Women in Britain's Pakistani Diaspora and their Relationship with Formal and Informal Labour, 1962-2002



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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Michaelmas 2021

Word count: 97,064

Acknowledgments

I am indebted to the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Peter Storey/ Balliol College Scholarship for funding this project. I want to thank Selina Todd, my supervisor, for taking the time to help me realise my ambition of writing a history about women from my community. The hours spent exchanging ideas and thinking through new arguments were crucial to the development of this thesis. I cannot thank Selina enough for her commitment to this project and to my development as a historian.

Many thanks to my colleagues in the Faculty of History for their support during the past three years. In particular, I would like to thank Jane Garnett, Christina de Bellaigue, Eve Worth, Matthew Myers and Mark Baker for taking the time to read my work. Finally, I would like to thank my friend and colleague Grace Heaton, not only for her continual support but also for the many hours we spent talking about oral history. These conversations, as well as our time together at Oxford, have undoubtedly made me a better historian.

This year presented unexpected challenges which, at times, seemed impossible to overcome. Leaving Oxford unexpectedly and returning home to Middlesbrough, as we all braced ourselves for the COVID-19 pandemic, was fraught with sadness and fear. Throughout all this, my family was, as always, an unwavering source of love and support. They inspired me to carry on, even when it seemed difficult to imagine completing this thesis. Needless to say, everything I do is for them, and I hope I have made them proud.

Most importantly, I would like to thank the women who welcomed me into their homes and shared their life stories. The opportunity to meet women who, like my mother, aunts, grandmother and community members, left Pakistan with the hope of making a new home in Britain was a privilege. Without their kindness and generosity, this study would not have been possible. I dedicate this thesis to them and, particularly, to the women I met who tragically lost their lives during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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List of Interviewees and their Year of Arrival

First-Generation women who migrated between the late 1950s and early 1980s:

Jameela, Middlesbrough, 1959.

Hanaf, Middlesbrough, 1967.

Rabia, Middlesbrough, 1968.

Balo, Middlesbrough, 1969.

Mafooz, Oldham, 1969.

Maneeza, Oldham, late 1960s.

Naseem, Middlesbrough, late 1960s

Nusrat, Oldham, late 1960s.

Riaz, Middlesbrough, 1971.

Sardar, Middlesbrough, 1972.

Talat, Middlesbrough, 1972.

Sugra, Middlesbrough, 1974.

Suriya, Middlesbrough, early 1970s.

Mansoora, Middlesbrough, early 1970s.

Astar, Oldham, 1982.

First-Generation women who migrated during the late 1980s and 1990s:

Fiyaz, Middlesbrough, 1989.

Sidra, Middlesbrough, 1993.

Nadiya, Middlesbrough, 1996.

Second-Generation women who were born or grew up in Britain:

Arshad, Middlesbrough, migrated from Pakistan to Middlesbrough in 1968.

Jabeela, Oldham, migrated from Pakistan to Bradford in 1969.

Razia, Oldham, migrated from Pakistan to Birmingham in 1979.

Simran, born in Bradford, moved to Middlesbrough in 1984.

Farzana, Oldham, migrated from Pakistan as a child.

Fauzia, Oldham, migrated from Pakistan as a child.

Iqra, born in Oldham.

Haleema, born in Oldham.

Noor, born in Oldham.

Shabna, born in Oldham.

Abstract (Short)

This thesis is a comparative study of British-Pakistani women's relationship with formal and informal labour in Middlesbrough and Oldham. The period begins in 1962, when the Commonwealth Immigration Act was enacted, and ends in 2002, when the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act was implemented and the 'Life in the United Kingdom' test was proposed.

Across time and between places and generations, women made decisions about their labour, often to cope with the demands of motherhood, family and community life. Twenty-nine interviewees, who migrated from Pakistan to Middlesbrough and Oldham across the period or grew up in these towns, highlighted how aspirations and opportunities for work changed over time and how their gender, class and race affected their labour experiences. Changes in local labour markets, access to adult education and English literacy, for example, had significant consequences on migrant women's work choices. Moreover, for second-generation interviewees who were born or grew up in Britain, compulsory education made forms of labour, such as professional work, more accessible. Crucially, every interviewee, both first and second-generation, described how they were not considered economically independent wage-earners and were rarely prepared for formal work. Instead, they were expected to marry as teenagers, have children and undertake domestic responsibilities. For migrant women in particular, who were often non-English speaking and, at times, illiterate, waged employment was largely inaccessible.

Whilst interviewees rarely participated in formal waged labour in a workplace, several women undertook work that was crucial in supporting the long-term settlement of their families and communities. Some of this work was paid, such as self-employment, yet

often women described how most of their labour, beyond domestic responsibilities, was unpaid and voluntary. In other words, solely focussing on British-Pakistani women's formal waged labour participation, rather than acknowledging the breadth of their paid and unpaid work, is both limiting and reductive.

Abstract (Long)

This thesis is a comparative study about British-Pakistani women's experiences of formal and informal labour, between 1962 and 2002; it is the first comprehensive account about British-Pakistani women in this period. The oral testimony of twenty-nine migrant and second-generation British-Pakistani women, who lived in Middlesbrough and Oldham, is central to this research. Their life histories revealed the extent to which time, place, generation, class, race and gender affected their paid and unpaid labour, including voluntary work, waged employment, self-employment and domestic responsibilities. Importantly, whilst British-Pakistani women rarely undertook work that was linked to the money economy (and are, therefore, statistically the most economically inactive group in Britain) they participated in labour which was crucial to the long-term settlement of Pakistanis in Britain.

The period begins with the enactment of the first Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962. The legislation to regulate migrant influx catalysed migrant men's decision regarding whether they would live in Britain permanently. Men from across the Indian subcontinent migrated after the Second World War to work in British mills, factories and foundries, primarily earning money to send remittance back to Pakistan. For many, their settlement in Britain was temporary because, before 1962, circular migration was possible. However, many Pakistani men arranged for the relocation of wives and children as a response to the restriction placed on migrant mobility by the government, driven by the fear that additional laws would prevent families from reuniting.

The period ends in 2002 with the implementation of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act. The 'Life in the United Kingdom' test, which was proposed as part of the

Act, became central to British immigration policy after 2002, irrevocably changing how citizenry was decided given the emphasis placed on testing applicants' English proficiency and general knowledge. Had the test been implemented before 2002, many of my interviewees would not be British citizens. These two legislative turning points marked forty years of women migrating from Pakistan to Oldham and Middlesbrough. Where women settled, the attitudes of family members towards waged work, changes in their local job market, their ability to access education classes and the communities they became part of all affected women's work choices and everyday activity.

Britain is home to the world's largest community of overseas Pakistanis.[1] Over 70 percent of British-Pakistanis (as well as most of the interviewees) migrated from the villages surrounding Mirpur, Azad Kashmir and were often part of Pakistan's exploited rural labouring classes.[2] Oldham has one of the largest populations of Pakistanis in the UK. It was an attractive place for single, migrant Mirpuri men to find decently paying work which was unavailable in their neglected villages. The town, known for its cotton spinning, offered opportunities for work in the local mills in the aftermath of the Second World War. Employers sought labourers that could be paid a menial wage and would take on the jobs white workers had refused. Like Oldham, Middlesbrough has a large Pakistani community. A hub of steel manufacturing, the need to remedy post-war labour shortages motivated employers from factories such as Dorman Long and, later, British Steel to look to South Asia. When men invited their families to join them after 1962, women and their children had to

[1] Ceri Peach, 'South Asian Migration and Settlement in Great Britain, 1951–2001', *Contemporary South Asia*, vol 15, no. 2 (2006), pp. 133-146.

[2] The Change Institute, 'The Pakistani Muslim Community in England: Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities', *Communities and Local Government Publications* (2009) p. 25. Available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120920001118/http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1170952.pdf [Accessed 20/1/21].

settle in towns rarely of their choosing, navigating places that were vastly different from the villages they had left behind in Pakistan. Women's economic participation was not a priority when places of settlement were chosen, rather men's work opportunities determined where families lived.

Women who arrived during any point of the period in question, and spent a significant part of their lives in either Middlesbrough or Oldham, were interviewed. As a member of Middlesbrough's Pakistani community, I was able to use personal contacts in order to locate women who arrived in the earlier part of this period. Often, their daughters-in-law and children were also interviewed. Contrastingly, in Oldham, I visited local community centres and groups, set up to support British-Pakistani or British-Muslim women, to find interviewees. Most women chose to be interviewed in Pothwari-Punjabi, the language that they felt most comfortable speaking. The interviews were translated into English during the transcription process.

Some women were part of the first, pioneer generation of British-Pakistanis to arrive during the 1960s and 1970s. Fifteen interviewees fit into this category. They had to build new networks of support through community relationships, learn a new language in informal settings and develop skills would be integral to a more comfortable settlement. Memories of loneliness, fear, isolation and, in some cases, depression marked the early part of their settlement. I also interviewed a new wave of migrant women who arrived during the late 1980s and 1990s. These three women were part of a younger cohort who often married the children of those early migrants. Much like older women, some used their skills to enrich life in their towns or found themselves in desperate economic situations that required them to find work in a competitive job market. Many had to manage this with childcare responsibilities and looking after vulnerable family members. Finally, I interviewed

seven women individually and four women in a group setting who migrated as children or were born in the UK during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. These women benefitted from compulsory education until the age of sixteen, which far surpassed the quality of state education women born in Pakistan had access to. Their aspirations regarding work, education, marriage and motherhood pointed to significant shifts in expectations across generational lines. Not only could this younger generation of women reflect on their mother's work through the lens of their childhood memories, they also highlighted how and why their lives were similar, or different, to migrant women who arrived to the UK as adults.

Migrant women's aspirations for work were affected by their experiences before migration as children and teenagers. Pakistani-born women from across the period were not regarded as potential wage earners and received training in domestic work rather than a formal education. These formative experiences affected their expectations of adulthood and their ability to envisage aspirations for work that earned an income. Almost every interviewee was pulled out of education to marry, often as children. This meant some older interviewees were illiterate. Migrant women's testimony revealed that they their decisions regarding paid and unpaid work as adults was, in some ways, informed by their experiences as children.

Whilst women were not prepared for waged work as children growing up in Pakistan, moving to Britain and securing a comfortable long-term settlement necessitated their participation in non-domestic work. Women's ability to make home in Middlesbrough and Oldham was predicated on their relationships with other British-Pakistanis in their town. The difficulties posed by not speaking English meant older, first-generation women in particular, who migrated during the 1960s and 1970s, had to support one another during their settlement, particularly since their husbands and sons were often absent because of

work. Mutual support was therefore a necessary part of making home in Britain and this support evolved into structured, yet voluntary forms of work. Migrant women's voluntary work and the significance it held as a method for securing a comfortable settlement is still underexplored. Free religious education classes and interest-free money saving associations were prominent examples of how women used their skills to offer members of their community services which could help secure a more comfortable settlement. Underpinning these services were the emotionally and materially sustaining relationships women had with members of their community, particularly women. Other Pakistanis were described as extended family members and their support was invaluable given the loss women felt when leaving their networks in Pakistan.

Crucially, interviewees living in Middlesbrough and Oldham had very different work experiences, highlighting the significant affect local social, political and economic change had on women's access to formal waged labour. In Oldham, every migrant interviewee and the mothers of second-generation interviewees were employed by exploitative corporations to sew clothes at home for a menial wage. Homeworking jobs allowed women to earn a wage and take care of their families. Migrant women were regarded as a cheap, expendable workforce that could be underpaid and overworked. However, whilst the exploitative practices of corporations are necessary to consider, women's everyday experiences amounted to more than the hours they sewed, since work and family life existed in the same space. Women were mothers, wives, community members and not just homeworkers. Moreover, homeworkers found ways to resist their work conditions, particularly by partaking in local activist campaigns. These campaigns, which began in the late 1970s, were organised by white, middle-class women, with the objective of lobbying for legislation which protected homeworkers' rights. By the 1990s, South Asian community workers played a

critical role in building connections with South Asian homeworkers who were often inaccessible to white, middle-class campaigners.

Women in Middlesbrough, on the other hand, set up their own businesses, creatively navigating the local economy to create products and services that met the demands of a growing Pakistani community. Older migrant women established businesses such as selling cloth for *salwar kameez*, seamstress work, growing and selling specialty vegetables and selling food. Self-employment meant that that they could earn an income and take care of their families. Middlesbrough consistently had a low rate of women's employment compared to the national average, so flexible self-employment became an important form of work, particularly for single mothers who needed to earn an income despite having very few options for waged work.

These labour experiences challenged the perceptions of the British state, namely that Pakistani women were not economically and socially valuable, ideas which underpinned Pakistani women's experiences of dealing with immigration officials. Their status as working-class, ethnic minority women informed local and national policies regarding their settlement which, in turn, affected their ability to make home in a new place. Despite their experiences of institutionalised racism, women from Middlesbrough and Oldham had different memories about their everyday interactions with white neighbours. Women in Middlesbrough actively denied that they had ever faced racism, instead remembering their experiences with white community members who were instrumental in ensuring they coped with settling in a new place. In Oldham, on the other hand, some interviewees remembered racial violence. However, British-South Asians resisted in varying ways, such as large-scale protests against the National Front.

The lives of second-generation women, who were born or grew up in Britain, were far different from their migrant mothers. Compulsory education affected second-generation women's perceptions of what adulthood would look like for them. In terms of their educational experiences, migrant women and their children, who were entering the British education system after their migration, often learned together. For first-generation migrant women, their pursuit of adult education was motivated by the desire to be independent and self-sufficient. Older migrant women started learning English before the implementation of legislation, challenging the idea that they would not learn without political intervention. Later in the period, migrant capitalised on the accessibility of free, accredited classes in their area and would often go to classes when their children were in school. Women's commitment to education directly affected their children and resulted in intergenerational learning, which was collective and informal.

However, despite the changing attitudes towards education, older migrant parents did not regard compulsory education as a guarantee that their daughters would be socially and financially secure as adults. Instead, arranged marriage was still seen as a way girls would be cared for, since second-generation women were not regarded as independent wage earners by their parents. These marriages took place after compulsory education, usually when girls were teenagers, and effectively ended the prospects of staying in education or becoming professionally employed. This was despite British-Pakistani girls being amongst the highest achieving groups in education during the 1990s. Divorce amongst second-generation women grew, and women were no longer ready to accept being unhappy in their marriages; single adulthood or lone parenthood necessitated a form of independence that parents did not prepare their children for.

Second-generation women who were born or grew up in Britain were the most likely group to get a higher education and professional work, often doing so after they married and had children. This is because compulsory education until the age of sixteen equipped second-generation British-Pakistani women with the qualifications to pursue training or higher education, as well as the confidence to recognise higher education and professional work as more realistic ambitions. Access to resources such as the polytechnical colleges and free adult education classes made it possible for them to become independent wage earners.

The interconnected nature of women's responsibilities resulted in interviewees often undertaking various types of work as part of their daily activity. Whilst formal waged labour in a workplace was not the most cited form of work, women explained why this was the case for them, in turn illuminating forms of labour that have been integral to the settlement of thousands of Pakistanis in Britain. In addition, asking women to discuss their everyday lives highlighted the significant yet overlooked relationship between class, race, gender, place and generation, which affected women's work choices. Across place and generation, based on individual experiences of education, training, family life and community bonds, women navigated the loss of leaving Pakistan behind and, as part of their long-term settlement, made choices about their labour which often worked to make their lives in Britain more comfortable. Work, as a starting point of historical analysis, revealed a rich history of women's changing attitudes, their aspirations for work and education, their expectations of life in Britain and their hopes for a future generation who would call Britain home. These experiences extended far beyond women's relationship with the labour market.

Introduction

This thesis is a comparative study about British-Pakistani women's experiences of formal and informal labour, between 1962 and 2002. The oral testimony of twenty-nine migrant and second-generation British-Pakistani women, who lived in Middlesbrough and Oldham, is central to this research. Their life histories revealed the extent to which time, place, generation, class, race and sex affected their paid and unpaid labour, including voluntary work, waged employment, self-employment and domestic responsibilities. Work, as a starting point of historical analysis, revealed a rich history of changing attitudes, community, family life, shifting aspirations and coming-of-age that extended far beyond women's relationship with the labour market.

The period begins with the enactment of the first Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962. The legislation to regulate migrant influx forced Pakistani men to decide whether to stay in Britain or return to Pakistan. Many men, who were recruited to help rebuild post-war Britain, chose to stay and arranged for the relocation of wives and children, since they feared that additional laws would prevent families from reuniting. The period ends in 2002 with the implementation of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act, a legislative intervention that significantly changed the requirements for citizenship. The law required applicants to take the 'Life in the United Kingdom' test, which examined candidates' English proficiency and knowledge about living in Britain. This irrevocably changed British-Pakistani women's experiences of migration.

These legislative turning points mark forty years of women migrating from Pakistan to Britain. Given the significance of the Pakistani community in Britain, in terms of size, it is

surprising that there are virtually no historical accounts of their migration and settlement experiences after the Second World War. The UK is home to the world's largest community of overseas Pakistanis. In 1951, the number of Pakistanis in Britain was negligible, with around 10,000 out of an estimated population of 50,285,900.[3] By 1971, this number had increased to 119,000 out of an estimated 55,928,000. The total number of South Asians in Britain increased from 43,000 in 1951 to 1,037,000 by 1981. In 1991, there were 477,000 Pakistanis out of 57,438,700 people.[4] According to the 2011 census, Pakistanis accounted for 2 percent or 1,124,511 people out of a total population of 56,075,912 in England and Wales, making this community the second largest ethnic group in the UK (excluding white British). The largest ethnic group in England and Wales was Indian, a community which constituted 2.5 percent of the population.[5] In addition, according to the 2011 Census, 38 percent of all Muslims in the UK, or 1,830,560 people, were Pakistani, out of a total number of 2,706,066 Muslims. Pakistanis were, and remain, the biggest ethnicity within the Muslim population; in 2011, the second highest ethnicity amongst British-Muslims was Bangladeshi, at 14.9 percent.[6] Islam is the second biggest faith group in the UK and is rapidly growing; according to the 2017-18 Annual Population Survey, there were 3,372, 966 Muslims in Great Britain.[7]

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[3] Ceri Peach, 'South Asian Migration and Settlement in Great Britain, 1951–2001', *Contemporary South Asia*, vol 15, no. 2 (2006), pp. 133-146, at p. 134. For figures about the UK's population growth since 1951, see: ONS, 'Overview of the UK Population November 2018' (2018). Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/articles/overviewoftheukpopulation/november2018 [Accessed: 20/12/20].

[4] Peach, 'South Asian Migration and Settlement in Great Britain, 1951–2001', p. 134.

[5] Gov.uk, 'Population of England and Wales: Ethnicity Facts and Figures' (7/8/2020). Available at: https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-and-regional-populations/population-of-england-and-wales/latest [Accessed 23/6/21].

[6] Muslim Council of Britain, 'British Muslims in Numbers: A Demographic, Socio-economic and Health profile of Muslims in Britain drawing on the 2011 Census' (2015), p. 24. Available at: https://www.mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/MCBCensusReport_2015.pdf [Accessed: 23/6/21].

[7] ONS, 'Muslim Population in the UK' (2/8/2018). Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/transparencyandgovernance/freedomofinformationfoi/muslimpopulationintheuk/ [Accessed 23/6/21].

This study focuses on the experiences of women who settled in Oldham and Middlesbrough. Both towns have large British-Pakistani communities which have grown since the Second World War. According to the 1981 census, Oldham was home to 5000 Pakistani migrants, which accounted for 2.3 percent of the town's total population. This figure increased to 9000 people, or 4.1 percent of Oldham's population in 1991 and, by 2001, Oldham's Pakistani population had grown to 13,754, equivalent to 6.3 percent of the town's population. Between 1981 and 2001, Pakistanis remained Oldham's largest migrant group and largest ethnic group (excluding white British).[8]

In comparison, Middlesbrough and County Cleveland had a substantial but relatively smaller ethnic minority and Pakistani community. In 1981, there were 2071 Pakistanis in Cleveland, out of a total population of 570,400.[9] Pakistanis were, by far, the biggest ethnic minority group in Cleveland. The second largest ethnic group were Indians, with 1324 people.[10] Half of Cleveland's ethnic minority population lived in Middlesbrough. In 1981, out of 12,150 ethnic minority people in Cleveland, 6100 lived in Middlesbrough. Similarly, in 1988, out of 13,800 ethnic minority people in Cleveland, 7010 lived in Middlesbrough.[11] Given the statistical dominance of Pakistanis in Cleveland, and the concentration of ethnic minority people in Middlesbrough across the 1980s, it is sensible to assume that the majority of Middlesbrough's ethnic minority population were Pakistanis. In 1985, there were eight wards in County Cleveland that had an ethnic minority population that was above the national average of 4.5 percent. Six out of the eight wards were in

[8] Business Intelligence Service, *Oldham 2011 Census Ethnicity Report* (Oldham: Oldham Council, 2016), p. 3.
[9] D. Bryan, S. Hunter and S. Turner, 'Cleveland's Ethnic Minority Population 1988', *Cleveland County Research and Intelligence* (1988), 3278-652 AC44, British Library, London, appendix 1.
[10] Bryan, Hunter and Turner, 'Cleveland's Ethnic Minority Population 1988', 3278-652 AC44, appendix 1.
[11] Bryan, Hunter and Turner, 'Cleveland's Ethnic Minority Population 1988', 3278-652 AC44, appendix 2. Also see: Nazalie Iqbal, *Transnational subjectivities: the practice of relatedness among British Pakistanis* (Durham: Durham University Theses, 2006), p. 20.

Middlesbrough. In Southfield, the second largest ward in terms of migrant settlement, 19.7 percent or 1000 people were ethnic minority. Many interviewees settled in Southfield after their migration. These eight wards had the highest rates of deprivation and unemployment, as well as the lowest rates of income in County Cleveland.[12] In 1988, there were 13,800 ethnic minority people in Cleveland, equating to 2.5 percent of the county's population.[13] By 1991, there were 3643 Pakistanis living in Middlesbrough. According to the 1991 census, 1870 were male, 1773 were female and 2124 were born in the UK. In comparison, there were 8936 Pakistanis in Oldham according to the 1991 census; 4545 were male, 4391 were female and 4765 were born in the UK.

A key finding in this study is that British-Pakistani women's experiences differed considerably depending on which town they lived in. Local social and economic change, as well as local policymakers' response to these changes, resulted in uneven development across England after the Second World War. To ignore the relationship between people and place is to neglect the important role local governance, activism, neighbourhood relations and changing populations played in women's everyday lives. A comparative analysis of Middlesbrough and Oldham's Pakistani communities, in relation to their labour, revealed differences such as access to jobs, local investment in initiatives to support migrant settlement, access to adult education, and so on. Whilst Middlesbrough and Oldham have similar histories of neglect by successive national governments, differences in local political decision-making resulted in diverse experiences of settlement amongst my interviewees.

[12] Bryan, Hunter and Turner, 'Cleveland's Ethnic Minority Population 1988', 3278-652 AC44, p. 7.
[13] Cleveland County Research and Intelligence Unit, 'Cleveland 1988-1992: An Economic, Demographic and Social Review', *Cleveland County Research and Intelligence Unit* (1998), 3278-652 CR 626, British Library, London, p. 12.

Analysing British-Pakistani women's settlement experiences in Middlesbrough and Oldham highlighted that the government's focus on formal waged work as a determinant of economic activity undermines the breadth of women's work, whether they are migrant or not. For migrants in particular, their participation in formal waged work has been used to gauge their willingness to integrate into British society. For example, in 2016, the Conservative Government sponsored *Review into Opportunity and Integration* was released, chaired by Dame Louise Casey. In the review, Muslim Pakistani and Bangladeshi women were described as the most economically inactive group in the UK and it was suggested that their lack of participation in formal waged work was an indication that they had not integrated into British society:

> The differences between UK-born and non-UK born women is significant in this group, with 44% of non-UK born Pakistani and Bangladeshi women aged 16-24 classified as unemployed or inactive and not in Full Time Education – compared to 27% of their UK-born peers. This percentage gap (17%) is considerably higher than that for Indian women (11% difference) and White women (2% difference).[14]

Whilst formal waged work was not a common experience amongst my interviewees, women worked in varying and important ways, from self-employment to structured voluntary work, often to ensure they, their families and community members had a more comfortable long-term settlement. Given the reasons underpinning the state's collection of information regarding economic activity, such as the management of workers and taxation, it is not

[14] Dame Louise Casey, 'The Casey Review: A Review into Opportunity and Integration' (2016), p. 91. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-casey-review-a-review-into-opportunity-and-integration [Accessed 15/10/21].

necessarily surprising that the invisible or casual work women regularly undertake is rarely accounted for in studies such as the *Review into Opportunity and Integration*. Instead, activists and researchers have recorded migrant women's work experiences. Pat Lewis and Rabia Patel, in their 1987 study of Black and South Asian women's work experiences, argued that a high proportion of their Muslim respondents from South Asia worked, despite official statistics that suggested otherwise. Amongst their twenty-eight interviewees was a young British-South Asian woman, who was the eldest of seven children. She told Lewis and Patel that she worked because 'you can't expect him (her father) to feed us all on his wage'.[15] It was precisely these timely debates, about whether British-Pakistani women worked and how work is defined, that necessitated further historical enquiry.

The rate of economic inactivity amongst British-Pakistani women has been of interest to researchers, journalists and politicians.[16] Between 1972 and 2005, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women were consistently the least economically active group in Britain. According to Anthony Heath and Yaojun Li, in a study published in 2008, the rate of economic inactivity amongst British-Pakistani and Bangladeshi women averaged around 70 percent throughout the period in question, as the table below shows.[17]

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[15] Pat Lewis and Rabia Patel, 'With one Voice: Black Women in West Yorkshire Talk About their Working Lives', *West Yorkshire Low Pay Unit* (1987), HWW 3, Box 12, Feminist Archives North, University of Leeds, Leeds, pp. 5-6.

[16] See, for example: Abigail Woodward, 'Exploring Economic Activity through the Lived Experiences of British-Pakistani Muslim Women', *Bridge Institute for Research and Policy* (2018), p. 4. Available at: https://www.azizfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Bridge-Economic-Activity-Pakistani-report.pdf [Accessed 30/7/21]; Matthew Taylor, 'Casey Report criticised for focus on UK Muslim Communities', *The Guardian* (5th December 2016), Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/dec/05/casey-report-criticised-for-focus-on-uk-muslim-communities [Accessed 31/7/21]; Women and Equalities Committee, 'Employment Opportunities for Muslims in the UK', *House of Commons* (2016), p. 15. Available at: https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmwomeq/89/89.pdf [Accessed: 31/7/21]; Zamila Bunglawala, 'Valuing Family, Valuing Work: British Muslim Women and the Labour market', The Young Foundation (2013), p. 4. Available at: https://youngfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Valuing-Family-Valuing-Work-British-Muslim-Women-and-the-Labour-Market-October-2008.pdf [Accessed 31/7/21].

[17] Anthony Heath and Yaojun Li, 'Socio-Economic Position and Political Support of Black and Ethnic Minority Groups in the United Kingdom, 1972-2005', 2nd Edition, *UK Data Service*, SN: 5666 (2008), pp. 19-46.

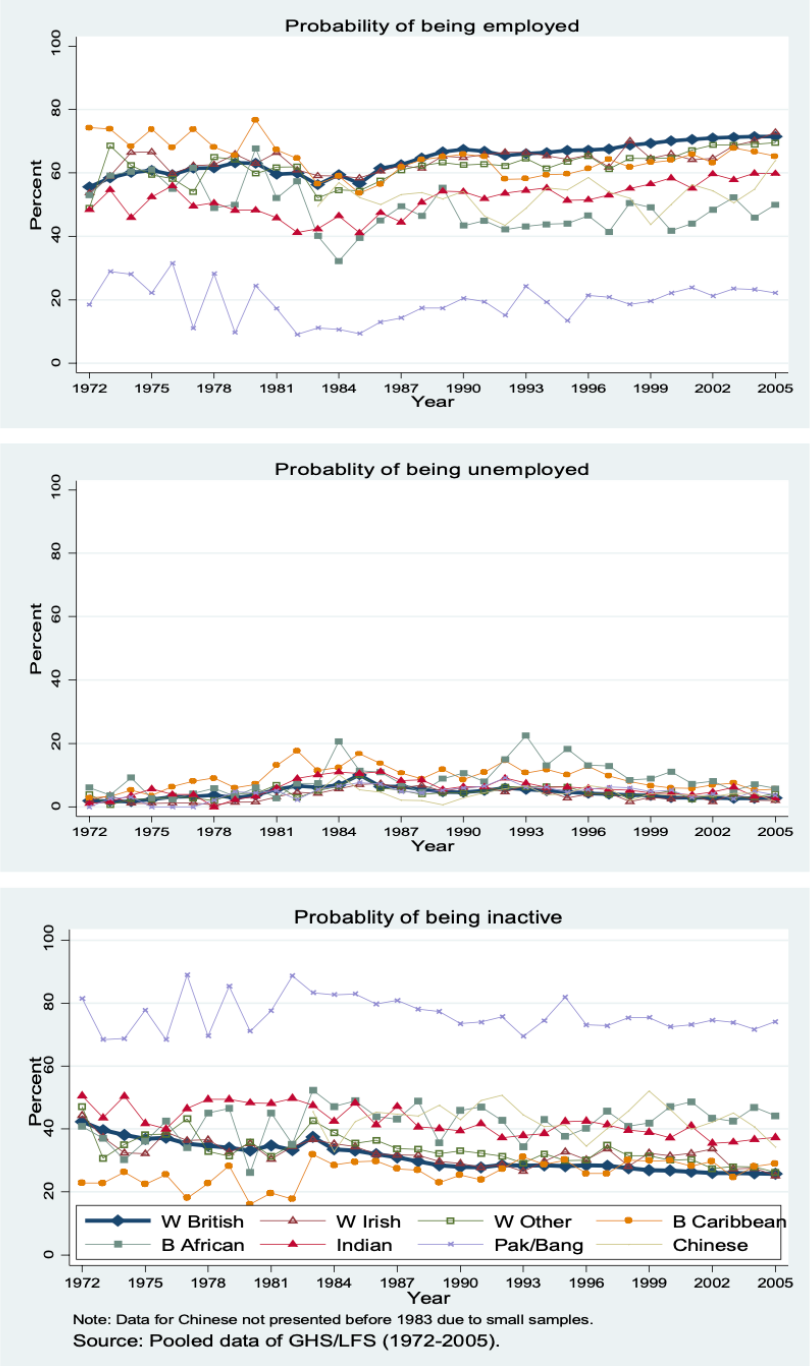


Figure 1: Employment status for women, aged 16-59 in Britain. Image obtained from Anthony Heath and Yaojun Li, 'Socio-Economic Position and Political Support of Black and Ethnic Minority Groups in the United Kingdom, 1972-2005', 2nd Edition, *UK Data Service*, SN: 5666 (2008), pp. 36.

The rate of economic activity amongst Pakistani women aged 19-60, between 2001 and 2005, was 31 percent, compared to 77 percent amongst white women. However, the rate of Pakistani women who are economically active but unemployed is also significantly. For example, 15 percent of economically active British-Pakistani women were unemployed

between 2001 and 2005, compared to 3.4 percent of white women.[18] High levels of poverty amongst British-Pakistanis affected their disadvantaged position within the labour market. In 2017, 37 percent of British Pakistanis lived in poverty, compared to 13 percent of the population belonging to white groups. Moreover, in 2017, the average income for a Pakistani household was £8,700 lower than their white counterparts.[19]

Despite the statistical significances of Pakistani women's economic inactivity, there has been little research into why Pakistani women were less likely to be formal waged workers, beyond some key anthropological and sociological studies. The first of these studies was published in 1979. The anthropologist Mohammad Anwar was concerned with analysing 'how far Pakistanis as an ethnic group are transplanting their culture to this country; in particular, to illustrate how sponsorship and patronage result in friendship and kinship networks being re-established in Britain'.[20] However, Anwar largely ignored women's experiences. On the theme of work, for example, Anwar argued that 'the majority of Muslims do not allow their wives and daughters to work or have contact with the outside world'.[21] Where women were mentioned, *purdah,* meaning veiling as a practice of female seclusion, was the overwhelming focus, rather than their testimony of making home in a new place, creating community networks and navigating the labour market.

Contrastingly, the anthropologist Alison Shaw, in her study of the Pakistani community in Oxford published in 1988, made a more concerted effort to use sex as a

[18] Angela Dale, 'Pakistani and Bangladeshi Women's Labour Market Participation', *Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research, University of Manchester* (2008). Available at: http://hummedia.manchester.ac.uk/institutes/cmist/archive-publications/working-papers/2008/2008-01-pakistani-and-bangladeshi-womens-labour-market-participation.pdf [Accessed: 30/7/21].
[19] Abigail Woodward, 'Exploring Economic Activity through the Lived Experiences of British-Pakistani Muslim Women', *Bridge Institute for Research and Policy* (2018), p. 4. Available at: https://www.azizfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Bridge-Economic-Activity-Pakistani-report.pdf [Accessed 30/7/21].
[20] Mohammad Anwar, *The Myth of Return: Pakistanis in Britain* (London: Heinemann, 1979), p. 6.
[21] Anwar, *The Myth of Return,* p. 165.

framework of analysis. Notably, Shaw argued that the trope of Pakistani women being subordinate, passive victims of patriarchy presents 'a wholly negative impression of Pakistani women's role'.[22] This was a direct critique of the growing orthodoxy within the social sciences to analyse Pakistani women's experiences primarily in relation to *purdah*.[23] Although they were briefly mentioned in this study, the women Shaw interviewed had far more complicated roles within their households and communities, often exerting power in the areas where they had responsibilities, such as the day-to-day management of their households.

Finally, Pnina Werbner contributed further to the limited yet growing understanding of British-Pakistani women's migration and settlement experiences, by examining the reconstitution of rituals, ceremonies, transaction and exchange amongst community members to understand what settlement meant to Pakistanis from different caste backgrounds.[24] However, Werbner chose not to examine how race and sex inequality affected her interviewees' working lives (and particularly their success as business owners). Arguably, the history of Pakistani settlement and labour in Britain cannot be sufficiently examined without recognising that settlement was, in part, a process of Pakistanis 'proving' their belonging. Institutionalised sexism and racism regulated who could have access to the resources and opportunities that supported long-term settlement and upward social mobility.

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[22] Alison Shaw, *A Pakistani Community in Britain* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p. 4.
[23] See, for example: Verity Saifullah Khan, 'Pakistani Women in Britain', *New Community*, vol. 5, no. 1-2 (1976), pp. 99-108, at p. 99; Anwar, *The Myth of Return,* pp. 164-166; Amrit Wilson, *Finding a Voice: South Asian Women in Britain* (London: Virago, 1978), p. 35.
[24] Pnina Werbner, *The Migration Process: Capital, Gifts and Offerings among British-Pakistanis* (London: Routledge, 2002).

This study, the first historical account of Pakistani women's migration and settlement since the mid-twentieth century, takes a different approach to the existing, limited scholarship about the British-Pakistani community. Most importantly, this thesis foregrounds women's personal testimonies of migration and settlement in Middlesbrough and Oldham to illuminate the breadth of their labour, rather than relying on the state's insufficient framework of economic activity or the testimony of British-Pakistani men.[25] As the activist and writer Pratibha Parmar argued, it is crucial to challenge the narrative of South Asian women as passive sufferers of oppression and, instead, analyse the ways in which women navigated and resisted institutional racism, sexism and economic exploitation.[26] A life history approach to oral history gave women the space to share an expansive account of their migration and settlement experiences. The rationale and consequences of this approach will be examined later in the chapter.

I interviewed twenty-nine women who settled in Britain between the late 1950s and the late 1990s and had spent a significant part of their lives in either Middlesbrough or Oldham. Some women were part of the first, pioneer generation of British-Pakistanis to arrive from the late 1950s until the 1970s. Throughout the thesis, those who migrated in these decades are referred to as 'first-generation migrant women' or 'older migrant women'. Fifteen interviewees fit into this category and they all migrated to join men who

[25] Key anthropological and sociological studies that examine British-South Asian women's testimony include: Wilson, *Finding a Voice;* Amrit Wilson, *Dreams, Questions, Struggles: South Asian Women in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 2006); Katy Gardner, 'Narrating Location: Space, Age and Gender among Bengali Elders in East London', *Oral History*, vol. 27, no. 1 (1999), pp. 65-74; Naila Kabeer, *The Power to Choose: Bangladeshi Women and Labour Market Decisions in London and Dhaka* (London, New York: Verso, 2000); Sallie Westwood, *All Day Every Day: Factory and Family in the Making of Women's Lives* (London: Pluto Press, 1984); Parminder Bhachu, '*Apni Marzi Kardhi:* Home and Work: Sikh Women in Britain', in Sallie Westwood and Parminder Bhachu (eds.), *Enterprising Women: Ethnicity, Economy and Gender Relations* (London, New York: Routledge, 1988).
[26] Pratibha Parmar, 'Gender, Race and Class: Asian Women in Resistance', in Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (ed.), *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and racism in 70s Britain* (London: Hutchinson and Co, 1982), p. 242.

were already settled in Britain (most often, their husband or fiancé). They remembered small, developing communities of Pakistanis who helped one another in the absence of council or government-led initiatives to support them as non-English speaking, often illiterate working-class South Asians. They had to build new networks of support through community relationships and develop skills that were integral to a more comfortable settlement. Memories of loneliness, fear, isolation and, in some cases, depression marked the early part of their settlement.

I also interviewed a new wave of migrant women who arrived during the late 1980s and 1990s, referred to as 'younger migrant women' throughout the thesis. These three women (one of whom was interviewed twice) were part of a younger cohort who often married the children of first-generation migrants or married straight after their migration. They had access to adult education classes as well as community centres established by British-South Asians. Much like older migrant women, their migration was predicated on where their husbands lived. In addition, and similarly to older women, some used their skills to enrich community life in their towns or found themselves in desperate economic situations that required them to find work in a competitive job market. Many had to manage this with the responsibilities of childcare and housework.

Finally, I interviewed seven women individually (one of whom was interviewed twice) and four women in a group setting who migrated as children or were born in the UK during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. These women, who are referred to as 'second-generation women' or 'the daughters of migrant women' throughout the thesis, benefitted from compulsory education until aged sixteen, which far surpassed the quality of state education women born in Pakistan had access to. Their aspirations regarding work, education, marriage and motherhood pointed to significant shifts in expectations across

generational lines. Factors such as the ability to speak English fluently and the national rise of married women and mothers entering the workforce were, in part, responsible for this change. Not only could second-generation women reflect on their mother's work through their childhood memories, they also offered rich insights into how and why their lives were similar, or different, to migrant women who arrived to the UK as adults.

Throughout this thesis, women are described as being part of a British-Pakistani community. Women defined community in relation to what people did for each other, in terms of everyday collective practices that, in some cases, were transformations of practices that underpinned community life in Pakistan. Women's perceptions of community and their memories of community relationships were diverse, and often contradictory. What it meant to be part of a Pakistani community was not necessarily cohesive, nor were the same norms shared by every individual. Nonetheless, interviewees reverted to individual experiences to construct a broad narrative of community life that was, as Ben Jones argued in the context of working-class community in the mid-twentieth century, 'publicly expressed and open to interpretation or critique'.[27] Although older migrant women and, to a lesser extent, migrant women who arrived later in the period remembered community with fondness and nostalgia, the conflicts of making community were easy to recognise in their testimony. Younger migrant women were less likely to dwell on community relationships, since the growth of extended families by the 1990s meant that they had to rely less on Pakistani neighbours to become practically familiar with life in Britain compared to women who migrated during the 1960s and 1970s. Despite the diversity in women's memories of community, every interviewee suggested that creating community was an active and

[27] Ben Jones, *The Working-Class in Mid-Twentieth Century England: Community, Identity and Social Memory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), p. 121.

dynamic process, driven by individual decisions to support or challenge others as part of everyday social practices.

The Long History of South Asian Migration to Britain

The history of migration to Britain from the Indian subcontinent is at least 400 years long. From ayah's (nannies) brought to Britain by wealthy families in the seventeenth century to the hundreds of thousands of Indian soldiers recruited by the British to fight on the Western Front, the significance of South Asians, in terms of their presence and contributions to British society, cannot be overstated.[28] The aftermath of the Second World War, however, marked a turning point in this history, given the decision men and their families made to permanently make home in Britain, which resulted in the rapid growth of migrant communities. It is important to note that every interviewee migrated after the partition of India in 1947; they were all Pakistani citizens at the time of their migration.

Migration from Mirpur is particularly noteworthy: over 70 percent of the Pakistani diaspora in Britain have connections to Mirpur, a district in Azad Kashmir, northern Pakistan which neighbours the border of Punjab.[29] Apart from one woman, every interviewee came from Mirpur or, in some cases, from the neighbouring Punjabi city of Jhelum. Historically, financial stability in Mirpur was elusive since there were few employment opportunities in this agrarian, formerly under-developed region. Arable land was difficult to come by, due to the geographical position of Mirpur on the foothills of the Pir Panjal Mountains.[30] In

[28] Rozina Visram, *Asians in Britain: A 400 Year History* (London: Pluto Press, 2002).
[29] The Change Institute, 'The Pakistani Muslim Community in England: Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities', *Communities and Local Government Publications* (2009), p. 25. Available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120920001118/http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1170952.pdf [Accessed 20/1/21].
[30] Douglas Haynes and Tirthankar Roy, 'Conceiving Mobility: Weavers' Migration in Pre-Colonial and Colonial India', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol. 36, no. 1 (1999), pp. 36-67, at p. 36.

addition, the ability for artisans and labourers to travel back and forth for work in close-by cities, such as Jhelum, which is a few miles away from the Azad Kashmir border, was hampered by poor transportation and infrastructure.[31] Consequently, economic migration has historically been an important way in which Mirpuri men could fulfil their breadwinner responsibilities.

The partition of India in 1947 and the creation of the Pakistani state had profound consequences on the economically motivated movement of Mirpuri men. The ports of Bombay, which once offered men the opportunity to work on ships, became inaccessible. Moreover, the creation of Mangla Dam, the seventh largest dam in the world, in the aftermath of 1947 devastated Mirpuri families and communities. Some older interviewees described how the destruction of their villages directly resulted in their families migrating to Britain, since they used their compensation money from the Pakistani government to fund the move.[32] Chain migration meant that men from the same families and villages often migrated to the same towns and worked together.[33] It is why so many Mirpuris made home in English industrial towns, where factories, foundries and mills were employing Commonwealth migrants to do the labour white workers had refused.

The importance of place: Middlesbrough, Oldham and migrant settlement

[31] Clair Wills*, Lovers and Strangers: An Immigrant History of Post-War Britain* (London: Penguin Random House, 2017), p. 230.
[32] Raja Tahir Masood*, The Heritage of Peterborough British-Pakistani Community* (Peterborough: Pakistan Community Association of Peterborough, 2011), p. 57.
[33] Anwar, *The Myth of Return,* p. 4.

As the previous statistics showed, some Pakistanis chose to move to Middlesbrough, often to work in the steel industry. Middlesbrough is 'entirely a product of Victorian enterprise'.[34] The initial exploitation of the natural resources found in the region began when railway pioneer Joseph Pease bought land in 1829 to build a new coal port, which attracted thousands of labourers. The town's population rose from 18,892 to 55,934 between 1851 and 1881, with migrants primarily arriving from Ireland.[35] From its inception, Middlesbrough has been a place of migrant settlement. South Asian immigration increased across Britain after the Second World War as manufacturing expanded and the need for labourers increased.[36] In 1965, Cleveland experienced near-full employment, with 1.5 percent of workers unemployed; economic stability and security was a by-product of long-term employment at the steel works.[37] The steel industry was significantly affected by national policies implemented to stimulate economic competitiveness. [38] For example, the nationalisation of steel industries under the Iron and Steel Act of 1967 worked to bring 90 percent of Britain's steelmaking capacity under the control of a central government authority.[39] The British Steel Corporation was reorganised and restructured so Britain could compete with steelmaking giants such as the EEC and Japan.[40] This was an attempt to stimulate the type of growth needed to sustain British steel manufacturing.

[34] Ian Stubbs and Jenny Parker, *Middlesbrough: A Century of Change* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2006), p. 7.
[35] Josh Warwick, *Central Middlesbrough Through Time* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2013), p. 3.
[36] Peach, 'South Asian migration and settlement in Great Britain, 1951–2001', pp. 134-135; Selina Todd, *Snakes and Ladders: The Great British Social Mobility Myth* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2021), pp. 180-188.
[37] Robert MacDonald and Jane Marsh, 'Employment, Unemployment and Social Polarization: Young People and Cyclical Transitions', *The Sociological Review*, vol. 47, no. 2 (1999), pp. 120-140, at p. 121.
[38] Huw Beynon and Ray Hudson, *The Tale of Two Industries: The Contraction of Coal and Steel in North-East of England* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991), p. xvi.
[39] Parliamentary Papers, 'Cabinet Conclusions, 22nd October 1964', *The National Archives*, CAB/128/39, p. 5. Available at: https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/cabinetpapers/cabinet-gov/cab128-post-war-conclusions.htm [Accessed 6/2/21].
[40] Parliamentary Papers, 'Cabinet Conclusions, 18th March 1971', *The National Archives*, CAB/128/49/15, pp. 11-12. Available at: https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/cabinetpapers/cabinet-gov/cab128-post-war-conclusions.htm [Accessed 6/2/21].

However, across subsequent decades, unemployment rates would change dramatically. Employment within British Steel, which was established in 1967 after the absorption of Dorman Long and was one of the biggest recruiters in Middlesbrough, fell from 156,600 to 88,200 between 1979 and 1981.[41] Between 1975 and 1986, around one-quarter of all jobs in County Cleveland and around one third of manufacturing jobs disappeared.[42] The economic recession of 1980-81 resulted in a 10 percent decrease in employment across the largest industries in the North-East, such as metal manufacturing and shipbuilding.[43] Service sector industries such as printing and finance, however, thrived during recession. By 1985, 24 percent of all workers in Cleveland were unemployed and, as a result, County Cleveland had the highest rate of unemployment in mainland Britain.[44] Under Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Government, the privatisation of British Steel in 1988 cut the workforce to 55,000.[45] Teesside's local economy was heavily hit by this loss. Thousands of families lost their primary source of income and labourers were no longer able to rely upon the work that generations of men had done before them. By the end of the 1980s, manufacturing, coal and mechanical engineering were still declining industries in the region, as clothing and food services stabilised.[46] By 1999, 1 out of 10 people within Teesside's workforce were unemployed.[47]

[41] MacDonald and Marsh, 'Employment, unemployment and social polarization', p. 121.
[42] MacDonald and Marsh, 'Employment, unemployment and social polarization', p. 121.
[43] MacDonald and Marsh, 'Employment, unemployment and social polarization', p. 121.
[44] Emil Evenhuis, 'Structural Transformation, Adaptability and City Economic Evolutions: Middlesbrough, Stockton and Tees Valley' (2018), pp. 1-58, at p. 26: https://www.cityevolutions.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/180220-Working-Paper-9-Case-Study-Report-Middlesbrough-Stockton.pdf [Accessed 8/4/21].
[45] Jason Deans, 'Steel in the UK: A Timeline of Decline', *The Guardian* (30th March 2016). Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/mar/30/steel-in-the-uk-a-timeline-of-decline [Accessed: 19/08/2020].
[46] Catherine Hodgson and David Charles, 'Structural Change and Globalisation: Case Study North-East England', *European Commission Directorate General Regional Policy* (2018), pp. 10-13. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/expost2006/wp4_cs_north_east_england.pdf. [Accessed 18/10/21].
[47] MacDonald and Marsh, 'Employment, unemployment and social polarization', p. 121.

Women's work experiences in Middlesbrough were greatly impacted by men's employment opportunities (or lack thereof). The work that had attracted migrant men and their families to Britain dissipated across the latter half of the twentieth century. Fewer jobs were made available to women, since factories and foundries prioritised men and their physical labour. A 1979 report on women's employment by K. Dobson and the Research and Intelligence Unit of Cleveland County Council found that economic activity amongst married women in Middlesbrough was lower than other comparable groups across the country. Of the 411 married women aged 16-59, who were interviewed in 1976, 53 percent were economically active, compared to the national average of 60 percent of married women.[48] In addition, 12 percent of wives who identified as economically active were unemployed, compared to the national average of 4.5 percent.[49] Dobson argued that an unbalanced local economy, which disproportionately channelled women into service and light industry work, was the reason why Teesside had a higher than average unemployment rate amongst married women.[50]

Unlike Middlesbrough, Oldham was a hub of light industry, specifically in textile and cotton production. It became an attractive location for British-Pakistani migrants to settle, given the opportunities to work in the mills. Regarded as the epicentre of cotton spinning, Oldham owed much of its prosperity to rapid technological development in cloth manufacturing, which transformed this previously insignificant town into a powerhouse of cotton production during the industrial revolution.[51] Between 1851 and 1911, the

[48] K. Dobson, 'Women, Marriage and Work: A Study of Female Economic Activity in Cleveland', *Cleveland County Research and Intelligence Unit* (November 1979), 8 CC/ RI/CR/264, Teesside Archives, Middlesbrough, p. 4.; Joan O' Byrne et al, *General Household Survey 1977* (Guilford: University of Surrey, 1979) p. 59.
[49] Dobson, 'Women, Marriage and Work', 8 CC/ RI/CR/264, p. 59.
[50] Dobson, 'Women, Marriage and Work', 8 CC/ RI/CR/264, p. 2.
[51] Hartley Baston, *A History of Oldham* (Otley, West Yorkshire: The Amethyst Press, 1985), p. 83.

population of Oldham grew from 12,000 to 147,000.[52] A large proportion of migrants, who were primarily responsible for the growth in Oldham's population, worked in the mills. Since then, the region has had a long and complicated history of economic development.

The demand for mill workers in Lancashire rose in the mid-twentieth century and the area became a centre for Commonwealth migration. Mill work offered a form of economic opportunity that could alleviate deep-seated poverty; it underpinned the conviction of many who took the chance to relocate, despite low pay, long hours and the loss of their support network. In 1948 alone, 7000 new workers from the Commonwealth were recruited.[53] However, the dramatic fall in demand for cotton after the Second World War, following a somewhat steady decrease since the peak of cotton production in the 1920s, resulted in the need to restructure and nationalise. The Cotton Industry Act of 1959 was the final legislative intervention to modernise Lancashire's textile industry. Grants were offered to upgrade spinning technology, with the expectation that this would increase productivity and profits, much like the previous Cotton Reorganisation Acts of 1936 and 1939 were expected to do.[54] Thirty percent of the workforce was dismissed as a result. Whilst the Act reinvigorated production as hoped, the downward trend of the industry seemed irreversible.[55]

In the 1971 census, 65,870 people out of a total 180,943 people in South-East Lancashire (which includes Oldham) over the age of sixteen were economically inactive. Of

[52] Noel Bruen, 'Ethnic Minority Groups and the Place of Adult Education', *Oldham Community Development Project* (no date), CDP/11/17, Oldham Archives, Oldham, p. 3.
[53] Baston, *A History of Oldham*, p. 184.
[54] Hansard, *Parliamentary Debate*, 'Cotton Industry (Reorganisation)', vol. 614, c146w (3rd December 1959, House of Commons). Available at: https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/written-answers/1959/dec/03/cotton-industry-reorganisation#S5CV0614P0_19591203_CWA_23 [Accessed 30/6/20].
[55] Virinder Kalra, *From Textile Mills to Taxi Ranks: Experiences of Migration, Labour and Social Change* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 82.

those economically inactive, 15,202 were male and 50,668 were female.[56] Oldham experienced deindustrialisation with the closure of its textile mills, particularly during the recession of the early 1980s.[57] In the 1981 census, in the Greater Manchester Metropolitan County, which includes Oldham, 190,278 people out of a total 490,928 people over the age of sixteen were economically inactive. Of those economically inactive, 53,095 were male and 137,183 were female.[58] Finally, in the 1991 census, out of a total 875,190 people in Lancashire, 349,813 people were economically inactive- 119,099 were male and 230,714 were female. In Oldham, out of total population of 167,943, 63,574 people were economically inactive- 20,885 males and 42,689 females.[59]

The British State and Immigration

Before 1962, it was men who migrated. There is no recorded example of an unmarried, Mirpuri woman migrating alone, without any connection to Britain, such as family members or villagers who migrated beforehand. Men would migrate because, before 1962 and under the British Nationality Act of 1948, circular migration was possible, meaning men could work, send remittance to their families and travel between Britain and Pakistan if they had the economic means to do so. Industrial British towns, which were a far cry from the villages

[56] ONS, 'Census Great Britain: Economic Activity Part 1' (1971), 24761c. 133= SO: GB. 9. 3, Faculty of Law Library, University of Oxford, Oxford, p. 4.
[57] See, for example: Kalra, *From Textile Mills to Taxi Ranks*; Jim Tomlinson, 'De-industrialization Not Decline: A New Meta-narrative for Post-war British History', *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. 27, no. 1 (2016), pp. 76–99; Tim Strangleman, 'Deindustrialisation and the Historical Sociological Imagination: Making Sense of Work and Industrial Change', *Sociology*, vol. 51, no. 2 (2017) pp. 466–482.
[58] ONS, 'Census Great Britain: Economic Activity' (1981), SO: GB 2.324761d684, Faculty of Law Library, University of Oxford, Oxford, p. 11.
[59] Nomis, '1991 census local base statistics: Oldham and Lancashire', *ONS* (1991). Available at: https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/datasets/lbs91 [Accessed: 17/9/21].

labouring men were accustomed to, became centres of recruitment. Neither the British state, nor migrants themselves, thought they would stay in Britain permanently.[60]

In 1960, the Conservative Home Secretary Rab Butler proposed new controls on immigration, as labour demands fell in older industries and migrant workers were no longer needed in large numbers. Moreover, Black and Asian migrants were seen to be a 'problem' despite the racially motivated attacks against them in Nottingham and London.[61] The 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act, which necessitated work permits for those wanting to migrate, resulted in men often choosing to live in Britain with their wives and children. This marked a turning point in Commonwealth migration. Where once the Pakistani diaspora in the UK primarily constituted single men, after 1962 the growing presence of women and children resulted in more diverse and established communities, the growth of infrastructure to support settled communities and, crucially, a generation of Pakistanis who were British-born or raised.[62]

The Immigration Act (1971) further restricted primary immigration to Britain. Those without prior connection to the country only had a partial right to abode. This meant that Commonwealth migrants were not automatically entitled to live in Britain unless they had lived and worked in the country for five years or more. Immigration policy changed somewhat incrementally after 1971, for example with the Immigration Act (1988), which outlawed multiple wives migrating as part of polygamous marriages, and the Immigration

[60] See, for example: Anwar, *The Myth of Return*; Wills, *Lovers and Strangers,* pp. 235-243,
[61] Wills, *Lovers and Strangers,* pp. 158-164.
[62] See: Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 2010); Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Postwar Era* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1997); Paul Foot, *Immigration and Race in British Politics* (London: Penguin Books, 1965); Stuart Hall, *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017); Wills, *Lovers and Strangers.*

and Asylum Act (1999) which was implemented by the Labour government to create a faster system for processing asylum seekers.

The most notable change to immigration legislation came in 2002, with the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act. The Act, which was a product of Home Secretary David Blunkett's white paper 'Secure Border, Safe Haven', required immigrants to evidence 'sufficient knowledge of a language for the purpose of an application for naturalisation' and 'sufficient knowledge about life in the United Kingdom for the purpose of an application for naturalisation'.[63] The 'Life in the United Kingdom' test was the result of this legislative change, an examination which has drawn negative attention as an inaccurate and irrelevant measure of an immigrant's capacity to contribute and thrive in Britain.[64]

Aspects of these immigration policies were particularity salient to women. Women were regarded as dependants of men, rather than economically active workers like their husbands and sons. Therefore, from 1962 onwards, their migration was predicted on their marriage or engagement to a British citizen. As the thesis will later highlight, positioning women as unwanted dependants resulted in invasive policies that specifically targeted South Asian women, such as virginity testing at Heathrow Airport in the late 1970s. This policy, which was supported by the Home Office, worked on the assumption that some South Asian women were lying about their marital status to secure the right to live in

[63] Gov.uk, 'Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002', Part 1, Section 1.3, ba-bb (2002). Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/41/section/1 [Accessed 26/6/21].

[64] See, for example: Dr Amy Clark, 'Britain still doesn't know the purpose of the Life in the UK citizenship test – and it shows', *Queen Mary University of London* (2019). Available at: https://www.qmul.ac.uk/media/news/2019/hss/britain-still-doesnt-know-the-purpose-of-the-life-in-the-uk-citizenship-test--and-it-shows.html [Accessed 26/7/21]; Historical Association, 'Historians Call for a Review of Home Office Citizenship and Settlement Test', *History Journal* (2020). Available at: https://historyjournal.org.uk/2020/07/21/historians-call-for-a-review-of-home-office-citizenship-and-settlement-test/ [Accessed 26/7/21]; Thom Brook, 'A Barrier or a Bridge? Serious Problems Revealed in the UK Citizenship Test', *London School of Economics* (2013). Available at: https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/a-barrier-or-bridge-serious-problems-revealed-in-life-in-the-uk-test/ [Accessed 26/7/21].

Britain. Virginity testing was used to determine whether a woman was married and, therefore, had the right to migrate. In addition, and later in the period, the 'Life in the United Kingdom' test had particularly negative implications for women who, like several of my interviewees, were pulled from primary education as children. Only well-educated, English-speaking, wealthy migrants had the resources and skills to become naturalised British citizens. As the thesis will later show, Pakistani women from rural areas have consistently remained the least likely group to stay in education past primary school since the mid-twentieth century. Had this test been a requirement for any of my interviewees, the vast majority would not be British citizens today.

Immigration policy was implemented when the British public was largely opposed to migration from new Commonwealth nations. According to Gallup polls conducted between 1965 and 1978, a substantial sector of the British public did not want Black and South Asian migrants to settle in Britain. In 1967, only 9 percent believed Commonwealth immigration had benefited Britain, and 60 percent believed it had caused harm. Notably, in 1972, 65 percent of respondents believed 'immigration; coloured persons' was a very serious social problem. A Gallup poll in 1967 gave some indication as to why the migration of ethnic minority people was perceived as a largely negative change to British society. They asked, 'Would you choose one or two of the things listed as being among the main causes of any opposition to coloured people immigrating to this country?' The most popular causes for opposition were 'They have to be supported by our welfare services', which 49 percent of respondents agreed with, closely followed by 'They congregate in a neighbourhood and turn

it into a slum', a claim supported by 41 percent of respondents.[65] This is the backdrop against which migrants were attempting to make home in a new place of settlement.

Oral History Methodology

This study is the first to analyse British-Pakistani women's experiences of migration, settlement and work up until the 21st century, using oral history as the primary methodology. Meeting women and gaining access to their homes was made easier by my status as a British-Pakistani, Muslim woman. I could access women's homes and women's community centres with relative ease and my background may have made it easier for women to share their experiences of child marriage, puberty and sex discrimination if they wanted to, since having these conversations with men (Pakistani or not) is deemed inappropriate.[66] However, despite my status, the generational differences between my interviewees and I, as well as the acute lack of historical research pertaining to British-Pakistani women, resulted in new themes of research emerging during the interviewing process. It was therefore necessary to be flexible with the questions I asked and adapt the project's aims to reflect new ideas.[67]

Since women were sharing experiences that had not yet been considered in existing scholarship, it was necessary to interview a variety of women, to better understand change across time, between places and generations. Snowball sampling was used to find interviewees. In Middlesbrough, my personal connections to the Pakistani community were

[65] Marcus Collins, 'Immigration and Opinion Polls in Postwar Britain', *Loughborough University Institutional Repository* (2016). Available at: https://core.ac.uk/display/288372299?utm_source=pdf&utm_medium=banner&utm_campaign=pdf-decoration-v1 [Accessed 26/7/21].
[66] Kathryn Anderson and Dana C. Jack, 'Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analysis', in Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (eds.), *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 11.
[67] Anderson and Jack, 'Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analysis', pp. 11-13.

used as a starting point to find an older generation of interviewees who migrated from the 1950s until the 1970s. It became apparent that there was an established community understanding of which women first settled in Middlesbrough. Every interviewee recommended other women I should speak to for this study and often actively helped to facilitate these connections by making phone calls or, in some cases, taking me to their friends or neighbours' houses. This allowed my network of interviewees to grow rapidly.

In Oldham, however, I did not benefit from being part of the local Pakistani community. Community centres became the places where I met interviewees, such as an elderly women's group at a women's community centre. Developing a relationship with community activists was crucial in building connections with potential interviewees. Whilst snowballing was generally a beneficial way to meet new interviewees, older women often recommended friends who were of a similar age and had settled in the UK around the same time as them, which made it more difficult to meet women from younger generations. To overcome this, I used personal connections in Middlesbrough to meet women who migrated later in the period and built a new network of younger interviewees by using snowball sampling. In Oldham, I decided to interview younger, second-generation British-Pakistani mothers who met weekly at a local primary school.

The relationship between the interviewees and I differed based on age and locale. I was considerably younger than all my interviewees, which meant they often positioned me in relation to their children and grandchildren. For example, older women were more likely to assume that I had no understanding about working-class life in 1960s and 1970s Britain. They spent considerable time, therefore, explaining how lucky my generation was to have access to technologies such as washing machines. Had I been older, this may not have been such a significant point of conversation. Since I was a member of the Pakistani community in

Middlesbrough, it was common for women to be more open to sharing their testimony soon after learning about the project. This was because, despite not knowing me personally, women knew my family and, as a result, assumed that I could be trusted. This meant that I had a responsibility to ensure women were agreeing to be interviewed because they understood what their participation would involve, rather than agreeing because of my ties to the community. In Oldham, on the other hand, not being part of the community meant I had to spend considerably more time building trusting relationships with potential interviewees and community activists.

Practically speaking, it was common to interview women either in group settings or with family members, friends and carers present. For some older women, immobility or disability meant their interviews had to take place in shared spaces. In some respects, being surrounded with people they knew was comforting, given the unusual circumstances of being asked questions about their lives. When interviewing women from Oldham, group interviews were a way in which to build a rapport with women who wanted to understand what the interviewing process would entail. From these group interviews emerged an unexpected dynamic; remembering became a collective process, with women learning from each other, comparing memories and powerfully demonstrating the close relationships they had with one another.[68] The overlaps and divergences in their experiences of labour highlighted the significance of age, status, generation and place in determining how

[68] See, for example: Graham Smith, 'Remembering in groups: Negotiating between 'individual' and 'collective' memories', in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (eds.), *The Oral History Reader* (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 193-211; Patricia Leavy, 'Focus Group Interviews' in S. Hesse-Biber and P. Leavy (eds.), *The Practice of Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2011); Anna Green, 'Can Memory be Collective?', in Donald A. Ritchie (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 97-108.

women's settlement processes unfolded. It was intended that, after interviewing women in group settings, they would be interviewed individually if they agreed to do so.

Protecting women's identity was a necessary part of women agreeing to the interview, since some themes were particularly sensitive, such as forced marriage, abuse and racism. All the interviewees were, therefore, anonymised and their names were replaced with a pseudonym. To protect the confidentiality of my interviewees, the names of any family members mentioned in their testimony were changed and, in some cases, street names were omitted since interviewees often associated other migrant families with the neighbourhoods they settled in. These decisions were made to ensure women were comfortable with sharing intimate details about the lives.

All the interviewees were given a choice to be interviewed in English, Urdu or Punjabi. It was imperative that women could exercise control over their life history by speaking in their first language. This allowed women to talk about their experiences with confidence and precision. My fluency in English, Punjabi and Urdu meant women did not need to compromise on the words and phrases they felt most appropriately encapsulated their experiences. Most migrant women, older and younger, chose to speak in Pothwari-Punjabi, the most common dialect in Azad Kashmir and northern Punjab. Every second-generation interviewee chose to share their testimony in English. I translated the interview recordings from Punjabi into written English during the transcribing process. It was important that the testimony, when translated into English, held the same meaning as the words women chose to use in Punjabi. Words that could not be directly translated into English or required more context have been footnoted throughout the thesis.

The language used to describe women in this thesis has been an ongoing process of analysis and reflection. Centring women's personal experiences, attitudes and emotions in

the production of historical knowledge came with a personal responsibility, to avoid imposing my own categories that shrouded the distinctions in how women identified. In prioritising women's memories, I chose to use the terminology used by women to describe themselves throughout the thesis and, when that was not possible, tried my best to use descriptors that were most appropriate in the context of individual life stories. The term 'Pakistani' has been used throughout this thesis, rather than 'Kashmiri'. This, in part, reflected the terminology women themselves used to denote which groups or communities they felt they belonged to. Women chose to describe themselves as part of a Pakistani community, rather than 'Kashmiri'. It was more common, in fact, to hear 'Mirpuri' instead of 'Kashmiri'. This is not to negate or undermine women's personal political convictions; had the scope of our interviews included questions about the politics of Kashmiri self-determination, for example, the terminology women used to describe themselves may have differed.

Since the vast majority of Pakistanis in Britain's diaspora are Mirpuri, and a handful of my interviewees came from the bordering city of Jhelum, which is in Punjab, I have decided to use the term 'British-Pakistani' rather than 'British-Mirpuri'. Given that all the archival material I consulted did not distinguish whether 'British-Pakistani' meant 'British-Mirpuri', for the sake of consistency and to reflect the blurred boundaries between these terms, I have opted to use the term 'British-Pakistani' throughout the thesis. At times, I use the terms 'South Asian', 'British-South Asian' or 'South Asian women'. These are not used interchangeably with 'British-Pakistani' or 'Pakistani'. Rather, I have used 'South Asian' to denote when the evidence I have used has either not distinguished between Indian, Sikh, Bangladeshi or Pakistani communities or when there is evidence to show that an idea or argument is applicable to most South Asian groups in Britain. Similarly, I have, at times, used

the term ‘Muslim women’. This is because the evidence or sources used were specifically about the British-Muslim population, and this evidence did not differentiate on the basis of ethnicity. Since the majority of the Muslim population in the UK has been Pakistani since the mid-twentieth century, it is sensible to assume that any sources about Muslims in Britain are relevant and pertinent to the British-Pakistani community.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant consequences on this thesis, not least because collecting testimony and visiting community groups was no longer possible. The project was initially designed on the basis that women would be interviewed multiple times since, more often than not, the first interview was a learning process for both the interviewee and I. Given that I met all my interviewees from Oldham at community centres, their personal information was not collected and, therefore, remote interviewing was not possible. As a result, the Oldham interviewing process was only partly completed. This year has had devastating consequences on the women I met, their families and their communities. Some women I interviewed lost their lives and other women have had to deal with the insurmountable grief of losing their parents or spouses. The ethical and emotional responsibility I had to my interviewees meant respecting their inability to commit to interviewing again. It also meant accepting that some questions will remain unanswered.

Using other sources was necessary given that the intended interviewing schedule was disrupted. Archival material about local ‘race relations’ policy, homeworking and locally-directed adult education initiatives, for example, were important in framing women’s experiences. These archival documents explained why women in Middlesbrough and Oldham had different experiences of work and community relationships. Despite the few instances where archival material has been heavily referenced in some chapters, all the themes of this study were directly informed by women’s testimony and what they found

important to tell me. Archival material was crucial in filling the gaps in women's testimony about everyday life in late-twentieth century Britain, however women's life histories dictated the themes that I have analysed in this thesis.

Defining work

Self-employment, structured but unpaid labour, casual voluntary labour, home-based employment, waged labour and unpaid, domestic labour and care were the types of work I encountered during the interviewing process, a large swathe of categories that reflect the complicated, diverse forms of everyday activity women chose to participate in. Despite the meaningful and important ways in which women contributed their time, effort and skills to support their community's long-term settlement, women often associated the term 'work' solely with waged employment. This raises a fundamental question: what does 'work' mean?

The Punjabi term for work, 'kam', is used interchangeably to mean waged work, self-employment and unpaid housework and childcare. At times, I chose not to qualify the term 'kam' with my own definition when I asked the question 'tusa kam karnay so?' or 'did you work?' and, instead, allowed my interviewee to define what 'kam' meant to them. This decision resulted in interviewees consistently interpreting this question as a reference to formal, waged work, rather than voluntary or unpaid work. In most interviews, I also asked 'tusa bar ni kam karne so?', which literally translates to 'did you work outside?' This is a typical way of asking an individual about their formal employment or self-employment in Punjabi, the insinuation being that earning money happened outside the home. This question often came later in the conversation, when women had spent some time reflecting on their day-to-day activities. Asking about 'outside work' was often an attempt to

specifically understand how employment, self-employment or formalised voluntary work fit into the matrix of domestic responsibilities women were more likely to discuss with me at length. Often, despite asking 'did you work?' or even asking 'did you work outside?', it was in passing, when women discussed community relationships or everyday activities, that they referred to any form of non-domestic work.

The interviews revealed that there was a commonly accepted definition of work, which was rooted in the idea that work is performed in a regimentally managed, time-controlled environment. [69] This was the way their husbands and sons worked, breadwinners who left home, worked a set number of hours and were paid at the end of the month. Samita Sen argued that this separation of the home and workplace 'eroded the integrity of the household' in Western Europe, as it became associated with leisure; this contrasts her case study of Bengal where, during the process of industrialisation in the mid-nineteenth century, the home remained the site of combined domestic and wage-earning labour for poorer women.[70] Women refused to use the same term, 'work', to define their own labour activities, instead characterising their services or home-based employment as forms of leisure that were separate from work.[71] This meant that practices such as saving money and managing household resources were not included in their testimony about economic participation. This was reminiscent of Alexandra Shephard's research on women in the early modern period and their important yet overlooked role in the growth of the economy. In her study of women's relationship with the early modern economy, Shephard argued that

[69] E.P. Thompson, 'Time, Work Discipline and Industrial Capitalism', *Past & Present,* vol. 38 (1967), pp. 56-97, at p. 57.
[70] Samita Sen, 'Gendered Exclusion: Domesticity and Dependence in Bengal', *International Review of Social History*, vol. 42 (1992), pp. 65-86, at p. 65.
[71] Claire Langhamer, *Women's Leisure in England 1920-60* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 17.

'focussing on women's disadvantages relative to men risks eclipsing the significance of their contribution at a time when their economic participation was extensive'.[72] During the early modern period, there were significant constraints on women's economic agency which meant very few women had formal occupational titles but, despite this, women played a crucial role in the growth of the early modern economy, by supplying services, providing credit and saving.[73] This was similar to some interviewees' experiences.

Women's paid work was determined, in large part, by the other demands on their time, as mothers, wives and community members. In the 1980s, feminist historians began to consider the ways in which women's family responsibilities structured their working lives. On the theme of women's paid and unpaid work, Jane Lewis, in her study of women's lives after 1945, argued that 'the extent to which unpaid work in the family has remained women's work is seemingly one of the most unchanging aspects of post-war life'.[74] This was despite the fact that improved household technologies meant that it was no longer beneficial to the household for women to specialise in housework (at the expense of working full-time) and for men to be the breadwinner. Much like feminist and women's historians of the 1980s, the sociologist Parminder Bhachu considered how responsibilities at home affected women's work experiences (and vice versa), by focussing on the testimony of British-Sikh women. Whilst Bhachu was careful not to equate waged work with liberation, she argued that having access to money meant Sikh women could 'invest and consume in their own interests and for their own benefit.'[75] Bhachu was the first scholar to consider the consequences of British-South Asian women using their wages to improve their settlement

[72] Alexandra Shepard, 'Crediting Women in the Early Modern English Economy', *History Workshop Journal*, no. 79 (2015), pp. 1-24, at p. 2.
[73] Shepard, 'Crediting Women in the Early Modern English Economy', p. 19.
[74] Jane Lewis, *Women in Britain since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), pp. 88-89.
[75] Bhachu, 'Apni Marzi Kardhi', p. 61.

experiences. In relation to generational change, Bhachu argued that younger Sikh women were more likely to be in professional work compared to their mothers and, whilst younger women still did most of the housework, they were in a better position to negotiate how their household was managed.[76] Generational change and the rise of women in professional work meant younger women earned more and, therefore, could exert more power in their households compared to an older generation.

More recently, Helen McCarthy argued that mothers earning a wage 'proved the most effective defence against the servility imposed on them by marriage and domesticity', with women after 1945 clearly expressing a desire for 'independence and fulfilment' by using their skills to earn a wage.[77] This was despite the deep-seated gender inequalities in earning and career progression and the specific disadvantages mothers faced, such as inadequate childcare provisions and the increased likelihood of working part-time. This thesis will similarly analyse the persistent association of women with caring responsibilities and examine the extent to which migrant Pakistani women's low rate of formal employment is explained by the necessity to make work fit around caring for children and the elderly.[78]

For several interviewees, the inability to work outside the home, for various reasons, meant home became the site of paid work.[79] Moreover, it meant that some women chose not to work for a wage, instead opting for voluntary work which was often regular, structured and took place within the home. Arguably, despite being unpaid, voluntary labour was work. Women's broad labour experiences, as Claire Langhamer argued, 'offers a

[76] Bhachu, 'Apni Marzi Kardhi', p. 73.
[77] Helen McCarthy, *Double Lives: A History of Working Motherhood* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), p. 344.
[78] See: Eve Worth and Laura Paterson, ''How Is She Going to Manage with The Children?' Organizational Labour, Working and Mothering in Britain, c.1960–1990', *Past and Present*, vol. 246, supplement 15 (2021), pp. 318-343.
[79] See: McCarthy, *Double Lives,* p. 311-314; Katherine Holden, 'Family, Caring and Unpaid Work', in Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska (ed.), *Women in Twentieth Century Britain* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 138-143.

fundamental challenge to definitions of leisure which assume an oppositional relationship to paid labour'.[80] Drawing from feminist sociology, Langhamer argued that ''leisure' and the inextricably linked category of 'work' are approached as fluid concepts, open to changing meaning and inseparable from the contextual and historical background against which they are experienced.'[81] Leisure and work were, for the vast majority of my interviewees, interconnected experiences because formal waged work was particularly inaccessible to working-class, often illiterate and supposedly 'unskilled' British-Pakistani women. This meant that women used their skills to offer voluntary community services for other Pakistani women and often operated these services from their homes.[82]

Whilst there has been little historical exploration of British-South Asian women's migration and settlement experiences, sociologists have debated the extent to which men's attitudes towards women's work and veiling has affected British-Pakistani and British-Bangladeshi women's lower formal labour participation rate. Early scholarship from the late 1970s, most notably by Amrit Wilson, suggested that South Asian women's isolation was a result of 'being forced to stay at home for cultural reasons' and that practices of honour killing and shame have stopped women from participating in work outside the home.[83] However, by the late 1980s and early 1990s, sociologists such as Avtar Brah argued that the idea of men preventing women from working was, by itself, insufficient in understanding South Asian women's work experiences, given the implications of regional variation, the class position of women before their migration, generational change and local job markets

[80] Langhamer, *Women's Leisure in England 1920-60,* p. 17.
[81] Langhamer, *Women's Leisure in England 1920-60*, p. 18.
[82] Also see: Judy Giles, *Women, Identity and Private Life in Britain, 1900-1950* (London: Macmillan Press, 1995), p. 17.
[83] Wilson, *Finding a Voice,* pp. 21-22.

in determining whether women worked.[84] In other words, childhood experiences before migration, local social and economic change, the demand to undertake unpaid work, racist and sexist hiring practices and patriarchal control affected British-South Asian women's experiences of work outside the home.

How, then, can work be defined in order to encompass the breadth of experiences women shared when asked about formal and informal labour across their life cycle? I argue that work is the purposeful application of skill to processes which result in material or intangible outcomes. In other words, quantifying the value of labour in relation to the money economy is both inadequate and limiting. The consequences of women applying skills that had a moralising affect, such as free Islamic education classes, or emotional significance, such as women becoming voluntary translators for their newly-arrived community members, are forms of labour that were more structured, organized and skills-based than typical leisure activities. To account for these experiences, the definition of work must be more expansive and encompassing, as I will demonstrate throughout the thesis.

Chapter 1 analyses women's experiences of life before their migration, specifically examining how women's formative ideas, assumptions and expectations of work shifted as they transitioned into adulthood. Women's childhood experiences were primarily rooted in preparing them for domestic life; they were neither educated for, nor expected to pursue, wage-earning work or professional careers. Like older women before them, every migrant interviewee had to leave education to marry and, for most older and younger women, this

[84] Avtar Brah, 'Women of South Asian Origin in Britain: Issues and Concerns', *South Asia Research*, vol. 7, no. 1 (1987), pp. 39-54, at p. 41. Also see: Marta Bolognani, Evelyn Ersanilli, Sarah Spencer and Katharine Charsley, *Marriage, Migration and Integration* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), pp. 123-159. Also see: Marta Bolognani, 'The impact of transnational marriages on Pakistani spouses in Britain' in Rashid Amjad (ed.), *The Pakistani Diaspora: Corridors of Opportunity and Uncertainty* (Lahore: Lahore School of Economics, 2017), p. 191.

happened when they were children or in their early teenage years. Leaving education and marrying instead resulted in some older interviewees, who were child brides, remaining illiterate. These experiences directly informed the types of labour women chose to participate in after their migration.

Chapter 2 focusses on how Pakistani migrants built new networks of support as adults in order to facilitate a more comfortable settlement. I argue that, as a product of creating community network that supported long-term settlement, women fostered emotionally and materially sustaining friendships with other women who had similarly experienced leaving Pakistan and making home in a new place. Women's testimony showed that mutual support for other Pakistanis, through acts such as translating for newly-migrated neighbours, evolved into structured yet unpaid community services. Women spearheaded forms of voluntary work, such as running Islamic classes and creating money-lending associations, which were integral to long-term Pakistani settlement in Oldham and Middlesbrough.

In chapter 3, I examine homeworking for the textiles industry amongst women in Oldham. Almost every woman I spoke to in Oldham was either a homeworker or their mothers were homeworkers. Homeworking offered women a way in which to earn money, take care of their children and be active members of their communities, although archival material often framed women as victims of capitalism and highlighted the efforts of campaigners working to improve homeworkers' rights. I argue that it is crucial to acknowledge the deeply exploitative practices adopted by employers to increase their profits whilst also recognising that women's everyday experiences amounted to more than the hours they sewed. Women often worked whilst also being mothers, wives and community members, experiences which existing studies of homeworking rarely examine.

In chapter 4, I analyse how self-employment became the most popular way in which interviewees from Middlesbrough earned an income. Women established their own small businesses which supported a growing Pakistani community whilst also generating an income for their working-class families. Underpinning the decision to start their own businesses were the demands placed on women as mothers and wives, as well as the inflexible and extremely limited options migrant British-Pakistani women had in terms of formal waged work in Middlesbrough, given the turbulent economic changes the town experienced in the latter half of the twentieth century.

The profoundly important ways in which women's status as South Asian women affected their sense of belonging, their ability to work with dignity and their experiences living day-to-day in majority-white neighbourhoods and towns is the central focus of chapter 5. Arguably, across the period, successive governments and policymakers reiterated that British-Pakistani women were unwanted because they were supposedly socially and economically valueless. They were, in other words, solely regarded as dependants of men, rather than individuals who had the capacity to meaningfully contribute to British society. In addition, place had significant consequences whether everyday interactions with white community members were remembered positively or negatively. For example, older women in Middlesbrough were adamant that they had never experienced racism. Systemic racism pervasively operated in the background of women's everyday experiences, negatively affecting their quality of life by denying them, for example, work, safe housing and adequate healthcare. This persistently undermined women's ability to secure a more comfortable settlement.

The final broad theme of this thesis, split over three interconnected chapters, focuses on generational change in relation to education and training, marriage and, finally,

formal work. The purpose of these chapters is to examine the extent to which a younger generation had different aspirations and expectations of what adulthood would look like for them in terms of their labour, and how factors such as compulsory education improved the possibilities for higher education and professional work. In the first of these chapters, on education and training, I argue that the desire to be independent and self-sufficient underpinned the mass pursuit of adult education amongst migrant women across the period. Adult education and English classes were necessary for women to navigate everyday life in Britain without relying heavily on others. Moreover, formal and informal learning was the most effective way in which women could improve their quality of life. Some interviewees who grew up in Britain also benefitted from the largely positive attitude migrant mothers expressed towards education as a method of preparedness for adulthood. Education was viewed by both migrant women and their children as the key to a personal sense of independence and self-sufficiency, although what self-sufficiency meant differed considerably, often along generational lines.

The second chapter on generational change examines why, despite the benefits of compulsory education, as well as migrant mothers actively pursuing adult education, second-generation women married as teenagers at the expense of further and higher education. I argue that this happened because arranged marriage, between cousins in particular, was regarded as the primary way in which migrant parents could ensure their daughters' social and financial security, given that second-generation women were not regarded as independent wage-earners. This reflected a continuity of values and practices which had underpinned the arranged and forced marriages of an older generation of interviewees who grew up in Pakistan.

Finally, in the last chapter on generational change, I analyse women's experiences of formal, professional work. It is important to note that only second-generation women who grew up in Britain had experiences as professional employees and these women gained their higher education qualifications after marriage. Despite being an uncommon experience amongst my interviewees, nonetheless those who did formally work revealed why it was possible for them, despite their experiences of marrying as teenagers. Arguably, and a common theme in all three chapters about generational change, compulsory education was fundamental in making professional work a viable aspiration. Being educated until the age of sixteen meant women had the qualifications to pursue training or higher education, as well as the confidence to recognise higher education and professional work as realistic ambitions.

Chapter 1: Life Before Migration

Women's childhood experiences were primarily rooted in preparing them for domestic life; they were neither educated for, nor expected to pursue, wage-earning work or professional careers. Interviewees who spent their formative years in Pakistan developed an understanding of adulthood that was limited to raising children and serving their marital families, ideas which were also informed by the domestic labour they saw older women perform.

These experiences directly informed the types of labour women chose to participate in after their migration. To understand how formative ideas and expectations of work were affected by women's time before their migration, I will analyse two broad themes. Firstly, I will examine how women remembered their childhood, specifically focussing on how education featured in their lives and to what extent. The centrality of education, or lack thereof, can point to the aspirations and expectations that were deemed permissible, since parents and older family members were responsible for deciding girls' participation in formal education. Secondly, I will analyse how girls' responsibilities shifted over time within the context of transitioning into adulthood. I will use age and changing status within the household, through marriage and other indicators of maturity, to analyse how girls' transition into adulthood affected the types of work that were ascribed to them.

A life history method of interviewing made apparent that girls who grew up in Pakistan across the period were not prepared for work other than unpaid, domestic labour. Women's experiences of education, the expectations to marry at a young age and the chores ascribed to girls before their marriage contextualise the expectations around women

and their labour, as this chapter will go onto show. The life history approach has been used by feminist scholars who have been similarly motivated by the necessity to analyse the relationship between changing societal expectations and personal decision making.[1] Eve Worth, for example, adopted a life story approach to examine how her interviewees, women born between the late 1930s and early 1950s, achieved social mobility by entering education later in life, after a period of employment.[2] Worth's interviewees adapted to structural changes in higher education and pursued new opportunities for work that their early educational experiences and parenting had not prepared them for, much like my interviewees. In the context of this thesis, to understand why women were more inclined to remember domestic responsibilities or, in some cases that will be discussed in subsequent chapters, say that their waged labour was not 'real work', I examined their experiences of growing up in Pakistan, going to school and watching older women work as they formed an early understanding of what adulthood might be like for them. [3]

Long-held ideas about women's place in Pakistani society have affected girls' relationship to education and formal work. Julia Grünenfelder, in her study tracing the changing links constructed between women and work in Pakistan since its independence in 1947, argued that the social and political rhetoric associated with the ideal Pakistani woman have been composed in antithesis to the formally working woman, who has consistently been perceived as immorally mixing with men in the workplace and circumventing her domestic responsibilities.[4] The historical foundation of Pakistan is built upon the

[1] See, for example: Angela V. John, 'Scratching the Surface. Women, Work and Coalmining History in England and Wales', *Oral History*, vol. 10, no. 2 (1982), pp. 13-26; Giles, *Women, Identity and Private Life in Britain, 1900-1950*; Elizabeth Roberts, *Women and Families: An Oral History, 1940-1970* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995).
[2] Eve Worth, 'Women, Education and Social Mobility in Britain during the Long 1970s', *Cultural and Social History*, vol. 16, no. 1 (2019), pp. 67-83, at p. 73.
[3] Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (London: Virago, 1977), p. 219.
[4] Julia Grünenfelder, 'Discourses of gender identities and gender roles in Pakistan: Women and non-domestic work in political representations', *Women Studies International Forum*, vol. 40 (2013), pp. 68-77, at p. 72.

construction of women as 'mothers of the nation', nurturers whose efforts towards the independence movement were limited to the home 'for the good of the nation'.[5] These ideas have resulted in low school enrolment rates amongst girls, which have only changed incrementally across the period. For example, in 1975, 16 percent of girls from rural areas of Pakistan were enrolled in primary school and 2 percent of girls in rural areas were enrolled in secondary school. In comparison, in 1975, 49.5 percent of boys in rural areas were enrolled in primary school and 30.3 percent of girls from urban areas were enrolled in secondary school. Ten years later, in 1985, 21.1 percent of girls from rural areas were enrolled in primary school and 2.5 percent of girls from rural areas were enrolled in secondary school. Comparatively, 60 percent of boys from rural areas were enrolled in primary school and 32 percent of girls in urban areas were enrolled in secondary schools. The progression was incremental but, certainly, place, time and sex had significant consequences on whether a child would have a primary and secondary education.[6]

Girls' low school enrolment rates can be explained by the high rates of child and teenage marriage in Pakistan. Higher rates of child marriage in Pakistan have historically correlated with lower educational attainment amongst women and girls. In other words, marriage ended the possibility of girls getting an education and becoming independent wage earners as adults. According to the Pakistani Demographic and Health Survey, in 1990, 84.01 per cent of Pakistani women who were child brides had no education at all. In 2017, statistics showed a small improvement in terms of academic attainment; 67.02 percent of women who married under the age of 18 had no education. In 2017, child brides averaged

[5] Nancy Cook, 'The Discursive Constitution of Pakistani Women: The Articulation of Gender, Nation, and Islam', *Atlantis*, vol. 25, no. 2 (2001), pp. 31-42, at p. 33.
[6] Naushin Mahmood, G. M. Zahid and Abdul Ghafoor, 'Measuring the Education Gap in Primary and Secondary Schooling in Pakistan', *The Pakistan Development Review*, vol. 31, no. 4 (1992), pp. 729-740, at p. 732.

2.14 years of schooling, compared to the average of 1 year child brides spent in education in 1990.[7] According to Rashid Javed and Mazhar Mughal, a 'lack of education is consequently more frequently seen among older women. Improving schooling enrolment is going hand-in-hand with falling incidence of child marriage.'[8] As this chapter will show, apart from one person, every interviewee who grew up in Pakistan across the period was married as a child or in their early teenage years, effectively ending the prospects of staying at school. The oldest age of marriage amongst the interviewees was seventeen and it was common for elderly women to reveal that they were child brides. From their earliest years, girls in Pakistan were being prepared for marriage and motherhood, whilst also developing their own personalities, making new friends and exploring life outside the confines of their homes. These contradictions were foundational to women's memories of childhood in Pakistan, regardless of age.

Reflections of childhood

Women's testimony revealed how active meaning was given to the sexual division of labour during these years before migration and, specifically, how girls coped with the inevitability of domestic life.[9] Carolyn Steedman posed this fundamental question: 'how do children come to understand themselves when all they have is their labour?'[10] In other words, how have children reckoned with the social, gender and class norms determining the circumstances of their working-class lives? These questions acted as a starting point to

[7] Rashid Javed and Mazhar Mughal, 'Girls not brides: Evolution of child marriage in Pakistan', *The Journal of Public Affairs*, pa. 2582 (2020), pp. 1-6.
[8] Javed and Mughal, 'Girls not brides', p. 4.
[9] Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (New York: State University New York Press, 1991), p. 53.
[10] Carolyn Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman* (London: Virago, 1986), p. 7.

understand how my interviewees who, for the most part, grew up as part of Pakistan's exploited rural labouring classes, managed the targeted ways in which their parenting and education prepared them for a life of domestic responsibility and community service. For the women I spoke to, an emerging sense of self was tied with language that reverted to their domestic labour. To interrogate why this was, we must consider the role place and politics played in women's childhood experiences.[11] Crucially, girls were born into structural gender inequalities that, in their view, did not have the capacity to change.

Women's earliest memories revealed that they were not expected to undertake waged work as adults. Instead, they were expected to become housewives and reproduce the labour of their mothers. The expectation to one day be married were present from a young age and encouraged by older women in their families and village communities. Arshad, who was born in a Mirpuri village in 1958 (according to her passport) and migrated to Middlesbrough with her mother and siblings aged ten, said that although her childhood memories were patchy, domestic work and a fascination with marriage were part of her experiences nonetheless:

> [Interviewer]: Do you have any memories of growing up in Pakistan?
>
> [Arshad]: Oh yes, I do! Well I don't know whether they're my memories or my mum. I know there are some that I really do remember but some, uh, when I was young I don't know if they're my mum's, because she used to tell me stories so I don't know if they became my memories now. Of sort of going with her to collect water from the well or um sort of

[11] Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman*, p. 6.

> wanting to, you know, when it was a village wedding, to sit in the dholi.[12] And, uh, saying to my mum 'when you get married, I'm going to sit in your dholi'. You know, no sense of, yeah, yeah (chuckles). [13]

Women often relied upon other people's stories and memories to construct a cohesive narrative about their early years. Therefore, women's memories of childhood, in part, reflected what an older generation believed was important for their children to remember, particularly in terms of 'social characteristics', such as skills, ambitions, behaviours and attitudes.[14] As Paul Thompson argued, 'telling one's own life story not only requires recounting directly remembered experiences, but also drawing on information and stories transmitted across the generations.'[15] Moreover, when reflecting on their childhood memories, my interviewees also had to interpret ideas that underpinned the national narratives about the value placed on women's lives in Pakistan.[16]

Ideas of domesticity, marriage and motherhood were consistently present in women's life stories and these images existed as a blueprint of what the future might look like. These childhood memories, as fragile as they were, still had remnants of how girls were shaped into respectable women. Central to most of the recollections Arshad shared was her mother, Rabia, who was also interviewed separately for this project. Her relationship with her mother was very important as she had been Arshad's only present parent for most of

[12] A dholi, also known as a palanquin, is an open or enclosed couch in which a bride sits when being transported to her husband's home on the day of her marriage. It is often carried by male family members.
[13] Arshad, Author Interview (13/1/2020).
[14] Paul Thompson and Daniel Bertaux, 'Introduction', in Paul Thompson and Daniel Bertaux (eds.), *Between Generations: Family, Models, Myths and Memories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 2-3.
[15] Paul Thompson, 'Family Myth, Models and Denials in the Shaping of Individual Life Paths', in Paul Thompson and Daniel Bertaux (eds.), *Between Generations: Family, Models, Myths and Memories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 13.
[16] Sally Alexander, *Becoming a Woman and Other Essays in 19th and 20th Century Feminist History* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), p. 231.

her childhood. Her father had moved to England just after the birth of her older brother, settling in Middlesbrough to work for the manufacturer Dorman Long. She was born after his first trip back to Pakistan:

> Mum was in charge really. She would also very much, like, seek advice from the village elders. You know if she needed something or she wanted something, it was the elders of the village. [17]

A support system was necessary for single women to take care of their household, since generations of women had not been prepared for the possibility of taking on the tasks designated to men, such as money management or taking control of small family farms. The ways in which women coped with the absence of men who migrated overseas is still a largely unknown history. The village hierarchy of authority, where resolutions to pressing matters were settled by the elders of the community, allowed Arshad's father to leave for years at a time. Although she had an aunt in the same village, Rabia was, for the most part, self-reliant. She was in charge of the remittance sent from England, which was a delight to Arshad because, 'she bought us whatever we wanted really'.[18] For a time, this household took on a new structure in which motherhood had a different meaning. Unlike Alain Lefabvre's conclusion that 'migration has not altered women's subordination to men', Arshad's testimony suggested a more complicated outcome. [19] Her mother became central in fulfilling a multitude of new responsibilities to cope with the rupture created by her

[17] Arshad, Author Interview (13/1/2020).
[18] Arshad, Author Interview (13/1/2020).
[19] Alain Lefebvre, *Kinship, Honour and Money in Rural Pakistan: Subsistence Economy and the Effects of International Migration* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1999), p. 258.

husband's absence. Most importantly for Arshad, her mother was the one who encouraged education so she could be literate and, therefore, more independent as an adult:

> My mum wanted us to have an education, she said 'that's one thing no one can take away from you' you know…she just used to always sort of encourage us to do well, whether it was in Arabic or in school or, even though my dad was really against it, she still wanted us to study as much as we could really and make something of ourselves…although they (other women in the village) thought 'oh we should, girls should get married' she was of the mind of 'yeah they need to get married but they also need an education', because her dad was very much you know, her dad was quite educated.[20]

Mothers were influential in affecting girls' attitudes towards education. Heidi Safia Mirza, for example, argued that in the experiences of British-West Indian women students, their mothers were profoundly important in influencing their relationship with education and consequently shaping their aspirations for work associated with a higher status.[21] Whilst, to some extent, this was also true in Arshad's experience, her parents had vastly different outlooks on educating girls, which limited Arshad's formal education. Arshad only stayed in school for a year, where she had just managed to learn the Urdu alphabet. The girls' school was in another village and her father did not want her to risk her safety by travelling. The severe lack of access to government-funded girls' schools implied that their education was not necessary, since girls could prepare for housewifery at home.[22]

[20] Arshad, Author Interview (13/1/2020).
[21] Heidi Safia Mirza, *Young, Female and Black* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 169.
[22] Akhtar Hasan Khan and Naushin Mahmood, 'Education in Pakistan: Fifty Years of Neglect', *The Pakistan Development Review*, vol. 36, no. 4 (1997), pp. 647-667, at p. 655. Also see: Selina Todd, *The People: The Rise and Fall of the Working Class, 1910-2010* (London: John Murray, 2014), p. 221.

Girls were not expected to become extensively educated rather, for most interviewees, their parents encouraged them to prepare for the inevitability of marriage and domesticity. It is crucial to note that parents' expectations were shaped by their vastly different experiences. For Arshad, whilst her mother Rabia was educated, her father was illiterate. Arshad's mother and father came from similar class backgrounds, although Rabia's father's work as an imam resulted in intellectual and spiritual development being part of her life in ways that other interviewees did not express. Other women in the village did not understand why Rabia would educate her daughters, suggesting that this form of encouragement was uncommon. Whilst we can never know her father's rationale, Arshad was confident that he made decisions based on what he thought was best for her, saying 'he wasn't a bad person'.[23] Although her mother saw education as a form of self-reliance, her father may not have seen the value of education given his own experience of working as a child instead of going to school.[24] Rabia fostered an excitement for learning in her home however decisions about her children's upbringing had limitations, even in the absence of her husband. Rabia could encourage her daughter's education but sending her to school required her husband's permission, regardless of his physical absence from the family. Consequently, Arshad was taught at home, a negotiation only made possible because her mother was educated. The next time she would go to primary school was after her migration to Middlesbrough.

Equipping girls with an education so that they could get by as married women, like Rabia did, was very different to educating girls to prepare them for a career. In Rabia's case

[23] Arshad, Author Interview (13/1/2020).
[24] Similar examples of children's experiences growing up in households where parents had different educational backgrounds include: Brian Jackson and Dennis Marspen, *Education and the Working Class* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 73-74; Todd, *The People: The Rise and Fall of the Working Class,* pp. 218-222.

it seemed that, despite the low chances of her daughter having a career, education was still a way in which Arshad could have some agency when navigating difficult marital circumstances as an adult, whether it be single motherhood or financial strain. Literacy allowed Rabia to cope with being a single mother and she thought it would do the same for her daughter. For interviewees whose education was encouraged, it had less to do with preparation for future careers and more to do with incrementally changing the possibility that girls would be able to cope with the demands of everyday life, regardless of what the future held for them. For men like Arshad's father, years away from his family meant that he did not see the important role his wife's literacy played in her ability to cope with her children on her own. This may be why it was more common to hear interviewees generally cite older women in their family as those who encouraged their education.

Similarly to Arshad, Sidra, who was born in 1975, was forthright in expressing how marriage was an inevitable part of her teenage years, particularly once she hit the 'ceiling' of learning, as she described, when she became a college student. Sidra was born in a village half an hour away from Mirpur city centre. She was seventeen years old when she married her husband, who was from Middlesbrough, in 1993. Sidra's parents and oldest brother gave her a college education up until the age of seventeen, where she studied the equivalent of A Levels in History, Islamic Studies and compulsory Urdu. She only knew three girls who had gone to college from her village. Amongst all my interviewees who grew up in Pakistan, Sidra was the most educated. Unlike Arshad, whose primary school was in another village and difficult to reach, Sidra benefited from easier access to state education, since the closest girls' school was a short walk away. There was also a male authority figure in her household who ensured she stayed in school, a form of encouragement that no other interviewee who grew up in Pakistan suggested. Sidra's older brother was well educated

and worked in a senior role at Mirpur District's Examination Board. His authority in the household, whilst Sidra's father travelled extensively as a truck driver, meant she had the opportunity to stay in school until she married.

Crucially, Sidra could stay in school because of her status as the youngest daughter in her family, which meant there was less emphasis on her undertaking domestic responsibilities at the expense of going to school. Her mother and adoptive older sister, who were both orphaned as children and were therefore uneducated, could take on the responsibilities of domestic work, which included maintaining the rice fields and making clothes for Sidra and her brothers. Having fewer household responsibilities meant she had more time to read and learn:

> I was very adored, I could do whatever I wanted, in the house not outside, I would get away with everything, read, if I wanted to do something I would, if I didn't want to I didn't. I loved to go to school, go to college, go to the river and clean the dishes, that was the best with my friend (laughs). College was the best, that's the only time I could leave the house. [25]

Despite her commitment to education, Sidra knew university (and, therefore, a professional career) was not an option, since Mirpur city centre, where the closest university was, was too far away and going to a mixed-sex school was frowned upon. As a child, Sidra's experience in a same-sex school and her supervised, limited interactions with people outside her household was an exertion of power by her parents to control the type of person she should be. This was not only to uphold the respectability of the family, as Sidra was the only unmarried daughter and interacting with men could jeopardise her chances of

[25] Sidra, Author Interview (10/1/2020).

marrying, but also for the sake of a moral and healthy society, where women operated in their 'natural' sphere.[26] These attitudes, which shaped Sidra's ideas about her future, were palpable when she stated that 'after finishing the local education, I was told I was going to get married to a suitable suitor. If you're mentally ready to get married, that's what you do'.[27] During another conversation, I asked whether she thought her life would be different compared to her mother and sister because she was afforded an extensive education:

> No, I thought, well I know as soon as I finish school or college or whatever, I'd get married, have kids, look after my in-laws. I didn't know what life would be like in England, everyone who left from Pakistan was still looking after their family, their in-laws. [28]

Being educated was not necessarily enough for Sidra to believe she could have a life beyond domestic responsibilities. Despite the fluid nature of the family, as being both the primary site for women's oppression and the institution from which women often derive emotive and economic support, it became apparent that many women I interviewed accepted that family was stubborn in its capacity to change. They recognised that they would be reproducing the very conditions that marked the experiences of women before them.[29] This was echoed by Anna Pollert, albeit in the vastly different context of oppression exercised in the day-to-day experiences of labour on the factory floor. She argued that daughters' desires to escape the trap of their mothers lives was rarely more than a hope, with the cycle of mothers and daughters sitting side by side on machines symbolic of the reproduction of

[26] Alexander, *Becoming a Woman,* p. 6.
[27] Sidra, Author Interview (10/1/2020).
[28] Sidra, Author Interview (10/1/2020).
[29] Michele Barret and Mary McIntosh, *The Anti-Social Family* (London, New York: Verso, 1982), p. 20. Also see Ann Oakley, *The Sociology of Housework*, Reprint Edition (Bristol: Policy Press, 2019) p. 37

working-class women doing working-class jobs.[30] The cyclical nature of labour is important to consider in Sidra's case and other interviewees who knew they would marry someone chosen for them, who was often a cousin or male family member: they were going to be embedded in the same web of values that underpinned the high standard of unpaid work which shaped their mother's lives. Sidra was the only woman I spoke to who had a college education. It was telling that her expectations, however, did not differ greatly from those who had fewer opportunities to stay in education.

Marriage was an inevitable part of Sidra's life, and the lives of other women I interviewed across the period. Education, or a life where the pursuit of a career was possible, was far removed from the expectations parents had for their children. Sugra, for example, was from an older generation, migrating to the UK in 1974 aged sixteen to be with her fiancé:

> In Pakistan I didn't get an education, there wasn't even a school, I mean I could have travelled but my mum died when I was little, who would have taken me? So, I didn't get an education there and then, I mean, if I had read in Pakistan then I could go places here, I did try to go alone but I didn't understand. I really wish, I mean, that I could learn English.[31]

Unlike Sidra and Arshad, she had no close relative who encouraged her education. Whilst Sidra expressed the view that her education did not change her ideas about what adulthood could look like, nonetheless it was apparent that she possessed a confidence and sureness when delivering her testimony that Sugra did not. Whilst Sugra remembered her childhood

[30] Anna Pollert, *Girls, Wives and Factory Lives* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1981), p. 110.
[31] Sugra, Author Interview (12/1/2018).

as 'very nice. It was so nice, *kasme*[32], in Pakistan. I lived a good life,' she said her lack of primary education negatively affected her ability to be independent and navigate the difficult circumstances of her settlement in Middlesbrough. [33] Despite a somewhat happy childhood, Sugra was not equipped with an education that would help her cope with difficult changes, and unlike Arshad, she was too old to partake in compulsory education after her migration. Sugra, therefore, represented the experiences of several women, who could not have predicted that most of their lives would be lived in England and, therefore, arrived significantly underprepared for the challenges ahead.

Sugra remembered housework and friendship, both being trained for a life of domesticity but also having the flexibility to do fewer chores since she was a younger family member. She was raised by her older brothers and lived with four sisters-in-law who took on the responsibilities of housework. Sugra noted that her only mandatory chore was to collect water from a well that was three miles away. She laughed when she remembered dragging heavy containers of water back to her home with her friends. Similarly to Sidra, Sugra added dimension to the types of lives girls in rural Pakistan lived, stating that girls in their pre-marital home had far more flexibility in deciding which domestic activities they wanted to participate in. Although her husband, who was in the room during this portion of the interview, remarked that his wife 'would clean the house, the dishes, the clothes…' when she lived in Pakistan, Sugra's response moved away from the assumption that girls' lives only involved housework. She said:

[32] Meaning 'I swear to god'. This saying is common, albeit not used casually, since a false pledge of truth using this saying is believed to be a sin.
[33] Sugra, Author Interview (12/1/2018).

> I didn't do everything myself, we all did everything but it was this type of work, house work, sweeping, making roti… Then I'd go play with my friends (laughs).[34]

Her daughter-in-law, Nadiya, also commented on both education and housework when asked about her childhood. Whilst a gap of over thirty years separated the time between Sugra's migration and her daughter-in-law's move, the parallels in terms of their expectation and experiences within the household were apparent. Both grew up in the same pre-marital home since Nadiya is also Sugra's niece.

Whilst neither Sugra nor Nadiya had an extensive primary education, Nadiya implied that the expectations for girls had changed slightly over time, in terms of girls staying in school longer and marrying older, albeit incrementally. It was more common to see girls in school when Nadiya was a child, although as previously highlighted, changes in girls' primary and secondary school enrolment only changed slightly between 1975 and 1985. The discomfort Nadiya exhibited when she admitted that she was pulled from education as a child was telling. She made it clear that, in this sense, her life was not much different from her mothers. She said, 'My mum didn't learn anything, like me', laughing when she said so, possibly to alleviate the disappointment attached to this aspect of her upbringing.[35] Her sister-in-law, who is older, remarked, 'yeah, that's enough to get by', as a means to minimise the unease with which Nadiya revealed this information.[36] The idea of 'getting by', Judy Giles argued, was a 'wrought expression of the disappointment, resentment and envy that asymmetric class and gender systems must engender in the psyches of those who

[34] Sugra, Author Interview (12/1/2018).
[35] Nadiya, Author Interview (9/1/2019).
[36] Nadiya, Author Interview (9/1/2019).

experience such injuries'.[37] Like Nadiya's sister-in-law, several other interviewees would similarly express that they 'got on' with difficult circumstances. Much like Judy Giles's interviewees, who grew up in Britain before 1950, 'getting by' was a way for women to rationalise the injustices they faced growing up in poverty and being denied opportunities because they were girls.

Despite the age gap, Sugra and Nadiya were both expected to prepare for domestic life and marriage as children, although sibling order determined how much domestic work they undertook. Whilst Sugra's childhood was affected by her status as the youngest girl in an extended household with many older women, Nadiya occupied a different place in the household as she was the eldest daughter of five children. I asked her what work looked like when she lived in Pakistan, before her marriage aged fifteen. She said:

> Housework was cleaning, making food, washing clothes, ironing clothes, looking after my little brothers and sisters. My mum was always going back to her 'pekay' (pre-marital home) (laughs). All day, she'd come back at night because she loves my dad so much (laughs).[38]

I asked Nadiya whether her sisters did this kind of work too. She said 'Just me… Because I was the eldest and they were little, so I said, 'you both chill' (laughs)'.[39] As the eldest daughter, she took on more domestic responsibilities, implying that when her mother was gone, she was responsible for the work that would have been designated to someone older. Sugra did not experience the pressures of having to take on extensive domestic responsibilities, given her status in the household as one of the youngest family members.

[37] Giles, *Women, Identity and Private Life in Britain, 1900-1950,* pp. 31-32.
[38] Nadiya, Author Interview (9/1/2019).
[39] Nadiya, Author Interview (9/1/2019).

Anna Davin, in her study about working-class childhood in London, from 1870-1914, argued that children's position in the family had significant consequences on their experiences. She said, 'most obviously, the eldest had the hardest time. Their childhood coincided with the period of maximum stress in the family life-cycle and more responsibility fell on them'.[40] One woman in Davin's study, who was the eldest daughter, recalled, 'I had babies from the time I was eight- I didn't actually lay them- but I did everything else'.[41] Older daughters continued to take on more housework than their young sisters, and more housework than boys of any age, after 1914.[42]

Participating in the culture of care to this extent as a child, in order to prepare for marriage, had strongly affected Nadiya's perceptions of a daughter-in-law's responsibilities immediately after migration:

> [Interviewer]: When you came here, how did your responsibilities change? Did you do the same things here as you did in Pakistan?
>
> [Nadiya]: No, they made me work more here, I didn't do as much there (laughs).
>
> [Sugra]: That's true, actually, *kasme*.
>
> [Nadiya]: There I didn't wake up to work…
>
> [Sugra]: In Pakistan you used to wake up in the afternoon (laughs)

[40] Anna Davin, *Growing Up Poor: Home, School and Street in London 1870-1914* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1996), p. 16.
[41] Davin, *Growing Up Poor,* p. 16.
[42] See: Todd, *The People: The Rise and Fall of the Working Class,* pp. 149-150; Giles, *Women, Identity and Private Life in Britain, 1900-1950,* p. 57.

> [Nadiya]: And here I was the first to wake up. Cooking, cleaning, make breakfast for everyone.
>
> [Sugra]: She used to wake up at 6am and I used to say 'Nadiya, sleep in, you don't have to wake up this early'. She did so much, *kasme*. [43]

Women born in rural Mirpur had been prepared from birth for a life of domestic responsibility and motherhood. This meant that the process of creating a coherent life story, that drew connections between the experiences of their past and the realities of their present, resulted in interviewees sharing a linear narrative about how they became carers and nurturers.[44] Sugra and Nadiya, in similar ways, used the same device to describe their days in Pakistan, namely referring to housework and caring. The continuous reference to household responsibilities by most of the interviewees centralised domesticity as an important part of how women expressed a sense of self.[45] The consequences for girls who veered too far from the confines of acceptable behaviour, like the praise-worthy work that Nadiya did every day, was their whole household being deemed morally degenerative by the village or local community. Given that girls' lives were geared primarily towards marriage and motherhood, the reputation of the family, which relied upon the behaviour of the family's women and girls, could determine the quality of suitors and, therefore, the potential for a girl to live a secure life.

[43] Nadiya, Author Interview (9/1/2019).
[44] Charlotte Linde, *Life Stories: The Creation of Coherence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 20.
[45] Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 51.

Changing status

Most migrant interviewees married as children or in their early teens, a practice which ended the possibility of attending school since becoming a daughter-in-law marked the start of inflexible and demanding domestic responsibilities. Across cultures and societies, the act of leaving home is a rite of passage for young women.[46] Few interviewees expected this relocation to take them across the world to small industrial English towns. For the most part, the women I interviewed were expected to leave their households or villages and relocate to their husband's home in Pakistan, the new site of their caring responsibilities. However, testimony from older women revealed how 'coming of age' was an experience that varied significantly.

The blurred boundaries between childhood and adolescence were particularly difficult for interviewees who were married as children to navigate. Childhood itself is a term that is often implicitly associated with irresponsibility, immaturity and the early stages of cognitive and physical development. The historian Anna Davin, for example, asked the question 'what is a child?', suggesting that no objective definition of childhood can be reached given that 'it is always lived and defined in cultural and economic contexts'.[47] The variations of what it means to be a child, across time and space, are particularly pertinent in the context of my interviewees' testimonies. Many women used the interviewing process to rationalise the contradictions between their parents using their authority to marry them as children, their admitted lack of preparedness for the responsibilities of marriage and, as one interviewee described, their physical immaturity. What, then, in the context of mid-

[46] Linda McDowell, *Working Lives: Gender, Migration and Employment in Britain, 1945-2007* (London: John Wiley and Sons, 2013), p. 4.
[47] Anna Davin, 'What is a child?', in Stephen Hussey and Anthony Fletcher (eds.), *Childhood in Question: Children, Parents and the State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 15.

twentieth century rural Azad Kashmir, did childhood mean? As I will go on to show, childhood had no universal meaning. For an older generation in particular, their age was unknown; it was often uncommon for women to know their date of birth. Their transition into adulthood, for the most part, was either marked by puberty or by their marriage. This also seemed to be the case for a younger generation of women who knew their date of birth. However, younger women were able to connect their transition from childhood to adulthood to a specific time (usually a year or their age), whilst older women remembered their changing status solely in relation to turning points or shifts in their everyday state.

Whilst many interviewees did not know their age, their status was defined in relation to other members of their household, with order of birth playing a significant role in determining how much domestic responsibility a girl would undertake before marriage, how long she would stay in school and when she would marry. As the chapter has already highlighted, the eldest daughter was often ascribed more household responsibilities. This reflected, in part, the necessity for daughters to be married in age order; the oldest daughter had to be prepared for marriage as her sisters could not marry before her without raising questions about the eldest daughter being an 'inadequate' bride. The respectability of the family, as well as the marriage prospects of other children in the household, depended on the eldest daughters being married first.

The expectations that girls would marry and undertake domestic work, instead of becoming educated and, eventually, independent wage earners, was reflected in Pakistani child marriage laws and their application. All my interviewees, who married in Pakistan as children and teenagers, were subject to the same, largely unchanged law. India's Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 legally prohibited marriage for girls under the age of fourteen and for boys under the age of eighteen; the age of adulthood for girls in Pakistan

was amended to sixteen in 1961. Not only did the Act of 1929 make a distinction between adult and minor, the Act also made it clear that girls were subjected to an altogether different standard when attempting to define adulthood. Ishita Pande argued that the act was significant because inserting 'age and numbers into the government's domain' resulted in childhood being legally defined on the basis of age and sex for the first time.[48] The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 was adopted by the Pakistani state after its creation in 1947 without much interrogation of the sexism which resulted in a discriminatory definition of adulthood. This changed in 2019, when the definition of 'child' was changed to mean every person, boy and girl, under the age of eighteen.[49] The problem of ascertaining age, to legally distinguish between children and adults, is particularly pertinent in the context of my interviewees' testimony.

Legislation minimally affected when children would marry. For legislators and activists at the time, the usefulness of the 1929 Act depended on the meticulous recording of births as well as an examination of census records, to determine whether the law had effectively shifted the age of marriage over time. Pande noted that 'if up-to-date birth registers were to provide a means to prevent crimes against the Child Marriage Restraint Act, the census was to verify the scale of the problem of child-marriage.'[50] However, using the alien, western category of age was not particularly useful. Many did not, or could not, share their age with much accuracy, which resulted in 'statistically implausible age distributions for adolescent girls and the elderly.'[51] Census data from 1911 revealed

[48] Ishita Pande, 'Coming of Age: Law, Sex and Childhood in Late Colonial India', *Gender & History*, vol. 24, no. 1 (2012), pp. 205-230, at p. 205.
[49] Government of Pakistan, The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929, 1st October 1929. Available at: http://punjablaws.gov.pk/laws/147a.html [Accessed 12/6/20] Also see: Sherry Rehman, '(As Introduced in the Senate), A Bill Further to Amend the Chid Marriage Restraint Act, 1929' (2018). Available at: http://www.senate.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1545206929_909.pdf [Accessed 18/6/21].
[50] Pande, 'Coming of Age', p. 214.
[51] Pande, 'Coming of Age', p. 214.

preferences for even numbered ages, and one fourth of the population in six provinces had ages ending in zero. Notably, as Pande pointed out, there was a preference for the age of twelve, which most likely reflected the fact that the age of consent for girls was twelve in 1911.[52] The legislation could not live up to the expectations of campaigners fighting for child protection, given the incessant focus on age to define childhood rather than a confrontation of the material reasons why child marriage prevailed in South Asia, such as poverty and poor access to education.[53]

The long-standing inadequate response to child marriage since the early twentieth century resulted in the vast majority of interviewees forgoing education in order to marry. This was a common experience for women who grew up in Pakistan across the period. According to Rashid Javed and Mazhar Mughal, between 1990 and 1991, 54 per cent of women in Pakistan, who were between the ages of 15 and 49, married before the age of eighteen; these figures were obtained from the Pakistani Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) dataset.[54] By 2006-7, the PDHS revealed that 49 per cent of women between the ages of 15 and 49 had married before they turned eighteen.[55] The disconnect between the legal definition of childhood and women's memories of being married highlight the importance of using experience as a framework of analysis. There was no indication that any interviewee who was married before the age of fourteen knew that the law did not permit their marriage, nor did they indicate that adults facilitating their marriage faced any reprimand for their actions.

[52] Pande, 'Coming of Age', p. 214.
[53] Pande, 'Coming of Age', p. 223.
[54] The PDHS are household surveys gathering information about family planning, fertility and the health of mothers and children. The studies are conducted by Pakistan's National Institute of Population Studies. The 1990-91 PDHS sampled 225 urban areas and 183 rural areas; 6,611 women from 7,193 households were interviewed. In 2006-7, the interviewers sampled 290 urban and 610 rural areas; 10,023 women from 95, 441 households were interviewed.
[55] Javed and Mughal, 'Girls not brides', p. 2.

Older women who grew up in Pakistan during the 1940s and 1950s emphasised the inevitability of child marriage, as this was a far more common experience than girls from their villages staying in school and earning money as adults. Sardar was the first interviewee I encountered who explicitly described herself as a child bride. She migrated to Middlesbrough in 1972 to reunite with her husband; I would quickly find out that this was one of the few concrete pieces of numerical data she could tie to her life story. She could not recall how old she was when she married, although she knew she was very young:

> My child, I don't remember what age I was and what age I wasn't! My fate was written with my husband and then I ended up coming here.[56]

She shouted for her daughter in the other room, asking 'What age am I now? They put my age down as much older', referring to the paperwork prepared to arrange her passport and visa. When Sardar migrated in the early 1970s, the legal age of marriage in the UK was sixteen and had been so since the Ages of Marriage Act of 1929. Clearly, those in charge of arranging her visa, who were her husband and other men in her family, knew that the norms of marriage and adulthood were different in Britain. Given that older women did not have birth certificates or an official record of their date of birth, dates could be fabricated in order to fit what was deemed 'normal' in their place of settlement. It was also a way to make their movement across borders as easy as possible and avoid extensive questioning from immigration officials about why a child was married. Sardar's friend, who facilitated the interview, suggested that Sardar may have been thirteen or fourteen, to which she replied 'I wasn't very old when I got married':

[56] Sardar, Author Interview (10/1/2018).

[Friend]: At twelve or thirteen they used to get us married. They used to say 'you're a young adult, you're wearing the cloth'[57]

[Sardar]: No, no it hadn't started, mine started after.

[Neighbour]: You got yours after you got married?! You must've been really young then

[Sardar]: Yeah, eleven, twelve. twelve or thirteen, around that age.[58]

Whilst the notion of marrying as a child was not unusual amongst an older generation of women, the idea of marrying before reaching puberty was still shocking and uncommon, given the response of her neighbour. This may be because marriage was primarily a method of creating familial bonds, and these bonds could only be consolidated when women had children. To marry before puberty circumvented the idea that marriage was a function of family expansion through childbirth. The response from Sardar's neighbour, who was from a younger generation and grew up in Pakistan, suggested that norms had shifted in terms of women marrying before the onset of puberty.

Whilst menstruation was one indicator of girls no longer being children, it was not the only way women described their transition into adulthood. The emotional experiences of maturing and learning were also indicators of adulthood. The varying ways in which interviewees personally defined adulthood or described why they were children at the time

[57] There is no word in Punjabi that is a direct translation for menstruation. Rather euphemisms are used such as 'wearing the cloth' or 'mavari', which means 'every month'.
[58] Sardar, Author Interview (10/1/2018).

of their marriage despite not knowing their age, suggested that the definition of adulthood was not fixed, even amongst interviewees who grew up in a similar time period. Balo, who migrated in 1969 according to her son, similarly could not tie age or dates to her life story, much like Sardar. I asked her what her life was like in Pakistan before her marriage. She said life 'was lovely, lovely. I was the *ladli*[59] everyone used to tend to me. I was so loved.'[60] Her son interjected at this point, remarking that she was a child bride. Balo described how her marriage happened suddenly and almost without warning. The difficult circumstances in which some of these women grew up, having to marry for economic purposes and to establish or maintain familial bonds, meant childhood was a fleeting time in their lives. Balo's testimony exemplified why it was too simplistic to ascribe marriage to adulthood and why marriage did not make her an adult:

> I can't remember child I was little when my wedding happened, they did my sister's wedding and decided to do mine at the same time as well. My sister's husband and my husband were brothers, and they were my Dad's real nephews. My aunty said, 'this is my eldest son he should stay here so let's get the youngest married off.' My aunty was looking for my sister's *rishta*[61], they got the *rishta* and did the wedding but they were desperate for the other one to get married so they got him married to me. I was a child when I got married, I wasn't a woman yet.'[62]

Balo married at the same time as her older sister; this was a financially motivated decision, given the expense associated with marrying a daughter. It was also a way in which to

[59] This word encapsulates the act of being doted on.
[60] Balo, Author Interview (10/4/2019).
[61] 'Rishta', in this context, means 'suitable partner for an arranged marriage'.
[62] Balo, Author Interview (10/4/2019).

strengthen familial bonds, by marrying both sisters into the same family. Balo's statement, 'I wasn't a woman yet', was striking. In accordance with the cultural information of the time, she was a woman: she was married, was able to have children and was responsible for an extended household as a daughter-in-law. Whilst Balo could not offer concrete dates or even the age at which she was married, she remembered the emotional turmoil of this change, the confusion of being married to a stranger, her innocence, naivety and immaturity.[63] It was why she could not describe herself as a woman.

It is crucial to recognise that underpinning the sudden change in Balo and Sardar's status as children was the wide-held belief that marriage was a matter of preservation. Women were not equipped to be economically self-sufficient, rather this form of education and training was exclusively for men. Elders of the family often exerted their power to dictate the future of unmarried girls, making arrangements which they believed would financially and socially benefit both the girl and the family. Balo, for example, described how decisions were made for her, without her input.[64]

With marriage came the inevitable change in everyday circumstances and the initiation of the skills and education girls received in domestic work. Regardless of their age or maturity, married girls were expected to undertake a plethora of domestic and caring responsibilities that were similarly ascribed to other adult women in their household. Marriage not only resulted in a new home and new family, but also new responsibilities attached to being a housewife. Migration, whether to a marital home or, as all these women would eventually experience, to another country, left women with no choice but to adapt to

[63] Mary Jo Maynes, 'Age as a Category of Historical Analysis', *The Journal of Childhood and Youth*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2008), pp. 114-124, at p. 119.
[64] Mona Gleason, 'Avoiding the agency trap: caveats for historians of children, youth, and education', *History of Education*, vol. 45, no. 4 (2016), pp. 446–459, at p. 448.

their new and difficult circumstances. As Linda McDowell rightly argued, migrant women had to 'attribute value and meaning to the everyday practices and communal institutions within which they found themselves.'[65] To understand the type of domestic work women undertook after their marriage, it is crucial to analyse how households in rural South Asia functioned. The capitalist exploitation of India under colonial rule placed significant importance on the household as a site of production and shifted the divisions of labour in the household economy, according to Samita Sen. Given the importance of family farms in sustaining the Indian economy under British colonialism, and particularly the unpaid work of rural farmers, Sen argued that from the 1860s, 'two significant processes transformed the functioning of the rural household: the increase in the unpaid component of women's and children's labour and the decline in its paid component.'[66] In other words, Sen argued that men undertook 'capital-intensive labour' whilst women 'undertook labour intensive tasks of low status and poor rewards.'[67] Arguably, inequality and exploitation was central to women's role within the household after their marriage.[68]

There was no indication that any of my interviewees were prepared for waged work or worked in a formal setting. Instead, their economic productivity was solely rooted in household activities which included tending to the land and cultivating produce as part of the family economy. The work that constituted daily, unpaid activity for housewives in rural Pakistan, such as farming, meant something different in a modern British context, where selling crops to earn a wage concretely fit into accepted definitions of paid, formal work.

[65] Linda McDowell, *Working Lives,* p. 82.
[66] Samita Sen, 'Unsettling the Household: Act VI (of 1901) and the Regulation of Women Migrants in Colonial Bengal', *International Review of Social History*, vol. 41 (1996), pp. 136-156, at pp. 135-136.
[67] Sen, 'Unsettling the Household', pp. 135-136.
[68] Drucilla Barker and Susan Fiener, *Liberating Economics: Feminist Perspectives on Families, Work, and Globalization* (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 2004), p. 20.

These differences in how domestic work is defined in rural Pakistan compared to modern Britain may explain why several women were reluctant to call their waged labour, such as growing crops, a 'real' job, as subsequent chapters will show.

Women who married in Pakistan during the 1950s and 1960s had to undertake labour often ascribed to men in order to cope with the absence of their husbands and sons who had left Mirpur to work in Britain. Older migrant women, like Sardar and Rabia, thought that they would live the rest of their lives in Pakistan and their husbands would, most likely, travel between Pakistan and Britain until they had acquired enough wealth to comfortably live in Pakistan. Arguably, the choices older women made to cope with single parenthood were similar to those described in Jane Whittle's study of enterprising widow's and their unpaid work, between 1534 and 1699. According to Whittle, women who worked alongside their husbands in a farming capacity were not officially classified as 'farmers'. This was despite women maintaining the land and enhancing these enterprises once they became widows.[69] Similarly, Rabia maintained the land in the absence of her husband after he migrated to Middlesbrough. Like the women in Whittle's study, the absence of her husband, as well as remittance sent from England, meant Rabia could scale down the production of her farm, although Pakistan's subsistence economy meant that she continued farming to feed her family, despite the difficulties of managing this alone with the responsibilities of childcare, cooking and cleaning. Historians such as Pat Thane, Tanya Evans, Judy Giles and Penny Summerfield have similarly analysed how women coped with single motherhood and what changed, in terms of their labour, to support their children.[70]

[69] Jane Whittle, 'Enterprising Widows and Active Wives: Women's Unpaid Work in the Household Economy of Early Modern England', *The History of the Family*, vol. 19, no. 3 (2014), pp. 283-300, at p. 295.
[70] See: Penny Summerfield, *Women Workers in the Second World War: Production and Patriarchy in Conflict, 3rd ed*. (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 123-147; Pat Thane and Tanya Evans*, Sinners? Scroungers? Saints:*

Arguably, the work of housewives in Pakistan cannot be solely accounted for through an assessment of their wage-earning labour; to do so would render the most common experience of women's work, such as managing agricultural work with caring responsibilities, invisible.[71]

Marrying initiated a new set of responsibilities, tied to women's movement to another household. The childhood experiences of flexible workdays and minimal responsibilities were fleeting for my interviewees. As married children and young teenagers, they were expected to care for their extended families by taking on the demands of unpaid work. Jameela, an elderly interviewee who migrated to Middlesbrough in 1959 aged nineteen (according to her passport), generally encapsulated the daily routine of married women before migration. When I asked what her days were like in Pakistan, she immediately described work, without much reference to the people she spent time with or fond moments she remembered about her time before migration. Her day was organised in relation to the responsibilities that were necessary for women in her household to fulfil, as well as her religious commitment to prayer five times a day:

> Our routine was, you wake up in the morning and pray, this is our duty right? Then you have tea, some families don't have tea but our family would have food afterwards, then until 12 o'clock you do, um, odd jobs around the house, women do that there, the richer families would keep someone to do that… clean the dishes, make food…then rest and then at five pray again, then do the evening food and drink preparations, take the kids to school and prepare food for them, for

Unmarried Mothers in Twentieth Century England (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Giles, *Women, Identity and Private Life in Britain, 1900-1950,* pp. 51-52.

[71] Whittle, 'Enterprising Widows and Active Wives', pp. 283-284.

> us Pakistani women it is only this routine! Sew your own clothes and wash them, by hand, there was that, fill the bucket with water and wash your clothes by hand.[72]

She stated that this was 'what a woman's routine is', describing how women's lives were organised in relation to their domestic work and how certain responsibilities became associated with them because of their sex. When I asked Jameela whether she woke up and did the same thing the next day, she said 'yes. The same work again'.[73] The monotony of this was difficult to ignore. It mirrored the experiences described by Elizabeth Roberts in her oral history study of women's role within the family from 1940 to 1970. One interviewee, Mrs Morrison, remembered how each day was assigned a different household task: 'Wednesday morning I used to go to market. Thursday I used to always do my front. I did my window-sill and front door every morning'. [74] This ritual, which was somewhat flexible for Mrs Morrison given the prevalence of household appliances in mid-twentieth century Britain, was strikingly similar to Jameela's testimony.

Jameela's account, however, negated her emotional state and what it meant to reproduce the same work as previous generations of women. This highlighted the inevitability of domestic life and caring responsibilities for generation of Pakistani women. Jameela implied that she believed her days would follow the same pattern as other women before her, until her migration changed the course of her life. We can compare this to other recorded experiences of women's everyday activity. For example, James Hinton, in his study of life in late twentieth century Britain, analysed the Mass Observation records of Caroline, a housewife who wrote her entries between 1982 and 1995. Caroline was frank about the

[72] Jameela, Author Interview (9/1/2018).
[73] Jameela, Author Interview (9/1/2018).
[74] Elizabeth Roberts, *Women and Families,* pp. 30-33.

emotional turmoil she experienced because her comfortable, middle-class life was unfulfilling and monotonous; she expressed how she expected and wanted more.[75] Crucially, and different to Jameela, Caroline articulated an emotional narrative; clearly, she had the time to thoroughly account for her life and why she felt this way. To do so was an important historical contribution, but a privilege, nonetheless.

I questioned whether my interviewees would offer similar accounts filled with emotional reflections when asked about their transition into adulthood and marriage. Jameela's account confirmed a consistent issue, namely that women were sometimes reluctant to attach emotions to their everyday state. This was a result of not being afforded the privilege to reflect on alternative ways in which their lives could have unfolded given that the only real option was domestic life. It was also useful for women to be emotionally detached from their labour. Similarly to domestic servants working in the early twentieth century, some women's emotional detachment from their domestic labour allowed them to separate themselves from the relentlessness of caring for others and, therefore, emphasise how they were more than their domestic work.[76] Despite their emotional detachment, however, interviewees implicitly expressed disappointment in their childhood experiences; like previous generations, women often had to accept that they neither had the power nor the resources to challenge the inevitability of domestic work and childrearing. Yet, as this thesis will show, overseas migration to Britain unexpectedly forced Pakistani women to re-think their everyday labour.

[75] James Hinton, *Seven Lives from Mass Observation: Britain in the Late Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 25.
[76] Selina Todd, 'Domestic Service and Class Relations in Britain 1900-1950', *Past & Present*, no. 203 (2009), pp. 181-204, at pp. 199-203.

Conclusion

Women's childhood experiences were primarily rooted in preparing them for domestic life; they were neither educated for, nor expected to pursue, wage-earning work or professional careers. Domestic life and caring responsibilities were part of girls' everyday routines from a young age and most interviewees were pulled out of education as children, given the expectation to marry young. Younger interviewees were more likely to spend some of their teen years in school and at least have a primary education, however access remained a privilege. Even if formal learning was encouraged by some parents (and particularly mothers), it was never with the view that girls would grow up and have careers. Rather, girls were encouraged to get a minimal education so that they could get by if they faced marital difficulties as adults.

Marriage is an unhelpful marker of adulthood for interviewees who were married as children by family elders. Despite most older interviewees not knowing their age, a few were explicit in defining themselves as child brides; legislation against child marriage did not affect when a child would marry. For these women, marriage could not be tied to adulthood. Instead, they relied on indicators such as puberty and the emotional experience of maturing and learning. The power of marriage as an economic enterprise that would benefit the family meant the abrupt end of childhood in a material sense for girls, specifically the flexibility to choose when to take on domestic responsibilities. Rigid and extensive domestic labour demands were placed on the shoulders of those married as children and teenagers. Careers, economic self-sufficiency or not marrying at all were unrealistic options. Instead, girls were taught that marriage was the most reliable and respectable way for them to be socially and financially secure as adults.

Chapter 2: Community Relationships in Middlesbrough and Oldham

It was an unexpectedly difficult transition, for many, to be pulled from the networks that formed the basis of village life in Pakistan. For thousands who migrated to Britain in the 1960s and 1970s, it was necessary to rebuild networks that supported their long-term settlement. In turn, women fostered emotionally and materially sustaining friendships with other women who had similarly experienced leaving Pakistan behind and making home in a new place. The strategies to support one another changed over time and differed between places, as Pakistani communities grew and local policies related to migrant settlement and community cohesion changed. Moreover, chain migration meant that people from the same families or villages sometimes migrated and settled in the same towns. Members of local Pakistani communities, who were strongly or tenuously linked to each other to varying degrees, had to work together in new ways to create an infrastructure of businesses and services that supported a more comfortable settlement, particularly as Pakistani communities grew and became more diverse.

This chapter will analyse the changing ways Pakistanis supported one another as they made home in a new place and, specifically, examine women's community-based labour. As a by-product of mutual support and friendship, there emerged a network of informal community services for Pakistani migrants spearheaded by women, such as free Islamic education classes. Over time, formalised, wage-paying, council-sponsored services became available to support the Pakistani community, with well-educated South Asian women occupying some of these positions. At their core, these forms of support and labour were born out of the understanding that there was a tacit responsibility to help fellow

members of the Pakistani and Muslim community, a belief that the interviewing process made apparent.

In the late 1950s, when the Pakistani community was small but growing, migrants in Middlesbrough actively worked to create strong community relationships in order to secure a more comfortable, long-term settlement. Jameela played an important role in building these community ties. In 1959, when Jameela arrived in Middlesbrough, there were only a handful of Pakistanis in the town, and she was one of the few Mirpuri women who had made the difficult journey to Britain. Inevitably, the small group of people in Middlesbrough who spoke her language, looked like her and had equally made the difficult decision to leave Pakistan became a substitute for the family and community she had said good-bye to. More than that, they became her core source of support. I interviewed Jameela alongside a mutual family friend, whose brother and father had migrated from Mirpur and lived in Middlesbrough in the years when Jameela had just arrived. This mutual friend was the son of another interviewee, Rabia. His brother worked in Jameela's husband's halal butchers, the first in the town:

> [Family Friend]: My brother, god grant him heaven, he worked at the shop
>
> [Jameela]: He did! He was such a good man, I swear to God he was like our family. Your dad considered me his sister, he was a good person. Back then, good men were like our family.[1]

Later, Jameela would describe his mother as her sister. These people, in her words, were the closest thing she had to an extended family. Describing community relationships as familial

[1] Jameela, Author Interview (9/1/2018).

was purposeful. Jameela wanted me to understand that the word 'neighbour' or 'friend' did not go far enough in capturing how meaningful these connections were. Interviewees often described friendships with other women with an affection and love that emphasised the emotional bonds amongst those tied together by their common experience of making home in a new place. In some ways, it echoed the argument made by Caroll Smith-Rosenberg, in her study of female friendship in nineteenth century America. When reflecting on the intense, meaningful friendships between women, Rosenberg said 'these female friendships served a number of emotional functions. Within this secure and empathetic world, women could share sorrows, anxieties, and joys, confident that other women had experienced similar emotion.'[2] A distinct difference between Rosenberg's study and the women I spoke to, however, was that most of my interviewees rebuilt their network of support as adults. As Rokeya Begum, a Bangladeshi migrant who moved from Sylhet to London, succinctly put it, 'when I first came to Britain, I had no-one. I had to make other people into my own.'[3]

These community relationships were not static nor were they similarly experienced or remembered by all those interviewed. Differences in generation and place affected the specific ways in which women described their memories of past relationships. These differences were exemplified by Simran, a British-born Pakistani, aged fifty-four, who was born in Bradford and subsequently moved to Middlesbrough after her marriage when she was aged eighteen in 1984:

[2] Caroll Smith-Rosenberg, 'The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America', *Signs*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1975), pp. 1-29, at p. 14.
[3] Katy Gardner, 'The Transitional Work of Kinship and Caring: Bengali-British Marriages in Historical Perspective', *Global Networks*, vol. 6, no. 4 (2006), pp. 373- 387, at p. 383.

> I don't know you see, career-wise, maybe I might have done well, in my, in my career, in Bradford… to tell you the truth, I prefer Middlesbrough, in the sense that you know, like the Asian community, we're like a big family. Do you know what I mean? 'Cause like, even when I go to Bradford, I don't know who's who kind of a thing or you don't know even when that one time there used to be that community sense, there isn't now. Whereas in Middlesbrough…we've still got that, we've got this like unity in, in Middlesbrough.[4]

There were significant parallels in Simran and Jameela's testimony, namely the sense of unity and support both felt from their local Pakistani community. Both women used ideas of family to illustrate what community relationships meant to them. Arguably, and as this chapter will show, strategies for building and maintaining strong community ties changed between generations and as local policies related to migrant settlement and community cohesion changed. Moreover, Simran's comparison between Bradford and Middlesbrough raised a significant question: how was community experienced in different places? In the case of Oldham, women's testimonies gave rise to similar feelings of supporting one another. Younger women from Oldham's Pakistani community, for example, reflected on what they remembered seeing and hearing as children:

> [Iqra]: There was a lot of single men, so you'd have like a…a house just full of single men. I remember in our family, we were all a family, but my grandma used to cook for all these other single men that used to live in the area
>
> [Noor]: Yeah, yeah

[4] Simran, Author Interview (18/1/2020).

[Interviewer]: Was that, like, a social service? It was her contributing to the community?

[Iqra]: Yeah, yeah

[Noor]: But I think, I think like our parents' generation, they actually loved it… there's like a saying, um, I don't know…

(a woman in the background says *Allah Ni Rehmat*)[5]

The saying *Allah Ni Rehmat*, meaning 'God's blessing', implied that there was a moral obligation underpinning the actions of some members of the community. These younger women suggested that the pressures faced by Pakistanis in the early years of their migration necessitated this form of support. Whilst I got the impression that acts of support, such as feeding neighbours, were not as commonplace amongst younger generations, the fact that I was meeting my interviewees at a support group for Oldham's British-South Asian mothers, which was run by a British-Pakistani community activist, suggested that the obligation to help other Pakistanis was still very much alive.

Building networks of support as adults resulted in women fostering emotionally and materially sustaining friendships. The emotional and practical support Pakistani women gained from their friendships, which was necessary for their long-term settlement, were similarly experienced by women from other migrant communities, such as Doreen Phillips. When Doreen migrated from Guyana to Britain in 1964, with her two young children in tow, it was her Caribbean friends in London that gave her the 'emotional sustenance' to not only

[5] Iqra and Noor, Author Interview (20/9/2019).

cope with leaving Guyana behind but also to deal with the abhorrent racial prejudice that marked her time working in a factory packing sweets.[6] She said 'we used to visit each other's homes, you didn't need appointments, you walked in, you're in one room, you sit together round the paraffin heater, you put the kettle on the paraffin heater, you make tea. You keep my children, I keep yours… you pick up mine today, I pick up yours tomorrow.'[7] Upon their arrival to their new towns, Pakistani women would similarly rely on one another, go to each other's houses to chat, walk to the market together after dropping their children off at school and visit local community centres with one another. Being neighbours, in part, facilitated these forms of support.

Community and Place

Migrant Pakistanis built new networks of support as adults in order to facilitate a more comfortable settlement in their new towns. Before analysing the structured, formalised services Pakistani women offered to their communities, we should consider this crucial question: what does it mean to be part of a community and what compelled the majority of migrant women I interviewed to reflect on acts of mutual support when discussing their time in Middlesbrough and Oldham?

Moving from one place to another took many forms for Pakistani women, which meant migrant interviewees had, more than once, built new networks of support as adults. The first migration for married women, so to speak, was to their marital home. For some, this meant travelling across seas, for others it meant moving from one village to another. The majority of respondents were, therefore, familiar with finding community in a new

[6] McCarthy, *Double Lives,* p. 289.
[7] McCarthy, *Double Lives,* pp. 289-290.

place, albeit doing so in a place as vastly different as Britain posed additional challenges.[8] Transnational marriages have acted as a 'crucible for change… whether as a way of creating status, providing care, negotiating risk and creating or changing family obligations and social networks.'[9] For an older generation, whose journeys across continents represented the first overseas migration for women of their kind, it was yet unclear what changes would come from their movement.

Place and community are intrinsically linked for first-generation British-Pakistani migrants who, from the 1960s until the 1990s, often migrated to the same areas in central Oldham and Middlesbrough. Where a person settled had significant consequences on who would become part of the network; these networks were central to women's everyday activity and crucially supported a more comfortable settlement. Close physical proximity was fundamental in determining who people interacted with and, therefore, who became part of their network. One point of interest was where the Pakistani community resided and how living in the same neighbourhoods facilitated stronger community relationships. Pakistanis in Middlesbrough and Oldham were often concentrated in the same neighbourhoods for most of the period, and these were usually the most deprived areas. This meant that the majority of Pakistanis in Middlesbrough and Oldham often had to work together to create businesses and services in their area so that their neglected neighbourhoods were more comfortable places to live.

The geographer Deborah Phillips argued that the claims of migrants preferring self-segregation and isolation, by public figures such as former Minister of Europe Peter Hain,

[8] Claire Alexander, Joya Chatterji and Annu Jalais, *The Bengal Diaspora: Rethinking Muslim Migration* (London: Routledge, 2015), p. 140.
[9] Alexander, Chatterji and Jalais, *The Bengal Diaspora*, p. 151.

are far too simplistic.[10] Using Bradford's Pakistanis as a case study, Phillips highlighted that estate agents had racialised views about the housing market, designating some areas as 'white' and some as 'Asian', consequently limiting the options they showed to Asian homebuyers.[11] This resulted in Pakistanis being concentrated in the most deprived areas of Bradford, such as Manningham, and having access to fewer resources necessary to upwardly progress, such as good quality schools or adequately paying jobs. Oldham had similar patterns of settlement and the area of Glodwick became home to the largest concentration of immigrants in the town. In 1972, 23.8 percent or 1200 people living in Glodwick were originally born in new Commonwealth nations; 16.3 percent or 822 of these migrants were from Pakistan.[12] According to James Laurence, segregated neighbourhoods in Oldham and other northern English mill towns were, in part, the product of deindustrialisation because white residents, who were more mobile, would move away from places where social and economic resources were more difficult to secure.[13]

British-Pakistanis have historically resided in the most deprived areas of their towns and cities, which necessitated the creation of community networks that were materially and emotionally sustaining. Equally important to the long-term settlement of British-Pakistanis was government and council polices to alleviate the pressures of poverty. Oldham became one of the sites of intervention by the Home Office in 1969, which chose twelve of the most deprived areas in England and Wales to establish Community Development Projects (CDPs);

[10] Ben Russell, `Hain criticised for `simplistic' comments on Muslims', *The Independent* (5th March 2014). Available at: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/hain-criticised-simplistic-comments-muslims-9169764.html [Accessed 11/2/21].
[11] Deborah Phillips, 'Parallel Lives? Challenging Discourses of British Muslim Self-Segregation', *Society and Space*, vol. 24 (2006), pp. 25-40, at pp. 34-35.
[12] Bruen, 'Ethnic Minority Groups and the Place of Adult Education', CDP/11/17, p. 4.
[13] James Laurence, 'Wider-community Segregation and the Effect of Neighbourhood Ethnic Diversity on Social Capital: An Investigation into Intra-Neighbourhood Trust in Great Britain and London', *Sociology*, vol. 51, no. 5 (2017), pp. 1011–1033, at p. 1014.

the initiative lasted between 1970 and 1978.[14] Glodwick was one of three neighbourhoods in Oldham that became the focus of the CDP's work, due to the particularly high levels of impoverishment there.[15] Community Development Projects would facilitate co-operation between local authorities, research teams and the Home Office to tackle urban deprivation, including unemployment and poor housing conditions.[16] According to a report by the Department of Environment in 1973, Oldham was described as suffering from 'large scale obsolesce of its housing stock, public amenities, and industrial premise… it displays a worn out physical fabric and inadequate provisions to meet today's needs and standards'.[17] Given the concentration of Pakistanis in Glodwick, reaching out to the Pakistani community was important to the CDP. Mrs Qureshi was appointed as an Asian Liaison Officer in August 1973 on a full time, temporary basis.[18] Her job was to support English education, translate and offer advice as part of broader CDP goals of employing local residents to help people in their ward or town, as well as develop stronger relationships between local authorities and the communities they served.[19]

Since the 1990s, the concentration of Pakistanis in more deprived areas of Middlesbrough and Oldham has changed considerably over time. This has resulted in fewer British-Pakistanis having other Pakistani neighbours and, therefore, having fewer opportunities to meet regularly in their homes or perform domestic activities together.

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[14] Mae Shaw, Andrea Armstrong and Gary Craig, 'Revisiting the Community Development Projects of the 1970s in the UK', *Concept*, vol. 7, no. 2 (2016), pp. 1-17, at p. 1. Also see: Sarah Banks and Mike Carpenter, 'Researching the Local Politics and Practices of Radical Community Development Projects in 1970s Britain', *Community Development Journal*, vol. 52, no. 2 (2017), pp. 226–246.

[15] Alan Barr, *The Practice of Neighbourhood Community Work* (York: Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, 1977), p. 7.

[16] John G. Carney and Clive Taylor, 'Community Development Projects: Review and Comment', *Are*a, vol. 6, no. 3 (1974), pp. 226-231, at p. 226.

[17] Department of Environment, *Making Towns Better: Oldham Study, Environment, Planning and Management* (London: H.M Stationary Office, 1973).

[18] Freedom of Information Request, Administrative History, Oldham Council (6/3/2020).

[19] Bruen, 'Ethnic Minority Groups and the Place of Adult Education', CDP/11/17, p. 12.

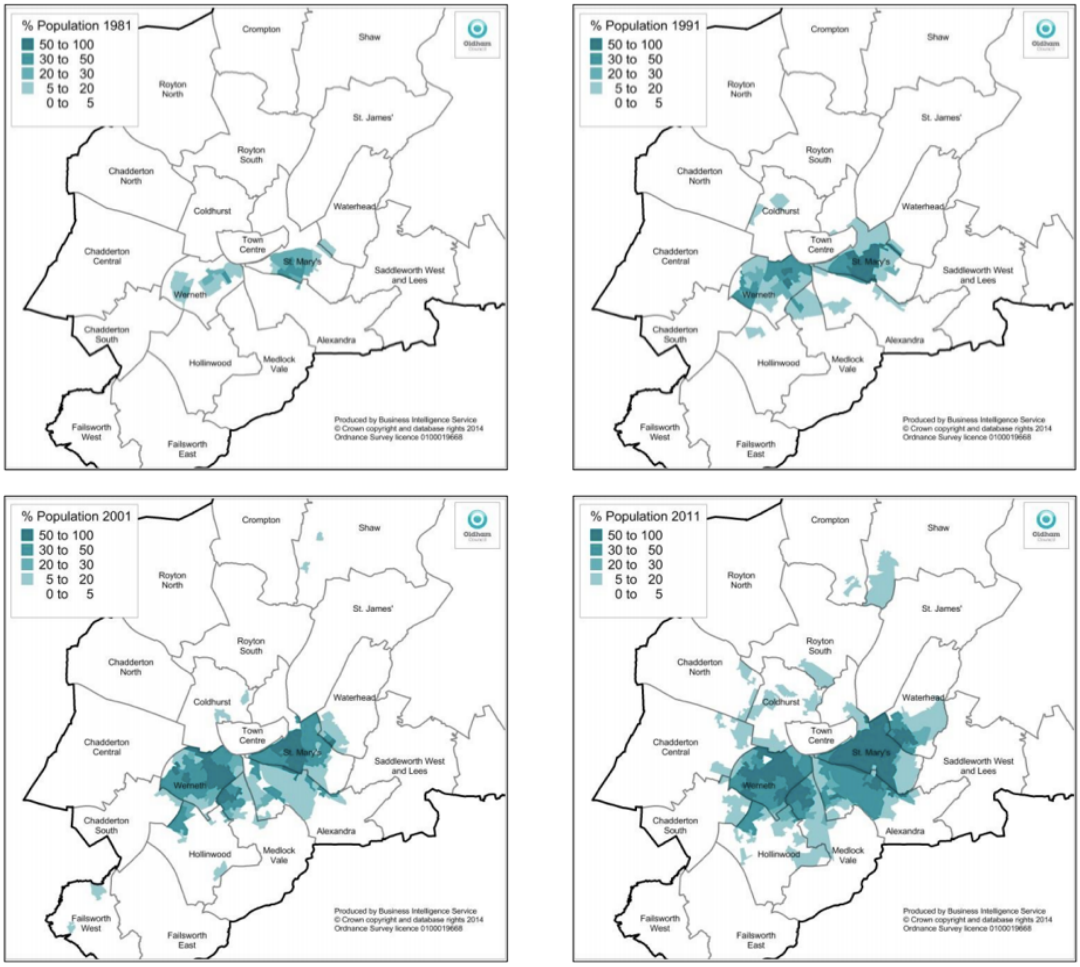


Figure 2: Pakistani Population Distribution, 1981-2011. Image obtained from Business Intelligence Service, *Oldham 2011 Census Ethnicity Report* (Oldham: Oldham Council, 2016), p. 4.

In Middlesbrough, upward social mobility has resulted in the dispersion of the Pakistani community from the town centre to wealthier wards such as Linthorpe which, in the 2011 census, saw a 16.4 percent increase in its local population. This rise has been attributed to new housing developments, rising number of students and an increase in migrant workers.[20] In Oldham, a similar pattern can be observed in the census. For example, in 1981, Oldham's 5000 Pakistani residents lived in Coppice, a small part of the Werneth ward, and in Glodwick, which is in the larger ward of St Mary. By 2011, the population of Pakistanis in

[20] Middlesbrough Council, 'ONS Census 2011: Middlesbrough Thematic Reports Programme' (2011), p. 7. Available at: https://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Census-2011_Population_and_Identity.pdf [Accessed 10/09/2020].

Oldham increased to 22,686, and whilst there was a stronger concentration of Pakistanis in Glodwick and Coppice, where some pockets of the local population were over 50 percent British-Pakistani, the dispersion within the wards of Werneth and St Mary was much wider.[21]

Despite the dispersion of Pakistanis into other areas outside Glodwick, I was told that Glodwick was still perceived to be the place of residence for the vast majority of Pakistanis in Oldham, in a way that suggested very little had changed in the past fifty years. I met Farzana, an outreach officer at a local community centre. After a walk around Alexandra Park, as part of the health and wellbeing programme she designed for the centre's women, I asked what it was like living in Oldham. She told me she arrived with her parents from Jhelum, a city close to Mirpur District, when she was a baby and had not lived anywhere other than Oldham. Farzana made it clear that she had never moved away from Glodwick, exclaiming that she felt uncomfortable in other areas of Oldham but she felt safe enough to walk through Glodwick at night without fear, since everyone was Pakistani. Racial discrimination, to a significant extent, affected Farzana's relationship with Oldham. Whilst this will be the focus of a subsequent chapter, it is important to note that her relationship with the Pakistani community and Glodwick was born out of the safety she felt being with other Pakistanis. Home for her was not Oldham, it was Glodwick.[22] This type of distinction was not made by interviewees in Middlesbrough.

Instead, in Middlesbrough, some women emphasised places where the community could congregate and build meaningful friendships that supported a more comfortable long-term settlement. Building community spaces was an important way to foster strong

[21] Business Intelligence Service, *Oldham 2011 Census*, p. 4.
[22] Farzana, Author Interview (28/8/2019).

community ties, and these spaces often changed the landscape of their neighbourhoods to make them fit for purpose. The Pakistani community in Middlesbrough initially became acquainted with one another through the local mosque. Although all the interviewees came from the same district in Azad Kashmir and some had extended family in the UK, most people were, at best, only tenuously linked with each other upon their arrival:

> At first, we didn't know who lived next to us. But when there was a funeral, when someone got ill and went to the hospital, you'd go visit them and be with your family, when someone died, we used to go to Waterloo Road mosque and meet everyone there. Men used to get to know each other, the whole situation with the community was being consolidated. We used to meet at the mosque, our interactions always used to take place there. Then we became friends.[23]

Pakistanis in Middlesbrough and Oldham used mosques as places where they could build and maintain strong community relationships, which was integral to permanently settling in Britain. Since 1889, when the first purpose-built mosque in Britain, Shah Jahan Mosque in Woking, was established by Jewish educationalist Gottlieb Leitner, mosques have been places where British-Muslim communities could flourish by praying together, sharing each other's happiness through regular celebrations and mourning loss collectively.[24] Before the establishment of local purpose-built mosques, houses were transformed into makeshift places of worship. Middlesbrough's Muslim community prayed in a terraced house close to

[23] Jameela, Author Interview (9/1/2018).
[24] Exploring Surrey's Past, 'Shah Jahan Mosque, Woking'. Available at: https://www.exploringsurreyspast.org.uk/themes/subjects/diversity/shah_jahan_mosque_woking/ [Accessed 18/10/21].

Waterloo Road up until 1976.[25] Similarly, Bradford's first mosque was established in a terraced house on Howard Street in 1959, which was run by the Pakistani Muslim Association.[26] In addition, Nazar Hussein from Oldham said his first Eid prayer in the mid-1970s took place in a co-operative on Huddersfield Road, whilst regular prayers were held in a house on Churchill Street, which were organised by a Bangladeshi Imam.[27] The Jamia Masjid Al Madina on Waterloo Road in Middlesbrough was built after a fundraising campaign amongst the community to build Middlesbrough's first purpose-built mosque in 1976. The mosque was originally St Michael's Church and was purchased for £10,000 in 1975.[28]

Parallels can be drawn between the evolution of Middlesbrough and Oldham's British-Pakistani communities and the growth of other migrant groups, such as the Jewish community in twentieth century Britain, in cities such as Manchester and London. For example, between 1887 and 1920, the 1000 Jewish residents living in the tenement block Rothschild Buildings in the East End of London similarly created community networks that were equally as complex as the networks created between Pakistanis in Middlesbrough and Oldham. Jerry White said the community in Rothschild Buildings was 'an immigrant community, a religious community, a community of class'.[29] Place, White argued, was one factor that determined how the community evolved since 'a particular environment will

[25] Jamia Masjid al Madina, 'Jamia Masjid al Madina, Middlesbrough'. Available at: https://www.jamiamasjidmiddlesbrough.org.uk/history [Accessed 19/11/20].
[26] Philip Lewis, 'Being Muslim and Being British: The Dynamics of Islamic Reconstruction in Bradford', in Roger Ballard (ed.) *Desh Pardesh: The South Asian Experience in Britain* (London: C. Hurst and Co. 1994), p. 68.
[27] Shakil Salam, Jawaid Iqbal and Tim Corum, *Hum Log: Stories of Oldham's Asian Communitie*s (Oldham: Oldham Arts and Heritage Publications, 1997), p. 56.
[28] Jamia Masjid al Madina, 'Jamia Masjid al Madina, Middlesbrough'. Available at: https://www.jamiamasjidmiddlesbrough.org.uk/history [Accessed 19/11/20].
[29] Jerry White, *Rothschild Buildings: Life in an East-End Tenement Block 1887-1920* (London: Pimlico, 2003), p. 68.

lend itself to the creation of community feeling'.[30] However, living together was not the only factor that drew people in the building together. The vast majority were immigrants who had escaped Eastern European and Russian pogroms in the late 19th century and, in some cases, moved into Rothschild Buildings to escape the slum housing of East End London. Whilst Pakistanis in Middlesbrough and Oldham, for the most part, left Pakistan to escape poverty rather than persecution, nonetheless like Jewish immigrants living in Rothschild Buildings, they were drawn to others who had a similar experience, who could sympathise with their struggles and helped those who were also seeking to build a new life in Britain.[31] Moreover, and much like Pakistanis in Middlesbrough and Oldham, whilst religious adherence varied considerably amongst individuals, for those who were observant, synagogues (which were close to Rothschild building) became more than places of worship: they became places of socialisation and networking.[32]

Mutual Support

Community relationships were primarily driven by the necessity to help one another cope with migration and long-term settlement. In turn, women formed friendships that were emotionally and materially sustaining. However, geographic proximity alone does not adequately explain why interviewees, regardless of when they came and where they migrated, chose to place such importance on the theme of community. The idea of home, in terms of comfort, safety and familiarity, was found in these personal relationships, particularly given the loss of their extended families in Pakistan or the absence of their

[30] White, *Rothschild Buildings,* p. 68.
[31] White, *Rothschild Buildings,* p. 73.
[32] White, *Rothschild Buildings,* p. 88. Also see: Irina Kudenko, 'Spaces of Jewish belonging', in Derek Fraser (ed.), *Leeds and its Jewish Community: A History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), p. 303.

working husbands.[33] In the interviews, these people were always referred to as *asa ni banday*, or 'our people'.

Alison Shaw, in her 1988 study of Oxford's Pakistani community, argued that the historical background of Mirpuri-Pakistani migrants offered crucial insights into how social organisation in Pakistan facilitated strong community relationships that were integral to long-term migrant settlement in Britain.[34] Shaw was primarily concerned with social organisation, focussing on *biradri* which is a system of social stratification based on occupation, although definitions of *biradri* differed amongst Shaw's interviewees. [35] In its simplest form, *biradri* signifies 'the group I belong to', denoting both where the person is descended from and who they are tied to, emphasising the collective rather than the individual.[36] Surprisingly, women never explicitly referenced *biradri* during the interviews. This may be because I never directly asked about *biradri,* given that social organisation has been a significant point of analysis by others researching the British-Pakistani community.[37] Had the opportunity presented itself, women may have steered the conversation towards their own caste status and their views on this important form of organisation that large swathes of Pakistanis still identify with.[38] Instead, and more interestingly, women chose to tell me about their friendships, nostalgically reflecting on how others in their community helped them whilst they came to terms with the sadness and trauma of leaving Pakistan and trying to find home in unfamiliar places. *Biradri* may have underpinned some of these

[33] Wendy Webster, *Imagining Home: Gender, 'Race' and National Identity, 1945-64* (London, New York: Routledge, 1998), p. ix.
[34] Shaw, *A Pakistani Community in Britain*, p. 99.
[35] See: Shaw, *A Pakistani Community in Britain*, pp. 85-108; Zekiye Eglar, *A Punjabi Village in Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), pp. 28-41.
[36] Shaw, *A Pakistani Community in Britain*, p. 99.
[37] See: Werbner, *The Migration Process*; Anwar, *The Myth of Return;* Shaw, *A Pakistani Community in Britain*; Roger Ballard (ed.), *Desh Pardesh: The South Asian Experience in Britain* (London: C. Hurst and co. 1994).
[38] Muhammad Anwar, 'Social Networks of Pakistanis in the UK: A Re-Evaluation', in Alisdair Rogers and Steven Vertovec, *The Urban Context: Ethnicity, Social Networks and Situational Analysis* (Oxford: Berg, 1995), p. 239.

friendships with other women, given the familiarity of belonging to the same caste group, but no interviewee made mention of this.

British-Pakistanis often used their skills to help others secure a more comfortable long-term settlement, regardless of their caste affiliation. In doing so, larger networks were created. For example, Alison Shaw reflected on how a volunteer for the Community Relations Council in Oxford, Mehboob, worked as a translator. She suggested that he took on this role since it benefitted both him and his community given that he existed in a network, a mindset which Shaw believed was shared by British-Pakistanis more generally.[39] This mindset was evident in the testimony I collected from those who worked to help women cope with the emotionally tumultuous reality of being separated from family in Pakistan or the difficulty of making home in a new place of settlement. Small-scale acts of support became part of women's everyday interactions and were affected by a sense of responsibility they felt towards other members of their network.

Friendships between women were crucial for those who needed help with the practicalities of everyday life in Britain. Women who had settled in Britain earlier were more likely to take on positions of trust within their growing community networks, between the 1950s and early 1970s. It was assumed that the longer the settlement, the more likely it was to have experiences such as visiting the doctor, taking a trip to the bank or posting a letter. These pieces of knowledge could be passed on by those who had been in the UK for longer, given that these systems were more sophisticated than in Pakistani villages and far more difficult to navigate when English was a second language. Jameela took on this role for some women who arrived during the wave of migration into Middlesbrough after the enactment

[39] Shaw, *A Pakistani Community in Britain*, p. 1.

of the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962. In the discussion between her and a friend's son during our interview, it was clear that there was an established understanding of the order of arrival amongst these first migrants, who lay the groundworks for what relationships could look like amongst a localised Pakistani community:

> [Family Friend]: After you, Aunty X came, about three, four years after do you think?
>
> [Jameela]: She came after us, about three years. Your mum came quite a few years after too.
>
> [Family Friend]: Yes, I think she came in '68
>
> [Jameela]: Yes, then your mum became ill, she got TB. I took her to the hospital countless times. No one knew English properly, to be honest, but listening to your children you pick words up here and there. Um, I tried to help people where I could. The community that existed earlier, it is so different to the one that exists now. [40]

Jameela, admittedly, did not have the best English, yet she believed it was her responsibility to look after a friend who had arrived after her and ensure she had a more comfortable settlement. Equally her friend Rabia, who was also interviewed for this project, trusted her to help her during this profoundly difficult time in her life, when she contracted TB over a year after her arrival in Middlesbrough.[41] This was something Jameela found more important to share instead of telling me about her formal work as a business owner, given

[40] Jameela, Author Interview (9/1/2018).
[41] Rabia, Author Interview (13/1/2018).

how often community and, specifically, women helping one another came up in our conversation.

Amongst older first-generation interviewees, their friendships with women were a necessary part of securing a more comfortable settlement, since they were emotionally and materially sustaining. However, Jameela recognised that her experiences were vastly different to how community relationships in Middlesbrough are enacted today, although she did not indicate whether this was because the community was bigger and more dispersed or because values had shifted amongst a younger generation. When Jameela described her community, the memories of these early years after her migration were laced with moments of joy and sadness. She was sentimental about what existed when she settled in Middlesbrough and how time had changed these deep-seated relationships. To say her rose-tinted memories of the past omitted the conflicts and struggles of creating a community is not an adequate critique of her recollections. Instead, as Ben Jones argued, when studying the presence of nostalgia in working-class autobiographies of the post-war period, 'the specific conditions in which such accounts were produced and the possible reasons for their overriding tone' are necessary to consider.[42] Whilst other women were more forthright in telling me about the inevitable conflicts associated with making a community, Jameela's criticism was less obvious, but it was certainly there in the form of her nostalgia, which had a purpose: it was a critique of the present.[43] She made it clear that the community had changed, implying that, for most Pakistanis in Middlesbrough, family-like relationships were a thing of the past:

[42] Ben Jones, 'The Uses of Nostalgia; Autobiography, Community Publishing and Working-Class Neighbourhoods in Post-war England', *Cultural and Social History*, vol. 7, no. 3 (2010), pp. 355-374, at p. 357.
[43] Jennifer Helgren, 'A "Very Innocent Time": Oral History Narratives, Nostalgia and Girls' Safety in the 1950s and 1960s', *The Oral History Review*, vol. 42, no. 1 (2015), pp. 50-69, at p. 52.

> There was a very good community, there was no ill will, no bad relations, that's how we lived our lives. There was your brother, he used to come and go like he was one of my children. That's it, life has passed us by.[44]

It is difficult to over-emphasise how, for many women, community meant more than a connection with those who shared common traits or experiences. The bonds they shared were profoundly meaningful, the key to imagining a fulfilling life in Britain.

These relationships were emotionally and practically important, particularly in the absence of men whose experiences of settlement were different from women.[45] Men's long hours at work proved to be a catalyst for a significant proportion of women to turn towards other Pakistani women within their community for support. Loneliness and isolation were common feelings expressed by those I interviewed when they described their arrival to a new town. It pushed Pakistani women to create community networks and whilst men played an important role in creating community networks too, the interviews I collected indicated that men were concerned with other men in the community rather than the day-to-day welfare of women.[46] In some ways, it was similar to women's testimony in Michael Wilmott and Peter Young's study of community amongst those who had moved from London's East End to an Essex estate built after the Second World War. Women felt the lack of family and friends more acutely, according to the researchers, because the vast majority did not have work colleagues like their husbands. One woman, Mrs Haddon, said 'I'd just

[44] Jameela, Author Interview (9/1/2018).
[45] Cynthia Brown, 'Moving On: Reflections on Oral History and Migrant Communities in Britain', *Oral History*, vol. 34, no. 1 (2006), pp. 69-80, at p. 69.
[46] Gardner, 'The Transitional Work of Kinship and Caring', pp. 382-383.

had the baby and it was all a misery, not knowing anyone. I sat on the stairs and cried my eyes out'.[47] Mrs Haddon, unable to bear her loneliness, yearned to be back in the East End of London. Likewise, Pakistani migrant women, from across the period, described initially wanting to go back home. Nadiya, who migrated to Middlesbrough in 1996 after her marriage, echoed Mrs Haddon's testimony, saying 'I really, really missed my family when I came. I cried everyday'.[48] For Sidra, who migrated to Middlesbrough in 1994 to join her new husband, she felt trapped in her town, which was vastly different from the open fields, spacious home and extended family she was used to:

> When I came here it felt like, how do you say that word in English? You know how you put a bird in a cage? It was like a cage to me, we used to live on X Road and I was like, I felt like I was suffocating.[49]

Sidra and Nadiya's husbands had lived in Middlesbrough their entire lives and had networks of family, friends, work colleagues and trusted neighbours they could rely on. Community and friendship, from the vantage point of men's testimony, therefore, only tells us part of the story.[50]

Whilst first-generation migrant women built new networks of support after their migration to help secure a more comfortable settlement in a material sense, they also had to cope with the emotional trauma of leaving family and friends in Pakistan. Their

[47] Michael Wilmott and Peter Young, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1986), p. 123.
[48] Nadiya, Author Interview (9/1/2019).
[49] Sidra, Author Interview, (7/1/2019).
[50] See: Anwar, *The Myth of Return*; Shaw, *A Pakistani Community in Britain*; BBC Radio 4, 'Three Pounds in my Pocket', Series 1, Episode 1 (19th May 2014). Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03ws7gm [Accessed: 20/10/20].

friendships with other women played a necessary role in maintaining contact with loved ones, since first-generation migrant women were all experiencing a similar loss. For most of the time period in question, long-distance calls were a luxury and letters were the only way to maintain this connection. Haleema, a second-generation British-Pakistani woman I met in Oldham, described how her mum used her skills in reading and writing Urdu to show kindness to those who were illiterate and, without a scribe, would have lost their critical connection to their family in Pakistan:

> My mum used to sew clothes and, uh, I used to, uh, 'cause she, she was a bit more educated from back home, quite a few women used to come and get letters done from mum, you know… telegrams and my mum would write them in Urdu, she had a few people that regularly came that couldn't write and they used to discuss all, I mean I remember they used to sit for hours and discuss everything and my mum used to write it intricately, on the sides of it as well. That's how I learned how to write in Urdu, mum taught me how to write letters.[51]

Another woman in the room, Noor, reflected on families sending cassettes with messages back and forth from Pakistan. She said, 'when they would get a cassette, they would be so happy, and they'd play it on the tape and cry and you know'.[52] Letters and cassettes were often the most interaction women had with their families in Pakistan as it was the cheapest method, given that travel to Pakistan was a significant financial commitment. Haleema's mother, during her busy life as a homeworker, took the time to ensure her community members were not disadvantaged by their illiteracy. It is difficult to fathom the trauma

[51] Haleema, Author Interview (20/9/2019).
[52] Noor, Author Interview (20/9/2019).

women endured upon leaving Pakistan. Loneliness, loss and, in some cases, depression were inevitable consequences of leaving home and, potentially, saying good-bye to family and friends for many years. Community helped women cope and the actions of some women, who were also all too familiar with the emotional turmoil resettlement brought about, highlighted the responsibility community members felt towards one another.

The mutuality and friendship explored here had the potential to evolve into women offering community services. The demand for translators, letter writers, community leaders and educators increased as Pakistani communities grew and different strategies were needed to support the long-term settlement of British-Pakistanis. In some ways, it highlighted how a growing community saw certain women as capable, skilled and trustworthy. Those who had migrated earlier, like Jameela, or were educated, like Haleema's mother, became points of contact. Some women took advantage of this and regularly allocated time to meet their friends and neighbours' needs. In the following sections, I will build on these examples of mutual support and highlight how formalised support systems manifested.

Formalising community services

The strategies to support one another in securing a more comfortable settlement changed over time as local Pakistani communities grew. The permanent settlement of large and diverse Pakistani communities necessitated services that specifically met the needs of British-Pakistanis. Systems of voluntary service set up by British-Pakistanis demonstrated how adaptation had a communal element. Reimagining systems of social service that fitted with the practicalities of life in Britain was often spearheaded by women as formalised, unpaid work. This type of labour has the propensity to remain invisible to researchers

because it is voluntary and unwaged. In turn, the breadth of women's work within the community has remained unrecognised.

Women created new forms of religious education for children that borrowed from the systems that existed in the villages of Pakistan, or organised networks of communal money lending; these systems were fundamental parts of everyday life for the Pakistani communities I had access to. Moreover, and similarly to some of Pearl Jephcott's interviewees in Bermondsey who were packing biscuits in a local factory, the women I spoke to enjoyed their work and found fulfilment from it.[53] For my interviewees and Jephcott's participants, the break from mothering and domestic responsibilities was a meaningful change.[54] They could socialise, channel their efforts into something outside of being mothers and wives and be rewarded for their productivity. Crucially, whilst Jephcott's interviewees cited wage-earning as the key to feeling a renewed sense of purpose, my interviewees worked on a voluntary basis. Yet serving their community ignited similar feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction. Through their work, my interviewees became respected and highly regarded members of the community. Widening the definition of 'work' to include unpaid volunteering highlights a world of practices that women clearly saw immense value in.[55] Even when formal waged work was inaccessible, women had the capacity to contribute to their communities in meaningful ways, by building social connections that had mutual benefit for both volunteers and for those accessing these services.[56]

[53] McCarthy, *Double Lives,* p. 227.
[54] McCarthy, *Double Lives*, pp. 228-229.
[55] Jessica Reynolds Jenner, 'Volunteerism as an Aspect of Women's Work Lives', *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, vol. 19 (1981), pp. 302-314, at pp. 302-304.
[56] DeAnne K. Hilfinger Messias et al, 'Expanding the Concept of Women's Work: Volunteer Work in the Context of Poverty'*, Journal of Poverty*, vol. 9, no. 3 (2005), pp. 25-47, at p. 45.

The permanent settlement of Pakistani women and children in Britain after the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act necessitated services that specifically met their needs. In the process of collecting interviews, religious teaching emerged as a key example of how a handful of women, across generations, supported the long-term settlement of Pakistanis through their daily, structured, voluntary services. Teaching Islam to younger members of the community, or even adults who were not afforded a religious education as children, was born out of the acute lack of infrastructure to support religious expression and learning in small industrial towns such as Oldham and Middlesbrough. In the 1970s, Rabia, from Middlesbrough, was the first woman in the town to set up her own class, in the process becoming a deeply respected member of her community. She was born in 1930 and was the daughter of an imam, which meant she had been given an extensive religious education, a privilege seldom afforded to women at the time due to the patriarchal nature of religious education. She was quick to emphasise that when she arrived in Middlesbrough, 'people didn't even practice Ramadan' and many people were illiterate in the language of the Quran. [57] This form of illiteracy was born out of poverty; boys were encouraged to work as soon as it was possible for them to financially contribute to their households whilst some women could only learn Arabic if there was an older woman teaching in their village. Rabia was lucky in this regard. Given her father's work, she was taught the Quran by him. Her older brother, who also lived in Middlesbrough, was revered by the community for his work as an imam and her younger sister was an Islamic teacher in Pakistan. The starting point of her job as a teacher began in her home with her children:

> I started teaching children when I came to X Street, that time Zara (her youngest

[57] Rabia, Author Interview (13/1/2018).

> daughter) wasn't reading, so then I said 'go on then, invite that girl so I can teach her'
> then they came but then there wasn't the atmosphere for this, my brother used to teach the boys in the mosque… namaz, quran he used to teach… he taught a lot of children…
> then next door's kids came… slowly, slowly a lot of kids started coming to me… and then I taught older women… I taught in Pakistan as well.[58]

The demand for this form of service resulted in her living room becoming a school for three hours every day. Rabia was an example of how women spearheaded Islamic education amongst oft-ignored girls who were not permitted to learn in the mosque with the male congregation. She told me how former students still enquired about her well-being and fondly remembered this time of their lives.

The progression of casual at-home religious teaching into fully-fledged services supported the long-term settlement of Pakistani migrants. Islamic education became a more consolidated, commonplace part of children's lives, particularly as the community rallied together to fundraise for a new mosque in the mid-1970s. Creating an infrastructure for religious congregation was crucial in ensuring British-Muslim migrants could live in places like Middlesbrough more comfortably.[59] For example, in Manchester, Pnina Werbner described how a network of Pakistani women in the neighbourhoods of Victoria Park and Longsight offered Islamic classes to children in their homes during the 1970s. Hafiza, the wife of a *maulvi* (religious leader) gave these classes even after her husband's retirement. Her sister-in-law did the same and so did a distant cousin, all working to serve their local area.[60] This was, in part, a process of women supporting other women; had there not been teachers in homes or the mosque, the responsibility for teaching girls would fall on mothers.

[58] Rabia, Author Interview (13/1/2018).
[59] Lewis, 'Being Muslim and Being British', p. 68.
[60] Werbner, *The Migration Process,* p. 109.

Sugra, Rabia's daughter-in-law, helped with the teaching when both women lived in the same home. Although she, her husband and three sons moved into their own house in the early 1980s, she continued to teach children who lived on her street, making it more convenient for mothers in her area to send their children. Sugra felt she was well-equipped to teach the Quran to children because she gained valuable experience working with her mother-in-law, which she could apply to teaching her sons and their friends. When I said life must have been very busy for her, looking after her family and teaching for a few hours every day, she told me it gave her day some structure; 'you knew they would come from 4 pm after school'.[61] Sugra, therefore, would try and get as much housework done as possible before the children arrived.

Crucially, Sugra and Rabia never charged for this service, since the purpose was never to make a profit, rather it was to use their skills to ensure that Pakistani families had easy access to Islamic education as they permanently settled in Britain.[62] For both women, unpaid teaching was something they were proud of. Rabia said 'I never took a penny' and Sugra exclaimed 'who takes money for teaching?' After Sugra said this, the other women in the room laughed, joking about other people in the community who had made a living from charging for Islamic lessons. To that, Sugra said 'god forbid'. Rabia and Sugra saw this as their duty to the community, given they were two women educated in the language of the Quran. They believed it was their responsibility as Muslims to pass their knowledge on to children and illiterate adults in their community, without profiting from it financially.

The strategies to support one another in securing a more comfortable settlement changed over time, and this was the case with children's Islamic education. By the 1980s, as

[61] Sugra, Author Interview (12/1/2018).
[62] Messias et al, 'Expanding the Concept of Women's Work', pp. 26-27.

the Pakistani community grew, it was common for classes to take place in community centres. Simran, for example, taught Islamic classes in a local community centre after moving to Middlesbrough. She was born in Bradford in 1966, the second oldest of six children, five girls and one boy. Both her parents migrated separately from Pakistan to Bradford to be reunited with family, marrying each other a few years after their arrival. Simran, herself, married when she was eighteen and moved to Middlesbrough, giving birth to her daughter soon after. She was determined to work after becoming a mother and decided to voluntarily teach children the Quran and Urdu at a centre close to her home:

> When Hana (her eldest daughter) was born, I was, actually I was teaching, when Hana was born, she was just a baby, I hadn't had my second then, I was teaching Arabic and Urdu in, uh, um Ayresome Street, on the corner, you know where the flats are now, there used to be that old church? There used to be a little, there they used to be Arabic and Urdu classes and I used to teach there in the evening.[63]

Simran was able to do work that was respected and accommodated her responsibilities as a new mother and wife. Equally, it was a way for Simran to meet other women in her community as she settled in Middlesbrough. Her colleagues at the class supported her so she could manage work whilst taking care of her child:

> I told them 'look I can't come anymore because, um, I've got no one to look after my baby.' And one of the teachers there, Saleema from Marton, she goes to me (in Punjabi) 'bring the baby with you, no, no don't leave the baby with a sitter' and you know why? It's 'cause I had

[63] Simran, Author Interview (18/1/2020).

> a good rapport with the kids, do you know what I mean? I wasn't a strict teacher. If they hadn't read their set reading and they wanted to exchange their little football cards, I would allow them that time, do you know what I mean? It's not like you would make them read for two hours… they always wanted to be in my class (laughs).[64]

Irrespective of the determination Simran showed to carry on working, a lack of childcare provisions almost derailed her new career. She was lucky, given that her employers were flexible. A 1980 survey estimated that around 15 to 20 percent of mothers took their children to work with them instead of paying for expensive childcare.[65] Juggling motherhood with work was a complicated and time-consuming task that, largely, fell on women. For example, the daughter of a chiropodist, who regularly accompanied her mother to work during the school holidays, stated that as a child she did not appreciate the lengths her mother went to in order to ensure she and her sister were looked after by being dropped off at playgroups, picked up from school by parents of their friends or left with teenage au pairs.[66] Simran remembered the kindness shown to her by the women she worked with, who encouraged her to stay in work despite the pressures of motherhood. She eventually found a babysitter who came at the recommendation of a friend and, later, she relied on a trusted neighbour when she and her husband were working. Arguably, these early experiences consolidated her faith that other members of the community, and particularly other women, would support her when she needed them.

Whilst Sugra, Simran and Rabia were respected and well-known members of their community, who clearly cared for the children they taught and community members they

[64] Simran, Author Interview (18/1/2020).
[65] McCarthy, *Double Lives,* p. 315.
[66] McCarthy, *Double Lives,* p. 340.

helped, it became clear that Simran's approach to teaching was, in some ways, born out of the tragic experiences of physical abuse she was subjected to when she went to Islamic classes as a child. It was why she emphasised the kindness and empathy she showed to her young students:

> I think I was only about four at the time, four or five, very, very young. And you know I couldn't say my words in Arabic, 'cause I was so young. And what she did was that she burnt my tongue. I remember what I was wearing. You know they used to have those open fires in those days, and she drew the curtains and there was a little gap, in the curtains. So I was sat on the sofa and she's got the poker and she poked it until it was red hot, her daughter held me like this, she told me to stick out my tongue and she burnt my tongue.[67]

Simran's teacher said if she told anyone, she would burn her tongue again, so Simran stayed quiet. Clearly, then, her teacher knew there would be repercussions for her violence against a child. Similar to Jerry White's exploration of community responsibilities in North London's Campbell Bunk, abuse towards young people and children was a clear infringement of the tacit code of conduct individuals outwardly abided by, with women in particular taking on this protective role.[68] Whilst this did not stop the abuse taking place in Campbell Bunk, it meant this abuse remained hidden in some cases. When Simran told me what she had endured, she described how the abuse and keeping it a secret affected her as an adult:

[67] Simran, Author Interview (18/1/2020).
[68] Jerry White, *Campbell Bunk: The Worst Street in North London between the Wars* (London: Pimlico, 2003), p. 75.

> When she died, she died and uh, and I'm not a crier, I can't usually cry in that sense, and I went to her funeral and I sat there and I sobbed and I sobbed and I sobbed and I cried so much that everybody was like 'what the hell?' And do you know what, I don't know what it was. Was it relief that she was gone, or what? I don't know what it was.[69]

The psychological turmoil of being subjected to this violence was immense. She tried to make sense of her pain whilst relaying these difficult memories to me, testimony that she had shared with very few people up until the point of our interview. Despite the profound impact this had on Simran well into her adult life, she still had to perform an act of community support by attending her abuser's funeral. It is difficult to judge the extent to which other women had similar experiences, mostly because Simran was the only one to come forward and share what she had gone through. Her revelation was unprompted, and she brought up this experience towards the end of the interview. It seemed like this was a story that she did not want to go unheard or unrecorded. As the interviewer, I listened attentively and empathetically, giving Simran the space to relay her memories, without imposing my own expectations as an oral historian of coherence or a beginning and end to her narrative; I allowed my interviewee to share as much as she thought she needed to. [70]

How can we account for the positive community service offered by women such as Sugra and Rabia whilst also recognising the abhorrent abuse of power Simran associated with the same system of learning? Moreover, what does Simran's experiences tell us about dynamics of trust and mutual support within the community? Simran's experiences reflect what happens when power goes unchecked; the potential of this grew, in some ways, when

[69] Simran, Author Interview (18/1/2020).
[70] Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, p. 194.

homes rather than community centres or mosques became the places of teaching and learning, resulting in a lack of formal accountability. The obvious point was that women were just as capable of bad as they were good. It is important to emphasise, however, that at no point during the research process did this form of abuse appear systemic. The interviews with Rabia, Sugra and Simran overwhelmingly highlighted the altruism associated with free Islamic education, the care with which they treated their students and the respect they have garnered because of their work. Arguably, however, it would take more testimony from students of home-based education to build a more accurate understanding.

Religious education was the most prominent form of women-led volunteering and a way in which religiously educated women could help other community members secure a more comfortable, long-term settlement. Beyond this, there were other forms of unpaid, structured support for Pakistani communities across the UK, with one of the most widely practiced systems being rotating money-saving and credit associations that women took charge of. A no-interest, communal system of moneylending and borrowing organised by women in Middlesbrough and Oldham directly replicated the systems of saving that have existed is societies lacking easy access to banks. The system, known as *kameti*, has been a point of economic and anthropological interest. It is a system of trust in which members of the association pay in a set amount per week and, based on a schedule of who paid in first, money is released.[71]

To facilitate a more comfortable settlement, first-generation British-Pakistanis, who migrated earlier in the period, transplanted the *kameti* system, which worked on the basis of trusting and respecting other members of the community. Pnina Werbner argued that

[71] Werbner, *The Migration Process,* p. 315.

kameti is 'not associated with the creation of moral bonds between men, or even necessarily between all the women who join them' because the system is too practical.[72] I will show that this is categorically untrue; it is precisely a moral bond between women, who are almost exclusively charged with collecting, organising and distributing money, and the members of the circle that keeps the operation afloat.[73] Organisers do not take a wage for this and *kameti* loans are interest-free since interest in Islam is forbidden; there is a moral component to not earning a wage from loans and savings. Nor do organisers have formal qualifications to deal with the large amounts of money being exchanged. They are charged with this work because they are seen as trustworthy and respectable members of the community, who can take on the responsibility of looking after people's life savings. In comparison, Jerry White's study of Campbell Bunk highlighted the similarly held position of women in the community. Financial support, White argued, was upheld by women in Campbell Bunk, who ran sophisticated money lending systems, and it was common for women to take a small payment for this work. [74] Their neighbourhood based 'diddlum' clubs for saving and lending reflected the types of systems that existed amongst British-Pakistanis, where money was circulated amongst those who would buy into the system on a set, often weekly, basis.[75]

Simran reflected on her mum's saving circle in Bradford, which played a crucial role in facilitating a more comfortable settlement amongst members of her working-class neighbourhood. They lived in a predominantly Asian area when she was a child and it was

[72] Werbner, *The Migration Process,* p. 315.
[73] Astrid Marie Jorde Sandsør, *The Rotating Savings and Credit Association - An Economic, Social and Cultural Institution* (University of Oslo, Masters Thesis, 2010), p. 5.
[74] White, *Campbell Bunk,* p. 73.
[75] See: Sean O'Connell, *Credit and Community: Working-Class Debt in the UK since 1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

here that her mother 'had that network'.[76] Simran's mother was known in her community for running both a Pakistani clothes business and managing three saving circles:

> Yeah, she ran that shop for 20, 23 years. And she ran the *kametiya* and at one point there was about I think £16,000 a week going through the *kameti.* So she had, like, a large *kameti* of around £10,000 and she had a smaller one of £2,000 and then she had another one of £4,000, do you know what I mean? So it's like, and that again was based on trust and my mother's got no degrees in accountancy or whatever. And you know when she was taking the money, she would like, um, like say…Naseem hands her £200 for the week, *kameti*, and she would put it in the book and write N-A-S-M… so we would, I would, obviously 'cause it's quicker for me.[77]

The aspirations people had to improve their quality of life often involved large investments and, therefore, strict saving practices. In Oxford, for example, families living in the city centre decided to buy properties rather than take up council housing in response to the slum clearance by the council. Interest-free *kameti* loans enabled families to buy properties worth £3,000-£4,000 in East Oxford, rather than obtain a mortgage.[78] This example highlights that people organising saving circles, like Simran's mother, had a huge responsibility given the large amounts of money coming in. They devised their own systems of organisation and, often, it was a family affair, given that people would visit the home throughout the day to drop off their money. All of this needed to be recorded accurately. Crucial to this entire operation was trust, not only in the organiser of the saving circle but

[76] Simran, Author Interview (18/1/2020).
[77] Simran, Author Interview (18/1/2020).
[78] Shaw, *A Pakistani Community in Britain*, pp. 41-42.

also those paying into the system, whose regular payments were necessary to ensure everyone would get their savings back on time:

> [Simran]: But, um, again, the other thing as well was the trust thing, 'cause it is a large amount of cash, every week, you know, that's coming, that you're paying out to different people. Um, you know how the concept works?
>
> [Interviewer]: Vaguely
>
> [Simran]: So basically, the community right, or people in the vicinity or people that you know, but no one would not pay, if you know what I mean. So if you didn't pay the *kameti*, if you took that pay out and not paid, you would be ostracized from the community… 'Cause it affects somebody else 'cause you've taken the pay out and not paid so, she never had that issue where someone's taken the payment and not repaid. [79]

This illustrated the types of interdependent relationships that existed within the British-Pakistani community; these relationships were crucial for Pakistanis who wanted to secure a more comfortable, long-term settlement. The emotions underpinning this form of network creation is difficult to overstate. Simran explained how profoundly important this type of system was for struggling working-class people who did not have easy access to other forms of loans:

[79] Simran, Author Interview (18/1/2020).

> She had the control where someone has come to her so *majboor*[80] and has come to her and said, literally she's knocked on the door and Mum's open and she fell in, in and she said 'I'm so helpless, I need to get to Pakistan, I need the money.' So my mum was able to give her that money and help her helplessness. So she had a lot of respect as well, 'cause maybe that person has already had their *kameti* (payment)… but she's like, sort of like um, thinking 'okay she needs it, I'll give the *kameti* (payment).'[81]

In other words, Simran described how her mum could circumvent the planned schedule of payment redistribution to help members of the community in desperate need seemingly without this change becoming a point of contention with the rest of the savings group. The skill, organisation, and empathy necessary to conduct this kind of work is significant. Whilst the reward for this was not a wage, Simran's mother, alongside Rabia, Sugra and Simran herself, earned respect and a higher status within the community for their work.

Waged Community Work

Strategies to support the comfortable settlement of British-Pakistanis changed over time and between places, as local Pakistani communities grew and local policies related to migrant settlement and community cohesion changed. By the 1990s, it became more commonplace for second-generation British-Pakistanis to take up positions of authority in community work, often on behalf of their local council. Before the 1990s, there were some instances of South Asian women working with local authorities to help support British-South Asian settlement, although this was uncommon. As previously discussed, in the mid-1970s, the Home Office sponsored Community Development project in Oldham employed Mrs

[80] A direct translation of this term is 'very helpless'.
[81] Simran, Author Interview (18/1/2020).

Qureshi as the Asian Liaison officer in Glodwick. According to Noel Bruen, Mrs Qureshi set up an adult education class combined with a playgroup, to teach South Asian mothers how to speak English, which was regularly attended for over three years.[82] In addition, according to CDP researcher Kanta Walker, when she interviewed residents of Glodwick in 1974, she would ease into the questions by first asking if they knew Mrs Qureshi, in order to establish some sense of familiarity, given that Kanta was not Pakistani.[83]

Later in the period, by the 1970s and 1980s, feminists were successfully pushing local authorities to open women's centres, which were important in directly or indirectly supporting the settlement of migrant women. Local grassroots movements in places like Bolton and Bradford highlighted the strategies feminist activists used during the Women's Liberation Movement to fund women's projects. Sue Bruley, for example, highlighted the difficulty of securing funding and finding premises for women's centres, particularly during the early to mid 1970s. Often, women's centres were established by a group of activists who voluntarily worked a rota. Small collectives, which often began in houses or in the rooms of an already-established community centre, grew depending on their agenda.[84] The Norwich women's centre for example, which began in the mid-1970s, grew from an informal collective that met in an arts centre to a structured organisation with charitable status in 1983. Between 1987 and 1990, the centre secured funds from the local council, Princes Trust and Equal Opportunities commission, which allowed the centre to purchase 'a four-storey listed building close to the city centre with facilities including a crèche, coffee bar and

[82] Bruen, 'Ethnic Minority Groups and the Place of Adult Education', CDP/11/17, p. 11.
[83] Kanta Walker, 'Asian Immigrants in Oldham: A report on a survey carries out in the Glodwick area of Oldham on behalf of the Oldham Community Development Project, by Kanta Walker', *Oldham Committee for Community Relations* (May 1974), Relations SFI: FS L386/L387, Oldham Archives, Oldham, p. 1.
[84] Sue Bruley, 'Women's Liberation at the Grass Roots: a view from some English towns, c. 1968–1990', *Women's History Review*, vol. 25, no. 5 (2016), pp. 723-740, at p. 730.

courses on anything from women's rights to bricklaying'.[85] Funding was crucial for local centres to meet the varying needs of women and their structure was rooted in the principle of 'collective self-management'.[86] By the 1980s, Black and South Asian activists set up their own centres, such as Southall Black Sisters (SBS), which set up a centre for Asian women in 1982, after securing funding from Greater London Council. According to Natalie Thomlinson, the Labour-dominated GLC, under the leadership of Ken Livingston, distributed an unprecedented amount of funds to local community groups, some of which began as radical political collectives in the 1970s. SBS used their funding to hire three employees who worked in the centre.[87]

By the 1990s, the state had increasingly funded migrant women's initiatives, some of which directly supported many of my interviewees' long-term settlement and allowed them to live in Britain more comfortably. Throughout my time collecting testimony in Oldham and Middlesbrough, I met a handful of women who had taken on waged employment that specifically worked to support South Asian and Muslim migrant communities in their towns. This was often because they could transcend the language barrier that inhibited direct communication between local authorities and migrant groups. It was also because they had an understanding about the needs of their community which was born out of personal experience. Crucially, all the women I interviewed who had taken on this important and specific kind of work were younger women who had either migrated as children and teenagers or were born in the UK.

[85] Bruley, 'Women's Liberation at the Grass Roots', p. 729.
[86] Bruley, 'Women's Liberation at the Grass Roots', p. 730.
[87] Natalie Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England, 1968-1993* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 80-82. Also see: Bridget Lockyer, 'An Irregular Period? Participation in the Bradford Women's Liberation Movement', *Women's History Review*, vol. 22, no. 4 (2013), pp. 643-657, at pp. 649-650.

Women's centres and collectives in Oldham for migrant and South Asian women were necessary resources for those who required practical and emotional support as they navigated their long-term settlement in Britain; these centres and groups were heavily frequented at the time of the interviews. Given that I met women in Oldham at local community centres, I often conversed with those who were employed by the local council to work there; those who held positions of authority in the centres I visited were all British-Pakistani. Fauzia, for example, was the director of an association in Glodwick that was specifically for British-South Asian, British-Muslim and migrant women and their children. She told me she applied to work at the centre twenty years ago because she 'wanted to do something myself' as she had dedicated most of her time to her husband's business. After a drawn-out application process, she secured a job as a sessional worker at the association, which evolved into a community development role after another employee left. She took this opportunity to develop the centre into a place where women could access necessary services:

> I was working at the same time in Oldham College, I didn't have much experience but, uh, I did my courses in Oldham College and I was teaching there as well. Um, so I had some contacts at Oldham College. So, when they've given me the responsibility… there was nothing much going on in the centre besides two sewing sessions and children's art project... So, when she (an employee) left I took her role and…um, I went back to Oldham College and told them I, you know, I want some classes in the community. So, from there, then they started to do some classes, and I went to lifelong learning and we had some classes from there, and then there was no structure in the organisation, they had no, um, resources and

> they had the committee but, um, we needed somebody who can keep the accounts… so, then I met somebody and I brought her in to manage. [88]

Her perceptiveness and ingenuity took a small association, that started in a terraced house, and made it into a sophisticated organisation with various services catering to the long-term and short-term needs of women in the community. Their funding has primarily come from Oldham Council, which has given £157,846 to date.[89] However, Fauzia alluded to the ongoing and seemingly never-ending job of securing funds to keep the organisation afloat:

> I made links with, with social services, Oldham Council, Oldham College and they all started giving us the funds. So after that we never stopped, just carried on applying for funding, our main funder has been Oldham Council. Not now, they stopped three years ago. But Oldham Council, they supported us. Henry Smith, they supported us for nine years and they've given us funding again for three years. BBC Children in Need has been excellent, they've supported us. Lloyds TSB... all these big funders, without their support we wouldn't be here today. [90]

The organisation worked to practically equip women with skills that could benefit their employment prospects or their ability to perform everyday tasks with ease, such as offering accredited English classes and driving theory classes. Fauzia, as the director, was well respected by everyone I met and was fondly referred to as *baji,* meaning older sister. Her work as a leader and community organiser has had immeasurable positive consequences on the people I met.

[88] Fauzia, Author Interview (28/08/2019).
[89] Freedom of Information Request, Administrative History, Oldham Council (6/3/2020).
[90] Fauzia, Author Interview (28/08/2019).

Fauzia took the job because she wanted a career change, which manifested into a decades-long career supporting women who wanted a more comfortable, long-term settlement in Oldham. For Simran, however, her work as a translator and interpreter could be traced back to her childhood experiences:

> [Simran]: My parents were illiterate, they couldn't speak English. So when it came to the parents' evening, we were interpreting for them, by myself.
>
> [Interviewer]: What, what is that like, to take on the responsibility of being a translator, 'cause that, for me, that's an unusual position to put a child in, or to be in as a child.
>
> [Simran]: Yeah, but at the end of the day Mr Brown the German teacher was telling my mum that me and X were talking in the German class and everything and he's saying it bright red in the face and quite angry and I turned around and said to my mum and say 'yeah she's doing really, really well' (laughs)…how can he confirm what I've told her, do you understand, so I'm saying 'yeah mum he's told me I've done really, really well in German', so it's like (laughs).[91]

Her mum did learn the alphabet which helped when she ran her shop and, as already discussed earlier in the chapter, Simran used to help her mum with her savings circles. She believed seeing her mum work for twenty-three years as the owner of a clothes shop instilled in her the belief that women in her community working everyday outside the home was 'normal'; 'My mother… she's always instilled into us that be independent, don't rely on

[91] Simran, Author Interview (18/1/2020).

anyone….so it's my mum that's my role model, my greatest role model.' [92] Simran's experiences as a child, coping with her parents' illiteracy, affected her choices regarding waged work. She became a qualified languages teacher and interpreter, a wage-earning job that started when she moved to Middlesbrough in 1984. After having five children and obtaining various qualifications, which will be the focus of a later chapter, Simran gained her TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Another Language) qualification in 1998. In addition, she received a diploma in translating and interpretation:

> I knew Urdu and that and, when my younger daughter was born (in 1995) I was on maternity leave at the time and I've gone to see a friend…there's a centre, she used to work there, so I went to see her. I go, 'do you wanna go out for a meal' and she goes 'oh I'm going to this translating and interpreting class' and I say, 'where is it?' and she goes 'oh, so and so' so I said 'oh I'll come with you as well'. So that's how I started in that class, and you know they higher qualification, the diploma, that was in Bradford. So I was taking my younger children with me and my daughter was little at the time and I used to leave them with my mum and I used to do the diploma in Bradford….I used to take my sister-in-law with me 'cause I said 'Urdu's your first language, your English's really good, you've got your GCSE's' so I used to take her. Now she's got that qualification and she goes and does interpreting everywhere. [93]

Simran used her interpreting skills to earn a wage whilst also supporting women in Middlesbrough who needed these services as part of their long-term settlement. Soon after gaining her qualifications, she helped launch 'Stockton Interpreters' with other interpreters in the area, which later evolved into 'Everyday Language Solutions', a registered charity

[92] Simran, Author Interview (18/1/2020).
[93] Simran, Author Interview (18/1/2020).

offering interpreting services to businesses and organisations, such as the NHS and Crown Courts.[94] She was the voluntary chairperson of the organisation for thirteen years, 'encouraging women to come out of their homes and use their linguistic skills to gain employment'.[95] She also gained an accredited qualification to teach adults interpreting in a community environment. The benefits of Simran's work for migrant Pakistani women are significant; throughout her career, Simran has helped British-Pakistanis who required interpreters when interacting with their local authorities. She was integral in making sure members of the Pakistani community had a more comfortable settlement in Middlesbrough. Her decisions showed a drive and willingness to build upon the practices of translation familiar to her since childhood.

Both Fauzia and Simran suggested that empathy and ingenuity was a necessary part of building and maintaining trusting relationships with the South Asian women they were employed to support. Similarly, activist Amrit Wilson remembered that the women's activist group, Awaz, had to gain the support of community members and avoid alienating an older generation of Asian women:

> In Awaz we did try to analyse everything. So, for example, we did not feel that people should not drink or smoke for moral reasons. But we were also very conscious of the Asian community. We did not want to alienate them or separate ourselves in any way. So, on various occasions we did not drink or smoke. We wanted the support and trust of the older women in our communities because on a practical as well as an emotional level our struggles were often identical to theirs.[96]

[94] Everyday Language Solutions, 'About Us'. Available at: https://everydaylanguagesolutions.co.uk/about-us/ [Accessed: 2/11/20].
[95] Simran, Author Interview (18/1/2020).
[96] Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England,* p. 84.

For South Asian activists, it was difficult at times to 'critique their communities without either alienating their supporters or being accused of simply wanting to become westernised.'[97] Simran and Fauzia were successful in gaining the support of South Asian women who sought their services. Both women's ability to communicate effectively, as well as recognise where their efforts would be most useful, made them assets to their organisations as well as the councils who were, in part, employing them for their work. They were both younger women, who could move between various social settings with relative ease, compared to most older women I interviewed who spoke little English and were not afforded an extensive education.

Local councils were particularly aware that skilled Urdu and Punjabi interpreters were key to supporting growing Pakistani communities as they settled in Britain permanently. In Oldham, for example, a call for interpreters was made by the Social Services department in 1980, since, according to a report by the Oldham Council for Racial Equality, 'the greatest need for home helps in the Asian community is among young mothers and the elderly living alone with families abroad.'[98] It seemed, in this sense, that the plight of British-South Asian women in Oldham was too big to ignore, so funding was funnelled towards hiring Asian-language interpreters to work with the council. Published in the same newspaper on the same date, however, was an opinion piece which said 'with the proposed severe cuts in expenditure on education, it would be interesting to hear what, if any, cuts are planned for the multi-educational language centre at Greenhill School'.[99] The writer

[97] Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England,* p. 84.
[98] Oldham Evening Chronicle, 'Call for Asian Home Helps', *Oldham Evening Chronicle* (21st January 1980), Box 15, M232/15, File 22, Oldham Archives, Oldham.
[99] Oldham Evening Chronicle 'Language Centre Cuts?', *Oldham Evening Chronicle* (21st January 1980), Box 15, M232/15, File 22, Oldham Archives, Oldham.

stated that white children were being deprived of an essential education because teachers were spending their time with a small group of Asian pupils whose first language was not English, which they believed constituted inequality. The writer ended with 'why should these people constantly expect to be regarded as a special case?'[100] The debate surrounding language education and meeting the needs of a growing South Asian community were divisive in Oldham, particularly during times of austerity, such as in early 1980 when the UK was on the brink of the worst recession since the Second World War.[101] The local council's attention towards the language and training needs of British-Pakistanis had the potential to make life in Britain easier and more fulfilling, whilst concurrently instigating feelings of discontent and suspicion amongst those who did not see the value in using public funds for these initiatives. Despite their efforts to help Pakistani women reach their occupational and personal aspirations, there was a disconnect between these intentions and the questions some white residents had about why migrants needed extra support to be find work or gain qualifications. A subsequent chapter will further examine the relationship between Pakistani and white residents in Oldham and Middlesbrough.

Conclusion

Pakistani migrants built new networks of support as adults to facilitate a more comfortable settlement. In turn, women fostered meaningful friendships with other women that were emotionally and materially sustaining. The strategies to support one another changed over time and differed between places, as local Pakistani communities grew and local policies related to migrant settlement and community cohesion changed. For an older generation of

[100] Oldham Evening Chronicle 'Language Centre Cuts?', Box 15, M232/15, File 22.
[101] Joyanna Moy, 'Recent trends in unemployment and the labour force, 10 countries', *Monthly Labour Review* (1985), pp. 9-22, at p. 10.

migrants, being part of a network enabled them to learn from one another and support each other through the trauma of leaving home. Women's unpaid services were rooted in providing care and support for their community amid making home in places vastly different from what they had known. It was also, for some, a way in which they could cope with change, by occupying their time with activities outside of their domestic responsibilities. In this sense, women actively made choices that supported a more comfortable settlement and consequently built friendships rooted in support and affection; women were not passive actors in shaping how their lives would unfold after migration. Often, place determined who would be part of their network, with community spaces such as mosques facilitating long-term settlement, not only by allowing religious expression but also becoming places where community could celebrate and mourn together. These community ties have been actively sustained throughout many of my interviewees' lives.

The development of small acts of support into more formalised services was the next step in making home in Britain. Pakistani women sought to use their skills to offer services that made life in Britain easier. Across places and generations, women took on unpaid voluntary work and, as a result, benefited from the higher status and respect associated with religious work or money saving. To participate in unwaged, yet highly organised, work was an active choice women made. It is a significant part of British-Pakistani women's history of work yet does not conform to more recognisable or visible forms of formal, waged labour that took place outside the home.

Given the growth of the Pakistani community, it was inevitable that waged community work and council-sponsored jobs would become more commonplace. Certainly, women like Simran or Fauzia may not have conducted their waged work with an acute level of empathy or ingenuity had they not been part of the communities they were working to

support. A younger generation of women were able to financially contribute to their households whilst fulfilling their responsibilities towards other Pakistani members of their community, building on the groundwork of mutual support laid by an older generation.

Chapter 3: Experiences of Homeworking in Oldham

Homeworking, which is an individual 'doing paid employment in the home or domestic premise, for an employer, with little control over the way the work is done or the design of the product and no profits invested in the business' was a popular, yet underpaid, form of waged work amongst working-class women in Britain across the twentieth century.[1] Almost every woman I spoke to in Oldham was either a homeworker for the textile industry or their mother was a homeworker. However, only one woman in Middlesbrough did any form of homeworking. I argue that it is crucial to acknowledge the deeply exploitative practices adopted by employers to increase their profits whilst also recognising that women's everyday experiences amounted to more than the hours they sewed. Interviewees offered insights into how they navigated the dynamics between working as machinists, being mothers and active community members, as a means to secure for themselves and their families a more comfortable settlement. This overlooked part of women's experiences creates a more complicated picture that victimhood and labour exploitation alone cannot encapsulate.

This chapter will firstly examine the proliferation of homeworking amongst British-Pakistani women in Oldham. The reasons why women chose homeworking varied, although former homeworkers and their children remembered how their job financially supported their families and allowed them to take care of their children. I will then analyse how homeworking affected family relationships, given that waged work and caring co-existed in

[1] Jane Tate, 'The National Group on Homeworking- United Kingdom', in Ursula Hews (ed.), *Action Programmes for the Protection of Homeworkers: Ten Case Studies from Around the World* (Geneva: international Labour Organisation, 1995), p. 81.

the same space. Finally, I will analyse the role of activist campaigners in securing better rights for homeworkers. More specifically, I will highlight the role of South Asian community workers and activists who, by the 1990s, played a critical role in building connections with South Asian homeworkers that were often inaccessible to white, middle-class activists, largely because of language barriers.

To understand how women managed family, community and employment as part of their everyday experiences, it is crucial to consider why so many interviewees came to occupy a form of waged work that was one of the most underpaid in twentieth century Britain. It is necessary to situate women's status as manual labourers in the history of capitalist modernisation across twentieth century Britain, not least because the presence of South Asians in Britain was precisely catalysed by this process. The process of modernisation, as E.P Thompson argued in the context of the industrial revolution, resulted in economic exploitation and political oppression. Capitalist exploitation, which often entails a loss of status, the loss of leisure time and insecure wages, as well as monotonous, disciplined, long workdays, is a product of extracting the maximum amount of value from labourers and reducing workers into 'instruments' of economic growth.[2] The everyday experiences of homeworkers cannot, therefore, be disassociated from the exploitative, profit-driven practices that placed incredible demands on their time and effort.

The exploitative relationship between employers and workers takes different forms depending on the historical context.[3] During the mid-twentieth century modernisation of cotton production, increased global competition changed how the textiles industry recruited its workers when it became apparent that the cheapest labour could be found in new

[2] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class,* Reprint Edition (London: Penguin Classics, 2013), pp. 221-223.
[3] Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p. 222.

commonwealth nations. Those employed in Mirpur were, in many respects, victims of modernisation. Where once families could earn a wage by selling produce from their land or independently selling services, the physical destruction of long-standing communities after the creation of Mangla Dam, as part of Pakistan's development into a modern industrial nation, made these enterprises less viable. Poverty and the loss of work made the migration from destitute Mirpur to the mill towns of Lancashire a matter of survival, for men and their families. The result of their employment in Oldham's mills was a loss of control over their work and an exploitation rooted in racism, given that South Asian men often did the labour white workers refused.

Since women were primarily seen as caregivers, rather than labourers, their access to work was not a serious point of consideration when places of settlement were chosen. Instead, women lived in places where their husbands and fathers had settled to find work. Women who settled in Oldham had greater access to employment in the textile industry, which was not the case in Middlesbrough. Homeworking in Oldham primarily involved the manufacturing of clothes, for which women would get paid pennies per item sewed. To participate in this kind of work required a level of adaptation that, so far in the recorded experiences of Oldham's British-Pakistanis, has been solely ascribed to men who had to navigate exploitative forms of factory labour, redundancy and ventures into self-employment.[4] British-Pakistani women in Oldham equally needed to reimagine what working and family life could look like, with many turning to homeworking as a way to economically support their families whilst also fulfilling their domestic responsibilities.

[4] See, for example: Kalra, *From Textile Mills to Taxi Ranks*.

What emerged from the testimony was the individual voices of those who were mothers, wives, daughters and community members, not just exploited machinists. The narrative of victimhood is, therefore, a far too simplistic way to frame this form of working life. A glance at newspaper articles would have you believe that homeworkers were waiting to be 'saved'.[5] In addition, much of the existing scholarship about British-South Asian communities, by academics such as Virinder Kalra or Pnina Werbner, who specifically researched Lancashire's working-class British-South Asians, has not analysed what motivated women to do this work and how homeworking shifted the demands on their time. In turn, the idea that migrant women were solely victims of globalisation and economic growth remains largely unchallenged. Migrant homeworkers found ways to resist, and amid testimony detailing how women made day-to-day life as manageable as possible, there were stories of neighbourly support and friendship. The history of homeworking in the twentieth century is not robust enough to account for my interviewees' personal experiences of being homeworkers.

Economic change and the rise of homeworking amongst Oldham's Pakistani women

For many South Asian women, work within the factory was not as readily available as it was for men of the community, in part because women also had to consider how their waged work would affect their capacity to do housework. Homeworking, therefore, was a way women could earn money and fulfil their domestic responsibilities. When the Oldham Community Development Project conducted a survey of ethnic minority groups and adult

[5] Our Own Reporter, 'Homeworker Paid 1p Per Hour', *The Guardian* (7th December 1976), p. 8; Marie Brown, 'Cracker trap: Sweated Labour, an alarming report on the plight of homeworkers, is published today', *The Guardian* (19th December 1974), p. 11; Liz Bisset and Ursula Huws, *Sweated Labour: Homeworking in Britain Today* (London: Low Pay Unit, 1985), p. 4.

education in the early 1970s, 60 percent of women said they sewed at home as homeworkers.[6] By the 1980s, when homeworking reached its peak, according to the Analytica for the Employment department, 1 in 10 employers employed homeworkers in some capacity.[7] This coincided with the decline of traditional industries in Britain (such as cotton manufacturing) recession in the early 1980s and the restructuring of the textiles industry to meet the demands for cheap garments. It is important to note that robust, reliable statistics about the employment of homeworkers that cover the period from 1962-2002 do not exist. There is no central register for homeworkers nor does the census indicate how many people worked from home as employees of larger corporations.[8] In fact, homeworking has often been 'off the books', with better paid homeworkers featuring in official statistics.[9]

Corporations recognised that working-class women, who needed to work from home to take care of their families, would undertake homeworking despite the low wages. Jane Tate, the founder of the West Yorkshire Homeworking Group (now known as Homeworkers Worldwide), a Leeds-based, not-for-profit organisation that has campaigned for improvements in working conditions for homeworkers since the 1970s, described why homeworking became prevalent in textile towns such as Oldham, using the fashion corporation Benneton as an example. In 1991, when Tate wrote her paper, Benneton was the world's largest consumer of cotton. To stay competitive, large companies such as this reorganised and subcontracted production to smaller firms. Benneton had decentralised 80 percent of its production work by sub-contracting smaller firms who employed

[6] Bruen, 'Ethnic Minority Groups and the Place of Adult Education', CDP/11/17, p. 9.
[7] Tate, 'The National Group on Homeworking- United Kingdom', p. 81.
[8] Jane Tate, *A Penny for a Bag: Campaigning on Homework* (Batley: Yorkshire and Humberside Low Pay Unit, 1990), p. 7.
[9] Tate, *A Penny for a Bag,* p. 7.

homeworkers as a source of cheaper labour. In turn, the corporation could remain highly competitive and reduce their need for expensive, large-scale factory manufacturing. Smaller sub-contracted companies were responsible for employing homeworkers and the overhead costs would be covered by the workers.[10] In addition, sick pay and holiday entitlements were rare and homeworkers were ineligible for pensions.[11]

However, Tate's example marked a somewhat new way in which Pakistani homeworkers were being recruited. Before the 1980s, it was common for homeworkers to be employed by smaller enterprises and family-run businesses who used this form of cheap labour to grow. Pnina Werbner's research about Pakistanis in Manchester illustrated how an older generation of migrants from Pakistan became clothes manufacturers by the 1970s.[12] These smaller-scale fashion garment manufacturers had to respond to changes in trends, meaning rapid and flexible decision-making processes were necessary for success. Labour was required, rather than mechanisation, and cheap labour allowed family establishment to remain competitive. 'Pakistani women work for Pakistani manufacturers', Werbner said, 'either as home machinists or in the work premise most manufacturers have'.[13] Similarly to Jane Tate's example about Benneton, small manufacturers were not employing unionised workers. However, homeworkers were not cut off from those employing them when they worked for family-run businesses. In fact, families were often regarded as units of production, with each household member expected to contribute to the family firm

[10] Jane Tate, 'Homework in Europe: A paper for the working group on economic and social cohesion' (November 1991), 7SHR/X/01, File 2, Women's Library, London School of Economics, London, pp. 8-9.
[11] Outworkers News, 'The Broader Picture', *West Yorkshire Homeworkers Unit* (no date), 7SHR/X/16, Box FL 685, Folder 1, Women's Library, London School of Economics, London, p. 57.
[12] Werbner, *The Migration Process,* p. 54.
[13] Werbner, *The Migration Process,* p. 55.

depending on their abilities. This form of self-sustenance increased profitability and women undertook homeworking to do their part.[14]

Homeworking for the textile industry required a vast amount of skill, patience and capability. Most interviewees learned how to sew from other women in their family or community, usually before their migration. The only instance of formal training came from Razia. She migrated to Birmingham in 1979, aged thirteen, with her mother and three brothers. She learned the basics of sewing in Pakistan and, upon her relocation to England, was given the opportunity to advance her abilities by participating in a training course organised by a local factory in 1983. This coincided with the implementation of the Conservative government's Youth Training Scheme (YTS) in 1983, which provided training on the job for 16 and 17 year old school leavers. Whilst Razia could not provide many details about whether the training was government-sponsored, it is possible that Razia took part in a YTS, given her age at the time and that 2,896 students were part of a YTS in Birmingham by November 1983.[15] Razia cited word of mouth as the way she got her job when she moved to Oldham after her marriage. Her neighbour recommended her for the job and she became one of four other women sewing garments on her street.[16] Similarly, Jabeela, who migrated in 1969 and settled in Bradford as a child, was encouraged by her parents to do homeworking at the age of fifteen. They helped her find this work, since many other women in the community were sewing for a living.[17]

[14] Werbner, *The Migration Process,* p. 58.
[15] Hansard, *Parliamentary Debate*, 'Youth Training Scheme', vol 80 cc337-47W, at cc377 (10th June 1985, House of Commons). Available at*:* https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/written-answers/1985/jun/10/youth-training-scheme [Accessed 2/2/21].
[16] Razia, Author Interview (17/7/2019).
[17] Jabeela, Author Interview (17/7/2019).

Whilst women were expected to undertake most of the household responsibilities, their unemployment was not an option for some families. Poverty meant their wage was crucial in ensuring there was enough food for extended families and that bills were paid, particularly if men faced redundancy. The consequences of economic turbulence in Oldham are documented in Virinder Kalra's ethnography about Pakistani men and their changes in employment, work and economic status.[18] The restructuring of the British economy saw a shift in focus from manufacturing to service industries. As a result, Oldham changed irrevocably, with former mill workers, particularly from the South Asian community, choosing self-employment in the face redundancy and their inability to secure limited, formal employment.[19] The recession of the early 1980s, in particular, made manual and semi-skilled work acutely susceptible to redundancy; it is no coincidence, then, that homeworking grew exponentially in West Yorkshire and Lancashire during this period.[20] British-Pakistani women's response to Oldham's economic change, however, was missing in this ethnography. Kalra stated that 'the experiences presented and the narratives offered are solely about men. In this regard there remains an unwritten story of the migration, settlement and labour processes that effected (Azad) Kashmiri women in this same period.'[21]

Women's wages went directly towards supporting the household, although the extent to which they controlled where their money went varied from person to person. Some women, like Jabeela, put their wage into the pooled income of the household and their husbands or parents would decide how it was spent. Others like Razia kept the money

[18] Kalra, *From Textile Mills to Taxi Ranks*, p. 2.
[19] Kalra, *From Textile Mills to Taxi Ranks*, pp. 2-3.
[20] Tate, 'The National Group on Homeworking- United Kingdom', p. 81. Also see: Sheila Allen and Carol Wolkowitz, *Homeworking: Myths and Realities* (London: Macmillan Education, 1987), p. 3.
[21] Kalra, *From Textile Mills to Taxi Ranks*, p. 28.

and decided where it would go, often using it to buy toys and clothes for their children. Pat Lewis and Rabia Patel, in a pioneering project about the experiences of Black and Asian West Yorkshire homeworkers- who were interviewed in their first language- highlighted that need often outweighed want when homeworkers decided how to spend their wage.[22] This was because, according to a 1982 PSI survey *Black and White Britain*, white men's median wage per week was on average £18 more than Asian men's wages.[23]

South Asian homeworkers were more likely to make less money and work more hours compared to white homeworkers. Annie Phizacklea and Carol Wolkowitz's comparative analysis of Black, South Asian and white homeworkers' experiences in Warwick in 1990 suggested that although there was an overlap in their low pay and lack of power, there were still contextual differences between homeworkers that must be accounted for. For example, South Asian interviewees were more likely to work as homeworkers full-time. They had on average more children, three compared to their white counterparts' two. Their family income was lower as white households made on average £184 per week when excluding homeworking wages, compared to Black and South Asian participants' £146 per week.[24] The authors' stated that 100 percent of Asian women felt there was a lot of pressure on themselves as homeworkers, compared to 38 percent of white manual workers, highlighting the significance of Asian women's economic contribution to the function of the household, as they negotiated unreasonably high productivity standards, poor working conditions and very low wages. [25]

[22] Lewis and Patel, 'With one Voice', HWW 3, Box 12, pp. 3-5.
[23] Colin Brown, *Black and White Britain: The Third PSI Survey* (Aldershot: Avebury Publishing, 1985), p. 228.
[24] Annie Phizacklea and Carol Wolkowitz, 'Homeworking in the 90s: A case study in Coventry (UK)', *University of Warwick and the World Congress of Sociology Madrid* (1990), 7SHR/X/16, Box FL 685, Women's Library, London School of Economics, London, pp. 25-28.
[25] Phizacklea and Wolkowitz, 'Homeworking in the 90s', 7SHR/X/16, Box FL 685, pp. 25-28.

A second-generation interviewee I met in Oldham, Iqra, shared testimony about her mother's work, which exemplified the strategies used by mothers to make sure their children were cared for whilst simultaneously trying to make ends meet. During a group interview with women whose mothers sewed as homeworkers when they were growing up, the conversation was often steeped in nostalgia and humour. When I asked Iqra about her mother's work, she said:

[Iqra]: You know what my mum did, my mum was sewing little jumpers

[Noor]: Yeah

[Seema]: T-Shirts?

[Iqra]: No, jumpers. My brother was only small and there were two arms left and no top so my mum just sewed the two arms together and made him a pyjama

(Women laugh)

[Iqra]: (laughs) we were so poor back then. I still remember it (laughs)

[Interviewer]: So, was every, was every woman that you knew sewing?

[Noor]: Most of them

Iqra linked the necessity to be resourceful directly to her family's poverty. It was telling that this was what she remembered when she thought about her mother's work, a singular moment that encapsulated the way in which families found ways to cope. The reaction of the other women in the room suggested that they were familiar with the conditions that framed Iqra's testimony.

To settle in Oldham meant access to types of work that were simply not available to women in heavy-industry Middlesbrough. Specifically, women in Middlesbrough could not apply for homeworking jobs to earn a wage and take care of their families, like women in Oldham could. Generally, scholarship about British work and pay in the twentieth century has significantly undermined the importance of regional variation in the history of women's labour. Balo, who migrated in 1969, was the only women who did homeworking in Middlesbrough. Whilst she did not label this work as 'homeworking', the system she described was a small scale, cottage industry version of what was happening in Oldham. She said:

> [Balo]: When I came from Pakistan, I worked for the Khawaja's.[26] They used to drop if off at the house and pick it up. Clothes. And they used to give me pennies for it.
>
> [Friend]: No pounds back then, just pennies.
>
> [Balo]: Pennies for unsewn clothes that we used to sew.

[26] The Khawaja's were a family, known for being some of the first Pakistanis to settle in Middlesbrough. Jameela, an interviewee for this study, was a member of this family.

Balo said she did this work for a month soon after she arrived. There was no additional information regarding whether her employers were subcontracted by a bigger business or whether other women were involved. These specific details were often missing in all the reminiscence about homeworking, reflecting the significant lack of information that was shared by employers to their employees. This was done on purpose, to keep exploitative homeworking invisible.[27] Balo's testimony indicated that employers in Middlesbrough were ready to exploit women's needs to economically contribute to their household and take care of their children, although this occurred at a much bigger scale in Oldham. In Oldham, changes in the local textile industry meant there was a demand for seamstresses and machinists, resulting in the mass-employment of Pakistani women. Poverty meant that migrant working-class and white working-class families alike had to find ways to stay afloat and homeworking was often the answer.

Homeworking and family relationships

From the moment of their arrival, women's waged labour and caring responsibilities became an indispensable part of sustaining the household. Home became the space in which both waged work and caring responsibilities co-existed, making every day a relentless balancing act. For homeworkers and their kin, it presented a set of challenges that required newly imagined ways of living. Women had to negotiate the often-inharmonious relationship between waged work and care, which demanded women's physical labour and mental exertion. Managing this, as mothers, wives and community members, required

[27] Shelley Pennington and Belinda Westover, *A Hidden Workforce: Homeworkers in England 1850-1985* (London: Macmillan Education 1989), p. 162.

homeworkers to organise their time and to employ practices that helped them fulfil their daily obligation, such as taking their children to school or maintaining a clean home.

The reasons women chose homeworking have, in previous research, revolved around the need to care for their children. In Naila Kabeer's study of British-Bangladeshi homeworkers in Tower Hamlets, for example, the most cited reason for choosing homeworking was that factory labour was often incompatible with caring obligations.[28] Mothers needed to find ways to manage paid labour with taking care of their children. In Sheila Allen and Carol Wolkowitz's small-scale study of West Yorkshire Pakistani homeworkers, ten women cited childcare as the main reason for choosing homeworking.[29] Inaccessible and costly childcare was recognised by activists as one of the primary issues to rectify if homeworkers were to have the opportunity to move into mainstream employment.[30]

It was no surprise, then, that amongst my interviewees from Oldham, stories about women managing their responsibilities as mothers, community members and employees were commonplace. Jabeela, for example, worked as a homeworker for twenty-five years in Bradford and Oldham. During that time, she had four children. She said her ex-husband, the father of her children, joined her from Pakistan in 1987 but, after a few years, decided to move back to Pakistan where he lived for fifteen years until their divorce. Given that she was the sole carer for her children during this time, she continued with homeworking. In addition, Maneeza found sewing compatible with caring for her family, particularly her husband who worked in a mill. She said, 'husbands did this kind of (factory) work' and that

[28] Kabeer, *The Power to Choose,* pp. 237-238.
[29] Allen and Wolkowitz, *Homeworking: Myths and Realities*, p. 82.
[30] International Conference for Homebased Workers, 'Homeworking Conference: Friday' (1992), Box 7SHR/X/01, file 1, document 6, Women's Library, London School of Economics, London.

her responsibility after his nightshift was to have breakfast ready when he returned home, often with his friends who had been working the same shift.[31]

Whilst homeworkers alluded to the difficulty of juggling work, familial responsibilities and social obligations, it was their children that candidly reflected on the demands placed on their mother's lives. Specifically, they offered new ways in which to understand how mothers juggled their multiple paid and unpaid responsibilities. Noor gave a glimpse of what this looked like in her testimony:

> We lived in poverty, they didn't earn much so the women had to help out and they were superwomen! They made the food, they had five, six kids each, I mean they had cloth nappies, toilets outside, um, and I think, I, I was only 9, 10 you know and we used to pull out the stool and help make roti at a very young age.[32]

The other women in the group agreed in unison, remembering their responsibilities of washing clothes in the bath by hand and picking up the pieces of thread. I asked whether they resented the need to do domestic work whilst their mothers sewed. The resounding answer was 'no':

> [Iqra]: It was just normal innit
>
> [Shabna]: We had no options we…

[31] Maneeza, Author Interview (17/7/2019).
[32] Noor, Author Interview (28/8/2019).

> [Iqra]: I think, I think that's not just an Asian thing, obviously for white people it was the same for them
>
> [Noor]: No, no I think we had a hard childhood, but we had a happy childhood 'cause we were outside playing…
>
> [Iqra]: If we told our kids these stories they'd be thinking 'oh my word'…[33]

Iqra recognised that her experiences were similar to those of white working-class children she grew up with. The accessibility of homeworking was a shared experience between white and South Asian women.[34] Poverty in Oldham pushed migrant and non-migrant women to take on severely underpaid work, often because other work was simply not available in places like Oldham and childcare was too expensive to make working outside the home possible.[35] This overlap is noteworthy because, often times, 'cultural constraints' are cited as the reason why many Pakistani and Bangladeshi women partook in homeworking, without recognising that culture has a tremendous capacity to change and is not an imagined set of static customs that have supposedly been exported from South Asia. For example, the Community Development Project survey of migrant communities in Oldham stated that women did not work outside the home because their husbands did not permit it and, when interviewing five adolescent Pakistani girls who had left school, described them as accepting 'this confinement to the home quite calmly'.[36] There was little space for the social and economic factors motivating these responses, the suggestion being that a 'very

[33] Iqra, Shabna and Noor, Author Interview (20/9/2019).
[34] Allen and Wolkowitz, *Homeworking: Myths and Realities*, p. 81.
[35] Tate, 'Homework in Europe', 7SHR/X/01, File 2, pp. 13-14.
[36] Bruen, 'Ethnic Minority Groups and the Place of Adult Education', CDP/11/17, p. 9.

different culture' is responsible for the decision-making of this community.[37] The same paper stated that 'paki' was generally used to describe South Asian members of the Glodwick community, yet the link between racism and women choosing to work at home was not made.[38] Nor was a link made between women's limited work choices and the declining local economy that made the creation of a government-funded Community Development Project in the area necessary.[39] For working- class people in places like Oldham, the prevalence of poverty resulted in homeworking becoming the occupation of both migrant and non-migrant working-class women. This meant that, as children, Iqra and her white friends had a shared experience of watching their mothers work and helping with their domestic responsibilities.

The daughters of homeworkers highlighted the long hours women sewed and the ways in which their mothers managed this with domestic work. I asked how many hours their mothers sewed and how they would fit it around school drop offs and looking after infants:

[Shabna]: We used to come back from school and help them (laughs)

[Interviewer]: Oh gosh

[Noor]: We would hear sewing machines ALL the time, like I remember my mum…

[Iqra]: I think it was the time wasn't it?

[37] Bruen, 'Ethnic Minority Groups and the Place of Adult Education', CDP/11/17, p. 10
[38] Bruen, 'Ethnic Minority Groups and the Place of Adult Education', CDP/11/17, p. 7.
[39] Imagine North-East, 'Community Development projects (CDP's)'. Available at: http://www.imaginenortheast.org/national-and-local-policy-the-cdps/ [Accessed 9/7/20]

Noor described falling asleep to the sound of the sewing machine, and Iqra suggested that this was a common experience during the 1980s and 1990s. Iqra, who grew up in the 1980s, remembered a time when homeworking was potentially at its most prevalent, nationally, as a form of employment.[40] Stockpiles of garments and the sound of sewing machines were the hallmarks of these women's childhood experiences. Homeworking and the home became one in the same:

> [Iqra]: They used to get 'maal'[41]
>
> [Noor]: Maal (laughs)
>
> [Shabna]: Yeah! That's what they used to call it, 'maal'
>
> [Noor]: We used to get cushion covers, I remember we used to sit there, mum used to sit there and we used to turn them inside out
>
> [Shabna]: We used to pull the thread of things and, you know
>
> [Noor]: The knickers, oh the knickers
>
> (A few women agree and laugh in the background)

[40] Tate, 'The National Group on Homeworking- United Kingdom', p. 81.
[41] 'Maal' generally means a substantial volume of items, often associated with messiness.

[Noor]: Knickers everywhere (laughs)

Their descriptions of childhood memories, where the work of their mothers was almost inescapable, vividly illustrated how sewing and family life became a tangled web. The lack of space meant literally living with work. Whilst these memories were steeped in nostalgia, the difficulty of women managing this was still palpable.

Some women chose to become homeworkers once their children were older and their time was more flexible. Whilst some women were happy to describe their work and pay, others were reluctant to call homeworking 'work' at all, given that they could sew and take part in family life simultaneously. This was particularly apparent when I spoke to Nusrat, who migrated to Oldham in the mid-1970s. She was hesitant to divulge details about homeworking when we began talking. My approach, to collect life histories, meant she could spend as much or as little time discussing her paid work. When I asked if she worked, she said 'I couldn't, there was just housework, there was no working outside the home.' I then asked if she did machine work, like several women I had talked to previously. She said 'I did but a lot later (after migration). When the kids were older. I did it for 10 years.' Her experience was slightly different, in that she did not take on homeworking to look after her children. Rather, Nusrat took on this work to contribute to the household income and focus her time on other activities since her children were independent. To say 'there was just housework' was significant. It suggested that she did not see her sewing as formal work or a notable skill, instead combining it with the other household responsibilities. The labour her husband undertook at the local cotton mill seemed to be the type of work that came to mind when I asked about her employment history.[42]

[42] Nusrat, Author Interview (16/8/2019).

For some families, women were the breadwinners, although this did not necessarily mean that domestic responsibilities were shared more equally between women and unemployed men. Razia made this clear when she described how her husband, after his redundancy, began working with her to help fulfil her sewing demands. In a passing statement she said, 'I got him on the work too because he was at home'.[43] It echoed the experiences of Sarfraz Manzoor's mother and sister in his autobiography about life in the Pakistani-dominated area of Bury Park in Luton. His mother learned how to sew clothes in Pakistan as a means to support her family and her husband was adamant that she replicate this form of work six months after her migration.[44] Manzoor's father's redundancy from the Vauxhall car factory in 1986, the biggest employer in Luton, meant his mother's sewing became the primary wage of the household.[45] Men's redundancy meant women had to juggle being carers and the primary breadwinner of the family, often with great difficulty.[46] The inaccessibility of the very work that brought Pakistani men to Britain made women's employment all the more vital.

Legislative Failures and the Rise of Activist Campaigns

Examining women's testimony about how they managed the demands of their employers with the needs of their families revealed that, across the period, legislation did not protect homeworkers from exploitative work practices. The Health and Safety at Work etc Act of 1974 stated that the duty to protect the welfare and safety of workers was contingent on

[43] Razia, Author Interview (17/7/2019).
[44] Sarfraz Manzoor, *Greetings from Bury Park: Race, Religion and Rock 'n' Roll* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2007), p. 19.
[45] Manzoor*, Greetings from Bury Park,* p. 36.
[46] See: Todd, *The People: The Rise and Fall of the Working Class*, pp. 329-332; Heather Joshi, 'The Changing Form of Women's Economic Dependency', in Heather Joshi (ed.), *The Changing Population of Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), pp. 157-176.

what was 'reasonably practicable…it shall be for the accused to prove (as the case may be) that it was not practicable or not reasonably practicable to do more than was in fact done to satisfy the duty or requirement'.[47] It became clear, during national debates about the status of homeworkers, that some political figures believed employers had done what was necessary to protect these invisible workers. Activists argued otherwise.

According to Sheila Allen and Carol Wolkowitz, the shifting image of home-based workers was one often rooted in their 'atypical' working lives, given that they worked from home, their wage was supposedly 'pin money' and they could fit work around other responsibilities, such as childcare. This formed the basis of the argument that these were not real workers.[48] The effort to collect empirical data and record the experiences of homeworkers across the early 1970s, however, began to dismantle the stereotype of homeworking as a supplement to the income of employed men. In 1973, the Commission on Industrial Relations was the first to reveal its minimal findings on the status of homeworkers. Their report focussed on the efficacy of five wage councils and found that some homeworkers were earning £8.20 after working a 40-hour week.[49] The Pin, Hook and Eye and Snap Fastener Wage Council was responsible for determining the minimum wages of textile homeworkers. Whilst the report recommended the abolishment of three of the five wage councils, due to their marginal relevance, Maurice Macmillan, Secretary of State for Employment, recommended that the Pin, Hook and Eye and Snap Fastener Wage Council should be restructured to solely include homeworkers and the determination of their pay

[47] Gov.uk, 'The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Provision as to Offences, Section 40'. Available at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37/section/40 [Accessed 10/7/20].
[48] Allen and Wolkowitz, *Homeworking: Myths and Realities*, p. 59.
[49] Peter Cole, 'Macmillan Reacts to Homeworkers' Survey', *The Guardian* (17th October 1973), p. 7.

rates.[50] This report catalysed further data collection on homeworkers, the poorest paid workers in Britain.[51]

A year later, the Low Pay Unit was the first activist group to account for the severity of the crisis over homeworkers pay and work conditions through the collection of empirical data and testimony. The pamphlet *Sweated Labour*, published in 1974, amplified the debate created by the Commission on Industrial Relations report and by the Liberal Party in Nottingham, who had improved the pay of lace outworkers two years prior.[52] The report found that the vast majority of women had no choice but to be homeworkers, given their caring responsibilities and economic disadvantage.[53] For the first time in over fifty years, the plight of homeworkers was no longer invisible.

As the chapter will later show, activist work pushed to galvanise support for legislative change to legally protect homeworkers, although they were fighting against the perception that earning a minimal wage from home whilst undertaking domestic responsibilities was a privilege rather than exploitative. The earliest step towards legislative protections for homeworkers was the Homeworkers Protection Bill of 1979, introduced by Labour MP Frank White. The bill provided a legal definition for homeworking in order to differentiate these workers from those who worked from home 'under different sets of relationships.'[54] Members of the Conservative government, however, did not believe

[50] Andrew Macleod, 'Wages Councils', *Industrial Law Journal*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1974), pp. 60–61, at p. 60.
[51] See: Our Own Reporter, 'Homeworker Paid 1p Per Hour', p. 8.
[52] Brown, 'Cracker trap', p. 11.
[53] Brown, 'Cracker trap', p. 11. Also see: Bissett and Hews, *Sweated Labour*, pp. 10-11.
[54] Sheila Allen and Carol Wolkowitz, 'The Control of Women's Labour: The Case of Homeworking', *Feminist Review*, no. 22 (1986), pp. 25-51, at p. 27.

homeworkers needed special attention.[55] The defeat of this bill, which aimed to regulate work conditions and improve the status of homeworkers, was detrimental.[56]

However, the fight for legislative protection was kept alive by MPs who represented constituencies where homeworking was too widespread to ignore. In 1989, Labour MP for Halifax, Alice Mahon, made the case for the registration of homeworkers and the machines and materials they used. This was in accordance with the recommendations made in the 1981 Select Committee Report on Homeworking which had been largely ignored because, at the time of Mahon's speech, homeworkers were still not actively protected by health and safety regulation. This was irrespective of the fact that an estimated 10 percent of all clothing production took place within the home.[57] Mahon stated that exposure to harmful chemicals in confined spaces, as well as health difficulties that accompanied long hours of intricate sewing work, were some of the difficulties faced by workers, who covered their own overhead costs and worked for 'appalling' wages:

> One west Yorkshire company uses 1,200 hand knitters, and a Huddersfield firm says that its home workers contribute £3·5 million to the company's annual turnover. That is big business. The managing director of that Huddersfield company says that his firm chooses to put work out because of the advantages of flexibility, cheapness and a reduced need for space. All that firm's outworkers are women and 95 percent of them are from ethnic

[55] Bissett and Hews, *Sweated Labour*, pp. 10-11.
[56] Allen and Wolkowitz, *Homeworking: Myths and Realities*, p. 4. Also see: Bissett and Hews, *Sweated Labour*, p. 4.
[57] Hansard, *Parliamentary Debate*, 'Health and Safety of Homeworkers', vol. 153, c. 387 (17th May 1989, House of Commons). Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1989-05-17/debates/8c7e4148-8e3c-4d5b-9a0a-1059ae85e3e6/HealthAndSafetyOfHomeWorkers [Accessed: 10/7/20].

> minorities who may not be well equipped to organise or to find their way around health and safety legislation in order to improve conditions.[58]

In response to Mahon's statement that women did this work out of necessity, to economically provide whilst also taking care of family members, Conservative MP for Elmet, Spencer Batiste said:

> Freedom and flexibility were their hallmarks and home workers expressed great satisfaction at that. Dissatisfaction at home working was low and there was a low level of union membership. Given the typical profile of the home worker, I see no case for giving statutory rights to factory inspectors to walk into people's homes.[59]

Batiste's conclusions were solely drawn from Catherine Hakim's 1981 survey, in which migrant women were not referenced.[60] The assumption that homeworking was satisfactory because it gave women the flexibility to earn whilst also fulfilling caring obligations undermined the profound difficulty and exploitative practices associated with this work. In addition, citing union membership as evidence of low satisfaction amongst homeworkers is a tenuous argument, at best. The historical exclusion of women from trade unionism, particularly the exclusion of those working in domestic or service industries, is well-documented. Sarah Boston argued that women first had to resist the exclusionary practices

[58] Hansard, *Parliamentary Debate*, 'Health and Safety of Homeworkers', vol. 153, c. 389 (17th May 1989, House of Commons). Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1989-05-17/debates/8c7e4148-8e3c-4d5b-9a0a-1059ae85e3e6/HealthAndSafetyOfHomeWorkers [Accessed: 10/7/20].
[59] Hansard, *Parliamentary Debate*, 'Health and Safety of Homeworkers', vol. 153, c. 397 (17th May 1989, House of Commons). Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1989-05-17/debates/8c7e4148-8e3c-4d5b-9a0a-1059ae85e3e6/HealthAndSafetyOfHomeWorkers [Accessed: 10/7/20].
[60] See: Catherine Hakim, *Employers' Use of Outwork: A Study using the 1980 Workplace Industrial Relations Survey and the 1981 National Survey of Homeworking* (London: Department of Employment, 1985).

of white, male trade union officials so that they could be seen as equal members, before then fighting against employer exploitation.[61] Between 1964 and 1970, 70 percent of new union members were women, given the exponential rise of women's employment in public sector work.[62] By 1979, for example, four million women were public sector workers. [63] However, for those working in service industries or domestic work, trade union membership was lower, since traditional methods of recruitment, such as visiting places of work with large numbers of potential members, were difficult to apply in home-based work settings.

Working from home and taking care of their families meant homeworkers were not considered 'real' workers and, despite their abhorrent pay and long working hours, did not receive trade union support. There are notable examples of British-South Asian women's workplace activism and the failure of trade unions in supporting their demands for better pay and improved working conditions. For example, between 1972 and 1974, 400 South Asian (predominantly women) workers went on strike in the East Midlands, demanding a pay rise of £5 and better paying knitting jobs, which were often given to white workers. Those on strike described how they were not allowed to wear saris to work and were bullied in the workplace. However, the National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers deemed the strike unofficial, despite the legal ruling that their employer had breached the Race Relations Act.[64] There are many other examples of strikes led by South Asian women that were undermined by trade unions in the 1970s and 1980s. Each case exemplified the historical failure of trade unions in meeting the needs of low paid, exploited migrant women

[61] Sarah Boston, *Women Workers and the Trade Unions* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1987).
[62] Helen McCarthy, 'Gender Inequality', in Pat Thane (ed.), *Unequal Britain: Equalities in Britain since* 1945 (London, New York: Continuum, 2010), p. 111.
[63] Pat Thane, *Divided Kingdom: A History of Britain, 1900-Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 326
[64] Jonathan Moss, *Women, Workplace Protest and Identity in England, 1968-85* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), p. 46.

workers and the powerful ways in which women chose to organise.[65] The activist Jane Tate argued that, by 1985, the Trade Union Congress (TUC) had become more involved in supporting the campaigns to improve conditions and pay for homeworkers.[66] The TUC offered policy proposals on homeworking in 1985, targeted towards improving union action and government legislation. The most striking proposal was 'Union[s] should seek to achieve employee status for homeworkers.'[67] This statement highlighted that the root cause of homeworker exploitation was that they were not regarded as employees and, therefore, were excluded from legislation that ensured a safe work environment and adequate wages.

The political apathy towards protecting homeworkers rights through legislative changes continued into the 1990s. On 20th June 1996, the International Labour Organisation adopted proposals to improve the working conditions of homeworkers internationally and promoted the implementation of national policies that guaranteed the same treatment between homeworkers and other wage earners. The Homework Convention of 1996 (C177) ensured homeworkers had the right to organise, fair renumeration, occupational safety, access to training and maternity protection. The ILO also urged its members to include homeworkers in labour statistics and inspections so that employers could no longer allow homeworkers to use unsafe substances or work with dangerous machinery.[68] Despite the Homework Convention of 1996 creating a new international standard for the protection of homeworkers, the majority of whom are women, the UK did not ratify the convention,

[65] Moss, *Women, Workplace Protest and Identity in England,* pp. 45-48.
[66] Tate, *A Penny for a Bag,* p. 104.
[67] Tate, *A Penny for a Bag,* p. 114.
[68] ILO, 'C177- Home Work Convention 1996 (No. 177)' (20th June 1996). Available at: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312322 [Accessed: 1/6/21].

despite pledges to do so in 1997 and 2000.[69] Activist work was necessary given the gap in legislative protections for homeworkers.

The growth of activism towards the advancement of homeworkers' rights became necessary in light of the national standstill in implementing legislation which protected homeworkers. The sheer number of organisations in places such as Rochdale, Calderdale and Bradford underscored the prevalence of homeworkers' maltreatment and the importance of activists to deliver support missing in national legislation. This swell of localised activity started with the establishment of the Leicester Outwork group in the early 1970s. The organisation was funded by Leicester City and County council, who collaborated with the outwork group to give homeworkers legal advice and fund support groups.[70] This was the longest running and best funded activist group, which worked to address the grievances of workers in the hosiery industry.[71] Some of their more successful initiatives were replicated in other parts of the country, such as distributing fact packs in multiple languages (including Urdu) amongst workers that covered topics such as the legality of their work and national insurance. The West Yorkshire Homeworking Group, for example, used this model as a template to immediately rectify the lack of knowledge amongst homeworkers about their entitlements.[72] Many women, particularly those from migrant communities, expressed fear of coming forward since they believed their work was

[69] Kitty Jenkins, 'Homeworkers 'Paid Below Minimum', *BBC* (11th November 2007).
[70] Tate, *A Penny for a Bag,* p. 6.
[71] Tate, 'Homework in Europe', 7SHR/X/01, File 2, pp. 8-9.
[72] National Group on Homeworking, 'National group on homeworking internal documentation 1993-2008 and homeworking fact pack' (1993-2008), FAN/ HWW/19: HWWIV, Feminist Archives North, University of Leeds, Leeds.

unregistered and therefore illegal. Spreading knowledge was a crucial way to unite several activist groups.[73]

A co-ordinated strategy was necessary given the widespread and varied forms of homeworking that were prevalent across the country, as well as the difficulty in reaching workers. Activists primarily shared their approaches and exchanged research at conferences. This co-operation had both a national and international dimension, for example inviting representatives from European homeworking campaign groups or SEWA, India's Self-Employed Women's Association.[74] In 1994, the National Group on Homeworking brought together multiple local projects under one umbrella, including the Leicester, West Yorkshire, Manchester and Rochdale campaigns.[75] This allowed for smaller, underfunded projects to get the support they needed, which was often not possible when smaller groups worked in isolation. National cooperation strengthened local-level activities. One of the most well-known campaigns was the West Yorkshire Homeworkers Group. Jane Tate, its founder, spearheaded a form of socialist activism that worked on the principle of employing homeworkers as part of the campaign, recognising that their experience equipped them with the knowledge to effectively identify what kind of resources were necessary.[76] For example, direct contact with homeworkers underpinned the success of their project to record the jobs homeworkers were employed to do over a five-year period. They found 100 different forms of work, with employers ranging from one-person

[73] Tate, *A Penny for a Bag,* p. 20. Also see: Greater Manchester Low Pay Unit, 'Your Rights at Work' (no date), GB3228.8/11 Employment, Ahmed Iqbal Ullah RACE (Race Archives and Community Engagement) Centre, Manchester Central Library, Manchester.
[74] Paula Solloway, 'Global strategy for women's labour organisation', *Northern Star* (9-16 July 1992), 7SHR/X/01, Folder 3, Women's Library, London School of Economics, London.
[75] Tate, 'The National Group on Homeworking- United Kingdom', p. 87.
[76] Tate, 'Homework in Europe', 7SHR/X/01, File 2, p. 32.

businesses to firms subcontracted by multi-national corporations.[77] The most difficult group to contact was migrant women.

The involvement of South Asian women as activists became more prevalent in archival material from the late 1980s and 1990s. Documents suggest an emerging practice of employing South Asian women to rectify the long-held issue of reaching migrant communities. Annie Phizacklea and Carol Wolkowitz, as part of their survey about homeworking in Coventry, contacted homeworking officer Vera Hyare to obtain the testimony of South Asian women who did not speak English and may not have had access to the questionnaire sent as an insert in the women's magazine 'Prima'.[78] Local South Asian community workers like Hyare could access South Asian homeworkers, one of the most difficult groups for middle-class, white campaigners to reach.[79]

The widely held belief that Asian community workers were best equipped to identify the needs of those from their community was exemplified in the records about the West Yorkshire Homeworking group's fact-finding mission to a homeworker's support centre in Tilburg, the Netherlands in 1992. Amongst the eight activists who went to Tilburg was Jaswant, a former homeworker originally from India. When asked why so few South Asian women adopted a higher profile within activism, Jaswant replied that she thought she worked illegally for nine years and feared the consequences of speaking out. Her only source of information was her employer, who told her nothing. It was a leaflet through her letterbox that informed her of a local meeting for outworkers organised by the West

[77] Tate, 'The National Group on Homeworking- United Kingdom', p. 82.
[78] Phizacklea and Wolkowitz, 'Homeworking in the 90s', 7SHR/X/16, Box FL 685, pp. 5-6.
[79] Tate, *A Penny for a Bag,* p. 49.

Yorkshire Homeworkers Group. This marked the starting point of her relationship with local activists.[80]

Jaswant's perspective illuminated the growing influence of South Asian women participating in forms of activism that tended to be dominated by middle-class white women. South Asian women primarily used their experiences and insight to refine outreach initiatives. One of the more successful outcomes came in 1988, when the West Yorkshire Homeworking Group hosted its first two-day conference at a local Pakistani community centre in Bradford. Roughly 100 homeworking women were in attendance. The activist group maintained its presence and support through fact packs and support meetings that, according to a Bradford council representative who supported the initiative, empowered women to be more assertive and negotiate their rate of pay.[81]

With the expanded inclusion of South Asian community workers came more nuanced and targeted methods to overcome complex problems specific to the South Asian community, such as language, which often relegated many South Asian women's experiences as invisible.[82] The strategies employed during the infancy of homeworkers rights campaigns was to produce expensive, multi-language fact packs. Although an effective strategy, a representative for Asian women from Bretton Street Enterprise Centre in Kirklees, at a conference organised by the West Yorkshire Homeworking group in 1992, made it clear that amongst South Asian homeworkers, a multi-pronged approach was necessary. Funding English lessons was recommended as a strategy; some women needed a

[80] West Yorkshire Homeworking Group, 'Tilburg Fact Finding Trip' (1992), Box 7SHR/X/01, Folder 3, file 1, Women's Library, London School of Economics, London.
[81] West Yorkshire Homeworking Group, 'Homeworking Conference: Meeting Minutes' (1988), Box 7SHR/X/01, Folder 1, file 1, document 5, Women's Library, London School of Economics, London, p. 1.
[82] West Yorkshire Homeworking Group, 'Homeworking Conference', Box 7SHR/X/01, Folder 1, file 1, document 5, p. 1.

foundational English education and others were better suited to college education.[83] There had been a long-standing commitment from the early days of campaigning for homeworker's rights to differentiate experiences in the pursuit of effective and wide-ranging change. The involvement of South Asian community workers put this belief into action.

Activism can work to improve conditions, but it is also crucial in illuminating new possibilities. The activism that took place in Rochdale, which neighbours Oldham, is the most prominent example of an authority working to meet the needs of South Asian homeworkers. It was one of the few local authorities, like Halifax, with a homeworking officer employed by the council. Whilst improving the conditions of homeworkers was part of the remit of this role, archival material highlighted that homeworking officers often encouraged homeworkers to pursue professional careers and adult education. In 1994, for example, Tanzeem Mahmood, the homeworking officer for Rochdale, helped organise a 13-week, bilingual business course for thirty South Asian homeworkers. The bilingual tutor taught basic office skills, word processing, typing and handling petty cash. In addition, Tanzeem took women to a local community centre to show them what a professional office environment looked like. The course offered free childcare, so that mothers could also participate. Thirteen women were able to complete the course in full.[84] Other outreach work did take place, such as a programme to help women knit shawls with an experienced designer, organised by Oldham's Pakistani Community Centre and Saddleworth Museum in

[83] West Yorkshire Homeworking Group, 'Homeworking Conference, Thursday July 2nd 1991' (July 1991), Box 7SHR/X/01, File 3, Doc. 1, Women's Library, London School of Economics, London, p. 3.
[84] Greater Manchester Homeworking Group, 'Minutes Greater Manchester Homeworking Group Meeting, 6th May 1994' (May 1994), GB3228.8/11 Employment, Ahmed Iqbal Ullah RACE (Race Archives and Community Engagement) Centre, Manchester Central Library, Manchester.

1994.[85] However, this type of outreach, albeit important, built upon an existing set of technical skills, rather than broadening the breadth of possibilities for those who wanted to partake in formalised waged work. Activism became necessary when the exploitative practices of businesses could not be remedied by the law. Time and again, governments rarely took the plight of homeworkers seriously and, as a result, campaigners stepped in to support homeworkers.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that it is crucial to acknowledge the deeply exploitative practices adopted by employers to increase their profits whilst also recognising that women's everyday experiences amounted to more than the hours they sewed. Women's testimonies revealed that their experiences of homeworking could not be dissociated from their domestic responsibilities. Local economic change and industrial restructuring framed the rise of homeworking in Oldham during the 1980s. Moreover, given the tumultuous experiences of men recruited to work in mills that were on the path to closure, women's homeworking became crucial to the household income. In turn, home became the site of both caring and working for women. Relationships within the household were inevitably shaped by this on some level, particularly since children would help their mothers with domestic work so that their deadlines were met. Whilst these memories were steeped in nostalgia, a closer reading of the testimony revealed that women had to contend with poverty, low pay and difficult working conditions whilst also being responsible for housework and childcare.

[85] Saddleworth Museum, 'Making Shawls: A new textile project for Asian women at Saddleworth Museum' (1994), PXT:SFI L6S270, Oldham Archives, Oldham.

Across the period, successive governments failed to implement legislation that protected homeworkers, largely because of their 'atypical' working lives which involved managing production with housework and childcare. However, the narrative of victimhood is an overly simplistic way in which to frame these women's lives. Women found ways to resist their work conditions, often by taking part in local activist campaigns which grew in scale from the mid-1970s. Activist campaigns were organised by middle-class white women who fought for legislative changes whilst also creating initiatives and resources that informed homeworkers about their rights. By the 1990s, South Asian community workers and activists played a critical role in building connections with South Asian homeworkers who were often inaccessible to white, middle-class campaigners. Local activist campaigns were crucial in supporting homeworkers when the national government failed to implement legislation that ensured fair pay, safe working conditions and adequate childcare.

Chapter 4: Self-employment in Middlesbrough

British-Pakistani women from Middlesbrough had significantly different experiences of work compared to their counterparts in Oldham, primarily because of where they settled. Whilst women in Oldham described how they worked within a textile industry that was ready to exploit their sewing skills as homeworkers, in Middlesbrough no such work was widely available. Steel ruled in Teesside, not textiles. Given these differences, women in Middlesbrough had to apply their skills in different contexts, often by establishing their own small businesses. The decision to start a business allowed my interviewees to take care of their children, support a growing Pakistani community and generate an income for their working-class families. The decision to be self-employed was necessary given the limited options migrant British-Pakistani women had in terms of formal waged work in Middlesbrough.

In this chapter, I will analyse the ways in which Pakistani migrants in Middlesbrough responded to the demands of domestic responsibility and earning an income. The frequency with which women cited self-employment as their primary source of income was difficult to ignore, particularly since no woman in Oldham cited this as part of their work history. Notably, all the interviewees were mothers when they undertook self-employment. Women's participation in flexible self-employment was generally in response to three different dilemmas: the lack of work available to all women in Middlesbrough (given the dominance of heavy industry in the town), the non-existent social or economic infrastructures to support long-term Pakistani settlement and the responsibilities placed on women to look after their families. I will contextualise the decision some women made to be self-employed by analysing the changes in Middlesbrough's local economy. I will then

examine textile work amongst Middlesbrough's Pakistani women, which was the most cited form of self-employment. The popularity of this work reflected the demand for South Asian clothing amongst a growing, permanent community. Finally, I will analyse the conflicting attitudes that emerged during the interviewing process, regarding whether self-employment could be considered work at all.

The management strategies women used to earn an income whilst also taking care of their families is best described by the concept of 'organisational labour', outlined by Eve Worth and Laura Paterson. They define organisational labour as 'the means by which women managed mothering in the home and the workplace… as a bridge between women's domestic, caring and employment roles.'[1] The decision to be self-employed was a way for women to work around the demands of family and community life. Added to the organisational labour women undertook was their creative navigation of the local economy; self-employment was not worth the mental and physical exertion if a substantial income was not earned in the process.[2] Women had to carve a space for themselves in a depleted job market, by tactically offering services which, in most cases, fulfilled the demands of a growing South Asian community in Middlesbrough. Throughout this chapter, I will highlight the combined application of organisational labour and women's creative navigation of the local economy, which resulted in self-employment being one of the few viable choices British-Pakistani women had to earn an income. Individual reasons for choosing self-employment varied considerably. Some chose self-employment because of single motherhood, for example, whilst others pursued this work out of interest. It is important

[1] Worth and Paterson, 'How Is She Going to Manage with The Children?', p. 318.
[2] Joanna Bourke, 'Housewifery in Working-Class England 1860–1914', *Past and Present*, vol. 143, no. 1 (1994), pp. 167-197.

emphasise that self-employment was often the outcome of an impenetrable job market and the concurrent pressures of housework and childcare.

The interviewing process showed that self-employment was the most popular way women in Middlesbrough earned an income. This reflected the national growing rate of self-employment amongst British-South Asians. Self-employment rose significantly between 1966 and 1994, from 7.13 percent of the total employed in Britain to 13.75 percent, the steepest incline since records began in 1861.[3] In a paper published by the Policy Studies Institute in 1993, South Asian and Chinese immigrants were the most likely to identify as self-employed compared to other British migrant groups.[4] Forty-six percent of Pakistanis who identified as self-employed worked in retail distribution and 23 percent of all self-employed Pakistani women worked in retail, the sector with the highest concentration for Pakistani self-employment.[5] In the broader history of women's work after the Second World War, particularly amongst mothers trying to manage work and family life, self-employment is an underexplored topic, and largely neglected in the histories of South Asian women in Britain.[6]

There were economic advantages to creating local businesses that worked to support growing South Asian populations. Halal butchers, stores selling *salwar kameez*,

[3] ONS, 'Figure 8: Share of employment that is self-employment, UK, 1861 to 2018' (2019). Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/uksectoraccounts/compendium/economicreview/april2019/longtermtrendsinukemployment1861to2018#:~:text=Figurepercent208percent20showspercent20thepercent20rate,yearspercent20ofpercent20thepercent2020thpercent20century.&text=Itpercent20increasedpercent20stronglypercent20betweenpercent201966,bepercent20attributedpercent20topercent20technologicalpercent20changes. [Accessed 1/09/2020].

[4] Trevor Jones, *Britain's Ethnic Minorities: An Analysis of the Labour Force Survey* (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1993), p. 65.

[5] Jones, *Britain's Ethnic Minorities,* pp. 65-67.

[6] See: Whittle, 'Enterprising Women and Active Wives', pp. 283-300; Frances Tomlinson and Fiona Colgan, 'Negotiating the Self Between Past and Present: Narratives of Older Women Moving Towards Self-Employment', *Organization Studies*, vol. 35, no. 11 (2014), pp. 1655-1675; Caroline Essers and Yvonne Benschop, 'Enterprising Identities: Female Entrepreneurs of Moroccan or Turkish Origin in the Netherlands', *Organization Studies*, vol. 28, no. 1 (2007), pp. 49-69; Joyce Burnette, *Gender, Work and Wages in Industrial Revolution Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 274-305.

restaurants, video shops renting Bollywood films or travel agents specialising in trips to Pakistan and pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia, for example, were all necessitated by the growth of Pakistani communities in towns and cities across the country.[7] This growth was particularly important in Middlesbrough because, unlike port towns and larger cities such as Manchester and Liverpool which became home to sailors, traders and labourers finding home in Britain long before the Second World War, Middlesbrough did not have strong links to South Asian migration until the post-war period. [8]

Interviews carried out by sociologist Virinder Kalra with British-Pakistani men in Oldham revealed that the primary forms of self-employment – take-aways and taxi driving – did not always result in lives changing for the better, at least financially. Regardless, economic change shifted the ways in which work amongst Pakistani migrant men was organised.[9] As Shaila Srinivasan, in her study of South Asian shopkeepers and restaurant owners in Oxford between 1989 and 1990 argued, independence was greatly valued.[10] For these small business owners, who owned 83 shops and 22 restaurants (or 12 percent of shops and restaurants) in Oxford despite only accounting for 8 percent of city's population, it was the sense of control self-employment offered that was most appealing, in terms of 'being my own boss', having the 'upper-hand' when dealing with racial discrimination in their stores and having financial control.[11] The control that often attracted men to self-employment was the very reason why women often disregarded their own work as a hobby of sorts that allowed them to fulfil their primary responsibilities as mothers, wives and

[7] Werbner, *The Migration Process,* p. 36.
[8] See: Visram, *Ayahs, Lascars and Princes;* Laura Tabili, *'We Ask for British Justice': Workers and Racial Difference in Late Imperial British* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1994).
[9] Kalra, *From Textile Mills to Taxi Ranks*, p. 170.
[10] Here, South Asian included those of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin.
[11] Shaila Srinivasan, 'The class position of the Asian petty bourgeoisie', *New Community*, vol. 19 (1992), pp. 61-74, at p. 63.

community members. Memories of domestic work, motherhood and community relationships were given far more importance than memories of self-employment. When self-employment was described, it was often used to illustrate how it helped them become more present mothers or active community members, as the testimony will show.

Importantly, whereas women in Oldham could turn to homeworking to earn a wage and take care of their children, women in Middlesbrough had to find new paths into paid labour. The popularity of self-employment amongst Pakistani women in Middlesbrough was an inevitable consequence of homeworking or other forms of flexible work – suiting women who did not speak English or did not want to work in a male-dominated environment – being unavailable. As a result, women in Middlesbrough formalised and commodified work they had always done.[12] However, the decision to be self-employed was not solely motivated by the desire for independence or economic control, as was the case for men. The prospect of earning an income without neglecting their familial and community demands often motivated women's decision for self-employment.

Changes in the local economy

Women's choice to be self-employed was often motivated by the necessity to earn an income whilst taking care of their families, although the purpose this income served varied across interviewees. Crucially, during the 1980s and 1990s, Teesside had one of the highest rates of unemployment in Britain.[13] For men to be the sole breadwinners was no longer sustainable in both migrant and non-migrant households. Virinder Kalra's study of Mirpuri men's relationship with work in Oldham revealed that they turned to self-employment,

[12] Alexander, *Becoming a Woman*, p. 84.
[13] MacDonald and Marsh, 'Employment, unemployment and social polarization', at pp. 121-122.

instead of other forms of formal employment, due to racial discrimination. Racially discriminatory employment practices prevented men obtaining jobs they were qualified for, forcing them to take low paying jobs such as factory work.[14] This was also the case for men in Middlesbrough.

It is too simplistic to argue that women's motivation to establish their own small businesses was a response to local economic change. Instead, a wide range of reasons emerged during the interviewing process, such as domestic responsibility or commodifying skills that met the demands of the Pakistani community. For some, their work as self-employed seamstresses or fabric shop owners was a direct response to gaps in the local market. For other women, self-employment was not necessarily primarily motivated by the need to supplement the household income, rather was a way to relieve boredom and earn money to buy toys or clothes. For a small group of women I interviewed, their self-employment was a response to unexpected changes in their lives, such as becoming single mothers, which meant that they became solely responsible for making ends meet.

The turbulent economic changes that marked Middlesbrough's development in the latter half of the twentieth century, which are detailed in the introduction, provide some insight into why self-employment became popular. The steel industry was the primary way in which a significant proportion of migrant men supported their families. It was an economic lifeline which, unlike the textile industry in Oldham, was not cited as a source of employment for British-Pakistani women. As one interviewee, Jameela, remembered when asked about employment in 1960s and 1970s Middlesbrough:

[14] Kalra, *From Textile Mills to Taxi Ranks*, p. 135.

> Here there wasn't this type of (factory) work available, so women didn't work. No one did. Here there weren't even jobs for women. Afterwards, women opened up their own shops, started businesses, helping their families…[15]

Women across the region had to contend with fewer work options that rarely accommodated women's caring responsibilities or pregnancy. Career prospects were limited by a single-industry economy dominated by steel manufacturing, which offered few opportunities to women. Similarly, Lady Florence Bell, the wife of Middlesbrough's mayor Sir Thomas Hugh Bell, offered insights into the everyday lives of steel workers and their families in her book written in 1911. She stated, 'the position of the women of the working classes in Middlesbrough is different from that which they occupy in the other big manufacturing towns, for the reasons that what is practically the only large industry in the town, the iron trade, offers absolutely no field for women in any part of it.'[16] Instead, she observed that the unmarried daughters of the ironworkers often went into occupations such as dressmaking, which 380 women in the study stated as their job.[17] Married women, however, were consistently described as homemakers who exerted themselves in order to ensure the wellbeing of men who risked their health by working for the ironworks. Across the twentieth century, women were rarely employed by the steel industry.

Women were not suited to an economy that was predicated on men as breadwinners and women as domesticated mothers, which is why many interviewees turned to self-employment. Pregnancy and motherhood could not fit into this paradigm. In an interview for the British Steel Archive Project, Judith Munroe, a former employee of the

[15] Jameela, Author Interview (9/1/2018).
[16] Florence Bell, *At the Works: A Study of a Manufacturing Town* (London: E Arnold, 1907), p. 178.
[17] Bell, *At the Works,* p. 179.

company, described how she spent a year working as an office girl in 1956 as soon as she left school, an entry level job that would typically progress into copy typist work. Instead of taking this path, for reasons Judith does not describe, she applied for a vacancy as a telex operator in the company's Department of Purchasing. Night school allowed her to sharpen her typing and copying skills. During her time as a typist, she studied at Redcar College where she completed a course in Shorthand Typing and English. A few decades later, when she returned to work after taking leave to be a full-time mother in the mid-1960s, she gained a TOPS (Training Opportunities Scheme) qualification in Copy Typing and Ordinary Typing, which she felt would help her progress further.[18]

Judith's testimony raised a particularly important question about the type of employment that was available to women who, even with the right qualifications, were navigating the highly pressurised circumstances of menial work within a male-dominated environment. When asked why she left her job at British Steel, Judith cited her pregnancy- 'why else?... you knew there was no returning in those days.'[19] Being a mother meant she could not work, since the cost of childcare was too high.[20] This experience was common amongst migrant and non-migrant women; inadequate childcare was consistently referenced by interviewees as the primary reason why they could not work. Progression within British Steel was stemmed by the persistent and unequal treatment of women based on prescribed gender roles and Judith's choices were limited because of her responsibilities as a mother, which made a precarious job market even more difficult to navigate.[21] Her

[18] British Steel Archive Project, 'Judith Munroe Interview with Val Harrison' (19th January 2009), BS/OA/I, Teesside Archives, Middlesbrough. Also see: Ethel Randall, 'The TOPS preparatory course: A pilot scheme', *The Vocational Aspect of Education* vol. 28, no. 69 (1976), pp. 7-10.
[19] British Steel Archive Project, 'Judith Munroe Interview', BS/OA/I.
[20] See: Worth and Laura Paterson, 'How Is She Going to Manage with The Children?' p. 327.
[21] Sara Connolly and Mary Gregory, 'Women and Work since 1970', in Nicholas Crafts, Ian Gazeley, and Andrew Newell, *Work and Pay in 20th Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 143.

absence from work for twelve years suggested that part-time work was not easily accessible, possibly reflecting the lack of opportunities available to mothers in Middlesbrough.

Yet there were qualities that Judith possessed (such as being born in Britain) that made the limited job opportunities available to women in Middlesbrough an attainable aspiration. She spoke English, went to school and, even though she left without qualifications, could read and write to a standard high enough that she could work as a typist. Older interviewees, who grew up in Pakistan across the period and were forcibly removed from Pakistan's weak education system at a young age, were illiterate in Urdu and English. In 1972, 4.7 percent of women aged ten and above in rural Pakistan were literate was compared to 22.6 percent of men. In urban areas, 30.9 percent of women were literate. By 1998, the rate of literacy in rural areas for women had increased to 20.09 percent and across Pakistan the literacy rate amongst women was 32.02 percent.[22] The definition of literacy, adopted by the Pakistani government in 1981, is the ability to 'read a newspaper and write a simple letter.'[23] Even in 1840's England, the level of literacy amongst women was higher than the standard recorded in Pakistan towards the beginning of the 21st century, with half of women in England being literate in the mid 19th century.[24] By 1950, 90 percent of British men and women were literate, meaning they could read and sign a document.[25] It was rarely the case that British-Pakistani women, who had not been formally

[22] Munir Ahmed Choudhry, 'Pakistan: where and who are the world's illiterates?', *Education for All Global Monitoring Report* (2006), pp. 1-14, at p. 5. Available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000145959 [Accessed 22/08/20].
[23] David J. Roof, 'Problems of Common Interest: The Shaping of Education in Pakistan, 1970-2014', *Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2015), pp. 35-51, at pp. 38-39.
[24] Max Rosner and Esteban Ortiz- Ospina, 'Literacy', *Our World in Data* (2018). Available at: https://ourworldindata.org/literacy [Accessed 18/09/20].
[25] Max Rosner and Esteban Ortiz- Ospina, 'Literacy', *Our World in Data* (2018). Available at: https://ourworldindata.org/literacy [Accessed 18/09/20].

educated in Britain, had the language skills to obtain the limited number of non-manual jobs available in heavy industry centres like Middlesbrough.[26] Some interviewees had to cope with the intense isolation of being illiterate and it became apparent that applying for formal waged work was out of the question for most migrant women. Other forms of employment had to take precedence.

As the testimony from some British-Pakistani women living in Middlesbrough will later go on to show, limited job opportunities, caring responsibilities and a lack of English proficiency did not prevent women from finding other ways to work. Whilst there has been little historical exploration of how deindustrialisation affected the working lives of migrant South Asian women, the concept of the feminisation of the labour force has been used by academics to highlight how de-industrialisation resulted in the rise of women creating enterprises out of skills they already had. Linda McDowell, for example, argued that the rise of service industries was not transformative but developed what had already existed. [27] Small-scale self-employment therefore had the potential to increase in a service orientated economy. Although it is difficult to ignore the devastating consequences of deindustrialisation on small, industrial towns like Oldham and Middlesbrough during the 1970s and 1980s, my interviewees did not, at any point, directly describe recession or economic change in the context of their work experiences. At times, deindustrialisation cast a shadow on parts of their testimony, such as when some women described their husbands or sons leaving factory work to become small business owners. However, based on when women's businesses opened and their motivations for starting their businesses, there is no

[26] Connolly and Gregory, 'Women and Work since 1970', p. 156.
[27] Linda McDowell, *Working Bodies: Interactive Service Employment and Workspace Activities* (London: Wiley Blackwell, 2009), p. 25.

correlation between de-industrialisation and the increasing number of women-led businesses amongst British-Pakistanis in Middlesbrough.

Arguably, the loss of jobs in Middlesbrough because of de-industrialisation did not affect British-Pakistani women's job prospects because the local job market had always been impenetrable. In addition, no interviewee said that their husband's unemployment directly influenced their decision to be self-employed. Instead, many women chose self-employment because its flexibility allowed them to make their own money whilst also being able to take care of their families. Migrant women had skills that could be commodified and sold to members of their community. Those who cited self-employment in their interviews did not indicate that they faced any opposition to pursuing their work. It is possible that women who had faced opposition to starting their own businesses would not have pursued the work in any meaningful way; maintaining civil familial or community dynamics may have outweighed the desire for self-sufficiency through entrepreneurialism.

Making their own work: self-employment within the textiles industry

For some British-Pakistani women, self-employment allowed them to take care of their families and support the long-term settlement of Pakistanis, by creating businesses that met their demands. Frances Tomlinson and Fiona Colgan, in their study of self-employment amongst older women, argued that self-employment can become an empowering tool for those who have minimal experience as formal waged employees.[28] In their case study of Turkish and Moroccan women entrepreneurs living in the Netherlands, the authors argued that the marginalisation of being a migrant was transformed, in specific contexts, into

[28] Tomlinson and Colgan, 'Negotiating the Self Between Past and Present', pp. 1655-1675.

advantages that sustained their interviewees' enterprises.[29] For women in Middlesbrough who migrated earlier in the period, establishing businesses that supported the settlement of their growing community similarly transformed the disadvantage of not being able to secure formal waged work into an advantage. The most cited form of self-employment amongst Pakistani women in Middlesbrough was within textiles, specifically making and selling traditional Pakistani womenswear.

Women turned to self-employment and commodified their sewing skills because formal waged labour was limited in Middlesbrough, particularly machinist jobs. There were a limited number of textile factories hiring women in Middlesbrough, such as the Dannimac Factory which manufactured baby clothes. Fiyaz got her first job at Dannimac in 1989, soon after her migration when she was fifteen. Women were often hired as machinists, although the extent to which Pakistani women were hired for these roles is difficult to gauge, given the lack of reliable statistics. Fiyaz, whose self-employment experiences will be examined later in this chapter, told me she was one of two Pakistani machinists working in Dannimac, whilst other residents of Middlesbrough have said it was quite common for Pakistani women to be recruited as machinists. However, the frequency with which interviewees, particularly those of an older generation, cited sewing *salwar kameez* and owning fabric shops as their form of work suggested that women were more likely to start businesses which catered to a growing and diverse community of Pakistanis rather than secure work in a textiles factory.

The heavy presence of women in archival photographs of Middlesbrough's textile factories, from the 1940s until 1993, suggest that traditional factory work was somewhat

[29] Essers and Benschop, 'Enterprising Identities', p. 66.

accessible for women in the town across the duration of this period. These photographed factories, which have since closed, included the Meridian Clothing Factory which manufactured lingerie that supplied chains such as Marks and Spencer and Burton Menswear Factory. The pictures showed factory floors exclusively filled with women operating the machines. However, these archival pictures suggested that most workers were white women.[30] Pakistani women were not present in these pictures, nor were any women from minority communities. This may simply be the result of these women not being in frame although this is difficult to discern without reliable employment and ethnicity statistics.

Whereas smaller, industrial town such as Middlesbrough are rarely the subject of study regarding entrepreneurialism amongst migrant communities, there are studies in large cities, such as Pnina Werbner's anthropological study of Manchester's Pakistani community during the 1970s, which indicate various reasons why self-employment became more prevalent amongst Pakistanis. Werbner analysed the transformation of British-Pakistani men's work as garment manufacturers and how men went from being peasants to businessmen. She termed this a 'cultural transformation', defining culture as the spread of ambition, expertise and know-how amongst larger sections of the community.[31] The term 'cultural transformation' presupposes a general understanding of culture that has the potential to be transformed in the same way for every individual without specific interrogation of individual change over time. Nonetheless, the changes in circumstances that facilitated Werbner's interviewees' self-employment within the garment industry

[30] Mike Brown, 'Taking a look back at factories of the past - Dewhirst, Burton, Dannimac and Meridian', *The Evening Gazette* (11th January 2020). Available at: https://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/teesside-news/gallery/taking-look-back-factories-past-17540138 [Accessed 2/09/20].
[31] Werbner, *The Migration Process,* p. 57.

paralleled the experiences of women in Middlesbrough. Although on a much smaller, localised scale, the testimony of women in Middlesbrough brought to light the extent to which place had the potential to draw out skills or interests that were once relegated to the home. Whilst men dominated as heads of family-owned businesses in Manchester's sophisticated garment industry, in which women were often underpaid homeworkers, Middlesbrough's weaker connections to Britain's textile manufacturing and distribution industry meant there was scope for creativity. [32]

The most notable way several Pakistani women found employment within the textiles distribution sector was through the establishment of their own fabric shops, which allowed women the flexibility to earn an income. Fabric shops specifically selling traditional *salwar kameez* and loose cloth remain almost exclusively run by South Asian women. Balo ventured into self-employment as a seamstress soon after her migration to Middlesbrough in the early 1970s, a business which was born out of interest rather than solely out of financial necessity. By the late 1980s, she owned a shop which sold loose fabric, threads and accessories and was one of several British-Pakistani women who set up this kind of businesses in central Middlesbrough. For Balo, textile work had been a lifelong occupation that was undertaken alongside her responsibilities as a wife and mother. Upon arriving at Balo's home for our interview, it became clear just how symbiotic her fabric business and family life were. Her shop was attached to the house, physically separated by a door that led to the hallway of her terraced home. When customers entered, a bell would ring in her living room, alerting one of the family members to make their way next door. This has been

[32] Werbner, *The Migration Process,* p. 55.

Balo and her family's life since she moved to this property in the late 1980s, a web of work and home life which has become almost indistinguishable:

> [Interviewer]: When did you open the shop?
>
> [Balo]: It's been a long time, I can't remember
>
> [Son]: 27 years ago
>
> [Interviewer]: 27 years…
>
> [Son]: No 30 years, about 30.
>
> [Interviewer]: Was it *shaunk*[33] that made you want to open the shop? What was the reasoning behind it?
>
> [Balo]: It was in my heart this idea. I had free time so I should do some type of work. At first, for one or two months, I would bring the cloth to my house. To the house. [34]

The shop gave Balo a new focus when her children became more independent. She enjoyed her work and did not see any problems with her work and family life being so closely tied. It was difficult to gauge the impact her income had on the household, whether it was important in supplementing her husband's income as a taxi driver or whether she used the

[33] This word typically refers to having a positive interest in something.
[34] Balo, Author Interview (10/4/2019).

money for her own personal expenses. Nonetheless, it was important for her and her family to keep the shop running, even during the period of ill health she was experiencing when I met her.

Balo opened the shop many years after her migration, when other women had already started fabric businesses. These businesses worked to fill the gap for traditional Pakistani and South Asian fabrics and clothes. It became a form of work spearheaded by women who required this service and only emerged as a primary form of employment amongst members of the Middlesbrough's Pakistani community when women and children began arriving in large numbers from the late 1960s. It was necessary to fulfil this demand given the long-term and permanent settlement of migrant families. A similar pattern of economic development occurred amongst Pakistani migrants in Denmark. As Mikkel Rytter described, when family reunification took place, it became necessary to re-create 'some of the cultural and religious institutions from their country of origin.'[35] Re-creating some semblance of home and creating access to necessities unavailable in Middlesbrough before the influx of Pakistani migrants, such as traditional clothes, gave space for businesses such as Balo's to flourish.

Self-employment amongst British-Pakistanis did not signify a leap towards independence and economic self-sufficiency for all women, rather was a necessary choice given the overwhelming demands of housework and, for some families, the necessity for women to earn an income in order to make ends meet. This directly challenges Sarah Hackett's argument that entrepreneurship amongst Muslim migrants in Newcastle was driven by 'economic aspiration and self-determination', which resulted in new products,

[35] Mikkel Rytter, 'Money or Education? Improvement Strategies Among Pakistani Families in Denmark', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 37, no. 2 (2011), pp. 197-215, at p. 203.

new ideas and employment for community members that promoted 'positive race relations'.[36] Women's experiences (which are not considered in Hackett's study) revealed that ideas of 'self-determination' undermined the extent to which the restrictions caused by unpaid domestic labour affected women's decisions about work. For some women I spoke to, the decision to make their own employment was born out of necessity, whether because of the loss accompanying their children growing up, the death of a family member, or single motherhood. Whilst this did not minimise the fulfilment many women gained from their work, their testimony reflected the complexity of their working lives.

The necessity to earn an income and take care of her family, rather than economic aspirations, motivated Jameela to open her fabric shop in the mid-1970s. When Jameela migrated to Middlesbrough in 1959, she was one of the first Pakistani women to settle in this northern industrial town. Her family became instrumental in catering to a growing community with businesses that helped support long-term Pakistani settlement. Her husband's halal butchers – the first in the town – was fondly remembered by friends as central to their everyday experiences. Whilst Jameela helped with her husband's business and gained valuable experience, it was after his unexpected death that she was forced to make decisions about her own career. She had to financially support her five children, and without formal qualifications, she felt her options were limited:

> [Friend]: Do you remember who was the first who opened the first cloth house in Middlesbrough?

[36] Sarah Hackett, 'From Rags to Restaurants: Self-Determination, Entrepreneurship and Integration amongst Muslim Immigrants in Newcastle upon Tyne in Comparative Perspective, 1960s–1990s', *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. 25, no. 1. (2014), pp. 132–154, at p. 151.

[Jameela]: In Middlesbrough, I did.

[Friend]: You did?

[Jameela]: Yes, on Gresham Road

[Friend]: Gresham Road. In which year?

[Jameela]: Umm (laughs) I can't really remember, about 45 years ago. I opened the first one. First it was brother Rehman's store. The clothes one. Then I opened it afterwards.

[Family Friend]: I have very faint memories, when we lived on X Street, Aunty, uh, Uncle X's wife, she had, did she open her store after you?

[Jameela]: She opened her shop after me.

[Friend]: Right, so you had your own business? That's interesting isn't it!

[Jameela]: Yes, I had my own business. I had my business for a very long time. My husband had just died so I though the kids are at school, the boys and girls, the older girls had gotten married so after thinking about it I started my own business and raised the kids until they were all grown up.

[Friend]: When did Uncle pass away?

[Jameela]: Uh, 1977.[37]

Financial necessity, a consequence of single motherhood, motivated some women to become self-employed, given the flexibility of their working days compared to those who were formal employees. As the first woman to establish a fabric shop, Jameela set a precedent in the town, with several other women following in her footsteps. However, the way in which she discussed her working life left the impression that, had she had the choice, she would not have started her own business; working was born out of necessity, rather than interest as it was for Balo. Nonetheless, she made an important contribution to Middlesbrough's local economy by meeting the demand for South Asian clothing amongst a newly arrived migrant community. As a single mother, she described how she could not sit idle and hope her children would be supported with welfare payments. Nor did she want her children to give up on their education to work. She had to make a choice:

> With the business, um, well when I came here, no woman worked and, I mean, no woman was told she had to work. Men worked. Okay, so with the business, my husband died. I became a widow and I had to raise five children, the government gives some money but it became very difficult. Then I wanted to start a business, the kids were young so instead of encouraging them to go work and make money I decided to do it myself. That's why I started the business. The business, I ran if for quite a few years, the shop. Then the children got older, they left school, then they had a choice, if they wanted to carry on with education they could.[38]

[37] Jameela, Author Interview (9/1/2018).
[38] Jameela, Author Interview (9/1/2018).

Jameela and other women of her generation often mentioned their self-employment later in the interview, despite being asked the question 'did you work?' How women defined 'work' has significant consequences on whether they mentioned self-employment when asked about their labour. It was telling that Jameela emphasised that women did not work in the decades following her migration. This was despite Jameela working long hours to earn enough money to keep her family afloat, all whilst dealing with the grief of her husband's untimely death. Jameela's perception that women did not work was informed by the reality that formal employment was difficult for women across Middlesbrough to obtain and the wide-held assumption that women from her community were not regarded as economically active members of the household.

Fiyaz's path to self-employment was, similarly to Jameela, a response to becoming a single mother. In 1989, she migrated to Middlesbrough aged fifteen with her mother and sister, to reunite with her father and extended family. I arrived at her home in the middle of a fitting, watching as she pulled and manipulated heavily embroidered cloth around her client, a young woman whose mother and sisters have long used Fiyaz as their regular seamstress. This was a common occurrence in Fiyaz's home; her living room transformed into a workspace where fittings and family life all happened simultaneously. She also worked at a local care home for a few hours a week, although she admitted that as she had gotten older, her working life had become more relaxed. In turn, she had the time to look after her grandchildren whilst her daughters worked, which reflected the long-held importance of grandparents as a source of childcare.[39] Throughout our conversation, it was clear that sewing had always been a constant source of income, a default form of making

[39] Angela Davis, *Modern Motherhood: Women and Family in England c. 1945-2000* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), pp. 23-24.

money that had served different functions in her life, depending on her circumstances. I asked where she learned this skill. Although she picked up basic skills in Pakistan, it was after her arrival that she sharpened her ability to sew in a professional environment:

> [Interviewer]: What was the apprenticeship?
>
> [Fiyaz]: It was to sew, you know, bibs and like kid's clothes. Yeah.
>
> [Interviewer]: Where did you do that?
>
> [Fiyaz]: Uh, it was called Dannimac in Skippers lane. And I think it's all closed down isn't it?
>
> [Interviewer]: And was there a lot of, um Pakistan girls doing the same thing or was it just you?
>
> [Fiyaz]: We was only two.
>
> [Interviewer]: There was only two of you?
>
> [Fiyaz]: Yeah, two of us.
>
> [Interviewer]: Did you learn (that skill) quickly or was it hard?
>
> [Fiyaz]: I, I was quite good at that.[40]

[40] Fiyaz, Author Interview (9/1/2019).

Formal training was foundational to the rest of her work experiences, whilst an older generation relied on the sewing skills they learned informally in Pakistan. The popularity of apprenticeships remained relatively high when Fiyaz started hers, with around 340,000 apprentices across the UK by the early 1990s.[41] An apprenticeship was deemed an appropriate choice by her parents, Fiyaz said, because she could earn money that her grandma would manage to help take care of her large household and she could gain relevant work experience. She resented having to pass her wage onto her grandma, saying 'I didn't see a penny'.[42]

In 1991, eighteen-year-old Fiyaz finished her apprenticeship. She married and moved to Leeds, living with her husband and his family. There, she worked as an employee in the budget supermarket Quick Save whilst also sewing tracksuits for her manager who would then sell them at the market. She managed this whilst giving birth twice within three years, before divorcing her husband and moving back to Middlesbrough in 1994. She was part of a growing number of lone parents in Britain; in 1996 1.6 million families were classified as lone-parent families with dependent children.[43] Her husband did not work for the duration of their marriage, nor did he financially support his children after their divorce. She became estranged from her family in Middlesbrough because of her divorce. They did not believe it was the right choice and, amongst her family members, divorce was considered a taboo.

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[41] James Mirza-Davies, 'A short history of apprenticeships in England: from medieval craft guilds to the twenty-first century', *Insight: House of Commons Library* (9th March 2015). Available at: https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/economy-business/work-incomes/a-short-history-of-apprenticeships-in-england-from-medieval-craft-guilds-to-the-twenty-first-century/#:~:text=Thepercent20firstpercent20nationalpercent20apprenticeshippercent20system,apprenticeshipspercent20shouldpercent20lastpercent20sevenpercent20years. [Accessed: 27/09/21].

[42] Fiyaz, Author Interview (9/1/2019).

[43] ONS, 'Families and Households in the UK: 2012' (2012). Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/families/bulletins/familiesandhouseholds/2012-11-01 [Accessed 28/4/21].

Fiyaz became self-employed after she moved to Middlesbrough. Alongside being a seamstress at a local factory and helping friends with their own businesses, such as her neighbour Brenda with whom she made celebration cards, she also sewed for clients from home. It seemed, given the estrangement from her family in Middlesbrough, that working became an outlet:

> [Interviewer]: And, um, working from home and sewing, did you like doing it or did you feel like you had to do it?
>
> [Fiyaz]: Yeah, yeah. I didn't mind doing it, I was quite enjoying doing it 'cause, like, it keeps you busy doesn't it rather than just, you've got nothing to do and you've got not family there around you can't go nowhere so obviously you keep carry on doing something. [44]

Her self-employment served different functions at different points in her life. After her divorce, seamstress work became a way she could support herself as a single mother by supplementing her wage as an employed factory worker. Given the circumstances of her first marriage, working life did not change dramatically for Fiyaz when she became a single parent; her first husband's unemployment meant she had always worked multiple part-time jobs. Whilst her divorce was a significant change, given the moral judgements made about her status by her family, her daily routine was a continuation of what she had experienced during marriage, albeit in the context of moving back to Middlesbrough. After her second marriage in 1997, and the birth of her two sons, she no longer had to work to survive, as her husband earned a substantial income as a business owner. She could pick and choose when

[44] Fiyaz, Author Interview (9/1/2019).

she wanted to work as a seamstress, so that she had her own money to spend on non-essential goods.

Casual self-employment as a seamstress meant Fiyaz could take on a wide range of additional opportunities in ways that homeworkers in Oldham could not, given the unrealistic expectations of their employers. Although her work as a seamstress was demanding, she could work at home whilst also taking adult education classes and raising her children. She went to English and Maths classes two days a week in the 1990s whilst also earning money by sewing clothes. She was not bound to her sewing machine and had the power to choose her own working hours after her factory employment. Middlesbrough Council encouraged self-employment, particularly under New Labour. The 'Women's Enterprise Development Fund', for example, was set up by the Teesside Enterprise and Training Council in 1997 to help women living in Grove Hill (an impoverished area of Middlesbrough) pursue employment, training and personal development.[45] The lack of jobs in Middlesbrough created the impetus to stimulate local economic growth through small enterprises and businesses.[46] However, Pakistani women were pushed to creatively find gaps in the market decades before council-funded opportunities such as this arose, recognising for themselves the types of services necessary to support long-term Pakistani settlement in Middlesbrough.

The meaning of 'work'

Women's working lives were structured in relation to a rigid set of domestic responsibilities. All the self-employed interviewees I spoke to enjoyed their jobs and recognised the benefits

[45] Middlesbrough Borough Council, 'Home-Link: The Newsletter for Council House Tenants in Middlesbrough', (February 1997), acc 6832 U/S 2452, Teesside Archives, Middlesbrough, issue 27, p. 3.
[46] MacDonald and Marsh, 'Employment, unemployment and social polarization', p. 121.

of being business owners, which included the ability to sharpen long-held skills, make their own money and control the hours they worked. However, these testimonies also brought to light the inherently problematic demands placed on women's lives and the inflexible nature of domestic responsibilities. The time-consuming responsibility to cook, clean and raise children, which overwhelmingly fell on women, meant my interviewees had no choice but to secure flexible forms of work. This flexibility was necessary, although it resulted in some interviewees saying that self-employment was not work.

The demands of family life did not subside for these women, yet through organisational labour, they found forms of work that could accommodate their other responsibilities. According to Worth and Paterson, the ways in which mothers practically organised their routines, to meet the demands of their multiple responsibilities, was particularly necessary given the limitations of welfare provisions. The association of women with the home and men with work resulted in affordable childcare being difficult to secure.[47] For example, Sardar had to be self-employed, or not work at all, since she did not consider putting her children into childcare and did not know that she was entitled to any welfare payments; she only applied for Family Allowance when her third child was born. This was, in part, why Sardar decided to earn an income by profiting from the sales of her vegetables, since she did not see the state as a source of support. Fiyaz often scrambled for childcare when she was a single mother, since she worked multiple jobs, and asked neighbours and friends to look after her daughters when she worked as a machinist for a factory. Once she left her job working in the factory, after her second marriage, self-

[47] Worth and Paterson, 'How Is She Going to Manage with The Children?', p. 319.

employment allowed her to earn an income whilst also being at home to take care of her children, instead of spending all her time working on the factory floor.

Yet, having control over work hours, workspaces and their rate of production was vastly different from men's labour experiences. Some women could not say their self-employment was a job because it did not resemble the formal, waged work that their husbands and sons did. Whilst Fiyaz, for example, never discounted her job because she could choose when and how to work, for an older woman Sardar, who migrated in 1972, the flexibility of her work was precisely why she felt it was inadequate to say she ever had a job. She was a horticulturist, growing vegetables in her small garden and then selling them to a local shop, Rehman's Food Store (known by the community as Fari's). She learned how to do this in Pakistan, growing vegetables that her husband would sell at the market before their migration. I asked at the beginning of the interview whether she had worked. Her answer was 'no'. It was a surprise, then, to hear her casually describe self-employment further on in our conversation, remembering at length a job that, by any definition, would constitute formal work. In her opinion, however, this was not the case:

> When I moved to X Road, I started doing the gardening… I never used to go to women's houses except for Fari's shop, everyone used to come to Fari's shop, everyone used to become a friend… so I had a garden, with spinach, fenugreek… I was growing everything… Everyone around used to come and sit with me… I had the garden and stayed with Fari and everyone I spoke to, even my son used said to his teachers 'my mum is working', when they asked me I used to say when they asked 'you call it what you want, I

> have my own meaning'… if I sit and chat with a woman or misplace a radish for example, I do it by myself for myself.[48]

Her reluctance to call her work a real job was striking. Whilst I had heard this remark before, by women who believed their unpaid services could not constitute a job, Sardar's work was a consistent form of income. Its unstructured nature, however, was the part she believed rendered this work a hobby of sorts, not a job. The use of her time was flexible, and she had control, a vastly different working experience compared to her husband. He was an employee of British Steel, meaning his working hours were strictly defined by his employer and his day was divided between his employer's time, where his labour could not be wasted, and his own time after work and on weekends.[49] Fiyaz, on the other hand, described self-employment as a job. She had experiences working both inside and outside the home, therefore could draw direct comparisons between the two and recognised both as demanding, albeit different, forms of work. In addition, she was a single mother for many years, and had to provide for herself and her children; the casual work she undertook alongside her factory job was necessary to make ends meet. Therefore, unlike Sardar, she always referred to her self-employment as 'work'.

The result of managing domestic responsibility with working from home was the dilution of women's self-conception as income-earners. In Sardar's case, it was telling that, throughout our interview, domestic life dominated her life story, even when I presented opportunities to talk about her job. She described her life as a mother of four, often reverting to her family life at various points of the interview, even when I asked about

[48] Sardar, Author Interview (10/1/2018).
[49] Thompson 'Time, Work Discipline and Industrial Capitalism', p. 61.

income-earning work. It was clear that her family was her priority. This sentiment was similar to a woman striking in the Leeds clothing workers' strike in 1970. The striker said, 'A man can stick up for his rights and all stick together, but a woman has a lot more things on her mind. Feeding her family, you know.'[50]

The specific nature of women's work also determined whether they were more likely to say they had a 'job' when describing their self-employment, since jobs such as growing vegetables could be seen as an extension of housework. Forms of self-employment, such as running a shop which operated on specific working hours, were more likely to be described as a 'job'. Suriya, who migrated to Middlesbrough in the early 1970s, was exceptional in how she described herself. She was one of the only older women to explicitly say she had a job, referring to her stint running a corner shop in a majority-white area soon after her migration. Her husband bought a house fronted by a shop in central Middlesbrough, which Suriya took charge of renovating, opening and running whilst her husband worked as a bus driver. She said, at the beginning of our conversation, that her early years in the UK were somewhat lonely, and her days were spent waiting for her husband to finish his shift:

> I never thought I'd spend my life here. My husband went to Pakistan and married me and when I got here I wouldn't even let my husband buy a house. I said I wanted to go back to Pakistan. It was only after our first child that we bought a house…I'm not sure when we opened the corner shop, um, I had kids then, we opened the shop and we all lived in the house attached to it… I used to tend to customer, manage the whole shop, look after the kids in the shop as well. The shop, the shop wasn't outside, it was in the house. The front

[50] Alexander, *Becoming a Woman*, p. 92.

> room was the shop and the back room was where we lived. The kids were with me, helping, I'd look after them. I worked there for six years.[51]

The shop was clearly important to Suriya, as she recollected her memories of life in Middlesbrough during the 1970s. It was also important that the shop was part of her house, as it allowed her to take care of her children and earn an income without spending money on expensive childcare. The shop became a place where she could build friendships and relationships with people in her local community:

> Um, then there weren't many of our people but white people, they were nice. The street we lives on where we opened the shop, where we first opened it, people would say 'we won't go to any other shop', people would come up and say that to us, we said we're not going anywhere and thank you for keeping our business going. People were good, they were friendly. If I closed the shop even for a little bit, they would find me and ask if everything was okay because I was alone. They were so nice. [52]

I asked why she chose to open the shop, whether it was born out of interest or necessity. Her answer was straightforward. She said:

> Eh, it was an interest but also we bought the, um, the property and the shop came with it so I thought 'why not, let's open a shop'.[53]

[51] Suriya, Author Interview, (9/4/2018).
[52] Suriya, Author Interview, (9/4/2018).
[53] Suriya, Author Interview, (9/4/2018).

Suriya, like other interviewees, made the decision to start a business based on the resources available to her, the support of her family and, crucially, her ability to fulfil the responsibilities of the job on her own, such as speaking to customers in English, skills which other interviewees of her generation did not necessarily have. There was no insinuation that she had to ask permission from her husband to do this or any resistance from family members regarding her work.

Family-run businesses became an important way in which women gained employment, albeit, for some, on a casual basis. Alison Shaw's study of a Pakistani community in Oxford briefly explored the differences between men and women's working activities, drawing the conclusion that women did not work outside the home as it would involve mixing with men who were not family members. She stated that it was common for shopkeepers to encourage their wives and daughters to work for the family business full-time, without pay, describing it 'as an extension of women's work at home, like working in the fields in Pakistan, for it is work done 'for the family''.[54] Similarly, in Denmark, Mikkel Rytter suggested that self-employment became the primary way in which Pakistani migrant men, in particular, took control of their financial prosperity after the decline of factory work. Like Pakistanis in Britain, most migrants in Denmark came from rural villages and worked as unskilled labourers. The Danish recession of 1973-74 and the consequent decline in factory work forced men to make decisions about their working lives. Women and children often worked as free labour for enterprises such as family-run corner shops.[55]

Suriya, however, described a form of work that was somewhat different. Whilst she did not mention if she took a wage for this job, she did not see it as an extension of her

[54] Shaw, *A Pakistani Community in Britain*, p. 67.
[55] Rytter, 'Money or Education?', p. 205.

housework either. There was some flexibility in the role, given the shop was attached to her home and she could look after her children whilst tending to customers. However, Suriya was confident in describing herself as a working woman and the sole employee of the shop. This was not her husband's enterprise, it was hers. The relatively short time she spent running the shop indicated that either the shop itself was not necessarily the primary income of the household or that Suriya's job was not prioritised when her husband decided to buy a new house for their family. Presumably, had the shop generated a meaningful income for the household, the family would have stayed at the property for longer, or Suriya and her husband would have taken steps to buy another shop. This was the only time Suriya was a shop keeper, although this experience certainly left an impression on her as a period in which she created new community bonds and developed the skills to be self-sufficient, independent of her husband.

It is important to note that when Sardar and Suriya began working during the early 1970s, it was only becoming more commonplace for mothers to be present in the workplace; an older generation of self-employed interviewees were part of the growing number of working mothers in Britain. By 1977, 70 percent of all wage-earning mothers worked part-time.[56] It is important to question, however, which women made up this statistic. According to Sardar, none of the women she knew formally worked. She laughed and dismissed the idea that women from the Pakistani community were formally employed. Evidently, however, far more participated in informal wage-earning work, labour that has the often remained invisible. When equal rights and pay equity dominated the debate around women's work in the 1970's, with the Equal Pay Act of 1970 and the Sex

[56] McCarthy, *Double Lives,* p. 325.

Discrimination Act of 1975, Pakistani women in Middlesbrough were yet to take steps into seemingly inaccessible formal workspaces. It is clear, then, why Sardar could not call her self-employment work. Work was what men in her community, or her white counterparts did, not her. Women of her generation living in Middlesbrough, she suggested, could not envisage being employees, nor did these opportunities necessarily present themselves. Suriya, by contrast, could draw a direct comparison between the work she and other men in her community did, running her own business in a dedicated workspace.

Conclusion

Women decided to start their own businesses because of the responsibilities placed on them as mothers and wives, the necessity to meet the demands of Pakistanis settling in Britain long-term and the inflexible, extremely limited options migrant women had in terms of formal waged work in Middlesbrough. The demands placed on women necessitated work that was flexible and could support their responsibilities as family and community members. The growing British-Pakistani community in Middlesbrough necessitated the establishment of services and businesses to support long term settlement. As a result, British-Pakistani women's self-employment, particularly in businesses selling traditional South Asian womenswear, flourished. The case of fabric shops is crucial, as this example highlights how women created businesses specifically for other women within their community. For some households, this resulted in women-led businesses being the primary income for the entire family, especially if household dynamics changed because of the redundancy of men during de-industrialisation, the death of a husband or children growing up and leaving. The question of whether a flexible job that married economic and domestic labour could constitute formalised work was up for debate. Depending on the interviewee, the response

varied. Nonetheless, women found ways in which to fill gaps in their local economy, changing their place of settlement and the prospects of their families and communities in the process.

Chapter 5: Race and Belonging

Race and belonging significantly affected women's labour practices and settlement experiences. Immigration legislation deemed Pakistani women as dependants, without recognising their potential to meaningfully contribute to society thorough their labour. Moreover, across the period, successive government officials and policymakers reiterated that British-Pakistani women were unwanted because they were supposedly socially and economically valueless. Crucially, however, place determined whether everyday interactions with white community members were remembered positively or negatively. Whilst few interviewees directly reflected on their relationship with the state when asked about racism, several women's testimony revealed that their interactions with white community members had significant consequences on their settlement and their sense of belonging.

To understand the relationship between women's settlement experiences, race and belonging, I will firstly examine the themes of identity and citizenship. The role of the state in determining who belonged, as well as the methods used to regulate this, have been crucial in shaping Britain's migrant communities. I will analyse what value was placed on the presence of Pakistani women and how debates about who could be deemed 'British' seeped into women's direct interactions with the state during their migration process. I will then analyse the importance of place in affecting women's experiences of racial inequality, using Oldham as a case study. Decisions by local policymakers, particularly during the 1970s, amplified the frustrations of working-class communities. The parallel rise of migration into towns such as Oldham and poor leadership has resulted in a long history of prejudicial attitudes amongst white residents who were witnessing unwanted shifts in their town.

Finally, I will focus on the unexpected but commonly held view amongst women in Middlesbrough that they had never faced racism. I will use their testimony to suggest that memories of neighbourly respect framed their interactions with white community members. It is important to note that the term 'race relations', which supposes equal power in the relationship between white and ethnic minority people, has been used minimally and in its historical context. Instead, terms such as 'racial oppression' have been used to encapsulate a system of racial hierarchy predicated on white supremacy.

The fine grain of Pakistani women's emotions and attitudes in relation to their minority status is yet to be fully analysed. Oral testimony revealed differences in how women remembered racial oppression, for various reasons. Older women in Middlesbrough, for example, actively rejected race as a primary frame of analysis and both younger and older women said they had never experienced racism. This was in direct contrast to testimonies collected in Oldham, where women of the same generation did, at times, reflect on racialised violence, histories which have been documented by researchers. Arguably, what could be perceived as conflicting histories of racial oppression is, instead, a recognition that we are yet to account for the full spectrum of experiences amongst people marginalised because of their race.

There are existing studies about British South Asians that have highlighted how pervasive systemic inequalities based on racist and sexist stereotypes resulted in South Asian women being subjected to inhumane checks on their belonging.[1] As Rachel Hall argued, the image of a meek, uneducated housebound woman whose social and economic contributions amounted to little more than housework and childrearing essentialised and

[1] See, for example: Wilson, *Finding a Voice*; Wilson, *Dreams, Questions, Struggles*; Brah, 'Women of South Asian Origin in Britain: Issues and Concerns', p. 41.

categorised South Asian women as 'unwanted' at the point of immigration.[2] These perpetuating stereotypes have resulted in working-class, non-English speaking South Asian women being caricatured as 'blocks of wood, you know, thick', as one midwife said in a study about stereotyping and its impact on poorer maternal health services.[3] There is also evidence in West Yorkshire of Muslim women being turned away from the nursing profession in the mid-1980s, since they could not wear trousers as part of their uniform instead of a 'standard (British) hemline' dress.[4] These microcosmic examples highlight how exclusionary practices rooted in racist stereotyping denied British-Pakistani and British-South Asian women access to vital resources and opportunities.

Identity and Citizenship: Belonging in a New Place of Settlement

Exclusionary immigration policies from 1962 onwards confirmed the unwantedness of South Asian women, who were framed as dependants of men rather than individuals who could meaningfully contribute to British society, both economically and socially. Arguably, for Pakistani women who came to Britain without any insight into what their lives would be like, the idea that their race would become a point of ferocious debate may have been difficult to comprehend. Clair Wills suggested that some new communities of Black and South Asian migrants in the mid-twentieth century could not have predicted the extent to which racial violence and hatred would frame their lives in Britain. Wills reflected on the moments in the summer of 1958, when violence was incited by young white men against Black citizens in

2 See: Rachel Hall, 'When is a wife not a wife? Some observations on the immigration experiences of South Asian women in West Yorkshire', *Contemporary Politics*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2002), pp. 55-68, at p. 62; Anwar, *The Myth of Return*, p. 165; Wilson, *Finding a Voice,* pp. 73-74; Evan Smith and Marinella Marmo, 'Uncovering the "Virginity Testing" Controversy in the National Archives: The Intersectionality of Discrimination in British Immigration History', *Gender & History*, vol. 23, no. 1 (2011), pp. 147–165.

3 Isobel Bowler, 'Stereotypes of Women of Asian Descent in Midwifery: Some Evidence', *Midwifery*, vol. 9, no. 1 (1993), pp. 7-16, at p. 11

4 Lewis and Patel, 'With one Voice', HWW 3, Box 12, p. 8.

Notting Hill, and argued that 'black residents had no way of gauging the depth and breadth of the hinterland of racial hatred which lay behind the attacks on them'.[5] Wills argued that, unlike Oswald Mosely's Union Movement, the White Defence League and, later, the National Front, whose 'enemy was easy to spot', for Black citizens, accepting white fascists as the enemy was difficult to comprehend; to accept that they were under attack would irrevocably alter their everyday lives.[6]

Systemic racism pervasively underpinned women's experiences of migration and settlement across the period, although the national and local debates about 'race relations' and migrant settlement were particularly fierce during the 1970s. Scholars John Solomos, John Findlay, Simon Jones and Paul Gilroy linked the 'elaboration of a popular racism in Britain' in the 1970s to British decline. The racism in 1960s and 1970s Britain was 'the racism not of a dominant but of a declining social formation'.[7] In other words, racism in the 1970s was distinctly different from the colonial racism that underpinned racial oppression during the time of empire. The restructuring of the national economy across the 1970s, for example, in response to increased unemployment, deepening class inequalities, and recurring economic crises, manifested into 'a re-composition of relations of power at all levels.'[8] Race was articulated as the problem.[9]

For several interviewees across the period, their first introduction to racism came when they interacted with immigration officials, representatives of the state who were ordered to follow policies that questioned women's belonging. The summer of 1958 in

[5] Wills, *Lovers and Strangers,* p. 159.
[6] Wills, *Lovers and Strangers,* pp. 158- 159
[7] John Solomos, Bob Findlay, Simon Jones and Paul Gilroy, 'The Organic Crisis of British Capitalism and Race: The Experience of the Seventies', in Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham (ed.), *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s* Britain (London: Hutchinson Press, 1982), p. 14.
[8] Solomos, Findlay, Jones and Gilroy, 'The Organic Crisis of British Capitalism and Race', p. 21.
[9] Solomos, Findlay, Jones and Gilroy, 'The Organic Crisis of British Capitalism and Race', pp. 21-26.

Notting Hill changed how Black people viewed their place in Britain. It also consolidated political perspectives on how to curb racial tensions, namely using immigration policy to control the quantity and quality of non-white migrants.[10]

Debates about the social and economic value of South Asian migrant women underpinned the immigration policies that targeted them. For example, the attempts to exclude South Asian women from Britain were detailed in the news piece about 55-year-old foundry worker Dara Singh, who fought with immigration officials to reunify with his wife and children. In 1978, Dara lived in West Bromwich and was interviewed for a regional news piece about the consequences of strict immigration policy on the welfare of British-South Asian families. The news piece was produced by ATV and was broadcasted in the Midlands region. After ten years of living in Britain and sending remittance back to his family in Punjab, Dara decided he wanted to invite his family to live with him. However, according to Dara's brother, who was literate and therefore took charge of facilitating the move, the Home Office blocked Dara from reuniting with his family because he did not have enough money and his living conditions were inadequate.[11] Whilst little is said about Dara's wife's everyday life raising her children in Punjab and waiting for the news about her migration, the news piece raised significant points that highlighted how sexism and racism underpinned South Asian women's migration and settlement. Most importantly, his application was rejected on the basis that he, as the breadwinner, did not have the resources to take care of his family; his wife, in this case, was depicted as a dependant and her value was only as great as the money her husband could make to support her. The everyday experiences of coping with the separation caused by discriminatory immigration

[10] Wills, *Lovers and Strangers,* p. 172.
[11] ATV, 'Immigration Control', *British Film institute* (3rd April 1978), 0:39-1:08. Available at: https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-immigration-control-1978-online [Accessed 7/12/20].

controls, as well as the strategies migrant families used to deal with the heavy hand of the state, cannot be gauged solely by policy recommendations or legislation.

In 1978, the unwantedness of South Asian women was emphasised in the recommendations made by the Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration, which was led by Labour MP Fred Willey. Five Labour and five Conservatives MPs pressed the government to 'make it unequivocally clear that that in the foreseeable future there will be no further primary immigration and that such immigration will only be allowed in exceptional individual circumstances.'[12] Whilst the committee acknowledged that they were writing at a time in which immigration was a controversial issue, they believed that 'nothing in this report should give rise to fears in anyone irrespective of race, colour or creed, who has lawfully settled in the United Kingdom'.[13] It is curious, then, that the committee recommended placing a quota on Indian migrants specifically. It is difficult to gauge whether this recommendation extended to those across the subcontinent, although the call to generally reduce the numbers of fiancés, spouses and children allowed entry certainly would have had significant ramifications on British-Pakistanis. Praful Patel, described by the New York Times as a leader in the British-Pakistani community but was, more accurately, an Indian-Ugandan activist resident in Britain who fought for fair immigration policy, said that the report highlighted the committee was 'just as infected with racial prejudice on immigration as most other institutions.'[14]

[12] Joseph Collins, 'British Panel Calls for Tight Curb on Asian and African Immigrants', *New York Times* (22nd March 1978), p. A4.
[13] Collins, 'British Panel Calls for Tight Curb on Asian and African Immigrants', p. A4.
[14] Collins, 'British Panel Calls for Tight Curb on Asian and African Immigrants', p. A4. Also See: Asians from Uganda, 'Praful Patel'. Available at: http://www.asiansfromuganda.org.uk/praful_patel.php [Accessed 14/10/21].

Political figures and the public alike believed that immigration damaged British society in the 1970s, a direct critique of the social and economic value of migrants. Notably, when Conservative Party leader Margaret Thatcher went on the television show 'World in Action' on 30th January 1978, she exclaimed that Britain was 'swamped by people of a different culture', calling for an 'end to immigration.'[15] As a direct result of these racist and xenophobic opinions, a survey by National Opinion Polls showed that the Conservatives took an eleven point lead over Labour, 50 percent to 39 percent, reversing Labour's two point lead immediately before the interview.[16] A Gallup poll conducted at the same time showed that '59 percent of those interviewed said they considered immigrants a very serious social problem, 46 percent said race relations were worsening, and 49 percent said Britain should offer cash to immigrants who would return home'.[17]

During the 1970s, migrants were fighting against a wave of hostility towards their long-term presence; support for tighter legislation had significant political purchase. At the same time, some political figures used their position to highlight the plight of individuals who were being denied reunification with their families, including spouses, parents and children. Labour MP for Coventry South-East and solicitor William Wilson emphasised how widespread the issue of family separation and discriminatory immigration policy was. He said, 'if you have a spark of humanity within you, you've got to feel sympathetic', as he explained how much time and effort went into putting an appeals case together to overturn Home Office's decisions.[18] Some waited years, desperately wanting to hear whether they

[15] Antoinette Burton, 'Connective Tissue: South Asians and the Making of Postcolonial Histories in Britain', in Sushella Nasta (ed.) *India in Britain: South Asian Networks and Connections, 1858-1950* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 197.
[16] R. W. Apple Jr, 'Mrs. Thatcher Touches a Nerve and British Racial Tension Is Suddenly a Political Issue', New York Times (22nd February 1978), Section A, p. 10.
[17] Apple Jr, 'Mrs. Thatcher Touches a Nerve', Section A, p. 10.
[18] ATV, 'Immigration Control', 4:19-5:06.

were able to be with their children, spouse, parents and siblings. Their interactions with the state had already made clear that they were not wanted.

Immigration policy necessitated that those who wanted to migrate not only have connections to Britain already, but that they prove their worth to immigration officials working for the British Government. An intergeneration conversation between Sugra and her daughter-in-law Nadiya made apparent that little had changed in terms of how women's belonging was determined by the state since 1974, when Sugra moved to Middlesbrough, and when Nadiya migrated in 1996. The only update to immigration policy between 1974 and 1996 was the Immigration Act of 1988, which principally worked to stop the migration of multiple wives who were part of polygamous marriages. Nadiya was fifteen years old when she faced immigration officials in an Islamabad office in 1996. This was the first time she experienced the wrath of British immigration policy, having to jump through hoops to prove why she needed a visa. Her belonging was already being questioned before she stepped foot on British soil.[19] Her new husband was a British-born citizen, his father having moved in the early 1960s to work for Dorman Long and then British Steel in Middlesbrough. Under the intimidating circumstances of questioning and interrogation, Nadiya went through the same rite of passage, so to speak, that other women who were facing the prospect of making Britain their new home would share. For some this was an 'ordinary' experience (or as ordinary as questioning by an official can be). For others, it was troubling and traumatising. These were the first, formative interaction women had with the British state:

[Nadiya]: Where did they do your interview?

[19] Parmar, 'Gender, Race and Class: Asian Women in Resistance', pp. 235-274.

[Sister-in-law]: In Islamabad

[Sugra]: In my time there did the interviews there too.

[Nadiya]: In my time an official asked a woman a question about periods or something and outside my room the husband as swearing and shouting, 'if you don't want to give the visa don't give it, why are you asking about stuff like that?' (laughs)

[Sister-in-law]: I think someone asked our sister-in-law something about that and she was crying so much but they didn't ask me anything like that

[Nadiya]: Me neither

[Sister-in-law]: They just asked me normal questions

[Sugra]: They didn't ask me anything inappropriate either

[Nadiya]: Ha, they asked me what town I was going to and I couldn't even remember the name of the town. I was here for ages until I realised that this town was called Middlesbrough (laughs). He asked, 'where are you going to live?' and I said 'England' (laughs). He asked twice 'where do they live?' and I said, 'well England' (laughs).

[Sister-in-law]: When I get there I'll find out (laughs).[20]

[20] Nadiya, Author Interview (9/1/2019).

The conversation amongst these three family members unveiled a common experience regarding their immigration process, namely being subjected to questions that determined whether a woman was legitimately associated with a man through marriage or engagement. Their experiences spanned over twenty-five years and they all obtained visas because of their marriages to men who were already British citizens. According to the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962, the immigration officer would be satisfied if 'he or she-…is the wife, or a child under sixteen years of age, of a Commonwealth citizen who is resident in the United Kingdom or of a Commonwealth citizen'.[21] Whilst subsequent legislation amended the 1962 Act, all the interviewees who migrated as married adults said their route to British citizenship was predicated on their status as wives of British citizens, suggesting that this route remained open across the period.

The questions posed by immigration officials actively worked to demean and intimidate women, in turn undermining their sense of belonging before they had arrived at their new place of settlement. Nadiya overheard questions about menstruation during her interview with immigration officials. Moreover, Sugra, Nadiya and her sister-in-law revealed that their relative had faced the same questions. This was possibly the result of the long-standing concern amongst British officials that Asian women would pretend to be married to gain citizenship via the claim to dependence.[22] Nadiya laughed at the man's response to the questions his wife faced when remembering what she saw, possibly because of the strange dynamic between the outburst and the professional setting they were in. This does not diminish the deeply problematic nature of this line of questioning, which was predicated on a pervasive stereotype that South Asian women were not economic migrants and could

[21] British Parliament, 'Commonwealth Immigrants Act, 1962', 10 & 11 ELIZ. 2. CH. 21 (1962), p. 2. Available at: https://www.freemovement.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/CIA1962.pdf [Accessed: 18/10/21].
[22] Brah, 'Women of South Asian Origin in Britain: Issues and Concerns', p. 45.

only substantiate their claim to citizenship by proving they were married or the dependents of men.[23]

These questions primarily worked to determine the legitimacy of women's belonging, the presumption being that women's marital status (and, therefore, their dependence on a wage-earning man) could be proved biologically. Journalist Melanie Phillips brought the severity of this issue to public attention with the publication of an article in the Guardian in 1979, detailing the policy of 'virginity tests' which were used by immigration officials to determine whether a woman was married; it was presumed that an unmarried Asian woman would be a virgin and would not have experienced pregnancy. According to the Immigration Act (1971), fiancés did not need to apply for a visa if they were to marry within three months of their arrival, resulting in women having to medically prove their eligibility.[24] Phillips's interviewee, an Indian woman, said she agreed to the examination because she was afraid that they would send her back to India. When the article was published in 1979, the British Government insisted that the cases published in the article were isolated.[25] Decades later, Marinella Marmo and Evan Smith revealed that over eighty women had been subjected to invasive virginity testing.[26]

After Phillips's article was published in 1979, activists mobilised to highlight the injustices South Asian women faced to prove their social and economic worth to state officials. South Asian feminists mobilised against virginity testing as part of women's

[23] Hall, 'When is a wife not a wife?', at p. 57.
[24] Commission for Racial Equality, *Immigration Control Procedures: Report of a Formal Investigation* (London: Elliot House, 1985), p. 16.
[25] Alan Travis, 'Ministers face calls for apology as extent of 1970s 'virginity tests' revealed', *The Guardian* (8th May 2011). Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2011/may/08/home-office-virginity-tests-1970s [Accessed: 26/8/21].
[26] Smith and Marmo, 'Uncovering the 'Virginity Testing' Controversy in the National Archives', p. 148. Also see: Evan Smith and Marinella Marmo, *Race, Gender and the Body in British Immigration Control* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Helma Lutz, Anna Phoenix and Nira Yuval-Davis, *Crossfires: Nationalism, Racism and Gender in Europe* (London: Pluto Press, 1995), p. 13.

immigration. Awaz, alongside the Organisation of Women of African and Asian Descent (OWAAD) and Southall Black Sisters, picketed at Heathrow against the policy, which targeted South Asian women.[27] Moreover, a 1981 satirical docu-drama directed by Claudine Booth depicted what it would have been like for those subjected to the Home Office's virginity testing. Booth explored what the conversation would have been like when the responsibility to test was designated to the doctor at Heathrow's Immigration Department. When questioned about the testing by the reluctant doctor, the delegating manger said 'if these girls still have their virginity when they arrive here, they'll be allowed in. If they haven't, they'll be sent back. It's as simple as that'.[28] He went on to say that, given Asian girls marry young, the tests would have to be performed on those from age eleven to eighteen, 'even ten if we have to'.[29] The manager argued that the virginity testing on teenagers and children was need to end 'the flow of Asian families' and mothers were depicted as the crux of the problem; 'once you let the mother in, the whole family trails in behind her'.[30] The fear, confusion and shame amongst those subjected to multiple tests highlighted the consequences of apathy, ignorance and, as the testimony substantiates, racism and sexism.

South Asian men were not subjected to invasive medical examination because their value was seen in their capabilities as economically active labourers. Instead, British authorities bought into the racial stereotypes of South Asian women immigrants as 'downtrodden, housebound, and emotionally and materially dependent on her husband'.[31]

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[27] Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England,* pp. 77-80.
[28] Claudine Booth, 'No Virginity, No Nationality', *British Film Institute* (1981), 2:00-2:11. Available at: https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-no-virginity-no-nationality-1981-online [Accessed: 9/12/20].
[29] Claudine Booth, 'No Virginity, No Nationality', 2:29-2:39.
[30] Claudine Booth, 'No Virginity, No Nationality', 2:58-3:05.
[31] Hall, 'When is a wife not a wife?', p. 62.

The inherent assumption that they would be worthless to the labour market meant their value had to be found elsewhere. The integrity of their bodies and their morality, therefore, became a point of scrutiny, to test whether what they had claimed to gain entry was true.[32] Intrusion became a method of subordination that was racially motivated. Nadiya's recollections showed that whilst virginity tests were not practiced when she was dealing with immigration officials, there was still a preoccupation with women's physicality. Given my interviewees knew someone else who had been subjected to this humiliating line of questioning, it is sensible to assume that this was a common occurrence.

Soon after Nadiya's arrival to Middlesbrough, parts of the apparatus determining immigration status were on the cusp of change. Nonetheless, these changes were predicated on immigrants proving their social and economic worth to the British state. In February 2002, the Home Office, which was under the control of Labour Home Secretary David Blunkett, released a white paper titled 'Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain'. Given the racialised tension and social unrest in multi-ethnic northern industrial towns such as Oldham, Bradford and Burnley the summer before, the paper stated that communities were divided, 'lacking a sense of common values or shared civic identity to unite around.'[33] The Home Office said 'it is vital that we strengthen both our sense of community belonging and the civic and political dimensions of British citizenship.'[34] One of the proposed methods was language education, the building blocks for the current 'Life in the United Kingdom' test. In the eyes of the government, this would 'strengthen the

[32] Smith and Marmo, 'Uncovering the 'Virginity Testing' Controversy in the National Archives', p. 149.
[33]Home Office, 'Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain' (2002), p. 10. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/250926/cm5387.pdf [Accessed 10/11/20].
[34] Home Office, 'Secure Borders, Safe Haven'. p. 11.

ability of new citizens to participate in society and to engage actively in our democracy.'[35] It is important to note that this white paper, at several points, did acknowledge the benefits of migration, suggesting that 'if managed properly, migration can bring considerable benefits to the UK, including improvements in economic growth and productivity, as well as cultural enrichment and diversity.'[36]

Crucially, despite the recognition of important labour migration, the paper perpetuated the same ideas of exclusion that underpinned previous immigration policies and legislative controls. The intense scrutiny asylum seekers were subjected to, who were barred from accessing welfare provisions and paid work, worked on the assumption that, until their claims for asylum were proven to be true, they were not deserving of social and economic rights. By promoting intense restrictions on asylum seekers, the government in turn defined what type of migrant was acceptable, namely those who were educated and highly skilled.[37] Those with 'low skills' were less likely to pass the stringent rules placed on gaining citizenship. Had this legislation existed before 2002, most of my interviewees would not have been granted entry.

The September 11 terrorist attacks played a role in the continuity of exclusionary practices; the racist and xenophobic attacks on migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were legitimised, in part, by the state's concerns for security. According to Human Rights Watch, in the wake of the attacks, David Blunkett suggested security measures such as increased police interrogation and restricted judicial appeals for those denied entry at UK airports. These measures contradicted the attempts by the Home Office to tackle racist attacks on

[35]Home Office, 'Secure Borders, Safe Haven', p. 11.
[36] Home Office, 'Secure Borders, Safe Haven', p. 22.
[37] Rosemary Sales, 'Secure Borders, Safe Haven: A contradiction in terms?', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol 28. no. 3 (2005), pp. 445-462, at p. 454-456. Also see: Paul, *Whitewashing Britain,* pp. 148-149.

British Muslims, Arabs and South Asians. British-Muslims were subjected to methods of interrogation by the state and the threat of violent attack in public spaces. For Muslim women, the hypervisibility of their religious expression, namely wearing the *hijab*, *niqab* or *burkah*, made them particularly susceptible to racial violence.[38]

The Importance of Place: The Case of Oldham

Where women settled, and the ways in which their neighbours and local policymakers either defended or challenged their presence, played a crucial part in how they remembered their interactions with white community members. Making home in a new place, as South Asians, was a contentious and controversial process. The specific ways in which this unfolded was determined, in part, by local economic change and local political decision-making. Oldham is an important case study about the relationship between place and experiences of racial oppression. Archival material pertaining to Oldham's recent history has revealed a long-standing and heated debate about the presence of migrants, which manifested into violence that captured the nation's attention at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

The importance of place in determining experiences of racial oppression has not yet been explored in relation to the settlement of South Asian women. Amrit Wilson's ground-breaking book on the lives of South Asian women, for example, detailed the consequences of isolation that stemmed from not being able to speak English and separation from loved ones. She stated, 'the realisation that this is a racist society, a society that wishes them dead for the colour of their skin, accentuates their loneliness, and their isolation in turn makes it

[38] Human Rights Watch, 'No Safe Refuge the Impact of the September 11 Attacks on Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants in the Afghanistan Region and Worldwide' (18th October 2001), pp. 9-10. Available at: https://www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounder/refugees/refugee-bck1017.pdf [Accessed 14/6/21].

harder for them to fight against racism.'[39] Although Wilson generally based her arguments on interviews from Indian women living in regions across the UK, my interviewees revealed that place had significant consequences on how women experienced localised interactions with white residents. Where women settled shaped the type of community relationships they would experience.

Place had significant consequences on how interactions with white community members were remembered. Whilst conducting interviews in Oldham, after collecting a set of interviews in Middlesbrough, it became apparent that these interactions meant something different to them, compared to their counterparts in Middlesbrough. Women in Oldham were far more likely to describe racism when asked about their settlement experiences, compared to women in Middlesbrough. One interviewee from Oldham, Mafooz, remembered how her husband and his friends used to get chased by skinheads on their way to their shift at a local mill. Mafooz, who arrived in Oldham on Christmas Day in 1969, said the 'bald men in red clothes' made her husband scared to go to work; 'they say they (racists) are here now but they were here before'.[40] This testimony was reminiscent of women's experiences in Tower Hamlets, for example, where Bangladeshi homeworkers described the anxieties they felt about them or their family members being out at night. One interviewee said 'they (a white, English person) stay out till two or three in the morning but never think that a Bengali person might beat them up. But if our son or relative stays out, we worry that something has happened to them'.[41] Like Mafooz in Oldham, this interviewee feared what would happen to the men in her family as they moved through public spaces. As discussed in a previous chapter, for one interviewee Farzana, her solution

[39] Wilson, *Finding a Voice,* p. 21.
[40] Mafooz, Author Interview (17/7/2019).
[41] Kabeer, *The Power to Choose*, p. 273.

was simple: stay in Glodwick, where walking around after dark and being comfortable in her neighbourhood was made possible because she lived with other Pakistanis. For many, this was neither an option nor was it an answer to the problems of being an ethnic minority in a majority white country.

The decision-making of local councils had significant consequences on experiences of racism. By 1975, the Oldham Council for Community Relations had conceded that greater strides had to be made in order to promote 'positive race relations'; the methods by which to secure this ill-defined status generally relied upon changing national policy.[42] In the minutes of a special committee meeting which was commenced by N. Hussain, the President of the Pakistan Society, it was agreed that the council should promote 'mutual tolerance', although details of what this meant were sparse.[43] In addition, at the meeting, the Oldham Council for Community Relations decided to expand the function of the local race relations conciliation committee to reflect the changes in race relations law. When Political and Economic Planning (PEP) published a series of reports between 1974 and 1976 about the persistence of racial discrimination, particularly around job seeking and housing, the government had to act.[44] The Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration investigated the function of race relations administration and, in July 1975, produced a report with recommendations of changes.[45] By September 1975, the government's white paper, 'Racial Discrimination' stated 'a decade has elapsed since the introduction of the first race relations statute in this country. The time has come to evaluate the working of the

[42] Solomos, Findlay, Jones and Gilroy, 'The Organic Crisis of British Capitalism and Race', p. 27.
[43] Oldham Council for Community Relations, 'Special Executive Committee', (16th April 1975), Box 15, M232/15 File 27: Weekend Conference Papers, Oldham Archives, Oldham.
[44] Political and Economic Planning, 'A P.E.P. survey of Race discrimination in Britain', *Patterns of Prejudice,* vol. 9, no. 22 (1975), pp. 20-21, at p. 20.
[45] Philip S. Sooben, 'The Origins of the Race Relations Act', *Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations*, no. 12, (1990), pp. 1-60, at p. 3. Available at: https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/crer/research/publications/research_papers/rp_no.12.pdf [Accessed 4/1/21].

legislation'.[46] With the support of the Race Relations Board, Community Relations Commission, the Runnymede Trust and PEP, the government proposed changes in the law that, alongside the Select Committee's July 1975 report, would shape the Race Relations Act of 1976, which superseded the previous two iterations. The 1976 Act would replace the Race Relations Board with the Commission for Racial Equality. On a national level and in localities like Oldham, the political responses to racial inequality were still being tinkered with, re-written in the hopes that committees and political leadership might change pervasive and unjust attitudes towards non-white British citizens.

Arguably, this was not enough to address the deep-seated frustrations and anger white residents felt about the influx of unwanted migrants into their rapidly changing neighbourhoods. In September 1977, ten days after the appointment of the new Community Relations Officer Keith Bradford by Oldham Borough Council, fierce debate erupted about the function of local leaders in curbing racial discrimination. On 13th September 1977, Keith Bradford declared 'war' on local businessmen. At a meeting in the Belgrade Hotel, he told them 'you, gentlemen, hold power in Oldham and I do not believe that you have the courage to use that power to make this a racially-just town'.[47] Mr Bradford suggested that businessmen in the room might have a change of heart after their meeting and make racial discrimination grounds for instant dismissal or even write an equal opportunities policy for their firms; 'but if you don't, if, for all your power, you connive at the institutionalised racism around you, then, make no mistake, the battle will be brought to you door'.[48] Mr Bradford's forceful words reflected the desperate situation Oldham's

[46] Home Office, 'Racial Discrimination', (9th September 1975). Available at: http://filestore.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pdfs/small/cab-129-184-c-93.pdf [Accessed 4/2/21].
[47] Evening Chronicle Oldham, 'New Race Officer Declares War on Businessmen' (13th September 1977), Box 15, M232/15, File 22: Newspaper cuttings, 1964-1988, Oldham Archives, Oldham.
[48] Evening Chronicle Oldham, 'New Race Officer Declares War on Businessmen', Box 15, M232/15, File 22.

migrant communities found themselves in and instigating 'war' seemed like a last resort effort to bring powerful actors in tow.

However, the public response to Mr Bradford's actions suggested that they fanned the flames of community divisions, instead of mending relationships as he had hoped. A member of the public, who wrote an opinion piece for the local newspaper, stated 'it is hard to understand why there should be a community relations officer in Oldham. The coloured person who lives in our street of three-bedroomed, semi-detached council houses, has a fine car, a well-appointed home, a well-dressed child, seemingly short of nothing'.[49] Another opinion piece by a Greenhill resident called A.B suggested that his whole area was dominated by Asian migrants; 'we locals suffer racialism in reverse much more than them'.[50] He said that many people have been compelled to move, as was he, although the price of their properties have been 'greatly reduced' given the influx of South Asians; 'oh, for an Enoch Powell to care for us'.[51] Finally, a member of the public using the pseudonym 'immigrant' said that the previous community relations officer of nine years 'achieved next to nothing' and Mr Bradford had declared 'war' on behalf of immigrant communities without consulting them or without taking into consideration the damage that may have been done. He said 'my advice to Mr Bradford is that he need not declare war just to justify his job; instead, help us make Glodwick, Wernerth Featherstall areas like Saddleworth i.e. proud to be lived in.'[52] The remarks of 'immigrant' were revealing. He did not feel local policymakers represented him and his communities and that they did not have the willpower to push for meaningful change in areas that affected his life, such as housing. In

[49] Evening Chronicle Oldham, 'New Race Officer Declares War on Businessmen' Box 15, M232/15, File 22.
[50] Evening Oldham Chronicle, 'Declaration of war…' (20th September 1977), Box 15, M232/15, File 22: Newspaper cuttings, 1964-1988, Oldham Archives, Oldham.
[51] Evening Oldham Chronicle, 'Declaration of war…' Box 15, M232/15, File 22.
[52] Evening Oldham Chronicle, 'Declaration of war…' Box 15, M232/15, File 22.

addition, the ideas of 'reverse racism' were pervasive in this article; some white residents could not understand the difficulties faced by South Asians in the town. Nor could they comprehend the actions of Mr Bradford. His status as an outsider, given he was previously Community Relations Officer for Coventry, is one of the reasons given for his lack of understanding about the lived experiences of those who grew up in Oldham.

These articles captured the ferocity of the debate around what it meant to be a person of colour in a place like Oldham and, concurrently, where the responsibilities of local authorities lay. The ability to work was being curbed because of racism and pockets of the white population saw Keith Bradford's actions as representative of a local political system that was acting far more favourably towards a migrant populous that many did not want in their town. One resident told the *Evening Chronicle* 'we are now getting to a stage in the Oldham area where, in a lot of ways, it might be said we need a community relations officer to represent the white communities'.[53] As well intentioned as local representatives such as Keith Bradford were, members of the public were losing faith in their local authority as leaders that could mend broken community ties.

Place significantly affected everyday experiences of racial oppression in Oldham. Stereotypes about South Asian migrants were widespread and these perceptions directly informed whether migrants could rent a house or secure a decent job. For example, the idea that migrant influx brought property prices down and made areas less desirable was echoed by an Oldham greengrocer, Mrs Florence Middleton, who told the *Evening Chronicle* that her business had been affected because of the influx of Bangladeshi migrants. Whilst they

[53] Evening Chronicle Oldham, 'New Race Officer Declares War on Businessmen', Box 15, M232/15, File 22.

were ‘good customers’, Bangladeshi presence made the street, ‘which was once a select area of Oldham’ into ‘the worst slum in Oldham’.[54]

Archival materials show that place had significant consequences on how ‘race relations’ were experienced in day-to-day interactions. Specific regions of Yorkshire, which often had the highest rates of South Asian influx, were chosen by the National Front during the 1970s as areas to protest, a strategy to increase recruitment amongst frustrated white residents. It is crucial to consider what agency looked like for those whose presence was at the centre of political debate. In Bradford, on 24th April 1976, a counter-protest against the National Front was organised by Bradford Trades Council. This was in response to the 1,000 people who took part in a National Front march in Bradford on the same day. In a short video filmed by police officers, as part of a large collection of videos by the West Yorkshire Police from the 1960s and 1970s, hundreds joined the counter-protest and South Asian men from all age groups marched through the city centre alongside white anti-racists; it is difficult to see if any South Asian women were present, although women and children from other communities were amongst the crowds. The counter-protest was supported by groups such as the Indian Workers Association, Hull University Union and the York Communist Party.[55]

A few years later, in 1980, South Asian locals organised themselves again to protest against the extreme right in Dewsbury and Halifax. The protest was filmed by the West Yorkshire police and showed generations of South Asian men, including the Asian Youth Organisation, which was founded in Bradford in 1979, and supporters from organisations

[54] Evening Chronicle Oldham, ‘I am ready to be jailed for notice in window’ (26th August 1977), Box 15, M232/15, File 22: Newspaper cuttings, 1964-1988, Oldham Archives, Oldham, p. 23.
[55] West Yorkshire Police, ‘Anti National Front Demonstrations Bradford’, *British Film Institute* (24th April 1976). Available at: https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-anti-national-front-demonstrations-bradford-1978-online [Accessed 7/6/21].

such as the Leeds Labour party and local branches of the Anti-Nazi League, marching together. Both marches were well attended, although markedly smaller than the protest that took place in Bradford a few years earlier. Nonetheless, much like the Bradford march, South Asian men and children were heavily present. The protest materials displayed in this clip are particularly striking. It was evident that some South Asian residents used this opportunity to promote class and racial solidarity, with messages such as 'Black and White Unite' and 'No Job, No Future. Black and White, We Suffer Alike'.[56] The National Front protested on the same day, with placards such as 'The National Front says Ban Textile Imports', a protest against the cheaper, globalised manufacturing of textiles which resulted in increased unemployment in mill towns such as Halifax and Oldham.[57] Other placards reflected similar sentiments, rather than overt messages of white supremacy and anti-immigration, emphasising the desire for the National Front to be regarded as a legitimate political party. Towards the end of the film, we can see young, white men doing a Nazi salute when they notice the camera; despite the nature of their placards and banners, those partaking in the protest still made their white supremacist sentiments very clear.[58] The role of British-South Asians in anti-fascist movements in the North of England across the 1970s is a significant, yet underexplored, history.

In places where local legislation inadequately addressed the frustrations of white residents, who turned to right-wing groups such as the National Front, resistance had to take many forms. Whilst there is evidence of anti-fascist movement or notable examples of striking South Asian women fighting for labour rights, for some their resistance took less

[56] West Yorkshire Police, 'Asian Alliance/ National Front Demos', *British Film Institute* (1980), 1:27-1:32. Available at: https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-asian-alliancenational-front-demos-1980-online [Accessed: 6/6/21].
[57] West Yorkshire Police, 'Asian Alliance/ National Front Demos', 6:41-6:43.
[58] West Yorkshire Police, 'Asian Alliance/ National Front Demos', 12:06-12:11.

obvious forms. In Oldham, some families decided to open their own businesses in the face of workplace discrimination.[59] Women in Oldham spearheaded the creation of community centres, found ways to work from home to lift their families from poverty and were integral in the religious education their children. These decisions consolidated Pakistani women's attempts to make home in communities that, time and again, showed that they were unwanted. As Pratibha Parmar argued, South Asian women 'develop their own forms of resistance, articulate their own ideas about British society, and rely on their own historical cultural traditions as a means of support'.[60]

By 2001, the history of racial oppression in Oldham manifested into violence that, retrospectively, was an almost inevitable act of resistance by targeted British-South Asians. Glodwick became the epicentre of race riots that erupted across the north of England during the summer of 2001. White, British-born residents saw their town change irrevocably over the course of a few decades and a new generation of British-born South Asians demanded the same opportunities and respect afforded to their white counterparts. Whilst the late 1970s caused policymakers in Oldham to reconsider their role in mending broken ties, by 2001 it was clear that not enough had been done to rectify the poor housing, unemployment and poverty that had made working-class areas like Glodwick hotbeds of frustration and anger amongst those who placed blame, at least in part, on migrants. Living side by side and competing for work underpinned the frustrations of Glodwick's working-class community, where race and difference became the central explanation as to why progression and opportunities evaded them. Ash Amin, a Ugandan-South Asian academic, stated that more than one generation of South Asians in Oldham lived in a state of

[59] Kalra, *From Textile Mills to Taxi Ranks*, p. 14.
[60] Parmar, 'Gender, Race and Class: Asian Women in Resistance', p. 239. Also see: Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England,* pp. 75-84.

permanent unemployment by 2001, with around 50 percent of young South Asians in the town being unemployed at the time of publication, in 2003. Drawing a crucial parallel between working-class Pakistani, Bangladeshi and white communities, Amin suggested that there was 'acute problems of social stigmatization, low educational achievements, unpleasant housing and urban amenities, elevated health and drug-abuse problems, and a pathology of social rejection.'[61] What happened in May 2001 was a consequence of long-term neglect.

The depiction of the riots themselves in national publications at the time highlighted the extreme and pervasive stereotypes of South Asians that were implicitly being used to explain the violence. For example:

> white Britons are used to thinking of Asian immigrants as those nice industrious people who keep the corner shop and local curry house. So it was a shock to see youths of Asian descent on the streets of Oldham…hurling petrol bombs at pubs and the police.[62]

What this depiction failed to acknowledge was the decades of contentious community relationships, racism and deprivation that came to a head over those days of violence and rioting. The author of this article placed the blame for the outbreak of rioting on young South Asian men, stating that the teaching of 'total obedience to Islam', for example, created 'questioning, assertive people driven by a strong sense of cultural identity and religious fervour' when paired with British state education.[63] Arguably, a stereotypical and prejudicial focus on Islamic classes or extremist attitudes amongst British-Muslims obscures

[61] Ash Amin, 'Unruly Strangers? The 2001 Urban Riots in Britain', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2003), pp. 460-63, at p. 461.
[62] The Economist, 'Shades of Brown', *The Economist*, vol. 359, issue 8224 (2nd June 2001), p. 38.
[63] The Economist, 'Shades of Brown', p. 38.

the short-comings of local councils and successive national government in raising the quality of life for those struggling to provide for their families. Naively, those part of the political establishment believed Britain 'had never had a serious race-related disturbance in years… things seemed to be going rather well'. [64] For middle-class, white members of British society, this may certainly have been the impression.

It was surprising that no interviewee in Oldham made specific reference to what occurred in 2001. There may be numerous reasons why. It is crucial to note that, for the most part, it was men who decided to riot. There are no reports suggesting that South Asian women were present. More interviews may have generated thoughts about what had happened and, possibly, a stronger focus on the experiences of second-generation women in Oldham could have illuminated their participation and their thoughts on what young British-South Asian men endured during this period of violence. It is important to note, however, that the lack of specific reference towards the riots may also reflect what Pakistani women found important to tell me. Interpersonal relationships with other Pakistani women came up frequently, as did being mothers and their stories of adaptation. Whilst I did ask about racial oppression, interviewees in Oldham rarely brought it up themselves. It was not the primary motive of the interviewing process and the lives of South Asians in Oldham extended far beyond what happened in 2001. However, the riots certainly paved the way for future policymaking.

Attempts have been made to contextualise the riots and to use lived experiences to form policy. The Oldham Independent Review, for example, commissioned a report about the strikes, led by David Ritchie. In the introduction, Ritchie remembered talking to a group

[64] The Economist, 'Down and Out Up North'*, The Economist*, vol. 361, issue 8252, (15th December 2001), p. 23.

of Asian women when collecting data for the report and said what he heard was 'moving'. An Asian woman, living in a white-majority area, described rubbish being thrown into her garden and broke down in tears when reflecting on how her children also enduring this form of racial abuse. Others described placing a self-imposed curfew of 7:00pm so that they could avoid racist attacks.[65] Whilst Pakistani women, themselves, did not talk about the events of 2001, they were certainly there; Oldham had been the home of my interviewees for most of their lives. Their recollections of life in Oldham, as well as archival materials, act as a starting point to understand how racial oppression implicated the day-to-day decisions they made to live comfortably.

Neighbourly respect and friendships

Pakistani women's experiences of community, beyond their circle of Pakistani friends and family, varied from person to person and between places. For some, their interactions with white community members rarely extended beyond parents' evenings with their children's teachers or visiting the local shop; they had little to say when I asked them about racism and belonging. For others, their experiences were seeped in fear and anger towards neighbours who undermined their belonging through racism and bigotry. However, for a significant proportion of older migrant interviewees, who were all from Middlesbrough, questions about their experiences with white community members triggered positive memories of friendship, support and acceptance. Younger migrant women were asked about racism and belonging too, although they were more likely to suggest that they had few regular interactions with white people and, instead, relied on and were friends with other

[65] Oldham Independent Review, *Panel Report* (Oldham: Oldham Independent Review, 2001), p. 4.

Pakistanis. Older migrant women, contrastingly, had to rely on white community members to varying degrees when they migrated because few Pakistani women had extensive knowledge about systems such as applying for family allowance or using new technologies like the gas fire.

Like women in Oldham, my interviewees in Middlesbrough often worked from home or worked to support other South Asian migrants. It was not surprising, then, that their experiences of racial oppression were different to their husbands, who worked on factory floors and were subjected to workplace racism. Whilst it was not surprising to hear that women had different experiences compared to men, given the dissimilarities in their everyday working lives, it was surprising to hear some women vehemently deny that racism had played a part in their settlement process. Some women said that 'back then' racism was not as bad as it is today, given that most of the interviews took place in 2018 and 2019, when levels of hate crime in Middlesbrough were at an all-time high.[66] Yet most older respondents refused the suggestion that they had been subjected to any form of racism whilst living in Middlesbrough.

This was despite the consistently high levels of poverty and unemployment in Middlesbrough, the same long-term reasons given for the race riots in Oldham; in this sense, there were similarities between both places, yet older women's everyday experiences of interacting with white community members were very different. Social cohesion, particularly on the basis of class, has been a long-standing issue in Middlesbrough. In 1946, the sociologist Ruth Glass expressed concerns for community relationships in the town; the minority middle-class, she argued, lived in their own area whilst working-class

[66] James Cain, 'Hate crime figures at an all-time high- here's why it might not be a bad thing', *Evening Gazette* (30th April 2018). Available at: https://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/teesside-news/hate-crime-figures-time-high-14595640 [Accessed: 12/11/20].

estates were dispersed from one another, which resulted in social seclusion and fragmentation.[67] In the decades since, deindustrialisation has resulted in growing social divisions due to increased levels of joblessness and deprivation. According to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 'Indices of Deprivation' report in 2010, 2015 and 2019, Middlesbrough had one of the highest proportions of the most deprived neighbourhoods in England, ranking first in both 2015 and 2019; 48.8 percent of the authority's neighbourhoods were classed as deprived in both years.[68] The indicators of deprivation were income, employment, education, health, crime, housing and the environment. Arguably, the smaller Pakistani population in Middlesbrough, and the widespread nature of deprivation across neighbourhoods that were majority-white, made it more difficult for white residents to cite immigration as the primary reason for joblessness and resource scarcity.

When asked about racism, Middlesbrough's older Pakistani women were more likely to remember intimate, everyday interactions of support rather than the racist and sexist exclusionary practices of the state, although reading women's testimony against the grain revealed the pervasive nature of systemic racism, such as experiences of immigration as discussed earlier. The earliest examples of Pakistani women's settlement in Middlesbrough

[67] Ruth Glass, *The Social Background of a Plan: A Study of Middlesbrough* (London: Routledge and Paul, 1948), p. 14.
[68] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 'The English Indices of Deprivation 2010', (2010), Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6871/1871208.pdf [Accessed 18/8/21].
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 'The English Indices of Deprivation 2015', (2015). Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/465791/English_Indices_of_Deprivation_2015_-_Statistical_Release.pdf [Accessed 18/8/21].
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 'The English Indices of Deprivation 2019', (2019). Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/835115/IoD2019_Statistical_Release.pdf [Accessed: 18/8/21].

suggested that migrants in the town relied on their white neighbours (particularly white women) to cope with the practical difficulties of making home in a new place. This was an important strategy. For example, Nafees Chohan, who is believed to be the first Pakistani woman to settle in Middlesbrough when she migrated in 1947 at the age of sixteen, joined her husband, who settled in Middlesbrough with his brother after fighting in the Indian Brigade during the Second World War. This made her testimony the earliest source I found regarding Pakistani women's migration and settlement.[69] Fifty years after her migration, on 16th August 1997, Nafees sat down to tell her story to Middlesbrough's *Evening Gazette*, who published a full-page interview and cover of Nafees, written by Terry Gilder as part of the newspaper's 'Remember when' series.

The article about Nafees offered a glimpse into the relationships between migrant Pakistani women and white, British-born neighbours, lodgers and professionals in Middlesbrough, specifically emphasising how these relationships helped women meet the demands of family and work life. In 1953 Nafees and her husband, who welcomed their daughter a few years earlier, opened their home up to a family of lodgers, a Polish man, his British-born wife Dorothy and their daughter. Dorothy taught Nafees English, as well as how to sew and cook. The journalist wrote, 'Dorothy, she realises, helped to lift her from her initial sadness and was among many kind English people she has come to regard as friends'.[70] She went on to use these sewing skills in local factories, working as an overlock machinist in the textile factory Meridian.

[69] Open University, 'Making Britain'. Available at: http://www.open.ac.uk/researchprojects/makingbritain/content/ghulam-sarwar-khan-chohan [Accessed: 2/11/20].
[70] Terry Gilder, 'A Passage from India: 'You are so kind'', *Remember When: Middlesbrough Evening Gazette* (16th August 1997).

Place, generation, gender and the time of migration significantly affected how racial oppression was remembered; younger migrant women from Middlesbrough, who arrived during the 1990s, were less likely to spend much time reflecting on race and belonging. According to a report commissioned by Middlesbrough Council in 2003, South Asian men and women said they felt safe in their 'neighbourhoods', which often meant wards in central Middlesbrough that had high concentrations of South Asian settlement. Every interviewee from Middlesbrough had lived in these wards, often for decades after their migration. The report claimed that 'there was no evidence of hostility towards Black and minority ethnic residents, with the exception of asylum seekers.'[71] Describing South Asians in the town as a 'settled population', the authors argued that 'racism was not a serious problem in the area and that there was a significant level of mixing between young people from different backgrounds,' based on the testimony of young South Asian men.[72] For young South Asian women, staying in central Middlesbrough (specifically Victoria Road, Waterloo Road and Abingdon Road) meant they could wear tradition Asian clothing without being subjected to racism. They did not describe confrontations with white community members, yet women in this study said they found it difficult to bond with white neighbours. Not only was this somewhat different from the positive relationships that older interviewees from Middlesbrough described, it was also distinctly different to the deep-seated racial tensions in Oldham.

Older migrant women often answered the question, 'have you experienced racism in Middlesbrough?' by highlighting positive relationships they had with white women when they first migrated. For example, Jameela rejected the idea that she had faced racism,

[71] Colin Webster et al, 'A Better Place to Live: Social and Community Cohesion in Middlesbrough', *University of Teesside* (2004), pp. 3-100, at p. 4.
[72] Webster et al, 'A Better Place to Live', p. 58.

despite acknowledging that her experiences were antithetical to the historical, recorded experiences of racial oppression in twentieth century Britain:

> If you ask me honestly, the world can say what they want to say, but neighbours and people we would meet, even goray[73], absolutely we didn't know English but you can read people on a human level, we're not stupid. Sometimes we would interact so that we could get through the day, you'd go to the hospital and they would treat us in a good way. Our neighbours, they would treat us very well. We would 'give and take', they would send us a card, we would send them one, Easter ones. We would see and greet each other like friends, back then people were very respectful…we were never harmed. We lived together very well.[74]

Neighbourly respect framed most interviewees' memories of the few white people they regularly encountered during their time in Middlesbrough. Women often lived in places with high migrant populations, so their interactions with white British-born people were limited, although clearly important to some interviewees. Jameela knew it was counterintuitive to suggest that she never had a racist interaction with her neighbours, saying regardless of her lack of English she was 'not stupid.' Beyond these friendly interactions of giving and taking, Jameela believed that, because of the kindness of her white community members, she was able to have a more comfortable settlement and was able to access welfare support when her family was struggling. It was British-born women that facilitated this:

> For women, I mean, who didn't have a clue or didn't know how to do things, other women would tell them 'go here' or 'do it like this'. Some women didn't know how to pay for things,

[73] Colloquial term for 'white people'.
[74] Jameela, Author Interview (9/1/2018).

> there were a thousand things we didn't know about! The one's who came first, they interacted with English people, English women used to tell us, 'this is what you need for benefits, you need this, you need that', 'if you don't know, tell us', they used to write it for us. We didn't know about Family allowance, that the government could support us. [75]

In 1960s and 1970s Middlesbrough, white women would help illiterate migrants fill out their forms and gather the appropriate documentation for free. For an older generation of women, this guidance allowed them to buy clothes and toys for their children, put away savings or buy higher quality food. These were luxuries that could not be afforded on the menial wages of factory labour that men contributed to their household. The levels of poverty some women found themselves in was exemplified by Hanaf. Hanaf arrived from Jhelum in the mid-1960s. She remembered how she would find creative ways to cook with offcuts of meat that the halal butcher would give away for free, boiling them for hours so they would be edible.[76]

It is no exaggeration, then, to suggest that the acts of kindness and support by white women regarding family allowance were fundamentally important for some being able to cope with the financial struggles of working-class life, particularly for those who struggled to speak English and learn practices that were crucial in making their settlement a possibility. It may be why Jameela reflected on the issue of her relationship with white community members for a while, determined to get her point across that she had never been subject to overt racism. She wanted to make her position clear to me, namely that the history of racial

[75] Jameela, Author Interview (9/1/2018).
[76] Hanaf, Author Interview (10/1/2020).

violence and oppression in 1960s Britain was not her story. She used this as an opportunity to describe the downfalls of the Muslim community, in her view:

> [Family Friend]: I… this is another point. I always think that those with Muslim qualities are *goray*. They don't believe in *namaaz*[77] but their qualities are Muslim qualities.
>
> [Jameela]: Of course we call them English and they have some bad qualities too but their good qualities, they prevail
>
> [Family Friend]: They have a sense of humanity
>
> [Jameela]: Humanity, yes! It is a solid sense of humanity. We are Muslim, but there is a world of a difference. I am ashamed of us. Because our religious obligations, our religious promise are not being met.
>
> [Family Friend]: Yes, absolutely.
>
> [Jameela]: If it was a mother or a daughter, I would say some of these teachings are wrong. I say this faithfully. We are friends with the entire community, right? There is not a single person that is right. They misbehave, deceive, my son we should not have these qualities. We cause pain to each other. If you have a few pounds then should I take them from you? We have corrupted English people, there was no badness before. I swear to god.[78]

[77] 'Namaaz' is the ritual of Islamic prayer, which happens five times a day.
[78] Jameela, Author Interview (9/1/2018).

Jameela was the only interviewee who was very critical of how the British-Pakistani community had changed over time and how they had fallen short of their Islamic obligation to care for one another. She did not always clarify whether she was referencing Pakistanis or British-Pakistanis, since at one point she said 'I watch the (Pakistani) news, my son, I swear to God sometimes my blood pressure goes high. I think what is this nonsense? Saying the name of our own Pakistan is a point of shame. These people are shameful.'[79] In comparison, Jameela believed white residents in Middlesbrough had 'bad qualities' but did not fail in their obligations to others like British-Pakistanis in Middlesbrough had. Given that Jameela had no expectations of what it would be like to live in a majority white country, the quality of care she received from doctors and her interactions with her children's teachers, as well as the neighbourly respect she received across her sixty years of life in Britain, possibly exceeded what she thought this country could do for her. She felt solidly supported and felt comfortable enough to share these controversial opinions about her community in ways other interviewees might not have, given her long-standing matriarchal position as one of the first Pakistanis in Middlesbrough.

Support went beyond small acts of kindness. For some, white community members became friends, seeing each other regularly and supporting one another through difficulties such as looking after vulnerable family members. Riaz exemplified how the kindness of a friend helped her cope with her overwhelming responsibilities. Riaz settled in Middlesbrough in 1971, reuniting with her husband whom she married in 1970. Her husband became disabled soon after she arrived. She spoke little English, did not know how to drive and was only starting to build her network of support. Riaz was solely responsible

[79] Jameela, Author Interview (9/1/2018).

for looking after her children and husband. A neighbour helped her through these seemingly exhausting and difficult moments:

> I had a friend, a *goree*[80]… how did we become friends, well her son and my son were class fellows, she used to drop him off to our house, so I told my son 'tell her to come in', she was disabled and she was shy at first but then she used to come every day, speaking to her I learnt English... she used to help me a lot, poor woman… before I was a driver, she used to drive me around, help with the shopping, keep me company, she helped with small jobs…they say she's died now... she used to live in Marton… she came for a long time but when I passed my driving she stopped coming.[81]

A friendship grew out of a drop-off arrangement and Riaz was clearly filled with gratitude, given the life-long skills she learned from a friend who would regularly help her. Riaz was visibly saddened when she revealed her friend stopped visiting after she had become a driver. Their friendship was in equal parts born out of fondness and pragmatism. This interview highlighted the complexities of relationships that fundamentally function on the basis of helping one another. When help was longer needed, in the case of Riaz, the dynamics of women's relationships changed.

For the small handful of migrant women who could speak English, their friendships with white community members extended beyond material support. Fiyaz, for example, benefitted from arriving in Middlesbrough at a relatively young age compared to Riaz. She spoke English, could drive and she could easily undertake tasks such as visiting the doctor without a translator. Fiyaz had a much larger network of white friends compared to older

[80] The colloquial Punjabi term for 'white woman'.
[81] Riaz, Author Interview (9/4/2018).

women, possibly because of the ease with which she could meet women at work and form bonds with them because they spoke the same language. Both Riaz and Fiyaz sought friendship out of necessity, given Riaz's difficult household environment and Fiyaz's active rejection of her Pakistani community. Fiyaz said:

> Just was a, it was uh one English lady, she would make uh dog jackets…and I used to do it with her. Brenda. And she, now she makes curtains. I was quite close to her... Do you know, the majority I used to keep with the *goray.* Didn't get on with, didn't have any friends that were Pakistani. I always used to hang round with the *goriya.* And I think that's better 'cause there's less trouble. [82]

I asked if her friendships with white women made her an anomaly compared to other women in the town. She made it clear that some British-Pakistanis were suspicious of her having a large network of white friends:

> Oh yeah, there used to be loads of rumours all the time...And they used to call me 'lesbian' all sorts, I didn't care. I'd get on with it…I did hear my own family say stuff but I thought forget it. Let them say what they want, if I'm right in my own way then I'm not really bothered what they say.

Fiyaz's divorce in the early 1990s and return to Middlesbrough created tensions between her and her large, influential family. Her life became a point of gossip because she chose to create a somewhat unconventional network of support:

[82] Fiyaz, Author Interview (9/1/2019).

> It was like, just like they were my own family. They were so nice and the never said nothing. I'd go somewhere and leave my girls with them to look after then for me. Didn't have no problem at all. You'd rather give them to your own family then to give to someone else. No trouble. And they were quite friendly, so responsible as well with anything. Like we did help each other, like if they needed anything I used to help them as well. And since these days Brenda has, won't close her door on me. We're still close and she's very nice. [83]

However, Fiyaz believed this respect was a thing of the past, much like Jameela who said white people 'used to respect us'. The relationship between white community members and British-Pakistanis had changed along generational lines:

> Yeah. Now they're more racist, the young part, like children now. The older generation they were totally different people. And we never had no trouble with no one. [84]

She saw racism as a generational issue, unable to see white community members of her generation, with whom she grew up, as part of the problem. It may be that, for both Fiyaz and other interviewees, their interactions with younger generations were limited; it is easier, in some ways, to make a distinction along generational lines and ignore the long-standing prevalence of racism, prejudice and bigotry.[85] Reconciling this with her loving, family-like friendships was understandably difficult for Fiyaz to do.

[83] Fiyaz, Author Interview (9/1/2019).
[84] Fiyaz, Author Interview (9/1/2019).
[85] See: Zig Layton-Henry, *The Politics of Immigration* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992); Stephen Small and John Solomos, 'Race, Immigration and Politics in Britain: Changing Policy Agendas and Conceptual Paradigms 1940s–2000s', *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, vol. 47, no. 3-4 (2006), pp. 235-257.

Place, including women's homes, had significant consequences on how everyday experiences of interacting with white community members were remembered by older women. Opening their homes to lodgers brought newly migrated people and white community members together, often resulting in positive relationships given that lodgers made a choice to live in British-South Asian homes. Those who migrated in the 1960s and early 1970s, such as Rabia and Sardar, had lodgers and it was a common experience for an older generation of women. Arguably, the intimacy of having someone in their home, even if their interactions were limited, created a sense of mutual trust and acceptance.[86] According to David Holland, who researched the settlement of South Asian migrants in early twentieth century Sheffield, it was rare for white people to be the lodgers of South Asian families; often, the reverse that was true.[87] However, for the women I interviewed who arrived during the 1960s and early 1970s, renting spare rooms out to lodgers was an easy way to make extra money, highlighting how lodging practices had changed since the early twentieth century. Balo extensively reflected on what it was like living with a white lodger:

> In the front there was a kitchen with a gas cooker, upstairs there was a gas cooker for the lodgers, we installed that for them, you know on the middle floor? In that space. For the front room we used to take £2.50, for the back room £2…Lodgers used to be older, they were very good. With the lodgers, I could never light the fire myself, the would light it for me. They saw it as their duty, older lodgers, you would never have to ask them to help they would just do it…. My husband said 'she doesn't know, she might die from the cold' so the older man, almost like it was his duty, would light the fire every single day, the room that we

[86] David Holland 'The social networks of South Asian migrants in the Sheffield area during the early twentieth century', *Past & Present Society Oxford* (2017), pp. 1-45, at p. 41.
[87] Holland 'The social networks of South Asian migrants', pp. 41-42.

> sat in he would light the fire in there. His duty was like, my husband told him once and he took it on as his responsibility. [88]

She said her lodger Billy, who helped her survive winter when she first arrived, was 'a very good person, he would feed the kids, buy them sweets and, our lodger was good, our Billy. Our Billy, his habit was, when he drank, he would swear at himself…That aside, he was very good.'[89] Balo could make these concessions for her white lodger, given that his support, quite literally, saved her life. Whilst drinking alcohol did not align with her Islamic beliefs, his qualities as a respectful and well-mannered household member were more important to her.

Place had significant consequences on how women remembered racial oppression and, for older women in Middlesbrough, their memories of positive, everyday interactions with white neighbours superseded conversations about the racist and sexist exclusionary practices of the state. Their networks were smaller than their husbands and sons, who were more likely to venture outside their neighbourhoods for work and socialisation. The politics of race and belonging was fierce, yet these interviewees were determined to ensure their stories were not disregarded because their immediate experiences did not reflect the more consistently expressed and equally important history of violence, prejudice and subjugation.

Conclusion

Across the period, government officials and policymakers reiterated that British-Pakistani women were unwanted because they were supposedly socially and economically valueless.

[88] Balo, Author Interview (10/4/2019).
[89] Balo, Author Interview (10/4/2019).

Crucially, however, place determined whether these interactions were remembered positively or negatively. British-Pakistani women's experiences of race and belonging were complex and varied, often depending on their age, their place of settlement and when they arrived in Britain. Operating in the background of all their experiences was political debates about who belonged and on what basis. Migrant South Asian women were subjected to prejudicial, exclusionary practices rooted in racist stereotyping. Immigration policy that specifically targeted South Asian women, such as virginity testing, was predicated on the idea that they were dependant on men and their entry to the UK was determined by South Asian women proving the legitimacy of their marital status. Unlike South Asian men, they were not seen as economically valuable to British society.

For those living in Oldham and Middlesbrough, their place of settlement fundamentally affected how they remembered their experiences of racial oppression. During the 1970s, local authorities in Oldham were debating how to mend the divide between white and migrant residents. The influx of migrants became the reason why some white residents believed their houses were no longer valuable, their streets were dirty or their jobs were being taken away. The voices of those denying respect and welcomeness to South Asians in Oldham were loud; the riots of 2001 were, in some ways, the result of these long-held frustrations boiling over. Most older women from Middlesbrough, however, were adamant that they had not experiences racism. Their immediate, everyday interactions formed the basis of what their relationship with white community members meant to them. For some women, their survival was predicated on the support of white community members, such as women helping with family allowance forms. This may be why they chose to speak about their personal experiences with white community members rather than

comment on the systemic racist and sexist practices that they had been subjected to from the moment they decided to migrate to Britain.

Chapter 6: Generational Change and Education

Every interviewee from Middlesbrough had, at some point in their life, participated in adult education. This was true for women who migrated across the period, although women who migrated during the 1990s were more likely to cite formal adult education classes as part of their learning experience given their increased accessibility. I argue that the desire to be independent and self-sufficient underpinned this mass pursuit of education amongst migrant women across the period. Adult education was necessary for women to navigate everyday life in Britain without relying heavily on others and it was the most effective way in which they could improve their quality of life. Arguably, daughters who grew up in Britain also benefitted from the largely positive attitude migrant women had towards education, particularly as a method of preparation for adulthood.

Whilst migrant women had no choice about whether their children would go to school, given the strict enforcement of compulsory schooling in Britain, it was obvious during the interviewing process that many mothers wanted their children to do better than them. What this meant, however, varied from person to person. For younger mothers, who migrated during the 1990s, they expected their daughters to pursue higher education. Older migrant mothers, contrastingly, were more likely to encourage their daughters to marry as teenagers after compulsory education, a theme which will be analysed in a later chapter.

Certainly, access to education increased the possibility for women and their children to live more independent, self-sufficient lives. For women who migrated across the period, adult education and training became a key characteristic of their daily activity.[1] The

[1] J. Hillage et al, 'Adult Learning in England: A Review', *Institute of Employment Studies,* Report 369 (2000), pp. ix- 114, at p. ix.

formality of this education, however, depended on when women arrived; accredited classes were easier to access later in the period. In some ways, the parallel education of mothers and their children, both in formal and informal ways, reflected a powerful attitude that education was the key to fulfilling and more independent lives. This is the most convincing explanation for why women in Middlesbrough, in the limited spare time they had, chose to partake in non-compulsory education and why they encouraged their daughters to do well in school.

To understand the role education played in migrant women and children's settlement in Britain, firstly I will analyse the politics of English education. An older generation of women sought English education, either in local community centres or through casual learning with their friends and children, to support their long-term settlement. Crucially, English education began informally before the government legislated funding towards programmes that encouraged linguistic uniformity. I will examine how migrant mothers and their children learned together as part of their settlement process, emphasising examples of how women utilised state-sponsored initiatives to further their own desires for independent and self-sufficient lives. Finally, I will analyse testimony that revealed women's return to formal education. The aspiration for financial independence and personal self-fulfilment motivated some women to dedicate their time and effort towards adult education. However, the caring responsibilities placed on these women were often too overwhelming to balance alongside the demands of being employed.

The Politics of English Education

The desire to be self-sufficient underpinned women's aspirations to continue with their education. For many interviewees, adult education made their settlement process easier, by

developing their confidence in understanding and using English in everyday life, as well as equipping some women with skills that they could use to support their aspirations for professional employment. Although skills and vocational training worked more directly towards the pursuit of economic self-sufficiency, English education supported women who wanted to live more independently instead of relying on their husbands. Women's relationship with formalised learning was affected by policies regarding education for migrant adults and their children, implemented throughout the latter half of the twentieth century by the national government and local authorities as a means to take control of learning and training. The policies of the state cannot be disassociated from the stereotype of working-class, new commonwealth migrants: uneducated and apathetic, with the potential to disrupt an ethno-linguistic British national identity.[2] They had to be re-shaped into English speaking, economically active citizens through systems of adult learning. The state did not work wholly altruistically, yet nationally and locally driven policies did make formal, certifiable education more accessible, and women took advantage of this.

Whilst most interviewees participated in adult education at some point in their lives, it is important to note that adult education seemed to feature less in the memories of those from Oldham. It Is difficult to gauge whether this meant that there were fewer classes in Oldham or that women were less likely to frequent these classes. One interviewee, Astar, who migrated to Oldham from Kyber Pakhtunwa, Pakistan in 1982, remembered the classes she went to when her children started school a few years after her migration:

[2] See: Dame Louise Casey, 'The Casey Review: A Review into Opportunity and Integration' (2016), pp. 90-91. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-casey-review-a-review-into-opportunity-and-integration [Accessed 15/10/21].; Wilson, *Finding a Voice,* pp. 21-22.

> There were mostly Pakistani women, because English was essential. Also the children were often in nursery. It was a mix, but mostly Pakistani…they were free. Because women used to think 'if we go to the doctors what will we say? When I get in a taxi what will I say? How will I navigate the market?' This is why women decided to learn English. Slowly, slowly I began to learn. Because in Pakistan we didn't get much of an education. I was only taught until 6th class in Pakistan. We didn't have English…But here was the problem of speaking it. 'If I have to go to the hospital, how will I call a taxi?'[3]

Her sentiments, about English education supporting women's ability to be more self-sufficient, were similar to those shared by women in Middlesbrough, as the chapter will show. Yet, she was the only interviewee from Oldham who remembered going to an English class, despite asking about this topic in other interviews. Given that most interviewees in Oldham had been homeworkers, it is sensible to assume that they could not fit adult education classes into their demanding working lives.

Women who arrived in the 1960s and early 1970s, before English education classes were easily accessible, learned English informally so they could become more self-sufficient. However, for the National Government, the assimilation of non-English speaking migrants into British society through language had to be dealt with legislatively, politicising the belonging of a new cohort of British citizens by emphasising linguistic uniformity.[4] One of the earliest directives in relation to English education was the Local Government Act of 1966, which was applied at the discretion of local authority leaders. According to this

[3] Astar, Author Interview (29/8/2019).
[4] Christina Julios, *Contemporary British Identity: English Language, Migrant and Public Discourse* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), p. 101. Also see: Andy Green*, Education and State Formation: Europe, East Asia and USA* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 1-4.

legislation–the first to directly address the migration and settlement of people who did not speak English–local authorities were:

> required to make special provision in the exercise of any of their functions in consequence of the presence within their areas of persons belonging to ethnic minorities whose language or customs differ from those of the rest of the community, grants of such amounts as he may with the consent of the Treasury determine on account of expenditure of such description (being expenditure in respect of the employment of staff) as he may so determine.[5]

The politicisation of language was intended to promote a sense of uniformity, rather than primarily encourage independence and self-sufficiency amongst migrant women.[6] Section 11 of the Local Governments Act of 1966 was the first indication of local government investment in English for Speakers of Other Languages, or ESOL. By 1975, ESOL was being taught as a course for teachers, the first of which took place at Westminster University.[7] According to a report on teaching English, published by the British Government and chaired by historian Alan Bullock in 1975, titled 'A Language for Life':

> [Immigrants] require tutors who have an understanding of the language difficulties of members of the different immigrant groups. These tutors should maintain close contact with those responsible for other types of language instruction at adult education level. Several voluntary schemes exist which deal exclusively with home tutoring for immigrant families;

[5] Gov.uk, Local Governments Act 1966, Section 11 (1966). Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1966/42/section/11 [Accessed 10/2/21].
[6] William Safran and Amy H. Liu, 'Nation-Building, Collective Identity, and Language Choices: Between Instrumental and Value Rationalities', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, vol. 18, no. 3 (2012), pp. 269-292, at pp. 296-270.
[7] Mary Hamilton and Yvonne Hillier, 'ESOL Policy and Change', *Language Issues*, vol. 20, no. 1 (2009), pp. 4-18, at p. 9.

> these are supported in some cases by the LEA and in others by such organisations as the local Community Relations Council.[8]

However, policy intervention regarding English language was limited in its scope or neglected, with no direct representation of ESOL in national legislation until 1984, when the objectives of the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit were expanded to include ESOL.[9]

One of the unintended consequences of governmental legislation to improve English education was the sense of community it created amongst migrant women who were informally learning together. Jameela remembered how, in the late 1970s, the International Centre in Middlesbrough became a place where women could meet and learn together:

> [Jameela]: the centre was made, we got all the women got together in one place. I mean, we used to give the number out to women….There weren't phones back then to be honest, only a few houses had phones. And then we got a centre made, Indian Women's Association. Where we used to all get together.
>
> [Family Friend]: Right, Right. Indian Women's Association?
>
> [Jameela]: Association, yes. Write that down. Then we ran it by getting all the women together. For women, I mean, who didn't have a clue or didn't know how to do things, other women would tell them 'go here' or 'do it like this'. Some women didn't know how to pay for things, there were a thousand things we didn't know about! [10]

[8] Alan Bullock, *A Language for Life* (London: Department of Education and Science: 1975), p. 282
[9] Hamilton and Hillier, 'ESOL Policy and Change', p. 2.
[10] Jameela, Author Interview (9/1/2018).

There is no evidence about the operation of a Women's Indian Association (WIA) branch in Middlesbrough. However, the WIA UK was established around the same time Jameela remembered being part of the organisation. In 1960, the sister of Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Vijaya Lakshami Pandit, founded the organisation, with the objective 'to strengthen ties between Britain and India and Indians in Britain.'[11] Despite the lack of concrete evidence about the establishment of a WIA branch in Middlesbrough, Jameela's testimony revealed that, in the earliest years of Pakistani women's migration to Britain, formalised collective support groups did exist and they operated on the basis of women teaching other women the skills necessary to cope with everyday life. Whilst their children were at school, women were trying to learn a new language in order to be self-reliant when meeting the demands of everyday life; sending a letter or buying groceries all required some level of English proficiency.

An older generation of women, who arrived in the 1960s and early 1970s, relied on informal, community-based education to learn English so they could navigate everyday life independently. Maurice Foley, Labour MP for West Bromwich and a junior minister in Harold Wilson's Labour government who dealt with the welfare of immigrants, inadvertently supported women's informal learning. A strong believer in assimilation, he believed that broadcasting was a powerful method by which to promote the objective of migrant adaptation since, by 1965, 91 percent of the British population owned a television.[12] On Sunday 10th October 1965, at 9am, the BBC broadcast its first episode of a

[11] Women's Indian Association UK. Available at: https://www.wiauk.org/ [Accessed 9/3/21].
[12] David Hendy, 'One of us? Make Yourself at Home, *BBC*. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/historyofthebbc/100-voices/people-nation-empire/make-yourself-at-home/ [Accessed: 10/2/21].

Hindi-Urdu show called *Aapna Hi Ghar Samajhiye*, which directly translates to *Make Yourself at Home*.

According to a document, produced by the BBC General advisory council in 1970, Indian and Pakistani representatives, who consulted the BBC, 'came out strongly in favour of special programmed for Asians in this country, mainly on the grounds that the religions, culture and languages of the sub-continent are entirely different from those of Great Britain.'[13] Notably, the document revealed that the BBC did not want to encourage Indian and Pakistanis to 'abandon their own culture' and turn themselves into 'Brown Gentlemen': 'if that is to happen, then it must be allowed to happen naturally, as the generations pass'.[14] However, there were 'a new set of rules' that migrants needed to learn, and the BBC thought their programming could be entertaining whilst also helpful in making these rules, such as the necessity to learn English, clear.[15] According to a presenter of the show, Mahendra Kaul, his job was to 'make our kind of people acceptable to the general public'.[16] This statement, in itself, is revealing; it supports the argument that the state was not working altruistically when promoting English education. Rather linguistic and cultural uniformity were integral in making migrant communities a more acceptable presence in British society.

Despite women's testimony revealing their participation in community-based informal English education, these representatives presumed that programming could tackle

[13] The British Broadcasting Corporation General Advisory Council, 'Programmes for Immigrants' (1970), p. 1. Available at https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/historyofthebbc/people-nation-empire/R34-1303-2%20Launching%20of%20Programmes%20for%20Indians.pdf [Accessed: 10/2/21].
[14] The British Broadcasting Corporation General Advisory Council, 'Programmes for Immigrants' (1970), p. 2. Available at: https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/historyofthebbc/people-nation-empire/R34-1303-2%20Launching%20of%20Programmes%20for%20Indians.pdf [Accessed: 10/2/21].
[15] David Hendy, 'One of us? Make Yourself at Home, *BBC*. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/historyofthebbc/100-voices/people-nation-empire/make-yourself-at-home/ [Accessed: 10/2/21].
[16] Wills, *Lovers and Strangers,* p. 155.

'feelings of isolation', particularly amongst women 'who tended not to mix with those outside their own community and consequently had no ready-made opportunities to pick up knowledge of English'.[17] Most interestingly, the show aired made-up scenarios to explain voting, turning the gas cooker on, conversational English, discrimination in housing, and even hosted a debate about integration versus assimilation for its South Asian viewership. The audience for the show consisted of both adults and children; it became part of some family's weekend routine, as journalist Sarfraz Manzoor remembered.[18]

Learning as part of migrant settlement processes was not exclusive to institutional settings, nor was it an individual endeavour. It could be informal, collective and could have outcomes that policymakers did not intend; in this case, it is doubtful that Foley expected an early morning weekend television programme to become a family ritual. Talat, for example, a Middlesbrough resident who arrived in 1972, fondly remembered how Sunday was 'radio day'. Her family huddled around a radio and listen to programmes like *Aapna Hi Ghar Samajhiye,* which would broadcast a radio version of the television show on Sundays on BBC Radio 4. Despite the obvious political motivations of creating linguistic uniformity and promoting assimilation, the seemingly ordinary experience of watching British-South Asian television shows was often a way families could maintain their connection to Pakistan.

[17] The British Broadcasting Corporation General Advisory Council, 'Programmes for Immigrants' (1970), p. 2. Available at: https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/historyofthebbc/people-nation-empire/R34-1303-2%20Launching%20of%20Programmes%20for%20Indians.pdf [Accessed: 10/2/21].
[18] Wills, *Lovers and Strangers,* p. 155. Also see: David Hendy, 'One of us? Make Yourself at Home, *BBC*. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/historyofthebbc/100-voices/people-nation-empire/make-yourself-at-home/ [Accessed: 10/2/21].

Migrant Women and their Children: Learning Together

For older migrant women, who arrived in the 1960s and 1970s, English education was a stepping-stone towards a life of independence. Through formalised education classes, women were learning how to read and write in English, making it possible for them to become more independent, a necessary part of long-term settlement. However, learning was not exclusive to the classroom. Outside the remit of state-sponsored initiatives was intergenerational learning in the home. Migrants and their children were learning new languages and practices from each other, with children often surpassing their parents in terms of their proficiency given their access to compulsory education until the age of sixteen.

Learning had to be intergeneration and, at times, informal given the inadequate approach of policymakers to teach migrant children English in school. Non-English speaking migrant children, who posed a problem to the state because of their lack of conformity, were subjected to experimental policies that hindered their academic progression. The issue of multi-ethnic schools, for example, concerned some white, British-born residents who thought that migrants would drag down the quality of education.[19] In some ways, this debate about immigrant demographic takeover was reminiscent of the prejudicial debates about migrants bringing down the price of houses and their presence, generally, lowering the standard of living, which was discussed in a previous chapter. Even the children of migrants had to bear the brunt of racialised criticism about their presence being a nuisance.

Whilst little has been written about the historical pursuit of English as a second language amongst migrant communities in Britain, the rise of literacy among working-class

[19] Olivier Esteves, 'Babylon by Bus? The dispersal of immigrant children in England, race and urban space, 1960s–1980s', *Paedagogica Historica*, vol, 54, no. 6 (2018), pp. 750-765 at p. 750. Also see: Department for Education and Skills, *The Education of Immigrants, Circular 7/65* (London: HMSO, 1965).

people, and particularly their experiences of intergenerational learning, is a useful comparison. In his analysis of literacy in England from 1750-1914, the historian David Vincent emphasised that 'an understanding of the function of reading and writing over time requires that equal attention be paid to education, the State, private enterprise capitalism, and the structures of working-class activity in both the home and the workplace.'[20] In other words, the process of raising literacy levels amongst working-class people extended beyond institutions of formal learning.

The earlier example of broadcasting as a method of promoting English education highlighted that learning did not necessarily have to take place in a formal setting; women learned informally in order to become more self-sufficient. This was true even after English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) classes became more accessible. Whilst Sidra remembered picking up English words from watching television, she stated that the most important way she learned English during the mid to late 1990s, and why she was able to speak in English throughout our interview, was by talking to her children. Her children's first language was English, and she benefitted immensely from their compulsory education. Sidra's experience of intergenerational learning echoed some of the findings in David Vincent's research. He detailed the consequences of intergenerational inequalities in literacy and education, with parents and grandparents often relying on the help of younger people to get by. Between 1859 and 1874, 70 percent of 20-24 year olds in England were literate, compared to 50 percent of 40-49 year olds. The gap grew smaller by 1879 and 1894; 90 per cent of 20-24 year olds were literate compared to 70 per cent of 45-49 year olds. This pattern, of a younger generation surpassing an older generation in terms of

[20] David Vincent*, Literacy and Popular Culture: England 1750-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 272.

literacy, continued until 1914, when literacy amongst age groups 15-60 years old were more or less the same.[21] Arguably, 'the natural order of the family was challenged' with older people, at times, needing their children for support more than their children needed them.[22] Kathleen Dayus, who grew up in a Birmingham slum during the First World War, remembered when she realised that her primary schooling was changing the dynamics between her and her mother, who was illiterate despite the 'official triumph of nominal literacy'.[23] Kathleen remembered bringing home a form so she could apply for free school clothes; her parents' illiteracy meant she had to 'read the leaflet to Mum and Dad and explained what it was all about because Mum couldn't read or write, and although Dad could write, he could only manage to read the newspaper.'[24]

Similarly, it was clear, when interviewing women who had children that were either born or raised in the UK, that their experiences of learning English was an intergenerational process. Children, who were learning English in school and would quickly surpass their parents in terms of their proficiency, played a significant role in supporting and teaching their mothers. As a previous chapter highlighted, Simran would translate for her mother during parents' evening when she was a child, given that her migrant mother could not understand English very well. Whilst Simran was born in the UK, women like Arshad, who migrated when she was ten, or Fiyaz who migrated aged fifteen, were learning new languages and practices at the same time as older people in their family. Municipal councillors had to accommodate a growing number of young people who needed additional support on top of their compulsory education.

[21] Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture,* p. 27.
[22] Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture,* p. 27.
[23] Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture,* p. 50.
[24] Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture,* p. 50.

Intergenerational learning, as part of women's informal English education at home, was integral in equipping women and their children with the skills and confidence to navigate everyday life in their new towns. The simultaneously occurring English education of migrant mothers and their children was demonstrated in a short local news clip by Anglia TV, which aired in 1976. It showed how women were eager to learn English without the state pushing them to do so. In the clip, filmed in Peterborough, the news host spoke to several representatives of the Peterborough Council for Community Relations (PCCR) who began an initiative called 'The Playbus', where children and their mothers were taught English in a brightly-coloured double decker. Students of all ages were being taught how to read, write and comprehend basic English. One teacher placed significant importance on children learning English before they went to school. She said that not speaking English at home meant teachers would have to spend considerable time teaching language skills that 'a child needs to survive, not the language he needs in which to be educated'.[25]

The news crew also filmed women as they learned practical English. In this class, five South Asian women were being tutored in how to use a library. For a representative of the PCCR, teaching both parents and their children was vital, not only to ease the pressure on teachers but also to ensure parents could understand what was happening in society and therefore actively participate. He said 'the ability to speak English also projects the ability for people to understand each other and understanding is one of the major parts of race relations.'[26] The reporter, who insinuated that parents were partly to blame for their children's lack of proficiency, asked why children were not being taught English at home, to

[25] Anglia TV, 'Peterborough Playbus', *British Film Institute* (1976), 1:04-2:03. Available at: https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-peterborough-playbus-1976-online [Accessed 1/6/21].
[26] Anglia TV, 'Peterborough Playbus', 3:23-3:37.

which the representative chuckled and said, 'well because the parents don't know how to teach it to them'.[27]

Intergenerational learning was integral to women's English education and their ability to become more self-sufficient in everyday life. The parallel learning experiences of mothers and daughters was exemplified by two interviewees: Rabia and her daughter Arshad. Rabia migrated with her two sons and two daughters to Middlesbrough in 1968, to reunite with her husband and son. As discussed in a previous chapter, Rabia organised Islamic education for girls in her neighbourhood; learning and education had defined her working life. Learning English would allow Rabia to be more independent in her day-to-day life, rather than rely on her husband or other women to act as translators. It was very difficult for her to convince her husband that she should be able to learn English, a skill which she clearly valued:

> My husband never let me (go to the International centre), often women used to come to the house to teach English… white women. I don't know if they came from the council or volunteered but they said these new women need to learn English, teach them to read books fully and to have conversations, but my husband didn't want me to learn… I didn't have too many friends when I came here and some did go and learn… I used to say if you come here you should know some English but I thought I would go back (to Pakistan).[28]

Under the most difficult of circumstances, women undertook informal education. Rabia revealed that other Pakistani women would come to her house with books and encourage her to learn English, however her husband forbade this. No other interviewee experienced this type of restriction. Rabia's testimony is antithetical to national narratives about the lack

[27] Anglia TV, 'Peterborough Playbus', 3:37-3:46.
[28] Rabia, Author's Interview (13/1/2018).

of engagement amongst migrants in relation to learning. In 1977, conservative MP Dudley Smith stated:

> There are many reasons for racial trouble and tensions in this country, but I have felt for a long time that one of the contributory factors is that many of the immigrants in this country have not got the full commitment that they should have.[29]

The notion that migrants were the cause of their own problems worked on the presumption that the onus of integration fell solely onto immigrant groups. Had Smith and other politicians focussed their attention on the difficult steps taken by migrants to make Britain their new home, the achievements of Rabia and others may have been made visible much earlier.[30] The difficulty of getting her husband, who thought she would leave him if she became English proficient, to agree to her education was the primary reason why she gave up pursuing community learning. Nevertheless, Rabia was driven by an enthusiasm to learn and saw great value in English proficiency. She eventually learned some English in a slow, informal manner, recognising that her long-term settlement would be made particularly difficult if she did not pick up some words and phrases in English.

Rabia instilled the importance of education, as a means of getting-by, in her daughter, Arshad. Arshad migrated to Middlesbrough not knowing a word of English and entered the British state education system at primary school. She remembered how a few days off from school in 1969, to look after her toddler brother when Rabia was taken away after a TB diagnosis, resulted in social services knocking on their door. She laughed and said

[29] Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration, *First Report from the Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration, Session 1977-78* (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1978), p. 353.
[30] See: Orsolya Nyilas and Mihaly Fonai, 'Socially Disadvantaged Social Groups and Adult Education: Chance for Integration?', *Practice and Theory in Systems of Education*, vol. 12, no. 2 (2017), pp. 51-19, at p. 52.

that was the moment when her father realised that they had to get a childminder for the baby; he could not restrict his daughter's compulsory education in the same way as his wife's optional educational pursuits:

> [Interviewer]: Did you go into school straight after you came here?
>
> [Arshad]: Straight away we had to go to school 'cause, you know, those people who lived in um, who picked us up from Heathrow Airport, they said 'oh the children have to be in school'. So, my dad had no choice really (laughs)
>
> [Interviewer]: Was it a fear of having local authorities interfere? Like wanting to make sure no one had a thing to complain about?
>
> [Arshad]: Yeah, yeah. So, we went to a local primary school. My older brother and I were there but my younger brother had to go to, um, it was a school that was um, I think because he was only five and that was like, it was almost like… I don't know if it was, I don't know why he wasn't placed in our school but in those days maybe they didn't have the room or something.[31]

The difference in siblings going to different schools may have been the consequences of 'bussing', or the forced dispersal of immigrant children.[32] Although it is difficult to pinpoint whether 'bussing' was occurring in Middlesbrough, it cannot necessarily be ruled out given the widespread nature of this policy, which was certainly implemented in places like

[31] Arshad, Author Interview (20/9/2019).
[32] Esteves, 'Babylon by Bus?', p. 750.

Bradford, Luton and Smethwick during the 1960s and 1970s.[33] 'Bussing', which specifically targeted migrant Black and South Asian children, reflected the larger conversation about immigrant children 'embodying a public policy problem to be solved from the vantage point of a national British/English culture'.[34] According to the Department of Education and Science:

> About one-third of immigrant children is the maximum that is normally acceptable in a school if social strains are to be avoided and educational standards maintained. Local Education Authorities are advised to arrange for the dispersal of immigrant children over a greater number of schools in order to avoid undue concentration in any particular school.'[35]

Bussing was not the only policy Local Education Authorities (LEA) implemented to meet the challenge of migrant, non-English speaking children going to school. Arshad remembered being put into a class specifically created for non-English speaking children. In retrospect, the quality of this education was questionable given her professional experience as a highly qualified primary school teacher:

> [Arshad]: The school we were in, there were a lot of Asians. It was, we were all grouped together, you know, 'cause we were the bottom set.
>
> [Interviewer]: Right, so I guess you were all trying to learn together?

[33] Esteves, 'Babylon by Bus?', 751. Also see: BBC, 'The child immigrants 'bussed' out to school to aid integration' (30th January 2017). Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leeds-38689839 [Accessed 1/10/21].
[34] Esteves, 'Babylon by Bus?', p. 750.
[35] Department for Education and Skills, *The Education of Immigrants, Circular 7/65* (London: HMSO, 1965), p. 4.

[Arshad]: Yeah, learn together really. And I remember, sort of, it was all mixed ability because you weren't in your year group. There were people that were older than us like my older brother and I were in the same class, you know. And then the teacher, the teacher was amazing 'cause (laughs) she put the alphabet on the wall and asked the class to stand and whoever's turn it was had to say the letter. Of course, I knew the first three only because I used to go out for lessons, you know someone used to take me to do a bit more extra work, so I knew 'A, B, C'. But after that it was 'is that a J or a K?' (laughs) Trying to sit closer to the, you know, board so I was in front of the line instead of more towards the back (laughs)

[Interviewer]: So, your teacher, do you know if your teacher was trained to teach English as a second language?

[Arshad]: Looking back, you know, the way we teach new children English, I think no they weren't trained how to teach them. They were just teaching them like 'okay, the alphabet, right let's do that'. There was no phonics then…and there wasn't any visuals used, you know, to teach, whereas now you would use visuals and first hand experiences.[36]

Migrant, non-English speaking children were separated into their own classes to ensure they would not slow down the academic progression of their similarly aged peers; teachers had low expectations of these students. According to Margaret Rodgers, 3.3 percent of children in British schools were 'immigrants' in 1972, roughly equating to 264,000 pupils. Rodgers used the term 'immigrant' in this context as a shorthand for children born to immigrant parents, even if these children were born in the UK. Approximately 42.5 percent of the total

[36] Arshad, Author Interview (20/9/2019).

population of immigrant school children were of Caribbean descent, whilst 28 percent were Indian and Pakistani.[37] The distribution of students was uneven, with 3 out of 4 of these pupils studying in schools in the Greater London area and West Midlands.[38] The influx of New Commonwealth migrants, refugees and asylum seekers resulted in a reactive response by local authorities and the government, with changes in provisions for educating adults and their children.[39] In schools during the late 1980s, for example, the objective for LEA's became to teach South Asian children English as quickly as possible, to support their assimilation.[40] Whilst Arshad did pick up speaking skills quite quickly, she admittedly lagged behind in her reading and writing. To improve her skills, she would make friends with 'English' girls in higher sets. She thought, as a child, that this would make her more intelligent.

Whilst compulsory education meant girls could stay in school much longer than their migrant mothers, differences in attitudes towards girls' education amongst household members meant going to school was a regular source of conflict, particularly as a girl reached her teenage years. Arshad remembered the 'torture' of being the eldest daughter. Her father forbade her from playing outside, once they moved to their new home when she was eleven, and he made it difficult for her to go to school, a problem that, she said, her brothers did not face:

[37] Margaret Rodgers, 'The Education of Children of Immigrants in Britain', *The Journal for Negro Education*, vol. 41, no. 3, (1972), pp. 255-265, at p. 255.
[38] Rodgers, 'The Education of Children of Immigrants in Britain', p. 256.
[39] John Grayson, 'Migration and Adult Education: Social Movement Learning and Resistance in the UK', *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2014), pp. 177- 194, at p. 180.
[40] David Gilborn, *Race, Ethnicity and Education: Teaching and Learning in a Multi-Ethnic School* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), p. 175.

> My aim always was to get up before he got up, so I could go out the house. Mum would say 'what are you saying, let her go to school' 'no if I said no, I mean no', and, you know that was it (chuckles). So it was awful, awful that part of my life really and, uh, you know, then because the systems in schools they got a bit better, so they would, you know, they would sort of say 'well why isn't she in schoo?l', they weren't as much as it is today but then it was like, I mean he realised that he couldn't keep me off. Plus mum said 'you know people in Bradford are keeping their daughters in the cellars, when social workers come and look for their daughters they say 'oh they're not here, they're not here' and they say that because they don't want to send them to school and when they get caught they're in so much trouble because they've kept their daughters in the cellars, is that what you want to happen? You're not sending her to school, you've got to let her go to school', and I think, um, the penny must've dropped. Plus, my father-in-law, um, my husband's dad[41], he was living with us, you know, and he said to…my dad 'oh, you know, when you go into hospital and you see' you know Chohan? Their daughter was a nurse. So he said 'you see her and you get so happy, you think 'oh look she's one of our own and, you know, she's studied and it's so good' well somebody let her go to school and that's why she got there, you shouldn't do that with your daughter. She needs an education as much as your boys need an education' you know. I think that's what turned it around.[42]

The factors that persuaded parents to allow their daughters to have an education included state intervention (either by social workers or the police). Career opportunities were a less convincing reason for an older generation of parents to keep their daughters in school, partly because they expected their children to marry as soon as their compulsory education ended, and professional work seemed like a distant ambition for working-class girls.

[41] This is in reference to Arshad's current husband.
[42] Arshad, Author Interview (9/3/2021).

Amongst the first generation of migrant parents, whose children came of age in the 1970s and 1980s, daughters 'marrying up' rather than pursuing higher education was a more realistic way to guarantee their financial and social security. The expectation that academic progress and higher education could secure better social and financial prospects were solely reserved for sons, at least for an older generation of parents. Second-generation women were, therefore, more likely to pursue their career ambitions and economic independence as adults, a point that will be explored in a later chapter.

Mothers encouraged their daughters to learn, whether formally or informally, to ensure that they could independently navigate everyday life in ways that were, at times, denied to older women. However, in terms of doing homework or learning independently outside school, their children had to be self-reliant, given that they often surpassed their parents in terms of academic ability at a young age. [43] Moreover, as Arshad highlighted, the methods employed to teach migrant children English at school were often ineffective and haphazard. This meant that Arshad had to improve her reading skills at home. When Arshad discovered reading, aged thirteen, she described it as a 'godsend', because it allowed her to 'escape':

> First of all, it was just my little brother giving me his books of, like, *The Famous Five* and whatever, sort of trying to read from him. And then I, he said, 'why don't you join the library Aps[44]' and I went with mum to join the library and it was a godsend, really, 'cause it was just down the road, just round the corner from the end of the street. So, I used to get books from there and I read and read and read and read. At night, I would read, you know 'cause my dad wouldn't let me leave the light on at night, so at 9 o'clock the lights were off, so I

[43] Todd, *Snakes and Ladders*, pp. 306-307.
[44] This is a shortened version of the title 'Aaapa', which means 'older sister' and is used to denote respect.

> used to read with the (street) lamp outside…and go to bed about three, four in the morning.[45]

The library she visited with her mother, Middlesbrough Central Library, opened in 1912 and was funded by philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, who donated £15,000 to help build Middlesbrough's first purpose-built library.[46] Easy access to Middlesbrough Central Library was, in Arshad's testimony, a turning point in her relationship with learning and education. She had access to resources that not only offered some relief from the pressures placed on her as the eldest daughter but also supported the development of her reading and comprehension skills.[47] Above all else, access to books allowed her to explore outside the confines of her restricted life as a teenager in Middlesbrough, by expanding her horizons. This period, when she discovered reading and was starting to develop her own attitudes and aspirations, was also informed by observing other teenagers from her community. As a teenager, a group of similarly aged girls from a more affluent British-Pakistani family in the area shaped some of her own aspirations, although the realities of her parents' expectations made what she wanted unattainable:

> Their girls went to private schools. And I used to think 'oh I wish I could do that, I wish I could study, I wish I could get a degree and do something. But, at the back of my mind, I

[45] Arshad, Author Interview (9/3/2021).
[46] Ian McNeal 'Take a leaf through our archive pictures of Middlesbrough Central Library', *Evening Gazette* (21st November 2015). Available at: https://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/nostalgia/take-leaf-through-archive-pictures-10457817 [Accessed: 28/6/21].
[47] Todd, *Snakes and Ladders*, pp. 307.

> knew, cause, that I wouldn't cause… I knew I was supposed to get married. Even though I thought that, I thought God might help me in some way (chuckles).[48]

Class significantly affected Arshad's relationship with further and higher education. A private education, Arshad believed, could have made her aspirations for a career and degree more realistic. Similarly, Simran expressed desires of pursuing higher education when she was a teenager, although she did not associate the ability to do this with private education, rather insinuated that it was more difficult because she was working-class. For second generation South Asians like Arshad and Simran, getting a higher education was not straightforward. They were the most likely to end up in unskilled manual labour than secure professional work and, in the case of medicine and dentistry, white students were twice as likely to be accepted onto these courses compared to second-generation South Asians, despite both groups meeting the minimum grade requirements.[49] The odds were stacked against girls like Arshad, given their lower socioeconomic class and their parents' lack of educational qualifications.[50]

Arshad said that she had no career or educational goal when she was a teenager, other than wanting to stay in school so she could learn and delay the prospect of marriage. The limited expectations of an older generation of parents, in terms of their daughters' abilities to pursue professional careers and higher education, meant second-generation interviewees rarely aspired towards these goals. Arshad, more than other interviewees,

[48] Arshad, Author Interview (9/3/2021).
[49] Todd, *Snakes and Ladders*, pp. 276-277.
[50] See: Helen Connor, *Why the Difference? A Closer Look at Higher Education Ethnic Minority Students and Graduates* (Nottingham: DfES Publications, 2004).

insinuated that she wanted to have a profession and go to university, although these ambitions felt unrealistic until later in her life.

Returning to Education and Training

Returning to education in adulthood meant migrant women could secure formal, accredited qualification that could improve their ability to independently navigate everyday life in Britain, as well as open doors to formal, waged work. Women took advantage of free adult education classes taking place in their area, which became more accessible as a younger generation of migrant women settled in Britain from the late 1980s until the early 2000s. Increased funding and easier access to free, accredited adult education classes meant younger interviewees could enrol onto education and training schemes with relative ease, compared to women who were seeking formal adult education classes during the 1960s and 1970s.

Whilst younger migrant women had better access to adult education, there was no indication that any adult woman who migrated across the 1990s and early 2000s expected to enrol in a class or train in a vocation straight after they arrived and often enrolled when their children were in school. In some ways, this spontaneity reflected the experiences of white women who, during the 'long' 1970s, decided to return to education and expand their opportunities for new careers. Eve Worth's analysis of socially mobile women and their relationship with education during the long 1970s revealed that spontaneity, rather than planning, was often the way in which women returned to education. One interviewee, Joy, described her experiences giving up a retail job and starting a teacher-training degree, saying 'I just thought -I'm going to go…I didn't have career goals, you just think about the

next little bit each time'.[51] Another interviewee, Rita, said her return to education was motivated by 'wanting something different than the life that seemed mapped out for you'.[52] The desire to want something different from their lives was a common sentiment amongst some of my interviewees.

Yet it is important to recognise that my interviewees were differently positioned compared to the women in Worth's study. To make a career pivot in adulthood and pursue higher education was only possible if women had the skills, matched with aspiration and confidence, to seek change in their lives in the first place. For someone like Nadiya, who was fifteen when she migrated to Middlesbrough in 1996 to join her new husband, the disparity between her life and those who were afforded an education in Britain was stark in her testimony. Whilst she was younger than Arshad by a few decades, the idea of having an illustrious career like her was out of reach, regardless of the developments in education quality in Pakistan. She did not know what life in the UK would look like and working outside the home was beyond what she imagined for herself:

> I was never well educated so I didn't ever think about work, maybe if I was born here I could think 'I want to be this' like you can… in Pakistan they didn't let women go to school, finishing primary school was okay for me there, they wouldn't let women learn, they'd say 'what will women do with an education, all they'll do is get married.'[53]

Before their marriage and migration, older and younger migrant women were never prepared for the possibility of settling in Britain. Therefore, no interviewee had the language

[51] Worth, 'Women, Education and Social Mobility in Britain during the Long 1970s', p. 72.
[52] Worth, 'Women, Education and Social Mobility in Britain during the Long 1970s', p. 73.
[53] Nadiya, Author Interview, (9/1/2019).

and vocational skills necessary for them to independently navigate life in Middlesbrough and Oldham. Moreover, it was assumed that a younger generation of Pakistani women would likely repeat the labour of their mothers. Even if the prospect of marrying a British-Pakistani man was realistic, as was the case for Nadiya who married her cousin, it was assumed that he would take care of his wife, and she would never need to work. These attitudes, as well as societal pressures placed on marriage as the key to women living a secure life, led to decisions that affected Nadiya's life outcomes. Importantly, the choice to pull a girl, like Nadiya, out of education was at the discretion of her parent, a choice that was impossible to make in Britain given the strict enforcement of compulsory education and school attendance.[54] Nadiya had to wait for her children to be in school before she returned to education.

Education in adulthood strongly supported women's ability to navigate their new place of settlement independently, particularly since most interviewees had a limited primary education. No woman I interviewed who migrated to the UK as an adult had any higher education qualification, which was not surprising given the restrictions placed on their education as children living in Pakistan. Yet, those who wanted a career actively worked to fill gaps in their roster of qualifications or retrain so they could secure qualification recognised by British employers. The infrastructural changes that allowed women to access free educational classes reflected the objectives of a growing adult learning and literacy movement since the 1970s. According to Mary Hamilton and Juliet Merrifield, the broader social, political and economic changes that have occurred since the 1970s explain why Adult Basic Education provisions have been implemented as a method to

[54] Human Rights Watch, ''Shall I feed my daughter or educate her?' Barriers to girls education in Pakistan' (12th November 2018). Available at: https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/11/12/shall-i-feed-my-daughter-or-educate-her/barriers-girls-education-pakistan [Accessed: 14/10/21].

cope with increased poverty, global economic competition and the immigration of non-English speaking populations.[55] Crucially, ESOL was not included in the provisions for Adult Basic Education, reflecting the lack of concrete policy directives working to support non-English speakers through the process of learning a new language. Nonetheless, the promotion of provisions across the latter half of the twentieth century to help adults improve their basic reading, writing and numeracy skills allowed some of my interviewees to get training that could support their aspirations for social and financial self-sufficiency, often by improving their chances of securing formal work. In 1973, the Right to Read campaign was launched by the British Association of Settlements, making it the first literacy campaign to be launched in a Western European nation. Volunteers and teachers recruited by LEAs, along with a £1 million fund from the government, resulted in the campaign having a wide reach in a relatively short space of time.[56]

By 1979, the idea that adult illiteracy was a 'temporary' problem had been dismissed, with the Secretary of State for Education, Mark Carlisle, expressing 'that the Adult Literacy Unit has done valuable work in stimulating and supporting developments in adult literacy and that the need for some central support for innovative work in this field has by no means ceased.'[57] Carlisle believed that for members of society to actively engage with their local communities, they had to have access to resources promoting skills development and training. Adult Basic Education was seen as a necessary provision for social cohesion and economic prosperity. By 1992, Adult Basic Education became a

[55] Mary Hamilton and Juliet Merrifield, 'Adult Learning and Literacy in the United Kingdom', *National Centre for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy*, vol 1 (1999), pp. 1-57, at pp. 2-4.
[56] Hamilton and Merrifield, 'Adult Learning and Literacy in the United Kingdom', p. 7.
[57] Hansard, *Parliamentary Debate*, 'Adult and Continuing Education', vol. 976, cc15-7W (17th December 1979, House of Commons). Available at: https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/written-answers/1979/dec/17/adult-and-continuing-education [Accessed 1/2/21].

consolidated part of English and Welsh Education policies with the passing of the Further and Higher Education Act. The Act mandated the funding of further education courses that improved basic English speaking and writing skills and basic mathematics for migrant and non-migrant citizens alike.[58] By 2000, The Learning and Skills Act restructured the organisation of further education in the UK by establishing a Learning and Skills Council which, as part of its remit, was responsible for 'planning and funding for all post-16 education and training' particularly to improve the skill levels amongst British adults.[59] Improving further education enrolment amongst adults was necessary given that, in 2000, 7 million adults had 'severe problems with basic skills' and 1 in 5 adults had 'a lower level of literacy than is expected of an 11 year old.'[60]

Sidra capitalised on the accessibility of formal adult education once her children were in school. She arrived aged eighteen, to reunite with her husband in 1993. She was the most educated of all the interviewees, having completed her college education before getting married. Her enthusiasm for learning did not wane when she came to the UK, as she finally had the opportunity to go further in her education:

> I started with English classes in 1998 when my eldest started nursery… it was all Pakistani women, so it was a good place to socialise. I was well educated in Pakistan so it was quite easy for me to pick up, with other women who aren't as well educated it was more difficult to pick things up so they would enjoy having people to chat there. Classes were free for everyone. I wanted to learn English so I could go to the hospital, doctors, parents' evening,

[58] Department for Education, 'Further and Higher Education Act of 1992: Courses of Further Education', Schedule 2, section 3-6 (1992), p. 75. Available at: http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/acts/1992-further-higher-education-act.html [Accessed 6/2/21].
[59] Jane Johnson, 'The Learning and Skills Act 2000: impact and change for further education', *Education and the Law*, vol. 12, no. 4 (2000), pp. 259-268, at p. 262.
[60] Johnson, 'The Learning and Skills Act 2000', p. 260.

> for everything so I could easily go to places by myself…They're fuzzy memories but I did English classes in three different places… I enjoyed getting time away from the house! [61]

Sidra believed formal English education was the key to becoming financially self-sufficient and securing work outside the home. She recognised the rare privilege of having an extensive education before marriage and knew she was set up for an easier journey towards English proficiency. Amongst a younger generation of women, it was expected that their daughters would eventually go to university and have professional careers. Sidra and her husband were adamant that their daughters would go to university, an opportunity that had not been afforded to her. For ten years, she and her husband used £20 per week from their household income, which primarily derived from her husband's work as a taxi driver, to pay for a Maths and English tutor to visit their home. Sidra, who oversaw the household budget and savings, described how paying for a tutor was a non-negotiable expense. This was to prepare their children for the eventuality of university. Both Nadiya and Sidra have daughters who went on to pursue higher education.

One older interviewee powerfully highlighted how access to adult education and training programmes made the prospect of having a career and making her own money more realistic. Talat migrated to Birmingham aged nineteen in April 1972, to reunite with her husband who had migrated before their marriage. A few months after her migration, she moved to Newcastle, to live with her aunt after separating from her husband. Finally, she ended up in Middlesbrough and lived with her sister, brother-in-law and their children. Talat made it clear that the UK, a place she described as 'home', offered her opportunities

[61] Sidra, Author's Interview (5/1/2019).

that went far beyond what she could envisage Pakistan. She stated that there were four things she greatly enjoyed about living here:

> The first is the government here is very good to its citizens. Am I right or am I wrong? Second, councillors have funded to keep the country tidy. Third, no matter your 'cloth', no one cares. And fourth, regardless of what a house looks like on the inside, they all have a roof.[62]

She was compelled to give up education at the age of sixteen by her father, halfway through Year 8. He was a headmaster, travelling to work in schools across Azad Kashmir; Talat, her mother, five sisters and brother stayed in Mirpur, since moving the whole family every few months was logistically and financially difficult. Her uncles, instead, took on the responsibilities of looking after her family in the absence of her father. Regardless of his absence, he played a crucial role in deciding her educational prospects. As a child, she wanted to be a barrister, but her father did not allow it:

> I left education, he said 'you're not going to be educated further, your dreams are different and our women don't become barristers.' My aunt was looking for a match (for her son), so they stopped my education and married me off to him.[63]

Her advanced education, compared to other women of her age, was unusual, but not surprising given her father's job. She had ambitions that women of her generation interviewed for this study rarely expressed; her experiences, of reading English books when

[62] Talat, Author Interview (9/1/2018).
[63] Talat, Author Interview (9/1/2018).

she lived in Pakistan and staying in school, allowed her to imagine what a career could look like. It was unfortunate that her circumstances did not lend themselves to the life she wanted. However, the decision-making of men in her life did not deter her from learning in an informal manner.

Talat was curious to learn formally or informally whenever the opportunity presented itself, to become more independent and skilled. For example, she fondly remembered how she and a white next-door neighbour learned how to make pastries together by following a Blue Peter episode; 'I didn't even know what Blue Peter was!' Even in our interview, which took place in her best friend Jameela's living room, Jameela asked Talat if she managed to make it to her English class the day before; learning was still an integral part of Talat's day-to-day life. Yet, she was acutely aware that the ambitions she had as a teenager to have a professional, white-collar job were never going to be realised, given the restriction placed on her education. She knew her grandchildren's lives would be vastly different to her children's and her own, because 'the way they socialisation, outside all the time, you can't say their lives will be like their parents'.[64] Most importantly, she knew that her children and grandchildren had opportunities to become qualified that were not afforded to her. After revealing that, as a child, she wanted to be a barrister, she told me that she was not interested in doing anything else. Instead, like many mothers I spoke to, she hoped that her children would have it better than she did:

[64] Talat, Author Interview (9/1/2018).

> I'd ask, 'why wasn't I allowed to be what I wanted?' I didn't have an interest in anything else, I thought I won't stay in school if I can't do what I want but hopefully my children will be more educated, and they can do it instead. [65]

A young person's education was regarded, by many interviewees, as the most powerful asset in successfully fulfilling aspirations that had been shaped by sixteen years in compulsory schooling. For mothers whose children grew up in Britain, extensive and free education was the key reason for some of the differences in their working lives. In some ways, the expectations mothers had for their children far exceeded what they expected of their own lives. For example, Jameela, who spent only a few years in education before she married, stated that whilst all her children finished their compulsory education, some of them 'didn't take education far', since her daughters went to university whilst her sons did not. She seemed somewhat disappointed when revealing this, and quickly changed the topic to tell me about her daughters' achievements as well-paid professionals.[66] Her expectations for her children were high. Several women were eager to proudly tell me about how their children and grandchildren had university degrees. Riaz, for example, told me her son was training to be a doctor and another interviewee, Suriya, had graduation photos on the walls of her living room; the house itself was owned by her son, which was in an affluent middle-class area of the town. Despite regional disparities in terms of quality, state-funded compulsory schooling was a privilege that far surpassed anything on offer in Mirpuri villages in the mid to late twentieth century.

[65] Talat, Author Interview (9/1/2018).
[66] Jameela, Author Interview (9/1/2018).

Conclusion

The desire to be independent and self-sufficient underpinned the mass pursuit of education amongst migrant women. The possibility that education could help women become more independent was the reasons why most women encouraged their daughters' academic achievements. Those who migrated without a proficiency in English or knowledge about the practices that underpinned everyday life in mid-twentieth century, working-class England, demonstrated that they were not disengaged from their place of settlement. In fact, despite the difficulties of housewifery and motherhood, most interviewees chose to partake in non-compulsory English classes. Older migrant women started learning English before the implementation of legislation whereas, later in the period, women capitalised on the accessibility of free, accredited class in their area. Pakistani women's commitment to learning has rarely featured meaningfully in existing scholarship.

It was these values about learning and education that were passed on to their children. Intergeneration learning, which was informal, collective and happened outside the classroom, meant families could learn together, with older migrants often relying on younger members of their family in order to learn English. Migrant children were subjected to similar checks on their belonging as their mothers, namely that 'too many' non-English speaking Asians in one place would drag down the quality of education that their white peers had access to. 'Bussing' and the separation of Asian students into other classes were some of the first methods used to educate an unwanted cohort of citizens. Despite these policies, migrant mothers hoped that their children would be able to achieve what they could not, since compulsory education meant second-generation girls were often more educated.

Chapter 7: Generational Change, Marriage and Shifting Expectations of Adulthood

The vast majority of second-generation British-Pakistani interviewees, who were born or grew up in Britain, married as teenagers soon after finishing their compulsory education, and there were all married by the time they reach their early twenties. These women, who married as teenagers between the late 1970s and the mid 1990s, did not continue with further or higher education because of their arranged marriages, which is defined as a union arranged by family members where consent is given by both partners.[1] I argue that second-generation British-Pakistani interviewees ended their education and training as teenagers because arranged marriage, between cousins in particular, was regarded as the primary way in which migrant parents could ensure their daughters' social and financial security, since second-generation women were not regarded as independent wage-earners. This highlighted a continuity of values which underpinned the arranged and forced marriages of an older generation of interviewees who grew up in Pakistan. These marriages were never depicted by interviewees as arrangements their parents made knowing that their children would be unhappy, rather women often said that their parents did what they thought was 'best' for the children's future.

To understand why second-generation interviewees were more likely to get married as teenagers to ensure their future social and financial security, rather than pursue further or higher education, firstly I will examine the disconnect between parents' motivations to marry their daughters and the national debates that framed arranged marriage as oppressive. Next, I will analyse the attitudes interviewees had towards their arranged

[1] Hannah Spruse, 'What is the Difference between Arranged Marriage and Forced Marriage?', *High Speed Training* (4th April 2017). Available at: https://www.highspeedtraining.co.uk/hub/arranged-marriage-forced-marriage/ [Accessed: 6/7/21].

marriages and why so many interviewees eventually divorced. Women revealed that attitudes towards arranged marriage were changing along generational lines and that second-generation women were willing to take care of themselves rather than stay in unhappy marriages. Finally, I will analyse the relationship between marriage and education. Both topics were often discussed by interviewees in relation to one another, given that marriage effectively marked the end of education for women and reduced their chances of being economically self-sufficient. Despite second-generation British-Pakistani girls being amongst the highest achieving groups in terms of academic attainment in the 1990s, they were the least likely group to be economically active, irrespective of expanding employment opportunities for women. Both women's testimony and statistics suggest that marriage played a crucial role in creating this disconnect between high academic achievement and low formal participation in the labour market.

Parents saw marriage as the primary way in which they could ensure their daughters' social and financial security, particularly if they married within the family. For migrant parents, it was important for girls to marry at a young age since single, unmarried women of an older age were seen as 'flawed' and could threaten the respectability of their family, and their status was often a cause for community gossip. Moreover, the eldest daughter was expected to marry first before her younger siblings, since subverting age order could again raise questions about the eldest child being 'flawed' and, therefore, threaten the marriage prospects of other family members. Similarly to women who were born in Britain between 1895 and 1922, for second-generation British-Pakistanis 'poverty, hard work and expectation of marriage structured their lives and their imaginations as they grew

to adulthood and struggled to make sense of their place and purpose in society'.[2] Material need, rather than romance and compatibility, determined the suitability of arranged marriages amongst working-class British-Pakistanis, since women were rarely regarded as independent wage earners. As previously highlighted, British-Pakistanis are amongst the most likely in Britain to live in poverty. Despite the advantages of compulsory education, migrant parents did not regard it as the key to women being independent wage earners. Rather being educated was seen as a way to ensure women could cope with everyday activities in non-economical ways without being reliant on others. Compulsory education was not regarded as a way that girls could be protected from the ostracization or economic disadvantage of not being married. Instead, second-generation interviewees revealed that marriage was seen as the predominant way in which girls could have it better than a previous generation.

These marriages were predicated on the ideals of respectable masculinity, in which a man was meant to ''look after' and provide for his dependant wife and children', which meant women regularly came into contact with a form of masculinity that depended on their 'feminine vulnerability and innocence'.[3] Economic powerlessness, combined with the fear of harming the respectability of their family, meant teenagers had to succumb to the idea that their security depended on marrying a 'provider'. It meant accepting, as young women, that their role was to undertake domestic responsibilities; fulfilling this duty depended on them sacrificing or pausing indefinitely any aspirations for further education and careers. In addition, deviating from the norms of marriage meant exposing their parents, and particularly mothers, to criticism about their parenting. Mothers are regarded

[2] Giles, *Women, Identity and Private Life in Britain, 1900-1950,* p. 33.
[3] Giles, *Women, Identity and Private Life in Britain, 1900-1950,* pp. 54-55. Also see Davis, *Modern Motherhood,* pp. 177-180.

as responsible for nurturing their daughters, since motherhood is a process of regulating children and ensuring their choices align with familial and societal norms.[4] Diverging from the norms underpinning girls' transition into adulthood risked judgement by community members who believed it was the mother's responsibility to raise 'good' daughters, a task that was paramount after migration given the assumption that the 'lax moral standards' of British people could corrupt young girls.[5]

Given all this, women often expressed disappointment about the ways in which their teenage years unfolded and their parents' inability to see them as economically independent. Like previous generations, second-generation women had to accept the inevitability of marriage, despite the awareness that they had the resources and capabilities to stay in education and have careers that were meaningful and fulfilling. When daughters, who were born or raised in the UK, remembered the decisions made by their parents in terms of their schooling and marriage, it was common to hear the phrase 'they did what they thought was best', rationalising their teenage arranged marriages as a disconnect between what their parents hoped for and what they themselves desired. As teenagers, second-generation interviewees had not necessarily fully formed their attitudes towards marriage and often said that they trusted their parents to make the right decisions.

Women's disappointment with the decisions made for them as teenagers manifested when they reached adulthood.[6] Whereas, in their teenage years, second-generation women saw no alternative to marriage, as adults some women were no longer willing to endure unhappy relationships; several second-generation interviewees divorced

[4] Steph Lawler, *Mothering the Self: Mothers, Daughters, Subjects* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 82. Also see: Rich, *Of Woman Born,* p. 219.
[5] Shaw, *A Pakistani Community in Britain*, p. 45.
[6] Giles, *Women, Identity and Private Life in Britain, 1900-1950,* p. 44.

after their arranged marriages. Women wanted to exercise autonomy in choosing a like-minded spouse and, unlike their migrant mothers, second-generation women did not need to stay in unhappy marriages to ensure their social and economic security. Crucially, all the interviewees who divorced grew up in Britain, were fluent in English and had some qualifications from their time in compulsory education.

Divorce was far more commonplace in the UK by the end of the period. In 1950, for example, the rate of marriage in England and Wales was 358,490 and the rate of divorce was 30,870. By 1999, there were 263,515 marriages and 144,556 divorces.[7] At the same time, divorce amongst South Asian women was also on the rise. In the fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorites in 1993-4, the rate of divorce amongst South Asians was at 3 percent, compared to 7 percent amongst white couples. By the 2001 census, however, single parent British-South Asians families had doubled, from just under 10 percent amongst British-Pakistanis and British-Bangladeshis in 1994 to 20 percent amongst Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in 2001.[8] Statistics regarding lone parenthood are 'likely indicators of significant marital instability, long-term separation and divorce.'[9] To a significant extent, these factors were decisive in increasing some interviewees' autonomy to make choices about their adult lives.

[7] ONS, 'Divorces in England and Wales: 2019' (17th November 2020). Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/divorce/bulletins/divorcesinenglandandwales/2019#:~:text=The per cent20divorce per cent20rate per cent20among per cent20opposite,processing per cent20of per cent20casework per cent20in per cent202018. [Accessed: 5/1/21].

[8] Kaveri Qureshi, Katharine Charsley and Alison Shaw, 'Marital instability among British Pakistanis: transnationality, conjugalities and Islam', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 37, no. 2 (2014), pp. 261-279, at p. 262.

[9] Qureshi, Charsley and Shaw, 'Marital instability among British Pakistanis', p. 262.

The Politicisation of Arranged Marriage

From the mid 1970s until the early 1990s, second-generation interviewees, who were teenagers and married at some point during this period, were navigating their own personal ambitions alongside the expectations of their parents, who believed that arranged marriage was the primary way in which girls could be socially and financially secure as adults. By 2001, three-quarters of all Pakistani and Bangladeshi women were married by the age of twenty-five, highlighting the importance placed on marrying at a young age in British-South Asian communities, although there is no indication of how many marriages were arranged.[10]

The decision for second-generation British-Pakistanis to get married, rather than continue with their education or pursue careers, became a national preoccupation, since marriage and domestic life at a young age deviated from the broader acceptance of young women's sexual and economic freedom, which marked growing up in Britain from the 1970s onwards.[11] Amongst journalists, commentators and politicians, second-generation South Asian girls' choices about their lives, such as staying in education, finding work or opting for housewifery, were being debated and politicised.[12] This was the case when second-generation transnational marriages resulted in the proliferation of men's migration from Pakistan during the 1970s. The arrangement of marriages between teenage girls growing up in Britain and their cousins in Pakistan was common amongst second-generation interviewees. In theory, marrying a cousin meant a woman was in a relationship with someone who was invested in taking care of her, as a matter of respect to his family. Moreover, this form of marriage consolidated family ties and ensured that wealth, such as

[10] Richard Berthoud, 'Family Formation in Multi- Cultural Britain: Three Patterns of Diversity', *Institute of Social and Economic Research*, *University of Essex* (2001), pp. 1-26, at p. 2.
[11] Melanie Tebbutt, *Making Youth: A History of Youth in Modern Britain* (London: Palgrave, 2016), pp. 126-130.
[12] See, for example: Lucy Ward, 'Forced marriages increase in Asian community', *The Guardian* (3rd November 2002). Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2002/nov/13/race.world [Accessed: 23/2/21].

land ownership in Pakistan, remained within the family.[13] However, these marriages meant Pakistani men could gain British citizenship because they were married to British nationals. This became a point of political concern. On 14th November 1979, Home Secretary William Whitelaw published a white paper that would address the contentious and nationally debated issue of arranged marriage. In a House of Commons debate, Home Secretary Whitelaw made the case for specific and targeted amendments to the law based on the growing influx of Pakistani men. He argued that whilst the Commonwealth Immigration Act (1971), Section 1(5) allowed wives and children to join their husbands, statistics about migration from new Commonwealth nations and, specifically, Pakistan showed that 'marriages have been contracted with the primary aim of enabling men to come here to work and settle. There can be no doubt about that.'[14] In 1973, 200 men were given permission to settle in the UK. This increased to 2,200 in 1974 and 5,000 in 1975:

> What we are discussing is the question of men being able to use a provision in our immigration control which enables them to settle on marriage when they could qualify to come in no other way. We must stop this loophole. The Government have a clear mandate to do so.[15]

Home Secretary Whitelaw's concern with unwanted migrant men, and his specific reference to Pakistanis, was revealing. He saw this influx as the product of marriages of convenience,

[13] Ziauddin Sardar, 'Arranged Marriage Fascinates People in the UK', *The Guardian* (13th September 2008). Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2008/sep/13/family1 [Accessed 12/1/21].
[14] House of Commons, 'Immigration' (4th December 1979). Available at: https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=1979-12-04a.253.0&s=speaker per cent3A19737 [Accessed: 14/2/21].
[15] House of Commons, 'Immigration' (4th December 1979). Available at: https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=1979-12-04a.253.0&s=speaker per cent3A19737 [Accessed: 14/2/21].

orchestrated to work around stringent immigration rules.[16] He said, 'it is reasonable to provide that a husband or fiancé should not be admitted if the marriage has been entered into for immigration purposes.'[17] Yet, there was little evidence that testimony informed this political decision. Nor were the statistics forwarded by the Home Secretary specific in detailing how many marriages were arranged. Pravin Lukka, a representative from the Confederation of Indian Organisation, told a journalist that 'my immediate reaction is that the white paper is a white lie. It perpetuates a lie that the Asian community is abusing the arranged marriage system to bring in more immigration and this is not so, I mean if you continue to repeat that lie, people will tend to believe that it's a fact.'[18] Ironically, Whitelaw wanted to challenge the suppressive or deceptive process of arranged marriage by supressing women's rights to marry and live with their spouse through the perpetuation of ill-informed narratives about Pakistani migration.

The preoccupation with second-generation British-Pakistani women's choices about marriage continued across the period. In a 2001 study about family formation, the sociologist Richard Berthoud argued that high rates of marriage amongst Pakistani and Bangladeshi families suggested that they were adhering to 'old-fashioned' nuclear family structures, since people married young, had children and rarely divorced. Moreover, in an article written by the journalist Gary Younge, Berthoud claimed that 'a clear majority of Bangladeshi and Pakistani women report their primary activity to be looking after the house

[16] Gov.uk, 'Immigration Act 1971', Chapter 77, Part 1. 1. F2. 2 (28th October 1971). Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1971/77 [Accessed: 14/2/21].
[17] House of Commons, 'Immigration' (4th December 1979). Available at: https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=1979-12-04a.253.0&s=speaker per cent3A19737 [Accessed: 14/2/21].
[18] ATV Today, 'Arranged Marriages', *British Film Institute* (1979), 3:18-3:33. Available at: https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-arranged-marriages-1979-online [Accessed: 12/1/21].

and family.'[19] Younge and Berthoud's comparison of British-Pakistani and British-Bangladeshi women from the late 1990s to white women in 1973, when two-thirds of women in their twenties were married and had children, is unconvincing. A comparison of this nature does not consider the histories of communities that have used arranged marriage as a method of preservation and security.

In addition, the study did not reflect the extent to which attitudes towards marriage were shifting along generational lines. Even in Younge's article, a British-Pakistani man from Oldham, Kashif, who married his wife Sabeen, a recent migrant from Pakistan, said, 'you hear of people who've cohabited, but none of my friends have… It tends to be people in interracial relationships. Maybe a generation down the line it might happen.'[20] Kashif recognised that a younger generation would have attitudes and experiences far different from his own. This sentiment was often repeated by second-generation women who reflected on whether they would ask their children to have an arranged marriage as teenagers. Shabna, a second-generation woman who was in her mid-thirties at the time of our interview in Oldham and was the mother of a teenage daughter, said that the reason migrant parents pushed their daughters to marry so young was because 'it's just not knowing any better, I think that's normal. Now, you wouldn't want that for your kids'.[21]

Whilst arranged marriage was seen as the primary way in which parents could secure their daughters' future, by the late 1970s, the decision by some to marry men their parents chose became a political point of debate, under the guise of concern. At the heart of this was a need to understand the practice of arranged marriage, an exoticized preoccupation

[19] Gary Younge, 'Asians fly the flag for traditional family life', *The Guardian* (18th January 2000). Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2000/dec/18/britishidentity.race [Accessed: 4/03/2021]; Berthoud, 'Family Formation in Multi- Cultural Britain', pp. 1-26.
[20] Younge, 'Asians fly the flag for traditional family life'.
[21] Shabna, Author Interview, (20/9/2019).

that questioned the agency and control young South Asian women had over their own lives. Arguably, more frequently written about, but nonetheless important, accounts of girls running away or being forced into marriages at a young age have dominated journalistic investigations, obscuring the complex range of attitudes towards arranged marriage and ideas about adulthood amongst young women.[22]

Teenagers' Changing Attitudes towards Arranged Marriage and Divorce

Arranged marriage was regarded as the primary way in which migrant parents could ensure their daughters' social and financial security, although second-generation women who were teenagers from the late 1970s until the 1990s were developing attitudes towards marriage and adulthood that were different to their parents. Whilst there was roughly a twenty-year age gap between the oldest and youngest second-generation British-Pakistani women I interviewed, being the children of migrant parents meant their experiences of being married to ensure their social and financial security were strikingly similar. Although parents made decisions based on what they thought was best for their children, rather than make decisions that they knew would make their children unhappy, some second-generation interviewees were deeply unhappy in their marriages. However, since they were teenagers at the time, they saw no alternative. The weight given to age and life experience meant parents could be trusted to make well-informed decisions about their children's futures. However, second-generation women's experiences highlighted that attitudes towards arranged marriage were changing along generational lines. Some interviewees divorced, a

[22] Shaw, *A Pakistani Community in Britain*, pp. 156-157. Also see: BBC News, 'Jasvinder Sanghera: I ran away to escape a forced marriage', *BBC* (24th February 2017). Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-38833804 [Accessed 11/1/21].

sign that women were willing (and had the skills) to take care of themselves rather than stay in unhappy relationships.

The feelings and attitudes second-generation women had towards their teenage marriages were, in some ways, similar to the testimony included in sociological scholarship about arranged marriage.[23] Avtar Brah's 1972 study of South Asian (mostly Sikh) teenagers in Southall, for example, showed that whilst some respondents did express the desire to make their own choices about their spouse in similar ways to their white peers, the vast majority were not necessarily concerned about having an arranged marriage themselves, or did not dismiss the idea that their own marriage might be arranged.[24] Whilst Brah suggested that a younger generation may be less committed to the norms of marriage supported by their parents, the prospect of being ousted by the family or being the subject of community gossip because of pre-marital relationships was primarily why so many teenagers accepted that they would have an arranged marriage.

A few decades after Brah's study, in the 1990s, Parminder Bhachu examined the lives of British-Sikh women. She argued that Sikh women had considerable influence in determining where they would work and who they would marry, subverting the image of 'working-class victims.'[25] Bhachu argued that 'the social system in which they (Sikh women) are situated, especially the ethnic community structures, are presented as rigid and as independent of the changes in the national economic and political climate.'[26] The

[23] See, for example: Parminder Bhachu, 'Culture, Ethnicity and Class Among Punjabi-Sikh Women of the 1990s', *New Community,* vol. 17, no. 3 (1991), pp. 401-412; Avtar Brah, 'South Asian teenagers in Southall: Their perceptions of marriage, family and ethnic identity', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 6, no. 3 (1978), pp. 197-206; Katy Gardner and Abdus Shakur, 'I'm Bengali, I'm Asian, I'm Living Here', in Roger Ballard (ed.) *Desh Pardesh: The South Asian Experience in Britain* (London: C. Hurst and Co.1994); Shaw, *A Pakistani Community in Britain*, pp. 156-157.
[24] Brah, 'South Asian teenagers in Southall', p. 200.
[25] Bhachu, 'Culture, Ethnicity and Class Among Punjabi-Sikh Women of the 1990s', p. 401.
[26] Bhachu, 'Culture, Ethnicity and Class Among Punjabi-Sikh Women of the 1990s', p. 401.

assumption, that attitudes towards marriage and women's autonomy were rigid, undermined how young British-South Asians have, historically, engaged with and transformed cultural frameworks.[27]

Despite parents encouraging their daughters to marry wage-earning men, in archival material from the 1970s, parents are depicted as purposefully causing harm to their children by arranging their marriages, rather than making decisions they believed would benefit their daughters. London Weekend Television, for example, broadcasted a documentary about Indian arranged marriages in 1977. The host, Janet Street-Porter, spoke to British-Sikh solicitor Jan. The 'problem' is framed as Jan's inability to go to pubs and discos, 'or anywhere else for that matter…if her parents have their way, she'll get married to someone they have chosen for her. She will scarcely know him. That's why Jan's leaving home.'[28] Whilst it is impossible to gauge how much control Jan had in how her story was depicted and what was edited out, it is clear that there was a gulf of difference between what she wanted from her life and her parents' expectations. Her parents wanted to see their daughter married, whilst Jan 'wanted to live my own life'.[29] She said she could not understand how centuries old traditions would change, even though she admitted that her father was not as strict as other Indian men; this statement acknowledged that attitudes could shift. She said she had thought about leaving home since she was sixteen:

Bhachu, 'Culture, Ethnicity and Class Among Punjabi-Sikh Women of the 1990s', p. 409.

[28] London Weekend Television, 'Asian Arranged Marriages', *British Film Institute* (8th May 1977), 0:39-0:52. Available at: https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-asian-arranged-marriages-1977-online [Accessed: 12/1/21].

[29] London Weekend Television, 'Asian Arranged Marriages', 2:30-2:38.

> mainly because the things that my parents believe in are completely different to what I believe and, I think, if I stay around, they're gonna arrange a marriage for me, which is their main thing in life anyway except that I'm totally against arranged marriages.[30]

Second-generation interviewees often challenged depictions of arranged marriage which suggested that their parents made decisions that they knew would cause them to be unhappy. When I asked second-generation women in Oldham what impact their arranged marriages had on their mental wellbeing, one interviewee, Iqra, replied that 'they want best for their child, but afterwards they find out'.[31] The other women in the room agreed. Iqra highlighted that parents acted with the best intentions based on their attitudes and life experiences but, despite this, some arranged marriages failed. Similarly, Jan pushed against Street-Porter's depiction of parents acting in ways that they knew would cause harm to their children. Jan did not believe that malice lay behind her parents' wish for an arranged marriage and she said her parents wanted a suitor who had a good job and similar educational achievements.[32] Certainly, many of my interviewees could agree that their parents, and mothers in particular, were doing what they thought was best and were acting on the basis of their own experiences, rather than purposefully making decisions that they thought would make their children unhappy. The importance placed on age and life experience meant that an older generation were seen to be making well-informed decisions.

Like younger second-generation British-Pakistani women in Oldham, Simran believed that her parents encouraged her marriage because they thought it was best for their children, rather than solely a contempt toward the idea of their daughters working; Simran

[30] London Weekend Television, 'Asian Arranged Marriages', 1:29-1:49.
[31] Iqra, Author Interview (20/9/2019).
[32] London Weekend Television, 'Asian Arranged Marriages', 2:12-2:22.

later went on to say her brother was similarly expected to marry, although he did so at an older age. Equally, Simran believed that since her parents had not been shown examples of women from their communities doing professional work, they could not imagine a life like that for her, a point which will be analysed later in the next chapter. Simran was eighteen when she married a distant cousin from Pakistan:

> [Interviewer]: And did you know you were going to marry your husband?
>
> [Simran]: No, basically he was supposed to marry my elder sister (laughs), she was in love with someone else! You know what they say, they say about karma… basically my mum, she had gone to Pakistan and then you know X had said about their brother in Pakistan so, so anyways she brought a photo back of him and he was nice, you've seen him he's a nice looking guy. So anyway, she's (older sister) come upstairs…and she's knocked my head really hard, I was asleep and she says 'you b***h, don't you be looking at this photo I'm gonna marry him!'…I switched on the light and I'd looked and I've seen this photo and I was like 'Nah that's something, I don't know where they got that picture from he's some actor or something' (laughs) And I thought 'he's too nice looking', didn't think much of it and then I ended up marrying him (laughs)[33]… Obviously, I got to know him and see him and go out with him and we went to Karachi with other family members, we travelled Sindh… so yeah, six months I stayed in Pakistan. So it wasn't a matter of being taken over and being told 'eya you're going to marry him'.
>
> [Interviewer]: So it was your choice?

[33] Simran, Author Interview (18/1/2020).

> [Simran]: Well…yeah. I mean it was a matter of my mum saying he has no bad habits, not a drinker or whatever, and um he's my cousin and he's from a respected family et cetra, et cetra and he is. He is very, um, he's a gentleman.[34]

Simran's husband was chosen because he had traits that indicated he could take care of Simran and their family. His background and 'habits' also meant that he would not threaten the respectability of the family; he could be trusted because he was Simran's cousin. Whilst Simran knew marriage would always be an expectation she had to fulfil, the flexibility of choosing her spouse was not afforded to her parents. Her father, for example, was married to a widow in his family when he was eight years old; Simran's grandmother arranged this to keep the widowed woman in the family. She described women as the 'worst offenders' when it came to arranging marriages for the sake of image, status and wealth; Simran, and other interviewees, were still coming to terms with the role women played in facilitating unwanted marriage arrangements.

Whilst parents regarded arranged marriage as the primary way their daughters could be socially and financially secure, education in Britain had the potential to expand the horizons of second-generation teenagers. Audrey Osler, for example, interviewed second-generation secondary school students from Birmingham whose parents had migrated from the Caribbean and South Asia. In the study, conducted over six-months in the late 1980s, the topic of arranged marriage was discussed amongst the British-South Asian students and their views about the practice were diverse. Anita, who had ambitions of going to university and studying Law like her father, said that whilst she did not want to marry, her sister (who was seventeen years older than Anita) had an arranged marriage at age twenty-three: 'I

[34] Simran, Author Interview (18/1/2020).

remember them (her parents) being worried about finding a bloke because a lot of Indian girls get married younger than that'.[35] Another interviewee from Osler's study, Mumtaz, who was a second-generation British-Pakistani, said that she would not marry until she was at least twenty-five and had a career.[36] Both students implied that attitudes towards arranged marriage, such as when girls should marry, were changing quickly and even had the potential to change between the oldest and youngest sibling marrying.

The changing (or unchanging) attitudes about arranged marriage, specifically as a method for ensuring a girl's security, was a point of discussion amongst some younger second-generation interviewees. During a group interview with women from Oldham, most of whom were teenagers during the 1990s, the issue of marriage came up for several women as a turning point in their teenage years. The majority married male relatives from Pakistan. Similarly to Osler's interviewees, the time that elapsed between the youngest and oldest siblings being married showed that attitudes towards marriage amongst some British-South Asians were flexible:

> [Iqra]: But even, like, younger siblings, like my brother's married a white girl (laughs) and it's totally acceptable. The time when I was growing up you couldn't think outside the family never mind outside the culture (laughs)
>
> [Interviewer]: Do you think that has an affect, being the oldest child? That you have to set the rules for the other kids
>
> [Iqra]: Yeah, yeah. You're forced (laughs) follow by example

[35] Audrey Osler, *Speaking Out: Black Girls in Britain* (London: Virago, 1989) p. 109.
[36] Osler, *Speaking Out,* p. 109.

Crucially, it was not just women who had to deal with decisions being made about their lives by family elders. Men were contending with similar pressures. However, for women, the decision to marry at a young age and leave education for domestic responsibilities arguably had different consequences on their choices around work, in ways that would not have been felt by breadwinning men. For some women, like Noor, they had known from 'birth' that their marriages would be arranged when they became teenagers, suggesting that some parent's attitudes towards arranged marriage were somewhat inflexible. I asked what kind of impact this had on their ability to concentrate in school, for example, knowing that their futures had already been determined. The generational differences between my experiences and theirs became apparent when I asked this question; they made it clear that if you have known something all your life, it is difficult to make a judgement about how that certainty can affect your aspirations:

> [Noor]: I think what happens is, with the relatives people think 'you're blood, you're gonna look after our kids'. And they'll do a swap thinking 'oh if this brother and sister marries this other brother and sister they're going to be tied down with the relatives so they won't leave, they won't leave'
>
> (group collectively agrees)
>
> [Noor]: Then those women and men, I'm saying men as well, they're stuck in these marriages because of the family ties and they're unhappy in their lives and they have mental health problems or whatever…

[Haleema]: 'If I divorce her then they're gonna divorce my sister', it's like that.[37]

As previously discussed, the notion that family members would look after one another underpinned why many of the women I interviewed, both younger and older, married other family members. For parents, it meant that their daughter's new family could be trusted and, in theory, was invested in protecting her. Richard Berthoud, in his 2001 study on family formation, argued that it was this precise form of arranged partnership which resulted in a low rate of divorce amongst South Asians, at less than half of what was recorded as the rate of divorce amongst white people.[38] The low rate of divorce was not simply a reflection that arranged marriages worked better. Rather, struggling marital relationships could have damaging consequences for the entire family, as my interviewees indicated.

Some women were frank in suggesting that could not exert the control they wanted to as teenagers over their choice of spouse, given that parents were often seen as having the experience to make judgements about who would best provide for their daughters. Despite this, most second-generation interviewees demonstrated that the difficulties of their circumstances did not undermine the agency they had over the nature of their marital relationships. This was apparent when I spoke to Noor, in particular. Her experience of being 'stuck' in a marriage was life-altering. Whilst she did not elaborate on her personal relationship, she did tell me she was divorced and said many women she knew had been in unhappy arranged marriages but were unwilling to settle like their mothers:

[37] Haleema and Noor, Author Interview (20/9/2019).
[38] Berthoud, 'Family Formation in Multi- Cultural Britain', p. 2.

> Yeah, from that generation, our parents' generation, they both got married in sort of, they were married in Pakistan and then came, so they had a lot of understanding between themselves. But I've seen now that the marriages that happened, you know, back in the 90s, those marriages are breaking down now when the kids are older, those marriages, the… the men have got their stay whatever, they've gone off and married somebody else, other wives, not all the cases but like… my ex-husband left me after he got the visa, so it is, it is a difficult one. But we're not doing that to our children. So our children are now married in England…But some marriages work.[39]

The idea that women of Noor's generation were more likely to file for divorce compared to older women was a significant interjection. As previous statistics have shown, divorce rates increased across the UK from the 1950s until 1999, including amongst British-South Asians. For second-generation women, who had British citizenship and were in compulsory education until the age of sixteen, divorce and single parenthood was a more realistic option compared to first-generation migrant women. They did not have to consider deportation or job markets that were inaccessible because of their language skills.[40] By no means does this undermine the anguish caused by broken relationships and the stigma associated with divorce. However, it is important to consider why divorce rates have increased over time and to what extent generational differences can explain this.

For one interviewee in particular, Arshad, her parents' decision to force her to marry her cousin, as a method of ensuring she was provided for and that the family's respectability was upheld, ended every prospect of her having a career like the privately educated girls

[39] Noor, Author Interview (20/9/2019).
[40] Evelyn Ersanilli and Katherine Charsley, 'A Good Match? Education, Labour Market Position, and British South Asian Transnational Marriage', *European Sociological Review*, vol. 35, no. 1 (2019), pp. 133–146.

she admired. In 1975, at the age of sixteen, and just a few months shy of finishing school, she was forced into a marriage with a man she despised. She was the only second-generation interviewee who had a forced marriage:

> In February I got married, they did an English register thing, and I was crying. And I remember the registrar sort of looking at me, you know really and I thought, in this day and age, they would have through 'what the f..?' you know, 'why, what's going on? You can't do this to someone who's not even 16 yet! You can't get her married like that', you know, but he just sort of looked at me, like concerned, but didn't do anything and just sort of carried on the performance. But I remember my art teacher saying, 'oh you don't have to go through with it, you can come move into my house' and I thought (laughs), you know in your head you know you can't do anything without your mum, you know, you get this emotional thing of girls always do what the parents tell them, otherwise they have a bad life, so you do that. [41]

Arshad explained that the reason her teachers did not intervene, despite there being open conversations about her marriage, was the belief that forced marriage was 'part of their culture, that's what they do', as Arshad put it. Forced marriage, she said, was not an open conversation in the 1970s amongst people in Middlesbrough. She highlighted how much had changed since then, emphasising, for example, that teachers now get training to recognise when a forced marriage is taking place. Whilst her white friends said, 'why don't you just say no!', Arshad remembered that, amongst her Pakistani friends, the conversation was different. Her best friend, for example, was married aged fourteen; 'in that day and age,

[41] Arshad, Author Interview (9/3/2021).

you could leave school at fourteen. So, she got married when she was just fourteen and I was gutted for her, really, but she was happy. Because you're brainwashed, inevitably, that that (marriage) is your end'.[42] Arshad avoided her husband as much as she could, refusing to be physically or emotionally involved with him: 'I couldn't stand him'.[43] She also said that, for the duration of the marriage, she was very ill and believed this was brought on by the psychological turmoil of being trapped in her marriage; her mother thought that taking her on a pilgrimage to Mecca would cure her. Arshad joked that had it been Donny Osmond or her current husband of thirty-seven years, the idea of marriage at a young age would not have been unbearable. It was him, the 'clown' of the family, she said, who was eleven years older and did not see value in learning and intelligence, that made her despise her situation.

Arshad was the oldest interviewee to file for divorce. Four years after her marriage, she was finally given permission by her father to divorce him. She explicitly saw this as an opportunity to return to school. In fact, she and her family accompanied her husband to Pakistan to help find him another wife, as she felt 'guilty' that she was not the wife he expected: 'I thought at long last! I can have a career and he can have his wife (laughs)'.[44] She said that she did not know anyone else who had been divorced; her parents were fearful of what the community would think. However, Arshad refused to live with him, even when her father offered to buy them a house of their own if she returned to him: 'that was the first time I stood up to him. I said, 'dad that house could be made of gold, but I will never, ever go back to him.''[45] She remembered how a neighbour visited when news of her divorce spread. Her neighbour offered her condolence, 'and I thought silly cow (laughs), I was over

[42] Arshad, Author Interview (9/3/2021).
[43] Arshad, Author Interview (9/3/2021).
[44] Arshad, Author Interview (9/3/2021).
[45] Arshad, Author Interview (9/3/2021).

the moon, what's she saying sorry about!'[46] The insinuation by Arshad's neighbour was that her husband had initiated the divorce, not considering the possibility that Arshad pushed for the divorce instead, which was the case.

Divorce meant that women had to be independent in ways that their parents did not envisage when they were growing up. For Arshad, divorce meant returning to education, which will be discussed in the next chapter. For others, it meant sharpening skills that could garner them an income. According to the sociologist Surinder Guru, who examined the consequences of increasing divorce rates within the South Asian community, some women were more independent after divorce. For example, Parminder, in her late 40s and originally from Kenya, had been in the UK since the 1960s. She was divorced for seven years before she married again. In those seven years, she improved the sewing skills she gained as a child and started making tapestries. Her work caught the attention of local development officers, which led her to exhibit her work in local schools. She then went on to get a part-time job at the local further education college, teaching crafts.[47] Of course, many women did not have generally positive experiences like Parminder; the stigma of being divorced meant some women in Guru's study were ostracized and struggled to make ends meet on their own. Moreover, despite divorce being codified in the Quran (unlike in Hinduism and Sikhism), some women refused to take this option given the consequences it would have on their economic survival and the potential negative impact it could have on their daughters finding a suitable partner.[48] In some extreme cases, the want for a divorce has led to the murder of British-South Asian women, such as Surjit Athwal, who was murdered by her abusive

[46] Arshad, Author Interview (9/3/2021).
[47] Surinder Guru, 'Divorce: obstacles and opportunities – South Asian women in Britain', *The Sociological Review*, vol. 57, no. 2 (2009), pp. 285-305, at p. 292.
[48] Guru, 'Divorce: obstacles and opportunities', p. 286.

husband in 1998 after starting divorce procedures. None of my interviewees indicated that they felt their lives were at risk when proceeding with divorce.

Whilst every second-generation interviewee married someone chosen by their parents to ensure their long-term social and financial security (or, at least, did so for their first marriage), interracial or mixed marriages (meaning marriage between people with different religions, castes or ethnicities) were deemed antithetical to a secure future because of the perceived incompatibility between people from different backgrounds. According to the Registrar General's Quarterly Returns 1969, only 6.59 percent of total marriages that year (which equated to 818 cases) were between an Indian or Pakistani woman and British man. In comparison, 12.27 percent or 1523 marriages in 1969 were between an Indian or Pakistani man and a British woman.[49] Mixed marriages amongst British-South Asian women, based on race, caste and religion, is a notable point of exploration in Amrit Wilson's work. She said that mixed marriages could cause a family to suffer 'all their lives. They will be ostracised, no one will marry their other children, if they ever go to Asian gatherings they'll be insulted and treated with contempt, even their relations may not receive them'.[50] Wilson stated that most of her interviewees did not agree with mixed marriages 'not because there was anything wrong with them, but they felt such marriages hadn't a chance'.[51] In other words, interracial marriages opposed what parents strove for when finding a partner for their daughters, namely long-term security.

There is one known instance from the 1970s in which a second-generation British-Pakistani woman from Middlesbrough chose to be part of an interracial marriage. Parveen,

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[49] Christopher Bagley, 'Interracial marriage in Britain—some statistics', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 1, no. 4 (1972), pp. 318-326, at p. 321.
[50] Wilson, *Finding a Voice,* p. 109. Also see: Claire Langhamer, *The English in Love: The Intimate Story of an Emotional Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 72-73.
[51] Wilson, *Finding a Voice,* p. 111.

who migrated to Middlesbrough as a child in 1954, believed that her marriage to a white British man was the first documented example of interracial marriage with a woman from the British-Pakistani community in Middlesbrough. In a documentary about South Asians in the North-East of England for ITV, which broadcast in 2007, Parveen said she and her husband were work colleagues when she worked as a social worker. This meant Parveen earned her own money and had opportunities to socialise with people who, like her, were interested in community work. Unlike Parveen, none of the second-generation British-Pakistani women I spoke to had been professionally employed before their first marriage. This may be why Parveen could see marriage as a romantic experience; for most of my second-generation interviewees, the idea of romance was far removed from their expectations of marriage. Parveen described her experience as exceptional for the time; it was far less likely for a woman from her community to be in an interracial marriage compared to men:

> It'll be twenty-seven years, this November, that we've been married…In the 70s, it was unheard of for an Asian girl to even have an unarranged relationship, and then a relationship with an English man, it was really totally unheard of in my community. It was just about approved of for the men to do it, in fact that was still frowned on.[52]

According to local historian, Arif Chohan, son of Nafees Chohan whose migration and settlement in Middlesbrough was analysed in a previous chapter, interracial marriage was a method of 'integration':

[52] Planet North Productions, 'A Passage from India' (2007), *ITV,* Ref: ITV006446, ITV Archives, London, 21:49-22:17.

> The most prominent and obvious way the immigrant community integrated was through marrying with local girls and in the 1920s and 30s many of my family did. But in the 70s it was much more common as people who, uh, initially immigrants had children who were born and bred here, so by the mid-70s there were a lot of people in their 20s who were born and bred here and were as local as the indigenous population.[53]

Arguably, the idea that Pakistanis were as local as the 'indigenous population' may be overstated. Throughout this thesis, I have demonstrated how local and national political decision-making, as well as racist practices in employment and education, has resulted in fractured experiences based on race, class, gender and place of settlement. However, it is understandable what Arif is trying to say. Namely that a younger generation of British-Pakistanis had more in common with their white counterparts.

Parveen was excluded from her family because she subverted the norms of marrying within the Pakistani community and, ideally, marrying a relative who was approved by older members of the family based on his reputation and ability to provide. Since Parveen's husband was an 'outsider', these judgements about his character and capabilities were difficult for her parents to gauge. It meant her marriage resulted in her being ostracized by some members of her family. Whilst Parveen subverted expectations about marriage more than most women, she highlighted the extent to which attitudes were flexible and could change:

[53] Planet North Productions, 'A Passage from India', 21:21-21:43.

> my family went on to accept Ken after about three, four years wasn't it? And as it turned out, my sister actually came to live with us because she studied here for three years and then my aunty lived with us for a year and then, in the end, my mum came to live with us for over ten to twelve years.[54]

She is still married, despite possible reservations that an interracial, interreligious marriage could not work. Whilst Parveen's experiences were vastly different compared to other interviewees, her testimony supports the argument that second-generation women were developing attitudes towards marriage and adulthood that were different to their parents. Moreover, attitudes towards marriage had the potential to change significantly over time.

Marriage and Education

Whilst parents believed that their daughters could only be socially and financially secure through marriage, since they did not see second-generation women as independent wage-earners, British-Pakistani girls were amongst the highest achieving groups, in terms of academic attainment, in 1990s Britain. It is crucial to examine how the decision to marry as teenagers may have influenced women's experiences of education and the extent to which this affected their labour market participation.

In terms of academic attainment at GCSE, the statistics revealed that British-Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls were amongst the highest achieving groups in the UK. As the tables below show, between 1996 and 1997, British-Pakistani and Bangladeshi females were more likely to achieve five or more GCSEs compared to British-Pakistani and Bangladeshi

[54] Planet North Productions, 'A Passage from India', 22:25- 23:04.

males. In fact, of all the respondents who stated their ethnicity, British-Pakistani and Bangladeshi males were the least likely of all ethnic minority groups to pass five GCSEs.

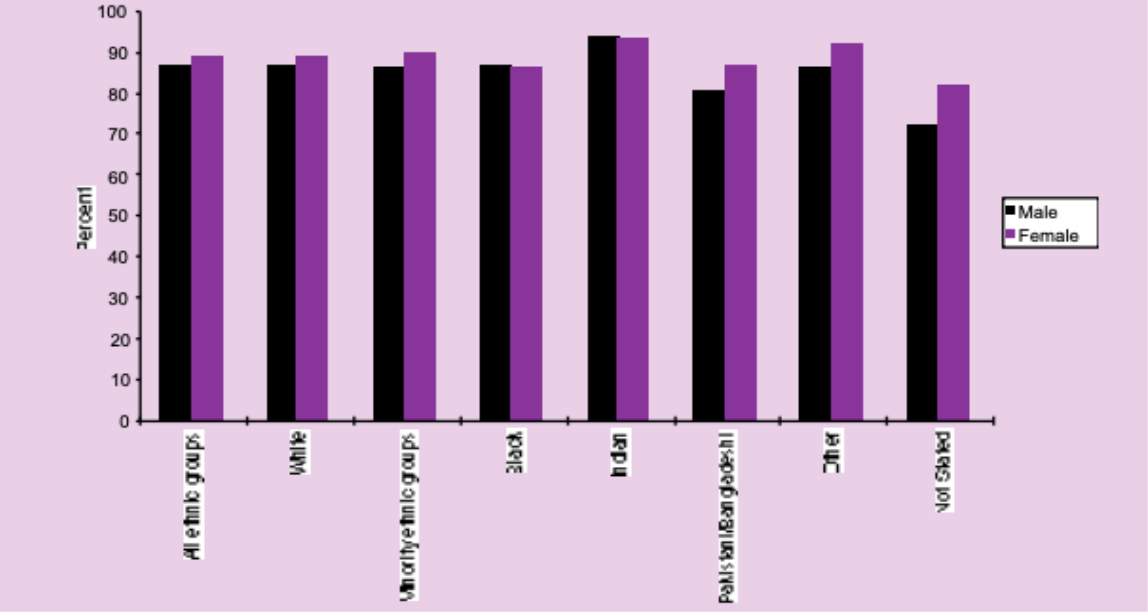


Figure 3: 'Percentage achieving 5 or more GCSE passes at grade A*-G by ethnic group and sex 1996/7', obtained from David Owen, Anne Green, Jane Pitcher and Malcolm Maguire, 'Minority ethnic participation and achievements in education, training and the labour market', *Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations and Institute for Employment Research University of Warwick,* Research Report No. 225 (2000), p. 26.

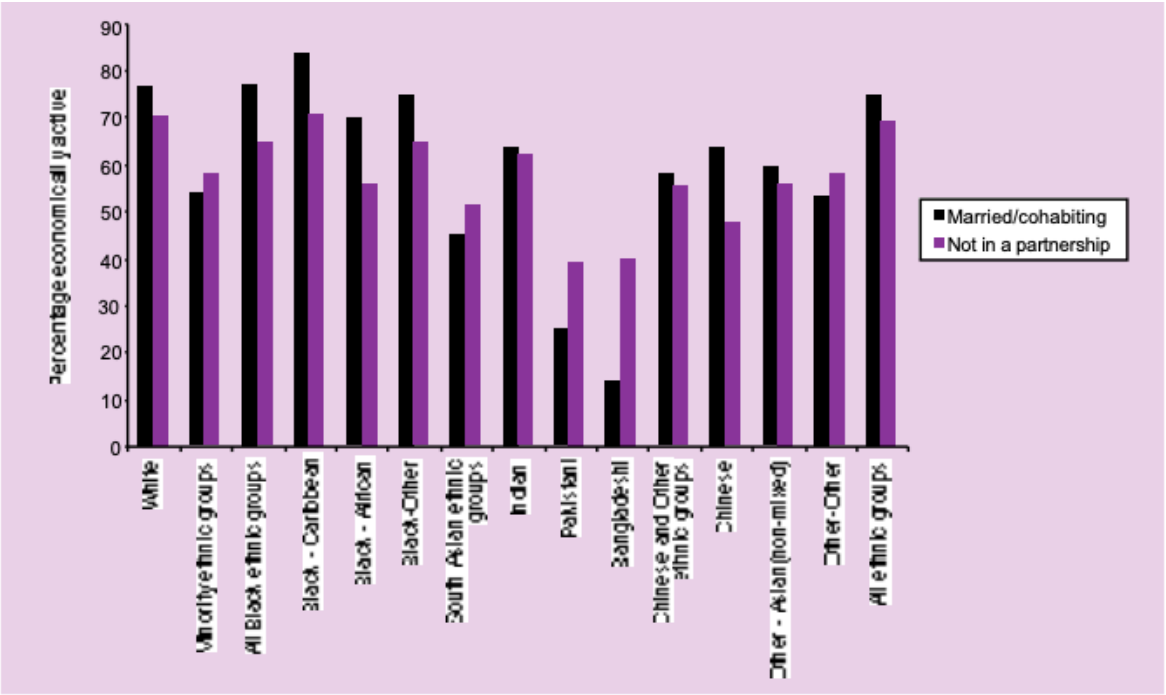


Figure 4: 'Percentage of women in Great Britain ages 16-59 economically active, by marital status, 1999', obtained from David Owen, Anne Green, Jane Pitcher and Malcolm Maguire, 'Minority ethnic participation and achievements in education, training and the labour market', *Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations and Institute for Employment Research University of Warwick,* Research Report No. 225 (2000), p. 75.

	Male				Female			
	16-64	16-24	25-44	45-64	16-59	16-24	25-44	45-59
White	85	78	94	78	74	70	78	71
Minority ethnic groups	***77***	***59***	***88***	***70***	***56***	***47***	***60***	***55***
Black	*78*	*69*	*86*	*69*	*68*	*54*	*72*	*72*
Black – Caribbean	80	77	89	65	75	63	78	72
Black – African	76	50	84	77	61	40	65	71
Black – Other	81	78	83	-	67	59	72	-
South Asian	*77*	*59*	*91*	*67*	*47*	*45*	*51*	*41*
Indian	82	62	95	74	63	56	69	56
Pakistani	74	56	89	62	30	35	31	21
Bangladeshi	65	55	81	40	22	36	-	-
Chinese &Other	*74*	*47*	*85*	*78*	*57*	*46*	*58*	*64*
Chinese	63	-	83	73	57	-	63	64
Other - Asian	77	46	85	82	58	52	58	64
Other - Other	76	58	86	77	55	49	55	66
All	**85**	**76**	**93**	**77**	**73**	**68**	**76**	**70**

Figure 5: 'Economic activity rates in Great Britain by age group and gender, 1999', obtained from David Owen, Anne Green, Jane Pitcher and Malcolm Maguire, 'Minority ethnic participation and achievements in education, training and the labour market', *Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations and Institute for Employment Research University of Warwick,* Research Report No. 225 (2000), p. 74.

Examination grade	Total	White	Minority ethnic groups	Black	Indian	Pakistani /B'ladeshi	Other	Not Stated
			Males					
5+ GCSEs A*-C	41.7	42.5	37.5	22.7	51.9	28.2	44.4	24.8
1-4 GCSEs A*-C	25.5	25.4	26.2	24.0	23.1	29.9	26.8	28.8
5+ GCSEs D-G	20.5	20.1	24.2	40.3	19.4	23.2	18.2	20.0
1-4 GCSEs D-G	5.7	5.4	6.7	6.5	3.2	12.4	3.5	8.8
None reported	6.6	6.5	5.4	6.5	2.3	6.2	7.1	16.8
All males	**7393**	**6460**	**934**	**154**	**216**	**241**	**198**	**125**
			Females					
5+ GCSEs A*-C	50.2	50.8	45.3	34.7	54.5	31.6	55.9	29.9
1-4 GCSEs A*-C	26.4	25.3	35.3	41.7	28.6	45.1	28.7	36.4
5+ GCSEs D-G	13.8	14.2	10.1	13.2	10.9	12.4	5.0	16.9
1-4 GCSEs D-G	3.8	3.8	4.0	2.8	3.6	4.7	4.5	6.5
None reported	5.7	5.9	4.0	6.9	2.7	6.2	1.0	9.1
All Females	**7269**	**6432**	**836**	**144**	**220**	**193**	**202**	**77**
			All Students					
5+ GCSEs A*-C	45.9	46.7	41.9	28.5	53.2	29.7	52.9	27.2
1-4 GCSEs A*-C	26.0	25.3	30.6	32.6	25.9	36.6	27.6	31.7
5+ GCSEs D-G	17.2	17.2	17.4	27.2	15.1	18.4	11.5	18.8
1-4 GCSEs D-G	4.8	4.6	5.3	4.7	3.4	8.8	4.0	7.9
None reported	6.2	6.2	4.8	7.0	2.5	6.2	4.0	14.4
All Persons	**14662**	**12892**	**1769**	**298**	**436**	**434**	**399**	**202**

Figure 6: 'Examination achievements in Year 11 by ethnic group and gender; percentage of all students achieving each level of attainment' obtained from David Owen, Anne Green, Jane Pitcher and Malcolm Maguire, 'Minority ethnic participation and achievements in education, training and the labour market', *Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations and Institute for Employment Research University of Warwick,* Research Report No. 225 (2000), p. 26.

British-Pakistani and Bangladeshi females were also the most likely to achieve 1-4 GCSEs at grades A* to C. Despite these educational successes, British-Pakistani females aged between 16 and 24 were the least economically active group in the UK by 1999, at 35 percent, half the rate of British-Pakistani male economic activity which was at 74 percent. As the Labour Force survey from 1999-2000 highlighted, 25 percent of married British-Pakistani women worked compared to 40 percent of unmarried Pakistani women. This, alongside women's testimony, revealed that marriage played a significant role in influencing the disconnect between high academic attainment and low labour participation amongst young British-Pakistanis who benefited from compulsory education.[55]

Some women in Oldham said that it was their mothers who encouraged their marriages after their compulsory education had ended. In a group conversation with women who were born in Oldham, the sometimes contradictory yet deeply varying nature of their mothers' attitudes towards education and marriage became apparent, particularly given that both topics were spoken about in conjunction with one another. The interviewees' own association of education with their arranged marriages is the reason for the nature of this conversation, rather than my interview questions positioning marriage and education as topics that needed to be discussed together:

> [Noor]: Yeah 'cause my mum fought against the community to get us to college and university. So we had the mosque coming to our house saying 'don't send them', 'cause

[55] David Owen, Anne Green, Jane Pitcher and Malcolm Maguire, 'Minority ethnic participation and achievements in education, training and the labour market', *Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations and Institute for Employment Research University of Warwick,* Research Report No. 225 (2000), pp. 1-125.

we're Pathans, you see, so girls, we were the only girls who went to college in that generation, from our *Pathan*[56] community

[Iqra]: Yeah, I was the first one from my community

[Noor]: You were probably the first one from your community.

[Haleema]: I was the first, my mum fought for it as well

[Interviewer]: So, was it mums who usually fought for daughters to be in school?

[Iqra]: No, it was my dad.

[Interviewer]: Was it?

[Haleema]: If your parents are from an educated background from back home, then I think they fought for the education, mostly

[Iqra]: I don't know my grandad was a police officer back before he came here and he, everybody else saying to him 'you know the people from blah blah blah', I think there was a stigma around girls going to get an education because there it wasn't a thing

[56] Pathans, or Pashtuns, are an ethnic group in Pakistan with ancestral links to Iran.

> [Noor]: the Mirpuri community had an uproar about us going (to university), 'cause it opens the door you see, and other people are scared, so my sister was the first one to go outside the *Pathan* thingy[57]
>
> [Haleema]: Same when I went to college
>
> [Iqra]: And I think there was the odd one that, like, did a runner.
>
> …
>
> [Noor]: Yeah, so my mum got my sister married off to a Mirpuri, it was like 'oh my god' it was like, people were like, it gives other girls a pass to marry someone outside their caste and culture.[58]

Parents' attitudes towards girls staying in post-compulsory education varied. There was some disagreement regarding whether parents' personal experiences determined if they decided that staying in education was appropriate for girls, given that education opened the doors for work, socialisation and economic self-sufficiency, as Noor put it. There was no indication that women who continued with post-compulsory education were more likely to marry someone of a higher status. In fact, it was likely that second-generation women would marry someone from Pakistan's lower labouring classes, given the prevalence of marrying cousins.

[57] The interviewee is referring to the stereotype of Pathans being less likely to let their daughters go to school compared to other ethnic groups from Pakistan.
[58] Iqra, Haleema and Noor, Author Interview (20/9/2019).

Haleema believed that those educated in Pakistan were more likely to encourage their British-born children to stay in school, rather than marry for the sake of social and economic security. There are some examples of family background affecting the type of work younger generations of migrants pursued. A 1976 study about second-generation South Asian men living in Newcastle upon Tyne found that those who wanted professional careers in medicine and engineering, for example, were more likely to achieve their goals if their fathers had similar careers before their migration, although, 'family background was no guarantee for success' given racist university selection processes.[59] Importantly, the family background of these men made professional work a more realistic ambition which parents encouraged. Equally, the lack of women in professional careers resulted in few parents encouraging their daughters to become wage-earners. Iqra believed that women's absence from educational settings in Pakistan meant an older generation could not envisage women using education as a tool to secure wage-earning work. Despite her paternal grandfather being a police officer, which implied that he had undertaken education and training, he did not think that education was appropriate for women; she suggested that girls staying in education, rather than marrying, caused community gossip amongst an older generation of British-Pakistanis. However, regardless of her grandfather's attitudes, Iqra said it was her father, who had spent most of his life in Oldham, rather than her mother, who encouraged her education.

Having spoken to older Pakistani women beforehand, the idea that they would encourage their daughters to forgo education and marry as teenagers was striking, particularly given the insecurity migrant women felt because they were not equipped with

[59] Todd, *Snakes and Ladders*, p. 276.

the skills to be socially and economically independent. Every older interviewee had an arranged marriage at a very young age, and often their testimony about being pulled out of education and having to migrate and live in their husband's home was tinged with dejection. Of course, for older women, it was difficult to capture the complexity of their marriages in a singular interview, given that these relationships had spanned most of their lives. Moreover, since many older women were widows, the nostalgia of their marital relationships was palpable and understandable. Sentimental feelings reflected the conditions elderly women found themselves in, dealing with the loss of stability caused by the death of their partners.[60]

Yet, the idea of mothers promoting the cycle of arranged marriage at the expense of education and training was clearly a painful subject for some younger women to reflect on and rationalise. Younger women had educational and employment opportunities that were simply inaccessible to their mothers. By capitalising on these opportunities to work, learn and train, these women could aspire to professional work, financial freedom and self-reliance, doing work that interested them rather than succumbing to familial or community expectations. The influence mothers had over the upbringing of their children was made apparent in a study conducted by Rashida Bibi on British South Asian women and higher education. Bibi spoke to women in Oldham, asking what role their parents played in their sense of identity. Whilst this was specifically in reference to belonging in British society, their answers reflected the central role mothers played in their upbringing. One interviewee in Bibi's study said:

[60] See, for example: Jones, 'The Uses of Nostalgia', p. 357.

> Asian fathers don't usually spend that much time or you know they just hug and kiss them and provide shelter and food, which I think is so important but as a mother we have more influence on the character building of children, because we nurture them so I think it's very important the way a mother she can influence them in every way… so yeah I think a mother influences a very great deal.[61]

Similarly, Amrit Wilson argued that mothers broadly understood their daughters' needs, but mothers also had to consider the importance of respectability and honour, which was why they encouraged their daughters to choose marriage over education. Wilson referenced the writing of Afshan Begum, a British-Muslim woman who wrote a thesis about Muslim girls in British schools, to substantiate her argument. Begum wrote that 'girls often become very close to their mothers, consequently the last thing they want to do is to bring any form of unhappiness to their lives'.[62] This close bond, Begum argued, stemmed from migrant women having few contacts outside the home, therefore relying on their daughters for company. Of course, this argument is imprecise; the loneliness of mothers, alone, cannot encapsulate the complexity of mother-daughter relationships, nor does Begum's argument acknowledge how daughters contributed to the development of these relationships. Certainly, however, mothers were the first reference point younger women had to understand what married life and adulthood might look like for them. Rather than avoiding making their mothers 'unhappy', younger women's decisions about marriage may instead reflect the limited representations of adulthood they had access to and the scope they had to subvert what already existed.

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[61] Rashida Bibi, 'Mussafirs of the 21st Century: British South Asian Women, Higher Education and the Changing Notions of 'Britishness'', *University of Huddersfield, MRes* (2014), pp. 6-147, at p. 89.
[62] Wilson, *Finding a Voice,* p. 34.

Migrant parents regarded marriage, rather than post-compulsory education, as the most important way in which they could ensure their children's social and financial security. It meant that, as a teenager, Simran could not envisage higher education or a career being part of her future. Instead, the only inevitable outcome was marriage, and this was strongly encouraged by her parents. She said that her parents' attitudes were directly influenced by their upbringings in Pakistan. Both her parents were illiterate and did not go to school for very long. Simran believed that had they gone to school for longer, or seen women in professional and educational settings, they may have encouraged her to do something other than marry as a teenager:

> [Interviewer]: When you were growing up, what did you want to be? Did you think, when you were younger, 'this is the career I want'? Did you ever have an idea of that?
>
> [Simran]: Um, not really.
>
> [Interviewer]: What did you think would happen to you when you grew up?
>
> [Simran]: That I would get married. In those days there was no such, there was no encouragement. 'Cause our parents didn't know, do you know what I mean. I think if there had been, you know, had been more informed about what we could have done in that sense they would've given us that support. But because they didn't know themselves, it was matter of 'they grow up, they're adults, they get married' and they fulfil their duty (as parents). [63]

[63] Simran, Author Interview (18/1/2020).

As the next chapter will show, despite not fully realising their own aspirations as teenagers, given that marriage dominated their imaginations of adulthood, some second-generation interviewees described how they went back to education and secured professional work, often once their children were older.[64] Their dissatisfaction, as well as the concurrent rise of adult education and women's professional employment, resulted in changing expectations of everyday life.

Conclusion

Second-generation British-Pakistani interviewees ended their education and training as teenagers because arranged marriage was regarded as the primary way in which migrant parents could ensure their daughters' futures were socially and financially secure, since second-generation women were not regarded as independent wage-earners. Marriage, rather than professional work or higher education, dominated girls' imaginations of adulthood. Older migrant parents thought it was important for girls to marry a respectable, wage-earning suitor (often a relative from Pakistan) at a young age because single, unmarried women of an older age could threaten the respectability of their family. Parents did what they thought was best for their children, rather than make decisions which they thought would make their children unhappy. As teenagers, interviewees often complied because they trusted their parents' judgement. Crucially, marriage effectively ended girls' prospects of continuing with their education, which is why interviewees discussed marriage and education together. Despite high levels of academic attainment, the idea of going to

[64] See, for example: Worth, 'Women, Education and Social Mobility in Britain during the Long 1970s', p. 73.

university and of having a career seemed unrealistic when marriage and motherhood dominated the hopes of their parents.

Politicians and journalists, across the period, were preoccupied with the need to understand arranged marriage without necessarily considering the ways in which attitudes towards marriage, adulthood and education changed over time. Women's testimony demonstrated the flexibility of some parent's attitudes towards marriage, given the differences between older and younger siblings' experiences. However, some women who were in unhappy marriages divorced, which grew in prevalence amongst women in Britain across the period. As a result, women had to be independent in ways that their parents did not envisage when they were growing up. As the next chapter will show, some women used their divorce as an opportunity to go back to education and become independent wage earners. However, the difficulty of making ends meet alone, as well as the stigma associated with being a divorced woman in the British-Pakistani community, made life after divorce difficult. For some South-Asian women, ending their marriage resulted in violence, which should not be ignored when considering the varying experiences British-Pakistani women had when making autonomous decisions as adults.

Chapter 8: Generational Change and Paths to Waged Employment

Second-generation interviewees, who were born or grew up in Britain, were more likely to access the labour market as formally waged employees, particularly as managers and professionals, compared to women who migrated to Britain as adults across the period. Arguably, this was because compulsory education until the age of sixteen equipped second-generation British-Pakistani women with the qualifications to pursue training or higher education, as well as the confidence to recognise higher education and professional work as more realistic ambitions. Women pursued higher education and career progression later in their lives rather than soon after they finished compulsory education. This was because interviewees were married as teenagers; they often got their degrees and became professionals after marriage and, in many cases, after they had children. Some women who migrated to the UK as adults, both younger and older, did have experiences of being employees, as this chapter will show, and others, for various reasons, said they aspired for skilled or professional work but could only fulfil these ambitions in part.

This chapter will specifically focus on women's experiences entering the workforce in professional, managerial, technical or clerical roles from the late 1980s until the early 2000s. According to data collected by the British government in 2019, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities, combined, had the lowest rate of formal employment amongst ethnic groups in the UK, at 57 percent.[1] In addition, 39 percent of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women were employed when the data was collected, compared to 75 percent of men.[2] Formal waged

[1] Gov.uk, 'Ethnicity Facts and Figures: Employment' (29th January 2021). Available at: https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/work-pay-and-benefits/employment/employment/latest [Accessed 16/12/20].
[2] Gov.UK, 'Ethnicity Facts and Figures: Employment' (29th January 2021). Available at: https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/work-pay-and-benefits/employment/employment/latest [Accessed 16/12/20].

work was not a common experience amongst my interviewees but is, nonetheless, important to examine. Given the infrequency with which interviewees cited formal waged work as part of their labour experiences, this chapter largely relies on the testimony of two women, who were professionals. To frame these interviews, a range of sources about British women's entry into the labour force after the Second World War, as well as their increasing participation in higher education and professional work, have been referenced throughout the chapter. To understand the generational differences in accessing formal waged work, firstly I will analyse formal work experiences amongst first-generation women who migrated to Britain as adults and examine why, despite aspiring for manual and white-collar waged work, interviewees did not partake in their chosen occupations. I will then analyse the testimony of second-generation interviewees who were educated in the UK and examine the reasons why they were employed as professionals.

Whilst there is scope to consider the differences between second-generation British-Pakistani women (who were born or grew up in Britain) and their white counterparts, in terms of employment rate and experiences in the workplace, there is a more notable point of analysis. Namely, why did first-generation interviewees ,who migrated as married adults during the 1990s and were the youngest women I interviewed for this study, not partake in professional employment, despite increased access to adult education and training? Arguably, age and when women settled was not important in determining whether women had increased opportunities to be employed. Instead, mandatory education was the primary factor determining women's relationship with the labour market. For migrant women with a limited education, formal waged work seemed like a distant and near-impossible ambition, yet for women who benefited from compulsory education until the age of sixteen, becoming professionals was an attainable ambition, regardless of how old they were.

Amongst British-Pakistani women, then, access to the labour market varied considerably. Those who migrated in the 1990s as young adults were less likely to be in professional work or have a higher education qualification compared to an older second-generation interviewees who were raised in Britain.

Pakistanis who grew up in Britain and stayed in education until the age of sixteen were far more likely to be in professional work at the time of our interview. Generally, the rate of women occupying professional work increased across the latter half of the twentieth century, although they were concentrated in particular sectors.[3] The general proliferation of British women in employment after the Second World War reflected similar trends in other industrialised nations, such as the USA, Japan and the European Union, where women were entering the workforce at record rates.[4] According to Mary Gregory and Sara Connolly, the end of practices such as the marriage bar and the expectation of women's resignation from waged work after they married in the 1950s and 1960s resulted in far more married women entering the workforce, with the rate doubling from 23 percent in 1951 to 46 percent in 1971.[5] However, the rate of women in full-time work since the 1970s has only changed slightly, increasing from 5.5 million women in 1971 to 6 million women in 2000.[6] Part-time work amongst women has, instead, increased substantially; 2.8 million women were in part- time work in 1971 and this increased to 5.8 million in 2000.[7]

[3] Gill Court, *Women in the Labour Market: Two Decades of Change and Continuity* (Brighton: Institute for Employment Studies, 1995), p. 17.
[4] Gregory and Connolly, 'Women and Work since 1970', p. 142.
[5] Gregory and Connolly, 'Women and Work since 1970', p. 146.
[6] Gregory and Connolly, 'Women and Work since 1970', p. 147.
[7] Gregory and Connolly, 'Women and Work since 1970', p. 148.

	Distribution of women (%)		Distribution of men (%)		Women's share of total employment		
	1971	*1993*	*1971*	*1993*	*1971*	*1981*	*1993*
Primary and utilities	2.2	1.4	7.4	4.4	15.0	16.9	23.3
Manufacturing	28.7	12.1	40.3	27.1	29.9	28.9	29.7
Construction	1.0	1.3	8.1	6.3	6.6	10.3	16.9
Distribution, hotels *etc.*	22.7	23.7	12.4	18.7	52.3	54.2	54.5
Transport & communication	3.0	2.9	9.2	8.8	16.4	19.5	23.4
Banking and business services	6.5	11.1	3.7	8.2	51.5	53.4	56.1
Professional services	2.6	4.6	2.2	4.6	41.6	43.5	48.5
Other (marketed) services	2.9	5.0	2.5	4.0	41.8	53.0	54.2
Public administration & defence	6.4	6.4	8.7	9.2	30.4	36.1	39.5
Health and education services	24.0	31.6	5.5	8.8	72.4	73.9	77.3
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*37.4*	*42.1*	*48.6*

Figure 7: Distribution of women and men, and women's share of total employment by industry, 1971-1993 (employees only). Image obtained from Gill Court, *Women in the Labour Market: Two Decades of Change and Continuity* (Brighton: Institute for Employment Studies, 1995), p. 17.

	Distribution of women (%)		Distribution of men (%)		Women's share of total employment		
	1971	*1993*	*1971*	*1993*	*1971*	*1981*	*1993*
Managers & administrators	6.3	12.4	13.7	20.2	20.8	23.7	34.3
Professionals	5.7	8.1	6.9	10.1	32.1	34.3	40.7
Associate professional/technical	7.0	10.4	5.9	8.3	40.6	45.5	51.5
Clerical & secretarial	29.9	27.4	8.7	6.7	66.4	72.0	77.8
Craft & related	6.7	3.5	26.6	22.4	12.7	11.0	11.7
Personal & protective service	10.0	13.7	3.5	5.5	62.0	62.9	68.0
Sales	9.8	10.4	4.9	4.6	53.5	60.7	65.6
Other	24.6	14.2	30.0	22.2	32.1	36.4	35.3
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*36.5*	*40.6*	*46.0*

Note: Data for 1971 have been calculated on a different basis to those for subsequent years and are not directly comparable.

Figure 8: Distribution of women and men and women's share of total employment by occupation, 1971 to 1993 (employees only). Image obtained from Gill Court, *Women in the Labour Market: Two Decades of Change and Continuity* (Brighton: Institute for Employment Studies, 1995), p. 19.

The growing participation of mothers in the workforce explained the increased rates of part-time work amongst women, since mothers had to give up hours of paid work in order to make room for childrearing and household responsibilities, factors men rarely considered. Career progression, skills development and financial reward have, consequently, been curbed by the overwhelming responsibility of unpaid work unduly placed on women.

In addition, it is necessary to consider what type of work was available to women. In terms of classification, major categories of occupation such as 'professional' correlate with the qualifications and experiences necessary to fulfil the demands of the job; professionals, for example, are those with graduate and postgraduate degrees, as well as substantial training in their field of work, such as teaching.[8] According to the Labour Force Survey, in 1981, 5.8 percent of economically active men aged 16-59 were in 'professional' careers, compared to 1.4 percent of women in full-time work and 0.4 percent of women in part-time work. In the same year, 20.7 percent of men were in occupations classed 'Managerial and Technical' compared to 23.3 percent of women working full-time and 2.0 percent of women working part-time. In 1991, 8.0 percent of men and 4.4 percent of full-time working women were in 'professional occupations' and 27.2 percent of men and 32.1 percent of full-time working women were classed in 'Managerial and Technical' jobs. In both 1981 and 1991, women dominated in skilled, non-manual work; in 1981, 44.7 percent of full-time working women were in these roles, compared to 35.4 percent of part-time women workers, and this changed to 39.2 percent and 39.7 percent in 1981 and 1991 respectively.[9] These statistics revealed that men were more likely to be in higher paid 'professional' work,

[8] ONS, 'Standard Occupational Classification: Volume 1, Structure and Description of Unit Groups' (2000). Available at: https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/publications/2000/soc2000vol1v5_tcm77-179121.pdf [Accessed 7/6/21].
[9] Gregory and Connolly, 'Women and Work since 1970', p. 157.

possibly because it was likely that women in both part-time and full-time work would have no educational qualifications; in 1981, for example, 61 percent of part-time women workers and 38 percent of full-time workers aged 16-59 had no qualification at all.[10] The enduring association of women with occupations that have a 'care' component was also a significant difference between men and women's work. The most prevalent form of professional work amongst women was teaching, with 7.7 percent of full-time professional women in this form of work; occupations such as engineering and science-based professions have been consistently dominated by men, reflecting an occupational segregation based on sex.[11]

Second-generation interviewees, who were entering the workforce from the end of the 1980s up until the late 1990s, worked in teaching and administration and gradually got promoted to senior positions later in their careers. No first-generation interviewee had undertaken professional work. However, some younger first-generation migrant women, who had migrated from the late 1980s until the 1990s, said they aspired for professional work and had undertaken some training to support these ambitions. Often, migrant women who were formally employed were concentrated in jobs deemed low skilled, such as food production. The expansion of women's employment raises questions about how ethnic minority women are positioned in the economy. Annie Phizacklea argued that migrant women are the most disadvantaged people in the labour market. Despite the characteristics that most working-class women share, namely being confined to low paid, low status work, migrant women are 'placed at the intersection of two processes, gender and racial subordination'.[12] In addition, Sallie Westwood, whose study involved a year-long

[10] Gregory and Connolly, 'Women and Work since 1970', p. 154.
[11] Gregory and Connolly, 'Women and Work since 1970', p. 156.
[12] Annie Phizacklea, 'Introduction' in Annie Phizacklea (ed.), *One Way Ticket: Migration and Female Labour* (London: Routledge, 1983), p. 7.

observation of South Asian textile factory workers, argued that the nexus between racism, class and patriarchy shaped her subject's relationship with production: they sold their labour for a wage but had to consider how domestic responsibilities affected their work. The added implications of being an ethnic minority meant the position of Black and South Asian workers was determined by both economic and political or ideological reasoning.[13] These testimonies built on Amrit Wilson's powerful argument that 'having directly and indirectly brought Asian women to Britain, the racism of the state and the racism of British society now defines the wider position of Asian women in this country- as the lowest paid and most exploited workers, or as wives and daughters of such workers.' [14]

Adult Migrant Women and Formal Work

Formal work, legally defined as contracted or arranged work for money or benefit in kind, was certainly experienced by a few Pakistani women I interviewed, particularly second-generation British-Pakistanis who grew up in Britain and greatly benefited from compulsory education. Women who migrated as adults were more likely to secure waged work that was deemed low skilled rather than professional work.[15] In part, this was because formal waged work was less accessible in the towns women settled; areas with a lower rate of employment overall had the largest immigrant populations.[16] Birmingham, for example, had the lowest rate of women's employment across the UK in 2013, with 50.2 percent of women in employment. The next lowest included Leicester at 55.2 percent. The Office of National

[13] Westwood, *All Day Every Day,* pp. 7-8. Also see: Annie Phizacklea and Robert Miles, *Labour and Racism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980).
[14] Wilson, *Finding a Voice*, p. 15.
[15] Gov.uk, 'Employment Status: Worker'. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/employment-status/worker [Accessed 16/12/20].
[16] Gov.UK, 'Regional Ethnic Diversity' (1st August 2018). Available at: https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-and-regional-populations/regional-ethnic-diversity/latest [Accessed 6/7/21].

Statistics noted that those who did not work often cited familial responsibilities as the reason why; 'this may be linked to the diverse ethnic population within the area.'[17] This statement, without much regard for the types of work available to working-class migrant women, obscures the complicated reasons why women may choose not to enter the workforce. Household chores, community work and the added prospect of difficult, underpaid part-time work resulted in some of my interviewees deciding that the disadvantages of being employed outweighed the advantages, as Joanna Bourke argued.[18]

For those without the advantages that education in the UK offered, the possibility of accessing work that was fulfilling, meaningful and well paid was greatly reduced. Some migrant women thought it was more productive to dedicate their time to domestic responsibilities or create work that was flexible. There were some older interviewees who said their husbands did not want them to work outside the home; these women, like Sardar or Rabia from previous chapters, took on other forms of work. Younger first-generation migrant women, who migrated as married teenagers and adults during the 1990s, contrastingly did not say they were restricted by their husbands or families from working and, instead, cited a lack of qualifications or language skills as the primary reason why they were not formally employed. Crucially, and as Jody Mellor argued in her study about working-class British-Pakistani women and education, none of my interviewees expressed the need to distance themselves from their families in order to pursue higher education and professional careers; the small number of women I interviewed who were waged employees

[17] ONS, 'Women in the Labour Market: 2013' (25th September 2013). Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/womeninthelabourmarket/2013-09-25 [Accessed: 6/7/21].
[18] Bourke, 'Housewifery in Working-Class England', p. 173.

or pursued higher education found work and went to university in the towns and cities they lived in, with the support of their families. [19]

Women's experiences of waged work depended significantly on whether they were educated in the UK; migrant women who grew up in Pakistan, across the period, were more likely to either seek self-employment, undertake voluntary work or, in some limited cases, secure waged work that was deemed unskilled. The lower rate of formal labour participation amongst British-Pakistani women has been a point of exploration in previous scholarship, although a lack of research into the Pakistani community has resulted in generalised explanations as to why this has been the case. Amrit Wilson, for example, stated that, 'what Muslim men don't like is for their women to work outside the home, potentially in the company of strange men'.[20] Wilson suggested that attitudes towards Muslim women's work were affected by the concept of *izzat*, or honour, which has been used to peddle 'the sensitive and many-faceted male family identity which can change as the situation demands it- from family pride to honour to self- respect, and sometimes to pure male ego.'[21] When Wilson published her book in the mid-1970s, 21 percent of Muslim women did work outside the home (most of them Pakistani and Bangladeshi) since financial pressures required women to work for a wage.[22] Helen McCarthy expanded on Amrit Wilson's argument, suggesting that *izzat* was the reason why the biggest employers in places like Oldham, such as the textile mills, were filled almost exclusively by Pakistani men. She detailed the experiences of Zubaida, who migrated during the 1960s from Pakistan to

[19] Jody Mellor, ''I Really Couldn't Think of Being Married, Having a Family and Nothing Behind Me': Empowerment, Education and British-Pakistani Women', in Marta Bolognani and Stephen M. Lyon (eds.), *Pakistan and its Diaspora: Multidisciplinary Approaches* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 218.
[20] Wilson, *Finding a Voice,* p. 31.
[21] Wilson, *Finding a Voice,* p. 31.
[22] Wilson, *Finding a Voice,* p. 32.

Colindale, North London to reunite with her husband. She said, 'When I first came, my husband did not want me to go out and work. It's true there was a lot of housework, but I used to be very lonely. Every day I used to cry'.[23] As McCarthy rightly argued, the economic pressures on working-class households meant women had to work, even if men were reluctant.[24] Arguably migrant men might give other reasons for their opposition to their wives working, such as protecting them from the same racist violence that they were subjected to.

For older, first-generation migrant women, whilst partaking in formal work for an employer was not a particularly common experience compared to educated, second-generation British-Pakistanis, those who did told me what motivated them and what their days looked like. Mansoora, for example, was the only older migrant woman who had a formal, waged job. She worked from the 1980s until the mid-2000s because 'there was a lady who owned the bakery…the lady was a friend of mine so I helped her.'[25] The bakery in question is called 'Yasmin's Bakery', a staple business in Middlesbrough that has served the local community since the mid to late-1970s. The business was established by the namesake, Yasmin, who was a native of Jhelum. Mansoora's working life was kick-started by her friendship with Yasmin, and her job primarily involved making products for the shop.

Mansoora was a reserved interviewee. Whilst welcoming and willing to answer questions, she had a tendency, much like other older women, to play down how many hours she worked and how she juggled her job with the responsibilities of being a wife and mother. Stories from friends of hers revealed the difficulties of managing all this. In the room at the time of the interview was a neighbour and Mansoora's friend who facilitated

[23] McCarthy, *Double Lives,* p. 314.
[24] McCarthy, *Double Lives,* p. 314.
[25] Mansoora, Author Interview (10/4/2019).

our meeting. She told me that Mansoora worked 'all day long, she doesn't want to make it seem that way but she was always working.'[26] The exhausting demands of doing multiple paid and unpaid jobs was a distant memory for Mansoora; her children were adults and she had long retired. Mansoora did not have formal qualifications to do her job; she learned how to make bakery products informally and was trained by the owner.

Young first-generation migrant women, who migrated during the 1990s, did not see professional work as a viable option, given their lack of education, and settled for supposedly unskilled work. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, younger first-generation migrant women were, in part, benefiting from the shift towards a service-based economy, although the loss of men's jobs in industries such as steel manufacturing was difficult for families to navigate. Economic and social change across Britain was uneven, the consequences of deindustrialisation debilitating regions such as the North-East where a lack of diversity in industry left thousands jobless.[27] Political responses to deindustrialisation ruptured the 'skin that had affectively contained anxieties and feelings of insecurity through the routine of work, kinship practices, and affective work and social relationships.'[28] In other words, the loss of jobs in places like Teesside where, at the peak of its expansion in the early twentieth century, over 40,000 people were employed by the steel industry, and the loss of everyday practices that underpinned the experiences working-class families for

[26] Naseem, Author Interview (10/4/2019).
[27] Andrew Johnston and Robert Huggins, 'Regional Growth Dynamics in the Service Sector: The Determinants of Employment Change in UK Regions, 1971–2005', *Growth and Change*, vol. 49, no. 1 (2018), pp. 71-96, at p. 88.
[28] Jo Forster, Margaret Petrie and Jim Crowther, 'Deindustrialisation, Community, and Adult Education: The North-East England Experience', *Social Sciences*, vol. 7 (2018), pp. 1-16, at p. 2; Also see: Valerie Walkerdine, 'Communal Beingness and Affect: An exploration of trauma in an ex-industrial community', *Body and Society,* vol. 16 (2010), pp. 91–120.

generations, resulted in feelings of insecurity.[29] For the women I spoke to, the closure of factories pushed husbands and sons towards self-sufficiency, to jobs such as taxi-driving, catering or barbering.

Some women, migrant and non-migrant, took on multiple responsibilities during this period of change, in some cases pursuing training so that they could work in a rapidly transforming, post-industrial service economy. For example, only 13 percent of women born in the 1960s obtained a higher education qualification; by the 1980s, this figure had reached more than 45 percent.[30] The government's implementation of policies to stimulate growth in dilapidated areas like Middlesbrough and Oldham led to an array of vocational training options. This represented a marked difference between the educational resources afforded to women who migrated in the 1960s compared to those who arrived in the 1980s and 1990s. During this period of economic restructuring, training was seen as the principal way in which labour forces could be equipped to deal with service-based work. As part of the European Union's Lisbon strategy, a goal was set for the EU 'to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world.'[31] New vocational training schemes emerged in an attempt to improve post-compulsory education, particularly since more than half of those leaving education had no qualification in the 1980s.[32] Learning became the primary way economic competitiveness could be restored;

[29] BBC, 'A History of Teesside Steelmaking', *BBC* (23rd November 2010). Available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/tees/hi/people_and_places/history/newsid_9220000/9220056.stm [Accessed 8/3/21].
[30] Barbara Rowantree and Kartik Vira, 'The Rise and Rise of Women's Employment in the UK', *Institute for Fiscal Studies* (27th April 2018), p. 5. Available at: https://ifs.org.uk/publications/12951 [Accessed 18/10/21].
[31] European Union Lisbon Council, 'Presidency Conclusions', Section 5, (23rd- 24th March 2000). Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm [Accessed: 2/5/21].
[32] Stephen Machin and Anna Vignoles, *Education Policy in the UK* (London: Centre for the Economics of Education, 2006), pp. 2-9.

given the number of migrants in the UK, their participation was crucial.[33] Even for women who sought training to meet their personal goals, rather than support their families economically, the government's investment in training schemes meant more options for them to pursue new careers.

Women who migrated to Britain as married adults during the 1990s took advantage of improved and more accessible training schemes, given that they did not benefit from compulsory education like their children. However, it was common to hear that women received training in sewing and cooking in order to secure formal manual work rather than pursue training and education for professional careers. When the topic of formal work was brought up during my interview with Talat, for example, I asked whether she would ever do machine work from home, if the opportunity presented itself like it did in places such as Oldham. She said no, since she believed home should be for socialisation rather than work. She said she would 'absolutely' do sewing outside the home instead:

> I did a fashion design course at a local centre, in 1993. I did it for a year and got 191 marks out of 200. Then I got ill, I had a skin condition, and you know, white people, they mind stuff like that quite a lot, like they would catch an illness. But I was very interested in working at Marks and Spencer. I got a 191 marks because I made a velvet dress and trousers with pockets. But I had a family, four kids. It became difficult, one goes to school then another… When I came to this country, I was very interested about Marks and Spencer clothes, if I

[33] By 2004, 8.9 percent of the UK's population was foreign-born. See: The Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, 'Migrants in the UK: An Overview' (2018). Available at: https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/migrants-in-the-uk-an-overview/ [Accessed 22/2/19].

> could find out where they make them and have the opportunity to work there. I wanted to work there. But there was four kids and it was so busy taking them to school and all that.[34]

Talat was the only women I met who had taken concrete steps at an older age to fulfil a life-long ambition of participating in formal waged work. She pursued this form of training when she was older and no longer had the responsibility of looking after young children as a single mother. She described the all-consuming job of motherhood: feeding, cleaning, taking her children out for excursions, and so on. Moreover, her brother-in-law and other men in her family did not allow women to work outside the home, so she dedicated her time to being a mother. It seemed like her training later in life was an opportunity to do something for herself, independent of her family. She chose to occupy her time with design classes, working to fulfil an almost 20-year-old aspiration of working in Marks and Spencer. These classes were accredited and, whilst she did not know the specific name of the class, she told me that they took place in a local community centre.

Young women who migrated from the late 1980s onwards were more likely to reveal that they aspired for formal, professional work, although they believed their chances were limited since they did not benefit from compulsory education like second-generation women. Some young migrant women took part in the growing number of vocational training schemes that were available in the 1990s, often going to classes whilst their children were in school. Training after migration was necessary in order to qualify for the work they aspired towards. This was the case for Sidra. Building on the English education she acquired through adult education, she decided to take the next step and train to

[34] Talat, Author's Interview (9/1/2018).

become a nursery teacher. Her education in the UK had been extensive before she made this decision:

> (Going to classes) became part of my routine… I didn't stop, I went to all the classes, I learnt computing, English, Maths… level 2 computing… I wanted to be busy, go out, learn something new. [35]

Sidra had the most wide-ranging experience of adult education, compared to other interviewees, and was also the only interviewee who stayed in education past the age of sixteen in Pakistan. This may be why she wanted to become a nursery teacher: she had the educational experiences and English proficiency to realistically achieve this goal. Sidra believed that the support of her husband and her extensive formal education as a child facilitated this decision:

> I wanted to do childcare, I did the course as well… I thought when my kids are off from school I'll be off too so I can spend time with them if I started working (in childcare)…When I worked with the children and then started looking after my in-laws and kids, I thought that was too much for me with my old mother-in-law and my young kids and the kids in the nursery. And then I got ill so I stopped everything, just looked after my mother-in law, I had to compromise. After that, no freedom. She (mother-in-law) doesn't go anywhere so I don't go anywhere. [36]

Sidra's case was a sobering example of how the will to work and the aspirations to achieve beyond what migrant women could have imagined for themselves was sometimes not

[35] Sidra, Author's Interview (7/1/2019).
[36] Sidra, Author's Interview (7/1/2019).

enough. The responsibility of looking after her mother-in-law became overwhelming, forcing her to decide whether a career was compatible with the realities of undertaking the care of an elderly person. The amount of training she would need to do to secure professional work was unrealistic, given that her qualifications from Pakistan were not recognised. In this sense, women who grew up in Britain had an advantage, since they left compulsory education with a set of recognised qualifications.

Given that young first-generation migrant women did not benefit from compulsory education before their marriages, they often had to manage their formal education with motherhood. Nadiya, who wanted to have earn money to ensure her family had a higher disposable income, faced multiple challenges that hindered her ability to get formal training, primarily looking after her disabled daughter and her mother-in-law, who lived with her part-time. Vocational training simply could not fit into her chaotic life. Instead, she pursued informal community-based learning to develop her interest in cooking into an income-earning job. Since Nadiya migrated in 1996, she had greater access to adult education classes or training course in Middlesbrough. Although she formally acquired English education after her migration through ESOL classes, the training for her job began in her living room. Nadiya did not know what life in the UK would look like and work outside the home was beyond what she imagined for herself:

> They'd say 'what will women do with an education, all they'll do is get married'… but I've been a samosa maker for a while now (laughs)… I do it for the money and also to help the time pass, it helps me buy things for my kids… I learned how to cook from my mum and the samosa's… my

> friend taught me to make them properly, even when I make them now I think 'thank god she taught me'.[37]

Nadiya's aspirations were shaped by the work other working-class British-Pakistani friends and neighbours were doing. To see that someone of a similar class and background could make money by selling food clearly influenced how she saw her daily activity changing once her children had gone to school. Aspirations are under a constant state of change, mediated and refashioned in relation to new experiences and new environments. The example of rural to urban migration in Indonesia has been used to argue that the longer a migrant is in their place of settlement, the higher their aspirations, since they have had longer to acquire training.[38] A similar trend can be seen amongst British-Pakistani women. In this sense, formal and informal skills and vocational training brought to life a new way of understanding what everyday activity could constitute. When I asked if she wanted to grow her small business, she revealed the poignant reality of her life. Work had to remain informal because her disabled daughter was her priority: 'I can't work more than I already do because my daughter needs 24-hour care and I have housework on top of that too'.[39]

Several young first-generation migrant women revealed the difficulty of balancing motherhood with education and training; a lack of compulsory education meant migrant women had to obtain basic qualifications to be considered eligible for any form of professional work. Taking care of vulnerable or disabled family members, for example, are circumstances which are often ignored when the relationship between migrant Pakistani

[37] Nadiya, Author's Interview (9/1/2019).
[38] Sung Soo Lim, 'Aspiration of Migrants and Returns to Human Capital Investment', *Social Indicators Research*, vol. 138 (2018), pp. 317- 334, at p. 326.
[39] Nadiya, Author's Interview (9/1/2019).

women and formal work is criticised by politicians and researchers.[40] Although John Major's government recognised that 'flexible forms of working… enable thousands of employees to balance their work with family commitments', the time-consuming reality of looking after disabled or elderly family members and the concurrent limited forms of work available to working-class migrant women remains underappreciated.

Learning and training was an important stepping-stone towards greater ambitions, and women capitalised on its availability with the hope that work could eventually be accommodated. Skills and vocational training could fulfil the social and economic goals of the state whilst simultaneously perpetuating the image of integration amongst migrant and non-migrant groups working and operating in the same public spaces.[41] Women in Middlesbrough were some of the primary receivers of learning and training initiatives, highlighting their dedication to securing the independence that education promised. Whilst the will to learn was powerful, formal work was difficult to fit into the matrix of responsibilities that constituted these interviewees' everyday state.

Professional Careers amongst Second-Generation British-Pakistanis

Amongst the interviewees who were born or raised in Britain, and benefitted from compulsory education, it was more common to learn that they had participated in professional, white-collar work after obtaining a university qualification. These interviewees were the first women in their families to work as professionals from the late 1980s onwards, have higher education qualifications and, at various points of their careers, they earned just

[40] Linda McDowell et al, 'Women's paid work and moral economies of care', *Social and Cultural Geography,* vol. 6, no. 2 (2005), pp. 219-235.
[41] Jill Rutter, *Moving Up and Getting On: Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion in the UK* (London: Policy Press, 2015), p. 262.

as much, if not more, than their husbands. Like them, 22.7 percent of second-generation children from an ethnic minority background went into professional or managerial work between 1972 and 2019, despite coming from the families of unskilled workers.[42] More specifically, according to the social scientist Yaojun Li, in his study of social mobility amongst ethnic minorities in the UK, between 1972 and 2019, British-Pakistani and British-Bangladeshi women:

> tend to have persistent disadvantages relative to White women in terms of overall labour market positions combining employment status and class position. Three-quarters of the first generation and around half of the second-generation women in this group were economically inactive, although the situation has slowly improved in the current decade. [43]

This may be why only four interviewees had professional careers. In this section, I will specifically focus on the testimony given by Arshad and Simran. Aged sixty-one and fifty-one respectively, both women extensively reflected on their experiences of professional work during their interviews. Notably, both women had gotten their degrees and pursued their career goals after their marriage. Arshad was a teacher for over twenty years before she took an early retirement in 2015 and Simran was a languages teacher, had qualifications in Law and, for thirty years, worked for a civil service department where she was a manager at

[42] Yaojun Li, 'The Social Mobility of Ethnic Minorities in Britain in the Last 50 Years (1972-2019): Summary Report', *Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparity* (28th April 2021). Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-report-of-the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities-supporting-research/the-social-mobility-of-ethnic-minorities-in-britain-in-the-last-50-years-1972-2019-by-professor-yaojun-li [Accessed 8/7/21].

[43] Yaojun Li, 'The Social Mobility of Ethnic Minorities in Britain in the Last 50 Years (1972-2019): Summary Report', *Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparity* (28th April 2021). Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-report-of-the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities-supporting-research/the-social-mobility-of-ethnic-minorities-in-britain-in-the-last-50-years-1972-2019-by-professor-yaojun-li [Accessed 8/7/21].

the time of the interview. Both Simran and Arshad said that as children and teenagers, they did not think professional careers were a realistic ambition given the pressure they felt to marry. Arguably, the privileges of their compulsory education, such as being able to fluently speak English and having the confidence to undertake advanced educational qualifications, became apparent when they both pursued further and higher education as married adults.

Compulsory education did not make access to professional work easy or a realistic ambition for working-class, second-generation British-Pakistanis, although their educational experiences certainly made it more likely compared to women who migrated to Britain as adults. For Arshad, despite being educated in the UK from the age of ten to sixteen, a professional career seemed out of reach, possibly because she could remember a time when her illiteracy in English significantly hindered her progression in school. After being forced into a marriage aged sixteen and pulled out of education just before she completed her O Levels, by the time Arshad returned to college at around the age of twenty, she had few formal qualifications:

> It was at that time (of her second hajj) that I asked my dad whether I could go to college, to learn, and he said 'well okay then'. I asked him, you know, my husband at the time and he said 'well ask your dad' (laughs). So I started going to college really, and it was really good 'cause I felt like, I thought 'oh I can', I mean the first thing I did was, uh, a certificate in Cambridge, um, that was first um, and that was really easy for me because all you had to do was put in missing words and because linguistically, speaking wise, I was okay so I knew which it was in terms of grammar and everything, I was very good at it and I got a distinction

> for it. Then I started to do my O Levels, you know, and uh I did English language, social sciences, history, geography and um, that's all I did.[44]

Whilst she failed all her subjects when she did her O levels for the first time, the second time she achieved 'C' grades in all her papers. She said 'it was very, very hard but I persevered', staying up until four in the morning to revise and enlisting the help of her sister, who would support Arshad with her spelling and writing. This was despite a former English teacher telling her that he did not think she would be able to pass her English O Level. Familial support, whether from parents or siblings, was a crucial component in women returning to education.

Similarly, Simran, who was born in the UK and completed compulsory schooling before marrying at eighteen, did not think a professional career was possible for her when she was a child. As the previous chapter highlighted, and like other second-generation interviewees, as a teenager Simran's only option was marriage. Whilst her parents encouraged her compulsory schooling, she said 'school, um…school was alright… it was hard at times, um, because my parents were illiterate', which meant getting practical academic support at home was difficult. However, Simran said she came from 'a line of strong women' who were willing to go against the norms of the time, such as her mother who ran her own business and her maternal grandmother who was a landowner in Pakistan, a rare status amongst women that resulted in backlash from men in the village:

> [Interviewer]: Seeing what the women in your family like your mum and grandma did, how did that affect your aspirations growing up?

[44] Arshad, Author Interview (9/3/2021).

> [Simran]: See I saw that as normal, do you know what I mean? You know, being hard working and you know, I mean they were working to provide for their family, to make life better for their family, so that was instilled in us. So for us, we're not waiting like not even waiting for the husbands to be like 'right, okay, you need to go get a job' and that. When we want something in life, we, you know, are improving ourselves. I mean, I used to only work 12 hours a week during term time… but now that I've got my education and qualifications and experience, my husband can't work- it'll be five years in April- *alhamdulillah*[45] that I can go out and, you know, keep the house running.

Women of Simran and Arshad's generation benefitted from the expansion of further and higher education in the latter half of the twentieth century and women who had been educated in Britain could access courses that were more advanced. Eve Worth argued that the changes in higher education from the late-1960s until the mid-1970s, as part of the 'second expansionary phase of the welfare state' under the Labour Government, resulted in women born during the late 1930s until the mid 1950s experiencing upward social mobility because of their return to post-secondary education.[46] The transformation of local technical colleges into degree-awarding polytechnics, as well as The Open University in 1969, meant flexible, part-time education and evening classes were readily available to those working or those balancing education with familial responsibilities.[47]

Returning to education as adults meant managing their courses with family life, community work and, in some cases, paid employment. This meant that courses were often

[45] An Islamic expression meaning 'praise be to God'.
[46] Worth, 'Women, Education and Social Mobility in Britain during the Long 1970s', pp. 67-69.
[47] Thane, *Divided Kingdom,* p. 267.

taken over an extended period of time and there were years in between women finishing a course and starting another. In 1979, Arshad returned to education to complete her O Levels when she was twenty, at Kirby College of Further Education. Over a decade later, in 1992, she obtained a Bachelor of Education Degree at the University of Bradford and, in the early 2000s, she obtained a second degree in Psychology and a master's degree in Psychology, the details of which will be discussed later in the chapter.

Simran returned to education in 1990 once her children, aged three and four, were in school. She enrolled in 'Quantitative Skills for Industry and Commerce' at Teesside Polytechnic (now Teesside University) in 1990. Since her mother was a business owner, it seemed realistic for Simran to get a qualification that could support her if she wanted to similarly open a business. Unlike her mother, however, Simran did not need to learn on the job and could instead easily access funded accredited courses. After having her third and fourth child, Simran went back to education and gained a qualification in Teaching English to Speakers of Another Language (TESOL). Later, in order to further her career in teaching English and interpreting, Simran gained DPSIs (Diploma in Public Service Interpreting) in Health (1997) and Law (2001). She pivoted to a career in Law in the early 2000s, receiving the LLB (or Bachelors degree) in Law from Teesside University in 2003 and subsequently receiving the LLM (or Master's degree) in Criminal Law from Teesside University.

Women's pursuit of professional careers coincided with particular periods of their life cycle; mature students had to make decisions about returning to education and work when the demands of family life were more manageable, such as when their children were in school. Interviewees often stated two overlapping motivations for going back to education after having children: wanting to financially provide for their families through personal economic self-sufficiency and wanting to undertake learning so that their lives

were not consumed by the monotony of cooking, cleaning and childrearing. Arshad, who got her first job at age twenty as a teaching assistant in a local primary school in Middlesbrough, ventured into professional work after her divorce. Life as a single adult meant she could seek an independent life on her own terms:

> My mum thought I should have some money for myself, without having to ask dad, so I started working as a teaching assistant at a local primary school and studying as well, at the same time…Mainly because, you know, my dad was a bit stingy (laughs), you know, I mean that's just the way he was so I think she thought, you know, that I should have my own independence, I should have my own money and buy whatever I want… [48]

Her mother Rabia, an Islamic teacher, did not make money from her community work, which was a point of pride for her, as detailed in a previous chapter. Yet, Arshad's testimony highlighted how her mother struggled because she did not have financial control and had to ask her husband for money. Clearly, Rabia wanted something different for her daughter, possibly recognising the resources at Arshad's disposal that she, as a non-English speaking first-generation migrant mother and wife, did not have. It meant that Arshad could have a life far different from her mothers, a second chance after her divorce, so to speak, to be financially and socially independent:

> Oh it was wonderful! I mean, I remember the first time it was, like a Christmas do, and they wanted me to come and I was like 'my dad won't allow it'. And I remember the teacher saying, 'you know what, I'm gonna come and talk to your dad and I'm gonna say I'm gonna

[48] Arshad, Author Interview (9/3/2021).

> pick you up and I'm gonna drop you off' and she did! And he said 'alright' (laughs) And that was my first do, I went three or four times and I felt really like 'oh my god I'm going out with my friends!' (laughs). [49]

She made it clear that, had she had children at the time, like her best friend who was married at the age of fourteen, going out with her colleagues and making up for the time she had lost during her marriage would not have been possible. Similarly for Simran, whilst she worked part-time for the civil service and did voluntary work when her children were young, her long list of qualifications often coincided with the gaps between having her six children. For example, she obtained both her degrees after her youngest child was born in 2001. Full-time education and taking care of young children was, at times, incompatible without a network of support and careful time management.

Whilst compulsory education certainly made returning to education and gaining advanced qualifications an easier process compared to first-generation migrant women, nonetheless women said that a network of support was necessary to progress in their careers. Not only did women require support from family and friends to take care of their children, Arshad described how she needed the validation of others to help her realise that teaching was a realistic ambition. In 1983, in her mid-twenties, Arshad married again. This prompted her move to Bradford, where she has lived since. She gave birth to her daughter in 1984 and her son in 1986. Arshad remembered a time when she asked her husband whether 'this was it, cooking cleaning, looking after the kids'. She wanted a career:

[49] Arshad, Author Interview (9/3/2021).

> I knew that he (her husband) was a bit different 'cause he was really happy that I was driving, that I could drive… if I wanted to get my haircut, wear English clothes, he was quite keen for me to be a career woman, so I think that really helped. [50]

When her son started nursery, she approached his teacher, asking if there were any teaching assistant posts available. The teacher asked what qualifications she had and, when Arshad told her about her past teaching experiences, the teacher encouraged her to teach as well. Arshad said it was the degree that stopped her from seeing this as a viable aspiration: she did not think she was 'intelligent' enough for university. She described a degree as 'an unreachable goal, if you like, like 'oh my god you have to be so intelligent to do that' and I didn't think I had that intelligence to become, uh, like have a degree. A degree was a big thing'.[51]

The educational successes of women in the British-Pakistani community are highlighted by their growing university enrolment, particularly since the 1990s. James Niven et al argued that New Labour's 1997 manifesto, which emphasised education as the Labour Governments biggest priority, is the context in which to understand the exponential growth of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women pursuing university education. This, along with the changing, more supportive attitude of parents and community members towards women's higher education, resulted in a 158.7 percent increase in the number of British-Pakistani women in the first year of their degree between 1994-1995 and 2004-2005; comparatively, white students in their first year of university, between 1994-1995 and 2004-2005,

[50] Arshad, Author Interview (9/3/2021).
[51] Arshad, Author Interview (9/3/2021).

increased by 43.3 percent.[52] In 2001, Prime Minister Tony Blair set a goal for 50 percent of young people to be in higher education by 2010, 'an ambitious goal because we are ambitious for Britain'.[53] Yet, according to Tariq Modood, in his breakdown of higher education initial participation rates and ethnicity, 38 percent of young white people enrolled for university between 2001 and 2002. Pakistanis participated at a rate of 49 percent, with 44 percent of all British-Pakistanis in higher education under the age of thirty being women. In fact, all ethnic minority groups were participating in university education at a higher rate than their white counterparts.[54] Modood noted, however, that ethnic minority students were less likely to enter prestigious universities, were more likely to drop out of the course and more likely to get lower grades compared to their white peers, although socio-economic factors explained much of this. Despite two-thirds of British-Pakistanis and British-Bangladeshis coming from a home where their parents were either manual labourers or unemployed, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women have fared better than their white working-class counterparts in higher education participation.[55]

These statistical successes, however, do not necessarily capture the acute difficulty of being a first-generation university student. One student, Anam, in Farhana Ghaffar and Jacqueline Stevenson's study of British-Bangladeshi and British-Pakistani women's perceived barriers in accessing higher education, explained that her parents were supportive but could

[52] See: James Niven, Alessandra Faggian and Kanchana N. Ruwanpura, 'Exploring "Underachievement" Among Highly Educated Young British-Bangladeshi Women', *Feminist Economics*, vol. 19, no. 1 (2013), pp. 111-136, at p. 115; Farhana Ghaffar and Jacqueline Stevenson, 'British Pakistani and Bangladeshi Women, Higher Education and Defensive Othering', *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, vol. 20, no. 3 (2018), pp. 50-67, at p. 53; Mary Stopes-Roe and Raymond Cochrane, *Citizens of this Country: The Asian-British* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1990), p. 88.
[53] Tony Blair, 'Full Text of Tony Blair's Speech on Education', *The Guardian* (23rd May 2001). Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2001/may/23/labour.tonyblair [Accessed 8/7/21].
[54] Tariq Modood, 'Ethnicity, Muslims and higher education entry in Britain', *Teaching in Higher Education*, vol. 11, no. 2 (2006), pp. 247-250, at p. 248.
[55] Modood, 'Ethnicity, Muslims and higher education entry in Britain', p. 248.

not necessarily offer the practical support and advice she sought at the point of applying. Anam, a second-year student, said:

> Well, my dad speaks a little bit English and my mum [cannot] really speak English, so they struggle to read anything like application forms, and then they struggle to understand and they can't even help me fill it in and when it came to personal statements and looking at unis, I couldn't rely on them …When I came to [the] open day, I told my sister because my parents wouldn't understand that, and it's like been like that throughout my whole education.[56]

Despite being thirty years younger than Arshad, Anam's experiences as a second-generation British-Pakistani, and being the first in her family to go to university, may also explain some of the anxieties Arshad described. Arshad was part of the first generation of British-Pakistani women to pursue higher education; unfamiliar processes, the lack of practical advice from friends and family and the personal insecurities Arshad had about her intelligence could have prevented her from getting the necessary training to become a qualified teacher. However, in 1992, when Pakistani women in higher education was not yet common, Arshad decided to undertake a Bachelor of Education Degree at the University of Bradford as a mature student. In the interview, she was quick to emphasise that a network of moral supporters, as well as generous bursaries, motivated her to apply. Her husband, who was running his own businesses, would take care of the children whilst Arshad finished assignments. They also paid to have their children in after-school clubs as she went on to gain her qualifications. She did not feel guilty being away from her children, since she knew

[56] Ghaffar and Stevenson, 'British Pakistani and Bangladeshi women', pp. 56-57.

that 'if I didn't do it now, I'll never do it.'[57] By 1995, Arshad was a qualified teacher. She was also heavily pregnant. When her daughter was three months old, she took her first job as a part-time, temporary teacher in primary schools across Halifax, until she secured her first permanent part-time job at a local primary school, working four mornings a week so that she could take care of her baby. The choice to pursue teacher training amongst British-South Asian women has been analysed by Graham Butt, Lin McKenzie and Russell Manning, who argued that the flexibility of teaching and the high status associated with the profession were the primary motivations for the interviewees, who were all pursuing a Postgraduate Certificates in Education (PGCE) in the West Midlands.[58] One interviewee, DM 207, said:

> I wanted more of a family life as well; I wanted a balance with my career and my family life – I don't always want to stay on the career side of things. Which is why I thought that teaching was a better option to go for.[59]

Another interviewee said, 'one thing I've noticed – not a racist thing – but that the teaching profession is a very, sort of, middle-class profession' and 'the idea of being a teacher is always well respected … teachers are seen as the top priority, if you can do that, or a doctor.'[60] Although there was no indication that Arshad went into teaching because of the high status associated with the profession, she knew that her full-time wage could offer her children experiences that were indicative of upward social mobility. Despite feeling guilt

[57] Arshad, Author Interview (9/3/2021).
[58] Graham Butt, Lin McKenzie and Russell Manning, 'Influences on British South Asian Women's Choice of Teaching as a Career: "You're Either a Career Person or a Family Person; Teaching Kind of Fits in the Middle", *Educational Review*, vol. 62, no. 1 (2010), pp. 69-83, at p. 69.
[59] Butt, McKenzie and Manning, 'Influences on British South Asian Women's Choice', p. 75.
[60] Butt, McKenzie and Manning, 'Influences on British South Asian Women's Choice', pp. 73-75.

about not spending as much time with her youngest daughter once she started working full-time, Arshad knew that her job was the reason why her children could go to a private secondary school, her eldest daughter could go on a school trip to Japan and piano lessons could be paid for. Admittedly, they were the activities that she longed for as a child; 'it wasn't about showing off or being snobbish, it was aspirations that I wanted for my children, and I wanted for me as well 'cause I never got that opportunity.'[61]

Second-generation British-Pakistani women were more likely to be in professional work because of their compulsory education and in work settings could, at times, use their expertise to support people from non-English speaking migrant communities. Arshad, for example, worked in primary schools where a large proportion of pupils were British-South Asian. As part of her job, Arshad would help non-English speaking pupils develop their language and comprehension skills, as well as communicate with parents whose first language was Punjabi. Similarly, Simran believed that the privileges of being born and educated in Britain meant she was able to help migrant women pursue professional careers and return to education. Whilst she did not think that being educated in Britain meant you were more likely to be in leadership roles in the community (citing Rabia, Arshad's mother, as an example of someone who had no qualifications but was a community leader), she did recognise how her specific background and qualifications legitimised her call for first-generation migrant South Asian women to also pursue careers as interpreters:

> For me it was, like, being there for women…to say, 'you know what, come and do this interpreting course, gain qualifications and you can move onto the next stage' and showing them the way and showing them other routes et cetra… I didn't have 100 percent of my time

[61] Arshad, Author Interview (9/3/2021).

> to give to them 'cause I had a family and six children, but I've always had it because I think that if Allah has given me this, I've got the advantages of being born and brought up in this country, I mean it's not the end for them, they've come to an English country but they are absolutely brilliant, intelligent women, strong women and they don't give up… I mean, when they're coming from Pakistan aged seventeen, eighteen, they're being told how to think, act and, you know... It's not right. They (men) kept them in the home so they could control them but so many years down the line they've realised it's a bad idea 'cause if they could speak English they could do things themselves, drive themselves, drop the kids off themselves… she's not just there to have children, and if she hasn't been in the world how will she know what's out there for her?[62]

Simran recognised that being born in Britain and benefiting from access to compulsory and post-compulsory education meant she was more privileged compared to women who migrated from Pakistan and had received a limited state-school education before their arrival. Moreover, she recognised that vulnerable migrant teenagers who arrived married often faced a form of subjugation in terms of seeking autonomy and independence that she, as a middle-class, educated, English-speaking professional, did not have to contend with. Simran saw education as a direct challenge to the restrictive patriarchal controls that resulted in 'brilliant, intelligent women' viewing formal waged work and professional work as an unrealistic goal, acting as a facilitator, so to speak, as migrant women from her community navigated adult education and the labour market.

[62] Simran, Author Interview (18/1/2020).

Conclusion

Second-generation interviewees, who were born or grew up in Britain, were more likely to access the labour market as formally waged employees, particularly as managers and professionals, compared to first-generation women who migrated as adults or married teenagers across the period. This was because compulsory education until the age of sixteen equipped second-generation British-Pakistani women with the qualifications necessary to pursue training or higher education, as well as the confidence to recognise higher education and professional work as a more realistic ambition.

First-generation migrant interviewees took advantage of opportunities for training from the late 1980s onwards, which addressed the state's need to have a trained populous to meet the demands of a service-based economy. These women took the time to obtain training in a profession and hoped that this would help them secure waged employment. Despite their willingness to work, the realities of caring responsibilities made fulfilling these aspirations acutely difficult.

Two women, who were educated in the UK, demonstrated the steps they took to pursue university education and take on professional careers. Their paths to professional careers were ridden with difficulty but financial independence and the possibility of upward social mobility motivated them to continue with higher education and professional work. The privileges that compulsory education afforded both women, such as English proficiency, meant that despite being older than migrant women who arrived in the 1990s, second-generation British-Pakistani women were far more likely to realise their ambitions for professional work.

Conclusion

Working-class British-Pakistani women, who migrated or grew up in Britain between 1962 and 2002, worked to support their families and communities in ways that were not always related to the money economy. Their testimonies of migration and settlement highlighted the breadth of their labour, which included self-employment, structured voluntary work, home-based employment, waged labour and unpaid, domestic care. Often, this work played a crucial role in supporting the long-term settlement of Pakistanis in Britain. Whereas previous scholarship has focussed on British-Pakistani women's low formal labour participation, and used *purdah* to explain it, this study has shown that British-Pakistani women's work was diverse and wide-ranging. Where women settled, the time of their settlement, their educational and training experiences before migration, local economic and social change and, for younger second-generation women, compulsory education in Britain all significantly affected women's work choices. Work, as a starting point of historical analysis, revealed a rich history of women's changing attitudes, their aspirations for work and education, their expectations of life in Britain and their hopes for a future generation who would call Britain home. These experiences extended far beyond women's relationship with the labour market.

Migrant women's aspirations for work were affected by their experiences before migration as children and teenagers; collecting life histories was crucial in highlighting these connections between childhood experiences and the decisions women made about their labour as adults. As children, Pakistani-born women from across the period were not regarded as potential wage earners and received training in domestic work rather than a formal education. These formative experiences affected their expectations of adulthood and

their ability to envisage aspirations for work that earned an income. Almost every interviewee was pulled out of education to marry and the lax application of Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 meant women often married as children, although most interviewees did not know their real age. For these women, marriage could not be tied to adulthood. Instead, they relied on indicators such as puberty and the emotional experience of maturing and learning to determine that they were children when they married. Marriage effectively marked the end of formal education. Despite incremental increases in the number of girls from rural areas enrolling for school in Pakistan in the 1990s, only one interviewee, who migrated in 1993, stayed in school until the age of sixteen. Older and younger migrant women's testimony revealed that their decisions regarding paid and unpaid work as adults was, in some ways, informed by their experiences as children.

Whilst women were not prepared for waged work as children growing up in Pakistan, moving to Britain and securing a comfortable long-term settlement necessitated their participation in work outside of their domestic responsibilities. Examining the neglected everyday experiences of British-Pakistani women through the lens of work revealed that women's ability to make home in Middlesbrough and Oldham was predicated on the relationships they created and maintained with other British-Pakistanis in their town. The demands on women's time as mothers, wives and community members, as well as the difficulties posed by not speaking English, meant migrant women had to support one another during their settlement, particularly since their husbands and sons were often absent because of work. Mutual support was therefore a necessary part of making home in Britain and this support evolved into structured yet voluntary forms of work.

Although women's unpaid work in Britain has been analysed by feminist and women's historians, migrant women's voluntary work and the significance it held as a

method for securing a comfortable settlement is still underexplored. Free religious education classes and interest-free money saving associations were prominent examples of how women used their skills to offer members of their community services which could help secure a more comfortable settlement. Underpinning these services were the emotionally and materially sustaining relationships women had with members of their community, particularly women. Women became like extended family members and their support was invaluable given the loss they felt when leaving their networks in Pakistan. Whilst the strategies for securing a more comfortable settlement changed over time and between generations, nonetheless younger and older women agreed that friendship and mutual support were integral to Pakistani settlement in Middlesbrough and Oldham.

None of the women I interviewed expected to migrate and spend most of their lives in Britain, nor did they have a choice about where they would settle. Interviewees living in Middlesbrough and Oldham had different work experiences, highlighting the significant affect local social, political and economic change had on women's access to formal waged labour. Whereas Oldham's textile industry offered Pakistani women employment as homeworkers, most older Pakistani women in Middlesbrough cited self-employment as the way they earned an income, since the local steel industry primarily employed men as labourers. Place determined these differences. Whilst no interviewee was forthcoming about how de-industrialisation and the closure of mills and factories affected their household, the employment experiences of women in Oldham and Middlesbrough in the 1970s and 1980s coincided with the growing commodification of skills women regularly used.

In Oldham, every older interviewee and the mothers of second-generation interviewees were employed by exploitative corporations to sew clothes at home for a

menial wage, between the mid-1970s until the early 1990s. Homeworking jobs were often easy to secure and allowed women to earn a wage and take care of their families. The few opportunities for work in Oldham resulted in homeworking being one of the only ways British-Pakistani women could secure paid employment. Migrant women were regarded as a cheap, expendable workforce that could be underpaid and overworked. However, whilst the exploitative practices of corporations are necessary to consider, women's everyday experiences amounted to more than the hours they sewed. Interviewees shared how they navigated the dynamics of work and family life existing in the same space. Moreover, homeworkers found ways to resist their work conditions, particularly by partaking in local activist campaigns. These campaigns, which began in the late 1970s, were organised by white, middle-class women, with the objective of lobbying for legislation which protected homeworkers' rights and to educate homeworkers about their employee entitlements. By the 1990s, South Asian community workers played a critical role in building connections with South Asian homeworkers who were often inaccessible to white, middle-class homeworker campaigners. These overlooked aspects of women's experiences show that it is inadequate to see homeworkers simply as passive victims.

Women in Middlesbrough, on the other hand, set up their own businesses, creatively navigating the local economy to create products and services that met the demands of a growing Pakistani community. Older migrant women established businesses such as selling cloth for *salwar kameez*, seamstress work, growing and selling specialty vegetables and selling food. Self-employment meant that that they could earn an income and take care of their families. In other words, unpaid domestic labour had significant consequences on how women's paid work was structured, much like their white British counterparts. For some women in Middlesbrough, self-employment was a necessary

decision, given that women did not have access to textile work in the same way as their counterparts in Lancashire or West Yorkshire. Moreover, before and after de-industrialisation, Middlesbrough consistently had a low rate of women's employment compared to the national average. Flexible self-employment was an important form of work, particularly for single mothers who needed to earn an income despite having very few options for waged work.

These labour experiences challenged the perceptions of the British state, namely that Pakistani women were not economically and socially valuable, ideas which underpinned Pakistani women's experiences of dealing with immigration officials. Their status as working-class, ethnic minority women informed local and national policies regarding their settlement which, in turn, affected their ability to make home in a new place. Some immigration policies which specifically targeted South Asian women, such as virginity testing, highlighted how women were unwanted. Despite their experiences of institutionalised racism, women from Middlesbrough and Oldham had different memories about their everyday interactions with white neighbours and professionals. Women in Middlesbrough actively denied that they had ever faced racism, instead remembering their experiences with white community members who were instrumental in ensuring they coped with settling in a new place. In Oldham, on the other hand, some interviewees remembered racial violence. Archival material about 'race relations' in Oldham revealed that racism denied migrant residents the opportunity to secure well-paying jobs and adequate housing. However, British-South Asians resisted in varying ways, from large-scale protests against the National Front to everyday decisions such as choosing to work from home in order to stay safe.

Given that migrant women did not expect to spend most of their lives in Britain, they equally could not have expected the differences in how their children's lives would unfold growing up in Oldham and Middlesbrough. Compulsory education affected second-generation women's perceptions of what adulthood would look like for them, although generational differences in expectations about education, marriage and employment were often difficult for families to navigate. In terms of their educational experiences, migrant women and their children, who were entering the British education system after their migration, often learned together. For migrant women, their pursuit of adult education was motivated by the desire to be independent and self-sufficient, so that they could undertake tasks, such as sending a letter or getting the bus, without relying on their husbands. Non-English-speaking British-Pakistani women demonstrated that they were not disengaged from their places of settlement, since older migrant women started learning English before the implementation of legislation and, later in the period, capitalised on the accessibility of free, accredited classes in their area. Women's commitment to learning directly affected their children and resulted in intergenerational learning, which was collective, informal and happened outside the classroom.

However, despite the changing attitudes towards education, older migrant parents did not necessarily see compulsory education as a guarantee that their daughters would be socially and financially secure as adults. Instead, arranged marriage was still seen as a way girls would be taken care of as adults, since second-generation girls and women were not regarded as independent wage earners by their parents. This affected the aspirations of interviewees, as marriage effectively ended the prospects of staying in education or becoming professionally employed. This was despite British-Pakistani girls being amongst the highest achieving groups in education during the 1990s. Attitudes towards arranged

marriage did change over time and even between the eldest and youngest sibling marrying, although those who married wage-earning men as teenagers were disappointed about how their teenage years unfolded. Divorce amongst second-generation women grew, and this mirrored the national growth in divorce rates after the Second World War. Women were no longer ready to accept being unhappy in their marriages; single adulthood or lone parenthood necessitated a form of independence that parents did not prepare their children for.

Second-generation women who were born or grew up in Britain were the most likely group to get a higher education and professional work, often doing so after they married and had children. Some young migrant women, who were born in Pakistan, aspired to professional work but rarely saw this as a realistic goal. Age, therefore, was not a factor in determining whether an interviewee would pursue professional work, since the youngest women I interviewed (who were younger migrant women) were less likely to be in professional work compared to second-generation women who were often decades older. This is because compulsory education until the age of sixteen equipped second-generation British-Pakistani women with the qualifications to pursue training or higher education, as well as the confidence to recognise higher education and professional work as more realistic ambitions. Nonetheless, migrant women demonstrated a willingness to learn and become skilled so they could eventually realise their professional ambitions. For second-generation women who had higher education qualifications and were in professional work, their paths to waged employment were often complicated. Access to resources such as the Open University, polytechnical colleges, free adult education classes, increased provisions for free childcare and encouraging family members made it possible for them to become independent wage earners.

The reasons why British-Pakistani women decided to work were diverse. Some women became single mothers and had to earn a wage to support their families. Others wanted to establish businesses and services that supported their community's long-term settlement. Some interviewees did not work for an income or voluntarily because they were responsible for vulnerable family members who required full-time care. Where they migrated, the attitudes of family members towards waged work, changes in their local job market, their ability to access education classes and the communities they became part of all affected women's work choices.

This thesis, the first comprehensive study of British-Pakistani women in this period, has highlighted the breadth of British-Pakistani women's labour, their changing attitudes towards work and education and what they hoped for their children. Even under the most difficult of circumstances, migrant women found ways to incrementally improve their conditions through labour that supported their families and communities. Simplistic and generalised narratives about Pakistani life in Britain are inadequate in capturing the scope of women's experiences.

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