

Pakistani Diasporas  
Culture, Conflict, and  
Change





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*Oxford in Pakistan Readings in  
Sociology and Social Anthropology*

GENERAL EDITOR  
ALI KHAN

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# Pakistani Diasporas Culture, Conflict, and Change

*edited by*  
VIRINDER S. KALRA

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## Foreword

Mehrgarh, Harappa, Mohenjodaro—it begins here. Mehrgarh—located in Baluchistan is the oldest known rural settlement dating from 7000 BC or (BCE?). Harappa and Mohenjodaro, cities in the Indus Valley Civilisation, represent the most ancient of urban settlements dating back between 2800 BC–1800 BC.

These ancient cultures found their roots in the area that now encompasses modern day Pakistan. As time progressed through to the modern day more and more civilisations, each with their own unique influence, came and left their stamp. Multiple invasions—Persian, Greek, Turkic, Mongol, Arab and later the British—led to the arrival of ‘foreign’ influences and populations, as migration (and trade) often followed conquests. Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam—all flourished. The indigenous and the non-indigenous fused to produce a mosaic of ethnicities, religions and cultures. It also established the region as an area that has amongst the richest and most varied of legacies.

All of these influences continued to have a strong effect on the colonial and the post colonial state. Pakistan’s subsequent ‘development’ after independence in 1947 and the problems associated with ‘under development’—widespread poverty, educating a rapidly expanding population, and uncontrolled urbanisation and migration were all tinged with issues of regional identity, ethnicity and religion. Today, in addition to these challenges globalisation has brought entrenched ‘traditions’ into conflict with ‘modernity’ throwing newer issues such as the underpinning of modern day gender and labour relations on traditional ‘hierarchical’ foundations into the spotlight. Moreover, the transnational movement of Pakistani’s has meant that as an area of study, Pakistan is part of a global culture rather than being confined solely to the physical boundaries of the nation state.

But this rich melting pot of cultural nuances represents amongst the richest raw material for sociological and anthropological analysis. Yet, research on Pakistan in the field of anthropology and sociology—despite the potential of the area—has been scattered and limited in scale and scope. The Oxford in Pakistan Readings in Sociology and Social Anthropology is an attempt to try and fill this void. Firstly by bringing together some of the best research on Pakistan which has to date remained spread across numerous journals and edited books; and secondly by including fresh material both by established academics and by researchers just starting their careers.

The strength of this series stems from this blend of older and newer articles and the fact that contributions have been made by both established and upcoming researchers. The common linkage though remains one of academic rigour and innovation. It is aimed both at the serious Pakistan focussed academic as well as academics, students and general readers who desire an introduction to the area as seen through a perspective that provides the kind of depth and intimacy of analysis that few disciplines can match.

The books in this series would not have been possible without the support of the growing band of researchers involved in work on Pakistan and I am particularly thankful to all those who contributed to the different volumes. The Pakistan focussed researcher is a shy species but the level of support for this series has been overwhelming. From those who started writing on Pakistan decades ago to those who are busily exploring new frontiers today, all have gone out of their way with the aim of drawing attention to the richness of material available as well as the incredible potential that Pakistan holds for research in the fields of anthropology and sociology.

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## CHAPTER 1

# Introduction

## Mapping the Terrain and Proposing New Cartographies of Pakistani Diaspora Studies

VIRINDER S KALRA

If migration were at the heart of any nation-state's formation, then Pakistan is perhaps the best example of a country forged out of the movements of people. The creation of East and West Pakistan in 1947 is perhaps too complex and violent a historical event to be reduced to the trope of migration, but recognising this aspect does at least enable us to frame subsequent migratory movements. According to Talbot and Thandi (2004), 12 million people were displaced during the Partition process and this remains the largest migration in modern history. The broad implications of Partition are still being explored, but it is possible to speculate that this initial mass upheaval left a psycho-social sense of dislocation that makes subsequent migration easier. Perhaps this emphasis on Partition needs to be tempered by the turbulent post-independence history of East and West Pakistan, in which at least up to the independence of Bangladesh, in 1972, was about managing affairs across a great distance, with two disparate populations. The aftermath of the formation of the modern state of Pakistan was then another set of migration from West to East Pakistan and vice-versa. The academic research that is presented here, while cognisant of this historical context, is centred on international emigration from the post-1972 state of Pakistan.

When compared to studies of the Indian diaspora, or even in the wider framework of diaspora studies, there is relatively meagre research about the Pakistani diaspora. Indeed, this collection is the first to bring together the extant literature and provide both a



historical and contemporary set of accounts. In an attempt to map the existing terrain, three previously published pieces have been included in the collection,<sup>1</sup> however, the majority of the chapters reflect new research. An initial attempt to only compile existing material revealed a paucity of published work, especially outside of the UK context. Our geographical spread is nonetheless limited to those areas where settlement of Pakistanis has occurred and is not sufficiently attentive to the Gulf regions where temporary migrants from Pakistan are numerically many. This perhaps reflects a disciplinary bias, where the major contributors to this collection are from area studies. Anthropology, sociology and history in contrast to the economic and development studies focus on the Gulf region. Given these caveats, a relatively wide geographic spread is offered, with contributions about Australia, Norway, Italy, USA, the Gulf, the Netherlands, but nevertheless the articles are prominently about the UK.

This book is primarily about the processes associated with migration and settlement as seen from the receiving end. Even though Roger Ballard and Junaid Rana offer accounts of Pakistan's political economy, it is only in Frances Watkins' chapter that migrant voices within Pakistan themselves speak. Even in this chapter their life stories are focused on the impact of migration. Though, given the transnational frame in which many Pakistani diasporic communities live, it is not really possible to solely focus on the place of settlement. Indeed, the shift from migration studies to transnational or diaspora research reflects the empirical reality of a non-linear dynamic inherent in migratory movements. Historically the notion that people move and settle in a sequential and traceable manner has been rightly disputed, rather the circular nature of migratory movements has come to the fore. Even though the issues that are raised in the majority of the chapters of the book are concerned with adaptation and change in new environments, these are always linked or referenced to a transnational frame.

In terms of migration from the four provinces of Pakistan, it is Punjab, which with the largest population, has seen the most migration. Due to the contested nature of its status, migration from

Azad Kashmir, which is numerically dominant in the British context is often subsumed within the label Pakistanis. In this volume, no distinction is formally made between Azad Kashmiris and Pakistanis even though in this has been present in my own and other scholars work (see Kalra, 2000; Ali et al, 1996) This is not to deny the contested nature of these claims, but rather to leave this up to the individual contributors in terms of assessing the impact of this identity on the issue of concern to them, or that arose in their research. Clearly, when areas in the UK, such as Birmingham or Bradford are concerned, then individual authors have made clarifications as to their preferred terminology.

The book is divided into four sections to reflect the central issues for the chapters included, but also as a way of dividing the literature into a number of salient themes. Labour, gender, ritual and identity are the four section themes and while there is a significant overlap within the chapters across the collection, the sections do enable a grouping which privileges neither geography nor history. For example the section on labour includes the Gulf, Italy and the US in terms of areas of research and encompasses a time frame from the 1970s to the 2000s. To reflect on possible new research agendas, the sections of the book are broken by poetry, authored by two diasporic Pakistani writers, based in Britain; Shamshad Khan and Basir Qasmi. An overview of their writing and work is given later on in this introduction.

## LABOUR NARRATIVES

Migration and labour are intimately connected. Indeed, policy debates are obsessed with the economic costs and benefits that migrants bring. The works of Castles and Kozack (1973) and Miles (1982) are good illustrations of an economic approach to migration through their application of world systems theory. In crude terms, the argument follows that in situation of capitalist expansion, people, considered as labour, move from areas of excess to those of demand. This movement parallels a division between the Third world and the West, where movement is from the former to the latter. The specific locales from which migration takes place

are unimportant in this theorization as migrants move simply because of the requirements of capital. In macro terms this model is fairly powerful as it is able to describe global flows, however, it has limited use when specific questions about the details of migration are asked. A more innovative development to this argument is offered by Hardt and Negri (2000) who see the migrations of people from poverty as a refusal to stay in the place that capitalism has determined for them. In either case, however, specific reasons for migration are rendered invisible. Indeed, this is the very point made by Roger Ballard in his article *The Political Economy of Migration: Pakistan, Britain and the Middle East*, which though now over twenty years old provides a useful broad overview of migration from Pakistan. Though Dr Ballard has written a great deal on migration from South Asia, his major contribution to the debate on labour migration from Pakistan has been to highlight the fact that there is a concentration of emigration from certain parts of the Indian sub-continent and these area cannot necessarily be defined as those with the greatest excess of labour or of the highest levels of poverty. This first chapter of the book also provides a useful contrast between temporary Gulf migration and the settlement migration of Europe.

Though often associated with the Gulf region, the precarious nature of migrant existence is also well developed in the chapters by Junaid Rana and Ali Nobil looking at the USA and Italy respectively. Junaid Rana offers us an impassioned and incisive update of world systems theory through the influential work of Saskia Sassen. Transgressing the usual debate about Pakistani migration to the USA, which focuses on the high achieving, brain-drain generation of engineers and doctors, Rana calls our attention to the migration of the working class. These, usually male migrants, often with tenuous immigration status, are part of the new global service class, and Rana usefully links the availability of this labour to economic changes in Pakistan. In many ways, this is an updated political economy of migration to that offered by Ballard, and focuses on the most advanced economy of the world linking in with workers in the global South. Rana intersperses this theoretical

narrative with a range of interviews with migrants and Pakistani officials concerned with migration to produce a nuanced and persuasive account.

Studies of Pakistani migrants are numerically concentrated on the United Kingdom, and in that sense much of the theoretical literature has also developed in that context. As might be expected, other countries offer their own stories in terms of migration histories and settlement. Ali Nobil looks at the case of labour migrants to Italy and focuses on the way in which the Italian labour market provides few opportunities outside of manual labour and small business for Pakistani migrants. Crucially, he questions the celebratory nature of research into transnationalism that emphasizes social mobility and migrant success. For Nobil it is the precarious and transitional nature of migrant narratives that marks the Italian case. In some senses his argument brings up to date the requirements of migrant labour in the 21st Century; that is to be relatively unattached to a particular nation-state and to be able to move when the next opportunity arises. In this context, the multi-national routes by which Pakistani migrants arrive in Italy and their quest to find some place of settlement makes sombre reading.

As a complement to the structuralist accounts that are central to the arguments made by Ballard and Rana, the article by Francis Watkins focuses on narratives of migration and the difficulties associated with livelihood. It is the Gulf which is the focus here and contractual labour from the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). Temporary, contractual labour migration, has a historical legacy in South Asia from the period of indentured labour in the mid- nineteenth century (Clarke et al., 1990). Its continuity into the present is best exemplified by Pakistani migrants to the Gulf. Based on fieldwork from the late 1980s and early 1990s, this chapter is a reflection on different periods of migration over time and space. Watkins offers a detailed account of three migrants' life stories from the NWFP over the period of his fieldwork. Attempting to locate agency in the overly deterministic rules and regulations governing labour flows to the Gulf, Watkins ultimately highlights

the human plight behind the statistics of low wages and remittances.

Separating sections in a collection of this nature is necessarily a heuristic process. Labour is, no doubt, central to the migration process, but can by no means be summed to its totality. It could be argued that an overt focus on labour masks or distorts other aspects of the migration process (and indeed in the next section this is an argument made by Kaveri and Harris with regard to gender). Robin Cohen (1997) in his historical analysis of global diasporas, categorises South Asian diasporas as primarily arising from movements related to labour. Though one would rightly argue that this is a reduction of a complex historical process (Kalra, Kaur, Hutnyk, 2005), what is manifest from the research presented in all of the chapters is that one explanatory variable in all Pakistani diaspora formation relates to economic motivation. The chapters in this section reflect that emphasis rather than any essential or primary quality.

### Gendered Accounts

In a wide ranging review of the North American academic literature, Mahler and Pessar (2001) argue that the research on transnational networks inadequately addresses the structuring effects of gender. As with the bulk of migration research that precedes it, much of the agenda remains focused on women's experiences, as a corrective to previous male bias, rather than considering the impact of gender relations on the migration process itself. These sentiments are echoed by Moch (2005) in a review of the European literature, where she points out: 'Gender is a most revelatory concept when it is used as an organising principle to elucidate the experience of both men and women.' (2005: 101). To respond to these challenges requires a re-reading of the ways in which Pakistani migration has been formulated. Kaveri Harris and Alison Shaw's chapter provides a more than adequate response to the call for taking gender as a structuring principle seriously. Indeed, this chapter sets a standard for exemplifying how the gendered nature of migration is central to an understanding of the



particular case of Pakistanis in Britain, but also to other diasporic groups. Re-reading the phases of the migration process, the authors demonstrate the way in which gender structures migration through the intermediary institution of the family. In addition to this reworking of the extant literature they also argue for a fourth phase of migration, that of 'Transnational Family Care' which incorporates their work into the wider body of transnational migration research.

Family is the intermediary institution in Harris and Shaw's chapter and this is complemented by Katharine Charsley's focus on marriage. Once again, this institution provides a route to migration and the complexity involved in the multiple legal and social systems that come into play are explored in this chapter. Central to the argument is the way in which risk is managed through these transnational alliances. Transnational marriages are risky at a personal level for those involved, due to cultural differences between British born brides and Pakistani born grooms, but also with regards to the vicissitudes of the immigration system, as grooms may not be granted visas. Drawing on ethnographic work as well as an understanding of the legal system, this chapter provides another example of the way in which structure and agency are intimately entwined in the migration process.

In contrast to Charsley, where the figure of the Pakistani woman is central in the maintenance and continuity of family relations, Marta Bolagnani's chapter considers the fraught issue of female deviance, an area of research which has hitherto remained almost exclusively focused on male diasporic Pakistanis. In a path breaking chapter, Bolagnani directs us to a consideration of deviance and crime amongst Pakistani women in Bradford, UK. Deviance here functions in two ways, to signify non-normative behavior but also to indicate the threat from the display of expected gender norms. Indeed, it is the combination of these that renders, diasporic Pakistani female deviance as inconceivable and unforgivable. Basing her argument on ethnographic fieldwork and semi-structured interviewing, this chapter opens up an exciting and new area of research. By utilizing anthropological methods both Charsley and

Bolagnani provide examples of female agency circumvented and circumscribed by the flexible application of patriarchy and the actions of the state.

The British centered nature of the chapters in this section is complemented by Nadeem Malik's chapter on Pakistanis in Australia. Though this is a general piece with an overview of migration by Pakistanis to Australia, one of the central arguments made by Malik relates to the critical role of gender in the formation of identity in the diasporic context. It is the control of women's bodies and their expectation to perform certain gender roles that are at the heart of the maintenance of Pakistani identity for migrant communities. These observations are not limited to Australia alone but have some resonance throughout the contexts in which settlement has taken place. One of the key differences noted by Malik in terms of Australia and the UK is the relative class and educational privilege of Pakistanis in Australia, but that nonetheless does not relieve expected gender norms. By reviewing the small literature on Australia and offering a new set of observations, this chapter once again highlights the way in which gender structures the experiences of both men and women in the diasporic context.

## TRANSFORMING RITUAL

In the British studies of Pakistani migrants, Pnina Werbner's name is synonymous with the ethnographic tradition. This chapter is a condensed version of a chapter from her first book *The Migration Process: Capital, Gifts and Offerings among British Pakistanis* which is a detailed account of Pakistani-Punjabi migration to the city of Manchester. Theoretically sophisticated and rooted in the anthropological canon, Werbner has established a number of significant markers that have come to form a reference point for studies not only of Pakistanis but of South Asian migrant groups more generally. Crucially, Werbner takes the issue of culture seriously and this chapter enhances our understanding of housing markets and choices made by migrants. This is an issue with much contemporary salience as Britain's policy domain is attaching itself to a spurious ideology of ethnic segregation, in which racialized

minorities, particularly Muslims are accused of keeping themselves within urban ghettos (see Kalra, 2002). Writing from fieldwork in the 1980s, Werbner conclusively shows how spatial mobility is intimately tied to social mobility in the lives of her correspondents.

An attempt at a broad geography in this collection was tempered by an issue driven approach that would apply to many different national contexts. Perhaps the most successful chapter in delivering this kind of approach is that by Alexa Doving, which is based on specific fieldwork in Norway but focuses on an issue that arises throughout Pakistani and Muslim diasporas. By focusing on burial associations and rituals associated with death, this chapter gives a local context to a widely applicable concern. Changing rituals with changing contexts is well defined and theorized in Doving's work and the specificity of migration is placed within this broader context. The development of burial societies and the changing institutional responses by the Norwegian state have begun to facilitate burial in Norway as well as in Pakistan. Doving reads burial as metonymic for the migration process as a whole relating place of burial with various types of relationship to home and abroad.

It is the multiplicity of home that is one of the themes in Sean McLoughlin's chapter on sacred journeys to Makkah and Madinah. In a similar manner to Doving, the issue of *Hajj* or pilgrimage is one that resonates throughout Pakistani diasporas and the Muslim world. McLoughlin draws on ethnographic fieldwork and interviews with pilgrims tracing their multiple responses to the journey to Makkah and Madinah. In particular, the continuity of social divisions maintains its salience in the process of pilgrimage. The intersections of Muslim, British and Pakistani identities becomes a *mélange* out of which critique of various things associated with the pilgrimage and its impact on subsequent life in Britain. Complex ideas of belonging are articulated in this chapter and the emergence of a British Muslim identity is pointed to, but also implicitly deconstructed by contesting claims over meaning and practice.

## SHIFTING IDENTITIES

Critical to any understanding of diaspora formation is the way in which identities, often taken for granted and assumed static, become challenged and thrown into flux. Hyphenated forms of identification, as in the case of British-Pakistanis or British-Muslims, often push towards the emphasis of certain aspects of identity and the neglect of others. Fore fronting British in these hyphenated identities may indicate some primary identification to the former and less to the latter. The processes and the work of identify as an unfinished project (Hall, 1992) can become somehow subsumed by the assertion of a hyphen. Despite these reservations, the transnational dimensions of flows of people from Britain to Pakistan in its circular dimensions is well addressed by these hyphenated formations and hyphenated identities do provide the possibility of addressing the complexity and fluid nature of diasporic formations, enabling a destabilization of presumed singularity and homogeneity. It is the shifting nature of identifications that is central to the chapters in this section.

One of the key changes in identity politics that has occurred in the Pakistani (and broadly South Asian) diasporic context has been a shift from national to religious identifications. Though of course in the Pakistani case this is not a phenomena that is solely related to the migratory context, nor in many ways is it best understood through a simple dichotomy between state and religion. Rather the formation of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan required a blurring of the boundaries between nation and faith, indeed this became more central with the formation of Bangladesh in 1972, where the fissures of faith and the myth of the two nation theory were exposed. Nonetheless, as Munira Mirza succinctly argues, the emergence of religious identity amongst Pakistani young people should be properly viewed as an aspect of British multiculturalism rather than primarily the result of a Pakistani heritage. In this short, journalistic piece, Mirza forwards a persuasive argument that represents the demand for identity from the UK state being responded to with the assertion of a British Muslim in contrast to British Pakistani identity. This disavowal of a Pakistani heritage

with that of a Muslim one allows for an insertion into the multicultural framework rather than a criticism of it. In some senses a similar argument is implicit in Tahir Abbas' chapter. While Abbas ostensibly focuses on a case study of the British city of Birmingham, he also highlights the ways in which young British Pakistanis are asserting a Muslim identity in the context of heightening Islamophobia, but places this in the context of startling indices of deprivation. In Birmingham, where Abbas' research is based, the differential life chances and educational achievements of Pakistani and Kashmiri heritage groups marks them out from all of the settled minorities. It is this socio-economic context that forces Abbas to conclude that assertions of difference are rooted in lives that are confronted with material inequality.

To map these shifting identity formations onto a wider terrain, the chapter by Waqas Butt focuses on the Netherlands. There is a marked contrast to the way in which the presence of Muslim minorities has been handled in the UK and Northern Europe. The Netherlands represents a society which, in the European context, is singled out for its remarkably tolerant and permissive public sphere. However, when it has come to the issue of immigrants and of cultural difference, we have seen the limits of an applied notion of liberal tolerance. Butt's chapter traces this changing climate through the attitudes of the Pakistani migrants with whom he did fieldwork in the late 1980s through to the 21st Century. Their opinions change towards the Netherlands from seeing it as a land of opportunity to one of rampant Islamophobia. This is not to argue that racism did not exist in the 1980s but rather indicates the increasing role of the state in increasingly targeting Muslim minorities as backwards and in need of discipline.

Though no historical narrative has run through the organizing of these chapters, it is not possible to construct a collection of this type without acknowledging what could be called, without exaggeration, an epistemic break in the migration and settlement patterns of Pakistani Muslims. The attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, in 2001, followed by war on Afghanistan and Iraq, and by subsequent suicide bombings in cities throughout

Europe have created a newer and hostile climate for all people on the move, but one that is targeted at Muslims and those that look like them. Aminah Mohammad-Arif's chapter perhaps most keenly alerts us to these larger processes by focusing on the political and social climate in the USA after September 11th. Drawing on her research in New York City, this chapter traces the presence of South Asian Muslims in the USA in a historical process, which follows the well known migrant path. Mohammad-Arif, describes how the subsequent creation of a Pakistani Muslim 'enemy within' came as a shock for many of this 'well integrated' model minority. Nonetheless, the impact was swift and had many repercussions in terms of demographic changes in the population of Pakistanis in the US and coterminously in the housing market in Islamabad and other urban areas of Pakistan. The return migration that took place as a result of September 11th illustrates the precarious nature of the migrant figure, but also the transnational ties which were sufficiently maintained to allow for these returns. Despite the turmoil created by global events, Arif is still positive about the possibility of a stable Pakistani-American diaporic community, though recognizes that this kind of formation is still some time in the future.

## NEW RESEARCH AGENDAS

A broad geographical spread and an attempt to cover salient issues that face Pakistani diasporas provides much of the rationale for this book. Indeed, by including scholars such as Roger Ballard and Pnina Werbner there is an awareness of the historical depth of research that has been carried out in this area. In mapping the terrain, the focus has been more on available material than to exhaustively present all of the plausible and most prominent. In the section on labour, for example, recent shifts in the political economy of migration, such as the increasing settlement of Pakistanis in the Gulf (especially with the changing social and political climate in Dubai, where settlement is now becoming a lived reality) have not yet begun to be studied. This collection has worked within the limits of the existing scholarship and while

excellent work has been carried out in many academic disciplines (especially anthropology) on Pakistani diasporas, there are new terrains that remain unexplored and areas of research that warrant more depth. For example, in the section on gender, issues that related to sexuality remain unexplored. A small body of literature on Muslim masculinities is beginning to develop but has of yet not engaged with ethnicity (Alexander, 2004). Once again in the wider Muslim framework certain gay organizations have begun to emerge, such as, organizations of Muslims and gay are present, such as Safra in the UK and Wake Up Muslims in Canada, academic studies remain few.

There also remains an anthropological bias in the study of culture which permeates, not just the literature on Pakistani diasporas but on South Asian diasporas more generally. In this view culture is viewed as a way of life rather than as the artistic and creative output of diasporic groups themselves. Charsley's excellent chapter on marriage does not engage with the hugely entertaining music video *Mangeter da haal burra* (the life of a newly married man from Pakistan is bad), the narrative of which illustrates the structural tensions between a British born bride and a groom from Pakistan. These cultural outputs are largely aired via the every growing numbers of satellite television channels and radio stations with a specific target audience of the Pakistani diaspora, which are in their own right areas of media studies research that remain untouched. Indeed, in the area of media and literature there is a largely untapped source of research material, in the Urdu/Punjabi press and the output of poets and writers.

In the migration and settlement histories of South Asians in Britain there is still a large area of neglect in the research agenda, when it comes to vernacular media and literature. The only serious scholarship in this field has been on Punjabi (Gurmukhi) newspapers and magazines (Singh and Tatla, 2006). Yet, the *The Daily Jang*, a (now) bi-lingual, Urdu-English, newspaper is in fact the only South Asian vernacular publication to be registered with the Audit Bureau of Circulation and shows a consistent sale of around 15-17000, with a readership that is ten times that number.

Indeed, the Urdu press in post-war Britain was the most popular amongst educated South Asian migrants as it was the common script of North British India. Indeed, in the USA *Gadr* party organisers (see Chapters, 3 and 16) at the turn of the 20th century used Urdu in many of their publications. In urban centres with large Pakistani populations, the advent of cheap newspaper publication costs has led to the explosion of small print-run newspaper/magazine enterprises. The Daily Pakistan Overseas is widely available in Oslo, while the most recent addition is the Daily Maizbann, an Urdu/Spanish newspaper. The Weekly News Pakistan from Chicago is another example of this kind of publication based in the USA. Systematic research into this area is urgently required to enable an understanding of the diasporic experience from the point of view of cultural producers.

While the world of media has not been fully explored there has been some work on the general fields of arts, music and literature. To some extent some of this work has become subsumed under studies of Muslims, especially where the study of fine art is concerned (Holt and Turney, 2006) but for those specific areas where a Pakistani diaspora is evoked a research agenda in media and cultural studies is sorely needed. Music is another neglected field, where the more widely known Quwwali form became popularised through world music and the endeavours of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan (Sharma et al 1996) which was partly a result of the WOMAD and other popular music festivals. These artists have been sold in the world music circuit as authentically Pakistani. In contrast we have no analysis or even description of the shrine musical cultures of Northern Pakistan as they have been shaped in Britain. The ever popular Shere Kwani groups who perform Putohari poetry, commonly associated with the sufi writer, Mian Mohammed Baksh attract large audiences from predominantly Kashmiri and Putohari communities across the diaspora. This folk music form incorporates the matka (clay pot) and Sitar with a number of singers. It is only with the advent of new media technologies in the shape of niche satellite television and radio that



these artists and performers are moving from live concerts to a wider audience.

Whilst it can be argued that much of these cultural performances remain closed behind barriers of language and access, this is not the case with the emerging English language literature, from Pakistani heritage authors. Published writers such as Shahid Alum (*Kilo*), Naheed Aslam (*Maps for Lost Lovers*) and Tariq Mehmood (*Where there is Light*) have received a little attention (see Mcloughlin, 2006) but as part of broader projects. These forays into English also point to the much larger, yet under-explored vernacular literature in Urdu. To compensate for the lack of a specific chapter on literature, but also to indicate its salience for Pakistani and South Asian diasporas, some poems by Basir Qasmi and Shamshad Khan foreground each of the sections. These UK based poets to some extent are representative of the range of creativity that is available when looking at literature of the Pakistani diaspora. Basir Kasmi is a relatively recent migrant to Britain, coming in 1990 from a middle class background, but more importantly from a deep literary family culture. His father Nasir Kasmi was one of the foremost exponents of the *Ghazal* poetic metre and is renowned for the contemporary revival of the form. Basir Kasmi is cited as one of the premiere Urdu poets of Britain and is regularly the guest of honour at *mushairas* (poetry recitals) throughout the country. However, Basir has not remained welded to his father's laurels and has expanded and innovated to develop bi-lingual forms of address which reflect a deeply diasporic sensibility. The two poems included here reflect an ambivalent set of feelings towards Britain which are beautifully expressed through the *Ghazal* form. *Working for Them* and *Finding One's Place* express the migrants condition through sets of metaphors and similes that resonate with many of the experiences represented in this book through surveys and interviews.

As a corollary to the literary heritage in the subcontinent that Basir imbues, Shamshad Khan comes out of a Northern British Asian/Pakistani heritage which is as much rooted in Britain as Basir's is in Pakistan. Brought up in Leeds to Pakistani migrant parents, Shamshad's poetic inspirations are wide ranging and

encompass the multi-locality that is central to urban diasporic lives in Britain. Rather than coming out of a specific sub-continental tradition, Shamshad's poetry reflects her subjectivity as a racialised woman in contemporary British society. This is not to say that there is no engagement or acknowledgement of a Pakistani/Muslim heritage but rather that this forms one of the many influences on her work. The two poems selected for this collection are from her recent book *Meglomaniac*, they are only segments of larger works. The first piece *Honey* reflects heads up the section on gender and is an appropriate piece to articulate some of the difficulties that British Asian women face to remain anonymous in close knit communities. The second poem is section 5 of the long piece *Meglomaniac* and could almost have been commissioned to head up the section on identity, as it perfectly encapsulates the changing dynamics of identity in contemporary Britain.

Literature, music, media, and other forms of cultural production allow researchers and scholars to move beyond anthropological modes of reportage on the culture of the peoples to the self-representation of those groups. These are complementary modes of research, but to date most academic study of the Pakistani diaspora has focused on culture as lived experience rather than as mediated representation. The aim of this volume is to bring together the best scholarship that exists in the field in its present condition, and the hope is that this will inspire others to further deepen our knowledge or to engage in some of the new area of research as indicated.

## NOTES

1. Roger Ballard's chapter 'The political economy of Migration: Pakistan, Britain, and the Middle East' was first published in Eades, Jeremy *Migrants, Workers and the Social Order*, London: Tavistock, 1987, pp. 17-41.
2. Katherine Charsley's chapter 'Risk and Ritual: The Protection of British Pakistan Women in Transnational Marriages' was first published in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 7, 2006, pp. 1169-1187, Taylor & Francis Ltd, U.K.
3. Prina Werbner's chapter 'Chains of Migrants: Culture, Value, and the Housing Market' was first in Werbner, Prina *The Migration Process: Capital, Gifts, and Offerings among British Pakistanis*, Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1990, pp. 1-19.

PART ONE

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# Labour Narratives



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## Working For Them

How much work should we do?  
Surely now we should rest.

We'll dedicate to them  
the pain they have given.

Only those who've suffered  
can dispense happiness.

How many more remain  
to be ensnared by them?

Night too resembles day,  
so when should we have rest?

Leave these dead jobs, Basir;  
let's do things for ourselves.

Ghazal by Basir Sultan Kasmi  
Translated jointly by the poet  
& Debjani Chatterjee



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## CHAPTER 2

# The political economy of migration: Pakistan, Britain, and the Middle East\*

ROGER BALLARD

**M**igration has brought about, and continues to be responsible for, some of the most momentous social, economic, and political changes in the contemporary world. Over the years, millions of people have moved from their rural homes in search of better paid work, usually in cities many thousands of miles away. Their movement has precipitated many dramatic changes, no less in the societies they left than in the ones they joined. It has also produced many new structures of inequality and exploitation. This paper explores the character of these developments in the case of one particular body of migrants - peasant farmers from northern Pakistan who have migrated to Britain and the Middle East during the past three decades.

### THE STRUCTURAL CONTEXT OF MIGRATION

International migration is primarily a consequence of global inequalities in the distribution of wealth and power. Sometimes, as in the case of European colonial expansion, the powerful have moved to settle amongst the relatively powerless; but in recent years an even larger number of people have left their rural homes and have gone to live in the metropolitan heartlands - in an effort to exploit, as far as they could, the wage earning opportunities available there. The timing and volume of such movements has

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\*Originally published in Jeremy Eades, *Migrants, Workers, and the Social Order*: Taristock, 1987.

been determined primarily by the strength of the demand for industrial labour; and despite periodic slumps, the trend of that demand, at least until very recently, was firmly upwards. But following the introduction of micro-chip technology in the 1980s, the presence of a large manual labour force has ceased to be a prerequisite of industrial production: indeed investment in new technology now tends to *reduce* the demand for labour. Future industrial expansion is unlikely to necessitate either the recruitment or the importation of a large new workforce. In consequence we may well have seen the last of the migratory flows which have hitherto invariably accompanied industrialization; but even so, the effects of the movements which have already taken place will long be with us.

Migrant workers are always socially, economically, and politically vulnerable. As well as being particularly exposed to the impact of booms and slumps in the international labour market, they themselves embody many contradictions. Doing better, by definition, than they would have done had they stayed at home, they are nevertheless disadvantaged in comparison with members of the indigenous population among whom they live and work, and with whom they are, as newcomers, in unequal competition for jobs and other scarce resources. Should they, or more likely their children, manage to make a secure base for themselves in their new home - a prospect of which the natives are often fearful - then they will, at least on a personal basis, have overcome the worst of the inequalities that led to their migration in the first place; but as long as they remain identifiable, they will always be in danger. In times of adversity, outsiders make ideal scapegoats. So it is that some of the most explosive popular movements in the contemporary world are directed against minorities which can be identified as 'immigrant' - witness recent events in West Africa, Indonesia, Assam, Sri Lanka, and now throughout Western Europe and North America. And such hostility is usually not just directed at immigrants themselves, but also at their locally-born offspring. In contemporary Britain, 'immigrants' are people of non-European physical appearance, wherever they may have been born.



Conflicts between 'immigrants' and 'natives' are nothing new, of course: they are at least as old as industrialization itself. As Marx observed, writing to friends in 1870:

Every industrial and commercial centre in England now possesses a working class divided into two hostile camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his own standard of life...and the Irish worker pays him back with interest in his own money...This antagonism is the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite their organization. (Marx 1953: 504)

Despite the power of Marx's empirical observations, most Marxist theorists have, of course, since argued that class both would, and should, be the primary social contradiction in all industrialized societies. Nevertheless it is now clear that ethnic conflicts - which usually have their roots in migration - are to be found almost everywhere, and that in many societies they completely override class conflicts. Thus while class may always have been a crucial component of inequality in British society, an ethnic factor has long been present too. The English/Irish divide which was so prominent in the last century may now have become less salient, except in Ulster, but only because it has simply been replaced by parallel tensions surrounding new groups of immigrants -Jews, Eastern Europeans, and most recently South Asians and AfroCaribbeans.

Such conflicts have many dimensions, but the driving force behind racial and ethnic polarization is invariably to be found in competition for scarce resources. Hence tensions between 'natives' and 'immigrants' are invariably most acute during periods of recession; and they are most easily sustained where the newcomers are easily identifiable. It is small wonder that race relations have become such an explosive political issue, not just in Britain, but also in Germany and France, where the Turkish and North African presence is proportionately even larger than that of Asians and Afro-Caribbeans in Britain (Castles, Booth, and Wallace 1984). Not only are such migrants and their offspring readily identifiable by virtue of their physical appearance, but with the sudden collapse

of the post-war boom, the labour market in industrial Europe has changed dramatically. As a result of the introduction of new technology, the loss of overseas imperial markets, and the success of newly industrialized countries of the Far East, the labour shortage of the past two decades has been replaced by a huge surplus. Millions of industrial workers have been made redundant, and the chances of their ever finding employment again are now remote. In such circumstances the growth of popular hostility towards an identifiable group of 'immigrant' scapegoats was only to be expected.

But it is important to keep a clear perspective on exactly what is going on here. Precisely because they are in a majority, it is the indigenous majority who have lost most jobs numerically. Hence there is much support for the view that if only the number of 'immigrants' could be reduced, there would be more jobs left to go round for everyone else. But given the *kinds* of jobs to which the newcomers had access - unskilled tasks in the older and undercapitalized industries such as textiles and heavy engineering - it is they who have been far more vulnerable than anyone else to the impact of the recession. In many communities in the Midlands and Yorkshire more than half the men have lost their jobs in the past five years. And given the existence of routine racial discrimination, their chances of finding alternative employment are far less than those of their white compatriots.

### MIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP, AND RIGHTS OF RESIDENCE

Even so, migrant workers in Western Europe are more secure than many. Despite increasing popular support for right-wing movements which advocate their repatriation, most migrants have by now acquired permanent rights of residence; in Britain those from the Commonwealth have gone one step further and become full British citizens. This stands in sharp contrast to the position of migrant workers in many other parts of the world, most particularly in the Middle East. There the total volume of migration has been on a scale akin to that to Western Europe (Birks and Sinclair 1980), but almost everyone has been employed on short-term contracts. Such

migrants are liable to repatriation as soon as they lose their jobs; the question of permanent rights of residence, let alone of citizenship, has never even arisen. But the Middle Eastern bonanza did not last long. With the collapse in the price of oil, and the completion or cancellation of most of the construction projects on which they were employed, migrants to the Middle East have not only been made redundant; they are being forced, willy-nilly, to return home.

Although the new minorities in Europe may have legal rights which should protect them from straightforward repatriation of this kind, their situation is still far from secure. Given the extent of current unemployment, many indigenous Europeans feel that the new minorities should never have been given rights of residence in the first place, and these doubts are further reinforced by negative judgements of the minorities' behavioural strategies. Now that it is clear that newcomers and their offspring have not, for the most part, assimilated, but are instead sustaining their own distinctive lifestyles, especially in domestic contexts, it is widely asserted that the (supposed) cultural unity of the nation is somehow endangered. Hence the popular feeling that the minorities' chosen lifestyles are incompatible with their claims to citizenship; on these grounds it is often argued that repatriation should be encouraged, whatever the minorities' formal legal rights may be. Of course, members of the new minorities counter this by insisting just as vigorously that they are 'here to stay', and on their own terms, whatever the majority may say. The issues here are essentially political, rather than moral or legal (Sivanandan 1983). And as dominant groups everywhere gradually discover, minority interests cannot be gratuitously ignored, for their angry reaction is likely to endanger the fabric of the whole social polity.

## MIGRATION AND ETHNICITY

Although public arguments about the legitimacy of the minorities' survival strategies, and so about the cultural correlates of citizenship, are becoming increasingly bitter, the tendency for minorities to organize ethnically is neither novel nor unique. Migrants

everywhere, including Europeans overseas, as well as earlier Jewish and Irish settlers in Britain, have always closed ranks in defence of their collective interests. It is on this basis that the new non-European settlers have established thriving ethnic colonies in the inner areas of all the European industrial cities in which they have settled.

The reasons why are not hard to identify. The varied sets of skills, assumptions, and understandings that migrants brought with them are the cultural capital out of which they and their children have generated new, and for the most part highly effective, strategies of survival as a means of coping with an alien and largely hostile environment. These strategies may have their roots overseas, but they are essentially a response to their users' Local experience. So however alien the lifestyles of the new minorities may seem to the indigenous majority, they are nevertheless an intrinsically British phenomenon. And if that is not the way in which they are commonly understood, then that is precisely the problem. Not until the lifestyles of locally resident Hindus, Moslems, Sikhs, and Rastas are seen as no less British than those of the Scots, the Irish, the Welsh, and indeed the English themselves, will a significant improvement in majority-minority relations have occurred, and the bogey of repatriation finally be laid.

Yet however politically and analytically vital it may be to insist that the new minorities are an integral part of the societies in which they have settled, it does not necessarily follow that their ties with the societies into which they or their parents were born will have ceased to be significant. Many links remain. Kinship obligations, often sustained by marriages between overseas settlers and those who stayed back home, still bind everyone together into a single network. And these ties are enhanced by those of sentiment. Migrants (and their children) invariably cherish memories of their historical roots for reasons of psychological security; and the experience of exclusion invariably reinforces that tendency.

## EMIGRANTS AND THEIR SOCIETIES OF ORIGIN

Although migrants invariably seek to preserve a rosy view of life and conditions back home, their status there is usually no less complex and contradictory than in their countries of settlement. Richer, by definition, than those they left behind, emigrants are still expected to fulfil their kinship obligations by extending material support to their families, especially to the very old, the very young, and the destitute. Even those who are most securely settled overseas invariably continue to remit a portion of their earnings back home, and most stay much more involved than this, making regular visits back home. Few fail to buy more land, should it become available, and most important, of all, to build themselves an elaborate new house. This partly reflects a concern for honour and status, and the wish to demonstrate how much success they have achieved overseas; but it also reflects a desire to build up security against the day when they finally return home.

Not only do most migrants come to rely on their home contacts, but those back home also come to rely on them, especially when migration takes place on a large scale. Recipient households tend to become increasingly dependent on the regular arrival of remittances for their continued financial health, as may the local and even the national economy. As ever, dependency is dangerous. Should the flow of remittances decline, either because migrants' priorities have changed, or because changes in the global economy have diminished or eliminated their sources of income, those who have grown used to a regular financial 'fix' can find themselves in desperate straits. It is easy to become addicted to remittance income, because it comes at so little cost. Indeed it is often in the interests of those who have stayed behind to encourage migrants to stay overseas for as long as possible, provided that they can be sure that they will continue to send back remittances: that way they can continue to reap the benefits of migrants' labours elsewhere. Migrants are easily exploitable, and not just by other members of their families. Those who control the national economy can have a similar interest in the foreign exchange component of their remittances. For them a naked policy of 'manpower export' may

make a great deal of sense in the short term, even it, as we shall see, the consequent condition of dependency may court long-term disaster.

In sum, migrants often find themselves socially, politically, and economically vulnerable, no less in the society that they have left than in the one they have joined.

### PATTERNS OF EMIGRATION FROM PAKISTAN

All these contradictions are clearly illustrated in the case of emigration from Pakistan, where over two million people - approximately 10 per cent of the country's adult male labour force - currently work overseas. Of these the great majority are employed in the oil-rich states of the Middle East, especially in Saudi Arabia; but a further 300,000 live and work in Britain. The remittances that they send home have now become a critical component of the national economy: they make up over 50 per cent of Pakistan's foreign exchange income. But with a major recession in Britain and even sharper cutbacks throughout the Arab world, this inflow is shrinking sharply, causing acute problems for the Pakistani economy. Before examining what these might be, we must begin by exploring how it is that so many Pakistanis came to seek their fortunes overseas, what happened to them when they got there, and the changes that have since been precipitated in their villages of origin.

The great majority of emigrants from Pakistan are of rural origin, and come from villages lying in the unirrigated, wheat growing *barani* areas in the north of the country (Gilani, Khan, and Iqbal 1979). Though less prosperous than the irrigated canal colonies further to the south, this area has always been densely populated. Because of the small size of agricultural holdings, and the conventional division of labour between the sexes, many households have long had a surplus of male labour. There is a longstanding local tradition for men from such households to supplement their incomes by working elsewhere.

Soon after the Punjab was incorporated into the British Raj in 1849, local men began to sign up as soldiers, especially after

Punjabis were classified as a particularly 'loyal' and 'martial' race following the mutiny of the Bengal Army in 1857. To this day, the majority of soldiers in the Pakistani Army come from this area. But men in more localized areas also began to explore other new opportunities. For our purposes, one of the most significant developments came at around the turn of the century, when men from a scatter of villages just inside the Maharaja of Kashmir's territories began to take work as stokers on merchant ships operating out of Bombay. Just how it was that villagers living so far from the sea pioneered this niche I have not yet been able to discover, but it was ex-seamen who were the principal pioneers of the contemporary Pakistani settlement in Britain.

As a result at least three quarters of British Pakistanis can trace their origins to an area no more than 20 miles by 30, lying mostly in what is now Azad Kashmir, and particularly focused on Mirpur District. In many Mirpuri villages, especially those lying close to those from which seamen were recruited, half or more of the population now lives in Britain.

## MIGRATION TO BRITAIN

When the earliest Mirpuri settlers came ashore during the 1930s, industrial jobs were virtually impossible to obtain, so most followed the longstanding tradition (see Salter 1873) of making a living as itinerant pedlars. During the Second World War the number of settlers grew rapidly. Britain's heavy industries were acutely short of labour, so that not only did many former pedlars switch to industrial jobs, but Mirpuri seamen who had had their ships torpedoed beneath them soon found themselves drafted off to work in munitions factories in Yorkshire and the West Midlands (see Dahya 1974: 84). Once transport was available after the close of hostilities some went home with their accumulated savings, but most stayed on to take advantage of the opportunities that became available in the post-war industrial boom. The jobs open to migrants were of a restricted kind - essentially those which the indigenous population were unwilling to undertake, because they were hot, hard, heavy, or low paid. But to Kashmiri peasant farmers

they offered the prospect of unparalleled prosperity, especially since their traditional jobs as stokers were disappearing rapidly as coal-fired ships were phased out after the war.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s an increasing number of seamen left their ships to take industrial jobs on shore, and soon afterwards began actively to call kinsmen and fellow villagers over to join them; it was thus that a process of chain migration began (Khan 1977; Anwar 1979). Until 1962, Commonwealth citizens had an unrestricted right of entry into Britain, and the steady inflow of settlers was essentially a response to the almost continual growth in demand for unskilled industrial labour. But in response to popular protests from the indigenous majority, a whole series of measures to control the influx of (non-European) immigrants have since been taken. The first of these, the 1962 Immigration Act, largely failed in its purpose.

Contrary to popular belief, migrants were coming neither to join the dole queue, nor to steal white jobs. The mills and foundries in which they worked were acutely short of labour and employers were only too happy to issue the vouchers which the Act introduced, for that was the only way they could keep production going. Prospective migrants knew that once they had obtained their vouchers from kinsmen in England they were guaranteed entry when they arrived at Heathrow. Far from controlling immigration, the voucher system tended to speed it up - so in the early 1960s virtually every able-bodied man who was not otherwise engaged and who lived in the area surrounding the seamen's villages set off for Britain.

Since 1965, when the issue of vouchers was halted, it has been made progressively more difficult for adult males of non-European origin to enter Britain, even though industrial jobs remained plentiful. These are precisely the conditions in which illegal immigration is to be expected. An unknown number of Pakistanis did enter Britain in this way while jobs were still available, but since the onset of the current recession, this surreptitious inflow has virtually ceased. Nevertheless the total inflow of people arriving



from Pakistan to settle in Britain has hardly declined at all over the years: it has simply changed in character.

During the first phase of migration it was men alone who came. Wives and children were left at home with their families, to whom periodic visits were made after intervals of anything between two and five years. At that stage hardly anyone envisaged that their stay in Britain might be permanent: like their predecessors who had worked as soldiers and seamen, they expected eventually to return home to live in comfortable retirement on their accumulated savings. Some have done just that, but many more have ended up staying in Britain for much longer than they intended, particularly those who have been joined by the remainder of their family.

Paradoxically, it was legislation designed to control immigration that played a major role in persuading Pakistani settlers to reunite their families overseas. Once the issue of vouchers ceased, the easiest way to augment the family's wage-earning capacity was to bring over dependent children shortly before they reached the age of sixteen: then they could start work as soon as they had passed school leaving age. But as soon as the immigration authorities realized that this was happening on a substantial scale, they changed the rules, and began to insist that the whole family - wives and daughters as well as sons - should be reunited at one and the same time. Even so, it was easy enough, although somewhat expensive, to circumvent this restriction. Wives and daughters could be brought over for a few months' visit, and then sent back home again. But the mould had been broken. With the growing complexity and stability of their ethnic colonies, settlers began to grow increasingly confident that they could reunite their families in their new surroundings without compromising their honour. Consequently the number of Pakistani women settled in Britain has risen rapidly from a very low base since 1970, and there is hardly anyone who has not applied for permission for his family to join him. Almost all Pakistani settlers have obtained British citizenship, so they now have an unchallengeable legal right to reunite their families in Britain. But exercising that right is by no means straightforward. Given ever more insistent demands from

the white majority that immigration should be reduced to the lowest possible level, all applications made to the British Embassy in Islamabad are now subjected to severe scrutiny (Commission for Racial Equality 1985). Entry certificate officers have to be convinced that all members of the family are related to the applicant as claimed; but they frequently manage to convince themselves that this is not so. The application is then rejected. Not only does this lead to severe hardship for all those concerned, but it also means that yet another family has been added to the merry-go-round. The settler in Britain has no alternative but to keep up his visits, and either to re-submit his application, or to look for British-based spouses for his children if the immigration authorities are otherwise excluding them. As a result of processes of this kind, the pressure of work in the immigration section of the Embassy has been growing year by year. So far the majority of applications have been for family reunions, and it has been assumed that the volume of work would be finite - that once all the applications in the pipeline have been processed, immigration would cease. But it is now becoming apparent that this is not so. In addition to the backlog of family reunion cases, there are now a rapidly rising number of applications from young people who have grown up in Britain but who have married in Pakistan, and also from families who have lived in Britain, but who have subsequently returned to Pakistan, and now wish to return to Britain once again. Immigration to Britain, or rather a complex pattern of movement back and forth between Britain and Pakistan, is set to be an ongoing process.

The reasons why are worth exploring in some detail.

## MARRIAGE RULES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

When members of a community within which marriages are customarily arranged migrate, it is only to be expected that in the initial stages of settlement, parents will continue to fix the same marriages as they would have done had they not migrated. But as the overseas colony consolidates itself, it would seem to follow that they will gradually begin to seek partners for their offspring from within their immediate community, so reducing the frequency of

matches back home. This has happened quite swiftly in the case of Hindu and Sikh migrants to Britain; but because of the differing impact of their marriage rules, Moslem Pakistanis are behaving quite differently. Not only have they delayed reuniting their families, but the frequency of overseas marriages remains much higher.

While the rules of clan exogamy practised by Hindus and Sikhs lead to virtually all marriages taking place between non-relatives, among Moslems the situation is wholly reversed. The marriage of cousins (both cross and parallel) is not only permitted, but it is preferred: siblings have the right of first refusal with respect to the marriages of each other's children. Thus while Sikh and Hindu migrants have no prior obligations with respect to their children's marriages, and can place them where they choose, Moslem migrants are members of much more closely-knit kinship networks, within which they usually find themselves under intense pressure to accept offers of marriage on behalf of their siblings' children back in Pakistan. And they also know that if they refuse, they are likely to be charged with having become so anglicized that they have forgotten their most fundamental duties towards their kin. These pressures are extremely hard to resist. So as more and more migrants' children reach marriageable age, the frequency of marriage with partners back in Pakistan is rising rapidly.

Residence after marriage was traditionally patri-virilocal, so there is rarely much question but that the Pakistani brides in such matches will come to Britain. But given the poor local employment prospects, the incentive for grooms to do the same' is large; indeed it is now assumed by all concerned that they will almost certainly want to do so. Hence marriages of British-born girls with Pakistani grooms are effectively a means of avoiding the exclusionary effect of immigration legislation - as those who frame the rules are well aware. All sorts of administrative hurdles have been introduced to make it as difficult as possible for such couples to exercise their right to enter Britain. Just who will be most successful in the midst of all this remains to be seen. But given the logic of their kinship system, the strength of family loyalties, and the large differentials

in living standards between Britain and Pakistan, the number of young couples seeking to enter Britain seems likely to continue to increase, however hostile the law may become. Return migration from Britain to Pakistan At first few, if any, Pakistani migrants to Britain envisaged that their residence overseas would be anything but temporary. However long they might have worked in Britain, they expected that they would eventually go home to enjoy the fruits of their labour - and now that an increasing number of settlers are reaching retirement age, some are doing just that. A British pension goes a long way in rural Pakistan. But in addition to these pensioners, a further category of returnee has recently become salient - those who have been pushed that way by redundancy and recession in Britain. Until 1979, few settlers were ever unemployed for long. Alternative, if low paid, employment was invariably available: even if it was located in a distant city, migrants would seek out kinsmen who lived nearby and go and stay temporarily with them; they were nothing if not flexible. But with the onset of the current recession almost all these alternatives dried up. Since 1979, there has been no work anywhere.

At first those who had lost their jobs sat it out, hoping that conditions would change. But with no sign whatsoever of an upturn in the demand for industrial labour, an increasing number of middle-aged men have been giving serious consideration to going back and trying their luck in Pakistan. From their perspective it seems to make good sense. All have land and a house there, and very often some other property as well; that is - where the remainder of their *biraderi* or kin group lives, and often where their hearts still lie, despite years of residence overseas. And by selling their house in Britain, returnees can raise the capital to finance the immediate costs of resettlement. As they, grow increasingly disillusioned with life on the dole, so more and more men are setting off back to Pakistan, taking their whole family with them.

Sadly, their experience is rarely happy. Not only is the cost of living a great deal higher than they expected, but opportunities to make money are few and far between. Most returnees go back hoping to start a business of one kind or another, but soon discover

that doing so successfully in rural Pakistan is far from easy. Credit is difficult to raise, personal contacts are essential, and competition within the market place (often from other returnees) is fierce. Profits, let alone a decent income, are hard to make. And although many feel that their land should provide an ultimate backstop, their holdings are generally so small, and productivity is so low, that it rarely provides much beyond the family's basic subsistence needs. In these circumstances, most middle-aged returnees find that their savings gradually but inexorably drain away. After a while almost all reach the conclusion that they have no alternative but to take their whole family back to Britain again, in order to take advantage of the strictly limited luxuries of the supplementary benefit system.

### SOCIAL NETWORKS IN THE DIASPORA

In view of the elaborate set of contacts still being maintained between settlers in Britain and their kinsmen back home, as well as the constant physical movement of people back and forth between the two arenas, it is now very clear that it is quite wrong to regard Pakistani migration to Britain as a single time-limited event. Instead it is much better understood as a process whereby a body of people have established a permanent overseas bridgehead, and where, having done so, there is a constant interchange of people and resources between the two ends of the migratory chain. The driving forces behind this process are first kinship, reinforced in this case by close kin marriage, such that all networks are extremely close knit and intuned; second the growing differential in material wealth between the two arenas, which makes those left back in Pakistan ever more concerned to sustain their relationships with kin in Britain; third the uneasiness of Pakistani settlers in Britain, especially in the face of recession and rapidly growing racism, which makes them view their homeland as the safest possible haven in times of trouble; and finally Britain's immigration law, which, despite fundamental injustices in its content and applications, still offers at least a chance for those with kin in Britain to climb out of the Third World and into the First. So

despite the introduction of ever more draconian immigration legislation, large numbers of people seem likely to continue moving back and forth between Britain and Pakistan for the foreseeable future.

## MIGRATION AND THE MIDDLE EASTERN LABOUR MARKET

Britain is not, however, the principal overseas destination of Pakistani migrants. Following the sharp rise in the price of oil in the early 1970s, all the oil-rich states of the Middle East embarked on massive programmes of infrastructural development, which in turn generated a huge demand for labour. For the most part the indigenous populations of these newly rich states were small, and lacked technical and craft skills; and given access to what seemed at first to be an inexhaustible supply of wealth, it appeared unnecessary for the local population to take work seriously. Replacement manpower could be imported instead. So it was that a huge expatriate labour force was drawn into these underpopulated but suddenly capital rich countries.

Recruited world wide, the migrant workers were clearly stratified in racial terms. Those recruited for the better paid skilled and professional tasks were predominantly of European origin, while manual workers were recruited initially from Egypt and Palestine, later from the Indian subcontinent, and most recently from a wide range of countries in South-East Asia (Birks and Sinclair 1980).

But in little more than a decade, the Middle Eastern labour market has changed with unparalleled swiftness. At first conditions were relatively good. The employers were for the most part major multinational construction companies, and even manual workers were paid at European and North American rates. So the Middle East was an attractive prospect for everyone who could find their way there. But this did not last long. By the early 1980s the heady days were over, and even the Saudis began to seek value for money. Contractors were heavily squeezed, and they began to economize, particularly on their wages bills. Rates of pay dropped sharply. Today, in the mid-1980s, the situation is even more critical. With

the real price of oil back to the level at which it stood in the early 1970s, most oil states have large budget deficits. Many construction projects are being abandoned, and none are being started. The demand for labour is plummeting. Competition for jobs is intense, and wages have fallen to unprecedentedly low levels. Large numbers of people, especially from countries such as Pakistan where migrants have come to expect a relatively high level of wages, are being sent back home. Their sudden swift return is having a major impact on their countries of origin.

### EMIGRATION FROM PAKISTAN TO THE MIDDLE EAST

Contacts between the Middle East and what is now Pakistan are of long standing. The earliest trading links between the Indus delta and Mesopotamia were established at least 4,000 years ago, and to this day many of the leading trading houses in the Gulf are run by families of subcontinental origin. Similarly there have long been links between the Makran coast and Oman, where a majority of the Sultan's troops are Baluchis. These ties, supplemented by others established by ex-soldiers from the British Indian Army who stayed on in the Middle East after various campaigns, formed the basis of a flow by chain migration into the jobs made available by the gradual expansion of the oil industry in the immediate post-war years. But when the boom took off in the early 1970s, these channels were unable to supply a sufficiently large volume of labour, so recruitment on a more formal basis began. Agents, many of whom were of Pakistani origin, made agreements with construction companies to supply a certain number of men with specified skills, and then secured their homeland for suitable recruits. They soon found that the people from the *barani* areas were the most responsive, partly because they had a long tradition of working away from home, but also because they had sufficient resources to pay the high fees that agents were soon able to demand before allocating them a visa. By the early 1980s, as much as Rs20,000 (£1,000) was being demanded from those seeking no more than a labourer's job. People from the very poorest families, and from the most remote villages which lacked access to any

outside resources, simply could not afford to go. Most migrants were recruited from a broad swathe of districts running right across Northern Pakistan, and whose environmental character is very similar to that of Mirpur. So although migration to the Middle East may have been larger in volume than that to Britain, it was not so densely concentrated: hardly a village in the whole *barani* area has been left unaffected by the exodus.

### MIGRATION AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY IN MIRPUR

It is not so much the migrants' absence, but their remittances which have the largest impact on the local social order. Over the years, Pakistanis in Britain have sent home many millions of pounds, the arrival of which has had a radical effect on the Mirpuri economy. In principle this large inflow of capital resources might have been expected to precipitate rapid economic development in an otherwise underdeveloped area, but in practice things have turned out otherwise: the local economy is actually stagnating. We must explore why that should be so.

During the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s, before they had brought their families to Britain, migrants remitted the greater part of their savings straight back to Pakistan (Dahya 1974: 113). Having paid the cost of their passage and met the subsistence needs of the remainder of their family, their next target was usually to build themselves a splendid and prestigious new house. Consequently there was an immense building boom in Mirpur in the late 1960s and early 1970s. New houses were constructed everywhere, even in the most remote and inaccessible villages. Suddenly there was a huge demand for construction materials - bricks, steel, cement, timber, and so forth - and also for masons and carpenters to build the houses. This set off an unprecedented economic boom. Bazaars expanded rapidly, as entrepreneurs sprang forth to serve the new market; and so great was the demand for labour that local wages rose sharply, attracting immigrants from neighbouring areas from which overseas migration had not then taken place. But this boom was not to last for long. By the mid 1970s most migrants to Britain



had reconstructed their houses, and thereafter the volume of construction activity fell sharply.

Nevertheless, those who were well placed in the market made a lot of money out of the housing boom, and this was to have some important effects for the future. Since they expected eventually to return home, all migrants were looking for a safe and profitable form of investment - preferably in some kind of bazaar-based business. Although mostly peasant farmers by origin, few, if any, considered investing in agriculture. Working on the land had long been considered unprestigious, and so a return to cultivation was considered a step backwards socially. This judgement was far from irrational. Given low agricultural prices, and the absence of significant infrastructural support from the state, farming has become less and less economically attractive in Mirpur, and indeed throughout the whole barani area, despite the great potential fertility of the soil. Since local wages and expectations have risen as a result of the inflow of remittances, agricultural activity has not been stimulated by migration: on the contrary it has been depressed.

With such large numbers of people now living overseas, many households are now acutely short of labour; but as most also receive a supplementary remittance income, they no longer need to depend wholly on the land for their subsistence. As a result the land in Mirpur is becoming increasingly ill farmed, and large areas are being withdrawn from cultivation altogether. Almost all the stonier fields on hillsides have long since been abandoned, and now a growing amount of the most fertile land never sees the plough: it is unlikely to do so again unless a rise in grain prices returns agriculture to profitability. So from having produced a substantial exportable food surplus in the past (*Rawalpindi District Gazetteer* 1894: 155), the area is now in chronic deficit. Of course Mirpuris now have plenty of money to buy imported grain, most of which is sold at subsidized prices through ration shops, so there is no shortage of food. Instead the whole economy is slipping inexorably into a condition of dependency. Since agriculture offers so little, business is invariably seen as the best and most secure way of

making money. In consequence every village in the area now has an extensive bazaar. But although activity may have been brisk at the height of the construction boom fifteen years ago, this is no longer so. Many speculatively built shop units remain unlet, and even in those that are, activity is very sluggish. Most businesses are very small, and too many people are chasing too little trade. Competition is so fierce that margins must be cut to the bone. Hardly anyone makes much profit. At present the only people doing well are some travel agents, and a few large and well established wholesale merchants. Returnees who are hoping to make a living by starting a business have a hard row to hoe. No wonder few succeed. Local tensions are also building up as a result of economic stagnation, particularly since so few opportunities are now available for young men. With growing affluence, education has become affordable for Mirpuri peasants, and so for the first time large numbers of boys have been sent to school and college. As jobs overseas dried up, their families hoped that education would improve their sons' opportunities for employment. But they have met a dead end. The few local jobs as teachers and bank clerks have long since been filled, there is no local industry, and agriculture is rejected out of hand. Some young men are trying their hand at opening small shops in the bazaar, although this is often no more than a means of showing to relatives in Britain that they are at least trying to help themselves, and they are therefore worthy of continued support. Others spend their time drinking tea and playing cards, hoping that something will turn up - perhaps in the form of an opportunity to marry a cousin from Britain. Rural stagnation is commonplace enough in the Third World, and is often attributed to lack of local financial and entrepreneurial resources. But this is not so in Mirpur. The whole area is capital rich, for banks can now be found even in the most remote villages, and all have vast sums on deposit. For example, all the five major banks were represented in the village in which I conducted intensive fieldwork, and altogether they had Rs5 crore (over 1=2 million) on deposit - all for a local population of little more than 3,000. But these funds have not been used locally. The banks' local loan

portfolio is insignificant, which means that villagers' savings are actually being used to finance investment by others elsewhere. But to suggest that this is a consequence of an absence of local entrepreneurial ability is most implausible, given Mirpuri migrants' success as small businessmen in Britain. Rather, local conditions are such that profitable avenues of investment are unavailable. It is these which have produced stagnation, and which account for the absence of a demand for loans.

Following the initial remittance-driven boom, Mirpur's—, economy has slipped gradually backwards, and is now heavily dependent on the continued inflow of remittances. This unhealthy condition, which is far from being the inevitable outcome of overseas emigration (see Ballard 1983a), is primarily a consequence of the way in which Pakistan's whole economy is structured. It is no fault of the Mirpuris themselves that agriculture has been rendered increasingly unprofitable as a result of central pricing policies, nor that the Government of Pakistan has done next to nothing to mobilize local resources, nor even to provide the infrastructural facilities around which migrants could more profitably and productively invest their savings. The issues here are structural.

## THE CONSEQUENCES OF MIGRATION TO THE MIDDLE EAST

While economic conditions in Mirpur may be a cause for concern, it is even more alarming to note that much the same processes are currently occurring throughout the much larger area from which there has been heavy migration to the Middle East (Amjad 1984). At first sight the local economy in these areas seems in good shape, just as it did in Mirpur in the late 1960s. A building boom is in full swing, and the bazaars, and indeed the whole of the service sector, is expanding rapidly. Wages have risen sharply, and there is an acute shortage of construction workers. But just as in Mirpur, little *productive* investment is taking place, either in agriculture or anywhere else.

This erosion of the local productive base is the most worrying development of all. A housing-driven boom is all very well, but it provides no foundation for future growth. On the contrary it is evidence of a slide into a condition of dependency, where prosperity can only be sustained by a continuing inflow of remittances. But this, it is now clear, will not take place. In Mirpur, where their volume has gone into slow decline, conditions are bad enough. But in those areas which are dependent on the Middle Eastern labour market the problem is much more serious. Not only is the volume of remittances set to decline very sharply, but migrants themselves are now returning in large numbers, and mostly for good. In the short run most can hope to live in some style off their accumulated savings; and their spending will also provide a buffer against the immediate collapse of the local economy. But as everyone is well aware, the money will soon run out. What will happen then? Returnees may live in fine new concrete houses, often equipped with televisions, videos, and refrigerators. But none of these can be eaten. As their 'smart consumer goods gradually fall into disrepair, former migrants may find themselves faced with the bleak choice of trying to find work in Pakistan's already overcrowded cities, or of returning to subsistence agriculture, using nothing but traditional technology. Despite all their hard work, they will have reaped few long-term benefits from the window of opportunity offered by the temporary availability of well-paid work in the Middle East.

## MIGRATION AND THE ROLE OF THE STATE

Most of the obstacles and inequalities which Pakistani migrants have encountered, both at home and overseas, were far beyond their own control. Like rural migrants everywhere, they have been seeking to circumvent those obstacles as best they could, in order to move forward in an unequal world. But they have had no control over the structure of their economic environment, nor over the booms and slumps in the global labour market. That this should be so overseas is hardly surprising, for immigrant minorities rarely have much bargaining power. But in this case it is no less true within their own homeland. To see why this should be so we must

examine just who controls Pakistan's economy, how, for what purposes, and to whose benefit.

Although Pakistan is extremely rich in natural resources, it is currently facing an acute economic crisis (Ahmed and Amjad 1984). In the absence of any kind of birth control program, the population is growing rapidly, while agricultural production is at best static, and probably declining (*Pakistan Economic Survey* 1984/5). Rural infrastructural investment on roads, canals, electrification, education, health care, and so forth is minimal, and so the picture of rural stagnation presented here is more or less typical (subject to the necessary local and regional qualifications) of the whole country. But the major cities are rather better provided for. Not only are infrastructural facilities concentrated there, they also have a superficial air of prosperity. Imported consumer goods, such as motor cycles, cars, cassette players, televisions, washing machines, refrigerators, air conditioners, and so forth, all of which are heavily advertised in the media, are freely available - at a price. Beguiled by all this, many young men are drifting to the towns. Only rarely do they get regular jobs, which are extremely hard to find. But at least they know that the chances of mobility are much greater in an urban than in a rural context.

Apart from the rural-urban divide, Pakistan is also a highly inegalitarian society in terms of class. But in this case privilege comes not so much from the ownership of industrial capital, nor even of extensive tracts of land (though most members of the elite have either one or the other) but rather through their control of the machinery of the state. The elite, composed mainly of senior bureaucrats and military officers, is small, but its members live extremely comfortably, mainly as a result of bending the economy to their own interests. It is from this perspective that the contemporary Pakistani social order is best understood.

Ever since Partition in 1947, the country has been ruled by a succession of authoritarian regimes, almost all of which have had reason to be doubtful about the extent of their popular support (Ziring 1980). And although all paid lip-service to the need to respond to the needs of the rural majority, those in power were well

aware that it was *urban* revolt which had brought down all their predecessors. Hence, for example, there has been a great reluctance to raise agricultural prices, even if this led to a large net transfer of resources away from the agricultural sector, and so to rural stagnation (see Naqvi 1984: 34). Much the same considerations lie behind the unequal distribution of infrastructural resources between urban and rural areas. Despite much public rhetoric about the promotion of economic development, securing the *status quo, above* all by containing the possibility of urban revolt, has long been the central priority of the Pakistani state.

In this situation the emergence of a large inflow of migrant remittances came as a godsend. Pakistan has long had a deteriorating balance of trade, as imports, composed mostly of consumer goods, and of which the elite re disproportionately large consumers, have risen much more sharply than exports (Naqvi 1984: 89). But over the past twenty years the rapidly rising flow of remittances, at first from Britain, and more recently from the Middle East, has been available to cover the deficit. This inflow is now absolutely critical to the economy. Not only do migrants provide over 50 per cent of the country's foreign exchange, they also bring back a large volume of consumer goods as personal baggage - and import duties are now the Government of Pakistan's largest single source of revenue. No wonder the promotion of 'manpower export' has become one of the Government's central economic priorities.

Yet the whole structure is becoming increasingly unstable. The demand for Pakistani labour overseas is bound to shrink, whatever the authorities may predict (Planning Commission 1984), and most migrants are set to return, whether they like it or not. And although they may have put immense efforts into the personal generation of capital resources overseas, it is most unlikely that many will be able to put them to any great use: indeed the process of filching slices off their resources begins long before they return. Consider the exchange rate, for example. Most commentators are agreed that the Pakistani rupee has long been overvalued (see Naqvi 1984), and my own estimate is that this may be by as much - as 100 per cent. The result has been not only to cheapen imports, but

also to devalue remittances, which are, in effect, subjected to an invisible tax. The easy availability of foreign exchange has been of direct advantage to the elite, partly because it has facilitated the easy import of the luxury goods of which they are disproportionately large consumers, and also because it has given them excellent opportunities for capital export. As in so many other stagnant corners of the Third World, the most senior members of the Pakistani regime now have the greater part of their savings safely tucked away in bank accounts in London, New York, and Basel. So when the crunch does come, as inevitably it will, they will be able to retire to comfort and safety on the nearest Jumbo jet. The deteriorating condition of Pakistan's rural economy is of little concern to them: indeed it is the real source of their wealth.

It is only when placed in this very broad context that the full extent of the exploitation to which overseas migrants may be subjected, often by means of the hidden transfer of resources, begins to emerge. Peasants everywhere are rightly suspicious of all external agencies, because they have been exploited too many times before. So it is thoroughly understandable that they should regard their villages of origin as the safest haven of all. Poor they may be, but at least they seem to be fully under their own control. That is why they build houses there, buy land, and put their money in their local banks. However exploitative foreigners may be, they do at least know where their own kinsmen stand. But this vision reckons without the pervasive effects of contemporary economic processes, which have made their homelands much less of a haven than they had supposed.

In the past two decades migrants have poured billions of dollars into rural Pakistan, but there is little to show for it. Grand new *pakka* houses have been constructed by the thousand, bazaars have expanded dramatically, and televisions and videos have arrived in the remotest rural areas. But what has not changed is the underlying structure of the national economy. Although in all the emigrant areas the capital resources needed to build new roads and irrigation systems, and to finance electrification and agricultural extension programmes and so forth are most certainly available, no such

public investment has taken place. In its absence, private investment remains unprofitable. So having built their houses, returnees have little alternative but to put their money in the bank. But how have these resources actually been used? The principal borrowers from the nationalized Pakistani banks have been, once again, the urban elite, who are using the loans to enhance their own wealth. But will they repay? The saddest fate of all would be for migrants to discover that when they wanted their money back, the banks had made so many bad loans to a disappearing elite that they were unable to reimburse their depositors.

Yet none of this should be regarded as an inevitable consequence of migration. The resources which migrants have generated through their labour overseas could have been used more productively, to construct a more secure economic base before the next global slump set in. That this has not occurred is no fault of the migrants themselves - it was primarily a consequence of the structure of inequality within the Pakistani social order itself. In the absence of political action to change that order, there was little that migrants could do but what they did.

## CONCLUSION: MIGRATION IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

Migration is, at heart, an attempt to circumvent institutionalized inequality, but in making this attempt migrants face many obstacles, including the historical legacies of Colonialism and Empire, regional and class structures in their countries of origin, and a further set of racial and class divisions in their countries of settlement. It is economic and industrial expansion, with its attendant demand for additional labour, that opens up opportunities for migrants in the first place, but consolidating that foothold is far from easy. Once recession sets in, no-one is more vulnerable than migrant workers. Their most central problem is that of externality, which constantly limits their bargaining power. Away from home, even the simplest moves towards organization in defence of their interests is likely to precipitate vigorous condemnation of their behaviour from those among whom they have settled. But as we have just seen, migrants are no less external



to their countries of origin, and so just as vulnerable to exploitation at home as they are abroad. Indeed such is the paucity of industrial production in Pakistan, and so large the scale of emigration, it seems plausible to suggest that the country now has what can best be described as an 'external proletariat': as severely exploited at home as they are overseas, they have no secure base around which to organize to protect their interests. Migrants overseas usually begin by organizing themselves in ethnic terms, for their common origins provide an effective and convenient foundation for both mutual assistance and collective action. Moreover, the formation of such aggregations reflects the facts of competition, both with members of the indigenous 'population and with other migrant groups, for the limited volume of resources available. In such circumstances, solidarity among all migrants working in a particular country is difficult, if not impossible to achieve. Instead, as at present in the Middle East, migrants of differing national origins are likely to compete fiercely with one another, and regularly to undercut each other's wages: since they have little in common, external proletarians in any one locality are necessarily hard to unify. And of course neither their employers nor the ruling elites who stand behind them have any interest in the emergence of such solidarity, for it will necessarily be a threat to their interests. As Marx pointed out, they will always do their best to undermine it.'

Failing the development of comprehensive solidarity among all migrants, let alone all workers, national solidarity is at least a fallback. But how much support does it get? In principle all countries are expected to protect the interests of their nationals overseas, but in practice labour exporting states such as Pakistan regard this as a luxury they cannot afford. Locked into a policy which is dependent on manpower export to keep the economy float, those in charge of the state apparatus need to convince labour importers that their product is amongst the cheapest and most docile on the market. As Pakistani migrants to the Middle East have learned to their cost, their Embassies are rarely willing to take up grievances on their behalf, however legitimate they may be.

Instead they are much more likely to take active steps to repress them. Likewise in Britain the Pakistani Embassy does little or nothing to defend its citizens' interests. Instead it constantly advises them to adapt themselves to local conditions, while simultaneously suggesting that it is the patriotic duty of all Pakistanis to maximize their remittances.

If migrants are exposed abroad, they are little better off at home. They are usually regarded as uniquely privileged, and are the object of considerable jealousy. And it is not just their dependent kinsmen who are envious of their apparently boundless wealth, so too are the urban elite - who are deeply affronted by the thought that mere peasants may now have access to televisions, washing machines, and so forth. This has even been formalized in the theory of the 'Dubai syndrome', which represents newly rich migrants' behaviour as misguided and disturbed. In such a climate there is no space for a serious discussion of migrants' difficulties, and still less for the construction of a positive response to them.

Seen in this light, Pakistani migrants who are more or less permanently settled in Britain are comparatively well placed, despite the numerous obstacles they face. So far, at least, their rights of citizenship have remained secure, and many of their children are now achieving considerable educational success (see, for example, Ballard and Vellins 1984). This is not to play down the extent and severity of the racial exclusionism that the minorities routinely encounter, but simply to emphasize that the structures of inequality their compatriots face both in the Middle East and in Pakistan are in many respects more severe than those in contemporary Britain. But wherever they may be, everyone is faced by the changing structure of the global economy. Not only is the demand for manual labour shrinking everywhere, but the decline is proving to be particularly sharp in both urban industrial Britain and the once booming oil states of the Middle East. Through no fault of their own, the villagers of Northern Pakistan are not well placed in the contemporary labour market.

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## CHAPTER 3

# Controlling Diaspora: Illegality, 9/11, and Pakistani Labor Migration

JUNAID RANA

### INTRODUCTION: STATE AND MIGRATION

‘The state is not the reality which stands behind the mask of political practice. It is itself the mask which prevents our seeing political practice as it is.’<sup>1</sup>

In the post-9/11 world the power of the state has returned with a vengeance. Where there was once talk of the demise of the state because of the laudatory example of global flows such as trade, finance, and labor; the reality of war, empire and violence, are inescapable in the contemporary moment.<sup>2</sup> Indeed both before and after the tragedy of September 11th, 2001, the state played a particular role within the transnational migration system. The state produces migrants in various forms according to its interests that remain far from coherent. Nonetheless, the role of the state in diaspora research has returned as an important component to understand the shape of transnational migration. As an ethnography of the state and migration this work is situated in what Marcus and Fisher (1986) have called world-historical political economy, that is, a form of critique based on the political and economic analysis of global and transnational relationships. Following ethnographic research I conducted prior to and after 2001, I trace the relationship of Pakistani migrants within the state systems of transnational migration between Pakistan and the United States. As I argue, the historical relationship of the state to migration in Pakistan and abroad is pivotal to the construction of transnational workers as an

economic and social class. This occurs both in terms of their place within the domestic economy and within international and transregional economies, most immediately visible in labor migration to countries of the Persian Gulf region. This relationship itself demarcates Pakistani workers within a larger labor diaspora. On the US side, since 9/11 what has emerged is a pattern of governance in a domestic War on Terror that seeks to identify potential criminality through broad concepts of illegality and deportability. The identification of criminality is itself constructed through broad historical practices of demonizing and racializing migrants.

As an ethnography of the state this work evaluates the logics and rationale of capitalist governance in terms of mediating migration patterns and the production of a transnational migrant. The state in this modality operates in terms of crafting transnational classes in its own interest.<sup>3</sup> Transnational migration most certainly exceeds the interests of the state, and it is in this excess that the state seeks to control labor migration. The state in the postcolonial condition takes on an increasingly economic character, because of its control of multinational investment and its role in mediating the interests of the propertied classes. This is so “because the state in the postcolonial society directly appropriates a very large part of the economic surplus and deploys it in bureaucratically directed economic activity in the name of promoting economic development” (Alavi 1973, 148). Through a system of laws and rules the Pakistani state was historically able to control and regulate formal labor within the domestic economy usurping the power of trade unions. Thus, formal labor that is organized, regulated and controlled by unions has been historically disempowered by the Pakistani state. Because of a reliance on multinational capital, not through direct investment but through tied credits and loans (e.g. through the World Bank and International Monetary Fund), that is regulated by the state and its stake in development projects, the Government of Pakistan has left itself open to market fluctuation and high unemployment.

The Pakistani urban working class is itself in large part surplus-labor displaced from rural agriculture. The failure of the industrialization process in Pakistan to takeoff as a planned economy, coupled with the tight control of the formal labor market by the state, has resulted in the chronic problem of high unemployment and underemployment of the domestic workforce. In these circumstances, informal labor becomes the only viable option for displaced labor seeking work. On the domestic front this is for the most part temporary work that then feeds into the formal and informal market of the transnational labor market. As a formal market, transnational work is most commonly subcontracted through governmental offices and labor contracting agencies. As such, this system of labor migration operates through contractual agreements set by employers abroad. Subcontracted labor from Pakistan has historically been sent to the Middle East. Yet, such labor has also become increasingly blurred with the informal labor market. As part of a system of informal step migration, such labor schemes often connect transnational workers to regions such as Europe and North America, to countries that have increasingly sought migrants from the educated and professional middle class. Thus, work becomes increasingly transnational in character in the absence of domestic opportunities. These formal and informal elements of this transnational labor market are central to understanding the element of the state that I elaborate in terms of the law and illegality and the attempt to control migration flows.

Following Saskia Sassen (1998), I argue that transnational migrations are patterned and produced. This is to say that labor migrations are structured according to the economic interests of the state. They are also controlled by the social and political debates surrounding migration and the discursive construction of the 'immigrant.' Hence, in the case of the Pakistani labor migrant, a reading of the production of this subject relies on layers of meaning and specific conjunctures of historic events. Sassen extends the general argument of push and pull theories prominent in international migration research by questioning the assumptions of what creates this dynamic. For example, she argues that wealth and

poverty do not necessarily equate to push and pull factors (Sassen 1988; 1998). Hence, migrations from Pakistan are not only one of economic opportunity, but are embedded in historical relationships and the uneven experience of globalization. These structures are based in choices that are socially produced. That is, individual choice and the option to migrate as a form of agency are located in the historical structures that constitute these migrations. As I argue in the case of the Pakistani diaspora, working class migrations from Pakistan are based in a history of state regulation and control of migration flows by identifying certain populations in terms of social, cultural, legal, and economic classifications.

### ILLEGALITY AND TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION

Recent scholarship in Migration Studies has focused on the ethnographic analysis of documentation and the legal role of the state in controlling migration flows. Nicholas De Genova in an insightful review of this literature explores the implications of such studies to a concept he refers to as the “legal production of migrant ‘illegality’” (2002, 429). By this he refers to migrant illegality as a distinct category separate from undocumented migrants. As a legal construction of the state, illegality is counterposed to the concept of citizenship as an important social, economic, and cultural subjectivity. As De Genova maintains documentation is not a necessary condition of legality, although it is constitutive of it. Rather, illegality is not only about exclusion, but inclusion through categories according to imposed conditions of state control. From a methodological point of view, studying undocumented migrants as opposed to the constructions of illegality is politically suspect. Whereas the study of illegality questions the process of state power, to focus on migrants as undocumented leaves open the problems of complicity with state surveillance through the ethnographic gaze (De Genova 2002, 422).

Illegality is constructed out of many discursive arenas, primarily legal-judicial discourses. It is in this vein that the illegality of those deemed noncitizens becomes a subjectivity produced in relationship to the concept of citizenship and the nation-state. To be clear,



migrant illegality is not solely about a status outside of proper citizenship—it is a category based on constructing those in relation to acceptable citizens. In other words, citizens can be viewed through illegality, say for example through an increased potentiality for crime.<sup>4</sup> Illegality as a category entails a set of practices as much as citizenship does. Such a relationship is instituted through the law and is enforced by way of state control and practice. The relationship between the law and the state is not consistent in practical terms. That is, enforcement of the law is based on the strategies and tactics of the state and political and historical context. For migrant illegality, state control regulates this concept by the selective use of deportability. The construction of illegality and subsequent deportability is based on a set of criteria that constructs the notion of the illegal migrant. This is based on multiple logics that cross the terrain of politics, economics, social and cultural debates. Immigration for many nation-states is often considered a threat to the welfare of its citizenry, regardless of whether immigrant labor is used to produce a fresh workforce as a reserve army of labor. Yet there is an important distinction both for the worker and the state. And depending on enforcement, the status of migrant workers becomes an important mechanism of control for the state in large part as a strategy for the economic and social control of labor. This is accomplished not only through direct policing, but the creation of statuses that are self-policed. Illegality then is a mode of subjectivity that creates its own set of practices and processes in terms of a self-policing disciplinary apparatus.

In the case of the Pakistani migrant the representation of the trafficking in humans, drugs, and terror are central components to the configuration of their illegality and deportability. Following Michel Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish* (1979), who importantly wrote about the concept of illegalities, De Genova (2002) expands these insights to migrant subjectivity. In describing how systems of delinquency are exploited Foucault offers an analysis of the production of illegality:

Delinquency, controlled illegality, is an agent for the illegality of the dominant groups...Arms trafficking, the illegal sale of alcohol in prohibition countries, or more recently drug trafficking show a similar functioning of this 'useful delinquency': the existence of a legal prohibition creates around it a field of illegal practices, which one manages to supervise, while extracting from it an illicit profit from elements, themselves illegal, but rendered manipulable by their organization in delinquency. This organization is an instrument for administering and exploiting illegalities. (Foucault 1979, 279-280).

In my usage illegality is not only an actual state of legal status, but is a condition of subjectivity that places migrants outside of the law. Thus, human trafficking as the illicit trade in economic migrants is in Foucault's language a useful and essential component of state regulated labor migration. The illegality of labor flows is an industry that is sanctioned by the state and exploited in the production of capital. It is a controlled illegality that is reflected in the illegal practices and informal regulations of governments. Immigration controls allow the nation-state to control and manipulate the labor of migrants. For migration studies this shifts the problematic attention of the documentation of the immigrant, to the status attributed to it by the state. Illegality is a discursive argument of how the state perceives certain immigrant populations and their exclusion. As Foucault continues, the organization of delinquency "is also an instrument for the illegality with which the very exercise of power surrounds itself" (1979, 280). For the state, power is extended through the use of illegality. Hence, techniques of power are politically constructed through illegalities. In the case of the Pakistani immigrant this is also a transnational process of racialization in which illegality is connected to the process of migration. Illegality, both real and imagined, defines racial typologies through the possibility of amoral behaviour—such as criminality, terrorism, smuggling, etc.

Illegality, as I suggest, is an important aspect of the terminology of the state through which Pakistani working class migrants are represented and made legible. On the Pakistan side this tacit awareness of the status of labor migrants is maintained through

cultural concepts of class. A Pakistani state official of labor migration expressed it this way:

Many of our Pakistanis get jobs in places like the Gulf, Hong Kong, Indonesia and then they wait until something else turns up. They even go to places like Sri Lanka until they can find a job or a flight somewhere else. Most of them become illegal but they are just trying to get jobs and make money. Mostly with this idea that they must go to the US.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, destinations within this labor diaspora mark pathways of interstate circulation and the process of step migration from one original location to a final destination. Migrant illegality is then an assumed condition. That is, working-class migrants are at one time or another falling out of legal status. Legality is then an obstacle to working and making money and the pursuit of greater access to resources and capital. The official continued:

For us [Pakistanis who are in Pakistan] there are many bad aspects to this. Because we cannot provide for our own people here they go to other places to find jobs. The problem with this is that Pakistanis are everywhere and they make us look bad. They drive taxis, they work construction, whatever they can find. A lot of our engineers are waiters. I went to the US once to visit my brother in Miami. I loved it there. But I new that everybody was looking at me suspiciously. Not because they were afraid of me but because they might be thinking that I wasn't supposed to be there. That's what happens and we have to pay for it.

Such sentiments express a class distinction in terms of social status and the discourse of illegality. Because of the inadequacy of the state, working-class migrants seek life opportunities in transnational settings risking deportation because of illegal status. In this example, the anxiety surrounding issues of legal status is filtered through transnational concepts that ascribe legality to nationality. Further, this meaning is the distinction between middle class Pakistanis and transnational working-class Pakistanis. The possible illegality of one affects the construction of the middle class and proper legal other. Much of the public debate in Pakistan is

expressed in these terms of the diaspora. On one side are the expressions of the loss of the professional classes to brain drain and the hope that they represent in bringing progress to Pakistan. On the other side are the working classes that, although work with honor, are often viewed as illegal. This classification is understood as giving Pakistan a bad name for engaging in activities deemed outside of the legal parameters of normal and acceptable behavior defined in terms of model citizenship practices.<sup>6</sup>

This awareness of state discourses of illegality and proper citizenship is evident in migrant narratives. Labor migrants indeed offer counter-narratives to the intentions of the state. As one recent Pakistani immigrant living in New York City for six years and working odd jobs from driving taxis to working in restaurants told me in 2002:

Before I came to the United States I knew living here would be hard. The same thing was there for me in Pakistan. I don't want my children to grow up in the US. I want them to live and be happy in Pakistan. But I know that this is not possible. The US has different possibilities for us, so we do what we can to give our children a better life than what we had. And we suffer through it here because we are seen as foreigners.<sup>7</sup>

Immigrants are well aware of the opportunities that are given in their choices to migrate. Thus migrancy is often framed in terms of possibility. Simultaneously, migrants come to understand the racial readings of their immigrant status as 'foreign' and 'alien'. These are some of the terms in which illegality is related to anti-immigrant racism. That is, certain immigrants are forever foreign and alien to their adopted countries. Hence immigrants come to be read as illegal in terms of interpellation and subjectivity. Thus for the Pakistani immigrant, the United States is imagined in terms of opportunity for work and a better life, while simultaneously they are imagined through state and popular forms of racism that view them as threats and outsiders.

## PAKISTAN AND LABOR DIASPORA

My research on the formation of the Pakistani labor diaspora has focused mainly on the narratives of migrants from the Punjab province of Pakistan. This group represents a large contingent of this contemporary migratory movement. This is in large part due to the effects of the Green Revolution in Pakistan that dramatically transformed agricultural production in Pakistan, and South Asia generally, in the mid 1960s. The social and economic upheaval created by these agricultural changes led to an enormous surplus in labor reserves. Rather than create a shift toward industrialization in Pakistan it resulted in large pools of labor that were left without adequate jobs, training and opportunities (Zaidi 1999). The focus of working-class migrations from Pakistan has a particular history that emerges out of the crisis of the Pakistani state in the 1970s. The organization of domestic labor unions in Pakistan was effectively crushed by the late 1970s under the Bhutto regime, a pattern that originates in the 1950s. The failure of organized labor to gain adequate protections from domestic trade union laws played an important role in the flight of laboring classes toward transnational sites. Indeed, in the 1970s as domestic labor unions were weakened, Pakistan saw an enormous growth in transnational migration to the Gulf and Northern regions such as Europe and North America.

Beginning in the 1970s and the advent of petrodollars to Gulf countries, South Asian labor migration to the Middle East became a major avenue of outsourcing. In this process, a wide range of class positions from the former peasantry to the landed gentry entered into the transnational working class. This population is significantly different from middle class migrations of educated professionals. As I discuss later, the ability to enter this labor market depends in large part on the ability to mobilize resources from kinship and social networks. This labor market segmentation is a device for controlling the labor process in terms of wages and kinds of work. Racialized practices of labor exploitation are increasingly becoming a source of containment of reserve labor forces in the global market (Persaud 2001). These racial and cultural assumptions are

historically embedded in the practices of labor recruitment. Class is not only a static location within the hierarchy of wage earning laborers, but a dynamic position that depends on a number of variables. Male workers have historically been the target population for the creation of this transnational labor market. Indeed government officials in Pakistan cite the examples of the experiences most prominently of the exploitation of women from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh as a justification for this male workforce. Although female transnational workers from India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have been a driving force in the changes in domestic economies and the restructuring of the family within their respective countries, Pakistan officials often counter such positive changes by arguing for the necessity to protect the honor of women in the work force. This is a response to the media coverage of employer abuse of women from these host countries throughout the Middle East, UK, US, etc.

Such a working class, however was in the making for some time. Indeed the precursor of the Pakistani state's relationship to the shaping of such migrations comes from at least as far back as the colonial state and the example of indentured labor in the 19th century. The period of indenture in the South Asian diaspora follows the end of slavery in the British colonies in 1837 until its suspension by the colonial Indian state in 1917 (Tinker 1974, 1977). In this time period some 28 million men and women from the Indian subcontinent would go abroad to work in the plantations of the Asian Pacific (Fiji and Malaya), East Africa (Uganda and Kenya), South Africa and the Caribbean (Trinidad, Jamaica, etc.). This work was both of an agricultural and industrial kind in that many plantations were also locations where raw goods were refined and manufactured. Indenture, of course, was based on contracted work of fixed wages in which violations of such agreements could result in punishments such as imprisonment.<sup>8</sup> The two important aspects of the colonial state control of such labor migration was the establishment of a labor contract and the depot system. The labor contract became an important site to define work, and significantly the rights associated with the work. As such, the labor contract

allowed the state to intervene in cases of malfeasance. The formalization of the depot system in which workers were recruited involved a system of brokers, agents and recruiters that worked on behalf of the state to find and maintain suitable workers. The depot was itself a waiting station, in which the discipline and bodily health of workers was tested through regimented schedules. The depot system was the model for subsequent labor migrations, of which a variant is used in many sending countries in contemporary labor migrations. This colonial model added two important features, one the depot system that was transformed into a subcontracting system, and second the labor contract that represented the legal exchange between employer and employee signaling the transition from indenture to wage earning.

At the end of the indentured period in the early 1930s, South Asia labor migrants were recruited to work in the newly discovered oil fields of the Middle East. By the late 1950s, large numbers of South Asians were recruited to Britain to fill labor shortages after the Second World War. Much of this work was in the industrial sector—mostly factories and mills. After indenture, the recruitment to the UK was the most significant migration in terms of numbers. By the 1970s, South Asian migration was also reaching vast proportions in the Middle East (Addleton 1992). Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, and recently in the 2000s with major building booms in urban centers throughout the Middle East, primarily the Gulf countries, the bulk of labor migrants were temporary workers in construction, factories, and the service economy. This period was marked by the large movement of workers for a set period of time through state contracted agencies. It was also early in this era that labor migration became of interest to the state, at least initially, in terms of facilitating interstate contracts and controlling remittances to Pakistan. For the state such contracts are big business that require the organization of mass pools of labor (Azam 1995). Indeed, as one economist argues remittances from workers in the Gulf in large part kept the military regime of Zia ul-Haq afloat (Zaidi, 1999, 431).

The influence of workers remittances in Pakistan throughout the 1980s and 1990s created a new middle class and the growth of urban centers, and was responsible for economic development in Pakistan's rural areas through the dispersion of money to numerous areas from workers' remittances. In Pakistan, migration became a popularly conceived motif in the 1980s and 1990s with references in the media to the 'Dubai chalo' working-class migrants and the 'Amrikan' overseas Pakistani.<sup>9</sup> Throughout these migrations, it was largely male immigrants that were deemed suitable for this type of working class labor that consisted mostly what was considered hard labor in refineries, factories, and in construction.<sup>10</sup>

The Pakistani state has a vested interest in regulating the current labor migration industry. Foremost from the perspective of the state, is the solution transnational labor migration provides for domestic problems of underemployment and unemployment. Labor migration is also responsible for the creation of an independent private industry of transnational labor contractors that manages this migration. As a sending country the Pakistani state is interested in regulating the flow of remittances because of the role they play in the national gross domestic product (GDP). Workers' remittances since 1980 have been a large part of the GDP in Pakistan ranging from 8.9% in 1980 to a gradual decline in 1993 to 3.3% and a rapid increase since 2001 (Bagchi 1999). This decline in the early 1990s does not so much represent a reduction in labor migration, as it does a diversification of the Pakistani economy. Additionally, remittances have also been notoriously difficult to track. For example remittances through official lines were close to 4 billion US dollars in 2000, but remittances through unofficial means were estimated as high as 15-20 billion dollars.<sup>11</sup> Such economic factors bare an enormous impact upon the social meaning of migration within Pakistan. The framing of a Pakistani transnational working class is then read through these historical precedents of migration patterns. Indeed for many labor migrants, the cultural capital gained through multiple migrations facilitates work opportunities and expands social networks. These patterns,



in the broad sense, reveal the complex relationships of migration from Pakistan to the United States.

The construction of a Pakistani transnational working class is then read through these historical precedents of migration patterns. Indeed for many labor migrants, the cultural capital gained through multiple migrations facilitates work opportunities and expands social networks. Contacts through work experience, kinship networks and broader social networks are many times the means through which transnational work is negotiated through and around the state bureaucracy. Efforts by states to regulate these informal networks are near impossible given the large numbers of labor migrants. The complicated nature of obtaining the resources to reach destinations for transnational labor migration are illustrated through social and kinship networks. For example as one Pakistani Christian whose extended family are mostly sharecroppers from a rural village of Punjab explained to me:

We mostly farm small plots and do odd jobs here in the city. I am a clerk in an office that doesn't pay very much. That used to be enough to get by but it's not enough to eat anymore. To get married, to build a house, this takes more. I went to the Gulf several times—Kuwait, the Emirates, Saudi Arabia—you name it. The work is very hard there and does not pay enough for my family to live on. Now I want to go somewhere else like Europe or America, even Australia. But it costs too much and someone like me cannot come up with the money to go. Unless I know someone or have a relative who has money or knows somebody else, getting money to go is too hard. I'm the oldest son in my family so I'm expected to provide for everyone else.<sup>12</sup>

The pressure to travel abroad is complicated by social position and the ability to temporarily amass capital resources through social networks. In contrast to this tale of rural displacement into urban and transnational spaces, social classes with wider networks and social status are able to accrue finances for traveling abroad but must face similar dilemmas. As a youth from a small town outside of Gujranwala, Pakistan explained to me his family expected him to go abroad wherever he could. In contrast to the narrative above,

his family is *Arain*, small landowners (*zamindar*), and consider themselves middle class.

For me I can go anywhere I want to. I just call my uncle in Karachi and I get a ticket made. I went to Dubai last year but got sent back because of my papers. But that doesn't matter. I'll go to New York next and make enough money to come back and get married. My brother is there now and he works with some friends. I'll do the same and come back after a few years.<sup>13</sup>

Access to such social and kinship networks enables the possibility of transnational migration based on prior relationships of class, ethnic and religious background. Additionally, migration patterns once established are used to expand networks and maintain ties through familiar and social connections.

## STATE CONTROL OF TRANSNATIONAL LABOR MIGRATION

It was not until the boom period of the 1980s and early 1990s of Pakistanis seeking work in Gulf countries that recruitment by the Pakistani state was no longer supervised under the official state depot system formed in the indenture period. Labor recruitment, at this time, was privatized by the Pakistani government and handed over to independent employment agencies. The depot system remained an important structure for this privatized industry. The system shifted from being obligatory in nature to one of coercion and consent. Although the regimentation and bodily discipline is no longer as strict, the process of producing labor migrants is still quite similar. Thus official state control shifted to the proliferation of recruitment agents as an independent, private, industry. In this case of decentralization, private contractors functioned as state-like institutions, ultimately under the supervision of the government of Pakistan. This had far-reaching implications into the modes of migration and the states ability to control illegal practices of recruitment. In the case of illicit recruitment, many times workers are deceived through the presentation of agents and brokers as authentic, and unknowingly

enter into complex human smuggling rackets. Trafficking of migrants is interesting in that it often mirrors the structures of the state through its agents and brokers, and hence the ease with which deception is accomplished. In large part, the transnational labor recruitment system based in private corporations is part of the biopolitical project of the state that seeks to identify workers through systems of passports, identity cards, visas, and other forms of documentation such as records of employment and labor contracts. But because of its location outside of the direct control of the state, this private industry often blurs legal and illegal. Thus, for example, one might enter a legal contracting agency for work abroad and unknowingly enter into illegal activities. Conversely, it is also possible to go to illegal agencies (those not officially supervised by the state) and obtain legal work contracts.

In large part, the laws from which the current emigration codes of Pakistan are based are drawn from the 1837 Indian Emigration Act framed by the British. Many protections initiated by the British for this labor code were mandated with the idea of facilitating this migrant work and labor. For example, for the early indentured laborers the issue of the labor contract was standardized by the colonial state to offset complaints of mistreatment by contractors and recruitment agents. The legal code then institutionalized certain terms under the supervision of the state. This ranged from the conditions of transport to the terms in which contracts become null and void. These protections have been modified in the current form of the Pakistani Emigration Act but the protective spirit remains. However, these statutes are rarely referred to, and are often a last resort to state mediation of labor problems. Reference to labor migrant rights only arises in the case of specific complaints, and more expressly when the state deems the case of reasonable significance.

This ambivalence of the state in terms of the law is articulated at many levels. On the one hand it wishes to promote labor migration in its own interests, on the other it is aware that it is dependent on the economies of other countries that are willing to absorb Pakistan's surplus labor and may not recognize specific rights

for migrant laborers. This was the position of many of the state bureaucrats I interviewed. Their ambivalence stemmed from an understanding that their role in the state apparatus was primarily as a caretaker. An official of the Government of Pakistan's Bureau of Emigration put it this way:

Our job is to make sure everything goes smoothly. In many cases of grievance there is not much we can do. Our people [Pakistanis] that leave from here are happy with their jobs and their contracts are satisfactory. But in the end there are many things that we cannot control especially in the host country. There [in the host country] it is the job of our missions to represent what we have tried to do here.<sup>14</sup>

This realist approach reflects the general ambivalence of bureaucrats in terms of their position in the state. It is a feeling that expresses the limitations of the state in the daily lives of migrants. Sending countries are often beholden to the terms imposed by host countries. And in many cases the state must be forced to enter into disputes between labor and management, especially considering the complexity of sovereignty issues with labor migrants.

For the Pakistani state, the production of such labor migrations is many times counter to the interests of receiving countries. While the Pakistani government views the export of workers abroad as a boon to the domestic economy, US officials, for example, view it in terms of containment. In early 2001 I conducted an interview with the US consul-general in Pakistan who clarified the off-the-record distinction between the labor pools of India and Pakistan. On the India side, the approach to visa-seekers is clearly the issue of brain drain, that is the educated professional classes seeking work in the US. On the Pakistan side, although some brain drain does exist, the consul expressed that the majority of the labor population was more of a brawn drain, that is, visa-seekers not through employment preferences but through family preferences. Here the distinction is between preferences for professionals in employment and in the case of family preferences, the reunification of families that is defined through the idea of the extended family (Prashad 2000, 78). Thus, as much as this is a distinction that creates the

potential of class differences, that is from professional to a more varied class background, this process is also gendered through the idea of family reunification in which women and children are sponsored for visas. At another level, the difference between a brain drain and brawn drain entails a complex gendering of the work force in terms of feminization and masculinization. For US officials this effect of the brawn drain entails a more rigorous interviewing and documentation process. And whereas Indians were recruited on the basis of their educational attainment, Pakistanis are in large part understood in terms of maintaining the requirements of the rules of family preferences.

This relationship of the US to Pakistan through state control of migration is further revealed by the intelligence gathering activities underway by US officials, primarily the FBI in collaboration with the Pakistani government. Such forms of state control have far-reaching effects throughout the Pakistani labor diaspora. The three major areas of intelligence interest and control include: 1) human trafficking, 2) drug enforcement, and 3) terrorism. This set of interviews predated September 11th and were in the context of the shift from the Clinton to Bush administrations. At the outset of this transition, the Bush administration dramatically increased the resources for these task forces, which took on a greater significance in the aftermath of 9/11 and the strategic role of Pakistan in the War on Terror and the US campaign in the Afghanistan War.

## 9/11 AND DEPORTABILITY

In the United States, Punjabi migrants were coming to the West Coast in small numbers at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century (Jensen 1988). The more significant populations did arrive until the large waves of professional migration that followed the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act. Thus, the post-1965 wave of immigration from South Asia is often characterized as middle class. It was not until the late 1980s and 1990s that this population began to diversify in terms of class. And although the more recent formation of an immigrant working class

is characterized as male, the difference of the post 1965 wave of immigrations was that as a state policy the preference was to keep families intact in the professional classes that allowed for women, children, and extended relatives for unification with their families (Prashad 2000). Throughout these various migrations waves, ideas of the South Asian and Pakistani working class immigrant were solidifying.

The tragic events of September 11th, 2001, signaled a new era of US immigration control and policing. In conjunction with this, the US War on Terror has significantly changed the lives of many through managed forms of policing and violence. This is most clear in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the domestic war on immigration, and the widespread use of force and violence by the state (Rana and Rosas 2006). The system of US immigration control was in many senses already in place through legal, social and state sanctioned forms of policing prior to 2001. In particular, the passage of the US Patriot Act immediately after 9/11 provided direct power to the attorney general to detain and prosecute aliens. As legal scholars have argued (Chang 2002; Cole 2003) the justification for this broad latitude in the system of detentions and deportations is based in the history of demonizing assumed national enemies of the US state. The broad anti-terrorism legislation enacted in 1996, along with stringent regulations of immigrant policy, were direct precursors to the logic of the Patriot Act and its criminalization of immigrants (Cole and Dempsey 2002). Such policies were put into place in the name of maintaining law and order among the US populace and as a measure of self-protection. Behind this mask of certainty of the US state, a veil of xenophobia has fueled an anti-immigrant racism against Pakistanis and other Muslim immigrants.

The generalized controls placed on US immigration were significantly modified in a strategy of threat containment and security. This in large part meant the targeting of the Muslim immigrant community. In January 2002 the Justice Department identified some 300,000 individuals in the "Absconder Apprehension Initiative" as potential absconders in violation of legal visa status.

This initial violation as an exhibit of illegality and criminality, was deemed enough to warrant suspicion based on the potential to commit terrorist activity. In this rationale, criminality followed a logic in which the illegality of visa status translated into the potential for further criminal activity, most threateningly terrorism. As part of this Initiative the FBI carried out sweeps in ethnic neighborhoods in large urban centers of Muslim communities throughout the US. Approximately 5000 immigrants were entered into deportation proceedings as a result. In conjunction with these sweeps into the Muslim American community, the US Justice Department launched the National Security Entry-Exit Registration (NSEER) Program that identified suspect immigrants based on nationality—primarily from Muslim countries (excluding North Korea, considered a rogue state for its nuclear technology). Some 83,310 men considered foreign visitors registered for this program, of which 13,740 were immediately ordered into deportation proceedings. A large proportion of these deportees were Pakistani immigrants.<sup>15</sup> This disparity is due to the greater size of the Pakistani immigrant population in comparison to the other Muslim nation-based groups. This results from the sheer fact that Pakistani immigrants constitute a much larger population of recent migrations to the US as compared to Arab nationalities and other Muslim populations. According to findings by the *Chicago Tribune* in 2003, 2 per cent of unauthorized immigrants are from 24 predominantly Muslim nations, which saw a 31.4 per cent increase in deportation orders since 2001. Further, 98 per cent of unauthorized immigrants are from other countries that saw a 3.4 per cent increase in deportation orders.<sup>16</sup>

Government statistics of official deportations do not describe the entire picture of what is taking place with immigrant removal. Many returnees will not appear in government statistics because of the process of voluntary return and deportation. On the one hand is the large number of immigrants who have left their US communities based on the fear of potential deportation and detention. Those who fear that they may be detained and subsequently deported, preempt this by leaving the United States

for countries that are safe havens or return to their home countries. To save taxpayers money, the US government is also pushing those who have actually been detained for violating their visa status to opt for voluntary departure as a form of deportation plea-bargaining that translates into a virtual self-deportation, rather than state-based deportation. In this case, detainees are held until they voluntarily acquiesce to deportation, whether or not they have any criminal violations. In this case, detainees are not counted as deported but are considered to have returned voluntarily, although they are held until they come to this decision. To preempt detention and deportation through the registration process of NSEER, many immigrants fled to their home countries or to Canada seeking refuge.<sup>17</sup> This for many was a strategy to keep their families intact and to avoid the fear of long-term detention. Estimates place the number of return migrants to Pakistan at well over 100,000.

The invisibility of the Pakistani immigrant community has much to do with the class position of many of these targeted immigrants of the working urban class.<sup>18</sup> As a reserve labor force that is located within the US economy in large part as the working poor, these immigrant workers are often invisible to the mainstream media.<sup>19</sup> Living in large part in urban US enclaves, the disappearance and return migration of these populations to Pakistan has created entirely new dynamics within the South Asian diaspora. In my ethnographic research I have begun to track this forced return back to Pakistan, where since September 11th, 2001, former Pakistani migrants from the US are prevalent. The emergent narratives speak to a widespread condition of Muslim immigrants that have fled or were forced to leave the US. Many return migrants to Pakistan have stayed, entering into prior familial and social networks.

The crisis over terror and immigration in the United States after 9/11 has led to the formation of new forms of control and policing by the US state. In the case of Pakistani immigrants the management techniques of the state are based in discourses of illegality and strategies of deportability. One of the strategies in this new form of control is detention in which suspected immigrants are held until the government deems them to either have no important



information or are not potentially dangerous. Once this determination of a potential threat is relieved, detainees are then deported through forced or voluntarily means. The enforcement of this system based on detentions and deportations relies on selective enforcement of immigration laws upon suspected immigrant populations. Thus, it is not probable cause that is the guiding logic of who is a suspect, but the potential of guilt by association to certain ideas, people, or organizations.

The criminalization of the Pakistani immigrant in the United States, along with other Muslim Americans, is part of a historic pattern of demonization of immigrant groups. The War on Terror for many US immigrant populations fits into a history of anti-immigrant sentiment that views them as outsiders and foreign aliens. This war on immigration has precedent in US history, but is also part of a global economy that connects flows of goods and commodities with people and workers. Further the history of detentions and deportations in the US as a process of scapegoating, has included a wide variety of groups based on religious, ethnic, racial and political ideology (Cole 2003). This process of imagining illegality and criminality has in large part fallen on the policing of working Pakistani immigrants in the US through popular and state sanctioned violence.

## CONCLUSION

For many labor migrants the navigation of the state system of transnational migration controls is part of the process that allows them to continue their pursuit of resources. This struggle over access to capital is in many ways controlled and regulated, yet there remain channels of excess that supersede these boundaries. In this sense, what is considered legal and illegal depends on the interest of the state and the perspective of the migrant. As I have argued the process of state power is wielded through a field of legal and illegal practices. State ambivalence to labor migration is a reflection of this relationship in which the economic rationale for labor migration makes sense, yet the means of this movement are arbitrarily controlled. This confusion of the state is recognized by

labor migrants in testimonials of the similarities between legal and illegal activity. One might argue that such a relationship is the result of a lack of regulation, yet theories of the state argue this is the masking of state practices and power through ideological graft. The myth of regulation and power is part of the states manifestation of its control. Part of the illusion of illegality of contractors and brokers is its ability to mimic the state through forgeries and false documentation. The power of the public state then is replicated in the actions of private contractors. Further, recent theorizations argue that this form of mimicry of the state and the private sphere is part of how neoliberal capitalism and modernity operate (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006). In this sense threats are necessary for security, and criminality and illegality are part of the global landscape of violence wrought by economic disparities. In the global economy, the migration of diasporic populations is now a permanent feature.

The analysis of South Asian diasporic populations in terms of nation, religion, class, region and gender, reveals some of the connections that frame South Asians in relation to migration. These issues are central to the framing South Asian diasporas from points of origin that encapsulate the complex political economies of migrations. Clearly, the placement of the Pakistani immigrant within United States takes on greater significance in the face of state endorsed racism after September 11th. Much of my research shows that the terms from which this racism emerged—the combination of migration, illegality, and terrorism — were well in place before this tragic event. Indeed, how South Asians are racialized in the United States has very much to do with attachments to transnational issues. In the case of the Pakistani immigrant, class, nation, religion and gender, result in a racial typology that has to do with understandings of Islam, terror, migration, and illegality. Hence immigrants are simultaneously framed through the discourses of both home and host countries. The Pakistani immigrant then becomes the Muslim immigrant, and hence nation and religion are articulated in terms of race. For the analysis of how this takes place, racial readings of South Asian Americans must be placed not only

in terms of domestic affairs but those of transnational and global ones. The US state plays a central role in this racial configuration of the Muslim as a terrorist in the representations of Wars on Terror, in addition to its exertion of state power through immigration controls and legal statutes such as the Patriot Act. The Pakistani working class immigrant read through the transnational readings of this subjectivity adds to the analysis of how this subject is both represented and given an identity.

## NOTES

1. From the Philip Abrams (1988) essay "Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State."
2. Arjun Appadurai is one of the intellectuals in tune to these arguments and academic trends. See Appadurai 1996 for his theory of globalization and the diminishing role of the state, and recently his Appadurai 2006 for a general analysis of global violence.
3. In terms of theories of class in South Asia, I rely on the work of Hamza Alavi, who argues that a set of new urban classes were created in the shift from colonial to postcolonial societies in places such as Pakistan. The emergence of new urban classes in postcolonial societies arrives through the industrialization process began in the colonial period (Alavi 1973, 1983, 1989). Also see Weiss (1991) for a cultural history of the Pakistani working class in Punjab.
4. As an example of this relationship of policing, criminality and immigration see Hall et al. (1978), and Gilroy (1987).
5. Interviews conducted in Urdu, Punjabi, and English. All translations are by the author. Interview conducted Lahore, Pakistan, male bureaucrat in his mid-50s, April 25, 2001.
6. See for example a special issue on Pakistani migration reported in *Newsline*, November 2000.
7. Interview conducted New York, United States, male from Punjab, Pakistan, age 34, October 2002.
8. See Look Lai (1993) and Kale (1998) for excellent histories of indentured servitude from the Indian subcontinent.
9. 'Dubai chalo' translates as 'Let's go to Dubai', a popular reference to the largely working-class migration to Gulf countries from the 1970s and its peak in the 1980s. Although these movements continue, popular references in the 1990s and currently are more frequently made to the professional class overseas Pakistanis. This group spans the globe, as much as the working-classes, with the US figured as the ideal destination. 'Amrikan' is then 'American.'

10. More recently, in the 1980s and 90s there has also been a dramatic migration of women to these places as their economies shifted toward the service sector and care work prominently by women workers. On Asian and Latina women see for example the work of Chang (2000), Louie (2001), and Parrenas (2001).
11. These figures are taken from the Asian Development Bank in 1996 by Bagchi (1999).
12. Interview conducted in Lahore, Pakistan, male, age 32, December 27, 2000
13. Interview conducted in Gujranwala, Pakistan, male, age 22, May 23, 2001.
14. Interview conducted Bureau of Emigration, Islamabad, Pakistan, April 16, 2001.
15. Cam Simpson, et al. "Immigration Crackdown Shatters Muslims' Lives," Tossed Out of America Series, Part 1, *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 16, 2003.
16. Ibid.
17. For a report on this exodus see Tram Nguyen (2005).
18. The large and visible Pakistani American middle class were not targeted for special registration and the immediate threat of detention and deportation. US immigration policy since 1965 has clearly privileged the professional classes, see Prashad (2000). Nonetheless they are suspected targets of FBI investigations and suffer anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant racism.
19. On the class demographics of immigrants in the NSEER process see AALDEF, *Special Registration: Discrimination and Xenophobia as Government Policy*, Report from the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, January 2004.

## CHAPTER 4

# The Myth of Arrival: Pakistanis in Italy

ALI NOBIL

### INTRODUCTION

It is almost three decades ago now, that the sociologist Muhammad Anwar, in an otherwise unremarkable study of Pakistanis in Rochdale coined the famous phrase ‘myth of return’. Now something of a cliché in migration studies, it has long passed into the lexicon of the field as a seminal concept, unique for the way it pithily captures the delusional tendency of postwar international labour migrants in the West from agrarian societies to espouse a rhetoric of denial about the likely long-term consequences of their accumulating strategies. Despite their stated intentions to ‘save, invest and eventually return to their villages back home’, Muhammad rightly observed, ‘most of them are here to stay because of economic reasons and their children’s future’ (Anwar, 1979, ix). Their subjective dreams of return, he argued convincingly, fell victim to the objective success of their migration.

Although somewhat distinct for its ethnographic focus on culture and social meaning, Anwar’s work falls broadly within the traditions of mainstream theories of migration in its treatment of the question of return by virtue of its binary logic. Mostly economic, these approaches have tended to frame it within an assessment of the relative success or failure of a given migratory movement: for neo-classicalists, it is an outcome of miscalculation: migrants behave individually and rationally and therefore will return only if their having migrated does not yield the expected benefits (Todaro, 1969). Proponents of the new economics of

labour migration (NELM), on the other hand, see migration as a collective endeavour, so that return is, conversely, an indication of success, and follows when migrants have achieved their goal and are able to return and take up a position within the household (e.g. Stark, 1991). Structuralist approaches are less clear in their judgement of return as a sign of either success or failure, and regard it as having causes and effects that are dependent upon societal, political and economic circumstances and contingencies within the context of origin and reception (Cerese, 1974).

Whatever the differences between these orthodox approaches on the subject of whether or not return constitutes success or failure, however, what they share with each other, and indeed with most sociology on return migration up to the 1990s (including Anwar's analysis) is an assumption that staying and returning are mutually exclusive, discrete and singular actions: migrants *either* return *or* stay 'here for good' (Castles, 1984).

And it is this dichotomous tendency in conventional theories of migration that has come under fire from scholars and policy-makers who, in responding to the changing nature of migration under late capitalism, have posed a series of theoretical challenges to Anwar's original, somewhat dichotomous formulation. The transnationalism paradigm, for example, argues that in the context of new technologies of travel and communication, migrants do not necessarily need to choose between staying or returning (Vertovec, 1999; Portes 1999). Indeed the fact that they can be embedded in more than one society simultaneously appears to render the very question of return as it was originally conceived by Anwar somewhat irrelevant and simplistic in its binary formulation. For proponents of transnationalism, who emphasise the centrality of cross-border connective circularity that apparently characterises contemporary international movements of people, the social and economic ties which bind migrants to their communities of origin are evidence that return is not the end of the migration cycle, but part and parcel of an ongoing process in which diasporic identities and activities feed back into the sending society's social, economic and political development.

Although it is not always stated explicitly, the upbeat tone of much of this literature is an important general feature: theorists of transnationalism tend to represent new labour diasporas as an example of the ways in which migrants from the global South have been able to overcome structural barriers such as national-state boundaries to shape the world economy in important ways. Portes, for instance, is fairly unambiguous about what he sees as the 'success' of transnational migrant initiatives, which supposedly 'stands as a tribute to human ingenuity and creates a partial counter to the hegemony of international and multinational actors on the world stage'; 'Not only corporations but common people can now cross borders in large numbers and with great flexibility.' (Portes, 2001, 191-2)

Part of this view of transnationalism as an expression of collective agency is explicable in terms of its association with social networks theory (Arango, 2004), which has also been associated with a certain optimism on account of its assumption that social ties and associations between ethnic and national groups form an important resource: social capital (Meagher, 2005). The emphasis in many studies of transnationalism is on the social capital generated by strong bonding networks within the group rather than bridging ties between group members and other groups within society. Indeed, there is considerable conceptual overlap between the sociology of strong ethnic bonds and that of transnationalism which 'refers not only to the linkages between migrants and their families or households in origin countries, but also to the multifarious ways in which migrants feel linked to one another by their common ethnic origins and in-group solidarity' (Cassarino, 2004, 263).

Their combined impact has been to complicate the discussion of return labour migration by thinking beyond the rigid binaries that limited it in earlier eras, and inject a note of optimism into discussions of migration and development, both fields in which they have been embraced and widely diffused for placing migrant agency at the centre of analysis. And yet, there is a growing recognition of the fact that empirical studies of the migration process tend to underline serious shortcomings of the

transnationalism paradigm, along with the migration literature on social networks/capital to which it is tied. These flaws include a kind of unwarranted, generalised optimism inherent in the mistaken assumption that social networks necessarily constitute a form of social capital (Dahninden, 2005), and a lack of attentiveness to the ways in which migrants' ability to engage in transnational activities is varied and conditioned by all manner of restrictions and political and institutional contexts (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002).

These problems are a consequence of a more deep rooted set of issues that stem from an unwillingness to treat transnational social networks and migrant diasporas as embedded in capitalist social relations, configurations of power and structured by political and economic contexts such as national state borders, and the macro economic forces which shape national and local labour markets. Where migrant transnationalism is related to wider processes in the literature, these tend to be overly general assertions about an undifferentiated 'logic of global capitalism' (Portes, 2001, 187) in which the movement of people and remittances is assumed to take place in manner that is relatively uniformly unhindered, and invariably has positive outcomes in terms of net gains for migrants and their families.

This article raises questions about the extent of migrant agency in transnationalism within the specific context Pakistanis in Italy, exploring the ways in which transnational movement, travel and practices are conditioned by political structures and local historically formed specificities within given contexts. It is inspired by the now well established claims of those who argue against monolithic representations of global capitalism, arguing instead that there are 'varieties of capitalism' which shape social outcomes in accordance with differentiated institutional arrangements and the uneven economic geography of the global capitalist economy (Hall and Soskice, 2001). Examining the testimonies of migrants themselves within the context of the formal and informal structures that shape their incorporation within Italian capitalism, it asks two principal questions about the saliency of a framework that stresses migrant transnational agency in relation to the question of 'return':



- How far do current theories of migration and transnationalism provide a valid and useful critique of the myth of return/‘here to stay’ binary approach of the 1970s and 80s?
- To what extent are transnational social networks and strong bonds in particular a useful source of social (or indeed any other form of) capital for migrants and their families in the migration process?

The issues raised by the answers to these two sets of problems will then serve as a basis upon which to make some final reflections on the emergent Pakistani experience in Italy and Europe more widely. These in turn will be tentatively compared with what is known about migration outcomes in other contexts, across space and time; in particular to the UK in the epoch of fordism, a setting that is dramatically different to Italy in the age of contemporary restrictionism. The concluding discussion will address what all this means for theoretical debates on transnationalism ‘from below’ and social networks/capital.

## METHODOLOGY AND BACKGROUND TO THE CASE STUDY

This article is based on 20 semi-structured interviews conducted with migrants in Prato and Florence in Tuscany. Of these, 18 were tape recorded in Urdu before being transcribed and analysed in English. The other two, which were conducted using a note pad (one at the request of a nervous interviewee in an irregular situation, the other due to technical difficulties which emerged with the tape recorder), were translated and transcribed into English as they occurred). Most of the interviews were executed in some considerable depth. Some were well over two hours, though most were around an hour (only a couple were less than half an hour). They were spread over a number of different venues - either in workplaces (PC’s and Doners), in the houses and flats of migrants themselves or in the open air (parks, piazzas and street corners, for example).

Migrants were recruited for life story interviews through standard snowballing techniques, which began through contacts I

made whilst resident in Florence in 2004-5. Some anthropological participant observation was also carried out with migrants in their places of work, as well as in their free time while they relaxed in their houses or wandered around town.

In terms of their social profile, there is little reason to believe that Pakistanis in Tuscany are in any way different to those settled elsewhere in the country (indeed many of those interviewed had themselves lived in other cities and towns, and several men I encountered during my time in Florence moved on to elsewhere). However, in terms of their labour market and housing experiences and outcomes, the data here is indeed likely to be marked by specificities of local economic geography, as it would anywhere (Italy is in fact renown for its highly uneven economic structure and development). The full extent of locality's importance, though touched upon below, will remain unclear until further research is conducted in other sites within Italy.

## VECTORS OF MOVEMENT: THE LIMITS OF TRANSNATIONAL AGENCY

The cross-border social and economic ties, practices and movements of Pakistani migrant workers residing in Italy would appear, on the surface, to provide a good example of the considerable extent and power of 'transnationalism from below' (Guarnizo and Smith, 1998). According to the authors of a rare volume on migrants in Prato, Pakistanis use the internet resources provided by the local library more than any other group, despite being numerically inferior to the Chinese, Moroccans and Albanians (Stefani, 2004b, 222), which would seem to suggest they are likely to remain in frequent contact with kin and maintain a keen interest in Pakistani newspapers and current affairs. (Indeed, many of the migrants I interviewed have installed satellite dishes in their homes and watch Pakistani and other Asian television channels, which would appear to add credence to the notion of them as 'Janus faced'). They arrived more recently than all of these other above listed groups, and have a relatively weak relationship with Italian bureaucratic institutions. At the same time, as a 'community', the Pakistani

population is strongly internally cohesive, and its priorities lie in the perpetuation of its transnational social and familial bonds (Gondal, 2001, 214). It is, in short, a population of seasonal guest labourers that is quite happy to return annually to spend periods of every year in its country of origin (201), or so existing scholarship would have us believe: 'They work nightshifts and weekends willingly...What they make of life in Italy is of less importance than their position within the family and social status in Pakistani society' (208). Needless to say, much of this is in line with what the transnationalism paradigm tells us about the priorities of international migrants.

My own research findings, however, paint a more ambiguous picture: whilst there can be no doubting the existence of sustained social ties and economic connections in the form of remittances between Italy and Pakistan, these were seldom in the foreground of migrants' narratives and day to day concerns. Their accounts of their experiences were, conversely, replete with varying kinds of cross-border movements and activities across multiple nation-states and continents that were *neither voluntary in the full sense, nor sustained, nor orientated toward forging connections within their communities of origin*. It is questionable whether these experiences constitute 'transnationalism' as it is delineated by its principal adherents for a number of reasons.

For one thing, much of the transnational travel and movement of the migrants I interviewed appears difficult to cast as mark of agency. Unlike the Pakistani population in the UK, Pakistanis have settled in Italy less out of choice than out of necessity, as a means to remain in the West rather than as an end in itself. It is not a mark of empowerment or some wilfully adopted cosmopolitan identity that they have lived in up to three other West European cities, but a reflection of their inability to 'arrive' at any of their original, intended destinations (despite working and living within them for some time). As with other recently established migrant groups in Italy such as such the Bangladeshis (Knights, 1996) and the Chinese (Ceccagno, 2003b, 30), these men spent much of the

1990s effectively being hounded from one country to the next, in and out of varying legal statuses.

The average age of immigration *to* Italy amongst the migrants I interviewed was 29, a figure which is tellingly higher than the average age of *emigration from* Pakistan, 26. The three-year discrepancy indicates the nature of journey-time for contemporary migration to Italy from Pakistan which, being largely irregular and indirect, can take up to several months; travel by overland and sea routes often entails making lengthy transit stopovers in places as diverse as Eastern Europe, China and the Middle East. It is also indicative of the tightening of internal immigration controls within nation states, which has made it increasingly difficult for migrants to settle within a given state even if they have penetrated its borders.

Most of respondents had made failed or aborted attempts to settle in other mostly (but not exclusively) European cities before even reaching Italy. These sojourns, which range from between one month in Portugal and 17 years in Libya, were 'failed arrivals' in destinations that were abandoned in favour of what was perceived as a more secure settlement package in Italy, following the state's adoption of a series of regularisations from the 1990s. The prospect of legal residency for men who had been living/and/or working illegally in Northern and western Europe and better living conditions, human rights and incomes for those working in and around the Mediterranean and Middle East enticed them to a country that had not previously figured as a destination for Pakistanis.

This is particularly evident in the fifteen testimonies of the first wave of pioneering arrivals in Italy, none of whom had selected Italy as their first choice destination in the West. Seven came directly from Paris, where they had been working and living illegally; five had lived in Germany at some point; one had lived and worked in Austria and then Switzerland for one and four years respectively. Another still had been in Oslo, which he left despite having close family there. From each of these countries, migrants left for Italy because they had been unable to obtain or maintain

regular status, despite what they generally regarded as relatively decent labour market opportunities.

Secondly, there is nothing much 'circular' about the cross-border movements and other activities practiced by the migrants following emigration, after which their priorities lay in forging sustained networks within their immediate, intended sites of settlement within Europe, away from the South Asian global peripheries and toward the central economic zones of the world economy. Indeed, most pioneers did not return to Pakistan for years whilst they sought to regularise their legal statuses for the obvious reason that they did not have legal means travel, but also because they could not afford to. The fundamental orientation of their trajectories thus far has therefore been firmly bent towards establishing a place for themselves within Europe, a task that has absorbed almost all of their energies and material resources. Indeed, the on going costs of attaining stability in various locations by the purchase of documents and finding accommodation and employment has often compelled them to request for remittances to be sent to them *from* their families in Pakistan.

For the pioneers in particular, migration has been a largely one-way South-North project in which most cross-border activity has been horizontal, within the West. Where ties were forged, they tended to be ephemeral and with actors in and around the context of reception, all of which runs counter to the oft presumed notion amongst transnationalists that migrants' cross-border activities are home oriented (Caglar, 2001, 607; Duany, 2002) and somehow of greater 'density' and 'flexibility' than those of previous generations of migrants (Portes, 2001, 188).

Of course, not all the migrants entered Italy irregularly, or as 'pioneers'. But even those that make up the second wave, which followed in the aftermath of these above described initial, 'spontaneous' flows are not primarily concerned with transnational activities. Indeed, my interview data suggests their status as 'seasonal' workers is less a reflection of choice or attachment to their homeland than a measure of the precarious niches of the Italian labour market that they occupy. It is doubtful that, as

Gondal (2001, 208) appears to suggest, their social status in Pakistan is their primary concern: two migrants who had resided in Portugal, where they had regularised their residency, opted to abandon the country for Italy precisely because they complained that their labour market prospects and living standards were poor (another left Greece for the same reason). Two others are planning to move onto the UK or the US where they believe their educational qualifications will be better recognised than in Italy, where despite being acute, discrimination against migrants within the labour market has barely been acknowledged. Some commentators suggest that by keeping migrants in a precarious legal position and slowing down the integration process, the state has deliberately ensured that educated immigrants do not pose any competitive threat to the native workforce in a society that is short on highly skilled employment opportunities (Reyneri, 2004, 1160).

Indeed for most migrants, maintaining legal residential status is an ongoing process. Its embroilment with employment explains the desperation with which they often move up and down the country in pursuit of low status, low skilled jobs when their contracts expire. Since migrating to Italy, Pakistanis have dispersed to an impressive array of locations around the country in search of jobs, so that their largest concentrations are now in the three largest textile districts and tell a story that rings familiar to researchers of Pakistanis in the UK: Brescia, near Milan along with Carpi, which is also in the industrial North, together with Prato in Tuscany. There is considerable movement between these equivalents of British Pakistani Mill town settlements in the North of England such as Bradford, Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham.

This internal mobility, as shall be discussed below, is a reflection of the fact that jobs are increasingly hard to come by in each of these principal industrial sites of settlement as a result of the decline in textile production within Italy that set in soon after the millennium. This decline compelled the Pakistani population to branch out over yet another constellation of towns and cities around the country including non-industrial localities such as Florence. No less than ten of the men I interviewed had worked in

more than one town or city, including destinations as diverse as obscure towns in Reggio-Emilia the Northern tourist resort, Lake Maggiore. Others I spoke with were headed for, or had contacts in other places still, such as Arezzo, Genoa and even Calabria in the South. In country where internal migration of the native population has diminished in recent decades (Bonifazi and Heins, 2000, 129; Faini et al, 1997), the unsettled nature of Pakistani migrants is a particularly stark indicator of the extent to which their primary migratory activities are, by necessity, focused within the borders of the nation-state in which they reside.

Nor are they confident that they can rule out having to migrate again, despite being desirous of settling in a single location: they understand only too well the costs in 'getting set', to use their own terminology, with each new horizontal move. Most reveal that they are in fact less than satisfied with the lives they lead, even if, on balance, the peace of mind that comes from escaping the insecurity of Pakistan means that they regard it as having benefited them overall. On the basis of this sample, they are experiencing mixed success at best. Family reunification has yet to occur on a mass scale, a fact reflected in my sample, which is composed exclusively of men. Fifteen of the 20 are married, but only four currently live with their wives and children (the remaining eleven live away from their spouses in Pakistan), despite fact that the average age of men in this sample is 37. Even the long-settled, despite having enjoyed visits from their wives and children, remain highly uncertain about the possibility of building futures for themselves with their families in Italy, as the following group exchange strongly hints:

**Mushtaq:** It's very difficult to get by here.

**Ajeeb:** Especially for anyone who has a wife and kids- having house and car, gas, electricity and bills to pay..... The kids are crying, you need to put petrol in the car. The government is not interested [in helping].

**Saif:** My family have come here quite a few times, for two or three months at a time. You can't settle down here though, with a family. It's just not possible to afford it. To cover the costs of the house, to pay the bills, to feed the family, to have a car- it just isn't affordable. What

people do is, two families get together. Then they can just about manage.

If the statistics reveal that family reunification amongst Pakistanis in Prato increased following the initial phases of exclusively male immigration in the 1990s (Marsden, 2003), it is also true to say Pakistanis remain a predominantly male community, with a gendered imbalance of 877 men to 358 women in 2004 (Stefani, 2004, 48-9). The arrival of families, in any case, is hardly an indication of 'success'. Khalid, the second longest settled of the men I interviewed, owns his own property and lives with his wife and children (even if alongside another family), but remains severely pessimistic following the shocks which have rocked the textile industry since 2001:

There's no real future in Italy, it's a matter of living in the present. If you manage to start a business it's preferable.

**What's the matter with what you're doing?** There's a high chance of unemployment. You have no idea when the factory will shut, it could happen anytime and if it does, there's no future here without work. There's no security.

These worries about their own plight are compounded by fears for the future of their children who, unlike British born Pakistanis, will not enjoy the global privileges of having English as a first language, and might well face a more difficult set of circumstances in terms of finding employment within a national labour market that is struggling to find jobs for Italian graduates. Many harbor hopes of transferring themselves, their children and even their family members to an English speaking country whose economic future appears more certain than Italy's:

**Jaldi:** My children's future is not better in Italy. Because the language is Italian which is useless. I want to shift from here. I have a brother and a sister in America, so I'm trying there.

**Chima:** My younger brother, it will be good for him if he studies in England.



Others want their children to remain in Pakistan, where they can complete their education in Urdu and English, but this is a consequence of their pessimism about the future of Pakistanis in Italy, and hardly ranks as evidence of a dynamic social process connecting the two locations:

**Atif:** I'm thinking it's better for my children to be educated there. Italian children here work in the evenings to make ends meet! There aren't many opportunities

Given the 'social unrest' amongst British born Pakistanis in Oldham and elsewhere that has made headlines in recent years, underlining the existence of an 'integration' deficit within the UK, an enormous question mark surrounds the prospects for the children of Italian born and educated Pakistanis. Italy lacks the anti-discrimination laws of Britain, along with the strength of its economy. What little research has been published on its emergent second immigrant generation suggests it sees its own future within the country as relatively bleak, and is already seeking better opportunities beyond Italy (Andall, 2002).

## WHEN SOLIDARITY IS NOT ENOUGH: THE LIMITS OF SOCIAL CAPITALISM

There can be no question that social networks play a crucial role in the migration process amongst Pakistanis in Italy, many of whom are from the same territorial locations, a fact which in itself underlines the now well established importance of chain migration, kinship and friendship ties: brothers, fathers, cousins, schoolmates and other male associates and acquaintances made in the diaspora frequently appear in their accounts of how they reached Italy, underlining the centrality of 'ethnic' and/or 'national' belonging as a resource in the facilitation of reaching the destination country. Its importance continues in the aftermath of their initial entry. The earliest arrivals amongst my sample of respondents headed for Rome which, being the administrative capital and location of foreign embassies, appears to have been the primary site of

settlement for Pakistanis in the early 1990s following the announcement of regularisation programmes, as was the case with Bangladeshis (Knights, 1996) and other migrant groups in the initial phases of immigration. There, migrants would make contact with others arriving from various quarters of continental Europe in a similar position to themselves. They shared information and material resources in a desperate situation of hardship and confusion- one in which food, shelter and information were in extremely scarce supply. Men such as Pela, who arrived in early 1990, confirms that men responded by pooling together, adopting strategies of mutual aid to fellow countrymen.

Strong bonds alone, however, cannot explain the success of the Pakistanis in pulling themselves out of their acute housing troubles. The ability of a community to construct bridging networks with outsiders is crucial. In Prato, shelter in the early stages was, crucially, obtained with the help of an empathetic local Pela managed to befriend: 'One Italian who lived near us, we became friends with him from talking in a bar. He had this shop lying empty and closed, and he let us have it'. The first purchase of a house by a Pakistani in Prato, Pela added, was also achieved with the aid of a local, whose advice was indispensable given the notoriously complicated bureaucratic procedures that surround dealing with banks and purchasing property in Italy.

A similar process took place in the labour market, in which employment opportunities were filled through the functioning of networks which mediated supply and demand, funneling job-seekers into the many vacancies that existed in the early 1990s: Italian Employers would recruit through men who worked for them. Bridging networks between employers and individual Pakistan workers thus allowed information to circulate throughout the Pakistani population in Italy (and even beyond), along the strong network ties that connect its nodal population settlements.

As numerous scholars of migration have argued in recent years, once initiated, the supply of labour funneled through networks such as the ones which connect Pakistani Punjab to Western labour markets continues irrespective of demand (Arango, 2004). In such

cases, it is not unusual for supply to outstrip demand, leading to recession and unemployment. Pakistani migrants, revealingly, have their own terminology for this- men such as Mumtaz referred to the 'Krezi' which occurred when 'everyone from outside came here and it got congested'. Employment prospects and prosperity have since reduced considerably, their effects having been compounded by a more general economic downturn that happened to hit textile production at around the same time: as supply developed a life of its own, demand for labour contracted. The employment experiences of other migrants who have arrived since the millennium are thus markedly different to those who arrived earlier and managed to obtain factory contracts. They have experienced far higher levels of job instability and precarity, a state of affairs which appears to extend to all of the principle sights of settlement. Six of the respondents were unemployed at the time I interviewed them. Increasingly, new arrivals struggle to obtain work in factories at all. Several of the (unemployed) men I encountered in Prato were there because they had failed to find work in Brescia and Carpi:

This has all taken place within the context of a wider economic downturn and general malaise that gripped Italy in the closing years of the Berlusconi administration's government. Migrants report that, intertwined with this decline of the industrial sector, a gradual contraction of the service industry, their other main employer, also took place. It suddenly became more difficult to get jobs in native businesses, which started to suffer acutely as a consequence of falling consumer spending Sarfraz, who was working at an Italian restaurant in Prato 'when the Krezi happened' in 2001, was one of those made redundant.

Many who were able to resorted to self-employment, entering an ethnic economy which now absorbs most surplus Pakistani labour in Italy, but supplies the wider native populace as well as co-ethnics and other immigrants. Communications and the service-sector have emerged as the principal two routes that Pakistanis have opted to take in starting their own businesses. Dozens of telephone and internet centres ('PCs', as they are known), and take-aways ('Doners') have appeared in Italian cities, following another wave

of internal migration or dispersal from saturated labour markets. A handful own grocery stores, but the vast majority prefer not to deviate from the tried and tested formula, emulating the few existing successful businesses that first appeared in a manner that replicates a pattern now familiar to migration scholars by which migrants shamelessly open enterprises next door to existent establishments offering identical services in a bid to appropriate their custom (Knights, 1996). This is a reflection of the extent to which they feel compelled to minimise risk by any means they can. By staking a share of the custom of an existing business that is successful, abject failure - the unthinkable, is avoided. The result, however, is that profits for everyone get reduced.

In Prato and Florence in particular, there are now a growing number of these businesses, particularly in the *San Lorenzo* area, near the central market and along the *Via Panicale*, alongside Bangladeshi, Nigerian, Turkish Kurdish and Arabic grocers and take-aways. Most of their proprietors say that businesses in the area prospered initially, but that an atmosphere of desperation has rapidly begun to pervade the local economy which has been flooded with shops and establishments offering the same goods and services, eroding any dynamic, creative aspects of entrepreneurship that once may have existed. The intensity of competition has made rife price-cutting, self-exploitation by employers and inter-exploitation within the group by employers of their staff. All work appallingly long hours for ever lower rates of pay in order to survive. Mumtaz, who helps out in the PC of a friend, explains the process, and its consequences for immigrant business:

**Mumtaz:** You've probably seen in Florence, there's Pakistani owned Doners and telephone centres everywhere. Why? Because people can't work- and they need to live- to do *something*. There used to be just three or four PCs in Prato. The takings were good. Saif was the first to invest- this was 94, 95. They were taking 1,500-1,600E a day. Now things are such that a good day is one when you take 500E-600E. The average is 450E. It's 600E on the weekends, 300E on weekdays. Everyone tells us we're lucky- the others are taking 200E, 250E! What

we've done is start to do other lines... We sell phone cards, make a bit here, there. It's a hand to mouth system.

The need to recoup the costs of migration, survive, cope and somehow accumulate profit in this context, has compelled ever larger proportions of established migrants to practice what is known as 'agenti'—to act as agents for newcomers seeking to regularise their legal status in Italy. A pattern has developed whereby settled migrants with businesses offer work contracts (and in some cases, housing) to newcomers, exploiting their knowledge of Italy's highly complicated and impenetrable system of bureaucracy and their relatively secure position in the labour market. The regularisation business was underway in Rome as early as the late 1990s, but as employment opportunities have contracted and internal controls of migration have intensified with the 2002 Bossi-Fini law, which attaches residential rights to employment status, more and more migrants across the country have turned to this sort of profiteering as a means of supplementing their income.

In the charging of extortionate sums of cash for services which include compiling the relevant documents (fraudulently if necessary) to obtain a work contract, proof of housing arrangements and the filling out and submitting of various long and complicated forms, we see the flip side of the oft hailed solidarity and 'internal cohesion' of the Pakistani population: Azhar paid 5,000 Euros in 2002 to a Pakistani agent for a procedure that, in 1990, cost the pioneers virtually nothing. The network, effectively, has started to eat itself, reducing the value of 'ethnicity' as a resource, and raising the spectre of internal strife as each wave of migrants bleeds the next dry. Relations of power now dictate that apparent acts of solidarity such as hiring a friend or cousin are distorted by an ever present will to survive and profit off those to whom one is bonded most strongly: employers squeeze their co-ethnic workers (to whom they may even be related by blood) with ever greater ferocity. Paradoxically, as this inter-group exploitation intensifies, migrants appear to become more, not less dependent upon the networks that

have come to constrain them. The prospect bridging out and taking risks seems more remote as the dynamism of the network fades.

### VARIETIES OF CAPITALISM: THE INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS OF AGENCY IN MIGRATION

How then, can we explain the limits of transnational agency and capital from social/ethnic solidarity in what researchers generally agree is one of Italy's most internally cohesive, extensively transnationally networked and newly arrived immigrant population?

It seems fairly clear that networks, transnational or otherwise can only be as fruitful a source of social (or any other sort) of capital as the context in which they are fostered and develop allows. The deteriorating fortunes of Pakistanis in Italy is, at bottom, a consequence of fluctuations in the demand for migrant labour and an increasingly harsh institutional climate. Migrants showed impressive degrees of solidarity in the very earliest stages of settlement by pooling resources in difficult times. But even at its peak, social capital from ethnic belonging did not appear spontaneously as a consequence of inter-community bonds. 'Pull factors'- above all, demand for labour, was the structural force that drew these networks toward places such as Prato. No sooner had the need for labour been plugged and the housing crisis resolved, the market went into a sharp decline due to a combination of a macro factors including the changing international situation in the world economy after 9/11, together with the intensification of competition in textile production which started to be outsourced to production sites beyond Italy's shores. It is hardly surprising that at this point, the social capital yielded by their networks and social ties began to diminish with the tightening of structural restraints.

As unemployment set in, a profound feeling of insecurity weighed down on the entire population, which experienced the total lack of protection from unemployment that characterises life in Italy. Jaldi was amongst the most bitterly disappointed with his life in Prato of all the men I interviewed.

**Jaldi:** My wife and I have been here for three and half years, we still don't like Italy. **Why?** There's nothing here. Just work...I've worked for four years at the same factory. I still don't have permanent work, they could sack me today and what would I do.

His pessimism about the future is matched by that of Mumtaz, who paints a particularly depressing portrait of Pakistani life in Italy.

**Mumtaz:** Those who are satisfied are 10-12 per cent, maximum. The rest of us buy our shirts and trousers from Pakistan. We buy shoes from there. Because it's so expensive here that if you buy here you won't save any money to send back to the others. Why do you think people don't call their families? Why do they send them back when they come even when they have papers? Because they can't afford the rent: It's 800 for accommodation. It's a hundred or two for bills (electricity, gas, water etc). God forbid you or your kids get sick, or you need to buy clothes, or you have people staying with you. What are you going to do? You try to reduce your food costs, and then your spending on coffee and cigarettes to 100, so that you can save 800. And then you try to have two hundred spare in case of an emergency. This is the life here. It's truly difficult.

Having lived elsewhere, many of the migrants felt this compared unfavourably with what they had witnessed and experienced elsewhere in Europe. Based on their knowledge of the experiences of Pakistanis elsewhere, they located the source of the problem in specificities of the Italian context of reception:

**Atif:** If you have documents and work there you're set. If you don't have a job the government supports you in France and Germany. Here if you don't have work for a month, it's over. Some people [in France] doing work claim benefits too, those who have documents.

Jaldi too draws an explicit comparison to the superior existence he led in Germany as an asylum claimant, during which time his long hours of low paid work were made worthwhile by supplementary forms of support he was in receipt of from the state. He also refers to the difference in overall quality of life in a strong Western

European economy with welfare protection and good public services:

I was a kitchen hand in a restaurant in Hamburg. In the beginning the money was 1500 Marks. At the end I was getting 2500. There was no problem there. The government was providing accommodation. Medical treatment was free. Transport was cheap there. I never needed a car there in five years there. I'd always get the train or bus. Here, immediately I had to get a car. Insurance is very expensive. Plus petrol. And maintenance. I've been here for four years- I paid 20,000 in taxes without any benefit. I haven't enjoyed Italy.

Norway formed Mumtaz's point of comparative reference:

**Mumtaz:** My cousins in Norway, they're settled. Their children lived and studied there. They grew up there, someone is working in a bank, someone else in the post office, someone's made a shop, someone else is driving a taxi. This is the Pakistani community in Oslo. They look so fresh when they're back from work that you'd think they were back from holiday- well dressed and in good condition, their faces are totally fresh. Here, you look at the men- everyone is stressed, spent. Haggard. Hard up. If you get someone a coffee you think at night in bed, 'I just spent 1.50 Euros unnecessarily, so I'd better reduce my cigarettes for two days'... You cook once and eat it for three days.

These migrants clearly identify Italy's general social and economic environment as the source of their woes, rightly pointing to the fact that its variety of capitalism is one in which jobs are scarce, wages are low and welfare protection minimal. It is also indicative of the specific plight of immigrants in Italy, which is noticeably more desperate than even the native working-class population thanks partly to the institutional constraints with regard to legal residency and discrimination within the labour market they face. Within Italian society, and Prato in particular, there is a fundamental tension between the host society's adoption of a program of economic development based on cheap foreign labour on the one hand, and its refusal, on the other, to accept the wider consequences of that policy where it entails social inclusion for migrants



(Rastrelli, 2003, 101). Socio-economic integration of the sort that exists in the UK, for all its limitations, is thus remote.

The difficulties for migrants in Italy, however, are not merely a consequence of discrimination and segmented labour markets which exist throughout Europe: many respondents pointed to weaknesses and specificities of the national economy. There is, by common agreement, little potential to launch elaborate or ambitious non-native businesses in Italy: 'There's no scope here. Italians don't like to buy things from foreigners', one respondent typically complained. 'If you start a business you'll be working for your own men', he went on: 'that's no good'. His words echo the sentiments of several of the take-away owners I spoke with. When asked why they were selling Doner meat prepared, frozen and imported from Germany rather than good quality South Asian cuisine, they claimed that, apart from the higher start-up costs, Italians would not be interested. This highlights an important trait of consumer demand in Italy, which is stubbornly attached to traditional and local produce, despite a growing interest in exotic goods. In this respect, it may well be some time before opportunities for foreigners in Italy match those in countries such as Britain and France, where tastes have long been exposed to curry and couscous respectively. One only needs to glance at the menu of any Italian 'Chinese' restaurant to understand this point (risotto and pasta invariably feature as starters).

Space-based specificities, however, are not the sole determinants of structural constraints. The bitterness of many of the respondents about their misfortune in relation to Pakistani migrants elsewhere stems as much from variation in time as it does place. Across Europe, the current historical moment is producing an experience of immigration that is starkly distinct from that of the 'old' fordist migrants who left Mirpur and Punjab for Britain up until the 1970s, and even that of the subsequent waves that entered various other western European countries before the recent tides of restrictionism altered the context of reception in the 1990s to one in which, even for individual guest-workers, arrival and settlement can take years. Fordist migration took place at a time when housing

was affordable; contemporary migration occurs at a time when house prices across Europe have soared to the point where they are reach for many natives. If Mirpuris and Punjabis, who had often purchased more than a single property within a short space of time following their incorporation into local economies, Pakistanis in Italy can only fantasise about a time when they will be able to manage a joint purchase. Only three of the men I interviewed own or part own houses, which reflects wider statistical realities: just 29% of Prato's 'extracomunitari', according to an estimate based on surveys conducted by an estate agency, are in a position to buy; 70% seek to rent (Marchetti, 2004b). It is, in other words, the historical context that is shaping the migration outcomes these men complain of: capitalisms, that is to say, vary not only across space but over time.

## CONCLUSION

To return to the question of whether or not traditional dichotomies of migration/return have been rendered irrelevant, it seems true to say that my respondents have no romantic attachment to Pakistan à la Anwar in the way that earlier waves of migrants from Mirpuri to the UK may have done. But not because they are somehow more cosmopolitan. These migrants have few qualms about admitting they want to be 'here to stay'. Many appear to be quite open to the idea of not returning to Pakistan at all, having witnessed the reality of 'no return' for those who migrated before them- both in their villages, and on their travels through Europe. The irony is that, where previous generations migrated in search of quick commercial gain but left with an unfulfilled will to return, the current wave are spending inordinate amounts of money in a desperate bid to never have to go back. The myth for them, it seems, is the idea that they will ever be fortunate enough to experience a meaningful arrival.

Unlike for previous generations, there is nothing romantic or mythological about migrant discourse on 'return' under the precarious conditions of late capitalist globalisation. Contrarily, 'return' for many of today's migrants is a distinct possibility. At the

very least, all sorts of questions surround theirs and their children's futures in Italy and Europe more generally. The dominant myth that imbues the rhetoric of their discourse now appears to be one of 'arrival'. Migrants now effectively fantasise about the possibilities of settlement and stability in Europe.

For all their insights, recent trends in migration research are hampered by their excessive optimism and neglect of structure. Their implication that the question of return has been eclipsed by changes in the increasingly cosmopolitan lifestyle and transnational practices of labour migrants is misleading. Following a growing number of scholars who have critiqued the transnationalism paradigm as it was originally conceived (e.g. Dahinden, 2005), this article points to the constraints which condition and restrict the sorts of cross-border activity migrants engage in. Underlining the fact that for many, the experience of daily life is structured by a struggle for stability and rootedness in place, it suggests that the forms of 'agency' they are able to mobilise are hardly an unproblematic manifestation of empowerment in the global economy. Their restlessness is not circular, nor sustained, nor a meaningful expression of agency. It is indicative of their inability to embed themselves in any society let alone more than one. Their decision to migrate and invest ever greater sums in paying smugglers and regularising their legal statuses, together with the money they are compelled to invest in businesses in order to create employment for themselves, underline the desperate, mythical, dream-like nature of their project. Having worked and lived in several European states, many have been compelled to migrate within Italy several more times. Much of their migratory energy is spent on internal moves, within Italy's borders, and on building bridges with Italian society, rather than with their relatives in Pakistan. Strong bonding and social networks remain central to their economic strategies, particularly given the contraction of the industrial sector. Thus far, however, these have brought them little sense of security.

The salience of Anwar's original formulation has been interrogated here with respect to the experience of contemporary migration, *not* because it is, as some exponents of transnationalism

would have us believe, somehow irrelevant due to the multiplicity of options that migrants supposedly now have, but rather the opposite. The structurally altered context of contemporary immigration to the West from poor countries is less one of newfound possibilities than it is one in which migrants' options are in fact narrowing due to the radically different regimes of control and economic contexts that immigrants of today face. These are more harsh in all kinds of fundamental ways than those encountered by postwar migrants to the UK, for instance, who arrived up until the 1990s when the costs of migration were less and its profits greater. Pakistanis in Italy feel uncertain about the future, and with good reason. For some, the dream of economic prosperity, family reunification and permanent settlement they are chasing is being partially realised, though seldom without great difficulty and always at considerable cost. For others, it is likely to remain illusive.

## CHAPTER 5

# **God don't kill the traveller, grant their desire that their last breath be at home: An analysis of Pakhtun migrants' tales**

FRANCIS WATKINS

## INTRODUCTION

Understanding stories of migration and the experiences of individuals is about exploration in two ways, about juxtapositions in space and about change over time. Some of the earliest social studies of migration, the work of the Wirth and the Chicago sociologists in the Americas and that of the Manchester school in Africa, focused on the juxtaposition of traditional and the modern, as rural migrants moved to the rapidly developing cities. More recent studies of migration from South Asia to the Gulf states have taken up similar themes. For example, Osella and Gardner (2004) talk about the ambiguity of migration: arguing that “Even as migrants struggle to transform themselves and their families, they are torn between competing ideals: to separate their families and gain access to the power and resources of new places, or to remain together; to retain links with their villages or break away from their often constrictive and burdensome obligations; to return or to stay” (Osella and Gardner 2004: xlii). Osella and Osella (2000) explore these themes from a slightly different perspective, looking specifically at male identity amongst male migrants from south India, and suggesting that “identity entails a more complex articulation between hybridity and essentialism” (117). The arguments, however, remain basically the same, that migrants face the challenge of dealing with new

experiences and circumstances, using the only tools available to them, their own cultural understandings.

Something that is perhaps less well explored, it is how these understandings change over time. Osella and Osella (2000) take a certain aspect of time into account, looking at changes as individuals mature and develop. They make the case that "Migration may accelerate an individual's progress along a culturally idealized trajectory towards mature manhood" (118). Ferguson (1999) takes up a similar theme, but with the perspective of history, describing the ways in which Copperbelt miners in Zambia in the 1990s, once enthusiastic proponents of the benefits of modernisation, have become cynical sceptics of these ideas (Ferguson 1999: 14).

In this paper I want to explore the experiences of migrants over time, in order to bring in this additional perspective. The paper is based on ethnographic fieldwork carried out in a village in Dir District, North West Frontier Province, Pakistan during 1990-3 and in the United Arab Emirates during 1988-1990. An important element of the research looked at labour migration from a Pakhtun village, initially considering recent migration to the Gulf states, but gradually expanding to look at personal histories of migration throughout the Twentieth Century. It draws on the tales of three generations of Pakhtun men who migrated during the colonial period, in the initial years after Pakistan was established and, more recently in the 1980s and 1990s, to the Gulf states. The three stories are used as the basis for exploring the development of migration from the village in these three periods and for looking three sets of literature relevant to Pakhtuns and to migrants.

In this paper I seek to explore these two facets of space and time. In the first part of the paper I attempt to do this through the stories of migrants from two generations and through making comparisons with literature that is contemporary to the tales told. I aim to use these tales to show the developing disjunctions between the perspectives of the settled and the successful and those who sought their opportunities elsewhere. In much of the ethnographic work from this period Pakhtun societies are conceived of as bounded and static. As will be argued below, there has often been a reluctance

to explore the issues that hint at the ways in which the outside world impinges on these societies.

I look at two stories and two sets of literature. The first story, that of Abdul Wahid, is, in contrast, that of a poor non-*khan*, a mullah and a hard-working migrant. The first set of literature is roughly contemporary and is based around Barth's work (1959, 1969) on Swat Pakhtuns, based on fieldwork in the 1950s. This is followed by Asad's (1972) re-analysis of Barth's work, giving a very different perspective on Barth's analysis, and Barth's own, revealing response (1981).

The second story, that of Abdur Rahim, provides the view of a Pakhtun migrant using the opportunities available to progress and to change, in the period of the 1960s and 1970s. The second set of literature provides alternative perspectives on Pakhtun societies, and particularly perspectives from contexts of rapid change. The focus is on Ahmed's studies of the Pukhtun tribal areas of Mohmand (1980) and Waziristan (1983 [reprinted 1991] and 1986) and the work of Anderson (1978) in Afghanistan bring out the changing nature of Pakhtun society in the 1960s and 1970s. I also draw here on the thesis of Addleton (1992), that the period of the 1970s and 1980s saw migration occurring largely outside government control and helping to undermine the centralised approaches to development.

In the second part of the paper I look at one story and a further set of literature, using these to explore the themes of continuity emerging over three generations. I then go on to make comparisons with more contemporary literature in order focus on themes of modernisation and disillusionment. The third and final story, of Abdur Rahim, provides the view of a third generation migrant, where migration has become an established way of life. The literature is that on Gulf migrants, which provides perspectives on the experience of migration to the Gulf states in the 1990s, and includes ethnographic work on migration to the Gulf states from India (Hansen 2001 and Osella and Osella 2000), Sri Lanka (Gamburd 2000), and from the perspective from the place of migration, specifically Kuwait (Longva 1997). Through looking at

changes over time I wish to explore a shift from migration as a sense of escape, through a sense of betterment, to a dawning realisation of migration as a way of life and the disillusionment that accompanies this.

### FIELDWORK IN THE VILLAGE OF KOHERY

Addleton (1992) estimates that in 1972 there were a total of 200,000 Pakistanis in the Middle East. By 1977 this figure had grown to 727,000, and by 1981 had further expanded to between 1.2 and 1.6 million (Addleton 1992: 56-8). In 1982, with almost 2 million Pakistanis abroad, 63% or 1.26 million were in the Middle East - 37% (740,000) in Saudi Arabia and 10% (200,000) in the UAE (Addleton 1992: 59). Addleton also suggests that "The majority of migrants from Pakistan to the Middle East came from rural areas", and that "Migration streams were proportionately more important for the NWFP and Punjab than for Sindh and Baluchistan. The propensity to migrate was especially strong in the NWFP, where locals departed at a pace two or three times what their proportion in Pakistan's total population would suggest" (Addleton 1992: 88-9). After this peak in the mid-1980s the numbers leaving the country annually to travel to the Middle East stabilised through the late 1980s and early 1990s, remaining of particularly importance in the NWFP.

Fieldwork was carried out in the village of Kohery in Dir District, a neighbour of the more famous Swat District. The village is three quarters of an hour drive from the town of Timirgara: across the River Panjkora and up a steep mountain road, built by the villagers themselves. Kohery in the early 1990s consisted of around 100 households in 5 neighbourhoods, surrounded by narrow terraced fields that extend across the mountainside. Virtually all of the households had at least one male member working in either the United Arab Emirates or Saudi Arabia. For most households this was their main source of income, while a few had sufficient land, often in the valley nearer to the town, or had other businesses, such as transportation or shops, which provided other income.



The migrants from the village, the vast majority men, often spent over two years away from home at a time. On their return to their home village the first few days were spent visiting family and friends, re-establishing family and kin ties. The stated purpose of these visits was to present gifts brought back from the place of migration, as well gifts, letters, tapes and photographs from family members still working abroad. Perhaps more importantly, these were times when family news was exchanged and tales were told of the time spent away. Story telling generally was an important element of the socialising and some individuals were especially sought after for their tale-telling skills.

The three stories presented in part here were told directly to me, although often others came to listen. Azum Khan was one of the first to tell me the tales of his experiences working in the Gulf. Over the period of fieldwork I collected stories from men of three generations of the same extended family, including the stories of Azum Khan's grandfather, Abdul Wahid and his uncles, Abdur Rahim and Fazal Wahid. In the cases of Azum Khan and Abdul Wahid, who were both excellent story tellers, what is written is a direct relation of the stories that individuals told me.<sup>1</sup> In other cases, such as that of Abdur Rahim and Fazal Wahid, the stories were pieced together from a number of short interviews and discussions with other family members. What are presented here are some contextual parts of the stories and one or two striking episodes, of which there were often a number. The aim is to give a flavour of these longer stories of migration to act as the basis for the following analysis.

In this first part of the paper I start with Abdul Wahid's story, as one of the first generation of migrants from Kohery. I then move on to Abdur Rahim and Fazal Wahid's stories, a second generation of migrants, with changing opportunities and changing perspectives.

### ABDUL WAHID'S STORY—ESCAPE

In his early life in Kohery, some time in the 1930s, Abdul Wahid often had to leave the village to look for work. Like many in the

village the family had little land and what they had was poor. Many men would travel to the area known as Mayra during the sugar cane harvest in the late summer. Mayra is the area beyond the Malakand Pass where the plain, on which Peshawar stands, begins. The area extends from Malakand itself, down through Skhakot to Mardan and Dargayee. Abdul Wahid travelled down to Mayra with one or two others from the village for fear of thieves on the road. They would walk there carrying thick baked bread to eat on the journey and staying overnight in mosques by the road. Once in Mayra the men would find work harvesting or refining the cane. For a full day and night's work the men were paid only 4 anay. For a while a number of men found work with the British contractors building the canal and tunnel that carried part of the Swat River under the Malakand Pass to irrigate the plain beyond. At first Abdul Wahid found work as a labourer earning 12 anay a day. He was then taken on by Sadbar Khan, another man from Kohery who had work as a foreman. Abdul Wahid worked for a total of six months for him as a cook and was paid directly by him. He could remember that many of the men would add to their wages by hiding the tools with which they had been issued with and taking them home to use or to sell.

Abdul Wahid first went to join his elder brother, Abdul Rashid, in Baluchistan around 1940 when there was still a British government in Pakistan. He himself was about 25 years old and had only a small moustache and beard. He travelled down from Peshawar, through Lahore and Mianwali to Dera Ghazi Khan by train. From there he took several long bus journeys into Baluchistan to the area of Kooloo where his brother lived and worked. He was able to find work as a *mullah* in a place called Gulsalayee. This was a place close to Abdul Rashid and where there were others from his own kin group in Kohery working as *mullahs*. At first he found things hard and had to spend six months learning the local Baluchi language. The people he thought were very ignorant and often contradictory as they would not listen to what he had to say. Many of the people there, even the older men and those who considered

themselves good Muslims, did not know even the simplest prayers and Abdul Wahid had to start from scratch.

The people who Abdul Wahid was *mullah* to were nomadic, Gujar as he called them. From the start they told him that if he wanted *zakat*, the grain and animals that they would pay him with, then he had to come with them, following them from place to place. As he was not used to the life of the nomads he found being their *mullah* hard. In the winter the people moved to the lower areas to avoid the snow and in the summer they went to the hills to avoid the heat. They did not build proper houses from stone and wood but rather wove mats from reeds and made temporary houses from them. Their ideas about hospitality too were very different from those of the Pakhtuns. A visiting guest, such as Abdul Wahid, was kept away from the house, sleeping in the open. Even at night the guests were left to sleep away from the house.

However, the nomads were generous with their *zakat* and every season each household would give 15-20 kg of grain and 2-3 sheep or goats to their *mullah*. Abdul Wahid sold the animals that he was given to merchants and would save the money. After two seasons he had saved enough money to be able to go back to Kohery to visit. The first few times that he went he was able to take back Rs-300 which was a great deal of money at the time. On the journey home he stopped at the big bazaar in Batkhela to buy gifts like clothes and tea for his family. As he said, when I returned people looked at me, they saw the money and gifts that I had brought and they knew that I was doing well.

When Abdul Wahid finally returned to Kohery he was able to buy land at the edge of the village for a cost of Rs 1100. Abdul Wahid was extremely proud of his land and claimed that he would never sell it even for Rs 600,000, a huge amount of money. When he first bought the land it was bare hillside and he had to work himself to turn it into fields. Over the years he worked himself and hired labourers at Rs 1.5 a day to build eight terraced fields. The land was relatively poor and stony but could still be used to produce two crops, of wheat and maize, every year. The beautifully constructed terrace walls stood as a testimony to Abdul Wahid's life

of work. Others, too, did well from their years in Baluchistan. Abdul Rashid was able to buy large areas of fields in the village as well as building a large new house and setting up one of the first shops in Kohery. Land was the real key to security at the time. It enabled families to live and provided them with a surplus in some cases that they could trade for other necessities.

Abdul Wahid's story presents a view of life in Kohery in the pre-independence period from the bottom, a life of poverty, uncertainty and migration. Although there are mentions of migration in Barth's work (1959,1969) covering this period, he presents a somewhat static view of Pakhtun society, which was clearly undergoing significant upheavals at the time. Aspects of Abdul Wahid's story help in bringing out some of these changes: the non-voluntary nature of poverty and the vulnerability that many families suffered; the routes open to the enterprising to escape from the strictures of khan led society in Dir and the risks associated with such an escape; and, the opportunities that such an escape led to in terms of the ability to purchase land in the home village and thus establish the family there.

Barth's (1959) presentation of Pathan life in Swat in the 1950s and the decades before is primarily the perspective of the landowners and the powerful, the khans. In his work he sets out to understand the political system, both the sources of political authority and the form of organization within which authority is exercised (Barth 1959: 1). His focus is, therefore, on those who aspire to power in Swat society, Pakhtun chiefs and 'saints', persons of holy descent (Barth 1959: 4). Much less attention is given to the perspectives of the political clients and the lower castes, on whom the political patrons depend for support (Barth 1959: 16-22), but who are seen as merely supporting players in the political drama.

Talal Asad presents an alternative analysis of Barth's own data, pointing out "The implicit assumption in Barth's model...the presence of a sovereign landowning class" and highlighting the fact that the system "is regulated by a dominant class of landowners who exploit the landless" (Asad 1972: 82). He goes on to argue for a more historical perspective that looks at the wider political

context and makes the case that “a class perspective reveals the political structure to be a complex, developing reality, and not a logically closed system” (Asad 1972: 90). Barth (1981) responded to these, and other, criticisms in a paper that presents a more considered view of the historical, political and environmental realities of Swat in the 1950s. He agrees with Asad that the analysis focuses on leader, arguing that the political system is clearer when described from the point of view of those most concerned with politics (Barth 1981: 133-4). Barth goes on to describe “The progressive integration of Swat into the wider economy, and the transport, trade, and in part local production which this entailed” (Barth 1981:142), although without the detail that a more nuanced description would require. Nevertheless, the emphasis on the upper ranks of Swat society and on describing a ‘logically closed system’ mean that those who sought their livelihoods outside the area, the migrants of the time, do not feature in these analyses.

Addleton (1992), however, in his work on the importance of migration to the state of Pakistan, and work by historians such as Kessinger (1974) and Dichter (1967) confirm that the experience of those from Kohery was not an isolated experience but that it was part of something much more widespread. Addleton presents evidence to suggest that internal migration was an important feature of society in the western frontier of British India and further states that the North West Frontier Province was a particularly important area of out-migration (Addleton 1992: 36) a point that is also noted by others (Dichter 1967, Ahmed 1980: 64). In the newly independent state of Pakistan migration became of even greater significance, as the next two stories illustrate.

#### **ABDUR RAHIM AND FAZAL WAHID—BETTERMENT**

Abdur Rahim, had been working for a number of years in the Punjab, along with many other men from Kohery. The new government of Pakistan had begun many large projects developing the infrastructure of the country in the mid-1950s. One of the main ones was the building of large irrigation canals in the Punjab to the north and south of the city of Lahore. Much of the work

was done by hand as there was little machinery around. As a result there were many opportunities for those who wanted to work as labourers. Some of the better off men in Kohery caught on early to the opportunities available and had been able to set themselves up as small-scale contractors with teams of donkeys, which were used to move earth. These contractors hired other men to work as labourers for them and in many cases they took on men from Kohery. Others in the village heard about the prospects and went to find work for themselves. In this way there were soon large numbers of men from the village working together in the Punjab.

As well as the work being hard, the men who worked on the irrigation projects sometimes faced great risks. Much of the Punjab is flat with large river systems running through it which enable some of this relatively dry land to be cultivated. The Pakistan government sought to continue and expand the work of the British before them by expanding the area that could be irrigated. This meant building enormous irrigation canals to carry the water from the river to new areas. The rivers were fed by rain and melted snow, mainly from the mountains in the north of the country. During the monsoon period in the late summer, when there were often substantial amounts of rainwater in the rivers, the plains could sometimes flood, even when there had been little rain in the actual area. Abdur Rahim recalled that day there had only been light rain while they worked. Then, without warning, they heard and saw a great rush of water coming towards them. The men fled for whatever high ground they could find, leading the donkeys where they could.

Soon they were stranded on the high banks of the canal that they had been building, completely surrounded by water. There was nowhere for them to go as the country all around them was flooded and their camps had been destroyed. With the camps gone they had no food and so for several days they ate nothing. As the flood continued, however, debris from destroyed villages began to float past. The men were fortunate enough to rescue some undamaged tins of flour, which they could use to make bread. One day they saw a buffalo swimming towards them in the flood waters. They

captured the animal, slaughtered, cooked and ate it, thankful to have *helal* meat to eat. Abdur Rahim also recalled that the government sent planes which dropped some supplies for them. While they themselves could eat, there was nothing for the donkeys on the bare, newly built canal banks. The men improvised a raft from flotsam and used it to paddle about to collect what fodder they could for the animals. The flood lasted for over a week and the men had to wait until the waters finally receded until they could escape from their island.

As the government programmes in the Punjab reached completion the contractors and labourers began to look elsewhere for work. Some of the contractors found work in the construction of the new international airport in Karachi. Soon many others were heading south to look for work in the growing city. The end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s was a period of great industrial expansion in Pakistan. Karachi, which had previously been the capital of the country took on a new role as the main port and industrial centre. Men from Kohery found work easily in this period of first industrial and then commercial development.

Men like Abdur Rahim followed the contractors and the work from the Punjab down to Karachi. Abdur Rahim worked first as a labourer and then as a night watchman in Karachi for a number of years. Abdur Rahim was joined by his brother, Fazal Wahid, who gave up his business in Kohery to go to Karachi. He soon found work, as a quantity surveyor. He worked on a number of large projects including the construction of the Pakistan steel mills outside the city. The work paid well and Fazal Wahid was soon able to return to Kohery and pay for his own marriage. Only a few short months after the wedding he returned to Karachi, this time to work for a fellow Pakhtun from Swat, a man called Baharam who was a large contractor. All the time that Fazal Wahid was working for Baharam he was saving money so that he could start his own business in Karachi. After a number of years he was able to open up a shop in rented premises where he sold cloth and did tailoring work. Fazal Wahid had four other tailors working for him in the business, each paying him a share of their own profits towards the

rental of the premises. Business was very good and after only a couple of years Fazal Wahid was able to move on and buy his own shop in a part of Karachi called Heyadaree.

Although most of the people from Kohery were scattered all over Karachi, wherever there was work, there were some places where groups of them congregated to live. In Heyadaree there was a small community of Pakhtuns, mostly from Swat, but with a number from Kohery. Fazal Wahid's brother, Gul Wahid, lived there with his wife, Abdul Hadi had a small shop there and there were others. Fazal Wahid bought his shop in Heyadaree and soon afterwards built himself a small house in the same area. In 1973 he moved his family - his wife, daughter and two sons - to Karachi to live with him. At the same time Fazal Wahid bought into partnership in a truck with Abdul Hadi and Abdul Rashid's eldest son, Abdulhai, who was working as a mullah in Karachi. It was a very poor investment as the truck was beset with problems. They made little money and often lost more than they earned, causing numerous arguments, which put Fazal Wahid off sharing a business for life.

After Fazal Wahid sold his share in the truck he went back to working for himself in his own shop. Not long after those events he was severely affected by a family tragedy. One of his own *khpulwan*, who also worked in Karachi, an Abdul Maliq, was killed in a road accident. As Abdul Maliq had been crossing the road from his house to the mosque opposite he was hit by a rickshaw and killed. After a lot of deliberation it was decided by his family that it would be too difficult to send the body of Abdul Maliq back to Kohery and so he was buried in Karachi. That Abdul Maliq was buried in Karachi and not in his home of Kohery affected Fazal Wahid quite deeply and he worried about it constantly. He thought about how unhappy the rest of the family were that the body had not been buried in the village but was rather buried outside. With these thoughts on his mind he decided to move his family back to Kohery.

Over the period from independence in 1947 to the 1970s there were considerable changes in the nature of migration from Kohery. More and more men moved further away from the village to take



advantage of the opportunities that were available to them as the new Pakistan began to develop. The stories of Abdur Rahim and Fazal Wahid, again bring out some key themes: the ongoing problems of poverty and vulnerability and the limited opportunities still available in Dir; the growing opportunities in the new Pakistan for those who were mobile to seek to establish themselves in new businesses and opportunities; and, the continued focus on the home village as the point of return.

Ahmed, writing about the Pukhtun tribal areas of Mohmand (1980) and Waziristan (1983 [reprinted 1991] and 1986) gives the issue relatively little attention, focusing instead on Barth's themes of power and independence. However, unlike Barth's earlier work, he does mention the changing nature of Pakhtun society at the time of fieldwork: describing the utilisation of visas for employment abroad as being a source of patronage among the Mohmands (Ahmed 1980: 346); and, the new sources of wealth that became available in the 1960s and 1970s and the impacts that this had on attitudes to work and household resources in Waziristan (Ahmed 1991: 97-8).

Other authors note the importance of these developments for internal migration in different areas of Pakistan (Naveed-I-Rahat 1990). Addleton, for example, suggests that for the Pakhtuns in particular, migration had become a way of life (Addleton 1992: 37). Dichter (1967), writing about the North West Frontier in the 1960s, noted widespread poverty and a reliance on migration throughout the area. In surveys of various parts of the province he recorded villages with men working in places as far afield as Peshawar, Lahore and Karachi sending home remittances. He even goes as far as to suggest that the Frontier was unable to support its population leading to temporary and permanent migration (Dichter 1967: 168).

Addleton's (1992) argues that the earlier internal movements in search of labour opened the way for the enormous migration from Pakistan to the Gulf. For the men from Kohery working in Karachi provided new opportunities in the 1970s. A combination of a huge new demand for labour in the Gulf states, relatively undeveloped

immigration laws and systems, and Pakistani engineering companies with experience from the development of the country brought new chances for a few brave pioneers from 1975 onwards. As Addleton puts it: “For the young Pathans from the NWFP who had already travelled a thousand miles and crossed several cultural frontiers in search of work in Karachi, the short journey across the Gulf to Oman or the UAE was relatively easy, involved few risks, and held the promise of extraordinary economic return” (Addleton 1992: 38). By the 1990s almost every household in Kohery had at least one man working in either the United Arab Emirates or Saudi Arabia, migration had become a way of life.

In the second part of the paper I open with Azum Khan’s story, a third generation migrant from Kohery. I use this story as the basis for exploring themes of continuity and change, making comparisons with more contemporary literature on the experiences of other Gulf migrants.

#### **AZUM KHAN’S STORY—MIGRATION AS A WAY OF LIFE**

In many cases migration was a source of conflict between fathers and their growing sons. While sons, like Azum Khan, longed for the chance to prove themselves working abroad, most fathers hoped that their sons would remain in education in order to improve their prospects that way. Few fathers wanted their sons to endure the hardships that they themselves had gone through and ordered them to remain at home in Kohery. Some young men made their own arrangements to leave in secret; Azum was one of these men. He knew that his father would not agree to him going to the UAE and so decided to make the arrangements himself. He first went to a relative to ask for a loan. Once Azum had the money he went straight to the nearest passport office in Swat and had an emergency passport made that day. A few days later somebody from the village was going to the UAE and so Azum sent his passport to his uncle’s eldest son with instructions to have a visa made. Throughout all of this time his family, his father and grandfather never knew what he was intending to do.

Some time later Azum received a cassette from the UAE saying that the visa had been made and that the passport would be sent to him. Of course then all of Azum's family knew what he had done and all of them were very upset. Azum's grandfather cried at what the boy had done and his father was so angry that he hit Azum for the first time in many years. Fazal Hakim asked him if he knew what he was going to do out there when he was so young. Azum replied that he would be able to do labouring work and make money that way which upset his father still more. In the end though Fazal Hakim agreed to let his son go. Azum's uncle paid for the cost of the first visa, Rs 24,000, and in 1985 Azum left on his own to go for the first time to the UAE.

Like most men from Kohery who have worked in the UAE, Azum found the first few months the hardest. For a start, in 1985 many of the men there were much older than he was and so he had no real companions. Then there was the problem of not knowing how to speak Arabic. The problems of learning the language, coupled with the difficulties that he had in getting used to a new lifestyle of caring for himself - cooking and washing clothes - made the early months the worst.

Azum was fortunate that he found labouring work almost immediately, and though the work was hard, it paid well at 40 Dh a day, the equivalent of Rs 240. Most of the labouring work was on a day-to-day basis and so Azum was happy to take on the work that he found in a vegetable garden as it paid a regular, monthly wage. There were two seasons in the garden, the tomato season in the spring and the clover season during the rest of the year. In the tomato season the work started with planting and then fertilising the tomatoes. Each plant had to be fertilised individually by digging a small hole at its base, putting in the dried fish fertiliser and then covering it up. When the tomatoes ripened, Azum and the other workers would spend all afternoon picking and packing the tomatoes in wooden crates. Each day they filled up to 300 crates which then had to be carried to the store room. Early the next morning the crates of tomatoes were loaded into a lorry and the men would take them to Dubai, Sharjah or Fujairah, all several

hours away, to sell them in the markets there. Any crates that were unsold, they would bring back and take around the neighbouring villages to try to sell them there. When they returned to the garden in the afternoon, they would begin to pick tomatoes again for the next day. When one area of the garden was picked clean, they would move on to the next area that had begun ripening, and so on until the season was over.

After a few months, Azum moved from the vegetable garden to a date garden. The work there was especially hard as the date harvest came during the hottest months of the year, June and July, when the temperatures can reach 50 degrees Celsius. Azum's job was to cut the dates from the palms and then lay them out on mats to dry in the sun. The work that he hated most was collecting the dates to be packed as this had to be done in the mid afternoon when the sun was at its hottest and the dates were often covered in hornets which stung his fingers as he worked. While he worked in the garden Azum lived in a small shelter at the garden itself. As the garden was some way from the village there was no electricity connection and so no fans or air-conditioners. In the summer at night the temperature barely drops and so it was hard to even sleep. The only way to be at all comfortable was to soak the foam mattress with water and sleep on that.

In all of this time Azum's only real pleasure was to watch Hindi films at the local cafes run by Indians. The colourful, exotic films became a passion for him and each night after eating with his companions at the garden he would walk on his own for an hour to get to the nearest cafe. At the cafe he would watch the latest videos and drink maybe one or two cups of tea before walking home, arriving back at midnight or one in the morning. On one night as he was walking home he was stopped by two policemen in a patrol car who wanted to know where he was going at such a late hour and where he worked. Azum explained that he had only been watching films and was returning to the place where he worked. The policemen told him that he was mad to spend so much of his time watching such an un-Islamic thing but offered to drive him back to the garden nevertheless.

In all, in his first visit to the UAE Azum stayed for 2 years and 3 months without returning home. All of this time he did nothing but save money so that he was able to pay off the price of his visa and ticket, send home Rs 24,000, and still have money to take back with him. Azum's great dream was to be able to take enough money back with him to pay for his own marriage. Whilst working in the UAE Azum received a letter from his father telling him that the family they had chosen a suitable girl for him and that they would be married before he returned. Azum then had to send home the money that he had so carefully saved to marry a woman he had never even seen before. When he returned to Kohery he was understandably nervous about seeing his new bride. It seemed that the woman herself was even more frightened for he never had a chance to see her during the first day of his return. He had to wait until nightfall when he shared his first night with her with his own grandmother for company and protection. Azum stayed with his wife in Kohery for six months before returning to the UAE to work again.

By the early 1990s migration was an established way of life for people of Kohery in Dir District, what Gardner describes as a 'culture of migration' (Gardner 1995: 10). What is interesting about Azum Khan's story is the fact that, after three generations and over sixty years, migration has become a way of life rather than a way in which to improve life. This is in contrast with Abdul Wahid, who migrated to escape, and Abdur Rahim and Fazal Wahid, who migrated to improve their own and their family's lot. There are two aspects of the three stories I wish to consider here, the continuities in the ways in which these three migrants have represented themselves and the changes that have taken place in attitudes to migration.

Understanding the contexts of these experiences, both the work context and the home context, is an important way in which to situate the way in which the migrants use these tales. I have explored elsewhere (Watkins 2003) the ways in which migrant men use their stories to portray themselves as selfless and suffering men of faith, drawing on the work of Abu-Lughod (1986) and Grima

(1993). These men suffer and save so that their households back home can 'eat', turning savings into homes and relationships of value (Watkins 2004: 69). At the same time, these individuals and their associated households spend in a 'carefully uncontrolled' way, in order to demonstrate that there are neither misers nor greedy and overly competitive (Watkins 2004: 72-3). The tales told by migrant men from Kohery draw, then, on discourses about tradition and loyalty to tell tales about how they cope with the temptations that modernity provides in the form of money. Money is converted into things of value, homes and relations, but is done so in a way that shows a trust in God and a sense of faith (Watkins 2004: 1).

Osella and Osella (2000) provide a very similar analysis of how ideas of masculinity relate to the central role of money and its use among migrants to the Gulf states from Kerala India. They identify four categories: the *gulfan*, a figure spanning the transitional period between youth and manhood, with an emphasis on "the consumer goods bought and the expenditure while on visits home" (Osella and Osella 2000: 122); the *kallan*, who ignores social obligations and is regarded as selfish and, indeed, anti-social (Osella and Osella 2000: 126); the *pavan*, the poor man, regarded as "highly moral but highly gullible", those who are easily manipulated and less than worldly-wise (Osella and Osella 2000: 127); and, those who strike a balance between these potential pitfalls to become a householder and the ideal of a successful, social, mature man (Osella and Osella 2000: 118). Again the emphasis in the use of these categories is in achieving the latter and finding an ideal balance between the demands of consumerism and the needs of family and home.

Again, Hansen (2001) writing about Muslims in Mumbai, brings out a nuanced view of migrant narratives. He frames his argument with the idea of the 'global horizon', 'ideological fantasies' that enframe what people do and say and how they make sense of their own lives (Hansen 2001: 261). He goes on to make the point that "The experiences of migration are...words transformed or silenced, when fed into the localized economy of identities" (Hansen 2001: 262). Hansen suggests that there are three intertwined layers in the narratives he examines: a discourse on

material plenty, order and safety; the experience of migration to the Arab world constructed as a purifying act, like a permanent haj; and, stories of abuse, betrayal, deportation and beatings (Hansen 2001: 264-5). His analysis brings out the complexity of the migrant narratives, highlighting the 'contradictions, gaps and inconsistencies' in the ways such stories are constructed (Hansen 2001: 261). This is in contrast with other ethnographic work, which focuses on how stereotypical images of migrants are used, but fails to fully explore what they mean in their own context: see for example Longva (1997) on migrants in Kuwait and Gamburd (2000) on Sri Lankan women domestic servants.

A further perspective comes in the work of Ferguson (1999), who explores the way in which rural migrants in the Copperbelt of Zambia, who once enjoyed the benefits of industrial modernity, through employment in the mining industry and life in urban settlement, had to cope with the collapse of the industry and their forced return to their rural 'homes'. In the earlier period, at the height of the mining industry in Copperbelt, Ferguson suggests that "Modernization theory had become the local tongue" (Ferguson 1999: 84). What he seeks to explore is the way in which these former beneficiaries of industrialization coped with the reversals of the 1990s: "a mode of conceptualising, narrating and experiencing socioeconomic change and its encounter with a confounding process of economic decline" (Ferguson 1999: 21). He describes a growing sense of disillusionment, so that where once their expectations were of the 'progress' that modernity promises, the realities of the industry in the 1990s were accompanied by profound feelings of abjection, humiliation and betrayal (Ferguson 1999: 236, 249). Similar themes are explored with regard to the experiences of migrants in industrial centres in India (Parry 2004, De Neve 2004) and are noted by Ballard (2004) with regard to economic development funded by remittances in Mirpur, Pakistan.

The stories of Abdul Wahid, Abdur Rahim, Fazal Wahid and Azum Khan, whilst sharing similar themes, also develop over time. The initial migration out of Dir, at the time of Abdul Wahid, was

for escape from poverty and lack of opportunity. This provided the basis for the pursuit of migration within Pakistan for betterment, for migrants such as Abdur Rahim and Fazal Wahid, both in terms of individual and family opportunities, jobs and land. In the current period, for migrants like Azum Khan, migration has become a way of life, with its own 'culture of migration' and, as Ballard (2004) suggests, its own form of economic development, where individuals, families and communities have become reliant on migration in order to maintain an ordinary way of life. What I would like to suggest can be seen to be beginning to emerge is a sense of disillusionment. This disillusionment is clear among the previous generation, who do not wish their sons to suffer in the same way that they have done, as Azum's father and grandfather expressed in their rage and despair respectively. Just as importantly, disillusionment can be seen among the migrants themselves, who see no prospect of escape from a life spent away from the things that are most important to them, their families and their homes.

## NOTES

1. All of the stories were told to me in Pukhtu and were mostly recorded towards the end of my fieldwork when my spoken Pukhtu was well developed. I made notes in English at the time and then wrote a full account in English in my field notes immediately afterwards. Where I was uncertain about sections of the stories or about my translation I usually had the opportunity to go back to the storyteller to check directly with them.



PART TWO

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# Gendered Accounts



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## Honey

she doesn't get cabs often

she prefers the anonymity of the bus

but when she does  
it's usually late at night

it's parked up outside  
headlights on

the driver's seen her at the window  
so he doesn't blow the horn

she locks her door  
and walks up to the car

like most single women  
she's a bit wary of  
getting into the back of a stranger's car  
but she gets in and puts on her seatbelt

the driver slits the silence  
with a question

*kidar kay rehney vaalayho?*

then others that makes her even more nervous

*shaadee hoi vi heb?  
akaaylay rehtayho?*

they're not pick up lines  
though they could be mistaken for them

they're put down lines

lines put down like bait  
see if she bites

this is not the usual cabby  
and

she's not his usual  
pick up

this line of questioning is  
information gathering

from the slightest incline of the head  
the subtlest tone

she decides how to reply

mostly she tells the truth out of habit  
other times  
she adds a little

“yes I'm married with three kids”

“no I'm separated my husband had an affair  
with my sister so we can't ever get back together”

sometimes she feels like saying

yes I live alone

how about you?

when she's answering nearer the truth  
she gives the names of the villages  
her parents were originally from  
then hopes the driver hasn't heard of them

Pakistan's a big place  
England's a big place

but the world

is a small one

Shamshad Khan



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## CHAPTER 6

# **Kinship obligations, gender and the life course: Re-Writing Migration from Pakistan to Britain**

KAVERI HARRIS AND ALISON SHAW

## INTRODUCTION

**M**uch of the migration literature is preoccupied with what Annie Phizacklea calls a ‘phoney war’ between approaches focussed on the broad structural forces influencing international migration, or approaches focussed on the agency, motivations and understandings of individual migrants (Phizacklea 2000). One potential way to resolve the tension between structure and agency is to focus the role of on intermediary institutions, particularly households and social networks, in the migration process. The approach harks back to work in migration studies in the early 1980s, when neo-classical economists such as Stark (1984) and Cohen (1986) began to look beyond models of migration based on individual rational choice, to ones in which the family or household were recognised as the effective decision-making unit. However, although households are undoubtedly an important unit of analysis in understanding migration, such models make problematic assumptions concerning the nature of households. They assume that decisions about migration are made collectively; that the household is characterized by an ethics of solidarity and shared resources; and that migration is necessarily a reactive strategy to redress a mismatch between household consumption and locally available resources.

Empirical work on the role of households in migration has exposed important flaws in the assumptions behind the neo-classical models. It is crucial to examine the ways in which the unequal distribution of power and resources *within* households shapes the migration process. In particular, it is important to examine the hierarchies of gender and generation that organize the political economy of the household. As Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo writes of her research on Mexican migration:

Opening the household 'black box' exposes a highly charged political arena where husbands and wives and parents and children may simultaneously express and pursue divergent interests and competing agendas. How these agendas become enacted draw attention to the place of patriarchal authority in shaping migration...a household cannot think, decide or plan, but certain people in households do engage in these activities (1994: 95).

This chapter offers a critical examination of the role of the family, as an intermediate-level institution mediating between structure and agency, in migration between Pakistan and Britain. The transnational family is a constrained institution, with legally defined boundaries that have been periodically changed in relation to the socio-economic and political agendas of Britain and Pakistan. Access to migration, power and other resources is shaped by the socio-economic status of the family. In addition, we emphasise the internal hierarchies of the family, in which access to migration is distributed along gender and generational lines. Gender and generation also shape normative expectations about family roles and flows of obligation and responsibility between kin.

Our unit of analysis is the family rather than the household, primarily because the family relations of Pakistanis in Britain span transnational household units scattered across the globe. Moreover, we feel that the focus on the household or reproductive sphere underestimates the distinctive role played by the family. A concern with family relationships also draws attention to the ideological and cultural meanings embedded in families (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994). Ideologies surrounding obligations and responsibilities towards kin emerge as utterly central to the experience of migration between



Britain and Pakistan. However, in contrast with other commentators, who have examined kinship obligations in terms of the 'corporate moral structure' of South Asian families (Ballard 2004) (p. 20), we suggest that notions of obligation and reciprocity are also centrally about affective and emotional ties between kin. In doing so, we are influenced by work of anthropologists on the place of emotion in social life (Lynch 1990), particularly in the realm of kinship, where anthropologists have questioned the scope for understanding relatedness without understanding the emotions flowing through relationships (Carsten 2004).

Our perspective is longitudinal, spanning from the mid twentieth century to the present day. Our approach differs from the existing accounts in certain ways. Pakistani migration to Britain is conventionally described in terms of distinctive, if slightly overlapping 'phases'. The first of these is the **male labour migration** of the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s; the second is the **family reunion** that occurred from the mid 1960s through to the 1980s (Ballard 1996; Shaw 2000). To this can be added a third phase, that of **marriage migration**, beginning in the 1980s and continuing throughout the 1990s to the present day (Shaw 2001; Charsley 2003). Here, we suggest an additional fourth phase; **migration for family care**, entailing long or short term migrations for the care of elderly kin (Harriss and Shaw 2006).

It is important to acknowledge the many problems inherent in using the notion of phases. It implies discrete historical periods characterised by discrete concerns. In reality, migration is a process with a family dynamic that can be initiated in any historical period—especially amongst British Pakistanis, who have reproduced transnationalism within every generation so far, and developed a much greater extent of transnationalism than other South Asian communities in the UK (Ballard 1990). There is, therefore, much more diversity within and across each phase of migration than the notion of historical phases indicates.

More fundamentally, the notion of phases potentially overlooks the place of gender and generation in the migration process. The picture of the early years of migration and settlement, built largely

from men's stories, tends to omit women's perspectives, and the dynamics and tensions in family negotiations surrounding migration. The existing accounts make little explicit reference to how labour migration was, and continues to be, gendered. Likewise, the analysis of family reunion tends to treat women as appendages who simply followed their men-folk, and fails to capture women's agency in the migration process. These tendencies mirror wider deficiencies in the migration literature, where women's agency tends to be appraised primarily in terms of their involvement in labour migration (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000), with the result that women's roles in decision-making about the migration of their men-folk, family reunion and marriage migration are overlooked.

Notwithstanding these problems, the notion of phases in the migration process remains useful to summarize the main demographic characteristics of Pakistani migration to Britain. We use the notion of phases as a heuristic to navigate our material, in the sense of understanding through trial-and-error. As the phases are built around the gender and generation of the majority of the migrants, they highlight the ways in which the experiences of the minority deviate from the norm, and thus expose very sharply the centrality of these factors to migration.

Another problem with the existing literature is that it tends to view Pakistani migration from the vantage point of household formation in the UK. Pakistani family formation in the UK has been shaped by state definitions of legitimate immigrant families which have been determined by British political expediency (Jopke 1999). In the 1960s and 70s, ideas about what constitutes a legitimate immigrant family were framed by a gender ideology that saw men as household heads and women as dependent and following their husbands. The primary means for female migration was family reunification, which had the effect of disempowering female migrants and preventing their potential contributions to the labour market from being realised (Wilson 1978). In later years, controls on family immigration have shifted towards the institution of transnational marriage, and have eaten away at the rights of spouses from South Asia (Wilson 2006). State controls over the

right to family reunification have set legal boundaries around an idealised white nuclear family. However, this legislation cold-bloodedly fails to capture the meanings of family in the Pakistani context, which spread far beyond the household in the UK.

Steve Lyon identifies two conceptions of Pakistani kinship which are relevant to transnational families, each characterised by particular normative expectations and obligations (Lyon 2002). First there are the *gharwale* or co-resident kin, who are not felt to be a nuclear entity but include members of the joint family such as grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins (Lau 2000). The ideology of the joint family is one of interdependent obligations of mutual care that extend from parents to children and from adult children to their parents. Normative expectations and obligations among the *gharwale* are associated with hierarchies of gender, generation and specific kin relations. Secondly, as well as co-residence, family is also entailed by genealogy, encapsulated in the notion of the *biraderi* or extended kinship group. *Biradari* relationships are also associated with normative expectations and obligations, invoking the idiom of relatedness through blood. Members of a *biraderi* are expected to provide assistance to one another, especially where the precise relationship is known and felt to be close. Both conceptions of Pakistani kinship are significant when the family extends trans-nationally.

Links between geographically dispersed kin constitute one of the most basic processes of transnationalism; 'by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement' (Glick Schiller, Basch et al. 1992) (p. 1). Obligations and responsibilities between kin have a particular significance within transnationally-divided families. Simultaneously, the significance of family responsibilities, gender and generation, changes in several important ways in the transnational arena. Firstly, the family becomes a diffuse and largely 'imagined' entity, reproduced through symbols as well as sociality. To illustrate, Ulla Vuorela depicts a twice migrant East African Pakistani family's sense of togetherness as being as "both imagined and materialized... reproduced through correspondence, greetings and presents carried

by visitors.... anchored in photographs and objects that become talismans of home and belonging” (Vuorela 2002) (p. 76). Second, notions of who belongs to the *ghar* and to the wider *biradari* can also alter as migrants forge new links with non-relatives or develop close relationships with distant kin in the new environment (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002).

Third, and significantly, notions of obligation and responsibility may also come to be contested through exposure to different social mores and expectations in the new environment. For instance, many British Pakistanis fear that ‘Pakistani’ obligations to kin are undermined by ‘English culture’. As we seek to demonstrate, the migration process has also brought important changes in aspects of gendered power relationships, particularly within the *ghar* but sometimes with more far-reaching effects. These changes are connected to wider structural inequalities between UK and Pakistan, as Pessar and Mahler acknowledge in the notion of ‘gendered geographies of power’ (Pessar and Mahler 2001) (p. 5-9). It is nonetheless also true that, despite such change, family values are a prominent part of the ‘nostalgic memory’ (Falzon 2003) that British Pakistanis have for ‘back home’, even for the second and third generations. As Arlie Hochschild observes, migration produces distance and dislocates the family, but responsibilities in transnational families ‘do not end but bend’ (Hochschild 2000)—adapting to and being adapted in relation to new circumstances.

This chapter adds to the literature by making three related points regarding the role of the family in migration between Pakistan and Britain:

1. We show the centrality of kinship obligations within transnational migration, as a motivation, an organizing principle, and a key concern for migrants, for whom separation from kin in distant continents is a long-standing source of distress.
2. We look at how gender has influenced and continues to influence the experience and impact of migration, in dynamic and changing ways.
3. We stress the importance of position in the life course, especially in terms of marriage and ageing, in understanding the pulls of

obligation and responsibility in transnational migration. In connection with this, we emphasise the significance of migration for family care as a fourth phase of the process of Pakistani migration to Britain.

The chapter begins with a discussion of male labour migration, informed by the concepts of gender and agency. In this first section we draw on men's accounts of their experiences to highlight the continuing significance of global inequality, position in the family, gender, position in the life-course and personal agency in moulding individual experience. In the second section we turn to examine women's narratives of migration and settlement. Previous work by one of the authors, Alison Shaw, has examined women's primary concerns with maintaining family integrity and ensuring that a man continued to recognise his obligations to kin (Shaw 2000) (p. 53-8). Here, we extend this work by looking at women's negotiations within the patriarchal structures that shape their involvement in migration. In the following section on marriage migration, we delineate the significance of transnational marriages, usually involving consanguineous kin, in simultaneously reducing and re-creating distance between transnationally-divided kin, and in the re-negotiation of gendered power relations. Finally, we draw attention to the gendered and generational dynamics that characterise what we suggest constitutes an important fourth phase of migration, that of migration for the purpose of providing family care in a transnational context.

Each section is built around narratives describing how migration is negotiated within transnational families, which are presented as case studies. We present material from Alison Shaw's long-standing fieldwork with Pakistani families in Oxford since the early 1980s, which offers a longitudinal perspective on households whose composition and gender dynamics have changed, often quite dramatically, over twenty-five years. This is combined with material from Kaveri Harriss's recent doctoral fieldwork in East London on circumstances of long-term illness and care, which reveals a diverse community in which all the 'phases' of the migration process appear to coexist simultaneously. The case studies are drawn from

ethnographic fieldwork, formal and informal interviews with British Pakistani families, and with branches of their families in the Punjab and in Azad Kashmir.

## 1. MALE LABOUR MIGRATION

The initial migrants in a chain of linked family members consist mainly of single men. The bulk of early migrants from Pakistan to Britain were bachelors who came to Britain on their own or with other male kin, and were motivated largely by the promise of higher wages. The pioneer migrants were the investments of their families, sent abroad in the hope that their remittances would be used to improve landholdings, build a better house, start a business or provide a dowry. Sadiq, an early migrant from East London, makes creative use of English idiom and says that he came for “*a better bread and butter*”. These early migrants identified themselves as breadwinners, migrating to Britain to solve their families’ economic problems or raise their economic status. The centrality of breadwinner obligations to kin in Pakistan in the decision to migrate exposes a gendered dimension which has not received sufficient analytical attention in the existing literature on migration from Pakistan.

From men’s narratives, it would be easy to imagine migration as a harmonious collective decision, as indeed the household migration theories of the early 1980s assumed. However, decision-making about migration was structured by patriarchal authority. Usually the migrant was selected amongst other young male kin by senior male elders, such as fathers or uncles, whose approval and involvement was needed to sponsor and guarantee the migration. In other cases, the decision was made not collectively, by the male *gharwale* but autonomously, by individuals leaving in a hurried, unplanned manner, in spontaneous response to opportunity. Significantly, too, these decisions were often made without regard to the views of the women of the *ghar* and wider family—particularly wives, but mothers and other female relatives—who would also have to endure the emotional turmoil of separation and

subject their households to upheaval due to the absence of the migrant.

Men's opportunities for migration were thus shaped by their gendered roles as producers, and by their access to migration networks. Male networks, mostly consisting of male kin or friends from the home village or town, formed the bedrock of early migration and settlement, providing the information and contacts needed for travel, accommodation, employment and starting up business. Mohammed Anwar explains the significance of kinship obligations in employment networks in the early years in terms of a Pakistani cultural predisposition to help or obligate each other (Anwar 1979). However, a more careful analysis of labour history shows that chain employment through kin networks was an established process for recruitment in some sectors of British industry (Kalra 2000). Within male networks, the ideology and ethics of *biraderi* that motivated flows of mutual aid and reciprocity between 'brothers' enabled chain migration to develop, giving rise to the patterns of local kinship that characterise most Pakistani settlements in Britain today. As Bashir, a pioneer migrant, recalls:

*"I had a friend from my next village. He was working in Barking and he was living in Barking. So that's why I came to Barking. Otherwise if he was living somewhere in Manchester I might have ended up living in Manchester. It depends where is your friend. That's the only one known contact you have in this country."*

The interdependence and closeness forged in the struggle to establish a life in the UK engendered bonds of fictive kinship, constituting social networks forged along inseparable lines of 'kinship-cum-friendship' (Werbner 2002). Indeed, the importance of fictive kin has prompted a semantic shift in the notion of the *biraderi* in the context of migration to Britain. British Pakistanis sometimes talk of *biraderi* to refer to those people who come from their home place, regardless of their clan, caste group or notions of blood.

Over the early 1960s, concerns within the British political elite about a contracting labour market, the nation being 'swamped' by

immigrants and the 'social implications' of introducing 'other races' to the country led to the introduction of immigration controls, which were tightened throughout the 1960s and 70s (Paul 1997). Most primary immigration had stopped by 1970. However, despite immigration controls, economic migration has continued in new forms. Pakistan's sending areas have been transformed by migration, which has come to be perceived as the only viable strategy for achieving livelihood security (Ballard 2003) and a key source of empowerment and personal transformation, particularly for maturing young men, for whom the promise of becoming established independently, away from home, can curtail the period of juniority in the life-course (Lindsay 1998). The attractions of migration to Britain now produce thousands of men who, despite the restrictions on labour migration in place since the 1960s, come to the UK on temporary visits or student visas hoping to gain qualifications that will be valued in Pakistan, and if possible, to find work and settle in the UK. New migrants are called 'freshies' by those settled in the UK since the 1960s, a term that is taken as a grave insult, conveying a laughable cluelessness about life in Britain and a lack of sophistication.

Like the generations of migrants from the 1950s-70s, today's 'freshies' are also motivated by breadwinner obligations. For them, migration is about being able to 'stand on their own feet' and make an independent means of living away from Pakistan, where they feel they have no future—at least, until they can go back as successful return migrants, with qualifications, business acumen or savings. They too send money back to their parents, fiancées and wives, contribute towards the costs of their parents' health care and siblings' weddings, and thus reassure their families of their success in the UK. Unlike the earlier generation of migrants, the students tend to be educated and of higher social class, seeking to maintain rather than enhance their family status. However, their reliance on male networks reveals much continuity with earlier male migration, suggesting that overseas labour migration inherently creates predicaments in which the bonds of kinship rise to the fore, and



are actively sought out and mobilized in the struggle to establish a viable life in a new place.

There is also now a small number independent female migrants who come to the UK for work or for study. The ideology of *purdah* or female seclusion means that Pakistani women have been less involved in labour migration than women from other parts of South Asia, such as Kerala and Sri Lanka (Ballard 2004; Mooney 2006). Female labour migration is constrained by Pakistani women's limited public roles, in education and outside employment, and lower access to migration networks. We encountered a small number of single female transmigrants during the fieldwork. They were educated and skilled women, who came to the UK to study or to work in recruited public sector jobs such as nursing. Some ended up working alongside their studies in an attempt to become established in the UK and get away from Pakistan. Tellingly, however, others returned to Pakistan without completing their qualifications, missing their families unbearably. Those who stayed lived under the fear of loose talk and moral retribution from fellow Pakistanis. Female migrants dreamed of marriage to a British passport holder as a means to securing their immigration status in the UK, although they had little interaction with men and limited opportunities for encountering potential spouses. Their difficulties and vulnerable position as independent migrants illustrates how gender structures opportunities for migration (Rozario 2006).

The early decisions and trade-offs about male migration to Britain created long-lasting obligations towards those who stayed behind. Coming to Britain was a coveted opportunity and those who came were thought to have been privileged amongst their siblings and cousins, who felt they should also later be entitled to a chance to come to Britain. Thus, male migration depends on the redistribution of gendered household responsibilities within transnational families, creating feelings of indebtedness towards kin at home; which, as we will later see, have set down the lines along which later waves of migration have taken place.

## 2. FAMILY REUNION

After becoming sufficiently 'set', pioneer male labour migrants generally marry or call over their wives and children. This represents a shift in orientation towards Britain as a place of temporary residence, where they would work and earn money for their families back home, to one in which they are sufficiently rooted to settle with their wives and children.

The main wave of Pakistani family reunion took place in the 1970s. The process of family reunion began later for Pakistanis than for other immigrant populations in the UK, as a result of concerns about the moral impropriety of Britain and its unsuitability as an environment for women and impressionable young children, and occurred in the context of tightened immigration and citizenship laws. As the bulk of immigration shifted to family reunification, so the focus of immigration policy shifted to the control of secondary immigration. Until 1985, family reunification was controlled through immigration laws that cast women as dependent housekeepers. Commonwealth women living in the UK were not allowed to bring their husbands to join them or grant citizenship to their husbands. Women were not allowed to bring over dependent children unless their husband were in the UK. Dependent women accompanying their husbands in the UK were not allowed to remain independently if their husband left the country, adding to women's vulnerability (WING 1985; Jopke 1999). Thus, the British state defined legitimate citizenship in gender-biased ways (Mohanty 1991).

As a result of the immigration controls, female spouses and dependent children were some of the few remaining classes of people eligible for entry to the UK. From men's narratives, it seems that many turned to family reunion reluctantly. Patricia Jeffrey suggests that family reunion was undertaken to consolidate the numbers of working male kin in the UK by bringing over sons and nephews, thus fulfilling economic obligations towards their immediate families back home (Jeffery 1976). Other men were more positive towards the advantages of living in Britain, and called their families over so that they might enjoy the health care and

education system available (Shaw 2000). In men's accounts, wives are depicted as passive, missed and longed for in the early days, but felt to be better placed in Pakistan until they were required to follow at their husbands' bidding.

By contrast, women's accounts often stress their own agency and involvement in the decision to join their husbands in the UK; and also how power relations bound up in gender and generation constrained their opportunities for migration. Women's accounts of being left in Pakistan reveal the extent to which their wishes were secondary to those of their male kin. They stayed and worked mostly at their in-laws houses, looking after their husband's parents. Roger Ballard argues that the common practice of close kin marriage amongst Pakistanis meant that Pakistani women were already well-embedded within their networks of affinal kin in Pakistan, so put less pressure on their husbands to arrange for their wives and children to join them than, for example, exogamously-married Sikh Punjabi women (Ballard 2004). However, many women describe life at the in-laws house in the absence of a husband as unhappy and fraught with conflict. Many of the wives wished to join their husbands in the UK and get away. Many also thought that separation was bad for their marriages and for their children's upbringing. As Rabia says, "*it's no good for a man to live alone, his wife should be there to cook chapattis for him*". They also felt that their children needed a father to discipline them. Their hopes and expectations of their marriages were deeply uprooted by their husbands' migration, regardless of the positive economic and status dividends.

The early years of many women's marriages were insecure. Some of the male migrants in Britain had affairs with English women, as Alison Shaw, one of the authors, has described in earlier work (Shaw 2000). The multiplicity of connections and flows of information between kin in the two countries meant that their wives in Pakistan generally came to know about such affairs. Wives in this position feared abandonment by their migrant husbands and were dealing single-handedly with the loss of dignity deriving from their husband's philandering. The dishonour entailed by divorce,

which is often taken to signify a lack of *sabar* (endurance) and commitment to the family on behalf of the wife, meant that the women had few choices and remained committed to patriarchal reproduction.

Affairs with English women were also threatening to wider family members in Pakistan, who feared that the migrants would withdraw from their obligations to kin, cease to send money or obstruct plans for marriages to desired and promised kin. Usually, senior kin would intervene to ensure that a man's activities in Britain did not stop him from fulfilling his responsibilities to kin in Pakistan, either by arranging the marriage of a bachelor or arranging for a married man to be joined by his wife and children. Some of the single women whose marriages were arranged at this time acknowledge that their marriages were explicitly arranged to keep a check on their husband's activities. Imrana recalls her anxieties before her marriage to Ijaz:

*“When Ijaz was first here, he got into bad company and his uncle was not much better. It is not surprising really, men here on their own. And he was only 19 at the time. But soon his parents got to hear that he had an English girlfriend: at least, that’s what some people from his village were saying. His parents were very worried. They had started to build a new house with the money he had been sending back. Other people got to know too, and his parents thought that because of it they would have trouble finding a girl for him to marry. A man’s family loses respect that way you know. So his parents came from their village in Jhelum to our city and spoke to my parents...Before the marriage, women in our neighbourhood used to talk to me about what England was like. They said that there was no control. Men drank alcohol and went with women and no one bothered. They also made remarks, not directly, but I knew, about my husband’s behaviour, hinting at what sort of a man he was. I don’t know how they knew. Perhaps they were jealous that I was going to England. Anyway, it made me very frightened before the marriage and I could hardly eat for weeks before it. But I couldn’t refuse this marriage. My parents had decided and were so proud to have a daughter going to England. I couldn’t shatter their hopes.”*

(Shaw 2000) (p. 56-7)

Women's accounts thus stress their own, divergent motivations for migration: maintaining family integrity and ensuring that a man continued to recognize his obligations to his kin (Shaw 2000) (p. 53-8).

As we discussed earlier, women had fewer opportunities for migration than men. Male kin were needed to arrange a visa or send over the money for the ticket. Women were also generally excluded from the male-centred migration networks that passed on information and contacts that were ultimately centred on securing paid work in Britain. However, women's accounts reveal that they did have some room to negotiate within the patriarchal structures that shape their involvement in migration. Some succeeded, through persistent persuasion, in getting their husbands to call them over to Britain. Many women were not merely following their men-folk but actively challenging them. Other female migrants had access to women-centred networks of their own, which could be drawn upon to support migration. They turned to their own kin and close affines for help with money and arranging transport. Khadija's husband had become involved with a Russian woman in Bradford. Her daughter Nasreen's account of how they came to Britain illustrates the how women-centred networks could undermine and even subvert the authority of their husbands and other senior male kin:

*"She went through different channels...A family was coming to England by road and she found out for a short sum of money that she had earned by all those by herself. She never liked putting her hand out to anyone I think she had a lot of pride and very intelligent and very caring. So she found out there was this family coming to England by road so she asked... My mum's father had a factory, they lived behind the factory somewhere around that area. So my mum asked them to some relatives if they would help my mum come to England because my father wouldn't send us a visa or the ticket money or anything... When we came my father had a back-to-back house. He never turned up to collect us even when we were in London. Luckily my cousins in London and they had a business as well, so they tried to trace my father. They sent someone they knew and he brought my father from Bradford."*

Women's migration was also affected by obligations towards wider kin; so much so that some women fostered children from their *biraderi* and took them over to England as their own. This was largely a strategy to bring boys or young men into the country and evade the increasing restrictions on immigration after the late 1960s, but many women took on this responsibility themselves, using migration as an opportunity to fulfil obligations towards those they loved or to extend compassionate help to poorer relatives hoping to establish a link in Britain. Such transnational fostering forged relationships of close fictive kinship with children from outside the *ghar*, and cemented kinship-like relationships with friends from 'back home'. This has also contributed to the inseparability and multiplicity of bonds of 'kinship-cum-friendship' in the UK (Werbner 2002).

Thus, family reunion was not a simple process in which wives and children followed their husbands and fathers to Britain. Migration has different meanings for individual family members, and women's interests in migrating, constrained by patriarchal structures, were sometimes at odds with those of other family members. Nonetheless, women also had some space in which to negotiate the meaning and form of migration, their agency sometimes importantly supported by strong relationships with husbands and natal kin (Unnithan-Kumar 2001). In the words of Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo:

Traditionally, gender relations have facilitated men's and constrained women's migration, but this is changing. While patriarchal practices and rules in families and social networks have persisted, through migration women and men reinterpret normative standards and creatively manipulate the rules of gender (1994:96).

### 3. MARRIAGE MIGRATION

Since the 1970s, the bulk of new immigration from Pakistan has been related to young second- or third-generation British Pakistanis who marry 'back home' and bring brides or bridegrooms to join them back in Britain, particularly cousins (Shaw 2000).

Transnational marriage is one of the few remaining routes to migration from Pakistan to Britain, so it is increasingly the principle vehicle facilitating chain migration. As Roger Ballard says, it is in transnational marriage that migrants have really excelled in using 'the capacities for translocal extension embedded in their kinship networks to construct and maintain complex relationships of interpersonal reciprocity even when those involved are very rarely in face-to-face contact with one another' (Ballard 2004) (p. 5). The central role of mothers in arranging marriages for their children is another way in which women exert agency over the migration process (*ibid.*).

Since the 1970s, state controls on family immigration have increasingly shifted towards the institution of transnational marriage. Between 1980 and 1997 the right to marriage migration was controlled through the primary purpose rule, which stated that marriage should not be contracted for the purposes of economic migration. The rule presumed the existence of 'bogus' applications and put the onus on the applicant to prove that the marriage was genuine. The Immigration Rules are pervaded by 'White' cultural perspectives on marriage, in that criteria such as proof of having met and the intention and practice of living together discriminate against the migration of spouses with conventionally arranged marriages, where premarital courtship is strongly disapproved. Following criticism that the primary purpose rule was specifically designed to discourage South Asian immigration through marriage, the primary purpose rule was abolished in 1997 following the election of the Labour government. Since the abolition of the primary purpose rule, the number of husbands granted visas to Britain has increased to the point where there have been almost equal numbers of male and female migrant spouses in recent years (Home Office 2001). Nonetheless, it is still common for spousal reunion in the UK to be delayed by a matter of years whilst the couple ran the gauntlet of proving the genuineness of the marriage. Immigration law under Labour has continued to eat away at the institution of transnational marriage. The current two year rule requires immigrant fiancés/fiancées and spouses to provide evidence

of having lived together for two years to demonstrate that the marriage was not solely motivated by the desire to settle in the UK. Wives have a probationary year in which their immigration status is insecure and they are not entitled to state welfare; if the marriage fails within a year they have no right to remain in the country (Wilson 2006).

In the context of such state constraints, transnational marriage is a highly sought-after commodity in Pakistan, and families with marriage links overseas claim high status and power. It is quite common for young British Pakistanis whose parents are of rural origin, who themselves might not have excelled in the British school system, to marry into the families of educated urbanites, traversing over what might otherwise have been huge gulfs in status. Shahid poignantly described this balance of power in his story of his cousin Afzal's marriage:

*“Afzal told me when he went over there to look for a rishta (proposal), that driver of his or whatever, they just lined the daughters all up, all 15 or 16 of them all in a row. And he didn't know what to do - I mean, it was like 'Pop Idol' or something! 'Dulhan Idol' ['dulhan' means bride]. And he said he chose the shyest one, the one at the back who didn't say anything. That's how he chose his wife...Man.”*

Transmigrants themselves are very aware of the opportunities and contradictions that arise from transnational networks (Mand 2002). Kin and close friends in Pakistan can put intense pressure on British Pakistani parents to marry their children into their families. The process of arranging transnational marriages, which is shaped by transmigrant kin networks in which women play a significant role, continues to offer a means to economic migration and citizenship abroad (Mooney 2006). For British Pakistanis, transnational marriage can allow a diversification of assets by consolidating or strengthening links to properties in Pakistan as well as the UK. It can enhance the reputation of the kin group through a demonstration of solidarity (Shaw 2000). Furthermore, parents may hope that a 'simple' spouse from Pakistan will bring religion and tradition into the marriage and instil good values into



the children and otherwise 'culturally confused' British Pakistani spouse (Charsley 2003).

Marriage arrangements are often historically contingent on obligations to kin that arose during the previous generations of migration and settlement. Kin who were unable to migrate in their own generation may benefit vicariously from the marriages of their children, who are hoped to be able to generally some transnational assets on behalf of their family. Deliberations over marriage alliances can be fraught with emotional recrimination, as the competition for British *rishtas* can be intense. This is illustrated by the conflict between Umbreen and her sister Farida. Umbreen, who lives in London, wanted her son to marry Farida's daughter. However, Umbreen's son refused, and since then Umbreen has been embroiled in angry disputes both Farida and her son. Farida feels that her daughter was entitled to the marriage because of the sacrifice that Farida herself made in 1973, when her mother first came over to Britain with Farida's sisters and left Farida in the village. Umbreen recounts:

*"My sister's got a lot of bitterness in her heart for mum not bringing her over, so there was always a clash against my mum, she was always saying why did you leave me why didn't you take me, and mum hasn't really got any reason to say why because when my sister got married mum could have called her over, she could have said to the Home Office I've got a daughter back home and I want to bring her over. There's so many things that mum could have done but mum didn't do. And even when my sister got married, instead of getting her married to a Pakistani guy in Pakistan she could have found a British rishta so my sister could come to England, but even that didn't work. But at this present moment she's got three sons in England, three sons married British girls and they've come over, but she's got two daughters that are 20 and 19, and they're like waiting to get married. So if she can find any British rishtas then they'll come as well but at the moment there's nobody there for them. Everybody goes to Pakistan, chooses somebody else, nobody chooses her daughters. So she's got all that bitterness as well."*

Many commentators have stressed the authoritarian nature of decision-making surrounding marriage, describing parents as 'pig-

headed' or 'honour bound' to give *rishtas* to immediate kin (Ballard 2004). In contrast, we would emphasise the place of affective ties in shaping marriage alliances. Parents in Britain generally remain committed to bringing over kin and close friends from Pakistan. Alliances often take place between young British Pakistanis and the children of the aunts and uncles with whom their parents enjoyed a particularly close relationship. Marriages are seen as a way to further an alliance with family members who are much loved and respected. As Katherine Charsley shows, the emotional dynamics of marriage migration act as a contradictory force that simultaneously reconciles kin who were separated in the first generation of migration, yet renews the dislocation and distance within the next generation (Charsley 2003). The common practice of consanguineous marriage migration means that British Pakistani society has reproduced transnationalism within every generation so far, and that the same processes of indebtedness and long-standing vicarious reciprocation between kin are likely to continue to guide marriage migration into the future. Roger Ballard has suggested that obligations to arrange marriages among kin account for the greater extent of transnationalism amongst Pakistanis than among exogamous Punjabi Sikhs (Ballard 1990).

Marriage migration, and the ways in which the family comes to be reconstituted in Britain, have made an independent contribution to a transformation of gender relations amongst British Pakistanis. Whether a woman marries a man from UK or a man from 'back home' marks a major fault-line in gendered power after marriage. The accounts of young British Pakistani women express the hope that marrying a young man from 'back home' will carry the weighty advantage of escaping the experience of having to live with their in-laws after marriage (Gavron 1997; Dench, Gavron et al. 2006).

The institution of patri-virilocal marriage has been somewhat weakened in the migration context. The first generation of female migrants joined husbands who were working in the UK without their parents. They often say that after their initial feelings of loneliness after arriving in Britain they enjoyed having greater

control over their households than they would have done had they remained in Pakistan (Shaw 2004). This expectation of freedom from the mother-in-law's authority appears to have been passed on to their daughters. As Samina laughingly recounted:

*“His cousin wanted to marry me, which was my husband. And I kept saying no no, and I said to my mum no, I don't want to marry. Mum goes no, larka achcha hai [the boy's good], he hasn't got no family, magar uski family sab Pakistan mein hai [his whole family's in Pakistan], tum you know you'll have an easy life, koi saas nay hai, koi nand nay hai! [no mother-in-law, no sister-in-law!]”*

Gender relations are being restructured in the construction of transnational family networks. The desirability of 'first-world' citizenship in Pakistan gives British Pakistani brides additional power in the marriage, allowing them to dictate the terms and conditions of financial provisioning in the relationship, and escape from the authoritarian relationship with their mother-in-law by leaving Pakistan after the marriage and returning to Britain. However, the 'first-world' citizenship of the bride is a double-edged advantage. It can make the bride vulnerable to manipulation by crafty (*chalaak*) Pakistani nationals who seek to marry British Pakistani women only to divorce them once they acquire British citizenship (see the chapter by Charsley in this volume). Sannah's first marriage, for instance, ended in divorce after her husband acquired his British citizenship, as he started womanizing and subjecting her to domestic violence. The experience seems to have made her cautious and anxious to establish the gendered roles explicitly in her second marriage, and early on. Here, during the first pregnancy of her second marriage, Sannah talks about her plans for the future. She intends to re-mortgage her house:

*“After re-mortgage I'm planning to put it away actually. I'm going to put it away and as I've said, that's why I'm gonna make my husband work. He's going to pay me. Pay all the repayments. It's not like I haven't spoken to him about it, I've spoken to him, I've explained my situation to him and I've said at first before the wedding, before we had the ceremony I did*

*say to him I said, if you want to come to London, if it's only for a visa I can call you as a student. I can help you get to London. But I don't want you to play with my feelings. He said no. It's nothing like that. He said, to me you can come and live in Pakistan with the kids. But I did live in Pakistan for a few months and I find it quite hard there. I don't like living there. Although it's a nice country for holiday, but to live in either you have to be mega rich either but otherwise...life there is hard. I said to him no. I can't live there. Especially with the pregnancy. I started getting depressed. In my first month, it was normal, it's normal with the hormones but I was just a bit worried I thought mmm...I'm gonna have a baby, how am I gonna cope? And then it's not about coping but then if anybody said anything to me I'd feel like...why have they said this to me for? I wasn't getting along well with my mother-in-law so then I came back here and I said to my husband I'll go back, I'll make myself fresh because for some reason I'm getting depressed...I said to my husband I know you're supporting me a lot but I need my mum's help at the moment. I need because at least I can shout at my mum and scream at my mum, I said—I don't want to do that to your mum!"*

As the account suggests, gender relations are also transformed by matri-lateral kinship, which has been able to flourish in the migration context. There is evidence of a matri-lateral bias developing amongst second-generation British Pakistanis, as female kinswomen maintain stronger and closer relationships than amongst men (Werbner 2002); a pattern of kinship reminiscent of working-class East Londoners in the 1950s (Young and Willmott 1957). The emotional closeness a woman can enjoy by remaining embedded in her natal family is a source of strength and a support to agency (Unnithan-Kumar 2001). These tendencies are extended when the groom comes to live with the wife's family after marriage. The proximity of the wife's family provides structures of support that can strengthen her power in the marriage.

The support from mothers and other local female kin often extends to informal childcare arrangements, and becomes central in allowing a woman to take on or continue paid work. Education and work outside the home also play their role in changing the balance of gender relations and blurring the conventional gender divide between domestic and public roles (Shaw 2000; Werbner

2002). Many women who engage in paid work give their earnings to their parents or husbands (Bhopal 1991). However, in British Pakistani families it is very often women who control the family budget and make decisions about spending and saving. In this context, a woman's independent financial contributions can strengthen her voice in negotiating the power relationships in her family. As Fauzia Ahmad stresses, patriarchal relations in the South Asian minorities the UK are not essentialized differences, but embedded in education and the economic structures of the transmigrant communities (Ahmad 2006). Moreover, British Pakistani women's economic roles are often enabled by the emotional and practical support they receive from local matrilineal kinship.

Contrastingly, Katherine Charsley's work explores the 'culturally unusual' experience of uxori-local residence from the perspectives of the imported husbands. The imported husband resembles the *ghar damad* (house son-in-law), a figure of ridicule in South Asia, who cannot assert his authority in the marriage because of clashes with his father-in-law. In the transnational context, the *ghar damads* can be further emasculated by downward economic mobility resulting from poor English and the lack of recognition of their Pakistani qualifications and employment experience, which may result in financial dependence on their wives. The lack of nearby supportive kin networks and need to negotiate cultural differences can further heighten their dependence. Charsley calls them 'unhappy husbands' (Charsley 2003; Charsley 2005). The term *mangetar* (fiancé or groom) is a commonly used derogatory synonym for 'freshie' amongst British Pakistanis. Charsley suggests that the archetype of the 'bogus' groom who mistreats his wife after marriage, like Sannah's first husband, may arise not out of premeditated cruelty so much as out of the difficulties he may experience in adjusting to the realignment of his power and status after moving to Britain (Charsley 2005).

Gender relations in the marriages of Pakistani women who marry into the UK can be quite different. On the one hand, transnational marriage can raise the status of women in their natal

families in Pakistan. Grooming a daughter for transnational marriage can be an important part of a family's livelihood strategy, as it is often hoped that a daughter, once established in the UK, will be able to arrange for the migration of one of her brothers, thus becoming an agent of marital citizenship (Mooney 2006). However, their status in their marital homes remains to be negotiated. Young women from Pakistan often find life in Britain difficult, and being separated from kin in Pakistan is isolating. However, many of the new wives move to the familiar homes of aunts and uncles, and isolation is certainly not inevitable.

Life cycle changes are also very important influences on the experiences of women from Pakistan. Although they generally begin married life in their husband's family home, the birth of children and subsequent marriages of the husbands' younger brothers put pressure on space, and the norm is for young couples to set up independent households nearby after a few years. For young women from Pakistan, then, the expectation of living independently of a mother-in-law may be one of the attractions of marrying in England (Shaw 2004).

Although women from Pakistan engage less in paid work than women brought up in the UK, this is not always the case. Many of the new wives from Pakistan are college-educated urbanites with skills that are readily usable in the formal British labour market. As for British Pakistani women, their entry to and continued paid work may depend on childcare provision by their in-laws—or their own mothers from Pakistan, who may make protracted visits. Other women take on significant roles in family businesses or in the informal economy of childcare, dressmaking, preparing *samosas* and *pakorras* and selling services in eyebrow threading, bridal makeup and *mehndi*. Within two years of living in London Zahida had built up a clientele of more than ten local children who came to learn Quran at her house, and was earning over £100 a week. Her brother-in-law appraised: “*not bad a for a freshie woman!*”

In securing, consolidating and reproducing transnationalism, family forms and practices are changing innovatively, and gender relations in family and community are responding dynamically.

Thus gendered power is being reworked in the process of establishing transnational family networks. Interestingly, other commentators have concentrated on processes of deepening patriarchy in transmigrant families, describing how the pressure on women to conform to gender roles intensifies. Women are felt to embody the 'traditional' values and identity of a transnational ethnic minority in counterpoint to the other, dominant culture (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1992; Yuval-Davis and Werbner 1999). By contrast, we suggest that migration can also engender changing and rising status of women in transnational settings.

#### 4. TRANSNATIONAL FAMILY CARE

Today, the pioneer men and women who arrived in the 1960s and 1970s are growing old, and their parents in Pakistan are very old indeed (Rendall and Ball 2004). As migrants progress through the lifecycle, the need to provide for one's elderly parents at late middle age can reawaken a migrant's sense of family responsibilities and relationships and provoke a shift in orientation towards the two countries (Izuhara and Shibata 2002). Furthermore, chronic illnesses and disabilities are more prevalent among British Pakistanis compared to the general population of the UK (Nazroo 1997; Davey Smith, Charturvedi et al. 2000). Obligations for family care are therefore common in branches of the family both in the UK and in Pakistan. Elders are felt to have entitlements and claims to care from their family members, even those who are separated and living on other continents. When there is a need to care for a family member in Pakistan or in the UK, British Pakistanis strive to bring the family together in one place.

The transnational context introduces difficult additional concerns to the matter of meeting obligations to elderly or long-term sick kin. Migrant families must negotiate legal and socio-economic barriers. Transnational travel implies costs. Transmigrants with elderly or long-term sick kin in Pakistan make trips back to Pakistan as frequently as money and time allow, making emergency visits to deal with health crises and spending up to several months looking after their relatives at home.

Concern about the long-term welfare of relatives in Pakistan and worries about the costs involved in frequent transnational travel may motivate British Pakistanis to try and call the elderly or sick person over to the UK as a more permanent solution to the need for care. However, transmigrants who try to bring elderly or ailing relative to the UK face formidable legal barriers in doing so. The right to a family life is guaranteed by the European Convention of Human Rights. However, there are potential contradictions between a receiving state's definitions of a legitimate immigrant family and transmigrants' normatively-shaped sense of responsibility to extend care to relatives, especially to vulnerable kin (Harriss and Shaw 2006). The British state defines a limited set of kin who are eligible for indefinite entry: dependent children under 18, spouses and elderly parents over the age of 65. Other adult relatives, excluding nieces and nephews, might be permitted entry under 'exceptional compassionate circumstances', provided that they can prove genuine dependence on their sponsor (UK Visas 2004). However, these are vetted by pragmatic considerations on behalf of the Home Office. As Ali recounts:

*"As a child my mum tried to get my grandma to come over because I was registered blind. At that time the Home Office made a big hoo-ha about it, a 50 year old woman coming over, how would she be able to give support? She herself is old—and she might have a family in Pakistan to look after, they need to be sure that the whole family isn't going to try and come over."*

Obligations to elderly and sick kin in Pakistan may sometimes pull a migrant back from Britain even when they were settled there. Such situations can give rise to irresolvable conflict and mutual unhappiness about unfulfilled obligations. Tahir's grandparents moved back to Pakistan to enjoy their retirement, and are now in need of care. However, he, like the other men in his family, is unwilling to move to Pakistan to do so. His father had moved to the USA and was settled with his own business there. As the eldest male grandchild, Tahir's grandparents are anxious that he, in particular, should return to Pakistan to look after them:



*“I’ve sometimes like wondered like why it’s expected of me, why it’s always the older son, why isn’t it expected of him to go back and look after them and be with them? So in that sense with my dad that kind of issue has cropped up in my mind with my dad...but I’ve never really discussed it with him—I certainly never did when I was over there. But I know that he doesn’t want to live there and he’s made it clear to them, and he always has done like I’m over here now, this is where I am now. If you want me to look after you then come and live here in the US but neither Abaji nor Ammiji [his grandparents] want to do that. So in a sense I can understand why it isn’t expected of him because that option’s ruled out in a sense, they you know, they were expecting him to come and look after him and they tried it and it didn’t work out so...now that option is ruled out so that’s why he’s not expected any more. It’s now me because I never ruled that out for myself for Abaji and Ammiji, I never actually said I’m not coming back, I’m settling in the UK now. That’s the kind of situation.”*

Decision-making about family care reveals strong normative expectations around the obligations to specific kin within transnational families. As in Tahir’s case, the structures of power in the family, organized around gender and generation, mean that the views of elders can be given priority in decision-making about migration, even when this goes against the economic interests of settling family members in the UK. Thus, transnational Pakistani families are not simply like corporations, moving between countries in response to perceptions of comparative advantage. Notions of obligation and responsibility to kin have an affective force, and a power of their own.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the long-standing debate surrounding the relative importance of structural factors influencing migration and the agency, motivations and understandings of individual migrants, intermediary institutions such as households and social networks, in which structure and agency interlock, can provide a valuable focus. Here we have sought to demonstrate that the family is undoubtedly an important unit of analysis in understanding migration, in terms of both its ideologies and its practices. However, it is also essential to examine how the hierarchies of gender and generation which

organize the internal political economy of the household and shape access to migration.

The centrality of kin in the networks of Pakistani migrants is widely appreciated within existing accounts of migration between Pakistan and Britain (Anwar 1979; Shaw 2000; Werbner 2002). Here, we have extended such work by giving sustained analytical attention to the ways in which the unequal distribution of power and resources within the family shapes the migration process. Our concern in doing so is to acknowledge women's concerns with maintaining family integrity and ensuring that a man continued to recognise his obligations to his kin (Shaw 2000) and, furthermore, to consider "not only the separate spheres of women's and men's immigrant networks and cross-gender ties, but also the dynamics of gendered activities and relations within the networks" (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994) (p. 8).

In examining how women negotiate within the patriarchal structures that shape their involvement in migration, we have tried to avoid the pitfalls of essentializing relations of patriarchy (Ahmad 2006). We have looked at the varied social realities of gender relations within the family and sought to locate the changing dynamics of gender relationships within the political constraints on transmigrant families and the socio-economic structures of transmigrant communities. Much of the feminist migration literature looks at changing gender roles amongst transmigrants in relation to the cultural influences of the receiving country, thus essentializing and privileging the 'first-world' as the only site for women's emancipation (Pessar and Mahler 2001). In contrast, we suggest that it is important to appreciate the independent role that migration, as it is regulated by the state, can play in restructuring gender relations.

Finally, while existing research on contemporary patterns of migration between Pakistan and Britain has focussed on marriage migration, we consider that the ageing of the Pakistani population in Britain also has appreciable significance for the migration process (Harriss and Shaw 2006). Today, short-term and longer-term

migration is often motivated by concerns with providing care for elderly family members. Moreover, this issue is unlikely to be limited to the present generation of elderly, as transnational marriage recreates distance between transnationally-divided kin, whilst simultaneously closing it, within each generation.

It is against this background that “the continued tightening of immigration controls strikes at the very roots of British Pakistanis’ deepest loyalties: to close kinsmen, dependents, and in relation to unquestionable family obligations” and “the controls deny axiomatic rights to marry by personal choice, to employ kinsmen in family businesses, to bring over brothers or married children”. To this, we would add that they also seriously constrain entitlements to and the provision of family across the transnational arena. It is not surprising, therefore, that “the restrictions on immigration are thus perceived as being fundamentally inhuman—and therefore unquestionably racist” (Werbner 2002) (p. 6).

## CHAPTER 7

# Risk and Ritual: The Protection of British Pakistani Women in Transnational Marriage

KATHARINE CHARSELEY

*With increasing numbers of Pakistani nationals entering Britain as the spouses of British Pakistanis, concern has been voiced over the risks faced by British Pakistani women entering into such marriages. This article takes the issue of risk as a central explanatory factor in examining the effects of transnationalism on Pakistani marriage ceremonies. The involvement of marriages in multiple legal systems, together with the individual circumstances of geographically divided kin groups, may lead to additions or adaptations to wedding practices. The focus on risk, however, illuminates a novel strategy employed by some British Pakistani families to reduce the risks to young women marrying Pakistani nationals: the delaying of the couple's cohabitation until after the husband's successful migration. The challenge for state intervention in the regulation of risks to its citizens through immigration policy is to keep pace with these changing phenomena.*

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the number of British Pakistanis marrying Pakistani nationals has increased, and the majority of British Pakistanis now probably marry transnationally in this way. For many Pakistanis, marriage is one of very few routes for migration to the UK still possible under the current immigration regulations (Shaw 2001).<sup>1</sup> Until the last few years, most marriage migrants from Pakistan were female; 1997, however, saw the abolition of the Primary Purpose Rule, which had required spouses to prove that their principal motivation for entering into the marriage was not

to gain entry to Britain, and which had been seen as targeted at reducing South Asian immigration (Menski 1999). As a consequence of this change in regulations, the numbers of men entering Britain on spousal visas have increased. At first this was largely as a result of re-applications from those previously rejected (Home Office 2001), but this rise has been sustained. Women for whom marriages are arranged with Pakistani nationals are thought by both commentators and my informants to be vulnerable to two types of risk: that the visa application will be rejected, leaving the bride as an 'immigration widow' (Menski 2002); or that the marriage will be deemed, in the terminology used by the recent White Paper on immigration, 'bogus' (Home Office 2002). 'Bogus' marriages are 'ones in which men from South Asia trick local [British] Asian families into allowing them to marry their daughters, only to divorce them immediately they acquire British citizenship so that they can bring their real wives and children to Britain' (Werbner 2002: 3).<sup>2</sup> This article argues that one response to these risks can be found in changing marriage practices that allow the couple's cohabitation to be delayed until after migration.

The recent, largely sociological, literature on risk grew out of concerns over the dangers to human health and the environment presented by new technologies (Krimmsley and Golding 1992), and risk has been treated by some theorists as a distinctive feature of late modernity (Beck 1992; Giddens 1991). Whilst the topic has most often been dealt with at this macro level, anthropological framings of risk may be more useful in understanding the small-scale, often 'interpersonal' (Lupton 1999: 14) calculation and management of risk involved in transnational marriage. Fundamental to the anthropological contribution to this field is the need to situate risks in their socio-cultural environment (Caplan 2000; Douglas 1992; Douglas and Wildavsky 1983).

This paper draws on ethnographic research carried out with people of predominantly Punjabi backgrounds. Fieldwork took place in the Pakistani Punjab and in the English city of Bristol. This involved 18 months of participant observation with families and community groups, and at wedding celebrations, plus more

than 30 semi-structured interviews conducted in Bristol with participants in this type of marriage. As is common among South Asian Muslims, the majority of these marriages were between first or second cousins, or more distant relatives. Although most academic discussions of such marriage arrangements have emphasised the strategic motivations for the families involved—as a means to continue the migration of kin, to fulfill obligations to relatives, or to demonstrate kin group solidarity (Ballard 1987; Shaw 2000: 147–58; 2001)—this research revealed the role of risk in helping to shape marital choices.

For Pakistanis, arranging a marriage is understood to be a risky process, with the dangers that potential spouses' flaws may be concealed, proposals may be rejected, or daughters mistreated. As noted above, transnational marriage serves to introduce new risks for the British brides. Migrants might be thought of as positively disposed towards taking risk (cf. Gardner 1995: 262–3), but transnational marriage can also be seen as a way of avoiding the perceived dangers of selecting a spouse raised in the West. Several informants suggested that the 'British-born' may be more likely to neglect religious knowledge or practice, to indulge in 'immoral' activities, or to exhibit a lack of commitment to marriage and the family—in contrast to the more traditional, religious, hardworking or family-oriented spouse that they hoped might be obtained in Pakistan (see Constable 2005 on such 'gendered imaginings' in transnational 'marriage-scapes'). Elsewhere I have suggested that the current popularity of marriage between trusted close relatives is at least in part a reaction to the various risks involved in selecting suitable spouses, as well as helping to strengthen connections between kin divided by migration (Charsley 2003; 2005a).<sup>3</sup> Here, I argue that wedding rituals, already somewhat flexible, and sometimes multiplied or adapted in response to legal aspects of the transnational context, may also be modified in an attempt to protect the conceptually vulnerable British women marrying Pakistani men.

## PAKISTANI WEDDINGS

I start with an idealised portrayal of a 'typical' Pakistani Punjabi wedding. Marriage customs vary (see Charsley 2003), but this outline of some common features of weddings in which both spouses are resident in Pakistan will form a backdrop to the developments presented in the remainder of the paper. Pakistani weddings tend to be lengthy affairs consisting of a variety of events spread over several days. These usually include three main festivities held on separate (conventionally subsequent) days: the pre-wedding *menhdi*, the *barat* (fêting of the groom's party), and the *walima* celebration given by the groom's family.

*Menhdi* translates literally as henna, which is used to decorate the bride's hands and feet in preparation for her marriage, but is also the name for the most popular of the pre-wedding festivities. More than the other days of a wedding, the *menhdi* is eagerly anticipated as an occasion for women to gather, play the *dholki* (a small drum), dance and sing. Women from the other 'side' (i.e. the groom or bride's relatives, although in close kin marriage this division can be somewhat artificial for some mutual relatives) come to the celebration bringing decorated trays of *menhdi*, and the singing and dancing can become quite competitive, with songs that ridicule the groom and his family, and the bride and groom's sisters striving to perform the best dances. The bride takes no part in the festivities, but sits with her head modestly covered and bowed, whilst guests hand-feed her sweets and place money and small lumps of henna and gifts of money on her outstretched palm.

On the *barat* day, the groom's party (*barat*) arrives at the bride's home or wedding hall. If the *nikah-namah* (the Islamic marriage contract) has not already been signed, the bride and groom will sign it separately, before being seated together as man and wife for the first time. The bride is elaborately dressed and wears the gold jewellery given to her by both her natal family and new in-laws. Both families and guests wear their finest clothes. After the giving of more gifts of money, and much photography, a meal is normally served. Legislation designed to curb expenditure on weddings has banned the serving of food at marriages in Pakistan, but this is

widely ignored. The final ritual of the *barat* day is the *rukhsati*, or leave-taking, a conventionally tearful moment when the bride leaves her natal family to go with her husband to her new home. The following day, it is the groom's family's turn to host a function, the *walima*, to celebrate the arrival of the bride in her husband's household. This time the bride's relatives arrive to greet the newly-married woman, and are also served a meal.

As an alternative to this format, the *nikah-namah* is sometimes signed on a separate occasion, often known simply as the *nikah*, which may be days, weeks, or even years prior to the *barat*. Such variations are discussed in greater detail below, but are mentioned here in order to illustrate the flexibility in Pakistani marriage ceremonies, which lies at the core of their potential for adaptation in the transnational context. In the sections which follow, I shall argue that the impact of transnationalism on marriage practices is two-fold: marriages become involved in the legal systems of two countries and may be adapted to fit the constraints and opportunities presented by this type of legal pluralism; and the potential flexibility of wedding rituals is exploited and expanded in innovative ways to manage the risks engendered by the introduction of international migration into the negotiations of marriage.

## THE TRANSNATIONAL LEGAL CONTEXT AND THE MULTIPLICATION OF MARRIAGE RITUALS

When the *nikah-namah* is signed in Pakistan, it is recognised as a legal marriage by the British immigration system, but when carried out in Britain the *nikah* alone does not fulfil British marriage requirements.<sup>4</sup> So if a couple marry in England, they will usually have a civil ceremony so that their marriage is legally registered in the UK. Yilmaz (2002) has recently drawn attention to the existence of this variety of legal pluralism for Muslims in England, where marriage, divorce and polygamy are dealt with very differently by Muslim and English law.<sup>5</sup> 'Muslim law,' Yilmaz writes, 'is still superior and dominant over English law in the Muslim mind and in the eyes of the Muslim community; and many



Muslim individuals follow Muslim law by employing several strategies in England' (2002: 343).

This is an example of what has been called 'new' rather than 'classic' legal pluralism (Merry 1988). Whereas 'classic' legal pluralism refers to colonial and post-colonial contexts in which foreign law was superimposed on pre-existing indigenous practices, the 'new' legal pluralism 'pertains to the existence of plural normative orders within modern, Western societies in particular' (Fuller 1994: 10). Transnational processes, writes Merry, 'shape local legal situations in a variety of ways':

Colonialism pulled entire legal systems across national borders and imposed them on very different sociocultural systems. Pockets of formerly autonomous indigenous peoples have become incorporated within nation-states as a result of European expansion... The processes of nation-state formation have produced multi-ethnic societies in which local groups struggle to maintain autonomous legal systems while national interests endeavour to unify and standardise these diverse systems. Some nations have voluntarily imported entire law codes of legal procedures from other nations and applied them to culturally different communities. Innovations in policing, judging, punishing and settling disputes have been borrowed among postcolonial nations and former colonizers. International institutions and regulations exercise an increasingly important influence over local legal orders (Merry 1992: 357–8).

Transnational migration, however, produces a further type of legal pluralism, as marriages become involved in the legal institutions of two countries. Islam permits polygyny, for example, with a man allowed to have up to four wives.<sup>6</sup> In Pakistan, second marriages require court permission, taking the views of the existing wife into account. However, marriages that occur without this permission are still considered legally valid (Yamani 1998: 156), providing a loop-hole that allows men to remarry without their first wife's consent or even knowledge. During fieldwork I encountered several examples of polygyny in the older generations, where it seems to have been not uncommon practice for an immigrant man to have one wife in Britain, and another in Pakistan.<sup>7</sup> British

immigration regulations permit only one wife to be resident in the country; one young woman I met in Pakistan finally obtained her visa to come to the UK after ten years of marriage, as her husband did not apply for her to join him until his first marriage ended in divorce. Even within Britain, however, the duality of Muslim and English law can be manipulated to allow a man to have more than one wife resident in the UK: in rare instances, a man has married one woman by *nikah* only in Britain, and another either in a British civil marriage, or in a Pakistan ceremony later recognised by UK immigration (cf. Shaw 1988: 57; Yilmaz 2002).

The concept of legal pluralism has been criticised on the grounds that 'it merely reminds us that from the legal perspective (as from any other) isolated, homogenous societies do not actually exist'; and that it risks blinkering the researcher, 'reproducing law-centred misconstructions' (Fuller 2002: 10). In the British Pakistani context, it is true that such a perspective tends to privilege these religious and legal marriages over the 'common-law' unions that some Pakistanis form, particularly with non-Pakistani and non-Muslim partners. Nevertheless, such a privileging is common amongst British Pakistanis themselves—marriages not solemnised by *nikah* may not be recognised by the community in Bristol and are often subject to disapproval. For the purposes of this discussion, the concept is also useful in that it draws attention to the issue of legislation, a matter of crucial importance in the negotiation of immigration, and one that will be revisited in the closing discussion.

The plural legal system can be employed to circumvent the problems of the immigration system in another way. Current Home Office regulations allow for a transfer of visa category from study or visit to spousal settlement—so that students or visitors who marry UK nationals may be granted the right to remain in Britain without the need to return to their country of origin and apply for a spousal visa. The recent White Paper on immigration proposed disallowing such 'swapping' (Home Office 2002) but, at the time of writing, no such changes have yet been made. So Rasham from Bristol, for example, who is now in her 30s with teenage children,

married her husband while he was in Britain as a visitor. They had two weddings—a quick registry office marriage before his visa expired, allowing him to stay in the country, and the ‘proper’ Pakistani wedding a few months later.

In another case, Uzma’s family had been advised that the simplest and quickest route to secure their daughter’s fiancé’s immigration status was to hold a civil marriage while he was studying in Britain. Early on in the year of Nadir’s study in Bristol, their grandfather visited from Pakistan, and Uzma’s mother decided this would be the perfect time to hold the official engagement party. During another visit by the grandfather (this time visiting a seriously ill relative), the family considered staging the *nikah* while he was there to enjoy it. These plans were shelved, however, when a friend of the family died, making festivities inappropriate. They decided to stick to the earlier plans of having a joint *nikah* and civil ceremony, with a large function for their relatives in England. The couple’s marriage would finally be completed, and the couple would cohabit for the first time, in a full three-day affair in Pakistan to celebrate in style with Nadir’s family and other relatives there. In the event, however, the illness of another family member prevented travel, and the *rukhsati* and *walima* were held in Bristol, six months after the *nikah* and civil marriage. A few months later, when Uzma and Nadir visited Pakistan to attend Nadir’s sister’s wedding, they planned to hold a party to celebrate the union with relatives in Pakistan, although the wedding was theoretically complete as the *walima* had taken place in Bristol.

This example demonstrates the many interacting factors—cultural, geographical, legal, political, financial and emotional—that can result in the multiplication of the ceremonies of marrying. The opportunities and requirements of the pluralistic legal situation form only a part of this complex picture. The transnational character of these families means that visits can be such rare occasions that important life events that cause a gathering of kin may be scheduled to coincide with them. The ability to hold the religious marriage as a separate function increases such possibilities. Legal pluralism creates another opportunity for division because a

separate civil ceremony can be held, and current immigration policies provide an incentive for such ‘paper’ marriages. Finally, a wedding in Pakistan presents opportunities to celebrate in much greater style than would be possible in Britain, given the favourable exchange rate and the availability of wedding venues, goods and services. It is also a chance for parents who migrated to the UK several decades ago to mark this important life event—the marriage of their child—with the siblings and other relatives they left behind. Where the main events of the marriage are held in Pakistan, a function may also take place in Britain to celebrate the arrival of the bride or groom with friends and family here.

### THE DIVISIBLE WEDDING

The addition of the British civil ceremony represents a multiplication of the rites of marrying, whilst holding a separate *nikah* is a dividing-up of the conventional Pakistani wedding celebration. Over the course of the research, it became apparent that the normal way in which Pakistani marriages are described, namely as consisting of the *menhdi*, *barat* and *walima*—which may be reflected in the titles of three different cards within a wedding invitation—did not really reflect the most important elements of marrying. Some rituals that occur during these days came to appear more essential than others, and some were occasionally dispensed with altogether.

Some do not hold a *menhdi* as they consider singing and dancing un-Islamic. The *walima*, on the other hand, is a religiously-prescribed event. Nevertheless, I have come across occasional cases where no *walima* was held. The *barat* day is in any case generally the most extravagant, in keeping with the general pattern across much of North India and Pakistan for the woman’s side to spend more on a marriage. Nabila, however, was sent off from Pakistan as a fiancéé, and had a simple *nikah* ceremony at her husband’s home in Bristol, so missing out on the *barat* altogether. Photographs from the family celebration in Pakistan nevertheless show the conventional *rukhsati* leave-taking scene being enacted, although there was no husband waiting in a car to take her away.

It seems that the two elements of the wedding that always occur are the *nikah* and the *rukhsati*. It is of course hardly surprising that the *nikah* is indispensable, as without this the marriage would not be recognised as legitimate by members of the religious community. *Rukhsati*, meanwhile, refers to the final ritual of the wedding day when the bride is sent off to her new home, accompanied by lamentation and weeping by her female relatives. It is also understood, however, to have the more general meaning of leaving the parental home to cohabit with the husband, and implies the consummation of the marriage. As such it is an equally inevitable element of being wed—where the *nikah* is the contract which establishes the union as legitimate, *rukhsati* is the practical act of marriage that transforms the virgin bride into a wife.<sup>8</sup> This double meaning of the term *rukhsati* was reflected in occasional confusion in talking about the issue. Jamilah for example, said there was no *rukhsati* at her wedding, while her husband said there was. She explained:

This is what happened. We went home together and we had dinner... And then he went to his house [and] I went to mine. So it was like a *rukhsati*, but not a complete... We went home together, but we did not actually, if you know what I mean. And then I went home. He stayed for about a week...not even a week—a couple of days. We arranged for him to stay at a family member's house.

In this case it seems that the dual meanings of *rukhsati* have been reified by temporal separation—the ceremony of leave-taking and joining the husband was performed, but the consummation of the marriage took place at a later date. Although the sequence of the marriage ceremonies is somewhat different, this can be compared to Nabila's case in which the *rukhsati* conventions were enacted when she left her parents in Pakistan, but the couple did not cohabit until after her *nikah* in Bristol.

The *nikah* and *rukhsati* can thus be separated and held on different occasions, sometimes with many months or years intervening. The reasons for doing so are diverse, as we shall see, but for current purposes, the phenomenon can be separated into

two categories: the 'separate *nikah*' and the 'delayed *rukhsati*'. In the former case, a smaller function is held for the *nikah* some time before the marriage celebration proper. In the latter, the normal wedding is held, with the arrival of the *barat* and the signing of the *nikah*, but the 'complete' *rukhsati*, in Jamilah's terms, does not take place. The bride may, like Jamilah, initially depart with the groom, or the conventional *rukhsati* scene may be staged for the cameras, but the bride will not accompany the groom to spend the night with him and consummate the marriage.

### THE SEPARATE NIKAH

This practice of holding the *nikah* several months or even years before the rest of the wedding exists in Pakistan as well as amongst Pakistanis in Britain—one woman in Pakistan went so far as to say that the *nikah* was really a 'strong engagement'—the couple were not really married yet, but it would be unusual for the match to be dissolved once the *nikah-namah* had been signed. Others would object to the term 'engagement' as it undermines the importance of the *nikah* as the religious marriage. Women in Bristol provided a variety of reasons why the *nikah* might be held separately. If the families were not well-known to each other, this time might allow them to make sure that the *rishta* (match/proposal) was indeed suitable. Families might want to finalise the match before the couple were ready to marry—they might still be studying, the groom might wish to establish his career, or the families might need time to save for the wedding. In addition, one woman told me, families might push for an early *nikah* if they feared that the groom might change his mind later on. In one case, a young woman who had to return to her job in Bristol simply did not have time for the full wedding.<sup>9</sup> The holding of Uzma's *nikah* as a social event for the benefit of a visiting relative was an echo of the *nikah* of her aunt two decades earlier in Pakistan during the visit of an uncle from Britain.

As a religious marriage, the *nikah* also has a legitimating effect. As such, an early *nikah* can permit behaviour that might otherwise provoke disapproval. If a couple are already religiously wed, for

example, they may sit side by side at a joint *menhdi* celebration. Sonam's *nikah* to her British cousin was carried out so that scandal would not result when she travelled abroad to study with another, theoretically marriageable, male relative. In Bristol, one couple took advantage of the freedom provided by this state of being religiously but not practically married by going out unchaperoned on shopping trips to buy jewellery during the year in which they were '*nikah*-ed' but not living together, overcoming the traditional prohibition on contact between engaged couples. There was another reason that this couple had their wedding so long after their *nikah*, however, and here we return to the issue of legal pluralism raised above. They could not have their civil marriage, or publicly celebrate their union, until the groom's divorce from his first wife had been finalised, so they chose to solemnise their relationship initially through the religious marriage contract.

A separate *nikah* may therefore be held for a number of reasons: to secure the *rishta*, as an excuse for a celebration that gathers kin together, to circumvent the British legal or immigration systems, to legitimate behaviour, or to buy time.

### THE DELAYED RUKHSATI

While the separate *nikah* seems to be an accepted tradition in Pakistan, this research uncovered a remarkable number of transnational marriages in which the *rukhsati* was delayed, so that the marriage would remain unconsummated until the Pakistani spouse arrived in Britain. I did not hear of this situation in Pakistan when international migration was not involved. Moreover, among those I interviewed, this arrangement was more common where a British bride was marrying a Pakistani groom, than vice versa.

Where motivations for holding the *nikah* separately show wide variation, those for delaying *rukhsati* were remarkably consistent, centring round a desire to protect against future difficulties and distress. The stories of two sisters, Nasreen and Rubina, help to explain why delaying the *rukhsati* may be attractive to the families of British Pakistani women. Nasreen and Rubina did not have their *rukhsatis* when they were married in Pakistan.

*Rubina*: Basically my parents—they've seen it a lot that people go to Pakistan, they have the wedding—full, full wedding—they have a wedding night together and everything, the bride gets pregnant and the husband doesn't get a visa. So she's here and she's a single parent and everything. So my parents wanted to avoid all of that.

*Nasreen*: The *rukhsati* means, obviously, spending the night together. Everybody was worried—like we don't really want babies and things involved if we're trying to get you over [i.e. during the visa application process]. And we knew it was going to be complicated for me because...I wasn't working....Me and my mum and dad all sort of thought that it was a better thing to do. I don't know really—I guess if you become heavily physically involved with someone, it's not necessarily the right thing to do I suppose—to not see them for months and months in that same situation. Maybe it's not mentally healthy or something.

Although acceptance rates for spousal visa applications have risen, I have indeed heard of cases of 'immigration widows' whose husbands' visa applications were refused, but who have conceived children on visits to Pakistan. The risk of rejection may help to explain why *rukhsati* is more often delayed for British women. Not only is the risk run by women higher than that for men—as the plight of an effectively single mother is unenviable—but there is considered to be a greater risk of husbands being refused visas than for wives, as men are under greater suspicion of being motivated by economic migration.

Moreover, as Nasreen suggests, prolonged separation due to immigration procedures might be difficult after embarking on a physical relationship. Pakistanis believe sexuality to be a powerful force—a common justification for *purdah* practices is that an unrelated man and woman left alone together would be unable to resist each other. Whilst this temptation towards illicit sex is seen as wicked, regular sex within marriage is considered healthy, and the separation of husband and wife thought difficult for both (cf. Das 1994).



The two young womens' cousin is Jamilah, quoted earlier talking about her delayed *rukhsati*. She added another matter in which her father sought to protect her:

...because my father had doubts in his mind that what if he never got to England, the visa was rejected, and then he still wanted me to be 'pure'. I'm the only daughter you see, so my dad's very protective of me.

If a husband's application to enter Britain is rejected, not only will the fact that the marriage is unconsummated protect against the dangers of children born without a resident father, and emotional attachments generated and then severed, but the young woman will have remained a virgin. As such, not only should it theoretically be simpler for her to obtain a divorce, but it may also be easier for her to remarry. Jamilah's father is thus reducing that which the family stands to lose in the risks of transnational marriage and negotiating the immigration system.

Of course, parents in Pakistan may also have similar concerns for their daughters who are marrying British men. As already noted, however, it is considered easier to bring wives from Pakistan than husbands. Moreover, it may be that the British side, with its promise of a better life, holds greater sway in the negotiations over such matters. When Talib from Bristol married Zahida from Pakistan, his mother clearly recognised that the consummation of the marriage might cause her new daughter-in-law problems, but avoided shouldering responsibility by employing the common discourse of fate:

Well people do—they don't consummate the marriage because they have other plans...but we said, 'They're married and why shouldn't they? It's now their destiny how quickly she gets here....It's their right and why should we get in the way?'

## FEARS FOR BRITISH PAKISTANI WOMEN

Even if a husband's visa application is successful, there are other fears for British Pakistani women marrying men from Pakistan. For Nasreen and Rubina it seems that delaying the *rukhsati* was also intended to protect against these additional dangers. The family decided to bring the young men, who are friends, over one at a time, with Nasreen's husband first. When the marriage failed, and her husband was repatriated within a few weeks of arriving, the family decided not risk bringing Rubina's husband to Britain at all and sought a divorce.

The assertion that the main reason for separating the *nikah* and *rukhsati* was to reduce the various risks to Nasreen and Rubina, is supported by the contrast with their sister Asma's wedding. Although the family took care that all three functions were identical in all other respects, Asma's *rukhsati* took place on the day of her marriage. This difference can be explained by the divergent degrees of danger perceived in these matches. Asma's husband is her mother's sister's son, a much closer relative than either of the other two men. He also has professional qualifications, while the others were poor and relatively uneducated. This educated 'boy' from a familiar family was far less risky than the two lesser-known quantities. The family could thus feel much more confident in allowing Asma's marriage to be completed by cohabitation.

The Home Office's concern, formerly expressed in the Primary Purpose Rule, that marriages should not be contracted simply for the opportunity for economic migration, is shared by many young British Pakistani women. For Pakistanis, however, whilst it is by no means the only consideration involved, connections to wealth and opportunity are often an accepted and intrinsic part of the search for a spouse. Accordingly, young British Pakistani women may be realistic about the economic aspect to their marriages, so when Shareen was deciding whether to marry in Britain or Pakistan, she thought: 'I may as well give somebody an opportunity from there [rather] than somebody that's already here—d'you know?'

Nevertheless, the potential or perceived gains from such marriages are such that they may undermine confidence in the

Pakistani husband's commitment to the marital relationship. Most serious is what the immigration regulations term the intention to 'live permanently with the other as his or her spouse'—in this case, the husband's intention to stay with his wife once he has gained the right to remain in Britain. A few husbands in Bristol have deserted their wives—either having gained 'permanent right to remain' after a year, or (and my impression is more commonly) having waited until they 'get their British passport' (i.e. are granted British citizenship) after at least three years. In some cases, once the husband's position in Britain is secure, he has contracted a second marriage in Pakistan.<sup>10</sup> The possibility of being deserted, perhaps with young children to support, while your husband of only a few years gains the right to remain in Britain and even imports another wife, understandably worries many women. These concerns are intensified when news of such an event spreads though the Bristol grapevine. A further fear is that the husband will not be sufficiently oriented towards his new commitments in Britain, neglecting duties to his wife and children in favour of his relatives in Pakistan. Many women accept that their husbands will fulfil their filial duties by sending money to support their parents, but in a few cases British families feel that the financial demands are excessive.

Some men are considered more of a risk than others, and other tactics may be employed to reduce these dangers. Several women reported that their husband's financially stable background was a factor in agreeing to the marriage. Not only did they suspect that poorer men might be motivated by economic gain, but they often hoped that their household budget would be less subject to demands for remittances. Zaynab, whose first husband's visa was refused, was divorced by her second husband once he gained British citizenship. She has since rejected proposals that she marry someone in Britain on a visitor's visa, for fear that he might only be looking for a way to stay in the country. Another family brought a man from Pakistan to Britain as a daughter's fiance' on a trial basis. The marriage did not take place in the end, as the family had developed doubts over his character during his stay. In two other cases, I met

people in Bristol whose future spouses had come over on visits, allowing the families concerned to see how they acted in this environment. This option is not, however, open to all. Those without financial securities in Pakistan may find it harder to obtain a visa, and it is commonly thought that visitor visas are less frequently given to the young and unmarried for fear that they will try to evade the normal spousal immigration routes by marrying during their stay.

### MAHR: ISLAM'S PROTECTION OF WOMEN IN MARRIAGE

Islam itself makes provisions to protect women against casual divorce and hardship after the end of a marriage. In the marriage contract, a sum of money to be paid by the groom to his new bride must be specified. This payment, the *mahr*, should be made before consummation of the marriage, but may be deferred or 'forgiven' by the bride. At the latest, however, it should be paid to the woman if her husband divorces her, and as such has been viewed both as a deterrent to divorce and a kind of alimony to support the divorced woman. Informants in Bristol generally referred to the payment as *haqq mahr*, *haqq* meaning true, just or appropriate.

The local character of *mahr* is, however, subject to great variation in terms of the amount paid and its meanings and consequences (Wakil 1991: 55).<sup>11</sup> In Pakistan, larger amounts correlate with, and indeed confer, higher status, although payment is often deferred. Poor families may engage in exchange marriages in which costs including *mahr* are low (Donnan 1988: 109, 150; Wakil 1991: 55-6). Small *mahr* payments are not only, however, driven by economic constraints. Prestige may be gained by an agreement on the 'Prophet's *mahr*' of 32 rupees, the amount said to have been pledged on the Prophet's daughter Fatima. Several of my informants reported this amount (or one approximating to it), which is in effect a token *mahr* given the current value of the Pakistani rupee, and which they more commonly called *shar'ī mahr*, i.e. the amount prescribed by Islamic law. In Britain, Shaw reports that small symbolic amounts are traditional, and seen by older women as symbols of trust in close kin marriage (2000: 243). Moreover, to

demand a large *mahr* is to risk appearing *lalchi* (greedy). In any case, a 'good wife' is often expected to excuse the payment of *mahr* (Shaw 2000: 243). In this context, to attempt to manage the risks to women in marriage by asking for a large *mahr* could produce other dangers by undermining the presumption of trust between kin.

Islamic feminists argue that the reduction or omission of *mahr* runs counter to the provisions for women's rights in Islam, and criticise the Pakistani tradition for husbands to ask their wives to 'forgive' the *mahr* on their wedding night, perhaps with the incentive of a gift of a ring. It is worth noting, however, that even the tiny shar'ī *mahr* may be forgiven—in which case a gold ring may make this a very good bargain.

For several informants in Bristol, *mahr* seemed so unimportant that they could not remember the amount that had been specified, or whether it had been paid. In some cases there was confusion about what was *mahr* and what were other marriage prestations. The munh dikha'ī custom in which the husband gives his new wife a present to persuade her to let him see her face sometimes seems to be confused with the issue of payment or forgiveness of *mahr*, which should be done before the husband first touches his wife (i.e. consummates the marriage), unless a deferral was specified in the marriage contract. This confusion seems to be most common among young men. Thus when I asked Tahir from Lahore about his *mahr*, he answered:

*Mahr*—yes, well the first night...let me remember what I did with it a little bit...I had to buy a present for the first night, so what happened [was] that I didn't really have the time—or I didn't know what I was going to do the first night. People told me at the last moment, 'Oh you have to give a present, you have to give the *mahr*'.... My mother told one of my aunts to bring over a present and they gave me it as a surprise and said, 'You give it to your wife'. It was a watch... [then on reflection:] no—it hasn't anything to do with the *mahr*, but I paid around 5,000 rupees—but I didn't know it was *mahr* at that time until later on. My father asked me in the morning, 'Well, did you pay your *mahr*?' I said 'Oh right, did I have to pay that as well?' So

next day or a few days after I asked her to just forgive it if she wanted to. Otherwise I could have paid it to her. It's not that much.

His British wife's memories are also vague, and differ from those of her husband.

*Mahr*, yeah...I can't remember how much it was. But there was a lot of money given. Because he gave me a watch on the wedding night, as a present from him. And I think it was 10,000 rupees—salami I think it's called, and he gave me that. And the *haqq mahr*, it was a wee little bit—35 rupees I think it was. He hasn't given it to me, but I said just give me it whenever, he probably already used it on me! Because it's only a little bit of money, but he said whenever you want it just tell me, so I said, 'Oh when we go next time I'll just take it then'.

Saif, from Bristol, seems to have been even less aware of the practice. At first, he could not remember the name of the payment, and said that when his wife declared she was keeping 10,000 rupees from the wedding gifts as her *mahr*:

I wasn't sure if she was pulling a fast one on me! But I just accepted it anyway. She said, 'Right—this is 10,000 rupees for me, this is my *haqq mahr*.' And I said, 'All right then...What's *haqq mahr*?'

It seems that for many Pakistani women, *mahr* does not seem to provide any kind of marital or financial security. This may be because the amount involved is very low, particularly with the value placed on the *shar'ī mahr*, which has by now become a token payment, but even a large *mahr* may not be paid if the wife 'forgives' it.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, even if *mahr* were operating effectively in Pakistan, it is unlikely that it could afford any real protection to British Pakistani women engaged in transnational marriages to men from Pakistan. Given the exchange rate between sterling and the Pakistani rupee, even the most generous rupee *mahr* would provide neither an effective deterrent to divorce once the husband is earning in Britain, nor any kind of adequate financial support to the divorced wife. Given the heightened risks that British women and

their parents run in arranging transnational marriages, it is hardly surprising that other methods of protection, such as those set out in this article, have been sought.

## CONCLUSION: TRANSNATIONAL KINSHIP, IMMIGRATION AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Recent years have seen an increasing interest in transnational social relations, or 'transnationalism from below' (Smith and Guarnizo 1998). As Robin Cohen writes:

A world economy is propelled by many social and economic actors, including states, international organizations and transnational corporations. These may be the sinews binding the ends of the earth together, but the flesh and blood are the family, kin, clan and ethnic networks that organise trade and allow the unencumbered flow of economic transactions and family migrants (1997: 175–6).

The pursuit of a 'bottom-up' perspective is often intended as a counter to the 'topdown' emphasis in the literature on transnationalism and globalisation. Nevertheless, the focus in such studies has often been on remittances and economic activity, leaving the 'transnational domestic sphere' poorly documented (Gardner and Grillo 2002: 179). Recent work on marriage migration has helped start to fill this ethnographic gap (e.g. Charsley 2005b; Constable 2005; Mand 2002). Marriage migration plays a crucial role in sustaining and transforming transnational Pakistani social networks, and the detailed examination of such marriages has much to reveal about contemporary migration and transnationalism. The research presented here suggests that a focus on risk, understood as embedded in cultural systems, social relations and legal contexts, may be a fruitful avenue in the pursuit of a richer understanding of the processes of change and continuity in migration. Conventional Pakistani conceptions of vulnerable brides may be rooted in traditions of virilocal residence that do not apply in the context of contemporary male marriage migration, but the same concerns are seen to re-emerge on the basis of new hazards. These underlie novel transformations in wedding traditions

that fulfil immigration requirements in holding a marriage ceremony, but protect women from the dangers of consummating the union before the husband's immigration status is secure.<sup>13</sup>

Returning to the literature on risk, Adams (1995) provides a useful framework for conceptualising this dynamic process in his observation of the existence of parallel risk management strategies: the formal (e.g. governmental) and the informal. Immigration regulations governing spousal migration are one example of the state's formal attempt to reduce risks to its citizens by screening out what it considers to be 'bogus' marriages.<sup>14</sup> Assessments of risk are dynamic, part of what Douglas and Wildavsky call the 'dialogue on how best to organise social relations...For to organise means to organise some things in and other things out' (1983: 6). From this perspective, the heated debates following the then Home Secretary's implicit advice to British Asians to seek partners from within Britain in light of the dangers of 'bogus' transnational marriages (Home Office 2002) can be seen as a process of negotiation of acceptable risk. The development of informal strategies takes formal provisions into account, and attempts to manage marital risk are set against the background of current immigration policies and legal definitions of marriage and divorce. Each system responds to the other. The abolition of the Primary Purpose Rule has made it far more likely that Pakistani husbands will be granted visas to join wives in Britain. In response, the number of British Pakistani women marrying men from Pakistan seems to be rising, which in turn has heightened other risks. British embassy staff in Pakistan expressed concern that without the ability to reject on primary purpose grounds, they may have to grant visas in some cases where they suspect the marriage to be 'bogus' or forced. Immigration regulations will almost certainly continue to be adapted in the future in response to the perception of such risks.

These dialogues echo Adams' observation that the formal sector tends to try to reduce risk, while the informal seeks to balance risks and benefits (1995: 4). So when Jamilah summed up the range of uncertainties faced by many young women, her account simultaneously demanded protection and freedom:



Your permanent stay shouldn't be given in one year, it's too quickly.<sup>15</sup> You've got to remember these people don't know each other. First it's hard enough putting people in a house together that already knew each other, but we've got two steps in one if you know what I mean. So I think it should be five year period at least...We've had this really bad experience in the family...and it wasn't fair at all. I think it all comes down to how easy it is. I know we pester [the authorities] to say we want to bring our husbands over, I know it's our fault as well partly, but you should have checks on it again and that the permanent stay be delayed. Maybe not delay them coming over, but [make sure] that they are suitable. Half the people you've got coming here...have got nothing to do with us [i.e. their wives] any more. They've all left—maybe gone back to Pakistan and married someone they really wanted to. It's all using—lots of it is. I mean I couldn't say it doesn't happen in the family [i.e. with marriages between kin] because it happens everywhere now—it's very common to be used...but this is fraud. You're using someone to come to England, pretend to get married, pretend to have children with them, pretend to love them and then—not even five years some of them—after two, three years turn around, go back to Pakistan and get married again and leave those people to live on government benefit. You could have done that in the first place, why do we have to have them living here and paying our taxes towards them?...I don't think it's fair...They think it's going to make their homes more financially stable back home. They don't give anything about people here and they say, 'Oh, you live in a trampy lifestyle and I'll keep sending money back home. Rich them up, make them go upper class or whatever it is they want to do'. And their needs are not even essential any more, they're like, 'I want a mobile phone', or a stereo system, 'So you can't have your dinner tonight'. So it's not very fair...That's not us though [she and her husband], but it happens... They seem like the best people when you first meet them, very kind—you wouldn't think they could ever do a thing like that. Then they do. Very cold-blooded.

Continuing transnational marriage suggests that, for many British Pakistanis, the risks remain worth taking. The immigration system plays a contradictory role in these potential dangers as both cause and protector: a rejected visa application can cause the failure of a marriage; whilst immigration procedures attempt, but

inevitably sometimes fail, to eradicate the danger that a Pakistani spouse might only be 'marrying a passport'. The elaboration of the potential divisibility of Pakistani marriages, in order to delay the consummation of the wedding until immigration has been achieved, is a clear example of an 'informal' response to the state's 'formal' provisions for risk management. The fact that the marriage may be unconsummated does not negate its being considered a valid and subsisting union.<sup>16</sup> It is in this valuable space for negotiation within the formal immigration structures, and in a context of legal pluralism, that the technique of reducing risks to British women by delaying their *rukhsati* has been able to develop. Wedding practices, far from being a fixed aspect of a reified Pakistani culture, should thus be viewed as at least partly the product of social and legal dialogues, and as capable of further change and development. The challenge for immigration policy is to keep pace with these changes so that the evidence presented by spousal migrants in support of their visa applications may be accurately interpreted and fairly assessed, whilst also retaining such crucial spaces for informal negotiations of risk reduction.

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## NOTES

1. Shaw is, however, careful to point out that this is only one among many motivations for such marriages. For a full discussion see Charsley (2003).
2. See the recent disagreement between Werbner (2002) and Menski (2002) over the relative importance of these two risks.
3. There is evidence to suggest that the rates of consanguinous marriages are higher in transnational arrangements than is the case either in the parental generation, or where marriages take place between British Pakistanis (Shaw 2001).
4. Not only are officiants and venues often not registered for marriages, but Islamic marriage declarations can be made by the couple in separate rooms, while in English law the bride and bridegroom must both be present to recite set vows (Yilmaz 2002: 348). This situation led the leader of Britain's Muslim parliament to warn that women who only have a religious ceremony may not realise that their marriage is not legally recognised, and that they thus have minimal rights on divorce or widowhood (The Guardian, 24 November 2003; 'Islamic weddings leave women unprotected').
5. The mechanisms of divorce are complicated by this situation, and women in Britain who were married in Pakistan may find it difficult to obtain a religious divorce from the Pakistani authorities (Shah-Kazemi 2001).
6. The Quran states: 'Marry the women of your choice, two or three or four. But if you fear that you may not be able to deal justly with them, then marry only one'. This passage is widely interpreted as meaning wives should be treated with complete equality (Yamani 1998: 156). Whether precise equality is possible in practice, and therefore whether polygamy is actually effectively prohibited, is a matter of debate.
7. This type of arrangement featured in the popular British film *East is East*.
8. Indeed, in the *nikah-namah* the term for a virgin (*kunwari*) also means an unmarried woman. It must be specified whether the bride is a virgin, divorced or widowed.
9. In Bangladesh, Gardner reports the opposite phenomenon, as the traditional delaying of the couple's cohabitation is relaxed in some circumstances where grooms must quickly return to work abroad (1995: 167).
10. It is often difficult to judge whether this was the husband's original intention, however, or a decision made later as a result of dissatisfaction with their first marriage (Charsley 2005b).
11. For contrasting practices compare, for example, Moor on Palestine (1991) and Tugby on Sumatra (1959). Current exchange rate is 100 rupees = £1.18.
12. Jeffery (2001) describes a similar situation of confusion and scepticism surrounding *mahr* in rural North India. Whilst many of her informants either did not know the amount of their *mahr*, or reported a low figure, not one of them had actually received the money.

13. Photographs of the wedding celebrations are commonly part of the evidence of marriage presented during the visa application process.
14. It should be noted, however, that some commentators are sceptical about the government's intentions. Menski, for example, suggests that Home Office discourses of protecting British Asian women mask a situation in which 'the "primary purpose rule" was only formally abolished, its restrictive principles are still in place' (2002: 20).
15. The probationary period for spousal settlement has now been increased from one to two years.
16. During the research for this study, an Entry Clearance Officer reported that a lack of *rukhsati* may, however, be considered suspect if the couple are claiming that the marriage was a 'love' match, and there are no signs of 'intervening devotion' (letters etc) since the marriage. This interpretation may, however, rest on an artificial polarisation of 'love' and 'arranged' marriages. See Mody (2002) for descriptions of 'love-cum-arranged' marriages in which the fact that the match arose due to a romantic connection between the couple does not alter the 'arrangements' which may later be made for the couple's marriage.

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## CHAPTER 8

# **'These girls want to get married as well'. Normality, Double Deviance and Reintegration amongst British Pakistani Women**

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### INTRODUCTION

It has been argued that in post September 11th Britain, Muslim communities have been constructed as dysfunctional or even as 'fifth columns' of the State (Lewis 2006). On the one hand there is a widespread moral panic about young Muslim men engaging in terrorist activities (Sengupta 2005), on the other there is an amplified uneasiness about cultural practices allegedly oppressing women (regrading veiling and marriage strategy, for instance, cf. Werbner 2005 and Shaw 2006). 'Deviance' may represent different issues according to gender, but a tendency to see Muslims (and especially Pakistanis) in Britain as deviating from (either legal or mainstream) normative behaviour appears to characterize discourses around this population (Kundnani 2002).

While existing literature on deviance in the Pakistani Diaspora refer mainly to men (Alexander 2000, 2004; Goodey 2001; Wardak 2000) and crime, broader notions of female deviance have been overlooked. Most academic research and media attention on Pakistani women has focused instead on forced marriages, violence and veiling (Werbner 2005; Shaw 2006). In a sense, female seclusion and what is generally perceived as oppression, can be considered part of Pakistani male deviance from a British normativity. Women's status and male deviance, therefore, are coupled through a differentially gendered field of social relations.

The present piece of work aims at analysing the perceptions of female deviance in the Pakistani Diaspora and to link them to wider considerations about the imposed role of passivity attached to Pakistani women both by their own community and state legislators.

After a brief discussion of the context and methodology, the first part of the chapter will present the findings on deviance amongst Bradford Pakistani women. The perceptions and misconceptions about problems affecting women of Pakistani heritage will be discussed in relation to both community-grounded and Government-adopted discourses. Women of Pakistani heritage in fact seem to be deemed to be passive by both their community and formal institutions. Informal strategies of social control will also be discussed, with particular attention to the role of gossip and the gender division in family social control. Part three, in contrast, will illustrate how many women, seem to, find in Islam a means to redefine notions of normality and head towards assertiveness and reintegration.

## CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

The data used in this piece of work is the result of doctoral research in the Pakistani community of Bradford (Bolognani 2006).<sup>1</sup> This research firstly concentrated on young men and drugs as the latter emerged as the origin of much moral panic. The scope of the research included women's roles and attitudes regarding deviance and social control when it appeared that their involvement both as victims and perpetrators was higher than had so far been acknowledged (Macey 1999). The recruitment of the sample<sup>2</sup> was based on an equal representation of three groups composed by both males and females: young people of both genders (both offenders<sup>3</sup> and non-offenders), parents (both from the first and the second generation<sup>4</sup>) and community workers (including social workers, community workers and clergy).



## WOMEN AND DEVIANCE: UNVEILING THE PROBLEM

Western feminist criminology has been analysing the question of female deviance since the 1970s, basing its major argument on the finding that criminology had always tended to portray criminal women as pathological or 'double deviant,' (Rosenhan 1973; Carlen 1985:2) as they not only were breaking the laws of the state but also, what are believed to be, the laws of a nature, that 'produce them' with caring attributes. For example, a woman taking part in a murder would automatically be depicted as a non-human, a monster, as the nature of a 'normal' woman could not allow the possibility of violent behaviour. Bisi has also argued that the subaltern position given to women in criminology was somehow connected with the belief that women are incapable of being autonomous (2002:24), unless the crimes committed were connected to their biological condition, for example prostitution and infanticide. In the data collected here, a different sort of double deviance seemed to be part of the common labelling process. While the legal aspects of deviance were rarely discussed when speaking about women<sup>5</sup>, the dual aspect of female deviance was more likely to be seen in breaching of female's nature and breaching of family honour. Afshar (1989:215; 1994:134) has observed how in West Yorkshire Pakistani women are considered to carry a double moral burden: an individual one based on their conduct as thought appropriate to their gender, and a family one, based on their successful maintenance of the family honour (*izzat*<sup>6</sup>). Also, in a sense, women are at the same time appreciated for their 'inherent' caring and 'soft' attitudes, and considered irreparably weakened by those. Women who 'naturally' want to get married (see below) are more prone to be misled by following unworthy men for whom they have fallen, and 'soft' mothers, valued for their love that knows no boundaries, are incapable of appropriately discipline their children. Women taking drugs may be seen as victims of a 'polluted' society and bad men, and mothers who do not adequately discipline their sons are considered victims of their soft nature.

Throughout the Bradford research, drugs appeared as the single most feared issue affecting the community. When some research

participants started discussing the impact of drugs on Pakistani young women, some new problems came to the surface. Although, as far as women were concerned drug consumption was the main worry, in their case the classification of drugs was broadened to prescription drugs. In fact it was reported that a growing number of women would 'get on' anti-depressants. This attitude might be considered the equivalent of the often mentioned cases of young men smoking cannabis as a reaction to the stress derived from family problems:

They get on drugs mainly because of family pressures, stress, to forget problems. (Ameena, youth worker in her late twenties)

In a similar fashion to what seemed to happen to British white working class housewives in 1960s, many Pakistani women are said to be hooked on prescription drugs in order to cope better with multiple emotional stress. According to many research participants some women, especially the youngest, use cannabis, hard drugs and alcohol out of escapist desires linked to tense family situations. Peer pressure was also mentioned.

Some research participants circulated frightening accounts of what seems to happen at universities, where, according to rumours, a high number of girls seem to be drawn into drugs and alcohol:

I am at uni and I know about 5 girls from the top of my head who can drink a big bottle of vodka in one day...I mean, like them big bottles. I know about 5 from the top of my head, come in the morning, they won't go lectures, they'll go sitting in the car and buy a bottle of vodka and get pissed and get totally wasted and then they would sleep, wake up, sober up and then go home. And if they are still not sober before 4, 5 o'clock, they'll ring home and say 'I am in the library doing work' and about 7, 8, 9 o'clock they will go home (Jamal, university student).

Some community workers feared that this may impact on the new positive rates of education of Pakistani young women: parents who get to hear these rumours may be tempted to reverse the trend and

get their daughters out of education before University<sup>7</sup>. Participant observation and engagement in the Bradford university grapevine was of great help to evaluate such statements. In fact, even though during my fieldwork there were instances of Pakistani women dealing drugs and of college female students routinely engaging in binge drinking and smoking light drugs, the general alarming statement about Pakistani women involved in deviance, appeared more as 'ubiquitous gossip' (Alexander 2000) rather than an empirically grounded description of reality. Although I met and heard of a few women addicted to prescription drugs, the active engagement in open deviant behaviours still seemed disproportionately linked to males.

When the research tried to address what was generally perceived as the cause of the recent growth of deviant behaviour among females, a range of possible aetiologies was mentioned. These went from 'westernisation' to 'family stress' and victimisation by criminal men; however, a common trait of these aetiologies was the tendency of neglecting aspects of female agency in deviance. Deviant women seemed to be helplessly falling by somebody else's hand.

## VICTIMHOOD, AGENCY AND DOUBLE DEVIANCE

Young girls taking drugs tended to be seen as victims rather than as individuals who made a choice of consuming such substances. This community perception of women as passive and fragile beings seemed to resonate with mainstream societal discourse on Muslim women with assumptions of lack of agency and assertiveness. A popular complaint collected both from older women and teenagers, who went to school in Britain, was that those in authority behaved towards them in a way that contributed to their maintenance of traditional roles:

I hated school, I think schools for me just didn't work, I think if I was left to my own devices I would have learnt more myself, because there was always this attitude 'she is an Asian girl, she will get married at 15, so what's the point?'. Teachers used to tell us all the time, even the Asian teachers. (Ayesha, member of a grassroots' organisation working with young people in her early forties).

A sense of helplessness seems to characterize members of mainstream institutions that deal with Pakistani women. Some community workers lamented a tendency amongst medical doctors (GPs) to too easily prescribe antidepressants to Asian women, who have in turn become characterised as a group with an endemic problem of depression and mental health. Some women would become addicted to such prescription drugs for life. In some cases, their daughters or other female relatives would get access to them and would start a more dangerous non-prescribed intake. Although no statistical evidence was collected to triangulate community workers' perceptions, depression was a very well known and often spoken about problem by almost all research participants (cf. Pearson and Patel 1998). One development worker was convinced that white GPs do not know how to deal with 'Pakistani culture' and see antidepressants as the only way to help women to lighten their emotional burdens. White GPs were seen as 'illiterate' in complex Pakistani family problems, which, according to this community worker, were the main cause of depression. At the same time, the number of trained Pakistani counsellors is not enough to be effective in contrasting the spreading illness.

A general perception by community workers and professionals working with Pakistani women was that British and European institutions are misled in the focus of attention. For example, the debate on the veil and the notion of the helpless passive Muslim woman does not lead to an increment of assertiveness or awareness among women in need. Even the overwhelming attention given to forced marriages<sup>8</sup> (Werbner 2005:25) seems to defer the light from other important issues that affect Pakistani women:

When we did our last conference we had the media ringing up 'we want to interview you, we know you do stuff on forced marriage and we want to speak with a young person' and this was like national media, but I said 'I am sorry, but I am not interested, this is not the only thing we work on. We do drugs, culture, truancy, substance misuse, we are doing it on issues that affect all young people and there is a bit on forced marriage, that is it' (Ayesha).

Unconsciously recalling established critiques of orientalist approaches to the study of migrant women of Islamic background (Lutz 1991), interviewees thought there was a common assumption of an inherent disfunctionality of their heritage and therefore policy makers' attention is predominantly addressed to issues directly involving family. It could be argued that hegemonic discourses seem to view Pakistani families' socialisation as a hurdle towards a functional self (see for example comments in Shaw 2006). This pathologising of the family has a long history in the way that British institutions have viewed South Asian women in general (see Parmar, 1981 and Brah, 1996).

From within the Pakistani community, however, similar notions of passivity and helplessness emerge, stirring the question of reciprocal influence of insiders' and outsiders' discourses on women (see conclusion). In the following conversation recorded during a focus group, sixteen-year old girls discussed an imaginary scenario in which a Pakistani girl of their age was found consuming drugs by her family:

FG2C: [People would say]: 'She is going down the wrong path' and stuff...

FG2A: She would be looked down upon not just by her family, and there would be so much stigma attached to her, like probably nobody would want to get married to her or nothing, and then...that's why girls don't want to do it.

FG2C: I think it would be difficult for girls to get hold of drugs...

FG2B: (Laughs)

FG2I: You think that because you don't know how it works...you think like 'where do you get drugs from?'...but someone comes to you and they give it to you. That's all it is. [These girls] probably want to get married as well.

This narrative seemed to imply that any girl of their age would 'naturally' aspire to get married. However, encounters with bad characters would lead on to the wrong path. The existence of a female 'natural' predisposition for certain choices was a recurrent topic when discussing deviance amongst young people. The

difference between the involvement in crime of men and women was explained by a focus group's participant in this way: 'boys get more attracted to go outside than girls do'

Like in the discussions about parental strategies (see below) with the description of parental roles based on soft, passive and 'domestic' mothers and authoritarian, active and 'public' fathers, this dyadic gender perception strongly affected representations of deviant characters. If the popular conception was that girls 'naturally' aspire to creating a home but may be misled by criminal men, it is evident that a greater threat was posed to the system if they were involved in deviant lifestyles. If women make a home, deviant women may jeopardise a whole extended family. Hence, the moral panic about female involvement in drugs. However, as it will be argued below, once a woman has 'fallen', her redemption seems quite impossible and one way to prevent her from contaminating other girls or the family is to evict her. Douglas (1966/2002:2) has argued that the frustrations of a society that does not know how to prevent or sanction behaviours that may jeopardise its existence are met with outrage and discourses of pollution. In a context where women are on one hand (at least in words) put on a pedestal because of their femininity and on the other considered victims of weaknesses attached to this elevated status, such complex threats may be met by pollution beliefs (see below). An articulate system based on pollution discourses may be individuated in gossip.

### MEANS OF SOCIAL CONTROL: GOSSIP AND GENDERED PARENTAL STRATEGIES

In theoretical (see Gluckman 1963) and ethnographic (see Lyon 2004) anthropological literature, gossip has been considered a very effective means to check behaviour and keep track of status competition. In my fieldwork, gossip and moral panic appeared as an instrument of social control. As argued by Saeed (2002:310), patriarchal societies sometimes pose psychological and physical boundaries by creating taboos, stigma and urban myths. The exaggeration and the ubiquity of the perceived drug threat against

females in my fieldwork seemed to follow a similar pattern. Stories (with a similar core, but changing fringe details), telling parables of fallen women by the hands of drug dealers from their own community recurred. The link between drug consumption, 'grooming' and prostitution was part of the wide-spread moral panic about British Pakistani women being drug-raped and subsequently introduced and blackmailed into prostitution<sup>9</sup>:

The Asian girls, now...I have seen myself they are all taking drugs and everything it is unbelievable. What happening at university now, 4 years ago it wasn't like that, but the culture at university has completely changed it is unbelievable. You see, with me I have got friends in Manchester, people in Birmingham, London, when I go there, ah, it is just completely different culture shock they are smoking heroine, and spliffs and everything...but I am talking about the grooming... they will start with a cigarette and then the boy will say let's smoke a spliff, the spliff is like cannabis, and they put a line of heroine in it, and it is like a drink, if you have a drink and someone spikes it with a bit of vodka you don't realize they are doing it. That's what they do, they put a line of cocaine so it makes it stronger, so when you take it, you are put on it, so you will always take it more and more and everything. (Adam, development worker in his late twenties)

The young women I work with do mostly cannabis but some are on heroine and cocaine, and end up in prostitution. Their boyfriends are their pimps. (Ameena, youth worker in his late twenties)

You can see it in town, I know so many people who have seen it, but it is just one of those things, it is really difficult to deal with it because the girls are thinking there are some guys who are paying attention to them. 'I've got myself an older boyfriend and he's got a car and he's got money...' So what can you say to those girls, 'No, you've been fooled'. They are not gonna believe you. (Ali, artist in his late twenties)

One imam was told by taxi drivers that Asian girls are to be found working in saunas as prostitutes in Bradford to pay for their drug habits. These may have been urban myths, but in the economy of the research, the existence of such rumours seemed to be an

important fact in itself. My belief is that such rumours have an actual social impact on the community as they feed into the moral panic about the hazardous environment of Western urban settings and have consequences for young women's autonomy. Exposure to the inner city world, indeed, seems by itself to be a hazard for women; moving to other cities to attend university can only increase the danger. The underlying idea that exposure rather than choices make women fall seems to recall the framework of purity and contamination as constructed by Douglas (1966/2002). Douglas argues that 'Society reward[s] conformity and repulse[s] attack' (ibid: 115) and ideas of purity and non-purity maintain the social structure (ibid: 132). Pollution is according to Douglas linked to the feelings of threat, of a perceived danger that arises frustration as society members recognise an incapability of practically sanctioning disorder: 'when moral indignation is not reinforced by practical sanctions, pollution beliefs can provide a deterrent to wrongdoers' (ibid: 134). In the case of pollution by drugs in the Pakistani community, the lack of practical sanction obviously does not refer to the lack of a legal system that rules on drug dealing and drug taking, but to the widespread frustrating feeling that despite law, there is not much that can be done about it.

Above we have seen how gossip can be treated as part of social control strategies and we have mentioned that a sense of taboo, stigma and scandal can be diffused by both men and women. However, it seems that other informal social control strategies are gendered in a way that mirrors the dichotomy women/private/soft and men/public/strong. When questioned about the different roles of mothers and fathers in raising children, research participants seemed to be unanimous in describing a division in parental roles. Mothers were the worrying, listening and forgiving part (especially with sons), and fathers more strict and inclined to produce chastisement in the form of physical punishment (cf. also Irfan and Cowburn 2004:96). During participant observation I witnessed several arguments in which mothers were 'told off' by husbands for being too lenient with the children, or even by daughters who



argued with mothers who had lied to their husbands in order to protect their sons from chastisement.

Imran (teacher in his early thirties): You'll find that the mothers usually hide these issues and they are in more or less in denial...

Me: You mean they hide it from the fathers as well?

Imran: From the fathers as well...you find fathers are at work, so they don't really know what is happening at home, it is the mothers who know the real happenings of the family. She knows what the daughter is getting up to, she knows what the son is getting up to, you know, she knows that. And a lot of the times you find that she hides it, keeps it secret from the father. Especially she feels that the father will be very heavy in dealing with it, you know, whereas on the father's side...I mean, these are only general...general stuff...the family decides to deal with it. If it is the father who deals with it...the fathers I met, they aren't actually understanding to problems (...) simply because they don't know problems or the pressures they have to face when they go to schools, colleges, on the streets...they don't understand the pressures they have actually been put...so you'll find that the fathers are very heavy handed in dealing with these issues.

The mother represents a 'softer' traditional culture<sup>10</sup>, the father authority and prescription:

My dad is more educated than my mum, and he has been brought up in England. That plays a big factor on my dad's character, my mum tends to have a big part in our culture, whereas my dad doesn't (Mahima, shop assistant in her late twenties).

While fathers might be more or less present in the upbringing of children (and their absence would create lack of discipline) the more stable presence of the mother may fail to provide the adequate upbringing either for her softness or her being unprepared to deal with problems facing the youth. If not deviant, therefore, mothers are seen as somehow complacent in the face of public pressures put upon children. The widespread belief that in Pakistani culture, or even in Muslim cultures, the man has a more public role and the woman a private one, seemed to be backed up by many interviews

in a way that is consistent with relevant literature (Irfan and Cowburn 2004). In addition to this, in Britain it is possible to view this perception permeating different strata of mainstream society. In the prevention economy, mosques, madrasas and schools were perceived, in spite of their potential, as failing structures to which moral education was naively and unsuccessfully delegated by many families (cf. Bolognani 2007, forthcoming).

### PREVENTION FOR GIRLS AND RETRIEVAL FOR BOYS: WOMEN AS UNFORGIVABLE VICTIMS

We have seen how women involved in drugs are likely to be considered victims of men, of contact with outer society or of their weak and soft nature. As Bisi puts it, 'female criminality [can be] interpreted as the logical outcome of certain bio-psychological traits: weakness, limited self-consciousness, incapacity of choice' (2002:24). This perception, however, does not necessarily lead to an easier path to forgiveness after their supposedly unwilling lapse. Parents were generally seen as more lenient with sons than with daughters, and all the women interviewed felt that cultural traditions made men feel as if they were always forgivable. This supported the idea that social control was deeply gendered:

If the Asian males of the community commit crime, it is not looked down as bad as if it was a woman (Mahima, shop assistant in her twenties).

Considering the widespread belief that women are the carrier of the family *izzat*<sup>1</sup>, the damage to reputation created by the bad behaviour of a son seemed to be retrievable, while the actions of a woman seemed to carry bigger consequences for her parents. This view was supported by an anecdote recurrently told during fieldwork:

I know of this family. They don't live in our neighbourhood but people used to...the story used to circulate from Bradford 8 to Bradford 1, so you are bound to hear somewhere along the line. This family...they were an Asian family, they weren't very religious and they weren't really

bothered about the way they were. A lot of people said they were westernised, but westernised is what you think it is westernised, not...so, they were just themselves, they were free people, they weren't eastern, they didn't have eastern values or culture, what our parents believe to be eastern. So they were just themselves, and...their sons started taking drugs, being smoking, they were very light, you know, 'we need to do something about him, we need to make him get off this drug'. The daughter started to take the drugs as well. She was kicked out of the house, like you said you heard. She had nowhere to go, so she ended up with her drug dealer. They said this was her ultimate decision, this is what she wanted from day one, that's why she made us kick her out...and excuses for covering up why they kicked her out.' This is what she wanted and that's why we've done it'. The son was continuing still taking the drugs, no matter what they would do to stop him because it is very hard unless you get proper help, but the son was sort of...I don't know what it is with boys in Asian family...they are seen as better assets. And she was like...all her focus was on the son, but none on the daughter. The daughter was kicked out of the house, it doesn't matter about her, it doesn't matter. It is like she was replaced...they did not need her. She ended up with her drug dealer and she ended up in a very bad state. Had she got the help she needed from the family or whoever...she would have maybe you know...did something about it. She ended up with someone who wasn't going to really get her off it, because he needs her. In fact he made her go back home, steal gold, Asian gold is like...very valued in family...made her steal all the gold, everything so basically her life was...because to this day she isn't allowed to go to her family now. As far as they are concerned she is dead. (Zaara, shop assistant and special constable in her early twenties)

In this story, the lack of discipline ('they weren't really bothered'), the effect of Western culture ('people said they were westernised'), the fact that parents were 'light' on the boys and harsh on the girl, even if she had been introduced to drugs through them, and finally the soft attitude of the mother towards her sons, exemplify once again the helplessness of a woman who becomes deviant. This anecdote, recounted more or less in the same way by different sources, seems also to convey the idea that rehabilitation of a daughter is more difficult than rehabilitation of a son. It may be

for this reason that preventive social control appears to be stronger for girls who are generally more limited in their freedom of movement than their brothers. The expulsion of a daughter from a family seemed to be an extreme and rare resolution as it may be a very publicly recognisable sign of the breach of family *izzat*. On the other hand, a family who had expelled their daughters might hide it in different ways:

They say she is studying, she's gone to stay with an auntie somewhere. If she is in Bradford they say she's gone to London, if she is in London it will be Bradford (Ali, artist in his late twenties)

Families are more likely to send a son back to Pakistan for 'rehabilitation', get him married in the hope that he will feel responsible of the new nuclear family, or ask for religious or magical help (*taweez*<sup>12</sup>).

### ISLAM AS REDEEMER OF CONSCIENCES AND ASSERTIVENESS

Between the ideas of passivity that both British Pakistani commentaries and British white mainstream views seem to construct, Islamist discourses seem to have created a different space for Pakistani women. Afshar in 1994 and McLoughlin in 1998 talk of a cathartic use of Islam for Bradford Muslim women. For instance:

For at least some women, 'reinvented', 'authentic' accounts of their religious experiences are the most organic feminist tools that they have to 'think' alternatives with (McLoughlin 1998:103).

My respondents (...) experienced Islam as a set of discourses and practices which could be deployed both hegemonically, in an attempt to control and discipline young women, and counter-hegemonically, so as to legitimate their concerns about issues such as higher education and marriage (McLoughlin 1998: 105).

Many female interviewees said they found inspiration for assertiveness and independence in the Quran. Regardless of the contested status of women's roles in Islam, clearly some of them have found grounds for autonomy in familiarising themselves with a translation of the Quran. Many women used the same example to describe how this reading made them grow in autonomy:

The Prophet's wife was a merchant banker, she proposed to him (Mahima, shop assistant in her late twenties).

Amongst young Muslims the idea that Islam in South Asia has been profoundly influenced and contaminated by local cultures and there should be a process of purging from it what is not consistent with the Prophet's teachings is very common<sup>13</sup>. 'Spurious' Islam would affect the lives of Muslims in a very different way from the original one, as one informant put it:

...they should give girls some autonomy because Islamic law allows girls some autonomy (...) Bradford is conservative, the community is conservative. The biggest problem I think is the culture, and culture has nothing to do with religion. For example: weddings. The traditions (of weddings) are Hindu traditions.(...) (it is something) that has been inherited and it sticks, like culture. (Sadiq, student in his mid twenties, quoted in Bolognani 2002).

An attempt to go back to 'the original Islam' has been adopted by movements and associations of young people (for example Young Muslims UK, the Muslim Women Forum and Islamic Society of Britain, cf. McLoughlin 2006) in Bradford and is the cause of most of the changes in the practice of Islam by women, but also of wider practices and beliefs. For example, in 2002 the Muslim Women Forum was promoting the creation of areas for women in the local mosques, as only a minority of buildings provide this facility. One of the changes in the perceptions of Islam by the younger generations is that while for a large part of the older generation Islam becomes important during life-cycle rituals (McLoughlin 1998:99), for an increasing part of the younger generation who

read the Quran in translation, religion is apparently an integral part of their lives which has a constant bearing in daily life. For these individuals religion becomes a public and political matter. For some women, it is the gate to much more freedom of choice and movement. Furthermore, 'fallen' Pakistani women may go through rituals and adopt visible signs of their 'redemption', that, according to analysis above, are much harder to come by through the 'cultural' community of their heritage. Fatima, a university student in her early twenties, an active member of an Islamist organisation, described her 'reversion' to Islam in this way:

I can give you a personal example. Before when I was 16, I was really confused.(...)So I did not know how to deal with my problems because I could not turn to my parents because I know what they would say, I couldn't turn to my grandparents, because I know what they would say and I wouldn't have liked to hear what they wanted to say. But I still knew, even if I turned to my friends they wouldn't tell me something that is correct as well, so I could only trust the one thing, which is my religion, my Islam, which could guide me out of my confusion that I was living in. So now when I did start talking with these girls, you know, my friends I knew who used to take lower class drugs, like smoking spliffs and...just, you know, a bit of fun here and there...when I did start talking about religion to them, to them it was only a laugh and a joke, but to me it was becoming serious so I started to change in a different way and they started to advance in their drugs and stuff like that...(...) I think...my experience, especially with... because I went though, even after Umra, after basically becoming more religious and practicing...I realised when I went back into Sixth Form or college and I saw a difference...not a difference...but the way I started to think now was more Islamically...(Fatima, university student in her early twenties, active member of an Islamist organisation).

Fatima who, by her own definition, used to live "a life at odds with Islam", after *Umra* started wearing the *hijab* and moved freely around Bradford, organizing meetings for her association and planning to go and study abroad, hopefully in Syria. Islam offered her a tool for negotiating her independence with her parents and a means to redemption that is so hardly available from her

traditional community. Pilgrimage and the act of covering her head with the hijab rehabilitated her into her family and community. Whether this kind of Muslim discourse that allows a specific form of autonomy and independence for women is only typical of one class is a controversial matter. While a large part of activities by Islamist movements happen on campuses, there is evidence that on a global level these discourses are likely to be firstly embraced by upper educated middle classes, but are also conveyed to different classes through the inherent 'outreach programmes' (Ahmad 2007, forthcoming). One of the most successful groups as such, Al-Huda, offers a poignant example by promoting quranic classes in disadvantaged areas and jails (ibid.).

## CONCLUSION

Evidence from this fieldwork seem to record a dramatic increase in the engagement of young Muslim women of Pakistani descent with criminal activities. Although relevant statistical data are not available and much of the rumours surrounding this topic may be part of the informal social control through ubiquitous gossip, a serious concern emerges as far as the position of Pakistani women in contemporary Britain is concerned. It appears that both their community and hegemonic discourses are likely to portray them as passive subjects and deny them agency. Consequentially, for the former, the alternatively praised and blamed natural attribute of softness, is the root of concern that leads to enclosure. For the latter, the alleged universal subjugation of the Muslim woman is likely to be severed only by a de-culturation process. These attitudes translate into mainly two practices. The first consists of neglecting ad-hoc education aimed at understanding problems, for instance, of addiction in favour of broader notions of protection from the outer world; the second consists of policies focused on alleged dysfunctional practices of the women's community of origin (such as veiling and marriage strategies) and the neglect of health and psychological well-being issues.

These attitudes collaborate in so much there is not much room for women to develop their own resistance strategy to emotional

and social stress in urban Britain. Rather than two distinct discourses (the community's and the mainstream), the constant oscillation between the two and their reciprocal influences construct a denial of women's agency.

Women in Pakistani cultures are considered to be the core of the family life and therefore of community (Ali 2000: 118; Khanum 2000:132.,133; Wardak 2000:63), as an essential unit composing the community, and it appears that mainstream British media and institutions struggle to see and relate to Pakistani women unless in view of their family and cultural ties, that are at the same time likely to be considered dysfunctional. Both viewpoints convey an idea of passivity and helplessness.

In research on deviance, those attitudes seem to negatively impact on any strategy of prevention. Seen as dependent and fragile subjects, when institutions like school do not give up on them, enclosure by their community, or auspicated socialisation into white British lifestyles, may be the only solutions to a growing number of Pakistani females engaging in deviant behaviours. Both a 'pollution' ideology believing that simple exposure may side-track women, and an attitude such as the alleged GP's one that believes that if still in their community there will be no solution and anti-depressants can limit the damage, means that structured campaigns about drugs prevention, for instance, are still far to come for many women. For the time being, isolated examples of initiatives of organisations such as the mentioned above Ayesha's and some Islamist movements, create a space for women where their problems are discussed and dealt with not only in relation to their families and where more value to their experiences as agents of their lives is conferred with no stigma attached.

## NOTES

1. In spite of distinctive languages and cultures, the outsiders' definition of all South Asian Muslims as Pakistanis has become prevalent in Bradford. For this reason, despite the preponderance of Kashmiris, the local language has developed in the direction of labelling them as Pakistanis. In this chapter the author follows the local denomination process and refers to Kashmiris and non-Kashmiri Pakistanis with the term Pakistanis, although the research was conducted mostly amongst Kashmiris.



2. Over a period of eleven months, forty-nine individuals were part of the research whether through interviews or focus groups. Twenty-one of those were females. Participant observation was linked as much as possible to in-depth interviews in order to unpack notions, definitions and perceptions of deviance and social control. What represented evidence of the entities composing the social reality under study were everyday concepts, practices and meanings as they were produced, negotiated and transmitted within the community. Those emerged through discussions of vignettes or analysis and individuals' commentaries on local current events.
3. In this context 'offenders' describe people who are breaking the law.
4. Generational studies have had an increasing popularity in sociology (cf. Edmunds and Turner 2002) as they are supposed to reflect an important component of change in society. The question of generation for the Bradford Pakistani community can be controversial as the majority of marriages are organised between England and Pakistan<sup>5</sup> (Shaw 2006:211). If we consider individuals coming from Pakistan and gaining permanent residence in the UK as 'first generation' and their children as second, a problem of 'diluted' generation will occur in the definition of an individual born of two parents of a different generation. For this reason, the generation-based sampling is problematic but still describes the age gap between parents and children.
6. Some research participants were keen on telling stories of drug dealers who used women in order to transport and sell drugs because of their strong conviction that police never stop Pakistani women and therefore such tendency would translate in the paucity of cases of discussion of women convicted for drug offences. On the other hand, some sources have revealed a sharp increment of convictions amongst Muslim women in West Yorkshire, in so far as to appoint a female Muslim chaplain in Wakefield female prison.
7. Chaudhary (1999:64) considers three types of 'shame': *izzat* ('prudery or consciousness of what constitutes shame'), *haya* ('inner modesty') and *ghairat* ('successful defence of honour and women'). In my research, the term *izzat* seemed to cover all three concepts, although seldom *ghairat* was used, also in the slang translation into 'g factor'.
8. For an analysis of the (lack of) relationship between formal education and transmission of moral values as it is seen by many Bradford Pakistani parents, see Bolognani, M. (forthcoming) Community perceptions of moral education as a response to crime amongst Bradford Pakistanis, in the special issue of the Journal of Moral Education on Islamic Values and Moral Education.
9. Declan Walsh, in an article on The Guardian, 9th December 2005, reports that around 100 British Pakistani women are every year saved from forced marriages by the Foreign Office. Walsh also claims that 60% of cases handled by the Foreign Office Forced Marriage Unit involve British Pakistanis.

10. For a Pakistani parallel of moral panic diffused as gossip or even as urban myth, see the discussion of the parables of prostitutes' recruitment in Lahore, diffused by women as much as by men, in Saeed (2002).
11. At the same time I often came across very sarcastic comments about strong women who 'wear the trousers at home'. These women are often taken the mickey out of and are seen as quite incompatible with what is expected from their gender. The husbands of such women are alternatively seen as victims or as good for nothing.
12. Saeed describes the concept of honour as carried by female in a very effective manner: 'Men created this concept and housed it in women's bodies. (...)Have you heard the story of the jin [genie] and the *tota* [parrot]?The genie's soul was in a parrot. No one could kill the genie unless they reached the parrot. So the genie built a secret den in a big mountain and hid the parrot. Once the parrot was hidden, the genie was indestructible, free to move around and do whatever he liked. It's the same idea here. A man places his honour inside a woman's body and hides her away in his house, freeing himself to go around and do anything he wants' (Saeed 2003:306, 307).
13. *Taweez* literally means amulet, but by extension a number of practices that have to do with the alleged healing power of Quranic verses are grouped under it. The following quotation seems to embody the blurring boundaries between magic and religion implied by *taweez*:  
I cannot really explain because it is weird and wonderful, it is one of those magical things that happen and make you believe in religion. (Amir)
14. For an account of how Islamist discourses spread in Bradford after the Rushdie Affair see Herbert 2003.

## CHAPTER 9

# Religion, Gender and Identity Construction amongst Pakistanis in Australia

NADEEM MALIK

### AUSTRALIA-PAKISTAN: HISTORICAL LINKS

According to official records, the Pakistani Muslim community is classified as one group of Muslims who have migrated to Australia from more than 70 different countries (Saeed: 2003). There are two different perspectives on the origin of the Pakistani diaspora in Australia. According to one view, they came to Australia after the easing of restrictions on Asian migration in the 1960s. However, according to the other view forwarded by Syed Atiq ul Hassan, the history of Pakistani migrants can be divided into three phases. The first phase (1860-1930) is the one in which the British (and later the newly “federated” Australia) brought cameleers from areas (Sindh, North West Frontier Province, Baluchistan), that became Pakistan after 1947. The second phase started after World War II. In this phase it was mostly students and professionals who came to Australia under Commonwealth Scholarships and the Colombo plan. And the third phase started from 1973 when the white Australia policy was abandoned and professionals were able to migrate under a points scheme (Syed: 2003). This longer historical perspective is one that is more useful to explore, as it provides a backdrop to the more contemporary migration.

The cameleers that came in the first phase are represented in most written records, according to Syed, as Afghans (Syed: 2003). The reason for this, he argues, may be because the majority of them

came from the Northern Frontier, close to what is now the Pakistan/Afghan border. Amongst them were also those Afghans who were settled in the areas, which are now part of Pakistan. According to Syed around three thousand people came to Australia from the northern parts of the Indian subcontinent between 1860 and 1930, the majority from present-day Pakistan. These cameleers were highly skilled at breeding and training camels and most of them belonged to the Indian armed forces. Syed describes them as 'pioneers in the development of the Australian infrastructure' and states that:

Without them much of the development of the outback and inland Australia would have been very difficult. The construction of roads, tunnels, bridges, towns, mines, railways, fences and pastoral properties was successful largely because of their contributions. They discovered new routes across the country, assisting in the exploration of central Australia and other places. They were instrumental in laying the overland Telegraphic Line that lined Australia with the outside world. They carried merchandise of all shapes and sizes on their camels (Syed: 2003:4).

They were also responsible for bringing Islam to Australia, as they built the first mosque for the Muslim community (Syed: 2003). Most of them were brought to Australia under three year contracts after which they were expected to return to their homeland. With the advent of the Immigration Restriction Act 1901, only a few could renew their contracts, build their own businesses or marry. The White Australia Policy was relaxed after World War I, enabling significant migrations from Europe, Asia, Middle East, the Far East, and South East Asia. However, Muslims did not arrive in large numbers until after World War II (Syed: 2003).

During the 1950s and 1960s Pakistani students started coming to Australia along with other Asian students under the Commonwealth Scholarship and Colombo Plan. A number of Pakistani students, after completing their education, settled in New South Wales, Victoria and Canberra. Their numbers increased during 1970s and with the demise of the White Australia Policy in

1973, the flow of Pakistani professionals and students grew substantially (Syed: 2003). According to Australian official figures, between 1947 and 2001 the Muslim population in Australia rose from 2704 to 281,586, of which 11,876 are reported to be Pakistani (Saeed: 2003). There are no statistics available on Pakistani ancestry in Australia, as Australian census reports 2001 only included the data on ancestry of immigrant communities whose population was more than 50,000 (see ABS, *Australians Ancestries: 2001*). Therefore, it is impossible to ascertain what percentage of Pakistani Australians is born overseas and what percentage is born in Australia. However, given that only 22.3 per cent of Pakistani Australians speak English at home (ABS, *Australian Ancestries: 2001*), one can guess that the majority of Pakistanis still belong to the first generation, as one would expect much higher rates of English-speaking for subsequent generations.

Moreover, if we follow Syed's argument, that most cameleers who are popularly known as Afghans in Australia, were from the areas that became Pakistan after the partition of Indian subcontinent, the question arises whether we should consider a number of Australian born Afghans as Pakistanis as well. Since the Australian census provides no data to either confirm or deny Syed's argument, and there has been little independent research into the origins and history of the Afghan Cameleers and their descendents, for the purposes of this chapter we will consider only those Pakistani Australians who are counted in the Australian Census Report of 2001, as Pakistanis. The census report does not account for the religious and ethnic background of these people i.e. the percentage of Muslim and non-Muslim migrants from Pakistan and the percentage of different ethnic groups such as Punjabis, Sindhis, Baluchis, Urdu speaking and Pathans. However, according to many Pakistanis interviewed and based on my observations, it can be safely said that the majority of Pakistani migrants in Australia are Muslims, and ethnically they are Punjabis, Urdu Speaking and Pathans, second to them are Sindhis with a very few Baluchis. <sup>1</sup>

## IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

There are many sites of identity construction for the Pakistani diaspora in Australia. However, three stand out as most important to both external sources of differencing and internal self-identifying: Islamic religion, patriarchal family traditions, and the gender relations that are so often implicated in religious and family matters. However, it would be important to mention that most Pakistanis in Australia see religion as an individual affair and that it should be a sphere separate from the state. For this reason, most Pakistani Muslims like most other Muslims in Australia call themselves Australian Muslims. Moreover, most Pakistanis are not orthodox Muslims. Religion becomes important for them to maintain their family traditions. In this context, the overlap of family traditions and religion is observable, where the reconstruction of patriarchal family traditions of their country of origin are justified in the name of religion. The result is a disparity between male and female mobility and interaction with wider Australian society.

In this part of the chapter, it will be shown that family traditions impact upon the identity of the Pakistani diaspora in Australia this in turn impacts upon their interaction with the wider Australian community, and finally the imaginary of the wider Australian community of Muslims impacts upon the status of Pakistani communities<sup>2</sup>. It can be demonstrated that the wider Australian community sees Pakistani Muslims and Muslims from other countries in general as a problem, especially after September 11, 2001 and the coloring of Australian multicultural policy (after September 11, 2001) by the 'One Australia' policy of the current regime. This is articulated primarily in terms of a binary between the way of life the Anglo Celtic Australian majority and that of Muslims generally (and in our case of Pakistanis). This dichotomy produces reactions in the minorities which further enhances a sense of victimhood and isolation.

## FAMILY TRADITIONS AND IDENTITY

Following Tsagarousianou (2004) it can be argued that the Pakistani diaspora is not merely a nostalgic community dreaming to go back to their homeland some day (although some may articulate such sentiments), but is one that whilst maintaining its religious and ethnic identity, is in a process of negotiating its identity to relate to the wider Australian society on one hand, and on the other, to new ideas and cultural interactions. The following comment by a Pakistani is instructive of what they feel about their homeland:

In Pakistan also the joint family system is in a gradual state of dilapidation. There is a change occurring in Pakistan as well but the process is slow. I have observed that there (in Pakistan) also the unity between brothers no longer exists. It was not like this in the past. So people think if they have to live the same kind of life in Pakistan what's wrong here (in Australia). Here at least they have jobs and security. I know two families, which went to Pakistan to settle, but came back to Australia.

The comment is not in agreement with the overemphasis of writers such as Safran (1991) who argued that diasporic communities have strong nostalgic links with the original homeland. On the contrary what the comment suggests is that the homeland does not remain the same but changes with time. It is in this context that Hall points out that the identification of diasporic communities with their past and the 'possible return of these communities to homeland is precarious'. (Hall: 1993: 355, as quoted in Tsagarousianou: 2004: 56). Tsagarousianou thus argues that diasporic communities should not be seen as backward looking. Following Morley he maintains that diasporic experiences are 'almost invariably constituting new transnational spaces of experience (Morley: 2000) that are complexly interfacing with the experiential frameworks that both countries of settlement and the purported countries of origin represent' (Tsagarousianou: 2004: 57). In the case of Pakistani diasporic community in Australia, however, one modification to the above argument needs to be made. This pertains to the male dominated family units that have

different sanctions for adopting acculturation strategies for men and women. Too often than not diaspora is assumed to be gender neutral, whereas, the gender aspect of diaspora, it can be argued, at times, has major implications regarding identity construction and acculturation strategies of diasporic communities (Kalra, Kaur and Hutnyk, 2006).

Ghuman pointed out that Muslim families are reluctant when establishing relationships with the wider Australian society compared to Hindu and Sikh families (Singh Ghuman: 1997, as quoted in Fijac and Sonn: 2003). In the light of my own research Ghuman's observation seem to be simplistic. The level of integration of Muslims with wider society in Australia depends on two major factors. One, the nature of the economic status these families enjoy within Australia and the class character of the migrating families. Second, in the case of Pakistani Muslim immigrants in particular, it varies within immigrant families in Australia belonging to various ethnic groups living in different provinces in Pakistan (for example: Pathan, Punjabi, Sindhi, Baluchi and Urdu speaking). This point of view is shared by the findings of Fijac and Sonn, who examined the level of integration of Pakistani families with wider Australian community and noted that this varies by families belonging to different ethnic communities in Pakistan. For example, they have a view that Pathans are more conscious of maintaining their distinct Pathan culture and family traditions compared to Urdu speaking families. I would add Punjabi families in the latter category as well. This means that Pathans are more reluctant to integrate into wider society compared to Urdu speaking and Punjabis. The reason for such variance might be the uneven economic and cultural development of different ethnic groups belonging to different provinces in Pakistan. The Pathans mostly live in areas, which are still dominated by tribal culture, customs and value system. When they come abroad they bring the same cultural package with them to the host country. Hence, the ethnic background of Pakistanis Muslims becomes an important factor in determining the level of their integration with the wider Australian society. Moreover, it depends on the economic status and class orientation of the



migrating Muslim families. For example in the case of Iraqi refugee families in Australia, it has been observed that more than men, it is Muslim women who maintain wider contacts with Australian society. Many Iraqi women drive taxis and even buses and are the main contributors towards family's economic well-being.

On the whole in the case of Pakistani diaspora in Australia it is evident that there is a process in which Berry's (1999) formulation that diasporic communities usually tend to practice a mix of 'cultural maintenance' and 'contact-participation' strategies seems to be true. The former refers to the extent to which people wish to maintain their cultural identity and the latter refers to the extent to which 'people value and seek out contact with those outside their own groups, and wish to participate in the daily life of the larger society' (Berry: 1999:13). Usually the non-dominant groups wish to achieve both (Berry: 1999). However, it is observed that at times the two-pronged strategy is gender biased. This is because in Pakistani families it is mostly men's income the family depends on. Moreover, they usually come from middle and in some cases from upper middle classes in Pakistan (Saeed: 2003). For this reason, in families that rely more on men's income than women's, men tend to have wider contacts with Australian society compared to women who don't work. However it also depends upon the level of education women have. For example, in the case of women being doctors, psychiatrists and other professional women, they are also equally proactive in integrating into wider society.

Although there are no official statistics available regarding the percentage of Pakistani women employed, my interviews in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane offered the view that around 50 per cent of women do work outside homes. However, not all of them are highly qualified professional women. The income of most women is not the prime source of livelihood and is considered extra family income. Moreover, according to some female respondents, women start working outside the home when a family buys a house and needs extra income to pay monthly interest instalments. In families where men's income is the prime source of livelihood, it is they who have greater opportunities and approval of the family to

participate in functions organized by the wider Australian community and women seldom accompany them. Moreover, it is rare to observe that women from such families participate in the wider Australian life independently. It is also observed that many Pakistani men even go to bars and drink alcohol beverages such as beer and wines, however, they would never approve of these kinds of activities for women.

Since in most cases, the family's dependence is not on women's income<sup>3</sup>, based on Berry's formulation of a two pronged strategy of 'cultural maintenance' and contact-participation' of diasporic communities, it is observed that Pakistani women are mostly supposed to adopt the former strategy and men the latter. Women are usually expected to maintain the cultural traditions within the family and men to establish contacts with the wider society. The following comments from Pakistani women are instructive of this fact: "More acceptable for men to act western...women are expected to uphold traditions (Fijac and Sonn: 2004: 22)"; "man acts westernized is not seen as a big thing, but if a woman acts westernized she is seen as teaching children corruption (Fijac and Sonn: 2004: 22)". While sharing her observation about a Pakistani male colleague one of my female Australian friends made a commonly articulated comment that he acts Australian while at work but at home he is traditional and has put the burden of maintaining his family values on his wife.

While some Pakistani women do express dissatisfaction regarding the role assigned to them, others mostly accept the differences in gender roles in their families and community (Fijac and Sonn: 2004). This can be explained through the comments made by such Pakistani women in the study conducted by Fijac and Sonn: "we want roles assigned to us"; "we accept our role as a woman"; "Muslim women don't want the same rights as men...God has given special rights to them"; "Men and women who believe in their faith...know gender roles...carry them out with pride" (Fijac and Sonn: 2004: 22). While these women do adhere to the traditional view of gender roles, an important point needs to be made here, i.e. that like most Pakistani men, most women are not

practicing Muslims of the orthodox variety as well. It is not common that a woman prays five times a day, or wears a hijab to cover her neck and hair. Most Pakistani women, when they leave the home for shopping either wear pants or *shalwar kameez* with *duppata* on their shoulders (Pakistani dress). A Pakistani woman wearing the hijab is quite uncommon, even in Pakistan, with the exception of the North Western Frontier Province (NWFP), Baluchistan, and other “tribal” areas where women wear the veil. Moreover, even those Pakistani women in Australia who believe in traditional gender roles, at times resent the pressure put on them by men to uphold family traditions. For example a women while accepting traditional gender roles stated: “we’re happy to have these roles but don’t like pressure to keep the family on track (Fijac and Sonn: 2004: 22)”. Espin argued that following traditional gender roles within immigrant communities helps maintain traditional culture, but at the same time it isolates them from the host society (Espin: 1995, as quoted in Fijac and Sonn: 2004). In the case of Pakistani families Espin’s observation applies more to women than men. On the whole, however, gender disparity impacts upon the integration of the whole family into the wider society; though men do have opportunities and the family’s approval to independently interact with the host society.

As mentioned elsewhere, most Pakistanis are not orthodox Muslims and do not engage in the ritual practices of Islam. In most cases, this is even true for those women who accept the traditional gender roles. Religion is usually rediscovered by men as part of a diasporic revanchism that involves maintenance of patriarchal family values and gender hierarchy. It is commonly observed that Pakistanis at times become more religious abroad than they were in their own country. Men advocate religion within their families to justify gender roles. While this might be true in their country of origin as well, advocating religion and justifying patriarchal family traditions through religion becomes even more important in a western society. This is because in their country of origin the patriarchal norms are given and are part of the polity, whereas in Australia, they have to be reiterated due to different norms and

values regarding gender roles, male-female relationships and sexuality. In an interview this was effectively explained by a young Australian born Pakistani girl who commented that, 'in Pakistan, the Pakistanis live in their culture. Here they have to construct it'. In Australia, therefore, the perceptions of patriarchal family traditions acquire a new context and families at times are more conscious to follow them. In short, in Australia the family values of most Pakistani families stand in conflict with the wider Australian norms regarding gender roles and status and religion and in this context becomes instrumental in specializing gender hierarchy within the home. It acts as an anchor point to construct boundaries to contain women's behavior.

Werbner had argued that the transnational migrants try to preserve some of their cultural traditions while 'sinking roots in a new country', not for the sake of it, but because they have certain stakes in particular aspects of their culture (Werbner: 2003: 7). Such stakes pertain to power relations and 'culture as a medium of social interaction confers agency within a field of power relations (Werbner: 2003:7). Referring to the power struggle between men and women in Britain Werbner discussed the case of Pakistani families joining their male members in Britain in the 1960s. As wives joined their husbands they 'struggled to recapture their control over a quite different form of social exchange: the Punjabi gift economy, *Lena Dena*, 'taking and giving' (Werbner: 2003:7). Moreover, they also started neighborhood Quran readings followed by food offering. These practices, which Werbner calls 'female-dominated cultural symbolic complexes', were brought to Britain from Pakistan. Their husbands usually regarded 'ritual feasting and gift-giving as wasteful' (Werbner: 2003:8). She thus pointed out that 'the translocation of cultural practices to Britain was not automatic, a matter of nostalgic clinging to 'tradition', but the product of locally grounded power struggles—in this case, a gendered one between married women and their spouses' (Werbner: 2003: 8). In this context Werbner argues that women 'recreated the domestic and inter-domestic domains under their control. Through such culturally grounded transactions, they came over time to dominate

familial sociality. The men worked, the women networked' (Werbner: 2003: 8). Unlike Britain such a struggle is not visible in Australia. This might be because such processes only occur where transnational migrants are considerable in number and form huge clusters of families within certain localities. Within Australia this is not true generally, as in most cities we don't find huge clusters of Pakistani families concentrating in some particular localities. Moreover, there is another difference between Britain and Australia that pertains to the class dimension of Pakistanis in both these countries. The Pakistanis who were discussed by Werbner came out of predominantly peasant backgrounds in Pakistan and became petite bourgeoisie in UK, whereas, in Australia most Pakistanis are professionals. The Punjabi gift economy of *Lena Dena* (give and take) is more entrenched into rural polity than urban locations from where the Pakistani professionals come. The reoccurrence of gift economy within the Pakistani community (that Werbner talked about) in UK, therefore, might be because of the class background of these immigrants.

On the whole, it can be argued that the whole process of identity formation lies in-between the needs to relate to the new culture whilst maintaining the actual or newly perceived patriarchal family traditions. Espin had argued that the immigrants in western societies are caught between the expectations of the host society and the ones of their own community (Espin: 1995, as quoted in Fijac and Sonn: 2004). In this context as mentioned earlier Pakistani men (not always but most of the time) in Australia are in a position to fulfill the expectations of the host society, however, women usually are not. This is also because the families in which both men and women have integrated well into the wider society have to face community pressure. They are seen as westernized and away from their own culture. For example, few Pakistani women and men even have Australian husbands and wives and few Pakistani families have integrated fully into the host society, other families within the Pakistani community see them as being too westernized. Such families are therefore at times isolated from their own community. They have more interactions and relations with

Australians than Pakistanis. Community pressure, therefore, also impacts upon the integration process and identity formation of individual immigrant families. This is at least true for the first generation of Pakistani diaspora; with the second and third generations the situation changes. The second generation is surely more Australian than the first. This, however, causes frustration within the first generation as they find themselves helpless to do anything to keep the next generation linked to their family traditions

### ANGLO CELTIC PRIVILEGE, VISION ABOUT MUSLIMS AND PAKISTANIS INTEGRATION WITH WIDER COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA

Another important aspect in the context of the integration of Pakistanis with the wider Australian community is the vision of the Australian public in general and that of the Australian state in particular about different ethnic communities and especially Muslim communities. This vision overlooks the cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity within the Muslim community and the diversity of ideas about religion and culture within an ethnic group. In the context of the Sydney riots between white Australians and Lebanese Muslims, the anthropologist Professor Andrew Dawson argued that these events and the commentary that accompanied them 'provide an important window onto the state of contemporary cultural politics in Australia. In this context a number of key processes can be identified' (Dawson: 2006:146). One of the processes, according to him, 'involved ethnic homogenization and specification, whereby the diversity of riotous factions was progressively representationally expunged and replaced initially by a conflict between Anglo-Celtic Australians and others and lastly by a conflict between Australians and Muslims' (Dawson: 2006:146). This comment highlights two points: one, that Australian nationalism is still dominated by the Anglo Celtic community, and the other, that any notion of multiculturalism produces ethnic communities as homogenous or more appropriately as a homogenous 'Other'. This fact is also verified by a telephonic

survey of 5056 residents in Queensland and New South Wales that examined the attitudes to 'cultural difference, perceptions of the extent of racism, tolerance of specific groups, ideology of the nation, perceptions of Anglo Celtic cultural privilege, and belief in racialism, racial separatism and racial hierarchy' (Dunn, Forrest, Burnley, McDonald: 2004:1). Kevin M Dunn, et al. conducted this survey and in the concluding paragraph of their research findings, they stated:

The social construction of cultural groups as problematic, by dint of supposed or generalised cultural practices, is a key aspect of the new racism. Another is the culturally exclusive construction of what constitutes the mainstream, the normal, or indeed the nation. There are more respondents who denied there was Anglo cultural privilege in Australia than there were those who recognized it. Recognition of privilege was especially associated with those born overseas, and with those who used a language other than English. Preparedness to make judgments on whether some groups do not belong to Australian society was itself culturally uneven. This culturally varied recognition suggests that privilege itself is culturally uneven. Given the findings on out groups and privilege, the degree of fit of cultural groups was most likely judged along an Anglo (or Anglo Celtic) yardstick. This provides yet another indicator of the unevenness of national belonging. The survey findings reported here generally suggest that the Australian national imaginary still remains very Anglo-Celtic (Dunn, Forrest, Burnley, McDonald: 2004:11).

In light of the above, it can be argued that the homogenization of ethnic communities (and especially of Muslims) and at times the intolerance to accept the cultural values of immigrants, especially the varied cultures of Muslim immigrants, makes it difficult for the former to integrate in the dominant culture of the host country. Muslims in this context feel uncomfortable with the way they are seen and at times are resentful of how the dominant Australian community sees them and portrays them in the media.

Fijac and Sonn in their study on Pakistani women living in western Australia reported that their participants in the study 'believed that perceptions of them as Muslim women held by the

western host society are severely distorted and unfounded, perhaps encouraged by misinformed western media' (Fijac and Sonn: 2004: 23) The following comments of these women are instructive of what they think about the perceptions of the wider Australian community towards them: "Westerners believe Asian women...are incapable"; we are frustrated with white society, they perceive us to be brain dead, brainwashed...outside people, so ignorant" (Fijac and Sonn:2004:23). While rejecting ethnic homogenization these women were critical of how the wider Australian community overlooks the diversity within the Muslim community and reduces their cultural diversity and identity into a stereotypically one-dimensional identity of being Muslims. For example they were of the opinion that, 'not all Muslims are Pakistanis and not all Pakistanis are Muslims (Fijac and Sonn: 2004: 17). They believed that westerners confuse the Pakistanis with other Muslim cultures perceiving Muslim identity as a race and not a religion (Fijac and Sonn: 2004). The argument of these women can be extended further in the light of cultural differences that can exist even within the citizens from one country but belonging to different ethnic communities. For example, as mentioned earlier, Pakistan being a federal state contains various ethnic communities such as Punjabis, Sindhis, Urdu Speaking, Pathans and Baluchis. These ethnic communities that belong to the same country possess different cultural traditions and values, which affect the process of their assimilation in a western country<sup>4</sup>.

Though, it might be true that the wider Australian community perceives Muslims as a homogenous community, the perceptions of the Pakistani community towards them are also somewhat the same. They also take the Australian wider community as practicing 'one western culture', assuming that people belonging to such culture probably are highly individualistic/selfish, materialistic and sexually free. For example: 'A Pakistani respondent while differentiating between Pakistani and Australian culture commented that in Pakistan, 'when someone grows older, his views about family matter command more respect, while in Australia when someone grows older his views become less important because he becomes



retired and economically poor'. This comment is surely too general and puts all westerners in Australia in one basket, as one can witness many families amongst them that equally value and care for their elders the way Pakistanis do. Moreover, it is observable that not all Pakistanis follow this norm. Another view by a respondent about a Pakistani student whom he found drinking and having a girlfriend in his arms seems to generalize the host community in Australia. While explaining this he showed his disappointment in deteriorating Pakistan youth and said: 'some Pakistani students belonging to rich families become totally westernized. The other day a Pakistani student came to me who was drunk having an Aussie girlfriend in his arm'. What he was implying was that some Pakistani youth become as perverted sexually as Australians are. Here he could not distinguish between different moralities and took the issue of morality as constant around the world.

Despite the need to acknowledge that minorities also hold homogenous views of majorities, it does not divert from the fact that the dominant ethos in the social and political landscape is created by Anglo Celtic Australians. Their views of Muslims as a homogenous community and the notion that 'cultural diversity to be deleterious to a strong and harmonious society' has significantly more impact on Australian multiculturalism, compared to the opinions of a few Muslims who view the wider Australian community in the same manner. In this context Dunn, et al. while agreeing with Jayasuriya's (2002:43) analyses of racism suggested that 'the confrontation of this sociobiological and pessimistic understanding of nation remains an unfinished public policy imperative of Australian multicultural policy' (Dunn, Forrest, Burnley, McDonald: 2004:11). The Multicultural policy in Australia, it can be argued, is still at the state of adolescence and needs to be further developed and strengthened through education and mass media.

On the whole it can be argued that the process of identity formation of Pakistani diaspora in Australia has three main dimensions: One: gender, Two: religion, and Three: Pakistanis

perceived as homogenous Muslims and not Muslims belonging to a specific socio-cultural background. The gender dimension is reflected in the process of acculturation where Pakistanis tend to have a mixed strategy of assimilation while maintaining their distinct cultural traditions. However, in this process the burden of maintaining such tradition mostly lies on the shoulders of women. Religion also becomes important, and at times more important than it would be for them in their country of origin in the context of maintaining family tradition. Otherwise most families are not orthodox Muslims in their daily life and are moderate. In the end their identity is considerably influenced by the way the wider Australian community perceives them. This has become significantly more important after 11 September 2001 and the attacks of Muslim extremists on the World Trade Center in USA.

#### EFFECTS OF SEPTEMBER 11

There would be rare examples in the entire history of mankind of a day such as September 11, 2001 that changed the entire world. Its main consequence—the US ‘war on terror’ divided ‘the world into friends and enemies’ (Humphrey: 2005: 133). Yet this divide is not based on cultural or geographical separation (Humphrey: 2005). International migration in advance countries has made the cities of these countries transnational places and ‘thus while the war on terrorism rhetorically divides the world, it at the same time declares war everywhere (Humphrey: 2005: 133). The impact of September 11, therefore, should be seen in the context of a globalizing world, which has become interconnected through mass migration from the South to the North (Humphrey: 2005). While September 11 raised new questions about international security and about the issue of addressing non-traditional threats, it also significantly impacted Muslim communities in states such as the UK, Germany, France, USA and Australia. As elsewhere, in Australia too a heated debate began, especially in the media, on the issue of Islam and the Muslim community (Saeed: 2003). Two main points of views emerged. One argued for the need of taking a hard look at ‘Islam and the potential threat it poses to Australia,

its society and values' (Saeed: 2003: IV). The others argued that the Muslim community in Australia is not a homogenous community but has diverse Islamic practices and origins and not all are extremists or could be called as terrorist (Saeed: 2003). On the whole, however, 'their institutions, beliefs and norms became the focus of the media and Australian security services' (Saeed: 2003: IV). A small but vocal segment of Australian society saw Islamic symbols with hatred, 'which was often directed at Muslims' (Saeed: 2003: V).

The situation led to a reaction in which immigration policy was reviewed resulting in major amendments to existing legislation. One such amendment was the introduction of the Form 1190 for applicants applying for permanent residence in Australia (Hugo: 2002: 4). This form asks questions whether the applicant had any military background or training in weapons (Hugo: 2002: 4). Another form being introduced pertains to a character assessment of applicants. The applicants are required to present a Police Clearance Certificate from their home country. If the applicant has been in Australia for the last 12 months he has to submit Police Clearance Certificates both from his home country and the Australian Federal Police. In general there has been an increased cancellation of visas because of these issues (Hugo: 2002: 4). However, apart from facing hassle, this particular legislation will not affect Pakistani applicants, as most of them are either former students, who acquired their education in Australia, or professionals coming from Pakistan. In contrast, another change that occurred after September 11 was an 'increased activity in immigration compliance with hard line programs to locate, detain and depart people who are without visas in Australia or people who are in breach of their visa conditions' (Hugo: 2002: 4). This has certainly affected Pakistani students, as cases of them being detained and deported from Australia for breaching their visa condition regarding 'work eligibility as a student in Australia' have been reported. Indeed, the areas where Pakistanis are most affected by the new policies are those relating to student or visitor's visas. In granting a student or visitor's visa, the immigration policy is marked by

differentiation. For example, the students of certain countries such as Pakistan and China are placed at assessment level 4 and countries such as India and Iran are placed in 'assessment level 3 for getting student visa for higher education'<sup>5</sup>. This implies that it is very hard for students from these countries to secure a student visa for Australia as 'there are virtually impossible benchmarks set in terms of financial capacity' (Hugo: 2004:9). On the other hand for rich and developed countries, much lower standards are set. As for visitor's visa, obtaining such a visa is extremely difficult. Visitors from the countries marked as risk countries, in most cases are not granted visitor's visa unless a sponsor lodges a security bond 'ensuring that all visa holders would keep their visa conditions' (Hugo: 2004: 9). In this regard, Pakistan is considered to be one of those countries that are rated as high risk destinations<sup>6</sup>. This certainly affects Pakistanis in getting student as well as visitors visas.

The above changes in immigration policy can be seen in the light of Humphrey's argument. He argued that 'the Australian Government has shifted from a perspective of reconciliation to one of risk, from a future premised on social inclusion of diversity to one premised on social exclusion, based on suspicion of the dangerous 'Other' (Humphrey: 2005: 133). According to Humphrey, the period of reconciliation in Australia was the one when immigrants and indigenous Australians got their cultural difference and rights recognized in Australia (Humphrey: 2005). This recognition reflected in the policy of multiculturalism for immigrants and the recognition of land rights and cultural heritage of Aboriginal Australians (Humphrey: 2005). The post September 11 situation that transformed the policy of reconciliation to the one of 'risk' is reflected in 'One Australia' policy of the present regime. In this context Humphrey stated:

This shift to a risk perspective has changed the terms of participation of Muslim immigrants in the West (especially in Western Europe and Australia). They had already been regarded as socially problematic and even culturally incompatible with multicultural values because of their social marginality and their conspicuous cultural identification through

public Islamic rituals and symbolic dress. The effect of the Al-Qaeda terrorist attacks in the United States was to deepen racism towards Muslims in Western societies everywhere through the collective fear the attacks engendered (Humphrey: 2005: 134).

Fijac and Sonn's observations are in line with the above statement they argue that September 11 'had a significant impact on the daily functions of individuals with this community' (Fijac and Sonn: 2004: 16). Their research findings suggested that while Pakistanis in Western Australia were already experiencing some discrimination, but since September 11 racism no longer remained concealed, 'but more overt in the form of violent threats and attacks' (Fijac and Sonn: 2004: 2004: 16). The following comments are instructive of this fact: "Racism, threats, discrimination increased dramatically since September 11"; "Since September 11 people have become even more violent than before"; there are more incidences of racism because of negative stuff on T.V"; and "People were always racist... now they are more violent and aggressive" (Fijac and Sonn: 2004: 2004: 16). Elaborating further Fijac and Sonn stated: "these findings suggest racism experienced by participants and other Muslims are primarily based on the fact they are Muslim rather than being Pakistani". One of their research participants in this context commented that: "Racist attacks against Muslims in Australia has gotten much worse since September 11" and "Attacks since September 11 are on Muslims"; "Since September 11, Western society now has a reason or justification to display hatred against Muslims" (Fijac and Sonn: 2004: 17).

## CONCLUSIONS:

There is not much written on the life and history of the Pakistani diaspora in Australia. The above account was meant, therefore, to be an overture that presented themes for future study, rather than a definitive statement. The chapter was divided into three sections. Section one shed light on the historical links between Pakistan and Australia. Section two focused on the issue of identity construction of Pakistanis in Australia. In this context, the focus was on three key factors in the identity construction of Pakistani Muslims in

Australia: religion, gender, and family. On the basis of empirical evidence, it has been argued that the single most important of these three sites for identity construction is religion, which often provides the lens through which the cultural traditions of their native land are interpreted and justified for their maintenance. Moreover, it has been argued that religious identity becomes a significantly more important factor for most Pakistanis in Australia than it would be in Pakistan, where their strong patriarchal family traditions are not forced to stand face to face with the dominant western culture. In particular, Pakistani women become the crucible on which relations with the host society are tested, thus restricting their adjustment and integration, and at times, impacting on the interaction of the whole family with the wider community. On the whole, therefore, the process of acculturation and adaptation is gender biased and built around stereotyping that impact on the perceptions of the wider community and upholds the intolerance of those<sup>7</sup> who believe in protecting the Anglo-Celtic Australian culture from the habits and beliefs of other nations and cultures. Like other Muslim communities, Pakistanis face cultural racism in Australia.

Finally, section three examined the particular impact of the events of September 11, 2001 on the interplay between Pakistani and other Australians, particularly the dominant Anglo-Celtic hegemon. September 11 further increased intolerance on the part of Australians as a whole, and raised fears among Pakistanis that they are not only considered foreign, but also dangerous, due to their origin in a predominantly Muslim country. While nobody can argue against the issue of security and the threat of terrorism, one aspect that needs to be kept in vision is that increased emphasis on potential risk leading to the 'one Australia' policy might in the long run lead Australia to what Andrew Dawson has feared. In one of his concluding remarks in his chapter on the Sydney riots he stated: "Certainly, in the era of the 'war on terror' and the 'home grown terrorist' one cannot discount the possibility of a return to an old style 'white Australia' approach of highly targeted immigration in which Islamic people are regarded as the most undesirable' (Dawson: 2006: 147).

## NOTES

1. The information presented in this chapter is based on semi-structured interviews with several individuals chosen by purposive sampling, in Melbourne, several telephonic interviews in Brisbane and Sydney -, as well as my own observations during three years of doctoral study in Anthropology and Development Studies at the University of Melbourne between 2003 and 2006, this chapter endeavors to present a few of the key motifs of the life of Pakistanis in Australia.
2. Such imagery essentializes Muslims as extremists and reluctant to adopt modern values and way of life. It also sees Muslims migrating from various countries as one ethnic community and not as communities having the same religion but different social and cultural backgrounds.
3. Excluding those families where women are highly qualified or are professionals, as in such families even if men have more income than women, women do assert themselves.
4. As mentioned elsewhere, Pathans are more reluctant to assimilate with the wider Australian community compared to other ethnic communities coming from Pakistan.
5. There are four risk assessment levels for various study levels. Most countries from Western Europe and other rich countries such as Canada and Japan are listed in the most favorable assessment level (Hugo: 2002: 9). Applicants from these countries have the privilege of lodging more informal onshore applications via the Internet, a service not available to assessment level 4 applicants (Hugo: 2002: 9).
6. Such country ratings were already in place even before September 11, and Hugo had predicted in 2002 that there 'would be stronger reliance placed on such classifications in future'. (Hugo: 2002: 4)
7. They are few but very vocal.



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PART THREE

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# Transforming Rituals





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## Finding One's Place

Everyone settles at last, each in their own place.  
No one can stay for long in someone else's place.

Everyone must find and build a place of their own,  
even if it seems they have a ready-made place.

The heart and the glance that were parted for so long,  
met again today at an old rendezvous place.

Where all are content in their own respective space –  
in my imagination there *is* such a place.

There is no charm here in living, or in dying.  
Who counselled you to inhabit another's place?

I grumble about you, but there is also love.  
There is room for both—each has its distinctive place.

It's not easy to discover an heir to Qais;  
for much too long this has remained a vacant place.

That site of which you have been neglectful, Basir —  
that is none other than *your* own space, your true place.

*Note, Qais or Majnoon was the legendary star-crossed lover of Leila.*

Ghazal: Basir Sultan Kasmi



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## CHAPTER 10

# Chains of Migrants: Culture, Value and the Housing Market

PNINA WERBNER

In Manchester...one grew accustomed to one's friends being Jews or Germans or both, or Armenians or Turks or both, but to be a Tory now, that was the stigma of uncleanness. (R.Ryan, granddaughter of C.P. Scott, editor of the Manchester Guardian; cited in Kennedy 1970:130).

**T**wentieth century Manchester is still, perhaps, the most cosmopolitan northern provincial city. Although it has long lost its focal position in world trade, Manchester remained a large administrative and commercial center, and until the 1960s it retained its prominence in distribution, wholesaling and manufacturing. Most industries in the city today are concentrated in small-scale manufacturing, particularly in the garment industry, in relatively sophisticated secondary industries such as food processing, high technology or engineering. The service sector has come to be prime importance, and Manchester is also one of the largest educational centres in Europe...In its heyday during the nineteenth century Manchester had a thousand warehouses in the central city, alongside ninety-nine spinning mills, dyeing and printing works (Mellor, 1984:7). Inner Manchester districts such as Ancoats and Cheetham Hill had a sweatshop sector built on a long tradition of outwork Mellor, 1984:8). By the 1950s, however, Manchester was a deindustrialising city with a declining population and a contracting labour force.

Within this context of general industrial and commercial contraction, the social economy of Pakistan immigrants represents a remarkable counter-tend. Like the Chinese and other Asian immigrants, they settled in a declining industrial city which was fast losing its prominence even as a regional metropolis...The flourishing of immigrant entrepreneurship in an apparently declining economy raises general theoretical questions. If, for example, we are to argue that immigrant entrepreneurship must be understood as responsive to favourable 'opportunity structures'(cf. Ward 1986), then the Manchester case illustrates that such opportunities, if they exist, must nevertheless be perceived, recognised or discovered. In other words, the construction of meaning crucially determines economic strategy. Manchester, a city apparently in inexorable decline, has become for Asian immigrants a base for potential economic prosperity. Migrants also counter the general trend of settlement patterns and household structure in the inner city.

Migrants also counter the trend of settlement patterns and household structure in the inner city. The majority of Pakistanis are, like other Asian immigrants, owner occupiers who uphold highly conventional marital norms, strong familial authority structures and, with few exceptions, relatively enduring and stable households....Seen in a broader perspective, however, Pakistanis in Manchester, like recent immigrants throughout Britain, are an extremely vulnerable population....At the start of my field work, in 1975, Pakistani workers were already losing their jobs as major externally owned factories in the region were closed. Most of these workers failed to find alternative factory work in the city. They either left for factory jobs elsewhere or opened their own business. Some of the older workers have remained unemployed....Asians are also the immigrant group most subject to racial harassment and abuse, including severe attacks on property and persons. The vast majority of (reported) incidents in Manchester have occurred in the inner city 'core' are in neighborhoods of high Asian settlement.

Yet, with all this, Manchester has remained, if not the 'shock' city of the post-war period, a highly cosmopolitan urban centre. Immigrants not only form a residential mosaic throughout the city and its suburbs, but they are highly evident in its workforce and in its business community, at home as much in the city's commercial centre as in its outer suburbs.

### IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENT AND THE 'PHENOMENOLOGY OF HOUSING'

The social and spatial distribution of Pakistani immigrants in Manchester during the 1980s is the outcome of processes of settlement and movement which have occurred over more than three decades. The hallmark of this settlement has been the propensity of these migrants to move, and to appreciate the significance of this movement, we need to examine how systems of meaning codify and determine spatial distribution within a city. The issue of housing and residence is, at its core, a profoundly phenomenological one. Values, markets and meaning interrelate to create both immigrant ghettos and exclusive suburbs. What a house or a neighbourhood *is* first and foremost, what it *means*. Even within a single city, the 'natural' concept of housing varied both synchronically, over time, and diachronically for different local populations.

The meanings constructed around housing and urban localities are both personal and collective, and they need, moreover, to be analysed in processual terms. From an individual perspective, the significance of a house or neighbourhood varies systematically according to his or her age and familial life cycle phase. For immigrants, it also varies according to migration phase. The intersection of these two axes (of migration and familial phases) has determined for Pakistanis the values allocated to space, privacy and locality. Where one phase has been marked by a stress on sociability, gregariousness and an obliteration of spatial divisions, the next phase has been marked by a stress on spatial segregation into areas of social and privacy. In one phase residents were inwardly oriented, towards the house and its occupants; in the next

phase much greater value has come to be attached to the neighbourhood and its social environment. Although it is true that the meanings attributed to space and housing derive from their location within a personal biography, our interest here is in the emergence of an inter subjective, collective, set of evaluations, stemming, perhaps, from labour migrants' shared personal circumstances.

In this more radical sense, the meanings attributed to space and housing are cultural and ideological. The Western 'culture of housing' that South Asian immigrants have encountered in Britain is characterized by a fundamental dualism. 'Nature', beyond the city, and 'civilization' or 'Culture', at its centre, constitute opposing poles of attraction, in constant tension. The suburb represents an uneasy compromise between the two. 'Nature' and 'Culture' are both in turn opposed to industrial and urban pollution or decay (i.e. negative 'Culture'), phenomena which precipitate a movement out of certain neighbourhoods.

In practice these Western cultural ideals operate in a setting where social status, like stigma, is a highly contagious personal identification: to associate closely with members of the elite is to acquire their attributes. Thus, the values accorded to housing are, in the final analysis, the outcome of social exclusivity and avoidance, of a constant creation, or intervention, of new housing ideals, combining values of space and privacy, of 'Nature' and 'culture', unattainable by lower strata in the society. The new values that are evolved legitimize the continued dominance of a society's elites, while the whole system of meanings depends on a definition of values within the reach of an elite, yet widely shared by most members of the society. Hence the exchange value of housing, rather than determining the value attributed to it, is better regarded as an outcome of currently negotiated orders of value. A loft in an exclusive neighbourhood costs more than a mansion in a slum.

Certain urban populations do, however, create encapsulated housing markets with their own 'natural' features: young singles, students, or bohemians are familiar examples of this tendency, tangibly represented on the urban landscape. Populations remote



from the elite are also likely to evolve alternative systems of evaluations. Just as they construct and pursue a 'local provincial moral order' (Suttles 1968:9), they also construct their own evaluations of housing and residential neighbourhoods.

Labour migrants, the prototypical strangers, are one such group distinguished because they do not share the pervasive public set of meanings and evaluations (cf. Dahya 1974). They neither recognize, nor wish to recognize, its unquestionable truth. It thus becomes possible for them to treat housing rather pragmatically, in terms of different criteria of space, costs, needs, future salability, increments and profits. For Pakistanis status is not initially anchored primarily in the house they live in in Britain as labour migrants, but in their house at home, in Pakistan. They thus often spend a great deal more on housing back home, which they rarely live in and which often remains empty, than they do on housing in Britain (cf. Ballard 1987; also Watson 1975; Helweg 1979). They are, it must be recognized, *dual* home owners, and their primary status is anchored, at least initially, in their home in Pakistan.

## THE HISTORY OF MOVEMENT IN THE CITY

It is commonly believed by local Pakistanis in the city that the first Punjabi Muslims to arrive in Manchester were two well-known local figures, one of whom came in 1927, the other in 1937.[1] They settled in terraced housing just south of the city centre, around Oxford Road, and were joined by a small trickle of others, some of whom came over in response to report about Manchester that they sent home. After the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, the families of these early migrants were forced to move as refugees into the newly created state of Pakistan (some had moved of their own volition into the 'canal Colonies' of Pakistan even before Partition). By that time many of the Manchester based Pakistanis had ventured into private enterprise mainly door to door peddling, market trading and wholesaling (in the case of the earliest pioneers). [2] During the 1950s their business began to prosper, and they brought their sons over, to help run these enterprises, as well as a large number of relatives and friends. In 1948, I was told,

there were only 'a few hundred of our people' all living in the Chorlton-on Medlock area just south of the centre of town near the University (see Map 1.2). Like the two early settlers, most originated from East Punjab (now Indian Punjab)—mainly from the Jullundur District, some from Hoshiarpur (see Map 1.1) [3]. The majority were also members of the *Arain* Muslim caste which had a large population in Jullundur [4].

The arriving immigrants lived in crowded quarters, sharing accommodation and living expenses. A now prosperous businessman told me that living expenses at that time came to one pound a week; could be saved. The early comers were linked to each other by previous ties of neighborliness, kinship or friendship but, even more importantly, by the intensity of relationships generated by the small size of the community at the time. Even today, these early comers continue to retain close links with one another and to set themselves apart from other, later settlers.

During the 1950s the main arrivals, apart from relatives and friends of the early comers, were students coming to study at the various institutions of higher education in Manchester. They too settled around the University, and spearheaded the move into Victoria Park (see Map 1.2). Many came from the same area of origin as the early migrant workers and traders, i.e. from the same districts of East Punjab, [5] and were often linked to them by kinship or family friendship, the link between students turned professionals and the early migrants, forged during the late 1950s and early 1960s, has persisted, and...is an important feature of leadership in the community.

## THE BACHELOR HOUSES AND THE CREATION OF A BENEFICIAL ECONOMIC CYCLE

For a long time migrants continued to live in 'bachelor' houses, four or five to a room, sharing expenses. This pattern of bachelor housing, the relationship between landlords and lodgers, and those between lodgers, have been carefully documented by a number of anthropologists (Desai 1963:39-55; Aurora 1967:35—49; Dahya 1974) [6]. A man on his arrival was provided with free lodging

until a job could be found for him. After he had saved enough money he would buy a house of his own, often with the help of an interest-free loan from his former landlord, and from friends, and would himself become a landlord to arriving new comers. A beneficial economic cycle was thus created during this period, redirecting resources internally, and minimizing dependence on the receiving society and on statutory bodies.

**Table 1.1 Life Styles and Housing**

Migration Phase:	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
Life Cycle Phase:	Single men	Young families	Extended, complex 3 generational families
Spatial Values:	Obliteration of internal spatial divisions	Strict internal spatial divisions by function, age and sex	Joint family living: Internal divisions into conjugal units
Nighbourhood and house choice:	Cheap, large houses. Little value accorded to neighbourhood	Family homes. Increasing importance accordance to neighbourhood	Renewed search for larger houses to accommodate extended family. Increasing awareness of the neighbourhood evaluations of wider society
Status differences and power aspirations:	Equality	Differentiation: affluent—inner or outer suburbs. Workers—“conformists” in central enclave, “independent in enclave periphery	Increasing differentiation. Move to outer suburbs by the more affluent
Economic strategy:	Purchase of lodging houses. Rental to incoming immigrants	1. Pay off mortgage as soon as possible. 2. Purchase, renovate and sell 3. Rent to students, etc. 4. Long term mortgage (only if long-term secure job)	Young couples move back to central enclave in order to purchase cheap terrace housing.

Labour migration:	Remittances	Investment in Pakistan (housing, and, tractors, etc).	Continued investment in Pakistan (including business investment.
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By 1975-77, during the main period of my field work, there were only a few 'bachelor' houses left, scattered throughout the city. For most migrants this period has been incorporated into the collective mythology of migration. The memories evoked are thus not primarily of squalor or bad living conditions but of camaraderie, sharing and weekend get together, of card games, political debates and, quite often, flirting with local girls and illicit drinking (drink is prohibited according to Islam). In retrospect this period, is seen as one when all men were equal, when they formed a true, 'community of suffering'. The very physical hardship of these early days has been transformed culturally into a myth of endurance and sharing, a trial period successfully overcome (cf p. Werbner 1980a).

By the late 1960s most men had brought their families over to Britain, while even single men had purchased their own houses. Since the flow of migration was stopped following the progressive tightening of immigration controls during the 1960s, the waves of new comers to fill the bachelor houses had disappeared. Today most single men own their own houses or share them with a kinsman or a friend. Others live with married relatives (cf. Table 1.1 on home ownership in general)

## THE SECOND WAVE OF MIGRANTS

The number of migrants arriving in Manchester in the late 1950s increased dramatically to reach its climax during the early 1960s. Many of the migrant men I knew came to Britain during this period. The second wave of migrants, unlike the early one, came from all over Western Punjab and even from Karachi (see Map 1.1). The migrants came from Gujrat and Jhelum Districts, and from the Canal Colonies of Faisalabad (then Lyallpur), Sahiwal, Multan and bahawarpur; a few came from Gujar-Khan Sub-District (*tahsil*) in the Rawalpindi District, from Mirpur in Azad Kashmir and from Campbellpur in the North-West Frontier.

One large kindred group came from Gujranwala having first served in the British army. Migrants also came from the big cities—Lahore, Rawlapindi, Faislabad, Sahiwal and Karachi—but many of these had originally come from villages or towns in East Punjab or North India- their families had moved to these cities at the time of Partition [7]...By the time of the great influx of migrants in the 1960s, the early migrants had established themselves financially and were moving out of the earlier area of settlement in search of separate accommodation for their newly arrived families. In the case of the more successful migrant, they were also seeking superior housing to match their improved material conditions.

The movement south in the late 1960s started from a single area around the University and had three prongs: to the southwest, to the southeast, and due south. Of the early immigrants who had lived around the University and had moved out in the early 1960s, some first moved to Moss Side and then, following the urban renewal scheme and improved economic conditions (which happened to coincide for many in the late 1960s), they moved further into the inner suburbs of the city—to Whalley Range, Chorlton—cum—Hardy and West Didsbury. North Whalley Range is today a transitional area where many ethnic groups intermingle. It has its own residential cluster in an area of large Victorian terraces. Within this area, Asian household concentrations are as high as 30 per cent. Another set of migrants moved due south through Rusholme to Fallow field, Ladybarn, Withington and Didsbury. Fallowfield is another such transitional area. From Victoria Park migrants followed the path southeastwards through West Long-sight, Levenshulme, Burnage, Ladybarn—all solid working class areas—and into Stockport's inner suburbs, Heaton Moor and Heaton Mersey. These 'invaders' were joined by other Asian businessmen and professionals, some of East African origin, who settled directly in the suburbs (cf. Novikowski and Ward 1978/9). The fan-like movement of immigrants is exemplified by the Sikh community's movement from east of Oxford Road in a southwest direction to Whalley Range and Chorlton-cum-Hardy, where they now have their main temple.

## URBAN RENEWAL AND THE SOUTHWARD MOVEMENT

In the late 1950s the City Corporation embarked on a large-scale clearance programme, perhaps the most extensive in Europe; the whole area, which at the time constituted the main Asia residential cluster i.e Hulme, Greenheys, Chorlton-on Medlock and, later, parts of Moss Side and Rusholme—was cleared during the following ten years. This precipitated a gradual fan movement southwards as one area after another was demolished.

Migrants began buying small family houses south of the area of initial settlement, and West Long sight in particular gradually became the heart of the immigrant residential enclave. Long sight, one of the main bases of my field work, is an area of three-bedroomed, terraced or semidetached houses. Most Pakistanis live in the central part of the area where there are no gardens and little greenery to alleviate the drabness of the surroundings; nevertheless, most of the housing in the neighbourhood is in reasonable condition and surrounding it are leafy streets with bigger houses. Neighbouring Victoria Park has also remained an important immigrant centre. Its houses are in better condition than those of other early immigrant areas, and it has been designated as a conservation area by the City Council.

The urban renewal scheme proved extremely advantageous for many of the migrants who had purchased their own houses early on. Most migrants seemed to feel that the corporation compensated them very adequately, and the money they received was used by most to invest in better quality, more expensive housing, often with the additional help of a private, building society or Council mortgage. The renewal scheme happened to coincide with the time when many migrants began bringing their families to Britain, so they bought small, three-bedroomed terraced or semi-detached houses in place of the large Victorian houses preferred for house letting. Since house prices in Manchester began to rise dramatically towards the end of 1970, and doubled in 1971 and then again in 1972, many migrants saw a more valuable property than they had originally owned multiply in value within a short time. For a large number of migrants house ownership proved to be an extremely

profitable investment; on the whole, the houses they own today are in fair or good condition, making it worthwhile to invest further in home improvements. Many are in attractive, tree-lined neighbourhoods, and some have gardens...

As many researchers in Britain have found, concentrations of immigrants tend to occur in specific streets and localities within a neighbourhood, rather than uniformly throughout it. This is probably due primarily to migrant preference for certain types of housing; once housing changes hands, it is rarely sold back to members of the previous residential group. The desire to live close to friends and relatives is an additional factor, often cited by migrants....

'Twilight zones' of deteriorating properties turned into lodging houses were no longer prominent in south Manchester in the late 1970s, mainly because most slum areas had been cleared, and with few new immigrants there was less demand for rooms in lodging houses. The city moreover, has never had a restrictive policy regarding lodging areas, as appears to have been the case in Birmingham (cf. Rex and Moore 1967). Much of the student lodging was, in fact, located in middle-class areas of the city such as Didsbury and Chorlton-cum-Hardy, as well as in less affluent suburbs such as Fallow field and Whalley Range. Immigrant lodging, too appears to have been widely scattered.

A myriad of ethnic groups intermingle within this area, alongside the more elderly population of the indigenous society, university students and other temporary residents. Hence Longsight, like Victoria Park, has now become a multi-ethnic area. In Victoria Park, Irish, Poles, Ukrainians, Jews, Italians, Chinese and West Indians reside alongside the different Asian groups, living evidence of the successive migrations to the city.

## CENTRES AND CLUSTERS

Rather than being fully concentrated within a ghetto, the community focuses around key institutional locations—of worship, education, shopping and commerce. These central places constitute locuses of high economic or cultural value. The first of these are,

of course, the immigrant residential enclaves, which constitute primary focuses of dense, closely knit networks and extensive sociability. The second communal focus is the commercial shopping area located quite separately from these enclaves. In the early period of settlement the centre was said to have been located closer to the main Asian residential cluster around the University, on Oxford Road and Upper Brook Street. This was also the area where the five main wholesaling houses operated, selling cheap knitwear and made up garments to local market traders. Four of these were owned by West Pakistanis, one by an Indian. The owners of three of these wholesale houses continued, as we shall see, to dominate the organization of the local Pakistani community in South Manchester until the 1980s.

Following the demolition of shops in this area, the shopping centre moved southward into Rusholme. By the mid 1970s this location had developed into a thriving shopping centre with travel agencies, banks, material and clothing stores, record and video shops, furniture and electrical goods stores, supermarkets, cafes and sweet shops, and a large number of delicatessens, usually selling ritually slaughtered *halal* meat. During the 1980s it was fast becoming a centre for authentic Indian restaurants, attracting during the evenings Mancunians of the backgrounds.

The Rusholme centre is common to Asian groups of all religions and areas of origins. Although located at waling distance from the central enclave, the centre serves migrants throughout Greater Manchester, and many of the shoppers there live over ten miles away from it. Quite a large number of the neighbourhood delicatessens serve smaller residential concentrations, and an alternative, much smaller shopping area can be found on the eastern periphery of the residential enclave, on Stockport and Wellington Roads.

The third important centre of communal efforts is the clothing and garment wholesaling district. The early wholesale houses shifted to the town centre, around Thomas and Lever Streets in the heart of the city, a district traditionally specializing in clothing and textile wholesaling. Small wholesaling has expended remarkably in



this district during the past decade, with the appearance of numerous small wholesale houses alongside the bigger ones. Wholesaling has also developed in another traditional wholesale district—Cheetham Hill and Bury New Road, just north of the city centre, alongside the North Manchester Asian residential cluster. This is also a wholesale centre for electrical goods, and Asians have entered this branch of the trade as well. In addition to wholesaling, Pakistanis have also founded a large number of clothing, and more recently, knitwear, factories relying mainly on outdoor machining, and these are located not far from the wholesale districts, on the periphery of the town centre. The availability of suitable premises for wholesaling and manufacturing in Manchester facilitated the expansion of these branches in the city and by the 1970s it had enveloped into an important distribution centre for cheap clothing in the North, catering for small retailers and market traders in the North of England, Scotland and Ireland. Once again, residence was not dependent on work location, and most wholesalers and manufacturers live several miles away from the business centre.

Unlike the business and shopping centres, the Central Manchester Mosque has remained in the same place throughout the years of transition and outward movement. It is situated in Victoria Park, not far from the shopping centre, in an area of large and beautiful Victorian mansions set in their own grounds. Most of these houses have been converted into public institutions and student hostels. The current mosque is located in a property initially bought and run by the Syrian community, long established in Manchester. A separate Pakistani mosque of grand proportions was set among terraced houses in the cheap area of Rusholme, built with fund raised mainly by prosperous Bengali restaurateurs, but as the West Pakistani community grew in numbers and spread into Victoria Park and West Long sight, its members came to dominate the central Manchester Mosque. The Pakistani mosque in Rusholme was handed over to the Bangladeshi community, following the partition of Pakistan in 1971.

Officially the Victoria Park Mosque remains the central mosque of the wider Muslim community in Manchester, whose representatives sit on the Mosque Committee and have contributed towards the construction of a new mosque building. The bulk of the contributions, however, were raised by the West Pakistani community, and they are its effective proprietors. The Arab community now has its own mosque, and grand new mosque has been built in North Manchester, serving the Chetham Hill residential enclave. Recently, there has also been a proliferation of smaller mosques. The Central *Jamia* Mosque has, nevertheless, remained a kind of focus around which the community in south Manchester has grown and spread.

Finally, communal residence also focuses around two single-sex high schools for girls. Pakistanis, many of whom are devout Muslims, place high value on the sexual segregation of their daughters after puberty. The two schools (Levenshulme and Whalley Range) appear to have stabilized the Pakistani population within the inner suburban neighbourhoods, Muslim girls from Cheetham Hill are bussed daily to Whalley Range High, after the single sex school in North Manchester was amalgamated into a co-educational comprehensive. Not all Pakistanis are, however, equally concerned about this issue. It is also possible, of course, to send daughter to private schools or single-sex high schools in the outer suburbs or to ferry them to school. Thus schools too do not ultimately preclude residential movement.

In sum, therefore, the community is served by several centres in somewhat separate geographical locations. Migrants utilise these centres and their facilities, but depending on their incomes, they choose to live close to or further away from them.

## PIONEERS, ELITES AND OCCUPATIONAL—RESIDENTIAL DIFFERENTIATION

On the whole, migrants tended to follow their relatives and friends from the old neighbourhoods into the new areas of settlement—which explains the fan like pattern which the movement took—but it must be stressed that the pattern is merely a tendency. As people

prosper or make their friends they shift neighbourhoods: Withington, Chorltoncum-Hardy, and southern Whalley Range are the centres of residence of most of the more affluent Pakistanis. For migrants from Jullundur who all moved outwards at about the same time, the move did not disrupt their existing set of social relations, although they are now more residentially scattered and do not concentrate in particular streets in the new neighbourhoods. Migrants who previously shared the same lodgings or lived on the same street can today be found living in neighbouring streets within several adjacent neighbourhoods, and they rely more heavily on cars and telephones to sustain daily communication. These migrants often have mutual business interests and are involved in complex ritual relationships with one another.

This last movement exemplifies the problems encountered by immigrant 'pioneers' moving into new areas. Those leaving the residential enclave today are, in effect, abandoning a small, tightly knit, family based community with a thriving and vibrant social life. Many of its residents prefer to remain living in the enclave and do not follow those spearheading the current move outwards. This more recent movement thus differs from the movement of the earlier pioneers who moved in tandem, retaining their prior sets of relationships. During the 1970s they were well established as the elite of the community by virtue of their wealth, their longer residence in the city and their control over communal institutions. Current 'movers' are following in their footsteps, and their move represents a chance to enhance their social status by establishing *new* friendships and acquaintances with immigrants of higher status, while attempting not to lose former friends.

Hence, men living in Longsight who have succeeded in business tend to move directly into inner-suburban neighbourhoods where other businessmen live. Factory workers, by contrast, prefer to move into low or medium priced houses still within walking distance of the central residential cluster. On the whole such factory workers are relatively well paid and work alongside British workers. As a result, they have acquired some proficiency in English and knowledge of English customs and etiquette. This is obviously an

advantage when living in a predominantly non-immigrant neighbourhood. They are able to strike up neighbourly relations with non-Pakistanis living nearby and to cope independently with various contingencies. These families form the vanguard of the new move from the cheaper housing areas into more highly priced neighbourhoods.

### THE SUBURBAN 'LEAP'

The second wave of immigrants who arrived in the 1960s seems doomed, however, to trail behind the earlier arrivals from East Punjab. For as they have begun to move outwards, the elite, dominated by these early arrivals, has already embarked on a new move—this time from the inner suburbs of the city to the exclusive outer suburbs of Greater Manchester. Like those moving out of Longisght, the pioneers of this move initially experienced some isolation, for they too lived away from the majority of their friends and relatives. Some even moved back to the city's middle-class neighbourhoods, but the trend outwards has nevertheless been gaining momentum. In a few years one may expect to find 'gilded ghettos' of Pakistanis in these outer suburbs, as friends and relatives join the earlier pioneers (cf. Kramer and Leventman 1961).

Despite an initial tendency to move, once migrants have moved into comfortable homes for lengthy periods. Such homes, conveniently located and reasonably sound structurally, are still the norm for most Pakistani businessmen and professionals. If migrants do move again, it is usually a major move, a lap into the outer suburbs, beyond the boundaries of Manchester city. They only make this leap after they have established themselves financially and usually in response to a major life cycle change (a child's marriage, the need to live near a good state high cycle change (a child's marriage, the need to live near a good state high school, etc.)

In sum, therefore, two opposing processes are currently evident in Pakistani settlement patterns. On the one hand, there appears to have been a substantial 'filling in' of the residential cluster as young couples buy homes within it. This increasing concentration appears also to be due to an influx of immigrants from elsewhere

in the North West as factories close down in outlying regions. Manchester's reputation as a city of opportunity is attracting these newcomers, who mainly originate from the *barani* areas of Jhelum and surrounding districts in Pakistan. At the same time the move into the outer suburbs gets momentum, reflecting the growing economic success of some Pakistani businessmen and professionals and a changed set of internally defined status evaluations, more congruent with those of the indigenous society.

### ECONOMIC RATIONALITY AND HOUSING CHOICES

It has been almost a truism to describe the debate surrounding immigrant housing in terms of a 'choice-constraint' opposition. This dichotomy obscures, however, in my view, the complexity of the issues involved. The economic rationality behind Pakistani migrants' choices has to do with the relation between risk, capital and alternative investment opportunities. As Davies points out (Davies 1985), immigrants operate in a high-risk environment in which their main aim is to accumulate secure capital within a relatively short period and to minimize long term, unpredictable, financial outlays. Given their insecure job tenure, they try, at least initially, to avoid taking on long term debts. In Manchester, as in many other British cities, they also wish to free capital in the form of savings for alternative, and more remunerative or symbolically valued investments: in local business, and at home, in Pakistan. In this respect too house ownership provides collateral for bank loans and is, indeed, widely used (cf. Wilson 1983). This makes council housing an expensive and undesirable option, as most available surveys overwhelmingly indicate.

What is meant by 'choice' and 'constraint' is in fact, highly problematic. It is undoubtedly true that immigrants make their choices under severe financial constraints, and they clearly also prefer to own their houses and to live near relatives and friends. In this trivial sense—from the individual perspective—they are subject to both constraints and a certain degree of latitude or choice. Direct racism, it should be noted, impinges very little on their decisions since the private housing market is relatively open in Britain, and

they rely minimally on statutory bodies. Where mortgages are unavailable, they use alternative sources of finance.

Far less trivial, however, is the significance accorded to the cumulative results of large number of individuals operating under the same constraints and with a similar rationale. The collective perceptions of what is necessary and relevant, the inter-subjective set of meanings surrounding housing and locality, have important if unintended implications: they appear to generate an 'encapsulate immigrant housing market' in which houses continue to be maintained and to retain their value. Encapsulation thus foster a protective economic environment. I put forth a similar argument in the following chapter with regard to immigrant business enclaves. By evolving a localized, provincial system of meanings, Pakistani immigrants evade, in effect, the impact of institutional racism. It enables them to accumulate valued resources which they can then utilize for future mobility (for a far-reaching critique of the immigrant as victims' view cf. Davies 1985). Pakistani thus 'play the game' in terms of their own internal, collectively accepted rules. It is a game which has resulted, by design or accident, in a relatively stable housing market providing a potential for the accumulation of capital in the form of housing and for the freeing of savings for other investments. It must be remembered, moreover, that the ghetto also protects migrants from direct racial abuse and, more importantly, from the stigma attached to residence in inferior or cheap housing. Like in other working lass neighbourhood, the ghetto has, as we shall see, its own positive, internal system of status relations.

Pakistani housing must be understood, then, within a broader framework of economic entrepreneurship. This is particularly so for the 'pioneers' who utilizes housing as a mode of accumulating capital or acquiring new status attributes. For them housing must be viewed, as indeed Dahya early on pointed out (1974), as part of multi-faceted enterprise or a complex economic portfolio. In the following case studies I contrast the use made of housing by two entrepreneurs, one who chose to remain living in the immigrant enclave, the other who chose to move to its periphery.

## HOUSING AS A RESOURCE: TWO CASE STUDIES

### *Case 1: Saver Families—Living on the Periphery*

This case surrounds the residential movements of one immigrant, Iftahar, a factory worker of village origin. I first met Iftahar when he was still a factory worker, and I have known him now for many years. He is a serious, extremely hard working man, with a reputation for trustworthiness and loyalty. Iftahar had moved to Manchester from a small outlying Lancashire town in 1969. At first he and his wife lived as lodgers in the house of migrants from the same area of origin in Pakistan, in the heart of West Longsight. After a year they bought a house on T. Road, then the periphery of the central residential cluster. Iftahar spent a great deal of effort and some money on improving and redecorating the house. A relative of his former landlord, Naim, also bought a house nearby, on the same road. During the following few years the Asian population of T. Road, increased dramatically, so that in 1975 they constituted 66 per cent of the residents in the road. Many of the migrants came from the Jhelum District.

In 1974 Iftahar moved out of T. Road, having sold his house there for a large profit. He first moved to any entirely non-Pakistani area in Stockport, where he bought a modern house on an estate. He and his wife found the isolation there hard to bear, however, and when his car broke down he sold the house and moved back, once again to the periphery of the central cluster—this time in Levenshulme. There he could rely on a regular lift to work. The road he lived on in Levenshulme had at the time only two other resident Pakistani families.

The distinctive life style of Iftahar and his friends is associated, I would argue, with residence on the edge, or periphery, of the main residential cluster. What is striking about their choice of residence is that living on the periphery is associated with avoidance of intense sociability. There are even some migrants who remain living in the central cluster but who still attempt to avoid major social commitments. This attempt is, however, usually frustrated, as women in particular tend to get caught up in due course in elaborate transactional relations with neighbours and acquaintances.

Outside the residential cluster women often lead lonely lives, although they usually acquire one or two neighbour friends, and visiting on the weekends is common. Men tend to have more casual callers, but often days go by without a knock on the door. Life for these migrants follows an uneventful routine, and dinners or other celebrations, when they do occur, are remarkable and significant for their rarity.

Competition for social status among local Pakistanis in Manchester takes a number of different forms. For those living on the periphery, status is clearly perceived to be related to wealth and education. Their residential movement stems from this perception, for they are aware that the central residential cluster has gradually been shifting southwards and, like most Mancunians, associate living outside it with increased status. Stereotypically, they regard migrants living in the enclave as low status, though they have many friends there, while high status migrants are known to live in middle class neighbourhoods, such as Chorlton, outside the residential cluster. They do not seem to feel that the price they pay—the lack of neighbourly relations with other Pakistanis—significant. This stems primarily from the fact that men, the main decision makers, do not rely on a residentially based network. Indeed, the men find the life style of the residential cluster, surrounded by the constant sociability of women, uncongenial. This life style, as we shall see, is characterized by intense interaction between neighbours, friends and kin, accompanied by a continuous flow of ceremonial prestations, and regular participation in domestic rituals. Consequently, it is often associated with female-dominated networks.

Iftahar and his friends prefer not to involve themselves in the excessive giving and hospitality which is at the core of friendships in other sections of the community. Instead, they share an ethos of frugality and saving, and friendships are valued in so far as they uphold this ethos. Although they appear to spend a good deal on consumer items, to compete through 'respectable' living, this expenditure may in fact serve to maintain or increase the value of their properties. A negative instance is afforded by the case of one



friend, Naim, still resident on T. Road, who refused to spend much on decorating his house or moving to a better house, despite friends' advice. He and his wife were intending to return to Pakistan and remitted money home regularly. Having lived in the house for several years, Naim's house was found to have serious structural defects, and the family—with five years children—was living in very bad conditions. Iftahar was very disapproving of their neglect of their property. In general, however, among Iftahar's friends the ideal of 'respectable' living was a predominant one, and the material life style aspired to was highly consonant with British tastes and preferences.

Movement to the periphery is also a way of gaining capital in the form of housing. Some migrants buy and redecorate houses and then sell them at a profit. In doing so they move house several times, each time to the periphery of the residential cluster as it catches up with them. They recognize that renovated houses appreciate in value beyond improvement costs and are therefore, willing to invest a great deal in high quality wallpaper, paint and wall-to wall carpeting. They do most of the repairs and redecoration themselves, with some help from friends. Eventually, however, the effort involved in these constant moves becomes too onerous, and migrants tend to settle down in a house on the periphery.

An idea of the scale of profit possible is given by the moves of Iftahar, who bought and sold a house outside the residential cluster within a two-year period. With the profits from this sale of £500 plus savings and returned debts, he sent his wife and three young children to Pakistan for several months. The wife took with her £1,000 for his brother there, who was taking care of his children from a former marriage. He was left with sufficient funds for a down payment on a new house—much cheaper than the one he had sold—and for redecorating costs of over £1,000. The new house—a semi-detached with a large garden—was in very bad condition, and he had bought it at a bargain price of £5,700, initially without a mortgage. A year later, having invested over £1,000 in its improvement, the house had appreciated in value to between £8,000 and £9,000. Iftahar had added a modern, fully

tiled bathroom, improved and kitchen, completely redecorated and re-carpeted the house with expensive carpeting and purchased a washing machine and other mod cons. This was at a period (during 1975) when house prices were at standstill! In 1979 the house was worth at least £16,000, possibly more. In 1975 alone Ifahar made a clear profit of at least £1,000. This represented a fourth of his income at the time (some £4,000 per annum). Not all migrants are as capable as Ifahar in this respect, while some prefer to direct their resources into small business such as market trading. The pattern is not, however, uncommon.

During the first two years in LEvenshulme, Ifahar continued to rely heavily on the network of friends he had built up during his residence in the central cluster, as well as on friends made at work. His wife made one new friend during this period, since many of the Pakistani residents of the neighbourhood were more educate and sophisticated than she was. Nevertheless they were, at this point, proud property owners who felt they had improved their lot. Many of their friends had also moved out of the central cluster, although not all had moved to Levenshulme.

Towards the end of 1975 Ifahar's factory closed down. He then suffered from a serious illness, and the family went through a period of extreme hardship. By 1978, however, he had become a manufacturer, and over the next period his business began to prosper. His oldest son married, and for some time the young couple remained the joint household, before purchasing their own house.

For the next few years, Ifahar remained living in Levenshulme. Rather than moving, the extended his house on a grand scale, adding two bedrooms, extending the living room and restyling and extending the kitchen. During this period he also opened up his own factory, with an initial outlay of some £ 20,000; he invested in a expensive car, well as in other costly consumer items. His son bought his own house and opened a separate factory. At the same time the family bought, and subsequently substantially enlarged and improved, a *koti* (detached cement house) in Pakistan, near Ifahar's brother who ran the family joint grocery store there.

In 1985 Iftahar moved again. This time the move was a major one, directly into any exclusive suburb in Trafford, favoured by other Indian and Pakistani businessmen. Here he bought a five bedroom modern detached house with a large garden. The house in Levenshulme was sold to a Pakistani family for over £30,000, which Iftahar reckoned was a good price, given his initial outlay and the current slump in the housing market in the North West. The new house cost over £80,000. It was in perfect condition and required no immediate alternations or decoration. All they did, Iftahar explained with some pride, was just move in. At the time of going to press the house had probably appreciated to around £200,000 as the property boom in the North west gathers momentum. At the same time Iftahar has also greatly enlarged his house in Pakistan.

Iftahar is perhaps unusual in being a success story. Not everyone succeeds in the cut throat competition of the rag trade. The case nevertheless illustrates the way in which housing is incorporated by Pakistanis into an overall economic strategy. Iftahar is a migrant of relatively humble origins, and neither he nor his wife had any schooling or prior business experience before migrating to Britain. As a factory worker, Iftahar purchased, redecorated and sold successive houses in order to gain some additional cash, which he used partly for investment in Pakistan. Once he became a businessman, however, his investments were directed almost entirely towards his business and its consolidation. By the time he moved again, he already owned a factory and all the other trapping of established businessmen. He explained his most recent move in terms of his desire to give his children a better education. He hoped his younger children in particular would enjoy the benefits he had been denied.

The second case illustrates that residence within the central cluster may also be a rational entrepreneurial strategy.

*Case2: Entrepreneurial Embeddedness in the Central Enclave*

Ahmed is a professional tailor, a member of the 'Tailor' (*Darzi*) occupational caste. He is a large, jovial man with a deep voice and

an air of self-confidence. He and his family live in a well-maintained house at the heart of the residential cluster. Several members of his *biraderi*, the intermarrying localized caste group, live scattered throughout this area. Most arrived in Britain having severed first as tailors for the British army. They are, as we shall see, very dominant in the social life of the residential cluster.

For seven or eight years after his arrival in Manchester, Ahmed worked in an asbestos factory in a outlying town. The work was very hard, but he stuck it out, though most workers he explained, left after a year or two. Following an unpleasant clash with the factory foreman 'was looking at the colour of my skin. I don't want this race thing'. Ahmen then went to work for a large food manufacturing factory in Manchester where his brother worked. He worked there till 1974 when he decided to start his own business.

Ahmed runs a small manufacturing concern making panties and underpants out of stretch nylon, which he sells directly to market traders. He has set up a workshop in the back room of his house and employs about five or six young machinists, supervised by his wife. Although he pays rather low piece rates (his machinists earned about £20 a week in 1976), he has no difficulty finding machinists since working for him has certain very real advantages. The young girls he employees are primarily saving for personal projects (such as dowries), and the workshop location enables them to work outside the house, in the company of other girls, without having to travel beyond the residential enclave. Ahmed's house is clean and well kept, and the girls are watched over and protected.

Ahmed's business is thus embedded in the social life of the residential cluster, and he is able to utilizes his resources to the maximum. He cuts overheads by basing his manufacturing concern in his home the only major additional expense he incurs being the cost of electricity. His wife is able to supervise the day to day sewing while still running her household. This frees him to travel to Leicester periodically for fabric purchases and to visit the big department stores in order to check on the latest fashions. He also uses his house as a base for selling, and market traders purchase

their orders directly from him on a weekly basis. Most market traders either live in the residential cluster or have friends living there, and he has no need to advertise or go around selling his goods. Both traders and machinists are readily available, since most of them live nearby. In sum, then; his residence in the central cluster is clearly an integral aspect of a far more complex enterprise.

Ahmed, was, however, ultimately forced to shift into industrial premises following complaints from neighbours to the local authority. Clearly then this strategy can only succeed for a relatively short period. Manufacturing from the garage' is a temporary phase which cannot be sustained over time.

The two case studies illustrate that housing for Pakistani labour migrants is a strategic resource, and Pakistanis are, indeed strategic house owners highly conscious of the way the housing market operates. Contrary to local stereotypes, house ownership does not simply reflect their class background in Pakistan, with middle class migrants choosing to live in the inner suburbs and working class migrants of village background seeking safety in inner city ghettos. Instead, housing for Pakistanis must be regarded as constituting part of a broader economic portfolio, relating to an overall economic strategy.

## CONCLUSION: SPACE AND SOCIAL ORGANISATION

Spatial distributions reflect social organization. In the 1970s Pakistani communal relations focused around key residential, commercial and religious centres. These constituted locuses of high value and intensive personal interaction. The evolution of these centres has been the outcome of a predictable phase: of migration and settlement, familial growth, and improved economic circumstances.

The process of Pakistani settlement in Manchester has typically been one of consolidation and encroachment. The immigrant residential enclave has gradually shifted outwards in response to the arrival of successive waves of migrants and external precipitating factors. At the same time, an improvement in the economic

circumstances of the more settled migrants has resulted in a further dispersal, as those who prosper move into costly housing beyond the immigrant enclave. In Manchester the first Pakistani arrivals, now residents in the inner suburbs, established themselves as the elite of the community by virtue of their affluence and control of its institutions. They have been followed by more recent arrivals moving outwards. The residential enclave thus constitutes, we saw, a springboard for encroachment into adjacent neighbourhoods, yet the number of immigrant households in the enclave itself has continued to rise as young couples marry and set up their own households within it.

## NOTES

1. I know of one man who came earlier, but he is not a man of local reputation.
2. See Desai's discussion (1963:64-7) of Indian pedlars in the Midlands in the late 1950s, and Ballard and Ballard (1977:28-9).
3. The impetus towards labour migrants from the Jullundur area is discussed by Aurora (1967: 24-34), Marsh (1967:2-9) and the Ballards (1977:26-7). Migrants appeared to originate from families of small landholders whose land and standing were threatened by fragmentation, but who could afford to send one son overseas. The same set of reasons applied later to much of the migration from Gujrat, Jhelum and Gujranwala in West Punjab.
4. See *Punjab Gazetteer*, Jullundur District 1935. The *Arain* population constituted over a third of the Muslim population of the District. Their status is somewhat ambiguous.
5. According to Wilber (1964:121), many of the high posts in the Pakistan Government are occupied by members of refugee families in India. This gives some indication of the superior education achievements of Muslims in India, by comparison to those in what is today Pakistan.
6. Rex and Moore (1968) also discuss relations in lodging houses and describe the mutual visiting of Pakistanis on weekends (p. 122). Their discussion focused on the inferior living conditions present in these households and the 'landlordism' of Pakistanis. In Manchester, judging from the ratepayers lists for 1963, there were very few Pakistani landlords who owned more than one house. Peddling and market trading appeared to offer more attractive opportunities of further capital investment. There are, however, some Pakistani landlords who rent to students.

## CHAPTER 11

# Migration—Ritual Attrition or Increased Flexibility? A Case Study of Pakistani Funerals in Norway

CORA ALEXA DØVING

*“It was in 1973 that the first Pakistani in Oslo died. I went straight to the hospital when I got the message. It was then completely unknown to the hospitals that we wanted to ritually clean the body. However, we were allowed to do so in an ordinary room so it all went okay. But we were insecure and we did not know how to transport the body out of the hospital and on to Pakistan. We did not know anything about refrigerated rooms, coffins, death certificates or funeral agencies. Luckily we had a Norwegian friend; he was a lawyer whom everyone in our community called “uncle”. He was very involved with the problems of immigrants in Norway and he was a very good man who helped us with everything - he became a kind of Pakistani grandfather. Well, we got in touch with him regarding this death and said that we had to send the body home to Pakistan, but that we did not know how to arrange it. He got in touch with a funeral agency and took care of everything concerning papers and tickets to Pakistan. We said that we had to pray for the dead before he was sent away so the funeral agency and the lawyer arranged a time for us in the hospital chapel. Several Pakistanis showed up there to pray janaza. That was when I noticed that the body was in a coffin with a cross. “We have to get rid of that”, I said, “he cannot arrive in Pakistan like that”. The lawyer then answered that it did not matter because the coffin would be burned straight after the ceremony. The urn would not have a cross on it, he said. I was horrified and asked who had told him that the body would be burned. Poor man, he did not know that we do not cremate our dead and he had arranged with the funeral agency that they should drive the body to the crematorium after the ceremony. I said no, no, no, we will send him as he is. In one piece. We got an arrangement with Pakistan International Airline which*

*has flights from Copenhagen. Yes, we often had problems in those early days: where will we wash the body? How will we organise the transportation home? Things are much better now, not least because so many Pakistani organisations taking care of the practical aspects have emerged in the last ten, five years”.*

\* \* \*

In every society, death requires an established pattern of actions or *rituals*. Jonathan Smith uses two examples to show that the rituals exist within a field of tension between the God-given and the humanly created. One example, from Plutarch, concerns the reaction of a priestess when the coachmen bringing the temple's holy bowls ask for something to drink. The answer is: *No, because I fear it will be part of the ritual*. We can find another example in Kafka when he describes an incident where leopards break into a temple and drink from the sacrificial bowls. This happens repeatedly and is gradually recognised as something which has always been a part of the ritual (Smith 1982).

These examples illustrate two significant sides to ritual actions: First and foremost that rituals are surrounded by institutions (the priestess), professions, normative texts and cultural conventions which ensure that they are carried out the way they should be. In other words, rituals are a *protected* form of action. Secondly, the examples show that rituals are always defined as *tradition*, which means that the people involved perceive rituals as part of the unknown origin of history, no matter how recent they may be. This means that new elements within a ritual structure soon achieve status as tradition.

In a migratory existence the original institutions maintaining actions (the priestesses) will either disappear, change or be rebuilt. At the same time, new living conditions will demand new elements (leopards) in a ritual. In my fieldwork on funerals among Norwegian-Pakistanis I have focused on new elements where the institutions of Pakistani death associations can be seen as the ritual protectors, and the sending of the corpse in a zinc coffin by air is definitely a new element. The article also focuses on an incipient



change from holding the funeral in Pakistan to holding it in Oslo.

Changes do not necessarily mean that the ritual repertoire diminishes in any way, as a number of migration researchers appear to believe (Dessing 2001, Firth 1997, Gardener 2002). I rather argue the opposite: that the burial practice among Norwegian-Pakistanis has grown richer and more flexible. I base my contention on four factors: 1) The rituals are often transnational and therefore increases in number. 2) The burial involves a network that crosses the traditional distinguishing lines such as religious division, relationships and caste background. 3) The burial has a number of new elements and the use of “the Norwegian room” creates opportunities to confirm sociality in a new way. 4) In addition to being a rite of passage, the burials take on the character of being a commemorative ceremony that constitutes history. Through *commemorative speeches*, a new element in burial ceremonies, a collective memory is established based on the history of the successful immigrant. These four factors will be examined in more detail. First, however, I shall briefly present the immigration history of Pakistanis in Norway and the two main institutions behind the organization of the funeral rituals: Pakistani death association and Funeral agencies.

## MIGRATION AND FUNERALS

Pakistanis constitute the largest group of non-western immigrants in Norway. The first Pakistani men came to Norway in 1967, and immigration increased through the early 1970s. The increase in immigration into Norway must be seen in view of the stronger restrictions on immigration policies, particularly in Great Britain (Lefebvre 1999:19, Aase 1979). The majority of the first arriving immigrants had relatives in Denmark or Britain, and came as guest workers.

Around 80-90% of Pakistani labour immigrants came from provinces in Punjab, mainly rural areas such as Gujrat and Jhelum. Thesil Kharian in the Gujrat district has the highest number of immigrants in Norway. Until the early 1970s, a labour shortage

meant there were few restrictions on immigration into Norway. The Pakistani group of immigrants increased rapidly, and even when immigration policies were tightened in 1975, family reunification led to an influx of Pakistanis to the major Norwegian cities. Even though the Pakistanis have come to Oslo to stay, it would appear that most still choose to be buried in their country of origin.<sup>1</sup> This means that the ritual of death commences in Norway but is concluded in Pakistan. Nonetheless, a great deal of activities take place in Oslo where migrants have re-established ritual conduct within the framework of their new environment. Since the 1970s and the first Pakistani deaths on Norwegian soil, both Pakistani and Norwegian institutions with specialized skills have established a Norwegian-Pakistani burial field, and ensure a funeral practice where Norwegian burial legislation is combined with Pakistani traditions.

The funeral ritual is a legal category in Islam. This means that schools of law have formulated norms for how dead bodies should be treated. With reference to the *Sunna* (the tradition of the Prophet) there is consensus between the four schools of law on a plethora of detailed regulations which are to be followed from the deathbed to the funeral itself. The interview material from Pakistanis in Norway also reveals a conscious reference to the normative regulations—the text—when practices are described. The most important duties a community has towards the dead can be summed up in four points: ritual wash, enshrouding of the body, funeral ceremony with prayer and the funeral itself. In addition to this the time between death and burial consists of many more Pakistani traditional ceremonies. Below is a list over the actions taking place:

- The relatives gather around the deathbed to give religious guidance and forgiveness to the dying or newly dead person.
- Positioning of the dead towards Mecca.
- Immediate communication of the death to the Pakistani milieu.
- Visit of condolence to the relatives. These visits starts remarkably soon after death and continues until the funeral is over.
- Ritual washing and shrouding of the body

- *Salat al Janaza*, a funeral prayer held in the Mosque
- Burial, either in Oslo or in Punjab
- *Khatme Koran-ceremonies*. The goal of the ceremony is to recite the whole of the Koran. The household has previously obtained the Koran divided up into 30 separate sections (*siparas*). When people arrive they are given a booklet from which they silently read. In this way they manage to get through the Koran during the ceremony. When this is done a platter with fruit is placed on a sheet on the ground. The sura *al-Fathia* is read and afterwards everyone prays *dua* to bring peace over the dead. The most important khatme Koran ceremony is held the third day after the burial and is completed with a meal to the poor (this meal will be described further on).

In order to understand how these rituals have been adjusted to and established in Norwegian society, we need to look at a few institutions surrounding the rituals: Pakistani ethnic institutions (deaths associations), Norwegian ethnic institutions (funeral agencies), religious-ethnic institutions (Pakistani mosques, the role of which is not described in this article) and a multi-ethnic institution (a Muslim funeral agency).

### Pakistani Death Associations

“The first thing that happens when the family experiences a death is that they call one of the members of the committee. We go straight to them and say: now, don’t you worry about any of the practical things”.  
Member of the committee of a death association.

A death association takes charge of the funeral arrangements for the vast majority of deaths among Pakistanis. This means that relatives have a Pakistani mediator, an intermediary, between themselves and the Norwegian institutions involved when somebody dies.

The death associations have developed as a direct result of a migratory existence. They have been established as a result of problems in relation to relatively strict legislation where neither the understanding of space nor time is easily compatible with Pakistani

Islamic funeral traditions. Such welfare organisations can be seen as a part of the integration process; a process which consists of uniting patterns of actions which may be defined as correct Pakistani tradition with Norwegian social conditions.

Studies from 1970s England show that early establishment of welfare groups and interest groups among Pakistani immigrants took place when small groups of friends and relatives organised themselves formally, often through an advertisement in *The Urdu Press* (Badr Dahya 1974). Welfare organisations and death associations in Oslo are also based on close networks, and many of them were established through the initiative of men who were among the first to arrive in Norway. Death associations often consist of a committee made up of four or five men, and the number of members seems to vary from 100 to approx. 250 families. Several mosques offer death-related welfare arrangements to their members, but the most common is for a death association to function independently of the mosques. This is evident in that members of the associations belong to different mosques: "We have members from the berelwi-mosquw Ahl-e sunnat and from the deobandi-mosque Islamic Cultural Centre", says a member of the committee from Punjab Welfare Organization. It is most common for welfare organisations to have geographical association in Pakistan as a starting point, as the names "Punjab Welfare Organization" or "Rawalpindi Welfare Organization" indicate. The establishment of death associations shows how death in itself can have a unifying effect.

### What does a death association do?

Shortly after a death, relatives will call one of the members of the committee of their death association who will then go immediately to the family's home. Then, one or more members of the committee go to a meeting on the funeral agency's premises. The funeral agency organises a schedule in consultation with the death association for the ritual wash at Ullevål Hospital, transportation to the mosque, time for the ceremony, air tickets or they make arrangements with a Norwegian cemetery. It is the funeral agency

which communicates with the Norwegian public institutions such as the hospital, the Probate Registry, travel agency and police, while the Pakistani representative arranges a time for the ceremony with the imam and informs the relatives of the various times. In other words, the contact with the religious institutions remains within the Pakistani community.

It is the death associations' task to inform about a death. This is done by telephoning various networks, using posters and informing imams, who then inform through sermons. The posters are announcements containing the name of the deceased and the time and place of the ceremony. The posters are in Urdu and are placed in the stores at Grønland, a part of Oslo where several Pakistani mosques are located. Funeral announcements in the newspapers as used in the Norwegian tradition are not used by Pakistanis. According to representatives for the mosques several people show up for the *janaza* prayer and considering the short period of time between a death and this ceremony takes place, it is evident that the distribution of information in relation to a death works.

The death associations see themselves as intermediaries between funeral agencies and the relatives. Each and every one of the people I have interviewed talks about problems in relation to organising a quick funeral without having to enter into discussions with Norwegian institutions: "It may work out well now as the funeral agencies know us by now, but if someone dies during vacation time or during a holiday it becomes a big problem. The weekends are a problem", says a member of the committee of a death association. It is in instances where the death association feels pressured by the relatives that they themselves take over parts of the work normally done by a funeral agency:

Yes, I have gone down to the police station and insisted that the papers must come so that we can make the plane. Sometimes someone is kind...or we have to wait for the usual routine.

This statement is one of several examples of a death association functioning beyond their task of being a link between Norwegian institutions and the relatives. In several instances they need to be

forceful in order to ensure that the funeral rites are carried out in a way that will satisfy the relatives. Through concrete action and manipulation of possibilities, they manage to organise a funeral in instances where conflicts between the needs of the relatives and Norwegian institutions may easily have occurred. The committee of the death associations possesses knowledge both regarding the members' ideas as to what constitutes a good Pakistani funeral and on the possibilities provided by Norwegian society. In the same way that it is possible to say that the funeral agencies play a very important part in the organisation (maintaining and changing) of Norwegian funeral practices, it is possible to say that the death associations are such ritual-providers in the Pakistani-Norwegian community. They know what is possible in a Norwegian context and they convey to their members what other members have done to solve problems. In this way they are active creators of a course of action.

With regards to rituals, there are always certain authorities that are the carriers of the knowledge needed to perform the rites. Concerning death, it is possible to say that the Pakistani death associations have become such bodies. Where there originally will have been individuals within a family and an imam who constituted the necessary carriers of knowledge, a profession of new helpers has been established.

### Norwegian Funeral Agencies

Funeral agencies are used in connection with almost all deaths in Norway. This is also true of Pakistanis. Funeral agencies are commercial businesses and as such they are more flexible than the public institutions. Several informants, both in the Pakistani community and from funeral agencies, talk about instances where the agencies have carried out necessary actions outside normal Norwegian working hours. One example is the hospital's responsibility for soldering the coffin and filling in the soldering certificate which needs to be attached to the coffin on its journey. On several occasions, the funeral agencies have been given a key to the hospital chapel so that the washing ceremony can take place

outside working hours and the funeral agency solders the coffin and fills out the papers. It is important to observe the role the funeral agencies have had, and still have, as entrepreneurs in relation to Pakistani funerals.

From the funeral agencies' viewpoint, it is the practical execution of the ritual wash which is in focus. My interviews with funeral agents show a professional attitude where actions are rarely measured against personal values. With a basis in being a private commercial business they have been able to meet Pakistani demands without taking heed of regulated working hours and holidays. It is in other words fair to say that the flexibility of the funeral agencies has prevented more conflicts in relation to Pakistani deaths. The agencies' ability to show such flexibility is related to the qualifications the employees at public institutions such as hospitals and the police believe them to have: "we are more than happy to leave the responsibility to an agency, they know exactly what has to be done", an employee at the hospital explained.

Funeral agencies as conveyors of rituals are an interesting thought for the future. If more people start burying their dead here, it is reasonable to believe that the importance of the funeral agencies will increase. Several funeral agents talk about a growing interest among Pakistanis concerning the choice of coffins and flower decorations on the coffin. "We have catalogues with pictures from ceremonies and illustrations of death advertisements, several Pakistanis have started looking through these", says a funeral agent. Funeral agencies have played an important part in Norwegian history when it comes to the development of an aesthetic in connection with death, and it is reasonable to assume that Pakistanis will gradually become familiar with this aesthetic.

### **Al-Khidmat—a Muslim funeral agency**

There is only one Muslim funeral agency in Norway, al-Khidmat, run by three Pakistani men. One of the men in al-Khidmat has explained as following:

Even though Norwegian funeral agencies do excellent work, there are several stages in the Muslim ceremonies which are not included in their services. For example the Norwegian funeral agency can arrange the time for the ritual washing of the body in a special room at the hospital, but only we (as Muslims) can provide the service of doing the wash for the relatives. Whereas the Norwegian agencies can convey the coffin to the mosque, only we can go in and pray *janaza* for the dead. We feel a responsibility as Muslims—even when we have delivered the coffin at the airport and our work officially is over, we drive home to the relatives of the deceased and pray a final time

Thus participation in religious ceremonies is the difference between *al-Khidmat* and a Norwegian funeral agency. *Al-khidmat* emphasizes that their competence is Islamic funerals and not primarily a Pakistani one, pointing out that the greater number of their customers are not Pakistanis. *Al-Khidmat* is a good example of Pakistanis being “the Muslim reference”: Pakistanis where the first who came to Norway and has the longest experience of practicing Islam here. *Al-Khidmat* operates inside both a Norwegian and a specific Islamic discourse. It is the combination of both Norwegian and Islamic traditions that makes *al-khidmat* into a multi-ethnic institution: The agency was established inside a Pakistani ethnic milieu, it is run on the same lines as Norwegian funeral agencies and in addition has a universal Islamic profile.

Focusing on entrepreneurs is according to Barth a way of understanding social and cultural change (Barth 1996:80). His point is that the entrepreneur introduces new sets of values: *Al-Khidmat* can be seen as entrepreneurs in the organisation of funerals. It is reasonable to assume that more Muslim funeral agencies will be established fairly soon. As *al-Khidmat* offers many of the same services as the Pakistani death association changes visible on a structural level might be the disappearance of the privately organised death associations. In other words the entrepreneurs have moved a former privately organised service into a commercial market.



## FUNERAL RITUALS IN A MIGRATORY CONTEXT

Ritual studies of death and burial often emphasize the rituals' meaning-creating functions because they *enable the individual to go on living in society after the death of significant others and to anticipate his own death* (Berger and Luckman 1967:119). The basis for such an interpretation is that death is a threat against the continued existence of society because death presents us with a:

...formidable problem not only because of its obvious threat to the continuity of human relationships; but because it threatens the basic assumptions of order on which society rests. Death radically puts in question the taken-for-granted, business-as-usual attitude in which one exists in everyday life...Insofar as knowledge of death cannot be avoided in any society, legitimations of the reality of the social world in the face of death are decisive requirements in any society. The importance of religion in such legitimations is obvious. (Berger and Luckman 1969:23, 43-44).

The point in referring to this type of classical theory is not to discuss its validity, but rather to connect this classical sociological view of death rituals with the direction ritual studies often have taken in connection with migration. As researchers often have believed that the primary function of the ritual is to connect marginal situations (such as death) to a social reality, a number of migration studies have aimed to analyze the degree to which rituals in the new country function as they should. Dessing, Gardner and Firth, who have studied burial rites in Muslim groups in the Netherlands and Britain and among Hindus in Britain, conclude that the rituals succeed less well in the new country than they do in the country of origin (Dessing 2001, Firth 1997 and Gardner 2002).

In her study of rites of passage among Muslims in the Netherlands, Dessing introduces the concept of *ritual attrition* (Dessing 2001:183, 186-190). Using this concept, originally used in linguistic research as a designation of attrition of a language's nuances and variety, she describes how the ritual repertoire in a migration becomes smaller and loses some of its variety compared

with the rituals in the country of origin. Thus the immigration context has caused a reduction in and attrition of the rites of passage. She claims that this happens because of the new context of the rituals and the absence of ritual actors:

First I suggest that the lifecycle rituals of migrant groups in a new setting, such as Muslims in the Netherlands, exhibit phenomena of attrition or erosion. Due to the transplantation of rituals from one social and cultural context to another that does not support them to the same degree, the ritual repertoire becomes smaller and displays less variety. The erosion of rituals arises from, and in turn results in, a loss of competence of the ritual actors and a reduction of ritual redundancy. (Dessing 2001:183).

Immigration necessarily means change, but not necessarily “phenomena of attrition”. Dessing inadequately describes the various immigration communities she has studied, such as the type of network found among the immigrants and the differences from one generation to the next. Moreover, she has focused her analysis on comparing three levels, rituals as they are conducted in today’s Netherlands, a description of the rituals as her informants remember them from their country of origin and the rituals as they are described in normative Islamic writings. The outcome of this perspective is that today’s practice is measured against the informants’ recollections of the past and normative texts. This is difficult, primarily because the informants’ recollections of “how things were done before” paint a static picture. When comparing, for example, a Moroccan wedding in the Netherlands with narratives about a Moroccan wedding in Morocco, the components that have disappeared from the ritual will be very apparent at the expense of the new elements. Hence the rituals are hardly at all studied on the premises of the ritual. Needless to say, the immigration pattern has importance for how the ritual practice is established in the new country, and it is possible that the Pakistani chain migration to Oslo may explain the differences between my findings and those of Dessing. However, this would not be the only reason. With a broader focus on practice and sociality instead of a

phenomenological and comparative focus on rituals, I believe that far fewer studies would conclude that immigration of necessity means a narrower environment for ritual practice. To continue the analogy with linguistic science, it may conversely be asserted that in contrast to attrition, ritual practice is part of a creative process - *a ritual creolization*.

### Transnational rituals

On the occasions when the ritual is completed in Pakistan, one or two members of the closest family usually travel with the body, although the funeral itself is organised by family members in Pakistan. Once in Pakistan, the body is usually delivered by the airline's transportation branch to the family. The house will be full of friends and family in mourning. The dead person's face will be looked at here. The coffin is then carried to the cemetery where an imam will lead the *janaza* prayer by the grave. Parallel to the rituals carried out in Pakistan, the remaining family in Norway will perform *qur ankhwani*; a ceremony which is held both on the third and the fortieth day after a death and which consists of readings from the Koran. This ceremony is either held in the mosque or in the home of the deceased's family. The traditional visits of condolence, where food is brought to the family, are also carried out in Norway after the deceased has been moved to Pakistan. There is, in other words, a clear continuity in ritual performance between the two countries.

When my grandfather died in Kharian, people came to visit us here in Oslo. I remember they brought sweet rice with them. Then on the third day after the burial we held a Koran ceremony here in Oslo at the same time as they held one in Pakistan.

The various small rituals which comprise a complete burial ritual often take place simultaneously in Pakistan and in Norway. As a result of this, the rituals have become more numerous in an attempt to adapt them to an arena which encompasses two countries. The rituals are surprisingly flexible and thereby afford an opportunity

to maintain transnational networks, which in turn create direct continuity between Norway and Pakistan.

### For example: The Meal for the Poor

The transnational aspect may also be crucial in connection with the preservation of religious conceptions. The account of the burial is to a large extent about the concept of *sawab*. This word refers to a religious reward which may be received after death as a result of good deeds accumulated throughout one's life. Moving a stone lying in a road results in *sawab* if it benefits somebody else, thinking positively about others can give *sawab*, and so on. Taking part in other people's funerals is an important way for the living to collect *sawab*. *Sawab* is also something that the living may pass on to the dead—with plenty of *sawab*, the period of waiting in the grave will actually become more tolerable. Hence, to a considerable extent, *sawab* has to do with a mutual relationship between the living and the dead.

A ritual which forms an important element of a funeral is that of arranging a meal for the poor three days after the burial. On this day, poor people and beggars collect outside the home of the family to receive a meal, showing their gratitude by praying for the deceased. The Meal for the Poor is one of the most effective ways of acquiring *sawab*. As a result of the fact that an increasing number of Norwegian Pakistanis are buried in Norway, this custom of distributing food has undergone changes. According to a number of respondents, money is sent to family members in Pakistan so that the network there can organise a meal on behalf of the relatives in Norway.

An important point here is that the meal is not simply a gift to the poor, but a gift which entails a return favour in the form of prayer. Hence, the recipients of the food must of necessity be both poor *and* Muslims. A characteristic of a sacrifice is that its effect for the giver depends on *who* the recipient is. The Meal for the Poor is therefore a gift with distinct characteristics of a sacrifice. In a Norwegian context the necessary group of recipients—the poor—simply does not exist, so if the custom of the ritual meal is to be

retained when the burial takes place in Norway, this ceremony must be moved to another continent.

## Network and burial

Dad died around three in the morning between Friday and Saturday here in my house. I immediately called a death association, the leader there is also my uncle. Then I called friends and family here in Norway. I didn't want to wait until daylight. Everybody must be told that in this family there is grief and that they'll be travelling soon. Visitors came even before the doctor arrived. I have a big family and they came around four, and all the friends came around four thirty in the morning. We carried all the sofas out onto the balcony and put carpets on all the floors so people could sit. They were sitting here crying. I think there were at least forty people here that night. People went into the bedroom and looked at the dead body. I'm driving a taxi, like so many Pakistanis, so we sent notification via the computer central to all the taxis. Then notification came to all the taxis that he was dead and that now there would be a *janaza*. Around three or four hundred people came to the ceremony.

The collective networks that are activated when a person dies appear to be bigger in Oslo than in Pakistan and transcend the boundaries that are tied to established categories for network alliances such as *biraderi* and *zat*. The most important categories for network alliances include family, ethnicity (Norwegian-Pakistani), joint geographic background in Pakistan (often the basis for welfare associations), mosque membership in Oslo and friendship. According to my informants, friends play a more prominent role in burials in Oslo than in Pakistan. What is interesting here is that the burial appears to function as an arena where friendship bonds are initiated into the traditional Pakistani gift system and thus are confirmed as a socially lasting bond.

*Lena-dena* is the term for the traditional Pakistani gift exchange system. Both in Pakistan and in Oslo members of a *biraderi* take part in a form of ritual exchange. *Lena dena* (take and give) may be described as gift transactions where the recipient is put under an obligation to return a similar gift on the next suitable occasion:

*The expectation of return is explicit, for gifts are viewed as goods or sums of money owing* (Shaw 1994:47). The gift to be returned must be postponed in time so that the gift relationship may be maintained through a deferred exchange. Hence the gift institution reflects the lasting element of a relationship.<sup>2</sup> *Lena dena* primarily occurs in connection with festivals or rites of passage, such as birth of a child, birthdays, finishing reading the Koran and, of course, weddings.

Death is thus the only traditional Pakistani rite of passage that has not established an extensive system for *lena dena*. Nevertheless, the many references to exchanging both services and money in connection with the burial are remarkable. The many large money transactions between friends may suggest that death is also a field where the gift plays an essential role in establishing networks. Here is a representative statement from a Norwegian-Pakistani man about the importance of money loans made by friends in connection with burials:

In March a cousin from Pakistan lived in my house. He suddenly received a message that his mother had died in the old country and we had to go there both of us, because she was my aunt too. Then lots of people came here with lots of money. Friends came here with something like 200,000 or 300,000 (Nkr), but I only took fifty thousand because I said I didn't need that much. Everybody was pestering me and told me I must, I must accept the money.

When I asked the men whether such money loans might be considered part of *lena dena*, several replied that they could be. They pointed out that there was a great deal of honour involved in offering money and that a money loan might be the initiation of two households into establishing a gift relationship in connection with other major events. They also stated that asking each other for services after such a loan based on trust was easy. The analytical point of considering money loans as comparable to gifts in the established exchange systems is to make the possible importance of the loans visible as symbols of loyalty and lasting network formations.

There are several arguments against the interpretation of money loans as a parallel to gifts. One is the money itself. In sociological theories on exchange and gift systems, great emphasis is placed on how a gift must have an individual aspect: the unique object that is given away carries the giver in it. When money is put on the table in connection with a burial I believe that just as with other gifts, the money carries the giver in it. What is actually transferred from one person to another is a promise of trust and loyalty. A sum of money is, moreover, a common type of gift in *lena dena*. Money is thus already established as something that may constitute a gift. Another argument against interpreting money loans as gifts can be found in the emphasis of the gift theories on the deferred exchange. The logic of reciprocity to some extent rests on tension, as the exchange of gifts concerns values that are not exactly equal. The sums of money that are exchanged in connection with burials are, however, ideally paid back in the same amount. If we consider the reciprocity of the *deferred exchange* itself and not of the exchanged object, the objective value of money represents no problem. In fact, the loan is a transaction that deals with future loyalty.

The gift objectifies social relationships that are valuable for people, and as pointed out by Werbner, migration has led to an expansion of network formations beyond the primary network based on the village and relatives. Werbner also shows how new relationship bonds are included in the gift system, bonds that were previously reserved for the family (Werbner 1995:214). The burial of an immigrant is an occasion for expanding such an individual network.

If the money loans between friends at funerals is interpreted as a form of gift giving with similar implications as “the gift” has in other rites of passage, and this is a correct interpretation, we may claim that the Norwegian-Pakistani burial practice has established an institutionalized form of gift exchange between friends that does not exist in Pakistan, thus it is an expanded ritual.

### Solutions in the Norwegian context

New contexts, as mentioned above, lead to ritual changes, but also to new opportunities for ritual acts. A year ago a popular man in the Norwegian-Pakistani community in Oslo died. He was an author, a teacher and an active politician. When he died it became known that his family were active in the Ahmadiyya congregation in Oslo. He had not been religious himself, but he was married to a Sunni Muslim. Due to the conflicts between the Sunni and Ahmadiyya Muslims, the mosques in Oslo refused to arrange a *janaza* for the deceased if his widow could not produce written documentation that he was not an Ahmadiyya. Conflicts arose from the discussion of the burial, the mosque boards met repeatedly for talks and the widow despaired that her husband would not be given an honourable burial. In comparison with Geertz' classical article in *Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese example*<sup>3</sup>, we can see the conflict as being dominated by political and religious splits originating from Islam and not from the families in this specific case. I shall not review the empirical findings in Geertz' or my own case. The point here is that according to Geertz' empirical findings, the conflict would remain acute during the entire funeral. In the case with the alleged Ahmadiyya sympathizer, however, a solution was found. Where Geertz talks of a burial ceremony that finally was pressed into Islamic norms but with aggressive and confused participants, the Norwegian case featured a genuine solution. A creative friend of the deceased came up with the idea that a ceremony could be arranged in the chapel by the churchyard. The chapel, located next door to the church, had never before been used for a funeral for a Norwegian-Pakistani Sunni Muslim. However, the ceremony was not carried out as an Islamic ceremony, nor did it become a ceremony that communicated ideological disagreements and ambiguity. The turnout in the chapel was extraordinary, with Sunni Muslims, Shia Muslims, Ahmadiyya Muslims and ethnic Norwegians. The ceremony was dominated by speeches praising the man's active life in Norway and his activities for immigrants in general.



In my opinion the funeral solution has two explanatory factors. One concerns the status of the deceased as a publicly approved representative of Norwegian-Pakistanis, a status that in the given situation was able to suppress his identification with an Ahmadiyya family. The second factor is the possibility the migrant had to move the ritual out of an ethnically religious arena into a Norwegian context. To move the framework from a Pakistani/Islamic location to a secular neutral ground was a possibility that did not exist for Geertz' actors. Using the Norwegian location not only enabled the funeral to take place, it became a major social event. Even if central religious symbols were absent, important ideals, such as the sense of community between immigrants and successful integration in Norway were confirmed and formed.

Another aspect of Norwegian context as a contribution to flexibility is the establishment of new ritual rooms. In the laboratory building at the pathology department of Ullevål Hospital in Oslo we find the room used for virtually all Muslim deaths. The room is practically arranged with a shower that can be stretched to any part of the room and a simple wooden table on which to put the stretcher. The chapel is decorated according to Norwegian perceptions of religious neutrality: a rack holding candles and two colourful paintings by Frans Widerberg depicting Day and Night.<sup>4</sup> The floor has square tiles, and the particularly observant person will notice a tile along each of the longest walls that is placed at an oblique angle, facing Mekka.

Compared to Britain where a large number of the mosques have small but practical rooms for the washing ceremony, this is a distinctive ritual room. It is decorated, tiled and designed. None of the mosques in Oslo have separate rooms for the washing ceremony, nor are there plans for such rooms in future construction plans. The ceremony room that has been established within the frameworks of a Norwegian state institution is thus an example of how the Norwegian society has created a ceremonial room which in Britain is established in an ethnic and Islamic institution and which does not exist in Pakistan.

## From rite of passage to commemorative ceremony

We have gathered here today to pay our final respects to a person who was an ideal Pakistani immigrant to Norway. By looking at her example the Pakistani immigrant community can draw inspiration as to how they should conduct themselves in their adopted country. Rubina Rana symbolised what all host societies and immigrant communities expect to achieve. She was integration at its best. She spoke Norwegian, participated in community matters, stood up for her rights and those of her community, entered the political arena and went on to get elected to the Oslo City Council. Her greatest achievement came about when she headed the 17<sup>th</sup> of May committee and then eventually led the parade on the national day of Norway. Rubina Rana with her example has set the bar high for Pakistani immigrant women in Norway. In fact, she has set the bar high for Pakistani men as well. (...)Rubina Rana you have made all of us proud. Khuda Hafiz. Memorial speech given by the Pakistani ambassador in Norway.

When Norway's first imam was buried, the mosque was filled to bursting point. Once the *janaza* was completed, people flocked toward the coffin. According to traditions in this barelwi mosque, the people were now expected to circulate around the coffin while taking a last farewell with the face of the deceased. However, on this occasion the imam leading the ceremony lifted his hand in a signal to stop. The crowd pulled back and a microphone was placed in front of the coffin. It was time for a speech. The imam talked about how important the man who had just died was. A Norwegian, the head of the city council of Oslo, brought an armful of roses. He praised the work of the deceased for the integration of Muslims in Norway.

Individual commemorative speeches are not part of the burial ceremony in an Islamic/Pakistani tradition, but appear to be increasing in number in Norway. It is my assertion that such commemorative speeches function as a mythologization of Pakistani history in Norway. Through the narrative of the successful immigrant a common Norwegian-Pakistani history is established. The burial ceremony is the arena. A rite of passage has received a

new element—the commemorative speech—which through the narrative of an individual history constructs a collective memory.

In his book *How Society Remembers* Connerton asks the following question: How is the memory of groups conveyed and sustained? (Connerton 1992:1) Connerton finds a substantial part of his answer in various forms of commemorative ceremonies. According to him public rituals are important for transferring collective memories from one generation to the next. Connerton points out that commemorative ceremonies resemble other rituals through formalism and performativity:

...but commemorative ceremonies are distinguishable from all other rituals by the fact that they explicitly refer to prototypical persons and events, whether these are understood to have a historical or a mythical existence, and by virtue of that fact rites of this sort possess a further characteristic and one that is distinctively their own. We may describe this feature as that of ritual *re-enactment*, and it is a quality of cardinal importance in the shaping of communal memory (Connerton 1992:61).

It is not obvious that an element in a rite of passage may be interpreted as a parallel to such commemorative ceremonies, but there are common features that make this possible. First, commemorative speeches so far only occur in funerals for Norwegian-Pakistani individuals with a publicly recognized status. Through the focus on the virtues of the deceased as a Pakistani, as a Muslim, as a new Norwegian, as well integrated and so on, a prototypical person is created through the commemorative speeches. "...to study the social formation of memory is to study those acts of transfer that make remembering in common possible", Connerton continues (Connerton 1992:39). In my view, the commemorative speech is such an *act of transfer*. Rituals are performative and they have a formalized language. Thus we may say that the until now private and individually related history of first-generation Norwegians is acquiring a ceremonial language through funerals. Through the integration of a new ritual element

an Islamic/Pakistani rite of passage has gained an expanded form as a commemorative ceremony that generates history.

### The meaning of Place—the grave as a metonym of the migration process

I have given the grave the function of a prism regarding the question of belonging: what can the location of the grave tell us about the migration process of the Norwegian-Pakistanis?

Even though Pakistanis have come to Norway to stay, it seems to be common practice to send their dead ones to Pakistan for the funeral. No statistics have been calculated concerning how many are sent back to their country of origin, although those funeral agencies which are currently being used by Pakistanis estimate that at least 80% of Pakistani deaths end up with the body being sent to Pakistan to be buried there. The agencies also mention a clear division between adults and children where adults are sent back to Pakistan while small children and stillborns generally are buried in Norway.

When asked why so many are buried in Pakistan, almost everybody starts by saying that they expect this to change. They stress that the country of burial is the country where the main part of the family lives; where the parents live is particularly important. Relatives and family are thus talked of as the decisive factors. The importance of the presence of family has at least three elements: The family has to have a chance to see the deceased's face as a last farewell, the funeral has to show respect for the older members of the family and it is important to be buried in the country where the majority of the family lives.

During the interviews, I tried to get an answer to what the significance of "resting in Islamic soil" was in relation to funerals in the country of origin. However, in all conversations the importance of family connection was stressed and the idea of Islamic soil was rejected as an important reason. Here is an excerpt from an interview:

- Will your generation (first generation) continue to have funerals in Pakistan?

- It is a question of time. My father is alive, my two brothers are alive and several relatives. If I die today, they will want me in Pakistan. In other words, there may be some problems because my wife and grown up children want me here. However, if I don't die today but in several years time, there isn't any question about where I'll be buried. It will be here in Norway.

In the same way the *family* is the principal argument for having a funeral in Pakistan, family is the deciding factor for having a funeral in Norway. There are, as expected, clear differences between the answers from first and second generation immigrants. Whereas the first generation immigrants are hesitant to answer questions concerning their place of burial (it depends on when they die in relation to the family network), second generation immigrants are clear: "You know, I don't have friends in Pakistan. My friends may be sitting down at Burger King just now, and if I were to be buried in Pakistan—who would visit me there?"

It is apparently documented in the literature, for example by Bloch and Verdery, that there is a close connection between a person's place of burial and territorial affiliation. It is therefore striking that words like *mother country*, *patriotism*, *situation*, *family grave* and *roots* are completely absent in interviews. What determines the location of the burial place is simply where the family network happens to be. For a large number of families of Pakistani origin, Norway will within a few years become the country where they have their principal network, and respondents therefore expect that burial in Norway will become normal practice.

Two studies carried out in England of Indians and Bangladeshis maintain that the practice of sending the deceased to the country of origin has an *ideological* motivation related to nationality. The sending home of deceased immigrants gives the country of origin (both its people and its territory) ideological priority over the alienation of diaspora. The ambivalence which often characterises immigrants' relationship to their two countries disappears with death; the adopted country becomes the profane place of work while the country of origin becomes the sacred land where one can be laid to eternal rest.

However, the removal of this ambivalence by death is something of which I do not find any evidence in the data which I have collected. On the contrary, because it is “the community” rather than “the country” which is decisive, and because the community for the vast majority of my respondents is both “here and there”, death represents an accentuation of the ambivalence: Those who wish to be buried in Pakistan are sad because they know that their children will not be close to the grave and will be buried in a different country, while those who expect to be buried in Norway feel the loss of those relatives who remain in Pakistan. Neither does death result in the ideologically higher priority of the country of origin, but in a clearly family-oriented ideology.

If we look upon the place of burial as metonymic with regard to the immigration process as a whole, a transformation is evident. Agathe Petit actually considers the burial place in such a context in her study of Senegalese immigrants living in France. She writes:

Apart from exceptions, those who die in France are buried in the country of origin. However, this practice is relatively recent, the first repatriation of this sort dating to 1984. Before then, the deceased were buried in France. In some twenty years, the practice and representations have thus considerably evolved. (ISIM Newsletter 11/02:13)<sup>5</sup>

In other words, Petit describes a modification in practice which is the reverse of that seen among Norwegian Pakistanis. For a Senegalese Muslim, burial in Senegal has now acquired explicitly new significance with regard to identity. Moreover, Petit maintains that the sending home of a deceased immigrant implies that the migration has been successful: The ideological thinking was that the immigration constituted a temporary sojourn in order to improve one's financial situation, after which one would return to one's home. In Petit's opinion this ideology is still prevalent and after death one has the opportunity to complete the migration process. According to her, being buried in France represents a clear break with one's original affinity, and the actual purpose of the migration process has not been achieved.

For Norwegian Pakistanis the idea behind the original migration has changed: one's presence as a Norwegian Pakistani has at a practical as well as at an ideological level changed from being temporary to become the ultimate status. A burial place in Norway can therefore not be looked upon as a symbol of a failed migration process, as indicated by Petir's study. Considering the location of the grave in relation to the migration process as a whole, as she does, nevertheless presents an interesting angle. A grave in Pakistan and a grave in Norway are two different metonymies of the Norwegian-Pakistani immigration process:

Burial in Pakistan is a result of the transnational character of the immigration process, while burial in Norway indicates that the Norwegian-Pakistani community is beginning to lose its closest transnational network in preference for a national one. A burial place in Norway is metonymic of a migration process where the immigrants are acquiring an increasingly simpler national affinity.

Benedict Anderson writes that nationalism should rather be looked upon *as if it belonged with "kinship" and "religion", rather than with "liberalism" or "fascism"*.<sup>6</sup> When both family relationships and religion are present in Norway, it is reasonable to interpret a burial place on Norwegian soil as an indication of increased national affinity to Norway. Will the place of the dead and the place of the living no longer transcend national boundaries?

## NOTES

1. In Oslo three burial grounds for Muslims have been allocated in churchyards, and a visible change is that increasing numbers of people are buried here.
2. The relationships of the exchange system are designated *pakkivartan* (strong and permanent ties) and are in contrast to *kachi vartan* (weak and temporary tied), often used about exchange partners outside a *biraderi*, such as friends who are invited to various ceremonies. According to Lefebvre, gift exchanges both in Manchester and in Pakistan are documented in a register (*behi*). The host receiving the gift records what the gift was, its value, who gave it and who witnessed it. 1999:47.
3. Geertz 1973.
4. Frans Widerberg is a Norwegian contemporary artist.
5. ISIM Newsletter 11/02:13,
6. Anderson 1991.

## CHAPTER 12

# Contesting Muslim Pilgrimage: British-Pakistani Identities, Sacred Journeys to Makkah and Madinah, and the Global Postmodern

SEÁN MCLOUGHLIN

In their groundbreaking volume, *Contesting the Sacred*, John Eade and Michael Sallnow set out a new agenda for the anthropology of pilgrimage, a field hitherto shaped by the theories of Emile Durkheim (1912) and Victor Turner (1974a; 1974b) who stressed the way in which sacred journeys support or subvert the existing social order respectively. While accepting that pilgrimage both promotes social integration and the more temporary, liminal and anti-structural feelings associated with *communitas*, Eade and Sallnow maintain that the reinforcement of social difference during sacred journeys is equally significant in the literature. Structuralist theories are criticised for being overly deterministic, ‘imposing a spurious homogeneity’ on their subject matter (1991: 5), while Eade and Sallnow are also critical of the phenomenologist of religion, Mircea Eliade (1958), whose influential work suggested the ‘inherent capacity’ of holy places ‘to exert a devotional magnetism, *sui generis*’ (1991: 9). Instead, they propose the deconstruction of pilgrimage into ‘an arena of competing discourses’ - the religious and secular, official and popular, consensual and conflictual (1991: 5). Unequally positioned constituencies of pilgrims, religious specialists, local residents and so on are all also shaped in complex ways by subjectivities and locations of class, gender, race, ethnicity and religion. Moreover, pilgrimages can become sites for regional and international political



conflicts, with symbolic centres witnessing division as much as unity (1991: 13). At the same time, 'secular commerce', sustaining often highly developed organisational and commercial infrastructures, is part and parcel of 'pilgrimage' (1991: 24-5). Devotees and custodians alike criticise commodification - perhaps mainly because 'it threatens most conspicuously the fragile boundary between...the sacred and secular realms' (1991: 26).

Against the background of such debates, the present article is a study of the normative and contested accounts of the sacred journeys to Makkah and Madinah undertaken by Pakistani heritage Muslims in the UK diaspora. Over two years, between 1999 and 2001, eighteen in-depth, semi-structured, interviews were conducted with respondents settled in Lancashire mill towns such as Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale and Nelson. Most interviewees traced their roots to Mirpur district in Pakistan-administered Kashmir (see Saifullah Khan, 1977; Ballard, 1983; Kalra, 2000) while the age of respondents ranged in more or less equal numbers across the following groups: i) teens and twenties; ii) thirties and forties; iii) fifties to seventies. Their occupations included further or higher education student, sales assistant, computer programmer, school teacher, housewife, classroom assistant, chemist, housing support worker, spinner and retiree. Around 25% were women. Most importantly, all had been on Hajj (50%) or *'umra* (the minor pilgrimage) (25%) or both (25%) at least once since the 1970s.

As many as 25,000 British-Muslims travel to Makkah and Madinah for Hajj every year.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, so long as they are physically fit and can afford to make the journey, it is incumbent upon the followers of Islam to undertake the Hajj at least once in their lives from the eighth to the thirteenth day of the final month of the Islamic lunar calendar, *dhul' hijja*.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, *'umra* is a voluntary rite which involves the performance of abbreviated rituals outside Hajj season. During Hajj and *'umra* many Muslims will also seek to do *ziyara* (visitation) of the tombs of sacred personalities such as the Prophet Muhammad, his family and companions. This is certainly true of the majority of South Asian heritage Muslims and especially the British Pakistanis interviewed here. Insofar as they

have been influenced by any particular tradition of Islam, whether through socialisation at home and the mosque or more active religiosity, the respondents tended to be associated with the devotional Islam of transnational Sufi cults and/or the reforming Sunni '*ulama*' (scholars) movement founded in British India, the Ahl-i Sunnat or 'Barelwis' (see Lewis 1994; Sanyal 1996; Werbner, 2003).<sup>3</sup>

My initial motivation for undertaking this research was very much driven by an interest in globalised imaginings of the *umma* (Islamic community) in Muslim diasporas, this at a time when the study of trans-nationalism was rising to the top of social-scientific agendas. While the impact of contemporary international crises in this regard can not be ignored (see Werbner, 2002, on '9/11' and the Gulf War, and McLoughlin, 1996, on Bosnia), the pilgrimage to Makkah and Madinah is perhaps the most emblematic expression of Muslim community, for both Muslims and non-Muslims alike. As one of the five pillars (*arkan*) of Islam, it is the Hajj that brings believers together at the site of their faith's genesis. The rites of this sacred journey are said not only to purify the individual believer of his or her sins, but also attest to, and reaffirm, the diachronic and synchronic continuity of the *umma*. So while pilgrims follow in the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad - who is believed to have established the rituals prescribed by the Qur'an (2:124ff) before his death—with more than 2.5 million pilgrims annually, the Hajj is now 'the largest and most culturally diverse assembly of humanity to gather in one place at one time' (Bianchi, 1995: 88).

In a pivotal study, one contemporary with Eade and Sallnow, Eickelman and Piscatori are concerned with the ways in which various forms of travel and associated 'journeys of the mind' (1990: xii) have contributed to the Islamicate religious imagination past and present, as well as the extent to which mobility 'inspire[s] changes in how Muslims conceive of and experience "Islam"' (1990: 3) spiritually, politically and so on. Eickelman and Piscatori see religious 'communities' not as determined by doctrine but rather as imagined through shared symbols and metaphors with plural meanings coexisting and competing in changing contexts.

Amongst Muslims of variable historical memories, social statuses and class, gender and ethnic positions, these contexts are transformed through time and across inter-linking spatial scales (1990: 15). Moreover, Muslim travellers have to negotiate their similarities and differences in encounters with Islamic 'others' at least as much as non-Islamic 'others'. Indeed, Islam is one factor amongst many and 'a causal relationship between the act of travel and a heightened sense of being Muslim' cannot necessarily be assumed (1990: 16). Hajj is increasingly nationalised with national delegations often limiting cosmopolitan interactions (1990: xvi) and travellers exhibiting a 'consciousness of locality and difference' (1990: xv). There can be no easy dichotomy either between sacred centres and peripheries - proximity to the former is not always invested with greater legitimacy (1990: 13). At different points in Islamic history and individual Muslim lifetimes, travel to Sufi shrines or the homelands of migrant workers have been as compelling as the Hajj (1990: xiv).

In the pre-modern period, the time, effort and even danger involved in travelling to Makkah and Madinah generally meant that numbers attending for pilgrimage were relatively small (Pearson, 1994). By contrast, in an age of globalisation, with the advent of international air travel, it has become accessible and affordable to ordinary believers worldwide.<sup>4</sup> More generally, Turner argues that 'In the pre-modern period, world religious systems had little opportunity to realize themselves globally, because the systems of communications and transport were wholly underdeveloped or non-existent' (1994: 83). It was only in modernity that the orthodox discursive tradition (Asad, 1986), or what Gellner (1992) calls 'High' Islam, has become more decisively and uniformly universalised at the expense of 'Folk' Islam. A tendency towards ideological coherence has been effected through state education and mass literacy, as well as the media, Islamic *da'wa* (propagation) organisations and international migration. In her study of Sylhet in Bangladesh, for example, Gardner (1995) argues that, amongst successful economic migrants and their families, the performance of Hajj is part of a modern, more rationalised and textualised,

'Protestant' Islamic consciousness that is the product of working in Britain and especially Saudi Arabia (1995: 243-5).

The argument here, however, is that it would be wrong to argue that globalisation simply moulds all tradition into a standardised and homogenised fundamentalism. As Lehman (2001) and Beckford (2003) suggest, and my ethnography of British-Pakistanis shows, time-space compression sees religious actors make and remake boundaries, creating multiple, criss-crossing webs of friction and conflict, ambiguity and resistance, within and across competing imagined communities and traditions. Indeed, for all the movement of so-called fundamentalism from the margins of classical Islam towards the centre of modern Muslim discourse (Calder, 1993), Islam remains 'polycentric...lacking any central global power' (Lehman, 2001: 308). As Fischer and Abedi (1990) maintain, even while the pilgrimage is performed within the boundaries of the authoritarian nation-state of Saudi Arabia, contested social, economic, cultural and political inferences from various local-global contexts are always in evidence. Moreover, paradoxically, the very processes which enable Islamist claims to regulate universalised Muslim identities, also integrate the Muslim masses (and especially the new middle classes) into new public spheres driven by electronic capitalism and cultures of everyday consumerism, organic hybridisation and reflexive self-identities (Turner, 1994: 202; Appadurai, 1996; Featherstone, 2002).

Turning then to my ethnography, firstly there is an account of the changing dynamics of British-Pakistanis' experiences of deciding to embark upon pilgrimage. In contrast to the expectations and religious imaginaries of their ancestors prior to Partition, their accounts are reflective of socio-economic and cultural shifts towards a religiosity increasingly defined in terms of self-identity and consumption as well as normative traditions. The ethnography continues with an examination of respondents' constructions of sacred time and place, community and identity, during the various rituals. However, profane inferences were never far away, with brotherhood and *communitas* cross-cut by competing narratives of socio-economic and political, as well as religious and racialised,

differences and divisions. Finally, I assess pilgrims' accounts of reintegrating into profane time and space back in the UK. The focus here is on the pervasive power of memories and souvenirs of the sacred alongside changing British-Pakistani expectations of a *hajji(a)* and divergent trajectories of Muslim religious identity and consciousness in late modern Britain.

### TRANSFORMING PILGRIMAGE: TRADITION AND MIGRATION, IDENTITY AND CONSUMER CULTURE

Until the post-Partition period, when remittances from migrant workers in Britain and the Middle East began to impact, few in what was to become Pakistani-administered Kashmir would have visited Makkah and Madinah.<sup>5</sup> Unless they were sailors in the British Merchant Navy or soldiers in the British Indian Army (Ballard, 1983), the majority that did would probably have started out on foot, joining a train to Rawalpindi from nearby Jhelum and from there continuing on to the port of Karachi. However, one female respondent, Munira (aged 69, widow), related how, as a young girl in her village, she would listen to the women of a local *sayyid* (descendent of the Prophet) and *pir's* (mystical guide) family talk about his overland journey to 'Makkah-Madinah' during the 1930s.<sup>6</sup> Stopping on the way for *ziyara* at places such as the Baghdad shrine of the eponymous 'founder' of the Qadiriyya order, 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (d. 1166), this *hajji* had taken years to complete his journey. Such pious stories were part of a (predominantly oral) discursive tradition (Asad, 1986) within which the Holy Places found a pivotal place in the religious imagination of generations of mostly illiterate Mirpuri-Muslims. Similarly, while the *khutba* (sermon) of '*id-i qurbani* (the festival of the sacrifice marking the end of Hajj) popularised the Qur'anic story of Ibrahim, Hajar and Isma'il that is re-enacted during the rituals, mystical poetry and devotional music (*qawwali*) both spoke of longing to give *salams* (greetings) at the *jalli sharif* (noble grill) of the Prophet's tomb (Mukhtar, 42, community leader).

The pervasive Sufi tradition of Punjab and Kashmir also imagined the principal importance of pilgrimage to 'Makkah-

Madinah' in terms of an interior journey. No doubt this was of some comfort for people who had little prospect of travelling to the Holy Places. Another native of Mirpur, Zafar (74, retired spinner), recounted a Sufi tale with the moral that one 'can meet God and His Prophet everyday...you do not physically need to go to the Holy Places'.<sup>7</sup> Recalling the words of Punjabi Sufi poet, Baba Bulleh Shah (d.1758), he argued: 'Going to Makkah is not the purpose; the purpose is to make peace with your Lord'.<sup>8</sup> To reinforce this idea that the sacred can be found anywhere, he also related a story about Mian Muhammad Bakhsh (d.1907), one of the most important modern Sufi saints of the region.<sup>9</sup> Despite being from a religious family, having wandered as a *faqir* (mystic) and become a well-known poet, Mian Muhammad never went for Hajj. Zafar told of how, even when his followers arranged and paid for his travel to the Holy Places, the saint turned back at the train unable to rid himself of the feeling that it was '*be adabi*' (disrespectful) to 'set his sinful foot upon the same earth as our beloved Prophet'.

Like the remoteness of the imaginary homeland for many ancient diasporas, the narration of 'Makkah-Madinah' as a faraway place in rural pre-Partition North India only intensified the mythic power of its sacrality. Perhaps inevitably, then, amongst the oldest of British-Pakistanis, there is a tendency to idealise the epic difficulty and exceptionality of pilgrimages of the past. They ascribe to them more intrinsic value than (what they see as) the all too abbreviated and (seemingly) instantly gratifying mass excursions of today. Of course, some do still seek to make epic journeys overland,<sup>10</sup> but given their new prosperity and the availability of affordable and convenient international air travel, most British-Pakistanis and their transnational families now have a reasonable expectation of going to the Holy Places at some point in their lives.

Having initially funded the pilgrimages of parents and grandparents back home in Pakistan, the first generation of migrants began to go on Hajj in large numbers themselves once families were reunited in Britain, a process that was completed only

in the 1980s. This was a time, too, of widespread redundancy in the textiles industry and approaching middle age for the men in question, as well as a world-wide Islamic revival from the revolution in Iran to General Zia's Islamisation policy in Pakistan. While the shift in conditions of possibility has been remarkable for all concerned, it has been particularly so for women, as well as children and young people, and even the infirm. All now regularly make the journey with globalisation having wrought something of a democratisation of pilgrimage amongst more privileged groups such as economic migrants at least.<sup>11</sup> One young male respondent, for example, Karim, 24, a sales representative, described taking his ageing mother direct from Manchester to Madinah on a charter flight of only six hours duration.<sup>12</sup>

Even in the jet age, however, it would be wrong to overlook British-Pakistanis' often spiritually uplifting and physically and emotionally testing experiences of pilgrimage. Many still stress that going to Makkah and Madinah is very much a matter of *kismet*, fate or destiny: 'in the hands of God' or 'answering the call' if it comes (Shauqat, 36, small business advisor). Moreover, at the same time as presenting new opportunities, their relative affluence and diasporic self-consciousness has raised new questions and dilemmas for British-Pakistanis concerning religious duties that would have been largely irrelevant to their ancestors. Depending on an individual's age, gender and other responsibilities, as well as their self-identity and level of religiosity, but also their competing social and economic priorities and those of their families, as well as the cultural expectations of British-Pakistani communities per se, their responses to such questions and dilemmas have varied considerably. Discussions and debates about who should go for pilgrimage, when, and for what purpose, are rarely straightforward in a 'normative' religious sense.

Zafar (74, retired spinner) told of how, as a labour migrant in the 1960s and 1970s, he had certainly had the money to go for Hajj but could not justify financing the trip until he had reunited his family in Britain. His time and funds had been invested in visits to Mirpur where he had bought land and animals as well as

building a *kothi* (large brick house). Further illustrating this customary expectation that pilgrimage is properly something for later in life, Habib (45, spinner) reported the fury of his family when, as a spiritually-minded youth in his twenties, he had announced his intention to go for Hajj in 1980. One night, Habib had dreamt of the Prophet and upon informing his *shaykh* (Sufi guide) of this the latter insisted that this was his call to the Holy Places. Surely, concluded the *shaykh*, his coming to England had been fated so that he might accumulate sufficient funds for the journey.<sup>13</sup> However, Habib's family rated 'other responsibilities and needs' - including getting married, buying a house and starting a family - as much higher priorities for someone in their mid-twenties and advised the young man to wait until he was more mature.

For younger British-Pakistanis now, however, the pressure on the spiritually-minded to postpone pilgrimage until later in life is less pronounced than it once was. For some, pilgrimage is very much seen as having an important part to play in a reflective personal journey of religious revival (compare Metcalf, 1990):

I'd just started reading [the five daily prayers] regularly and I thought, "Well, I've got the money, whatever I've got I may as well use it". You never know. I might not be here next year. I was involved in worldly affairs, just being up to no good, and for me it was a form of purification. ('Ali, 30, housing support worker)

Another male respondent in his thirties put his situation in very stark soteriological terms, describing a fear inspired in him by hearing of a *hadith* (narrated tradition) of the Prophet: anyone who can 'afford to do Hajj and doesn't - then he dies as a Christian or a Jew' (Sajid, 37, computer programmer).

For Shazia (56, housewife), in contrast, who had waited until her daughters were married before undertaking Hajj (although her husband had not waited), it was a question of deciding to go quickly - she sold some of her jewellery - in the hope of coping with an individual crisis. In the diaspora and at similar distance from the local shrine of her youth where women had always gone



in times of trouble, she went instead to Makkah and Madinah.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, reflecting on the expectation that pilgrimage should be undertaken only by those willing to assume the responsibilities of a pious life thereafter, Shazia evidenced a highly personalised and pragmatic interpretation of Islam which willingly contested the still very real expectations of many religious leaders and elders:

Then people said to her [Shazia's sister-in-law, whom Shazia had invited to accompany her], "Look, you put make-up on, you dress like this, you do this, you do that, and if you go to Hajj you'll have to give up all this and live a pious life". I explained to her that this is a personal matter and that you take it at your own pace and doing Hajj doesn't mean that you become 100% practising over night.

Moreover, when an *'alim* (religious scholar) from an important *dar-al-'ulum* (Islamic seminary) in nearby Ramsbottom ruled, 'No, she [the sister-in-law] can't go on her own [without a *mahram*, a male relative whom it is forbidden to marry]', she argued from experience, 'it can be done, there are ways round it'. Indeed, a respondent with experience of leading groups on pilgrimage, Mukhtar (42, community leader), suggested that, despite the efforts of the Saudi Arabian government to regulate it, in the large groups that do travel from Britain, many women are not accompanied by *mahrams* in the technical sense.

An emerging dimension of the experience of contemporary pilgrimage for British-Pakistanis, then, is its availability as a reasonably affordable commodity that can be increasingly consumed at times of one's need, desire and choosing as part of the elaboration of self-identity. The new immediacy of international travel also means that it is possible for individuals to travel for Hajj and especially *'umra* at just a few week's notice although most family groups plan months ahead. One young male, Abid (30, sales representative), spoke of fasting during Ramazan in 1998 and listening to the exhortatory speeches of the *'ulama'* (religious scholars) in the mosque. With the freedom to travel as and when he wanted, he and a friend just thought: "What would it be like

to be fasting in the Holy Cities?" We both spoke about it so much that we said, "Why don't we just go?"

At the same time, securing a month's leave from work can be difficult for many British-Pakistanis intending to go for Hajj and some have to carry annual leave over from one year to another to enable their pilgrimage. However, quotas for the numbers of pilgrims travelling from the UK for Hajj are much less pressured than those in Muslim countries.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, while Saudi Arabia has its own detailed requirements of visitors,<sup>16</sup> as a non-Muslim state, the UK does not seek to regulate pilgrimage in the way that ministries in the Islamic world do.<sup>17</sup> British-Pakistani pilgrims travel in groups from tens to hundreds of people having purchased packages organised through officially recognised Saudi providers in consort with UK-based travel agents. 'Budget' and 'five-star' options are available, with the cost for international travel, accommodation and local services, currently ranging from just under £2000 per person to about £3000.<sup>18</sup> Large companies and small agents alike advertise on the web, in the minority ethnic media and through posters in religious institutions. Indeed, what might be described as a global marketisation of Islam in new public spheres and consumer cultures (compare Featherstone, 2002: 8), something that can be measured in terms of the proliferation of new media, is very much in evidence in the pilgrimage industry. One respondent, Suleyman (16, student), for example, even won his *'umra* tour in a regular prize draw at his local *zikh* (ritual remembrance of God) group.

In the same way that experiences of pilgrimage today are shaped by the sheer velocity of globalisation and the choices of consumer capitalism, in the Information Age some pilgrims arrive in Makkah and Madinah better orientated to the rituals and setting than any previous generation.<sup>19</sup> Live satellite television broadcasts from the Holy Places, official Saudi Arabian government videos, documentaries made for UK television by Muslim production teams, Internet sites, travelogues and guide-books all at once demythologise and re-mythologise the Hajj especially. Abid and his friend, having decided to travel at short notice, decided simply to

'buy the book and learn the *du'as* (supplications)'. Indeed, Mukhtar (42, community leader) reports that the historic institution of the *mutawif* (guide), although still in evidence in Makkah, is 'pretty much dead...people know what to do...it is all DIY [Do It Yourself] and less specialised'. At the same time, some earnest young pilgrims do find the sheer volume of material available confusing: 'Everyone was very happy for me that I was going but how was I supposed to feel?...Will the pilgrimage be accepted if I don't know the rites' (Suleyman, 16, student). Munira (69, widow) concurred highlighting the appeal of religious literalism in an age of the overproduction of knowledge and the dispersal of authority: 'young people have access to so much...My youngest son has become a Wahhabi whereas all the elders follow the way of *pirs*'.<sup>20</sup>

### THE SACRED AND PROFANE: NORMATIVE AND IMPROVISED AUTHENTICITIES OF 'BEING THERE'

The ritual mechanisms of pilgrims' symbolic separation from *dunya* (this worldliness) and liminal transition to the sacred are performed when, having made their ablutions and stated their intention to complete the pilgrimage, they don the *ihram*.<sup>21</sup> Depending on their route to Saudi Arabia, whether they come via a port of entry at Jeddah or Madinah, British-Pakistanis may change into their ritual attire in the UK, where they make stopovers (for example, in Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates), on the aeroplane itself or at one of the *miqats* (boundary stations) outside Makkah.<sup>22</sup> Two female respondents spoke of *ihram* in terms of both physical separation from the familiar and a greater consciousness of Allah, what Fischer and Abedi describe evocatively as 'reawakening from the oblivion of ordinary life' (1990: 150):

you forget everything, your children, your families. I thought England was everything for me, my lifestyle was everything, but once I got there all I thought about was me as a Muslim, what I've done in my past, the mistakes I've done. I just wanted all my sins to be forgiven and that was the focus of me being there. These two weeks I have to be a perfect Muslim and being there, it's such a beautiful place, that you

don't think of doing anything wrong and it's like Islam is in your face and I think that's the best place to be, to be a perfect Muslim. (Maryam, 26, teaching assistant)

You're trying to focus, be more vigilant, you're going on Hajj...this feeling of wanting to be *pak*, to be clean, and that doesn't just mean physical cleanliness but spiritually pure thoughts. It prepares you as you're approaching the House of God that you're becoming more God-conscious, reciting the *talbiya* [invocation]: "O God, I am here, what is your command?" at every part of the journey. We cut off from *dunya* and go in the divine presence. (Shazia, 56, housewife)

Highlighting the sacred journey of pilgrims from sin and death to purity and rebirth as they repent and ask for God's forgiveness and mercy (Werbner, 1998: 97), Habib (45, spinner) explained that the *ihram* also anticipates how all humankind will appear before God on the Day of Judgement:

I think what Zindapir [a Pakistani Sufi saint] said about the concept of *ihram* is pretty much how I felt.<sup>23</sup> He said it was a rehearsal for the Hereafter. When you're in the divine presence that's how you will be. A Muslim dies with only two sheets of cloth [their shroud]. Likewise, performing Hajj. No matter if he is a king or beggar, there is no difference between them in the sight of God.

However, another pilgrim cautioned that spiritual introversion and self-consciousness is not at all an automatic outcome of ritual separation: 'you need to be in touch with yourself or you can feel anything' (Ali, 30, housing support worker). Certainly for Zafar (74, retired spinner) the prospect of coming so close to the House of Allah, the centre of the Islamic universe, made him feel excited but also humble and nervous because of his sins and, recalling Mian Muhammad's anxieties, a perceived need to keep to the elevated (and idealised) *adab* (good manners) he associated with the Holy Places. However, this was not true of everyone. He complained: 'In the past every moment of the journey was sacred and cherished but I see people with their mobile phones even when

they are putting on their *ihram* - their mind is still on *dunya*, their business and football'.

Many pilgrims' incorporation into sacred time and space is confirmed when they are confronted with Masjid al-Haram, the Great Mosque of Makkah. Here they perform the first set of rituals which re-enact in reverse order the faith testing ordeals of the founder of monotheism, Prophet Ibrahim, his son, Isma'il, and the latter's mother and former's concubine, Hajar (Fischer and Abedi, 1990: 150f; Werbner, 1998: 97-100). When Abraham is forced by his wife Sarah to abandon Isma'il and Hajar in the desert, the latter searches frantically for water to save her baby son from death, only for God to create a miraculous spring from the ground. Pilgrims commemorate these events by drinking water from the well of *zamzam*, this after the *sa'y* (hurrying seven times) between two small hillocks, al-Safa and al-Marwa, adjacent to the precincts of the Great Mosque. Of course, it is the *ka'ba*, the large cube-shaped stone structure, covered by a black silk *kiswa* or curtain and embroidered with golden calligraphy, that recalls the most iconic and totemic images of the pilgrimage. This is the House of God, first built by Adam and then rebuilt later in life by Abraham and Isma'il to mark their covenant with God when He tested a father by asking him to sacrifice his son.<sup>24</sup> Here pilgrims must complete the *tawaf* (seven circumambulations).<sup>25</sup>

In underlining the importance of 'being there' pilgrims reinforced the idea of the Holy Places as a spiritual homeland and 'one of the primal scenes of Islam' (Fischer and Abedi, 1990: 150). As Tariq reflected (53, retired factory shop steward): 'I had seen the large photographs in people's houses, but nothing prepares you for the 'splendour' and immense size of the mosque'. In a similar vein, Amjad (55, chemist) discussed the contrast between *assuming* that one is facing the *ka'ba* when praying towards Makkah and then actually 'looking at it'.<sup>26</sup> He, like many pilgrims, was overwhelmed with awe and emotion:

When I just walked into the Great Mosque, *al-hamdu-li-llah* [praise be to God] and I saw the *ka'ba* there, the only thing I could do was to cry. You just grab the wall and cry for forgiveness, all the sins and

misdemeanours you've done. The human beings, they come and say, "Allah, forgive me for that" and after you feel as though you're really born again...It is as though you have come back home. That the *ka'ba* is the very source of our beginning - this is the feeling I had. And checking with *'ulama'*, some say the reason why it is there is because in the beginning of the world, the *ka'ba* is the place where Azra'il (as) took the piece of earth that Allah used to make Adam. I returned and the whole of humanity needs to return. It was a great blessing.

Such narratives of sacred place and belonging are also inflected with more individualised and particularistic feelings of closeness to family and kin, especially the dead. Maryam (26, teaching assistant) reported the impact on her mother who was recently bereaved after the death of a son:

I remember my mother saying to me, "My son's gone to a place like this and we're all going to go here". As soon as she got there she was just consoled completely...My mum has been religious all her life and she knows we're all going to die, but having your son taken away from you, only a mother can understand that. Each time something would remind her of him and she wouldn't stop crying. Being in England, I think it's probably the worst place for her, because there was nothing to remind her of God apart from her home and *namaz* [daily obligatory prayers].

As they circumambulate the House of God most pilgrims salute the *hajar al-aswad* (black stone) lodged in one corner of the *ka'ba* and said by Muslim tradition to be a meteorite brought from Paradise by the Prophet Adam. However, others struggle through the crowds to kiss it (Bianchi, 1995: 89). Ikram (25, teacher), another young man who went on Hajj primarily to accompany his elderly mother, told of how unable to secure a clear path to the *ka'ba*, he improvised: 'I just thought in my heart I've got the black stone in my hand and this is everything to me, my *ka'ba*, it just came to me, I thought I should kiss her hand and that was good enough for me'.

For all such novel and deeply personalised interpretations, Sajid (37, computer programmer) described another characteristic

experience for many British-Pakistanis. He underlined the continuing textual domination of an Islamic discursive tradition (Asad, 1986; Messick 1993), one that has socialised generations of Muslims, directly or indirectly: ‘the whole history of Islam actually goes round in your head, what you’ve read...it’s like walking in the footsteps of the Prophet and the Companions’. However, in this regard, the influence of popular culture on the religious imagination is also apparent: ‘I have a video called *The Message* and in it, it shows what the *ka’ba* would probably have looked like. This was how I pictured it when I closed my eyes’ (Tariq, 53, retired factory shop steward).<sup>27</sup> Such popular texts are invoked to simulate authenticity in part because contemporary Makkah has cheated them of the unadulterated tradition of their imaginations. Many appreciate the air-conditioning at the Great Mosque: ‘*Asian Englandi* are *nazak* (soft/spoilt) so Allah has made the Hajj much easier for our sake’ (Munira, 69, widow). However, Suleyman (16, student) was not impressed with some of the many modern ‘improvements’ made by the Saudi Arabian government since the 1960s especially: ‘I could not but help feel that I was not experiencing the true *sa’ý* which generations in the past have done running on marble rather than rock’.<sup>28</sup>

Moreover, in a context where Makkah receives more visitors than any other city in the world for one month in the year, and in so doing provides Saudi Arabia with an income second only in importance to oil (Park, 1994: 263), ‘Ali (30, housing support worker) underlined the constant presence of a globalised, Western-influenced, *dunya*, cheek by jowl, with the sacred:

You’ve got a big Arndale<sup>29</sup> centre sitting in front of Haram Sharif and in front of Masjid al-Nabi [the Prophet’s mosque in Madinah] you see shops that have Nike trainers and even white wedding dresses. It makes you think, “Who buys these? How much are they [the Saudis] influenced [by the West]?” Everybody around you, they’re wearing white *cholays* [robes] and they’ve got turbans on and you don’t see people in trousers but yet these are shops that are selling Western clothing.<sup>30</sup>

Some welcome the supermarkets with branded goods or enjoy looking for bargains while others are disappointed by the Saudi and UK agents who promise the world and deliver the bare minimum. However, as a wise young pilgrim, Hamid (20, undergraduate) advised, 'If you want to look for tradition you will find tradition. If you don't look you will not find tradition. So it's a matter of where you look rather than being traditional or not'.

The zenith of the Hajj is the procession several miles east - via an overnight camp in the Mina Valley - to the plain of 'Arafat where Adam is said to have met again with Eve after the Fall (Wolfe, 1997: xxiii). Here they repented of their sin and were taught to pray on the Mount of Mercy where later Muhammad, in his time, gave his farewell sermon. Some pilgrims shade from heat of the day in tents while others participate more directly in the solemn congregational standing (the *wuquf*) in supplication from noon until sunset:

Us ladies just stayed in the tents, we made *du'a* and prayed for everything we could think of. I was especially praying for my son, so that he becomes good and doesn't get into trouble, all these kinds of things...making *du'a*, asking forgiveness and doing *tasbeeh* [using prayer beads] and *zikr*. (Shazia, 56, housewife)

Many hold that it is at this time and place that God is closest to the world, 'making it easier for human prayers to attract his attention' (Bianchi, 1995: 89) and pilgrims try to spend at least a short period on the Mount of Mercy making *du'a*. However, it was the sheer size, scale and openness of 'a vast plain of people all dressed in the same clothes as far as you can see on the horizon' (Majid, 23, petrol station manager) that made most impact on pilgrims. At 'Arafat they described an oceanic feeling of oneness and collective effervescence which again evoked the end as well as the beginning of time:

Arafat is exactly the same as what it will be like in Yaum al-Qiyama [Day of Resurrection] and to get the gravity of the situation you have to be there...It drives the message into you how dependent we are. You



see the whole of humanity all around you and say “*al-hamdu-li-llah*, I am actually part and parcel of this sea that is before me, the sea of humanity”, the oneness that it represents, our one Lord, Allah. I was amazed to hear the *‘ulama’* saying that it was this place of ‘Arafat where Adam was forgiven for taking the forbidden fruit...It was a great joy, the amount of *rahmah* [mercy] that is there...The system is just goes into a state of shock really, just looking at the size of the situation. (Amjad, 55, chemist)

If pilgrimage involves separation from *dunya* and the seeking of forgiveness, it also involves sacrifice ‘without losing faith in God’ (Werbner, 1998: 98). Having left the hotels and shops of Makkah behind and moved out into the desert, the stoning of three tall pillars (*jamra*) back at Mina and then the sacrifice that follows commemorate the binding of Isma‘il and the repudiation of the Devil’s temptations. Amjad (55, chemist), one of the theologically more literate pilgrims, once again explained his understanding of the symbolic significance of the rituals:

The Day of Judgement is real. It drives into you the seriousness and the reality of the faith, especially when you’re stoning the Devils. You’re getting people here [in Britain, Europe and the West] nowadays that say that the Devil is just a figment of the imagination but, with respect...a Muslim has to always be prepared for what a powerful adversary the Devil is. He’s as real as anything and always tries to make sure you are never saved.

Trying to follow the example of exemplary persons such as Abraham and Isma‘il who resisted the temptations of Satan and showed commitment and perseverance or *sabr* in their faith (Fischer and Abedi, 1990: 165), some pilgrims emphasised that: ‘You have to be patient here, then in the rest of your life you’re patient, it’s good for you’ (Farzana, 20, student). While there was only implicit criticism here, others were more explicit in their criticisms of fellow pilgrims arguing that, given the vast expansion of numbers in the modern age, many had lost respect and required instruction on proper *adab*. This was all grist to the mill of older pilgrims’ like Zafar (74, retired spinner): ‘Unless you suffer, hunger, thirst and

feel discomfort, you have really not done Hajj...Have they been on Hajj or some holiday?'.<sup>31</sup>

Nevertheless, some do find that the reality of completing this part of the Hajj really does test them to their limits despite the modern conveniences. While many are extremely well prepared and organised, the heat combined with the sheer numbers can take its toll on others in terms of getting lost, dehydration, sunburn, exhaustion, injury and even the threat of death. It also impacts on the ability (and desire) of some pilgrims—and not just the elderly or infirm who are excused—to complete their rites in the prescribed manner, again with some unusual improvisations. Most problems arise at the stoning of the pillars after the tiredness of a night meditating and collecting the requisite pebbles at Muzdalifa. The crush of people at the *jamra* makes the act extremely hazardous with some experiencing the stampedes that regularly make international news:<sup>31</sup>

A stampede broke loose with people just crushed with each other, women without their scarves, screaming. A helicopter was monitoring on top of us and doing nothing. There wasn't even room for an ambulance to get through. I think on that day 50 to 60 people died...To me there's a simple solution but I think it's the way we've been brought up that we shouldn't criticise anything...its not criticising the Hajj ritual its constructive criticism to improve things. One '*ulama*' was standing there and he said, "No, you shouldn't say things like that". (Sajid, 37, computer programmer)

[Back at the hotel] there was a room full of people from Bolton and Manchester with all these lame excuses, all these guys bunking off. One guy was saying that him and the five guys that have come here, they're ill, they've left their pebbles with another guy. He just happened to turn up as well, 24 hours before he was due back in Makkah. He said, "Oh, I've had enough, I put all six people's pebbles in one cloth and threw the big 'football' at the Devil". They were shouting at him, "Stupid, you're supposed to throw them one by one". He said, "Oh, please don't say nothing to me, I've just about made it back myself". (Majid, 23, petrol station manager)

The pilgrim relating this last story, whilst completing his ‘return’ *tawaf* (Wolfe, 1997: xxiii) having arrived back in Makkah from Mina, actually collapsed and had to be taken to the hospital inside the Great Mosque’s precincts:

That day was the longest and most painful of all the Hajj, the day when you really get purified...I had tears in my eyes and I was reading *kalima* [the Muslim profession of faith] and thinking, “I’m going any minute now but at least I’ve done Hajj”. I realised that if someone had told me the pilgrimage was going to be so difficult I probably wouldn’t have come but *al-hamdu-li-llah* I didn’t know that.

#### MULTIPLE LOCATIONS, COMPETING IMAGINARIES: RACE & CLASS, PURITANISM & DEVOTIONALISM

The sacrifice of *‘id al-‘adha*, sometimes known as *‘id al-kabir* (the ‘big’ festival), is the normative culmination of the Hajj. According to Werbner, the commemoration of Abraham’s covenant with God is ‘a moment of ordeal and release’ (1998: 99). Celebrated by Muslims world-wide, there is also a symbolic reminder to pilgrims to share their blessings as the sacrificial meat is given to the poor. However, given the modern, depersonalised mechanisation and bureaucratisation of the Hajj, British-Pakistanis now buy vouchers for the animal sacrifice before leaving the UK.<sup>32</sup> Neither do they participate in the *‘id* celebrations because of the demanding schedule of rituals. Nevertheless, reflecting back on the rites of pilgrimage, there are many accounts of the sacred unity and emotional bonding of Muslims as a community, with reference to the suspension of racial, class and national hierarchies described by Turner (1969). There is a strong sense of egalitarianism, anti-structure and *communitas*, that ‘humanity is one single community...not different and separate nations’ (Amjad, 55, chemist):

People who I’d never seen before and will probably never see again were coming up and saying “*mubarak* [blessings, congratulations], you’ve just done *‘umra*”. Even all the barbers [who cut or shave pilgrims’ hair as a sign of release from *ihram*] shook my hand. It really was a

humbling experience. I really felt Islamic brotherhood and I'm just used to being with Pakistanis. (Abid, 30, sales assistant)

In Makkah *sharif* you're sitting around the *ka'ba*, you see lots of people from all walks of life, old, young, little boys, little girls from all corners of the world, which amazed me. I remember talking about multiculturalism and pluralism, even writing essays about such things in Britain, and trying to understand other people. At that time all these things came to mind. Everyone tries to communicate with one another, even smiles or letting one person pass before you, letting them go in front or apologising, even sharing dates that you've got, or fruit, with the next person. I couldn't speak their language, they couldn't speak mine, but the smiles on each other's faces made you feel really, really happy. (Ikram, 25, teacher)

The integrative function of ritual does not of course impose simple uniformity of meaning upon pilgrims. Rather, as we have seen, the pilgrimage is perhaps better seen as providing a common symbolic form which enables the aggregation of a sacred community, while at the same time allowing for the expression of multi-vocal interpretations and individual experiences (Turner, 1974a and 1974b; Cohen, 1985). Moreover, while it is still possible to be treated as *dauyuf al-rahman* (Guests of the Merciful), perhaps especially in Madinah which is described as more relaxed than Makkah, British-Pakistanis complained about the harshness of those marshalling pilgrims at the key sites and the fact that, although most shops are run by Pakistani immigrants, the latter can not own property in their own right in Saudi Arabia (Hamid, 20, undergraduate). They did not escape racism as easily as Malcolm X (1968) during his somewhat privileged Hajj.

Nevertheless, whilst in the Holy Places many British-Pakistanis were also confronted with experiences that prompted a deep realisation, too, of the economic privileges and political freedoms that they benefit from by living in the West. Some members of the *umma* are undoubtedly more exposed than others to the stark inequalities and injustices that remain within a globalising world. As a diasporic community, British-Pakistanis were caught between

a sense of connection and disconnection with pilgrims from South Asia especially:

I think we're lucky being in Europe; *al-hamdu-li-llah*, we have work that financially pays us quite well and people get money from the welfare. For people from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the poor countries - the sacrifices they would have to make—it's much harder. I think their Hajj is more complete. It's far too easy for us. Although we're going to Hajj, we still pick and choose. We'll travel on the coaches and things like that but those people, they'll sleep rough, they'll eat little and they'll walk from one place to another. Yeah, so I value those people's Hajj more than ours and I think it is more valuable to Allah. (Ali, 30, housing support worker)

At the same time, British-Pakistanis also revealed stereotypes and prejudices of their own in terms of race, culture and class: 'pilgrims from Africa [were]...seen as the cause of stampedes' (Zafar, 74, retired spinner) and Shi'as were criticised because they 'dress all in black, are always chanting something, behaving in odd ways and determined not to fit in' (Ikram, 25, teacher). Given her own affluence, Shazia (56, housewife) felt threatened by rumours about the alleged criminality of the poor:

I had a lot of jewellery on and the women started telling me these horror stories saying, "If you go down there on your own, there are these black women who'll cut your hand off and slit your throat or they'll cut your stomach open and they'll take away your gold", some saying, "they'll drug you and take away your bangles". I was really, really frightened. I tried my best to take my bangles off but my hands had swollen, so I ended up by using some tape to cover them and wore a *jilbab*, like a black cloak, to make sure that they were never displayed.

As Suleyman (16, student) suggested, 'Some people give a bad name to their culture and because of this the rest of their people are looked down upon even on pilgrimage'.

Having completed the Meccan rites many pilgrims travel north to Madinah to pay their respects to Muhammad whose tomb is to

be found at the Prophet's Mosque with its green dome, tall minarets and ornate calligraphic carvings. South Asian heritage Muslims are amongst the most devoted to the Prophet, with those influenced by Sufi and Barelwi movements emphasising the concept of the 'light of Muhammad' (*nur-i Muhammadi*). This is said to have existed from creation and is derived from God's own light (*nur-i khuda*). According to Barelwi scholars, Muhammad is no mere mortal. Alive not dead, he possesses *'ilm al-ghayb* (knowledge of the unknown) and is the primary focus for Muslims' *tawassul* (intercession) with God (Sanyal, 1996: 255-9):

Our belief is that our *nabi* [prophet], like all the *anbiya'* [prophets] is living and if we are sincere our *nabi* is going to sort all our problems. Our *'ulama'* say there is a saying of our *nabi* that whoever comes and visits me in my mosque, *insha'Allah* [God willing], come the Day of Judgement, I will not let that person down. (Amjad, 55, chemist)

Other pilgrims described queuing in single file and then having a few seconds to give their *salams* (greetings) to the Prophet's tomb and make *du'as* with some believing that 'the carpets are meant to be part of *janna* ['the Garden', Paradise]' (Farzana, 20, student). For some British-Pakistanis time in Madinah was seen as the most profound and emotional of all their pilgrimage experiences, despite not being a part of the formal rituals:

I felt a strong emotion thinking that just the other side of that gate, which was only a matter of a few feet away, lay the most beautiful person who has ever lived and I started to cry. It was totally involuntary and I cried until I left the mosque. (Tariq, 53, retired factory shop steward)

Even a young respondent who was sceptical about 'spiritual powers' still 'felt very strongly "There is something here"' (Maryam, 26, teaching assistant).

The British-Pakistanis interviewed found that their visit to Madinah underlined their theological differences with other Muslims, differences already familiar from Pakistan and the UK.

They described meeting ‘different types of people who practice Islam according to their area of *fiqh* [jurisprudence, schools of law]’, sometimes encountering annoying zealots who sought to ‘correct’ their practice on various matters: ‘You get young people coming up to you and telling you, “Uncle, you should know better. It is *bid’a* [innovation] to make supplication in front of the Prophet”’ (Zafar, 74, retired spinner). Indeed, familiar sectarian debates occasionally broke out, something that a majority found unacceptable in the Holy Places:

When we were leaving ‘Arafat riding on top of a bus, there were these two guys who came from Britain arguing about the Bareilwi-Deobandi debate.<sup>33</sup> I was getting really cheesed off but remained quiet as they were quite old. I thought to myself, “What a place to bring theses silly debates!”. In the distance was a bus full of African Muslims who were reciting a beautiful *qasida* [panegyric poem praising the Prophet]. Everyone just stood motionless, but those two lunatics continued debating. (Habib, 45, spinner)

Despite such disapproval, one young British-Pakistani admitted that he had found it difficult to be quite so pragmatic given the backing that the Saudi Arabian State gives to the puritanical and anti-Sufi ‘Wahhabi’ sect of Islam. As a ‘lover’ of the Prophet, he decided that he must take drastic steps:

Because I knew the differences between ‘us’ and ‘them’, their *‘aqida* [creed] and our *‘aqida*, one of my problems was reading *namaz* behind them [Wahhabi *imams*]. The first day I read behind them but I felt very uneasy. Some were telling me, “If you don’t know the *imam*, it’s ok” but I brushed it aside because we think they are *gustakh-i rasul* [blasphemers of the Prophet]. Then I decided, “No, I’m not going to do it”. We’d go to the mosque and join in with them but not do *niyya* [‘intention’, which validates the prayer]. We just used to do the poses, then afterwards we’d read our own *namaz*. Throughout the trip I used to think, “These are the people who back home would say, ‘Oh, we don’t read *namaz* behind them, they’re Wahhabi’. But here they say, ‘We should put these things aside’...All the elder people were saying,

“You are foolish. Are you reading for Allah or what?”. (Ali, 30, housing support worker)

‘Ali also complained that the Saudis ‘try to push their beliefs onto others’ through the publication of books and pamphlets given to all pilgrims, observing that: ‘there are some simple brothers and sisters who aren’t very educated and they get these leaflets and they think, “Oh, this must wrong”’.

Boosted by its oil wealth, Saudi Arabia has pumped huge budgets into the global, multi-media, export and propagation of Wahhabi ideas through pan-Islamising international missionary projects and organisations such as the Muslim World League (Rabitat al-‘Alam al-Islami, founded 1962) (Nasr, 1994; Zaman, 2002).<sup>34</sup> Other pilgrims also felt that their belief and practice of Islam was policed and disciplined whilst in Saudi Arabia in a way that was not true of Britain or Pakistan. They reported the ‘paranoid’ prohibition on carrying anything while paying respects to the Prophet and the ‘bad looks’ from security guards ensuring that no-one touch the grills of His tomb.<sup>35</sup> There were stories, too, of guards challenging (sometimes in a threatening manner) public behaviour which was judged to constitute *shirk* (polytheism) or *bid’a*, from the kissing of a living saint’s hand to carrying prayer beads for *zikr*. Pilgrims also spoke of papers vetted at the airport, one having a page removed from a book of devotions (Habib, 45, spinner). In the same way that some pilgrims were critical of Saudi Arabian organisation of the pilgrimage - ‘and how organised people are back in Britain...if this was run by the British authorities how smoothly things would run’ (Shazia, 56, housewife) - so too another compared the Saudis unfavourably to Britain in terms of freedom of speech:<sup>36</sup>

I don’t think there’s any freedom allowed in the Saudi Kingdom to actually do any *da’wa* [propagation] or youth work or even any sort of freedom to talk against them. I think it was a year before I went to Hajj when the Iranians did a demonstration and were shot down [1987]...about three hundred people got massacred.<sup>37</sup> In the West it doesn’t matter how bad the demonstration is they never open fire on



their own people. I think this is a problem, not maybe just with the Saudis. The majority of Muslim countries are 'trigger happy'. (Sajid, 37, computer programmer)

Pilgrims complained too that, in their drive to erase *bid'a*—and despite many 'innovations' of their own - the Saudi authorities have left unmarked, unsigned or even destroyed many places of *ziyara*. While not part of the formal Hajj or *'umra* rituals, sites of pilgrimage such as al-Baqi Cemetery are still sought out by many pious Muslims from across the world as places that offer great continuity with their salvation history and certain *baraka* (blessing) in the present:

There are so many thousand *sahabis* in that graveyard, but you don't know where their graves are. There are no names, no tombs or anything like that. So one just keeps walking and doing *fatiha* [reading the opening chapter of the Qur'an] at various places although we saw some Turks and some Shi'as from Iran who had old maps and we asked them and they pointed out Hazrat Fatima Zahra [the grave of the Prophet's daughter] so we went and prayed there. ('Ali, 30, housing support worker)

The other feeling I had was the preservation of our history. I think that was very sad to actually see that most places like the Prophet's birthplace and his house and other things, have been demolished...In the West every single thing historical has been preserved and it is a source of inspiration, that's what you want to see when you go there and do *ziyara*. (Sajid, 37, computer programmer)

And yet there were always minor victories that subverted such attempts at the discipline and regulation of religious belief and practice. Shazia (56, housewife) reported the success of a friend who wanted to smuggle religious souvenirs back to Britain:

At each grave-yard and other *ziyara* you go to they have these massive posters or signs saying, "It's forbidden in Islam to touch the graves or to believe that there's any blessing or to take stones or dust". But people have a long tradition of taking things from graves of holy people and this friend of mine was collecting stones

from different graves and mosques. We had to hide them in such a way that they wouldn't be detected at the airport and luckily those stones were brought back to England and now they adorn the front room, where people come and do *ziyara*.

### REMEMBERING THE SACRED: SOUVENIRS & MEMORIES, PERFECTED & PRAGMATIC RELIGIOSITIES

Every year, at the end of Hajj season, British-Pakistanis flock to Manchester airport to give returning family and friends their customary welcome home reception. Temporarily sacralising the Arrivals Hall into which they enter, the *hajjis* and *hajjas* are greeted with flowers and *hars* (garlands). One *hajja* described the 'beautiful sight' of the crowds waiting to wish the returning pilgrims 'Hajj *mubarak*' (blessings of Hajj): 'you felt as if you were back in Jeddah, it was that kind of atmosphere' (Shazia, 56, housewife). In the days and weeks following their return, *hajjis* also share their experiences in many ways through telephone calls and letters and more occasionally audio-recorded reflections and short diary entries. While Munira (69, widow) complained that pilgrimage has become so commonplace now that people are less prepared than they were in the past to travel to listen to *hajjis*' stories, most returnees still receive a steady stream of visitors wanting to offer their congratulations and exchange reflections on the journey for the most recent local gossip.

Many visitors are also eagerly expectant of gifts promised or requested, enabling the metonymic transfer of the blessings of pilgrimage (Werbner, 1998: 99). Farzana (20, student) was especially keen to return with tokens that would actively encourage religiosity: 'if they read with the *tasbeeh* [we bought], that's even more blessings'. However, Shazia (56, housewife), a more seasoned traveller, told of her female friends giving her, 'a very big list of things they want...every little domestic thing...I don't know whether it's got blessing or if it's cheaper'. Apart from the pressure from peers to shop for clothes, toys and electrical goods - with stopovers in Dubai having become especially popular for those who travel with Emirates Airlines - she went into great detail about the

range of religious souvenirs commonly available. One of the most popular is water from the well of *zamzam*. Apart from that, dates are a commonplace gift with the very expensive *ajwah* variety from trees said to have been planted in the Prophet's time (or even by Muhammad himself) reserved 'for somebody very special', for example, 'a *pir sabb*'. Then there are the *tasbehs* which Shazia bought with varying numbers of beads depending on the level of the recipient's piety: thirty-three beads for 'people who are not very practising' and 500-1000 beads for those 'who make a lot of *zikh*'.

Another popular gift is a *masala* (prayer mat) which, amongst British-Pakistanis at least, may be rubbed against the *ka'ba* or the gate of the Prophet's Mosque so as to capture its *baraka* (blessing) and distinctive perfume. Shazia reported that an imitation of the fragrance used to perfume the *ka'ba* is highly sought after. Other gifts include *hijabs* (scarves) for women, small gold *ka'ba* necklaces for young girls and video and audio recordings of Qur'anic recitations and *tarawih* (special Ramazan prayers) from Makkah and Madinah, as well as books on Islamic history and toy cameras containing pictures of all the main sites. As Sajid (37, computer programmer) reflected on this deterritorialised production of Islamised cultural commodities: 'although it's made in Japan or India, you still buy from there and it has a special meaning that it belongs to the Prophet's city or Makkah'. Even the most unlikely gifts can recall one's sacred journey: 'A friend of mine went and bought a pair of Dame Edna glasses from Madinah and every time I see her it brings back pleasant memories' (Shazia, 56, housewife).

Several British-Pakistani respondents reported the genuine pleasure they took in recalling their memories of pilgrimage to Makkah and Madinah. Meeting a recently returned pilgrim, praying on a *masala* rubbed with the perfume of the *ka'ba*, performing *zikh* (remembrance of God) or *i'tikaf* (seclusion, usually in a mosque, during the last 10 days of Ramazan) or even just hearing the *azan* (call to prayer), could trigger a momentary

expansion of the religious imagination and consciousness: 'It takes you back and you no longer look at the walls in the house but your mind has the picture of the *ka'ba* - that atmosphere or that aroma reproduces the effect of being back in Makkah' (Shazia, 56, housewife).

For some British-Pakistanis the memory of performing pilgrimage is seen as a powerful source of ongoing spiritual connection, strength and motivation. Hamid (20, student) reflected, 'If I now need help in any matter, I just close my eyes and visualise myself sitting in front of the Prophet's grave and ask for help...the thing is done'. Another young *hajji* truly hoped and believed that it had effected a permanent renewal and transformation in his life:

The biggest souvenir is the love in your heart and that's all Allah's doing, believing that Allah has heard your prayers and you are purified like a new baby...hoping and praying that when you go back into the world, that you'll try to keep yourself clean...These are the spiritual things in you and the rewards you've received from your Lord...It makes you think about yourself all the time (Ali, 30, housing support worker).

A small number of returning pilgrims, however, struggle to reintegrate, finding it difficult to separate themselves from what one pilgrim described as 'the purest, holiest place on earth' (Abid, 30, sales assistant). Whether because of his lack of preparation for the experience that overtook him or the rapidity of his movement from the profane to the sacred and back again, an existential disorientation overcame him that he found difficult to compare to the impact of any other form of travel:

I thought I'd just go back to the normal swing of things but I became withdrawn because I couldn't understand the experiences I'd had. I still felt as though a part of me was in Makkah. I just felt empty. I thought I'd find all the answers but I realised that I only had the questions. I had changed. It was a case of me getting to know myself. I felt as though my soul had been somewhere so happy it was just reacting, "Hold on, what are you bringing me back here for?"...I've been abroad

where the sea is blue and the sky is blue and everything is beautiful, where people call it “paradise”, but its never confused me and felt so different. (Abid, 30, sales assistant)

For others, perhaps the majority, however, there is a more gradually fading efficacy of pilgrimage once they reintegrate with British society. Many embark on a sacred journey with mixed motives—perhaps because of a parent, partner or friend - and their own spiritual journeys evolve in fits and starts. Memories of the Holy Places are still seductive but they rarely entirely displace attachments to friendships, careers and having fun which have become sacred in their own way. Many will acknowledge a sense of transgressing religious expectations and norms set out in the dominant discursive tradition but there is an affirmation too of the givenness of one’s character and feeling most at home in Britain, as well as a pragmatic confidence in Allah’s continuing mercy and forgiveness:

Coming back you’re starting again as a new Muslim...but I only lasted with the headscarf for three months. Being there I was fine about it - everybody else covering - but for me not to wear a headscarf is normal. I looked at myself and thought, “This is not me”. I thought, “How strange I look”. I was getting back to my normal self. I noticed everybody was staring at me, like, “What’s happened to her?”. Then slowly *namaz* started reducing as well...When I was really tired there was nothing there to inspire me. I would just have the excuse of the children, you know, “God will forgive me, Allah knows I’m really tired today, I can’t get up for *fajr* [early morning prayer]”. (Maryam, 26, teaching assistant)

Regardless of their past lives, *hajjis* were traditionally given increased respect in the community and were often seen as returning more learned and enlightened as well as with new honorific titles and Arab-style attire (Gardner, 1995). For the very oldest British-Pakistanis, there is a clear sense now that the meaning and significance of pilgrimage has been diluted because so few who come back from pilgrimage are able to ‘cut themselves off’ from *dunya*: ‘they don’t even grow a beard. The women go with make-up

and come back with make-up' (Munira, 69, widow). The sacred journey appears to have lost its uniqueness, become banal even, with some making the journey several times over: 'You meet people nowadays and they have done six or seven Hajjs, so now it has become a number game' (Zafar, 74, retired spinner). Nevertheless, there is still a sense of public scrutiny in British-Pakistani communities:

I spoke to a cousin of mine who is *hafiz* [one who has committed the whole of the Qur'an to memory] and *imam* of a mosque...After the formal greetings he started interrogating me on my daily actions saying that *'umra* would be of no use if I do not follow the daily obligations. (Suleyman, 16, student)

It's so easy to do Hajj. All you're doing that one month is *'ibadat* [worship]. The hardest thing is to live up to being a *hajji sabb*. One wrong move and I'll be the talk of the town. (Ali, 30, housing support worker)

Shauqat (36, small business advisor) recognised that 'if you have that concept [cutting off from *dunya*] you are safeguarded and spiritually you'll progress'. However, for him, there was always another chance: 'Allah, for some reason, does call them [pilgrims] for Hajj again'. Indeed, standing before the *ka'ba*, like most pilgrims, he asked God for worldly success as well as spiritual purification: 'O Allah, give us *dunya*, give us *mawla* [give us the best of both worlds]'. Rather than a once and for all sacred journey to prepare for death and the Day of Judgement, he imagined modern pilgrims periodically seeking 'top-ups' of forgiveness, 'until hopefully the time will come when they will be cut off completely'.<sup>38</sup> Despite what their elders might think, the Holy Places do exercise a strong hold over the religious imaginations of younger British-Pakistanis, positing the idealised sacrality of a trans-national or even post-national (Appadurai, 1996) spiritual homeland and the imagined communities of both Britain and Pakistan to which they are also ambiguously attached. Indeed, many articulated a strong

desire, sometimes a deeply felt need, to return to the Holy Places one day:

It's not a good place to live here being a Muslim. You need to refresh yourself and be in the company of good people...I need to be kept strong in some way but we can't live in Saudi Arabia, we can't live in Makkah or Madinah. Our life is here in England but we need to be reminded of Islam. (Maryam, 26, teaching assistant)

### CONCLUDING ANALYSIS:

The many perspectives, accounts, and interpretations of the Hajj should be set one upon another like palimpsest...so that it may be seen in its historical and phenomenological variety, one interpretation critiquing another, reminding us of the philosophical, theatrical, and historical variety and depth of Islam. (Fischer and Abedi, 1990: 171)

Following Eickelman and Piscatori (1990), this article gives an insight into the way that British-Pakistani Muslim religious imaginaries are shifting in relation to historical, social, economic, political and cultural change. In the peasant communities of pre-partition Kashmir, despite no real expectation of pilgrimage to the Holy Places, 'Makkah-Madinah' had a pivotal place in the religious imagination. This was produced and reproduced through a formal, and especially informal, discursive tradition (Asad, 1986: 14) of preaching, pious anecdotes and religiously inspired Sufi poetry. There was room, too, in this tradition for significant diversity and nuance, for example, in terms of the esoteric understanding that ultimately the sacred concerns interior journeying. For poets of popular Punjabi mystical literature such as Baba Bulleh Shah and Mian Muhammad Bakhsh, the inner pilgrimage towards Allah was more important than any physical journey or legal obligation. However, in the context of post-war immigration, an older generation of Pakistanis in Britain is increasingly confronted with a perception of losing the sacred as they once knew it. Like religious institutions and rituals per se (Vertovec, 2000), the experience of pilgrimage has been transformed

especially intensely in diaspora although such transformations must be seen as part of more general processes associated with a globalising (post)modernity (Turner, 1994).<sup>39</sup>

Because of increasing mobility and prosperity, pilgrimage has become more affordable, convenient and democratised for Pakistanis in Britain. However, these changing circumstances have produced new religious questions and debates to resolve. The custom of waiting until later in life to complete Hajj still has some hold, not least in terms of the constraints of discharging 'family responsibilities'. However, visits to the Holy Places are increasingly consumed with relative immediacy at times of pilgrims' need, desire and choosing. This is especially true amongst younger age groups and mirrors the way that spaces have opened up amongst second and third generation British-Pakistanis for the weaving and elaboration of more highly individualised and reflexive self-identities. This youth demographic, which has mushroomed since the 1980s, must in turn be set against the wider contexts of socialisation in a more or less secularising and ad hoc multicultural British education system. The Information Age, too, has seen the emergence of a globalised Islamic consumer culture and media hand-in-hand with world wide Islamic revivalism (Eickelman and Anderson, 2003). Against these shifting cultural capitals and social structures, religious authority, tradition and identity are being trans-locally renegotiated. This is as true for those held by a more pragmatic religiosity of belonging as much as those holding a more self-conscious sense of belief and practice.

All pilgrims experienced something of the liminality of ritual separation from *dunya* in the Holy Places, affirming intensified consciousness of Allah and being a Muslim. British-Pakistanis describe pilgrimage not only as an emotional and testing journey from sinfulness to purification but also - in commemoration of the lives of the Prophets Adam, Ibrahim and Muhammad - as a return to the sacred homeland of (monotheistic) all humanity. However, the 'authenticity' of actually 'being there' is increasingly framed in terms of the simulations of tradition readily available via a globalised Islamic consumer culture. Indeed, compared to idealised



accounts and even popular films, the perceived 'in-authenticity' of Saudi modernisation, the lack of *adab* amongst touristic pilgrims and the prevalence of 'McWorld' (Barber, 1995; Featherstone, 2002) is disappointing for some. Moreover, the fact of a Western-influenced *dunya* throughout the Holy Places highlights the fragility of the boundary between the sacred and the profane (Eade and Salnow, 1991) in an age of time-space compression. Rather than navigating boundaries once and for all, however, pilgrims continually make and remake their liminality step by step, from moment to moment.

Pilgrims' narratives about similarity and difference also attest to the fragility of such boundaries in terms of sacred-secular constructions of community, where cheek-by-jowl, cosmopolitanism and racism, theological utopias and dystopias, are juxtaposed. British-Pakistanis articulate a 'double' (Gilroy 1993) or, more properly, 'triadic' (Sheffer, 1986; Safran, 1991) consciousness, reflecting multiple, genuinely rooted and highly contextualised locations and attachments in terms of i) the homeland of Pakistan, ii) the wider Muslim world and iii) the new diasporic homeland of Britain. Strong feelings of *communitas* and empathy are cross-cut by the resentful and even fearful rhetorical tropes of encounter with Muslim 'Others': 'the commitment of poorer Pakistani pilgrims'; the potential 'danger of African pilgrims stampeding or stealing'; 'the separatism of Iranian Shi'ites'; 'the disorganised, authoritarian, rip-off and sometimes racist Saudis'. Moreover, British-Pakistani pilgrims also characterise their own compatriots in terms of narratives of 'privilege and softness, a lack of knowledge and *adab*'.

As well as differences of class and ethnicity, the Hajj brings together Muslims of competing religious traditions. There are zealots in all camps, all anxious to define orthodoxy and assert correct ritual practice (Asad, 1986). However, while Makkah and Madinah have long been key centres for the dissemination of revivalist ideas (Eickelman and Piscatori, 1990), the majority of interviewees viewed sectarian interventions as transgressing the *adab* of the Holy Places. For Sufi and Barelwi influenced British-

Pakistanis especially, the oil-rich nation-state of Saudi Arabia was the biggest culprit in this respect. Heavy investment in both propagating Wahhabi interpretations of Islam and regulating those of others was contrasted with the neglect and destruction of historical sites of devotion. Indeed, some pilgrims valued their visitation to the Prophet's tomb and its environs at Madinah at least as much as the official rites centred in Makkah and around.

Pilgrims return to Britain with a sense of the sacred that is shared, disseminated and infects family and friends during informal gatherings and communications. In the act of giving, mass-produced souvenirs become carriers of the sacred (Werbner, 1998). Back home, memories of Makkah and Madinah are triggered by a range of stimuli and senses, from hearing the call to prayer to the act of praying on a *masala* perfumed with the smell of the *ka'ba*. All are resources for the (re)expansion of the religious imagination. In weaving the intricate webs of meaning that go back and forth between normative discourses and demotic experiences, British-Pakistanis, like Muslims everywhere, are therefore active makers and re-makers of a tradition that is embodied and material as well as discursive in Asad's (1986) terms. This is what Nye (1999) calls 'religioning'.

The efficacy of travelling to the Holy Places for British-Pakistani religious identities must be mapped along a continuum from a readily accessible source of strength to a sense of fading ambiguity. Despite some of the elderly grumbling about the banal over-availability and under-appreciation of sacred time and place in the global (post)modern, for many younger people in the diaspora the possibility of travel to the Holy Places has become an important reference point for the imagination of their increasingly translated identities. However, despite the whirl of social change (Coleman and Eade, 2004), most pilgrims are pragmatic and few adhere to the ideal and 'cut off from *dunya*' on their return. Despite the tendency towards coherence associated with the nation state, global media and transnational religious movements, for the present moment at least, British-Pakistanis' highly contextualised narratives

resist simple incorporation by narrow and reactive, homogenised and formulaic, forms of culture and knowledge.

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#### NOTES

1. [www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029390590&a=KCountryAdvice&aid=1013618387135](http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029390590&a=KCountryAdvice&aid=1013618387135) (accessed 29 March 2007).
2. It is not incumbent on children, the disabled, the enslaved, those with a mental illness or those women who do not have a *mahram* (a relative to whom marriage is forbidden). Exceptions are also made when conditions are dangerous for political or other reasons (von Grunebaum, 1951: 15-16).
3. Followers reject the term 'Barelwi' in favour of Ahl-i Sunna (People of the Sunna), underlining their claim to be authentic representatives of traditional Sunni Islam. Ahmad Riza Khan (d. 1921) of Bareilly (hence Barelwi), founder of the movement, was first and foremost a Hanafi scholar and his

scholarship was deployed to defend many of these more customary aspects of religious practice that were being criticised as un-Islamic innovations by reformist movements of the period. See Sanyal (1996).

4. As Fischer and Abedi (1990: 170) report, numbers participating have mushroomed in the modern period: 1850 (40,000); 1902 (200,000); 1964 (1,000,000); 1984 (2,500,000).
5. Indian Muslims often believed that seven pilgrimages to Ajmer were the equivalent of Hajj (Saiyed, 1989: 241) while the numbers of Pakistanis performing Hajj have been low relative to population size (Park, 1994: 271).
6. Geographically distant, it was simply imagined to be one place.
7. The tale concerned a pious young shepherd boy from Mirpur who sought to join up with a group of pilgrims leaving the area for Hajj. Thinking the journey too harsh, the latter left him asleep during the night but the young boy wandered and wandered until he came across a mosque in the middle of a desert. There, the most beautiful man he had ever seen was praying together with his companions. Upon spotting the boy and seeing to his needs, the man bid one of the boy's countrymen, 'Data Ganj Bakhsh' (al-Hujwiri, d.1075) of Lahore, to guide him home which the saint did in the blink of an eye. The beautiful man of course was the Prophet Muhammad.
8. On Sufi religious poetry in North India, see Schimmel (1980), Shackle (2000) and Ballard (2006).
9. For a brief account of the life and key work of Mian Muhammad, see McLoughlin and Khan (2006).
10. One of the earliest journeys recalled was Suleyman's (16, student) account of his father travelling from Britain by road over a period of two months during the late 1970s. Journeying through France, Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Turkey, Syria and Iraq, he and his companions finally reached their destination in Saudi Arabia but only after various testing experiences and adventurous encounters on the way. Honoured as a guest by the poor in Turkey and witnessing wondrous whirling by dervishes in Damascus, they read *namaz* with the Shi'ites in Najaf. See also the account of Thompson (1994), a British convert to Islam.
11. This also extends to sponsoring someone to complete Hajj on behalf of someone who has died and was unable to complete the pilgrimage themselves. This is known as Hajj *badl* (Mukhtar, 42, community leader).
12. A good proportion of single young men make the journey principally as escorts for older relatives.
13. Dreams are a hugely important vehicle for coming to know what Allah has decreed. See Sirriyeh (2000).
14. For an account of shrine culture in Mirpur see McLoughlin and Khan (2006) and Ballard (2006).
15. For an international comparison of the management of Hajj in the Muslim world, see Bianchi (2004).

16. Requirements include passports, visas, return tickets, banker's drafts for local services and certificates for meningitis inoculations, marriage and so on (Mukhtar, 42, community leader).
17. Although, interestingly, in recent years the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office has established a British Hajj Delegation close to Haram Sharif (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2006).
18. In recent times there has been a clamp down on poor quality accommodation with it being a condition of travel now that approved (minimum 2 or 3 star) rooms be taken as part of a package (Mukhtar, 42, community leader).
19. Malaysians have a replica of the key sites which intending pilgrims train on (Mukhtar, 42, community leader).
20. The name often given by Barelwi-influenced detractors to followers of the Arabian reformer, Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (d.1792), or indeed anyone exhibiting anti-Sufi or even reformed-Sufi tendencies. Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab's mission was to purge Arabia of the various 'innovations' (*bid'a*) which he maintained had compromised God's absolute oneness, uniqueness and sovereignty. For Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, only that given sanction in the Qur'an, *hadith* or by the first generation of Islam, the pious ancestors (*al-salaf al-salih*), could be considered authentically 'Islamic'. See Sirriyeh (1999).
21. Before changing into *ihram* body hair is removed, beards and nails trimmed, and full ablution made. Two white sheets must be worn by men while women simply dress modestly (Roff, 1986: 84). Sex and the taking of any life are forbidden. Mukhtar (42, community leader) reports that, before departing, British-Pakistanis do gather with relatives as is reported by Roff to be customary. The latter might bring a gift and old clothes to be distributed amongst the poor. However, these are brief affairs. To make a will before departing is rarer.
22. These mark a 30 km radius around Makkah beyond which no non-Muslim should pass (Park, 1994: 265).
23. Until his death at the turn of the last century Zindapir was a well-known Pakistani living saint in North-West Frontier Province. Werbner (2003) is a sophisticated study of the cult that grew up around him.
24. Pilgrims can literally follow in the 'footstep' (*maqam*) of Ibrahim as a miraculous stone within Haram Sharif is said to contain its imprint (Fischer and Abedi, 1990: 160). Ibrahim's steadfastness is replayed in the life of Muhammad who rids the House of God of the idols on his triumphant return to Makkah from Madinah.
25. Pilgrims perform the rite at least three times; upon arrival in Makkah, at the end of the pilgrimage rituals and once more before departing (Wolfe, 1997: xxii). The *ka'ba* is often described as an earthly counterpart of Allah's heavenly throne, while *tawaf* imitates angels' circling of Him in adoration (Bianchi, 1995: 89).
26. Muhammad originally followed Jewish tradition and prayed towards Jerusalem, until he received a revelation instructing him to make the Muslim *qibla* (direction of prayer) Makkah instead.

27. *The Message* (1975) is an epic filmic representation of Muslim salvation history starring Anthony Quinn. Drawing on the Qur'an, but especially the *sirah* (Muhammad's biography) and *hadith* literatures, it was given a seal of approval by the most important centre of traditional religious learning, al-Azhar, in Cairo.
28. These include modern roads and air-conditioned transportation, water-sprinklers, modern slaughterhouses, medical, fire-fighting and surveillance personnel, and a media centre (Fischer and Abedi, 1990: 169).
29. The Arndale is a large shopping mall in Manchester, UK.
30. I have subsequently been informed that Ann Summers adult shops are also to be found close by too.
31. For example, in 2006 a stampede killed 400 including three British nationals. See [www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029390590&a=KCountryAdvice&aid=1013618387135](http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029390590&a=KCountryAdvice&aid=1013618387135) (accessed 29 March 2007).
32. Mukhtar (42, community leader) reports that some do go to the modern slaughter areas (or, alternatively, to local Bedouin), touch an animal and pay for it to be slaughtered and butchered. The Saudi authorities then ship most of the meat overseas to the needy.
33. The message of the Deobandis, another '*ulama*' led movement of British India, was one of a disciplined adherence to the divinely ordained *shari'a* (Islamic law), cultivating a disciplined personal morality and restrained ritual practice. Optional rites and 'innovations' with disputed sanction in the *hadith* but defended by the Barelwis were actively discouraged. In British India controversies were played out very publicly during preaching tours, oral disputations and in an increasingly elaborate sectarian literature. See Metcalf (1982). This has all been reproduced in diaspora and the new media.
34. The League first emerged as part of Saudi Arabia's attempt to counteract communism and especially the pan-Arab nationalism and socialism of revolutionaries such as Nasser of Egypt.
35. Mukhtar (42, community leader) also spoke of applications being rejected by the Saudi authorities because family names including words with divine associations such as 'Ullah' or 'Wahid' were said to constitute *shirk*.
36. It would be interesting to re-interview respondents in the wake of '9/11' and '7/7' to explore any impact on their constructions of Britain as much as Islam.
37. For a discussion of changing Iranian Shi'ite interpretations of Hajj, see Fischer and Abedi (1990).
38. Compare Abu Yazid of Bistam, "On my first pilgrimage I saw only the temple; the second time, I saw both the temple and the Lord of the temple; and the third time I saw the Lord alone" (Roff 1986: 86).
39. McLoughlin and Khan (2006) argue for the late impact of modernity on Pakistani administered Kashmir.

PART FOUR

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# Shifting Identities



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## Meglomaniac

ego is the leg—that trips that friend  
who tried to get ahead

ego is the grain of grit  
that stops the cog that turns the wheel  
that drives the pump  
that makes the light  
that lights the stage

that some one else is on

ego is the oil your right hand needs  
to grease the joint  
that signs the deal  
that twists the knife  
that ends the life

Shamshad Khan



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## CHAPTER 13

# Multiculturalism, Religion and Identity

MUNIRA MIRZA

### INTRODUCTION

In the years since '9/11', media commentators, politicians and academics have focused on Islamic terrorism as a foreign problem, imported to these shores. Samuel Huntington's widely cited thesis of the 'clash of civilisations' regarded the Muslim world as a powerful, unwavering force that was now challenging the West. More sympathetic observers tended to see terrorism as a desperate political strategy carried out by people in the deprived South. However, since the attacks on London on 7th July 2005, the focus has come closer to Britain. The London attacks undermined the dichotomy between 'West and the rest' by bringing home the fact that the *jihad* had found some fertile ground in the UK, amongst people who have had enjoyed the benefits of living in a modern, secular society. Most disturbingly, three of the bombers were of Pakistani descent, which raised concerns about the extent of anger and alienation of this sizeable ethnic group.

How can we explain the growing presence of Islamist ideas amongst a younger generation of British Muslims, in particular, those of Pakistani origin? We should first recognise that there is little evidence to show that Islamic terrorist groups constitute a *mass* social movement in Western society. In surveys conducted in Britain after the London bombings, the majority of ordinary Muslims fully denounced the attacks and disputed the religious legitimacy of Salafist Jihad groups.<sup>1</sup> As Roy (2004) and Kepel (2004) point out, today's Islamism should not be confused with former incarnations of political Islam, which were once popular

social movements in the Middle East, tied into anti-colonial struggles.

Whilst the number of potential terrorists remains small, such actions can, however, be construed as an extremely acute expression of a broader shift towards the 'Islamicisation' of identity (Roy 2004) in Britain, and a growing interest in neo-religious ideas, particularly amongst a younger generation of people of Pakistani origin. Various indicators demonstrate this: increased wearing of headscarves amongst Pakistani Muslim women; greater cultural identification with a transnational Muslim identity, or the 'Ummah'; the growing membership of Islamic political groups and youth associations; increased awareness of anti-Western and anti-Semitic attitudes; and greater demands for Sharia-compliant education and legal frameworks.<sup>2</sup> While such indicators might rise and fall in different regions, they do suggest a cultural shift is taking place. This is particularly important when taking into account that approximately one third of Muslims in Britain is under the age of sixteen and it is this generation in contrast with their parents, who are more likely to identify with a religious rather than an ethnic or national label.

It has been argued that the increasing religiosity of Muslims can be explained by the overwhelming influence of Salafist groups operating from abroad and funded by Middle Eastern organisations, particularly in Saudi Arabia (Glees, 2005). Certainly, there is an abundance of information targeting young Muslims through literature, bookshops, the internet, student societies and charitable organisations. But the absorption of ideas cannot be explained simply by their profusion. Why should the medieval pretensions of the Salafist narrative appeal to a modern, secularised Muslim in Britain? More strikingly, why should young boys of Pakistani origin wear Arabic clothing and be seduced by a culture quite different to that of their parents? To begin to answer some of these questions, we should recognise that the 'Islam' of contemporary Islamism is not a constant and unchanging ideology as portrayed by some culturalists such as Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington. The Wahabist doctrine promoted today is not something brought to

Britain though mass immigration, but has become adopted in order to suit the particular moral and political questions that concern the audience (Kepel, 2004). This is particularly marked for the case of Pakistanis, as these ideas and groups have always been marginal to both lived experience of Islam as well as the political culture there. In short, we cannot take for granted the success of any ideology by its mere existence; rather we need to explain why it takes root through an historical understanding of social relations (Fields, 1990).

The argument put forward in this essay is that the rise of religiosity represents a major shift in political life; it is not simply the continuation of traditional religious beliefs from Pakistan, nor is it a re-branding of old anti-colonial struggles. It is rather an expression of the new politics of identity, which has transformed the individual's relationship to society. Being a Muslim today and practising one's religion is something quite different to previous generations. It needs to be understood as a politicised reaction to the alienation of the contemporary world, which is globalised and depoliticised. It is also a reaction that is shaped by conditions in the wider world, not just amongst Muslims. Issues facing Muslim communities in Britain are not isolate from wider social trends and currents. Evidence for this perspective is based on 36 in-depth interviews conducted with young British-born Muslims of Pakistani origin in the summer of 2006. A further 14 interviews were conducted with non-Muslims, to highlight possible areas of comparison to explore in future research. The respondents were either university students or recent graduates and the interviews were conducted in London, Birmingham, Rochdale, and Manchester. (3) This essay will use these findings to outline a theoretical explanation for some of the contradictory features of contemporary religious identity amongst young British Pakistanis in Britain

## RELIGION AS IDENTITY

In our research, over half of the respondents, who articulated a high level of religious belief, said that they were more religious than their

parents. Many of them explained this by pointing out that their parents had arrived in Britain as poor migrants and probably had less time to reflect on spiritual issues. Some also mentioned that their parents were actually disapproving of their increased religiosity, preferring their children to concentrate on educational achievement and getting a good job. Typically, one respondent from Rochdale said:

“If you were to ask all the teenagers or people my age what their parents will concentrate on, they are probably asking them to study more than to go towards religion or start praying.” Male, Rochdale

It is the search for meaning and belonging that drives contemporary ‘religiosity’ (Roy, 2004) and shapes the way in which religion is understood and practised:

“I sort of came to a cross section in my life where you have to question why you are here. Just being here and then you die can’t possibly be it, there has to be a purpose to your life. And I felt that society wasn’t providing that, the answer. And the answer that it was giving wasn’t very good, you know, “don’t worry about it we’ll deal with it later, you’re young do what you want.” Male, London

This search for meaning leads younger Muslims away from the everyday, community aspects of their religion. Such engagement, as their parents practiced would have been routine and unthinking, something one does ‘because everyone else does it’. The younger generation prefer instead to ‘return’ to the scriptures and seek out meaning by themselves. Often they wish to ‘de-Pakistanize’ Islam and render it pure from cultural influence. They are actively seeking out a connection with religion that is direct and not mediated by community gatekeepers or indeed the community itself. Often, this means a re-reading of religious texts, as opposed to the rote-learning they did as young children.

Another major departure between generations is the transgression of private and public distinctions. The turn to religion is at once a rejection of one form of community and about expressing a

belonging to another community in the public space, and asking for recognition of this new identity. This is different from previous generations, who had largely adapted their habits to accommodate to life in a non-Muslim society. They had kept their religious belief private or at least moderated it against the pressures of what is 'normal' in the communal public space. For example, an increasing number of young Muslim girls choose to wear the full *hijab* today as an expression of their religious faith, although their mothers do not. As one young woman states about wearing the headscarf:

"Now I wear the headscarf to say, 'yes I am a Muslim and it is an important part of my identity and it shouldn't be threatening to you...'  
Female, Birmingham.

This religiosity is not driven by social *mores* or their belonging in a community, but from a personal commitment or sacrifice that requires public recognition. Indeed, it is about distinguishing oneself from the wider community, rather than doing what is 'normal'. This is even evident in many girls' preferred choice of 'hijab', which is not the 'dupata' (thin scarf) that their counterparts in Pakistan might wear loosely over their heads, but closer to the tighter apparel such as the 'burqa' or 'niqab' worn in Arab countries.

The religiosity of younger Muslims is therefore much more centered on the self and the individual's relationship to God, rather than the wider, established community. One indicator of this is the rejection of the traditional mosque elders in the UK, who are regarded as moribund by younger, more radical Muslims. The younger Muslims tend to meet away from the mosque, in private rooms, university campuses, the internet, or even gyms. They are looking for alternative spaces to congregate which are not dominated by religious elders who have no authority over them. Among some more religiously extreme Muslims, as some respondents pointed out, there is a rejection of those Muslims who are not spiritual enough, or who are not interested in the broader *ummah*. They dislike the emphasis on the local community.

Because this new religiosity is cut loose from traditional social ties, it looks increasingly to more abstract notions of community. Younger British Muslims are less likely to participate in the Pakistani cultural traditions of the local community, but at the same time, they are keen to identify with an abstract 'ummah', which is composed entirely of victimised Muslims abroad, such as in Palestine or in Chechnya, with whom they have had probably little or no actual contact. As Roy (2004) points out, despite the anger of young Muslims about the way 'their people' are treated in Palestine, they are unable to point to where the country is on a map. This is not to deny that issues such as Palestine were not important to previous generations of Pakistanis, but these would be secondary to the political status of more local concerns, such as Kashmir, or Indo-Pak tension. The identification with victimised people abroad is often taken as a sign of the strength of the Muslim identity and the ties of the community (Briggs et al, 2006). However, the identification with victimised Muslims is similar to other forms of philanthropic distance making. Younger British Muslims feel more immediate connection with the downtrodden around the world, than the average Muslims in their neighbourhood because one offers a narrative of suffering by which he or she can make sense of their own life and place in the world. In this sense support is based on a connection that the plight of others is about the perceived victimisation of the self. This can lead to material support via the presence of Pakistani young people in Palestine... [get news report]

## MULTICULTURALISM AND IDENTITY

This need for an identity and the individuated character which it takes shape in today is not exclusive to Muslims. As older forms of political and national identity come under attack, people are generally turning to other ways to search for meaning and belonging. It is clear that people are looking for an explanation of the world and their place in it. This self-orientation of today's search for identity also has to be understood in the wider context of multiculturalism, which engages people on the basis of their



cultural difference. The importance of identity has been nurtured by state policies over the last two decades, which privilege the importance of different cultural identities. Whilst initially the support for 'difference' was organised around ethnic lines (Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian), this has since shifted to religious and cultural differences. In the past decade, Muslims have emerged as a 'community' requiring special recognition. This has been institutionalised through support for Muslim groups, faith schools, major cultural projects like the Festival of Muslim Cultures initiated in 2004, and most recently, the extension earlier this year of the racial hatred law to cover religious hatred. High profile institutions like London's Metropolitan Police have given Muslim women the option of wearing the *hijab* (or Muslim men, a turban) instead of a traditional uniform cap, even though this is not common practice for police in most Muslim countries (The Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity, 2005: 61). In particular, young people are encouraged to look inwards to their own cultural and religious heritage for their identity, as long as it complies within a framework of 'safe minority'. This approach was developed in the aftermath of the public disorders of the 1980s and was much criticised for damping radical potential amongst racial minorities (Sivanandan, 1981). This is a different type of criticism of multiculturalism that that from the chair of the (former) Commission for Racial Equality, Trevor Phillips, who challenged the concept and announced Britain was in danger of 'sleepwalking into segregation'. For Phillips, the sense of social fragmentation is too easily blamed on the reluctant of immigrants to integrate. For instance, for all the claims that Pakistani migrants are self-segregating into ghettos (particularly in the former milltowns of northern England), the reality is that they are spreading geographically at the same pace, if not more, as other ethnic groups (Simpson, 2005).

The government's working groups after 7/7 suggested that Muslims needed greater recognition of their cultural identity. It recommended media promotion of positive images of Islam, and even teaching Arabic to young women to boost their confidence. Yet such recommendations miss an obvious paradox about the

younger generation of Muslims of Pakistani origin, which is that as many of them identify with their religion, so they are also increasingly secularised. Many Muslims live increasingly secular lives that do not conform strictly to *sharia* law. Half of the Muslims interviewed for this research, for instance, admitted to having drunk alcohol at least once in their lives. Also, 70% of Muslim house owners have a normal mortgage, despite religious restrictions on paying interest (The Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity, 2005: 102). The tendency of the government to engage with migrant groups through religious identity misses the three-dimensional, contradictory character of human beings living through cultural transition. There are no doubt many so-called Muslims who also drink, smoke, have pre-marital sex, or do not pray five times a day. They may be 'culturally' or 'ethnically Muslim' but they may not be particularly observant. The identification with Islam or 'the Muslim community' is not always a religious identification, borne out of a spiritual experience. More often, it is a tag or badge of identity that one feels they are born with and that is re-enforced by racism and discrimination in the wider society as well as an encouragement to see their religion as something inalienable. It is considered a sign of their 'authenticity' even long after they have ceased to be a believer.

The Muslim community is therefore not a coherent body of believers who all share the same religious values (indeed, the diversity of the sects means this was always difficult to achieve). Rather, 'the Muslim community' has become an empty vessel which people attempt to fill with their own aspirations and identity. It is inevitably loose and full of diversity, with different people seeking to use it for their own cause. The one thing that ties Muslims together into the Muslim community is its sense of difference to the mainstream. What sustains the notion of 'the Muslim community' is the vague sense of exclusion from wider society, not inclusion in a particular community with a set of shared beliefs. Because of this incoherence and diversity, it is impossible to find any religious authority or organisation that can claim to represent this group. Although the Muslim respondents we spoke to believed

there should be more representation of Muslims, very few of them believed the current Muslim groups represented them:

“Who elected them? Who put them there? I don’t know, I don’t even know who they are.” Male, Muslim, London

“It means that Muslims are all lumped together and treated as if they have one voice. That’s simply not true.” Female, Muslim, Birmingham.

There is a desire to be recognized as Muslim, but at the same time, a desire not to be represented as a Muslim. When the government engages with Muslims as Muslims, it reinforces this sense of disconnection rather than overcoming it. The policies to engage Muslims end up making them feel like outsiders who need to be more included.

Another paradox in the politics of identity and the ‘demand for recognition’ is how it belies the actual integration of British Muslims. Many British Pakistanis are integrating into ‘western’ life but at the same time, keeping their difference as a marker of identity; a strategy widely encouraged by multiculturalism. The notion of the ‘secular Muslim’ represents this paradox well—being religious but also not religious. This ‘being different and not different’ at the same time inevitably leads to confusion about whether Muslims are integrating or not. The confusion is resolved if we recognize that *asserting one’s difference has become the mainstream*. The wearing of a cultural identity—the veil, for instance - is a sign of one’s integration into the multicultural landscape. Everyone is supposed to have an identity now. Is this identity one that people can control? On the one hand, yes. Younger British Pakistanis use their religious identity as a way to escape the inherited identity of their parents’ rural and old-fashioned culture. Although the veil appears to be an outwardly ancient sign of repression or submission to higher authority; in fact it is a remarkably modern act of defiance to religious elders and a re-defining of religious practice. Older Muslims from Pakistan recoil at the sight of this Arab costume and see it as extreme. Their

daughters see it as a liberation from the older cultural forms they have been brought up with; a redefining of women's status in Islam which challenges the patriarchy of their families. The veil or headscarf is an act of revolt, albeit within the strict confines of the religious lifestyle. It is a statement of submission to no other than God. Hence, the campaign led by some younger female Muslims to enter mosques is both a statement of modernizing radicalism and a 'return' to a purified Islam. It is about seeking to create a new British Muslim identity which is defined by a younger generation. On the other hand, the Muslim identity is also beyond young people's control. The paradox of identity politics means that younger Muslims are trapped into defining themselves in this way, to the exclusion of other identities which are available—political, cultural, social. If they wish to rebel, it is only acceptable within the confines of what is considered 'authentic'. They are labeled according to a religious badge, which has decreasing appeal for many growing up in the modern secular world. Whilst they might seek to enjoy the benefits of freedom, they can be easily pressured into identifying with other Muslims for fear of 'letting the side down' and losing part of their identity. The sense of belonging can therefore be an immense comfort but also an incredible burden.

### ISLAMISM AS ANTI-WESTERN SENTIMENT

Beyond the desire for an identity, Islam has also come to represent an attitude to western society; one's position in relation to the political and cultural landscape. Although many Muslims are secularising and adopting 'western values', many of the respondents interviewed expressed ambivalence about the 'west' and a perceived lack of values:

"A lot of the values that used to be in western society about 50 yrs ago have been lost. To me it seems there are no values left. I find that my religion at least provides us with a way of life where these values aren't lost. Whether we choose to abide by them or not is a different matter."  
Female, Muslim, Manchester

“It is seen as good to get drunk, abuse women and live in sin”. Male, Muslim, Birmingham.

No doubt, the cultural conservatism is partly as product of stricter cultural upbringings and parental influence. But it has been noted by a number of commentators, that Muslims abroad can appear quite strict when compared to Muslims ‘back home’ in Pakistan. One observer writes:

“The other puzzlement is about why Pakistanis living somewhere like Britain do not become completely ‘westernised’. I’m asked regularly about how easy it is to buy alcohol, about which techno DJs I like best. There’s almost a sense that, given that these delights are so readily available, surely most young people are unable to resist” (Nazeer, 2006).

Much of the appeal of Islam is the way it appears to provide a moral framework against the relativism of the west, albeit one that is mostly preoccupied with personal behavior (sex, drugs, homosexuality) rather than a wider, social project. Islam has become a counter-cultural marker against the West. For those British Pakistanis who feel uncomfortable about certain aspects of the western lifestyle, Islam offers itself as a ready-made strategy of reaction. Many people have commented on the behaviourism in Islam and its potential to satisfy the desire for rules, regulations and intimate self-control. Being a good Muslim is a cultural expression of rejecting the loose relativism of western society. One *must* pray five times a day, one *must* not drink, one *must* obey one’s parents, and so on. The conformism of Islam and its pretence to spiritual purity is appealing to someone seeking meaning in an apparently meaningless, *laissez-faire* world. Being a good Muslim does not necessarily mean a hatred for the West. In fact, many respondents we spoke to happily tolerated the coexistence of wider society with their morality. But at a deeper level, the turn towards religiosity suggests a profound unease with the wider social framework and the values.

As with many of the features of contemporary Muslim identity, this feeling of unease with the West is not exclusive to Muslims. A significant number of non-Muslim respondents said similar things about the lack of morality in society:

“...there are no morals, society is too materialistic and there isn't a moral guide or sense.”, Male, Jewish, London.

“I think there's too much irresponsibility from people. There's too much of a laddish, hooligan culture that I don't like...” Female, non-religious, London.

The turn to religiosity is, for many younger Muslims, an outcome of their alienation from modern Western society. For the vast majority, this will be expressed peacefully rather than in a violent way. It may not even be understood in these terms, as many people will talk of their turn to religion as nothing more than a search for spiritual satisfaction. But implicit within this is an awareness that modern Western life does not offer the satisfaction they are searching for.

The ambivalence towards the west is not only cultural, but also political. Many younger Muslims will turn to their religion and the notion of the ‘ummah’ to make sense of the political world. However, the anti-Western sentiment of politically-oriented Islam provides a critique of the West in moral terms which leads away from political organising to a focus on policing behaviour. It does not seek to understand or explain the problems with the West in the hope of improving it in itself a problem for those who live in the West. Rather it reduces political complexity to a manichean morality play: The West is bad, the oppressed of the world (Muslims/victims) are good. This means that when younger British Muslims do develop their political curiosity - as many of course do—they are given given tools of analysis which operate at the level of the personal. The war in Iraq, the Israel/Palestine conflict, and the Balkan conflict, are interpreted through the prism of Muslim vs. non-Muslim, which leaves no room for engaging with the political and economic forces at work. Ambivalence towards

Western consumer society and its destructive consequences is common to both Islamists and anti-globalisation groups. Both are rooted in a Manichean worldview of the struggle between a neo-conservative cabal in Washington and a vulnerable, victimised world population. There is little complexity in this emotional analysis, in which everything is reduced to the sinister motivations of a profit-seeking elite.

Of course, this simplistic political approach does not originate in Islam or Wahabist thinking. It is a product of western politics itself and the degradation of left-wing politics in particular. The contempt for the West—targeted at America - is not exclusive to radical Muslims but a long-held feature of the radical left. The anti-globalisation movement was the first to emote about America as a greedy, imperial oppressor. The electoral success of George Galloway's Respect party in the constituency of Bow and Bethnal Green in 2005 fused together a younger religiosity with an anti-globalisation politics. The manifesto included concerns ranging from the protection of the environment to the war in Iraq, leaving aside potentially divisive issues such as gay rights or abortion. Bin Laden himself draws on the language and ideas of prominent Western writers, like Robert Fisk, of whom he writes 'the latter is one of your compatriots and co-religionists and I consider him to be neutral'. Michael Moore's polemic, *Stupid White Men*, about America's "pathetically stupid, embarrassingly white, and disgustingly rich men" (xi) was a bestseller on both sides of the Atlantic in 2001. Moore's contempt for America should leave no room for doubt—the people who hate America most are most often American.

## TERRORISM BEGINS AT HOME

The issue of Islamist terrorism has raised concerns from many quarters about the experience of British-born Muslims and the impact of Pakistani migration. The knee-jerk reaction amongst some political commentators has been to regard Pakistani migrants as a singular threat to British secular culture, as if everything would be alright without them. The voices of young Muslims and non-Muslims in Britain suggest that such a simplistic view cannot hold.

Second and third generation Pakistani migrants may be turning to religion, but for reasons that originate in the social and political climate of the west, rather than the continuing influence of imams from 'back home'. At the same time, for most British-born Muslims, the turn to religiosity does not necessarily result in violence or even alienation from the mainstream. Many are grappling with the contradictory demands of identity politics whilst living normal, everyday lives. Unfortunately, the political climate in Britain risks intensifying these problems rather than enabling people to resolve them. It is not the influence of Islam or Pakistan that alienates this younger generation from western society; it is facets of western society itself.

## NOTES

1. According to a survey conducted by YouGov for the *Daily Telegraph* on July 23rd 2005, 88% fully condemned the London attacks, whilst only 6% believed they were fully justified. A larger number (24%) did sympathise with the motives of the bombers but 70% of those polled said they would notify the police if they saw 'something in the community that made them feel suspicious'.
2. See *The radicalisation of Muslim youth in Europe: the reality and the scale of the threat*, Testimony of Claude Moniquet, Director General European Strategic Intelligence and Security Center, April 27 2005, Hearing of the Committee on International Relations Subcommittee on Europe and Emerging Threats, United States House of Representatives, p. 2–3. Also see *Muslims in Europe: The State of Research*, Frank J. Bujijs & Jan Rath, October 2002, Russell Sage Foundation: New York.
3. The interviews were transcribed and then analysed using the Atlas ti. System. But, instead of focusing too heavily on empirical data (as is often the case in the policy-oriented approach to the 'Muslim problem').



## CHAPTER 14

# Multiculturalism, Islamaphobia and the City

TAHIR ABBAS

### INTRODUCTION

**B**irmingham possesses a respected tradition of academic investigation into issues of ‘race’ and ethnic relations (Rex and Tomlinson, 1979; Solomos and Back, 1995). This chapter provides an analysis of the situation of Pakistanis in the city of Birmingham, UK, as this group of people attempts to negotiate the current realities of economic, social, and political marginalisation together with the racialisation, ethnicisation and widespread anti-Muslim sentiment expressed by certain media and political sectors.

The city of Birmingham is home to approximately 1m people and it is Britain’s ‘second city’. It is also a place where one-in-seven are Muslim—the vast majority of whom from South Asia. Of the officially recorded Muslim population of 140,000, Pakistanis make up just over 104,000 (based on the 2001 Census). On the whole, this South Asian Muslim community is one of the most unequal in society, but it is those emanating from the poorer sending regions of Azad (free) Kashmir in Pakistan and Sylhet in Bangladesh who fill the homes and streets of inner city Birmingham, with new African and Middle East groups (also Muslim) arriving to and settling within the city as ‘refugee and asylum seekers’. Specifically exploring the issues of educational underachievement and the experience Islamic political radicalism this chapter argues that there are a number of important challenges facing Pakistanis in the city, many of which are structural but also cultural, social and intellectual. The long-run suggests a weakening of economic, social

and political infrastructures of Pakistani communities as they continue to fragment in the face of increasing marginalisation, globalisation and cultural isolation.

First, I briefly chronicle the recent history of Pakistani and South Asian Muslim migration to Britain, exploring the economic and social predicaments of the current existence (Anwar, 1979). With a focus on South Asian Muslims throughout, it is important to note the diversity of Muslims (within this category there is a great deal of heterogeneity; see Robinson, 1988). Second, an analysis of the forces of prejudice, discrimination and disadvantage—experienced as religious *and* ethnic groups—shows how the discourse on the inequality of Muslim minorities has begun to shift from ‘race’ to religion in the current period. An analysis of education and the influence of Islamic political radicalism, one embedded in the structural, the other in the cultural, illustrates the specific issues impacting on young Pakistanis.

## A PAKISTANI BIRMINGHAM

Muslims from the Raj came to Britain to study or engage in commerce. Since the nineteenth century there has been a significant Muslim presence in Britain: seamen and traders began settling around the major British ports. The growth of the Pakistani population dates from the post-war immigration of South Asians and African-Caribbeans who arrived to fill specific labour shortages in declining industrial sectors, as was found in other Western European countries in relation to their own once colonised immigrant workers (Castles and Kosack, 1973; Nielsen, 2004).

Birmingham is Britain’s ‘second city’. Until the 1960s, the West Midlands region, with Birmingham at its centre, was one of the fastest growing in the country. Strengths were in a strong manufacturing base in vehicles, material manufacturing and engineering. During the 1970s and 1980s, however, the region suffered severe industrial decline, with the city of Birmingham particularly affected (Hasner, 1986). Unemployment rose faster than new jobs were being created, with some wards in the inner cities decimated as a result. Pakistanis as ethnic, cultural and

religious communities found only limited housing available to them in inner city areas, isolated from white majority communities, leaving the areas through a process of 'white flight' (Rex and Moore, 1967). These Pakistanis were trapped in the very same inner city areas that people were rushing to get out of. This had implications for political, educational, employment and cultural integration. Through decades, younger Pakistanis were found to remain in the same localities as the first generations largely due to educational underachievement, labour market discrimination and exclusion on the basis of ethnic and religious difference (cf. Phillips, 1998). Over time, these areas become further impoverished with new employment created elsewhere and in other economic sectors (Owen and Johnson, 1996). It is only recently that the expanding service sector has begun to make an impact on the fortunes of city. The effects of de-industrialisation, technological investment and the internationalisation of capital and labour have left distinctly negative impressions on some parts of the city.

For the first time since 1851 a religious identity question was asked in the 2001 Census. Although a voluntary question, ninety-two per cent of the population gave a response, with 73% of white-Britons ascribing a Christian faith identity. Using estimates, it is possible to determine that the British Muslim population has grown from around 21,000 in 1951 to 1.6m in 2001. According to the 2001 Census, one third of all British Muslims are under the age of 14. There are 7.2m people in London, with nearly 1m Muslims. In the city of Birmingham, home to 1m people, Muslims account for 14.3 per cent of the population, with Pakistanis numbering just over 104,000 (74% of Muslims in Birmingham). This number is twice as large as the highest concentration of Muslims outside of London (ONS, 2005). In April 2001, nine per cent of all 1.6 million British Muslims and 16 per cent of Britain's entire Pakistani population of 658,000 were found to be in the city of Birmingham. In 2001, nearly one in ten of all British Muslims were found in Birmingham, arguably home to the world's largest expatriate Azad Kashmiri community.

Pakistanis do not necessarily comprise a single homogeneous religio-ethnic group: ethnically, there are Punjabis, Kashmiris, Pathans, Sindhis and Blauchis who are all Pakistani. Religiously, Birmingham's Pakistanis are Barelvi, Tablilghi, Deobandi, Hanifi or Jamaat-e-Islami in the main, which are all variants of Sunni Islam. Most of the Azad Kashmiris are Barelvi and Hanifi. Furthermore, the independence of former East Pakistan in the early 1970s and that the vast majority of Pakistanis in Britain are from the Azad Kashmir region does mask certain ethnic characteristics of people ordinarily identified as Pakistanis. Furthermore, there is a considerable body of people who have originated from the North West frontier. Because of vast population movements from Afghanistan to Pakistan, largely as the result of the Russian-Afghan war and more recent events, ethnic identities such as Pukhtun or Pathan are subsumed under that of Pakistani. Nevertheless, as a result of the building of the Mangla Dam in North West Pakistan, which uprooted many families, men of working age were sent to places such as Birmingham to join the existing male numbers. Many arrived in this way, followed by wives, children and fiancés, who came to join men in order to unify families and form communities. As such, as much as there is a great deal of homogeneity among Muslims in Britain there is also considerable heterogeneity, particularly in Birmingham with its large Pakistani, or more specifically, Azad Kashmiri communities.

On the whole, Pakistanis' in Birmingham predominantly originate from the Mirpur district of Azad Kashmir and the surrounding areas, including Attock, Jhelum and Rawalpindi. A number of British Pakistanis also come from districts in Northern Punjab (Pakistan) but have largely settled in the de-industrialised inner cities to the North (Werbner, 2002), or in the South East of England. Before migration, many Azad Kashmiris lived and worked in rural areas. 'Mirpuri' families were usually extended with up to three generations living in a single household, with men working on small land-holdings or in specialist craft-work, while women maintained domestic order and looked after livestock. Families lived in close proximity to each other and were knowledgeable of

each other's affairs. Shaw's (2000) socio-anthropological study of a Pakistani community in Oxford shows how among rural-origin migrants from Northern Punjab the village-kin network found in the sending regions has remained relatively intact as part of adaptation to Britain. A proliferation of Mosques is sign of a definitive commitment to the development of Islam in Britain and the teaching of younger Muslims the practices of the religion. Specialist goods and services outlets such as Halal butchers, Madrassas (Qura'nic schools), grocers, restaurants, takeaways, jewellers, bookshops and Urdu-Arabic audio/video retail outlets are familiar sights in the concentrated multi-ethnic enterprise economies that many live and work in.

Post-war South Asian Muslims largely entered and settled in Britain as a workforce for the unwanted jobs indigenous people did not wish to carry out anymore (Kettani, 1986; Dayha, 1988). Today, Pakistani and Azad Kashmiri groups continue to live excluded lives, existing near or at the bottom of local area economic and social contexts, largely in post-industrial cities to the North, Midlands and the South, all of which at various stages of regeneration after the collapse of traditional industries. The fact that one-in eight of working Pakistani men in Britain a taxi driver is indicative of the marginal nature of communities. British Pakistanis, new and old, is the economic and social positions they possess. Birmingham Pakistanis experience some of the highest rates of unemployment, with up to three times as others in the city (Anwar, 1996). These inner cities reveal that it is Muslims (largely Pakistanis and Bangladeshis but also Somalis and Yemenis) who occupy the areas in highest numbers and that it is they who are at greatest disadvantage. In Birmingham, Pakistanis appear to have been particularly neglected by state and third way public services. It is difficult to generate a position of cultural and social integration from a weak economic and social foundation (Abbas and Anwar, 2005). Any development to local economic areas has concentrated on service sector investment. Muslims are often excluded from this experience because of structural subordination and existing conditions of poverty, disadvantage and alienation.

## MOBILITY THROUGH EDUCATION: CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITATIONS

The 1991 Census revealed that 55 per cent of all ethnic minorities were British-born. In Birmingham, over half of Pakistanis were British-born, but forty-nine per cent of Pakistanis were below the age of 17 compared to 21 per cent of whites. Nationally, the 2001 Census showed that approximately one-in-three of all Muslims were under the age of 15. Today, there are more African-Caribbean and South Asian minorities in Birmingham schools than whites. This has implications for resource allocation in this area. The continued experience of economic and social disadvantage and poor educational outcomes continue to beleaguer the community. Education, generally the only route to social mobility, is an area of focus.

Research carried out on the educational achievements of Kashmiri/Pakistani children in central inner city wards in the mid 1980s found parents and children were to be highly motivated although pupils achieved relatively poorly. Issues were also raised by research in relation to supplementary schooling, which was seen to impact negatively upon pupil performance. It was felt that after-school education limited the development of Pakistanis because of its apparent focus on religious scripture and less on wider engagement with the majority community. Furthermore, language and social class issues were thought to make matters more complex for Birmingham's Azad Kashmiris (Joly, 1986). At the end of the 1990s I researched the educational achievement processes of South Asians in the city, more than half of whom were of Pakistani or Azad Kashmiri in origin. Based on a study of eight secondary schools, some of which were inner city mono-ethnic (almost entirely Pakistani), and using interviews with parents, children, teachers and community members, it was found that *achievement* was strongly related to social class (measured by both occupational positions and educational levels of parents) *and* to the effect of schools *per se*. Furthermore, important questions are asked by respondents about the ways in which underachievement of certain groups persisted. For example, white teachers suggested that

language limitations prevented school pupils from engaging more pro-actively with the school's curriculum. Pakistani and Azad Kashmiri educationists were inclined to ask what schools were doing to address the issue. School children were of the view that they were able to bridge South Asian and English languages and cultures where the need arose. Some of the comments made by a number of the white teachers suggested socio-pathological problems with children and communities rather than the educational system itself. They were likely to make reference to 'excessive in-marrying' or a lack of desire to integrate with dominant society (Abbas, 2003a). What I found was that for many Pakistanis in education it was parents who did not possess formal education and tended to have a limited comprehension of the English language and the education system itself who were least able to assist their children. Furthermore, schools that many Pakistani children attend are often located in inner city areas, which possess lower overall resources and are equipped with perhaps less motivated teachers. It is the combination of adverse home *and* school factors which negatively impact upon Pakistanis and provide the main reasons for relative educational underachievement. Indeed, Pakistani with parents who are not just motivated but educated too *and* the fact of learning in stronger schools are the reasons for why other South Asian groups achieve above Pakistanis (Abbas, 2002; 2003b; 2004).

The education of immigrant children to British schools has remained a topic of concern since groups first came to Britain. Early problems involved language, integration and teacher expectation issues—and all of these factors were thought to affect educational outcome (Rose et al., 1969). It appears that many of these factors are remain important today, with Pakistanis, in particular young men, often performing the least well of all ethnic minority and majority groups in education. Beyond this, it is important to consider the wider range of forces impacting on the education of Pakistanis. These concern the home and school (as studies continue to show to a large extent) but also the social world in which we all live. However, the impact of Muslim Pakistani identity on a) performance and b) alternative forms of Muslim

schooling has yet to be looked at in sufficient detail. Of further research interest are a) the extent to which the experience of Pakistani in education differ from the experiences of other South Asian Muslim groups and b) the extent of difference *within* the overall Muslim group. Furthermore, the way in which identity impacts upon individual and group experiences, how it is manifested in educational settings and the ways in which it influences achievement are also important to explore. Today, in many Birmingham comprehensive schools, Pakistanis and Azad Kashmiris are the overwhelming majority. Although teachers work hard to ensure that what they do embraces the diverse and multi-faith children who enter their institutions there are still questions of identity and religio-cultural maintenance that exclude certain groups.

Based on official schools performance data relating to the period of the research it is true that Pakistanis and Bangladeshis *do not* always underachieve the greatest. In fact, the South Asians are among the highest achievers, with Indian boys and girls performing highest, in Birmingham and nationally. It is, however, African-Caribbean boys and girls who perform least well among the ethnic minorities and it is white working class boys who perform least well *per se*. As per usual, almost in every instance, the girls outperform all the boys, irrespective of ethnicity (BCC, 2004). In addition, there are state-funded Islamic schools causing disquiet among some liberal quarters. Social class, the impact of religion and culture within the home, the workings of schools and how teachers and pupils interact within them and local and national education policy, including the demands placed upon output and performance measures, are all important factors to consider in any rationalisation of the education of Pakistanis in British schools.

## ISLAMIC POLITICAL RADICALISM AMONG BRITISH PAKISTANIS

Aside from issues in relation to education there are also major concerns in relation to how the alienation, marginalisation and exclusion caused by structural inequalities create further problems



of a socio-cultural nature. The norms, values and expectations of Muslims are being challenged from *within* as well as *without*. The present focus is on the concept known as Islamic political radicalism.

The current local, national and international political climate is concerned with 'international terrorism' and 'radical political Islam'. Although the mere association of these areas is an act of oversimplification, there are genuine social, political and economic concerns that combine them. The issue of Islamic political radicalism is nevertheless important to explore as it is now at the heart of Europe, given the events of Madrid Bombings in March 2004, the murder of Theo van Gogh in the Netherlands in November 2004 and the London bombings of July 2005. There is a concern that disaffected Western-born Muslim youths are increasingly succumbing to radicalising forces in a perceived setting of permanent disadvantage and the virulent 'othering' of Muslims in media and politics (Poole, 2002; CBMC, 2004; Seddon et al. 2004; Abbas, 2007).

The patterns across Europe are remarkably similar. Once colonised post-war immigrant groups, who were either invited or came searching for improved economic opportunities, found their young growing up in societies that exhibited prejudice, discrimination and racism towards minority Muslim communities. When local education for the young is limited, for much the same reasons as in the city of Birmingham, UK, it affects the likelihood of securing effective higher education or labour market entry (cf. PIU, 2003). There are also inter-generational tensions as a result of language, culture and attitudes towards majority communities. Invariably, as the process of adaptation evolves, there is greater welcoming by majority society in subsequent generations of migrant communities. At times there is resistance to the adaptation of freedoms, rights or responsibilities, borne out of choice or constraint, as in the case of a few Muslims who see it as a negative feature in their life in liberal secular countries.

When most of the Muslim world is still facing up to the challenges of modernity and democracy, Muslim minorities in the

West face a whole host of issues in relation to identity, the adaptation of religio-cultural norms and values, and issues of citizenship as everyday concerns. In Birmingham, indigenous-born Pakistani Muslims experience a complex, dislocated reality. Low social class positions coupled with religious and cultural isolation place many young people's experiences outside the spheres of wider social life. Where there are inter-generational tensions in relation to tradition—for example in the insistence on consanguineous marriages by some Pakistani and Azad Kashmiri parents—many young Muslims object, and to wish to return to a more literal interpretation of Islam. This development encourages young Muslim minds to explore further, but parents cannot always provide the knowledge as they often lack the linguistic, intellectual and cultural skills to communicate with their children, even though they often experience a reinvigorated approach to the religion later on their lives themselves. The Mosques provide a form of learning environment but the information tends to be at a very basic level—or is geared within a specific linguistic and cultural framework *and* largely due to limited capacity. As a result the young are encouraged to seek alternative forms of 'empowerment knowledge' in relation to Islam, whether via the Internet or through or informal religious circles. This Islamic awareness is sometimes strongly tainted with a radicalising message that promotes intolerance, antipathy and the general disregard of all things non-Islamic. These messages stem from outside traditional Sunni Islam and are more a function of Salafi thought (and based on very selective and sometimes dubious interpretations, Ansari, 2005). Much of this thinking appeals to a small number of young Muslims (and it must be said that they are mostly men although not entirely) who see it as a form of resistance—to the traditions, norms and values of their own religio-cultural communities and from nation-states which apparently seek to subjugate Muslim minorities. At the same time, their actions are provided a theologically-abstracted justification.

Indeed, there were many cases of Salafi-type organisations influencing impressionable minds throughout 1990s. Organisations

such as Al-Muhajiroun, Supporters of Shariah and Hizb ut-Tahrir had much success in 'infiltrating' university Islamic societies all over Britain before their actions began to be viewed with suspicion by the security services and hostile media reporting. Because of the *Ummah*, young British Pakistanis, watching on their satellite channels the events of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kashmir, Chechnya and Palestine, have been affected as much as any other Muslim might be. The 'Mike's Place' bombers in Tel Aviv (2003), Britain's first known British-born suicide bombers, and most of the bombers in London (2005) were British-born South Asian Muslims, invariably of Pakistani and Azad Kashmiri origin. Not necessarily poor—some attending universities but who were, however, born on the 'wrong side of town'. They experienced prejudice, racism and discrimination throughout their early lives and sustained themselves in education in spite of its limitations in relation to Muslims. By hoping to find their 'truth' they were ultimately misdirected. By providing a sense of belonging, identity or an association with a struggle that transcends their everyday boundaries and barriers, theologically, metaphysically and spiritually, radical Islamism has acted with an impious message of deliverance.

At the geo-political level it is also clear that the politics of George W Bush in the USA and Tony Blair in Britain has helped to further radicalise Pakistanis at home (Rai, 2006). The ways in which Muslim prisoners have been treated in Guantanamo Bay and Abu Gharib prison at the hands of the Americans and the revelations of the extent of the abuse inflicted on Iraqi prisoners and civilians by the British army serves only to disillusion an already disenfranchised British Pakistani community. Although a significant reason for much of this experience is increasing isolation and exclusion in society but also important are the radicalising forces that stem from outside of the community. Since 9/11, throughout much of the Western world, changes to international finance, anti-terrorism legislation, the launch of identity cards and citizenship tests, 'extraordinary rendition' and the elimination of *habeas corpus* and the introduction of 'control orders' in Britain have all seen the nation-state seemingly tighten its grip on Muslim

minorities. Some argue that the 'war on terror' has revealed itself to be an ideological construction, helping to maintain the *status quo*, while Muslims are derided, misrepresented, incarcerated, and, in general, made to feel and think they are the unwelcome in society. So too has been a shift towards regarding Muslims as the 'enemy-within', as an undifferentiated mass of 'Arab terrorists', as groups who are overly-demanding of their religious and cultural rights, and as people unwilling to integrate into majority society.

I am reminded of the Salman Rushdie Affair of 1989 and how the Azad Kashmiri and Pakistani communities were vilified at the time. It is somewhat poignant that today it is the same group when discussing issues of integration, community, identity, and 'loyalty' to the state on the one hand and problems of education, employment, housing and health on the other. Such was the initial post-war subordination of this body of people. Other Muslim groups (the half of British Muslims who are not Pakistani) are conspicuously absent in the discourse on the radicalisation of Muslims in Britain today. It is clear to see the impact of social class, ethnicity and to some extent gender on how the 'Muslims in Britain' reference is framed and in relation to particular groups, invariably Pakistani or Azad Kashmiri Muslims.

### ISLAMOPHOBIA AND THE 'DEATH OF MULTICULTURALISM'

Given the younger age profile of Pakistanis in Britain, the pressures on the local education systems which often result in underachievement and the development of anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist and anti-Zionist, Islamic-political groups, the situations facing many young Muslims are precarious. It is important to realise, however, with all the emphasis made on cultural hybridity, a multicultural framework which encompasses difference and tolerates the 'other' and the development of a national citizenship, it is the issue of structural marginalisation that remains at the forefront. With much emphasis upon a benign multiculturalism, acceptable to both minorities and majorities, the factor of religion is now beginning to supplant racial and ethnic differences. Certainly, the idea of 'race' has been central

to the capitalistic project of the last four hundred years, what we are witnessing today has existed for much longer. What could be argued is that that Islamophobia began with the dawn of Islam in the seventh century and what emerges today is a mere reflection of the past transposed onto modern times as a result of more acute shifts in recent geo-political relations.

Indeed, Islamophobia is not just about the numbers of people who have reported physical violence or the numbers of Muslims who have been 'stopped and searched' by the police, as recently suggested in an attempt to rebuke the idea of an Islamophobia (Malik, 2005). 'Stop and search' is one aspect of the experience—one needs to consider the number of young Muslim men who are increasingly filling our prisons. The basic definition of Islamophobia refers to the idea of the fear or dread of Islam. Islam has been seen to be hostile to Christianity since it became necessary to present the religion in these terms (Bennet, 1992). Islamophobia is ideological, historically-specific but contemporarily relevant. It is as much like anti-Semitism, which also refers to how a religion and its people can be denigrated, hated and cruelly purged. Therefore, it is difficult to talk about the rise or fall of Islamophobia, rather that in each period of history since the inception of Islam, Islamophobia has taken different forms and meanings specific to each time. There is little doubt that since 9/11, by whatever measure one uses, Islamophobia has risen *and* not just in Britain but in most Western European democratic nation-states (Allen and Neilsen, 2002).

What is important to appreciate, nonetheless, is that apart from the economic, cultural and social dimensions there is one other crucial aspect: the political. It was local social and economic tensions conflated by politically-loaded local administrated and a hostile local media that led to the disturbances in the North in 2001 and the harsh sentences that were meted out to many of first-time offenders (Kundnani, 2001), keeping some communities segregated, although white communities are the most segregated of all (Peach, 2005b). The national political context has brought in draconian anti-terrorist legislation that has been viewed critically

across all sectors of society, regarded as being directed largely at Muslims. In international political context, many now regard the 'war on terror' supportive a neo-conservative globalisation agenda. All of these on-going factors further fuel Islamophobia. Furthermore, there is a persuasive counterattack being developed against the apparent rise of the Islamophobia industry. Left-leaning liberals desire equality for all—and although disregarding how Muslims are being disadvantaged in society more is found of concern in relation to how women are seemingly treated in Islam, for example. Secularists are sometimes alarmed about separate Muslim education and the general freedoms people ought to possess in a laissez-faire and interdependent economy such as Britain's. These factors also are important considerations in any attempt to appreciate the nature and orientation of Islamophobia and its many different but interlocking layers.

Internal to the South Asian Muslim community there are important struggles taking place that are not always made aware. They are broad-based attempts to develop an *Ummah* that is an effective force for good *and* to challenge different ethnic and cultural traditions that are seen as retrograde. Society is sympathetic to the needs, aspirations and expectations of its minorities but some sectors feel that certain Muslims are receiving too much attention, for example the British National Party (REWM, 2006). Pakistanis wish greater acceptance of the religion of Islam, which has not always been forthcoming in recent periods when needs are at their greatest. They also desire equality of opportunity in the social and economic world. Under the gravitas of the current anti-Muslim hue both can become submerged. A population that arrived in the 1950s and 1960s suffered immensely in the initial periods. Subsequent generations bear the brunt of poor local economic and social infrastructures. Now that the only opponents to the West are anti-capitalists it is Muslims who are soft targets. What we are witnessing in how Muslims are seemingly reacting to their oppression is similar to the 1960s civil rights movements of the USA—at the time it was 'Black Power. Today it is 'Muslim Power' (Modood, 2004). What government rhetoric and negative media

representation does is to dismiss attempts being made by Muslims to modernise, advance and integrate successfully however incomplete these experiences have been up until now.

Thinking in relation to notions of multiculturalism thinking in recent periods has focused on the ideas of liberal communitarianism, which stresses the need to tolerate 'otherness' while keeping a core of shared norms and values that bridge, bond and link communities helping to generate and maintain the development of cultural, social, economic and intellectual capital. The debate that followed Trevor Phillips' comments about the death of multiculturalism and the need to return to integration in May 2004 were fiercely discussed. It referred to the multiculturalism excess that was perhaps being experienced in Britain. It was pertinent, serving as an acute reminder of what is clearly the main problem for British Pakistanis—as it is for many other ethnic minority groups in society—economic and social exclusion. Where Pakistanis are achieving social mobility they tend not to experience underachievement in education, labour market inequality or radicalism that impacts on their South Asian counterparts from lower social class backgrounds (even though some of the so called 'terrorists' or those who have been associated with events in the past have been for the most part university educated). It is also somewhat ironic that those regarded as the standard bearers of the Muslim community emanate from an elite, privileged sector of economy and society much removed from the 'failings of multiculturalism' and the acute levels of racism and discrimination found in the inner cities, where most South Asian Muslims live. Few are of Pakistani or Azad Kashmiri origin. Although important and a necessary aspect to appreciate it is not always identity that impacts on choice in the market place (Kahani-Hopkins and Hopkins, 2002). No longer is it possible to merely deny the existence of radicalising forces that seek to harm existing Muslim-non-Muslim relations. It is important to challenge them head on.

## THE WAY AHEAD

Pakistanis have remained concentrated in the inner city areas of older towns and cities in the North, the Midlands and the South. It is an indicator of how they have not benefited from the levels of mobility enjoyed by other immigrant communities, and of their inability to move out areas which are facing high levels of social tension and economic deprivation through direct discrimination, racial hostility and cultural preference. Birmingham is typical of many of the challenges faced by Muslims across the country. Roughly one-in-ten of the city's inhabitants are Pakistani and their unemployment rate is three times that of the city. The experience of Muslims in Birmingham Muslims brings into focus the fact that economic opportunities have tended to bypass Pakistanis, even when other communities have prospered. While other cities with large Pakistani, such as Bradford, are trapped in economic decline, Birmingham's economic performance has been favourable despite the decline of its manufacturing and engineering sectors. The city is undergoing successful regeneration and this has begun to attract a successful service (retail) and commercial sector. Nevertheless, these opportunities have largely evaded most Pakistanis and may have even entrenched some of the barriers they face. While the indigenous population has moved out of inner city Birmingham through 'white flight', South Asian Muslims have failed to move beyond the inner city areas which they originally migrated to.

It is not then a surprise that Pakistanis have low levels of engagement when it comes to state driven initiatives and reflect the greatest tendency to meet their needs through self-sufficiency, a strategy which has so far proved ineffective and is unlikely to significantly improve the position of the community. At the same time, the development of certain trends in separatism and extremism among some minority sections of the Pakistani and Azad Kashmiri community could further increase the marginalisation of Muslims, and contribute to even more tension. Exacerbated by a sensationalist mass media and the statements made by senior political figures, the perceptions of Pakistanis and other Muslim minorities by majority society continue to be negatively tainted. In



the context of growing economic and social inequality, global instability and lower levels of trust in state services, failures to address the barriers faced by Pakistanis and Azad Kashmiris could lead to a serious deterioration in community relations (Abbas and Griffith, 2005).

To move forward it is important to realise the extent of inequity in the distribution of power, knowledge and resources. British Pakistanis and Azad Kashmiris have been suffering because of imperialism, colonialism, decolonisation, immigration and settlement in the West for three hundred years. Much of what happens today is a function of history but it is also based on how modern societies face up (or not) to the challenges of unity and diversity in an era of rapid globalisation. We see this problem operate at the global, macro-level in terms of the 'war on terror' and we see it at the local, micro-level in terms of 'community cohesion'. Lessons from history suggest that the West, for the most part, does successfully incorporate religious minorities, i.e., the Jews. The hope is that Muslim minorities begin to find their solace in Western nation-states, which are proud, peaceful and prosperous places to live and work for all their citizens before matters become ever more complex.

## CHAPTER 15

# A Socio-economic and Cultural Perspective on Pakistanis in the Netherlands

WAQAS BUTT

### INTRODUCTION

The migration of Pakistanis to the Netherlands is a relatively new phenomenon, when compared with the UK. During my research in the late 1980s in the Netherlands, I found out that the process of migration started in the early 1960's.<sup>1</sup> In my sample of 120, I found that 108 of them were born in Pakistan and in British India (until 1947 Pakistan was part of British India). Out of these 108, I found that only three of them arrived in the Netherlands during the period of 1960 till 1965, thus 2.8 per cent over a period of five years. During the period of 1965 till 1970 only two Pakistanis arrived, but in the period of 1970-1975, 16.7 per cent of my informants arrived in the Netherlands, to be followed by 29.6 % in the period of 1975 till 1980. The increase may have occurred due to the deteriorating political and economic situation of their country at that time. During the period of 1980 -1985 and in the most recent period also, many Pakistanis appeared to have migrated to the Netherlands.

Most of the studies done on Pakistani immigrants in Britain have shown that the majority of Pakistani immigrants in Britain came from a rural background (See H. Alavi 1963, M. Anwar 1979, F. Hashmi 1967, B. Dahya 1972-73, and P. Jaffery 1976; etc.). Surprisingly the majority of my informants (87.5 %) happened to be of urban origin, and more or less all of them have a basic level of education, and many of them have received

university education in Pakistan. A majority of the Pakistani migrants overseas originated from the Punjab province. According to the Pakistan Institute of Development, Islamabad: "The Punjab is the major province of origin. Nearly two third of migrants presently overseas and about a half of the emigrants in the Middle East, originated from this province" (Mohammad Irfan and others 1979: 43). In the Netherlands, Pakistani immigrants mainly belong to the Punjab province: 76 of my informants came from Punjab province, and 21 from Sindh province, 1 from NWF province, and 8 from Baluchistan, while 6 of my informants came from Kashmir, which is a disputed area between India and Pakistan. These Kashmiris considered themselves as citizens of an independent Kashmir, but I included them in my sample because they travel on a Pakistani passport. Interestingly, 89 of my informants speak Punjabi as mother language. It means that some Pakistani immigrants who came to the Netherlands from other provinces also have a punjabi background.

After analyzing the data of my respondents I can conclude that majority of the Pakistanis in the Netherlands from my sample belong to the middle class. In order to undertake the journey to Europe, one needs a passport, air-ticket, or any other ticket for travel, which always costs a lot of money. In addition, foreign exchange and some extra expenditures are necessary for migration. As Jeffery describes, besides the journey expenses "standard fees for passport are nominal, but many informants told of substantial bribes to persuade passport clerks to process their application" (Jeffery 1976: 63). Usually a poor Pakistani can not afford these expenditures. That is why in my sample I did not find anyone from a poor peasant background. All of my informants have a more or less middle class economic and social background. The majority of them have economic motives behind their migration. Dahya in his article 'Pakistanis in England' describes that the migrants have left home in order to achieve an income which can be used to improve the living standard and status of their family still at home (see Dahya, 1972-3). The majority of my informants told me that they migrated to the Netherlands to secure money for their families and

earn money for their future and to gain high social and economic status in their native society. Mohammed Anwar (1979: 21) states: "The immigrants left Pakistan in order to return home with money to buy land, build better houses and to raise their social status". In that sense this group of migrants share many characteristics with others from Pakistan.

### ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND STATUS

It had become evident during my fieldwork that Pakistani migrants were gradually adapting themselves to their new situation by adopting new forms of behaviour and practice. To get a real picture of that ongoing process of adaptation, and change, I would like to explain the cultural importance of a profession in Pakistani society. The main questions are; How do professions determine social status of Pakistanis in that society? What sort of profession are Pakistanis doing in the Netherlands and are they satisfied with them? Pakistan is a patrilineal society where the profession of a man is an important factor in determining his social position and that of his family members. According to a Pakistani sociologist, Hameed Tigha: "the social status of every Pakistani is determined by his ancestry, economic resources, occupation, education, sex and caste" (Tigha Hameed 1978: 47). Ancestry, caste and occupation are very closely related with each other, because usually the occupation of the ancestor determines the caste or *quom*, of a person. In Choudhry's terms: "In most of the cases, occupations are predetermined by the caste, as in punjabi villages most of the castes and sub-castes are the basis of occupations" (Choudhry 1976: 103). In the Netherlands the *quom* name of many Pakistanis has become their family name. So the occupational background of the immigrants can be recognised by their family name.

Some anthropologists equate '*quom*' with 'caste', others with 'clans' and still others with occupation. For example Barth (1965: 16) treats Swat quoms as "patrilineal, hereditary, ranked occupational groups, conceptually endogamous". Zekiye Eglar (1960) treats quoms as castes but emphasizes their cultural connotations as the basis of so defining them. The general meaning

of the word 'quom' is tribe, sect, people or nation. Both of them describe how each quom is named and membership of quom is achieved by birth which is not changeable (see Barth 1965: 16, and Eglar 1957: 70). But Saghir Ahmed on the other hand does not consider quom endogamous like a caste. According to him it is true that the individual's quom is determined by his birth and "to a considerable extent quoms are associated with traditional occupations (but) the quom status of a household may be changed within a single generation, not to mention over long periods" (Ahmed 1977: 75). Saghir Ahmed and Barth have described the ranking of these castes in their books. I would like to mention the ranking system which could help us understand and analyze the changes in Pakistani immigrants in the Netherlands. Saghir has divided quoms in Punjabi villages into two groups: Zamindars who consist of landlords and traditional cultivators, and Kammi who are all sort of artisans. Kammi is originally a punjabi word, which means a person who works. Barth described and ranked quoms among Swat Pathans. Both of them put the Sayyed quom on the top of their ranking system. This classificatory method determined the social status of every quom, but wealth and resources play an important role as well. For Punjabi men and women alike, *izzat* means high status, prestige, honour and power. To achieve an ever higher degree of *izzat*, one has to have wealth in accordance with one's particular status" (Zekiye Eglar 1957: 71). There are the cases when the change of profession or class has enabled some families to change their quom name. There is a common Punjabi proverb "Last year I was a Jullaha (weaver), this year I am a Shaikh (disciple) and next year, if prices rise, I shall be a Sayyed" (Ibbeston 1916: 222, stated in Ahmad, 1977:73). A rise in economic status or change into a better occupation may lead to a change in status group membership, although this is not always immediately accepted by others. But an important and noticeable thing is the movement from top to bottom. Nobody likes to move from high to low, but in case of Pakistani immigrants in the Netherlands this movement is sometimes reversed. For example, many of those I

interviewed are doing work which they would never do in Pakistan.

In the Netherlands, Pakistanis gave top priority to earning money. Most of my interviewees could not write or speak Dutch, therefore, many jobs were out of their reach, particularly those that might involve public engagement. In my sample, 22 men and 3 women were unemployed. The unemployed informants of my sample have a good educational background, three of them had M.A.'s, eight of them B.A.'s, and six of them had the F.A. qualification. The high rate of unemployment amongst Pakistanis is due to four reasons. Firstly, Pakistani refugees are not allowed to do any sort of paid work until the ministry of justice accepts them as refugee. Many refugees can wait for the final decision for a number of years. Secondly, the competition in the labour market forces them to leave their jobs. Once they lose their job, they find it difficult to get a new one. Thirdly, a few of my informants got a job through an employment agency (*uitzendbureau*) on a temporary basis, which was never more than three months in duration. When the period is over they become unemployed once again. To find new work they have to wait for a long time. Fourthly, a few of my informants used to have a good job, but because of some incident they lost their job and were not able to find employment again. The rate of unemployment among Pakistani immigrants has increased after the 9/11 attacks and the 7/7 event in the United Kingdom. Racism and Islamophobia is currently playing an important role in maintaining high levels of unemployment amongst Pakistanis in the Netherlands.

Dahya has stated: "The migrant's ascribed status, i.e. his membership of caste remains immutable as long as he does not take up an occupation which, according to caste ideology, would conflict with his ascribed status" (Dahya 1972: 28). He has mentioned that he did not find any Pakistani who worked as a lavatory cleaner or sweeper, and added the following detail: "I came across a firm in Bradford where a migrant whom the management regarded as a 'trouble-maker' or a shirker would be asked to take a bucket and mop to clean the lavatory. This procedure would be adopted in the

full knowledge that the migrant concerned would refuse, ask for his papers and leave the firm” (Dahya 1972: 28). The occupation of sweeper is considered to be lowest profession in Pakistani society: “Some occupations are clearly polluting...In the case of sweepers this pollution is so strong that the profession as such is repudiated by Pathan society” (Barth 1965: 18). Ahmed also put sweepers on the lowest rank of the *kammis*. He uses the word ‘*Mussali*’ for that. But the study of Pieter Streefland has informed us more deeply about the profession of sweeper. He used the word *Chuhbras* for them, and according to him: “In the traditional Indian Caste-system the chuhras were ranked among the untouchable, and even among these they held a very low position” (Streefland 1973: 1). Three of my informants in the Netherlands during my fieldwork admitted that they were working as a sweeper or cleaner. They are all male and belong to the highly ranked *quoms* in Pakistan, namely Arian Main and Awan. These *quoms* were positioned second and third on the ranking system of Barth and Ahmed. A Pakistani from the Sayyed *quom* which is on the top in both the ranking lists came across me when he was working as a sweeper. All of my informants having the profession of sweeper have good schooling level. Two of them have a secondary school certificate and one of them has a good education from England. Two of them are satisfied with their job while the third one is not. All of the three above mentioned that sweepers are hard working persons. Eight of my informants were working in the hotel and catering industry. Seven of them are male, while one of them is female. Out of these eight informants, five are satisfied and the other three are not satisfied with their work. This category of my sample consists of those Pakistanis who are working as a carrier in a hotel, dish washer, room servant or waiter. Mostly Pakistanis prefer to have the job of carrier, because in this job they can get a reasonable amount of extra money from tipping. Tipping is not considered to be good in the country of their own culture, and the jobs of waiter, dish washer and carrier are considered to be low ranking jobs. But in the Netherlands many respectable Pakistanis from high ranking *quoms* do these sort of jobs. In the Netherlands they consider work as a job, and their

attitude to work has nothing to do with their *quoms*. A few of them informed me that in the Netherlands everybody respects the work and the worker and therefore, they are proud of being a worker.

Ten of my informants have white collar jobs. Seven of them are male, and three of them are female. All of these white collar job holding Pakistanis are satisfied with their work. Pakistanis working in offices, and high paid factory workers consider themselves as white collar job holders. None of the informants from my sample worked as a industrial worker in Pakistan, but in the Netherlands six of my informants are industrial labourers, and all of them are male. Five of them are satisfied with their work. They have better educational background as compared to the nature of their work. The majority of Pakistani immigrants aspire to starting their own business. A few of them have been working on this plan for a few years. They prefer control of their own work and want to enjoy the freedom of business. Twenty of my informants after many years of hard work have been able to start their own business. Seventeen of them are male and three of them are female. Their businesses includes a grocery shop, meat shop, snack-bar, ready-made clothes shop, carpet business and stall in open markets. Thirteen of them are satisfied with their business. I observed a paradoxical situation in their business. For example the profession of a butcher as a category is despised as low status in Pakistani society (see Barth 1965: 17; Ahmed 1977: 82; Dahya 1988: 445 and 1972: 29). But in the Netherlands a few socially ranked *quoms* have adopted this profession. In Pakistani society, the use of alcohol and pork are strongly forbidden for Muslims, but nonetheless a few Pakistanis in the Netherlands sell pork and alcohol in their shops. The business of snack-bar is becoming very popular amongst the Pakistani community in the Netherlands (see Bano 1988: 29), and this business involves the selling of pork and alcohol.

One of my informants, who is the owner of one snack-bar said: "I sell alcohol and pork in my shop. I did not fast during the Ramadan, because with fasting you can't sell these forbidden things. When I was in Pakistan I fast regularly, but here the situation is different. We are in business and have to take care of our



customers". I found a few other examples of Pakistanis who have a strange relation between their feelings and doing. The professions they are engaged in are not respectable according to their cultural background. They do not want to let their family members and friends in Pakistan know about the nature of their work. I found the same situation reported by Dahya, who was planning to extend his research into the villages of origin of the migrants: "My informants from the areas I want to visit strongly urged me not to reveal to any one in their villages the kind of jobs they were engaged in" (Dahya 1988: 445). More or less the same situation prevails in the Netherlands.

During my participatory observation, I noticed another important change in the behaviour of Pakistanis. The majority of changed their ideas about professions, due to the new circumstances of Dutch society. For example musicians and dancers are considered to be lowest ranking *quoms*, Barth (1965: 17) put them on 21st and last position, while Ahmed (1977: 82) put them on 13th position. But in the Netherlands, many Pakistanis love to dance and sing. A few of them adopt singing as a profession too. These singers and dancers, like sweepers and butchers, are also enjoy social respect among the Pakistanis in the Netherlands. This trend seems to continue as new areas of business are engaged with. According to one of my informants in 2006 more than 50% of the laundry business in Amsterdam is owned by Pakistanis. In other cities of the country, Pakistanis are also establishing laundry business, while the same profession in Pakistan is considered to be that of lower *quams*. In the 1990s I didn't come across any Pakistani taxi driver in the Netherlands but in 2006 you can find Pakistani Taxi drivers all over the Netherlands. This is another emerging profession amongst the Pakistanis in this country. Many Pakistanis now own their taxi firms and are running this business very successfully.

Like many other societies of the world majority of the Pakistanis do not consider household and other domestic labour of women as work, but as her basic duties. For them only labour for an employer involving payment or wages could be considered work. During my field-work I found out that one of my male informants

used to be a cook in one restaurant. The cooking in a restaurant, according to him, is work but cooking at home is not work; it is a part of a woman's duties. One of my informants told to me that "Before marriage I always cooked myself, but afterwards I did not. Now I cook only when my wife is seriously ill". It is common among Pakistani migrants in the Netherlands that before marriage they cook and clean the house themselves, but after the arrival of their wives or after marriage they immediately stop housekeeping. They do not consider this tasks as work, because it does not give any economic reward. Out of the 35 Pakistani women informants living in the Netherlands, three of them have their own business. Only one of my female informants works in a hotel and catering industry. Three of the female informants have white collar jobs. Seven of them are students. All of these seven are young girls. Three of my female informants are unemployed. These Pakistani women used to do paid labour but now they do not have paid jobs any more. These women want to have work, but they have not been successful to find any job. Eighteen of my female informants are housewives, and most of them remain busy in their work day and night without any rest. Only one of them spends only 35 to 44 hours per week on domestic activities. Even though men have been willing to let go of their qaum identity in the new context, the role of women in paid labour has not changed that much. Patriarchal gender relations are therefore maintained even though the changing circumstances of migration have transformed economic circumstances.

### SOCIAL LIFE

The social lives of migrants is in someways similar to that of Pakistan. Urdu is thought to be the language of the elite and parents tend to speak to their children in Urdu rather than their indigeneous language, Pakistani immigrants in Netherland also follow and suit and hardly teach their local languages to children. With an increase in income, most immigrants feel that they now belong to the upper middle class and therefore must adopt the language of the elite as well. Whereas 74 % of my informants speak

Punjabi as their mother language, only 33 per cent of them speak Punjabi with their children. On the other hand, only 13 % of the sample speak Urdu as a mother language, whereas 59 % uses Urdu as a language of communication with their children. These figures clearly show that majority of the Pakistani immigrants in the Netherlands with a Punjabi mother language are changing their language because of their social conditions. They know that Urdu is the language of Pakistani ruling class. Urdu is a language of the rich and the use of this language enhances their social status. A few of my informants with Punjabi mother language disclosed to me: "Punjabi is not a decent language and it is a language of poor people. We do not want to teach this vulgar language to our children. We want to give them a good education and good social position in Pakistani society, for that reason they must learn Urdu". The second generation of Pakistanis in the Netherlands is more fluent in Dutch compared to Punjabi. The majority of Pakistani Immigrants speaks Urdu with their children although their own mother language is Punjabi. In other words the majority of Punjabi Pakistani mothers speak Urdu with their children in the Netherlands. A large number of Pakistani children in the Netherlands can't speak and communicate in Punjabi. In many cases their punjabi link is only through Punjabi songs.

The Pakistani immigrants in the Netherlands have a semi-feudal social background. They share a lot of things with their family members and friends. In Pakistan their lives were not so mechanical and busy as are their lives in the Netherlands, and they used to have a lot of time for each other. More important, the strong joint-family system dominates their social lives. In everyday life people used to share a lot of social activities with each other, and exchange their happiness and sorrows. Even if they live a few miles away from each other, they become socially close to each other, while in the Netherlands persons living on a sixth and second floor in a same building became socially away from each other. But in the Netherlands the lives of the Pakistanis are different. They are heavily involved in their business and labour activities. So they have less time for social visits. They still do visit their Pakistani friends

more than the Dutch visit theirs but it is much lower in comparison to the visits they would have paid in Pakistan. They may have Dutch friends but the frequency of their visit to their Dutch friends is very low. The Pakistani women visit their Dutch friends less than men. It is not common in the Netherlands for Pakistani women to visit their female Dutch friends alone. They have to acquire the company of a Pakistani male or a child. By and large, more than half of the Pakistani immigrants have a reasonable number of social relations with the Dutch people, which indicates only a partial integration into social life, but which nevertheless is at a satisfactory level.

As compared to men, Pakistani women are poorly integrated into Dutch society. It would not be wrong to say that Pakistani women are the most isolated section of the Pakistani immigrant community in the Netherlands. The majority of the Pakistani women spend most of their time inside the walls of their houses. Generally, Pakistani women do not even go shopping on their own and the majority do not visit their friends alone. Seventy-four per cent of my female informants never go out to watch sport matches, and whereas in Pakistan only thirty-one per cent of my female informants did not take part in any sport, in the Netherlands this ratio is more than double. Due to the few contacts outside the household, Pakistani women have to spend most of their time inside their houses. In the house most of them have only television and video-recorder for amusement. This lack of a social life, is because they do not have the big families which they are used to in Pakistan. In the extended family-system they can exchange their problems with other family members. In Pakistan they can go out and visit their family members or friends when they want. In the Netherlands they do not have the extended family system, and cannot visit their friends so freely as in Pakistan. The majority of women feel very lonely in the Netherlands. During my fieldwork I heard some horrible stories about the miseries of Pakistani women in the Netherlands. During that period, three Pakistani women committed suicide because of their terrible circumstances. In 1983, the newspaper, *De Telegraaf* published a series on Tahira in eleven

episodes, according to the version of this popular newspaper, the Pakistani girl Tahira was burned by some Pakistani males because she fell in love with a boy. The version of her parents was different, according to them Tahira committed suicide. A few years ago one Pakistani women committed suicide in a canal of Amsterdam with her two children. This incident was also reported by Dutch television. In the South Eastern part of Amsterdam, another Pakistani women committed suicide because of her severe domestic condition, she locked herself in a room and cut her wrists. One of my respondents argued: "We know these cases because they were reported in news media. The real number of these sort of cases may have been more than three, and in future you will hear about more suicides, because I know a few more Pakistani women who are ready to commit suicide". On the other hand, many Pakistani women and a few of the Pakistani men want to change this situation. The Pakistani men and a few women interviewed usually pointed out that the best way to get rid of this situation is to give more freedom to women, and to allow them to communicate and integrate with Dutch society. At the same time a few brave Pakistani females are openly opposing this sort of situation.

## DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

In Dutch society racism is more than an idea; it is institutional and structural. Racism exists materially in Dutch society, in the shape of a racial hierarchical structure, where a white man is placed in top, some brown people, like Indonesians, are in the middle (may be because they speak very good Dutch and are generally from a middle and even upper class background), and black Africans are at the bottom of the structure. Like other immigrant groups in the Netherlands Pakistani immigrants also face racial discrimination. Roughly half of my informants have faced racial discrimination during their stay in the Netherlands. Most of the immigrants who have a very good business or good monthly income have faced less discrimination than working class Pakistani immigrant, and the majority feels that racial discrimination does exist. A few of them face this experience themselves. In 1987 a young, respected and

well known Pakistani, Azam Choudhury, sacrificed his life in his struggle against racism. "Azam chudhry, a Pakistani refugee and very competent information secretary of the National Awami Party in the Netherlands killed by local fascist on the same street where Kerwin was stabbed" (Di, Maurice 1988: 146; see also Bano 1988: 18).

Of the persons who have faced racial discrimination, nine have faced it at the administrative level including in police stations, hospitals, housing corporations etc. But the most frequently reported instances were related individual discrimination in the work situation. To examine the intensity of racial discrimination, I questioned all of my informants as to which public institutions they were afraid to visit: If we look only at the males, then we shall find that 32 out of 85 respondents are reticent to go to certain offices. Six of them do not like to visit any office, because they do not want to face any racial and emotional shocks again. Nine of my informants did not like visiting the office of social security. They felt ashamed of visiting this office. According to one of my informants: "I feel too much shame whenever I visit the social security office for help. At that time I also feel myself helpless. I do not like to see myself as a helpless person. Many time i heard sometimes the social security officers passing discriminatory comments on people. But this never happened to me. I went to social security office for getting help only once in my life. I can not forget that experience in the whole of my life". Sixteen of my informants did not like visiting the police station, especially the foreign police department. Many of them consider the foreign police to be very rude. According to one of my informants: "Foreign police officers often pass racist comments against foreigners". The story of one respondent was published in *De Waarheid* of 14th April 1987, under the title of "No taxi, no police: A Pakistani gave birth on the street of Amsterdam". On 10th of April 1987, in the evening a Pakistani pregnant women felt the labour pain. She asked her husband to bring her to the hospital. They phoned a taxi, at 11 PM. The taxi driver advised them to come down in front of their building and promised to see them

within a few minutes. They were waiting but the taxi did not arrive. The Pakistani woman was crying with labour pain. The neighbors noticed it and came for help. The neighbors tried to reach the taxi driver again and again but in vain. Then they phoned to the police. The Police was not willing to help them. According to the police 'this matter is the concern of the hospital department not of their department'. In the meantime The Pakistani lady gave birth to a baby on the street, one week before the date suggested by doctors. Then at last at 00:30 AM. the ambulance arrived. They brought the mother and newly born child, who was covered with sand to the hospital. The doctor put the newly born baby in a high-care department. Next day, the Pakistani man went to the police station to complain about the incident of the previous night. But the police refused to register his complaint. The Pakistani insisted on his request to register his complaint. This offended the police officers, who became angry, and two police officers hit him and threw him out.

Whereas sixty six per cent of my informants think that there is more discrimination than five years ago, only forty-eight per cent of my informants have faced racial discrimination themselves. Only sixteen per cent of my informants think the opposite, and the others do not know the answer because their stay in the Netherlands is less than five years. Interestingly thirty four per cent of my female informants did not face any racial discrimination themselves, but sixty three per cent of them think that the racial discrimination has increased in last five years. By and large, the Pakistani immigrants feel racial discrimination, but they do not discuss it with other Pakistanis. They try to keep these emotional shocks secret. The first generation of Pakistani immigrants generally think that a discussion about racial discrimination is politics, which is a negative thing for them. For example, one of my informants, a working woman in a hotel and catering industry, with a income of more than 3500 guilders per month, replied to my question in these words: "I do not have negative and pessimistic ideas". For her to talk about racism is a negative thing. Another Pakistani respondent, a very sensitive person, used these words: "I faced incidents of racial

discrimination several times. The Dutch people are very polite and soft in their general behaviour. Usually a Dutch person does not harm or hurt black people consciously. But it is also common that the Dutch consider themselves superior to us because of their colonial past. These feelings are still in their subconscious. This subconscious forces them to racially discriminate against us. For example if you go to a supermarket for shopping, the eyes of the guard will be focussed on you and not on any white person. The same happened with me in a tram. Once I was travelling by a tram. I was the only black person in that tram. At one stop the ticket examiner entered. He did not check anybody in the whole tram, but came straight towards me and checked only my ticket and left the tram”.

On the other hand, the second generation of Pakistani immigrants is not willing to accept the distinctly inferior social status assigned to their elders on their arrival a position which they accepted without much protest. These Pakistani children are not passive like their parents. Because their command on Dutch is better than that of their parents, they can easily understand racial comments passed on them or on their parents. Slightly less than half of my second generation's informants had gone through the experiences of racial discrimination, and a clear majority of the Pakistani children think that racial discrimination is more pervasive than five years previously. The majority of the second generation is very clear in this view, which is akin to the ideas expressed by Chris Mullard, a British born black scholar: “We will not put up with racist behaviour. Rather than acquiesce we will react. Through our understanding of the British way of life we will be better equipped than our parents to organize constructive rebellion” (Stated in Peter Fryer 1984: 390).

After the 9/11 and 7/7 acts racism against Muslims has increased. The media has played a major role in creating fear of so-called, Islamic terrorism. In 2006, a survey revealed that 70% of Dutch people are scared to have a Muslim neighbour. Though this is a relatively new set of opinions, the lack of understanding between the majority of Dutch people and Muslims goes back to the



Rushdie Affair. For many Dutch commentators the Rushdie Affair is understood in terms of 'blasphemy', 'heresy', 'democracy', the right of 'free speech' and 'fear of racism', but the Muslims of the Netherlands make the point that Rushdie has been guilty of something, which is for them, far more dreadful: apostasy and denial of faith. The majority of Dutch journalists appear to be atheist. When a person has no faith, the denial of faith is meaningless thing for him. So a few of these Dutch journalists who do not really understand the feelings of Muslims, emphasize democracy and freedom of speech. Some of them have tried to create the fear of racism with the help Rushdie. For example, after one of the demonstrations against Rushdie, one part of the Dutch press presented Muslims of the Netherlands as a homogeneous group with an alien 'anti Dutch' culture. Toine van Teeffelen also mentioned some examples in his article "De Moslims maken het ons niet gemakkelijk" (The Muslims do not make it easy for us). In this article, van Teeffelen gave a few examples of how the Rushdie affair was represented by the Dutch press (see 'You treaten us' in Halber 1989: 127); also *De Volkskrant* of 7 march and 8 march 1989). When the Dutch translation of *The Satanic Verses* appeared in the market, the Dutch Press published the news that the super stores Vroom and Dreesmann and Byenkorf could not sell *The Satanic Verses*, because of threatening letters from a Muslim organization. *De Telegraaf* gave this news in five columns (1-9-1989). *Trouw* published it in four columns (1-9-1989). But when the Amsterdam police found out that the threatening letter was a joke carried out by school children, they published it as a very small news item. Only *De Volkskrant* carried it in a two column' news item (15-9-1989). By and large, if one reads the Dutch newspapers during these months, one can easily get the impression that some journalists tried to create racism, and have treated Muslim communities as the culprits. The news of *NRC* of 6 March 1989 gave the impression that only (and all) Pakistani Muslims are in favour of the death sentence of Salman Rushdie, while my field-work reveals that only twenty six per cent of the informants are in favour of the death sentence of Rushdie. The majority of the

Pakistani immigrants in the Netherlands are not fundamentalists. But the overlap between political and religious identities in a racist atmosphere makes it easy for religious leaders claiming to represent the whole community to capitalise on the anger and frustration of Pakistani immigrants. Ultimately this reflects the failure of the secular Pakistani political organizations, to consolidate and provide a real alternative and have contact with the wider immigrant's movement.

Then came 9/11 the reaction in the Netherlands was extremely violent compared to neighbouring countries. Dozens of Mosques and asylum seekers centres were attacked. All foreigners were expected to publicly denounce Bin Laden, fundamentalism or even Islam as a whole. A sociologist, Pim Fortuyn decided to join politics and due to his status as a university professor was allowed to state racist opinions for which neo-nazi's used to get convicted. He called Islam "a backward" religion. He warned of the "Islamisation" of Dutch culture and argued for a "cold war against Islam" because "Muslims are busy conquering Western Europe". He announced that foreigners should learn to be Dutch or get out of the country. He often referred to foreigners as criminals. He said we should be free to mention these "truths" about foreigners, without being called racists. With every racist remark his popularity grew day by day.

In the local elections in March 2002 over one third of the population of Rotterdam voted for the Right-wing populist Pim Fortuyn. On 6th May 2002 only 9 days before the elections, Fortuyn was killed. Suddenly the racist climate that had been building up for so long became perfectly clear to everyone. There were pogroms in the air. Was the attacker a foreigner? or even worse: a Muslim? That was the question. In the end the attacker turned out to be white and no racist attacks followed. But tens of thousands of Fortuyn-fans did demonstrate for days together with nazi-activists. His party, Lijst Pim Fortuyn (LPF), got 26 out of 150 seats in the national parliament. Only founded some 3 months before, the LPF became the second biggest party in the Netherlands. Although this coalition did not last three months, the minister of

justice from the List Pim Fortuyn party set the tone for what continues to be a very negative terminology for minorities. What integration meant to him, Hilbrand Nawijn explained, was that “They (minorities) have to learn to do what we (‘the Dutch’) want them to do: they have to become like us”.

In July 2005 after suicide incidents in London the Dutch media attacked the Muslim communities in the Netherlands. All these incidents provide fuel to create stereotypes against ordinary Muslims. It also helped to create hostility towards Muslims and the recent increase in racist attacks. According to a report published by European network against racism (ENAR) “Approximately 50% of (Dutch) Turks and (Dutch) Moroccans indicate that they have been personally confronted with discrimination in the past year”. This all comes in the context of the rise of political Islam that has been making some ground amongst Muslims in the Netherlands- a reaction to the intensifying stigmatization and discrimination felt particularly amongst youth. Young Muslims, especially Pakistanis, feel increasingly alienated as a result of religious and racial discrimination, unemployment, low pay, police harassment and poor housing. Today, there are about 1.7 million “non-Western” immigrants or their children are living in the Netherlands. They are more than 10 per cent of total population of 16.3 million. About one million of them are Muslims.

Dutch society’s remarkable devotion to anti-racist norms, influenced by their revolt against Nazi and apartheid regimes, is now pressured by an opposite trend. Feelings of racial superiority dating back to the colonial period have surfaced again. Dutch people began to perceive migrants and refugees foremost as a problem. As a result many harsh anti-immigration laws were introduced without much protest. The social-fiscal number was introduced in 1992, compulsory identification in 1995, and the “Koppelingswet” in 1998, a law by which all governmental databases are coupled to exclude undocumented people from all services. In 2001 a new immigration law made it more or less impossible for refugees to get asylum in the Netherlands. At the same time border controls were expanded, the number of raids at

workplaces grew, just as the number of special jails for people without legal documents. The Dutch government decided in 2004 that no foreign born imam of a mosque would get a visa after 2007. It means that new Imams will be trained in the Netherlands. It also affects the Pakistani Imams. It is becoming very difficult for Pakistanis immigrants to get their families members and spouse in the Netherlands.

#### New Dutch Nationality holders with Pakistani ethnicity

Year	Pakistanis Total
1996	630
1997	296
1998	287
1999	277
2000	237
2001	255
2002	241
2003	132
2004	83

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, Voorburg/Heerlen 2006.

New language requirements have become another hurdle of immigration to the Netherlands. In an apparent move to restrict the inflow of Pakistani immigrants to the Netherlands the Dutch government passed a new law on 4 September 2006, requiring immigration applicants from Pakistan to be proficient in the Dutch language. This table also shows how Dutch authorities decreased the numbers of new nationality holders through different measures. Under the new law, Dutch nationals of Pakistani origin may only petition family members to settle in Holland provided these relatives learn the Dutch language first before filing their immigration application. The Dutch Embassy in Islamabad would administer a language proficiency test to all Pakistanis who want to immigrate to the Netherlands. Those who fail the test would automatically be denied the right to apply for immigration

(kwintessential language and culture specialist September 2006). The passing of a kind of a good citizenship examination will become mandatory. A new ceremony, complete with national anthem, is being contemplated for naturalizations. On 11 November 2006 The Guardian reported “The Netherlands may become the first European country to ban Muslim face veils after its government pledged yesterday to outlaw the wearing in public spaces of the *niqab*, or veil, and the burka, or full—length cloak covering the head”. This is an ongoing controversy. The white Dutch appear to have reached consensus on one point: the rejection of the *niqab* (a face-covering scarf). Very few women in the Netherlands use it, but it is clear that a line has been drawn here.

Dutch racism is a well-intentioned, friendly apartheid: white, Christian, and fuelled by feelings of supremacy and superiority which are self evident, although they will be generally denied. Generally immigrants, especially Muslims groups” are held one-sidedly responsible for whatever problems come up. The most alarming thing of all is the propagation of the notion that immigrants are “scary”. A certain fear of numerical dominance that has been around for a while is now reinforced by the threat of “Islam”. The excrescences of fundamentalism are depicted, in this connection, as being representative of Islam as a whole. Fear is playing a role to create more racism. May be the other communities are more wise than Muslim and especially Pakistanis living in the Netherlands. Jewish organisations in the Netherlands are bold in challenging the growing racism, they displayed big orange-and-black posters at all main railway stations in the Netherlands with these words “In 1940-45, most of the Jews had to get lost. Who’s next? Don’t let hate come back.”

## REFERENCES

Extensive use has been made of the following dailies and weeklies:

The Economist  
The Gaurdian  
Economic and Political Weekly  
India Today

Daily Jang London  
De Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant (NRC)  
De Telegraaf  
The Times  
De Volkskrant  
De Waarheid

## NOTES

1. The research material and case study data for this work were collected during the months of March through July 1989. For this research a selection of 120 respondents was made among around 12000 Pakistanis, living in the Netherlands, including (so-called) illegal migrants. For the selection of respondents the method of snowball sampling was adopted. Out of the 120 respondents of the sample, 54 of who are heads of the household. Four informants have been divorced. Fourteen persons in the sample are single men, living without families. Thirteen respondents are unmarried sons, living with their parents. Six informants are unmarried daughters, living with their parents. Only one informant is a father of married children. Twenty-eight respondents are married women. As a whole the majority of them (75.4 %) is between the ages of fifteen and forty-five. We can say the majority of the Pakistani immigrants belong to the young age group and their labour activities are useful for the development of the Netherlands.

## CHAPTER 16

# Pakistanis in the United States: From Integration to Alienation?

AMINAH MOHAMMAD ARIF

### INTRODUCTION

Many people in the West, Europe in particular, perceive Pakistani migrants as being mostly relegated at the bottom of the social ladder, concentrated in ghettos, isolated from their host-society, and so on. While this image reflects only partly the reality of migrants in Britain, this picture is even more deceiving in the case of the United States, where migrants are fairly educated and affluent. At the same time, however, it would be inappropriate to systematically oppose Pakistani-Americans to their counterparts in Britain, as the former represent a rather diversified community, not all migrants enjoying the same level of success. Even more significant is that discrimination against Muslims, and Pakistanis in particular, has been on the rise in the United States, in the wake of September 11th, this being likely to generate common feelings of alienation beyond borders. In fact, from the earliest period of migration, as shows the experience of early Punjabi Muslims on the West Coast of America, to the present, discrimination against Pakistanis has tended to take on a cyclic form, with discrimination alternating with a fairly good acceptance in American society. This in turn has redefined their modes of adaptation (or non-adaptation) in their host-society, as migrants have been oscillating between return to their homeland, withdrawal within themselves and a more dynamic ‘integration’<sup>1</sup> into their host-society.

After presenting the Punjabi Muslims who landed in North America as early as the late nineteenth century, I will explore the integration process of Pakistanis during the contemporary period, and then examine how this process has been increasingly called into question since September 11th, and the implications on this ethnic minority.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The presence of Muslims from the Subcontinent in the United States goes back to the end of the nineteenth century. The overwhelming majority comprised natives of Punjab. During pre-colonial time, there was no recognized private ownership of land, as land was controlled by the village elite. But after 1849, the British introduced private property and created landlords from among the former operators of land, who were thus given the power to buy and sell their lands, provided they paid the revenue demands. Small holders were often unable to pay the required taxes but rather than selling their lands, they preferred to mortgage their property and soon became over-indebted. Eventually, small holders were expelled from their lands and in order to survive they had no other choice than to become labourers. Some of these landless workers, when provided with the opportunity of emigration jumped at the offer: they were to furnish the bulk of indentured labour migration. However, these indentured labourers mostly went to Africa or South East Asia and not to America. In fact, emigration to the American continent seems to have taken place primarily from the class of small holders who were not completely ruined but whose standard of living was rapidly declining owing to debts and mortgages (Mazumdar, 1982: 22). As during the late nineteenth century, economic conditions worsened in Punjab—demographic explosions, and shortage of land combined with disasters like droughts, famines and severe epidemics —, migration became increasingly recognized as a potential opportunity (Barrier & Dusenbury, 1984: 4). While opportunities in South East Asia and Africa diminished, reports came especially from labour contractors, shipping agents and return migrants of greater prospects in Canada



(‘Kaneida’) and in the United States (‘Mitkan’ or ‘Miriken’) (Barrier & Dusenbury, 1984: 6). North America became attractive for Punjabis as wages were higher than in other migration countries and men could migrate as free workers rather than as indentured labourers.

This initial wave of migrants, who were mostly from the districts of Hoshiarpur and Jallandar, comprised about 85-90 per cent of Sikhs, 8-10 per cent of Muslim and a very small percentage of Hindus). Among Muslims, there were also small numbers of Pathans. Most of these immigrants were illiterate young peasants from the Jat caste, unmarried (those who were married left their wives at home), and from average income families: emigration required a minimum access to capital and richer folk did not need to migrate.

Punjabi immigration to the United States is usually considered as a ‘by-product’ or a ‘spillover’ from Canada. Indian immigrants typically first went to Canada where they were attracted by the propaganda of Canadian employers. The overwhelming majority settled down on the West Coast, in British Columbia. But as between 1905 and 1908, immigration sharply increased and Canada was going through an economic depression, the Canadian government decided in 1909 to end Indian immigration after an agreement with British and Indian authorities. As a result, many immigrants either returned to India or moved south of the border and joined those who were already in the United States.

Indians had in fact started coming to the United States since 1898, but while between 1898 and 1903, only thirty Indians per year were entering the country, the volume increased dramatically to 1,072 in 1907 and 1,710 in 1908, as persecution developed in Canada (Hess, 1974). These migrants initially settled in the State of Washington in the lumber industry. But Indian workers were soon faced with the resentment of White workers, and hence moved South to California after 1908, and sought work in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valley as well as in Fresno and the newly developed Imperial Valley. Thus the great majority of Indian pioneers were to live in California, in the older agricultural lands.

They proved to be fairly skilful and some of them even started buying lands, and moved into owner and lease-holder ranks.

A minority however stayed north in the urban areas but they encountered extreme hostility from Euro-American workers. The beginning of the twentieth century was a period of economic and social transition: Euro-American workers were fighting over issues of wages and working conditions. And the arrival of Indians increased the level of tension in a background of traditional violence against Asians (the Chinese in particular).

Between 1909 and 1917, an organization initially called the Japanese and Korean Exclusion League, soon renamed as the Asiatic Exclusion League (AEL) to include Indians among its targets, channelled the resentment expressed by the Whites against the Indians (of whom there were still only about 6000 in 1917) (Jensen, 1988). The local media joined with unions and workers in the campaign against Asians and created through their articles a fear of the “invasion of Hindoos” and the “tide of turbans” (in reference to the Sikhs). Interestingly, though Hindus comprised only a very small percentage of the total number of Indians, all people originating from the Subcontinent were called “Hindoos”. This trend was to be observed during the contemporary period as well, at least until September 11th (see *infra*). But the difference however with the contemporary period is that while the term “Hindu” now does not particularly arouse any negative feelings among Americans, in the beginning of the twentieth century, it was not only used as a way of distinguishing Indians from American-Indians but it had, at least for those who were advocating exclusion, a derogatory connotation, fairly close to the word “Paki” in contemporary Britain. The campaign against Indians reached its peak in 1907 when riots took place in a couple of towns like Bellingham and Everett.

The following year immigrant officials began to deny admission to Indians; the most common reason being used for exclusion was that Indians were likely to become ‘public charges’, but because some of the incoming immigrants were Muslims, the charge of practicing polygamy was also put forward. In 1910, a Commission

appointed by the Congress published a report asserting that Indians were the most 'undesirable' and 'unassimilable' immigrants so far admitted to the United States (Jensen, 1988: 141).

The campaigners obtained satisfaction when the 1917 Immigration Law was adopted, putting an end to immigration from most Asian countries. Discriminatory measures against Indians increased dramatically: between 1917 and 1924, they were excluded not only from immigration but also from naturalization procedures, and from land ownership rights. They were also persecuted for their political activities<sup>2</sup> and threatened with deportation.

As a result of discrimination, a significant number of immigrants went back to India: the total Indian population hence decreased from around 6000 in 1917 to 3310 in 1930 and 2405 in 1940. As for the remaining Indians, they tried to settle down as well as they could. While some men remained bachelors and kept to themselves, a few chose to marry with non-Indians. Owing to the strict conditions for being delivered a marriage license, workers in California, especially those settled in the Imperial Valley, primarily married Mexican women, and formed a distinctive biethnic, and fairly acculturated, community, usually called the Mexican-Hindu community<sup>3</sup>.

From the 1940s onwards, the immigration restrictions imposed on Indians started to loosen up. In July 1946, an immigration law was adopted which gave Indians an annual quota of 100 entrants and the right to obtain American citizenship. These measures were confirmed in the MacCarran Walter law of 1952. And yet it was not until 1965 (when American immigration law was liberalized) that South Asians began to arrive in the United States in significant numbers. The flow has never slowed down since then. In between Partition had taken place, and former Punjabi Muslims and Pathans were to be known as Pakistanis.

## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Pakistanis (like Bangladeshis and unlike the Indians<sup>4</sup>) are classified as "other" in the broader "Asian" category of the census, this

meaning that not many figures regarding them are available. The relatively high number of illegal immigrants introduce yet another difficulty in the calculation. Moreover, as Pakistan did not exist before 1947, immigrants born before these dates, especially those who did not arrive directly from Pakistan can find it difficult to define themselves. Besides, the so-called twice or thrice migrants arrived via East Africa, Guyana, England or Canada; the census asks about the country of origin of one's ancestors: some of those whose parents were born in the places named above (especially the first two), will tend to name these countries as their homeland.

It does remain nonetheless that the number of Pakistanis in the United States has been steadily increasing since the 1960s. The population was officially estimated to be 40,000 in 1980, 75,000 in 1985, 93,663 in 1990, and 153,553 in 2000. But these figures are most probably an under-estimation: according to compilations of the Embassy, Pakistanis were about 500 000 in 2003. After September 11th, the number of Pakistanis who were admitted to the United States declined considerably, but it seems that the flow has resumed since 2005<sup>5</sup>.

By all accounts, the Pakistani population, like the rest of the South Asian group, is one of the most rapidly expanding immigrant group, as their numbers have grown more than ten-fold over the past 20 years. They are however confined to a relatively small number of states: New York (where 35 per cent of the total Pakistani population is estimated to live), New Jersey, Illinois (20 per cent), California and Texas.

Most Pakistanis hail from urban areas and mainly come from the major cities (Lahore, Karachi, Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, Hyderabad and Peshawar). The majority are Punjabi and Muhajir—Muslims who left India for Pakistan after Partition, and their descendants-. Interestingly, the Muhajirs, many of whom are fairly educated and urbanized, are “over-represented” as per the percentage in their homeland (only 8 per cent)<sup>6</sup>. A substantial number of Pathans have also migrated while the Sindhis and the Baluchs, belonging to more rural and poorly educated populations, are correspondingly under-represented. In recent years, however, an

increasing number of Punjabis from rural areas have made the journey<sup>7</sup>.

Pakistanis moved to the United States for a variety of reasons. In the 1960s and 1970s most were drawn by the exceptional opportunities in terms of work and research conditions, and by the remunerations offered by the Americans in the fields of education and employment. This period coincided with more restrictive immigration policies in Britain; hence those, among the elite in particular, who might have migrated to Britain went instead to the United States. Though a significant number of immigrants have helped their brothers and sisters to migrate to the United States, chain-migration, as observed in Great-Britain for instance (see Shaw, 1994: 39-40), is not a dominant migration pattern. Pakistanis have migrated to America for social and cultural reasons as well: migration is associated with ideas of prestige and is seen as raising the social status of a family. It is encouraged by the reports of those already settled in the United States. American novels, but above all films and TV serials, now accessible to all, can also increase the desire to migrate, especially among the youth. Needless to say, if American foreign policy has been for decades highly criticised by the Pakistani population in the homeland (and this despite the close nexus between the American and Pakistani governments), the United States have for long been (until September 11th at least) considered by Pakistanis, the youth in particular, as (one of) the best place(s) to migrate. At any rate, migration has increasingly become not only a means but an end in itself as Pakistanis, like other South Asians, are convinced that to work abroad (and especially in North America) is the *nec plus ultra* of success. But political considerations can also be a significant part of the equation. Hence, Ahmadiyyas, who were declared non-Muslim by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government in 1974, have tended to emigrate in large numbers, Owing to their fairly high levels of education, many have chosen the United States as their destination. Some have been successful in obtaining political asylum. In the 1980s, Karachi had been torn apart for several years due to the violence between the Muhajir and Sindhi communities, and between rival factions

within the Muhajir community. The Sindhis, due to a kind of 'majority complex', were attempting to reduce the monopoly on political and economic influence exercised by the Muhajir population on the city of Karachi. This violence encouraged a number of Muhajirs to emigrate either to the Gulf or to North America, but most did so on the basis of their qualifications rather than as political refugees. Beyond the affiliation to any particular sect or ethnic group, a number of Pakistanis have also left their homeland during periods of military regime and/or economic and political turmoil: hence after the nuclear tests of 1998 and the subsequent sanctions imposed by the United States which contributed to worsening an already faltering economy, a great number of people left their country: though most went to Canada (where immigration policies were then fairly lenient), some Pakistanis tried their luck in the United States as well.

#### RETURN MIGRATION: NO MORE A MYTH?

Before September 11th, the 'myth of return' had never been very strong among Pakistanis in the United States (except perhaps in the very first years of migration) for reasons explained elsewhere (see Mohammad-Arif, 2002: 37-39). But 'dramatic' events, both internal and external, combined with what is perceived as the discriminatory policies of the American government have at present made this return, for a few at least, a forced reality. As a matter of fact, amongst all Muslims who have been deported or placed under deportation proceedings, Pakistanis (along with Bangladeshis) have been the worst affected: while officially 2000 Pakistanis from across the United States are estimated to have been deported, thousands of others who had been under deportation proceedings have 'preferred' to leave the country and go back to Pakistan<sup>8</sup> instead of spending time in prison; or they have tried their luck in Canada<sup>9</sup> or Western Europe<sup>10</sup>.

The returnees do not only include illegal migrants but a small segment of professionals and businessmen as well who have starting going back to Pakistan not only because of better economic opportunities in their homeland but also out of fear of

discrimination in their host-country. As for the Pakistanis who have migrated to other countries, they are in some ways undergoing the same kind of experience as those twice or thrice-migrants who, albeit for other reasons, had had (often overnight) to flee East Africa.

### ECONOMIC PROFILE: A FAIRLY SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY

During the contemporary period, Pakistanis have migrated in two major waves: the 1960s and 1970s on the one hand, and from the 1980s onwards on the other. There is a relative dichotomy in economic terms between these two waves.

During the 1960s and 1970s, Americans encouraged the immigration of educated and (highly) qualified people; hence, a substantial number of Pakistanis who migrated in those decades have high levels of education and are relatively prosperous. They include a significant number of doctors<sup>11</sup>, engineers, scientists and businessmen. In 1971 for example, 82.6 per cent of Pakistanis were professionals and technicians; others were teachers, scientists and businessmen (Minocha, 1987: 302). In the subsequent decades, there has been a relative shift, as many of the immigrants who arrived from the 1980s onwards have tended to be less qualified than those who migrated in the 1960s and 1970s. This change of profile partly owes to the fact that many came under the family reunion provisions of the immigration legislation (as brothers and sisters, for instance, of the early immigrants) and were not expected to meet educational or professional requirements. Others came as illegal immigrants. Many of these migrants, along with the professionals who have not been able to find work commensurate with their qualifications, have moved into business: mostly insurance, real estate, banking, restaurants, hotels, travel agency, jewel shops and small retail (groceries, 'ethnic goods', and so on). Those who were formerly professionals had two assets: they had a starting capital from their previous work and their level of education made them more aware of and better informed about the world of business. Those who arrived 'as brothers and sisters'

of earlier immigrants were helped by the first group in establishing themselves and making essential contacts.

Not all Pakistani immigrants have been however so fortunate: the second wave also includes among illegal immigrants in particular, a relatively high number of people who are in low or poorly paid jobs: taxi drivers, newspaper vendors, waiters, petrol pump attendants, and so on. But, interestingly, while many of those who work as taxi-drivers or newspapers vendors have taken up these jobs because they are under-qualified, there are also others who did gain higher education qualifications (degree or masters level) in Pakistan, but their qualifications had little or no value in the American workplace. Most of the immigrants arriving in the United States from the Indian Subcontinent, especially physicians, have to repeat at least a part of their studies. Doctors are prepared for this and go along with it (though I did meet an Indian dentist who was repeating his studies at 47!). Other immigrants, who arrive as graduates in history or literary subjects at the age of 40 or more in the United States, are not necessarily prepared to start studying again, especially if they have arrived with a family to support. They are therefore constrained to take on work for which they are overqualified.

It does remain however that the South Asian population as a whole, Pakistanis included, continues to be made up of mostly immigrants occupying higher rungs of the social ladder. Hence, although the number of underprivileged Pakistanis has been increasing over the past two decades, the average income of families has also been growing significantly. According to the 1990 census, Asians (of all origins) were the wealthiest amongst the non-white American population. For the current decade, the census calculated that the mean household income in the United States in 2002 was \$57,852 annually, while that for Asian households, which includes Pakistanis, was \$70,047. Another study conducted in 2001 at Queens College in New York concluded that 75 per cent of the Muslim immigrants had completed university studies<sup>12</sup>, while the census showed that they earned a salary that was 20 per cent higher than the American average.



It is worth noting that although most of the Pakistanis who have migrated for professional reasons are men, the women are also educated, if not quite to the same level as the men. It is however not uncommon to see Pakistani families where both spouses are professionals.

### ETHNIC ENCLAVES, THE EXCEPTION TO THE RULE?

As a result of this relative economic prosperity, most Pakistanis do not live in ethnic enclaves or in ghettos, and instead are scattered in the residential suburbs of New York City or Chicago. A few ethnic enclaves do exist nonetheless, like in Queens borough (New York) for instance where many South Asians, irrespective of their country of origin, have settled. But one of the most striking examples of ethnic concentration is probably that of Coney Island: between Avenue H and Newkirk Avenue in Brooklyn, a few blocks away from a Jewish neighbourhood, is an area where there are nearly a hundred shops, all Pakistani apart from one or two antique shops which will probably soon disappear. The first Pakistani grocery shop, the 'Punjab Grocery', opened in 1984. Its owner, Abbas Rizvi, was not keen that a shop selling *halal* meat should be run by Hindus (they left the neighbourhood) some time ago now), so he decided to open a shop himself. He was joined by dozens of other immigrants from Pakistan, and their customers also hail largely from the same country. A few Pakistanis have already been living in the area since the late 1970s. In the early 1980s, they established a mosque, the Makki Masjid, which (until September 11th at least) had been drawing several hundred faithful for Friday prayers. The inhabitants of this neighbourhood are mostly all working-class Punjabis who often work outside the area as garage attendants, taxi drivers, labourers, and so on. The women are not much visible during daytime, but come out for a stroll in the evening, most of them wearing the *shalwar kameez*. According to the policeman who for the past ten years or so (this was before September 11th) had been watching the mosque on Fridays at prayer time ('a courtesy', he explains), the neighbourhood was known to have a low crime rate and little delinquency, which he

said made his job almost boring. When Pakistanis first settled in the neighbourhood there were few tensions with their Jewish neighbours, however, they seemed to have established a *modus vivendi*. Relations were not warm, but the two communities, only a few blocks apart, were cohabiting in peace. After September 11th however, the area has come under close scrutiny from the FBI, several people have been arrested, and many of them have been deported, though they were only illegal immigrants or people whose visas had expired, or in some cases petty criminals (mostly involved in credit card fraud), but people, at any rate who had no affiliation whatsoever with any terrorist group. Since 2001, thousands of Pakistanis have left the section of Brooklyn which includes Coney Island: between 15,000 and 18,000 in 2003 according to estimates; they have either gone to other states, to Canada or Western Europe, or even back home. Those who have stayed back are surviving with great hardships, as businesses that were thriving in the past are struggling now. Events, including international ones, like the July 7th 2005 bombings in London and probably like the alleged plot to bomb American planes in August 2006, in which British Pakistanis may have been involved, contribute to nurture the fear, and Coney Island may soon lose its distinctive identity as the Little Pakistan of New York City. All the more so as businesses of other migrant groups, like the Russians in particular, have already replaced some of the faltering Pakistani businesses<sup>13</sup>.

## REMITTANCE AND INVESTMENT PATTERNS

Pakistanis, like other South Asians, set great store by saving and investing money, more so than many long-established American families. Among recently arrived migrants, most families make a point of sending a part of their budget as remittances to those family members who have stayed in Pakistan. Even many of those whose monthly income is barely enough for their family in the United States to survive on a daily basis will send money to their kin back home: while this underlines the importance of family links even after emigration, it is also symptomatic in some cases of the

fear of being castigated as failures by their relatives back in Pakistan if they do not send money. As the stay goes longer and as the migrant becomes wealthier and better established, and hence feels more secure, the sending of remittances diminishes or undergoes a shift: financial assistance to the family may decrease, and even stop. But in recent years, it has been increasingly replaced by economic investment in the country of origin. Hence, a recent study conducted by Burki shows that 'in one year - between 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 - remittances from the United States increased almost six-fold, from \$135 million to \$779 million. In the following year, they increased by another 60 per cent and reached a record of \$1.24 billion. They have stayed around that level since then. Interestingly, while the largest flow of private funds to Pakistan was, till the end of the nineties, sent by migrants living in Saudi Arabia, now the stream of remittances comes mainly from Pakistani settled in the United States, and as said before this money is mainly used for investment<sup>14</sup>. This does not only tell us of the growing prosperity of the latter or of the relative decline in the number of Pakistani workers in the Gulf, it is also a sign of the increasing sense of insecurity of Pakistani-Americans, given the well-known correlation between one's sense of security in the host-society and the amount of remittances sent to the home-country (Helweg, 1986). While before September 11th Pakistani-Americans used to invest most of their money abroad, this partial reversal of capital flight owes as much to a feeling that they are not welcome in America anymore as to the fear that their assets might be frozen in terrorism investigations<sup>15</sup>. This also coincides with Pakistan's improving economy which makes the country more attractive for potential investors than it was in the 1990s.

The final point to be noted is the huge amount of money spent by Pakistani-Americans on charity: according to another recent study, this amount reaches one billion dollars a year, out of which 40 per cent is sent to Pakistan (Najam, 2006). Hence, with the growing investments of Pakistani migrants in their homeland as well as the enormous amounts they are willing to give as charity, not to mention, as seen above, the return of a few highly qualified

migrants in the wake of the tremendous erosions of civil liberties after September 11th (racial profiling, immigration registration and restrictions, heightened discrimination and so on), the brain-drain may to some extent be converted into a brain (and capital)-gain. But this needs to be qualified: the highly qualified returnees are still a very small minority and as Najam's study shows, *only* 40 per cent of the charitable donations are directed to Pakistan, while the rest is still donated in the United States itself<sup>16</sup>.

### A WELL-INTEGRATED COMMUNITY?

Altogether, the high standard of education achieved by Pakistanis, their good English, their middle-class origins all combine to equip them to structurally integrate into American society. The absence of a colonial past between America and what became Pakistan has also contributed to make integration a smoother process. Finally, there is no collective history, unlike in Britain, of frustrated efforts to assimilate into a society where Pakistanis have been for decades amongst the most "unpopular" and ostracized of all immigrants.

Since September 11th however, Pakistanis, like many other Muslims, tend to feel that the fairly good acceptance they had been enjoying so far in their host-society is increasingly called into question. This means that their integration process may no longer be as smooth as it used to, although, relatively few, among those who have stayed back, complain of direct experience of discrimination in their daily lives: albeit acts of racism (at the workplace in particular) against Pakistanis and other Muslims have dramatically increased in the United States, it does not seem, except perhaps for the women who wear the *hijab* that they have reached the same levels as to what the economically underprivileged minorities, like Hispanics and African-Americans, go through. The high standards of education and relative prosperity of most Pakistanis have in some ways protected them so far against outward forms of discrimination, unlike in Britain where (inter)national politics and (relatively low) social status have combined to make Pakistanis 'privileged' targets. However, the attitude of the American government in using phrases like 'Islamic fascists' and deporting

large numbers of immigrants, as well as some sections of the media who are quick in denouncing Muslims as terrorists, contributes to enhance the feeling of insecurity of Pakistanis, and this even though their homeland is an official ally in the so-called “war on terror”.

At any rate, at least for now, it does remain that the vast majority of Pakistanis have chosen to stay back and they are still a fairly well integrated group into the American landscape, as shown by their participation in the economy of their adopted country, their interaction on a daily basis with the society at large, and the fact that they are not spatially isolated in ghettos. Their political participation however remains fairly marginal as compared both to other ethnic groups in the United States and to Pakistanis in other parts of the world like Canada or Britain. We might assume that this political apathy owes to the fact that Pakistanis are still a relatively recent ethnic minority, who have been so far busy settling down. Issues of blatant discrimination have not been such either (at least till September 11th) that they felt compelled like their compatriots in Britain to be more politically involved.

But no matter how well they are structurally integrated into American society, most Pakistanis in the United States seem as keen as their peers in other parts of the world or as many other ethnic groups in the United States, to keep their cultural and religious traditions alive.

## IDENTITY ISSUES AND THE PLACE OF RELIGION (BEFORE SEPTEMBER 11TH)

Needless to say, identity is a very subjective and fluid concept, fluctuating in time and space, according to circumstances. Like all ethnic minorities, Pakistanis in the United States oscillate between Americanization and the upholding of their cultural heritage. Their lifestyles largely borrow from their white American middle-class counterparts in terms of family structure (nuclear families), housing (spacious homes in residential suburbs), leisure (keen participation in sports, tennis and golf in particular; vacations in fashionable places for the most affluent ones), and so on. At the same time, most retain many traits of their culture of origin as observed from

their food patterns and linguistic practices (though many were fluent in English even before migrating, they remain bi- or multi-lingual, at least in the first generation). This concern for upholding their ethnic identity<sup>17</sup> can also be seen through their circle of friends (they are usually South Asian, but this also has to do with American society, which, outside academic and artistic circles, is still ethnically very segregated) and marriage patterns (though there are no statistics available, the tradition of endogamous marriages seem to be largely followed including in the second generation).

But the most important vector for keeping traditions alive and transmitting them to younger generations is religion. This significant place attributed to religion in the process of (re)constructing individual and community identities is not a specificity of the United States as similar processes have been underway in other countries, particularly in those which promote multiculturalism like Britain. The experience of migration to some extent creates the conditions for an exacerbation of the religious sentiment, such that many immigrants, across ethnicity, “discover” themselves as Muslims when living in the United States. An identity which was “taken for granted” in the home-country is renegotiated, reconstructed, reinterpreted in a somewhat more self-conscious way. In an alien environment, religion can also be endorsed with a cathartic role: it may help individuals who have been socially and culturally marginalized and psychologically destabilized by the diasporic experience to exorcize their fears and frustrations and to find landmarks. In such a context, mosques and temples are no longer mere spaces of prayer; they become major spaces of socialization, in the same way as were churches and synagogues for earlier immigrants (and as they still are for recent ones) of other origins, and play a crucial role in community formation. Hence, it is estimated that there are more than one thousand mosques in the United States<sup>18</sup>. The arrival of children and especially their maturation also plays a major role in the process. It causes serious anxiety amongst the parents who fear that their offspring will acculturate and hence call into question their authority. They worry about the fact that an “excessive”

Americanization might engender a rupture between the youths and their families and/or urge them to enter into exogamous marriages. As a palliative measure, parents devote all their energies to ensure that their cultural and religious heritage will be properly transmitted to their children. In the process, religion is perceived by many parents as the most efficient means to curb the effects of acculturation (Mohammad-Arif, forthcoming).

However, unlike Britain, the construction along religious lines is not as much as in *reaction* to the host-society: although American society is also viewed as permissive and replete with social “evils” (abortion, divorce, homosexuality, pre-marital sex and so on), the American context itself also explains the salience of religion. Most immigrant groups have gone through this process, regardless of their religious, national or ethnic affiliations. Hence, Irish, Greeks or Jews have all seen religion as an important vector in the formation of communities and the reshaping of ethnic identities both at the individual and collective level. Beyond the issue of minority groups, religion occupies a significant place in the United States. Americans have the highest rate of religious practice among industrialized countries, as shown by the high proportion of the population professing to a religion and being actively involved in it. Moreover, despite the fact that religion is officially relegated to the private sphere, the relationship between religion and State can be very ambiguous, as religion is seen as an “element of the nationalist paradigm” (Marienstras, 1997), and this relationship has essentially been defined in Christian and to some extent Jewish terms (Herberg, 1960). The US has nonetheless been characterized by a tradition of relative religious freedom which has enabled “new” religious minorities, like Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists to “transplant” their faiths and establish organizations (that parallel those of other “recognized” religions).

However, despite the freedom enjoyed by religious minorities, Pakistanis, like other Muslims, do suffer from discrimination, and this even before September 11th. Hence the paradox of the situation: on the one hand, American relative tolerance in religious matters enables Muslims to practice their religion more or less

freely and openly (at least till September 11th). On the other hand, anti-Islamic prejudice in the American population, which is fed by the media and reinforced by international events, exacerbates the religious sentiment of some segments amongst the Pakistanis and other Muslims, and in reaction, they show a stronger commitment to Islam (this even before September 11th). In a way, this partly reactive religiosity drives them closer to their British counterparts.

This deeper involvement in religion can be observed both at the individual and collective levels: many Pakistanis, like their other fellow Muslims, have become more practising after migrating to the United States and more aware of their Islamic identity: they may not be praying five times a day but do give more importance to rituals, food prohibitions, mosque attendance, and so on. Some women who were not wearing the *hijab* in Pakistan have started covering themselves in America, in the first as well as the second generation. At the collective level, Pakistanis have been very active in building mosques, establishing religious institutions and so on (Mohammad-Arif, 2002).

### RELIGION, IDENTITY AND INTEGRATION IN POST-SEPTEMBER 11TH

Since September 11th, there have been differing or (conflicting) reactions of Pakistani and other Muslims. Some, fearing discrimination, have stopped practicing at least in public places. Hence, the number of worshippers attending Friday prayer in the Makki mosque of Coney Island, has considerably declined<sup>19</sup>. Owners of Islamic bookshops in prominent Pakistani commercial areas, like Devon Avenue in Chicago, complain that they no longer have as many customers as they used to<sup>20</sup>. Some women have stopped wearing the *hijab*. On the whole, many Pakistanis prefer to keep a low profile, or even go further and deeper into (external) acculturation; all the more so as other (external) events have since then put their counterparts in the homeland or in migration into the limelight: the murder of the journalist Daniel Pearl in Pakistan, the July bombings in London, and so on. While most Americans would have been at pain to locate Pakistan on a map before



September 11th and would usually confuse Pakistanis with Indians, and more particularly with the Hindus, now the situation has somewhat changed: South Asians across religion (in particular Sikhs who wear the turban) are likely to be taken for Muslims or Pakistanis.

Other Pakistanis have on the contrary experienced an awakening of their Islamic identity, this being observed amongst the youth in particular. At any rate, the second generation has always been quicker in denouncing discrimination (of all kinds) than the elders, and in asserting itself. This of course is not a specificity of young Pakistanis as similar behaviour has been observed across ethnic and religious groups in most countries of migration. However, the exceptional intensity of the event and the subsequent trauma for young Pakistanis are bound to affect the construction of their identity and their self-perception. The negotiation between the strong longing to be part of the mainstream on the one hand and the winning back of a scorned dignity on the other has been for most a painful process whose repercussions are yet to be fully expressed. Before September 11th, the rediscovery of the faith would not be incompatible with the assertion of young Pakistanis as American: many in fact would even claim that it is easier to be a good Muslim in America than in Pakistan (Mohammad-Arif, 2002); since then, however, albeit the process might not be widespread yet, but the more (young) Pakistanis feel alienated from the mainstream, the more the awakening of their Islamic identity might well go with a withdrawal into themselves (that could for example translate into a growth in the number of youths attending separate Islamic schools, while before September 11th only a very small minority would do so; see Mohammad-Arif, 2002: 160-163).

At a more collective level, September 11th has not only called into question the integration of Pakistanis and other Muslims into American society but it has also, to some extent, redefined the entire process and meaning of citizenship within the American nation, or, for the non-citizens, the concept of being part of the American landscape: it has in other words compelled them to be

more involved in their host-society. Three areas have been particularly concerned with the need to change priorities: donations, religious authority and political participation. Pakistani-Americans now devote more money in financing Pakistani organizations and American charities in the United States than in directing it towards their homeland (Najam, 2006)<sup>21</sup>. Religious authority has undergone a shift in paradigm with a growing awareness that instead of relying on imported imams, there is a serious need of religious leaders that are well acquainted with American society (Mohammad-Arif, 2004). As for politics, most Pakistanis of the first generation had been so far more concerned about the politics of their homeland and issues related to Muslims abroad. September 11th has aroused the need for migrants to focus more on the situation of their own community in America. The second generation has been most instrumental in generating this shift in paradigm. Beyond generations, although most Pakistanis would still prefer to keep a low profile, the mobilization for the defence of their civil rights has been an opportunity both to enhance the level of their political awareness and to learn from the experiences of discrimination of other ethnic groups, whether these were relatively short-term experience (Japanese-Americans after World War II) or centuries-long experience (African-Americans). But in all cases, these have been stories of struggle to be part of the American mainstream.

More fundamentally, it is the very issue of leadership which is at stake here: while before September 11th, the first generation of migrants had the upper hand and would impose its agenda (usually homeland oriented), and hence partly alienate the second generation from becoming involved in community affairs, there has been since then a growing consensus, across generations but with the youth playing a significant role, on the vital need to be more actively part of the mainstream.

## CONCLUSION

September 11th has had several consequences on the integration pattern of Pakistanis in the United States, as it has strongly generated a sense of insecurity. Notwithstanding how well

structurally integrated Pakistanis are in the United States, no matter the absence of a colonial past and the subsequent grudges it might have nurtured like in Britain, they tend to become almost as insecure as their counterparts in Britain whenever 'dramatic' events take place in which Pakistanis, across borders, come under the limelight. No specific derogatory word, like "Paki"<sup>22</sup> or even "Hindoo", has been coined in present-day America, but many Pakistanis in the United States have now joined the ranks into this growing globalization of the sense of alienation. More than a common attachment to their homeland, shared memories and persistent ties, we may wonder whether to some extent it is not this common experience of recurrent fear and insecurity, across borders and beyond decades (as shown by the experience of early Punjabi migrants on the West Coast), that makes expatriate Pakistanis a diaspora.

At the same time, however, beyond the very notion of integration and 'being part' of the mainstream, that does not exclusively go along with economic success but includes political awareness as well, is being redefined under the current circumstances, and may ultimately yield constructive results for Pakistani migrants, beyond generations, as they could become more full-fledged participants in the American landscape. But before that, a long history of (individual and collective) fight against stigmatisation and discrimination may be awaiting them.

## NOTES

1. I define here integration as the process whereby minorities participate in the economic, social and political lives of their host-society without necessarily becoming culturally assimilated. I will not dwell here much upon the issue of cultural assimilation or acculturation.
2. A few Indian nationalists had migrated to the United States. They founded the Ghadar Party and were able to get the support of students and of the Punjabi peasants and labourers. As during World War I the Ghadar Party sought the support of Germany, the British were provided with an opportunity to portray Indian nationalists in America as disloyal to the American government, and hence most were deported (see Jurgensmeyer, 84).
3. For more details, see Leonard (1992).

4. Since 1980, there has been a specific category of 'Asian Indian' in the census classification.
5. In 2003, the number of people arriving from 22 Muslim countries, including Pakistan, had dropt by more than one third. But in 2005, 40.000 migrants were admitted from Muslim countries, this being the highest annual number since September 11th. See *New York Times*, 10 September 2006.
6. According to a report published by Arif Ghayur in 1980, Punjabis were 50 per cent and Muhajirs 30 per cent. Though no recent figures are available, it is safe to say, as per my own observations, that Punjabis and Muhajirs still form the majority of the Pakistani population in the United States.
7. Hence, during the Clinton administration (1992-2000) when immigration control and visa restrictions were relaxed, many Pakistanis who migrated during that period hailed from rural areas of the Punjab, namely Wazirabad, Sialkot and Gujrat rather than the large cities. This emigration was apparently made possible by a "gang of expert forgers" operating in these areas. *Dawn*, 16 February 2003.
8. An article in the *New York Times* underlined the plight of migrants from the United States who were deported back to Pakistan, as they have become "outcasts in two lands": after being confined for months in jail and treated like dangerous terrorists, these migrants are seen by some Pakistanis as the victims of post-9/11 policies, but by others as traitors in a context of a growing anti-Americanism. *NCPA (National Council of Pakistani Americans)*, 20 January 2003.
9. The exodus of 2003 was mainly triggered by the announcement of the US government that visitors from mainly 25 Muslim countries were required to register with the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Fearing that they would be deported, Pakistanis, who had no legal immigration papers or had overstayed their visas, fled to other countries. Among them 2000 at least crossed the border and went to Canada. *Dawn*, 21 January 2003, *NCPA*, 9 January 2003, *Washington Post*, 18 January 2003.
10. *Dawn*, 11 July 2005. I am very grateful to Mariam Abou-Zahab for pointing out this article to me.
11. The late 1960s and 1970s were marked by a lack of highly qualified personnel, especially doctors, because of the Vietnam war and a poor distribution of doctors within the health system. Doctors tended to leave the city centres and move to the more comfortable suburbs to open private clinics as a consequence, the city center hospitals were left under-staffed. To fill the void, Americans strongly encouraged the migration of foreign doctors, from South Asia in particular.
12. *New York Times*, 14 November 2001.
13. *Newsday*, 2 August 2005. I am very grateful to Mariam Abou-Zahab for pointing out this article to me.
14. *Dawn*, 22 March 2005. I am very grateful to Mariam Abou-Zahab for pointing out this article to me.

15. *The Washington Post*, 17 February 2003.
16. The relative reluctance to give more as charity to Pakistan seems to be primarily due to a lack of confidence in their homeland's philanthropic institutions. There are also practical barriers to it: on the one hand, since September 11th, US regulations have not been clear about giving charity abroad; on the other much people have little information about the institutions where they can give their charitable donations.
17. I will define ethnic identity as a process of construction or invention which incorporates, adapts and amplifies historical memories, cultural attributes and pre-existing solidarities, in order to create an internal cohesion, and to mark out distinctive cultural territory. This definition is a synthesis of those offered by Brass (1991:19) & Bodnar (1985: xvi).
18. The figure includes mosques built by non-South Asians.
19. *Newsday*, 2 August 2005.
20. *New York Times*, 21 August 2006.
21. Even before September 11th, Pakistani-Americans would make large donations to their own ethnic organizations as well as to American (non-Muslim) institutions (Mohammad-Arif, 2002: 59-60), but the trend has been now reinforced, as the need for deeper involvement into the host-society has become vital.
22. The word "Paki" was once used by an Israeli academic during a American TV show. He was immediately asked by civil rights group to apologize. *NCPA*, 20 August 2003.

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