Community Liaison Unit

Community Perceptions of

Forced Marriage

Yunas Samad and John Eade

University of Bradford

and

University of Surrey Roehampton

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is an analytical report for the Community Liaison Unit (CLU), '*Community Perceptions of Forced Marriage'.* This report provides the context, explores the problems and the perceptions of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities of forced marriages. Therefore, this report represents a comprehensive and rigorous synthesis of existing research evidence combined with primary data collected specifically for the report.

Chapter One

Reviews the original aims of the research project and how they will be met by this report. It clearly sets out the focus of the research and delineates closely related issues that will not be investigated. It considers a variety of perspectives, assessing their strengths and weaknesses, and then explains the strengths of a multi-dimensional approach and how this can be actualised in terms of method. It also discusses the following:-

- Pros and Cons of Different Approaches

- Methodology

- This Research as a Comparative Study

- Data Collection

- Limitations of the Research

Chapter Two

Provides the local context within which the two communities are located showing that they both are primarily rural in origin, working class, have low human capital and a substantial young population. The middle class professionals and elderly population are relatively small, both at national and local levels. Both groups suffer from a high degree of social stress making them dependent on bonding social capital, based in kin networks, to establish niches in the labour market.

- Bradford
    - History of migration
    - Demography
    - Social Stress
    - Employment and Unemployment
    - Education
- Tower Hamlets
    - Economic and Cultural Background
    - History of Migration
    - Age and Sex Ratios
    - Social Stress: National and Local Data
    - Education

Chapter Three

Examines marriage practices amongst Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities within the context of marriage and Britain generally, in among minority groups specifically. It provides an overview of endogamous marriage practices and examines factors that are salient to understanding forced marriages. It evaluates the following: -

• Marriage

• Group Boundaries and Marriage

• Kinship and Marriage

• Caste

• Honour

• Arranged and Love Marriages

• Trans-continental Marriages

This chapter reviews marriage practices, examining factors for high rates of marriage amongst the communities and the phenomenon of endogamy. Endogamous marriages are used to reinforce kinship of networks and group boundaries and to maintain the cultural distinctiveness of the group and its identity. However, both communities are highly diverse and marriage is conducted between sub-groups within these communities. Caste hierarchy and status are important motivating factors in the arrangements of marriage. Arranged marriages are not contracted between individuals but between families and families invest in the stability and success of marriages because

divorce and separation can result in inter-family feuding. There are various forms of arranged marriages and the social class and educational backgrounds of parents are closely linked to the degree of choice that is offered to children in the arrangement of marriages. 'Traditional' arranged marriages are most common amongst the least qualified and the working class. Trans-continental marriages are associated with a limited marriage pool and the need to find sub-groups of similar status, educational and class backgrounds, and will thus persist into the foreseeable future.

Chapter Four

Examines the causes of and the debates on forced marriages within the communities. A detailed examination of the forced marriage issue is followed by an analysis of community discussions about it. It discusses the following issues: -

- Forced Marriage - Definition and Numbers

- Motives of Forced Marriages

- Debates on Forced Marriages

- Parental Love, Duty and Reciprocity

- Denial about Forced Marriages

- Gender and Ethnicity

- Honour and Men in the Public Sphere

The chapter examines the definition of forced marriage in detail, considers various views on the extent of the problem and explores demographic explanations for the problem. While the motivations involved in forced marriages are complex, the chapter demonstrates that liaisons with the opposite sex are an important trigger for instigating the process of forced marriage. Communities have become reflective about the issue and realise that forced marriages do not work. Divorce, separation and running away from home are some of the consequences. The elderly are being forced to adjust and adapt in reaction to their children's demand for greater choice. While they want young people to accept their marriage decisions, the elderly are aware they cannot force them. Middle-aged participants believe that forced marriage will die out because they realise the un-Islamic nature of the practice. This group is acutely aware that they need to make pragmatic decisions to accommodate the wishes of their children or they will suffer dishonour by them running away. The general consensus is that force is unacceptable but community understanding of coercion does not include emotional and psychological pressure. This issue crops up in delicate situations such as inter-religious relations. Women, due to socialisation, are important enforcers of patriarchal norms and in many cases are the active agents in the process of forced marriages.

Chapter Five

Examines generational differences in greater detail. It first defines the ambiguity of the categories `generation' and `youth' and then explores differences between young and old. The main issues covered are: -

• Religion and Culture

• Social Change, Parents and Arranged Marriage

• Trans-continental Marriage

• Social Class and the Rise of Individualism

Generational differences are clearly emerging in a number of areas. The first area is the emergence of linguistic change, mainly among Pakistanis, where we are seeing English becoming the main language of communication. The young tend to identify themselves as Muslim, although this is truer for Pakistanis than Bangladeshis due to their different heritage. This is not an example of increasing religiosity but a shift in social identity. The shift is reflected in the difference between generations over what are considered to be important criteria for matrimony. Elders argue that religious and cultural factors should be taken into account, meaning that the person should be from the same ethnic group, while young people are saying that only religion is important. Marrying outside the ethnic group is acceptable, but marrying outside one's religion is unacceptable. Parents recognise the ground reality that their children's expectations of marriage are different, and are being forced to become more flexible or face unacceptable situations such as their

offspring running away. Trans-continental marriages are another area of difference. Young people argued that linguistic and cultural compatibility is important and only if appropriate candidates were not found in Britain would they look for a partner in South Asia. They do accept the concept of arranged marriage, but want a greater degree of choice and show a clear preference for marrying someone already living in Britain. For women educational compatibility is an important criterion. Young people are concerned also that community leaders have not adequately and seriously addressed the issue of forced marriage and show little confidence in them.

Chapter Six

Considers the very strong response from the community about the project itself. It covers the following areas: -

•   Race and Islamophobia

•   Immigration

These issues emerge spontaneously from the focus groups and indicate the sensitivity to the topic that was being investigated. The range of opinion was strongest amongst the elderly but was still evident among the youth. The research was seen as part of a veiled threat against arranged marriages. The reaction showed how important it was for policy initiatives to be articulated in a sensitive manner, otherwise they would face a hostile community rallying around the accusation that the government's interest in forced marriages was an example of racism and Islamophobia.

Chapter Seven

Draws together the various findings that were explored and analysed in the body of the report and the annex, summarising the main points raised in the individual sections.

Annex 1

Reviews the national demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities within the context of minority ethnic groups in general. Providing a national context for the data examined in chapter 2, it explores the following: -

- Spatial Distribution
- Population Size and Growth Rate
- Age Structure and Sex Ratio
- Employment, Unemployment and Self-employment
- Human Capital.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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GLOSSARY

Azad	Free
Affines	Kinship relations arising through marriage
Biraderi	Patrilineal kinship group in the Punjab
Bonding social capital	The social glue that results in strong group solidarity such as dense ethnic networks which provide crucial social and psychological community support.
Collectivity	Any grouping of individuals that brings together the actors as a composite unit such as a nation, ethnic group or women's group.
Cross-cousin	Father's cousin marrying mother's cousin or visa versa.
Endogamy	Marrying within a clan or tribe
Essentialist	Pertaining to an essence of anything or representing absolute truths.
Ethnic Minority	Is a term used to denote people of South Asian, Black Caribbean and Black African origin. It's a broad umbrella term used deliberately to signify reference to a wide variety of minority groups that are strictly ethnic. These categories are based on the 1991 census.
Gatekeeper	Someone who controls access to information or to a particular group.
Gusthi	Patrilineages in Bangladesh
Haraam	Illegal
Heuristic	Any general concept which is framed merely as an aid to analysis but not an end in itself.
Homogamy	The selection of a partner from a similar social background
Human capital	A person's educational and social assets
Izzat	Prestige, honour
Jati	Occupational hierarchy
Khandan	Extended family
Lascar	Sailor
Qaum	Tribe or caste
Salariat	White-collar employment
Sharam	Shame
Umma	Islamic community
Zat/Jaat	Caste, former is in Urdu/Punjabi and the latter is in Bengali

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The report of the Home Office Working Group on Forced Marriages (A Choice by Right 2000), has highlighted a serious but neglected issue. Its remit was to probe the extent of forced marriages, engage with relevant service delivery agencies, affected communities and relevant non-governmental organisations, stimulate public debate to raise awareness and develop a comprehensive strategy for tackling this issue including preventative measures (Ibid, 2000: 28).

The Working Group attempted to discover the number of forced marriage cases but was unable to produce a definitive figure. This report will not cover the same ground. It takes its cue from Baroness Scotland of Asthal's statement that the key to this problem lies within the communities themselves and that the government must be guided by these communities (Scotland 2000). However, a better understanding of how communities perceive the issue of forced marriages is required before strategies for working with them are developed. Our study explores the insiders' views of the issues and we outline the main areas of concern raised by different sections within the communities.

While the issue of forced marriages is not restricted to a particular racial, ethnic

or religious group, it does seem to be more common where the practice of arranged marriage is the norm. As many social scientists have pointed out, in many respects the practice of arranged marriage is not very different from marriage practices among white people, because the latter still recruit their partners from the same nationality, ethnic and racial group, socio-economic background and religion. Those who do not conform to these norms, in some circumstances, suffer sanctions, ranging from disapproval to ostracism (The Bradford Commission Report 1996). It is in this wider social context that arranged marriage among South Asian communities needs to be considered.

Contemporary understandings of community no longer accept notions of identity as essentialist and unproblematic. Ethnic communities, as many writers have argued, are not homogeneous since their members vary according to language, religion, gender, generation, social class, sexuality and political persuasion (Ranger 1996). To understand this diversity we need to use a much more mobile and subtle understanding of community. The same applies to discussions of community identity. Identity is a process which is hybrid and varies over time, space and place; a process that is always becoming but never completed (Hall 1996, Jackson and Penrose 1993).

Pros and Cons of Different Approaches

The issue of forced marriage can be approached from a number of theoretical perspectives. Different analytical approaches produce results that emphasise a particular aspect of the issue. The concern here is that the issues are multidimensional and so we need to engage with a number of perspectives.

An ethnic perspective would locate the phenomenon within the wider context of arranged marriages, especially endogamous marriages. Forced marriages could, therefore, be seen as an extreme extension of endogamy practices and not the result of arranged marriages. The difficulty with this approach is the tendency to focus on culture or religion to the exclusion of other factors.

Generation is another approach and the study should be alert to the variations due to generation that occur within communities. It illuminates inter-generational debates and discourses that are taking place. The limitation of this approach would be that generation has to be triangulated with other factors to have explanatory properties.

The perspective of gender is central to the issue of forced marriage, in particular the role of women in the reproduction of the community. Women's membership of a collectivity is similar to that of men, and women are active participants in community struggles. However women are, generally, the symbols of the collectivity while men act to represent it. Ethnic boundaries are often dependant

on gender attributes organised around sexuality, marriage and the family. These socially constructed markers of 'honour, purity, the mothering of patriots, reproducers of nation, transmitters of ethnic cultures' make women symbols of the collectivity and their reproducers (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992: 113-4, Lutz, Phoenix, Yuval Davis 1995:9-10). Hence the heightened sensitivity over critical public examination of minority ethnic affairs. The gender approach sees forced marriages as symptomatic of wider issues associated with domestic violence. It is inextricably associated with control of women, especially their sexuality. Critics, however, point out that forced marriages are not only about women - they also affect men and gender variations need to be accommodated in any heuristic approach.

The fourth perspective examines the issue in terms of social class. Here we need to be aware that the relationship between social class and ethnicity is problematic and that multiple factors need to be built into the concept of social class (Smith *et al* 2000). If forced marriages are located within the category of domestic violence then evidence shows that domestic violence takes place across class lines. Social class is an important variable but is not a defining indicator in its own right and must be cross-referenced with other variables.

In outlining these possible approaches we confront the problem, which Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis (1993) elaborated in their influential book

Racialized Boundaries. The difficulty of following a single approach, whether it is ethnicity, patriarchy or social class, leads to a series of disconnected worlds where oppression in one category does not link up with other categories and forms of oppression. Clearly, real life experiences of individuals are far more complex and each perspective can only explain a part of the general picture. A multi-dimensional approach is needed which brings these perspectives together so that a more comprehensive analysis can be made which bears a closer resemblance to people's lived experiences. The approach that was adopted for the research was to examine the issue of forced marriages from a perspective that accommodates ethnicity, gender, generation and social class.

The sensitivity of the research requires that racial, ethnic and religious stereotypes do not influence the research methodology, the assumptions of the research itself and any policy implications that may emerge from the research. Closely linked to these concerns is the public examination of cultural issues that are normally kept within the private realm of ethnic communities. Any discussion about the policy implications that may emerge to address the issue of forced marriage has to consider the sensitivity of the communities whose marriage practices are being subjected to public debate. The issue of religion and religious discrimination is also involved here. The accusation of Islamophobia can be quickly raised because the research focuses on two Muslim communities: Pakistani and Bangladeshi. The two issues combine to produce concerns that

racial stereotypes are shaping the public debate about forced marriages and the policy initiatives that may emerge. It is only through an approach which problematises ethnicity and culture as contested terrains, that these concerns can be dealt with. Recognition of the internal diversity within communities provides the basis for a more refined and nuanced understanding of the complex social space occupied by community.

Ideally it would have been preferable to have conducted a study investigating forced marriage practices among all minority ethnic communities where cases of forced marriages have been registered. Such a study would have covered other communities. Here, because of limited time and resources, we could only deal with two communities: the Bangladeshi community in Tower Hamlets and the Pakistani community in Bradford. These communities were chosen because most of the forced marriage cases handled by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office involve women and men from these communities. Although not all members of these communities are Muslim, all the cases the FCO handle from these communities involve Muslim women and men. Interestingly Islam was brought up by the participants in the focus groups as a key issue in the discussion of marriage. As a result of this Islam is a central feature of the report. However, the report did not set out to conduct a study of marriage in Islam per se.

The report does not deal, therefore, with forced marriages globally and we

recognise that further research may be warranted on this issue. Another limitation of the research is that we are only able to consider perceptions of the people involved in the UK and did not investigate the motives of relatives involved in the marriage abroad. Often the arrangement for the wedding is done by close relatives in the country of origin and their beliefs may have a bearing on the actions of the parents in the UK The research also excluded cases of forced marriages which did not involve an overseas marriage.

While there was general agreement over the definition of forced marriage, NGOs were frequently unclear as to who should be included in this category. Certain cases of domestic violence and forced marriages were conflated. This study exclusively focuses on British citizens, brought up in the UK and forced into marriages in their parents' country of origin. We have excluded non-British citizen women, who enter the UK as spouses and are then subject to domestic violence. The situation of women brought to the UK as spouses and ill-treated by in-laws is a cause for concern and worthy of further research but is not the focus of this report.

Methodology

A Comparative Study

This report on forced marriage is based on a comparative study of Pakistanis in

Bradford and Bangladeshis in Tower Hamlets. We concentrated on these two populations and localities because (a) most forced marriage cases handled by government involved Pakistanis and Bangladeshis (b) Bradford and Tower Hamlets were the heartlands of these two communities.

The comparison was carried out with the intention of revealing the complexities of the phenomenon known as forced marriage. These complexities are shaped by the interaction between demographic forces, on the one hand, and social, cultural, economic and political forces on the other. They involve both populations, even though most reports of forced marriage have concerned Pakistanis rather than Bangladeshis. In other words, the forced marriage issue is not peculiar to one community. We want to show, therefore, the reasons why the issue involves both populations as well as the particular ways in which Pakistanis and Bangladeshis understand the forced marriage issue. In so doing we hope to avoid the inherent danger of both playing one people off against another and stereotyping them.

Data Collection

Evidence was collected from a variety of sources. Statistical data was collated from various population surveys, both national and local, to establish the key demographic changes affecting both communities during the last twenty years. Other secondary material was used in order to establish the social, cultural and

economic background but the primary data was collected through the focus groups in Bradford and Tower Hamlets as well as one to one interviews with gatekeepers. These groups were chosen according to age and gender and were led by researchers who were fluent in the appropriate South Asian languages as well as in English.

The sample of interviewees in each setting consists of the following:

One to one interviews with gatekeepers   20 per site

Group interviews   24 per site with two sets, one for working class and another for middle class

Age	Men	Women
55+	2 groups	2 groups
25-54	2 groups	2 groups
16-24	2 groups	2 groups

The researchers' skill in setting up the focus group meetings was vital to the project since they had to operate in difficult circumstances given the problems of post-Bradford Riots and after the destruction of the Word Trade Centre's twin towers on September 11, 2001. There was increased tension against Muslims and

this produced a reluctance to participate in a research project, which was perceived as hostile. These problems particularly hampered the research in Bradford but, in early 2002, focus group meetings were resumed in both localities and the targets achieved.

Limitations of the research

The researchers were acutely aware that the study may have been perceived as intrusion into cultural practices and that perception may have impacted on the responses made in the interviews. The view that the research was part of an Islamophobic/anti-Muslim government policy was openly voiced by educated males. It is possible that this may have led to the downplaying of forced marriages in the findings. The team was acutely sensitive to the notion that boundaries between insiders and outsiders depend upon both sides perceiving differences. Insiders are, therefore, aware of outsiders' beliefs about their distinctiveness as a group and outsiders' opinions and actions play a part in the maintenance of in-group boundaries.

The methodology adopted was to avoid these insider/outsider problems and how this may influence answers given by the focus groups. The strategy adopted by the research team was to ensure that ethnic and gender matching of the researchers conducting the interviews would overcome any potential resistance there might have been to speaking openly or critically about forced marriages.

Furthermore, the topic guide used in the focus groups initiated discussion by looking at the question of marriage as a whole rather than simply asking for views on forced marriages.

The focus groups followed a standard format, contextualising the discussions on forced marriages within the wider framework of South Asian endogamous marriages and how this framework has functioned and changed in Britain. The focus groups explored the motives for people marrying and then proceeded to discuss particular forms of marriages – arranged, love and forced marriage. Participants were encouraged to express their individual views and to reflect on various scenarios, which involved situations where young men or women might find themselves under pressure to marry. They also spontaneously expressed their opinions on a number of issues, such as the interest shown by the government and the media in forced marriages. The lively responses from most of the focus groups to this format provided a vivid insight into the nuances of Pakistani and Bangladeshi responses to the forced marriage issue. The voices of community members are expressed through numerous quotations and are also located within an analytical framework to elucidate their meaning. The construction of the analysis was merely an aid to clarify the meaning of individual points of views expressed in the group interviews. Thus our analysis attempts to represent sociologically the ways in which the groups construct a hierarchy of meaning.

CHAPTER TWO

BRADFORD AND TOWER HAMLETS:

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Introduction

The demographic and socio-economic context of the Pakistanis in Bradford and Bangladeshis in Tower Hamlets is explored in this chapter. Both groups share many features with other ethnic minorities and are dissimilar in other ways. The national characteristics are developed in detail and can be found in Annex 1. There is some overlap, with the national figures and the data for the local level producing some repetition of information. This is unavoidable as it cannot be assumed that national characteristics will be reproduced on the local level, since some localities show considerable variation from the national trend. The Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities in Bradford and Tower Hamlets are representative of the national trend for these two groups. Social-economic issues that are examined and illustrated in this chapter influence some of the cultural practices, which are discussed later in the report. We argue that, as well as culture, demographic and socio-economic factors are important determinants in explaining the issue of forced marriage.

Bradford

History of migration

The Bradford Metropolitan District is situated west of Leeds; north of the trans-Pennine highway. To the north and east lies North Yorkshire, with its manor houses, farms and cathedral cities, while to the west and north lies the Lake District.

The city has been the centre of the wool trade since the 18th century and, until recently, wool dominated the local economy. Even the engineering and chemical industries were associated with the wool trade by supplying the needs of the textile industry. Throughout the 19th century it was mainly a working class city structured around a low wage economy. The global networks, stretching out to the colonies, in particular, were constructed around importing wool and reprocessing it for export. These networks persisted into the mid-twentieth century.

This global movement of commodities was accompanied by the movement of labour and a wide range of people, following different religious traditions, settled in the city (Bradford Commission 1996). The Irish and Germans migrated to the city before the Second World War, followed by Poles, Ukrainians and Italians in the 1940s. During the 1950s and 1960s new arrivals came from the

New Commonwealth. There has been considerable debate as to the motivations of the recent arrivals. The literature is structured around competing theories of push and pull factors; the main push factors being the economic and political conditions in the country of origin while the pull factors were primarily a demand for cheap labour during the post-war period.

Push/pull factors are not the only forces at work, however. Social anthropologists have been quick to point to the cultural dimensions which also play a role in migration. Chain migration is influenced by the degree of community consciousness and, in the case of Mirpuris, this consciousness was deeply shaped by their *biraderi* system.

In Bradford a combination of push and pull factors, combining with cultural resources, facilitated the settlement of Pakistanis. It is estimated that 50 per cent of Pakistanis in Britain are from Azad Kashmir (Ballard 1991) and most of these are from one district in particular – Mirpur – as well as the southern part of Kotli district. Azad Kashmiris are culturally and linguistically part of the Punjabi heartland but, under colonial rule, they did not benefit in the same way as the rest of the Punjab. The Punjab was the Sword Arm of the Empire and provided substantial military recruitment to the British Indian Army. Consequently, the region was developed so that discontent would not affect the army.

What is known as Azad Kashmir today was part of the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir. Princely states were autonomous in their internal affairs and their inhabitants were excluded from military recruitment. Mirpuris established instead a niche in the engine rooms of the British merchant navy before the Second World War. With the outbreak of hostilities many worked in the munitions factories in South Shields, establishing a bridgehead which facilitated the arrival of their fellow countrymen. New opportunities arose with the acute labour shortage after the Second World War and British firms encouraged labour migration to fill the vacancies and Mirpuris filled in these gaps. These pioneers created the foundation for the process of chain-migration which took place in the post-war era. Substantial numbers of Mirpuris called their families and clansmen to join them in the United Kingdom. The impetus to migrate was facilitated by the construction of the Mangla Dam, since the World Bank financed compensation for those whose homes were submerged by the lake which the dam created. Many used this compensation to finance their move to Britain. A third of a million settled in Britain - half the population of Mirpur's villages - resulting in significant flows of remittances back to the villages of origin (Ballard 1991, Dayha 1974, Saifullah-Khan 1976)

Demography

The Pakistani demographic profile (figure 2.1) shows a substantial young population and a much smaller population of elders, with more males than

females.

Figure 2.1: Population for the Bradford District by Age and Ethnic Group 1998

Population	0-4	5-15	16-17	18-retired	Retired-74	75+	Total
White	23,600	4,800	9,800	225,950	44,150	31,000	389,250
Black-Caribbean	400	1,300	200	3,850	450	100	6,200
Indian	950	2,400	500	8,650	700	200	13,450
Pakistani	10,050	16,100	3,050	33,900	2,200	300	65,650
Bangladeshi	750	1,400	250	2,600	150		5,200
Other	500	1,850	300	3,800	200	50	6,700
All groups	36,300	27,900	14,100	278,700	47,800	31,650	486,400

Source: Bradford Council's Population Forecasts 1991-2001

Forty-four per cent of the Pakistani population are aged under 17, while barely 4 per cent are over 65. This population is continuously topped up by a trickle of immigration (mostly spouses), estimated between 600 and 700 per year (Simpson 1997)

The ethnic minorities of Bradford are concentrated in the `inner city'. The definition of the inner city, as pointed out by the Bradford Commission (1996), is highly ambiguous and different official bodies use different criteria, reflecting their specific responsibilities. The Police, Education, Health, Social Services and voluntary bodies work with different boundaries, influenced by different funding formulas, institutional structures and their prioritisations of certain issues and interests. Temporal and social change also influences the way the inner city is constructed:

> Some official publications classify the inner city in Bradford as composed of five electoral wards and the outer city as composed of

> some 15 wards, on the basis of demographic trends … Although inner city Bradford, defined in this way, is often portrayed as an area inhabited predominantly by Pakistanis, the majority of residents are White (Bradford Commission 1996).

Most ethnic minority citizens are concentrated in the inner city and in five wards in particular - Heaton, Toller, University, Little Horton and Bradford Moor - which have 20 per cent or more of their population belonging to ethnic minority groups. The highest concentrations of Pakistanis are found in Toller, University, Little Horton and Heaton, and they dominate the inner city outnumbering all the other ethnic minorities. Bradford Moor and Toller wards have over fifty per cent of their population from the Pakistani community, while University ward contains over seventy per cent (OPCS 1993).

Social Stress

According to the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions Index of Local Deprivation Bradford is ranked 64th out of 354 districts in the country and Little Horton ward was the 42nd most deprived in the country (DETR 2000, 2000a). The Bradford Metropolitan Council survey reveals that out of the 11 wards in the district showing high measures of multiple stress three of them, Manningham, Girlington and West Bowling wards, contained high proportions of Pakistanis (BDEIS 1995: 50).

Employment and Unemployment

The transformation of the economy, particularly due to de-industrialisation, has been a major cause for concern. Between 1961 and 1991 the labour market rapidly contracted resulting in the loss of 31,600 jobs. In 1961 just under 60 per cent of employment, representing 127,400 jobs, was in manufacturing, while 35.5 per cent or 75,700 jobs were in the service sector. In 1991 this position was reversed with the service sector employing just under 68 per cent or 122,500 jobs and manufacturing employing around 27 per cent or 49,700 jobs. Mechanical engineering and textiles continued to downsize but there has been growth in the electronic, chemical and printing sectors (BDEIS 1995: 19).

The 1991 Census showed unemployment among Pakistani males at over 35 per cent and fractionally higher among Pakistani women. Only Bangladeshi males came close to these rates of unemployment. Pakistani male unemployment was nearly three times higher than White male unemployment and nearly six times higher than White female unemployment (OPCS 1993). The Bradford Commission noted that '700 or 1,000 new jobs per year were needed to maintain current levels of employment, and many more if unemployment was to disappear' (1996). The situation in 1998 improved with unemployment among Pakistanis falling to 21 per cent but this was still considerably higher than the White unemployment rate of just over 5 per cent (BDPIS). What is particularly worrying is that youth unemployment is just as high and also has a strong ethnic bias. Unemployment among Pakistani young men is more than twice as high as

it is for young Whites. In 1999 youth unemployment in University ward was estimated to be as high as 20 per cent (BDPIS a).

Education

The OFSTED report on Bradford (2000) is critical of the LEA for serving the district so poorly. It blames poor leadership, political and professional, as the primary cause. At Key Stage 2 44 out of the 59 middle schools were below benchmark standards. At Key stage 3 the difference from the national average narrows, but the percentage of students attaining five or more subjects A*-C is 32.3 per cent compared to the nationals standard of 46.3 per cent. Underperformance among Pakistani boys, whose pass rate (at the level of 5 GCSEs at grades A-C) is 17 per cent is even more worrying.

Tower Hamlets

Economic and Cultural Background

Bradford and Tower Hamlets have a lot in common socially and economically. Tower Hamlets also has a long history of immigration shaped by periodic waves of overseas settlers – French Protestants during the late 17th century, Irish Catholics in the 18th and 19th centuries, Polish and Russian Jews in the late 19th century, and more recently Maltese, Cypriot, Somali and Bangladeshi arrivals. These newcomers usually found work in the small industries and retail outlets

north of the docks. Bangladeshis were the latest immigrants to revive the garment industry and to create an ethnic enclave of small shops, cafes, restaurants, taxi companies and travel agencies.

During the 1980s and 1990s, however, the garment industry's fortunes declined while a second and third generation of Bangladeshis has emerged eager to find work outside the ethnic niche created by their elders. New opportunities have been created by the dramatic redevelopment of `Docklands' to the south of the borough, but the companies attracted to this alternative to the City of London have brought their own workforces or require skills which young Bangladeshis lack. High rates of youth unemployment coexist with an expanding informal economy, where drugs play a prominent role.

Culturally, since the vast majority are Muslims, an important feature of the last twenty years has been the growing power of Muslim institutions and Islamic organisations based in Bangladesh and the Middle East. The arrival of wives and dependants during the 1980s and 1990s has resulted in a greater emphasis on the norms and values of Muslim family life. Another key issue has been language. The Sylheti first generation has clung to local dialects, while the pressures of Bangladeshi nationalism have encouraged the teaching of standard Bengali in state and community schools.

History of Migration

Although concentrations of Bangladeshi residents can be found in other London boroughs, as well as Oldham, Luton and the East Midlands, the 1991 Census revealed that almost a quarter of Britain's Bangladeshi population was to be found in Tower Hamlets. This borough's Bangladeshi population comes predominantly from the north-eastern district of Sylhet. Sylheti sailors (*lascars*) have been associated with Tower Hamlets since at least the early 19th century but the settlement of large numbers of Sylhetis did not begin until the 1960s and 1970s.

Socially, the key features of this migration are (a) the familiar process of chain migration from clusters of villages supported by (b) strong family and kinship ties. These have ensured the maintenance of powerful economic ties through the flow of remittances from Britain to Bangladesh. However, increasing investment in Britain, through education, housing and consumer goods, may be diminishing this flow of remittances.

Age and Sex Ratios

Tower Hamlets' Bangladeshi population is a very young one. In terms of the balance between the sexes the ONS 2001 figures indicate that, nationally, there is almost parity (102:100) between the ages of 15 and 29 but there are many more men than women in the 30 to 44 age range (150:100). However, the national

picture is reversed at the Tower Hamlets level. According to the London Research Centre the ratio between men and women in the 26 to 35 age range is 100 to 146 (Eversley 2001:18). As Eversley notes, the key issue among the largest concentration of Bangladeshis in Britain, therefore, may be the belief that there is 'a shortage of eligible, suitable men' (Ibid.). Approximately two-thirds of women marry between 20 and 24, while probably less than 10 per cent of both genders marry before 20.

Social Stress: national and local data

According to the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions Index of Local Deprivation Tower Hamlets is ranked as the most deprived district out of 354 districts in the country and Spitalfields, Lansbury and Weavers wards are the 46th, 47th and 49th most deprived in the country (DETR 2000, 2000a).

Bangladeshi men initially found work in the local garment industry, hotels and hospitals. An ethnic economic enclave has been developed through the expansion of small shops, restaurants, cafés and taxi services. The second generation has also moved into local government, welfare and social service provision and professional occupations. Women have been far less economically active, although statistics may not reveal those involved in home-working for the garment industry.

At the same time Bangladeshis suffer high rates of unemployment. In 1991 22.7 per cent of British Bangladeshi males 16 years and older were unemployed compared with the national average of 12.6 per cent. Although there are no recent figures for the rate of Bangladeshi unemployment in Tower Hamlets, we know that unemployment in this borough is very high (13.6 per cent of the total population was unemployed in 1998 compared with the national average of 4.6 per cent) and that the Bangladeshi unemployment rate is likely to be even higher. For example, the Spitalfields ward, which contained the highest proportion of Bangladeshi residents nationally in 1991, also had the worst unemployment record – 24.3 per cent for men and 20.3 per cent for women compared with borough averages of 17.4 per cent and 7.7 per cent respectively (Tower Hamlets 1999). In another ward where 51 per cent of the residents on the large Ocean Estate opposite Queen Mary College (London University) were Bangladeshi, 90 per cent of those between 17 and 18 were `Asian', while only 66 per cent of men and 32 per cent of women were `economically active' (Carey 2000: 13).

Education

Tower Hamlets has also a poor record of educational achievement, although the arrival of White professionals employed in the Docklands wards may be changing this. By 1998 54.2 per cent of the borough's school population were Bangladeshi and only 28.3 per cent were White (ethnicity recorded as England,

Scotland or Wales [ESW]).

Even so during the 1990s the third generation of Bangladeshis have been more successful than their White counterparts and Bangladeshi female students have fared better than their Bangladeshi male peers. In 1998 36.6 per cent of Bangladeshi females passed five of more GCSEs at A* to C, compared with 29.7 per cent of Bangladeshi males, 24.9 per cent of ESW girls and 17.6 per cent ESW boys (Ibid). These rates of success are encouraging Bangladeshis from the third generation to attend one of several universities nearby (especially London Guildhall University, Queen Mary College and the University of East London) and to look for jobs outside the ethnic economic enclave. At the same time, as we have already noted, educational achievement is not necessarily being turned into local jobs: ambitious Bangladeshis will have to look further afield - across the global city and even further. One indication of this more outward vision is the movement of Bangladeshi homeowners out of Tower Hamlets as they take advantage of the substantial increase in equity and buy more desirable accommodation in London's eastern suburbs.

Conclusion

Unemployment, multiple social stress and educational underperformance characterise both communities. In terms of age structure both communities are

young with Bangladeshis having an even younger population than the Pakistanis. Both are primarily working class communities of rural origin, unemployment is high among both communities for both men and women and the figures for youth unemployment are worryingly high. Both urban areas are deprived localities containing some of the poorest wards in the country. Human capital is low but increasing among the younger generation, mainly among girls. This also has an important effect on their success in the labour market. However, the London effect appears to benefit Bangladeshis and the Tower Hamlets LEA has shown better leadership resulting in improved educational results.

In summary, both communities are primarily from a rural background, are working class and youthful. Both middle class professionals and the elderly are relatively few in number. The focus groups schema assumes equality across age, gender and social class but the national and local picture is demonstrated to be skewed towards the young and working class.

CHAPTER THREE

MARRIAGE: KINSHIP AND ARRANGED MARRIAGE

Introduction

Marriage among the Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities will be examined within the context of kinship and the attendant issues of caste, religion and honour. These features provide important input into the arrangement of marriages among these groups and have explanatory capacity for the decision-making process that leads to endogamous marriages. Arranged marriages only become understandable when endogamy is analysed. This chapter will explore the range of factors that are influential in endogamous marriages and then consider variations of arranged marriages.

Marriage

The national trend for marriage is complex. On a superficial level marriages are at their lowest level since 1917 and the divorce rate is the highest in the European Union. However, the picture is more complex than simple marriage 'decline' as it is accompanied by sequential cohabitations, separation, divorce and remarriage (Barlow, Duncan, et al 2001). Minority ethnic groups mirror some of these characteristics. Rates of marriage vary across communities with African-Caribbean people more likely to remain single and cohabit than Whites or South

Asians. The rates of marriage among Pakistanis and Bangladeshis were comparatively high - 73 per cent and 74 per cent respectively. Marriage is extremely popular among Pakistanis and Bangladeshis.

Figure 3.1 Marriage Rates by Communities

Column percentages

	White	Caribbean	Indian	African Asian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Chinese
Single	23	41	21	21	19	22	34
Married	60	39	72	72	74	73	62
Living as married	9	10	3	2	3	1	1
Separated /divorced	7	9	3	3	3	1	3
Widowed	1	2	2	1	2	3	-

Source: Modood and Berthoud 1997: 24

Islam

In the focus groups Pakistani and Bangladeshi respondents explained their high rates of marriage and low levels of co-habitation in terms of religion. Marriage is related to duty and Islam, sex is for procreation and sex before marriage is considered to be sinful:

> Most Bangladeshis are Muslims so it is part of our religion. (Bangladeshi Young Men, Middle Class).

> The reason why we get married is so that sexual intercourse is made legal … to prevent people to make illicit friendship and have sexual intercourse which is against our religion and is completely wrong.

> Wrong for our community and is against our religion. (Bangladeshi Elder Men, Working Class)

Parents consider it a moral obligation to marry their children and intimate relationships should only develop within this context. Responses were fairly consistent across ethnicity and generation.

> In Islam it is a parent's duty to marry their children - this is considered to be moral act and a blessing. (Bangladeshi Elder Women, Working Class).
>
> [All] parents like their children to get married and God too want this to happen in pleasant way. If there is an intimate relationship between a girl and a boy without marriage, this is *haraam* in Islam. We call it *haraam* meaning illegitimate. The answer to this question is that parents do get their children married in a good way, so there shouldn't be any matrimonial issues of respect or disrespect. (Pakistani Elder Women, Working Class)

In the focus groups both Pakistanis and Bangladeshis consistently expressed this view across gender and all the generations. Young men and women reaffirmed this view but it was seen as a normative position to which women are expected to conform more rigorously than men.

> It's just wrong to be seen with anybody else but your husband. It's just for support, basically. One person to be there for another, a mother. Plus, our Prophet did it … We follow our Prophet's way. (Bangladeshi Young Women, Middle Class)

Group Boundaries and Marriage

The governing principle of marital choice in any community is homogamy - the selection of a partner from a similar social background shaped, for example, by race, class, ethnicity, religion, age and education. Those who do not conform to these norms, in some circumstances, suffer sanctions, ranging from disapproval to ostracism (Bradford Commission Report 1996). Marriages that do not conform to this pattern are uncommon and in the population as a whole trans-racial/inter-ethnic marriages form a very small proportion, about 1 per cent, of all partnerships in the population. However, among ethnic minority groups 20 per cent of African-Caribbeans were married or living as married with a White partner, 17 per cent of Chinese, 4 per cent of Indians and just 1 per cent of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis (Modood and Berthoud 1997: 29-30). Thus Pakistanis and Bangladeshis conform to the national pattern of marrying within their social group.

Marriage is an important indicator of cultural distinctiveness and is a principal means by which boundaries are drawn to include or exclude those who are eligible for marriage. Group members typically try to maintain social cohesion through sustaining a boundary between themselves and others. This boundary between insiders and outsiders depends upon both sides perceiving difference. Insiders are, therefore, aware of outsiders' beliefs about their distinctiveness as a group and outsiders' opinions and actions play a part in the maintenance of group boundaries. So marrying outside the community threatens social cohesion

and breaks down the boundaries, and this is why you get few trans-racial/inter-ethnic marriages in general and specifically among Pakistanis and Bangladeshis.

Issues of identity and of belonging to a particular community and/or territory loom large in this process of boundary maintenance. These issues are usually linked to debates about cultural traditions embedded in distinct languages, religions and regions, for example. Insiders may keenly resent outsiders' interest in marriage strategies, even if it is justified in the name of wider public interest. The 1991 British Social Attitude Survey reported that 75 per cent of White respondents believed that White people would mind if a close relative was to marry a Black or Asian person. Among minority ethnic groups the highest disapproval was found among Pakistanis with 64 per cent minding strongly, 52 per cent of Indians disapproved followed by Bangladeshis (35 per cent), with African-Caribbeans having the lowest disapproval rate. The Pakistani disapproval rate coincides with the fact that only 1 per cent of Pakistanis are in trans-racial or inter-ethnic marriages.

The anomaly here is that while Bangladeshis have a much lower disapproval rate than Pakistanis, the percentage of trans-ethnic marriages is equally low in both communities. There is no clear explanation for this incongruity but it may be due to the asymmetries in sex ratios explored in Chapter 2 (for more detail see annex 1). Generally speaking, the PSI Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities

suggested that on the whole people without qualifications and in manual occupations minded 'mixed' marriages more than middle class professional groups (Modood and Berthoud 1997: 315). The data examined in the previous chapter clearly shows that both groups are predominantly working class, with low human capital and, therefore, more likely to be against mixed marriages.

Despite the appearance of group solidarity the boundaries may be highly contested by some insiders. Global migration has created a complex situation where debates about local and national boundaries may be shaped by trans-national allegiances (to a global Islamic community or *umma*, for example), by visions of multiple homes and increasing individual choice, as well as by perceptions of living in a risky world undergoing rapid social and cultural change. Social mobility can weaken boundaries and conversely deprivation and exclusion, explored in chapter 2 (see annex 1 for more details on this), can lead to the reinforcement of group solidarity.

Kinship and Marriage

Group boundary maintenance is sustained by family involvement in marriages. Individuals rarely make marital decisions without the involvement of families. Both the state and religious authorities regulate these decisions and they confer rights and obligations on partners and their relatives. The family, therefore, plays an important link between the private and public sphere.

What differentiated South Asians from most other minority ethnic groups and the wider public is the practice of arranging marriages within lineage groups. Among Bangladeshis and Pakistanis extended families play an important role in the decision-making process. Both communities, however, are not homogenous entities and contain numerous sub-groups and marriage arrangements are usually between these sub-groups. The family plays the crucial role in the process of arranging a marriage and it is usually the mother and siblings who are involved in the process of selection. There are various criteria that are applied to produce a suitable match. These criteria vary depending on whether the marriage pattern of the collectivity is endogamous or exogamous in nature. Among Pakistani and Bangladeshi rural migrants to Britain, in particular, marriages between individuals take place within the wider context of extended family ties and marriage alliances over a long period of time.

As many anthropologists have pointed out, South Asian marriages cannot be understood separately from dowry involving the flow of goods and/or money from the bride's family to the groom's, or dower, which is the reverse. Both practices can be found among Sylhetis while dowry was practised among Mirpuris and dower among Pakhtuns. Katy Gardner noted the increasing expense of marrying off daughters in the Sylhet village of Talukpur and argues that:

> this is less to do with the changing value of women's labour, or their increasing subordination, and more to do with competition between affines, the use of marriage in upward mobility, and the need for women, and the goods they carry with them to be "markers" of the reputation and social position of their natal households' (1995: 178).

This raises important questions about how marriage alliances have changed with migration to Britain. Both Werbner and Shaw argue that social class is becoming a determining factor but alliances are still justified in terms of *zat* and kinship (Werbner 1990: 120 , Shaw 1988: 107)

While the 1991 Census refers to the category `Pakistanis' the population is highly differentiated on linguistic, ethnic and clan lines. When it comes to marriage partners, endogamy means not simply marrying within the Pakistani community but within a specific kin group. Strong regional ties differentiated Pakhtuns from Punjabis and from the majority of British Pakistanis, who come from northern Pakistan, especially from the Azad (Free) Kashmir district of Mirpur. These regional differences map on to the towns and cities of this country since :

> Mirpuris predominate in the Pakistani populations of Bradford and Birmingham, for example, while Faisalabadis [from the Punjab] reportedly predominate in Manchester and Glasgow. (Shaw 2001: 317).

These regional differences are compounded by social divisions based on family (*khandan*), kinship ties (*biraderi*), caste or caste-like groups (*zat*) and tribe or caste (*qaum*). These territorial and social forces provide the background for a process which lies at the heart of our study – the contrast between an increasing disposition to marry cross-cousins among some Pakistani groups from the Punjab, on the one hand, and 'a European, North American, and Japanese decline in consanguineous and especially first-cousin marriage', on the other (Shaw 2001: 332). This process is 'not simply a question of following a cultural preference for close kin marriage', because for many parents, 'it makes good sense to meet the obligations to consider your sibling's children as spouses for your own children' (Ibid). It provides status within the *biraderi*, demonstrates migrants' commitment to their relatives in Pakistan, and can bring social and economic benefits.

Shaw argues that these benefits encourage some Faisalabadi entrepreneurs and Punjabi factory workers in her Oxford sample to sustain cross-cousin marriages. Those who are more likely to reject this strategy are upwardly mobile, as well as those who have been brought up in this country, 'particularly those with higher education and economic independence' (Ibid). Increasing education amongst the younger generation of Pakistanis links to a decline of first cousin marriage amongst this group. Chapter 2 (and annex 1) shows gender differentials with girls becoming more educated than boys resulting in differentials in expectations

from marriage. Conversely, low literacy rates amongst parents are associated with high levels of consanguineal marriages – hence the reluctance of educated women to contract trans-continental marriages. Focus group evidence supports the claim that educational differentials across generations are resulting in differing expectations over marriage.

Family and marriage dynamics among British Bangladeshis have not been analysed by researchers in any depth so far. We do not know how much the process of migration and living in this country has altered marriage customs. However, since the vast majority of British Bangladeshis hail from one particular district – Sylhet — we can draw on the work of Katy Gardner, especially her ethnographic study of Talukpur, a Sylheti village community, in *Global Migrants: Local Lives* (1995). She notes that kinship is 'one of the principal factors of social, political and economic organization' in Talukpur as elsewhere in rural Bangladesh (1995: 28-29). Kinship is patrilineal so that 'ancestry is traced back through the male line', creating patrilineages (*gusthi*). In Talukpur the *gusthi* usually included 'siblings and cousins of one's father and paternal grandfather, and their spouses and offspring' (Gardner 1995: 29). Traditionally most marriages 'were arranged with local descent groups, and often with maternal and paternal cousins' but there was now a trend towards marrying people 'outside the local area' (Ibid: 171). The exchange of brides still continues but 'the new marriages help form important new economic and political alliances, often

expressing (and adding to) increased economic and social mobility within the area' (Ibid). The implication of her data for migrants to Britain is that marriage here can be stretched even wider so that alliances can be established between migrant families within Britain for social, economic and (perhaps) political reasons, as well as between British migrants and a wider network of families across Sylhet.

Although we do not have detailed information about British Bangladeshi marriage patterns, there is some anecdotal evidence that British Bangladeshis/Sylhetis are seeking marriage partners from both their country of origin and within Britain, as we shall see later in the report when we consider the Tower Hamlets focus groups. What the balance is between these two options we cannot say as yet. If the picture described by Shaw in Oxford is anything to go by, socio-economic factors as well as cultural forces are swaying the balance. Family elders will be taking into consideration the educational background of marriage partners in Britain and Bangladesh, their ability to contribute to family income within this country, and their facility in English, as well as such other factors as the desire of their British-born children to find a partner brought up in this country.

Caste

Endogamous marriages are the norm for these two communities. The focus group contributors, however, are unclear about the precise meaning of *zat* (caste) - patrilineal groupings associated with occupational hierarchy (*jati*). Certain forms of labour are traditionally considered to be spiritually unclean and associated with low caste status. Family names are usually a good indicator of a person's caste. Both Pakistanis and Bangladeshi elders conflate customary practices with Islam but there are also differences between the two communities. Many Pakistanis replace references to *zat* with extended family or village loyalties, while middle-aged working class Pakistanis do not think *zat* is so relevant in Britain, are more critical of it, but accept that it persists.

> Q: So how important is caste? How important is village location?
> A: Very important …
> A: I think your caste is a lot more important to our parents, you know if you're a Jackson, marry a Jackson, I mean you can't marry…
> A: Well how important is it to us?
> A: I don't think …
> A: You know what it is; the caste system in this country for us now is non-existent
> Q: ….our parents still refer to it.
> A: …..a good caste, they'd never let you marry someone (from it).
> A: If you're a Blacksmith or a Shoesmith, you'd never let your daughter marry a Shoesmith; you'd rather let your daughter marry a Blacksmith.
> A: But the strangest thing in terms of this cultural thing about being a Blacksmith, Shoesmith or an Ironmonger or whatever, is that they weren't actually doing them trades. It was (...) going back ten generations past his great, great, great grandfather might have been a Blacksmith. (Pakistani Middle Aged Men, Working Class)

Bangladeshis refer to the significance of *zat* but there is no consensus about what *zat* constitutes. People are agreed that *zat* is a group but are hazy about what kind of group. A participant in a young focus group, for example, argues that these groups are:

> sub-divisions [created by] our ancestors … Most of these arranged marriages that's what they look at – what background, where're you're from back in Bangladesh. (Bangladeshi Young Men, Middle Class)

These sub-divisions are sometimes described as castes, indicating a system of ascribed status groups ranked hierarchically, but some describe *zat* in terms of belonging to Islam or to a particular class:

> This is in Islam. In Islam someone who sell scent, his daughter's marriage to a person who sell fish would not be right because there will be problem in the future...There has to be similarities on both sides. For example, someone has a five star hotel and another's boys live in a council flat.
>
> *Jaat* (*zat*) means someone is Chowdhury, someone is Khan, someone is Talukder, someone is a Syed, someone is a Pir, someone is a Ghulam. (Bangladeshi Elder Men, Working Class)
>
> If a girl's going into a low class family, then their children cannot get married to high class people. The Bengali word for class is *zat* (Bangladeshi Young Men, Middle Class)

The normal practice for arranged marriages is to contract a marriage within the same caste and with families of similar social status. However, social mobility

and education can lead to families contracting marriage with higher social status and hence from superior castes.

Honour

Zat is also related to honour (*izzat*) and honour is associated with competition between families, family respect and the control of women's behaviour. Relationships between families are often competitive, with each family being concerned about its own social standing and reputation. This is reflected in competition between affines, through the use of marriage for upward mobility, over the size of dowries, which are 'markers' of reputation and position of natal households. Marrying into the right sort of family brings respect and this notion is generally found across communities in the older and middle age ranges. Close relatives expect the right to first refusal and if this does not take place it can cause friction.

> (T)hey want their children and their daughters to you know stay within that family network so if they don't get married to any then it can cause conflict between the brother and sister. (Pakistani Young Men, Middle Class)

Honour becomes a clear issue in arranged marriages when formal agreement between families, usually between fathers, has been made. To withdraw from an agreement to marry by one side would lead to considerable dishonour on the family and this affects both women and men.

> My father died at age of 79. I was in college, … doing my 'A' levels. I went back to Pakistan for the funeral. My father actually spoke to them in the family for my marriage. Now my mother said: 'This marriage has been arranged for you by your father but he's died. What are you going to do?' My first reaction was: 'No, I wanted to complete my education, and this is true as well. Then I'll decide'. My mother said: `That's fine, but remember if you are not going to do it, tell us now, rather than embarrass us later on because the decision they have come to' …. `And normally', she said, `since your father and grandfather's word of mouth is a word of honour and if you are going to go back on that this is what is going to happen to us and what we will do'. So I said: `Fine'. I slept over it and, by God, in the morning I said: `I'll get married'. (Pakistani Middle Aged Men, Middle Class).

Given the patriarchal and patrilocal character of Mirpuri and Sylheti rural society young men have usually far greater freedom in the outside world than young women, who are conventionally seen as guardians of the home. The young women focus group complained of the restrictions that were placed upon them in order to maintain family honour and contrasted this with the freedoms given to their brothers. The accumulated wisdom of elders, especially men, guards against the 'immaturity' of the younger generation. Immature females must be protected against their own innocence and the dangers posed by strangers – other Bangladeshis or Pakistanis beyond the family network and the wide range of those outside the ethnic boundary. Elder male focus groups tended to corroborate this argument. An individual's fulfilment depends, therefore, on conforming to his or her role within the group. Marriages should be arranged through a process where the interests of the male and female individuals are

considered within the wider context of marital alliances with 'suitable' members of the group.

Arranged and Love Marriage

Arranged marriage, which was once common in British society, has disappeared but the practice persisted among the aristocracy far longer, where it was a means for forging political and economic alliances. Modood *et al.* argue that the Asian older generation prefers marriages to be arranged by families within the clan or extended family and that 'love marriages' were not the most appropriate way of finding a life-partner. The most frequent argument supporting this view was that love marriages are equated with high levels of divorce. Arranged marriages are seen as diminishing the likelihood of divorce because the partners are chosen for their compatibility and suitable family backgrounds (Modood *et al.* 1997). The Asian older generation measures the success of the marriage by whether the couple stay together, because divorce within a clan or extended family will have implications not only for the couple involved but also for the whole clan or extended family. Problems with a marital relationship can easily spiral out of control, causing difficulties and discord between families. Thus the interests of the clan or extended family are paramount, possibly more so than the feelings of the couple towards each other. The social stigma associated with divorce among the two communities, as well as the complex legal procedures (a civil and Islamic divorce is usually required), act as powerful deterrents that reinforce community

expectations that couples should remain together.

It is argued that relationships which encounter difficulties would find support from the extended family so that the problems do not escalate into inter-family feuding. Hence, both communities treat marriage seriously and compare arranged marriages favourably with love marriages. It is repeatedly asserted that arranged marriages are more long lasting and stable than love marriages. It is argued that there is a much greater chance of a marriage that is arranged and based on tradition being successful.

> Marriage is not a joke, it is a long life contract and parents exactly want that their child should be successful in this contract. I do not have exact figures, however, I can say if you call these so-called forced (*sic*) marriages are more successful than love marriages. There is a higher rate of divorce in love marriages compared to so-called forced marriages. There is no place for so-called forced marriages in Islam. (Pakistani Elder Men, Working Class)

Young female respondents associated greater risk with love marriage because, if there were difficulties, family support will not necessarily be forthcoming as in an arranged marriage. Love marriage implied leaving the security of the extended family and this factor was taken into account by young educated women. Anwar (1998: 109-110) suggests that arranged marriage is still viewed with favour by young South Asians even though the numbers that were ambivalent increased.

A: But the thing is, you know like, sometime like if you have an arranged marriage right you can at least and they don't work out you can at least ring your parents (…).

A: If you have a love marriage and it breaks up then they can blame you for it.

A: (…) live your own life, you wanted to live your life, and go and live it now, and you'll be left. **(**Pakistani Young Women, Working Class)

Inter-ethnic or inter-racial marriages are acceptable, in theory, as long as one of the partners goes through religious conversion. Nevertheless, in practice, such alliances are not preferred because of community opprobrium attached to marriages outside the ethnic and religious group (Modood 1997). Furthermore, there is a widespread belief that these marriages result in the weakening of the family as a close-knit, self-help unit upon which elders can depend in their old age.

There is a commonly held perception that a sharp distinction can be made between arranged and free choice marriages. This view fails to distinguish between various forms of arranged marriages. It also fails to see the continuum between traditional forms of arranged marriages at one end of the spectrum, where parents make the crucial decisions, and free choice marriage at the other end, where the individual is the primary determinant. The use of marriage bureaux by White people is indicative of the overlap between the different marriage patterns. Research by Stopes-Roe and Cochrane (1990) suggests a typology of arranged marriage - 'traditional pattern', the 'traditional modified'

arrangement and the 'cooperative traditional' variant. In the traditional pattern the parents and elder relatives select a spouse for their children, while in the 'traditional modified' pattern the candidate has the power to decide the outcome from a shortlist prepared by the parents.

Afshar (1989) demonstrates that, despite the variations in the degree of consultation, there was a close correspondence with parental circumstances. Those with strong rural connections were rarely consulted while those from conurbations (extended urban areas) and the more educated and affluent delayed marriage and enjoyed greater flexibility. In the previous section it was demonstrated that both communities came mainly from rural areas and possessed low human capital. Figure 3.2 shows that for South Asians over 35, with the exception of African Asians, parents choose their children's spouse. Parental choice was most common among Pakistanis and Bangladeshis but was declining among the young. Only a minority of young Indians and African Asians observed the practice, indicating significant generational change. However, women of all groups were more likely to leave their parents to choose their spouse, except for young Hindus and Sikhs.

There was also variation according to level of education with the practice being more common among those with little or no qualifications. For Pakistanis the practice was spread evenly across occupational classes but there were regional

differences. Parental choice was most common in the West Midlands but three-quarters of Pakistanis in the North West, two-thirds in Yorkshire/Humberside and only half in the South East had parentally arranged marriages.

Figure 3.2: Parental Involvement in Choice of Marriage Partner, by Age

Column percentage

	Indian		African-Asian		Pakistani		Bangladeshi	
	16-34	35+	16-34	35+	16-34	35+	16-34	35+
Parents made the decision	18	55	9	23	57	68	45	57
I had a say but parents decision	9	4	6	8	8	7	5	7
Parents had a say but my decision	24	11	21	22	15	9	25	12
I talked to my parents but my decision	27	11	33	22	11	4	6	3
I made decision on my own	20	12	27	22	8	8	8	13
Can't say	3	7	5	3	2	4	11	7

Source: Modood and Berthoud 1997: 318

Figure 3.3 Parental Decision over Marriage Partner, by Religion and Age

Cell percentages

	Hindu		Sikh		Muslim	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
50+ years	50	74	72	86	62	87
35-49 years	21	51	49	77	59	78
16-34 years	18	20	41	27	49	67

Source: Modood and Berthoud 1997: 318

The 'traditional' pattern in the UK is now in decline as consultation and

negotiation become more prevalent, especially among Hindus and Sikhs. The use

of photos of potential partners, arrangement of chaperoned meetings, the use of marriage bureaux, intermediaries, matrimonial columns in newspapers, websites and magazines and introduction slots on Asian radio are indicative of the 'traditional modified' pattern's increasing popularity.

There are, however, considerable variations in the way that respondents described their personal experiences of arranged marriages. Even within the 'traditional mode' there are variations. Some complain that they were not consulted or had minimal knowledge of their intended spouse but still proceeded with the family arrangement.

> They didn't ask me where they were marrying or ask me if I like the boy and in fact I didn't know about him. On engagement I was quite annoyed. I didn't want to have an engagement. But it was nothing to do with choice. (Pakistani Elder Women, Working Class)

Others had 'traditional' arrangements but possessed prior knowledge because they used to play together as children in the village or met their wives before their marriage because they were close relatives.

> I'm fortunate that both of us are compatible … and I think the other thing that I was looking for, was a wife to look after my parents as well. (...) The fact [is] that she was my mother's niece (...). Well, I think my marriage is quite good. I've had no problems. No concept of divorce and that kind of lark going on. No heated arguments… (Pakistani Middle Aged Men, Working Class)

Others had a 'cooperative' arranged marriage, where they met prior to the formalisation of marriage arrangements with a chaperone and got to know each other before agreeing to formalise arrangements.

> Yeah, my … parents had an Islamic wedding, 'cos my dad saw my mum and liked her and my mum saw my dad. And then there was an adult involved in it and they spoke to each other for hours on end. And they said: 'OK, we want to get married, we really like each other'. And then the parents came into it.
> (Pakistani Young Women, Working Class)

As for the 'cooperative traditional' patterns either the parent or the candidate can make the selection depending on the circumstances and the eventual decision is a cooperative matter but parental consent is essential. Young people, who had been going out clandestinely for several years, then used a matchmaker to officially introduce them in front of their unwitting parents resulting in a successful marriage (Gillespie 1995, Shaw 2001).

Trans-continental Marriages

For Pakistanis and Bangladeshis marriage is conducted between patrilineal sub-groups and this may result in the lack of appropriate choices being available in Britain. Sex asymmetries and differentials in educational qualifications compounded by endogamy, mean that there may not be an alternative to conducting a trans-continental marriage. In Bradford 50 per cent of marriages are trans-continental, i.e. the partners are selected from Pakistan (Simpson 1997),

while in Oxford the proportion of these alliances is estimated to be as high as 71 per cent (Shaw 2001).

The difference between Oxford and Bradford primarily relates to the number of eligible candidates available. The Bradford population is significantly larger than Oxford, therefore finding an appropriate partner within a specific kin group is more difficult in Oxford. The demographic profile of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities shows that there is sex ratio imbalance, particularly for the Bangladeshi community, with more men than women at the national level. The lack of suitable candidates is reflected in the use of media, newspapers, radio and websites to look for suitable partners and the problem is even more acute among educated Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. While young men show some preference for a partner from Bangladesh or Pakistan, young women normally are reluctant to follow suit. On the one hand evidence suggests that women are more reluctant to enter into trans-continental marriages. On the other hand data in Chapter 2 (see also annex 1) shows that women were achieving better educational results then men and thus finding appropriately educated partners for them in Britain was problematic. These factors combine to make finding a suitable partner, particularly for young women, difficult (Anwar 1998: 111). Education transforms gendered power dynamics, of women as guardians of tradition and culture, and this development is seen in focus group discussions in Chapter 5.

Conclusion

Marriage is popular amongst Pakistanis and Bangladeshis and religion is an important factor for the high rates of marriage. Marriages are primarily endogamous and are used to reinforce kinship, networks and group boundaries. Marriage is used as an important tool in maintaining the cultural distinctiveness of the group and is very closely related to issues of identity and belonging. While the category Pakistani and Bangladeshi is used by the 1991 Census, both communities are highly diverse and internally differentiated in various ways. Marriage is conducted between sub-groups within these community categories and is associated with caste and honour. Caste hierarchy and status competition between families are important factors in understanding families' motivation for marriage. Women's behaviour, dowries and marriage agreements are all linked to notions of family honour.

Focus group contributors argued that arranged marriages are more stable, they are less likely to end in divorce and marital problems do not result in discord between individuals, although they can lead to clashes between clans and extended families. Hence families are very concerned about marital discord and they provide support so that differences do not escalate into inter-family feuding. For this reason, young women associated greater risk with love marriage because family support would be denied. Arranged marriages give greater importance to

the group than to the individual and are also seen as resources of bonding social capital.

There are various forms of arranged marriages and there is a close social class and educational correlation with the parents' background and the degree of choice that is offered to their children in the arrangement of marriages. Among South Asians the practice of parents choosing the spouse is most common amongst Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, but the practice is now declining and 'co-operative' arranged marriages are beginning to become more common amongst the young. There is a link between the degree of choice and the class and qualification background of the parents. The practice of 'traditional' arranged marriages is strongest among those groups which are least qualified and involved in manual work. Both communities are disproportionately working class and have low human capital.

Trans-continental marriages are linked to the size of the marriage pool in individual locations and are also associated with endogamy. The need to marry between sub-groups of similar status leads to difficulty in finding appropriate marriage candidates. Educational differentials between young men and women and sex asymmetries make it difficult to find partners. Young educated women are more reluctant then young men to enter into trans-continental marriages. Hence the proliferation of media sites and professional marriage bureaux to find

appropriate partners. Trans-continental marriages are associated with a limited

marriage pool and the need to find sub-groups of similar status, educational and

class backgrounds. Consequently, they will persist into the foreseeable future.

<div align="center">**CHAPTER 4**</div>

<div align="center">**FORCED MARRIAGES: CAUSES AND COMMUNITY DEBATE**</div>

Introduction

The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first part explores causes of forced marriage, defines it, examines its extent and explores motivations. The second section examines community responses and debates concerning forced marriages. We then move on to the focus group discussions where a range of issues were examined and we outline people's views in their own words.

Forced Marriage Definition and Numbers

Forced marriage is not exclusively an Asian or a Muslim problem and 'shotgun marriages' were prevalent in the 1960s among the White population. The crucial factor, which the Home Office Working Group on Forced Marriages (A Choice by Right 2000) used to differentiate between forced and arranged marriage, is consent:

> it is a marriage conducted without valid consent of both parties, where duress is … invariably a factor of forced marriages. (p.6)

> The Court of Appeal has ruled that the test of duress for these purposes is simply 'whether the mind of the applicant (the victim) has in fact been overborne, howsoever that was caused' (p.7)

Duress ranged 'from emotional pressure, exerted by close family members and the extended family, to more extreme cases, which can involve threatening behaviour, abduction, imprisonment, physical violence, rape and in some cases murder' (p.11)

We have tried to ascertain the size of the problem but have uncovered few reliable figures. The Southall Black Sisters deal with 200 (SBS 2001) cases of forced marriages annually, while Bradford Police deals with 70 cases (West Yorkshire Police), The FCO's Community Liaison Unit dealt with approximately 200 cases last year and the figures have increased year on year since the establishment of the unit. There may be some overlap in the figures and we do not know how many cases of forced marriages are never reported, due to the consequences of divorce and difficulty of facing the family. It is very difficult for women to act against the wishes of their parents or in cases where their husbands, whom they were forced to marry, have abused them. In many respects the phenomenon of forced marriages closely parallels domestic violence - there is considerable under-reporting and the figures are a small fraction of what is estimated to be the real scale of the problem. However, there is no evidence to prove or disprove speculation in the media, which suggests that there may be as many as a thousand cases a year.

Given the difficulty involved in quantifying the scale of the problem we took the position that even one instance of forced marriage was one too many. We are also aware that this view has been criticised on the grounds that it can be used to

stereotype Islam as incompatible with British values, that it can lead to interventions where the human rights of the many are curtailed for the protection of a few, and that it can inhibit dialogue with people who inflict duress without breaking the law (Eversley and Khanom 2001). However, there is no suggestion that the human rights of British Asians are going to be curtailed to protect victims of forced marriages or that new laws are being created which people may innocently break.

While it is difficult to estimate the scale of the problem, it is possible to suggest reasons why forced marriage has become more of an issue recently. As shown in Chapter 2 and Annex 1 all ethnic minorities have a high proportion of young people. British Pakistanis are only now reaching marriageable age in large numbers, while Bangladeshis will reach this point in perhaps a decade. These demographic facts indicate that a substantial number of Pakistanis are entering an age when they are normally expected to marry. The numbers of eligible Bangladeshis, on the other hand, are lower but they will probably exceed Pakistanis during the next five to ten years. Consequently, the issue of forced marriage has become more significant simply because people from these communities are getting married in ever larger numbers. The rapid increase in forced marriages due to demographic changes is the real cause for concern and not the absolute numbers. The demographic evidence suggests that the number of Pakistanis in forced marriages will fall as the size of the young population falls

and there will be an increase in Bangladeshi forced marriages in the near future. This scenario is based on the assumption that policy initiatives are not formulated or fail to engage effectively with this problem. Effective social policy could perhaps prevent a relative and absolute increase in forced marriages. The young people focus groups do suggest, however, that there will be a hard core of people who would persist in forcing their children to marry and that there would be a continuation of the problem.

Motives of Forced Marriages

The Home Office Working Group enumerated a number of possible causes. Although motivations are complex and highly personal and oversimplification needs to be avoided, these causes fall into three broad categories – (i) family, (ii) sexuality and independent behaviour and (iii) honour. (2000: 14) The evidence from the CLU cases, media sources and interviews with gatekeepers, shows that the major motive for families forcing their children into marriages was, first, sexuality and then independent behaviour - the two are, therefore, closely linked. Independent behaviour was exclusive to women, followed by other motives concerning family and honour. Under the first heading it became clear that these young women and men had boy/girl friends, were engaged, eloped or had married and, in all of these cases, the family disapproved. Some of the liaisons were inter-ethnic, others were inter-religious and many were within the same community. The link between independent behaviour and sexuality was usually

evidenced by young women desiring to go to university and work. Parents assumed that such behaviour would eventually result in an unacceptable relationship. Forcing them into a marriage of their parents' choice was seen as a way of pre-empting such an eventuality.

Discovery or fear of such liaisons resulted in a pretext being made for a trip to the Indian sub-continent. The pretext ranged from a visit/holiday to illness of usually one or other of the grandparents. Once in South Asia the young people were, in effect, incarcerated through the removal of their passports and airline tickets while a more suitable partner was looked for. Even when the family had apparently accepted the liaison through an engagement ceremony or marriage family members still attempted or actually forced them to marry someone whom the family approved of.

Many of the people who were repatriated were only able to do so through the support they received from their boy/girl friend or, sometimes, from a sympathetic relative. The real difficulty in these cases is in finding out where the person is being held and in getting them to safety.

In most cases dealt with by the Community Liaison Unit, concerns around behaviour and control over sexuality were primary factors and immigration did not appear as a motivating factor for parents living in the United Kingdom. New

immigration controls would be unlikely to stop forced marriages, but we acknowledge that our research has not looked at the influence of relatives living abroad (for whom immigration may or may not be a factor) on the decision to force a person to marry. The fact that so many cases result in applications for spouse settlement visas suggests that there is some pressure on couples to live in the UK and not in the parents' country, i.e. immigration is a factor. Otherwise, it would probably make sense to leave the woman outside the UK where she would be more tightly controlled. The significance of our conclusion is not only that any new immigration control would not solve the problem but that young South Asians would be simply coerced into marriages and sent back with no expectation of returning.

Family issues covered a number of areas and were linked with some cases of forced marriages. Concern about preventing fragmentation of landholdings in South Asia and honouring family obligations through betrothal continue but are declining. On some occasions parents came under pressure from family members to marry off their daughters, even when they had no intention of doing so. However, the combination of pressure and deference to senior relatives led to children being married without their consent. There were other issues related to crime and marital breakdown. Sending youngsters in trouble with the police back home was another response and in cases of divorce children may be taken back and married. The number of cases where immigration was the sole factor -

families here arranging marriages to bring relatives to the UK - was negligible. Family honour, however, comes into play when formal agreement has been arranged and at this point there is considerable pressure for arrangement to be carried through. At this point men become explicitly involved as they defend family honour.

To recap, we are investigating the motives of families settled in Britain and here immigration was not a factor in their decision-making process. Immigration was a clear factor in the motivation of those who wanted to marry British citizens but we noted that there are cases where they influence the decision-making process resulting in a forced marriage. In some cases it is the overseas relatives who are pushing for marriages and in almost all cases the relatives hold the girl and arrange the marriage so they play a significant part to make sure it goes ahead. Family members may make agreements with relatives abroad and then may find they have to honour them. According to Alison Shaw some of the Pakistani families she sampled were disturbed by the instrumental way that their relatives treated marriage in Pakistan.

> In my sample, seven of the marriages of women to kinsmen from Pakistan, four of them first cousins, have ended in divorce or separation. In four cases, the parents now feel that their sense of duty towards siblings in Pakistan was exploited primarily to facilitate the immigration of a husband with no intention of making a commitment to his wife or her family in Britain (Shaw 2001: 327)

Debates on Forced Marriages

The focus groups debated forced marriages within the context of marital difficulties. Accompanying the increase in marriage rates in both communities is a concomitant increase in marriage problems resulting in divorce and separation. The divorce rate amongst British Asians in general is around 4 per cent which is considerably lower than the average of 9 per cent amongst the White population (Modood 1997, p. 32). National figures from the Muslim Women's Helpline indicate that marital difficulties are a growing problem. The overwhelming majority of the helpline's callers are from the Pakistani community and most are between the ages of 21-30. The calls mainly concern family problems related to marriage (The Muslim Women's Helpline 1996). The Police are dealing with an increasing number of cases where married women are leaving home and separating from their partners (West Yorkshire Police nd).

Both older and younger focus group members commented on the situation indicating how common marital breakdown had become:

> [Marriages are] always breaking down [now]. Now it's more common because it takes place based on two people's decision. (Bangladeshi Elder Women, Working Class)

> And a lot of the girls what they do is say: 'Yeah [I] will marry him' and they marry whoever their parents ask for. And then they, a few years later, divorce him and then it's fine that they go and marry anyone else.

(Pakistani Young Women, Middle Class)

Victims could turn to a number of agencies for assistance and did do so. As for the elders, they deny that forced marriages are a major problem, warranting the intervention of the police, social services and other agencies.

> In reality this issue has been exaggerated … And some people instead of discouraging it, in reality encourage it and promote it i.e. for example, social services, free helpline. These are the kind of avenues open for a boy or girl in this kind of situation.
> (Pakistani Elder Men, Working Class)

Young people, male and female, of both communities confirm this development and state that opposition to forced marriages is increasing but it is still easier for men to resist than women. At the same time young women are increasingly leaving home to escape such marriages – they:

> are running away from home to live with their boyfriends. (Bangladeshi Young Men, Middle Class).

> Q: Do you think opposition to forced marriage is growing?
> A: Yeah.
> A: Yeah.
> A: Yeah.
> A: Especially with the girls.
> Q: Especially the girls?
> A: Yeah.
> A: They are like little girls running away from home ...
> Q: Girls are?
> A: … running away from home. Guys, girls are running away from home cos they don't want to get arranged marriages, forced marriages.
> Q: Do you think in that case then boys can get out of forced marriages easier than girls, do you think?

A: Yeah.
(Pakistani Young Men, Working Class)

Young people indicate that the issue is gaining recognition not just among their generation but also among their elders. The issue was increasingly discussed within the community and there is a greater appreciation of the problem.

> At least their eyes are opening. First it wasn't happening, you know. Now it's like everyone really knows about it. It's a big issue you know there's a lot of debate about it.
> (Pakistani Young Men, Middle Class)

They complain, however, that community leaders, response is inadequate and there was need for community representatives to be more pro-active on this issue.

> I think there needs to be a more sort of openness as well amongst you know like the religious leaders. They need to encourage it more and say that: 'Look, this is wrong. What you're doing?' They need to come out in the open and talk to parents and they need to educate even the parents. It might be a bit difficult to actually get through to the parents but they somehow need to do that because the only way I think that the elders would get the respect is from elders themselves.
> (Pakistani Young Men, Middle Class)

Parental Love Duty and Reciprocity

Many members of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi focus groups could not understand how forced marriages could occur, given the love which parents

usually lavished on their children. Elders state that they are obliged by religion to ensure that marriage is voluntary and negotiated.

> No parent will want anything bad for their children. Parents will certainly seek good families for their children … Usually parents allow their children to marry someone they like … it's their life' (Bangladeshi Elder Women, Working Class).

A contributor to a young Bangladeshi group also claims that `parents had so much love for their children that they would respect every single wish' (Bangladeshi Young Men, Working Class).

Most of these younger participants agree that they would be happy if their parents arranged their marriage. This was due to a combination of filial piety, love and trust. Parents love their children and want the best for them and their children understood that.

> But parents always do their best though. (Pakistani Young Women, Working Class)

> Some parents I know genuinely really, really love their daughters and sons. (Pakistani Young Men, Middle Class)

> In Islam or in any religion or culture, forced marriage is not allowed and this is confirmed by the saying of Prophet and holy book Quran, that marriage is between two people and this is an agreement and there can not be any force in this matter. And this has never been so. (Pakistani Elder Men, Working Class)

> Q: All of you said parents apart from you why do you say that for?

A: Because my parents I wouldn't trust their choice, my mum's choice.

A: (The) way that they look at it, (it) is your life you know you're going to be spending it with someone and if it's (your) parents' choice it's different, in one way yeah they could be right.

A: Yeah but parents …. always decide yeah they know how you are, they know how the children are so they can choose the right person **(**Pakistani Young Women, Working Class).

Denial about Forced Marriage

These views about love, duty and reciprocity encourage older Pakistanis and Bangladeshis to deny the existence of forced marriages. A common theme of many focus groups, conducted with elderly men and women, is the state of denial. Denial declines across generation with both young men and women arguing that forced marriage is indeed an issue. The respondents adopt normative Islamic positions to support the view that forced marriage is unacceptable in Islam and therefore does not exist. Clearly the issue is that forced marriages are justified by cultural tradition, which condones these practices.

Elderly working class men and women claim that the whole issue has been blown out of proportion and context by the media, whose real target is arranged marriages. Participants both male and female vehemently declare that Muslims would not force someone to marry:

No, you can't force like that … You can't get someone to do anything this way … I don't believe things like that could take place. We're Muslims. (Bangladeshi Elder Women, Working Class)

In fact, parents bring up a child for 15/20 years and bring them … him or her or to age 15/20 years, look after him and sacrifice for him, take care of him. And after doing all that, how is this possible that they marry their child in a wrong place or force him or her.
(Pakistani Elder Women, Working Class)

Elders are critical of aspects of social policy and police interventions that provide opportunities to youngsters and make them less dependent on their families for support. As far as elders are concerned the problem lies with the youth who go against the wishes of their parents. There is an implicit rationalisation of forced marriages as a short-term problem that is ironed out over time as the couple come to terms with the marriage. This reflects the low expectations of intimacy many have from marriage. For some parents this reflects their own personal experience of marriage where they were not consulted and had no or very little choice in the matter. Having said this there are examples where some had shown a clear preference for a partner, who is a relative, and their parents respected this choice:

When our parents decided, our grandparents, our sisters and brothers, sister[in]-laws and brother-in-laws, all consulted us; they asked for our opinion. We did whatever our parents decided. This is in Islam – to do what your parents want. No parents will want anything bad for their children. Parents certainly seek good families for their children and, so when we were consulted, we just agreed. Whoever our parents chose for us we went along with that.
(Bangladeshi Elder Women, Working Class).

This form of passive agreement by the young people is what elder generations want from their own children or grandchildren. However, they reluctantly concede that in a few cases violence is used but people should avoid making generalisations based on a handful of incidents:

> [This] weakness is an individual weakness. This weakness is not a weakness of all [and people] should work together with their children to come to an appropriate and acceptable solution so that these issues and problems of marriages can be solved. (Pakistani Elder Women, Working Class)

Some women argued that there was no question of force because if the marriage ran into difficulties they would be held responsible. Also it was accepted that it is difficult to force children into a relationship when they had little or no control over their behaviour.

> I thought if I get them married by force to my brother's daughter or sister's daughter they have to live their lives afterwards and if they have any problems who will be responsible for that and that is the reason, whatever they said I accepted it. (Pakistani Elder Women, Working Class)

> A girl was to marry her cousin. Her parents arranged in Bangladesh. He used to write to her but she tore [the letters] up. Her parents plan to take her to Bangladesh, got the tickets ready [but] she then ran away and never returned. The parents sent the police over to her but she told the police that her parents threaten to kill her if she didn't go to Bangladesh … She wouldn't return. (Bangladeshi Elder Women, Working Class)

Elders also see arranged marriage as the ultimate means of stopping youth going off the rails and sorting them out. The knee-jerk reaction to young men's involvement in drug use and petty crime or young women forming illicit liaisons is to get them married and thereby, hopefully, resolve the problem. The evidence shows that this strategy is unlikely to work. Women become subjected to abuse and violence while men continue with their illegal activities or liaisons.

Middle-aged participants in the focus groups reluctantly accept that there is a problem but are very concerned with Islamophobia and the danger that our research would feed into that discourse - this aspect will be discussed in chapter 6:

> I'll be the first one to stand up and say … somebody should not be
> forced, and force should not be used against their will.
> (Pakistani Middle Aged Men, Middle Class)

Middle aged participants believe that forced marriage is a declining problem since their cohort would not conduct forced marriages. They are more enlightened than their parents' generations. They explain that they are acutely aware of the conflation of cultural practice with Islam and are consciously revisiting Islam and rooting out practices that originate from a non-Islamic heritage. Personal experience guides them and they do not wish to inflict their bad experience on their own children.

I'm … at the time, at the time when I, well when I was arranged marriage, I was a bit upset at first, but then I was okay with it you know, I thought yeah it's okay, it's part of our thing, how it happens in our community like this anyway and it's part of my life to go through, and I just accepted it … from then onwards. (Pakistani Middle Aged Men, Working Class)

Hence forced marriage would not be an issue for this generation as it is explicitly forbidden in Islam. Forced marriage, in their view, is a passing phenomenon, which would not continue due to social change that is taking place within this group. However, there appears to be a tension between normative positions and the continuing influence of cultural practices. The role of caste, for example, in arranged marriages for Muslims is agreed by most Pakistani middle class, middle aged female participants to be un-Islamic but it is still influential, even if its influence among their peers is declining. Middle aged women and men also recognise that it is very difficult to force young people into marriages they do not want and to sustain such relationships. Forced marriages could not be kept together and the danger of divorce, separation or the marriage collapsing was too great.

A: Yeah … they've been into a marriage that's been forced. But once they're back here they have the opportunity to either negate that agreement that they've made because they've got access here, they've got freedom. [They can say]: 'Right, that's it, I've had enough of you, you're not compatible with me. I'm not happy'. Irrespective of the pressures imposed by families that there might be, or the local ties *et cetera*. … If someone's not happy within their marriage now, they will clearly state so and say: `That's it'. Whether they've got kids or they haven't, they'll say:

'B***** it, I'm not happy with it'. And it's predominantly women who will say that. Guys from over there and they come here and they can't get on. 'See you later mate. Off you go.'
(Pakistani Middle Aged Men, Working Class)

Participants in the Pakistani and Bangladeshi elder and middle aged focus groups, both male and female, conclude that if they do not accommodate their children's desires and passions, they will not only be unable to stop them from leaving home and/or continuing relationships but they will also incur community opprobrium through their children (particularly girls) leaving home. They have to negotiate and persuade determined young men and women rather than resorting to unenforceable diktats. If children remain adamant they will have to capitulate and accept what their children want. Accommodation becomes not only a strategy for sustaining relations with their children but also maintaining family respect and honour in the community. This appears to contradict all that had been said by the respondents about putting the community and family first. However, it indicates the tension between theory and practice, and preferred behaviour that conforms to tradition may not be possible or enforceable due to ground realities forcing parents to behave pragmatically.

A: The danger with that is that when kids get to that particular age and you start to exercise certain discretion, and say you can't meet so and so, or I can't let you marry so and so. Then the ending of that is, is if the kids are adamant enough, and cases are now coming across that the girl will say: 'Well, b***** you mum and dad, I'm off'…

A: That's right.

A: That's right, they'll rebel then.

A: … your respect and your standing within the community, and your tribe or your tradition, or what ever you come from. 'I'm going with this bloke whether you like it [or] you don't like it'. So rather than that occurring, it's in our interests as parents to say: 'Although you like this particular person, have you considered all these other things that go along with that particular person? His parents, his background, and the problems that you know you perceive there to be?' And if, having explained all that, and the kids saying: 'No, I'm still going' there's nothing you can do. So you have to accept what the kids decide. (Pakistani Middle Aged Men, Working Class)

There is a reluctant acknowledgement of the unacceptability of the use of force and the dishonour that force brings. Trying to maintain family honour through the use of or threat of force only brought dishonour.

In reality, parents over here are helpless. There is no way children can be forced in this country. Parents are well aware that times have changed and doing this kind of force, or talking about using this kind of force, will cost or bring bad name to them. (Pakistani Elder Men, Working Class)

Parents conceded that they had to make the best of things and that if they were unhappy with a relationship it was better to come to terms with it, otherwise it may provoke a response that would cast a shadow over the family's reputation.

When boys and girls choose their own partner for marriage you've got to accept … It's better to get them married … What can you do? … Parents might as well allow the marriage to take place. This is better than running away … than doing something bad'. (Bangladeshi Elder Women, Working Class)

The reaction of young men and women of both groups to inter-ethnic and inter-religious marriages is clear - physical pressure or force are not acceptable. This reaction differentiates them from the older generation. When the middle aged male groups were asked what would be their response in such a scenario, three responses were articulated – firstly, they would persuade their children that inter-ethnic or inter-religious relationships are not acceptable and that it should be ended; secondly, they might use psychological and emotional pressure by threatening to disown their children and, thirdly, there was the option of the potential spouse converting to Islam. Most of the discussion related not to inter-racial marriages but to inter-religious ones. This area was considered to be the most sensitive. The discussion does show that social change across generations is taking place and that physical pressure is not considered to be an option.

> You know Islamically speaking, if my daughter went out of Islam, you know to get married, you know, I don't know, non Islamic or in any other way, I would most ... definitely use force…
>
> Q: To what extent, would you lock her up?
> A: … well no, no …
> Q: Drug her?
> A: … I mean …
> Q: What do you call force?
> A: … Mainly it would be hard counselling you know, really to change her ways …
> A: Emotional blackmail.
> A: … well, yeah, if you want to call it ….. If you wanna call, to brainwash her mind.
> (Pakistani Middle Age Men, Working Class)

The focus group responses raised the question of how coercion is understood. While it is generally agreed that physical force is unacceptable, psychological and emotional pressure is not considered to be coercion. Young people of both communities and gender were against any sort of coercion. Emotional and psychological pressure was just as unacceptable as physical force.

Gender and Ethnicity

Some have portrayed the issue of forced marriages as illustrating gender conflict within these communities. Are men, then, forcing women and young men into unwanted marriages for their own interest and was this also an expression of men saying that they were in charge? This perspective was seriously considered and evidence to support this was examined. There is considerable evidence to suggest that gender oppression is prevalent in South Asia and this was demonstrated in detail in the report *Human Development in South Asia*. Life expectancy of women is lower than men, they have a poorer state of health, lower rates of education and nutrition and these biases were ultimately reflected in the gender imbalance of 94 women to 100 men when the global ratio is 106 women to 100 men (Haq and Haq 1997). The discrimination of women among Muslims has been generally subscribed to the confusion between religion and culture where non-Muslim misogynistic cultural practices override Islamic tenets. Islamic law explicitly forbids forced marriages, does not recognise the validity of a marriage where consent is absent, and gives considerable freedom to

women in the area of education, work, inheritance, etc. Cultural practices, however, impose a number of restrictions and customs, which confine women to the home and to the veil Pakistan Commission on the Status of Women, 1989: 30). This dichotomy between culture and religion has been eroded over the last twenty years in some South Asian countries, especially in Pakistan, due to the Talibanisation of Islam. The influence of these interpretations is also seen in British mosques as Imams are imported from South Asia and then use the pulpit to expound their conservative views (Lewis nd).

South Asian cultural practices, particularly in rural areas, have strong patriarchal ideologies that can be in conflict with Islam but are still influential. As Agarwal (1994: 52) argues, gender relations are usually defined as relations between men and women but also relate to gender hierarchies between individuals of the same sex. Mothers play a central role in socialising their daughters' behaviour so that it conforms to the desired pattern (Afshar 1989). In South Asia the ideology of segregating women is so powerful that young girls from an early age are secluded from men and boys and their movements are restricted to the private sphere. This regulation of young women's movement is implemented by the women in the household, mothers, elder sisters and mothers-in-law, and this clearly shows how women internalise patriarchal ideology and then become its enforcers (Report of the Pakistan Commission on the Status of Women 1989). Thus, in the case of forced marriages, women are in many cases voluntarily

involved in acts of coercion and even violence due to the way they have been socialised. While in some instances there may be pressure put on the mother by the husband to make children accept the marriage, in many cases they are active agents. The marriage process is seen as women's work, with the mother and other relatives going through the selection process, moving between different households to vet possible candidates. Siblings, especially sisters, play an important role in making suggestions. Uncles and aunts also have a say in the marriage process but the mother normally draws up the final shortlist of acceptable candidates. It is from this shortlist that the father is usually brought in to approve the final selection and make formal agreements pertaining to the marriage.

Women, then, are central characters in the marriage process and are also active agents, and are not simply coerced into supporting forced marriages but can be the primary agents. There are numerous examples where it was clearly the mother who used force against recalcitrant daughters. The significance of this is that social policy targeted exclusively at men would be less effective than policy targeted at both men and women. However, once the behind-the-scenes work has been completed, men are brought into the picture to officially approve the agreements. At this point family honour comes into play and any attempt to break the agreements results in men becoming active in the defence of honour.

Parents of both families are responsible for marriage negotiations and it is important not to overplay or underplay the role of any of the actors.

Honour and Men in the Public Sphere

Most South Asian communities are concerned with the linked issues of honour *(izzat)* and shame or modesty *(sharm)*. These concerns have an effect on gender relationships, for whilst men defend and advance the family's *izzat* through active participation in public activities, women demonstrate a sense of *sharm* by excluding themselves from such arenas and ensuring that their own personal *izzat* is unimpeachable. Flagrant disregard of segregation and conventions of modesty raise issues of family honour. In theory male behaviour is also regulated by shame but in practice there is very little that men cannot do and that would bring dishonour. Men's claim to *izzat* is really about controlling women and their departure from the home is seen as a threat to patriarchal domination. Amrit Wilson (1978) argues that *izzat* is more than honour and self-respect. It is:

> essentially male but it is women's lives and actions which affect it most. A woman can have *izzat* but it is not her own, it is her husband's or her father's. Her *izzat* is a reflection of the male pride of the family as a whole (1978: 5)

Parents consider it to be their greatest responsibility to guard the *izzat* of their daughters and through them their own *izzat.*

The Bradford Commission (1995) noted that loss of *izzat,* brought about by a woman leaving her home, drives male relatives to bring her back and that this also acts as a deterrent to women from asking for external help in coping with abuse and violence. Throughout the sub-continent the great majority of the proceedings which come before the courts are driven by issues of *izzat* and *sharm* (Equal Treatment Bench Book).

Contributors to the focus groups make it clear that the positions of young women and men are different when it comes to issues of honour, shame and respect within the group (*zat*).

> If a girl who's done something … she'd be talked out of this and would then be taken to Bangladesh and married off. Such [a] step is necessary as it is a matter of maintaining *izzat*. Girls at the ages of sixteen to twenty are not mature. (Bangladeshi Elder Men, Working Class)

> Whereas it's frowned upon a lot more with girls … you're not allowed to sleep with somebody before you're married. You're supposed to be a virgin.
> (Pakistani Middle Aged Men, Middle Class)

This theme is repeated by young men. A Bangladeshi middle class male argues that it is dishonourable for the community if a female gets:

> pregnant or something. It is very stigmatising … She should have known. She should have respected her parents' wishes as well. She shouldn't have a kid … She shouldn't be having drinks … drugs as well.

Interestingly, a female participant in a Bangladeshi group of young males and females at a London University also echoes these views. According to her families are usually relieved when their children, especially the daughters, get married.

> [Marriage brought] relief for the family, especially when girls are married. Different for boys because they can bring [the] girl home … If girls get into drugs, they lose their respect for their parents. Parents will not be able to marry them to the best families.

Similarly male behaviour, while not acceptable, is tolerated and does not result in drastic actions by parents:

> If it's boys ... it's kind of accepted …. perhaps not accepted, but more expected that the boy would go out and sow his wild oats (laughter) (Pakistani Middle Age Men, Middle Class).

Others argue that sons are treated differently, partly for economic reasons – sons are seen as breadwinners. Daughters married out of the family and therefore, as we have already seen, might be attracted to 'other cultures':

> As males we are not pressurised. As a mother she loves her son most … They don't want the sons to get married quickly. They are the breadwinners. They provide for their parents when they get older … whereas the daughters, to save them from going to other cultures, they would like to get them married quickly.
> (Bangladeshi Young Men, Middle Class)

Forced marriages might take place, therefore, when parents reject their offspring's choice of a fellow Muslim from another country or an inter-religious relationship because these relationships raise issues of honour and shame. Differential treatment of women due to issues of honour, perhaps explains why forced marriages mainly affect women. In response to such liaisons parents insist that they marry someone brought up in Bangladeshi/Pakistani culture. Such a person might be chosen from South Asia or within Britain but the implication was that the most likely recruit would be someone from the extended kinship networks, which stretched across the Sylhet/Mirpur countryside.

Conclusion

The Home Office Report clearly defines forced marriage as marriage without consent and differentiates it from arranged marriage. There is debate about the numbers of forced marriages but it is clear that the problem is increasing and that this increase is partially explained by the demographic profile of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi community - they both are very young populations who are reaching marriageable age.

The motivations for forced marriages are complex and care must be taken to avoid over-generalisations. However, they do seem to fall broadly into three categories and the category that is perhaps the most common is where young men and women are found to be involved in a liaison which their families

disapprove of. Irrespective of people's motivations the two issues that are related to forced marriages are (a) the role of relatives and (b) the location and safety of the victims. It is quite difficult to find where victims are being held and to bring them to a safe location for repatriation. Families may pressurise parents into agreeing to forced marriages, they certainly play a role in the incarceration of the victims and quite often immigration is a factor that motivates them. The behaviour of the extended family is making families in Britain more cautious about arranging trans-continental marriages.

British Asians have to think more carefully about the issues of arranged marriages. They are sensitive to the fact that forced marriages do not work, people divorce and separate, and that young people run away from home to avoid forced marriages. There are, however, generational differences in the way that the problem is understood. Elders expect greater passivity from the younger generation. They want them to accept the decisions, just as they did when they got married, but they are aware that they cannot force, impose or ignore the choice of young men and women. They do, however, see marriage as the last resort in stopping young people going off the rails. Middle aged participants believe that forced marriage is a declining problem because of their own personal experiences. They are aware that the elders conflate culture with religion and they in turn wish to disaggregate the two. Returning to a more Islamic position means that force is out of the question. They also realise that if they fail to

accommodate the desires and passions of their children they would not be able to stop them running away and ignoring their wishes, thus bringing dishonour upon them. Negotiation and accommodation is emerging because of these basic realities and the need to maintain family respect and honour in the community. While there is a clear understanding that force is unacceptable there is a lack of clarity over what is the definition of coercion and this can be an issue when considering inter-religious relationships.

There is no doubt that patriarchal behaviour is imported from South Asia. Women are socialised by the gender hierarchy and reproduce and enforce imposed norms of behaviour. Mothers play an important role in regulating the behaviour of daughters and daughters-in-law and it is not unusual for them to use force against recalcitrant daughters. Men enter the scene when family honour is involved and women leaving home or demanding divorces results in loss of honour. Clearly there are differences in the way that men's and women's behaviour is regulated and that is why forced marriage is mainly related to women. Actions that flagrantly break norms of honourable behaviour trigger processes which ultimately culminate in forced marriage. Tightening of immigration control would not address this problem because young women will still be coerced into marriage and sent back with no expectation of returning. Immigration may be a factor for relatives in South Asia but it is usually not the trigger that leads to forced marriages in Britain.

CHAPTER 5

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCE

Introduction

Generation is an ambiguous and ambivalent category. Community opinions, however, vary according to age and, therefore, community understanding on issues such as forced marriage also varies. As for the category of youth, in spite of the ambivalence over its definition, it is generally accepted that the period referred to as `youth' is extended by schooling and unemployment. There are two points that need to be considered here. Youths are active agents and not just victims. Amit-Talai and Wulff (1995) argue that young people negotiate cultural processes – they do not simply react to them. Yet, as much as young people try to negotiate generational differences, there is a countervailing pull where adults try to re-enculturate them. Therefore, spaces which are levered open are being closed, successfully and unsuccessfully, in a process that makes explicit hierarchy and claims to leadership. Introducing the variable of generation indicates that it is incorrect to assume that ethnicity produces a consistent and single opinion on any issue. This is especially true concerning such contentious issues as forced marriages, which specifically have a disproportionate effect on the youth generation.

Religion and Culture

Differences emerge between elders and youth concerning the significance of culture and religion. This divergence between culture and religion in the younger generation can be attributed to interplay of British education on the cultural and nationalist heritage of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis and the variations in heritage means that the resultant product of this synergy differs between the two groups.

Islam is central to Pakistani nationalism and throughout the 1980s and 1990s the state played a major role in the reassertion of a particular Islamic identification. Muslim Punjabis read and write in Urdu but traditions and cultural practices are transmitted orally in various Punjabi dialects. In the diaspora linguistic identification becomes weak. Urdu is made available by some local authorities but it is not the mother tongue of most British Pakistanis. Among Bangladeshis, linguistic nationalism is the primary feature of national identification. This nationalism emerged during the 1950s when the region was a part of Pakistan in opposition to the Islamic nationalism propounded by the Pakistani state. Bengali is a written language and is taught in mother tongue classes supported in the United Kingdom by some local authorities. Among the elder generation of both Mirpuris and Sylhetis illiteracy is high, making cultural transmission from one generation to another problematic.

The process of schooling in the United Kingdom has resulted in different world views, as well as a nurturing of critical and rational thinking among young Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. The vehicle for this transformation is the linguistic change that has taken place. Modood (1997) and Afshar (1989) confirm this and shows that the younger generation are experiencing language loss. While older generations speak in Urdu, Bengali or regional dialects such as Mirpuri or Sylheti, the younger generation consumes and produces media primarily in the English language (Samad 1998). Young people do use South Asian languages and paradoxically use them as a symbol of ethnic solidarity (Saifullah Khan 1982) but they are considerably less proficient in these languages than in English. This linguistic gap is reinforced by the fact that the majority of the youth - those born or raised here - can read and write only in English while their parents, if literate, mainly use Urdu or standard Bengali. This is far more the case for Pakistani youth than their Bangladeshi peers because among them Punjabi is not a written language.

The oral traditions, customs and religious practices are, at best, only partially transmitted, producing differences between generations in Islamic understanding and identity. The rational world view, cultivated by education, is complemented by the rational character of modernist interpretations of Islam, which are written in English. This literature is accessed through religious studies at school and religious activists and is freely available in certain bookshops and

supermarkets. The move away from oral traditions as the prime source of religious information means that customs and rituals, regulating the lives of the elder generations, do not get effectively transferred.

Complementing this development is the greater emphasis on Islam rather than regional (Mirpuri or Sylheti) identities among many members of the younger generation. As South Asian linguistic skills are lost, identification with Pakistan or Bangladesh - countries which young people may only briefly visit - becomes less significant and Muslim, as an identity, becomes more important. (However, it must be emphasised that this process is more pronounced among the Pakistanis than Bangladeshis due to their divergent heritage.)

The emergence of Muslim identification is not related to an increase in religiosity or to the rise of 'Islamic fundamentalism' but becomes prominent, paradoxically, as people become British. However, it also appears the case that middle class youth, because they retain greater linguistic skills and have better familiarity with Pakistan and Bangladesh due to greater opportunity of travel, are more strongly associated with South Asian identifications (Samad 1998).

Arranged marriages, particularly trans-continental marriages, are seen by the elder generation as a strategy to culturally rejuvenate children brought up in the

United Kingdom. Bringing over a spouse or fiancée from Mirpur or Sylhet compensates for the loss of culture they believe is taking place here.

> If a boy from here marries a girl from back home, then that girl keeps that boy within the culture. And if he is not straight, meaning out of line as far as his cultural duties are concerned, she brings him within the culture. This is our experience and this happens nine out ten times and this is one of the advantages of getting married in Pakistan. (Pakistani Elder Men, Working Class)

These generational differences appear to shape Bangladeshi and Pakistani focus group discussions of the roles played by religion and culture in arranging marriages. Older Bangladeshis and Pakistanis are more inclined to insist on due consideration being given to both religious and cultural factors. Both Pakistani and Bangladeshi elders would find it unacceptable if someone married out of their ethnic group even though it was to a Muslim.

> That wouldn't make any difference. It's the fact that she/he is from different culture and language – different everything. How are we going to accommodate this? I couldn't accept this. (Bangladeshi Elder Men, Working Class)

> If we marry outside our culture, then our culture will disappear. For an example, if one marries a Jamaican then he or she does not know about our culture i.e. looking after others, caring for others and looking after parents. (Pakistani Elder Men, Working Class)

In contrast, a number of younger Bangladeshis and Pakistanis are not so emphatic and some claim that racial and ethnic differences should be irrelevant when choosing a marriage partner. Arguing that elder generations confuse

religion and culture, young people employ religious based arguments to challenge cultural norms opposing inter-ethnic marriages.

> If the family is properly religious … they wouldn't care whether he was White or Black as long as he was Muslim … But for some people it does matter – the cultural people. They get religion and culture mixed up. (Bangladeshi Young Women, Middle Class)
>
> Q: And do you think marrying into another ethnic group is acceptable?
> A: Yeah.
> A: I wouldn't think about it. …
> Q: Would you marry somebody else other than a Pakistani?
> A: No.
> A: I think it depends. I … it really, really depends.
> A: It depends like if you're totally on the same wavelength, why not. (Pakistani Young Women, Middle Class)

In the case of inter-religious marriages there are also religious injunctions that have to be considered. Most interpretations of Islam allow men to marry Christians and Jews without the necessity for conversion as these religions are considered 'to be of the book' (*aleh-kitab*). Women from other religions have to convert to Islam. In the case of a Muslim woman she is forbidden from marrying a non-Muslim so the man must convert to Islam. Failure to do this would lead to rejection by the woman's family. Male responses are ambivalent on this issue. It comes down to the type of family people come from. If the family is a 'really western type', it may be considered but 'a really traditional family' would not consider it. Others argue that 'even a western family' will not accept their child marrying a non-Muslim. Women, however, of all ages reject the suggestion that a

Muslim could marry a non-Muslim, not only because of family rejection, but also on moral grounds.

> Q: What about different religious groups, would you consider that?
> A: (In unison) No!
> A: No one would accept that.
> Q: No?
> A: It's not about them accepting, it's about my own self, I wouldn't.
>   (Pakistani Young Women, Middle Class)
>
> A: … (it) is looked down at, the worst thing that can happen is for a Muslim girl to marry out of Islam … Even the man, even if he marries out of it yeah, and he marries an English girl and she converts, even if she didn't convert yeah he could still take her to his family. But whereas the girl … The girl, right? - if the girl, she got married out of religion that's it, she's out, completely out.
>   (Pakistani Middle Aged Men, Working Class)

Social Change, Parents and Arranged Marriage

Popular White perceptions conflate forced marriages with arranged marriages and see little or no difference between the two practices in spite of government policy to make a clear distinction between the two. Ministers have consistently stated that they are not against arranged marriages: they only want to eliminate the practice of forced marriage.

There is no clear delineation between arranged marriages and love marriages – rather, they are aspects on the same continuum. The common variable on this continuum is the element of choice that candidates have in marriage, where there is limited choice in arranged marriages and greater choice in love marriages.

There is a wide range of practices, ranging from limited consultation to free choice. As shown in Chapter Three the element of choice is influenced by the degree of urbanisation, education and parental affluence.

The issue of choice has become more central as children, socialised and educated in Britain, are reaching marriageable age. Some young people use arguments about genetics to persuade Pakistani parents that consanguineal marriages are unhealthy and may lead to disability in children. These arguments are used to challenge parents' preoccupation with endogamy and are indicative of social change emerging in the younger generation. Parents realise that if their children are adamant about a particular relationship it is better to accept it and to formalise the relationship. Parents are under pressure from their offspring to be more flexible and try to reconcile young people's emotional aspirations and demands with the formality of arranged marriages.

> A: … it's actually a better thing to say: 'Hang on, we've got our own kids'. Perhaps the concept of choice is relevant, but within the confines of arrangement. I mean it's not wrong for let's say …
> A: You're not gonna force them.
> A: … Yeah, someone's son brings his dad and says: 'I wanna get married to your daughter, right?' And your daughter likes this guy cos they've been going to school together …
> A: Logically I would. I'd, if he come and I knew that this was a close relationship and I can't really split this, I probably would go for that.
> A: … I would plan, you know? Like, my plan, my thought of mind would be, would be, I would go through the arrangement to assess but not like a forced arranged marriage. Like an arranged

marriage but with the consent of my children. (Pakistani Middle Aged Men ,Working Class)

Trans-continental marriage

Clear generational differences emerged on the issue of trans-continental marriages. Male and female elders from both communities are strongly in favour of bringing over either a spouse or fiancée from South Asia. They cite the strengthening of family links and the reinvigoration of cultural norms among children as reasons.

> A. Well, I have a daughter and through her if I can bring my nephew over, then that's going to be really beneficial for me as well as his family ... It's my nephew –I would think of how to improve his life.
> A: Parents are also worried and believe their children are deviating and that everything they're doing is against Islam. (Bangladeshi Middle Aged Men, Working Class)

A minority believed that trans-continental marriages are not working. A few elders argue that marrying educated men and women to barely literate relatives is not a recipe for a successful marriage. Expectations are so different and couples could barely communicate because they don't speak a common language. These relations limp along simply because most women are socialised into considering divorce or separation as unacceptable, especially if she was brought over from South Asia.

> Because of language barriers. She'll speak English and he Bengali, so they'll have problems with language. Some will cope all right, thinking they've no choice but others will not think like that'. (Bangladeshi Elder Men, Working Class)

Cultural practices are also an issue.

> They arrange the marriage because the boy is from the UK. They don't look at the family or anything else. When the girl arrives in the UK she finds the boy's behaviour or lifestyle unacceptable. (Bangladeshi Middle Aged Women, Working Class).

This led a minority to argue that the youth should be given greater say and should marry someone from a similar background living in Britain.

Young men and women from both communities, however, are more suspicious of trans-continental marriages. They do not reject the option of such alliances out of hand but they claim that language, culture, different expectations and awareness of the instrumental behaviour of spouses from South Asia should be considered. Both young Bangladeshi and Pakistani contributors to the focus groups believe that linguistic and cultural issues would be major obstacles if a partner came from South Asia. In nearly all the cases of forced marriages handled by the Community Liaison Unit, the girl is married to a village boy from Sylhet or Mirpur.

> I wouldn't encourage it because the girl needs someone on her … wavelength. Someone she can interact with. She cannot spend the rest of her life with this person who can't even speak English.

(Bangladeshi Young Women, Middle Class)

A young man argued:

> You've been brought up in the Western culture. You've got nothing in common with the person in Pakistan apart from religion and background culture, but for her it's not background culture - that's their culture full stop and it's gonna cause conflict. (Pakistani Young Men, Middle Class)

Others point out how relatives brutally exploit marriages for immigration purposes.

> One of my uncles' friend's sister got married - her marriage didn't last four weeks because of that. He just wanted to come to this country. (Bangladeshi Young Men, Middle Class)

Some respondents suggested that potential candidates, educated and from urban areas, are possibly more compatible and better equipped to prosper in Britain.

> in individual cases when people like in … Karachi and Islamabad in the cities they'll be more educated and there may be that sense of compatibility when they actually meet in those sort of cases. (Pakistani Young Men, Middle Class)

Finding a suitable partner is not easy when issues of caste, education, sex ratios are considered and a suitable person may not be available in the United Kingdom so they look to the sub-continent. Depending on the size of the extended family there may not be an appropriate British candidate at the time thus necessitating a trans-continental marriage.

Q: No, where you find your … in Pakistan.
A: Oh, no …
A: No, I'm strongly against that.
A: I don't agree with it. No.
A: No, I don't really.
A: I'm not against it or for it. I'm not saying I'm specifically going to go to Pakistan only to get a husband. I'm just saying that, if all else fails, then there's always (that). (Laughter).
A: Yeah.
A: Cos that's the thing, it's different in every case. There's a lot of marriages … and they work out and there's [those] in England and they don't work out.
A: I would regret it so much if I had it in my head that: 'Oh, I will marry a guy only from England' and then it turns out that [there is no one available]. (Pakistani Young Women, Working Class)

Social Class and Rise of Individualism

There is evidence of considerable social change among the young Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. Firstly, young people socialised in the United Kingdom have a greater sense of individualism than the older generations. The key factors here are higher education and social mobility. Secondly, language differences are emerging, especially among Pakistanis, making it more difficult to transmit oral traditions across generations in Britain. Language change is further exacerbated by attitudinal changes which are clearly evident among the youth focus groups. The result is that young people from both communities have different priorities when considering marriage. The significance of caste status has become less relevant while education and social class have become an imperative in arranged marriages. The majority still want arranged marriages but with a greater degree

of choice. When asked what were the greatest influences when choosing a partner, one respondent replied:

> First, I think it is individuality and then it is family. (Bangladeshi Young Women, Middle Class)

Another Bangladeshi compares his parents' generation with what might happen when he marries:

> [People considered] where the partner's family was from, how wealthy they were, what was their caste background. My own wedding – the categories will be far more lengthy … It won't necessarily be just looking at status. I personally have my own preferences and I believe … that I can have these. (Bangladeshi Young Men, Middle Class)

Education is an important qualification, especially for young women since it is assumed that educated men will be less traditional and conservative.

A: I feel the more educated they are the more liberal they are, in terms of their views. …

A: (Laughter) They break out of that tradition don't they? Like if they're more educated they break out of cultural tradition of you know getting married within the family. (Pakistani Young Men, Middle Class)

There was a lively discussion by young men and women on the future of arranged marriages. Many consider that love marriages are becoming more feasible and some young people suggest that it may become the norm in future generations. Others disagree, arguing that it is a cultural dimension which will persist.

I think in the future people are going to get married and say: 'Mum and dad, meet your daughter-in-law!' (laughter) Most teenagers now, like between our age range, they've got their own girlfriends they want to spend their lives with. So they have got ideas. Times have changed. (Bangladeshi Young Men, Middle Class)

A: And if you give it two … more generations, there'll be … hardly any arranged marriages going on. It'll be all love marriages and people will find each other and you know …

A: I disagree …

A: I disagree …

Q: Why do you disagree?

A: I disagree because I think it's against the culture and religion. If people follow it in the correct way then arranged marriage is the best way to do it …

A: In two generations time it'll be our kids' kids and they're not gonna have much knowledge of the culture. (Pakistani Young Men, Middle Class)

Young people believe that forced marriages are a much bigger problem than the middle-aged and elder groups do. They are at the cusp of major life cycle

changes and are more concerned by such issues. Primarily, they are at a marriageable age and sensitive to parental pressures. They argue that their parents do not listen to them and that their concerns are not understood. This generational gulf is exacerbated by linguistic change where parents and children do not speak a common language with fluency. Most youngsters are happy with the concept of arranged marriages but it is clear that they want far more say in the process than they have enjoyed so far. They are challenging caste norms and most want to have a wider range of choice than is normally allowed. As for trans-continental marriages some are happy with them, while many clearly favour finding a partner already living in Britain. These views do not accord with those expressed by the older generation and are evidence of the social change taking place. Emotional ties with parents remain strong and some young people are sorry that their parents are seen in a negative manner. However, when they were asked who they would turn to if faced with a forced marriage, there is ambivalence. Most young contributors want the matter settled within the family, since this is the most honourable solution. They are not keen on outside intervention and agree with the elders' negative views about social services. They also show a considerable distrust of imams and community leaders and feel no confidence in turning to them for help.

Conclusion

Generational differences are emerging in a number of areas. Young people born or educated in Britain have a different understanding of religion and culture from the elder generation brought up in South Asia. Language differences are emerging, particularly among Pakistanis, who consume primarily English media and are relatively weak in South Asian languages. Oral traditions of the elder generation are transmitted in South Asian languages which means that they are not being passed on or only partially, at best. There is a tendency for the young to identify themselves as Muslims rather than identify themselves with their parents' country of origin. These differences in marriage practices are reflected in the elder generation's insistence that both religious and cultural factors should be taken into account, i.e. they should marry from the same ethnic group, while young people are saying culture is not so important but religion is. This results in young people arguing that inter-ethnic marriages are legitimate but inter-religious marriages are problematic if the partner does not convert. Parents do recognise that social change is taking place and are much more accommodated to their children's concerns and demand for choice. If young people insist on consummating particular relationships then it is better to accept and formalise their demands than to use force or to see their children running away.

There is a clear generational difference over the issue of trans-continental marriages. Elders are in favour of trans-continental marriages because they reinforce cultural norms but they realise that this is not working. Young people

however, are much more sceptical about trans-continental marriages, particularly women. Language and cultural issues are considered to be major obstacles, but educated people from urban areas in South Asia are considered to be a possibility, particularly where there may not be an appropriate candidate available in Britain.

Young people basically agree with the concept of arranged marriages but want a much greater degree of choice. They are challenging endogamy and prefer a partner who is already living in Britain. Educational compatibility is considered to be an important criterion, particularly by women. There are mixed views about whether arranged marriages will persist or `degenerate' into love marriages. There is almost unanimity that forced marriage is a much bigger problem than the middle aged and elder groups consider it to be. Furthermore, they show no confidence in the way that community leaders and Imams have dealt with the problem.

CHAPTER 6

COMMUNITY RESISTANCE

Introduction

Several social scientists have demonstrated that racism has entered a new phase and moved away from discourse about visible difference to discourse of cultural difference (Gilroy 1987, Barker 1981). The shift towards discriminating on the basis of culture has been well documented and Muslims have argued that Islam has become a focus of cultural racism. The Runnymede report (1997) on Islamophobia shows that anti-Muslim pressure is a real problem in a number of areas, and holds some of the media responsible for spreading prejudice. Muslim concerns about Islamophobia increased in the aftermath of the disturbances in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham and after September 11, 2001. The revival of the Far Right in Britain and in Europe has been based on anti-Muslim propaganda, leaving Muslims suspicious of the motives for outsiders' interest in their internal affairs.

Neither race nor Islamophobia was directly mentioned in the topic guide but these issues were consistently raised, without prompting, along with concerns over immigration legislation by most of the focus groups, especially the elder and middle-aged male groups. This reaction reflects the heightened sense of insecurity which these communities are feeling, and represents a deep distrust

based on history about government interest in matters pertaining to the private sphere of these ethnic minorities.

Race and Islamophobia

While all the focus groups, in varying degrees, showed concern that the issue of forced marriage is associated with race and Islamophobia, our middle class male participants most systematically and clearly expressed this argument. The most meticulous critique of the research was developed by this group, which criticised the study for not including Indians, restricting the focus to forced marriages and not covering suicide and other abuses to women. A broader approach, which incorporated South Asian communities as a whole over a range of issues, it was claimed, would produce a different picture. The investigation in its present form simply pathologises Muslims, reiterating and reinforcing the racist and orientalist stereotypes peddled by certain politicians and the media. The track record of earlier research was dismissed as poor with no beneficial legislative or administrative action emerging from them. Fears were raised that this research would be used to justify legislation designed to systematically assail the community.

Rather, they argue, the communities should be proud of their family system and should allow children the freedom to decide for themselves and not be fearful. Respondents claim that arranged marriages are more stable than love marriages

and that divorce and domestic violence are considerably lower among Muslims. This reaction highlights the resistance that any social policy initiative on forced marriage will encounter. A highly charged debate on racism and Islamophobia will deflect or block any initiatives on this issue. The quote below indicates the insecurity that the respondents felt about the nature of the investigation. A legacy of suspicion has developed among these relatively uninfluential communities, who feel nervous and incapable of adequately debating in the public arena issues which they feel sensitive about. The topic guide made no mention of legislative implications emerging from the research. However, some respondents immediately concluded that this would be the end result of the investigation and reacted strongly.

> Can I just say my piece … because I've got to go. I'm going to say it as frankly as possible ... This research into forced marriages is another tool … designed to support the views of different political personalities that have been accusing the Pakistanis and Bangladeshis of having traditions which they see as back(ward) outdated … not giving enough rights to youngsters within the Muslim community.

> The way that I see it is this. The research that we have commissioned - I can give an example of two - Runnymede Trust … on Islamophobia ….. and another one - both of them, …[when] the research was being done, everyone jumped onto the bandwagon to give all the information …. It is not and never has been used to help any … [law] or statute in the Parliament or House of Lords to help those communities and neither will this.

> I know the background information to it and politically this is the key and information like this as well as all the other information (has) been collected without the knowledge of the community. … There are a lot of people who are most dangerous whose views are

going to be in this legislation and statute … (Among the) Muslim community and the Pakistani community, Kashmiris and Bangladeshis, there's a lack of people who can understand the issues and articulate them. This kind of legislation is going to batter our community up. It is about time that people like yourselves and others actually stood up in the community, spoke to parents, spoke to children, give them … the total freedom and right of making decisions and be proud of them. I'm very proud of my community and everybody else should be. We should be proud of our family system and nobody else can beat that family system. (Pakistani Middle Aged Men, Middle Class)

It is clear that the issue of forced marriages was raised initially by one MP in particular, Anne Cryer, and women's groups and then picked up by the media, both print and audio-visual. The very public gaze on the issue of forced marriage makes British Asian communities sensitive to this issue rather than becoming reflective and self-critical. Young and old participants share the view that the British media is biased in its reporting of marriage practices and fails to differentiate between arranged and forced marriage. A member of a young women's group declares that:

the media tends to say that arranged marriages are forced marriages but that's not necessarily true. (Pakistani Young Women, Working Class)

Most of [the reporting] is biased … Whoever gets married back home is, like, they've been forced into getting married … They don't see that some people actually want to go back home and get married … They do not distinguish between arranged and forced. (Bangladeshi Young Women, Middle Class)

One Bangladeshi middle class young male acknowledges that forced marriages do take place but the few cases are used to promote Islamophobia. The impression was created that this problem was widespread:

> There is some truth in it but they're going to stir it up … - basically, Islamophobia … They pick up a few examples of forced marriages and then a general picture is given and it [gives] a false perception, if you like.

Some had seen television documentaries, which contributed to widespread misunderstanding about the issue. Another Bangladeshi middle class young male comments:

> They even had on BBC sometimes this programme [where a] girl was forced into marriage back home in Pakistan. Things like that I find very misleading.

It creates confusion in the White audience's mind between arranged and forced marriages:

> I mean, a girl I know came into my office the other week, this is going back about three or four months. There was a programme on TV I think and she got talking and said: 'Oh, did you watch that programme?' And I said: 'What was it about?' She said: 'It was about arranged marriages'. And I said: 'No, it was about forced Marriages'. And she said: 'What do you mean?'. I said: 'Get a dictionary and look at the definition of arranged and looked at the definition of forced. They are two different things altogether'. (Pakistani Middle Aged Men, Middle Class)

Bangladeshis and Pakistanis are blamed by a process of reporting where differences between Islam and cultural tradition are ignored – differences which, as we have seen earlier, some younger contributors emphasise. Another Bangladeshi young middle class male articulates this position in the following way:

> They lean heavily on the name of Islam which I can't stand. They say: 'Look, it's from Islam' … They say: 'Bangladesh is an Islamic country … and that custom forces the women to get married'. And they take the mick … Islam and custom is completely different.

Immigration Controls

Many of the older and middle-aged respondents in the Bangladeshi and Pakistani focus groups believe that the government's interest in forced marriages is motivated by a desire to halt the immigration of spouses. Such a view contradicts government statements that it has no plans to introduce tighter immigration control. The state's interest in forced marriages is seen as a veiled assault against arranged marriages, which are equated with economic migration – a process which the state wants to restrict. Strong opinions are expressed about current immigration controls which are seen as racist, since administrative controls and immigration legislation target members from the New Commonwealth, especially those from the Indian sub-continent, and do not apply to Canadians and Australians. The greatest anxiety is expressed by Bangladeshis, whose compatriots are still in the process of family reunification

and would, therefore, be most likely to be affected by any legislative changes. Contributors to the Bangladeshi male elder group of school governors are the most vociferous on this issue.

> The British immigration [service] is just fed up of granting visa to the spouse of our sons and daughters who are having arranged marriages in Bangladesh. They are trying to stop that … The more such problems are created, the less chance we'll have of finding boys within our own community. Our girls will then look for boys in other communities, such as White or black

A contributor to one of the Bradford groups developed the same theme:

> There's this perception at the higher levels that … the only reason for these arranged marriages is due to economic grounds, and it's not, it might be nothing to do with that. … If our kids go (to Pakistan) and they actually like someone that is related to them, why is it an economic … migration. (Pakistani Middle Aged Men, Working Class)

These statements show that older generations rely on historical experience with past UK governments, which makes them sceptical about any administrative initiative relating directly to them. Interestingly, similar opinions are also raised by young women who are irritated that forced marriage is being equated with immigration issues. The impression is given that:

> girls are being forced to Pakistan (for their passports). Well, most of isn't like that. (Pakistani Young Women, Working Class)

There is a growing realisation that forced marriages are unsustainable. Elders deny that forced marriages are a major problem, given the intervention of the police, social services and other agencies.

> In reality, this issue has been exaggerated … And some people instead of discouraging it, in reality encourage it and promote it i.e. for example, social services, free helpline. These are the kind of avenues open for a boy or girl in this kind of situation. (Pakistani Elder Men, Working Class)

There is a reluctant acknowledgment of the unacceptability of the use of force and the dishonour that force brings:

> In reality, parents over here are helpless. There is no way children can be forced in this country. Parents are well aware that times have changed and doing this kind of force, or talking about using this kind of force, will cost or bring bad name to them. (Pakistani Working Class Elder Man)

> When boys and girls choose their own partner for marriage you've got to accept … It's better to get them married … What can you do? … Parents might as well allow the marriage to take place. This is better than running away…than doing something bad'. (Bangladeshi Elder Women, Working Class)

Middle aged contributors are also not keen on state intervention but this is because they believe that social change is taking place and the issue will die out. Forced marriages have no role to play in Islam and cultural traditions should be separated from religious practices. While they may not be happy about inter-ethnic and inter-religious relationships, they do not consider physical force as part of the repertoire of their strategies and tactics.

In sharp contrast to the elders and the middle aged focus groups, who spent a lot of energy arguing on the discriminatory nature of our research, young men and women claimed that the problem of forced marriage does exist and that coercion has no role in the marriage process. However, they also felt at a loss as to the strategy to pursue. They agreed that coercion has no part to play and that they did not accept any justification for force. Yet, for them, coercion is not a large-scale problem, although there always will be a hardened minority who will persist in coercion in spite of any initiatives.

Conclusion

The study had no question in the topic guide on race, Islamophobia and immigration. These issues were spontaneously raised by the focus groups and indicate the sensitivity of the communities researched to this issue. The common themes raised were (a) that the study pathologises Muslims and reinforces racist and orientalist stereotypes and (b) that it is a surreptitious attack on arranged marriages. Old and young participants were worried that in the public eye arranged marriages were seen as the same as forced marriages. Older respondents also argued that government interest in forced marriages was motivated by the desire to halt immigration of spouses. Their sensitivity is due to a legacy of suspicion that makes inarticulate and relatively uninfluential communities feel nervous and inadequate when sensitive issues are debated in

the public arena. Clearly, policy initiatives around forced marriages, if not dealt with in a sensitive manner, can easily be derailed by such suspicion and an unwanted debate on racism and Islamophobia.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities contain rapidly expanding populations which are now entering the marriage market in considerable numbers, with the Bangladeshis reaching their peak in 5-10 years time. Both communities are primarily from rural areas, are working class and suffer from high rates of unemployment. A combination of racial exclusion and ethnic inclusion reflects their high rates of self-employment. Both communities, however, are vulnerable to economic downturn, regional variations and sectoral shifts in the labour market. Their low human capital leads to greater dependence on bonding social capital which, in turn, reinforces kin networks.

Endogamous marriages within sub-groups based on caste and status continue and many people still see the group as more important than the individual. The socio-economic context within which these groups find themselves reinforces group boundaries. Bonding social capital and kin networks become valued as alternative resources to human and financial capital (Annex 1). At the same time marriage practices are changing, albeit slowly. There is evidence that greater choice is becoming more common amongst the young. In comparison with Indians these changes are taking place much more slowly due to the educational

and class backgrounds of parents. In the long term, improvement in educational outcomes and social mobility will lead to greater flexibility in arranged marriages. Trans-continental marriages continue due to difficulties in finding appropriate partners; from the same caste group, educational background and class background.

The reasons for forced marriage are complex but the analysis does show that sexuality and independence among young women can trigger off a forced marriage. Women's behaviour which may jeopardise family honour appears to be an important variable. Family honour motivates men and women to regulate the behaviour of their children, in particular girls, and flagrant disregard of group norms can trigger processes that culminate in forced marriages. Immigration may be a motive for relatives in South Asia but does not appear to be a primary factor for families settled in Britain. Here the concern is that changes in legislation could result in women being sent back to South Asia with no hope of return.

Community attitudes to marriage are changing and the issue of choice has become more pertinent than before. The elderly appear exasperated by their inability to enforce or impose their decisions of marriage on young men and women. They see marriage as the ultimate means in preventing young people from straying. Middle-aged participants argue that forced marriage is a problem

which will eventually die out. They say this because, unlike their parents, they distinguish between culture and Islam and it is cultural practices that legitimate forced marriages. They are re-examining their Islamic heritage and in the process are coming to the conclusion that forced marriage is unIslamic. They also, irrespective of their personal predilection, accept that they have to accommodate the wishes of their children, who are highly independent, if they wish to maintain family respect and honour in the community. There is a degree of ambiguity over the understanding of coercion, particularly with regard to inter-religious marriages. Force is unacceptable but emotional and psychological pressure appears to be condoned. Young people consider any form of coercion to be completely unacceptable and argue that there should be greater choice in marriage.

Generational differences are emerging in a number of areas. Language differences are emerging, particularly among Pakistanis, as both groups are primarily consuming English media and, in the process, Muslim identity is becoming more significant than ethnic identity. In terms of marriage this is reflected by the view that cultural factors are less significant than religious ones. While the elderly argued that religion and culture must be taken into account when arranging a marriage, young people are saying that religion is the only important variable. Young people are, therefore, concluding that inter-ethnic marriages are legitimate but inter-religious alliances are problematic, especially if

the partner does not convert to Islam. There is a tacit recognition by parents that if they do not negotiate and accommodate the wishes of their children they may be faced with a *fait accompli,* which would cast a shadow on their community and family honour. Even greater differences emerge over the issue of trans-continental marriages. Young people, especially women, are wary of trans-continental marriages, because of linguistic and cultural differences. They do not totally rule out trans-continental marriages but in such cases they would look for partners who come from urban and educated backgrounds as opposed to the villages of their families.

Young people accept the concept of arranged marriages but want a much greater say. They challenge endogamy and show a clear preference for partners already living in Britain. Educational compatibility is probably the greatest concern, especially for women. There is considerable discussion as to how arranged marriages will develop in the future but there is no unanimity about this. They are, however, concerned that the full scale of the problem if forced marriage has not been recognised by their elders and there is agreement that the community is not responding adequately to the situation.

There was considerable apprehension and criticism of the research topic itself. While we do not wish to overstate the significance, there was considerable discussion - mainly among the middle-aged and elderly contributors - that the

research reflected the racist and Islamophobic intentions of the authorities. Immigration control was considered to be the authorities' main aim and the research was seen as a veiled assault on arranged marriages. The government has consistently distinguished between forced and arranged marriages but this distinction has not percolated down to the communities' grass root levels. The historical legacy has been such that it has left a deep suspicion of government by communities which lack influence and are nervous of public interest in this area. The significance here is that policy initiatives have to be constructed and implemented in a sophisticated and subtle manner so that they do not provoke a diversionary debate on racism and Islamophobia.

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ANNEX 1

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT:

BANGLADESHIS AND PAKISTANIS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Introduction

This annex elaborates on the national socio-economic context of the study starting with a demographic profile of the Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities within the context of ethnic minorities in general. It locates specific characteristics, such as population size, spatial distribution, age structure, sex ratios and employment patterns, of the target groups within the national context. It assists in dispelling ideas that there are peculiar traits only found among Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. These communities share many features with other university ethnic groups, including ones from South Asia, but are dissimilar in other respects. This evidence strengthens our argument, explored in chapter 2, that culturalist explanations alone are inadequate in explaining the issue of forced marriage.

Population Distribution

The majority of the minority ethnic population (96.1 per cent) are concentrated in England. Only 1.9 per cent of these groups are found in Scotland, while in Wales their numbers are even smaller with only 1.2 per cent of found there (ONS Autumn 2001). Ethnic minorities are concentrated in urban areas; 49 per cent live in London where they make up 28 per cent of the

total population. Approximately 66 per cent of Black minorities are found in Greater London but only 33 per cent of South Asian groups are located in the capital city. The West Midlands have long contained the highest concentration of South Asians; just under 20 per cent of all South Asians are found there.

However, there are major differences within this South Asian category, since around 80 per cent of the Bangladeshi population is found in Greater London, while Pakistanis are mostly concentrated in the Midlands and northern England (Owen et al. 2000; ONS Autumn 2001). Only 23 per cent of Pakistanis are found in London compared with 41 per cent in West Yorkshire and the West Midlands. The Pakistani concentrations (figure A.1) in the South East are located in north-east London, Slough, Buckinghamshire and Luton. Across the Midlands their substantial concentrations are to be found in Birmingham, Peterborough and Stafford.

Figure A.1 shows that the largest concentrations - five times the national average – are in the 'textile towns', which stretch from Yorkshire to Manchester and South Lancashire. In contrast, the largest concentrations of Bangladeshis are found in the boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Newham, Camden, Westminster and Waltham Forest, as well as Luton and Oldham (figure A.2). Significant numbers of Bangladeshis are also found in the West Midlands. The variation in population distribution between the two communities indicates that Pakistanis are perhaps more vulnerable to economic disadvantage associated with regional variations than

Bangladeshis.

Figure: A.1 Pakistani Population by District

Location quotient

□ 5 to 11.41 (11)
□ 2.5 to 4.999 (17)
□ 1 to 2.499 (35)
□ all others (369)
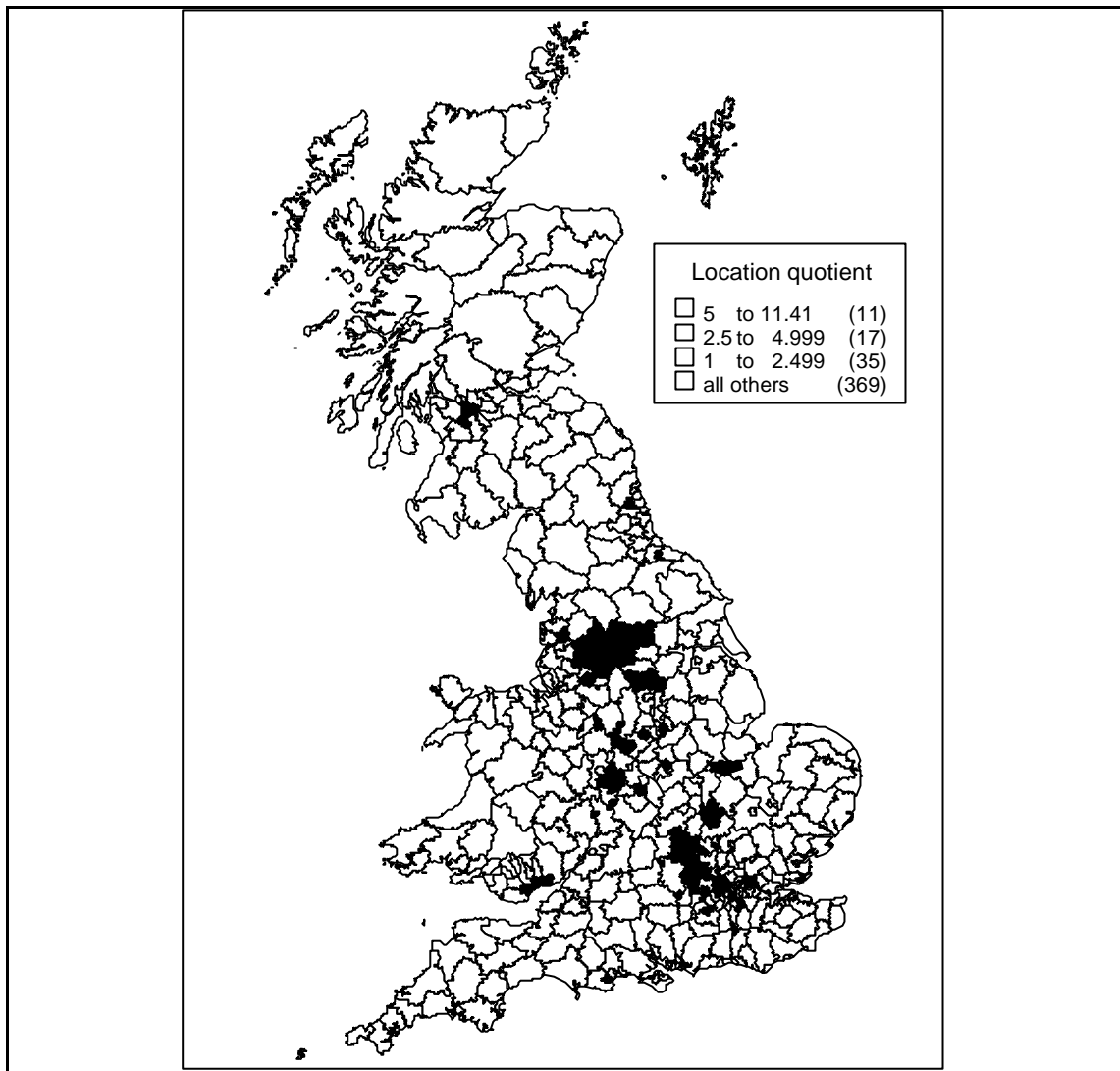
Source: Owen 1994

Figure: A.2 Bangladeshi populations by district
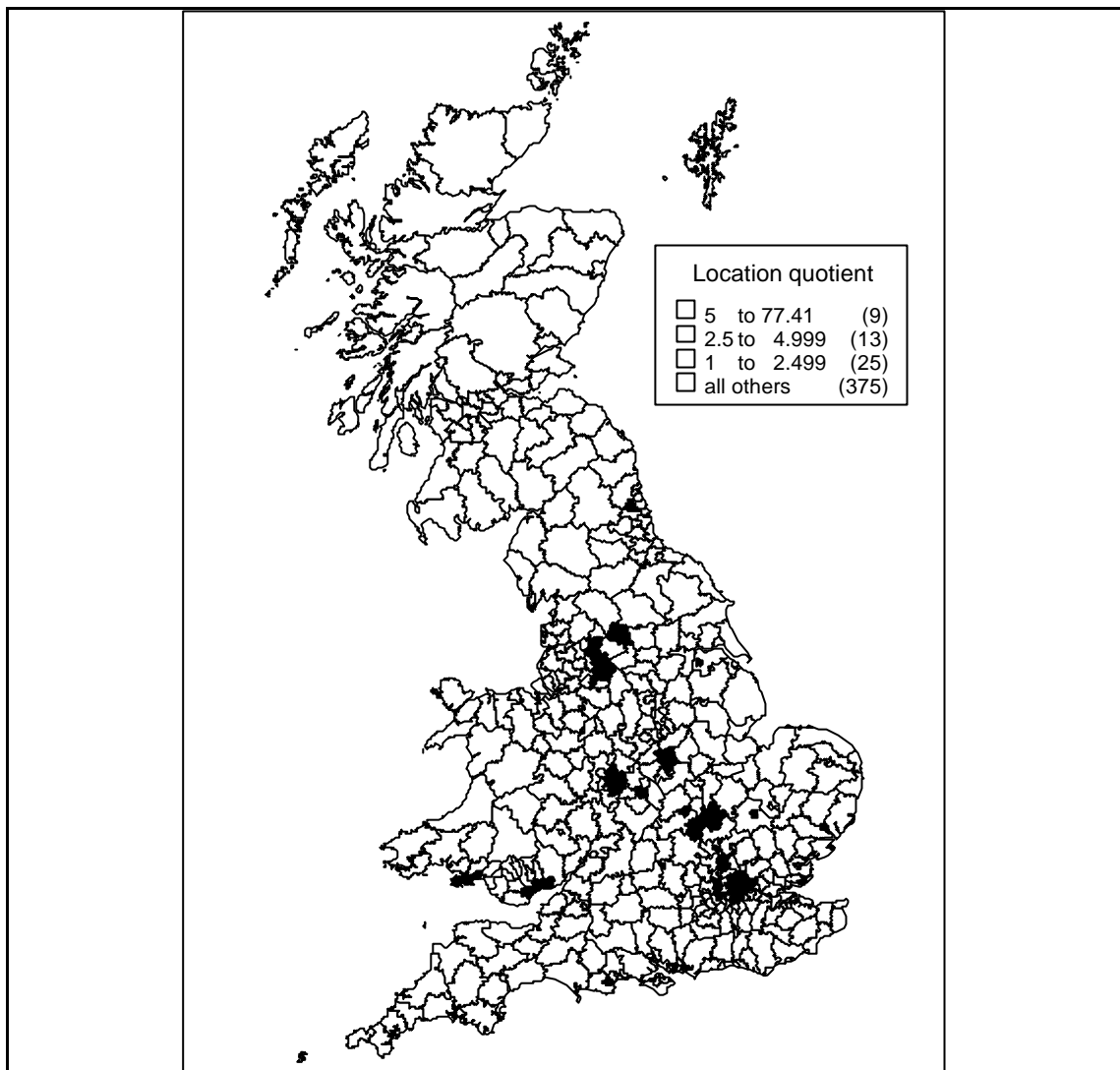
Source: Owen 1994

Population Size and Growth Rate

The estimated size of the minority ethnic population in 2000 was 4 million or 7.1 per cent of the total population, compared with 3.1 million or 5.5 per cent of the total population in 1991. Approximately half of the total minority ethnic population is South Asian (Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi), while almost a third identify themselves as Black, Black-Caribbean, Black-African or Black-

Other. Among South Asians the Indian population was approximately 936,000 in 2000, representing the lowest growth rate, of 4 per cent, during the 1990s (figure A.3). In contrast, the Pakistani population had grown from 535,000 to 605,000 and the Bangladeshi population had increased from 183,000 to 238,000 - growth rates of 13 per cent and 30 per cent respectively (ONS 2001).

Figure A.3: Population Estimates by Ethnic Group, Great Britain, 2000
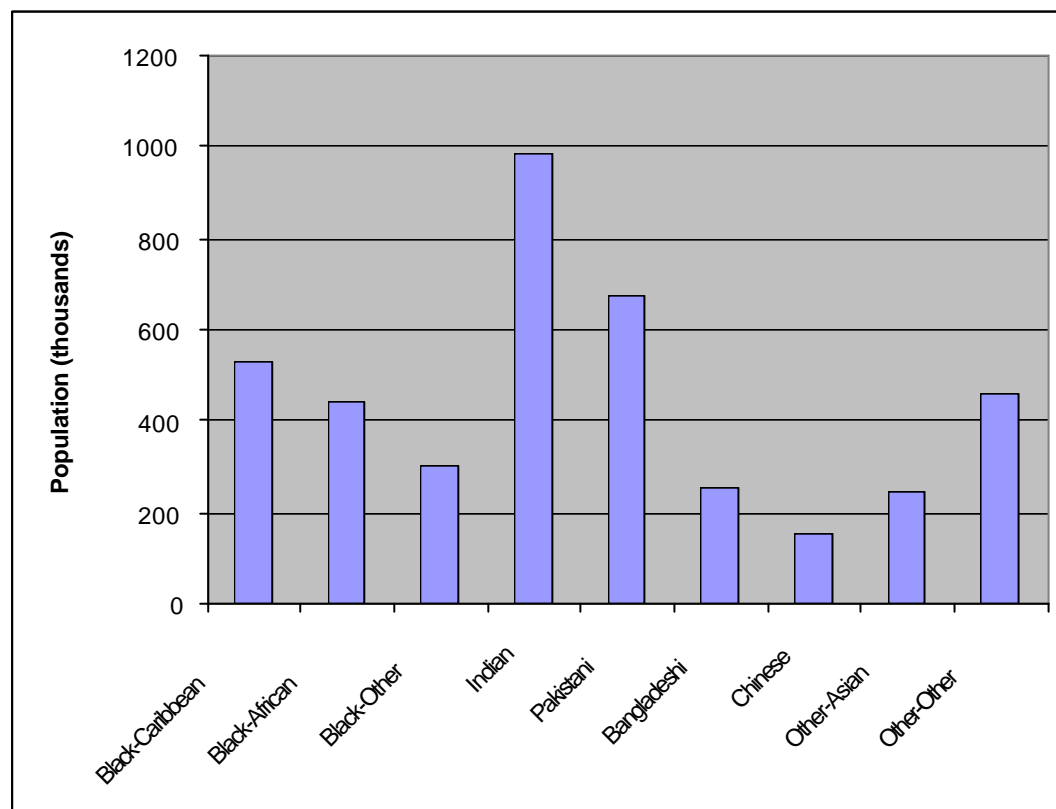
Source: ONS 2001

Age Structure and Sex Ratios

Figure A.4 shows that the minority ethnic population is very young with a median age of 26 compared with a median age of 37 for the White population (ONS 2001). The age profile of the White population reveals a well rounded

population, where there is a rough parity between the sexes, even though as the population ages more women are present than men. The White majority population is a significantly mature population where the proportion of older people is steadily increasing. In contrast, minority ethnic groups are characterised by large numbers of young people and a dearth of elderly people. These differences are influenced by the timing of immigration mainly of young adults, with or without families, and differentials in fertility, with the Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups being the most fertile.

Among South Asians, Indians were closest to the age profile of the White population with a median age of 31. The median age of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi population was 22 and 18 years of age and 34 per cent of the Pakistani population and 40 per cent of the Bangladeshi population were under 16.

Clearly the two communities contain fast growing populations, which are entering marriageable age range faster than other minority ethnic groups. At the same time there are also differences between Bangladeshis and Pakistanis. Pakistanis have a larger cohort in the 15-29 age range while Bangladeshis have a greater presence in the 0-14 age range. This indicates that the Pakistani population is experiencing a demographic bulge of young people of marriageable age at present while Bangladeshis will experience this in the next five to ten years.

Figure A.4: Age structure of Minority Ethnic Groups 1997-99
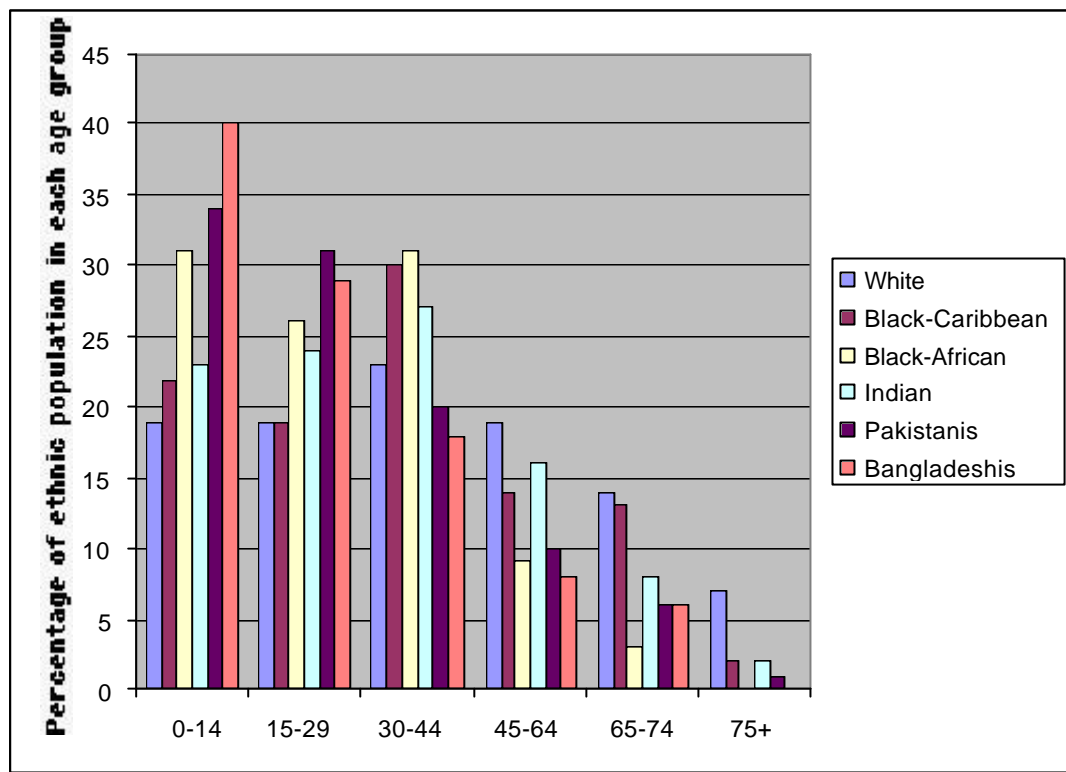
Source: ONS 2001

Both the Bangladeshi and Pakistani populations show asymmetries in the sex ratio. Overall there are more Pakistani men than women with the largest imbalance in the 30-44 age range. However, the one exception lies in the 15-29 age range where there are marginally fewer men than women. There is some ambiguity about these figures (see pages 30-32 for discussion of contra-factual evidence) and we will know with a greater degree of certainty when the 2001 Census published. The Bangladeshi profile is far more irregular - it is more male dominated than either the Pakistani or Indian groups. The pattern has been skewed by two factors – (a) poverty has delayed marriage and (b) immigration legislation and administrative procedures have interfered with

migratory flows. The impact of these two factors is most marked in the 30-44 age range where there are 150 men to 100 women (figure A.5). A third (perhaps weakening) factor shaping these asymmetries has been the tendency for Bangladeshi men to marry women younger than themselves. On average husbands are ten years older than their wives (ONS 2001, Peach 1996, Eade 1996). In the white community marriage tends to take place between similar age ranges, although in the past men tended to be older than women. The traditional explanation for men being older when they marry is that they mature physically slowly more than women, are expected to be the principal earner and provide economic support for women, and may delay marriage in order to pursue higher education. As women engage with higher education and secure careers, the age gap has narrowed. The linkage between endogamous marriages and asymmetries in sex ratios is explored in chapter 3 pp. 55.

Figure A.5: Sex Ratios and Percentages of People Born by Ethnic Group, 1997-99, Great Britain

	Black-Caribbean	Black-African	Black-Other	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Chinese	Other Asian	White	Total
Sex ratio (males per 100 females)										
0-14	98	110	113	108	104	117	86	94	105	105
15-29	109	113	84	102	99	102	148	87	104	104
30-44	74	94	96	109	117	**150**	77	90	103	102
45+	87	119	115	101	101	108	65	79	87	87
All Ages	89	106	100	105	105	116	92	87	97	97
Percentage born in the UK									Percentages	
0-14	95	70	98	95	93	87	81	67	98	97
15-29	87	33	93	73	60	33	34	22	95	92
30-44	65	15	83	14	14	5	6	4	95	90
45-59	4	1	19	1	6	1	2	2	95	91
60-74	1	4	15	1	9	0	1	0	95	92
75+	2	0	36	0	6	0	0	0	95	94
All ages	57	35	89	43	53	45	25	21	96	93

Source: ONS 2001

Employment, Unemployment and Self-employment

Employment data (employed and jobseekers) indicate that Whites have a greater participation in the labour market than minority ethnic groups. Generally employment is lower for minority ethnic groups and the lowest rates are found among Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. Women's employment rates are far lower than men's with only 30 per cent of Pakistani women and 19 per cent of Bangladeshi women economically active compared with 57 per cent of Pakistani men and 54 per cent of Bangladeshi men. Minority ethnic group (see figure A.6) unemployment is more than double the rate of White unemployment. Heath argues that racial harassment and discrimination have impacted negatively on employment outcomes and provide a partial and important explanation for persistent disadvantage (Heath 2001: 128).

Figure A.6: Male Economic activity. Employment and ILO Unemployment
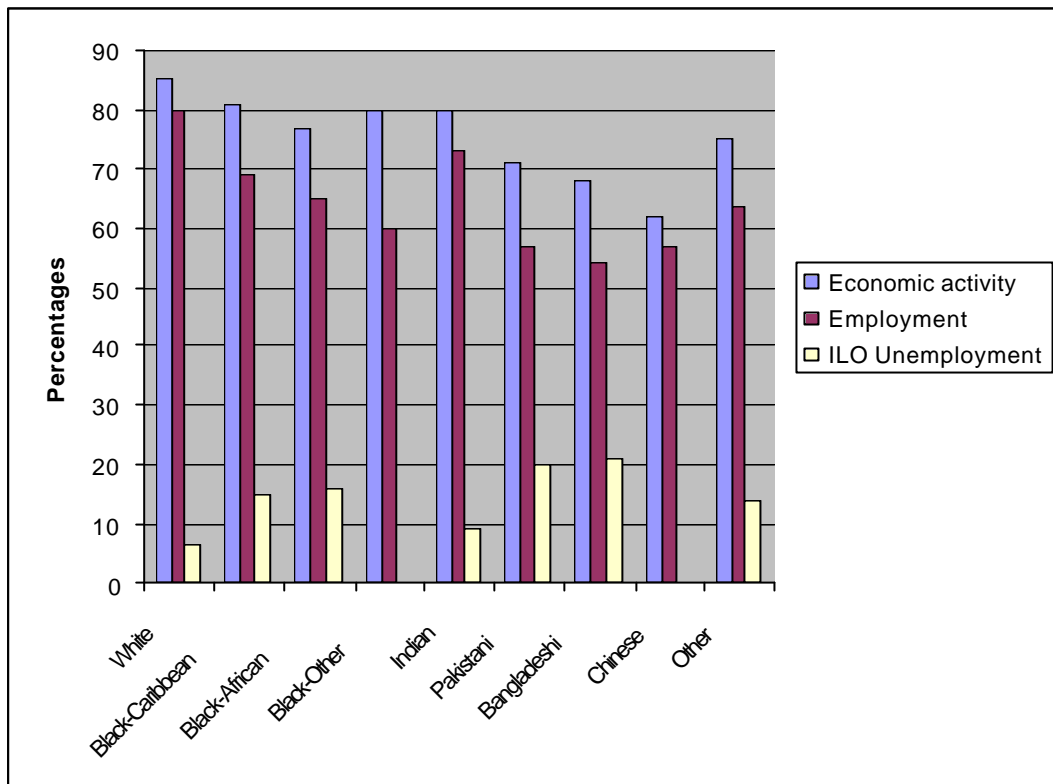
Source: cited in Policy Action Team 1999

Employment and unemployment outcomes are exacerbated by economic downturn and regional variations, which affect minority ethnic groups more than Whites, and Pakistanis more than Bangladeshis as 63 per cent of the latter live in London. These figures do not take into account disguised employment of men and women in the informal economy (working 'off the books', that is casual employment and in some cases while claiming benefits, and home-working – particularly by women – manufacturing garments) and unemployment of women who may not be claiming benefit.

Figure A.7: Female Economic Activity. Employment and ILO Unemployment
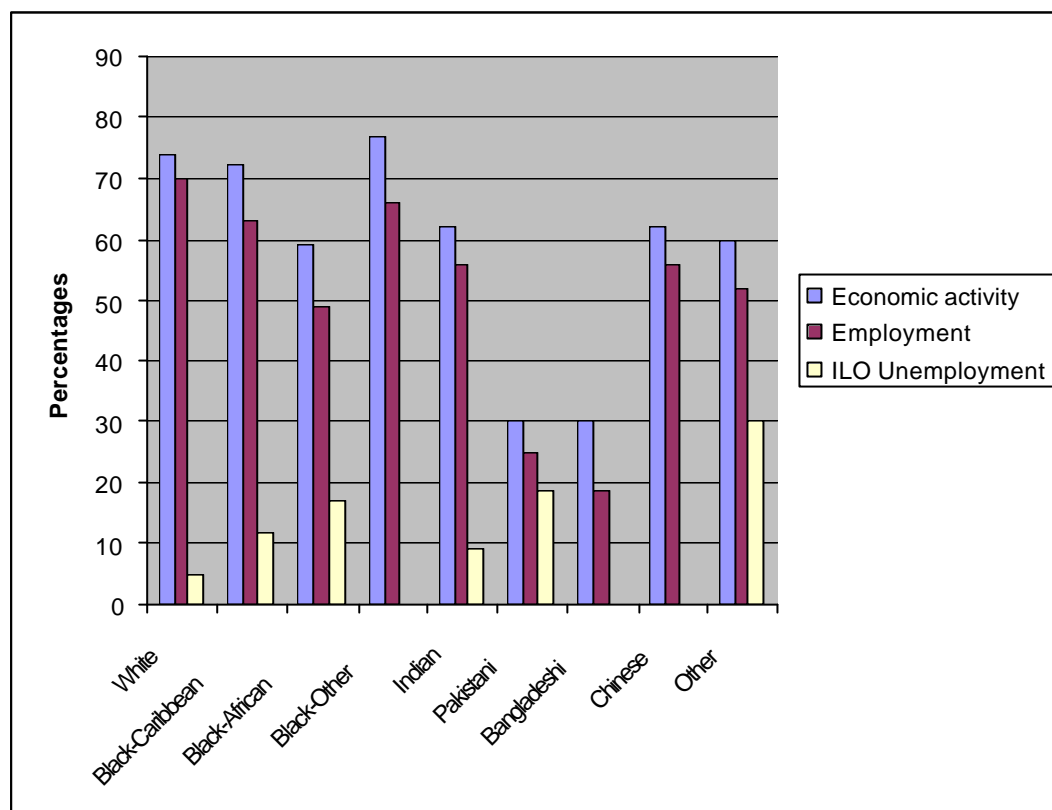
Source: cited in Policy Action Team 1999

The proportion of self-employment among minority ethnic groups is relatively high. 20 per cent of South Asian men are self-employed compared with 15 per cent of White men. South Asian female self-employment is similar to rates found among White women. Pakistani, Chinese and Indians have the highest rates of 25 per cent, 21 per cent and 19 per cent respectively. Bangladeshi self-employment was higher than the White average in 1998 but had fallen below this average by 2000. These higher rates are attributed to two factors (not necessarily mutually exclusive) - discrimination in employment restricting advancement and self-employment being seen as an alternative

strategy for advancement. Racial discrimination was a strong factor for Pakistanis going into self-employment. Another interpretation is that ethnic inclusion pulls minority ethnic groups to work in particular sectors of the economy as self-employed. Networks of kinship and friendship provide organisational and cultural resources – partnerships, credit, customers, market information etc. – giving advantage to ethnic entrepreneurs over White competition. (Owen 2000: pp. 76-7, Heath 2001: 49, Metcalf, Modood and Virdee: 68-9).

Minority ethnic groups (figure A.8) are clustered mainly in manufacturing, distribution, hotels and restaurants, public administration, education and health and the financial sector, in that order. They have hardly any representation in agriculture and fishing and energy and water. Bangladeshis are over-represented in the distribution sector, which includes restaurants and hotels. 65 per cent of Bangladeshis are employed in this sector compared with 29 per cent of Pakistanis. A significant number of Pakistanis also find employment in manufacturing (21 per cent), transport and communication, which includes taxis and chauffeuring (14 per cent), public administration (17 per cent) and the financial sector (13 per cent) (Owen et al. 2000: 77). The high rates of self-employment, particularly for Pakistanis, and clustering around certain sectors, especially for Bangladeshis, indicate that the process of exclusion is being addressed by exploiting bonding through social capital reinforcing kinship networks.

Figure A.8: Ethnic Breakdown of Employment by Industry: Percentages of all Employed and Self-employed 1997-1999.

|	A-B: Agriculture and Fishing	C, E: Energy & Water	D: Manufacturing	F: Construction	G-H: Distribution, Hotels & Restaurants	I: Transport & Communication	J-K: Banking, Finance & Insurance, etc	L-N: Public Admin, Education & Health	O-Q: Other Services
White	2	1	19	7	20	7	15	24	6
Black-Caribbean			14	5	15	8	14	36	7
Black-African			8		20	9	21	31	7
Black-Other					22			35	
Indian			22	3	26	9	18	20	3
Pakistani			**21**		**29**	**14**	**13**	**17**	
Bangladeshi					**65**				
Chinese					50		13	20	
Other Asian			12		30		16	27	
Other-other					29			29	

Source: D. Owen et al. 2000

Human Capital

Human capital, i.e. such non-material assets as education and skills, has an impact on employment prospects. Education is the primary variable and, nationally, Chinese and Indians outperform Whites at GCSE, while Pakistanis and Bangladeshis languish at the bottom with only African-Caribbeans doing worse. A gender breakdown shows that girls across the board do better than boys and this is most marked among Black girls. Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls do marginally better than boys (figure A.9).

Figure A.9: Percentage of Examination Achievements in Year 11 by Ethnic Groups and Gender
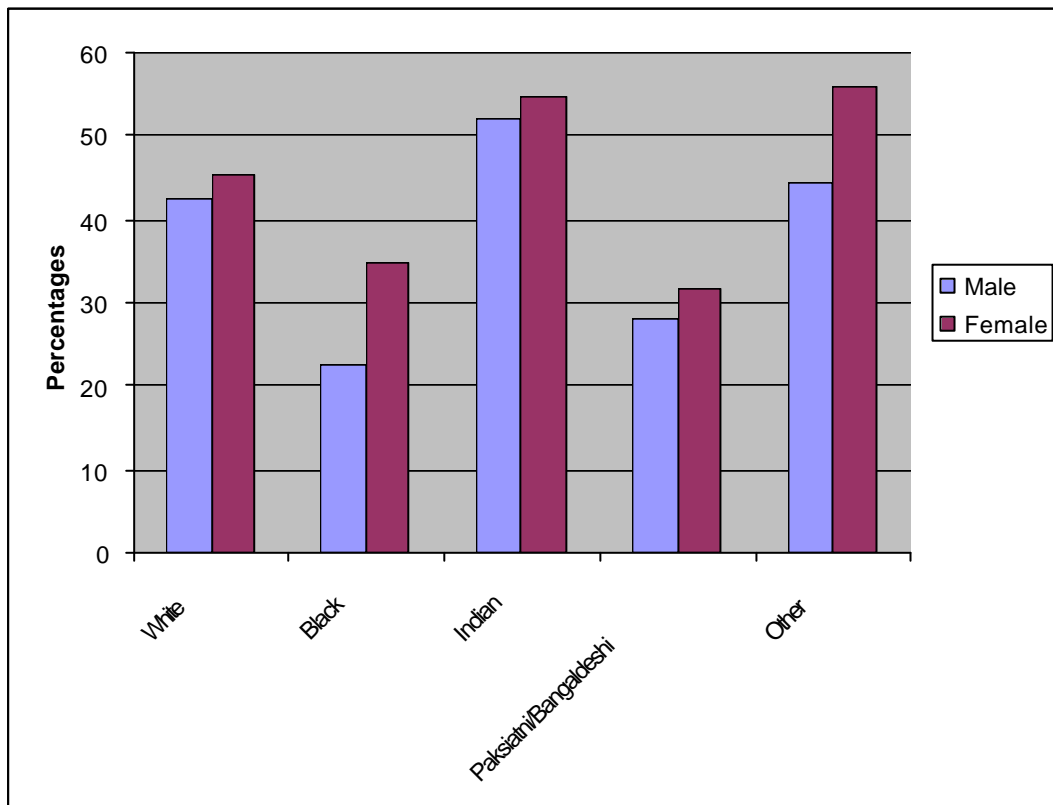
Source: D. Owen et al p.26 2000

Owen demonstrates that Bangladeshis are the most under-represented group in higher education and that Pakistani and Bangladeshi graduates have unemployment rates double that of their White counterparts. In spite of recent improvements in educational and training outcomes there is a considerable gap between these two groups, on the one hand, and the White population or more successful minority ethnic groups, on the other (2000: 130).

Heath argues that poor participation in the labour market can partly be explained by racial discrimination and partly by deficiencies in human capital. He considers class origins to be an important factor in understanding minority ethnic disadvantage in the labour market. Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are mainly from rural and petty bourgeois backgrounds and this limits their chances of entering the salariat. Cultural and religious factors may be determinant but are difficult to account for statistically. Even when a range of factors are accounted for, Pakistani and Bangladeshi unemployment is three times that of Hindus. Indian Muslims are strikingly different in their achievement rates from Pakistanis and Bangladeshis suggesting that religion is a proxy for specific group circumstances (Heath 2001: 80-1; Brown 2000). However, there are important local differences at work, shown in Chapter 2.

Conclusion

In common with most minority ethnic groups, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis

are primarily concentrated in the urban areas of England with only a small presence in Scotland and Wales. The main difference in spatial distribution between the two communities is that Bangladeshis are primarily located in London, while Pakistanis are concentrated in the West Midlands and the mill towns of Yorkshire and Lancashire.

In terms of age structure both communities are young, with Bangladeshis having an even younger population than Pakistanis. Thus various socio-economic issues that are confronting Pakistani young at present will be faced by Bangladeshis young in five to ten years time. This relates to a wide range of issues from education to employment and marriage. Both are primarily working class communities of rural origin. Male and female unemployment is high in both communities and the figures for youth unemployment are worryingly high. Racial discrimination and harassment is an important factor for these high rates. Due to racial exclusion and ethnic inclusion there are high rates of self-employment, particularly for Pakistanis, and sectorial concentrations for Bangladeshis. Both communities are vulnerable to economic downturn, regional variations and sectorial shifts. Human capital is low but increasing among the younger generation, mainly among girls. This has an important effect on their success in the labour market. The dependence on bonding social capital reinforces kin networks and makes them of greater strategic importance than might be expected. This in turn makes endogamous marriages an important cultural asset that can be translated into economic

advantage.