and more powerful others; factors outside of their control.

The earlier but lesser known study of Hersh and Schiebe (1967), also studied the relationship between locus of control and self-evaluation earlier than Lefcourt but are less publicised. This exploration found a positive relationship between internal locus of control and self-evaluation, a concept that is closely related to self-esteem. However, Hersh and Schiebe discovered that individuals who had produced low self-evaluations were also more likely to have external locus of control. Furthermore, research by Bellack (1975) found that low self-evaluation correlated with external locus of control.

Common to these studies is the relationship asserted between high self-esteem and internal expectancies compared to low self-esteem and external expectancies. It would appear at first sight that this relationship is universal. However, the relationship between self-esteem and locus of control has proven to be more complex. When comparisons are made across different ethnic groups, contrasting relationships emerge between locus of control and self-esteem.

Louden (1977) compared self-esteem and locus of control relationships across contrasting ethnic groups. He found that the relationship described by Lefcourt applied to white students but not to African Caribbean or Asian students. African Caribbean and Asian students tended to have higher levels of self-esteem than white students but tended to have external expectancies. Hendrix (1986) research confirmed Louden's findings. A total of 240 black and white students participated in this study, 135 black students and 105 white students. Hendrix discovered that black male and female students showed high self-esteem as well as external locus of control measured on Rotter's general Internal-External scale. These two factors were statistically significant and positive. However, the specific dimension of students' personal control was measured using the Personal Control Scale. The results here indicated that black students retained a sense of personal control. Hence, even though black students were more likely to have external expectancies, personal control was not depressed. This suggests that external factors are perceived and felt more strongly by black students than by white students, so perhaps reflecting their relative social positioning. Results for white students were less clear as the self-esteem and locus of control of white students were not significantly related in Hendrix's study.

Tashakkori and Thompson (1991) provide a contemporary contribution to the body of research concerning the relationship between self-esteem, locus of control and ethnicity. Their large-scale longitudinal research tested self-esteem and locus of control between African American and white students between the ages of 16 and 19. 14,721 white high school students and 5,197 African American students were tested

on three occasions over a period of six years. Overall, African American students showed higher levels of self-esteem across general and specific dimensions such as physical attractiveness. In terms of locus of control, African American students tended to show external expectancies regarding cultural events and personal efficacy. However, African American students had higher expectations of academic success compared to white students. Gender differences across locus of control were slight although females tended to have less belief in their academic potential and so showed lower efficacy than males.

Wood, Hillman and Sawilowsky (1992) also maintain that externalisation is sometimes used as a self-protective mechanism among stigmatised groups. The Nowicki Strickland Locus of Control Scale and the Piers-Harris Children's Self-concept Scale were administered to 110 African American school students. These students were all aged between 11 and 13 years old. The students here had higher than average self-concept but external expectancies were far higher than the normative comparison group. Hillman et al suggest that this demonstrates that external locus of control is perhaps a self-protective mechanism among stigmatised groups.

Yong's (1994) research explored the relationship between locus of control and self-esteem across contrasting American ethnic minority groups. This research involved adolescents between the ages of 11 to 13 years old. A total of 165 students participated in this research. 90 African American students, 30 Mexican American students and 45 Chinese American students were involved. All were gifted students. In this study, student responses across all ethnic groups were characterised by high self-esteem and internal locus of control. Locus of control was measured using the Nowicki Strickland scale for children and was measured using the Self Concept Scale for Gifted Children (Feldhusen and Kolloff, 1981). These results contradicted those of Hendrix (1986) and Tashakkori and Thompson (1991) who found that high self-esteem was accompanied by external locus of control among ethnic minority students.

It is important to remain conscious of Nowicki and Strickland's contribution to the area of locus of control in order to understand the emergence of contradictory results (1973). They maintain that locus of control is an unstable factor that is affected by social and individual difference. Research concerning the nature of ethnicity should also be considered as there are strong arguments to suggest that ethnicity is an unstable factor also (Rassool, 1999; Banton, 1998; Hall, 1992 and Gillborn, 1995). Consequently, it is difficult to predict psychological outcomes on the basis of an unstable factor such as ethnicity that is arguably contingent upon changing social context and individual circumstance also.

2.17 Summary of Student Identity

In order to explore identity effectively an important area of student life and experience was selected. This was the area of student friendships. Mutuality is a strong organising feature of friendships among children, adolescents and adults; it emerged that ethnicity and gender are two characteristics that are often taken as key signifiers of mutuality. Consequently, the formation of same ethnicity and same gender friendships is often the norm between students. This applies to students from minority as well as majority ethnic groups. Ethnicity and gender then appear to be important areas of identity in the context of friendship.

It is important to have a comprehensive understanding of the concepts of self-esteem and locus of control in order to appreciate the fluidity of these personality constructs. Classical and contemporary theories outline how both are affected by social and individual contexts. When exploring self-esteem and locus of control across ethnic lines, the fluidity and complexity of ethnicity needs to be considered also. Consequently, there is no consistent pattern in the direction of self-esteem or locus of control along lines of ethnicity. Neither are there constant patterns in terms of gender differences in self-esteem or locus of control.

The notion of flexible and complex identities is particularly salient within this section. Consistency has been highlighted in terms of ethnic mutuality in friendship

formation, but this does not translate into static notions of status or self-worth as can be seen from inconsistent results of self-esteem and locus of control tests.

2.18   Concluding comments

The aim of this thesis is to illuminate student experience of transfer and to compare the experiences of students from minority and majority ethnic backgrounds. This review has intended to provide a theoretical framework from which to understand the nature of ethnicity and how this may impact upon experience. A flexible, non-essential position has been promoted as a means of understanding the attitudes and responses within and between contrasting groups. The theoretical framework surrounding ethnicity serves as a background to understanding experiential and personality issues that arise during a review of relevant literature and also emerged during fieldwork.

Experiential and personality issues serve as major organising themes for this thesis, encapsulating fundamental areas of student orientation and identity. Within this review of literature, *Student Orientation* embraced such areas as student destinations. This section also discussed the major trend of post-sixteen education; it demonstrated that parents performed a pivotal role in student decision-making and support. Social relationships were also identified as important to student adjustment and coping. In the section relating to *Student Identity*, friendship formation and the personality constructs of self-esteem and locus of control were discussed. Patterns of friendship formation proved the importance of mutuality, with gender and ethnicity emerging as fundamental markers. A greater emphasis was placed on discussion of self-esteem rather than locus of control as this has received greater attention in popular discourse and is presented as an explanation of differing outcomes more frequently than locus of control. However, self-esteem and locus of control are closely related constructs. There is a considerable amount of literature that has used the associated relationship between them to explain adjustment of students in general and ethnic minority groups in particular. In this review of literature, attention was given to the theoretical understanding of both concepts and it was demonstrated that simple readings of self-esteem and locus of control could not be taken for granted. The

reviewed studies presented contradictory evidence as well as complex interactions between self-esteem, locus of control, ethnicity and gender. However, it was an appreciation of the instability of both constructs that allowed contradictory evidence to be understood. The instability of both self-esteem and locus of control also related to the nature of ethnicity. Ethnicity is also an unstable construct and this enables the emergence of multiple configurations when self-esteem, locus of control and ethnic group membership are considered alongside one another.

The literature review here has utilized theory and previous research serving as a framework for my research findings. The rest of this thesis focuses on research design, followed by discussion and analysis of research findings. This stage would have been far more difficult to organise, comprehend and synthesise without the benefit of much of the research reviewed here.

3 Methods of Collection and Analysis

3.1   Description of research process

Fieldwork occurred across two distinct phases. Phase One involved the collation of questionnaire responses and acted as a central element in bounding the research and in conceptualising theoretical frameworks. Questionnaire responses of 311 Year 11 pupils constituted the first layer of fieldwork during Phase One. A second layer involving responses of 210 first year college students complemented this. During Phase One complete Year 11 cohorts were surveyed in two schools. Dimension sampling of Leicester schools was used here to include a cross-section of ethnic minority and ethnic majority students. Dimension sampling was also used in relation to students from Leicester colleges in order to compare Leicester's largest ethnic minority students with minority students. Phase Two involved collective case study of 27 students undertaking post-compulsory education immediately after leaving school at age sixteen. Interviews were also held with college staff.

The aim of fieldwork was to establish the essential features of experience for students transferring from compulsory to post-compulsory education. Of central concern was the need to compare experience between ethnic minority and majority groups. Ethnicity was treated as a flexible entity that varied in importance according to social and individual context. The importance of ethnicity was also considered as intricately related to other identities, thus altering its importance in varied contexts. Detailed discussion of this theoretical position can be found in the literature review within this thesis. Comparisons across ethnic groups formed the central focus of research although gender and school effects were also considered. Emphasis of the overall research project was on experience for students in the first year of transfer.

However, Year 11 students were included in order to clarify the earlier context that surrounded student intentions. The recurring themes of *Student Orientation* and *Student Identity* began to emerge during Phase One of research and also arose in Phase Two.

Phase Two involved qualitative research that tracked specific students throughout their first year of post-compulsory education. Stake (1995) argues that case study research can take on a variety of forms such as concentrating on a single individual. He also argues that a more general approach can be considered as case study research. He maintains that,

> ...researchers may study a number of cases jointly in order to inquire into the phenomenon, population, or general condition. We might call this *collective case study* (p237).

I would argue that the students involved in Phase Two of this research that were interviewed and observed over the period of one academic year allow this phase of research to be considered as a collective case study. Student experience was considered in relation to the general condition of transfer experience. Case studies involved in-depth interviewing as well as completion of self-esteem and locus of control measures. Observations were also conducted to support interview and questionnaire activities. Staff were also invited to comment on their perceptions of the experience of these students and to comment on issues that were pertinent to student transfer in general. Case study research aimed to explore the nature of experience as well as explain any differences in experience. The comparative method was essential to this research, contrasting student experience among those from ethnic minority and ethnic majority groups.

The way in which students were selected for inclusion in case study research was based on replications, a conventional measure of reliability in the case study approach. It was predicted that two or more students from the majority group would share similar results. This was seen as a basis for comparison with students from ethnic minority groups. Such an approach is defended by Stake (1995):

> Potential for learning is a different and sometimes superior criterion to representativeness (p243).

Hence, replication was considered more important than statistically based sampling logic. In specific regard to this research, the case study approach concentrated on opportunities to discover differences and explain those differences, rather than over-emphasising statistical representativeness.

Fieldwork research was reflexive as emerging hypotheses were constantly reconsidered and evaluated in relation to research evidence. This research however, did not simply utilise data that emerged directly from fieldwork. Student interpretations, literature and research based evidence all informed the analysis of this collective case study.

3.2   Aims

Phase One and Phase Two were designed to complement one another. The aim of Phase One was to provide background information regarding immediate and future student trajectories. Research here involved students at the end of compulsory schooling and students engaged in the first year of post sixteen education. Hence, a comparative approach was also involved. The information emerging from Phase One was also respected as a means of informing later fieldwork research in Phase Two. This was influenced by grounded theory in terms of utilising research findings in order to inform each stage of research (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

3.3   Resources

Phase One involved the completion of the *After Year 11* survey and the *Changing Times* questionnaire. Each aimed to unveil a snapshot of student perspectives regarding immediate and future trajectories. The *Changing Times* questionnaire also aimed to gauge the experience of post-compulsory education.

Phase Two looked more closely at post-sixteen educational experience and this was facilitated through semi-structured interviews and naturalistic observations. There was a greater leaning towards ethnographic approaches in this phase. There was also a concern to explore perceptions of self in order to uncover any significant

relationships between student trajectories, student experience and ethnic and gender differences of students. The Rosenberg (New York State) measure of global self-esteem was used. The Nowicki-Strickland Internal-External Measure of Locus of Control was also utilised. The theoretical bases of both concepts are discussed fully within the literature review of this thesis. Many self-esteem and locus of control measures are expressly applicable to children or adults. As sixteen to seventeen year old students straddle both phases careful consideration needed to be given in order to avoid attendant dangers of patronising or intimidating students. The Rosenberg self-esteem measure and the Nowicki Strickland locus of control measure both have a history of testing among students in the 15-17 age range and have strong reliability and validity. Both were regarded as most appropriate here.

3.4   Year 11 Participants in Phase One

During Phase One, the largest ethnic minority group to respond to questionnaires were Asian students in both schools and colleges. African Caribbean students were the second largest ethnic minority group but the sample size here was small in both schools and colleges. Consequently, principal comparisons of minority and majority groups involve Asian students and white students, respectively.

Table 4   Year 11 students sampled at School A and School B, by ethnic group

	Ethnic group									
	African Caribbean		Asian		Mixed race		White		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	2	.6	177	57	4	1.3	8	2.6	191	61
School B	5	1.6	28	9	5	1.6	82	26.4	120	39
Total	7	2.0	205	66	9	3.0	90	29.0	311	100

Approximately 3% of the Year 11 school sample were mixed race and 2% were African Caribbean. Only 1 other student indicated belonging to an ethnic minority group other than those already stated. White students made up 29% of the Year 11 sample and Asian students comprised 65% of the Year 11 sample. 57% of all Year 11 students completing the questionnaire were female.

3.5 College participants in Phase One

White students made up approximately 44% of the college sample that responded to the *Changing Times* survey and Asian students comprised roughly 48% of the college sample. Approximately 6% of students were African Caribbean and 2% were mixed race. 48% of the 209 students were female.

Table 5 First year college students sampled at Marshfield, Brooks and Quarry Hill, by ethnic group

	Ethnic Origin									
	African Caribbean		Asian		Mixed race		White		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Marshfield College	0	0	41	19.6	2	1	21	10	64	31
Brooks College	6	2.9	56	26.8	1	.5	36	17	99	47
Quarry Hill College	6	2.9	4	1.9	1	.5	35	16.7	46	22
Total	12	**5.8**	101	**48.3**	4	**2**	92	**43.7**	209	**100**

Students undertaking primarily A Levels, GNVQs or GCSEs were represented across the three colleges. 30% of students surveyed were undertaking A Levels as their main pathway, 57% were undertaking vocational courses and 13% were undertaking GCSEs as a primary activity.

3.6 Administrating the research for Phase One

Fieldwork for this thesis was carried out between April 1997 and June 1998. The first phase involved the administration of questionnaires targeting students in their final year of compulsory schooling and students undertaking their first year in post-sixteen education. Hence, Phase One constituted two layers. The first layer of research involved 315 Year 11 students from two East Midlands secondary schools. These two schools were within the same East Midlands education authority. They were also within the same local area as those colleges involved in the second layer of this phase. All Year 11 students who were present in school completed questionnaires on the day that it was administered. This questionnaire was presented as the *After Year 11* survey and was administered by form tutors in April 1997. The

second layer of Phase One involved 210 students in their first year at college. They completed the *Changing Times* questionnaire between May and June 1997. This was administered by form tutors and by subject tutors.

3.7   *College participants in Phase Two*

Phase Two, involved college students only. Proportions of students from minority groups were more even than was achieved during Phase One. Out of a total of 27 students involved here, 2 were mixed race (7%), 5 were African Caribbean (19%), 9 were Asian (33%) and 11 were white (41%). Gender was also well balanced. 16 males and 11 females were involved in this phase of research.

3.8   *Administrating the research for Phase Two*

Phase Two of fieldwork involved case study research performed across four further education institutions within two East Midlands counties. All four sites were centrally located.

Student participation was secured within the first term of attendance at a further education institution. Requests were sent via tutors who were provided with details explaining the project. These details were also written out for the benefit of students. It was felt that an approach from staff would be appropriate in this early period of transfer, as external contact so early within the term could appear intrusive. Staff were asked to respect basic criteria in terms of seeking ethnic, gender and ability diversity. Consequently, the overall selection of students was not excessively skewed towards any ethnic or gender group. Also, in terms of overall ability, a range of students was represented, as were academic and vocational course types. Furthermore, participation rates were high.

Once students expressed an interest in being involved with research brief introductory meetings were held on an individual basis. Details of the study were directly explained and students were given further opportunity to fully consider their involvement in the study. Students were made aware that they were not obliged to

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participate and could withdraw from the study at any point. Students were also assured that any information provided would be confidential.

Fieldwork entailed tracking students in the initial stages of the first year in post compulsory education towards the end of their first year. This involved up to three rounds of interviewing and observations. Round 1 occurred during the first term at the start of the academic year. Round 2 occurred at the close of this term. Round 3 occurred towards the end of the academic year when students had experienced a substantial period within post-sixteen education and were beginning to think once again about plans for the following year. In-depth interviews and observations commenced between September 1997 and June 1998. In-depth interviews with college staff were also undertaken during this period. Permission to record semi-structured interviews was always gained. A brief preamble preceded each interview to explain the point of the discussion.

3.9   Level of response in Phase One

The response rate to questionnaires was extremely high. Nil questionnaires were returned as wholly incomplete or wholly spoilt. It was more likely that students elected to omit a specific question, particularly where ranked responses were requested. Open questions generated far greater variation of response than where students were given a selection of choices. All closed questions carried the option of 'other' to allow some limited flexibility in response.

3.10   Level of response in Phase Two

During this phase only one student out of 27 declined to take any further part in the study following the first series of interviews. Three students withdrew from their courses before Easter and only one could be contacted for any follow-up on motivations for leaving and intentions. Such incidents were expected, as there was awareness that 100% participation rates were unusual. There were sufficient students involved in fieldwork to retain a good cross-section and one further student

volunteered to act as a substitute in replacement of a friend who had been involved in research but subsequently left the course. Her contributions were welcomed.

3.11 Description of research instruments

3.12 Rosenberg global self-esteem measure

The Rosenberg self-esteem scale consisted of a ten-item Guttman scale that included the four stages of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. This measure depended on student self-reporting in response to the ten questions of the measure. Most students took up to three minutes to complete this brief measure.

3.13 Nowicki-Strickland internal-external locus of control measure

The Nowicki-Strickland measure was used in this research to measure locus of control. Students were required to consider their attitudes to 40 reinforcement situations. The Nowicki-Strickland measure consisted of 40 questions requiring a ticked response of Yes or No. Completion time ranged from five to fifteen minutes.

3.14 Analysing fieldwork data

3.15 Analysing questionnaire data in phase one

Discussion of results from Phase 1 began with an exploration of questionnaire data originating from the *After Year 11* survey. Prior conceptualisation, hypothesis building and bounding of research had informed the construction of the *After Year 11* survey and the *Changing Times* questionnaire. The two themes of Orientation and Identity were key considerations in analysing the *After Year 11* survey.

3.16 Analysing the after Year 11 survey

Where orientation was explored, analysis focused on items concerning pupil attitudes toward school, surveying relationships with staff and establishing the importance of this relationship, discerning motivations for post sixteen choices, and identifying pupil support networks regarding transfer and decision-making. During analysis of

the *After Year 11* survey, pupil identity was explored through items establishing the importance of ethnicity, the ethnic and gender composition of friendships was also explored and the importance of several separate aspects of identity were investigated. In addition, the Rosenberg measure of self-esteem was included in the questionnaire to explore whether any variance in levels of self-esteem existed and whether this related to orientation in any way. This was the only opportunity gained to explore self-esteem among Year 11 pupils.

3.17   Analysing the Changing Times questionnaire

Student experience of college was investigated through the *Changing Times* survey. Student orientation towards college was examined by exploring reasons for choice of college and course choice, examining attitudes to course and whether this affected decisions to return for a second year, establishing whether students missed school, and surveying differences and similarities perceived between school and college. Student adjustment to the first year was also investigated, how well students felt that they had coped, and how far students were satisfied with the academic and social aspects of college life were also explored. Student plans for the following year as well as more long-term aims and expectations were also investigated. Those significant in providing advice and encouragement to students were identified, as were those instrumental in students' decision making. Student identity was discussed with regard to ethnicity, gender and friendship formation.

3.18   Data analysis techniques

Without exception, univariate frequencies were generated for each questionnaire item. Basic, general statistics were displayed and subjected to the chi square test for goodness of fit. It was necessary to identify from the outset whether any differences emerging from the data were statistically significant or not. Frequencies for all items can be found in Appendix 6 (After Year 11 survey results) and Appendix 7 (Changing Times questionnaire results). Constant independent variables used throughout the analysis of the questionnaire were ethnicity, gender, school and self-esteem. These were related to the central themes of Orientation and Identity.

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3.19   Analysing data in Phase Two

Phase Two aimed to explore transfer experience from the beginning of the new academic year in post-compulsory education to the end of the academic year. Whilst Phase One was concerned with questionnaire responses, Phase Two incorporated in-depth interviewing and observation as central components of research in the form of a collective case study.

Analysis for Phase Two involved extensive coding of interview and observation data. Common areas were identified and extreme episodes were also noted. This stage also involved a level of verification for ideas that had emerged in Phase One. It was also possible to explore ethnicity on a broader scale in the sense that African Caribbean students and mixed race students were proportionately less marginal in research than had been the case in Phase One.

3.20   Qualitative research and validity

Qualitative approaches do not share the same measures of significance as more quantitative approaches. Within the qualitative field of grounded theory for instance, significance is measured through comparing common occurrences of phenomena within and between several cases and across varied measures. Only when the phenomena has been observed in multiple cases and forms is it treated as a valid feature of the research. The clear absence of data across sites may also be of significance. Comparison was a particularly important practice in this study as contrasts between minority and majority groups was the focal point of research (Strauss and Corbin, 1990 and Miles and Huberman, 1994).

3.21   The analysis of personality measures during Phase Two

3.22   Self-esteem

The Rosenberg self-esteem measure is a measure of global self-esteem rather than a measure of specific dimensions of self-esteem. Rosenberg's Guttman scale is uni-dimensional and cumulative; hence, an overall score can be calculated. There is no

standard limit indicating high or low self-esteem. Hence, the convention of treating the median score as normal was observed. Students scoring in excess or below this level were considered as having high or low self-esteem respectively.

The Rosenberg self-esteem measure exceeded the requirement of reproducibility as a coefficient of .92 was achieved (Rosenberg, 1979). High reproducibility also suggested that this measure was reliable. Rosenberg presents evidence from Silber and Tippett (1965) that is able to confirm strong reliability in test-retest studies. Following a two week test-retest trial, reliability of .85 was recorded among college students. Evidence from McCullough is also presented and a reliability of .88 reported following a two week test-retest period among college students.

Not only was Rosenberg's self-esteem measure thoroughly considered in terms of its reproducibility and reliability, the theoretical strength of the measure was also considered. Construct validity was obtained via two approaches. The first was a prediction of the relationship between self-esteem results obtained using the Rosenberg measure and specific psychological conditions. Rosenberg compared high self-esteem scores with those for depression, anxiety and peer group reputation. The relationship was found to follow predicted trends. Individuals with higher self-esteem had greater protection from depression and anxiety and were more readily accepted in leadership roles (1979).

Rosenberg also demonstrated construct validity through the convergent-discriminant function. He quotes Silber and Tippett's (1965) research in support of this. This study involved 44 college students and utilised four separate measures to test convergent-discriminant validity. Results from Rosenberg's self-esteem measure also converged with Kelley's Repertory Test of self-ideal discrepancies (.67), with the Heath self-image questionnaire (.83) and with rating of self-esteem by psychiatrists (.56). Convergence of results was achieved between these similar concepts despite the forms of measures being very different. Rosenberg also sited research from Crandall. Crandall (1973) reinforced the convergent validity of Rosenberg's measure. Crandall compared results from the Rosenberg self-esteem

measure and those from the Coopersmith self-esteem inventory. A coefficient of .60 was achieved that indicated a close relationship between locus of control and self-esteem. One of the ways in which discriminant validity was demonstrated was through comparison of results between monotrait-heteromethod (single trait - different method) and heterotrait-monomethod (varied traits - single measure). Results from the Rosenberg self-esteem measure were compared with results from a stability of self measure. Both shared the same form of measurement in the shape of the Guttman scale. The correlation achieved between these two measures was only .53, the lowest of all the correlations that included self-evaluation. This confirmed that there was less common ground shared between the distinct *level* of self-esteem and the actual *stability* of self-esteem. Hence, the Rosenberg measure demonstrated its commonality with the single dimension of the direction of self-esteem rather than the stability of self-esteem.

3.23   *Locus of control*

The Nowicki-Strickland locus of control measure serves as a global measure of locus of control and so there are no specific subscales within it. However, interpersonal and motivational themes are present such as influence over peers and belief in luck. The scoring convention for this measure involved marking external responses only. Hence, the highest scores indicated external locus of control whereas lower scores suggested greater internal locus of control. As with the Rosenberg measure, there is no universal score indicative of internal or external locus of control. Individuals can only be considered internal or external in relation to their group. Hence, the median score for external locus of control among this group, was treated as normal and those outside of this score were regarded as having internal or external locus of control as appropriate.

Reliability for the Nowicki-Strickland measure has been tested using the split half as well as test–retest method (Nowicki and Strickland, 1973). Internal consistency was high when this measure was tested among American school students between grades 3 to 12. Reliability for school students in grades 9, 10 and 11 was .74 and among Year 12 reliability reached .81. This demonstrated that the older the students were

the more reliable the measure proved to be. In a test–retest period of six weeks, strong reliability of .71 was also gained (Nowicki and Strickland, 1973).

Construct validity of the Nowicki-Strickland measure was tested through the convergent-discriminant function (Nowicki and Strickland, 1973). Convergence was shown between the adult version of the Rotter scale of internal-external control and the adult version of the Nowicki-Strickland scale. Two separate tests showed convergence. The first involved 76 subjects and showed a significant correlation of .61 ($p <$. 01) and the second involved 46 subjects and showed a significant correlation of .38 ($p <$. 01).

3.24   Personality measures and validity

Construct validity is difficult to secure particularly with personality measures and so the decision was taken to use established instruments that had strong records of construct validity. This motivated the decision to use the Rosenberg self-esteem measure and the Nowicki-Strickland measure. Reliability statistics for both measures are included in sections 3.22 and 3.23. Factor analysis of the Rosenberg self-esteem measure was also undertaken in Phase One as a means to reinforce construct validity. Factor analysis was appropriate here, as over 300 students had responded to the Rosenberg measure in the *After Year 11* survey. This meant that there was a large enough response pool from which to explore factorial structures.

With all overt research measures, there is a possibility that individuals will present socially desirable responses and this has the potential to corrupt research validity. Nowicki and Strickland (1973) confronted the problem of social desirability by running their own measure of locus of control in tandem with the social desirability measure of Crandall et al (1965). The results of this comparison suggest that adults did not respond to locus of control reinforcement situations on the basis of their perceptions of socially desirable answers. Such comparison was not explored in the Rosenberg measure of self-esteem.

Wylie (1979) argues that there has not yet been any method of working out when or to what extent social desirability is applied by individuals in self-esteem testing. However, approaches can be applied to limit the occurrence of such bias undermining validity. The most important factor here was to provide a comfortable environment where personality measures were conducted, in order to encourage students to report faithfully. However, the Rosenberg self-esteem measure was included in questionnaires where empathy and rapport were not generated as easily. Therefore, the randomised ordering of positive and negative items was relied upon to suggest a lack of order to the questions and a lack of expectation concerning responses. In this limited way validity was protected to a degree.

3.25   *Analysis in general*

Fieldwork involved the use of contrasting instruments and varied contexts and therefore it became important to compare information across general concepts. The general concepts of Student Orientation and Student Identity were utilised to explore and to bound comparative analysis of information from Phase One and Phase Two. These two themes had emerged strongly in earlier reviews of literature and were established during the conceptualisation of research. Consequently, these themes enabled the process of verification to occur across each stage and form of research.

3.26   Assigning methods

In order to capture the essence of student experience of transfer, a mixture of research approaches were applied. Concerns respecting quantitative analysis influenced the organisation of the project; hence, it could be argued that positivist influences could be felt. Qualitative approaches had a definite role in the research. Practical considerations concerning particular research methods and measures were also made. Extant literature as detailed earlier in this thesis, in addition to on-going research, helped to shape the analytical framework for discussion of results. This mixture of methods and methodologies is eruditely promoted in the work of Layder (1998; 1997), who pleads for flexibility in research in order to gain rigorous and

robust results. Shortcomings in single methods and methodological approaches necessitated a flexible and mixed style of enquiry here.

3.27   *Questionnaires*

The questionnaire was used in this research for two primary reasons. Firstly, the questionnaire was utilised as a preliminary means of gaining outline information that could uncover essential associations and inform the next stage of research. The second motivation for use of the questionnaire related to practical concerns. The questionnaire could be presented to hundreds of students at a similar point in time and in similar contexts. The swiftness and ease of questionnaire administration also contributed to its strength.

There were basic design considerations that needed to be addressed when the questionnaire was constructed. A combination of open and closed questions was used to generate interest and to gain differing levels of detail from students. A mixture of open and closed questions was also used to prevent response set, so encouraging students to think about the content of responses rather than replying automatically to familiar closed question formats. Open and closed questions also had specific strengths. Open questions allowed a degree of democracy in terms of students being able to respond more freely. This also had the potential to unlock additional dimensions to the research that were not considered when the research was bounded. The closed questions addressed specific research questions, so retaining the focus of research and developing its theoretical dimension (Robson, 1996 and Oppenheim, 1992). However, the questionnaire was regarded primarily as a means of information gathering and its limited means of probing student perceptions was recognised. Various techniques were employed to enhance its validity. For example, where students were asked to choose a response from a list, they were always given the opportunity to dissent or add new categories. Also, where it was necessary for students to respond to a group of several related items, a rating scale usually accompanied this. Where rating scales were used, these had a neutral mid-point and did not go beyond five stages. There was also a concerted attempt to provide a clear frame of reference for the scale. Clarifying the frame of reference reduced 'halo

effect', so discouraging students from responding generally but encouraging specificity. The sequence of positive and negative items was also randomised to discourage response set. Questions were also organised into specific blocks to provide the opportunity for factorial explorations during analysis. It was also preferable to chart student intentions using a number of related items as opposed to a single one. This provided a broader set of opportunities to test attitudes rather than reliance on a single item.

Items within the questionnaire, with the exception of the Rosenberg self-esteem scale, were not psychologically based attitudinal measures. They had face validity but in the time allowed could not be developed to the same statistically reliable standard as such measures as the self-esteem and locus of control measures used elsewhere in the research. However, construct validity existed among several of the items in the questionnaires. Analysis showed that a number of items correlated with one another such as the importance of various social and physical identities. Factor analysis also demonstrated the existence of construct validity within the 15 items relating to student expectations.

There were potential difficulties in using questionnaires in research of which I was aware when considering the value of the questionnaire approach. Among the most important concerns here related to defining the boundaries for research. It was important not to overlook important areas in this single opportunity to survey Year 11 students on such a scale. Also, although the research had to be bounded this could not go so far as to stifle contradictory ideas and explanations.

A further area of the questionnaire approach that required attention was the distance between researcher and students. The questionnaire was the major starting point of fieldwork research. However, development of rapport with students is not integral to this tool. The questionnaire is by its very nature distant. This is one of its great strengths in that students were able to respond to standard questions and were provided with a range of standard responses that were free from interview bias. The security of confidentiality also lessened the pressure to respond in ways deemed

conventional or socially desirable. However, any confusion or misunderstanding concerning questions could not be readily overcome.

Ontological issues arose in relation to the distance between researcher and those being researched. There was an awareness that there is no accounting for the varied interpretations and attitudes taken towards social phenomena. This is not a question of misunderstanding or lack of clarity; it concerns the different ways in which individuals view the social world. The researcher can only phrase questions as clearly as possible to convey an understanding of the social world and analyse how far others differ or concur with one another in relation to this view. Essentially, the questionnaire utilises the researcher's conceptual range. This range defines the limits of the questionnaire as well as the analysis of open and closed responses. However, it is clear that the questionnaire is not a natural part of student life. It is an artificial means of gaining insight. Therefore, naturalistic observation of students in their usual contexts was one of the methods adopted to supplement questionnaire data.

3.28   Observations

Observation is a common practice in social research and cuts across a number of methodologies. The popularity of observation stems from the closeness with which researchers can get to the subject, witnessing the reality of students within their contexts and frameworks. It is not reliant on faded memories or misrepresentations of events. Neither is it a responsive approach in the way that questionnaires and interviews demand.

In this research, naturalistic observations were undertaken. Observations allowed events and relationships to be observed in actual context and real time. Observation was principally used to triangulate interview data of individual students. However, there were potential problems associated with this method. The most serious was that of validity. It is possible that the presence of the observer affected the behaviour of those under observation in the direction of social desirability, exaggeration or faking. My role was an overt one and I explained to individual students that they were the focus of research and that I was also interested in the general experience of

transfer among the whole class. In classrooms where I undertook observations, I explained to students that my observations were general and did not reveal which individual students formed the focus of my attention. Over the period of one academic year, staff and students became familiar with my presence and I was able to blend into the background of events. Observed behaviour was also discussed in follow-up interviews with individual students as well as teaching and pastoral staff in order to verify what had been observed.

Participant observation was not considered practicable here due to questions of access and lack of subject specialism across the variety of departments involved in the research. Notes were taken during each observation session and this was considered preferable to committing events to memory. Depending on memory was not feasible in sessions that proceeded beyond 45 minutes with some lasting as long as three hours.

Interpretation of observation data is often criticised as lacking in objectivity, thus making it unreliable. However, observations were not left to stand as independent evidence. Observation was predominantly used as a strand to verify student and tutor interviews. Although there was recognition that observation could potentially uncover important issues, there was also a care to avoid imposing researcher interpretations of observations. Consequently, any appearance of new issues or relationships was discussed with interviewees. There was only one area where this occurred and this was exposure of the isolated positioning of specific students. This was important, as it was not expressed during early interviews with students concerned. However, observation was not allowed to stand alone without regard for student interpretation of events. Therefore, there was a concerted effort to discuss any revealing observations with students. Overall, observation performed a support role within this research, with greatest emphasis placed on student expressions of experience.

3.29   *Interviews*

Interviews were included in research due to the flexibility of this approach. Interviewing students and staff helped to gain insight into student opinion and preferences. It also helped in exploring the motivations and experiences of student choices. Factual information was also gained from students as well as staff. Any topics that arose from the questionnaire data could be more fully explored through interviews with specific students rather than gaining only a general picture of student experience.

A total of 38 interviews were conducted and these involved students and staff. This led to a rich resource but also proved time-consuming in terms of transcription and analysis. However, this difficulty had been fully anticipated and weighed against more compressed forms of data collection such as the questionnaire approach. The questionnaire approach has already been detailed above and its use justified as a preliminary and time-effective approach. However, it could not reveal the same level of detail as interviewing.

The semi-structured interview was used in preference to structured or unstructured approaches given that research was not entirely exploratory and was bounded by specific objectives. Therefore, a degree of control in terms of what issues were covered in the precious time of each interview was necessary. The semi-structured nature of interviews was also useful in terms of comparing student and staff responses to particular issues. Comparing unstructured responses for 38 interviews would have been extremely more difficult and not necessarily have yielded information that was appropriate for comparison. Conversely, an entirely structured approach was considered too close an equivalent of the questionnaire method that had been used in Phase One. Phase Two aimed to uncover individual responses and greater detail. Hence, greater flexibility in questions and response were favoured. The semi-structured approach that was applied in Phase Two made use of a prepared list of questions but also used probes and prompts to encourage further discussion and clarification. A combination of open and closed questions were also used in

order to maintain structure to the interviews as well as allowing a degree of flexibility for students and staff contributing to interviews.

Interviews were taped to aid the memory of what had passed and also to assist with comparative analysis. Transcripts of tapes helped to further bound the research as particular recurrent themes and attitudes could be tracked in retrospect. Also, as Oppenheim has noted, it was important to evaluate, "what is being omitted" (Oppenheim, 1992). Tape recordings provided an opportunity to reflect on the content of interviews as they presented a fair record of discourse.

The interview was included as a means to engage with students and staff at a level at which they felt at ease in expressing positive and negative ideas. Recognising that this was more likely during the interpersonal communication of the interview meant that interpersonal considerations also had to be undertaken. Hence the need for rapport was central. Many students treated interviews as an opportunity to discuss social and family situations not directly related to research. Although this was beyond the limits of the research framework, it was an inclusive element of interviewing. It was an ingredient within the development of a trusting relationship that contributed to the positive conduct of interviews.

There were remaining problems that had to be attended to in deciding whether to use the interview approach. These were particularly related to the issue of bias. The contemplation of potential bias is inescapable when considering whether to use the interview method. Three areas were of major concern and these included interview bias, ethnic bias and respondent bias. Strategies were enacted to limit interview bias as it was recognised that leading and/or partisan questions could be limited. This was tackled by formulating extremely clear questions and fully considering appropriate prompts. This occurred as an integral feature in the construction of interview schedules. When ethnic bias is discussed in the general literature concerning research methods, it often refers to the problems of ethnic majority researchers interviewing individuals from ethnic minority groups. One suggested redress to this is to balance interviewer characteristics with those of the interviewee

(Cohen and Manion, 1994). However, in this research, the situation was reversed. Bias in response of ethnic majority students and staff towards questions and issues relating to ethnicity from an ethnic minority researcher was the situation that needed to be considered here. The second suggestion to ethnic bias in the general literature is to attempt to make those being interviewed feel at ease and free from judgement (Wragg, 1978). This was promoted as far as possible with all students and staff interviewed. The issue of respondent bias relates to those being interviewed providing answers that are socially desirable or in keeping with what they assume the researcher would wish to hear. The issue of social desirability could not be entirely eliminated, as this is an area over which the researcher does not have complete control. However, the conditions for encouraging respondent bias could be reduced. Robson (1996) suggests that neutrality of tone and response is necessary in interviewing in order to allow those interviewed to feel at ease with expressing their genuine opinions and ideas. He suggests that contributions should be encouraged but lack of agreement with responses should not be demonstrated. This approach was adopted in student as well as staff interviews.

The final area of discussion concerning interview conduct and analysis are related to issues of reliability and validity. Reliability tests such as the test-retest approach were not fitting here. Interviews were undertaken periodically to gauge student attitudes as they progressed through the academic year. Experiential and attitudinal changes were expected and considered normal. Reliability could have been increased if the fixed nature of structured interviews had replaced the flexibility of semi-structured interviews. However, this would have created the problem of undermining validity within the questions asked, as this would have weakened opportunities for contributions and innovations by those being interviewed. This would also have removed the interpersonal quality that was valued in the semi-structured approach.

Interviews formed a fundamental vehicle for integrating research in several respects. Preliminary information gathered from questionnaires provided one element in the construction of interview schedules. Interviews were also used to develop and verify

information from questionnaire data. Interviews also enabled clarification and verification of observed instances concerning social relationships and student participation in learning activities. The interview approach also proved useful as an independent technique. It allowed students and staff the opportunity to introduce areas that were not covered in previous questionnaires. This final point reduced the temptation of simply corroborating research domains and concepts that had been wholly determined by the researcher.

Use of multiple methods allowed convergent validity to be conducted among the results of each method. Hence, interview data was compared with questionnaire data. There proved to be a great deal of convergence among the responses of students. Observation data also converged with much of the interview data. However, each method had a specific role. Questionnaires were effective in providing a general picture of student intentions at Year 11 and overall experience and satisfaction at the end of their first year at college. Interviewing provided a more specific and individual portrait of student experiences at the beginning, middle and end of the first year of post-compulsory education. Observation provided an opportunity to specifically observe classroom relationships and participation.

3.30 Methodological issues

Attention was given to a range of methodologies and the decision was taken to draw upon the strengths of varied approaches as no single methodology provided an entirely satisfactory framework. However, this was not a haphazard technique, care was taken to continue rigorous research practice.

3.31 Positivism

Empirical research was gathered on the basis that this would assist information gathering. Such practice has its roots in positivist approaches to social enquiry as promoted in the writing of Auguste Comte (1838). It is assumed that 'social facts' can be measured and quantified if rigorous and objective standards are applied (1838). When relevant social facts are identified, cause and effect relationships are

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then constructed. Student questionnaires fitted into this category of research to a degree as the questionnaires aimed to identify post sixteen intentions and destinations. Associations between variables were found and discussed in relation to influential causes. However, there were limitations to this practice, as the totality of transfer experience was not fully accessed by means of a questionnaire or on the basis of a positivist approach. Student decisions were framed by numerous contexts including the observable such as GCSE grades and availability of course opportunities. However, subjective conditions such as student attitudes to education and educational experience were also central to such decisions. The social context of action was a complex one, indicated by the emergence of causal relationships that could rarely be substantiated without recourse to a consideration of subjective factors. This undermined the adequacy of the positivist approach. Furthermore, within the positivist tradition, quantifiable observations are regarded as objective social facts that do not require explanation. Commitment to objectivity is one of the key features of this method. However, although the research practice undertaken for this thesis was rigorous, subjectivity was also valued. For instance, this research aimed to uncover the destinations of students as well as exploring how their subjective experiences framed their choices. Differing experiences were identified and described. However, the explanation of difference was open to interpretation of both subjective and objective factors. These factors were observable as well as unobservable. This relates to the final difficulty within positivist philosophy. Although the positivist approach seeks to uncover cause and effect, it tends to reject theoretical development. There is an over-reliance on the assumption that phenomenon speaks for itself without the aid of a more general framework. It is this researcher's view that research projects can provide erudite explanations of social phenomena but the use of general theory can also strengthen the theoretical structure and analysis of research. For instance, sections of literature discussed in this thesis make reference to the influence of social structures on identity. Such considerations have also been useful in understanding the contradictory results that emerge from personality measures. At first sight results appear to be entirely concerned with individual personality factors alone but a greater understanding is aided when social differences are explored in the general context of social difference.

3.32   *Ethnography*

Ethnographic forms of research were also applied during this study. Extensive use of interviews were undertaken in the collective case study of Phase Two for example. Interest in ethnographic forms of research related to attempts to centre student perceptions of experience. Feminist critiques of positivist approaches also drove the decision to introduce ethnographic forms of research. Such critiques have charged positivist approaches with imposing male-centred and male generated approaches and paradigms that ignore female experience (Reinharz, 1992 and Stanley, 1990). Stanfield (1994) makes similar charges in relation to the imposition of ethno-centric approaches generated by the majority ethnic group within society. The inclusion of ethnographic forms provides an opportunity to closely consider the contributions of all those involved in the research. However, the employment of ethnographic approaches was not only a democratic strategy, it was also crucial to an understanding of how student actions were framed. Student perspectives were centred and this assisted in challenging preconceptions of the researcher. In turn, this enhanced the validity of research.

Grounded theory offers a comprehensive guide to research that draws upon ethnographic approaches. Glaser and Strauss (1967) were responsible for setting out the detail of grounded theory that was popularised during the mid-1970s. Pragmatism and Symbolic Interactionism were taken as the basis for their approach (Mead, 1934; Park and Burgess, 1921 and Blumer, 1969). Strauss and Corbin (1990) went on to develop grounded theory further and argue that an explicit methodology is required in order to guide and conduct research of an acceptable standard. They seek to understand the behaviour of social actors that arises as a result of the specific interaction within a given social situation. Therefore, their technique applies to chiefly qualitative data. Strauss and Corbin (1990) accept general research guidelines that are concerned with avoiding bias during the interview and observation process. Furthermore, they do not set down inflexible conditions for sources of data collection. For example, interviewing and observations are promoted alongside analysis of official documents, video evidence and letters. However,

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grounded theory introduces procedural features into research that are absent from other approaches.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) maintain that throughout research, hypotheses concerning the inter-relationships between categories should be developed and verified. Verification can be achieved by testing hypotheses in interviews and observations. Necessary revisions to hypotheses can then be made accordingly. This requires that the researcher seek qualifying or negative evidence. Therefore, the research should seek out patterns as well as irregularities. This provides theoretical order to the data and also facilitates data and theory integration. The spirit of grounded theory is one of discovery and the principal source of information is taken from the subject of enquiry. Therefore, extant literature and theory are disregarded and systemic factors are not investigated as this relies on abstract considerations that lie outside of the subject.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) argue that the analysis of phenomena must not be isolated from broader structural concerns. They maintain that macro research no matter on what scale, should include central issues that are specific to the project, but broader factors that influence the conditions should also be acknowledged and explored. These broader conditions may be economic, cultural or social for example. Strauss and Corbin are careful to discuss conditions rather than structures. The broader influences that they mention are observable rather than conceptual.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) do not make claims that grounded theory is fully reproducible. They argue that no analysis that deals with social psychological dimensions is entirely reproducible as it is not possible to replicate conditions exactly. However, they contend that grounded research is verifiable. Adopting an identical theoretical perspective, employment of like data collection methods and use of comparable analysis techniques, should allow another researcher to replicate the study and achieve similar results in similar contexts. Any differences that emerge should be attributed to special conditions that apply to each case.

Despite the rigour and detail facilitated by grounded theory, there were limitations to this approach. These were mainly related to the concentration on observed behaviours rather than social or psychological structures and concepts. For instance, the importance of investigating self-esteem and locus of control were established in the review of literature. This concerned an exploration of the relationship between ethnicity, self-esteem and locus of control and a questioning of popular associations between low self-esteem and minority ethnic groups. There was a necessary departure from grounded theory when considering both of these personality issues. It was not appropriate to subject these social-psychological concepts to the type of analysis applicable within grounded theory. Discussion of social structures and impediments to progress were also difficult to tackle using the grounded approach. Similarly, concepts such as identity were not easily engaged through the grounded approach, as grounded theory is so heavily reliant on observable phenomena. Extant theory and literature were used to inform a greater understanding of phenomena and to provide more effective explanations of difference. This is demonstrated in the literature review within this thesis. The literature review made use of previous theory and research evidence to set a context for transition and difference.

Ethnographic and positivist methodologies provided significant frameworks to shape research. However, both were limited in terms of how far they were able to fuse research practice with theoretical development. The work of Layder became important in terms of providing a rationale from which to unite research practice and theoretical development.

3.33   Layder

Layder (1998) refers to his approach as adaptive theory. He maintains that 'adaptive' theory conveys the sense in which theory both adapts to, and is shaped by incoming evidence from emergent data. Emergent data is also influenced by theoretical frameworks established prior to research practice. Layder encourages a considered union between research and theory, as this would allow theory to be rigorously tested.

> On the one hand, theory would be made more robust and its explanatory capacity
> generally enhanced by having its assumptions, axioms and presuppositions more
> closely and routinely measured against empirical evidence. On the other hand,
> empirical research would benefit from more sophisticated forms of analysis and
> explanation as well as enhanced generalizability and applicability (1998: 7).

Layder argues that as far as possible, research should be related to theoretical frameworks. A greater level of generalizability would also allow the theory and research to be applied more widely, rather than confining both to specific, localised contexts. However, Layder contends that positivist and ethnographic approaches both lack effective generalizability and discourage broad application. He is concerned that the emphasis on empirical data gathering within the positivist approach leads to a situation where the data is not explained, it is merely presented as capable of speaking for itself. Layder argues that the explanatory power and the application of such studies could be broadened if research was to be evaluated in the context of general theory. Research results could also be used to test general theory. Layder also maintains that the strong emphasis on distinct subjectivities within grounded theory, leads to a constant recreation of theory for each specific context. Subsequently, generalizability is undermined. Layder argues that generalizability could evolve more effectively if general theory was considered adjacent to subjective detail. This would also allow structural and systemic factors to be considered alongside observed behaviours.

This thesis has attempted to make use of Layder's approach. The review of literature in Chapter 2 sets out a range of empirical studies alongside more theoretical research. This has been used as a basis for understanding the educational and social context of transfer. Execution and discussion of fieldwork has aimed to verify this context and contribute further insights and explanation. The concluding chapter of this thesis then aims to generalize findings by displaying important implications and recognising where further research and action is required.

In order to develop theory within research, Layder argues that full use should be made of a variety of theoretical sources and traditions.

> The basic precondition here is that discourses cease to be regarded as sacrosanct, monolithic and self-referentially true. Instead, each becomes regarded as a working resource – just one of several in the context of an overarching framework (1998: 39).

Layder promotes the use of extant literature as a flexible resource and maintains that this shares equivalent status with information gained directly from research practice. He argues that this assertion is justified as theory and research practice are related and yet are also distinct. He stresses the importance of combining existing theoretical frameworks from extant literature with the information derived from research data. Layder promotes openness in the use of research methods and methodologies. He regards current literature as a valuable resource throughout the research process. He also contends that it can inform the direction of research, provide a contrasting perspective to view initial ideas and is also useful in developing accretive knowledge within the subject.

Layder argues that there is an inescapable association between theory and research practice. He recognises that research phases may be distinct notionally but are not so detached in practice. Phases often overlap making it difficult to disassemble the point at which the research problem was bounded from the framework of theoretical deliberations. Layder also maintains that extant literature can boost the explanatory power of the research and so lead to greater generalizability and application. Overall, it is evident that Layder supports a flexible and inclusive approach to theory, believing that it is valuable in the development of individual studies and useful as a contribution to the body of research within a given area.

Layder argues that theory and research are intricately bound and this was the case within research undertaken for this thesis. The theoretical framework of this thesis has been outlined in the literature review and this necessarily drew on extant literature and research. Extant literature and previous research were of tremendous value in terms of developing theoretical understanding and gaining familiarity with key issues in this area. The literature and previous research that were utilized derived from various sources and methodological traditions. However, all elements were treated as accretive contributions towards a sense of transfer experience among

contrasting ethnic groups. Subsequently, this body of work was used as a rich reference tool and was drawn upon throughout the research process. For instance, extant literature and previous research were important in framing the boundaries for this study and aided the conceptualisation of research. They were also used to inform an understanding of emergent research evidence. Such practice would have been denied if positivist or ethnographic forms of enquiry had been strictly adhered to. Therefore, Layder's promotion of openness in terms of theoretical discourse proved to be of practical and theoretical value.

3.34   Concluding comments

Research for this thesis was constructed on the basis of wide reading, an open mind and an interpretation of student activity and expressions. The shape, content and analysis of research were founded on this basis. Specific techniques were applied to reinforce probity and rigour. However, this is one researcher's interpretation of interview, observation and questionnaire evidence. No claims to complete objectivity are advanced. Indeed, approaches applied in this research have relied on a subjective position, such as the creation of rapport during interviewing and attempting to make sense of opinions and actions from the point of view of students. I have also made use of the research enquiries and findings of others and looked to existing theoretical frameworks to assist the mapping and analysis of my own research. This research set out to capture the central features of student transfer experience and to highlight and explain any differences according to minority or majority ethnic group membership. Interview, observation and questionnaire evidence has shaped my analysis, as has extant literature within this area. However, the final interpretation and analysis of research evidence is my own. I would argue that it is a faithful account and analysis based on observation, interview and questionnaire responses gained over a period of two years.

4 Analysis and discussion of questionnaire and interview data

4.1   *Introduction*

The *After Year 11* survey (see Appendix 1) formed the first phase of fieldwork research and involved students in the final term of Year 11. The *Changing Times* questionnaire (see Appendix 2) was also included in this phase and was concerned with the first year of post compulsory education. The second phase of fieldwork involved collective case study research and was performed across multiple sites. This involved tracking students from their initial stages of post compulsory education towards the end of their first year. In this chapter, analysis and discussion of fieldwork findings are presented in this order.

The general concepts of *Student Orientation* and *Student Identity* were utilised to explore and to bound comparative analysis of information. These two themes were established during the conceptualisation of research and had emerged strongly in earlier reviews of literature.

Figure 1   Themes explored in the *After Year 11 Survey*

Orientation			Identity		
Pupils' attitudes to school	**Student support networks**		**Importance of ethnicity**		**Friendship formation**
	Motivations for post sixteen choice		**Self-esteem**		**Relative importance of identities**
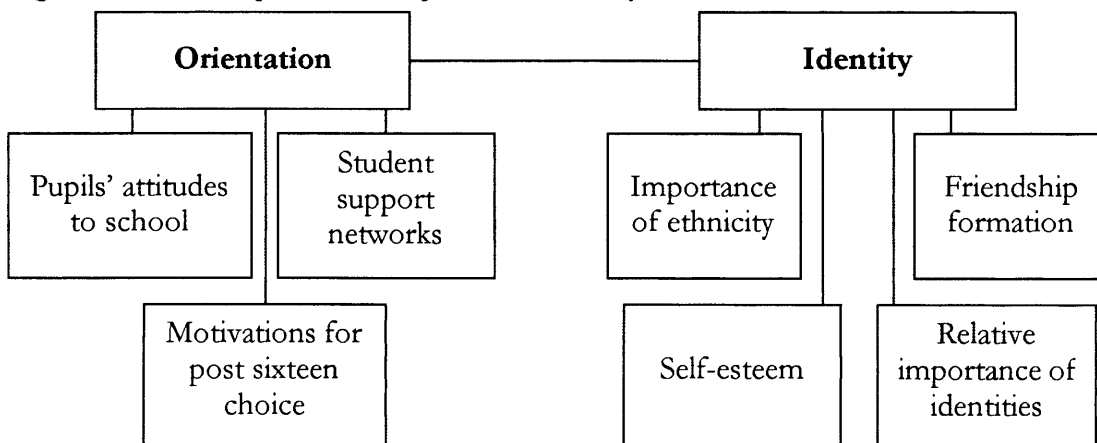
Analysis of questionnaire data was aided by use of the SPSS package. This package facilitated the numerous tests and analyses necessary in exploring the breadth of data emerging from both questionnaires. Without exception, basic statistics were generated for each questionnaire item as an early stage of exploration; univariate frequencies for specific items are presented throughout this chapter.

There is recognition of the wide variation in total numbers with specific regard to data concerning ethnicity. However, the uneven distribution of ethnic groups involved in questionnaire data is a reflection of actual populations. The main focus of research concentrates on the largest representations of students but observations concerning smaller ethnic groups are also noted. The chi square statistic was not a reliable indicator of significance for much of the data concerning ethnicity. Therefore, it is usual for percentage frequencies to stand alone where ethnicity is discussed within this thesis. An alternative here would have been to compare larger ethnic groups and exclude less represented groups. However, the decision was made to register responses of all ethnic groups. As marginalised positioning is an actual condition for students, it was felt that it was an important area to acknowledge and explore in relation to larger groups. There was also an attempt to avoid generalisation concerning all minority ethnic groups on the basis of evidence obtained from a single and larger minority ethnic group.

The data collected from questionnaire responses ranged from the nominal to ordinal level. Hence, the chi square test statistic is widely used to explore the statistical significance of univariate frequencies as well as crosstabulated data. It is utilised as a basic indicator of significance and interpreted in relation to research hypotheses. Statistically significant differences are also discussed with recourse to observed figures or mean scores where appropriate. Respect is observed for the basic guideline that no more than twenty percent of categories should have expected frequencies of less than 5. Where this occurred the chi square test statistic was not treated as reliable and was therefore not quoted.

Where chi square test statistics indicated significant association between two variables, this was further explored through correlation testing where appropriate. Spearman's correlation coefficient is used to explore the relatedness of ordinal variables and reflected the wide use of non-parametric data used within this thesis.

Where a number of items are related within the questionnaire, Friedman's test of related samples is applied. This is used to explore several ordinal, related items. It is accompanied by Kendall's W coefficient of concordance; a normalization of the Friedman test statistic. In combination, these two tests assist in gauging any differences in student responses to related items.

The final test to be mentioned concerning analysis of questionnaire data is that of Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha is utilised in circumstances where data is at the ordinal level. In order to aid generalisation, conceptually proximal items are grouped into a single measure of a general concept. Scores from each item are then pooled to contribute to an overall index. Internal consistency of the index was tested using Cronbach's alpha.

Interview data was managed and explored through use of Atlas Ti; software dedicated to manage and handle qualitative data. This assisted the process of coding, tracking and charting observations within interview data. Consequently, complex interactions of unique as well as common observations could be analysed and discussed. Results from interviewing data are reported later on in this chapter. Schedules used to guide semi-structured interviews can be found in Appendix 5.

4.2   Analysis of results from the After Year 11 survey

Consideration of results began with data obtained from the *After Year 11* survey conducted in two Leicester city secondary schools. Prior conceptualisation, hypothesis building and bounding of research had informed the construction of this questionnaire. The two themes of Orientation and Identity were also major considerations in analysing the *After Year 11* survey. Where Orientation was explored, analysis focused on items uncovering pupil attitudes toward school, surveying relationships with staff and establishing the importance of this

relationship, discerning motivations for post sixteen choices, and identifying pupil support networks. During analysis of the *After Year 11* survey, pupil identity was investigated through items exploring the importance of ethnicity. The ethnic and gender composition of friendships was also analysed and the importance of several separate aspects of identity were investigated. In addition, the Rosenberg measure of self-esteem was used to assess whether any variance in levels of self-esteem were evident.

The *After Year 11 Survey* was carried out in March 1997. 315 pupils from two Leicester schools completed questionnaires. In each school, all of the Year 11 cohort were asked to complete the questionnaire if they were present on the day that it was administered. The majority of pupils in the sample attended School A (62%). Also, the majority of pupils in the sample were of Asian origin (66%). The second largest group were those of White/European origin (29%). Much smaller proportions of pupils were mixed race (3%) or were from African Caribbean backgrounds (2%). Overall, 43% of respondents were male and 57% were female.

Independent variables used throughout analysis of the *After Year 11* survey are ethnicity, gender and school. These relate to the central themes of Student Orientation and Student Identity.

4.3 Student Orientation

Table 6 Year 11 students' most important features of school, by gender

The single most important thing about school	Female %	Male %	Total %
Lessons	24.9	17.4	42.3
Female friends	11.9	6.5	18.4
Learning things	5.8	6.8	12.6
Nothing is important	2.7	5.1	7.8
Male friends	2.0	3.8	5.8
Being with friends	5.1	.7	5.8
Teachers	2.0	1.0	3.1
Other	1.4	.7	2.0
School life in general	.7	.3	1.0
Good environment	.7		.7
Working hard with facilities provided	.3		.3
N	169	124	293

N=293, χ^2=21.01, df=10, p<.021

In terms of pupils' orientation whilst at school, most regarded it as an academic pursuit; 42% of pupils who responded to this question indicated that lessons were the most important aspect of school as shown in Table 6. The second most common response was that female friends were the single most important thing about school (18%). Girls were more likely to respond in this way than boys. 12% of girls compared to 7% of boys stated that girls were the single most important things about school. 13% of pupils stated that learning things was the single most important thing about school. This category was not included in the questionnaire but was innovated by a total of 37 pupils. Results here suggest that pupils had a strong sense of educational orientation. Pupil responses also reflected pro-school attitudes. Only 8% of pupils felt that there was nothing important to them about school.

4.4 Teacher affirmation

When pupils were asked to agree or disagree with the statement, *It is important to me that teachers like me*, 75% of pupils agreed with this statement. This suggested that pupils valued teacher affirmation (n=305, χ^2=80.8, df=1, p<.01). When this was

explored along lines of ethnicity, gender and school, it was evident that gender differences existed.

Female pupils (47%) were more likely than males (29%) to agree with the statement that it was important to them that teachers liked them (n=304, χ^2=6.74, df=1, p<.01) These results indicate that positive relationships with teachers are more likely to be perceived as important to girls rather than boys.

When pupils were asked to *Agree* or *Disagree* with the statement, '*If I like a teacher I tend to work harder*', the majority responded in agreement (72%). There was no significant difference between male and female responses. However, differences occurred along lines of ethnicity and school.

Table 7 Influence of teacher affability on Year 11 student motivation, by ethnic group

If I like a teacher I tend to work harder	Agree %	Disagree %	N	% of all students
Other	100	0	1	.3
White	88.9	11.1	90	29.4
African Caribbean	85.7	14.3	7	2.0
Mixed race	75	25	8	2.6
Asian	63	37	200	65.4
Total	219	87	306	100

$$\chi^2=21.62,\ df=4,\ p<.01$$

The clearest contrasts were between white students and Asian students as is evident in Table 7. White students were the most likely to agree that they worked harder if they liked a teacher (89%) and Asian students were least likely to agree that they worked harder if they liked a teacher (63%). Asian students were seemingly less reliant on teachers as a motivational source. Overall, students from all minority ethnic backgrounds were less influenced by teacher affirmation than white students.

Table 8   Influence of teacher affability on Year 11 students, by school

If I like a teacher I tend to work harder	% Disagree	% Agree	% total sample	N
School A	61.3	38.7	60.6	186
School B	87.6	12.4	39.4	121
Total	87	220	100	307

$$\chi^2=25, \, df=1, \, p<.01$$

Differences between responses of pupils from School A and School B were also significant as illustrated in Table 8. Pupils from School B were more likely to agree with the statement *If I like a teacher I tend to work harder*. This indicated that pupils at School B were more likely to consider teacher affirmation to be an important factor.

It should be noted that a correlation existed between school and ethnic group (n=311, r=.648, $p<.01$). Therefore, it is not surprising that school differences reflected ethnic differences in response to teacher affirmation. School A had a higher percentage of Asian students and this group were less likely to be motivated by teacher affirmation as demonstrated in Table 7. School B had a higher proportion of white students who appeared to be affected more by teacher affirmation.

The possibility was also explored of a correlation between the statements, *It is important to me that teachers like me* and *If I like a teacher I tend to work harder* (n=204, r=.240, $p<.01$). These two items were correlated and therefore it is possible that positive affirmation had the effect of encouraging some pupils to work harder.

4.5   Staff awareness of intentions after Year 11

Year 11 pupils were asked to consider a number of issues relating to their imminent conclusion to compulsory education. They were almost equally divided on the question as to whether or not staff were aware of their intentions at the end of the year. 57% thought that staff were aware of their intentions and 43% of pupils

thought that staff were not. There were no differences in perception according to gender or ethnic group of pupils.

4.6   Student destinations

Table 9   Student intentions after Year 11

Intentions after Year 11	%	n
College	79.7	248
Stay on	13.5	42
Training	5.1	16
Employment	1.3	4
Other	.3	1
Total	100	311

$(n=311, \chi^2=710.56, df=4, p<.01)$

Pupil intentions after Year 11 showed an overwhelming trend towards college enrolment. Approximately 80% of pupils indicated that they would attend college after Year 11. Only 5% indicated that they would begin a training contract. Even more striking was the small figure of 1% of pupils who responded that they would undertake employment after Year 11. Differences concerning post Year 11 intentions also occurred between ethnic groups and between schools. These differences are demonstrated in Table 10 and Table 11, respectively.

Table 10   Student intentions after Year 11, overall percentage by ethnic group

Intentions after Year 11	Other %	African Caribbean %	Asian %	Mixed race %	White %	Total %
College	.3	1.6	62.9	1.9	12.9	79.7
Employment					1.3	1.3
Other			.3			.3
Stay on		.6	1.9	.3	10.6	13.5
Training			1	.3	3.9	5.2
N	1	7	205	8	89	310

Differences in white and Asian pupils intentions' demonstrate that the destinations for these two groups are different at times. The intentions of Asian students were

largely directed towards college rather than training or staying on at the school's sixth form. Going into training was not a common intention for any ethnic group, but it was a more likely intention of white students than any other as Table 10 demonstrates.

Table 11   Name of school, by Intentions after Year 11

	Intentions after Year 11 %				
School	Other	Training	College	Employment	Stay on
School A	.5	1.6	97.9		
School B		10.9	50.4	3.4	35.3
Total	.3	5.1	79.7	1.3	13.5

$$N=311, \chi^2=108.14, df=4, p<.00$$

The intentions of pupils from School A were overwhelmingly directed towards attending college (98%). A very small minority planned to undertake training (2%). The majority of School B pupils also intended to attend college (50%) but were also spread across options of staying on at the school's sixth form (35%), training (11%) and employment (3%). There was no sixth form provision at School A, so accounting for much of the difference between schools in this regard. When intentions to go to college and attend sixth form were combined for students from School B, it emerged that a total of 85% of students were intent on continuing in further education. This is clearly a large majority as was the case for students at School A (98%). However, a sharp difference existed between schools. School B pupils were seven times more likely to say that they intended to embark on training after Year 11 than pupils from School A.

The differing intentions of contrasting ethnic groups were also mirrored in explorations of intentions across each school. Hence, it is likely that school and ethnic group were both influential in terms of pupil intentions after Year 11.

Gender differences were explored but no significant differences emerged.

Pupil intentions after Year 11 overwhelmingly leaned towards continuing in education. 19% of pupils indicated their intention of going to a further education college in the Leicester area whereas 77% indicated that they wished to attend a local sixth form institution. One college emerged strongly as the favoured choice among pupils. Approximately one third of all pupils wished to attend Acres Hall Sixth Form College (31%). Brooks Sixth Form College was the second most popular choice (18%). The intention to attend School B's sixth form comprised the third most popular choice (14%). School A had no sixth form provision. However, 35% of students from School B wished to stay on at this sixth form although the majority indicated that they wished to continue their education elsewhere.

Only 1% of pupils reported that their parents were disappointed with their intended choices after Year 11; this represented 4 pupils. All 4 pupils intended to continue in full-time education after Year 11.

4.7   Reasons for student choices

Table 12   Top ten most important reasons for pupil choices of college

Most important reasons for pupil choices	N	% of responses
Does subjects/course/work which I enjoy	235	27.0
It has a good reputation	188	21.6
Does subjects/training which I need to take	142	16.3
Publicity looked interesting	95	10.9
Friends are going there	75	8.6
Family members have been to same/similar	41	4.7
Teachers encouraged me to apply there	38	4.4
Parents wanted me to go there	26	3.0
I haven't decided yet	8	.9
Facilities	7	.8

The most commonly expressed reasons for pupil choices of college or course were enjoyment of coursework (27%), the reputation of an institution (22%) and provision of subjects/training that could enhance education or career opportunities (16%). These reasons accounted for 65% of valid responses here as can be deduced from

Table 12. The strongest reasons for course choice are based on the level of course enjoyment gained at GCSE. The most important motivation for destination would appear to be an institution's reputation. This indicates that pupils considered the transfer process in relation to their interests and needs and also considered at what venue they would be most suitably placed to pursue those interests. Considerations of reputation reflected pupils' orientation towards successful study. Case study research reinforces these findings and highlights the importance of college reputation in pupil considerations.

4.8 Anticipating experience

Pupils were questioned about what they were looking forward to in the year ahead and their responses are recorded in Table 13.

Table 13   Factor students were looking forward to after Year 11

Factor most looking forward to after Year 11	N	%
New subjects	126	40.8
New friends	83	26.9
More independence	74	23.9
Having money	9	2.9
Different building	5	1.6
No uniform	4	1.3
Same friends	4	1.3
New teachers	3	1.0
Fresh start	1	.3
Total	309	100

$\chi^2 = 517.86, df = 8, p < .01$

The main factors students looked forward to were studying new subjects (41%), making new friends (27%) and having more independence (24%). These factors account for 92% of responses. These factors were also explored across contrasting ethnic groups and are outlined in Table 14.

Table 14 Factor students were looking forward to after Year 11, by percent within ethnic group

Factor most looking forward to after Year 11	African Caribbean %	Asian %	Mixed race %	White %	Total %	N
New friends	28.6	31.5	22.2	16.9	26.9	83
New subjects	57.1	41.9	33.3	37.1	40.6	125
New teachers	0	1.5	0	0	1.0	3
Different building	0	1.5	11.1	1.1	1.6	5
Having money	0	0.5	0	9.0	2.9	9
No uniform	0	0	11.1	3.4	1.3	4
Same friends	0	1.0	0	2.2	1.3	4
More independence	14.3	22.2	22.2	29.2	24.0	74
Fresh start	0	0	0	1.1	.3	1

Differences existed in terms of what contrasting ethnic groups looked forward to as demonstrated in Table 15 and Figure 2.

Figure 2 Aspects of college life Year 11 students looked forward to by ethnic group

Factor most looking forward to after Year 11
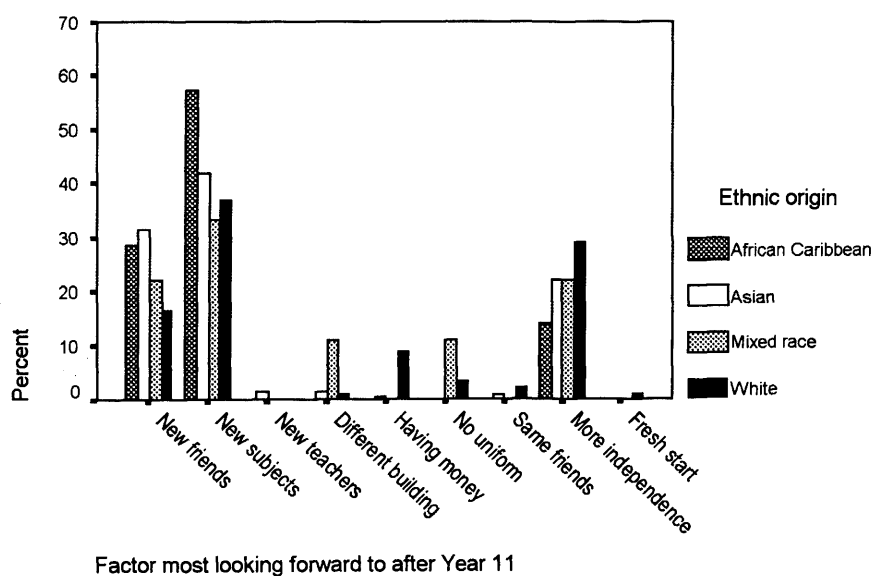
The responses of Asian, African Caribbean and mixed race pupils were concentrated in studying new subjects, followed by making new friends and having more independence. White pupils also looked forward to studying new subjects, but the second most popular option was to have more independence and then to make new friends. Differences between School A and School B were found to reflect the ethnic composition within each school.

4.9   Sources of advice

Table 15   Person who has given most useful advice about post Year 11 choices

Advisor concerning choices	N	%
Careers teacher	132	49.1
Form teacher	23	8.6
Mother	21	7.8
Father	19	7.1
Sister	16	5.9
Myself	12	4.5
Male friend	10	3.7
Other teacher	10	3.7
Brother	9	3.3
Female friend	5	1.9
Other family	5	1.9
Parents	3	1.1
Aunt	2	.7
Uncle	1	.4
Grandmother	1	.4
Total	**269**	**100**

$n=269$, $\chi^2=818.42$, $df=14$, $p<.01$

When pupils were asked to identify the most useful source of advice specifically regarding post sixteen choices, careers' teachers were identified most frequently (49%). 15% of pupils stated that parental advice was the most useful source and this equalled the second most common response. Other family members, particularly siblings were also identified as an important resource. 9% of pupils indicated that brothers or sisters gave them the most useful advice about post sixteen choices.

It was also evident that pupils from different ethnic groups identified different sources as useful advisors. Asian students (56%) and white students (42%) were more likely to identify the major source of useful advice as Careers' Advisors compared to African Caribbean students (0%) or mixed race students (25%). The small number of African Caribbean students included in the sample tended to regard

form teachers (57%) as the most useful source of advice. Mixed race students tended to regard parents as most useful (38%).

Table 16   Individuals who help Year 11 students to make decisions

People who help students to make decisions	% of all responses	N
Parents	42.7	368
Friends	17.1	147
Siblings	15.5	133
Education staff	14.1	121
Other relatives	7.8	68
Myself	2.4	21
No-one	.1	1
Other	.1	1
Family in general	.1	1

Pupils were also asked to identify those people who helped them to actually make decisions and not just simply present advice. The most common source of help here was parents and they accounted for 43% of all responses as shown in Table 16. This pattern persisted across all ethnic groups, across gender and across School A and School B. Parents were identified most frequently even when all teachers and careers advisors were collapsed into a single broad category of education staff (14%). However, friends emerged as important to students' decision-making (17%).

4.10 Longer-term pupil expectations

Table 17 Year 11 pupils' expectations of experiences

School pupil expectations	Never %	30 %	21 %	18 %	N
Be employed		16.4	45.3	38.3	298
Be in education	6.5	2.7	18.4	72.4	293
Become unemployed	75.3	14.5	3.2	7.1	283
Get married	10.5	41.8	46.0	1.7	287
Take holidays abroad	1.4	8.4	26.0	64.2	296
Have a full time job	.3	38.9	49.0	11.8	296
Have children	11.4	62.1	25.5	1.0	290
Live with parents	10.4	4.5	31.5	53.6	289
Based in home	54.0	39.7	5.9	.3	287
Own a business	33.6%	56.7%	7.9%	1.8%	277
Own a car	.7%	8.4%	37.5%	53.5%	299
Own a computer	5.1%	9.4%	20.2%	65.3%	297
Own your home	2.7%	57.3%	36.2%	3.8%	293
Remain in locality	25.9%	29.1%	27.0%	18.1%	282
Work abroad	47.7%	34.7%	14.4%	3.2%	285

The final measure of pupil Orientation was that of future aspirations. A total of fifteen items were used to explore medium term and long term pupil aspirations. The results were statistically significantly at the .00 level when subjected to Friedman's test of related measures (n=222, χ^2=1730.71, df=14, p<.00). The significant differences in mean rank scores indicate that students expect to experience events at various stages within their life; they do not expect to experience all items at the same point in their lives or necessarily at all. Kendall's W normalization further confirmed that students had responded to items in a discriminatory as opposed to arbitrary manner (.557). Rank scores of pupil expectations are presented in Table 18.

Table 18 Mean rank scores of Year 11 pupil expectations

Year 11 pupils' expectations	Mean Rank
Be employed by age	10.52
Be in education by age	12.04
Be unemployed by age	3.49
Be married by age	7.23
Take holidays abroad by age	11.89
Have a full time job by age	8.40
Have children by age	6.06
Live with parents by age	10.80
Look after children and home by age	3.74
Own a business by age	4.67
Own a car by age	11.35
Own a computer by age	11.54
Own a housing property by age	7.04
Stay in Leicester by age	6.83
Work abroad by age	4.40

Students were given a score of 1 where they expected events *Never* to occur, 2 where they anticipated experiencing events by the time they were 30, 3 if they expected events to occur by the time they were 21 or a score of 4 was applied where students expected to experience events by age the 18. Students who did not know when they expected to experience an event were excluded from this analysis. Hence, higher scores indicate student anticipation of events at a younger age. For example, the experience of education attracts the highest score of 12.04, indicating that students have expectations of being involved in education at 18. Mid-range scores are a basic indicator that students expect to experience events by age 30. Very low scores indicate that students do not expect to experience specific events at all. An example of this is the phenomenon of unemployment that gains a score of 3.49. This suggests that very few students expected to experience this event.

Mean rank scores offer an overall guide to differences between items and also provide a basic indicator of the nature of theses differences. By re-visiting percentage frequencies set out in Table 17, it is also evident that student responses were concentrated in two areas; the ages of 18 and 30. There were only three

contexts out of the fifteen items where *Never* emerged as a dominant response; the majority of students did not anticipate unemployment (74%), they did not expect to look after children and home full-time (54%) and many did not assume any likelihood of working abroad (48%). The effects of ethnicity, gender and school were also considered in relation to each of these fifteen expectation items.

There were differences between contrasting ethnic groups concerning expectations of employment, education and along the personal dimension of marriage. Due to the low representation of African Caribbean and mixed race students, statistical significance was not achieved. However, basic percentage figures are reported.

Expectation of employment proved to be sensitive to ethnic group membership with the main contrasts occurring between white and Asian students as shown in Table 19.

Table 19 Pupil expectations of employment by ethnic origin

Expectation of employment	African Caribbean %	Asian %	Mixed race %	White %
18	16.7	19.9	37.5	5.7
30	50.0	52.0	25.0	32.2
21	33.3	28.1	37.5	62.1

It was found that white students were the most likely to expect experience of employment in general by the age of 18. Among ethnic minority students, most expected this experience to occur after the age of 18. Earlier evidence in Table 10, had also shown that white students were more likely than other ethnic groups to enter employment or training at age 16. Pupil expectations of employment were crosstabulated with pupils' intentions after Year 11. The aim was to explore any association between these two variables. Table 20 displays the results of this crosstabulation.

Table 20   Crosstabulation of pupil expectations of employment, by intentions after Year 11

Expectation of education experience	Intentions after Year 11 (%)					
	Other	Training	College	Employment	Stay On	N
30	100.0		18.4		11.9	49
21		12.5	50.0		35.7	134
18		87.5	31.6	100.0	52.4	113

$\chi^2=341.41$, $df=8$, $p<.00$

Table 20 provides evidence of the significant relationship between expectations of employment and intentions after Year 11. Those students who intend to engage in employment or training immediately after Year 11 are more likely to expect to be employed at the age of 18. This could provide some explanation for ethnic differences in expectations concerning employment.

Table 21   Pupil expectations of education by ethnic group

Expectation of education experience	African Caribbean %	Asian %	Mixed race %	White %	N
Never		2.6	12.5	15.7	19
30		4.1			8
21	16.7	22.6	37.5	6.0	53
18	83.3	70.8	50.0	58.3	212

Figures in Table 21 show that students from all minority ethnic groups expected to be involved in education at older ages than white students. Evidence from Table 10 also demonstrated that white students were less likely to continue education after sixteen than other ethnic groups. It appears that white students desire a shorter period of involvement in education.

Table 22 Pupil expectations of marriage by ethnic group

Expectations of marriage	African Caribbean	Asian	Mixed race	White	N
Never	14.3	8.6		15.1	30
30	71.4	36.2	100.0	45.3	119
21	14.3	52.4		39.5	132
18		2.7			5

Along the private dimension of experience of marriage, it is evident that Asian students anticipate marriage at a younger age than others as demonstrated in Table 22.

4.10.1   Gender differences in pupil expectations

Gender differences emerged in student expectations in regard to various employment related items, ownership items and expectations of working abroad.

Employment related differences included expectations of employment in general, full-time employment and unemployment.

Figure 3 Year 11 student expectations of employment in general, by gender

Be employed by age
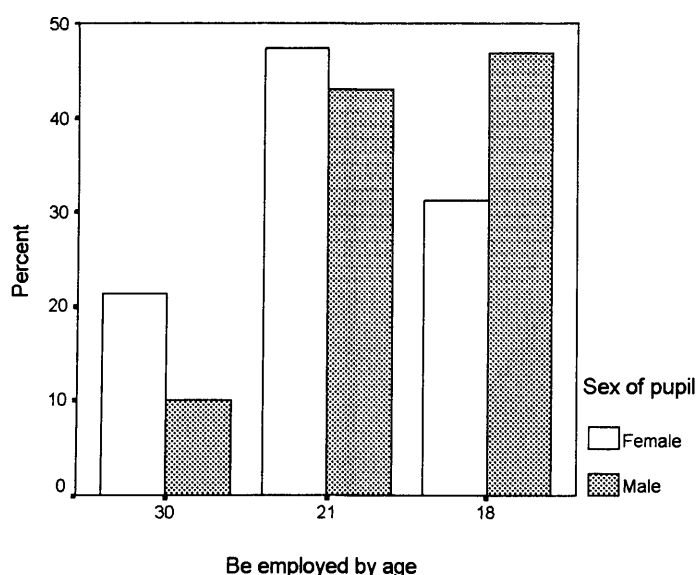
Males were more likely to expect employment in general by the age of 18 whereas more females expected this to occur later as is evident in Figure 3 and Table 23.

Table 23 Pupil expectations of employment by gender

Expectations of employment	Female	Male
30	21.3	10.2
21	47.3	43.0
18	31.4	46.9

$n=297$, $\chi^2=10.40$, $df=2$, $p<.01$

Males were also more likely to expect full-time employment at a younger age. A total of 70% of males expected to experience full-time employment by age 18 or 21 compared to only 54% of females as shown in Table 24.

Table 24 Pupil expectations of having a full time job by sex of pupil

Expectation	Female	Male	Total
Never		.8	1
30	45.9	29.6	115
21	46.5	52.0	144
18	7.6	17.6	35
			295

$\chi=12.72$, $df=3$, $p<.01$

The majority of students did not anticipate unemployment. However, males were slightly more optimistic.

Table 25 Pupil expectations of unemployed by sex of pupil

Expectations of unemployment	Female %	Male %	N
Never	71.8	80.7	213
30	19.6	7.6	41
21	3.7	2.5	9
18	4.9	9.2	19

$\chi^2=9.82$, $df,=3$, $p<.02$

Table 25 indicated the greater propensity for males to report that unemployment was something that they *Never* expected to experience (81%). Fewer females anticipated that they would *Never* be unemployed (72%). Table 25 demonstrated that females expected to be unemployed at a later age. For females, the most common

expectation of unemployment was at age 30 (20%). However, for males, the most common expectation of unemployment was between age 18 and 21 (12%).

Ownership of a business, car or computer were areas where gender differences emerged starkly.

Table 26   Pupils expectations of business ownership by gender

	Female %	Male %	Total
Never	41.6	21.7	33.3
30	51.6	64.3	56.9
21	5.0	12.2	8.0
18	1.9	1.7	1.8

In terms of business ownership, females (42%) were more likely than males (22%) to report that they *Never* expected to own a business. Males and females anticipate business ownership at the later age of 30 although more males are found in this category (64%) than females (51%). A greater proportion of males also expect business ownership at least by the age of 21 (14%) This is in contrast to only 7% of females.

Table 27   Pupil expectations of car ownership by gender

Expectation of vehicle ownership	Female %	Male %	N
Never	1.2		.7
30	8.8	7.9	8.4
21	43.3	29.1	37.2
18	46.8	63.0	53.7

Vehicle ownership was commonly expected amongst both males and females. However, differences occurred concerning the expected age of ownership; 63% of males expected to experience car ownership by the age of 18 compared to 47% of females.

Table 28   Pupil expectations of computer ownership by gender

	Female %	Male %	N
Never	7.1	1.6	4.7

30	8.3	10.9	9.5
21	25.6	13.3	20.3
18	58.9	74.2	65.5

The final item concerning gendered differences in ownership related to computers. Again, males expected computer ownership at an earlier age. The majority of males expected computer ownership by the age of 18 (74%). Most females also anticipated ownership by age 18 (58%). However, this was to a lesser degree than that of males.

Overall, males were more likely to anticipate ownership at an earlier stage than females. This applied across all three items of business, car and computer ownership.

4.11   Identity among Year 11 pupils

Identity formed a major area within research and ethnic identity was of special interest. When pupils were asked *Is the colour of your skin important to you?*, 55% responded *Yes* and 45% responded *No*. This close split was not statistically significant. However, when ethnic origin was considered in relation to the importance of skin colour, differences were evident.

Table 29   The importance of skin colour to Year 11 students, by percentage within ethnic group

Is the colour of your skin important to you	Other	African Caribbean	Asian	Mixed race	White	Total
Yes	100	28.6	56.7	44.4	20.7	45.3
No	0	71.4	43.3	55.6	79.3	54.7
N	1	7	194	9	87	298

$\chi^2 = 33.44$, $df=4$, $p<.01$

Asian pupils were more likely than white pupils to feel that skin colour was important. 57% of Asian pupils felt that skin colour was important. However, among white pupils there was a greater leaning towards the notion that skin colour was not important. Only 21% of white pupils stated that skin colour was important.

Table 30   The importance of skin colour to Year 11 students, by school

Is the colour of your skin important to you	School A	School B	Total

146

Yes	56.4	28.2	135
No	43.6	71.8	163
Total	181	117	298

$$\chi^2=22.72, \, df=1, \, p<.01$$

School differences reflected ethnic population differences concerning the importance of skin colour. Pupils from School A (56%) were more likely to feel that skin colour was important than those from School B (28%); School A had a larger number of Asian pupils than School B where a larger number of white pupils were enrolled. Data presented in Table 29 highlighted differences in attitude towards ethnicity between white and Asian pupils.

4.12   Ethnicity and friendship formation

In terms of social relationships pupils had at school, it was clear that most formed friendships with others from the same ethnic group as themselves.

Table 31   Proportion of friends from the same ethnic group as Year 11 students

How many of your friends are from the same ethnic group as you?	Percent of all responses	N
Most	77.0	238
Half	14.9	46
Less than half	6.8	21
None	1.3	4
Total	100	309

$$\chi^2=457.56, \, df=3, \, p<.01$$

When pupils were asked how many of their friends were from the same ethnic group as they were, 92% responded that *Most of them* or *At least half of them* were from the same ethnic group as themselves. Only 8% responded that *Less than half* or *None* of their friends were from a different ethnic group.

Table 32   Proportion of friends from the same ethnic group as Year 11 students, by % within each ethnic group

How many of your friends are from the same ethnic group as you?	Other %	African Caribbean %	Asian %	Mixed race %	White %	N

147

Most	0	42.9	87.7	11.1	62.9	238
Half	0	28.6	8.9	22.2	27.0	46
Less than half	0	28.6	3.4	44.4	9.0	21
None	100	0	0	22.2	1.1	4
N	1	7	203	9	89	309

All students tended to draw most of their friends from the same ethnic group. However, Asian students were the most likely to have friends primarily from their own ethnic group.

Table 33 Proportion of same ethnic group friendships of Year 11 students, by % within each school

How many of your friends are from the same ethnic group as you?	School A %	School B %	Total %
Most	88.4	59.2	238
Half	6.3	28.3	46
Less than half	4.2	10.8	21
None	1.1	1.7	4
Total	189	120	309

Students from School A were also more likely to have friends from their own ethnic group compared to students from School B. This mirrored findings based on ethnic group contrasts.

Asian pupils and white pupils formed respective ethnic majorities at School A and School B. Opportunities for cross-ethnic friendships existed but were limited due to the narrow range of ethnic groups within each school cohort. The cohort that completed the questionnaire at School A were largely of Asian origin (93%) with only 7% from other ethnic groups. At School B, the majority of pupils here were of White/European origin (68%) with 32% from other ethnic groups. However, this did not account fully for the ethnic exclusivity of friendship patterns. Very few pupils responded that less than half or none of their friends were from a different ethnic group to their own (8%). If friendship formation was merely a pragmatic process,

not only would pupils from the majority group select friends largely from the majority group, minority group pupils would also be expected to draw their friends from the majority group. Instead, all minority groups in this study tended to form friendships with those from the same ethnic group as themselves. For example, African Caribbean pupils tended to state that at least half to most of their friends were from their own ethnic group. African Caribbean pupils represented only 2% of the overall sample, and formed a very small minority at School A and at School B. Where white pupils formed a minority population within the survey as they did at School A, friendship patterns were based on same ethnic group. Asian pupils were a majority within the population of School A and also tended to form friendships within same ethnic group. The same pattern occurred among Asian pupils where they formed a minority at School B.

In the absence of large numbers of same ethnic group, pupils' friendship patterns became slightly broader and friendships were formed with those from ethnic groups other than their own. Mixed race pupils and African Caribbean pupils tended to favour own group friendships, but these very small groups were also the most likely groups to have no friends from their own ethnic group.

Although the overall pattern of preference towards same ethnicity friendships was dominant across both schools, same ethnicity friendships were not as fixed in School B as they were in School A. School B incorporated a broader range of ethnic groups and therefore greater opportunities existed for culturally diverse friendships to be formed.

Table 34   Proportion of friends of the same sex as Year 11 students

How many of your friends are the same sex as you?	Percent	N
Most	77	238
Half	14.9	46
Less than half	6.8	21
None	1.3	4
Total	100	309

$\chi^2 = 125.79$, $df = 2$, $p < .01$

149

Pupil friendships were also characterised by same sex friendships as well as same ethnicity friendships. 92% of pupils in the survey indicated that *Most* or *At least half* of their friends were the same sex. This pattern was constant for males and females, persisted across all ethnic groups and appeared across School A and School B. Hence, it was demonstrated that gender served as a robust marker within friendship formation.

4.13 Ethnicity in context

Ethnic identity was explored in relation to other identities. Seven items were used to help frame the context and importance of ethnic identity. These items included the importance of being a boy/girl, being good at sport, being strong, being clever, skin colour, body shape and wearing fashionable clothes. Initially, pupils were asked how important each identity was, ranging from *Not Very Important, Important* to *Very Important*. Each individual item proved to be significant and highlighted pupil differences.

Table 35 Relative importance of identities for Year 11 students

Importance of ...	Not very important	Important	Very important	Total	χ^2		
Being a boy/girl	25.2	30.6	43.5	301	χ^2=116.34	df=3	p<.01
Being good at sport	44.2	38.9	16.9	301	χ^2=37.66	df=2	p<.01
Being strong	27.9	49.5	22.6	305	χ^2=37.17	df=2	p<.01
Being clever	14.9	46.0	39.1	302	χ^2=48.36	df=2	p<.01
Skin colour	63.2	16.8	20.1	304	χ^2=122.18	df=2	p<.01
Body shape	42.2	41.3	16.5	303	χ^2=38.67	df=2	p<.01
Wearing fashionable clothes	42.6	40.6	16.8	303	χ^2=37.31	df=2	p<.01

Most students regarded each of the seven aspects of Identity as *Important* to *Very important*. However, the importance of skin colour followed a pattern in contradiction to that of all other items. 63% of pupils responded that skin colour was *Not very important* whereas all other items were regarded as important to very important.

Table 36   Friedman test – Relative importance of identities for Year 11 students

Importance of ...	Mean Rank
Being clever	4.97
Being a boy/girl	4.78
Being strong	4.19
Body shape	3.63
Wearing fashionable clothes	3.62
Being good at sport	3.61
Skin colour	3.21

$$N=288, \chi^2=233.45, df=6, p<.01$$

Friedman's Test further confirmed the differing importance of ethnicity among differing ethnic groups as reproduced in Table 36. The importance of ethnicity attracted the lowest mean score of all identity items, an indication of the lesser importance attached to this aspect in relation to all others.

Paradoxically, pupils were asked a similar question earlier on in the questionnaire that sought to establish whether the colour of their skin was important to them. In that instance, 55% of pupils responded *Yes,* when asked whether their skin colour was important. This difference may be explained by ethnicity being placed in a more general and less personal context when considered in relation to other identities. '*Being clever*' emerged as the most important aspect of identity when students considered general contexts.

Each of the seven aspects of identity was explored to see whether any variation existed in terms of how contrasting ethnic groups responded. The importance of skin colour was the only item to demonstrate differences in terms of responses between ethnic groups.

Table 37   Importance of skin colour to Year 11 students, by ethnic group

Importance of skin colour	Other %	African Caribbean %	Asian %	Mixed race %	White %	Total n
Not very important	0.0	50.0	54.2	75.0	84.1	192
Important	100.0	33.3	18.4	12.5	11.4	51

Very important	0.0		16.7	27.4	12.5	4.5	61
N	1		6	201	8	88	304

It was noted earlier that most pupils did not regard ethnicity as important when asked to respond to these seven items. However, pupils from minority ethnic groups were more likely to indicate that ethnicity was *Important* to *Very important* in comparison to white pupils. White students attached the least importance to skin colour as shown in Table 37.

The seven identity items were also explored for gender differences. A single item proved significant here. This was the importance of being good at sport.

Table 38 Importance of being good at sport for Year 11 students, by gender

Importance of being good at sport	Female %	Male %	Total *n*
Not very important	52.8	31.5	132
Important	33.5	46.8	117
Very important	13.6	21.8	51
Total	176	124	300

$$\chi^2=13.67, \ df=2, \ p<.01$$

Males were more likely than females to feel that being good at sport was *Important* to *Very important*.

4.14   Self-esteem

The Rosenberg measure of global self-esteem was included in the *After Year 11* survey (see Appendix 3) and was used as an opportunity to gain a sense of self-esteem among school pupils.

Table 39 Percentage responses to each item of the Rosenberg self-esteem measure

Rosenberg measure of self-esteem	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	*N*
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	19.0	67.1	12.9	1.0	310

Rosenberg measure of self-esteem	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	N
At times I think I am no good at all	9.1	45.9	30.6	14.3	307
I feel that I have a number of good qualities	24.1	69.4	6.5	0.0	307
I am able to do things as well as most other people	22.3	66.1	9.7	1.9	310
I feel I do not have much to be proud of	2.9	16.8	53.5	26.8	310
I feel that I am a person of worth, at least equal to others	30.0	61.6	6.2	2.3	307
I wish I could have more respect for myself	9.5	35.9	40.5 ·	14.1	306
I often feel that I am a failure	7.2	27.6	44.7	20.4	304
I take a positive attitude toward myself	2.7	20.3	53.7	23.3	300
I certainly feel useless at times	6.5	42.5	30.7	20.3	306

Results from this ten-item measure indicated that the majority of pupils had moderate responses to each of the ten questions being asked; the majority responded positively to each item.

The ten items of the Rosenberg self-esteem measure were closely related as confirmed by Cronbach's alpha measure of internal consistency (Alpha= .85). This strongly suggested that a single construct of general self-esteem was being tested.

It was discovered that all ethnic groups within this sample responded in very similar ways to self-esteem items. Table 40 shows the number of items for which students responded positively.

Table 40   Crosstabulation of global self-esteem by ethnic origin

Count of positive agreements (from ten Rosenberg self-esteem items)	African Caribbean %	Asian %	Mixed race %	White %	N

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1.00		1.1		2.4	4
2.00		2.1		2.4	6
3.00		3.7		6.1	12
4.00	20.0	5.3	28.6	7.3	19
5.00	20.0	8.0	14.3	2.4	19
6.00		15.4		13.4	40
7.00		10.6		7.3	26
8.00	20.0	16.5	14.3	11.0	42
9.00	20.0	17.0	14.3	20.7	51
10.00	20.0	20.2	28.6	26.8	64

There are few differences between students here; the majority responded positively to at least five out of ten items regardless of ethnic group.

Gender differences were detected in the responses of pupils to self-esteem items as outlined in Table 41. However, chi square analysis could not be relied upon here as more than 20% of cells had a value of less than 5.

Table 41 Crosstabulation of global self-esteem by sex of pupil

Count of positive agreements (from ten Rosenberg self-esteem items)	Female %	Male %	N
1.00	1.3	1.6	4
2.00	1.3	3.3	6
3.00	5.6	2.5	12
4.00	8.8	4.1	19
5.00	9.4	3.3	19
6.00	17.5	9.0	39
7.00	10.0	8.2	26
8.00	15.0	14.8	42
9.00	16.3	20.5	51
10.00	15.0	32.8	64

A cumulative total of 74% of females recorded positive responses to more than 5 self-esteem items. This compared to 85% of males; females were slightly less inclined than males to respond positively to self-esteem items.

Table 42 Pupil perceptions of how they are perceived by others

How most people think of me	N	%
They think very poorly of me	1	.3
They think fairly poorly of me	6	1.9
They think fairly well of me	182	57.8
They think very well of me	116	36.8
Total	305	96.8
$\chi 2=306.37$, df=3, $p<.00$		

An overwhelming majority of students perceived that most thought *fairly well* or *very well* of them (65%). This moderate perception accorded with positive global self-esteem that most students demonstrated in Table 39.

4.15 Analysis of results from the Changing Times Survey

The aim of the *Changing Times* survey was to establish the essential factors affecting students' experience in the first year of post compulsory education. The two recurring themes of Orientation and Identity provided a framework for analysis.

Student Orientation towards college was explored through investigating reasons for choice of college and course, examining attitudes to course and whether this affected decisions to return for a second year, establishing whether students missed school, and surveying differences and similarities perceived between school and college. Student adjustment to the first year was also investigated, exploring how well students were coping, and how far students were satisfied with educational and social aspects of college life. Student plans for the following year as well as more long-term aims and expectations were also uncovered. Individuals important in providing advice and encouragement to students were identified, as were those instrumental in students' decision-making. Student identity was discussed with regard to ethnicity, gender and friendship formation.

210 students from three Leicester colleges completed the *Changing Times* survey in June 1997. Students were at the end of their first year at college having left school in

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July 1996. The *Changing Times* questionnaire represented the second layer of Phase One, complemented by the *After Year 11* survey.

Three Leicester colleges were involved; Brooks Sixth Form College ($n=100$), Quarry Hill College ($n=46$) and Marshfield College ($n=64$), all three were based within the city area. The distribution of females and males within the sample was very similar with 48% female and 52% male students. Ethnic origin categorisation within the questionnaires was based on students choosing from a number of options and deciding which group best described their ethnic origin. Asian (48%) and white students (44%) were most strongly represented. African Caribbean (6%) and mixed race students (2%) were the smallest groups. 13% of students involved in completing questionnaires were studying primarily for GCSEs, 30% were undertaking A Levels as their main course of study and 57% of students were largely undertaking GNVQs.

4.16   Orientation among college students

Table 43   Most common reasons for course choice among college students

Why did you choose this course/these subjects at college?		
	N	*%*
Interested in these subjects	78	39.6
Useful for future career	49	24.9
To improve grade/Re-sits	23	11.7
Want to continue subjects at university	10	5.1
Stronger in these subjects	9	4.6

$n=197$, $\chi^2=651.01$, $df=17$, $p<.01$

The most common reason students gave for undertaking a specific course was that they were interested in the particular subject/s involved (40%). Many students also identified their course as being useful for future career aims, indicating that decisions concerning occupational choice had been taken prior to college enrolment (25%). This was a more common response than course considerations being motivated by access to university. University access came relatively low down in the order of reasons presented here (5%).

4.16.1.1 Concern with Progress

Table 44 The single most important thing about college among students in their first year of transfer

What is the single most important thing to you about college?		
	%	*N*
Certain lessons	58.9	109
Achieving good grades	10.8	20
Female friends	8.1	15
Friends and lessons	7.0	13
Male and female friends	5.4	10
Particular tutors	2.2	4
Education	2.2	4
Working hard	2.2	4
Male friends	1.6	3
Having independence	1.1	2
Enjoying college life	.5	1
Total	100	185

$$\chi^2=578.28,\ df=10,\ p<.01$$

Orientation towards educational progress would be a summary descriptor here, as 60% of students reported that the most important feature about college was certain lessons, followed by achieving good grades (11%). Orientation was reported as being strongly aimed towards study rather than towards social aspects of college. The category concerning importance of enjoying college life made up only .5% of responses. 15% of students reported that friends were the most important feature of college life but this was considerably less important in relation to overall academic orientation. However, it is worth noting that the combined score of female/male friends (15%), ranked as the second most important feature of life at college, following educational orientation.

4.16.2 Desirability of Teacher Affirmation

Table 45 Affect of teacher affability on motivation of college students

	Agree %	Disagree %	Don't know %	N	Significance
It is important to me that teachers like me	71.1	28.9	0.0	204	$\chi^2=36.26$, $df=1$, $p<.01$
If I like a teacher I tend to work harder	59.6	39.9	.5	203	$\chi^2=110.35$, $df=2$, $p<.01$

The perception by students that they were liked by tutors, emerged as statistically significant. Whether students worked harder if they liked a tutor was also significant.

Table 46 Importance of teacher affability by affect on motivation

		If I like a tutor I tend to work harder		Total n
		Agree	Disagree	
It is important to me that tutors like me	Agree	95	49	144
	Disagree	26	32	58
Total		121	81	202

$n=202$, $\chi^2=7.70$, $df=1$, $p<.01$

A significant relationship also emerged between these two items. Students who agreed that it was important for tutors to like them were also more likely to agree that if they liked a tutor they tended to work harder. This indicated that tutors were perceived as a positive effect on learning for some students. Hence, tutors appear significant in terms of influencing motivation and achievement at this stage, as they also appeared to be for some students at the secondary phase. However, there were no differences between contrasting ethnic groups unlike evidence that emerged from the After Year 11 survey. There was also an absence of gender differences in attitudes to teacher affirmation.

4.17 Adjusting to college life

Students were asked to rate levels of satisfaction across four dimensions. These dimensions were; Satisfaction with course, guidance from staff, independence allowed by staff and social life at college. The three-scale items they were asked to use as a measure ranged from *Very satisfied*, *Satisfied* to *Not very satisfied*. Results are shown in Table 47.

4.18 Coping and Satisfaction

Table 47 Satisfaction with aspects of college life

Satisfaction with aspects of college life	Very satisfied %	Satisfied %	Not very satisfied %	N	Significance
Subjects/course content	24.6	71.5	3.9	207	χ^2=149.07, df=2, p<.01
Guidance from college staff	21.3	71.5	7.2	207	χ^2=141.77, df=2, p<.01
Independence allowed by staff	26.0	68.3	5.8	208	χ^2=126.96, df=2, p<.01
Social life at college	21.7	55.2	23.2	203	χ^2=43.64, df=2, p<.01

Satisfaction with subjects was overwhelmingly positive (96%), suggesting that students were content with their choice of course. Similar results were also gained concerning satisfaction with guidance and independence allowed by college staff. Least positive was the level of satisfaction reported in relation to social life at college. Although approximately 76% of students reported being satisfied or being very satisfied, 23% of students reported that they were not very satisfied with their social life at college. This score was by far the most negative of all the individual satisfaction items.

4.19 Coping with College

Table 48 How well college students feel that they have coped this year

How well students have coped	Coped very well %	Coped fairly well %	Not coped that well %	Struggled %	N	Significance
Progress in academic subjects	20.8	72.9	5.3	1.0	207	χ^2=271.74, df=3, p<.01

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Friendships with other students	56.3	39.9	3.8	.0	208	χ^2=89.72, df=2, p<.01
Relationships with tutors	37.4	59.2	3.4	.0	206	χ^2=97.82, df=2, p<.01

How well students felt they had coped during the year was measured across three areas; Coping with academic subjects, friendships with other students and relationships with tutors. The four-scale item here ranged from *Coped very well*, *Coped fairly well*, *Not coped that well* to *Struggled*. The vast majority of students reported positive experience in coping with academic demands of college. The remainder stated that they had *Not coped that well* (5%) or *Struggled* (1%) as shown in Table 48. As far as friendships were concerned, students responded very positively. This was the only area of coping items where student response was concentrated at the very positive extreme of the scale. Approximately 56% of students reported that they had coped very well in terms of developing friendships with other students. 40% reported that they had coped fairly well, and a very small minority reported that they had not coped well (4%). The extreme negative response of struggled was not selected by any students. Furthermore, the ability of students to relate to tutors was generally viewed as effective. Only 3% of students reported that they had not coped that well in this area.

Friendships emerged as an important aspect of students' coping and college life. Both coping and satisfaction levels indicated that students felt that they had adjusted to college effectively at a social and academic level. The four satisfaction items and the three items regarding coping, represented central blocks in terms of the way in which students adjusted to their new experience of college. The combination of all seven items incorporated perceptions of academic progress, relationships with tutors and relationships with students. These seven items were combined into an index to measure overall adjustment. Cronbach's Alpha was conducted and established that internal consistency existed (Alpha=.71). Hence, the Adjustment Index was accepted as a general and reliable indicator of overall adjustment. It was used to explore differences along lines of ethnicity and gender. When the Adjustment Index was used to compare overall adjustment by ethnic group, it was discovered that white

students tended to report higher levels of adjustment than students from minority ethnic groups. These differences are depicted in Figure 4.

Figure 4   Overall level of adjustment for first year college students by ethnic group
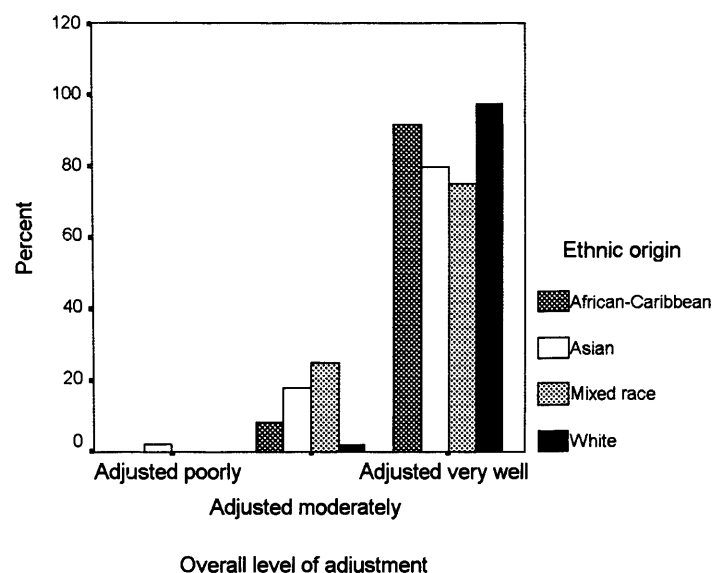
Although all ethnic groups were concentrated within the area of *Adjusted Very Well*, a higher proportion of white students were concentrated here. In regard to moderate adjustment, all ethnic minority groups were represented more strongly in this category than white students.

4.20   Sources of support

Included in the analysis of sources of support for students, were those individuals giving advice, providing encouragement and assisting in decision-making. Parental awareness of student progress was also included here as extra information to gauge communication between students and parents regarding academic progress. Individual's providing advice and support for students varied according to the nature of support being given. However, four major sources were identified. These were college staff, family, friends and students themselves.

Table 49 Most common sources of advice for college students

Those who have given students the most useful advice about college	N	%
Course tutor	95	17.9
Subject tutor	76	14.3
Mother	61	11.5
Father	51	9.6
Careers Officer	46	8.7
Male friend	41	7.7
Female friend	38	7.2
Sister	26	4.9
Brother	25	4.7
Student Guidance Officer	22	4.2
Myself	12	2.3
Personal tutor	7	1.3

In so far as students gained useful advice about college, the main providers were course tutors (18%), subject tutors (14%), mothers (12%) and fathers (10%) as illustrated in Table 49. College staff were the most highly represented group followed by family and friends. That college staff should be cited as the most useful source in providing advice about college was not a surprising result. Parents also featured strongly here. However, it is also evident that friends were engaged as an important resource.

4.21 Sources of Encouragement

Most encouragement for students tended to be provided by mothers (28%). In the previous item concerning advisors, mothers (32%) and fathers (26%) were more evenly represented. However, this is a deep contrast to the provision of encouragement, where mothers were more than twice as likely to be identified than fathers were (12%). Encouragement provided by fathers also ranked slightly lower than that provided by personal tutors (14%). Table 50 shows the ten most common sources of encouragement identified by students.

Table 50 The ten most common sources of encouragement for college students

One person who has given the most encouragement about college this year	N	%
Mother	56	26.7
Personal tutor	27	12.9
Father	24	11.4
Subject tutor	24	11.4
Female friend	14	6.7
Male friend	13	6.2
Sister	8	3.8
Brother	6	2.9
Careers Officer	4	1.9
Myself	4	1.9

$n=198$, $\chi^2=390.85$, $df=20$, $p<.01$

There were significant differences in what students perceived as important sources of encouragement. Subject tutors (11%) featured as important in providing encouragement, but this was far below the proportion of that of mothers (27%). Female friends (7%) and male friends (7%) were also important, but less so than either parent. This contrasted to the provision of advice, where parents and friends were cited in closer proportions to one another than they were here. Here, parents are shown to be four times more likely to provide encouragement to students than friends were.

4.22   Aiding Student Decisions

Mothers were most frequently identified as instrumental in student decision-making (22%). Fathers emerged as the second most common response (18%). In combination, both parents were by far the most frequently identified source in helping students to make long-term decisions. Table 51 lists the ten most common sources of support identified by students.

Table 51   Ten most common sources of support for college students' decision-making

People who help you to make decisions about your future	%	N
Mother	21.6	119
Father	18.1	100
Personal tutor	12.0	66
Female friend	9.3	51
Male friend	8.9	49
Subject tutor	7.8	43
Sister	5.6	31
Myself	5.1	28
Brother	4.7	26
Parents	1.5	8

Parents emerged as prime sources of support for college students' decision-making as seen in Table 51. Personal tutors (12%) also featured well in helping with long-term decision-making. Personal tutors appeared consistently across all three items of advising about college, encouraging students and helping students to make decisions. Two other groups that appeared strongly across the specific item of helping in decision-making were female friends (9%) as well as male friends (9%). Friends were identified in virtually equal gender proportions.

An interesting variation in the identification of individuals who helped students to make future decisions, was among the category of *Myself*. This category was innovated by 5% of students and specified in the *Other* option. This allowed students to specify additional categories to the list of family, friends and college personnel already provided. This was not the first time *Myself* had been specified but it was applied here more powerfully than elsewhere. Students had previously identified themselves as a central resource in terms of providing themselves with advice about college (2%) and this was also claimed to a lesser degree in terms of providing self-encouragement (2%). The occurrence of 5% of students citing themselves as one of the key resources in making decisions about their future was all the more important when the discerning use of this category was considered.

4.23   Parental Awareness

Despite the evidence above demonstrating that parents advised, encouraged and assisted in decision-making, a number of parents remained unaware of student progress.

Table 52 College students' perceptions of parental awareness of progress

Parents are aware of progress this year	N	%
Yes	154	75.5
No	50	24.5
N	204	100

χ^2=53.02, df=1, p<.01

Almost one quarter of students indicated that their parents were unaware of their level of progress at college (24%).

4.24   Comparisons with school life

Table 53 Perceived similarities between school and college

Top ten similarities between school and college as perceived by college students	%	N
Workload	11.6	36
Meals	10.6	33
Start/finish times	10.3	32
Teaching approaches	9.3	29
Exams/coursework	6.4	20
Tutor programme	5.1	16
Attendance is necessary to keep up	4.8	15
Keeping to deadlines	3.9	12
Lesson length	3.5	11
Furniture	3.5	11

The ten most common similarities between school and college are presented in Table 53. Similarities cited between school and college tended to concentrate on teaching and learning issues such as workload (12%), start/finish times (10%) and teaching approaches (9%). One very popular exception to teaching and learning issues was

that of similarity in meals (11%). This usually referred to poor quality of food that was important enough to many students for them to note. However, this was not explored further.

Table 54 Perceived differences between school and college

Top ten differences between school and college as perceived by college students	N	%
Difference		
Free periods	67	14.7
More independence	66	14.5
Treated more maturely	8.8	22.9
Longer lessons	26	5.7
More advanced work	25	5.5
Less formal relationships with tutors	24	5.3
Teaching approaches	15	3.3
Freer choice of subjects	14	3.1
No uniform	14	3.1
Different ages in class	11	2.4
Atmosphere less formal	11	2.4

Teaching and learning issues also featured strongly in perceived differences between school and college as can be seen in Table 54. The actual structure of the college day was central to teaching and learning issues that featured here. The way in which students were treated was also considered important; students noted that they were treated more maturely at college and had more independence. Referring back to important factors about college, independence was an option for students to choose from. However, it ranked poorly as an important feature about college (.5%). Hence, although students noted it as a striking difference between school and college, they did not perceive this as important.

Table 55 College students' desire to participate in extra curricular activities

Have you wanted to participate in any activities organised by your college?	N	%
No	130	63.4
Yes	75	36.6
N	205	100

$\chi^2=14.76$, $df=1$, $p<.01$

Extra curricular activities were an established part of school life, but for the majority of students in their first year at college, there was relatively little interest in such activities. 63% reported that they did not participate in any extra-curricula activities. This may have been a reflection of the Orientation of students who perceived their academic activity as central. It may also have reflected the lesser provision of such activities. The reasons for lack of participation here remained at a speculative level.

4.25 Thoughts of School

Students completed the *Changing Times* survey towards the end of their first year and so it was expected that thoughts of school would be minimal. However, this was not the case.

Table 56 How often college students still thought about school

How often students thought about school	N	%
All the time	20	9.8
Often	90	43.9
Not very often	78	38.0
Not at all	17	8.3
N	205	100

$\chi^2=85.21$, $df=3$, $p<.01$

Responses were divided almost evenly across those thinking about school often and very often (54%), in contrast to those thinking about school not very often or not at all (46%). This suggested that school was an enduring experience for many, leaving an impression on students even though those surveyed were all in a changed location

and had been so for over eight months. The extremes of those thinking about school *All the time* as opposed to *Not at all* were both marginal.

4.26 College student expectations

Two questionnaire items were used to investigate plans and expectations. Firstly, students were questioned about their intentions after July and secondly, students were asked to consider longer-term expectations.

4.26.1 After July

The majority of students were clear about their plans for the following year as shown in Table 57.

Table 57 College student intentions after July

What will you do after July?	N	%
Continue same subject/course here	122	59.2
Begin new subjects/course here	39	18.9
Don't know	18	8.7
Attend a different college	9	4.4
Start employment	4	1.9
Go to university	4	1.9
Begin training and start employment	4	1.9
Travel abroad for one year	3	1.5
Begin training course	1	.5
Advanced course	1	.5
Possibly training, need to find out more	1	.5
Total	206	99.9

$$\chi^2=747.83, df=11, p<.01$$

Most intended to return to college to continue courses (59%) or intended to return in order to undertake new courses (19%). A small proportion (9%) did not know what they would do after July and a smaller percentage still, reported that they intended to enrol at a different college (4%). However, the overall picture was for the majority of students to return for a second year at college. This reflects an intention of

progression for the majority of students. Only a small percentage intended to undertake employment or pursue training opportunities.

4.26.2   Longer-term expectations

Students were presented with a list of life circumstances and asked whether they expected to experience any of them by the time they were *18, 21, 30* or perhaps *Never*.

Table 58   College student expectations of experiences

College student expectations	30 %	21 %	18 %	Never %	Total
Be employed	25.6	30.5	41.9	2.0	203
Be in education	2.0	35.8	57.7	4.5	201
Become unemployed	15.6	7.8	8.4	68.2	179
Get married	63.8	27.6	2.0	6.5	199
Take holidays abroad	16.4	21.4	61.2	1.0	201
Have a full-time job	50.0	38.1	10.4	1.5	202
Have children	73.7	17.9	1.6	6.8	190
Live with parents	15.9	30.8	42.1	11.3	195
Based in home	41.7	3.2	-	55.1	187
Own a business	52.2	8.2	1.6	38.0	184
Own a car	19.2	37.4	42.4	1.0	203
Own a computer	12.8	24.0	56.1	7.1	196
Own your home	69.1	21.6	4.6	4.6	194
Remain in locality	31.3	24.2	18.1	26.4	182
Work abroad	38.7	15.1	2.7	43.5	186

Examination of percentage frequencies provided information concerning the detail of specific items. Responses were concentrated in two areas; the ages of eighteen and thirty. The category *Never* was rarely used and the age of *21* did not feature as the most frequent age for any expectation. Also, three items out of the fifteen attracted *Never* as a dominant response. This included students assuming that they would never be unemployed (66%); that they would never look after their children and homes on a full time basis (54%) and that they would never work abroad (41%). This mirrored evidence from the *After Year 11* survey.

Friedman's test statistic verified that there were significant differences in terms of the way that students responded to related expectation items (N=135, χ^2=900.47, df=14, p<.00). Kendall's W coefficient of concordance reinforced these findings, demonstrating that student ratings were not arbitrary (.476). Rank scores are presented in Table 59.

Table 59 Mean rank scores of college student expectations

College student expectations	Mean Rank
Be employed	10.59
Be in education	11.93
Become unemployed	4.46
Get married	6.89
Take holidays abroad	11.63
Have a full-time job	8.04
Have children	6.40
Live with parents	10.18
Based in home	3.79
Own a business	4.71
Own a car	10.92
Own a computer	11.31
Own your home	6.96
Remain in locality	7.24
Work abroad	4.94

Mean rank scores demonstrated basic differences in student expectations across these related items. A score of 1 was given to students who *Never* expected to experience an event, 2 for students who expected to experience an event by age 30, 3 for students who expected to experience an event by age 21 and 4 for students who expected to experience an event by age 18. Students who did not know when they expected to experience an event were excluded from this analysis. Therefore, low rank scores indicate that students were unlikely to expect to experience specific events. For example, 3.79 is the lowest rank score within Table 59 and represented students' lack of expectation of being based in the home full-time. Conversely, the highest rank score of 11.93 is associated with students' expectation of being involved in education at 18.

Student expectations were explored further to uncover any ethnic or gender differences between students. Contrasts between ethnic groups related to differing expectations of employment in general, taking holidays abroad and marriage. Gender differences in expectations involved living with parents, business ownership and car ownership.

Figure 5   College student expectations of employment, by ethnic group
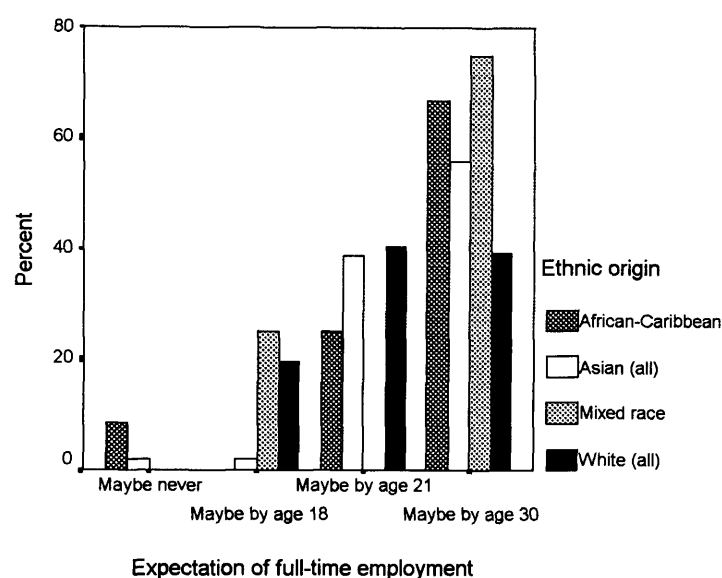
It was discovered that African Caribbean students and Asian students were slightly more likely than others to think that they would never experience employment. African Caribbean and Asian students were also more likely to envisage experience of employment at a much later stage in their lives than white students.

Table 60   College student expectations of full-time employment by ethnic group

Expectation of being employed	% within ethnic group				
	African Caribbean	Asian	Mixed race	White	N
Maybe never	8.3	2.1	.0	.0	3
Maybe by the time you are 18	.0	2.1	25.0	19.8	21
Maybe by the time you are 21	25.0	38.9	.0	40.7	77
Maybe by the time you are 30	66.7	55.8	75.0	39.6	100
Don't know	.0	1.1	.0	.0	1
N	12	95	4	91	202

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The difference between ethnic groups here could not be accounted for in terms of an expectation of being in involved in full-time education, as no ethnic or gender differences were found in this regard.

Table 61   College students' expectations of holidays abroad by ethnic group

Expectation of going on holidays abroad	% within ethnic group				N
	African Caribbean	Asian	Mixed race	White	
Never	8.3	.0	.0	1.1	2
Maybe by age 18	58.3	44.8	75.0	79.5	123
Maybe by age 21	16.7	79.1	.0	8.0	43
Maybe by age 30	16.7	19.8	25.0	11.4	32

African Caribbean students were also less likely than others to consider taking holidays abroad by the age of 18. Furthermore, Table 61 shows that 8% of African Caribbean students felt that they would never take holidays abroad, whereas all other groups were far less likely to respond in this way.

Differences emerged across contrasting ethnic groups concerning expectations of marriage. A clear majority of white students (78%), mixed race (75%) and African Caribbean students (67%) expected marriage by age 30. However, this trend was weaker among Asian students (50%). A substantial proportion of Asian students expected marriage at the younger age of 21 (43%). Similar observations also emerged from the *After Year 11* survey, where Asian pupils also expected marriage at a relatively younger age.

Table 62   College student expectations of marriage by ethnic origin

Expectations of marriage	African-Caribbean %	Asian %	Mixed race %	White %	N
Never	25.0	5.3		5.7	13
30	66.7	49.5	75.0	79.3	127
21	8.3	43.2	25.0	12.6	54
18		2.1		2.3	4

Three notable gender differences emerged across the 15 items concerning student expectations. The first related to living at home with parents and the second related to owning a business as shown in Table 63 and Table 64, respectively.

Table 63 College students' expectations of living with parents by gender

Expectation of living with parents	% within gender Female	Male	N
Maybe never	12.0	10.8	22
Maybe by age 18	45.7	39.2	82
Maybe by age 21	35.9	25.5	59
Maybe by age 30	6.5	24.5	31
N	92	102	194

$$\chi^2=12.04, \, df=3, \, p<.01$$

Only 7% of females expected to reside with parents by the age of 30 compared to 25% of males.

Males also appeared to have different expectations of owning a business than did female students. Chi square analysis could not confirm statistical significance of data here as more than 20% of cells had an expected count of less than 1.

Table 64 College students' expectations of owning a business by gender

Expectation of business ownership	% within gender Female	Male	N
Maybe never	49.5	25.5	70
Maybe by age 18	.0	3.1	3
Maybe by age 21	4.4	11.2	15
Maybe by age 30	44.0	56.1	95
Don't know	2.2	4.1	6
N	91	98	189

It is evident that female students were more sceptical regarding business ownership, with approximately 50% indicating that they would perhaps never own a business compared to 26% of males. Where there was any expectation of business ownership by male or female students, it was considered that this would occur by the age of 30 rather than any other age.

Table 65 College student expectation of car ownership by gender

Expectation of car ownership	Female	Male	N
Never	1.0	1.0	2
30	17.5	21.0	39
21	48.5	27.6	76
18	33.0	50.5	85
N			202

Finally, in terms of student expectations, car ownership proved to be an area of difference between females and males. Expectation of car ownership was common among males and females but differences emerged in the expected age of ownership. Most males reported an expectation of ownership by age 18 (51%). However, a lower proportion of females expected to experience car ownership by this age (32%). Females were more likely to expect car ownership by the age of 21 (48%). Conversely, 28% of males expected to experience car ownership at this age; the majority had expected ownership by the age of 18. Chi square test statistics did not provide a reliable source of verification here.

Overall, expectations were positive, with students expecting to extend their education, find employment, take holidays abroad and enjoy other material comforts by the age of eighteen. Longer-term aims were conservative with students expecting to marry, to have children, become homeowners and to own a business by the age of 30. This raised the issue of whether students were sensitive to normative constraints in terms of social convention or questionnaire bias.

Results indicated that African Caribbean students had slightly different impressions concerning expectations of life experiences. These differences related mainly to becoming employed and taking holidays abroad. African Caribbean students regarded these experiences as less likely to occur at any age compared to other students. Gender differences were also revealed in terms of expectations, with female students having less expectation of living with parents, owning a business or owning a car. However, although ethnicity and gender were at times important

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cleavages in terms of students' future expectations, shorter-term plans of intentions after July showed little difference.

4.27   Identity among college students

Identity was explored across the separate dimensions of ethnicity and gender. Relevant items from the questionnaire included ethnic origin, the importance of being with others of the same ethnic origin in four different contexts and ethnicity of friends. Later, an overall indicator of ethnic importance was achieved by combining scores across these four items. Gender identity was assessed by looking at gender of friends.

Identity was explored largely in the context of friendships as friends were also of consequence in terms of providing advice and helping to make decisions. Students had tended to report that they coped well with making friends, suggesting that the college environment was not one of threat. Students also reported that friends were an important aspect of college life. It was also useful to explore whether students gravitated towards individuals of the same ethnicity as themselves, which could have suggested preference for same ethnic group; same gender friendships could also be used to inform an appreciation of gender identity.

4.28   Ethnic identity in context

Students were asked how many of their friends were from the same ethnic group as they were. The majority reported that at least half of their friends were drawn from the same ethnic group (85%) as highlighted in Table 66.

Table 66   Proportion of college students' friends from the same ethnic group

How many of your friends are from the same ethnic group as you?	N	%
Most of them	130	62.2
About half of them	47	22.5
Less than half of them	22	10.5
None of them	10	4.8
Total	209	100

$$\chi^2=167.90,\ df=3,\ p<.01$$

Students were also asked how important it was to for them to be with those of the same ethnicity in four different situations; during college lessons, when socialising at college, when socialising outside of college and at work.

Table 67   College students sense of importance of being with others from the same ethnic group

Importance of being with others from same ethnic group in varied contexts				
	Not important %t	Important %	Very important %	N	χ^2
College lessons	77.1	18.0	4.9	205	$\chi^2=181.82,\ df=2,\ p<.01$
Socialising at college	65.9	25.9	8.3	205	$\chi^2=107.04,\ df=2,\ p<.01$
Socialising outside of college	59.8	27.0	13.2	204	$\chi^2=70.09,\ df=2,\ p<.01$
At work	78.9	14.9	6.2	194	$\chi^2=183.23,\ df=2,\ p<.01$

Table 67 shows that the majority of students felt it was *Not important* to be with others of the same ethnic group during college lessons (77%). Approximately 18% indicated that it was *Important* and only 5% regarded it as *Very important*. Such differences proved to be significant. A total of 34% of students felt that ethnicity had some importance when socialising at college. Importance was reported more frequently here than it was for college lessons, but the majority of students still felt that ethnicity was not of great importance in this context. 40% of students felt that ethnicity was *Important* to *Very important* when socialising outside of college. However, although the majority of students reported that ethnicity was *not important*, this was the narrowest majority of all contexts (60%). Socialising outside of college was more likely than any other context for ethnicity to be regarded as *Important*. Of

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all four items concerning ethnicity and context, the workplace was the least critical in terms of ethnic importance; 79% of students reported that being with others from the same ethnic group would not be important at work.

Overall, the importance of ethnicity across the four contexts emerged as being *Not very important* as the majority of responses fell into this category (70%). Approximately 21% of students felt that ethnicity was *Important* and only 8% of students felt that it was *Very important*. Further analysis was undertaken to explore these contexts across ethnicity and gender lines. Table 68 outlines results in relation to ethnicity.

Table 68   Importance of being with others from same ethnic group by ethnic origin

| % within ethnic group | Importance of being with others from same ethnic group in varied contexts | | | | |
	African Caribbean	Asian	Mixed race	White	N
College lessons					
Not very important	66.7	64.3	100	91.2	205
Important	33.3	27.6	.0	6.6	
Very important	1.8	8.2	.0	2.2	
N	12	98	4	91	
Socialising at college					
Not very important	75.0	49.0	75.0	82.4	205
Important	16.7	39.8	25.0	12.1	
Very important	18.3	11.2	.0	5.5	
N	12	98	4	91	
Socialising outside of college					
Not very important	66.7	42.9	75.0	76.7	204
Important	16.7	36.7	25.0	17.8	
Very important	16.7	20.4	.0	5.6	
N	12	98	4	90	
At work					
Not very important	83.3	69.6	100	87.2	194
Important	8.3	23.9	.0	7.0	
Very important	8.3	6.5	.0	5.8	
N	12	92	4	86	

Asian students were the most likely to consider that ethnicity was important to very important across all four contexts. White students were the least likely of all ethnic groups to feel that ethnicity was important in any context. For instance, 91% of white students felt that it was not important to be with others of the same ethnic group during college lessons compared to 64% of Asian students who were inclined

to feel this way. The remaining 36% of Asian students felt that ethnicity had a degree of importance during college lessons compared to only 9% of white students. African Caribbean students tended to respond in very similar ways to Asian students. The responses of mixed race students were parallel to those of white students. The work context was least sensitive to concerns regarding ethnic mutuality.

Males and females treated the importance of ethnicity very similarly across varying contexts. However, there was a single context where significant differences occurred and this was during college lessons as outlined in Table 69.

Table 69 Importance of being with others from same ethnic group in college lessons, by gender

Importance of being with others from same ethnic group in college lessons		
	Females %	Males %	N
Not very important	85.9	68.9	158
Important	12.1	23.6	37
Very important	2.0	7.5	10
N	99	106	205

$$\chi^2 = 8.85,\ df = 2,\ p < .01$$

Males were more likely to feel that ethnicity was *Important* to *Very important* in lessons (31%). Only 14% of females felt that ethnicity was *Important* to *Very important* in the context of college lessons.

4.29   *The context of ethnicity and the effect on adjustment*

An overall index regarding the importance of ethnicity was created using the four items relating to ethnicity and context. Cronbach's Alpha test of reliability showed that internal consistency within these items was very high (Alpha=.85). Therefore, these items were re-coded to provide an index to measure the overall importance of ethnicity. This was referred to as the Importance of Ethnicity Index.

Table 70   Importance of ethnicity index by ethnic origin

Importance of ethnicity index	African-Caribbean	Asian	Mixed race	White	N
Not important in many situations	4.7	19.3	2.1	34.9	117
Important in some situations	1.0	25.5		8.3	67
Very important in many situations	.5	2.6		1.0	8

The overall importance of ethnicity was affected by ethnic origin of students. White students and African Caribbean students demonstrated very similar responses, tending to feel that ethnicity was not important overall. For example, 78% of white students and 75% of African Caribbean students tended to think that ethnicity was not very important in   many situations. However, the reverse was true for Asian students.

Figure 6   The importance of ethnicity overall among first year college students, by ethnic group
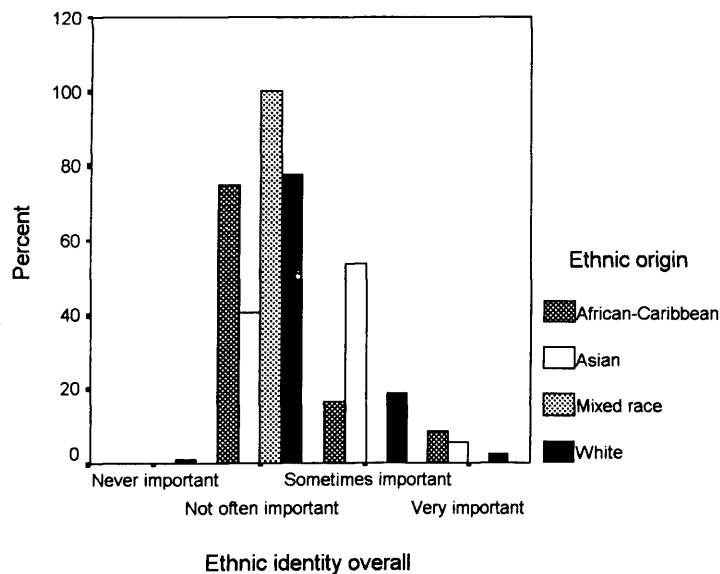
The majority of Asian students indicated that ethnicity was important to them in some situations (54%).

4.30   Gender identity

Gender proved to be an even stronger social cleavage in terms of making friends than ethnicity. Gender attracted a lower mean score (1.42) than did ethnicity (1.58) when subjected to Friedman's H test. This signified that students were more likely to form

mutual friendships on the basis of gender and slightly more likely to form mixed friendships in terms of ethnicity. This was verified through a comparison of percentage frequencies as displayed in Table 71.

Table 71 Comparison of ethnic and gender characteristics of friendships

Comparison of how many friends are of same gender or same ethnic group		
	Same gender friendships %	Same ethnic group friendships %
Most of them	42.0	62.2
About half	50.7	22.5
Less than half	6.3	10.5
None of them	1.0	4.8
N	210	210
	$X^2=153.73$, $df=3$, $p<.01$	$\chi^2=167.90$, $df=3$, $p<.01$

Approximately 93% of students reported that at least half of their friends were the same sex as themselves, whereas 85% reported mutuality in terms of ethnicity. Roughly, 7% of college students reported that under half of their friends were of the same sex. This compares to 15% who reported that less than half of their friends were from the same ethnic group as they were.

4.31 Discussion of 'After Year 11' and 'Changing Times' Findings

4.32 Orientation – discussion of findings based on questionnaire data

Overall, student orientation at the end of Year 11 and during the first year of college was geared towards educational progress. Attending lessons and achieving good grades were the most important aspects of school and college life for the majority of students. This educational orientation was also supplemented by the interest students had in their courses and this ranked as the primary reason for course choice among Year 11 students. Choosing a course associated with future career aims ranked as the second most important reason for course choice. This highlighted a dimension from the Southampton study, *Student Decision-making and the Post-16 Market Place* (1996). It was shown that students' career choice decisions occurred much earlier than at age sixteen. In this study, 64% of pupils indicated that they had already

begun to consider career choice before Year 10 and Year 11 at secondary school. The high profile of career-related subject choice suggested that students in the *Changing Times* questionnaire already held future career aims which were being consolidated through course choice. It should be stressed however, that course choice was not singularly based on a consideration of career pathways. The majority of Year 11 students maintained that intrinsic interest in subjects was paramount. Students expressed intrinsic interest in subjects as fundamental and possibly used this as a foundation for career options or further study. This relates to concerns by Gleeson and Hodkinson (1995). They argue that much of the attention in terms of educational targets set by government are allied far too closely to industry. They argue that education is not always an instrumental tool and should not always be treated as such. Keen on promoting lifelong learning, Gleeson and Hodkinson (1995) argue that the breadth of educational interest and needs should be accounted for in policy aims. Tight (1998) expresses a similar sentiment also. They argue that too much emphasis is placed on vocationalism that has not been proven to lift national productivity or competitiveness that is so often assumed.

Educational orientation was also suggested by the positive relationship most students reported to have with tutors at school and at college regardless of ethnic group or gender. Where students reported that it was important that tutors liked them, this was also found to relate to greater satisfaction with tutor relationships. Asian students in Year 11 were less likely to feel that this was important compared to other groups. Overall, relationships with tutors were regarded as significant and capable of influencing educational motivation. However, the lack of major differences in the attitudes of students calls generalised theories of oppositional culture into question. Such theories as those of Ogbu (1974) suggest that ethnic minority groups tend to be oppositional in attitudes towards a range of social factors. Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey (1998) argue that theories of oppositional culture are not useful explanations of the general attitudes of minority groups. Furthermore, even where disillusioned students were interviewed, African American students emerged as having more positive attitudes to school. Although Asian students surveyed for fieldwork research were less likely to feel that tutor affirmation was important, there was no

indication that Asian students had less positive attitudes to education. The direction of student destination also provides a strong challenge to general theories of oppositional culture in relation to education. Ethnic minority students were not opposed to post-compulsory education and were more likely to participate at this phase than majority students.

Educational orientation was also confirmed by evidence indicating that the majority of pupils felt that teaching staff were aware of their intentions after Year 11 and this was constant across all ethnic and gender groups. The overall intention of Year 11 students was to attend a further education institution. Ethnic and gender differences emerged here. All students were more likely to undertake post-compulsory education than any other option. However, ethnic minority groups were more likely to indicate this choice than white students. A minority of white students indicated that they intended to undertake employment or training contracts. However, white students were more likely than any other group to embark on this route. No females indicated such intentions. Similar findings have emerged in previous research. Payne et al (1996) and Hagell and Shaw (1996) noted that overall, students are far more likely to undertake further education after post-compulsory education than any other option. Authors such as Drew (1995) and Gillborn and Gipps (1996) have also discerned differences, indicating that ethnic minority students tend to be more likely to participate in post-sixteen education than the majority population. Conversely, employment and training are more likely to be undertaken by white sixteen year olds. This was replicated in findings from the *After Year 11* survey.

The overwhelming choice of Year 11 students was towards sixth form institutions rather than further education colleges that enrolled students from a wider age range. Choice of specific institution was largely based on the perceived reputation of a college and on the provision of specific courses. Specific course choices were based on student experiences at GCSE that further confirmed the educational orientation of students. Choices were based on educational factors rather than social factors such as friends although a small minority of students were swayed in their choices by such concerns. However, students also took visits to further education institutions

seriously. In Phase 2 of research, students stated that choice of institution was influenced greatly by the impression gained from visits. Payne et al (1996) and Hagell and Shaw (1996) also found that sixteen year olds in general and within city areas, tended to prefer sixth form institutions. Payne et al (1996) note a growing trend in sixteen year olds attending further education colleges but note that currently, sixth form institutions remain more popular.

Educational orientation was reinforced further with Year 11 students demonstrating that they were particularly interested in studying new subjects at college. This should perhaps be modified to include subjects at a new level. Many students indicated that positive GCSE experience influenced course choice. It is assumed that many took advanced academic and vocational courses that developed GCSE subjects. There were slight ethnic differences here. Overall, studying new subjects was the most eagerly anticipated factor. However, Asian students were more likely to state this than white students were. White students were more likely to specify that they anticipated making new friends.

Parental approval of choices was a point noted by Foskett and Hesketh (1996). This was also confirmed in fieldwork research. The vast majority of Year 11 students in research indicated that they thought parents approved of their intended destinations. The majority intended to continue education as mentioned earlier. Foskett and Hesketh argued that parents perform a central role in the transfer process from school to post-compulsory education. This consonance between pupils and parents did not appear to vary in terms of ethnicity or gender of students. Authors such as Siann and Knox, (1992), Siann et al, (1990) and Basit (1996) have expressed concern regarding the way in which disagreement between Asian parents in particular has become a stereotypical imagining among teachers and careers advisors. They argue that Asian parents and pupils are more often in agreement rather than at odds concerning intentions after Year 11. The After Year 11 survey also suggested that this was the case. There were no differences across ethnic groups that related to parental approval for intentions after Year 11. Furthermore, Penn and Scattergood (1992), Drew (1995) and Mirza (1992) maintain that parental support for further education is

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stronger among ethnic minority groups. However, there were differences in terms of student destinations as noted earlier despite perceptions of strong parental support for all pupil choices. However, pupils belonging to all ethnic minority groups were more likely to continue in education than white pupils. Therefore, higher levels of support from ethnic minority parents could not be entirely discounted.

For one half of students approaching the end of their first year in post-compulsory education, school was a resonant memory but it was a weak memory for the remaining half. However, this did not affect levels of adjustment, suggesting that students were not greatly disturbed by thoughts of school, regardless of the nature or frequency of such thoughts.

Students were able to provide a wealth of similarities and differences between school and college. Major similarities involved teaching and learning methods and major differences concerned the amount of free time students experienced at college and the attitude of staff towards them. Students frequently mentioned being treated more maturely. These differences were not necessarily viewed as important or even positive.

Research by Martinez and Munday (1998) and Wardman and Stevens (1998) found that students generally adjusted well to college. However, students vulnerable to dropout included those who did not cope well socially and those who failed to keep abreast of course demands. Wardman and Stevens in particular, found a higher dropout rate among students studying vocational qualifications. In the *Changing Times* survey students reported that they had adjusted well to college at academic and social levels. This was an encouraging outcome and one that was not specific to ethnic origin, gender or course.

Students reported that they were coping very effectively with friendship formation, although social life in general involved lower levels of satisfaction. This may have been associated with a feeling by students that there were limited opportunities to socialise, but nevertheless were still able to form enjoyable friendships. However,

further research was required to identify who students actually defined as friends, student attachment to friends within and outside of the context of lessons and to explore the functions friendships fulfilled for students of this age.

Family, college staff, and friends provided a valuable resource for pupils in Year 11 and students in their first year at college. Mothers were cited as the overwhelming source for students in terms of providing encouragement and assisting with decision-making. Data from the *After Year 11* survey and the *Changing Times* questionnaire indicated that parents were the strongest source of support for students and this conformed to findings in the Foskett and Hesketh study (1996). Not only were parents found to stimulate students' initial thoughts about post-16 choices, but they were also identified as providing a "key role in both encouraging and supporting students' transition from compulsory education into further education" (1996, p11). Year 11 pupils and college students highlighted the importance of both parents above other sources of support. It was also apparent among college students that the role of mothers and fathers appeared to be qualitatively different. Beinstein Miller and Lane (1991) also uncovered this difference.

Very similar findings emerged in the *Changing Times* questionnaire. This may have been attributable to a number of factors such as the increase in households headed by single women (*Office for National Statistics*, 1996 and *Office for National Statistics*, 1997). However, reasons for this difference were speculative and could not be tested on the basis of information requested in the *Changing Times* questionnaire. In the *Changing Times* questionnaire, fathers were perceived to be important in providing advice and were also important in assisting with decision-making. However, contributions of fathers were reported less frequently in all situations than that of mothers; consequently, fathers seemed to provide a less dynamic role for students here as in the Beinstein Miller and Lane study (1991).

Members of staff providing a pastoral role were important in providing advice about college, lending encouragement and helping students to make long-term decisions. Their role was more prolific than that of parents in only one instance, when

providing students with advice about college. It was not at all surprising that tutors were identified as authoritative sources concerning college. Parents however, became more important in contexts involving emotional and long-term support.

Year 11 students made use of careers teachers more so than parents in only one instance. This was in relation to gaining advice concerning post-sixteen choices. Asian students and white students in particular made use of this service. African Caribbean students and mixed race students were more reliant on tutors and parents for advice concerning post-sixteen choices. Students in their first year at college did not look to specialist careers guidance personnel to the same degree as Year 11 pupils. Overall, college students rarely drew on this service and were more reliant on personal tutors, family or friends. Careers officers were seen as important in advising about college within the first year, but occupied a very low position in terms of helping students to make decisions about their long-term future. Most careers guidance was incorporated into tutor programmes across all three colleges and was delivered by pastoral tutors. Hence, contact with specialist advisors was limited further in many colleges and this is likely to have accounted in part for the poor representation in responses of college students. This could also have been an indication of the success of tutor programmes or a shortcoming in links being forged between students and specialist agencies.

In the *After Year 11* survey and the *Changing Times* questionnaire, peers were an important resource although never as important as parents. Friends were relatively important in terms of helping students to make decisions and were also referred to as an important feature of school and college. Also, female pupils in Year 11 who were vulnerable to low self-esteem tended to see other female friends as the most important factor about school rather than school lessons. This strengthened the suggestion that friends were an important support for students. Writing by Hartup and Lougee (1975) refers to the importance of peer modelling, the role of peers in providing support and positive models for one another. Hartup and Lougee explain that at times, parents are more influential and in other contexts peers are more effective models. The role of peers and parents are not set as antagonistic

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dichotomies but as complementary support structures. In relation to encouragement and guidance concerning future decisions, Year 11 pupils and college students utilised parents as authoritative resources more so than friends. However, peers were still influential across all items referring to student support. Hallinan and Williams (1990) explanation of the development of trust and solidarity within friendships also has a bearing on results regarding peer support particularly for college students. Hallinan and Williams assert that trust and solidarity are basic foundations of positive relationships. However, these features take time to develop and solidify. Compared to well-established and robust relationships with parents, peer relationships are perhaps not as solid, particularly those formed within the first year of college. Therefore, it is perhaps not so unusual that students' should have relied on parental support to a greater extent than on friendships.

The category 'myself' was innovated by Year 11 pupils as well as college students in the context of identifying individuals who provided advice, encouragement or aided decision-making. Identifying self as a resource demonstrated that many students were keen to express a level of initiative and responsibility in considering their future. Individual students introduced the category 'myself' and this made it a powerful expression. Its introduction suggested that it might have been applied more widely had it been included in the list of options all students were able to choose from.

Students' long-term expectations varied according to ethnic origin and gender. Many of these differences in expectations emulated differences in actual life chances and lifestyles of ethnic groups of men and women in Britain. For instance in the *After Year 11* survey and the *Changing Times* survey, minority ethnic groups emerged among the most pessimistic in terms of their attitudes to employment. As is apparent from recent Government figures, African Caribbean males are over-represented in unemployment rates across all age groups. In 1995, approximately 24% of all unemployed males were African Caribbean. This compared to approximately 8% of white males (Office for National Statistics, 1996). High levels of unemployment amongst African Caribbean males coupled with low expectations

of ever gaining work were also discussed in *Ambitions and Marginalisation: A qualitative study of under-achieving young men of Afro-Caribbean origin*, by Wrench, Hassan and Owen (1996). The young men involved in this study expressed feelings of pessimism concerning career and employment opportunities. Educational constraints and racism were often cited as the cause. Males in general are more likely to face unemployment than females and younger people more likely to experience unemployment than older people. The additional factor of ethnicity further exacerbates this situation. African Caribbean males between the ages of 16-24 were the most vulnerable to unemployment of all ethnic groups in England and Wales in 1995. Within this age range 39% of African Caribbean males were unemployed compared to 14% of white males. Pakistani/Bangladeshi males also suffered identical levels of unemployment as African Caribbean males between the ages of 16 and 24 (Office for National Statistics, 1996). However, African Caribbean males were consistently positioned in the most unfavourable position across all age groups. Even where qualifications are equivalent to or higher for majority groups' employment status remains lower (Barringer, Takeuchi and Xenos, 1990). *Ambition and Marginalisation* contains interviews with African Caribbean males who demonstrate an acute awareness of unemployment and poor employment opportunities.

Students from minority ethnic groups were also less likely to expect holidays abroad. Local figures showing an ethnic breakdown for holidays taken abroad were unavailable; the only figures available here were those showing holidays by social class. As may be expected, holidays abroad were more likely to be taken by those from professional and managerial classes than any other group (*Office for National Statistics*, 1997). As most minority ethnic groups are over-represented in less privileged social classes, it may be that holidays abroad are not regarded as easily accessible.

Gender distinctions also existed in terms of expectations. These referred to living at home, owning a business and owning a computer. By the end of 1996, 36% of females between the ages of 24, were living at home compared to 54% of males who

continued to live at home (*Office for National Statistics*, 1997). Furthermore, by the age of 34, 5% of females continued to live at home compared to 11% of males (*Social Trends*, 1997). However, these national trends contradicted the results of the *Changing Times* Questionnaire, where females reported that they would leave home at a later date than males.

National figures show that overall females are less likely than males to own their own business/be self-employed. In spring 1997, .07% of females owned their own business. This compared to 2.4% of males who owned a business in the same period (*Office for National Statistics*, 1997). Female students in the *Changing Times* questionnaire, were less likely to expect to own a business than males were and this reflected national trends. The majority of males did not expect to own a business, but the very small minority that expected this experience significantly out-numbered females.

Overall, Year 11 pupils and college students expected to be in education at the age of 18. This reflected national trends. The majority of school leavers attend a further education institution rather than enter work or undertake training (DfEE, 1998). The majority of Year 11 students also expressed their intention to commence post-compulsory education. Elsewhere in the questionnaire, the majority of college students stated that they would return to college for a second year rather than undertake employment or training. This accounts for the expectation of the majority of students to be involved in education at the age of 18. However, ethnic differences existed in the period of contact students expected within the education system and slight differences in immediate intentions at age sixteen. Students from minority ethnic groups tended to envisage involvement with education at the age of 21 and beyond whereas white students expected to have no further involvement after the age of 18. It was also found that white students were more likely to express an intention to embark upon employment or training immediately after Year 11. This reinforces Drew's (1995) findings that show a greater tendency among minority ethnic groups to continue education at sixteen.

Computer ownership was the final difference across gender lines in terms of student expectations. Very few female students expected to own a computer. Kelly's work concerning female involvement in technology highlighted the less frequent participation of females in computer-related subjects (1987). Whilst this was not an exact index of computer ownership, it offered a degree of insight into the lesser involvement of females with computers. The expectation of females owning a computer stood in marked contrast to males. Most males assumed that computer ownership would occur at least by age 18. Why females participate less in computer-related subjects is beyond the scope of this report. However, *Changing Times* data lent support to Kelly's view that difference in attitudes existed with girls less likely to expect computer ownership at all and at a later age than males.

4.33 Student Identity – discussion of findings based on questionnaire data

All three colleges were located within central areas and attracted students from varied ethnic backgrounds. Leicester city itself has a mixed population with Asian residents forming the largest of its minority groups (Leicester City Council, 1996). The ethnic characteristics of friendship have been fully discussed by authors such as Deegan (1996), Verma, Zec and Skinner (1994), Clark and Ayers (1992), Hallinan and Williams (1990) and Rubin (1980). A common strand among these studies is the observation of same ethnic group friendships occurring more commonly than mixed friendships. This pattern was also reflected in both the *After Year 11* survey and the *Changing Times* questionnaire.

Clark and Ayers (1992) noted that where African Caribbean students were in a minority, this forced one of two options; the option of forming cross-ethnic friendships or the option of having a very limited selection of friends. This study involved students in early adolescence between the ages of 11 and 13. Clark and Ayers point out that African Caribbean females were more likely than anyone else to form ethnically diverse friendships. This contrasted to African Caribbean males who were more selective and so more likely to form same ethnicity friendships. Grant (1984) also noted a similar phenomenon in his study of junior high school students. Here, African Caribbean females were found to have more cross-ethnic friendships

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than African Caribbean males or any other ethnic group. Similar patterns described by Clark and Ayers were also found among Year 11 pupils and college students. Such differences were not found in fieldwork research for this thesis. However, African Caribbean males and females in schools and colleges were more likely than any other ethnic group to form cross-ethnic friendships. African Caribbean students formed a small minority within school and college populations involved in the surveys and this created a greater need to form ethnically diverse friendships. However, even though African Caribbean students were a very small minority throughout this phase of fieldwork, overwhelming preference was still shown for same ethnicity friendship formations. This strongly suggested that ethnicity was a central factor in friendship formation.

Gillborn (1995) recognises and comments on the varying importance that ethnicity has, with ethnic identity being neither fixed or universal. He notes that ethnicity 'may be more or less important to the same person at different times or in different contexts' (p11). This was verified during fieldwork research among school and college students. The importance of ethnicity was tested in a number of ways within the *After Year 11 Survey* and within the *Changing Times* questionnaires.

It emerged that among Year 11 pupils, those from ethnic minority groups were more likely to regard skin colour as important than were white students. The ethnic population of School A was characterised by a predominant presence of Asian pupils. Pupils from this school were also more likely to agree that skin colour was important than were students from the slightly more diverse population of School B. Pupils were also asked to consider the importance of ethnicity in context with other identity factors. Most students felt that ethnicity was not important in relation to other identities. The attribute that students regarded as most important was being clever. This did not vary across ethnic or gender groupings. These results reinforced Gillborn's assertions regarding the relative importance and flexibility of ethnicity. This approach to ethnicity was also mirrored by college students in their responses to questions in the *Changing Times* survey.

In the *Changing Times* questionnaire, college students attached more importance to ethnicity in social contexts than they did in college lessons or work situations. As college lessons and work provided more restricted and more limited opportunities for social contact, interaction in these contexts did not rely on intimacy and reciprocation that are characteristic of friendship (Hartup and Lougee, 1975 and Rubin, 1980). Therefore, relationships that are more distant may exist in the classroom or at work. Socialising however, often draws on other social skills that aim to develop friendships. The actual process of making friends is driven by mutuality, a basis for establishing intimacy and trust. Mutuality in respect of ethnicity has been reported in a number of friendship studies and also proved to be a very strong feature of friendships in the *Changing Times* questionnaire (Rubin, 1980; Deegan, 1986 and Verma et al, 1994).

In a number of friendship studies, gender is identified as an even stronger social influence than ethnicity in terms of choosing friends (Bukowski, et al, 1993; Youniss and Haynie, 1992; Hallinan and Williams, 1990 and Cauce, 1986). Cross-gender friendships are reported to be rare in children's relationships as well as those of adults. The findings in the *After Year 11* survey and the *Changing Times* questionnaire also supported such a view. Gender identity at the level of friendship was found to be extremely strong. In the case of the Changing Times Survey, gender was found to be slightly stronger than ethnic cleavages in terms of friendship formation.

Overall, Year 11 pupils had moderate to high self-esteem. There were no significant differences across ethnic groups. However, females showed slightly lower levels of self-esteem than males although statistical significance was not established here. Therefore, self-esteem results in regard to ethnicity in particular, reinforced the approach set out in the review of literature within this thesis. Results from Year 11 pupils demonstrated that general assumptions could not be made concerning the relationship between self-esteem and particular ethnic groups. This is due to the instability inherent in self-concept components as explained in the pioneering work of James (1890). Consequently contradictory results emerge in contrasting studies.

For example, Bagley, Mallick and Verma (1979) found no significant differences in the self-esteem scores for contrasting ethnic groups. However, Halpin, Halpin and Whiddan (1981) found higher scores among white students than ethnic minority groups. These results contrasted sharply to those of Bekhuis (1994) who found that African American students tended to have the highest self-esteem scores of all. The flexibility of ethnicity also contributed to the contradictory nature of these results. As Gillborn and Gipps (1996) have noted, ethnicity is not always a defining or important factor for minority or majority ethnic individuals or groups (Hall, 1992; Gilroy, 1987; Banton, 1998 and Rattansi, 1994). Therefore, ethnicity will not affect self-esteem in a uniform manner.

4.34   Analysis and Discussion of Interview Data

Case study research formed the second phase of fieldwork. Interviews and observations completed in this phase helped to compose a fuller picture of the transfer experience. Fieldwork experience occurred over a period of eight months; from the start of term towards the end of the first year. For many students college was considered as a bridge from compulsory education to higher education or employment, a time when future trajectories were assessed or solidified. The trajectory students pursued was greatly influenced by the nature of the experience within this first year of education after compulsory schooling. Positive experience of college life encouraged participation within further education and negative experience had the opposite effect, it discouraged participation and undermined commitment. Dissatisfaction with social and cultural factors also fed into poor learning experience for students and undermined commitment to a college career.

Transfer experience was explored across the two dimensions of Student Orientation and Student Identity. These themes were also utilised during Phase One for the analysis of the *After Year 11* survey and the *Changing Times* survey. Featured within the area of Student Orientation were important features of college life, commitment to and coping with course work demands as well as an exploration of levels of satisfaction. The section concerning Student Identity investigated the multifarious nature of student identity and interactions between the specific areas of

ethnicity, self-esteem and locus of control. Attention was also given to the ways in which teaching staff mediate the nature and quality of transfer experience through their classroom practice.

Triangulation occurred at three levels. Firstly, comparison of interview data, observation data and questionnaire data resulted in the emergence of recurrent themes. Secondly, data from individual students was constantly compared to that of other students through checking field notes, memos and transcripts. Finally, student accounts of their participation and interaction within the classroom were compared with accounts from teaching staff. Rarely were there any discrepancies within these versions. Hence, interviews with teaching staff contributed to the picture of individual and general student experience; these interviews did not stand counter to student comments. The cases that I have drawn upon in this section of the thesis are used to present a discrete portrait of student experience.

4.35   Orientation of first year college students

4.36   Student choices

Case study research revealed that choice of college for most students was primarily based on positive decision-making. Students tended to make the decision of enrolling at a college based on how far they were impressed by college staff or college facilities when they visited a site. Choice appeared to be a proactive engagement. For example, Maxine arranged a visit to Greenway College in Nottingham as well as to another neighbouring site offering the same course. When she was asked what made her choose this college she responded:

> Because it had a special course in Beauty Therapy which I was interested in and I
> went to look at Hounslow College but their course wasn't as good as Greenway's,
> they didn't have as much of the equipment.

> I came for a Shadowing Day, but that was my choice. I asked the teacher to phone
> up for me at school, to ask if it could be arranged and I came along for the day. I
> went to Hairdressing as well as Beauty Therapy during the day. (...) It's a lot

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> longer course in Hairdressing. (...) I didn't want to be at college for any longer
> than a year really, but if I'd done Hairdressing I would have been here for at least
> three or maybe four years. I couldn't cope with that.

This was a typical reaction by students who were surveyed and interviewed; impressions of a site were measured against the reality of a visit. Even though a prospectus or an advertisement may have impressed students, a visit ultimately confirmed or challenged this impression.

Proximity of a college was not regarded as a major influence in college choice for most students. The overall reason for college choice was the interest students had in those courses offered and the comparison of sites offering the same course. Earlier questionnaire results also concurred with this. Findings indicated that travelling distance was not an important issue. Proximity of college was considered as an advantage but distance was treated pragmatically and weighed up against other factors as in Aysha's case:

> I live on the edge of Market Town centre, right near the A101. It is far but I've got
> used to it. I just come on a direct bus, but I don't mind.

There were some students who stated that their chosen site was the nearest college to their home that offered this course. This explanation only occurred where an alternative site was situated outside of the county and where journey times in excess of an hour were required. Research from interviews and observations demonstrated that duration of travel was not a major concern in college choice. Martinez and Munday (1998) also found that student choice and commitment was not greatly affected by concerns regarding travel. They established that those students with journey times of less than thirty minutes and those with journey times over sixty minutes were slightly more likely to withdraw from courses than others. However, these differences were slight and militated against commonsense assumptions that students with long journeys are vulnerable to dropout.

4.36.1   Choice of Course

Choice of college course rested on three major considerations; interest and enjoyment in subject, career aspirations and university hopes. These considerations emerged as central features of choices in both the After Year 11 survey and the *Changing Times* survey also. All students interviewed stated that they were interested in the subjects that they had chosen. Many pointed out that this was a necessary consideration as they would not be able to focus on courses that they had no interest in and would therefore not perform well in these subjects. As one student stated:

> I was thinking about maybe going into Journalism or something to do with the
> media would be ideal. I just liked the look of Media anyway. I didn't want to do
> just a load of boring subjects because I know I would have just dropped out.

The two other major considerations were split between access to university and access to work. Marie had definite ideas regarding access to university.

> I'm determined that I want to do well for myself because I don't want to end up
> working at the factory or anything like that [...] my mum works in a factory but
> she does the administering at Jay Crisps and my dad cooks at Jay Crisps [...] that's
> how they met. My mum has worked there since she was eighteen [...] my nan
> worked there as well and I don't want to carry on a family tradition.

Maxine on the other hand was extremely clear about her career aims.

> I want to work on a Beauty Counter and then go mobile. Then my plan is to go to
> college maybe at night.

However, in the first round of interviews, many students expressed general aims and had far less focused aims than those such as Maxine's. For most students college was an opportunity to engage in subjects that they were interested in and/or had a strong record in and future trajectories were not yet cemented. General directions were expressed and these were split between the separate tracks of employment and university.

Even where students were enrolled on year long courses, the majority expected to remain at college for at least another year. Students undertaking GNVQ courses expected to undertake courses to at least intermediate level and then seek immediate

employment. Although a minority of GNVQ students regarded advanced courses as a preliminary to university the majority regarded GNVQ as a direct route into employment. Also, students undertaking GNVQ courses were more likely to be interested in owning/managing their own business than A Level students were. Conversely, A Level students regarded their academic studies as a precursor to university. None expected to complete A Levels and immediately enter work.

Even though students were not always absolutely sure about what specific occupation they were aiming for they were often clear about which field they would like to be employed in. Enrolment on courses was driven by the desire to work in a general sector as this quote from Mina demonstrates who was enrolled on a GNVQ Intermediate Computer course.

> I want to get a job ... something to do with computers, I've always wanted to.

Course tutors were also aware that many students enrolled on courses with a very general idea of future intentions and did not necessarily regard this as a problem. One lecturer endorsed such an approach and commented that:

> [Some] do actually see that because computers come into every aspect of life, an
> Information Technology course is giving them a broad base for potential career
> prospects and that's certainly the way in which I would sell the course. ... You can
> actually do a variety of jobs if you have this background of understanding
> computers and information technology.

Although students enrolled on GNVQ courses had a general idea of what area of work they would like to undertake, only a minority of students were able to identify specific occupations that they would like to enter. These students were also enrolled for specific vocational areas such as Mechanical Engineering or Hairdressing. Those students enrolled on general courses such as Information Technology were attracted by the general application of this course to a variety of vocational contexts.

Teaching staff identified further reasons for course choice. Some believed that course choice and the idea of attending college related strongly to a perception of very limited alternative options as this tutor illustrates.

> I think some of them come because they leave school, can't get a job and can't get
> the social security benefits. Some of them can get a grant and some of those kids
> think well I better go because that's the only way that I can get some money.

Another member of staff at a different college repeated this suggestion.

> I think, speaking to them, a lot of people tend to be on these courses because there's nothing else for them outside.

Limited opportunities outside of education, particularly in employment, were perceived as a major factor in student choices to attend college as well as to enrol on particular courses. This perception was not only articulated by staff, but students also expressed similar motivations as this quote from Carl illustrates.

> ...If I came out of college now, what is there really? The reason why I've come to college is because I want to earn a lot of money when I'm older, that's the reason why most people come. They want a nice job, they want further ambitions. If someone said to me now, I'll offer you £500 a month to leave college, or £400, I'd leave.

Such viewpoints would appear to support the existence of the 'discouraged worker' phenomenon (Ashton, 1993; Ashton et al, 1988; Raffe and Willms, 1989; Gray et al, 1992 and Furlong and Biggart, 1995). For instance, Ashton et al (1988) argue that restructuring of industry during the 1980's and 1990's was responsible for the decline in youth employment. They argue that lack of recovery here has precipitated the expansion in post-compulsory education. The sense of little opportunity outside of education is certainly central to the expressions of the tutor and to Carl as illustrated.

Carl was uncertain of his choice to attend college from the outset. Subsequently, he chose not to return to college for a second year and undertook a paid training contract. In the quote above he mentioned limited employment opportunities as a motivation for attending college and assumed that this was also a primary factor in the decisions of others. This may be further evidence of the 'discouraged worker' phenomenon (Ashton et al, 1988; Raffe and Willms, 1989; Gray et al, 1992 and Furlong and Biggart, 1995). Large-scale research by Martinez and Munday (1998) and a smaller study by Wardman and Stevens (1998) both illustrate that students who withdraw from courses take up employment more so than any other option. There is a high degree of course switching, but there is a greater incidence of withdrawal leading to employment. This strongly suggests that there is substance to Carl's assumptions and he is not alone in his attitude to college.

There were specific motivations for course choice that teaching staff did not approve of and associated with poor commitment. One such circumstance was where students undertook choices motivated primarily by the idea of accompanying other friends.

> Whether or not they change in the first fortnight will depend on the thinking that's
> gone on beforehand. (...) There are those who are a bit immature who really tend
> to do what their friends are doing. When they realise that is what they have done
> and they've based their choices on that, they think again and realise that it's silly to
> just traipse around with their friends all of the time.

Other tutors echoed this. They also connected this type of motivation with poor commitment from students. Implications for retention were also expressed.

> She rang up to say that she was going (...) I think she [enrolled on the course]
> because she didn't really know what else she wanted to do. Jackie her friend had
> done it and so she just tagged along. She messed me around for a long time with
> no kit, she never handed in work ...

This student was perceived as having no genuine commitment to the course and this was regarded by one tutor as a primary reason for lack of application and ultimate withdrawal from the course.

Teaching staff were also wary of the future retention of students who enrolled on courses bereft of a comprehensive understanding of what the course entailed. Staff commented that where student expectations of a course were not met, this led to poor commitment and at times to poor retention.

> They see [it] as a soft option (...) I think all of them have said this is not what I
> expected. You ask them what they did expect. (...) They say we don't like
> getting up for 9 o'clock. (...) They get jobs or realise that they don't want to be
> on the course.

Other staff when identifying reasons why students enrolled and then left courses early on in the year also felt that not all students researched courses fully. GNVQ staff were particularly critical of this approach. Many felt that students simply enrolled on courses on the basis of assumptions regarding course content.

> To be honest, I think they think that it's an easy option. (...) But there is the
> academic side to it, we have to assess their knowledge and I think that's where a lot
> of them fall short because they don't like the idea of assignments and being chased
> and deadlines.

Despite such misgivings, most students involved in the case studies demonstrated that they had researched courses with care. However, there were students willing to acknowledge that they had not researched choices fully and were subsequently disappointed. As this quote from Joseph illustrates.

> I thought that there would be more sport because when I first came I said I wanted
> something to do with sport. They said Leisure and Tourism would be something
> good to get into. So I enrolled on it not really finding out what everything was
> about and there's nothing to do with sport, not at all, nothing.

Joseph did not complete the course and staff were not certain what he went on to do. A minority of students had clearly not researched the contents of courses but not all students received accurate advice either as this example demonstrated.

> You can do short courses with this course but I tried to get into them and they were
> all full. (...) But X did promise me, she said you'll definitely be able to get into
> them, so I enrolled and they were all full.

This student was given particular advice and assurances that this curse could be tailored to meet his particular needs. However, his wishes failed to be met following enrolment.

Grades that students achieved at GCSE also clearly exerted an influence on their final course choices. Those failing to attain five GCSEs at grade C or above were generally disbarred from undertaking A Level courses. This led to students using the first year to enhance grades as well as gain alternative qualifications that could offer access onto advanced courses the following year.

> - What made you choose this particular course?
> - My grades, I wanted to do A Level PE but I didn't get my grades for that, so this
>   was about the best thing I could do for Sports. I want to do some short Sports
>   courses now as well. So if I do well this year I can get on to the A Level Sports
>   course next year.

Robert was one of the students whose course choice was affected by GCSE grades obtained at secondary school. His attitude was pragmatic and positive. However, poor course organisation later fuelled disillusion and impatience with further education. Robert went on to complete this year long GNVQ but later expressed opposition to remaining in further education for another two years to complete advanced studies.

4.36.2 Group Organisation

Transfer experience was critically affected by the way in which groups were divided. In one college, students were allocated to different groups according to their order of enrolment on the course:

> What happened was something that I'm going to change next year. (...) But come September I enrol fifteen kids into A Group and then the next fifteen kids are enrolled as B group, they're the keen kids. By the end of enrolment, another thirteen or so stragglers come in and form C Group. But then right at the end nine go into D Group. So you've got keen kids in Group A, keen kids in B Group, middling kids in C Group and then (...) iffy kids in D group, who think I've got nothing else to do so I might as well go to college. So what happened then was that group became a really hard group to manage... If we can monitor that and we can juggle them about to have more mixed abilities then I think that it will be better because if you just compare the other groups to D Group, you'd be horrified. (...) There is a big difference but I think it's down to our initial organisation.

There is an admission here that initial organisation of the course was not effective and that manipulation is required to attempt to balance groups more evenly. The changes suggested by staff here were aimed at altering transfer experience in terms of discouraging poor behaviour and by implication increasing successful completion of the course.

4.36.3 Classroom Interaction

The way that students adjusted to staff and peers was recognised in terms of participation in set tasks and interaction with other students within the classroom. Students had outlined how far they participated in lessons when they were interviewed and tutors verified this. When students were observed there was no discrepancy within these accounts. Students tended to confine interaction to those within close proximity to them. There was very little mobility of students around classrooms and generally, movement did not occur unless students were expressly asked to perform certain tasks such as forming groups.

4.36.4   Gender and Isolation

The way that groups were organised had an unbalanced affect on behaviour and interaction. In one instance the gender balance within an Information Technology course was overwhelmingly skewed in favour of males. Of thirty students enrolled on the course only seven were female. However, thirty was too large for one group and so two groups were created. The course leader commented that 'we had to make the decision somewhere' as to how many girls were placed in each group. Five girls were placed in one group and two girls placed in another. The pair of girls were observed during fieldwork. Teaching staff identified them as having very limited social contact with others in the group.

> They elected not to join in the group discussion as to why the answers were the
> right answers and they seemed quite happy to work together in their own little
> world, so I think really we need to work at bringing them more into a group.

The member of staff here considered both students to be pleasant and hard working but reluctant to become involved in interacting with teaching staff and other peers. This was perceived as undermining their subject knowledge.

> I can see that work is being marked down a little bit more now because we're all
> aware that the knowledge isn't there. Really we're doing that as a concerted effort
> to try and jump start them into asking a few more questions, admitting that they
> don't understand something and getting the information from us so that we can
> explain it in a variety of ways so that they will understand.

This member of staff did not attribute this limited contact to the way that the groups had been split. The females in the other group were described as 'quite sociable' and it was implied that they were coping and so it was possible for the two females being observed to cope with this situation also.

> I'm sure they could learn a lot from Carlos and vice versa because they're quite
> studious and Carlos tends to get a little bit uptight. We could do with a big melting
> pot really, give them a good mix.

The member of staff here also felt that many of the skills of the females concerned could serve as an example and contribute to the development of other students. The limited interaction of these two students was verified during observation and when interviewed both students confirmed that their contact with others in the class was limited. They also remarked that they were not unhappy with the situation and that having more females in the group would not necessarily encourage them to interact

more. However, it was also commented that they were not always comfortable with the behaviour of males in the group, regarding some as over-confident and not prepared to listen to their contributions. The decision to have divided the seven females between two groups is not being judged here. However, there was a failure here to anticipate what effect such a division could have and a lack of awareness as to how to prevent or deal with isolation. There was also an assumption that females would find this division unproblematic.

4.36.5   Ethnicity Perceived as a Problem

Where staff noted that there were clear ethnic sub-groupings within the classroom, this was perceived as a negative situation.

> The problem with the Asians is that they tend to form little groups throughout the college across different courses and some get left by the wayside. You see if Ramanjeet and Kam are working, Imran comes in, then it tends to have an effect on them, but I personally think that those two work hard.

Another colleague supported this comment.

> I would say that it is a cultural thing in so far as they will all hang around in the gym area from all different courses and they get into this little group and that's a problem not just that we have with these lads but a problem we have with Asians at the college.

In this context Asian males were considered as a problem in terms of not fulfilling commitment to work and forming negative cliques. In another college, it was African Caribbean male students who were identified as such a problem.

> There are three [cliques] in my group, William, Joseph and Luke [form one of them] and they tend to interact with each other and tend to have very little to do with the other two groups and I don't know why that is. I think it's quite worrying really because those three are already on contracts because of the lack of work and what we consider to be the lack of commitment there and I think they let themselves down. They also could help to foster this perception of ethnic groups and the work ethic within those and it's a shame really because I'm sure [they] have got the capability.

In both examples, the ethnicity of students is implicitly treated as a negative influence. The member of staff responsible for the last quote had mentioned earlier that one of the other cliques 'had no commitment at all,' and were 'wasting their time

and efforts'. This group comprised white males but their ethnicity was not explicitly identified or described as significant at any level.

The students described by the tutor in fieldwork research had poor attendance records and poor work rates. However, this behaviour was equivalent to that of another subgroup that was identified as uninterested and their efforts regarded as superficial. The most palpable distinction between both groups was that of ethnicity rather than behaviour or commitment. Mac an Ghaill (1988) also noted that teachers used the behaviour of individual African Caribbean males to typify whole ethnic groups in much the same way as this member of staff.

In the discussion of friendships, it was acknowledged that relationships tended to be consonant along lines of ethnicity. It was also acknowledged that mutuality was an important function of friendships (Deegan, 1996; Verma, Zec and Skinner, 1994; Clark and Ayers, 1992 and Hallinan and Williams, 1990). Therefore, unions between students were likely to be formed along ethnic lines regardless of any perception of racism. However, ethnicity remained an important dynamic here because definite ethnic groupings were observed and other fieldwork evidence indicated that this was far from coincidental. It should also be emphasised that mutual ethnic friendships were also characteristic of conforming groups. Therefore, Mac an Ghaill's approach needs to be applied carefully (1988). Students showed little awareness of racism or ethnic difference during case study research. Mirza (1992) also noted this during research involving African Caribbean females. However, Mac an Ghaill's explanation of oppositional culture rests on the recognition and explicit rejection of teacher racism. This is a plausible explanation of oppositional behaviour centred on an awareness of racism. But it does not allow an explanation of comparable types of behaviour among contrasting ethnic groups as in this case. Therefore, care should be taken in imposing Mac an Ghaill's model onto an understanding of the behaviour of the students here. Poor behaviour and poor commitment among ethnic minority groups cannot always be defined as a response to ethnicity. Furthermore, ethnic mutuality is recognised as a strong characteristic of friendship but it is not always employed as a vehicle for oppositional

responses. Mac an Ghaill's approach centralises the oppositional nature of ethnic minority expressions. His approach is effective in illuminating the specific area of oppositional behaviour. However, it is less appropriate when explaining similar behaviours of contrasting ethnic groups as was the case with two of the cliques described here.

The tutor responsible for highlighting the differences between subgroups averred that poor behaviour and lack of commitment fed into negative stereotypes concerning African Caribbean males. This tutor centralised ethnicity when describing the behaviour and characteristics of African Caribbean males even though similar behaviour occurred in a predominantly white group. Comparative behaviour of white students was framed in terms that did not include ethnicity. This selective centralisation of ethnicity may itself fuel negative stereotypes. This approach along with that of Mac an Ghaill (1988), tends to overlook the possibility that whilst ethnicity is a clear distinguishing feature between groups, ethnicity it is not always a causal or dominant factor (Gillborn, 1995; Hall, 1992; Gilroy, 1997; Banton, 1998 and Rattansi, 1994). Although these groups were differentiated by ethnicity, their behaviour was very similar.

4.36.6   *Mediating Adjustment through Induction Processes*

Staff were able to outline what formal processes of Induction were available to students in their first year of transfer within their college or on specific courses. Induction was a standard policy across all sites but it was not a standardised practice. Each site had different practices that fell largely into one of three areas; course administration, course awareness or team building. Course Administration as a form of induction dealt largely with registration, distribution of equipment and resources and clarification of college and course regulations. Of all three types this attracted the most negative of comments from students. Course Awareness induction included services such as Taster Courses and a temporary enrolment period. Students were able to attend classes in any subject in order to aid them to make a definite commitment to pursue a particular course. Students who had experienced Taster Courses commented that they were largely convinced of the merits of their chosen

subjects and that these courses did not alter their decisions. It was also recognised by teaching staff that taster courses tended to be used by students to confirm their intentions. They were regarded as most beneficial to those students who were uncertain about course choice.

> Some of them will have gone to tasters in subjects they already thought they were
> going to do anyway, maybe just to sort of confirm their ideas and maybe just to
> feel good. Others used it to help them make up their minds which is what they're
> really for, it's for ones where they've really got serious doubts.

The role of the temporary period of enrolment was justified on the grounds that a small minority of students may be genuinely disappointed about course content despite researching the course literature and attending taster courses.

> There are some genuine disappointments, someone wants to do Geography, they
> think it's wonderful, go to a fortnight's lessons and realise that they don't like this.

There were certainly students at other sites who complained that their chosen course was not as they expected from course literature, interviews and visits. Therefore, this view of the value of the temporary enrolment period was strongly verified.

Team Building strategies of induction were more typical of vocational courses than A Level courses. Students expressed satisfaction with this type of induction more than any other and identified it as helping them to form friendships and relationships with peers. Team building activities were recognised and innovated as part of the induction process by individual members of teaching staff or incorporated into the course structure by departmental agreement. This form of induction was praised most highly by students as a means of mediating interaction and generating relationships between new peers and new staff.

> We went on a day trip to Abbey Hall in our second week, and we got to know each
> other better, but you got to know the tutors as well. We got to know X Tutor better
> and got to know that she was all right, she was friendly. We had a good time.

This attitude was common among students who had experienced a range of team building activities.

4.36.7 Adjusting to College Routines and Practices

Students were asked to identify differences between school and college life. These differences involved contrasting routines and practices than those at school. Many

identified a more informal atmosphere at college and associated this with the greater maturity and responsibility that was now expected. One student noted:

> You're spoken to as if you're more of an adult, when [tutors] speak to you they
> don't just say right, get on with your work, (...) they might say you're here by your
> own choice and if you don't want to work you can leave. (...) You get trusted
> with a bit more responsibility, you can be left for say fifteen minutes, whereas at
> school after five minutes they'd be checking up on you.

The feeling that staff treated students more maturely at college also emerged in the *Changing Times* questionnaire when students were asked to identify school and college differences. On the whole, those students who were interviewed welcomed this change. Martinez and Munday (1998) also noticed that students expressed a similar viewpoint.

Informality of college was also reflected in referring to staff by the use of first names. Many students found this slightly awkward initially but soon became more used to this as Robert noted.

> It seemed a bit odd at first [...] to call them by their first names but it's all right
> now.

This difference was noted by most students but was not problematic for the majority of them.

A further difference that emerged between school and college during interviews and within responses to the *Changing Times* questionnaire, was the way in which students had significant amounts of free time. They also had the responsibility of managing this time themselves. This was handled in a variety of forms as seen from the comments of Aysha, Maxine and Robert. Aysha commented that:

> I'm trying to get used to all of the free periods that I've got and trying to make
> myself work in them a little bit. It's a lot different.

This contrasted to Maxine's approach:

> I tend to stay in college. Last week I had some work to do I went up to the library
> and did about an hour and then I went down to the canteen for the rest of the time.

Robert had a different response to his extended break.

> I play Basketball if there's no lesson; we always do that if we can. (...) There are
> about ten lads that go down and play and have a five-a-side basketball match. On
> Monday I finish at twelve and my next lesson's not until quarter to five so I have a

> four-hour break and that's when we all go down. It gets a bit tiring waiting for
> ages so I go and play basketball.

Students clearly organised their free time differently. However, comments such as Aysha's suggested that this free time was not always organised as responsibly or productively as students felt it could have been. Robert's break of four hours also generated a degree of frustration.

> The course is getting ridiculous. Since we started back after Christmas we've been
> having lessons and we've had to leave half way through because the teacher's
> made a mess up with the room so we end up going home early. My mum and dad
> are getting a bit sick of it because we're not learning. Hopefully they'll sort it out
> but it's been going on for a long time now.

This type of complaint was confined to one vocational course in particular and was clearly generating disappointment. Wardman and Stevens (1998) also express concern that poor administration of courses remains a common complaint. In their research, students studying for vocational qualifications were more likely than A Level students to express dissatisfaction with the way in which courses were administered.

Most staff were conscious that students underwent a period of adjustment to college on a number of levels. That students needed to be allowed time to adjust to teaching staff and to new students was something that all teaching staff stated they anticipated. Most felt that once this had occurred classroom relationships and contributions developed positively as illustrated simply by one member of staff:

> After they began getting used to me and used to each other they became quite
> talkative.

Interaction between students was not expected immediately but this was encouraged on some courses. Individual teaching staff and some courses facilitated this. They operated classroom activities that sought to encourage interaction in the early stages of the course or through organising residential visits for staff and students with the

aim of fostering team building and interaction. Students commented on the effectiveness of these icebreaker or team building exercises where they were practised.

> She puts us so that the whole class worked together. She got us to do different
> group activities and then she got the whole class to do it together. We had these
> little signs on our heads. We had to have a conversation and try and figure out
> what our own sign said from the way people would react. That was a good way of
> getting to know everyone.

Students at the start of term generally welcomed such activities. Teaching staff also regarded day trips and residential courses as successful.

> The biggest thing I noticed when they first came to this college was that nobody
> talked to one another. (...) But when we went to Malvern we split them up and
> made them integrate. (...) It's nice to see that you've got that integration and it's
> working well. I think there'll be a good progression there towards next year.

The effectiveness of this particular residential trip was measured in terms of the increased interaction and cohesiveness of this group. This was valued in terms of creating a more pleasant environment but also in terms of heightening retention of students and progression of students into a second year.

Adjustment to the college environment in general was also expected. One member of teaching staff registered the anxiety of students in the early days of the course.

> Some of them are anxious, in fact more than half of them probably. Some of them
> are better at concealing it than others.

Most students were perceived to have adjusted well although a minority were regarded as a problem. The main points of contention were inappropriate and immature behaviour in the classroom. A member of staff at Brooks Sixth form College illustrated this point:

> His essays are good, he writes well, he's intelligent ... but he doesn't know how to
> behave ... I'm waiting for him to grow up and it may take a little time. ...I think
> he'll come good though, I've seen it so many times. They seem to want a long rest
> after the efforts of GCSE.

During observations, it was also noticed that this student was off-task and distracted on a number of occasions. He sat with two or three other males who had a tendency to chatter and joke between themselves. This was evidently noticed by teaching staff

and perceived as a temporary phase. A member of staff at Greenway College made very similar observations regarding inappropriate behaviour.

> During Induction Week I sat down and spoke with them. (...) I know another colleague split them up because they were being disruptive and distracting other students. (...) But he's fine in class now apart from his vocal outbursts that you just put down to classroom banter.

Staff were expectant that inappropriate behaviour would cease as students adjusted to the college environment.

4.36.8   Reflexive Considerations of Experience

As time progressed, many students began to consolidate or reconsider their future trajectories. Those students who had arrived at college with hopes of undertaking a specific occupation or educational pathway were the most stable and generally cemented these hopes. This first year proved to be a very formative period, reinforcing the commitment to courses for some and undermining that commitment for others. As demonstrated earlier, Maxine for example had very definite ideas at the start of term about her future and had set about shaping this early on. At school she had arranged her own visits to local colleges and made measured assessments regarding her own aims and what the college offered in terms of, college reputation, course outline and departmental facilities. When she was interviewed later on, half way through the course, her ideas were revised and consolidated.

> I still want to go mobile but I think that I'm probably not going to afford to go mobile at first because I haven't even got a car. I think at first I need to get a job, I don't mind really whether it's in the beauty industry or not as long as I get some money to get a car and some equipment.

Even those students such as Maxine who had arrived with distinct aims engaged in re-assessments of the situation.

Although those students who had arrived at college with less certain aims were more likely to waiver in terms of what their next step would be, they engaged in assessments of the situation as the college year developed.

> I like it but I'm not really liking it as much as I thought I would. I think it's just that A Levels are really difficult I think and I'm not sure ... at the moment. I

> wonder if I'm just going to have to keep working at it, but I'm not sure whether
>
> this is the right thing that I want to do. But I think I'll give it a bit longer and I'll
>
> see what happens.

Carl's unease regarding A Levels did not go unnoticed by staff. One member of staff articulated concerns for the progress that he was making, but was satisfied that he was surviving.

A necessary period of adjustment for students was also recognised in terms of the progression from GCSE to differing course demands of A Level or GNVQ. This was a point expressed by a number of students who regarded it as a difficult period.

> A Levels I've found really difficult, I have to really work hard. You can't not
>
> concentrate in the lesson. At GCSE I just coasted but A Levels are a different ball
>
> game.

The new level of difficulty at A Level compared to GCSE is perceived powerfully here. GNVQ students also noted increased difficulty with course content. Adjusting to the workload of vocational courses was also commented upon regularly.

> It's difficult because when you get one assignment you find you get another one on
>
> top of it.

This comment was typical of concerns related to workload. Wardman and Stevens (1998) also found that complaints regarding workload were common with first year students particularly GNVQ students. The nature and volume of coursework was also noted by teaching staff as a necessary adjustment for students.

> I think they're getting better now because coming from GCSEs to GNVQ, I think
>
> the two courses put a lot of different demands on people and GCSEs are used to a
>
> lot of chalk and talk and you're told this is how you do it. With GNVQs it's more
>
> a case of going and finding it out yourself. There's a lot of investigative work and
>
> I think a lot of people struggle with that initially. Maybe that's why you get a huge
>
> drop-out between September and December.

This member of staff appreciated differing course demands and expected students to notice this difference and adjust to it more effectively as the course progressed. This difficult transition was also identified in A Level courses. The transition from GCSE to GNVQ was also regarded as a reason for student dropout in the early stages of the year.

Where students reported dissatisfaction with college, they were less keen to pursue courses for a second year. In these situations students tended to express a preference for paid employment or training courses based at work rather than a change of college or course. Martinez and Munday (1998) and Wardman and Stevens (1998) also noted this trend. Both studies explored switching within the first year of college. Robert was asked why he had changed his mind about being a sports' coach as he had originally intended at the start of the year.

> Because most of my friends are in the army and they say how much better it is than anything that I've been thinking of doing. I'd still like to be a physical instructor but in the army. It seems good to get my training that way rather than going about it the long way.

Members of staff recognised the trend that some students were leaving courses in favour of paid employment or training. One member of staff expressed concern that students who attended college on the basis of restricted alternative options in employment were also those who were vulnerable to poor retention. These students were identified as being more likely to leave college if immediate job opportunities arose.

> Several have left but it's all been employment driven. I think they're at the stage where they've probably had enough of school, they're at a loose end; they don't know what to do. (...) That's the sort of perception that many of them come with, but at the end of the day they do need money in their pockets to be able to go out with their friends. The majority of people who have left have left the course purely and simply in favour of full-time employment. (...) It's been whatever job came up and serviced their financial needs.

Vulnerability to withdrawal by unfocused students is illustrated in this quote. Those students with no strong commitment to college appeared to be more likely to leave education in favour of employment. Research by Martinez and Munday (1998) and Wardman and Stevens (1998) also recognise this trend. However, Martinez and Munday argue that although dropout tends to result in employment, this is not primarily driven by financial need. They report that dissatisfaction with college experience fuels poor retention rather that financial necessities.

4.37   *Friendships and effects on satisfaction*

The amount of friends students made at college, as well as the gender and ethnicity of friends were important indicators of how students felt about their experience. Students reported feeling uneasy about lack of friendships and reported feelings of loneliness in the early weeks of the term. Carl clearly articulated this position.

> To be honest, when I first came, I didn't like it at all. No, I thought I'm going back
> to my school, I thought no way. I got here and I thought I'd know someone. I
> dreaded break time because I thought I'm just going to be standing on my own, but
> luckily I saw a lad from English. You make eye contact don't you and I found out
> that he was in the same situation as me. (...) We just became friends from then on
> (...) but it got better after about three or four days.

For the vast majority of students interviewed feelings of isolation were alleviated quickly as familiarity was gained with other students. Friendships were then forged in and out of lessons. Most students commented that they had two sets of friends, those at college and those who lived within the local area. For all students, friendships in and out of college were characterised by same ethnicity and same gender formations. Students were drawn to comment on the ethnicity (or gender) of friends when asked during interviews but in general none commented on this otherwise. Of all the students interviewed only one commented on ethnicity without being asked. Melanie had strong opinions on the importance of ethnicity within college contexts.

> - On a social level, which class do you prefer to be in?
> - Sociology, it's just easier to speak and voice your opinion in that lesson, no-one's
> staring at you and everyone just wants to get their opinions across in the
> debate.
> - Do you feel as though you stand out in other lessons?
> - In Science I'm the only black person.
> - Do other people, or do you see that as a difference?
> - It's a major difference, we both see it as a difference.
> - Is it a difference that bothers you?
> - Sometimes, yes. I just feel that they could at least put another black person in the
> class or something.

Within this college limited opportunities existed to make friends from the same ethnic group. This contributed to the sense of dissatisfaction that was so strongly articulated by Melanie. This situation and its consequences were also reinforced in

questionnaire responses involving students at the end of the first year of college. In the *Changing Times* survey students' sense of dissatisfaction was significantly higher when opportunities for forming friendships were limited. Not only does this appear to affect dissatisfaction but in extreme cases as demonstrated by Melanie, learning opportunities may also be undermined as the following quote demonstrates.

> I don't know anyone's name in Science. [...] I sit by myself [...] everyone sits in tables of four and it's divided up so that there's enough for everyone to have four in a group which just leaves me out [...] There was an experiment that's set up for two people and basically once you divide into two people that just leaves me by myself, so I joined into a three and I didn't get assessed because I was in a three and not a two [...] for that experiment there wasn't enough work for three people so I really did the fetching and carrying whereas they did the weighing and measuring, so in the end they got marked and I didn't.

Melanie felt isolated due to the physical isolation of sitting alone, coupled with a sense of ethnic difference between herself and her peers. From her earlier comments it was clear that she was not satisfied with the social context of this lesson. Not only did this have implications for social development within the classroom, but it also undermined learning opportunities for Melanie. Seated alone as she was did not encourage any social interaction or discussion of lesson content.

I would argue that Melanie's approach is a single configuration of the importance of ethnic identity, there are many others. However, what it serves to demonstrate in an extreme sense is that the learning environment is also an important social environment. Melanie was physically isolated and felt ill at ease; this in turn fed into the isolation that she felt regarding her own ethnicity. Her perception of her ethnicity was already predefined as a separator and a hostile marker. Consequently, dissatisfaction emerged within the context of the classroom where broader social contact was neither facilitated nor encouraged. Melanie's perceptions were not positively challenged through broader contact. Instead, her discomfort and exclusion fuelled her perceptions. The opportunity to benefit from subject development through participation and discussion with peers was also lost. Limited opportunities for same ethnicity friendships will inevitably occur in some colleges and in some classrooms but I would argue that similar feelings of isolation equivalent to Melanie's are not inevitable if wider contact can be established. Thomas was also

from a minority ethnic background but enjoyed broad contact with peers in various lessons:

> People just tend to mix and match and chat with whomever, wherever they're
> sitting in each lesson [...] I think I can work with anybody, it just depends on
> conflicting attitudes and things like that. I think I'm easy going, I think I fit in with
> other people.

It is evident that Thomas did not perceive his ethnicity as a difficult difference. Also, the contact between students in this classroom also appeared wider than that described in Melanie's science lesson. In Thomas's lesson, students were encouraged to interact with other students and to form flexible groups whereas contact within science was much more restricted. There are further contributory factors that account for the contrasting responses of Thomas and Melanie. The basic matter of physical proximity was influential. Thomas sensed no feelings of isolation based on physical separation as Melanie did. Confidence and enjoyment within the subject area were also important in contributing to Thomas's sense of satisfaction. Crucially, although Thomas was the only student from a minority ethnic group, he enjoyed broad contact with other students within all of his subject groups. He welcomed discussion and co-operation with peers and perceived any differences between others as based on personality rather than ethnicity.

Dissatisfaction with varied aspects of college life had implications for the issue of student retention. Where students were dissatisfied with college experience, this was reflected in dropout at a subject level, switching course or leaving college altogether. For example, Carl had begun the course warily and had grown increasingly dissatisfied with the content of courses and with the progress that he was making. Carl did not continue into a second year at college. He completed his GCSEs and left college in the summer, electing not to continue to pursue A Levels. How well students coped with subject demands was a fundamental determinant of whether commitment to college was cemented or not. Those students who coped adequately with course content and workload were more likely to want to return to college for a second year or more. Those students who were not coping as well as they expected were less likely to solidify their commitment to college. Where students lost interest in a course, they reported that they would prefer to work rather than change course or

college. Friendship formation was an important factor in Melanie's dissatisfaction with science and further exemplified the negative effect of dissatisfaction. When her case was re-visited through follow-up questionnaires I discovered that she had continued to pursue only two out of three A Level courses and had dropped her A Level science subject. She had regarded science as unsuitable and discontinued this course.

4.38   Adjustment and Implications for Retention

Staff were able to provide their own explanations and highlight implications for student retention within the first year. Particular reasons for college attendance were identified and assessed in terms of whether these reasons encouraged or discouraged student retention in general. Worries were also expressed with regard to individual students.

Those students who excelled at college were not the only group regarded as likely to return for a second year, average students were also perceived as likely to return if they were consistent in terms of attendance and work level. Two tutors commented of the same pupil that,

-I don't think he's any superstar but he's there and he's consistent.

-I think he's the type of lad that will probably succeed and probably come back.

A member of staff at another site expressed a similar view.

The ones who have got the most sticking power seem to be the less confident ones because they haven't got the confidence to give in to it. Whereas somebody like Chlöe has got lots of confidence anyway and would go off and think, oh well this isn't for me I'll do something else.

Retention for students in the middle ground was regarded as fairly stable. Confident students were regarded as vulnerable to lack of retention in some ways as articulated by the tutor in the quote above. Weaker students and those with poor attendance records were also identified as vulnerable to poor retention.

Carl is the one who I've had slight doubts about ... (he) has only got three GCSE passes ... he's starting from a very weak base.

This was just one of several reasons why concern was expressed for this particular student.

> He's come from a 14-18 school and he had the option of staying on at the sixth
> form, except that I understand now that he's doing PE and they probably don't
> offer PE at A Level. [...] I've always worried about people who come from those
> schools because there is this sense that they might choose to go back there after a
> few weeks here ... and I suppose this was linked to a sense that I had in the
> classroom that he wasn't completely at home with A Level.

Concern with the actual subject combination taken by this student was also a point of concern.

> Doing PE is a strange thing it doesn't go with the other subject at all in my view.

The concerns of this tutor were borne out, as Carl left the college at the end of year one. He completed the GCSEs that he commenced in September but did not wish to continue with any of his A Levels. Instead, he embarked on a training contract at a hair salon.

Some members of staff also related the issue of ethnicity to retention.

> With their culture I think they tend to come to college because their parents tell
> them to and want them to come to college so his heart is not in it and also of course
> he's not attending properly. He's definitely being left by the wayside.

Here, Asian students were being perceived as vulnerable to withdrawal from courses where it is not a decision that they have made for themselves and are not entirely content with. The only two students to state that college enrolment was a parental decision and one that they were unhappy with were of Asian origin. There may be a degree of parental pressure within choices but the overwhelming majority of students from all ethnic groups were in accord with parents in terms of destination and course choices. There is some evidence to suggest that parents from ethnic minority groups are more supportive of further education. Research by Penn and Scattergood (1992) and Siann and Knox (1992; 1990) explored the context of decisions for post-sixteen choices. Both found that Asian parents tended to favour social mobility and perceived education as crucial to this aim. Siann and Knox (1992), Mirza (1992) and Basit (1998, 1997) also comment on the higher aspirations of females from ethnic minority groups who also tend to see education as a means to social mobility. Therefore, although parents of students from ethnic minority backgrounds also tend to favour post sixteen education this is not necessarily a point of conflict. Hence, it

would be inappropriate and misleading to characterise Asian parents as consistently exerting pressure on students to continue in education.

4.38.1   Sources of Support

Students were proactive when researching opportunities prior to the commencement of the college course and during the course they undertook evaluations of their experience.   Generally, students claimed that they were central in determining choices regarding what college to attend and what course to take. Parents were the overwhelming source of additional support concerning decision-making regarding transfer and regarding the distant future.   Siblings and college staff were also identified but to a lesser degree. Specialist careers advice from centres such as the Army and Navy Careers' or practitioners invited to careers events were also influential for a minority of students.

4.38.2   Role of Parents

Students discussed their decisions with parents who tended to sanction these choices. Most parents were not worried about what site students attended, but were more concerned with what course students undertook. There were few examples of conflict arising between student and parental preferences. This was also apparent in evidence gained from the *After Year 11* survey where the overwhelming majority of parents were found to approve of student destinations after Year 11.   However, disagreement between students and parents was not entirely absent from decisions concerning destinations. Parental advice concerning course was ignored in one case. However, conflict over destination and course concluded with the imposition of parental choice in a small number of cases. Parents insisted on choice of college and course in three cases. This was unusual rather than typical. Research from the *After Year 11* survey highlighted a high level of accord between student destinations and parental approval of choices.   Research by Foskett and Hesketh (1996) also concurred with this finding. Research by Siann and Knox (1992) and Basit (1997) also showed that in specific relation to students from Asian backgrounds there tended to be little disagreement regarding destinations after compulsory schooling. However, where parents imposed their choice, this tended to increase student

expressions of dissatisfaction. In the first round of interviews, Mina articulated that her parents had insisted on her enrolling at college:

> My mum just said, "You have to go to college". My mum and dad say you have to
> go to college, it's good to have an education but I don't think so. My careers'
> advisor was saying that training's good and that I should go for training.

In all interviews Mina articulated dissatisfaction with her course and expressed uncertainty that it had been the right choice for her. She constantly expressed a preference for paid training or employment.

Parents had a distinct role in providing advice concerning transfer from school to college and the future of students. However, where students required advice regarding course demands, pastoral tutors and subject staff were consulted. This also related to the findings in the *Changing Times* survey that parents on the whole had a limited idea of the progress that their children were making once at college. Most students reported that they only informed parents of progress if the news was positive.

> I just tend to tell [my dad] the good things, I don't tend to bother him with all the
> hard stuff, I'd just try and cope with it

Those students who were making the least progress reported the lowest levels of parental awareness. However, the *Changing Times* survey did not show any significant differences in terms of parental awareness and student coping levels.

4.38.3   Staff Awareness of Student Intentions

Staff were more likely to be aware of intentions of students if they were also pastoral tutors for these students.

> At this point I don't know very much at all. I know about Mark because he's in my
> tutor group and it's my job to know things like that. ... So I'm fully apprised of his
> intentions...

Other members of staff who were not aware of student intentions at this stage felt that it would be something that they intended to, or would like to explore later on in the course.

> What I'm going to do with everyone towards the end of the course is to actually
> arrange some careers guidance for them. Get them to look at where they see

> themselves in maybe five years time and I think that's the crunch, if they can
> actually look that far ahead and see the most appropriate route to get there.

This approach was supported by other teaching staff:

> I'd like to sit them down and ask why have you come and what have you got out of
> it and where do you want to go.

Approximately half of the pupils in the *After Year 11* survey perceived that teachers were aware of their intentions. The level of staff awareness could not be gauged as fully through the limited amount of interviews with students and staff. However, all staff expressed an interest in exploring student intentions and this was incorporated into all tutor programmes

4.39 Identity among first year college students

4.40 Ethnicity and friendship formation

Students were questioned about the importance of ethnicity during interviews and within the *Changing Times* survey. The friendships of students from all ethnic groups were characterised by same ethnicity groupings regardless of context. However, findings indicated that for most students ethnicity was a more important issue within social contexts inside and outside of college. Students adopted a flexible approach to whom they associated with during lesson time and when socialising within college. Socialising outside of college proved to be the most sensitive area of all. Most students interviewed reported having separate friends outside of college and these were regarded as true friends as Carl explained.

> I have different sets of friends because I've not known any of my new friends at
> this college for more than four weeks, so you don't really know what they're like.
> They're good mates but out of school you've got your friends who you've known
> for five, six years so that's who you stay with generally out of school. As years go
> on obviously we'll start more mixing, going out for a drink and that sort of thing.

Friends outside of college tended to live in close proximity to students. They also tended to be those who had shared an enduring friendship spanning secondary and in some cases primary education. Where students did not live near to such friends, contact with college friends tended to continue during evenings and at weekends. The implications of this are manifold. Firstly, it is well documented that adult and childhood friendships are generally based on mutual characteristics such as ethnicity,

gender, residential proximity and social class (Deegan, 1996; Verma, Zec and Skinner, 1994; Clark and Ayers, 1992 and Hallinan and Williams, 1990). Therefore, where students have an open choice of friendship formation rather than a pragmatic one, it can be confidently assumed that friendship formation will be along mutual lines. When students were asked about friends outside of college, these fell into the expected pattern, they were largely from the same ethnic group. These friends were consistently regarded as more important than college friends. It was therefore concluded that a more pragmatic approach to social relationships was assumed at college. Where contact with college friends continued outside of college hours, this also fitted the pattern of mutual friendships. However, only one student stated that mutuality was an overt consideration. All others stated that it was something that had happened unconsciously. The friendship between Diane and Yvette makes this point clearer.

> - Do you think that the fact that you are both black had anything to do with your friendship?
> - It might have, I don't know. I'll be friends with anyone who's nice.

Both were African Caribbean and were the only two African Caribbean students in their class. However, when asked whether their strong friendship had anything to do with ethnicity they were not certain as shown in the quote above. Furthermore, Diane stated that they had more in common with one another than anyone else in the class in terms of the same interests, perspectives on life and musical tastes. Mutuality was an essential feature of friendship formation, and I would argue that ethnicity played a role in framing perceptions of common interests and background. Students often stated that they were friends with those who they had something in common with, people who they liked regardless of colour. However, perceived barriers to culturally diverse relationships were also presented when students were questioned. Isobel who was a white student, felt that some Asian students within her class excluded others who were not Asian. She described her perceptions of a number of Asian students in the class on the first day of term.

> As soon as we came in there was a Chinese lad and he seemed a bit funny, he went straight off and sat with the Asian lads ... everyone else went over and sat in their little groups because they were all Asian. At first I wasn't very happy about that but I thought if you want to be like that then fair enough. But now it doesn't really bother me.

Not only were barriers perceived here and various assumptions being made regarding sub-groups, what was also being indicated was that assessments of mutuality included ethnicity as a factor.

Melanie was the only student to state that ethnicity was a conscious factor in her friendships. She associated with students across a range of ethnic minority groups whilst at college but did not consider these students to be 'real' friends.

> - I prefer it that way because I can be the true me around my friends outside this
>   college.
> - Are your friends outside of college mainly black, white, Asian?
> - Oh they're all black! They're all black.

Further comments highlighted that this was a conscious decision and Melanie rejected the idea of socialising with other ethnic groups outside of college. Melanie was strongly opposed to teacher racism and racism among her peers. However, she was an extremely isolated figure and did not engage in collective forms of oppositional behaviour as described by Mac an Ghaill (1996). She had an extremely strong commitment to education and regarded this as a means of undermining stereotypes and as a means of resisting the situation common to her friends of unemployment and single parenthood.

> - I refuse to become another statistic, I refuse. I want to prove everybody wrong.
> - What is it that you want to prove?
> - I just want to show all my friends from where I come from that we don't have to
>   hang around like all of those girls. I want to get out of there so my friends can look
>   around and think well she's done it. If it takes me to show people that they can do
>   it, then I'll do it.
> - What sort of situation are your friends in?
> - They're not doing anything. (...) I've known them since I was in nursery. It just
>   makes you feel sick. Most of them are mums to tell you the truth, just pushing
>   around their babies and living with their parents. I'm not saying that's wrong
>   because my mum's been there and done that but I'm just saying they could all
>   have done a lot better and I'm not going to do it.
> - Why do you think that they are like that?
> - They're all conforming to stereotypes really, (...) none of them are individually
>   strong enough to stand up. (...) I'm not like that.
> - You feel that you're different?
> - Damn right I am.

Melanie was by far the most conscious of all students of the social positioning of minority groups but her response was to seemingly embrace academic values. This is far removed from Mac an Ghaill's portrait of open resistance and defiance of school rules as a response to racism. However, Mirza (1997) perceives such a response as Melanie's as tantamount to revolutionary activity as this form of challenge has the potential to reshape social positioning. Mirza (1997) recognises the disadvantaged positioning of minority groups and argues that educational success of ethnic minority women is against the odds. She argues that such success defies strong odds and therefore should be acknowledged as a significant achievement. Melanie's desire to escape poor social positioning is one that Mirza (1992; 1997) has noted to be common among African Caribbean females. Anyon (1983) and Fuller (1982) have also described similar attitudes. Furthermore, Rassool (1999) noted that students in her study regarded education as a means of gaining social mobility as well as a weapon with which to challenge poor stereotypes. These accounts are far removed from those such as Mac an Ghaill's (1988) that tend to concentrate on more vivid responses involving challenges to school rules and asserting speech and dress codes that are regarded as exclusive to particular ethnic groups. However, such differences in response demonstrate flexibility rather than expressions of ethnicity that can be regarded as any more or less authentic.

For the majority of students, even though identification with own ethnic group was being played out in the form of friendship formation, this was not expressed as an overt occurrence. However, that is not to say that ethnicity was unimportant. Even though mutual friendship formation was not being recognised as an overt practice, indicators from interviews and questionnaire responses suggested that ethnicity was influential in terms of friendship formation and in terms of how satisfied students were with social life at college and overall satisfaction with the experience of college life. Although ethnicity was rarely recognised by students as an important factor of friendship formation this should not discount its role in this process. There were factors other than ethnicity that were also important to friendship formation such as proximity, as individuals were likely to socialise with those who they lived near to, which often meant mutual social and economic status. However, even here ethnicity

was often a by-product of this as ethnic minority groups tended to be clustered in particular residential areas (Leicester City Council, 1996, and *Office for National Statistics*, 1996). This resulted in limited opportunities for all groups to form culturally diverse friendships and so reinforced mutual ethnicity friendship formation.

Evidence from the *After Year 11* survey, the *Changing Times* survey and interview data, suggested that ethnicity was not an overt issue for the overwhelming number of students. However, the mutual nature of friendships observed in colleges, reported by students and demonstrated in the *Changing Times* survey, indicated that ethnicity was treated as an indicator of mutuality and was a partial reflection of ethnic identity for students. It is clearly a factor that is important to students, which in extreme cases generated a sense of isolation as in the case of Melanie that has already been illustrated. Deegan (1996) recognises that ethnicity is often an important factor in friendship formation. His research relates to the context of friendships in primary and secondary classrooms but applies equally well to those in late adolescence. He writes:

> Children negotiate their friendships against backcloths of unique and contingent 'mixes' of contextual dissonances related to race, ethnicity, gender, class, community, disability and an array of continually changing life-situational socio-cultural factors (1998: 6).

Deegan (1996) acknowledges the importance of ethnicity in friendship formation here and he also recognises the fluidity involved in the process of friendship development as it is contingent upon changing personal, social and cultural factors. Deegan (1996) also maintains that all positive friendships can promote learning regardless of diversity or consonance. I would argue that fieldwork evidence relating to the experiences of Thomas and his diverse friendships also lends weight to such an approach. Other students from minority groups such as Yvette and Dianne shared consonant friendships. This was positive socially and also facilitated exchange of subject information. However, Melanie's experience in a context of isolation severely undermined learning opportunities.

4.41 Ethnicity and self-esteem

The intention within this phase of fieldwork was to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and ethnicity to see if any constant patterns emerged and whether any trends related to differential experience. Research concerning the relationship between ethnic identity and self-esteem is ambiguous with ethnic minority students exhibiting low self-esteem in some trials and above average self-esteem in others. For example, Halpin, Halpin and Whiddan (1981) concluded that self-esteem was higher among white students than minority students. This was reinforced by findings from Dukes and Martinez (1994). However, the comprehensive review of research by Wylie et al (1979) illustrated that there were no consistent trends in relation to ethnic group membership and levels of self-esteem. Hirsh and Rapkin (1987) also supported this position. Later research by Bekhuis (1994) and Tashakkori and Thomson (1991) supported the view that self-esteem among African American students tended to be higher than that of other ethnic groups. Results for college students involved in case study research suggest that ethnicity did not consistently contribute to low self-esteem.

The Rosenberg self-esteem measure was used to test 23 out of the 27 college students involved in interviews and observations. Results of the self-esteem measure are reproduced in the graph below with *lower* scores indicating *positive* self-esteem and *higher* scores indicating *negative* self-esteem.

Figure 7   Responses to self-esteem and locus of control measures

Students in first year of post-compulsory education
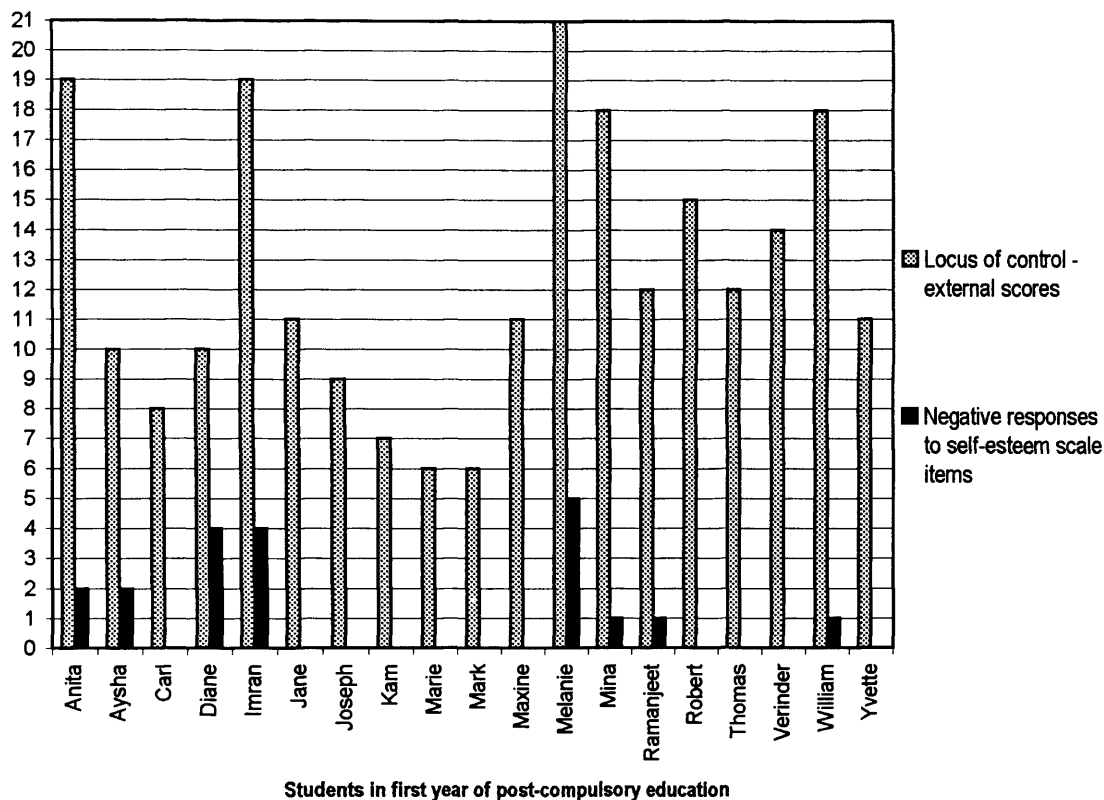
The results of the Rosenberg self-esteem measure showed no overall patterns in terms of students who were vulnerable to low self-esteem on the basis of ethnicity or gender. The contrasting results of African Caribbean males and females emphasised that the relationship between ethnicity and self-esteem was a complex and ambiguous one. It was evident that the overwhelming majority of all students had positive to moderate self-esteem (scores between 1 and 4). Only two students (Diane and Melanie) could be regarded as having low self-esteem, both scoring 8 out of 10, respectively. Both students were female and both were African Caribbean. In terms of educational outcome, they are not a particularly low status group (Gillborn and Gipps, 1996; Mirza, 1992 and Drew 1995). Melanie and Diane were very different in terms of academic ability. At the time when the test was conducted, Melanie was studying for three A Levels and Diane was undertaking a GNVQ Level II course. Both students were interviewed on two occasions. Melanie was not performing well in terms of the academic demands of the course, was achieving lower grades than her high flying brothers who had attended the same college, felt socially isolated, had a keen awareness of ethnic disadvantage but was determined to achieve good results.

Diane had not passed any GCSEs at school, had a poor attendance record at college and was dissatisfied with her vocational placement that occupied two out of five days of the course. She was also behind with course work assignments. These two students were the least satisfied with college out of all the students tested with the Rosenberg measure. Melanie also had very limited contact with peers within college. In the case of Melanie ethnic identity was articulated as an important difference as noted earlier in the discussion regarding satisfaction and friendship formation. She regarded herself as intrinsically different to others on the basic level of colour and more complex level of culture. This was accompanied with an assumption that white and Asian students held stereotypical views of black students and regarded her as inferior. Low self-esteem is often associated with the perception that others hold the individual in low regard (Rosenberg, 1979). This was demonstrated in results involving Year 11 students during Phase One of research. It is likely that Melanie's belief that others regarded her as inferior on the basis of her ethnicity also contributed to her low self-esteem. Therefore, she felt isolated because of her own perceptions of an important difference and her assumptions that others perceived a negative difference also. Her social relationships were very exclusive, with only two black students regarded as friends and a position that held that white or Asian students could not be regarded as such. Melanie would co-operate with students regardless of colour in the course of college lessons but would prefer to work with black students. As there were no black students in two out of three of her courses, she expressed a feeling of isolation for much of the time. I would argue that the isolating effect of Melanie's ethnic identity was an additional and very strong factor that contributed to her low self-esteem. Diane's dissatisfaction, lack of interest, poor academic record and failure to keep up with course work were likely to have contributed to her low level of self-esteem.

The three African Caribbean males involved in the self-esteem tests were among those students showing the highest levels of self-esteem. One out of these three males was extremely satisfied with his A Level course; the remaining two were not as enthusiastic about their courses. Despite this, all three were confident contributors to whole class questions and group activities. All three students were also enjoying

average to above average performance on their courses. All three males here were also confident in terms of their social engagement with others. Where ethnic difference was discussed during interviews, it was not regarded as a barrier to social interaction. Hence, social isolation was not an issue to any of the African Caribbean males here. All three were confident in terms of their individual social status and to varying degrees, confident in terms of their ability to cope with course demands.

In terms of national academic outcomes, African Caribbean males are often amongst the least successful (Gillborn and Gipps, 1996). Authors such as Bekhuis (1994) and Tashakkori and Thompson (1991) have challenged the assumption that low social status always encourages low self-esteem. Both studies found that African American students tended to have higher levels of self-esteem than other groups. Tashakkori and Thompson (1991) also found that gender and ethnicity were inclined to intersect. African American females had far higher self-esteem scores than white females whereas there was little difference between the scores of African American males and white males. Various authors have advanced arguments in an attempt to explain why there is no simple equation between low self-esteem and poor status. Crocker and Major (1989) are among commentators who argue that self-esteem among minority groups is effectively defended. For members of minority groups, social rejection and low social status are attributed to ethnic group membership. Therefore, members from minority or disadvantaged groups do not internalise rejection as they regard social status as the source of antipathy rather than personal failings. Prager et al (1986) also argue that social relationships are characterised by mutual ethnic groupings. They argue that within school, minority students benefit from consonance within their social groups where high self-esteem is fostered. Furthermore, there is also a strong case for rejecting the view that low social status perceived by dominant groups is also shared by members of minority or disadvantaged groups. Results from research conducted by Rickman (1983) demonstrate this point. African American students showed awareness of various stereotypes associated with African Americans. However, African Americans rejected these stereotypes. Each ethnic group involved in the research presented their own ethnic group as the most favourable. African American students were no

exception, showing greater preferences for, and advancing more favourable impressions of their own group. Within fieldwork, this point was also demonstrated by the attitudes of all three African Caribbean males who did not consider themselves inferior on the basis of ethnicity or other factors; on the contrary, they enjoyed contributing fully to classroom activities. Conversely, low academic performance and dissatisfaction with course appeared to be inter-related factors in contributing to the low self-esteem of Melanie and Diane. The perception of ethnic identity as exclusive in nature seemed to further compound these effects for Melanie. However, where students were confident about their individual status self-esteem was enhanced regardless of ethnic status. Furthermore, no ethnic group appeared consistently in the upper or lower levels of the self-esteem results. This indicated that self-esteem was a multi-faceted feature and needed to be considered in relation to individual context and circumstance and not ethnicity alone. This reinforced findings from the *After Year 11* survey, where self-esteem and ethnicity emerged as unrelated factors. Evidence from that survey indicated that significant differences were related to gender rather than ethnic group.

4.42   Ethnicity and locus of control

Locus of control has been linked in theoretical writings to social adjustment as well as motivation, thus making it an important area within education. Phares (1976) characterised those with external locus of control as having less social confidence, experiencing greater anxiety in social situations and in constant need of affirmation of their social conduct. Others such as Lefcourt (1976) and Traub (1982) characterised those with internal locus of control as taking greater participation in social activity, being more confident in social situations and were psychologically well balanced.

Overall, first year college students involved in case study research obtained positive results to self-esteem and locus of control measures (See Figure 7). 13 points was the average score among this group of students in terms of responding to items in an external manner. Scores for 12 out of 19 students indicated that they had internal expectancies. These students all responded to less than 13 items out of forty in an

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external direction. The remaining 7 out of 19 students indicated external expectancies. There were no outstanding gender differences within the results. Males and females had similar proportions within the internal and external expectancy ranges. The consideration of ethnic differences bore contrasting results. Melanie proved to be the most extreme case. She responded in an external direction in a total of 21 instances out of 40. However, this was not characteristic of African Caribbean females within this small sample. Also, Asian students emerged as slightly more likely to be represented within the external expectancy range than other ethnic groups. Hui (1982) and Dyal (1984) argue that in general, socially deprived groups tend to have external locus of control compared to other groups. When ethnic groups in particular are considered, minority groups tend to have external locus of control compared to the white population. Earlier theorisation by Phares (1976) suggested a similar situation. Wade (1996) also argued that ethnic minority students and female students developed external expectancies that become consolidated in late adolescence. Wade (1996) suggests that this is due to an increasing awareness of the differential opportunities available. However, students within fieldwork research between the ages of 16 and 17 did not fully conform to Wade's expectations. Melanie emerged from fieldwork research as the only African Caribbean student with external expectancies. However, research from fieldwork did not display any definite patterns in terms of the relationship between ethnicity and locus of control. As mentioned earlier, although Melanie represented the most extreme case of external locus of control, this was not characteristic of other African Caribbean students. Also, although more Asian students than other groups were found to have external locus of control, this was not a dominant characteristic of Asian students. Overall, students from all groups tended to have internal locus of control. Furthermore, African Caribbean students and mixed race students tended to demonstrate internal locus of control more so than other ethnic groups. Assumptions concerning the tendency of particular ethnic groups should not be accepted without question even though such assumptions may be supported by erudite argument. A number of configurations have emerged from the small number of results within this section of fieldwork that challenge the tendencies suggested by Phares (1976), Hui (1982) and Dyal (1984). Even where general assumptions are verified by research,

interpretation of results still needs to be questioned. This is clearly illustrated in the work of Sastry and Ross (1998). As with findings from fieldwork research conducted for this thesis, Sastry and Ross (1998) also noted that Asian students tended to be more likely to demonstrate external expectancies than other groups. According to classical exponents such as Rotter (1966), this often results in poor social adjustment and undermines personal motivation. However, Sastry and Ross (1998) argued that Asian students tend to have more collectivist responses to family and community life and this accounts for the tendency towards external locus of control. This observation has also been noticed by educational researchers who when exploring student choices discovered that collectivist responses were an established element within Asian family and community structures (Siann and Knox, 1990 and Basit, 1997). Sastry and Ross (1998) argue that external locus of control does not tend to lead to psychological ill health among Asian students or adults who share this approach. Therefore, it should not be assumed that the tendency towards external expectancies is a problematic situation for all ethnic groups. Furthermore, Lao (1990) and Forward and Williams (1970) found that where minorities held external expectancies such as blaming systemic factors for failure, this related positively to social activism and militancy. Melanie's case could be considered within this context. Her recognition of systemic limitations led to challenging ideas and attitudes and may also have contributed to her sense of external control. Consequently, it should not be assumed that external expectancy is always an antecedent of anxiety and poor adjustment; it appears that external expectancies are adaptive. However, the overall conclusion of fieldwork research reinforced the conclusions of Graham (1994) who found that there were no clear differences across ethnic groups in terms of attribution. All students tended to attribute success to positive effort and ability and failure to lack of effort.

4.43 Ethnicity, self-esteem and locus of control

Three students appeared to have external expectancies as well as low self-esteem. One was Melanie who was discussed at length earlier on with regard to low self-esteem. Melanie's score was the most extreme and pointed towards an external locus of control; a sense that she was not in command of present or future opportunities.

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The normative comparison for this group was 13 external responses out of 19. Melanie had also responded negatively to 5 out of 6 scale item self-esteem scores, signifying poor self-esteem. This indicated lower self-esteem than most of her peers who responded negatively to only one scale item on average. However, Melanie expressed determination in attempting to achieve academic success. However, she recognised that her self-esteem was low and was dissatisfied with her degree of success. She also recognised the existence of stereotyping and racism and felt that this asserted pressure on the activities and achievements of those from African Caribbean backgrounds. Anita was another of the four students demonstrating low self-esteem coupled with external locus of control. Anita had responded to 19 items out of 40 in an external direction. This score established that Anita tended to perceive a lack of control over circumstances more strongly than her peers. She had also responded negatively to 2 out of 6 self-esteem items. Anita constantly expressed disappointment with college life and had felt that there was a degree of family pressure to enrol at college. Imran was another student that fell into the category of low self-esteem along with external locus of control. Imran had left school in June and obtained no passes at GCSE. His attendance at college was poor but he enjoyed the social environment of college.

It has been asserted that there is often a relationship between locus of control and self-esteem (Rotter, 1966). Rotter (1966) argued that locus of control is often used as a defence mechanism arguing that it is easier to defend self-image by attributing failures to impersonal and external factors rather than to individual failings. This resulted in poor self-image being coupled with external locus of control. There are other theorists who have observed a tendency for high self-esteem to be accompanied by internal locus of control (Lefcourt, 1976 and Bellack, 1975). The case of Melanie demonstrated the characteristics that Rotter (1966) described between low self-esteem and external locus of control. This relationship was mirrored in two other cases but in less extreme forms. 10 out of 19 students were found to have high self-esteem and internal locus of control so demonstrating the relationship described by authors such as Lefcourt (1976) and Bellack (1975). Locus of control and self-esteem militated against expected patterns in 6 out of 19 cases.

Various authors have gone further than outlining general expectations concerning the relationship between locus of control and self-esteem. Patterns between locus of control, self-esteem and ethnicity have also been suggested. Louden (1977) and Hendrix (1986) have argued that the relationship described by authors such as Lefcourt (1976) applies more typically to white students and not to ethnic minority students. Louden (1977) and Hendrix (1986) both argued that students from ethnic minority groups were more likely to have high self-esteem and external expectancies than high self-esteem and internal expectancies. This pattern is similar to that identified by Rotter (1966) but is suggested as typical of minority students. Rotter's claims were far more general and suggested that high self-esteem and internal expectancies tended to be the normative pattern. Later research by Hillman et al (1992) also adopted a like position to that of Louden (1977) and Hendrix (1986). However, Melanie was the only African Caribbean student to emerge from fieldwork with low self-esteem in addition to external locus of control. All others conformed to the model suggested by authors such as Rotter (1966), Lefcourt (1976) and Bellack (1975) and as also discovered by Yong (1994). Yong's (1994) study involved gifted African American students. These students tended to demonstrate high levels of self-esteem and internal locus of control. Graham's review of research also focused on African American students. She found that there was little conclusive evidence in support of the notion that particular ethnic groups consistently reinforced internal or external expectancies. She argues that overall, all students tend to be in possession of high achievement aspirations and positive self-image. She also argues that her review reveals a situation wherein students have similar expectancies and there is little difference in terms of how minority or majority ethnic groups attribute success or failure. Fieldwork research conducted for this thesis also discovered little evidence to demonstrate definite patterns in the relationship between self-esteem and locus of control across ethnic groups. Consequently, there was no further support for the theory that locus of control is used to defend self-esteem (Rotter, 1966 and Hochreich, 1975).

During fieldwork numerous configurations emerged involving the relationship between self-esteem, locus of control and ethnicity. Rosenberg (1979) pointed out

the unstable nature of self-esteem and this is also a cornerstone of the earliest writings on the subject. James (1890) argued that self-concept was an unstable factor that was affected by personal, psychological and social circumstance. Nowicki (1973) has also noted that locus of control is an unstable factor, one that is contingent upon individual and social factors. A reminder of the flexibility of ethnicity and its importance is necessary here (Hall, 1992; Rassool, 1999; Banton, 1998 and Gillborn, 1990). In order to make sense of the range of results that materialized during fieldwork it was necessary to appreciate this basic principle. No ethnic group was consistently under-represented in terms of high or low self-esteem or in terms of internal or external expectancies. The interplay between ethnicity, self-esteem and locus of control was subject to variation because of the instability common to all three factors. Given the scope for variation that arises with the combination of three unstable factors, it should not be considered unusual that a range of configurations transpired.

4.44   Summary of findings from interview data

To summarize, the analysis of issues within this chapter demonstrated that student experience in the first year was a formative process. It was a transitional phase that had the potential to shape immediate and distant decisions concerning progression and retention. Furthermore, attention to ethnicity allowed discussion and illumination of the influence of ethnicity in student experience. Evidence also confirmed that ethnic identity was a flexible factor with varied and complex ramifications. This was manifest in the shifting significance students attached to ethnicity in different contexts. The complexity of ethnicity was further demonstrated in the complex interactions that emerged between ethnicity, self-esteem and locus of control.

For the majority of students transfer from secondary education to post compulsory schooling was a successful transition. Students tended to move from a sense of short-term concern regarding life immediately after school to longer-term considerations. Hence, college life became the intermediate step between school and university or work. Most students allowed the positive or negative nature of their

experience of college life to be the decisive factor when considering whether to continue further education or enter the world of work. The factors that contributed to a positive experience were broad contact with peers in social and learning contexts, coping with course demands and a firm commitment to the course of students' choice. Those students who achieved positive contact with peers, coped with course demands and engaged in courses voluntarily were likely to succeed in the first year. Where these factors were not present dissatisfaction, disillusionment and frustration were more likely to surface. Where contact was not broad due to ethnic or gender differences, this was shown to impede the satisfaction and progress of students. It was likely that other causes of isolation had the same effect. This emphasised the importance of mediating the learning environment to effect positive student contact. The most positive endorsement by students was given to induction activities that encouraged peer familiarisation and aimed to facilitate group formation. Furthermore, in case study research, isolation was the most extreme in cases where there was no purposeful attempt to mediate isolation. It was recognised that the transition from school to college was a tentative step for many students, with the majority expressing a degree of concern regarding their likelihood of forming relationships with their peers. This was not purely a pastoral concern as the extent to which students felt included in the life and activity of the learning environment influenced the quality and scope of their learning experience. Those students who felt excluded and detached from their peers were not best placed to take full advantage of learning opportunities born of discussion and contact with others. Therefore, positive peer relationships need to be considered complementary to the learning process as well as a social resource.

The experience of students in the first year was an important factor in student progression. How far students were satisfied with factors such as course content, progress and contact with peers greatly affected their decision to complete courses. Therefore, it is important that institutions also undertake their own research into student experience in the first year and act upon results. There were positive examples throughout fieldwork research of attempts to mediate experience such as the development of Taster Courses, group formation activities early on in the term

and recognition of the difficulties of transition from GCSE. However, full recognition of the value of positive peer relationships was also necessary. A greater understanding of the nature of ethnicity is also required if appropriate responses are to be made in relation to ethnic differences or inequalities. Ethnicity is at times a central factor in student lives; it may also interact with other factors and sometimes it is of minor significance. Consequently, there is potential for varied configurations to emerge. The analysis and response to ethnicity needs to be appreciative of the contextual influences that create such instability in the area of ethnicity. Overall, regular evaluation of student experience and an understanding of differing experience are essential to reinforcing participation and generating positive experience. Consequently, flexible responses are vital in order to improve upon the already positive experience of most students and to dramatically improve that experience for others.

4.45   Review of overall findings

4.46   Student Orientation

In exploring the reasons students chose to continue in education, three distinct motivations emerged. Firstly, there were those students who perceived college as a positive and exciting prospect and embarked on a college career with assent. Secondly, there where those who were disappointed with lack of employment or training opportunities available and regarded education as a less favourable option. For these latter students college was regarded as the final alternative and courses were undertaken through necessity rather than desire. Thirdly, for a very small minority of students, college attendance was not voluntary. Instead, parents insisted upon attendance. The latter two groups of students embarked on post compulsory education with less commitment compared to the first group and this had implications for retention within the first year.

A minority of students entered post sixteen education with specific aims; most entered with a general idea of what vocational field they would like to enter or with a desire to go to university. Students undertaking vocational courses tended to be

aware of possible career options relating to the course which they had undertaken, and they tended to state that the avenue or specialism they pursued in the future would depend on the outcome of their course and their individual strengths. Students undertaking A Level study usually had an idea of two or more course options which they would like to pursue at university but these were provisional considerations based on A Level results. However, as students approached the conclusion of the first year, they developed a far clearer picture of their strengths, alternative options and of what they enjoyed. This strongly contributed to the consolidation of their aims or elicited adaptation.

The nature of student learning experience also affected the level of commitment to college. Positive learning experience encouraged attendance, knowledge acquisition and development of subject knowledge, and promoted the likelihood of students undertaking a second year or advanced study. Negative experience was a corollary to this. Negative experience discouraged regular attendance, limited knowledge acquisition and undermined the likelihood of students completing courses or returning for a second year of further study.

One factor that emerged as particularly important to learning experience was peer contact. Where limited contact between students and their peers was excessively low, this isolation was found to limit opportunities for students to acquire and develop their knowledge of the subject. Two extreme forms of this isolation occurred in case study research; issues of ethnicity and gender were crucial elements in each situation. The way in which groups and subgroups were organised and managed also altered the nature of the learning environment.

The discovery that friendship formation was important to students at a social and educational level led to an exploration of specific dimensions of friendship formation among students. Students involved in research demonstrated a preference for friendships characterised by same sex and same ethnicity. Where there was an absence of mutual friendships or peer contact, adjustment to college proved to be less effective for some students. Positive appraisal by students of activities that

facilitated group formation was further evidence of the importance attached to peer contact. Fieldwork demonstrated that students perceived ethnicity as an important factor in friendship formation and mutual friendship patterns were the most favoured. However, positive diverse friendships were also uncovered.

Important differences existed in terms of dissatisfaction with college life and these centred on social opportunities. When examined in the context of ethnic background and ethnic friendship patterns, it was found that students from minority ethnic groups report less satisfactory adjustment to college life. Additionally, during fieldwork research, the perception of exclusion in terms of ethnicity was found to undermine participation in learning activities. Certainly, all ethnic minority students did not perceive isolation in similar degrees. However, minority status was more likely to affect adjustment, peer contact and learning opportunities in a negative direction.

Coping with course demands was a palpable indicator of how well students coped with transfer. The major issue for students was increased workload and accommodation to advanced study. Most students anticipated initial difficulty and expected to overcome this. However, a minority of students were unable to cope with course demands throughout the year. Those who were not coping were also most likely to report dissatisfaction with the first year. Staff were generally aware of how well students were coping and this was monitored through assignments and assessments of how well students coped with tasks during the course of a lesson. Staff were largely attuned to how well students were coping and many expected a transitory period from the rigours of GCSE to contrasting courses at college. Various strategies were also enacted in order to enable students to cope more effectively in the initial stages of courses. For some students however, the rigours of their new courses were perceived to be unachievable and this left students more likely to drop out.

Few discernible patterns were found across ethnic lines in terms of the general expectations of students in Year 11 or within their first year at college. Students' short term aims centred largely on attending a post sixteen educational institution.

Future aspirations in terms of the life course were also very similar across ethnic and also gender groups. Future aspirations were conservative, centring on hopes of full time employment, owning a home and marrying. Very few students envisaged any likelihood of working or living abroad. Even less students expected to pursue their own private enterprise. However, a fundamental difference emerged in terms of hopes of full time employment. African Caribbean males were the least likely to expect full time employment. This reflected patterns within the local and national economy where African Caribbean males were one of the groups least likely to be engaged in full-time employment. This group is also under-represented in participation in post compulsory education at a local and national level. It may be inferred from this that the idea of participating in further education in order to improve employment prospects is not fully accepted or is being consciously rejected. It was beyond the brief of this research to explore this lack of participation. However, among those African Caribbean males who were in attendance at college, there was less conviction among this group than any other that they would become employed on a full-time basis.

In terms of Student Orientation, transfer from compulsory education to further education was deemed to be a formative process. In the first year of post-compulsory education future intentions were constantly revised and consolidated. Decisions regarding destination and course choice were evaluated and for some it was felt that a complete change in direction was necessary. This change was prompted by varied factors such as final GCSE grades or later on as a result of negative experience within the first year. Students also came to achieve an appreciation of where their strengths and interests lay based on their overall experience during the first year of transfer. However, negative experience wreaked the most dramatic effects in direction; withdrawal from course being the most extreme response. As students progressed through the academic year, their considerations focused increasingly on future aspects of the life course involving further study beyond the first year and employment prospects.

4.47   Student Identities

The flexible nature of ethnicity was expressed in student responses and attitudes. Students demonstrated that they responded to ethnicity differently in varied situations. For instance, ethnicity was considered more important in social rather than learning contexts. Ethnicity was also considered important but not as important as other factors such as being clever. It became clear that ethnicity was indeed a fluid entity and therefore an unstable predictor of student attitudes. Important implications flowed from this. Firstly, this acknowledgement guarded against stereotypical imaginings being imposed on any particular ethnic group. Due to the fluidity of ethnicity multiple configurations occurred and were acknowledged. Secondly, ethnicity was found to interact with other factors such as self-esteem. This type of interaction led to complex configurations that were not reducible to single variables. Furthermore, ethnicity was not always a defining factor in terms of differing student experience. Other factors such as gender were at times more significant. I would argue that these three points aid a clearer understanding of the nature of ethnicity and explain the variations in student responses across various issues. Ethnicity is applied flexibly in the lives of students and this should be acknowledged and accounted for when analysing and reacting to student responses. There were cases during research when behaviour of African Caribbean males was defined largely with reference to ethnic group. Similar behaviour by white students was framed in alternative terms. The ethnicity of one group was centralised and treated as problematic whereas the ethnicity of another was ignored. This approach suggested that ethnicity was always a dominant and defining factor for minority groups. Such an approach fell prey to stereotyping and was in danger of ignoring other factors that interact with ethnicity or that are at times more significant than ethnicity.

Ethnicity was also considered in relation to that of gender identity at the level of friendships. To explore gender in addition to ethnicity as a major factor was too broad for this particular research project. However, gender was accepted as an extremely strong social separator and this dimension was measured against ethnicity. The greater prevalence of same sex friendship formation indicated that in terms of

peer contact gender was a stronger social separator than ethnicity. However, caution must be expressed here, as the gender balance across all sites was far more even than that of ethnicity. This had the effect of broadening opportunities for same sex friendship formation and limiting opportunities for same ethnicity formation. In part, students may have been reflecting pragmatic choices.

Fieldwork results and related research led to the conclusion that ethnic group could not always be used as a predictor for behaviour. General patterns were discernible across some dimensions but within group differences were also marked. This does not mean that ethnicity was not important. Ethnicity was a significant marker in terms of how far students perceived themselves to be included or excluded in relation to a given group. Ethnicity was also important in a related dimension of inclusiveness and exclusion in regard to friendship formation. Those students in minority ethnic groups feeling less satisfied with college life were by implication more vulnerable to withdrawal from courses.

Levels of self-esteem and expectancies of control were areas that also had implications for levels of peer contact within the classroom. Poor self-image of students was indicated by low self-esteem. This was reinforced by their impression that others also held them in low regard. External locus of control in itself was not necessarily a deficit for students. However, where low self-esteem and external locus of control were coupled, this contributed to a vulnerable position for students. Poor self-image in conjunction with little sense of control left students vulnerable to poor social adjustment as well as poor motivation.

Overall, trends for each ethnic group were high self-esteem and internal expectancies with extreme exceptions emerging within this. Extreme scores that were observed were found to relate to ethnicity on specific occasions. For example, it was discovered that one student had extremely low self-esteem as well as external locus of control. This constituted a negative and exceptional position in relation to other students. She was from an African Caribbean background. Asian college students were also more likely than other ethnic groups to have external locus of control.

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Among school students, no significant ethnic differences occurred but gender proved significant as females tended to have lower self-esteem than males. This lack of uniformity was further corroboration of the instability of ethnicity. However, not only did these results further inform an understanding of the dynamic of ethnicity, they also demonstrated that generalisations concerning ethnicity and direction of self-esteem or locus of control should not be made. For instance, there was no basis for assuming that African Caribbean students tended to have lower self-esteem than others. Where this occurred it was exceptional. The discovery of Asian students being more likely to have external locus of control also required careful treatment. External locus of control is not necessarily negative. This may simply reflect cultural differences in terms of the importance attached to individualism or collectivism. Where collective activity is strong, expectancies relating to the influence of the individual tend to be weak. Furthermore, there is no conclusive evidence to confirm that this contributes to psychological anxiety.

The collective evidence here suggests that identity was intricately tied to student experience. Perceptions of mutuality predisposed the characteristics of friendship formation and peer contact. Negative image of self also affected peer contact and students' sense of confidence and satisfaction. Reluctance or opposition to share broad social contact, and the condition of poor self-image had a negative impact on students' sense of belonging, confidence and satisfaction. Exchange of subject information with peers was also curtailed. It is assumed that this process was bi-directional, with identity affecting experience and educational experience feeding student identity.

Student identity has been considered largely in relation to ethnicity. The notion of flexible ethnic identities was established as a model in the review of literature for this thesis. Fieldwork evidence secured support for this approach in three ways. Firstly, the sum of questionnaire and interview data demonstrated that the importance of ethnicity was not a constant. Students attached differing levels of importance to ethnicity according to context. Secondly, when the importance of ethnicity was considered relative to other factors, ethnicity did not emerge as a primary identity.

Features such as intelligence were regarded as more important. Thirdly, the flexible nature of ethnicity was further confirmed by the pattern of interaction with other factors. For example, there were no definite trends in the self-esteem scores of contrasting ethnic groups. The self-image of students was interwoven with their sense of belonging or isolation as well as with other factors such as level of achievement and social confidence. It is important to emphasise that the concept of flexible identities guards against deterministic and singular notions but it also recognises a range of influences on identity. In this way, flexible notions of ethnicity are able to account for differences as well as similarities that emerge within and between ethnic groups. Fieldwork evidence illuminated definite differences across ethnic groups at times. For instance, students from minority ethnic groups tended to perceive ethnicity as more important than white students in all contexts that were explored. I would argue that this is not simply due to individualised perceptions of identity. It is also due in part to the realities of social positioning where ethnic minority status is often weighted negatively. Social context and other identities have already been noted as important influences on the flexibility of ethnicity. The impact of social positioning should also be acknowledged as an important dimension that accounts for the emergence of definite contrasts between ethnic groups. The flexible nature of identity means that perceptions of self and individual attribution will not necessarily be uniform across ethnic groups. However, differences in social positioning are evident in comparisons of majority and minority status and therefore there is also potential for discernible trends to occur.

4.48 Concluding comments on questionnaire and interview findings

Two over-arching concerns were dealt with under the broad headings of Student Orientation and Student Identity. General issues involved in the transfer from post-compulsory schooling to further education were incorporated in analysis and discussion of Student Orientation. How far student identity impacted upon and interacted with the process of transfer was discussed in the area of Student Identity.

4.49 Implications and Suggestions

The continuing trend of the majority of school leavers undertaking further education is one that is both celebrated and sponsored in government and industry. It is argued that extended education will lead to a more educated workforce that will enable innovation and so enhance Britain's competitive edge (NACETT, 1997a and NACETT, 1997b). However, the reasons cited by some students for participation in post compulsory education are not necessarily in accord with such a vision. There were students that regarded college as a second choice in the shadow of limited employment opportunities. Also, the predominant destination for students withdrawing from college was to undertake paid employment or training. Research showed that some students responded by seizing employment or training opportunities when they arose in preference to continuing with full-time education. Some students gained positions in fields that they were committed to whilst others were less discerning and accepted positions that they had expressed no previous interest in. This trend needs to be addressed, as lack of course completion does not satisfy more instrumental concerns such as raising national skill levels. Neither do such motivations encourage a valued sense of lifelong learning. Such attitudes to continuing education may indeed be counter productive as the experience of education here is marred by lack of commitment and lack of interest.

Choosing the right course was clearly a central factor in determining the nature of first year college experience. Students expressed various concerns in this regard such as transfer difficulties from GCSE to A Level or GNVQ. The transfer from GCSE to higher academic or vocational qualifications would have benefited from support such as study skills development and clear target setting and feedback on coursework. Those students who felt stretched by new course demands may have profited from such initiatives. At times, anxiety concerning course demands also stemmed from a lack of awareness of course content. Institutions had varied structures in place to deal with this such as support from Advice and Guidance personnel and Taster Courses to clarify course content. However, it remained a difficult area for several students. Further actions were necessary in most colleges such as provision of clear descriptions of course content. Students were generally

positive about commencing courses. They were also inclined to treat course success as the most important function of college. Therefore, a positive basis existed for providing transparent course summaries, and structured evaluations of student progress.

It is not possible to foresee difficulties with course demands encountered by all students. However, for some students difficulties stemmed from poor decision-making. Those who had not fully researched their course were unaware of and unprepared for the quantity of work required. For others, they had enjoyed the subject at GCSE and assumed that they would like to continue at an advanced level without researching course requirements. For some students their expectation of courses did not match with reality and they found that vocational courses in particular had a strong academic element that they were not acquitted for. This poor decision-making could be reduced in part if students researched their course preferences more fully. However, some of the responsibility also rests with institutions that should provide a clear portrait of course content and entry requirements.

Some situations within the classroom would have benefited from mediation. Inclusiveness needed to be facilitated in some circumstances. The basis on which individuals were allocated to a particular class required careful consideration in order to avoid the creation of predominantly dissonant groups. In addition, subgroup formation involving students with varying levels of commitment to study also required attention. All three variations of the way in which groups were formed had implications for student interaction and the quality of learning experience. Where there was an absence of mediation or alteration to prevailing group dynamics a cohesive learning environment failed to emerge for particular students. However, Quicke (1999) emphasises the importance of positive peer contact and collaboration.

> Genuine collaboration reflects a mode of relating which is highly desirable in a
> democracy, one that has as intrinsic value and is highly functional for learning
> (1999, p69).

Quicke (1999) is greatly concerned with the social by-products of learning environments. In this quotation he recognises that positive peer contact enhances learning opportunities and has the added bonus of fostering democratic behaviour.

Despite similar levels of satisfaction with course appropriateness in terms of content and difficulty, differences emerged in the future expectations of students. The relatively pessimistic expectations of some minority group males in relation to future employment is noteworthy. All students surveyed were in attendance at college and most expected to return for a second year. However, African Caribbean males were the most pessimistic of all about future employment opportunities despite expectations of remaining in education for a similar length of time as other students. Whilst this did not appear to affect retention in the first year, longer-term implications emerged. This concern is intractable as the pessimistic expectations of African Caribbean males mirrored actual employment trends. Such trends are likely to fuel poor expectations. Hence, it is necessary to address the issue of existing and future employment opportunities. However, there is also scope within education to combat such pessimism and this relates to raising aspirations. Pastoral and or mentoring support could be a positive means of developing student aspirations here. This could also be used as an opportunity to focus student aims and to promote the strategy of target setting among vulnerable groups of students.

Ethnicity also proved important in relation to peer contact. Ethnicity emerged as a key aspect of friendship formation. Isolation of ethnic minority students was seen to exacerbate less effective adjustment. However, research also threw up examples of effective ethnically diverse friendships as well as effective mutual relationships. The most severe case of poor peer relationships related to isolation where students had very few or no friends. The findings of Martinez and Munday (1998) synthesize the importance of peer contact.

> The most positive aspect of college for most students is other students. The implication is that efforts to promote group formation, facilitate purposeful socialization and support collaborative approaches to learning will pay great dividends (p113).

The crucial detail here is that students are assisted in forging positive contact between one another and do not become subjected to isolation on the basis of ethnicity or any other factor and this can be mediated within the classroom. Group cohesion and broad contact should be considered as a means of enhancing social adjustment as well as facilitating learning opportunities for students.

Self-esteem and locus of control also had specific implications in the understanding of ethnic differences between students. However, levels of self-esteem or locus of control could not be predicted on the basis of ethnic group membership alone. This highlights the need for self-esteem and locus of control enhancement techniques to be aimed at actual levels of self-esteem and locus of control that are based on reliable tests as opposed to assumption or surface level perceptions. Responding to self-esteem on the assumed basis of deficit among any particular group is therefore highly inappropriate. Furthermore, results of self-esteem tests need to be considered in relation to social and individual contexts such as gender and individual perceptions of success and failure. Where ethnic group membership is used to describe any pattern, this should incorporate an understanding of social and cultural difference that may account for rather than simply identify difference. The causes of low self-esteem and external locus of control are varied, but social isolation and perception of poor performance are thought to compound both conditions. Both can be improved if consideration is given to developing confidence and competencies within the classroom. This can be effectively accomplished by facilitating collaboration within the classroom that aims to build confidence as well as aid the exchange of subject knowledge. Targeted development of specific weaknesses is also required.

5 Conclusions

This research was in many ways a diverse pursuit, as transition incorporated diverse issues including a perusal of student destinations, classroom management issues, investigation of contrasting student expectations, discussion of peer contact and theoretical discussion of the nature of ethnicity, for example. There was potential for concentration on any one of these single avenues to provide sufficient material to complete this thesis. Of the most striking were issues surrounding peer contact and reinforcement of the concept of flexible and complex identities with particular reference to ethnicity.

5.1   Suggestions for future practice

Research concentrated on student experience in the first year but this was a practical constraint rather than a theoretical one. Research tracing student experience needs to explore student progression in subsequent years also. The first year is able to evoke a sense of student destination in the second year and this needs to be further tested and verified.

Students seemed to have very similar aims concerning expectations regarding education. However, at the closing stages of Year 11 and Year 12, differences emerged in student expectations concerning employment. This observation has been noted elsewhere in the thesis and has been related to employment trends across comparative ethnic groups. However, the pessimism of ethnic minority groups in

this regard requires further research to inform meaningful intervention. Resolutions of target setting, mentoring and encouraging ethnic participation in employment and education need to be considered and systematically evaluated. Student expectations are likely to affect motivation as well as achievement. Therefore, research is necessary here to gain a full understanding of why poorer expectations arise despite local and national trends of high involvement of minority groups in post-compulsory education. Research is required into developing strategies that usefully challenge the pessimism concerning employment opportunities. Furthermore, the temptation should be resisted of reducing explanations of difference to personality issues alone such as poor self-esteem or external locus of control. There was no consistent pattern within minority groups to suggest that pessimism was characterised by either of these factors. There is some evidence to suggest that African Caribbean students in particular are concentrated more heavily in vocational courses than other groups (Drew, 1995). There is greater evidence still of larger proportions of ethnic minorities undertaking post compulsory education (Drew, 1995; Gillborn and Gipps, 1996 and Modood et al, 1997). When this is considered alongside observations of greater pessimism among some ethnic groups concerning employment, it would seem a convincing argument that actual and unequal trends are indeed responsible for a degree of this pessimism. Therefore, the harsh reality of actual employment inequalities needs to be tackled as a source framing such despondency.

Ethnicity has shown itself to be a complex entity and it is likely that expectations relate to more than the singular dimension of employment or education. Explorations of opportunity, practice and policy within both employment and education are necessary areas of investigation. Gillborn (1997; 1999) argues that since the Swann Report of 1985, ethnicity has never returned as a central issue within educational policy considerations. He argues that ethnicity received scant attention in the Dearing Report of 1993, the most recent policy review. Gillborn (1997; 1999) maintains that this situation is also reflected in educational research. Research for this thesis allowed a brief glance at a comparison of student expectations. This needs to continue at a more detailed level to uncover the dynamics that shape pessimism and optimism across contrasting ethnic groups.

Ethnic difference and convergence should also be related to other social divisions such as social class and gender differences in order to gain a relative sense of the range of influence that ethnicity bears. Continuing research would benefit from such a comparison that this thesis did not have the scope to incorporate. Factors such as social class positioning and gender differences also have a bearing on wider research into transfer. Students do not become entirely detached from social factors in the course of college life. For example, gender was highlighted as an important issue during research in terms of peer friendships. The integration of other factors such as social class was too ambitious for this relatively small-scale project. Integrating explorations of other social factors including ethnicity is recognised as a challenge even for those projects with greater resources to draw upon. However, there remains a need to seek clarity beyond the confines of the classroom and solely educational boundaries. Research by Drew (1995) has demonstrated that there are complex intersections between ethnicity and other social factors. These intersections need to be considered in relation to transfer in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the various facets of this process.

In this research peer contact was shown to be central to perceptions of satisfaction as well as influential in the learning environment. Students were also found to have complex friendship structures with varied levels of friendships within lessons, within college, outside of college and at time over-lapping friendships. It would be valuable to explore further how far differing friendships affect student motivation and what aspects of friendships students define as important. Of great interest here is the issue of mutuality, ethnic mutuality in particular. During research, students rarely expressed any explicit preferences in terms of choosing friends based on ethnic group membership. However, same ethnicity friendship was a prevalent trend. Hence, future research would benefit from investigating how far ethnicity is centralised or ignored in friendship formation. Such an exploration would also aid an understanding of perceptions of ethnicity. Whether ethnicity is taken for granted in perceptions of mutuality and how far ethnicity is regarded as an aspect of cultural, social, personal or ethnic mutuality is an important question. This would inform as to how deep perceptions of sameness and difference actually are. As friendships are

very personal affairs, this would be a useful point of analysis in contrast to understandings of ethnicity in formal or structural contexts alone.

Furthermore, friendships and broader peer contact are accepted as critical in developing social and cognitive development at early stages of childhood (Rubin, 1980 and Hartup and Lougee, 1975). Hence, friendship formation is an established area of discussion in relation to pre-school and primary educational contexts. Sociometric explorations have also been undertaken to chart the characteristics of friendship networks and to analyse the benefits and deficits of peer relations among young children (Rubin, 1980; Pollard with Filer, 1996; Deegan, 1996 and Verma, Zec and Skinner, 1994). Cauce (1986) and Erwin (1998) have also investigated such networks among secondary age pupils. O'Connor (1992) has specifically explored gendered friendship networks. Such detail also needs to be applied to late adolescent learning contexts. Not only would this aid a fuller appreciation of the developmental form of peer relations, I believe that it could also provide a more informed basis in developing group cohesion and improving opportunities for positive group contact.

Further research needs to investigate how far ethnic and other social divisions come to be reflected and/or reinforced within the classroom. The example of the way in which ethnicity characterised peer contact has been discussed throughout. Expressions of exclusion played out within the classroom context have been described. The result of such exclusion in educational terms was to discourage participation in learning activities and to ultimately discourage course completion. It was not possible to determine social and individual cost in the same way but it was clear that exclusion was often a negative individualised condition. Authors such as Deegan (1996) have also noted the way in which peer networks within the classroom are marked by social divisions such as ethnicity and social class. Quicke's (1999) recent research also notes the role of gendered identities, contrasting pupil cultures and social class influences on peer relations. Hence, the classroom should be acknowledged as an important centre of social reproduction even when considered in the most basic of terms. The classroom was where students continued to spend significant proportions of time, it provided a strong focal point for developing peer

contact and it was an arena for shaping success or failure. Social dynamics crept into all of these areas and in some cases difficult situations emerged. Hence social dynamics need to be acknowledged in the interests of developing more positive learning environments.

Friendship formation proved important to the study as this was central to student well-being within college but distinct groupings were continued with other friends outside of college. Research demonstrated that friends outside of college also had an impact on student motivation. Family influences were also highlighted as a source of support and pressure. Therefore, these factors could usefully be explored to provide a deeper understanding of student motivations. Bhatti (1999) has recently documented the overlapping and distinct influences of community and family on young Asian children's educational experiences. Such a detailed study of older students would be equally fascinating as well as informative.

An important area of discussion was that relating to the personality issues of self-esteem and locus of control. Although popular in explanations of poor performance and adjustment among minority groups, this is arguably an under-researched area. Graham's (1994) observation of the fifteen-year absence of this discussion from the *Review of Educational Research* demonstrates the point effectively. However, there is a need for clarity in terms of the relationship between ethnicity and personality factors such as self-esteem and locus of control. Within the theoretical literature concerning self-esteem for example, there is a consensus that high self-esteem is positively associated with social adjustment as well as academic attainment. However, due to limitations of time the association between ethnicity and achievement could not be fully explored. This is necessary for future research in order to inform more clearly the applicability of this theoretical principle to all groups. There is a mass of research evidence to suggest that self-esteem among minority groups is equal and often higher than that amongst the majority population. However, there is significant information concerning academic performance that highlights differing patterns of attainment that favour majority groups. Therefore, there is some question as to how far self-esteem is an antecedent of success for

minority groups. Hence, there is a need to explore personality differences within ethnically similar groups as well as exploring comparisons between minority and majority sets. This would allow more detailed analysis of the dynamics of personality issues among specific groups. Furthermore, there is also a need to explore ethnic and class intersections when considering minority and majority comparisons. Minority groups are more likely to be positioned in a less advantaged socio-economic position than others. Therefore, there is the need to compare similar socio-economic groups in order to gain a more valid reflection of how far differences are affected by socio-economic positioning other than or as well as ethnic group membership.

The final research area upon which I wish to comment is the development of an understanding of the nature of ethnicity. In the opening chapter to this thesis, much time was given over to present a clear outline of my approach. This was important not only in terms of scholarly conduct but also in an attempt to provide a convincing and clear approach, particularly as ethnicity often surfaces as an issue surrounded by controversy. The portrait of ethnicity that has been asserted throughout this thesis is one that presents ethnicity as a complex and flexible area. My own understanding was challenged and revised in developing this framework. I am conscious that this outline poses a theoretical challenge to essentialist concepts and conservative models that portray fixed notions of ethnicity. These fixed notions tend to seize upon a combination of actual, perceived and in some instances fabricated presentations of cultural difference. However, if the social consequences of ethnic differences are to be addressed comprehensively, this requires that the discussion be informed by effective theory. This theory must be able to accept, describe and explain fluctuations and complexities. The complexity of ethnicity was tested and born out throughout this research with clear differences emerging in particular areas. Fluctuations in terms of the importance of ethnicity also occurred. Ethnicity was not always useful as a grouping variable as ethnic group membership bore no relation to attitudes or responses in certain areas. Personality issues of self-esteem and locus of control threw out complex configurations in relation to ethnicity that had to be treated with care. Reliance on fixed notions would not have assisted the discussion

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to progress beyond limited stereotypes, regardless of what motivations lay behind these fixed philosophies.

A further note is also required in terms of the relationship between ethnicity and other identities. There is no suggestion that skin colour is consistently a dominant force in terms of identities, or that it is a singular force. Research by Saeed et al (1999) and Sarhadi Raj (2000) involving Asian Muslims in Scotland, is testimony to this. There is a strong case in both pieces of research that demonstrates religion is capable of providing a driving force in terms of ethnic difference in contemporary Britain.

Ethnicity may also interact with other identities such as social class and may also be interwoven with social experience such as community. However, although there is an absence of such broad explorations within this thesis, there should not be an assumption that such considerations have been rejected. An exploration of interactions between ethnicity and other identities would certainly benefit from greater research.

I would have liked to explore the nature of ethnicity further and it is little consolation that this should become a suggestion for further research. Minority group ethnicity tended to be centralised in this thesis. Owing to limitations of time and resources the prioritisation of minority ethnicity was preferred. The evident and unfavourable social positioning of certain ethnic minority groups suggested that ethnicity is a more critical factor here. However, majority group approaches to ethnicity were not entirely ignored and comparisons were sought. It was clear from former studies and through research practice that ethnicity contributed to negative social positioning and to personal identity in a more explicit form for ethnic minority students than it did for ethnic majority students. However, it would be interesting to explore further how far majority students perceive ethnicity as an influential factor for themselves and others. Other comparisons that would be useful for further research include contrasts between minority groups. Such contrasts have the potential to detail differences further and may provide an indication of just how far ethnicity is a meaningful

grouping factor and how far it needs to be considered alongside other social factors in presenting effective explanations of social inequalities and similarities.

5.2 Validity

Some comments are in order concerning the generalizability and validity of this research. The sample size used within fieldwork questionnaires provided a fair basis for generalizability of findings amongst Year 11 pupils and first year college students. Two complete cohorts were used in the Year 11 sample and students across three further education colleges with differing college profiles were involved. There were few institutional differences occurring within research that were independent of other factors such as the balance of ethnic minority and ethnic majority pupils therein. Furthermore, evidence from questionnaires was compared with data from Phase Two where more detailed enquiries were undertaken during case study research. Triangulation also contributed to the validity of research. Triangulation not only occurred between questionnaire data and case study material, it was also undertaken within case study research by measuring observations with interview data and constantly comparing individual cases. Student comments were also compared with staff comments and perceptions.

Relatively large samples of white students and Asian students provided a means of comparing minority and majority groups effectively. However, greater ethnic diversity within this sample could have further contributed to the developing portrait of student experience. African Caribbean and mixed race students for example were marginal. This was unavoidable to an extent as the smaller presence of African Caribbean and mixed race students reflected demographic trends within the east Midlands locality. Also, access could not be secured at particular sites that had greater representation of African Caribbean students. However, the marginal presence of a minority group should not be treated as invalid as this reflects the actual positioning of many students. Troyna and Hatcher's (1992) research involving ethnic minority children in mainly white primary schools provided great insight into this specific and common condition. Such students would be in danger of becoming invisible if research constantly treated sample size as the benchmark of

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valid research. Comparative research however, in a location that has other ethnic groups in varied proportions could provide a useful source of contrast in the future.

The possibility always exists that responses are not entirely free from expressions of social desirability and this had the potential for undermining the validity of this research. Some areas of research were particularly sensitive such as questions concerning the ethnic characteristics of friendships and explorations of this topic during interviews. Issues subject to less sensitivity such as future employment expectations were also open to bias from students presenting socially desirable responses. However, care was taken to undermine both possibilities by such techniques as varying the order of positive and negative responses in questionnaire items, providing neutral and extreme boundaries to responses and through providing a confidential and secure environment for those involved to express views honestly. I feel that the operation of these safeguards helped to develop a faithful representation of attitudes and events.

Discussion and analysis for this thesis was undertaken from an informed stance aided by established theoretical frameworks, extant literature and research evidence. A conscious decision was made to review theoretical frameworks in regard to ethnicity in particular. This was most effectively presented through commenting on a range of arguments and studies. I have already mentioned that my own understanding was challenged. Along with this my awareness of the subject matter was also broadened. Hence, the theoretical frameworks and discursive contributions of others proved useful. The form of reflexivity adopted here facilitated a challenge to researcher assumptions and this serves as a strong defence to the incorporation of research activity with theoretical argument. Such an approach assisted in developing analysis of findings as well as suggestions for improving practice.

This research included the study of minority and majority experience and was conscious of criticisms of mainstream methods expressed by commentators such as Stanfield (1994). He makes important methodological argument where he contests a lack of ethnic specific research tools within the social sciences. Stanfield argues that where explorations of ethnicity are involved this usually occurs via existent

methodologies that were originally constructed for exploration of majority ethnic groups. Stanfield also maintains that theoretical approaches and focuses of research tend to reinforce conservative models of experience such as poverty and powerlessness.

Stanfield also argues that mainstream methodologies tend to ignore the social positioning of ethnic minority groups and fail to recognise that the construction of identity is not entirely voluntaristic. He argues that this creates problems for ethnographic studies that primarily frame phenomena in terms of negotiated meanings. Feminist projects are also criticised for failing to provide an appropriate framework for studying ethnic minority groups. Stanfield argues that the social positioning of black and white women is different due to the primacy of colour rather than gender. He argues that the socialization of masculine and feminine norms in the majority culture for example is not necessarily duplicated among ethnic minority groups.

Stanfield's central argument is that there are no paradigms within the social sciences that have been constructed specifically around ethnic modelling. He argues that the existence of such paradigms would improve the accuracy of research as well as theory. Furthermore, he maintains that there is no discussion of the research process where ethnic minority researchers explore dominant populations. Stanfield does not suggest that extant methodology should be obliterated. However, he does argue that new paradigms need to be created in order to add to the body of existing research methodologies.

Stanfield's arguments are thought provoking and also important to note. The way in which research methods may encourage or deny opportunities for learning about phenomena as it relates to minority and majority cultures requires further attention. The methodologies of ethnography and feminism are often received as contemporary and challenging forms of enquiry. However, there is still a need to question their applicability to comparative research involving ethnically diverse groups. Also, most general texts have documented the way in which the presence of white researchers sway bias when interviewing ethnic minority groups. Further research

also needs to uncover how far bias is affected in terms of minority researchers investigating the majority group, particularly around issues concerning ethnicity. No methodology is fully comprehensive in its ability to be applicable to all situations and there may prove to be very little differences in the effectiveness of varying methodological practices among ethnically diverse students for example. The vast majority of ethnic minority students in this country are British-born and have broad experience of mainstream influences. However, the effectiveness of diverse research methods among contrasting ethnic groups in the British context has yet to be fully explored.

Layder (1997; 1998) appeals for creative research design that attempts to be rigorous as well as responsive. He also asserts that general theory and other studies can inform research and help to establish coherence within research. Such an approach is complementary to Stanfield's. Specifically, the criticisms Stanfield makes of mainstream research and the lack of awareness of structural and social pressures in framing issues such as identity is fundamental here. Research throughout this thesis has drawn upon extant literature and the studies of others to arrive at informed considerations concerning ethnicity. This background also had implications in relation to methodological approaches. Ethnographic forms of research were considered democratic in so far that student responses were centralised. However, there was also recognition that student perceptions and identities were not entirely voluntaristic, but were shaped by current context and in broader terms were also fashioned by historical contexts. This knowledge was informed by earlier studies of others, extant literature and general theory. Consequently, an entirely ethnographic approach to research reliant on the premise that meanings are negotiated was consciously rejected. Instead, varied approaches were considered and drawn upon in order to undertake effective and appropriate research practice. Layder (1997; 1998) promotes such flexibility in approaches as it allows a fusion of methodologies to occur in the best interests of research practice and effective theory generation. If such an approach remains mindful of concerns such as those expressed by Stanfield then contemporary research paradigms will be able to develop further and so enhance validity of research as well as the explanatory power of research.

5.3   Final note

The overall aim of this thesis has been to gauge differences and similarities among minority and majority students. The differences have been described and the similarities have also made a contribution to the story. However, it was important to not only make note of contrasts but to also forge an understanding of these. This thesis has aimed to do that through the utilisation of extant literature and research practice. In effect, this thesis has aimed to present a convincing portrait of the complexity of ethnic differences and similarities in relation to transfer. There has also been an endeavour to go beyond stereotypical assumptions and evince an appreciation of the complexity surrounding similarity and difference in post compulsory transfer experience.

Appendices

Appendix 1

After Year 11 survey

After Year 11 Survey

Name:	Age:
School:	Female/Male:
Tutor group:	Date:

School Life

S1 What are your three favourite subjects?   Which three subjects do you enjoy the least?

1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

What options have you taken?   .

....

What languages have you studied at school?

....

S2 Circle **one** letter which shows the most important thing to you about school?

(a) Female friends
(b) Particular teachers
(c) Male friends
(d) Certain lessons
(e) There are no important things to me about school
(f) Other ....
Please state

S3 **Tick** the box which shows **whether you agree or disagree with each statement.**

	Agree	Disagree
It is important to me that teachers like me	❑	❑
If I like a teacher I tend to work harder	❑	❑

S4 Have you taken part in any school clubs/teams/performances?

❑Yes *State which one/s*
❑No *Explain why*

....

....

S5 Most teachers know what my plans are after Year 11. **Tick** whether this is true or false.

❑True   ❑False

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After Year 11

L1 What are you aiming to do at the end of Year 11?

❏ Begin a training course
❏ Start college
❏ Start employment
❏ Stay on at school
❏ Don't know
❏ Other

....

Please state

L2 What is your first choice of college / company?

....

L3 Starting with the most important as number 1, list your **3 most important reasons** for applying to this college / company.

❏ Does subjects/course/work which I enjoy
❏ Does subjects/training which I need to take
❏ Family members have been to same/similar place
❏ Friends are going there
❏ I haven't yet decided what to do after Year 11
❏ It has a good reputation
❏ Parents wanted me to go there
❏ Prospectus/brochure/advert made it look interesting
❏ Teachers encouraged me to apply there
❏ The rate of pay is good
❏ Other

....

Please state

L4 Which **one** of these people has given you the most useful advice about what to do after Year 11?   **Circle** the letter which applies to that person.

(a) Mother
(b) Female friend
(c) Father
(d) Careers teacher
(e) Brother
(f) PSE teacher
(g) Form teacher
(h) Sister
(j) Other   ....

Please state

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L5   Tick **one** of these things which you are looking forward to the **most** after Year 11?

❑Making new friends

❑Studying new subjects

❑Having new teachers

❑Being in a different building

❑Earning money

❑Not wearing uniform

❑Being with the same friends

❑Having more independence

❑Other ....

Please state

L6   How do you think your parents feel about your choices after Year 11?

❑Very pleased

❑Pleased

❑Okay

❑Not pleased

❑Disappointed

About You

A1   **Tick** the box which best describes your ethnic origin?

❑African-Caribbean

❑Asian

❑Mixed race

❑White European

❑Other   ....

Please state

A2   Do you think people are treated differently because of their skin colour?

❑Yes *Explain below*

❑No   *Explain below*

....

....

....

A3   Is the colour of your skin important to you?

❑Yes *Try and explain below*

❑No   *Try and explain below*

....

....

....

A4 How many of your friends are from the same ethnic group as you?
❑ Most of them
❑ About half of them
❑ Less than half of them
❑ None of them

A5 How many of your friends are the same sex as you?
❑ Most of them
❑ About half of them
❑ Less than half of them
❑ None of them

A6 How do you feel about the statements below? Tick whether you *strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree* with each one.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself				
At times I think I am no good at all				
I feel that I have a number of good qualities				
I am able to do things as well as most other people				
I feel I do not have much to be proud of				
I feel that I am a person of worth, at least equal to others				
I wish I could have more respect for myself				
I often feel that I am a failure				
I take a positive attitude toward myself				
I certainly feel useless at times				

A7 Place **one** tick next to how you feel most people think of you.
❑ They think very well of me
❑ They think fairly well of me
❑ They think fairly poorly of me
❑ They think very poorly of me

A8 Show the **3** most important people who help you to make decisions. Show the most important person as number 1.
❑ Male friends
❑ Teachers
❑ Female friends
❑ Father
❑ Brother
❑ Mother
❑ Sister
❑ Others

....
Please state

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A9 Show how important you think **each** one of these is to you.

	Very important	Important	Not very important
Being a boy			
Being a girl			
Being good at sport			
Being strong			
How clever you are			
The colour of your skin			
The shape of your body			
Wearing fashionable clothes			

You may include others

What is the **single most important thing to you** from the list above?

....

A11 The list below shows a number of things which may be a part of your future. Put a **tick to show whether you think you will experience any of the things below** by the time you are **18, 21, 30** or **perhaps never.**

	18	21	30	Never
Be employed				
Be in education				
Become unemployed				
Get married				
Go on holidays abroad				
Have a full-time job				
Have children				
Live with parents				
Look after your children and home full-time				
Own a business				
Own a car				
Own a computer				
Own your home				
Remain in Leicester				
Work abroad				

Thank you for completing this questionnaire

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Appendix 2

Changing Times questionnaire

Changing Times Survey

Name:
College: Female/Male:
Personal Tutor: Date:

Life at College

L1   What subjects/course have you taken?

....

L2   How satisfied are you with the following aspects of college life?

	Not very satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Subjects/course content			
Guidance from college staff			
Independence allowed by staff			
Social life at college			

L3   How well do you think you have coped in these areas this year?

	Coped very well	Coped fairly well	Not coped that well	Struggled
Progress in academic subjects				
Friendships with other students				
Your relationship with tutors				

L4   Are your parents aware of your progress for this year?
    ❑Yes
    ❑No

L5   Tick whether you *agree* or *disagree* with **each** statement.

	Disagree	Agree
It is important to me that tutors like me.	❑	❑
If I like a tutor I tend to work harder.	❑	❑

L6   Circle the most important thing to you about college.
    (a)Certain lessons
    (b)Female friends
    (c)Male friends
    (d)Particular tutors
    (e)Other

....
Please state

L7   Why did you choose this course/subject at college?

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....

....

L8 Have you wanted to participate in any sport or performances organised by your college?

❑Yes

❑No

L9 **Tick** how often you think about school?

❑All the time

❑Often

❑Not very often

❑Not at all

L10 Think of up to three things which are similar about school and college. Also, think of three things which are different about college compared to when you were at school.

Similar things about school and college	What is different about college

L11 What will you do after July?

❑Attend a different college

❑Continue subjects/course

❑Begin a training course

❑Start employment

❑Begin new subjects/course here

❑Don't know

❑Other...

Please state

Friends, Family and Advisors

F1   Which **three** people have given you the most useful advice about college during this year? Start with **the most useful person as number 1.**

☐Mother   ☐Father
☐Sister   ☐Brother
☐Subject tutor   ☐Student Guidance Officer
☐Course tutor   ☐Careers Officer
☐Female friend   ☐Male friend
☐Other

....

Please state

F2   **Underline one** person who has given you the **most** encouragement about college during this year?

Father   Brother
Mother   Sister
Male friend   Female friend
Personal tutor   Subject Tutor
Careers Officer   Student Guidance Officer
Other...

Please state

F3   **Show** the **three** people who usually help you to make decisions about your future. Begin with the **most important person as number 1.**

☐Female friend
☐Male friend
☐Mother
☐Father
☐Sister
☐Brother
☐Personal tutor
☐Subject tutor
☐Others

....

About You

A1   Circle the letter which describes your ethnic origin the best.

(a)African-Caribbean
(b)Asian
(c)Mixed race
(d)White European
(e)Other

....

A2 How many of your friends are from the same ethnic group as you?

        ❑Most of them
        ❑About half of them
        ❑Less than half
        ❑None of them

A3 How important would it be for you to be with others from the same ethnic background as you in these situations?

	Not very important	Important	Very important
During college lessons			
When socialising at college			
While socialising outside of college			
If you were at work			

A4 How many of your friends are the same sex as you?

        ❑Most of them
        ❑About half of them
        ❑Less than half of them
        ❑None of them

A5 What types of music do you like?

....

A6 The list below shows a number of things which may be a part of your future. Put a **tick to show whether you think you will experience any of the things below** by the time you are **18, 21, 30 or perhaps never.**

	18	21	30	Never
Be employed				
Be in education				
Become unemployed				
Get married				
Go on holidays abroad				
Have a full-time job				
Have children				
Live with parents				
Look after your children and home full-time				
Own a business				
Own a car				
Own a computer				
Own your home				
Remain in Leicester				
Work abroad				

Thank you for completing this questionnaire

Appendix 3

Rosenberg measure of self-esteem

Rosenberg Measure of Self-Esteem

Below are a number of statements. Tick one box which shows whether you *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Disagree*, or *Strongly Disagree* with the following statements?

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.			*	*
2.	At times I think I am no good at all.	*	*		
3.	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.			*	*
4.	I am able to do things as well as most other people.			*	*
5.	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	*	*		
6.	I certainly feel useless at times.	*	*		
7.	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.			*	*
8.	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	*	*		
9.	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	*	*		
10.	I take a positive attitude toward myself.			*	*

* Positive responses to self-esteem items

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Appendix 4

Nowicki-Strickland measure of locus of control

Nowicki-Strickland Measure of Locus of Control

This questionnaire lists a number of views about everyday life. Tick **YES** or **NO** according to whether you feel the statement applies to you. *Try and commit yourself for all of the statements.*

	Yes	**No**
1. Do you believe that most problems will solve themselves if you just leave them alone?	*	
2. Do you believe that you can stop yourself from catching a cold?		*
3. Are some people just born lucky?	*	
4. Most of the time do you feel that getting good grades means a great deal to you?		*
5. Are you often blamed for things that just aren't your fault?	*	
6. Do you believe that if somebody studies hard enough he or she can pass any subject?		*
7. Do you feel that most of the time it doesn't pay to try hard because things never turn out right anyway?	*	
8. Do you feel that if things start out well in the morning that it's going to be a good day no matter what you do?	*	
9. Do you feel that most of the time parents listen to what their children have to say?		*
10. Do you believe that wishing can make good things happen	*	
11. When you get punished does it usually seem its for no good reason at all?	*	
12. Most of the time do you find it hard to change a friend's (mind) opinion?	*	
13. Do you think that cheering more than luck helps a team to win?		*
14. Do you feel that it's nearly impossible to change your parent's mind about anything?	*	
15. Do you believe that your parents should allow you to make the most of your own?		*

	Yes	No
16. Do you feel that when you do something wrong there's very little you can do to make it right?	*	
17. Do you believe that most people are just born good at sports?	*	
18. Are most other people your age stronger than you are?	*	
19. Do you feel that one of the best ways to handle most problems is just not to think about them?	*	
20. Do you feel that you have a lot of choice in deciding whom your friends are?		*
21. If you find a four leaf clover do you believe that it might bring you good luck?	*	
22. Do you often feel that whether you do your homework has much to do with what kind of grades you get?		*
23. Do you feel that when a person your age decides to hit you, there's little you can do to stop him or her?	*	
24. Have you ever had a good luck charm?	*	
25. Do you believe that whether or not people like you depends on how you act?		*
26. Would your parent/s usually help you if you asked them to?		*
27. Have you felt that when people were angry with you it was usually for no reason at all?	*	
28. Most of the time, do you feel that you can change what might happen tomorrow by what you do today?		*
29. Do you believe that when bad things are going to happen they just are going to happen no matter what you try to do to stop them?	*	
30. Do you think that people can get their own way if they just keep trying?	*	
31. Most of the time do you find it useless to try to get your own way at home?		*
32. Do you feel that when good things happen they happen because of hard work?		*
33. Do you feel that when somebody your age wants to be your enemy there's little you can do to change matters?	*	

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	Yes	No
34. Do you feel that it's easy to get friends to do what you want them to?		*
35. Do you feel that you have little to say about what you get to eat at home?	*	
36. Do you feel that when someone doesn't like you there's little you can do about it?	*	
37. Do you usually feel that it's almost useless to try in college because most other students are just plain cleverer than you are?	*	
38. Are you the kind of person who believes that planning ahead makes things turn out better?	*	
39. Most of the time do you feel that you have little to say about what your family decides to do?	*	
40. Do you think it is better to be clever than to be lucky?		*

* *Indicates external response*

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Appendix 5

Interview schedules

Interview Schedule

(Round 1)

1. General - How are you finding college?

       2. *Course*

       3. *Friendships*

       4. *Relationships with tutors*

5. Do you think it has been a good choice?

6. Do you think about school at all?

7. Is college very different from school (positive)?

8. Is college very different from school (negative)?

9. Do you feel different as a college student compared to as a school pupil?

Course

10. How are you coping with college in terms of keeping up with work?

11. Where would you place yourself in a self-assessment - top, middle or towards lower end?

Friendships

12. Do you have the same friends as you did at school?

13. *Do you still see your ex-school friends?*

14. *What are they doing?*

15. *Majority male / female?*

16. *Ethnicity?*

17. Are friendships at college at same level - *talk about social life, college work ...?*

18. *Majority male / female?*

19. *Ethnicity?*

20. Do you socialise with them outside of college?

21. Do you tend to have separate friends at college and outside of college?

Relationships with tutors

22. Are these different to relationships with school teachers?

       More mature?

       Distant / friendly?

23. Do you talk to your parents about college?

24. *Other family members?*

25. Are they aware of how you are coping?

26. Are they pleased with how you are coping?

27.What made you choose College?

Taster Course, School Link ...?

28.Why this particular course? *What influenced your choice?*

Work experience, interested in subject, good career base, Higher Education subject, etc.

29.Who influenced choice?

30.Majority on course, male / female?

31.Ethnic distribution?

32.Feel settled into group / class?

33.Fit in most of the time?

34.Tutor questions to class - *Volunteer answer, say to friend, allow someone else ...?*

35.Role in group work / pairs?

36.Teaching / learning style at college?

37.Very different from school?

38.In what ways?

39.What do you tend to do in your free time at college?

Canteen with friends, study, go into the town centre, go home, etc.

40.Do you participate in any clubs / drama / sport, etc., at college?

41.Overall, is experience here what you expected?

42.Is it very different to school?

43.Thoughts about future - *use course to continue in HE, work, training, undecided, etc.*

Interview Schedule

(Round 2)

(Self Esteem and Locus of Control measures included within this round)

1. If you were asked to, could you name all of the students in your group?
2. Who do you usually work with?
3. Why?
4. List up to three people who you like working with.
5. Why?
6. Is there anyone who you haven't worked with yet?
7. Would you like to work with any of these other students?
8. Why?
9. Is there anyone who you don't like working with?
10. Why?
11. Which people in your group would you class as friends?
12. Why?
13. Do you socialise with them outside of college?
14. Do all of your tutors know your name?
15. Which tutor are you most comfortable with about asking questions?
16. Why?
17. Which tutor are you the least comfortable with?
18. Why?
19. What are your opinions of the course so far?
20. Is this what you expected?
21. How would you say you're progressing with college work?
22. Have you completed any assignments? (Best grade to date.)
23. Do you have any firmer ideas about what you want to do at the end of the course? / Have you changed your mind about what you want to do?
24. What do you think people need to make it there?
25. Do you think that you will make it?
26. Why?

Interview Schedule

(Round 3)

1. Most progression/Least progression in following areas:
    2. Academic progress
    3. Relationships with tutors
    4. Friends in lessons
    5. Social life at college (Same outside of college)
6. Main source of enjoyment overall
7. Least source of enjoyment overall

Plans for next year
    8. Any different to what you thought when you first came here?
    9. What do you want this to lead to?
10. Where do you see yourself in five years time?

Schedule for Tutor Interviews

1. How is student coping with the course?
2. What is student's attendance like?
3. Who does student tend to work with where group/paired work is involved?
4. Were particular friendships struck up in initial weeks of course?
5. What is your relationship like with student?
6. Does student volunteer information if you ask general questions to the class?
7. Have you perceived any changes in student's attitude/behaviour since September?
8. How have other students adjusted to the course?
9. In terms of socialising, do most students seem to fit in?
10. Were there any activities during induction week aimed at familiarising group with one another?
11. Have any of group left the course?
12. When did they leave?
13. Is this usual?
14. What reason/s did they give?
15. Are you aware of what students are aiming for from this course?
16. Would you allow student/s to return for a second year on your course?
17. What is gender balance like across the course as a whole?
18. What is ethnic mix like across the course as a whole?

Appendix 6

After Year 11 univariate frequencies

After Year 11 univariate frequencies

Name of school

		N	%
Valid	School A	194	61.6
	School B	121	38.4
	Total	315	100.0

Sex of pupil

		N	%
Valid	Female	179	57.2
	Male	134	42.8
	Total	313	100.0

Ethnic origin

		N	%
Valid	Other	1	.3
	African Caribbean	7	2.2
	Asian	205	65.7
	Mixed race	9	2.9
	White/European	90	28.8
	Total	312	100.0

The single most important thing about school

		N	%
	Female friends	54	18.4
	Teachers	9	3.1
	Male friends	17	5.8
	Lessons	125	42.5
	Nothing is important	23	7.8
Valid	Learning things	37	12.6
	Being with friends	17	5.8
	School life in general	3	1.0
	Working hard with facilities provided	1	.3
	Good environment	2	.7
	Other	6	2.0
	Total	294	100.0

It is important to me that teachers like me

		N	%
	Disagree	74	24.3
Valid	Agree	231	75.7
	Total	305	100.0

If I like a teacher I tend to work harder

		N	%
	Disagree	87	28.3
Valid	Agree	220	71.7
	Total	307	100.0

Participation in extra curricular activities

		N	%
	No	50	16.5
Valid	Yes	253	83.5
	Total	303	100.0

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Teachers are aware of my plans after Year 11

		N	%
	False	133	43.2
Valid	True	175	56.8
	Total	308	100.0

Intentions after Year 11

		N	%
	Other	1	.3
	Training	16	5.1
Valid	College	248	79.7
	Employment	4	1.3
	Stay on	42	13.5
	Total	311	100.0

Choice of college/company after Year 11

		N	%
	Other	10	3.4
	Not applicable	1	.3
	Marshfield FE College	8	2.7
	Brooks Sixth Form College	53	17.9
	Corpus College	13	4.4
	Acres Hall Sixth Form College	93	31.4
Valid	Regents Sixth Form College	36	12.2
	Quarry Hill FE College	33	11.1
	School B's School Sixth Form	42	14.2
	Farley Sixth Form College	3	1.0
	Southern FE College	3	1.0
	Royal Marines	1	.3
	Total	296	100.0

What is required to get into college/company?

		N	%
	Other	4	1.5
	Not applicable	4	1.5
	Good GCSEs	185	69.3
	Good references	4	1.5
	Already have place	13	4.9
Valid	Good attitude	7	2.6
	Good attendance	7	2.6
	GCSE passes	37	13.9
	No qualifications needed	4	1.5
	Dependent on interview	1	.4
	Pass physical test	1	.4
	Total	267	100.0

	Most important reasons for intentions	N	% of responses
	Does subjects/course/work which I enjoy	235	27.0
	It has a good reputation	188	21.6
	Does subjects/training which I need	142	16.3
	Publicity looked interesting	95	10.9
	Friends are going there	75	8.6
	Family members have been to same/similar	41	4.7
	Teachers encouraged me to apply there	38	4.4
	Parents wanted me to go there	26	3.0
Valid	I haven't decided yet	8	.9
	Facilities	7	.8
	Rate of pay is good	5	.6
	Teachers know me	4	.5
	Wanted change from school	2	.2
	Liked atmosphere	2	.2
	Has good pass marks	2	.2
	Liked teachers	1	.1
	Total	871	100

Person who has given most useful advice about post Year 11 choices

		N	%
	Female friend	5	1.9
	Male friend	10	3.7
	Form teacher	23	8.6
	Careers teacher	132	49.1
	Other teacher	10	3.7
	Other family	5	1.9
	Myself	12	4.5
Valid	Mother	21	7.8
	Father	19	7.1
	Sister	16	5.9
	Brother	9	3.3
	Aunt	2	.7
	Uncle	1	.4
	Grandmother	1	.4
	Parents	3	1.1
	Total	269	100.0

Factor most looking forward to after Year 11

		N	%
	New friends	83	26.9
	New subjects	126	40.8
	New teachers	3	1.0
	Different building	5	1.6
Valid	Having money	9	2.9
	No uniform	4	1.3
	Same friends	4	1.3
	More independence	74	23.9
	Fresh start	1	.3
	Total	309	100.0

Parents' feelings about intentions

		N	%
Valid	Very pleased	137	44.6
	Pleased	128	41.7
	Okay	38	12.4
	Not pleased	3	1.0
	Disappointed	1	.3
	Total	307	100.0

Are people treated differently because of their colour?

		N	%
Valid	No	83	28.9
	Yes	203	70.7
	Other	1	.3
	Total	287	100.0

Why people are/not treated differently

		N	%
	Don't know	5	2.2
	Everyone's fair	16	7.1
	School is multicultural	10	4.4
	Treated the same by most people	6	2.7
	Everyone's equal	16	7.1
	Colour makes no difference	3	1.3
	Sometimes people are treated differently	24	10.7
	Not everyone's fair	3	1.3
	Depends on individual's background	5	2.2
	Racism exists outside of school	3	1.3
	Prejudice/racism begins at sixth form	3	1.3
	Stereotyping exists	31	13.8
Valid	Prejudice exists	48	21.3
	Aspects of language/culture discriminated against	1	.4
	Most people have some form of prejudice	11	4.9
	Can make you feel left out/ignored	4	1.8
	Can lead to name calling	5	2.2
	Appearance is different	18	8.0
	Think others are inferior	5	2.2
	People don't know how to treat me	1	.4
	I'm happy with what I am	1	.4
	Because people don't have the same rights to speak out	2	.9
	Mistrust	2	.9
	Negative attitude and attracts negative response	2	.9
	Total	225	100.0

Is the colour of your skin important to you?

		N	%
	No	163	54.7
Valid	Yes	135	45.3
	Total	298	100.0

Why skin colour is/not important to you

	N	%
Colour attracts different treatment	2	1.1
Positive feelings for culture/religion/background	29	15.3
Positive feelings for self and not negative towards others	10	5.3
Skin colour shows my culture/religion/ background	23	12.1
Skin colour shows who I am	18	9.5
Valid Skin colour is part of who I am	12	6.3
It's who you are that matters not colour	28	14.7
Everyone's equal	38	20.0
Colour doesn't make any difference to treatment	28	14.7
Skin colour is the least of my worries	2	1.1
Total	190	100.0

How many of your friends are from the same ethnic group as you?

		N	%
	None	4	1.3
	Less than half	21	6.8
Valid	Half	46	14.9
	Most	238	77.0
	Total	309	100.0

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How many of your friends are the same sex as you?

		N	*%*
	Less than half	10	3.3
Valid	Half	155	50.5
	Most	142	46.3
	Total	307	100.0

On the whole, I am satisfied with myself

		N	*%*
	Strongly disagree	3	1.0
	Disagree	40	12.9
Valid	Agree	208	67.1
	Strongly agree	59	19.0
	Total	310	100.0

At times I think I am no good at all

		N	*%*
	Strongly agree	28	9.1
	Agree	141	45.9
Valid	Disagree	94	30.6
	Strongly disagree	44	14.3
	Total	307	100.0

I feel that I have a number of good qualities

		N	*%*
	Disagree	20	6.5
Valid	Agree	213	69.4
	Strongly agree	74	24.1
	Total	307	100.0

I am able to do things as well as most other people

		N	%
	Strongly disagree	6	1.9
	Disagree	30	9.7
Valid	Agree	205	66.1
	Strongly agree	69	22.3
	Total	310	100.0
Missing	System	5	
Total		315	

I feel I do not have much to be proud of

		N	%
	Strongly agree	9	2.9
	Agree	52	16.8
Valid	Disagree	166	53.5
	Strongly disagree	83	26.8
	Total	310	100.0

I feel that I am a person of worth, at least equal to others

		N	%
	Strongly disagree	7	2.3
	Disagree	19	6.2
Valid	Agree	189	61.6
	Strongly agree	92	30.0
	Total	307	100.0

I wish I could have more respect for myself

		N	%
	Strongly agree	29	9.5
	Agree	110	35.9
Valid	Disagree	124	40.5
	Strongly disagree	43	14.1
	Total	306	100.0

I often feel that I am a failure

		N	%
	Strongly agree	22	7.2
	Agree	84	27.6
Valid	Disagree	136	44.7
	Strongly disagree	62	20.4
	Total	304	100.0

I take a positive attitude toward myself

		N	%
	Strongly disagree	8	2.7
	Disagree	61	20.3
Valid	Agree	161	53.7
	Strongly agree	70	23.3
	Total	300	100.0

I certainly feel useless at times

		N	%
	Strongly agree	20	6.5
	Agree	130	42.5
Valid	Disagree	94	30.7
	Strongly disagree	62	20.3
	Total	306	100.0

How most people think of me

		N	%
	They think very poorly of me	1	.3
	They think fairly poorly of me	6	2.0
Valid	They think fairly well of me	182	59.7
	They think very well of me	116	38.0
	Total	305	100.0

Those who have assisted Year 11 students in decision-making

	N	% of responses
No-one	1	.1
Female friend	98	11.4
Male friend	36	4.2
Male and female friends	13	1.5
Other	1	.1
Form teacher	77	8.9
Careers teacher	16	1.9
Other teacher	28	3.3
Myself	21	2.4
Mother	195	22.6
Father	168	19.5
Sister	72	8.4
Brother	61	7.1
Aunt	16	1.9
Uncle	20	2.3
Grandmother	8	.9
Grandfather	3	.3
Other relative	21	2.4
Parents	5	.6
Family in general	1	.1
Total	861	100

Importance of being a boy/girl

		N	%
	Not very important	76	25.2
	Important	92	30.6
Valid	Very important	131	43.5
	Not applicable	2	.7
	Total	301	100.0

Importance of being good at sport

		N	%
	Not very important	133	44.2
Valid	Important	117	38.9
	Very important	51	16.9
	Total	301	100.0

Importance of being strong

		N	%
	Not very important	85	27.9
Valid	Important	151	49.5
	Very important	69	22.6
	Total	305	100.0

Importance of being clever

		N	%
	Not very important	45	14.9
Valid	Important	139	46.0
	Very important	118	39.1
	Total	302	100.0

Importance of skin colour

		N	%
Valid	Not very important	192	63.2
	Important	51	16.8
	Very important	61	20.1
	Total	304	100.0

Importance of body shape

		N	%
Valid	Not very important	128	42.2
	Important	125	41.3
	Very important	50	16.5
	Total	303	100.0

Importance of wearing fashionable clothes

		N	%
Valid	Not very important	129	42.6
	Important	123	40.6
	Very important	51	16.8
	Total	303	100.0

Most important aspect of identity

		N	%
Valid	None of them	6	2.2
	Don't know	1	.4
	Not applicable	3	1.1
	Being a boy	11	3.9
	Being a girl	30	10.8
	Being good at sport	18	6.5
	Being strong	34	12.2
	Being clever	110	39.4
	Skin colour	22	7.9

Most important aspect of identity

Body shape	7	2.5
Clothes	9	3.2
Being honest	1	.4
Doing well at school	2	.7
How well people think of me	1	.4
Self belief	2	.7
Emotional and mental strength	8	2.9
Normal	1	.4
Being nice	2	.7
Having friends	2	.7
Being loved	1	.4
Being myself	2	.7
Working hard	1	.4
Without prejudice	1	.4
None of these things	4	1.4
Total	279	100.0

Be employed by age

		N	%
	30	49	16.4
Valid	21	135	45.3
	18	114	38.3
	Total	298	100.0

Be in education by age

		N	%
	Never	19	6.5
	30	8	2.7
Valid	21	54	18.4
	18	212	72.1
	Don't know	1	.3
	Total	294	100.0

Be unemployed by age

		N	%
	Never	213	74.0
	30	41	14.2
Valid	21	9	3.1
	18	20	6.9
	Don't know	5	1.7
	Total	288	100.0

Be married by age

		N	%
	Never	30	10.3
	30	120	41.2
Valid	21	132	45.4
	18	5	1.7
	Don't know	4	1.4
	Total	291	100.0

Go on holidays abroad by age

		N	%
	Never	4	1.4
	30	25	8.4
Valid	21	77	26.0
	18	190	64.2
	Total	296	100.0

Have a full time job by age

		N	%
Valid	Never	1	.3
	30	115	38.7
	21	145	48.8
	18	35	11.8
	Don't know	1	.3
	Total	297	100.0

Have children by age

		N	%
Valid	Never	33	11.3
	30	180	61.4
	21	74	25.3
	18	3	1.0
	Don't know	3	1.0
	Total	293	100.0

Live with parents by age

		N	%
Valid	Never	30	10.4
	30	13	4.5
	21	91	31.5
	18	155	53.6
	Total	289	100.0

Look after children and home by age

		N	%
Valid	Never	155	53.6
	30	114	39.4
	21	17	5.9
	18	1	.3
	Don't know	2	.7
	Total	289	100.0

Own a business by age

		N	%
Valid	Never	93	32.4
	30	157	54.7
	21	22	7.7
	18	5	1.7
	Don't know	10	3.5
	Total	287	100.0

Own a car by age

		N	%
Valid	Never	2	.7
	30	25	8.4
	21	112	37.5
	18	160	53.5
	Total	299	100.0

Own a computer by age

		N	%
Valid	Never	15	5.0
	30	28	9.4
	21	60	20.1
	18	194	64.9
	Don't know	2	.7
	Total	299	100.0

Own a housing property by age

		N	%
Valid	Never	8	2.7
	30	168	57.1
	21	106	36.1
	18	11	3.7
	Don't know	1	.3
	Total	294	100.0

Stay in Leicester by age

		N	%
Valid	Never	73	25.4
	30	82	28.6
	21	76	26.5
	18	51	17.8
	Don't know	5	1.7
	Total	287	100.0

Work abroad by age		N	%
	Never	136	46.6
	30	99	33.9
Valid	21	41	14.0
	18	9	3.1
	Don't know	7	2.4
	Total	292	100.0

Appendix 7

Changing Times univariate frequencies

Changing Times univariate frequencies

College

		N	%
	Marshfield	64	30.5
Valid	Brooks	100	47.6
	Quarry Hill	46	21.9
	Total	210	100.0

Ethnic origin

		N	%
	African-Caribbean	12	5.7
	Asian (all)	101	48.3
Valid	Mixed race	4	1.9
	White (all)	92	44.0
	Total	209	100.0

Gender

		N	%
	Female	100	47.8
Valid	Male	109	52.2
	Total	209	100.0

Course type

		N	%
	A Levels	62	29.8
Valid	GNVQs	119	57.2
	GCSEs	27	13.0
	Total	208	100.0

306

How satisfied are you with the following aspects of college life?
Subjects/course content

		N	%
Valid	Not very satisfied	8	3.9
	Satisfied	148	71.5
	Very satisfied	51	24.6
	Total	207	100.0

How satisfied are you with the following aspects of
college life? Guidance from college staff

		N	%
Valid	Not very satisfied	15	7.2
	Satisfied	148	71.5
	Very satisfied	44	21.3
	Total	207	100.0

How satisfied are you with the following aspects of
college life? Independence allowed by staff

		N	%
Valid	Not very satisfied	12	5.8
	Satisfied	142	68.3
	Very satisfied	54	26.0
	Total	208	100.0

How satisfied are you with the following aspects of
college life? Social life at college

		N	%
Valid	Not very satisfied	47	23.2
	Satisfied	112	55.2
	Very satisfied	44	21.7
	Total	203	100.0

How well do you think you have coped in these areas this year? Progress in academic subjects

		N	%
	Struggled	2	1.0
	Not coped that well	11	5.3
Valid	Coped fairly well	151	72.9
	Coped very well	43	20.8
	Total	207	100.0

How well do you think you have coped in these areas this year? Friendships with other students

		N	%
	Not coped that well	8	3.8
Valid	Coped fairly well	83	39.9
	Coped very well	117	56.3
	Total	208	100.0

How well do you think you have coped in these areas this year? Your relationships with tutors

		N	%
	Not coped that well	7	3.4
Valid	Coped fairly well	122	59.2
	Coped very well	77	37.4
	Total	206	100.0

Are your parents aware of your progress for this year?

		N	%
	No	50	24.5
Valid	Yes	154	75.5
	Total	204	100.0

308

It is important to me that tutors like me

		N	%
	Disagree	59	28.9
Valid	Agree	145	71.1
	Total	204	100.0

If I like a tutor I tend to work harder

		N	%
	Disagree	81	39.9
Valid	Agree	121	59.6
	Don't know	1	.5
	Total	203	100.0

Why did you choose this course/these subjects at college?

		N	%
	To improve grade / Re-sits	23	11.7
	Want to continue subjects at University	10	5.1
	Would like to keep options open	2	1.0
	Interested in these subjects	78	39.6
	Stronger in these subjects	9	4.6
	Useful for future career	49	24.9
	Given guidance by teachers to take these subjects	2	1.0
	Want to continue at A Level next year	5	2.5
	Heard it was a good course	1	.5
Valid	Not yet ready for A Levels	1	.5
	It was the only course I could get into	1	.5
	Interested in these subjects due to Taster Day	1	.5
	Told by parents to take these subjects	1	.5
	Enjoyed these subjects at GCSE	5	2.5
	Useful for future (not University or career related)	3	1.5
	Don't know	3	1.5
	Better than A Levels	1	.5
	Grades not to standard	2	1.0
	Don't know	1	.5
	Total	197	100.0

Have you wanted to participate in any activities organised by your college?

		N	%
	No	130	63.4
Valid	Yes	75	36.6
	Total	205	100.0

Tick how often you think about school

		N	%
	All the time	20	9.8
	Often	90	43.9
Valid	Not very often	78	38.0
	Not at all	17	8.3
	Total	205	100.0

School and college similarities

	N	%
Not a lot of homework	1	.3
Workload	36	11.6
Day trips	2	.6
Teaching approaches	29	9.3
Same friends	8	2.6
Start/finish times	32	10.3
Attendance is necessary	15	4.8
Exams/coursework	20	6.4
Lesson length	11	3.5
Move around to classes	4	1.3
Different people in different subjects	3	1.0
Tutor programme	16	5.1
Lot of pressure	1	.3
Boring	1	.3
Same students in classes	7	2.3
No uniform	4	1.3
Meals	3	10.6
Making friends	7	2.3
Time to socialise	5	1.6
Environment	7	2.3
Nothing	3	1.0
Poor set-up	1	.3
Same subjects	3	1.0
No smoking building	1	.3
Discipline	9	2.9
Furniture	11	3.5
Attitude of students	2	.6
Importance of achieving	9	2.9
Keeping to deadlines	12	3.9
No activities in free time	2	.6
Achieve most in subjects encouraged in	1	.3
Travelling in	1	.3

Call tutors by first name	1	.3
No encouragement of black history/culture	1	.3
Class size	2	.6
Males and females in classes	1	.3
Tutors help you	2	.6
Mixture of people	1	.3
Still some compulsory subjects	1	.3
Being organised	1	.3
Teachers for each lesson	4	1.3
	311	100

School and college differences

	N	%
Not a lot of homework	1	.3
Workload	36	11.6
Day trips	2	.6
Teaching approaches	29	9.3
Same friends	8	2.6
Start/finish times	32	10.3
Attendance is necessary	15	4.8
Exams/coursework	20	6.4
Lesson length	11	3.5
Move around to classes	4	1.3
Different people in different subjects	3	1.0
Tutor programme	16	5.1
Lot of pressure	1	.3
Boring	1	.3
Same students in classes	7	2.3
No uniform	4	1.3
Meals	33	10.6
Making friends	7	2.3
Time to socialise	5	1.6
Environment	7	2.3
Nothing	3	1.0
Poor set-up	1	.3
Same subjects	3	1.0
No smoking building	1	.3
Discipline	9	2.9
Furniture	11	3.5
Attitude of students	2	.6
Importance of achieving	9	2.9
Keeping to deadlines	12	3.9
No activities in free time	2	.6
Achieve most in subjects encouraged in	1	.3
Travelling in	1	.3
Call tutors by first name	1	.3

No encouragement of black history/culture	1	.3
Class size	2	.6
Males and females in classes	1	.3
Tutors help you	2	.6
Mixture of people	1	.3
Still some compulsory subjects	1	.3
Being organised	1	.3
Teachers for each lesson	4	1.3
Total responses	311	100.0

What will you do after July?

		N	%
	Attend a different college	9	4.4
	Continue same subject/course here	122	59.2
	Begin training course	1	.5
	Start employment	4	1.9
	Begin new subjects/course here	31	15.0
	Don't know	18	8.7
Valid	Go to university	4	1.9
	Advanced course	1	.5
	Travel abroad for one year	3	1.5
	Start new / continue same subjects here	8	3.9
	Begin training and start employment	4	1.9
	Possibly training, need to find out more	1	.5
	Total	206	100.0

Advisors on the subject of college

	N	%
Mother	61	11.5
Father	51	9.6
Sister	26	4.9
Brother	25	4.7
Subject tutor	76	14.3
Student Guidance Officer	22	4.2
Course tutor	95	17.9
Careers Officer	46	8.7
Female friend	38	7.2
Male friend	41	7.7
Personal tutor	7	1.3
Grandmother	2	.4

Aunt	5	.9
Uncle	2	.4
Parents	4	.8
Friends	3	.6
Myself	12	2.3
No-one	1	.2
Cousin	2	.4
Other (unspecified)	4	.8
Parents and male friend	1	.2
Head of Department	1	.2
People who previously attended college	1	.2
Mosque Principal	3	.6
Foreman	1	.2
Total responses	530	100.0

Those who have assisted in decision making

	N	%
Mother	119	21.6
Father	100	18.1
Sister	31	5.6
Brother	26	4.7
Subject tutor	43	7.8
Student Guidance Officer	1	.2
Course tutor	1	.2
Careers Officer	3	.5
Female friend	51	9.3
Male friend	49	8.9
Personal tutor	66	12.0
Grandmother	4	.7
Aunt	3	.5
Parents	8	1.5
Friends	3	.5
Myself	28	5.1
No-one	1	.2
Cousin	4	.7
Other (unspecified)	3	.5
Family	3	.5
Wife	1	.2
Mosque Principal	3	.5
Total responses	551	100.0

How many of your friends are from the same ethnic group as you?

		N	%
	None of them	10	4.8
	Less than half of them	22	10.5
Valid	About half of them	47	22.5
	Most of them	130	62.2
	Total	209	100.0

How important would it be for you to be with others from the same ethnic background (College lessons)?

		N	%
	Not very important	158	77.1
Valid	Important	37	18.0
	Very important	10	4.9
	Total	205	100.0

How important would it be for you to be with others from the same ethnic background (Socialising at college)?

		N	%
	Not very important	135	65.9
Valid	Important	53	25.9
	Very important	17	8.3
	Total	205	100.0
	No response	4	
Missing	Spoilt	1	
	Total	5	
Total		210	

How important would it be for you to be with others from the same ethnic background (Socialising outside of college)?

		N	%
Valid	Not very important	122	59.8
	Important	55	27.0
	Very important	27	13.2
	Total	204	100.0

How important would it be for you to be with others from the same ethnic background (at work)?

		N	%
Valid	Not very important	153	78.9
	Important	29	14.9
	Very important	12	6.2
	Total	194	100.0

How many of your friends are the same sex as you?

		N	%
Valid	None of them	2	1.0
	Less than half of them	13	6.3
	About half of them	104	50.7
	Most of them	86	42.0
	Total	205	100.0

Be employed

		N	%
Valid	Maybe never	4	2.0
	Maybe by the time you are 18	85	41.9
	Maybe by the time you are 21	62	30.5
	Maybe by the time you are 30	52	25.6
	Total	203	100.0

Be in education

316

	N	%
Maybe never	9	4.5
Maybe by the time you are 18	116	57.4
Maybe by the time you are 21	72	35.6
Maybe by the time you are 30	4	2.0
Don't know	1	.5
Total	202	100.0

Valid applies to the rows above.

Become unemployed

	N	%
Maybe never	122	66.3
Maybe by the time you are 18	15	8.2
Maybe by the time you are 21	14	7.6
Maybe by the time you are 30	28	15.2
Don't know	5	2.7
Total	184	100.0

Get married

	N	%
Maybe never	13	6.5
Maybe by the time you are 18	4	2.0
Maybe by the time you are 21	55	27.5
Maybe by the time you are 30	127	63.5
Don't know	1	.5
Total	200	100.0

Go on holidays abroad

	N	%
Maybe never	2	1.0
Maybe by the time you are 18	123	61.2
Maybe by the time you are 21	43	21.4
Maybe by the time you are 30	33	16.4
Total	201	100.0

317

Have a full-time job

		N	%
	Maybe never	3	1.5
	Maybe by the time you are 18	21	10.3
Valid	Maybe by the time you are 21	77	37.9
	Maybe by the time you are 30	101	49.8
	Don't know	1	.5
	Total	203	100.0

Have children

		N	%
	Maybe never	13	6.8
	Maybe by the time you are 18	3	1.6
Valid	Maybe by the time you are 21	34	17.7
	Maybe by the time you are 30	140	72.9
	Don't know	2	1.0
	Total	192	100.0

Live with parents

		N	%
	Maybe never	22	11.3
	Maybe by the time you are 18	82	42.1
Valid	Maybe by the time you are 21	60	30.8
	Maybe by the time you are 30	31	15.9
	Total	195	

Look after children and home full-time

		N	%
	Maybe never	103	54.2
	Maybe by the time you are 21	6	3.2
Valid	Maybe by the time you are 30	78	41.1
	Don't know	3	1.6
	Total	190	100.0

318

Own a business

	N	%
Maybe never	70	36.8
Maybe by the time you are 18	3	1.6
Valid Maybe by the time you are 21	15	7.9
Maybe by the time you are 30	96	50.5
Don't know	6	3.2
Total	190	100.0

Own a car

	N	%
Maybe never	2	1.0
Maybe by the time you are 18	86	42.2
Valid Maybe by the time you are 21	76	37.3
Maybe by the time you are 30	39	19.1
Don't know	1	.5
Total	204	100.0

Own a computer

	N	%
Maybe never	14	7.1
Maybe by the time you are 18	110	56.1
Valid Maybe by the time you are 21	46	23.5
Maybe by the time you are 30	25	12.8
214	1	.5
Total	196	100.0

319

Own your home

	N	%
Maybe never	9	4.6
Maybe by the time you are 18	9	4.6
Valid Maybe by the time you are 21	42	21.6
Maybe by the time you are 30	134	69.1
Total	194	100.0

Remain in Leicester

	N	%
Maybe never	48	25.4
Maybe by the time you are 18	33	17.5
Maybe by the time you are 21	44	23.3
Valid Maybe by the time you are 30	57	30.2
Don't know	7	3.7
Total	189	100.0

Work abroad

	N	%
Maybe never	81	41.5
Maybe by the time you are 18	5	2.6
Maybe by the time you are 21	28	14.4
Valid Maybe by the time you are 30	72	36.9
Don't know	9	4.6
Total	195	100.0

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