

Rishtas: Transnational Pakistani Marriages

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British Pakistani man, about to marry a woman from Pakistan he has not met:

It's in my *qismat* (fate) init? If it's going to work out, it's going to work out.

In-shā'llāh (God willing) it will.

Friend: He's a risk taker! He's a risk taker!

(Marrying a Stranger, Channel Four, 11/11/02)

The title page photograph shows a British groom and his Pakistani wife (with the groom's cousin on their right) at the function to celebrate the bride's arrival in the UK. The function took place in a school hall, and the couple is seated in front of a backdrop of a high-rise sky-line, partially obscured by a sign in Urdu that reads *Shādī Mubārak* (Wedding Congratulations).

Abstract

In the year 2000, over ten thousand Pakistani nationals obtained entry clearance to join spouses in the UK. In examining this phenomenon, this thesis joins recent scholarship in moving away from an ethnic minorities approach stressing the maintenance of community integrity vis-à-vis the White majority, to one focussing on membership of transnational communities. Attempts have been made to conceptualise differing transnationalisms, but there are limits to the extent that the complexity and diversity of transnational engagements can be captured by the broad theoretical brushstrokes of much writing in this field. This ethnographic exploration of the kinship connections that form the experiential basis of global and local relationships demonstrates the role of gender, age, origin, kinship, class, and life-course events in creating variation in individuals' engagement with the transnational.

In all cases, however, I argue for the utility of exploring the meanings of the indigenous concept of *rishta*, understood as 'match', 'proposal', or 'connection'. A focus on *rishta* as connection eliminates the contrast between strategic and emotional concerns evident in the literature on Pakistani marriage practices. Transnational marriages in particular highlight the various facets of a desirable *rishta*, by increasing the potential for connections both with much-missed family in other countries, and to opportunities, status and wealth. Such unions also, however, heighten the risks involved in arranging marriages. The literature on South Asian and transnational marriages has prioritised kinship obligations, and social or financial strategising. Drawing on the anthropology of emotion, this research emphasises risk reduction as a motivating factor in arranging marriages. Parental exegeses stress the need to protect daughters, conceptualised as vulnerable to mistreatment by in-laws. British Pakistani parents' arrangement of their children's marriages to trusted close kin raised in an Islamic society is shown to be one response to this risk.

The risks involved in transnational marriage vary. Parents of British Pakistani young women are often concerned that a Pakistani husband will use the marriage simply for economic migration, or will be refused a visa, leaving an effectively single daughter who is no longer a virgin. One strategy uncovered by this research is the practice of disaggregating the marriage ceremony, delaying consummation until after the husband has arrived in Britain. In contrast, there is no tradition of concern for the fate of a married son, who would normally bring a wife to live in his parental home. In transnational marriage, however, husbands and wives migrate in equal numbers, and migrant men may initially live with their in-laws, in a position analogous to the traditionally undesirable status of *ghar dāmād* (house

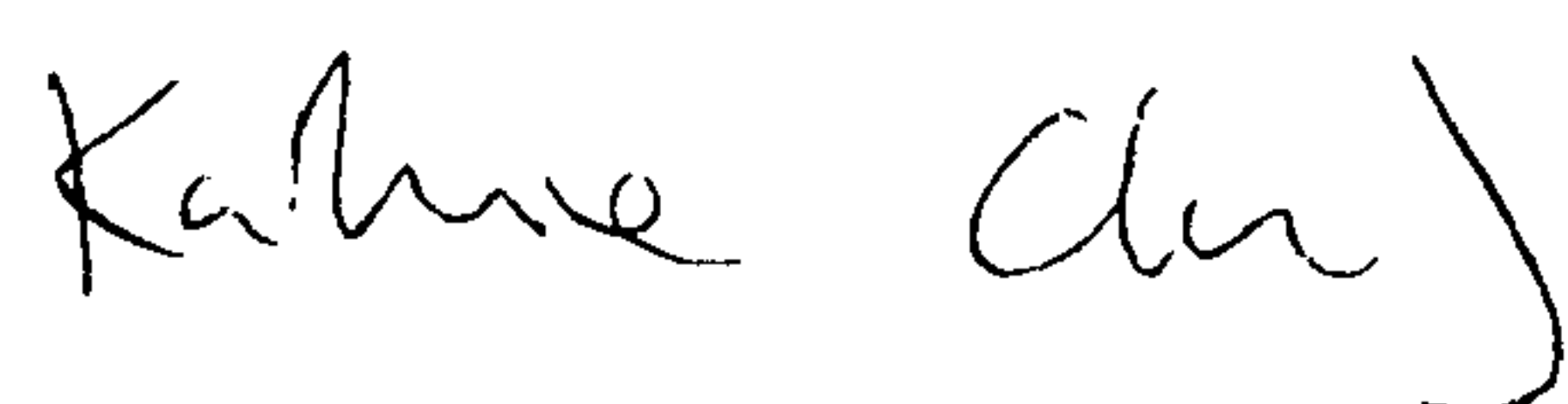
son-in-law). Combined with social and economic difficulties, this situation can prevent migrant husbands fulfilling Pakistani ideals of masculinity. For some, this is an extremely frustrating experience. Finally, if attempts to manage risk fail and divorce occurs, rifts can develop in kin groups as relatives take sides. Such instances often ride on challenges to the honour of individuals or families. The literature on this subject tends to downplay or even exclude the role of emotion in honour. Careful examination of case studies and reports of 'honour killings', however, show points of slippage between these categories, leading to a discussion of the gendering of emotion.

While it is an anthropological commonplace that marriage is primarily a relationship between groups, this thesis therefore reinstates the role of individual emotional relations in Pakistani marriages. These are not necessarily, however, the bonds between husband and wife, but those between parents and children, and migrants and the siblings they leave behind.

Declaration

This thesis has been composed by the candidate and is her own work. The work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification, except where specified.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katharine Charsley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Katharine Charsley

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Introduction

At the end of my fieldwork I left Bristol and returned to Scotland. A few weeks later, Razia, a Pakistani friend from Bristol, telephoned to say that she was missing me. In Urdu, she told me that she felt as if her younger sister had got married. This kind and touching statement encapsulates much about both the product of my research in the form of the ethnography of transnational Pakistani marriage presented in this thesis, and my engagement with the topic and with those who helped me reach these understandings.

Unless married into the same household, Pakistani sisters are normally separated by marriage as they leave the natal home they shared as children to live with their husbands and in-laws. Migration, a central theme of this thesis, is thus part of the conventional experience of Pakistani women, who may not migrate internationally as the subjects of this study have done, but migrate for marriage nevertheless. It is in this context that it is enough for Razia to mention a sister's marriage to evoke her leaving. Migration, this thesis will contend, is an emotional matter. Razia's simile, after all, presents the separation of sisters by marriage as an archetype of sadness at the loss of female friendship. In contemporary transnational marriages, however, comparable numbers of men and women migrate, and this work will explore this development in diasporic Pakistani kinship practices.

The emotional content of Razia's call also conjures up other compelling factors in this research. Marriage and migration are sensitive matters, not only in the political sense which I had anticipated, but also in terms of emotion. Whilst much of my fieldwork passed without drama or intensity, there were points at which the strength of the sentiments of those with whom I worked made a powerful impact on me. At least one interview ended in tears and hugs. Perhaps as a result of this property of my topic – its intimacy – my fieldwork led to some friendships with women which I valued and will continue to value highly. These reinforce my determination to give an account of these transnational marriages that does not sacrifice such women's feelings to a structural or strategic interpretation of marriage, but one which gives emotion a central place in both my evocation of experience and explanation of practice.

A later section of this Introduction will detail further how the theme of emotion weaves through the chapters of this thesis. First, however, I will introduce the subject of transnational Pakistani marriage and its scope, and the places where and people with whom this research was carried out.

Pakistani Migration

The state of Pakistan was itself born of massive migrations. Between what is called Independence from a Pakistani perspective, or Partition from the point of view of India and the closing of the border in 1951, 14 million people moved between the two countries.¹ While 6 million left Pakistan, the country gained 8 million migrants from India. These *muhājirs* formed nearly a quarter of the population by 1951, and constituted 46% of the inhabitants of Pakistan's nineteen largest cities (Burki 1988: 11-13).

Migration continues to play a significant role in modern Pakistan, both in the form of domestic rural to urban movement, and in the large numbers of Pakistani international labour migrants. Accurate statistics on Pakistani labour migration are impossible to obtain due to intermittent monitoring by the Pakistani government and the substantial volume of illegal movement, so official figures of, for example, 154,529 people 'proceeding abroad for employment' in 1993 are likely to be dramatic under-estimates. Studies suggest that these workers hail largely from lower-middle income and asset groups, and migrate in the hope of improving the socio-economic positions of their family and to finance domestic plans (Azam 1995, see also Ballard 1987). Remittances from such migrants make a substantial contribution to Pakistan's economy, and as such are the focus of much government concern and investigation – for example into the informal 'Hundi' money-sending schemes which by-pass state control (OPF n.d.).

Much of this migration is to the Middle East and Gulf states as a consequence of the oil 'boom' of the 1970s and subsequent development, which continues to provide a draw for skilled and unskilled workers from across the globe. In the 1960s and 70s, the building of the massive Mangla and Tarbela dams by multi-national companies in Pakistan provided opportunities for construction work. The dams were completed at about the same time as the oil boom, and many Pakistani workers moved to new jobs for the same companies in the Middle East (Azam 1995). Throughout this period, unskilled workers were encouraged to migrate, and in the financial year ending 1976, remittances from the Middle East formed nearly a third of Pakistan's total foreign exchange earnings. Simultaneously, however, there was concern over the numbers of trained physicians leaving Pakistan for the Middle East to the extent that in 1973, martial law regulations were introduced intended to block this 'brain drain' (Noman 1990).

¹ The difference in the term used for this event in India (Partition) and Pakistan (Independence), is reflected in the writing of scholars of the two nations.

Pakistani migration to the Middle East tends, however, to be temporary, cyclical, and overwhelmingly male, due to a combination of socio-cultural, economic and legal factors. Most migrants to the Middle East leave their wives and family in Pakistan. Those employed as labourers may live in cheap accommodation shared with other male workers which would be considered unsuitable for women and children (Azam 1995). Most are on temporary contracts. The unstable nature of such employment does not encourage permanent resettlement – the 1991 Gulf war meant the loss of substantial numbers of migrant worker's jobs and fashions in recruitment have seen, for example, South East Asian workers gain more of a market share (Ballard 1987). Moreover, some Middle Eastern states restrict family reunification and the right of migrant labourers to apply for citizenship.

Migration to countries outside the Gulf region has, however, resulted in permanent Pakistani settlement overseas and the development of a Pakistani diaspora. There are significant Pakistani presences in Scandinavia and West Germany (Ballard 1990), and North America is an increasingly popular destination. Many of these countries also have substantial populations from India and Bangladesh, and there has been considerable academic interest in recent years in these diasporic South Asian populations (e.g. Ballard 1994; Bates 2001; Clarke *et al* 1990; Petievich 1999; Van der Veer 1995). In Europe, the greatest numbers of South Asians are in the United Kingdom (Peach 1994: 48), and over a third of this British population are Pakistani.² Before moving on to outline Pakistani migration to Britain, it is worth stressing that these migrants and their children often retain networks of linkages between various sites in the diaspora, and may even relocate once more. Migration can be seen as part of an ongoing process of adjustment and employment of resources (Ballard 1990: 222) – as long ago as 1976, Patricia Jeffery documented instances of onward migration from Britain to Canada (1976: 67), and within the global Pakistani community migration continues, not only for work, but also for marriage.

A few cases from my fieldwork will illustrate these global networks and movement. The daughter of a friend in Pakistan, for example, is now engaged to an engineer in Saudi Arabia and will move there, at least temporarily, on her marriage. A few years ago, it seemed more likely that she would follow in the footsteps of her mother's sister and marry in Britain. This aunt's daughter, on the other hand, is to marry another relative from Pakistan who is studying in the UK, and the couple hope to migrate once more to live in America, or perhaps back in Pakistan. Another woman in Bristol told me that after her daughter is married to a

² In census measures of self-declared ethnicity, Pakistanis represent 1.3 percent of the UK population, Indians form 1.8%, and Bangladeshis 0.5% (2001 census online).

father's brother's son from Pakistan, the young man hopes to gain employment in computing in America, where they will join other close relatives. The bride's mother wonders whether she and her husband may eventually take advantage of the opportunity this could offer to move to US, where she considers that her relatives enjoy a better quality of life. Finally, one woman I met in Bristol grew up in Denmark and had come to the UK after marrying a British cousin in a ceremony held in Pakistan, where other close relatives still live.

Pakistanis in Britain

Migration to Britain from what is now Pakistan pre-dates the creation of the Pakistani State in 1947 (Anwar 1979; Shaw 1988), but increased in the post-war period as workers needed to rebuild the British economy were recruited from the Commonwealth and Pakistan. Pressure on land and unemployment contributed a 'push' to add to this economic 'pull', but at the beginning of the 1960s, factors in both countries created further spurs to migration. As in migration to the Middle East, dam construction in Pakistan played a significant role. During the 1960s, 100,000 Mirpuris were displaced by the construction of the Mangla dam.³ Some moved elsewhere within the country, whilst others used their compensation to start a new life in the UK. Policy changes in both Britain and Pakistan encouraged migration in the form of a 'beat the ban' rush preceding British immigration reforms in 1962 (Anwar 1979: 24): in 1961, Pakistan removed restrictions on emigration in order to promote the migration of 5000 people as compensation to villagers dispossessed by the Mangla dam; whilst in the UK, the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 was about to remove the right of Pakistanis to settle in Britain. Thereafter, access was restricted to those with 'vouchers' granted on the basis of employment in Britain, specific skills, or service in the Second World War, and to the dependants of those already living in Britain. This reinforced patterns of chain migration from certain regions of Pakistan to specific areas of the UK (Shaw 1988: 25-6). Prior experience of migration⁴ is mentioned by both Anwar (1979) and Shaw (1988) as a factor that facilitated later relocation to Britain.⁵ In Anwar's study of the Pakistani population of Rochdale, for example, 70% of heads of household surveyed were *muhājirs* (1979).

Most initial migrants came with the intention of earning money and returning to

³ Mirpur is a district of Azad (Free) Kashmir, one of the main areas of origin of Pakistani migrants to Britain – although this is a disputed territory in ongoing troubles between India and Pakistan.

⁴ Or 'the habit of movement' (Hitchcox in Brown and Foot 1994: 3).

⁵ Equally, a negative experience of resettlement in Pakistan may have precipitated migration.

Pakistan after a few years. The major areas of settlement in the UK – West Yorkshire and the West Midlands – reflect the industrial labour shortages that drew such workers to Britain. These male labour migrants left their wives and children in Pakistan and often lived in crowded accommodation shared with other Pakistani men. After the immigration reforms of the 60s, however, wives and families started to arrive from Pakistan (Shaw 1988), and over the years as children have been born and grown up here, the ‘myth of return’ (Anwar 1979) has tended to fade. Although some original migrants still harbour dreams of retirement ‘back home’, many more now consider Britain to be home, spawning new ‘hyphenated’ identities (Modood 1992) such as British-Asian or, for the purposes of this study, British Pakistani.

By the 2001 census, 747,285 people living in Great Britain gave Pakistani as their ethnic group (ONS 2003). Issues of enumeration and classification aside, the population is growing rapidly – ten years earlier the equivalent figure was 476,555. Most of this growth can be accounted for by children born in Britain. The Pakistani population is disproportionately young, and family sizes tend to be larger than for other ethnic groups – according to the PSI survey, 33% of Pakistani couples in Britain have four or more children, compared with only 4% of White couples (Modood *et al* 1997).⁶ However, migration also continues to make a substantial contribution to the growth of the British Pakistani population. In 2000, for example, 11,270 grants of entry for settlement in Britain (subject to a probationary period) were given to applicants from Pakistan (as well as 58,670 grants of entry clearance for temporary purposes). In the same year, 11,010 applications for settlement by Pakistani nationals were accepted, representing almost 10% of the total for the United Kingdom (Home Office 2001).⁷

Information about migration in the opposite direction is, however, more difficult to obtain (Azam 1995). The International Passenger Survey provides estimates of the number of people who state on arrival that they intend to stay in the country of destination for a year or more, but contacts a mere 0.2 to 5% of passengers, depending on season. Its figure of 900 people (mostly female and all Pakistan-born Pakistani citizens) migrating from Britain to Pakistan in 1998, is thus based on surveying only 3 actual passengers (O.N.S. 1998). Add to this doubts over the accuracy of reported length of stay, and these statistics appear of little real value. It seems safe to surmise, however, that the vast majority of migrants between the two countries travel from Pakistan to Britain rather than the other way round.

⁶ Only Bangladeshis have higher rates, with 42% of families having four or more children.

⁷ South Asians overall accounted for 20% of the total.

Of course Pakistan is not the only Commonwealth country to have answered the call for workers for the 'motherland' from the 1950s onwards, and migrants from the Caribbean and South Asia were later joined by 'twice migrant' East African Asians. All have by now become large and established ethnic minority communities in Britain and have long attracted academic attention. This is a field shared with and arguably dominated by sociologists, who have generally employed a race- or more recently community- relations framework (Bates 2001: 9). Consequently, much work has dealt with inequalities in various arenas (Rex 1997: 206) including health (Donnovan 1986; Nazroo 1997), housing (Charsley & Powell 1998; Smith 1989) and socio-economic position (Modood *et al* 1988), regarding ethnic minorities as a whole, and more specifically South Asian groups (Williams *et al* 1998). Among the ethnographic literature on ethnic minorities there are several studies of South Asian communities (e.g. Ballard 1994a; Clarke 1990a; Bhachu 1986) and specifically of Pakistanis: in Rochdale (Anwar 1979), Bristol (Jeffery 1976), Oxford (Shaw 1988, 2000a) and Manchester (Werbner 1990, 2002b). Much of the earlier anthropological research on South Asians in Britain demonstrates a Barthian focus on social institutions, ethnic identities and boundary maintenance (Gardner 1995: 6-7).

Another feature of the sociological antecedents is visible in much of this literature. The race-relations theorists' project of formulating stages of post-migration settlement (Clarke *et al* 1990b) is continued by Ballard (1990), Ballard and Gardner (n.d.), Jeffery (1976a) and Werbner (1990), in their focus on community formation, and migration as a process rather than a single event in time. My work shares this processual approach. Hence the present thesis examines marriage migration from the transnational negotiation of suitable matches, through to consequences of the decision to migrate. These may continue for years, or even generations.

Several of the anthropological works on Pakistanis in Britain have taken the form of community studies set in a single British town or city (Anwar 1979; Jeffery 1976a; Shaw 1988, 2000a; Werbner 1990, 2002b). Whilst fieldwork for this project was carried out in one British location, whose particular characteristics will be outlined below, in deciding also to carry out fieldwork in Pakistan, I was explicitly attempting to move away from the concept implicit in much sociological work on South Asians in Britain of an ethnic minority community encapsulated within the larger ethnic majority. In doing so, I followed in the footsteps of Jeffery (1976a) and Shaw (1988), who included stays in Pakistan in their research design for studies of Pakistani populations in Britain. I concur with Jeffery's criticism of a certain type of ethnocentrism in British writing on race relations. She writes 'the geographical base in Britain is assumed to be important, and there is little attempt to

take seriously the links which extend outside Britain to the sending country' (1976a: 3). Since the time of her writing, however, anthropologists have made progress in this area. My work follows the latest wave of this movement's interest in transnational social formations. As long ago as 1990, the term 'transcontinental families' was used of Indian Gujaratis (Kelly 1990), and more recent writers on diasporic South Asians have discussed issues from global political and religious formations (Werbner 2002b) to transnational rituals (Gardner 2002; Mand 2002). This trend will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter Two.

Despite these similarities with other writers on British South Asian and more particularly Pakistani populations, this thesis diverges in one significant manner from these works. In its focus and use of data, this work is emphatically a person-centred ethnography. Rather than devote great quantities of space to the documentation of Pakistani social structures and institutions in Britain, a project which has been undertaken with admirable results elsewhere (Shaw 1988; Werbner 1990), the main ethnographic chapters of this thesis present close and comparative examination of individuals' narratives, together with other commentaries, information and observation, to bring the experiential qualities of my informants' journeys through transnational marriages to the fore. Whilst this style of ethnography has not been developed in relation to ethnic minorities in Britain, this approach has been influential in the two ethnographic regions to which Pakistan itself has been argued to belong, South Asia⁸ and the Middle East,⁹ notably in the works of Abu-Lughod (1988), Jeffery & Jeffery (1996), and Raheja & Gold (1994). In importing this approach to the study of British Pakistanis, I intended to complement existing work in this field by contributing experiential detail of a kind inevitably subsumed in the (undoubtedly valuable) wider projects of comprehensive community ethnographies or large-scale sociological work concerned with inequalities.

Marriage Migration to Britain: Trends and Controversies

The bulk of Pakistani migration to Britain now consists of Pakistani husbands and wives coming to join spouses in the UK. In 2000, 4,720 husbands and fiancés and 5,560 wives and fiancées in Pakistan obtained entry clearance for this purpose. Spousal immigration on this kind of scale is a uniquely South Asian phenomenon, with Bangladesh and India also sending substantial numbers. However, by far the largest contribution is made

⁸ Witness the inclusion of Pakistani ethnographies in collected volumes on South Asia such as Böck & Rao (2000) and Mines & Lamb (2002).

⁹ Cf. Fardon 1990; Eickelman 1989; Gullick 1983.

by Pakistan, accounting for more such migrants than India and Bangladesh combined (Home Office 2001). Applications from the Indian subcontinent as a whole rose in the late 1990s due to re-applications following the abolition of the Primary Purpose Rule in 1997 (discussed later) before declining slightly, but applications from Pakistanis continue to rise.

No national figures are available on the proportions of British Pakistanis marrying abroad. Figures for Bradford in 1992-4 report that 57.6% of Pakistani marriages were to spouses from Pakistan, but a more recent study in Oxford found that 71% of marriages were with spouses from Pakistan, predominantly with relatives (Shaw 2001: 327), suggesting that the proportions of transnational marriages may have increased. Such direct comparison between Pakistani populations of the two cities is made problematic by their very different characteristics and origins (see Shaw 2001). Nevertheless, the suggestion of an increase is supported by the general drift of national figures. The total number of husbands and wives granted entry clearance has risen from 4390 in 1990 to 10280 in 2000. Of course the Pakistani population itself has almost doubled in a similar period, but most of that increase must be through the birth of children who will not yet be of marriageable age and so cannot contribute to the statistics on spousal immigration. Thus it follows that the overall proportion of transnational marriage must have risen. Although I was not able to determine equivalent numbers for Bristol's 4000-strong Pakistani population, my impression is that the majority of marriages of Bristolian Pakistanis are now being arranged in Pakistan rather than Britain. The practice has become the norm to such an extent that on hearing of a school class-fellow's engagement, one young woman informant immediately asked about the future husband's immigration and was surprised to hear that the fiancé was in fact from Bristol.

The sheer volume of spousal visa applications from Pakistan lead to a backlog which resulted in long waiting times for first interviews at the Islamabad High Commission at the end of the 1990s. In 1999 the waiting time to first interview for spouses was 9 ¾ months, and 11 months for fiancés (Home Office 1999). Karachi also offers visa processing services where times were much shorter at 3 months, but the majority of those hoping to come to Britain come from the Punjab or Azad Kashmir and so apply through Islamabad.¹⁰ In 1999 and 2000 the Islamabad High Commission ran a successful 'fast-track' system where the first few applicants on a particular day with adequate documentation and income in the UK would be seen and issued visas on the same day. By 2000, waiting times to first interview were down to 4 ¼ months for spouses and 5 ¼ for fiancés (Home Office 2001). This scheme

¹⁰ Lahore now has an office, but Karachi and Lahore are both closed at the time of writing due to security fears.

was very popular, and several of those I interviewed had benefited from it, whilst another family was very disappointed to discover that the 'fast-track' programme was over, as the daughter had planned to bring her new husband home with her when she returned from her wedding in Pakistan.

Transnational Pakistani marriages thus represent an important social trend, and make a significant contribution to overall numbers of migrants to Britain. It is not surprising, therefore, that they have recently attracted controversy and increased media and government attention. A focus on forced marriage came first, with the high-profile 'rescue' by the MP Mohammed Sarwar of two Glaswegian-Pakistani girls forced into marriage in Pakistan in 1996 (*Guardian* 15/01/1999). A number of legal cases involving South Asian women appeared in the British press, including that of Rukhsana Naz, murdered by her brother and mother after becoming pregnant by her lover whilst married to a man in Pakistan; and a couple who drugged and kidnapped their daughter in order to force her into marriage in Pakistan (Alibhai-Brown 1998a, b & c, 1999). The 'Anwar sisters', three British Pakistanis who escaped forced marriage, have been the subject of a BBC documentary, and Nareena, the eldest, now works with a Home Office Unit that has been established to deal with cases of forced marriage. The Home Office set up a working group on the issue, which published its report *A Choice by Right* in June 2000 (Home Office: 2000), and subsequently carried out a nationwide consultation with community representatives on new police guidelines for dealing with forced marriage.¹¹ Although the report takes pains to point out that many ethnic groups have been known to practise forced marriage, the issue is generally thought of as a Pakistani (and to some extent Bangladeshi) problem, as witnessed by the government's commissioning of a report on 'community perceptions' of forced marriage among these populations in Britain (Samad & Eades 2002). Moreover, at the Islamabad High Commission I was told that cases they have dealt with come disproportionately from certain cities in Britain, and certain regions of Pakistan.

Forced marriages, the Home Office report states, often involve spouses from overseas, with migration in either direction (Home Office 2000). The British vice-consul in Pakistan told me that dual nationality can inhibit their ability to deal with cases in which British Pakistanis are forced into marriage in Pakistan. These young people, mostly women but also some men, may hold British passports and be unaware that they are automatically

¹¹ Together with a Pakistani voluntary organisation, I was able to participate in the Bristol workshop of this process.

considered Pakistani nationals by the Pakistani state by virtue of having a Pakistani father.¹² International law ‘prevents a country from affording consular protection to one of its citizens ‘against’ another state whose nationality that person also possesses’ (Home Office 2000: 13), so I was told at the High Commission that if a ‘rescue’ is not carried out quickly, there is a danger that the family will have recourse to law to prevent the young person’s repatriation. Some of those who participated in the Working Group consultation, however, ‘felt that dual nationality had been used by British officials as an excuse for lack of action... and challenged the UK’s interpretation of the law’ (Home Office 2000: 13).

British Pakistanis forced into marriage may also be made to sponsor the immigration of a spouse, and may be too afraid of repercussions to tell consular officials that the marriage is against their will. Complaints to entry clearance officers of forced marriage cannot be completely confidential, given the applicant’s right to know the grounds for refusal of immigration. Foreign women coerced into marriage and brought to Britain who are subject to domestic violence often lack the language skills, information and resources to seek help, and may be deported under the ‘one year rule’ if their marriage ends (Home Office 2000). Some estimates put the numbers of forced marriages as high as one thousand per year (*Women’s Hour*, BBC Radio 4, 29/6/00).

On the other hand, Menski suggests that the ‘reluctant bride’ phenomenon has been exploited by immigration services anxious to stem the flow of South Asian immigrants, so that women’s hesitation in answering culturally-sensitive questions on whether they wanted to get married is interpreted as meaning that the marriage is forced, and therefore invalid (1999: 92). Until recently, British spousal immigration legislation included a requirement to prove that the ‘primary purpose’ of the marriage was not to obtain entry to Britain. The primary purpose rule (PPR) has been seen as specifically tailored to discourage continued South Asian immigration (Menski 1999).

This law seems to have affected male marriage migrants disproportionately. Most Pakistani women are economically inactive and conventionally do not remit money to relatives and so they are less likely to be considered to have an economic/labour motivation for moving to Britain.¹³ In addition, as virilocal residence is the norm, immigration officials may argue that a British bride should be joining her husband in Pakistan, rather than *vice*

¹² Children born of Pakistani mothers and foreign fathers since 2000 are also now automatically considered Pakistani citizens.

¹³ Indeed the family of a women is not normally supposed to accept anything from a daughter after she is married, although see Chapter One on covert remitting by women.

versa (Gardner & Shukur 1994: 156). Thus, in the mid 1990s, more applications for entry clearance by husbands and male fiancés from the subcontinent were being initially refused than initially granted, whilst more than twice as many wives and fiancées were given visas as were refused. Grants of entry clearance to Pakistani husbands and male fiancés rose from 2,000 in 1996, to 5,160 the year after the PPR was abolished. This is a much greater increase than for wives and fiancées (3,080 to 4,540). Numbers of male entry clearances dropped back the following year to 2,700, leading commentators to suggest that the high figures for 1998 simply represented re-applicants rejected under the PPR, but the upward trend continued in 2000 with 4,720 grants (Home Office 2001), so it is possible that British Pakistani marriage strategies are adjusting to the new opportunities for male marriage migration afforded by the revised system.

Although the PPR was abolished on 30th June 1997, people with legally valid marriages but limited means may still find spouses refused entry under financial rules requiring sufficient money and accommodation to avoid recourse to public funds.¹⁴ If a spouse is barred from entering Britain, Menski suggests seven options for the British party: move to the subcontinent; commute between the two countries; ‘immigration widowhood’; have a child; seek dissolution of the marriage; do nothing; or challenge the ruling. Legal challenges are expensive, and the failure of a marriage may involve social stigma, so Menski sees hope for those denied the right to live with their spouse in Britain only in a temporary move to another European Union country with fewer restrictions, or in having children to take advantage of a 1992 concession for marriages lasting more than five years involving British-born children.¹⁵ Although minute details of marriage are thus made a public issue, Menski writes, the implications of rejections are left for individuals to struggle with in private (1999).

Such public debates led me to believe that interactions with the immigration system might prove a prominent feature of my research. By the time I was carrying out my fieldwork in 2000 – 2002, however, the levels of rejections had substantially dropped. In the only recent case of a rejected spousal visa I encountered, the application was granted on appeal, and I gather from conversations with High Commission staff in Pakistan that this is a fairly common occurrence.¹⁶ In fact, they complain that since the abolition of the PPR it is difficult to make a strong case for the rejection of a spouse when they feel that the

¹⁴ For full UK immigration rules on the entry of spouses and fiancés see Appendix

¹⁵ This option is obviously only available when the wife is already resident in Britain.

application is, in the Home Office's terminology, 'bogus'. I was told that even if a British citizen reports in the visa interview that they have been forced to marry and requests that the spouse be refused entry to the UK, it can be difficult to ensure that this does indeed happen. An entry clearance officer (ECO) told me that they have to be extremely careful in such cases, as any hint that the applicant is rejected on primary purpose grounds will be used in case of appeal. Struggling for legal reasons for rejection, an ECO may refuse the application on the grounds of doubts over the intention of the couple to live together permanently as man and wife, but the visa is likely to be granted on appeal unless the young person is prepared to stand up in court and say that they do not want their spouse to be allowed into Britain. As pressure from or fear of family members was often the reason that they went through with the marriage in the first place, perhaps assuming that they would be able to scupper the immigration process later on, many are unwilling to take the step of public testimony.¹⁷ Thus, although I did collect some data on the methods employed to try to influence the outcomes of visa applications prior to the 1997 change, the current situation in which waiting times are at most a few months and most applications are successful, means that interactions with the immigration system are not of such concern to my informants, and therefore less central to my thesis than I had anticipated.

The Immigration White Paper

Ethnic relations and immigration have been the subject of repeated public debate in recent years concerning the increasing numbers of asylum seekers, and following the White-Asian riots in the North of England in the summer of 2001, the attack by Muslim hijackers on the World Trade Centre in New York on September 11th 2001 and the subsequent discovery of several British Muslims with apparent links to Al Qaeda. With the exception of the well received *Islam UK* season on Channel Four, media coverage of Britain's South Asian, and in particular Muslim, populations over the past few years has thus appeared to many of my informants to be overwhelmingly negative.

It was in this context that the government's White Paper on immigration, *Secure Borders, Safe Haven* (Home Office 2002) was published, proposing major changes to the immigration and asylum procedures, including a short section on spousal immigration reforms. In the intense media coverage that accompanied its release, it was notable that the

¹⁶ Around a quarter of rejections of spouses from the sub-continent in 2000 seem to have been granted on appeal (Home Office 2001).

¹⁷ Consul officials also said that they thought many did not think through all the implications of agreeing to an unwanted marriage, and in particular that they would be expected to consummate the marriage.

matter of transnational marriage was the subject of particular controversy. One section over which much ink has been spilt is David Blunkett's statement that:

As time goes on, we expect the number of arranged marriages between UK children and those living abroad to decline. Instead, parents will seek to choose a suitable partner for their children from among their own communities in this country (Home Office 2000: 99).

One reason why (largely Pakistani) community representatives reacted with such hostility to this suggestion were the sheer numbers involved in transnational marriages. Marriage represents the main route of immigration from Pakistan to the UK, and the fact that the majority of British Pakistanis get married in Pakistan means that Blunkett's comments referred to something which is part of the experience of almost all Pakistani families in the country. Moreover, he was speaking on a highly emotive issue, reaching to the heart of issues of cultural reproduction, links with distant kin and country, and relationships between the generations.

Controversy over the immigration White Paper also ignited an argument that raged in the pages of *Anthropology Today*, which brought several of the issues discussed above into academic focus. Pnina Werbner's 2002 editorial criticises Blunkett for lumping together all the 'problems' associated with Asian and Muslim immigrants, from riots and lack of English to forced marriage, thereby racialising the whole community. She accuses the Home Secretary of failing to address the 'real problems of youth, masculinity, deprivation, racism, police tension and crime in Northern British cities' (2002c: 3). However, she also comments on the increase in forced marriage and 'suspected bogus marriages' after the abolition of the PPR (700 in the first year according to Home Office figures), echoing the concerns of the ECOs mentioned above.

Often too, incoming spouses suffer from loneliness and exploitation. Such violent and corrupt practices cause immense suffering to young British Asians. Bogus marriages are ones in which men from South Asia trick local Asian families into allowing them to marry their daughters, only to divorce them immediately they acquire British citizenship so that they can bring their real wives and children to Britain... Blunkett has rightly been criticised for the plethora of stereotypes he has invoked in the name of a need to open a dialogue with and within the British Asian community. There is little doubt that many marriages to spouses from the subcontinent are carefully planned and wanted by young people themselves. But it is also conceivable that Mr Blunkett's radical critique of inter-continental marriage may help young British Asians, especially young Asian women, in their struggles to resist family pressure to marry quite unsuitable spouses from South Asian, just because they are relatives or members of the same caste. It is probably these young people who have suffered most from the liberalisation of the marriage migration laws (2002c: 3-4).

These comments provoked outrage. In the following issue, Nancy Lindisfarne criticised Werbner for uncritically reproducing the Home Office line and statistics and ignoring the government's 'two-facedness' on immigration. Perhaps unfairly, she seems to accuse Werbner of siding with the 'system' rather than being an advocate for the powerless: 'As a rule of thumb, liberal confusion supports those who are powerful. Clarity, and good anthropology, comes from siding with those who are weakest and most vulnerable in any situation' (2002: 20).

Most interestingly, however, Werner Menski attacks the ethnographic basis for Werbner's comments:

As a lawyer, I see such terrible disasters too, but I come across many more horrible cases of British Asian 'immigration widows' suffering state-induced human rights violations because their husbands are not allowed to join them from South Asia on certain technical legal grounds advanced by Blunkett's officials. This happens only to Asian couples, which should motivate anthropologists to help lawyers research such state-induced separations. I do not see such commitment. The Home Office will not talk about such cases and instead peddles the forced marriage issue. Werbner, evidently impressed with this, mentions only those Asians who allegedly suffer from Labour's 'liberality'. But the 'primary purpose rule' was only formally abolished, its restrictive principles are still in place and hit many Asian families by teaching them to marry in the UK instead of abroad (2002: 20).

As outlined above, the issue of spousal visa rejections did not emerge strongly from my fieldwork, although I have heard of women who have conceived children on visits to Pakistan while their husband's visa applications are refused, and I do not doubt that among the several hundred rejections that still occur every year, many will indeed cause hardship and distress. However, legal anthropology has been accused of being a pathologising discipline, dealing in the main not with the smooth functioning of laws, but with matters that go wrong and so require legal intervention.¹⁸ As a lawyer, it is not surprising that Menski 'comes across' more cases of 'immigration widowhood'. Most of Werbner's 'bogus' or forced marriages on the other hand will not come to court, or at least not in an obvious fashion, but nevertheless can cause profound suffering, as cases in later chapters will demonstrate.¹⁹

¹⁸ My thanks to Dr Neil Thin for this thought-provoking comment, to which I will return in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

¹⁹ They may, for instance appear as divorce disputes – see Shah-Kazemi 2001 on the difficulties faced by some Muslim women in obtaining a religious divorce. They are also, it will be suggested, more complex than the stereotype presented in Werbner's editorial.

Neither type of misfortune should be dismissed, and this argument in fact reflects disagreement and ambiguity amongst the Pakistani community in Bristol over the White Paper, and spousal immigration in general. Young women with whom I worked are aware of the difficulties that can be caused both by the rejection of a husband's visa, and the dangers of dishonest men using marriage to obtain entry to the UK, or 'marrying a passport' as I have heard it put. Several young women suggested that the solution might be to lengthen the probationary period for immigrant spouses.²⁰ To conclude this review of controversy surrounding marriage immigration, an excerpt from an interview with Jamilah, a young British Pakistani woman married to a Pakistani national, sums up these ambiguities:

Your permanent stay shouldn't be given in one year, it's too quickly. You've got to remember these people don't know each other. First it's hard enough putting people in a house together that already knew each other but we've got two steps in one if you know what I mean, so I think it should be a five year period at least... We've had this really bad experience in the family... and it wasn't fair at all. I think it all comes down to how easy it is. I know we pester [the authorities] to say we want to bring our husbands over, I know it's our fault as well partly, but you should have checks on it again and that the permanent stay be delayed – maybe not delay them coming over – but [make sure] that they are suitable. Half the people you've got coming here... have got nothing to do with us [i.e. their British wives] any more. They've all left – maybe gone back to Pakistan and married someone they really wanted to. It's all using – lots of it is.²¹

The Bristol Community

Having thus outlined the contexts of migratory flows and political controversy in which this project took place, the remainder of the chapter will describe the physical and social setting of the research in the city of Bristol, the methods employed, and outline the main themes that emerged from this work.

Bristol is a city in the South West of England of just over 380,000 people. The 2001 census gives population figures for self-ascribed ethnicity of 5585 Black Caribbeans, 4595 Indians and 4050 Pakistanis in Bristol, the latter accounting for 1.06% of the inhabitants of the city. This section will detail some of the social distinctions that exist within this population.

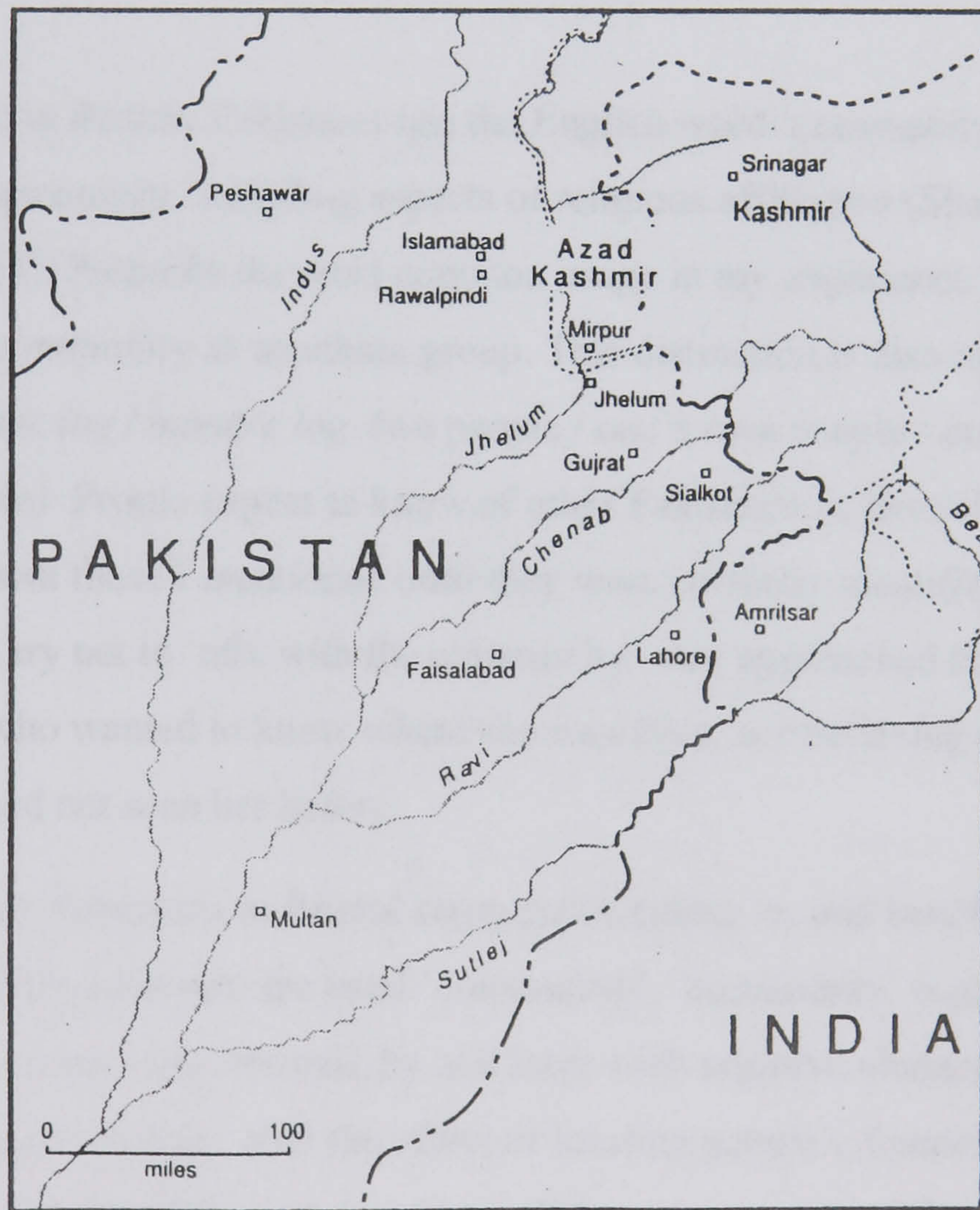
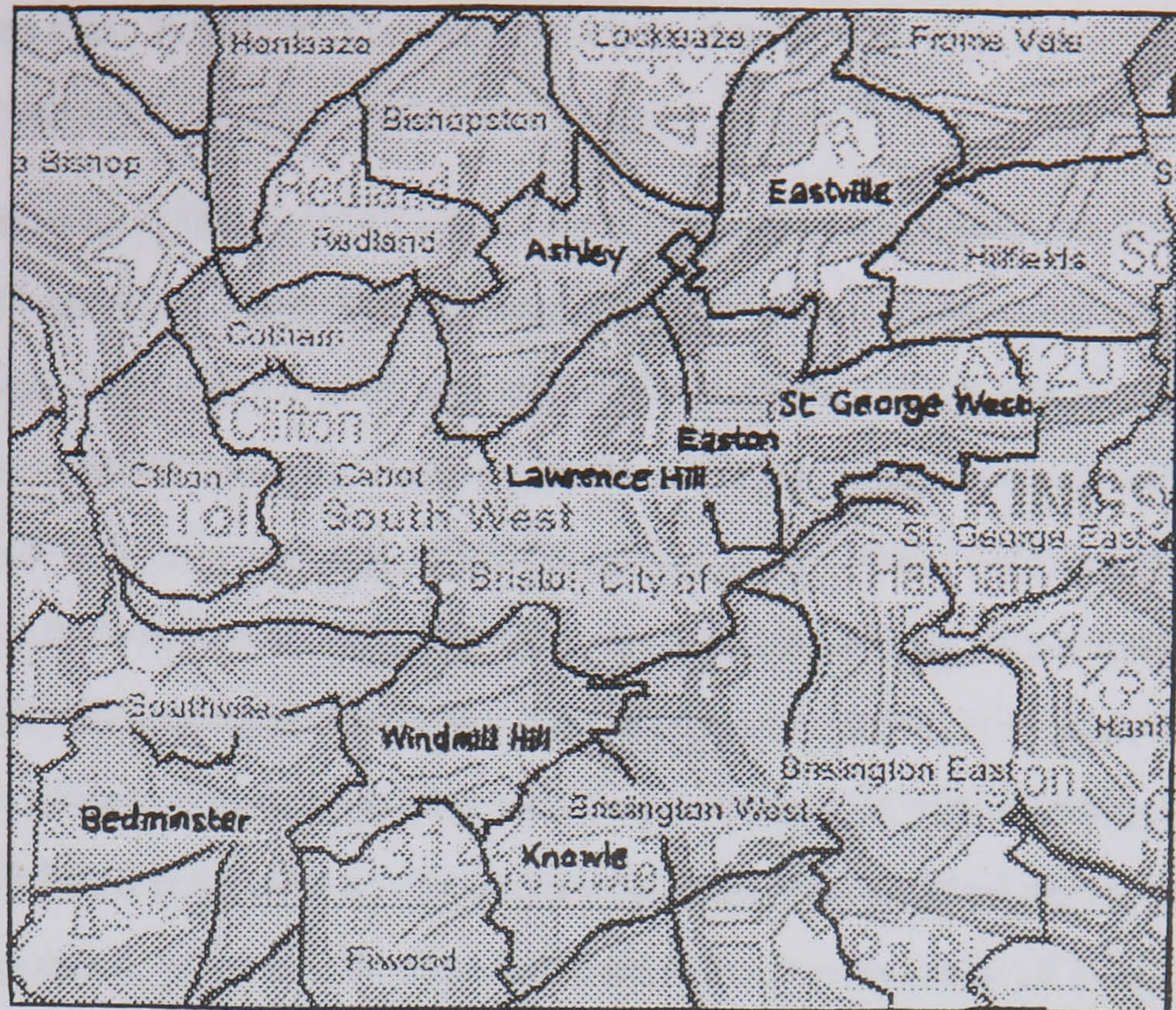
²⁰ As I write, I have just heard that the probationary period is to be lengthened to two years. There are concerns, however, that this could weaken the position of, for example, immigrant wives subject to domestic violence who could face the choice of either staying with an abusive partner or being deported. Although the government currently makes concessions for applications from women in this position, such women may not be aware of their rights.

²¹ In common British slang 'using' in such contexts refers to someone exploiting a relationship for underhand reasons.

Bristolians tend to have a clear conceptual map of ethnic minority residential concentration in the city, with St Pauls near the city centre thought of as the 'Black' area, and Easton, a little further east, talked of as the main 'Asian' area. Ethnic minority households can of course be found in most areas of the town including the most affluent, and many Pakistanis live in St Pauls, and Afro-Caribbeans in Easton. Indeed, Patricia Jeffery reports that the majority of initial Pakistani migrants to the city in the 1950s and 1960s settled in St Pauls, attracted like those from the Caribbean and the Irish before them by the cheap but dilapidated housing in this depopulated inner-city area. By the time of her research in the early 1970s, some had moved north to Montpelier, east to Easton, or south of the river to Totterdown and Bedminster (1976a).

There is, however, some truth to the simplistic model of an Asian area. Easton has become a centre for Muslim and South Asian services, with food and cloth shops, mosques and community centres, and has a large Pakistani population. To give a rough idea of the ethnic geography of the city, Easton can be thought of as the centre of a wedge of East Bristol in which Pakistanis are concentrated, from the tip in St Pauls, expanding through Easton, Barton Hill, and St George's and out to Eastville and Fishponds. To a certain extent this outward movement also corresponds to affluence, as St Paul's, Easton and Barton Hill are areas of deprivation, smaller housing and social problems, with larger properties and more leafy areas found in Eastville and Fishponds. A second, smaller concentration is found in the south of the city in Totterdown, Bedminster and Windmill Hill. Again, this area has a mosque, but fewer Asian shops, and again some families are also living in generally more expensive properties a little further out in Knowle. Social networks tend to be more dense within these areas than between them, and Easton and Totterdown also feature as centres in Bristol Pakistanis' own conceptualisation of the local community. Azra, for example, told me that she was unusual in knowing both the Easton and the Totterdown 'posse', as her family had originally lived in the south of the city before moving to Easton.

This pattern of residential concentration is not restricted to Bristol. The PSI survey found that out of all minority ethnic groups, the Pakistanis sampled were most likely to live in wards with a high density of residents of their own ethnic group (25% or more), and were also most likely to express a preference to reside in an area with a greater proportion of their own ethnic group than others (51%). Although the majority are in owner-occupied accommodation, Pakistani homes are often of poor standard, and feature levels of overcrowding second only to Bangladeshis. Assessing these figures against household size and income, the authors of the PSI survey concluded that overcrowding was a result of the lack of housing appropriate for larger families. They also note that levels of overcrowding



Map 1 (top) Ward map of Bristol. Ward boundaries do not correspond exactly to the areas people talk of in Bristol. St Pauls and Montpelier form the lower half of Ashley ward. Barton Hill is in Lawrence Hill. Fishponds is the east of Eastville ward, and Totterdown is in Windmill Hill. This map is Crown Copyright.

Map 2 (bottom) Map of the Pakistani Punjab and Azad Kashmir.

and poor quality housing have decreased over the years since initial settlement (Modood *et al* 1997). Migration may, however, have played a part in perpetuating these conditions through a migrant ethos of saving by reducing living expenses.²²

Several families in Bristol with whose housing history I am familiar moved from the ethnic 'centres' of Easton or Totterdown to larger properties in the more desirable areas further out along these corridors, but others who could perhaps afford to move prefer to stay close to the facilities that an area like Easton provides. This provides a further explanatory factor for high levels of over-crowding, as the housing stock in these areas tends to consist of two or at most three bedroomed terraced housing, so choosing to stay in an Asian area can entail living in relatively cramped conditions. One woman in Easton, for example, told me that she could find a larger house in another area to accommodate a household consisting of herself, her three children (two now adult) and the husband and child of one of the daughters. She did not want to move, however, as she would miss the convenience of being able to take her son to the Quranic classes in the mosque after school, shop locally, visit friends, and walk to work.

As elsewhere in Britain, Pakistanis use the English word 'community' frequently and to mean various groupings, including aspects of religious affiliation (Shaw 2000a: 10; Werbner 2002b: 29-31). Probably the most common usage in my experience in Bristol is to denote the Pakistani community as an ethnic group. This distinction is also made in Urdu as between *ham log* / *apne log* / *hamāre log* (we people / one's own people / our people) and *gore log* (White people). People expect to know of other Pakistanis in Bristol – I was frequently quizzed about those I mentioned until they were correctly identified. A young woman whose family try not to 'mix with the community' was approached at a wedding by other young women who wanted to know where she was from, not believing she could be from Bristol as they had not seen her before.

Although many Pakistanis in Bristol enjoy participating in, and benefit from, the multiple social ties which constitute the local 'community', 'community' is at the same time largely talked about as something external, by and large with negative characteristics: scrutinising, gossiping and critical, with the effect of limiting people's freedom of action through worry over what the community would say.²³ It is seen as essentially conservative –

²² See Charsley & Powell 1998 for a more detailed discussion of ethnicity and housing. New research is also planned by Bristol University on the motivating factors behind ethnic residential concentration.

²³ In the context of the ethnography of an English town, Edwards and Strathern note that although locals recognise the negative side of community, this aspect is often missing in academic commentary (2000: 151).

frowning on such things as divorce or new styles of dress or marriage party, and jealous of individual families' achievements. So one informant said she would not like to do any kind of work which brought her into too much contact with the community, whilst a community worker said she tends not to visit any of the clients' homes for fear of causing jealousy and conflict. Another woman lives in an area outside the main concentration of Asian households to avoid scrutiny from the community, and a last did not divorce her violent husband for ten years until her parents had died, for fear of the effect on their name in the community. Being involved with the community by living in the ethnic centres or running important 'ethnic' services can also increase social obligations in terms of reciprocating invitations to family weddings, and *salāmī* money gifts. A wedding with, I was told, nine hundred guests ('and that's without the Mirpuris') was in a family where the mother was involved in community groups, while the father had run a *ḥalāl* meat shop and so came into frequent contact with even more Pakistanis.

Community may refer to the whole Pakistani population of the city – the Bristol community as opposed to those of other cities – or sometimes only to that of Totterdown or Easton. As such, it sits happily along side another flexible term, *barādarī* (patrilineage or kin group), which will be discussed in a later chapter. Among anthropologists, of course, the idea of community as a social reality has been subject to criticism, and ways in which community is imagined or symbolised have been explored (Anderson 1983; Cohen 1985). In common with many writers on South Asians in Britain, however, I will make use of the term throughout this thesis to reflect its indigenous usage and, in keeping with my informants' flexible approach to the concept, will expand it to speak of the transnational Pakistani community. In doing so, however, I do not wish to imply acceptance of the much criticised implications of the concept, such as homogeneity or boundedness (Anthias 1998). Indeed I would argue that my informants are themselves aware that within the Bristol Pakistani community there is great heterogeneity, and that any boundaries are inevitably artificial, as their own social and kinship networks do not map onto this imagined unit. Community, both for them and this project, serves as a convenient shorthand to facilitate communication in a complex social reality, at the same time as it reflects and creates a cognitive schema for mapping and dividing the social world.

In addition to current residence within Bristol, place of origin in Pakistan also plays a role in Bristol Pakistanis' self- and mutual identification. As Alison Shaw notes, data on area of origin is hard to come by as it is seldom mentioned in public records. Evidence from Birmingham and Bradford, however, suggests four main regions of origin for Pakistanis in

Britain: Mirpur district in Azad Kashmir; Attock district; an area of Peshawar; and some Punjabi villages in Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Gujrat and Faisalabad districts. The presence of these groups varies in different British cities. Some of those with the largest Pakistani populations in Britain such as Bradford and Birmingham are predominantly Mirpuri (Shaw 2000a: 15-16). In Bristol, the two main groups are Mirpuri and Punjabi (Jeffery 1976a; Shaw 2000a). The Punjabis include some from cities such as Rawalpindi and Lahore (Jeffery 1976a).

Two final inter-related social distinctions stem from this variation in origin: the rural-urban divide, and that between Mirpuris and non-Mirpuris. As Shaw points out, almost all Pakistanis in Britain are city-dwellers now, but the connotations of being from a city or a village still underlie local prejudice, with city dwellers thought to be superior and villagers denigrated as ‘uneducated, ill mannered, crude and short tempered’. Whilst Shaw reports urban-origin Pakistanis in Oxford distancing themselves from other Pakistanis through negative evaluations of villagers as *jangli* (wild, uncultivated – from the same root as jungle) (2000a: 20), amongst my informants in Bristol, the equivalent derogatory term is *pindu*, a Punjabi word literally meaning from the village (*pind*), with all of the preceding connotations. With respect to marriage, villagers were described to me as more inclined to be strict about close kin marriage and marriage within the *zāt* (caste), and to have higher levels of transnational marriage. This thesis, however, provides plenty of evidence for these practices among ‘urban’ Punjabis.

For city-origin Pakistanis, there is an overlap in the prejudices against villagers and Mirpuris. Mirpuris are often described as *pindu*, in addition to the specific derogatory term ‘M.P.s’ which I frequently heard young people use to refer to people of Mirpuri descent. One woman whose family is from a town near Rawalpindi compared the English North-South divide with that between Punjabis and Mirpuris. Mirpur is like the Yorkshire of Pakistan, she said, so Mirpuris from places like Bradford are doubly backward, a statement which humorously combines Southern English and Punjabi prejudices. There is some blurring of the geographical boundaries in this geography of stereotypes – I have heard of the villages around Gujrat in Eastern Punjab being lumped in with Mirpuris as being ‘all the same kind of people’. Although the social divide between Mirpuris and non-Mirpuris is porous, and many of the private judgements of others as ‘backward’ do not necessarily preclude friendships between the two categories, marriage can be a different case. One woman I interviewed had a love marriage vetoed by her family on the grounds that the boy was a Mirpuri:

Because when my father came to the country he came across some real like – what can I say – the worst you can think of. Like poo-ing in the garden and things like that... We're from the city, we just can't accept them.

She eventually married this man against her family's wishes, and sees her Mirpuri in-laws as 'innocent', moderating the damning description above. This (often submerged) ambivalence is reflected in other commentaries by my British Pakistani informants on villagers as 'simple', an attribute which is valued, particularly in women.²⁴ The term *desī* provides a further positive evaluation of the rural, linking authenticity and autochthony with the provinces rather than the urban centres in its meaning: 'of or belonging to a country, native, indigenous; homemade; local; provincial', or as a noun: 'native of a country' (Platts 2000 [1884]). Free-range eggs, associated with the village and valued over battery versions are described as *desī anḍe*, and the term *desī* is used in celebration of South Asian identity in some of the new British Asian popular music.²⁵

Urban families, on the other hand, may be viewed as overly 'modern' by those they themselves deride as *pindu*. This morally dubious modernity is evinced by women working, going about without covering their heads, and 'doing fashion'. A community worker from Rawalpindi told me that her Mirpuri clients are always surprised that she prays and considers religion important as they assume that she has 'forgotten Allah' because she doesn't wear the *hijāb*, and has a short hairstyle. The woman married to a Mirpuri above explained that it had taken her a while to convince her in-laws to like her:

These *pindus* (laughs)... they don't like to give girls out of the family or take girls out of the family [in marriage]. And my husband was the first person to bring me, an outsider. And the respect I get from them now! They think they must have been mad not to consider girls like us... They think we're big headed and really full of ourselves, no manners, and I think I've proved them wrong... And because we're modern and I don't wear a *hijāb* – they're all into *hijābs* and things. They have this thing that we're modern and we're... probably bad basically because outgoing girls for them are bad.

A further shorthand which will be used throughout the thesis, but which necessitates examination and qualification is the analytical distinction between Pakistanis and British Pakistanis. The complicated and ongoing history of migration from Pakistan to Britain often muddles these neat divisions. How, for example should one label Bushra, a woman in her

²⁴ They use the English word. See Chapter Four for a lengthier discussion of the simple-modern contrast.

²⁵ Cf. Kurin's Pakistani informants' dual contrasts between city and village-dwellers. The former are seen as both noble and sophisticated, but also as cunning plotters, whilst the latter are wild savages, but straightforward and innocent (1988). Also See Gardner on the consumption of *deshi* produce by overseas Bangladeshis as a 'social statement of the spirituality of the *desh*' (1995: 120).

forties who was born in Pakistan but came to Britain as a young child and was schooled here? Or Humera, who came when she was a little older, and might on the surface seem more 'Pakistani' as she was not schooled here and is still self-conscious about her English even decades later. Nevertheless, when her husband arrived from Pakistan, she perceived strong cultural differences and her seeming English-ness proved difficult for her husband to accept. Or how about Tahir, born in London but brought up in Pakistan, now returned to live in Britain as the husband of a cousin who was born and spent her whole life in Bristol? Another of this couple's relatives migrated to Britain and had a child with a White British woman. When the marriage broke down he took the young child back to Pakistan where she was brought up and lived until she married a Pakistani national and her dual citizenship enabled them to settle in the UK. The categories of Pakistani and British Pakistani belie this complexity, to the point of being meaningless in some cases. In this thesis I will attempt to reserve the description 'British Pakistani' for people born and brought up in Britain, and 'Pakistani' for those whose lives (up until migration) were spent in Pakistan. Occasionally, however, when considering migration and transnational marriage they will be used as descriptors for those who have spent most of their lives in the relevant nation, or to signify that the greatest part of the individual's socialisation has taken place in that country, for the purposes of discussing what my informants call 'culture clash'.

A similar difficulty is encountered when writing of 'generation'. The literature on ethnic minorities is peppered with references to the 'first', 'second' or 'third generation' (e.g. Narayan 2002). In other words, those who migrated to the country, their British-born children and grandchildren. Given that Pakistani migration to Britain has continued across the years since the initial migrants arrived, however, these distinctions are artificial (cf Gardner & Shukur 1994). Particularly with transnational marriage increasing over the past few years, many households contain newly arrived migrant members. If they have married a 'second generation' British-born Pakistani, will their children be second-generation as the offspring of an immigrant, or third-generation by virtue of their other parent being born in Britain? Even ignoring transnational marriage, similar difficulties would be encountered within the 'settled' UK Pakistani population, given that initial immigrants arrived at different times, so that in a couple of the same age, one might be second and one third generation. In contrast to the other two problematic categories outlined above, however, I do not find the generation concept to be either descriptively or analytically helpful in the study of transnational marriages, and so will not employ it in this thesis.

Themes and Chapters

As I outlined at the start of this chapter, the theme of emotion is a thread that runs throughout the chapters of this thesis. The cross cultural comparison of emotion is a project dating back several decades – for instance in Geertz’ exploration of Balinese notions of shame (1973: 401-2) or Briggs’ *Never in Anger* (1970). Interest in the anthropology of emotion has grown in recent decades, but without producing disciplinary consensus, so that a number of different approaches to the subject have developed. Much debate has surrounded the status and origins of emotions themselves: whether they are created by culture or innate; universal or cross-culturally variable (see Lutz & White 1986). Authors disagree about the site of emotion, which has, for example, been seen as embodied, or grounded in language (Lutz & Abu-Lughod 1990; Lyon 1995). In this thesis I do not address the problem of the essence or origin of emotion, nor do I presume that the emotions named here in English are experienced by these people as precisely the same feelings that I or the reader would describe in these terms. The information on emotion I present stems from people’s own descriptions of their and others’ feelings and reactions. In this I follow Lutz and White’s (1986) suggestion of a shift from a focus on whether emotion is the ‘same’ cross-culturally to an exploration of how people make sense of life’s events.

My purposes in incorporating emotion into my ethnography are multiple. First, as several authors have noted, emotion can give greater depth to anthropological descriptions, which ‘allows us to explore the phenomenological, experiential dimensions of these phenomena more fully than we would otherwise be able to do’ (Maschio 1998: 97). Emotion also ‘reanimate[s] the sometimes robotic image of humans which social science has purveyed’. Furthermore, ‘[i]ncorporating emotion into ethnography will entail presenting a fuller view of *what is at stake* for people in everyday life’ (Lutz & White 1986: 431).

This last point brings to the fore a further benefit to add to those of the enhanced depth, aesthetic and communicative power of ethnography – its utility in improving the accuracy of our interpretations of people’s motivations for decisions or actions:

To know what is considered dangerous, a thing worth having, or a loss is crucial for understanding the motivational basis for all aspects of participation in social life (Lutz & White 1986: 428).

In other words, emotions, rather than being peripheral to social action and change, are crucial to understanding these processes. One recent contributor to the sociology of emotion, Barbalet (1998, 2002), has suggested that a social group’s ‘emotional climate’ can

lead directly to large-scale social and institutional change.²⁶ His examples include fear of unemployment leading to the establishment of the trade union movements, or British ‘elites’ during the First World War whose fear of labour movements lead to the incorporation of unions into political decision making in an attempt to contain the danger. Whilst sections of Barbalet’s writings suffer from a lack of recognition of cultural variation, I am sympathetic to the thrust of the argument: that emotion must be incorporated into our understandings of the processes of social behaviour. Later chapters of this thesis will demonstrate the centrality of emotion not only in individual choices and reactions, but cumulatively as an explanatory factor in wider trends of transnational marriage.

Finally, emotion offers a way into exploring understandings of relatedness and the content and experience of kinship, a project central to this exploration of transnational Pakistani marriage. Throughout the thesis the emotional aspects of key concepts concerning Pakistani kin relations, such as *rishta* (proposal/relationship) and *‘izzat* (honour), are explored. In this respect, although our ethnographies differ markedly in other ways, I follow in the footsteps of Trawick’s influential exploration of Tamil notions of love and kinship (1990). In the South Asian context, linkages between affective ties and relatedness have also been explored by Lambert in Rajasthan (2000a & b), using a processual approach integrating indigenous ideas on substance shared by Carsten’s Malaysian ethnography (1997). In a paper that contrasts with this predominant focus on affection, Peter Parkes has argued that anger too constitutes and reaffirms kinship in Kalasha divination rituals (2000). Once again, I would ally my study to ethnographies by Abu-Lughod (1988), Jeffery and Jeffery (1996) and Raheja and Gold (1994) cited earlier as influencing the focus and presentation of my research. Where Abu-Lughod and Raheja and Gold examine the more formal formats of poetry, story telling and songs for their emotional discourses on relationships,²⁷ however, this thesis is perhaps closer to the Patricia and Roger Jeffery’s work on life histories and personal narratives.

Emotion interweaves with several other themes, including globalisation, transnationalism, migration, risk, gender and, of course, marriage and kinship. To set the scene in Chapter One, I present an account of a wedding that took place in Pakistan between

²⁶ Sociology’s interest in emotion is more recent than that of anthropology. With its historical focus on ‘rustic populations’, Barbalet suggests, anthropology ‘was not embarrassed to find emotion’ (1998: 19). In sociology, although Marx, Weber and Durkheim’s interest in the explanatory value of emotion have been documented, the topic was until recently seen as peripheral to sociological study, ‘lurking in the shadows or banished to the margins of sociological thought and practice’ (Bedelow & Williams 1998: xvii).

²⁷ See also Grima (2002) on the role of sadness in self-representation through Paktun women’s story-telling.

a British Pakistani woman and a Pakistani national who later came to join her in Bristol. This is followed in Chapter Two by a review of the literature on globalisation and transnationalism in relation to such inter-continental marriages. The title of this thesis, *Rishtas*, is a reference to these global processes. By pluralising *rishta* in the English fashion (the Urdu plural is *rishte*), I hope to evoke some of the transformations that occur as people negotiate multiple sites, languages and relationships. In an attempt to get beyond the almost inevitable homogeneity produced by theory from a great height, the chapter includes a 'bottom up' exploration of British Pakistanis' varying engagements with the transnational. These difference, I argue, stem from factors including gender and lifecourse. I then go on to address how some young British Pakistanis negotiate these engagements on visits to Pakistan, and during the course of wedding celebrations in what is for them a foreign country.

Chapter Three describes the process of looking for a potential partner, and suggests that the indigenous term for a 'match', *rishta*, reintroduces elements of emotional connection between family members absent in some strategic accounts of South Asian spouse selection. These two facets are highlighted in transnational arrangements where both the gains to be had from a marriage and the weakening of valued relationships through migration are heightened. For siblings separated by their own emigration, a marriage between their children can be an opportunity to re-establish these connections across continents.

This analysis is taken further in Chapter Four, which looks at reasons for the popularity of close kin marriage. Again, a model based on maximising benefits, such as the retention of family assets, is replaced with one that I argue is more faithful to the understandings and motivations of participants through the inclusion of emotion. Close kin marriage, I will suggest, is employed as a culturally scripted method for reducing risk in arranging marriage, as my informants hope that similarity, kinship morality and family pressure will deter the mistreatment of a valued daughter by her husband or in-laws. Here emotion surrounding the dangers of marriage is seen to be gendered, as concern is for daughters rather than for sons due to the convention of virilocality. This analysis treats risk as an emotional discourse and a matter of small scale social relationships, in contrast to most social science output on the subject, which deals with environmental, scientific, state, corporate and legal contexts of risk (e.g. Giddens 1999; Laidlaw 2003, cf. Caplan 2002; Douglas 1992). Chapter Five suggests another way in which this risk to women is managed, in the disaggregation of marriage ceremonies to delay consummation, a development which takes advantage of the legal pluralism inherent in transnational marriage. The functioning of *mahr*, an Islamic marriage payment that has been seen by commentators as another attempt

to protect women, is examined through the statements of my informants and found to be inadequate in this regard.

This chapter is followed by an extended narrative from Yasmin, a young Bristol woman whose story illustrates both this extended form of marriage ceremony and the dangers that families hope to avoid. It also features disagreements and factions forming within the kin group over the marriage. These form the topic of Chapter Six. Here a masculine emotional response is explored as Yasmin's father responds to the failure of his daughter's marriage. The notion of 'izzat is introduced, and several interpretations are offered for his behaviour, based on different models of honour, before concluding with an argument for the contextual eliding of 'izzat and emotion.

Chapter Seven offers another contribution to the gendering of emotion by making visible the young husband/son-in-law, seen in many of the discourses and narratives above only as the source of risk and conflict. Combining an extended interview extract from an immigrant husband with excerpts from conversations with other young men and the glimpses of such stories seen in the narratives of their wives and in-laws, I argue that for some men the experience of marriage migration can be profoundly frustrating, in conflict with ideals of masculinity, and analogous to the derided Pakistani position of *ghar dāmād / ghar jamā'ī* (house son-in-law). Counter examples show how other husbands have fared better in their marriage migration experience. In concluding, I argue for both the ethnographic utility and political necessity of an approach that incorporates emotion, and I locate this study within the classic anthropological literature on marriage in order to make clear the contribution this perspective can make to the field.

Methods

Mitchell argues that emotional experiences can also be central to ethnographic understanding. Drawing on insights into Maltese religious beliefs gained through his own feelings during an encounter with a statue of the crucifixion, he writes:

By taking part in particular cultural practices, we hope to make them explicable. But adoption of local practices can also take one beyond simple mimesis, and into the realm of felt experience. This type of experience should not be ignored. Rather, it can give us further, deeper insights into the practices that provoke them, and into the interpretations that are made of them (1997: 83).

Jacobson has also made intensive use of her own emotions as a dance student as methodological tools in her study of Indian classical dance (2001). However, there is a crucial difference between these authors and my own work, in the nature of fieldwork that

we conducted. While Mitchell participated in religious rituals, and Jacobson learnt dance, I could not participate as a bride, groom, parent or sibling would do in the transnational marriages that were the topic of my research. Therefore, although I witnessed and empathised with the emotions of those involved, I do not have the benefit of sharing this experience with my informants. Instead, I rely on their narratives, my observations and other forms of participation, for example as a guest at weddings or visitor to their homes. Hence, while it is central to my interpretation, I do not intend to dwell here on the methodological uses of emotion, although I will return briefly to this issue in the concluding remarks of this thesis. Other aspects of my fieldwork will, however, be the focus of reflexive attention in this final introductory section.

My fieldwork on transnational marriages was itself transnational, involving research in both Britain and Pakistan. A period of six months in Pakistan focussing on language learning and general cultural acclimatisation was followed by a year in Bristol. (My initial plans for a second trip to Pakistan to trace relatives of people I met in Bristol were curtailed by political events in the region.) In a review paper, Marcus describes such research as an emergent ‘multi-sited ethnography’. The question of how ‘new’ such methodologies really are is, however, a provocative one. Both Jeffery (1976a) and Shaw (1988), for example, carried out research in Britain and Pakistan that went beyond simple ‘controlled comparison’ (Marcus 1995: 102). It might be suggested that this perceived newness could be related to globalisation discourse and the re-presentation of anthropology in terms of ‘globe-talk’, issues addressed more fully in a subsequent chapter. Nevertheless, Marcus’ observations provide a useful starting point for describing the methods employed in the study. He provides a typology of modes of investigation: Follow the People; Follow the Thing; Follow the Metaphor / Plot, Story or Allegory; Follow the Conflict; and Follow the Life or Biography. I will consider the relevance of each in this order.

In terms of following people, literally accompanying marriage migrants was not a possibility, although in one case I was able to attend the marriage of a woman from Bristol in Pakistan, and then meet her husband again in Bristol some months later, as the whole process was within the timescale of my research. More often, however, I visited individuals and families in either Pakistan or Britain, but also gathered information in the sites from which they migrated, or to which they intend to migrate. This constitutes ‘off-stage’ information for a ‘foreshortened’ version (‘The Strategically Situated [Single-Site] Ethnography’), with other sites and a sense of the wider system evoked through knowledge of what happens to the subjects in other places (Marcus 1995: 110). Further ‘off-stage’ information was also often available in the form of participants’ wedding videos and photographs, which in

addition provided fertile ground for enriching and expanding our discussions. Having attended many weddings in Pakistan, I was able to surmise to an extent the practices and contexts of the production of these artefacts (another layer of this time literally ‘off-stage’ information), aiding interpretation.

I also followed ‘things’ by witnessing, discussing and to a certain extent participating in gift exchanges between kin, affines and friends. Shaw notes of Pakistani weddings that ‘the gifts given at the various stages of the marriage proceedings are more important to the people involved than the “accurate” performance of the various ritual stages’ (1988:121). Gifts are not only exchanged between the families of the bride and groom, but also in wider networks. Just as the display of this ‘culmination of obligations’ (Shaw 1988: 124) indicates the family’s standing, relationships are illuminated by following these traces in the opposite direction, towards the donors. The discussion of gifting and *rishta* in a later chapter will demonstrate some of the interrelations that can be illuminated by such an approach.

In terms of a ‘metaphor’ or ‘plot’, marriage may be understood as a certain type of relationship, as having a typical plot, or bringing about certain emotions and relationships. Diverse influences on these matters will be outlined in the section on globalisation. A later chapter will explore the idea of a good match, or *acéhā rishta*, in both the British and Pakistani contexts, and in its travelling form in transnational marriages.

I had anticipated that negotiation of the immigration system might provide ‘conflicts’ to follow. While in Pakistan, I was able to visit the British High Commission in Islamabad, where I talked with the Vice Consul and Entry Clearance Officers, and sat in on spousal visa interviews, but as I have already discussed, this did not emerge as a main area of inquiry. Conflict within kin groups around transnational marriages is, however, the topic of a later chapter. Details of such conflicts emerged through the final category in Marcus’ typology: ‘Follow the Life or Biography’. This was done, as Marcus suggests, through the use of life histories to illuminate an ethnographic ‘space’ amid transnational processes (1995: 110). In addition to informal collection of biographical data throughout the fieldwork, whilst in Bristol I carried out semi-structured interviews focusing on the narration of transnational marriages.

However, Marcus also notes a potential problem in having plural fieldsites, the fact that,

Multi-sited ethnographies inevitably are the product of knowledge bases of varying intensities and qualities (Marcus 1995: 100).

Having previously worked and established Pakistani contacts in Bristol provided me with a 'head start' in local knowledge, access and personal acclimatisation (cf. Altorki & El-Sohl 1988) that I lacked in Pakistan. My proficiency in Urdu was limited, and language learning occupied much of my time. Nevertheless, I gained a lot from this period in terms of knowledge about Pakistan, and in particular of local wedding customs, kinship, and perceptions of Britain and British Pakistanis, thanks to the extraordinary generosity and hospitality of so many of those with whom I came into contact. I was initially based at a women's university in Rawalpindi, where I lived in a hostel with students, all young women of marriageable age. They were kind enough to spend endless hours conversing, answering questions, helping me with my Urdu, advising me on clothing, and showing me around. One young woman in particular, Aisha, deserves special thanks for taking me away from the city to spend weekends with her family, and offering constant and valuable advice, including patiently instructing me on how to wear my shawl appropriately. Several members of staff were also good enough to spend time talking with me, and one in particular welcomed me into her home and family life on many weekends and holidays. After two months I moved out of the hostel to stay at the home of another member of staff. She and her husband were extremely welcoming and helpful, and took me to several weddings. During my stay, I was also fortunate enough to be able to spend time with four groups of British Pakistanis on their visits to relatives in Pakistan, and I am very grateful to them and their relatives for making this possible and allowing me an insight into the experiences of such visitors.

Des Chene suggests that a mobile ethnography can be extractive, rather than passive study *in places*, thereby illuminating wider patterns and processes (1997: 79). Similarly, Gupta and Ferguson write that social and geographical movement can be:

an extraordinarily valuable methodology for understanding social and cultural life, both through the discovery of phenomena that would otherwise remain invisible and through the acquisition of new perspectives on things we thought we already understood (1997: 36).

The initial period in Pakistan did indeed prove valuable for my Bristol fieldwork, enriching my understanding and providing me with areas of inquiry which might not have been obvious without this 'off-stage' knowledge. Like Patricia Jeffery almost thirty years before, I also found that it made a great difference in terms of access (1976a) evincing to potential participants in the study that my interest was genuine and grounded in a certain amount of knowledge. By the time I reached Bristol, some local Pakistanis had even seen footage of me in a wedding video shot a few months before in Pakistan, all of which helped create interest in me as an individual and in my project.

Having made an effort to learn Urdu was also very much appreciated, as something that very few *gore log* (White people) attempt. Some useful contacts were made simply by starting a conversation in Urdu (in shops or taxis for example), which often prompted pleased surprise and curiosity. Even in interviews with young British Pakistanis conducted in English, being able to use the Urdu term for a wedding ritual, for example, could lead to a more detailed discussion than might otherwise have been the case. My Urdu was of course not fluent, but I could understand much of what was said, and at least towards the end of my fieldwork my proficiency was adequate for conducting interviews on marriage migration. Not all Pakistanis in Bristol speak Urdu, and more probably have one of several dialects of Punjabi as a first language. Nonetheless, I was advised to learn Urdu rather than Punjabi as so many at least understand the language. Moreover, Urdu is considered a more educated, respectful and beautiful language, and when I asked Pakistani women to teach me Punjabi phrases during my previous research in Bristol, I was repeatedly told that Urdu was the ‘proper’ language for me to learn. Learning Urdu also gave me access (albeit limited) to printed material. Sikh Punjabi has a script, but Pakistani Punjabi is not written. Moreover, Urdu and Punjabi are closely related, and I was often able to understand the gist of Punjabi conversations.

The location of my Pakistani fieldwork did, however, have implications for the constituency of the Bristol section of my study. Most of the people I worked with in Bristol are Punjabis. A small number are from Sindh province, but all of these have strong family ties to the Punjab. A few of my informants are from Mirpur. My social networks developed in this way partly because of the connections I had established in Pakistan, including one very large extended family with many branches in Bristol. In addition, I worked with two voluntary organisations, both of which were run and staffed primarily by Punjabis, further emphasising the geographical bias of my study. For the same reasons, my informants are probably disproportionately from urban backgrounds. Although this may make this study less representative of Pakistanis in Britain as a whole, it should be remembered that given the geographical variation in the British Pakistani population discussed earlier, no single community could really claim to be representative. Moreover, a focus on non-Mirpuri and urban-background Pakistani may help to balance the overwhelming interest in recent years on the predominantly Mirpuri communities of northern and central England, particularly in the context of increased concern with inter-ethnic relations in these areas following the recent riots.

In Bristol, I volunteered to work for one day a week in each of two women’s organisations. I helped out with administrative tasks in both, and in one I also assisted in

fundraising and collected life history interviews with elder members to create an exhibition, 'Voices of the Pioneers'. This work gave me the opportunity to interact with Pakistani women of all ages and from different backgrounds in the form of the staff and clients of these groups. From these contacts I 'snowballed' informants and, in addition to less formal unstructured interviewing and participant observation, carried out over thirty semi-structured interviews. These were conducted either in English or Urdu, and were usually tape recorded and transcribed. If the person being interviewed preferred not to be recorded, they were typed-up from hand-written notes. The vast majority of those interviewed agreed to the tape recording. The interviews were based on a style developed in collaboration with Dr Kathy Powell during earlier research. I devised a schedule of areas to be covered, with initial broad questions to encourage a freely flowing narrative, followed by prompts to elicit further information if the respondent was hesitant. Before starting my interviews, I drew up several such schedules with different versions for use in interviewing spouses from Britain or Pakistan, and their parents. Each was also translated into Urdu for my convenience. I used these schedules flexibly as a guide, or as a useful checklist at the end of an interview which might have taken us in a different direction, to ensure that all intended areas had been covered. The schedules were adapted through the early phases of interviewing to take account of new issues arising.

The quotations from interviews presented in this thesis are, unless specified, in the original English. I present data gathered in Urdu/Punjabi either by quoting the Urdu with appropriate translation, or by giving information in English without presenting it as a direct quotation. Given the sensitive nature of some of the material presented here, and as is conventional practice, all names have been changed to protect the identity of my informants. Re-naming is a responsibility – names have meanings, associations and fashions of their own. To give a comparison, a White British teenager is currently unlikely to be called Dorothy, or an octogenarian to answer to Kylie. I have taken advice on names appropriate for men and women of different age groups and employed my own observations of naming trends (for example in the recent increase in names considered to be more purely Muslim than Pakistani) in an attempt to avoid inappropriate choices. It may also be that names have particular regional or class connotations, but this is outside the current scope of my knowledge. I can only apologise for any misjudgements. In addition to changing names, features of people's lives such as their employment or details of their family have been omitted or altered in certain cases where it is necessary to ensure their anonymity.

A final issue in my fieldwork was that of gender. Ardener famously wrote that:

The fact is that no one could come back from an ethnographic study of ‘the X’, having talked only *to* women and *about* men (1975: 3).

As a female researcher in a gender-segregated society, however, the danger was that I might end up in just such a situation, although as Carsten (1997) points out, this does not mean an ethnography of the world of women, but the world of men and women, from the perspective of women. Debate surrounds the relative advantages of male and female ethnographers (Callaway 1992: 35). Abu-Lughod writes that women ethnographers in Arab societies may benefit from a greater flow of information from men’s worlds into those of women than *vice versa*, as rules of deference mean that men are more likely to discuss their business in front of women than the other way around. Papanek, writing on Pakistan, suggests Western women fare better than men and indigenous women, as local norms are transcended by ‘role flexibility’. Stressing a ‘male’ professional role, for example, men may talk freely about business to a woman who presents no competitive threat. While male researchers endanger the honour of local women, a female foreigner may have access to both genders:²⁸

Since it is the woman who takes most of the risks in a situation where she is defined as inherently vulnerable, an outsider who can afford to take such risks may overcome the social disabilities of women in a *purdah* society (Papanek 1964: 162-3).

Pastner, however, found difficulties in availing herself of such ‘role flexibility’ during her Pakistani fieldwork. As her husband observed *purdah* practices towards women in the village, men reciprocated, with the end result that the couple resorted to a gendered division of research. Contra Papanek, she writes that,

...men of any culture confronted with a female outsider certainly may regard her as somehow ‘different’, but to assume that they thereby have excluded her altogether from the generic category of ‘female’ is not only naive but condescending on our part (1982: 263).

‘[O]ne is never just a man or a woman’ (Callaway 1992: 34) and numerous attributes may affect interactions in the field (cf. Altourki and El-Sohl 1988). We may manage to talk to men and women of ‘the X’, but how they talk to us, and what they talk about, depends on how they ‘read’ us (Crick 1992: 180). Caplan, for example, found on a return visit to her fieldsite that the wife of a key informant talked to her more freely, considering her to have finally ‘grown up’ by marrying and having children (Caplan 1992). As a young, unmarried woman, I faced similar issues. Many of my ‘key informants’ were

²⁸ See also Jeffery 1976a.

also young women, whilst progressing to interview older members of their families was not so straightforward as I was associated with the daughters of the household. In other relationships, however, my first contact was with the mother, some of whom ‘volunteered’ their children to help me with my research.

Women researchers have often sought to influence the way they are perceived through clothing. While Papanek writes that Western dress permitted access to ceremonies which local women could not attend (1964: 161), Pastner found veiling necessary to avoid public chastisement (1982: 262). In Pakistan, I wore *shalwār qamīṣ*, whilst in Bristol I often wore non-revealing ‘Western’ clothes in environments where I considered this would make me less, rather than more, conspicuous, reserving my Pakistani clothes for functions and social occasions. My collection of and interest in Pakistani fashion was also invaluable as a topic of mutual interest for conversing with many women. Nonetheless, caution is required in taking advice on the most appropriate attire and behaviour. During Greek fieldwork, not only did Kenna’s crossed-legged posture turn out to be associated with prostitutes, but her subsequent attempts to seek advice on clothing misfired. Older women reported idealised standards from their youth, with the result that,

...I turned myself into an anachronism without realising it and was then held up to young island women as a shining example. No wonder that many of them were shy with me and unwilling to confide (1992: 153).

Whilst I did not experience such difficulties in Bristol, in Pakistan I found the opposite problem to that encountered by Kenna. On arriving in Rawalpindi, I asked some of the young women I met to advise me on cloth and cut, and accompany me to the tailor. Unbeknown to me, I ended up with some slightly daring, highly fashionable outfits, including suits with slim-fitting trousers featuring small side-splits. Whilst some hostel-mates borrowed these objects of desire to have them copied, I may have aroused jealousy in others, as on a couple of occasions I woke to find myself locked into my room.²⁹

I was prepared for accessing men to constitute a real challenge during my fieldwork. In addition to the issues discussed above, many Pakistani men in Bristol work extremely long hours or night-shifts, and it can be difficult to find an appropriate time for research. It was for this reason that I focussed on interviews in my methodological design, as many men are willing to arrange a more formal appointment. Interviewing has also been recommended as a tool for urban kinship research (Barnard & Good 1984), and in previous urban fieldwork

²⁹ This was the interpretation offered by friends at the hostel.

I had found that this technique provided a reason for making contact, established a relationship in which questions can be asked, and often led to the potential for further interactions or invitations. Of course, the nature of information given in interviews differs from that gathered during participant-observation, but I attempted to ‘triangulate’ this data with other statements and observations – a combination of methods employed by others studying in urban environments (Passaro 1997; Hannerz 1980). ‘Triangulation’ is perhaps an unfortunate metaphor. Coming from the geographical sciences, it means to calculate the height of something by taking measurements from different points. In that context, the thing being measured remains constant, whilst in social research, differing perspectives between informants, and various levels of information such as Barnard and Good’s ‘categorical’, ‘jural’ and ‘behavioural’ distinction (1984), may not be reducible to a univocal truth. I hope that my tentative exploration of the experiences of husbands whose voices are often submerged in the narratives of women goes some way to exposing this heteroglossia, and the more sensitive ways in which various forms of data maybe combined in ethnography.³⁰

Most of my participant-observation was carried out in mainly female environments such as community groups and people’s back sitting rooms (cf. Shaw 2000a for the gendered division of space in British Pakistani homes), but this was supplemented with interviews and conversations with men wherever possible. In the end, the types of people who proved most problematic to access, and from whom I have least information, were the young men whose behaviour caused most concern to the women with whom I worked. These formed two categories – young British Pakistani men whose habits concerned their parents, and immigrant or British-born husbands who had mistreated their wives. Whilst the first were unlikely to volunteer for interview, or to be at home when I visited their families, the networks that could have allowed me to contact the latter could not be employed for reasons of tact and sensitivity. The forensic approach indicated above, using interviews with other men together with women’s narratives and observations, is employed here in an attempt to compensate for these problems of access. As my plans for a second research trip to Pakistan were curtailed by political circumstances, I also have less information from the Pakistani families of migrant spouses than would be ideal. Here I rely on information collected from the families I knew in Pakistan and the reports of migrant spouses and relatives settled in Britain. I hope to rectify this imbalance on future visits to the region.

In constructing this work, I have employed several lengthy excerpts from interviews. In doing so, I hope not only to give ‘voice’ to my informants, but also to give a flavour of the

³⁰ See Mody 2002b for an inspiring work of ethnographic detection through a combination of sources.

nature of the fieldwork that forms the basis of this thesis. These interviews were all, however, conducted in Bristol. Most of the weddings of British Pakistanis to Pakistani nationals, on the other hand, take place in Pakistan, which was also the starting point for my ethnographic journey. For all these reasons the chapter that follows, Chapter One of the thesis proper, is built around a description of a marriage I attended in Pakistan.

Chapter One

A Chapter about Weddings

This chapter will take a marriage I attended in Pakistan as a starting point to discuss wedding styles and the experiences of British Pakistanis travelling to Pakistan to get married. Most weddings between British Pakistanis and spouses from Pakistan take place in Pakistan, although there may also be a function held in Britain to celebrate the arrival of the immigrant spouse. There are several practical reasons for weddings to be held in Pakistan. In addition to the difficulty of obtaining visas for fiancé(e)s to come to Britain from Pakistan, this arrangement allows relatives still living in Pakistan to attend. Moreover, given the advantageous exchange rate of sterling into rupees, and the ready availability of marriage goods, services and facilities, a far more lavish function can be held than would be the case in Britain.

The event I will describe consisted of the three conventional main days, the *meñhdī*, *bārāt* and *walīma*, although weddings may be as long as five days or as short as one. Narrating each in turn will act as an introduction to the Pakistani marriage customs that will feature in discussions throughout the thesis. Styles of functions are also subject to change and debate in Pakistan and the diaspora. A review of such issues is intended to provide a snap-shot of the dynamic and contested nature of practices and discourses that exist in both my fieldsites. It also introduces some vignettes of transnational experience, as British Pakistanis are seen in the process of marrying abroad. This ground-level view of global processes is a preview of the perspective I will advocate in the review of the literature on transnationalism and globalisation that follows. These descriptions also provide a first ethnographic glimpse of themes that run through the thesis, featuring a combination of kinship, emotion, religion and financial matters that will become familiar over the course of subsequent chapters. Wedding styles are also discussed in terms of oppositions between tradition, religion and modernity, categories touched upon briefly in the Introduction.

Iram's Meñhdī

I arrived at the small village in South Western Punjab a few days after *choṭī* (little) Eid, on the day before Iram's marriage. Iram was twenty two and from Bristol. Hamid, her fiancé, was her maternal grandfather's younger brother's

son and lived in another village. Her sister, Shabanna, had come from Bristol four months earlier to spend time in their ancestral home, and her mother, Shanaz, had arrived a few weeks ago, when preparations for the wedding really got under way. Earlier in the day they had sent furniture including a double bed to Iram's future in-laws' house as part of the *jahez* (dowry).

The extended family – including several others from Bristol – gathered for an evening meal in the house of another relative in the village. ‘Am I supposed to be here?’ Iram asked her mother – in the fifteen days preceding her marriage a bride is meant to stay at home, refrain from wearing make-up and undertake beauty treatments such as the application of *ubtan*, a paste which is yellow with turmeric, to make the skin ‘clean’ and beautiful for her wedding day. Her body hair is removed (in Islam, pubic and underarm hair should not be allowed to grow longer than a grain of rice) and she traditionally wears yellow clothes, which are given to a servant or poor woman at the end of this period. But the extent to which these ‘rules’ are followed varies – Iram had been out to the beauty parlour in the nearest town, and although she told me that she ‘wasn’t supposed’ to have contact with her fiancé, he had telephoned to wish her a happy Eid.¹

Tonight was to be her *meñhdī* celebration. I showed Shanaz the clothes I had brought with me and she told me to wear a green velvet *shalwār qamīs*, as green was the colour of *meñhdī*. *Meñhdī* literally means henna, which is a greenish-brown colour in its paste form, and green and yellow feature prominently in the clothes worn to *meñhdī* celebrations – in women's dresses and in the yellow scarves that the groom's male friends and relatives may wear round their necks and hold aloft in exuberant dances.²

I was taken upstairs to a room above the internal courtyard where Shabanna and her mother's brother's daughter from Bristol were getting themselves ready in

¹ These days the restriction on contact between engaged couples is relaxed in some families, with telephone calls, emails or even accompanied visits permitted. Moreover, new technology allows fiancés to find ways to communicate – a friend from the hostel in Pakistan, for example, carried out a secret email correspondence with a fiancé she had never met, while another woman in Pakistan reminisced about how her fiancé would telephone hoping she would answer, and she would pretend to be talking to a girl friend.

² See Werbner 1990 for a symbolic analysis of these colours.

velvet, costume jewellery and make-up. Iram wore a green and yellow *shalwār qamīṣ* sent by the groom's family. She wore no make-up, but said she felt naked without jewellery and so was wearing a bit of gold. This was my first Pakistani wedding, so I asked the girls what was going to happen. They said they didn't know – all the *meñhdīs* they'd attended had been in Britain, but there was usually singing and playing the *ḏholkī* (small double ended drum). Shabanna put some bhangra style music on the cassette player. 'I'll have to dance to this later', she said.

But there was to be no dancing, drumming or singing. The family's trip to Pakistan not only coincided with Eid, a popular time for weddings when families are gathered after the fasting of *Ramazān*, but was also the first anniversary of Iram's father's death. His body had been repatriated and buried in the family graveyard in the village, and they were also in Pakistan to mark the anniversary of his death. Shanaz, the bride's mother, had told the women from the groom's family not to 'bring *meñhdī* (*meñhdī lekar ana*) with its accompanying joyful/teasing singing and drumming to the house on such a sad occasion, so they stayed at home to celebrate the groom's *meñhdī*.

Girls from the village came upstairs and joined us, sitting on the other side of the room. The video camera-man was late, so we sat waiting for several hours, the Bristol group talking in English between themselves, and changing tapes of bhangra and *filmi* (Hindi film) music now and then. Eventually, Shabanna put on some angry-sounding hip-hop. 'It'll be all f..., f...' she said, 'but they [gesturing to the village girls] won't understand it anyway!'

Eventually the video man arrived, and I and some of the bride's younger female relatives were handed plates decorated with silver foil on which lumps of *meñhdī* bore lit candles. We carried them outside to re-enter the house slowly and ceremoniously for the cameras. 'The whole of Bristol's going to see this', whispered Shabanna. We put the plates on the floor in front of a sofa that had been brought out into the courtyard – at other *meñhdīs* I have attended the *meñhdī*-bearers sing on their entrance, and sisters of the bride or groom dance round the plates on the floor. Then Iram, head bowed and covered, garlanded

with roses, was brought down to the courtyard under a red and gold *dupattā* held aloft by female relatives – Shanaz pushed me forward to join them. The bride was seated on the sofa, her sister on one side and her cousin on the other, and filmed under bright lights for a while. I strained to get a view past the barrage of lights, cameramen, and relatives coming forward to take pictures. People came forward to hand-feed *miṭhā'ī* (sweetmeats) to the bride and her companions, and place money and small lumps of *meñhdī* paste on Iram's outstretched hand, the professionally applied patterns on her palm protected from henna stains by the bank notes.³

When the guests finally dispersed, Iram's elder brother, his friend from Bristol and another British male cousin who had been looking sheepish in front of the cameras all day were gathered round the plates of *meñhdī* left on the floor. One of them pushed a plate with his foot: 'I don't understand this. It's just mud, innit' he said, adding that putting it on banknotes was a waste of good money. The young men smiled. Later that night they were given guns to fire in the air.⁴

Making the bride beautiful

The *meñhdī* is the culmination of the ceremonies which precede a marriage. It is traditionally the occasion on which the bride's hands, feet, and sometimes arms are decorated with intricate henna patterns whose colours deepen to anything from a rich orange to dark brown by the next day, her wedding day. In practice, as for Iram, the designs are often applied separately by a professional or skilled relative or friend. More than the other days of a wedding, the *meñhdī* is eagerly anticipated as an occasion for women to gather, play the *ḍholkī*, dance and sing. Women from the other 'side' (ie. the groom or bride's relatives) come to the celebration bringing trays of *meñhdī*, and the singing and dancing can

³ When I showed the photographs to a Pakistani friend she pointed to this use of money as an example of British Pakistani's ostentation – her family use tissue paper or a leaf.

⁴ Firing guns on a wedding night is traditional in Pakistan. It seems the same may be true in neighbouring Afghanistan after a sad incident during the recent conflict in which an Afghani wedding party came under fire from Western coalition forces who believed they were under attack. Several young British men I met relished the opportunity travel to Pakistan presented to hold and shoot firearms, something they do not have the chance to do in urban Britain. In light of the current political situation, however, Saif from Bristol joked that it was perhaps just as well that he hadn't managed to fulfill his ambition of returning with photographs of himself, a young Muslim, firing a Kalashnikov.



Picture 1 (top) Male friends and relatives of the groom dance at a *mehndī* in a hall in Pakistan.

Picture 2 (bottom) Relatives of the bride dance at a hotel *mehndī* in Pakistan.

become quite competitive, with songs that ridicule the groom and his family, and the bride and groom's sisters striving to perform the best dances. It is often combined with the *tel* rite, when oil is poured into the hair of the bride or groom, and is then known as a *tel-meñhdī*. Henna and mustard oil used are both 'cooling' substances, and these rituals have been interpreted by Pnina Werbner as part of a process of heating and cooling that socialises the dangerous sexual heat implicit in the marriage union (1990).⁵ Participants' exegeses, however, invariably stress the beautifying properties of these substances. *Ubṭan* is supposed to render the skin clean and glowing, while Pakistani women often oil their hair before washing it to make it strong and shiny, and young girls practice wielding cones of henna to effect the latest designs copied from diagrams in booklets, for occasions such as *cand-rat* (moon night) when the much anticipated new moon marks the end of *Ramazān* fasting.

I have been told that some South Asian Muslims view the intricate *meñhdī* patterns as un-Islamic, preferring simply to cover the palms or soles of feet in henna. However, none of the young women I met in Britain or Pakistan espoused this view. Rather, some saw the simpler traditional designs, such as a circle in the centre of the palm surrounded by dots, as rather village-y and unsophisticated. These days, *meñhdī* designs from around the Muslim world may be downloaded from websites. 'Henna tattooing' has also become fashionable in the West, with artists advertising designs conventionally available in tattoo-parlours, from butterflies to Chinese characters and Native American-inspired shapes. As far as I know, however, such patterns have not become popular in Pakistan or among British Pakistanis. Instead, during the period of my research, the vogue among my informants was for Middle Eastern designs that tended to be floral or arabesque in character and feature blocks of colour. Patterns might be sent by relatives, learnt on trips abroad or be taught by visitors from overseas.

By the day of her wedding the bride's beauty is the culmination of the work, care and affection of her family who have secluded her, ensured her skin and hair will shine, embellished her hands and feet with beautiful *meñhdī* designs, dressed her in beautiful costly clothes and lavished gold upon her, spending hard earned savings or melting down the precious items mothers were given by their own parents when they left their natal homes. The bride in her wedding finery comes close to being what Mauss (1990 [1924]) called a total prestation, embodying her family's wealth and standing, and the parental care and

⁵ As is common across South Asia, Pakistanis commonly view substances such as foodstuffs as being hot or cold.

duties which are being transferred in the marriage. As such, her beauty can have important implications for her standing in her new family, as a lack of effort may be perceived as a lack of regard on the part of her parents, implying that the girl is poorly supported and therefore vulnerable. One woman visiting Britain from Pakistan, with a taste for subdued colours, was pitied by a neighbour who asked if her parents had stopped sending her good clothes after only a few years of marriage.

The beautification of the bride should not, however, be understood as merely economic or symbolic. It is part of the experiential aesthetic of romance and affection in the lives of Pakistani women. As Kohn writes of Nepal:

The interest women have in gold is, on the one hand, a material one, for gold jewellery often represents a rural family's entire life savings. On the other hand it is also an interest in the romance intrinsic to the act of giving gold and bestowing beauty on new wives. (1998: 72-3)

It is in this light that I understand Iram's mother Shanaz's words about a heavy gold coin she showed me before the wedding. She said that she could have had it melted down and made into a new set for Iram, but her late husband had given it to her, so she had decided to keep it just the way it is. The allure of gold seems not to fade – Bushra, another woman in her forties, had been collecting gold to make her daughter's wedding jewellery in a few years' time. After her last visit to Pakistan, however, she reappeared wearing a solid-looking gold heart on a thick chain, saying her husband had said she should have something made for herself in the meantime.

Although dowry as practised in South Asia has been criticised as damaging the position of women (e.g. Menski 1998, Sharma 1984; Srinivas 1984), parents and daughters can also understand it as bound up with the affection and care demonstrated in the bride's beauty. The gold she wears is a central part of her *jahez*, and Mody describes the sadness of a man whose daughter eloped and so denied him the opportunity of lavishing gold on her in a demonstration of his fatherly love (2002b). The recent film *Monsoon Wedding* also provided an illustration of the emotional dimension of dowry, as the mother of the bride goes through the saris she has collected for her daughter, reminiscing over their purchase, and about her own marriage.

This romantic aesthetic is often missing from descriptions of South Asian arranged marriages. Kohn argues that an 'archaic but ever-present focus on function and structure imposes a hierarchy of motivation for marriage' that ignores love and romance. She quotes MacFarlane, who writes that in most societies 'marriage and individual sentiment are not connected, and marriages have been arranged' to epitomise this 'inaccurate polarization of

experience' (1998: 77). For the bride, although she may be apprehensive, her wedding day represents the pinnacle of her beauty, as never before has she worn such lavish and costly clothes, and shone with so much gold. Most women took pride in showing me photographs of themselves on their wedding day. One nineteen-year-old in Bristol is already planning the design for gold sets based on ones she has seen at other weddings, although it will be several years before she is married. The growing problem of British Pakistanis forced into marriage means that for some their marriage is not a happy occasion, but the romance and beauty of weddings is widely celebrated. Hindi movies glorify romantic images of weddings and brides, and modern wedding videos often feature images of the bride set into romantic backgrounds – at the centre of a rose, for example. Another common feature depicts layers of the same image of the bride (and often other attractive young women in attendance) peeling off, like rose petals, while sound tracks feature romantic songs.

With the opportunity they give for dressing up and socialising, weddings are among the most exciting occasions in the lives of Pakistani women both in Pakistan and the UK. Where young South Asian men can turn to sport for culturally-sanctioned enjoyment, 'wedding culture' has been suggested as women's primary 'fun space' (Werbner 1996). Although Werbner describes weddings as a source of female enjoyment, the groom is also feted. Talib from Bristol was surprised by how much he enjoyed his wedding day. A young man with strong religious views, he had been apprehensive about the process, but once he was dressed up and sitting on the stage, he felt in his words: 'wicked and lush'. Another British groom said about his wedding day:

It was fantastic. Honestly, those two days were probably the best time I've ever had. Without a doubt. Well it's just to see so many family in the same room at the same time – everyone coming up and giving their wishes and the money. And the ceremony, which I was trying to absorb at the same time. I wanted to remember the experience... I don't think we had dancing at the *meñhdī* – on the *bārāt* we did. Yeah, on the second day we did – which was excellent as well. It was completely different because I don't think we do that on family occasions... So that was great fun because it was all the boys and I've got the nephews and cousins who come from here, and cousins from America and Manchester and all the different parts of the world – Kuwait, Dubai, Pakistan. They're all in the same place at the same time, all for me, and I thought well, you know, people make that effort then this must be a really special occasion, which made me feel really special. (Saif)

Meñhdīs: religion and tradition

Meñhdī functions are traditionally held separately for the bride and groom, with the bride's party without the bride travelling to the groom's *meñhdī* and then vice versa. In modern urban Pakistani weddings, however, a 'joint' *meñhdī* is often held. I was told that this was because city houses are small and those who can afford to often hire a venue for the occasion, either the function rooms of a hotel, or one of the *shādī* (wedding) halls which can be found in any reasonable-sized town. It then makes financial sense for the families to share the cost of one hall rather than rent two separately.

At one hotel *meñhdī* I attended in Rawalpindi, the bride and groom were seated beside each other on a sofa in the room designated for women.⁶ The bride sat demurely with her head down and covered while the groom was brought in by relatives dancing wildly, with a triumphal air. She remained silent and still while his male friends took the anointing to playful excess, smearing his face lavishly with *ubṭan* and henna, and pouring oil into his hair until he looked thoroughly dishevelled. Others later told me that the joviality of the occasion was a marker of bonds of kinship between the two sides – without these ties the rivalry can apparently get out of hand. Fellow guests said that this couple had probably signed the *nikāḥ-nāma* (Islamic marriage contract) before the *meñhdī*, or their sitting together might have been a minor scandal, breaching the conventional taboo against contact between an unmarried man and woman.

Not only is opinion divided on whether the couple should sit together, but the desirability of *meñhdīs* themselves is also subject to divergent views, and not every wedding includes this function. Some Pakistani Muslims view the *meñhdī* as an un-Islamic Hindu accretion, an example of the bad habits picked up from generations living side-by-side with Hindus in India.⁷ Jeffery, Jeffery and Jeffrey, for example, note that improving literature for Muslim girls and young women in North India produced by reformist movements stresses the importance of purging such traditions from religious practice (forthcoming).

⁶ Weddings are often segregated, either with men in one room/*shāmiyāna* tent and women in another, or with one room divided by a screen. The bride or couple are then seated in the women's section.

⁷ This folk model belies the fact that many Muslims in the subcontinent may be the descendants of converts from Hinduism.



Picture 3 (top) A couple sit together at a *mehndī* in Bristol as the groom's sisters tie on a gift of anklets.

Picture 4 (bottom) Friends of the bride play a trick on the groom at a *mehndī* in Pakistan by smashing an empty egg-shell filled with glitter on his head. He holds money gifts, and a tissue to wipe away some of the turmeric paste that has been playfully smeared on his face.

Opinions vary, however. At a function in Bristol one woman lamented that *meñhdīs* in Britain were not as much fun as in Pakistan, with less money, dancing and singing. I relayed this comment to Azra, a married woman in her mid-twenties who wears the *ḥijāb*. ‘Yes’, she replied, ‘It’s much better here’. While Leyla, who is nineteen, Bristolian and engaged to a cousin, is keen to ask her elderly relatives about old traditions she can incorporate into her wedding, others try to pare down their marriages to purify them of ‘tradition’ or ‘custom’, leaving them purely ‘religious’. Tahira told me that her wedding in Bristol to her paternal grandfather’s brother’s son was ‘quite simple, because my family they’re quite religious and they don’t want anything too grand’. The *nikāḥ* was done at home, and a couple of days later they had a single function for around two hundred people in a hall in Bristol. There was no *meñhdī* or wedding day, the function being the *walīma*, the celebration given by the groom’s side once the bride has been taken to her new home. According to *sunnat*, the sayings of the prophet, the *nikāḥ* and *walīma* are the essential elements of a Muslim wedding. Tahira commented about Pakistani wedding traditions: ‘my dad was saying a lot of this stuff is derived from Hinduism. You know – custom’. Her Pakistani husband elaborated:

It’s not of religion, because it came from our culture. We came from Hindu culture – we became Muslims from Hindus.... A lot of people say this [but] when they do [it] themselves they don’t mind it, they just keep doing it [i.e. they know it’s not religiously correct but carry on with these traditions].

Of course, a simple religious ceremony with limited celebrations is also much less costly, particularly for the bride’s family, as the *walīma* is the responsibility of the groom’s side, but this lack of wasteful spending is in itself held up as an Islamic virtue.⁸ I will return to the issue of tradition and religion in wedding styles later in this chapter.

Iram’s wedding day

The women from the beauty parlour were late. The *bārāt* (groom’s party) were due to arrive at eleven and by twelve there was still no sign of the women who were to dress Iram’s hair, do her makeup, and help arrange her wedding clothes and jewellery. Her sister and cousin got dressed and put on their make-up, Shabanna struggling with safety pins to ensure that her sari didn’t show any

⁸ In transnational marriages, however, many of my informants reported that the wealthier British side had shouldered the majority of wedding expenses, regardless of whether they were the family of the bride or groom.

skin around her waist. She hadn't worn a sari before, but luckily the modern innovation of stitching the pleats onto a belt, which also gave it a fashionable slim-fit, eliminated the need for skilful folding. Shanaz had lent me a red and gold *lahngā* (skirt with a tunic top) bought in Britain for £45 but which all three girls had rejected, preferring to buy much more elaborate and up-to-date outfits locally. Iram set about doing her own nails in the burgundy colour of her wedding *lahngā*, applying gold transfers to the varnish.

Eventually the beauty parlour women arrived, and I went downstairs to defrost my toes. It was a crisp winter day and they were turning white in my thin *lahngā* and wedding *kusse*.⁹ Unfortunately this meant that I missed the arrival of the *nikāḥ-nāma*, the marriage contract, which Iram signed without reading.¹⁰ Some guests arrived, and women surged up the stairs to try to get a look at the bride, to cries of 'Don't let them in!' Iram's aunt and I squeezed past them and were admitted to find Iram transformed in her heavily beaded red and gold *lahngā*, gold necklaces and rings, heavy make-up, and the final touches of gold glitter being sprayed onto her elaborate rolled hairstyle. 'This isn't me', she said, playing with the rings – family had given so much jewellery that she had two rings to a finger, and her mother had kept some of the money sent by relatives in Europe to buy gold for future purchases of household items when the groom came to England.

The girls grumbled that they were hungry – there were supposed to be *samosas* (savoury filled pastries) when the *bārāt* arrived, and the wedding was, as is often the case, running several hours late. Then word came that the *bārāt* were on their way. Along with the other women, I was given a plate of rose petals, many from the garlands of the previous night, and we made our way to the entrance to the village. The groom, with his uncle by his side (his father, who would normally have played this role, had died) came walking down the village

⁹ Traditional decorated leather shoes made to a single pattern which must be worn to mould them to fit left and right feet. The male version worn by the groom often have long toes which curl extravagantly upwards.

¹⁰ At the women's university where I stayed, teachers entreated the female students to be sure to read their *nikāḥ-nāma*. Not only does it specify the amount of the *mahr* payment to the wife, but sections are sometimes crossed out to remove the woman's right to divorce (cf Shah-Kazemi 2001 on Islamic divorce).

street from their coach and cars, followed by the rest of his relatives and friends. Shabanna, her cousin from Bristol, and a cousin of a similar age from the village approached the groom and his uncle. In a small space in front of the cameras, with people crowding round trying for a view, Shabanna offered Hamid a sip from a cup decorated with silver foil and sequins¹¹ and Hamid's uncle gave the girls some money. This done, the *bārāt* came forwards, women from their side embracing women from ours, and men doing the same. As we made our way back to the house one of the girls told me excitedly, 'I got fifteen hundred rupees – that's like a hundred and thirty pounds!'

The female guests gathered inside the courtyard to watch the display of the *barī* (Urdu) or *varī* (Punjabi) gifts of clothes, jewellery and accessories from the groom's family to the bride. Outfit after embroidered outfit was held aloft to be inspected by the audience, followed by shoes in the latest platform styles, beauty cases and gold jewellery. The display of Iram's *barī* was followed by a meal, served to women and men separately in *shāmiyānas* (decorated tent structures) outside the house.

Finally we returned to the courtyard to witness the couple sitting together as man and wife. Guests approached to put *salāmī* money gifts into the hands of bride and groom, and some sat beside the couple to be filmed by the camera, which once again had the best view. The day is generally understood to be arduous for the bride, with the weight of her jewellery and heavily bead-worked *lahngā* under the hot lights. She sat with her head modestly down, unsmiling – it would not be seemly to look as if she were looking forward to her wedding night, although Iram was happy about the match.

Eventually it was time for the *rukḥṣatī*, when the bride is sent to her husband's home. She is normally taken out surrounded by female relatives weeping at her departure, although she will return for a short stay at her natal home the following day if her husband's home is not too distant. This time the tears were particularly numerous as the women of the family remembered that her father

¹¹ The *dudh-wali* or milk cup, but nowadays it is sometimes filled with cola.

could not be there to see her married. When she had been escorted to the waiting car, the *bārāt* drove off.

Traditions of Opposition

Numerous traditions, which may or may not be performed at any individual wedding, take the form of the groom paying his bride's sister in order to progress with the marriage. If the bride has no or few sisters, then other female relatives will perform this role, and at the marriage of an American woman with no suitable kin, those demanding payment were her female friends. Fines paid to the relatives of the bride and other attempts to delay the progress of the groom's party through the marriage are seen by many commentators as a kind of symbolic battle between the two sides. For Bloch, these traditions are part of the 'rebounding violence' found in all ritual (1992), but such universalising assertions are beyond the scope of this study. More interesting are those cases in which these practices are seen as expressing tensions and differences between the families of the bride and groom. Campbell argues that for the Sarakatsani, marriage customs give voice to this mutual antagonism within conventional bounds (1964: 132-5). For Carsten, reports of similar traditions are evidence of the differences between affines that are denied in the assertion of the similarity of the bride and groom throughout Malay marriage ceremonies (1997: 209). In both cases, affines are potentially dangerous outsiders, and the challenge of a marriage is to reduce this difference and create bonds of kinship or co-operation. In Pakistani weddings, however, the two 'sides' are often already closely related. For guests equally related to both the bride and groom, it can be difficult to say whether they should arrive with the *bārāt*, or be there to welcome them. Patricia Jeffery reports a jovial celebration of a marriage between Muslim first cousins in North India during which 'joking turned on the double roles which everyone could play: all the *Pirzada* were simultaneously "bride's people" and "groom's people"' (1979: 173). The bride's mother, in her role as the groom's aunt, thus visited her own daughter to 'see the bride's face', and the groom's brother insisted that he should arrive and be feted with the groom, his 'cousin-brother' (1979: 173). Nevertheless, Pakistani wedding customs are 'structured around the cultural fiction of an alliance between distinct kindreds' (Werbner 1990), and I would suggest that the elements of mock fighting at Pakistani weddings – the bribing of the bride's sisters, or the triumphal dancing of the groom's party on the *meñhdī* – can be viewed as part of the way in which this distinction is created. Whereas in Langkawi or among the Sarakatsani the problem of a wedding is the management of difference between the two sides, for Pakistanis engaged in close kin

marriages, such customs help create the distance needed for affinity, so that a bride is not kept within the family (which would imply incest) but given to another.¹²

Money may be required before the groom can enter the marriage venue, and one particularly popular ritual, *jūte* (shoes), involves the sisters of the bride seizing one of the groom's shoes and holding it to ransom until a sufficient sum is offered. The women are being compensated for the loss of their sister, and the amounts involved can be substantial, but the playful nature of many of these practices also refers to the temporary state of joking and licensed behaviour permitted between a man and his bride's sisters (Werbner 1990: 278-9). Although Werbner writes of this as signalling the temporary incorporation of the groom into the bride's family, a phase which ends once the marriage has been consummated, during another wedding described to me, this behaviour carried on during the *walīma*:

At the end they thought, 'Oh yeah – your brother-in-law has to sit on your lap.' It's a custom or something. [I said] 'Yeah, but you haven't got no brothers', and all his cousins come over... All of them got something [money] – they were begging for it, from me... I think the youngest one has to sit on your lap, but he was too shy – he was a little baby. He's about four years old... So all of them, they start massaging my legs, saying, 'We're doing something for you!'... Some of them were men! I thought, 'Don't touch me, just have some money!' I gave them my purse – 'Just have what you want!' We had lots of fun. (Asma)

In most cases, the demands for money are playful, as befits the artificial and temporary creation of opposing sides from mutual kin, but marriages can also reveal underlying tensions between participants (cf. Werbner 1990: 252-3). The low 'price' eventually given for a shoe at one function was accepted with only a little good-natured teasing, although one guest did comment that this was mean considering that the groom was gaining the opportunity to go abroad through this marriage, with the implication that he would soon be earning far more and so could have afforded to be generous. In one wedding video I was shown, however, the haggling turned into a fairly heated argument between relatives from each side.

If there are two wedding outfits, one for the *bārāt* day and the other for the *walīma*, one will normally be provided by the bride's family and the other by the groom's side. The bride is also equipped with many sets of fancy clothes by her own family as part of her *jahez*, and is expected to appear in all her finery at dinner invitations and functions in the weeks following her marriage. This display brings prestige to her husband's family by showing that their new member is beautiful, and has brought wealth with her, and by demonstrating the

¹² The issue of similarity, kinship and affinity is discussed further in Chapter Four.



Picture Five (top) *Jūte* – Ransoming the shoe.

Picture Six (bottom) Gathering to watch the display of the *barī* in a village house in Pakistan.

expense that they themselves have lavished on her. Hence, when I met Iram at a wedding a fortnight after her marriage and admired the many sets of gold jewellery she was wearing, she explained that she didn't really want to wear all of it, but had been told that she should.

In the previous section I argued that the beautification of the bride embodies the care and status of the family who give her in marriage, but the *barī*, which may be equal in value to the *jahez* (Fischer 1991), demonstrates the effort, care and investment which is also put into the new bride by her in-laws. In her discussion of Pakistani marriages Pnina Werbner quotes a Hindu hymn about the transfer of the bride cited by Lévi-Strauss, 'Love has given; love has received. Love has filled the ocean', saying that 'for Pakistanis a wedding is about a transfer of love, nurture and authority' (Werbner 1990: 259), but the mutual investment of the two families in the bride's splendour is a meeting between the 'two loves'.

Werbner and Lévi-Strauss describe this as only a momentary joining on the occasion of marriage, after which the bride is transferred to her in-law's family. The bride's relationship with her parents does indeed become more circumscribed after marriage. An imported husband in Bristol, for example, limited his wife's daily visits to eat at her mother's house saying that it 'didn't look nice'. Not only should her duties now lie with her husband, but providing for her is his responsibility. North Indian and Pakistani families no longer take food from their daughter after she has married, signalling that she has become part of another household as a gift, for which nothing should be accepted in return (Jeffery *et al* 1989: 53). For North Indian Hindus, the bride is *kanyā dān*, the gift of a virgin (Fruzzetti 1982; Raheja & Gold 1994). *Dān* is a type of gift that removes inauspiciousness from the donor and therefore should not be reciprocated (Raheja 1988; Raheja & Gold 1994: 74-92; see also Parry 1986). This religious connotation is absent for Muslims, but the expectation of non-reciprocity is similar, although I am told that this practice is less strictly observed where marriages are between close kin. Sisters whose children are husband and wife, for example, may continue to give each other gifts.

All this is not to say that women have not found ways of sharing the financial benefits of their migration with relatives in Pakistan. I have been told that women who came to Bristol and worked in factories did make secret arrangements to send some of their wages home. Money is commonly sent through the unofficial 'Hundi' system in which local agents take deposits and relatives can collect the money from an agent in Pakistan, saving time and bank charges (OPF, n.d.), and without the need for villagers to open bank accounts. It is rumoured that one man involved in the 'money business' in Bristol took advantage of the secrecy to start affairs with his clients. Part of the reason for the clandestine nature of these

arrangements is of course simply that the women are siphoning off a portion of the household's income for their own purposes without permission, but it also reflects the strength of the social expectation among both Hindus and Pakistani Muslims that women's parent will not receive monies or goods from their daughter after she is married.

Unlike in Hindu marriages, there are normally pre-existing kinship links between the new in-laws, and the *rishta* of the marriage is a multiplying and strengthening of the bonds between the relatives of the bride and groom. The unifying potential of close kin marriages among Pakistanis, on which I will elaborate in the following chapters, is demonstrated by the gifting and investment by both sides towards the bride. Her highly decorated beauty in the days of her wedding and the months that follow is thus an embodiment of the union between the two families.

The Wedding Meal

At other weddings I have attended, the serving of food was normally left until after the marriage ceremonies are completed and the bride and groom are seated together. Many guests leave directly after eating, with only closer family and friends staying to witness the departure of the bride to her new home (the *rukḥṣatī*). One guide to Pakistan gives the following warning to foreign visitors attending Pakistani weddings:

Some time during these proceedings dinner will be announced. The news spreads like wild fire and everyone abandons the bridal couple and moves towards the food. Don't be shocked at the jostling, shoving and pushing that you will experience at the dinner table, which is usually a buffet. Everyone attacks the food table as if it is the last meal he is going to get and in a matter of minutes the food has disappeared from the table. A team of harangued waiters clears up the mess. The bridal couple gets a dinner table set up before them on the stage (Mittmann & Ihsan 1991).

Since Nawaz Sharif's attempts to control expenditure on weddings, the serving of meals at marriages has actually been illegal. In addition to being an attempt to control the economy, this legislation may be viewed as part of the trend to 'purify' Islam of traditions mentioned above. Ostentatious expenditure is sometimes seen as a Hindu characteristic, contrasting with Islamic values of frugality and simplicity. Every year a few raids in which food is confiscated make the papers, but function halls (known as *shādī* [wedding] halls) may get away with providing a meal by failing to mention that the event is a wedding – I have seen notices on announcement boards for 'X family function', for example. Nevertheless, during my stay in Pakistan I got into the habit of eating a snack before going to a wedding in order to stave off hunger, as on occasion the anticipated meal turned out to be



Picture Seven (top) A wedding buffet in Pakistan. Men and women ate separately.

Picture Eight (bottom) The meal at a wedding in a school hall, Bristol. Men and women ate separately and in several sittings.

limited to *kaśmīrī cā'e* (a pink, milky tea), or soup served in a tea-cup. It may be easier to evade the law in village weddings, or those held at home rather than in *shādī* halls. While most of those I spoke to in Pakistan agreed that curbing excessive spending was an admirable goal, few are prepared to forgo serving a meal, saying that if guests have come from a distance, it is impossible to send them away without feeding them. Weddings are part of the exchanges between kin and friends that form both an important social obligation and a source of prestige, so the legislation intended to curtail expenditure on hospitality at weddings is widely flouted.

Weddings in Britain and Pakistan alike generally involve a lot of sitting around waiting, and in addition to the excitement for the women of dressing up and seeing the bride's clothes, or commenting on how well matched the couple may or may not be, the food is the highlight and most discussed aspect of the event: whether it was served too late; what was served; and who it was served by. It is traditionally the duty of the men of the family to serve the wedding food, a function performed by waiters at hotel/*shādī* hall weddings. Some people with strong religious views, however, object to women being served by men. At Iram's *walīma* I was warned to be careful of the men serving, but on the *bārāt*, the wedding day, a buffet-style meal meant that the involvement of the men was minimal.

Wedding Styles

Some of the different styles of functions have been mentioned already: village/home versus halls, joint or separate *menhdīs*, and the issue of religious purity against local marriage traditions. This last aspect is of particular interest to my informants in Bristol, who talk about some functions as 'religious weddings'. As mentioned above, these may involve the segregation of men and women, and the absence of music and dancing, but may also mean limiting or excluding video-ing and photography.

At most weddings I attended in Pakistan, the video camera was a marked presence with its attendant scrum of lights, lighting operators and cameramen. Nothing could be done until it was in place, it monopolised the best viewpoints of the couple and ceremony, and as is evident from Iram's wedding, determined the pace of the event. Even when the guests were eating, the camera pursued them, something which many women find embarrassing. Copies of videos are dispersed to relatives, sometimes across the globe, and including those who could not attend. They are watched and re-watched to the accompaniment of reminiscences about the event, and commentaries on women's dress or eating habits. As time

goes by they also provide opportunities to revisit the images of relatives who have since died, so that on a visit to his daughter in Britain after the death of a female relative, one elderly man asked to be shown a family wedding video in which she could be seen. It is just this dispersal, however, that makes some people object to video-ing on religious grounds, as un-related (*gair mahram*) men may see the faces and wedding finery of the women in attendance. While some 'religious weddings' do without a video camera, however, few can resist altogether having some photographic record of the day, so when Rashida in Bristol asked me to take photographs of a function to celebrate her son's wife's arrival in Britain, she said that while filming and photographing were wrong in Islamic terms, it would still be 'nice to have a few snaps'.

At another wedding in Bristol, I became aware that there was a third element to moral assessments of wedding styles. While some marriage celebrations are seen as 'traditional' and others 'religious', this function was seen by some as scandalously 'modern'. It was a sit-down affair with named table settings held at a hotel in the centre of Bristol, and incorporated some elements of ethnic British wedding styles – the bride and groom joined hands to cut a tiered wedding cake, there was a band (an out-of-town Asian ensemble performing *filmi* songs), and the couple danced the first close dance together. But the seemingly British style held particular Pakistani significance. Zaynab, seated at my table, was scathing about the dancing. Women may dance in front of other women at *meñhdīs*, and men may do a bhangra in front of a mixed audience, but it is neither traditional nor religious convention for a husband and wife to touch each other, let alone dance together, in public. To make matters worse for Zaynab, the bride's sisters and their husbands started dancing, and then swapped partners so that men were dancing with women who were not their wives. One of the sisters' husbands is from the Middle East, and Zaynab said that this behaviour was all right for him because it was the tradition of his country, but she disapproved of it for Pakistanis. All the weddings in Birmingham, she told me, have dancing these days. Her nephew in Birmingham, of whom she is extremely fond, has told her that she must dance at his wedding, but she replied that if there was dancing, she wouldn't attend.

Polarised attitudes to cities such as Birmingham and London, with larger Pakistani communities and considered far more 'modern' than Bristol, mirror those towards other things considered 'modern', from some styles of weddings to educated working women or the latest fashions in *shalwār qamīs*. Some, like Zaynab, disapprove and talk about the moral degeneracy of these 'modern' spaces, such as badly behaved city boys who cruise around in their cars making comments at girls. Others, and particularly the young, dismiss Bristol as



Picture Nine (top) The bride and groom cut a British wedding cake at a 'modern' wedding in Bristol.

Picture Ten (bottom). The bride and groom dance together at the same 'modern' wedding.

‘backwards’ and crave the opportunity of the big cities. But just as most Bristol Pakistanis jump at the opportunity for a shopping trip to Birmingham, many Pakistanis incorporate some elements which might be considered ‘modern’ into their lives and marriages, whether that be a woman developing a career, ‘doing fashion’ or holding a joint *meñhdī*.

Nonetheless, the tripartite classification of ‘religion’, ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ present important sets of oppositions for my informants in Bristol. The English words ‘religion’, ‘tradition’, and ‘modern’ are used by many of my informants in Bristol. I also use them in this context to gloss terms such as *rasm* (custom), and more specific references to Islam or, for example, *sunnat*. The Introduction mentioned the use of such categories in mutual evaluations of Mirpuris and urban Punjabis, and subsequent chapters will show how these characteristics are also involved in decisions on marriage partners. As is apparent from this present discussion of modernity, however, the moral evaluation attached to each attribute may be reversed according to the standpoint of the speaker. While some condemn wedding traditions as both ‘backwards’ and against religion, others value them as an enjoyable part of their cultural heritage, and Leyla, it will be remembered, hoped to resurrect some old customs for her wedding day. I have never, on the other hand, heard religion criticised by a Pakistani Muslim, but I have occasionally encountered the pejorative term ‘fundamentalism’ employed to contest practices and attitudes that the practitioners themselves view as ‘religious’.

A Political Economy of British Pakistani Wedding Styles

As noted elsewhere, a ‘religious’ wedding is almost by definition a less costly affair, but this is not the only factor in the political economy of wedding styles. When Bushra’s brother Saif’s wife arrived from Pakistan, the family decided to hold a function to celebrate. This would allow British relatives and friends who had not attended the marriage in Pakistan to participate, and such events are often referred to as weddings (*shādī*). During their deliberations on the form the party would take, Bushra and Saif explained the implications of and reasons for their choice of venue and the size of the function.

Saif, a ‘modern’ young man, wanted to hire a nice function suite at a good hotel, with a sit-down meal, and even considered the stylish setting of Ashton Court mansion in a country park just outside the city. There were three major problems with this aspiration. First, most establishments expect to provide the food themselves, while most Pakistanis would like to have the function catered for by a reputable Pakistani source, both to ensure that the meal is appropriate to Pakistani tastes and dietary requirements, and also as a

substantial financial saving.¹³ At the time Saif's party was being organised, there was a shortage of hotels in the city willing to accept this arrangement. The second drawback was that this type of function is extremely expensive. Finally, if there is to be a seated table plan, the numbers of people who can be invited must be curtailed and monitored. Even if expense were not an issue, the numbers such a venue could hold would probably be limited to two or three hundred, while I attended a function in a school hall with three sittings to eat at canteen tables where the hosts estimated that nine hundred guests were in attendance.

Bushra explained the political implications of such a decision. If you have been invited to another family's wedding, failure to reciprocate with an invitation when there is a marriage in your family can be taken as an insult (*besti*¹⁴). However, invitations can be understood to apply to the whole household or even the extended family, making limiting the numbers of guests difficult. One woman told me that she gave careful consideration to which invitations to accept, bearing in mind that her children were coming up to marriageable age and so any invitation accepted would increase the numbers of guests she would have to invite to their weddings. Obligations can span the years. Humera told me that when she attended Farida's wedding in 1975, her family was small – just Humera and her sister Zaynab – but when her own daughter Arifa marries she will have to invite Farida's whole family, grown large in the intervening years. Bushra and Saif jokingly complained about one particularly large family in their area – 'You invite one [family name] and they all come!' Having a seating plan, and so needing to control numbers precisely, can thus be controversial. Equally, however, it may be that such an arrangement is desired precisely in order to have a mechanism to control numbers and censor who can attend.

Saif was also, however, tempted by the idea of a large hall, and several of Bristol's school assembly halls are popular venues. The advantage of this style of wedding, he explained, was that the cost of hiring the venue are low, and if a large number of guests is invited, the returns in the form of *salāmī* (money gifts) can be high. *Salāmī* is given to the bride or groom, or both, depending with which side the giver is related or otherwise connected. The amount depends on the closeness of the relationship. My enquiries and observations suggest that £20 is a fairly standard amount, with £10 the minimum acceptable. A close friend or relative might give £50 or even £100. Again, the large family mentioned above were given as an example of a problem with this scheme: as *salāmī* is generally given

¹³ One popular caterer is referred to as the Cardiff-*wālā*, the man from Cardiff.

¹⁴ A contraction of *be-'izzati* (dishonour) a concept discussed at length in Chapter Six.

on behalf of a household (*ghar*), a large family who only give one *salāmī* but bring many members to be fed can be an expensive proposition, although some account of this may be taken in the amount given.

While Saif was obviously enticed by the prospect of so much cash, and it can undoubtedly be of great assistance in bearing the expense of functions, the money will in effect be repaid as a return *salāmī* gift on the next wedding in the giver's family. Thus Shanaz saw some of the larger amounts of *salāmī* given to Iram as a burden. Some of Iram's friends, she complained, had given £100, which meant that at some time in the near future, she was going to have to find £100 for each of them. At most weddings, a relative will be delegated to make note of who gives what, although the process seemed to have been made more straight forward at functions I attended in Bristol by the widespread giving of *salāmī* inside a greeting card in which the giver's name is written.

Some literature on North Indian and Pakistani gifting reports that return gifts should be of a slightly greater value than that received, in order to continue the gifting relationship, while a gift of the same value will be understood as closing the exchange (e.g. Shaw 2000a: 236-7). Werbner writes that a pound note would sometimes be added to the sum to represent the ongoing relationship (1990: 251), and figures of 101 or 1001 rupees occur in the subcontinent. During my fieldwork, however, neither of these appeared to be the case. My informants reported that they would give an equal amount of *salāmī* to that given, and common values were £10, £20, £50 and £100. An explanation for this may lie in changes in British currency from one pound notes to coins – when I asked why they wouldn't give gifts of say £11, one woman told me that coins are never given as they 'look cheap'.¹⁵ The same practical difference between Pakistan and England probably accounts for the fact that money *hār* (garlands) seem less common at British functions. In Pakistan, the groom often sports impressive garlands made from low-denomination notes, which I am told may be unstitched, or taken back to the manufacturer who will exchange the money minus a small amount for labour. In England, however, with a minimum note value of £5, such *hār* would be extremely expensive, and even imported ones made from one rupee notes sell for £20 and more in Birmingham, many times their monetary value.

¹⁵ I was not, however, able to ascertain whether this had been the custom before the switch to notes.

Another way in which money is very visible in Pakistani weddings is when the groom arrives for the *menhdi* accompanied by yellow-clad drummers who can be found waiting for business on certain streets in the cities. His male friends and family rotate notes above his head ('for luck' – see Raheja & Gold 1994 on removing inauspiciousness in Hindu North India) and flinging them into the air for the drummers to gather as payment. As neither drummers nor low-denomination notes are available in England, this exuberant display is absent. As much of this would suggest, and contrary to the project of 'purifying' Islam in the subcontinent, conspicuous consumption and display of wealth is a prominent feature of most Pakistani weddings, so that at Rubina's wedding her grandfather displayed a cheque for a million rupees as a wedding gift. The cheque was destroyed later, having been 'just for the show at the time'.

Determining Wedding Styles

In Britain, then, wedding styles are partially determined by the local environment – the types of venues materials and services available. There is also great regional variation within Pakistan, and between British families who hail from these different regions. On one occasion my questions about wedding customs led two women into a discussion in which each was constantly surprised by the practices of the other. One of them described a tradition in which the women of the groom's family carry a water pot on their head. The other said she had only ever seen this done on videos.

Beyond these determinants, however, the wedding may still not turn out as the bride or groom have envisioned it. Saif, who wanted a posh modern function in Bristol, had to accept a school hall at the lower end of the price-range, as his father and elder brothers had decided not to opt for the more expensive possibilities. But even the parents and those financing the wedding will not always have the final say. Azra religiously avoids being photographed, and she and her mother were determined to have a 'religious' wedding without videos or photography. On the day, however, other relatives brought video cameras. Azra's mother managed to stop them filming, but they were unable to resist pressure to have photographs taken.

Brides may not choose what they will wear on their wedding day. While I was in Pakistan, for example, I went on several shopping trips with Mariam from London, who had been commissioned to buy all the clothes for her sister's wedding in England. Many brides arrive in Pakistan to find that mothers or sisters who were able to leave earlier have selected

their wedding *lahngā* and other fancy outfits. Luckily, these close relatives are often good at judging the other's tastes:

I'm sure by the time [of my marriage] I'll just forget it and let everyone else get on with it. I trust everyone else in the family, that's the thing. I trust they'd get the right outfit and they'd get the right jewellery and everything, because they're quite modern. They're quite in with the times. (Leyla)

As mentioned above, one wedding outfit and many sets of fancy clothes to be worn after the wedding will be provided by the groom's side, and the choices made by those who do not know the bride so well may be less successful. Raisa, for example, keeps her wedding photographs hidden so as not to be reminded of the awful clothes and make-up she was made to wear on her wedding day.

Decisions on how the wedding will proceed may also be criticised by more distant relatives. Asma's husband's family did not ask for *jahez* (dowry) as the couple were going to live in Britain, and Asma's father provided household goods for them when they set up house independently in Bristol. One of Asma's aunts from a village background, however, goaded Asma's mother about the decision saying, 'Oh, don't you want to give anything to them? Like a bed or some cupboards?' The family stood their ground, but in other cases people may bow to pressure from relatives so that, for example, *meñhdīs* may be held for young men and women who do not believe in them.

The style of a wedding thus becomes a corporate decision, and family styles develop over time. People often explain the presence or absence of particular practices in their marriages by what 'we' as a family do or do not do. There can, however, be differences between even close relatives – on a marriage between first cousins, one side may hold a *meñhdī* while the other does not. When Tahir married Asma, he was keen to sit beside his fiancée on their *meñhdī*, but his attempts to have a romantic night were foiled:

I asked, 'Can we sit together?' My mother also asked, 'Let them sit together', but their side didn't let us... That's a relatively new style. Some people do it that way – quite a few changes coming in now... I wanted to sit close to her! One thing I did was I got her a rose, one of my friends got a rose. I went quietly over the hall – she was in separate room – and tried to enter... She's got a big aunt. She's quite big and fat and she came in the way... [Boys in Pakistan are] quite romantic, they are, most of them. I don't know why but most of them think that way about girls – maybe the frustration or something!

Iram's Walīma

The next day we boarded a coach hired for the occasion and set off for Hamid's village. When we arrived, we were shown straight into a room where Iram was sitting in a gold *lahngā* on the double bed sent by her family, which was decorated with strings of multicoloured tinsel. I followed as her relatives went up one by one to embrace her, and then took their seats or went outside to the courtyard where more chairs had been laid out. Some whispered something to her – Shanaz asked if she had taken a bath,¹⁶ while the younger Bristol women had other concerns – as Shabanna sat down, her cousin asked, 'Did she have a good night?'

Shanaz pushed her youngest son forward, 'Go and *mil* your sister' she instructed (*milna* is the verb to meet). Shanaz was wearing her gold jewellery and make-up today – yesterday she had worn neither and had never taken off the black shawl covering the beautiful blue *shalwār qamīṣ* she had had made for this special occasion. She had spent the wedding day stressed and avoiding the cameras, but now that her responsibilities were discharged and the wedding had passed off smoothly she was able to relax. All that was left now was the visa to bring Hamid to Bristol. After a meal, the guests departed.

Seeing the bride

I have never accompanied the *bārāt* as they take the bride home, but am told that she is seated on the bed in which she will spend the first night with her husband. People may visit to view the new bride. When the couple are left alone together, it is traditional for the groom to persuade his shy young bride to lift her veil and show her face by giving her a gift, usually of a ring. This is called the *muñh-dikhā'ī*, which literally means 'showing the face'. Of course most couples have seen each other before, and one young woman from Bristol told me of her wedding night in a way which seems to contradict the image of the shy new wife, as she playfully argued over the lifting of her veil:

It was our *muñh-dikhā'ī* time and my husband actually ordered me a ring but it wasn't ready for our wedding day... so he gave me a thousand rupees... [but she

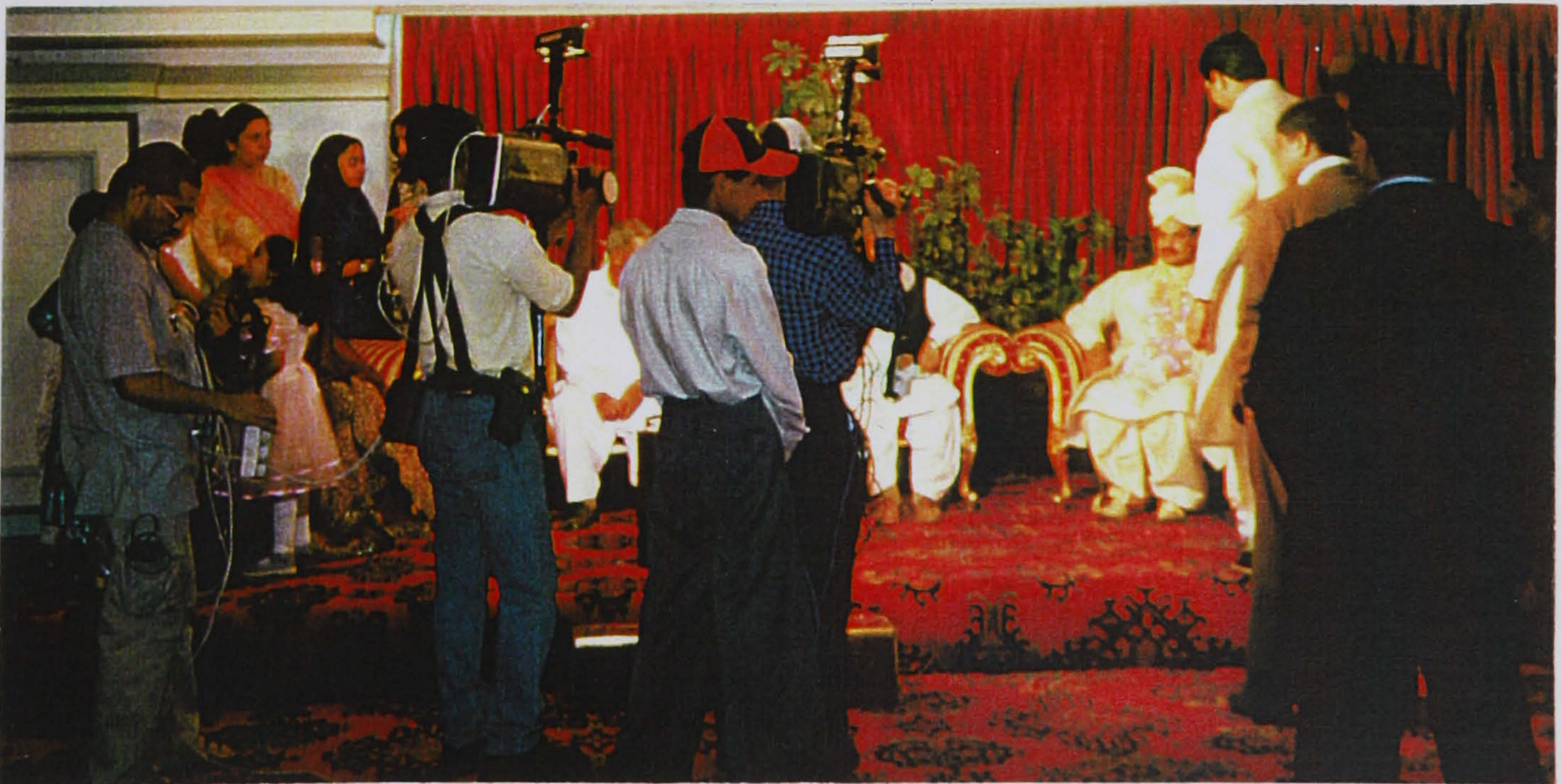
¹⁶ For Muslims, sexual intercourse causes a state of impurity that must be removed by washing (see Shaw 2001a: 213).

said] ‘When you’ve brought my ring, [then] you can pull my scarf up!’ And he said to me, ‘What can I give you?’... And he took his watch off and he took his ring off, and he said, ‘You keep this. I promise you I’ve got your thing. You keep hold of this, you don’t have to give it back to me... I promise you sure I’ve got this for you and we’ll go tomorrow, we’ll go see that man’... And I said to him, ‘This isn’t really enough!’... He was a bit nervous [saying] ‘Oh my God what shall I do!’ And he took his watch off and his ring and said you have this. And I said, ‘I suppose it will have to do!’ (Shareen)

In light of the intimacy of the *muñh-dikhā’ī*, a startling feature of many wedding albums is the intrusion of the camera into this moment. The bride may be photographed sitting on the decorated wedding bed, veiled and with her skirts spread out around her. In some photo-shoots I have seen, the camera mimics the new husband’s view in a close-up as the young woman lifts the scarf covering her face. Women I have talked to about this say they find it embarrassing to be photographed on the bed in this way.

I can only surmise that this might not be the only change that photographic technology has brought to Pakistani weddings. As has been seen several times in this description of Iram’s *meñhdī*, the video and stills cameras are given pride of place at weddings to the extent that guests struggle to get a view of the proceedings. Interestingly, there are hints that it is not only at the *muñh-dikhā’ī* that the camera seems to undermine the traditional practices of modesty of the bride. At another wedding, for example, the bride’s head was originally covered with a modest brown embroidered shawl, which had to be removed so that the camera could capture the beauty of the intricately beaded fabric of the wedding dress. I have been told that in earlier times when the couple was seated together for the first time as man and wife, the bride’s head was completely covered, and a mirror might be placed between them so that they could glimpse each other’s faces. The importance of the *muñh-dikhā’ī* as the first viewing in private is highlighted under such circumstances, but it may be that the demands of the camera helped to advance the viewing of the bride’s face so that it is now uncovered on the wedding day itself. Undermining the significance of *muñh-dikhā’ī* is taken further by the intrusion of the camera into the marital bedroom. As will be seen in a later chapter, some confusion and lack of knowledge of the practice now seems to exist among young people in both Britain and Pakistan.

Not only the camera, but the camera operator or operators can be an intrusive presence. To satisfy the demands of the lens, the private celebration of the *meñhdī* is exposed to the gaze of a male outsider – all the camera operators I have seen have been men. I have often heard young women at weddings refer to the camera-man as ‘video uncle’. The



Picture Eleven (top) The bride sits on a decorated bed with her mother at a *walima* in her husband's home in Pakistan.

Picture Twelve (bottom) The film crew at a hotel wedding in Pakistan.

English word ‘uncle’ is often used by young British Pakistanis as a term of respect for older men, but here may also moderate the undesirability of an unrelated man intruding into the predominantly female space of the *meñhdī*. I am also tempted to speculate that the tradition of women singing bawdy songs to each other at *meñhdīs* may come under threat from the exposure of the event to a wider audience, through self-censorship of behaviour that some might view as less than respectable.

Wedding videos (and photographs) and their production were thus a striking part of my fieldwork experience. Brides complain that the heat of lights and constant scrutiny add to the burden of maintaining their composure under the weight of both expectation and the elaborate wedding dress. My fieldnotes from Iram’s wedding note how struck I was by the intrusiveness of the cameras, which inevitably obscure the view of guests:

The groom is grinding his teeth. The camera is very close. The bride is brought down by her sisters, with her head lowered, and sits on the sofa beside the groom. They are filmed and photographed by successive people – lights bright in their faces as different relatives from both sides sit on the chairs and sofa beside them. I am uncomfortable with how much I’ve been filmed – interesting how I want to be invisible when so much emphasis is on the filming... This goes on for a long time – I move around a bit to try to get views – I’m not the only one standing on chairs and things. They both [the couple] look rigid.

The dominant presence of the camera reflects the importance of images of the wedding. The professional video team may also be joined by relatives with their own still or video cameras. Videos and photographs are kept as mementos by the bride and groom and their families, and may circulate locally and globally, allowing many more people to participate, at least in terms of imagination, in the event. In this way, they aid in the maintenance of relations between kin and friends, and between Pakistan and the diaspora. They also document the splendour of the occasion and thus are a testimony to the status families hope to display at such events, and the affection lavished upon the bride. Guests are filmed, charting the relatives, friends and acquaintances in attendance. For this reason, videos may even present an opportunity for viewers to spot potential *rishte* for themselves or their relatives. Videos and photographs may not only be sent over great distances, but are also durable. As time goes by they can become a cherished record not only of events, but also of relationships. All these factors contribute to the value of such media in the long term

maintenance of relationships across continents.¹⁷

Later chapters focus on the arrangement of transnational marriages, and the subsequent experiences of both migrant and resident spouses. Several themes that have emerged in this introductory ethnography will continue to underlie the discussion, including gendered experience; the contrasts between religion, tradition and modernity; and the interplay of legislation, strategy, kinship and emotion in producing a dynamic practice. This chapter has also started to explore some of the experiences of British Pakistani visitors to Pakistan in the context of their own and their relatives' marriages. Humour, enjoyment, and uncertainty have all been present in their words and actions. The following chapter will attempt to site this ethnography within the broader processes and literature of globalisation and transnationalism, and will end by returning to Iram's brothers at the *walīma* as they 'mil' their newly married sister. A review of the actions and narratives that have been presented in this chapter, in combination with further ethnographic material, will then allow an exploration of the individual and characteristic forms of transnationalism presented by these young people.

¹⁷ They are a form of tele-vision in its most literal sense. Interestingly, the name of the Indian national television station, Doordarshan, is composed of the words *dur* (far, distant) and *darśan* (view, sight). Platts' dictionary definition of *dur-darśan* includes 'Far-sightedness; long-sightedness; foresight' (2000[1884]: 532) – providing a further linkage between vision across time and across distance.

Chapter Two

Globalisation and the Transnational Pakistani Community¹

The Pakistani community in Britain has been described as an ‘enclave’ (Werbner 1987), and much has been written on attempts to maintain community boundaries vis-à-vis the majority White population, from the ‘myth of return’ to resurgent Islamic identity. In the first, intentions of returning to Pakistan provided an incentive for the maintenance of cultural practices and social networks in the face of pressure and opportunity to ‘integrate’ or ‘assimilate’ (Anwar 1979; Jeffery 1976a). As it has become obvious that many Pakistani immigrants have settled permanently in Britain, and generations have been born and educated here, Alison Shaw argues that an interest in the maintenance of a distinct identity has been fostered by the emergence of Islamic movements (1994). However, although some anthropologists have documented ties with Pakistan (Jeffery 1976a; Shaw 1988; Werbner 1990), a study of the ongoing practice of marriages between British Pakistanis and people from Pakistan necessitates a reconceptualisation of the Pakistani community in Britain that places greater emphasis on these transnational networks.

The enclave paradigm does little to explain the continuing practice of transnational arranged marriage, which must be understood in light of both Pakistani marriage practices and wider patterns of international migration from Pakistan (e.g. Noman 1990). My thesis joins recent scholarship in moving away from an ethnic minorities approach, to one focussing on membership of transnational communities. This move has been in the wake of the rise of globalisation theory, and a large part of this chapter will review this literature to explore its consequences for the study of transnational Pakistani marriages.

One danger in this transition, however, is that the previous model of homogeneous, bounded groups, may be replaced by another, albeit transnational, homogeneity.² Attempts have been made to conceptualise differing transnationalisms – as ‘scapes’ (Appadurai 1990) or the ‘cosmopolitan’/‘local’ distinction (Hannerz 1990) – but there are limits to the extent that the complexity and diversity of transnational involvements can be captured by the broad theoretical brushstrokes of much writing on transnationalism and globalisation. It is here that

¹ Sections of this chapter draw on the literature review in my MSc thesis (University of Edinburgh, 2000).

² However, see Sahlins (1999) and Freidman (2002) for arguments that an earlier anthropology based on essentialised homogeneity did not exist. This theme will be taken up again in the latter part of the following chapter on the concept of *rishta*.

ethnography is crucial. Work such as Pnina Werbner's (2002a) article on 'chaordic' structures of transnational Pakistani religious and political networks is instructive in the exercise of documenting this complex picture. My research, however, explores the domestic nature of transnationalism in connections of kinship that form the experiential basis of global and local relationships.

Furthermore, a focus on marriage brings variation within the transnational community to the fore, an aspect touched upon in another of Werbner's (1996) articles, this time on the varying transnational 'spaces' available to men and women of differing ages, but one worthy of more explicit attention. Following participants through transnational marriages demonstrates the role of gender, kinship, life-course events, and 'lifestage' in creating variation in individuals' engagement with the transnational. Finally, this chapter will conclude with a return to Iram's wedding as a case study of how some young British Pakistanis manage their transnational experience.

Terminology: transnationalism, and 'globaloney'

Globalisation was a favoured topic in the social sciences at the end of the twentieth century. Not only was it the subject of the 1999 Reith Lectures (Giddens 1999), but its inclusion in the 'thematic priorities' of the Economic and Social Research Council guaranteed its continuing popularity, at least amongst British academics, through the initial years of the new century. This prevalence is particularly noticeable in the political sphere – Prime Minister Blair, for example, perhaps influenced by Giddens, has been making frequent use of the concept of globalisation for several years. Indeed, Hay and Watson suggested in 1999 that 'globe talk' (Holton 1988) is so prevalent in debates on public policy that, '[t]o have no opinion on globalisation is effectively to disqualify oneself from having anything to say about the way our world looks as we reach the millennium' (p418).

There are, however, voices of dissent, and several of these will be addressed in this chapter. In a review of three books on globalisation, Farrell criticises globalisation as 'fast theory' or 'but the latest in a long line of hooks on which to hang speculative debates about modernity', and cites with approval Micheal Mann's humorous neologism 'globaloney' (2001: 390). Stressing the need for theoretical formulations to be grounded in empirical research, Farrell writes:

There are literally hundreds of global theorists rhapsodising about the power of transnational networks and forms of life. But little is known, in truth, about how these emergent transnational patterns of living fit or disrupt the basically sedentary structures of the vast majority of the world's population who do not

migrate and who do not live transnational lives. One suspects the lived experiences of these transnational pioneers to be immensely difficult and unsettling, often tragic; full of unpredictable social trajectories that clash with the perceptions and expectations of most people around them, the 'normal' life led within a nation-state community. What wonderful material this could provide for future sociologists working to do fine-grained humanistic, empirical studies of the impact of globalisation. And what a pity it is that there is so little trace of this kind of sociological imagination in these books (2001: 398).

Writing on globalisation is undoubtedly overwhelmingly theoretical, and furthermore deals predominantly with corporate 'top-down' formations, rather than 'bottom-up' transnationalism. However, two critical comments should be added to Farell's statement from the perspective of the current study. First, whilst the theory-heavy nature of much writing on globalisation is common across the social sciences, it may be that anthropology is providing more in the way of 'fine-grained humanistic, empirical studies of the impact of globalisation' than sociology as portrayed by Farell. Indeed, a special issue of the same journal in which Farell makes this complaint featured five anthropological accounts of transnational ritual (Al-Ali 2002; Gardner 2002; Mand 2002; Olwig 2002; Salih 2002), and with regard to British Pakistanis, Pnina Werbner has published several recent pieces grappling with the complexity of transnational formations (1994; 1996; 2002a; 2002b). This study joins these works in the project of the ethnography of transnational social phenomena. My second caveat is an empirical point: it is my contention that the majority of British Pakistanis and Pakistanis living in Britain do, to a greater or lesser extent, 'live transnational lives', even if they themselves are not migrants. I will return to this issue later.

The emergent transnational anthropology, Hannerz notes, has spawned a plethora of terms to describe its subject (of which he considers flows, boundaries and hybrids to be key) (2002). Many of these will be encountered in the proceeding discussion of key debates in globalisation, but even before embarking on such a portrait it is necessary to grapple with the vocabulary with which to delineate the field of study. One possibility is to refer to the 'Pakistani diaspora'. Here Clifford's (1997) review of the diaspora concept is a useful starting point. He points out that several populations commonly referred to as diaspora do not fit the 'checklist' approach of some theorists. The main features of such a list are 'a history of dispersal, myths/memories of the homeland, alienation in the host... country, desire for eventual return, ongoing support of the homeland, and a collective identity importantly defined by this relationship' (p247). 'Overseas Pakistanis', as they are called by the Pakistani government, would also not strictly fit this model. For instance, although some British Pakistanis do say they would like to live in Pakistan, many others are clearly oriented towards Britain, which they perceive as a home rather than a 'host' society. Clifford cites

Amitav Ghosh's argument that the South Asian diaspora is 'oriented not so much to roots in a specific place and a desire for return as around an ability to recreate a culture in diverse locations' (p249). Indeed, although the concept has its roots in Jewish dispersal, Clifford notes that Medieval Mediterranean Jewish populations themselves do not fulfil the criteria, having, for example, multiple 'centres', rather than a yearning for a single point of origin. He nonetheless finds value in the concept, which blends 'roots and routes' in community consciousness, and argues for a more flexible, polythetic definition of diaspora.

However, even with an expanded definition that would include British Pakistanis, diaspora is not my preferred term of reference for the populations that are the object of this study. Whilst the 'enclave' model, and more broadly the ethnic minorities or race relations approaches to studying such groups has had a British focus, diaspora implies a 'centre' in Pakistan. By choosing to describe my study as of a transnational community I hope to avoid privileging or, more importantly, peripheralising either physical location.

Whilst Farrell uses transnationalism and globalisation interchangeably, Levitt argues that the terms should be conceptually separated. The former, she writes, is 'the cultural, economic, and political linking of people and institutions within a variety of contexts including business and organizational practices, foreign investment and production, or cultural interchange' (2001: 202). Globalisation, on the other hand, refers to 'the political, economic and social activities that have become interregional or intercontinental and to the intensification of levels of interaction and interconnectedness within and between states and societies' (2001: 202). Furthermore, these general phenomena should not be confused with 'transnational migration'. Portes (1998), however, asserts that the processes are intrinsically interlinked, citing examples where migrants created by global capitalism start cross-border economic enterprises, which in turn create transnational social and cultural bonds.

Whilst much ink is being spilt in the quest to establish an orthodoxy on the subject, I will take the opportunity to pick and choose elements of these authors' often conflicting definitions to provide a working meaning for my usage of the adjective 'transnational'. Contra Levitt, I find Portes' suggestion that state and corporate activities be excluded from the category appealing. He suggests that 'international' and 'multinational' are more appropriate labels for the two former activities, leaving 'transnationalism' to refer to the often informal activities of 'non-institutional actors, be they organized groups or networks of individuals across national borders' (2001: 186). This is the 'bottom-up' transnationalism whose relative absence I lamented above. This contrast has been phrased in several ways: 'transnationalism from above' versus 'transnationalism from below' (Smith & Guarnizo

1998); ‘great’ versus ‘little’ transnationalism from an Indianist perspective³ (Gardner 2002); or in terms of the ‘public’ versus ‘private’ contrast (Mand 2002). Even when anthropologists have studied this ‘micro’ level transnationalism, note Gardner and Grillo, the focus has been on remittances and economic activity, leaving the ‘transnational domestic sphere’ poorly documented (2002: 179). Although one might question the vocabulary of ‘private’ and ‘domestic’, the study of transnational marriages and kinship is a step towards filling this ethnographic gap.

I use the term ‘community’ both following Anderson (1983) in the sense of an imagined entity, and in reference to its indigenous usage by British Pakistanis, as discussed in the Introduction. Contra Anthias (1998), however, I do not understand the concept of community to presume homogeneity. Nor does my categorisation of this population as a group, for some analytical purposes, rest solely on an attribution of common origin, but is supported by transnational processes such as ongoing intermarriage. Gardner casts doubt on the idea of a transnational Bangladeshi community on two grounds. First, like Anthias, that such groups involve internal inequalities. Her second objection is that ‘transnationalism is a process, not a fixed state of being’, and although Bangladeshi marriage migration to the UK continues, ‘the general drift of activities, investment and ritual is towards Britain’ (2002: 201-2). I see no reason to attribute stasis to the concept of community, but to respond to the other implication of this suggestion, which could equally be made of British Pakistanis, I return to my assertion that the majority of non-migrant British Pakistanis are, or will be at some point in their lives, transnational in some sense. Not only will a significant proportion of their relatives or acquaintances be married to migrants, but with substantial numbers of close kin still living in Pakistan, it is unlikely that their orientation can be purely local. By this I mean Levitt’s ‘expanded’ rather than ‘core’ variety of transnationalism. Individuals, she suggests, can participate in transnational social fields in various ways and to varying degrees (‘comprehensive’ or ‘selective’), and migration or frequent cross-border travel is not a prerequisite for transnationalism (2001). The course of this chapter, and indeed this thesis, will document some of the many varieties of transnational Pakistani involvement.

Having said all this, I do not wish to make too much of the issue of labelling. As Clifford points out, the terms used in this field are translational and overlapping, bleeding into each other and creating difficulty in ‘maintaining exclusivist paradigms in our attempts to account for transnational identity formations’ (1997: 247). Whilst ‘transnational’ is my preferred description, there will be contexts in the following discussion, and indeed

³ Echoing the distinction between ‘great’ and ‘little’ religious traditions.

throughout the thesis, when diaspora or other terms lend themselves better to illuminating features of the situation. Moreover, although ‘transnationalism’ is now growing in usage amongst academics, perhaps in the wake of growing interest in politicised nationalism in the latter part of the last century, much significant work on these issues has been done under the rubric of the influential concept of globalisation. Hence the following sections will review some of the debates surrounding globalisation, with particular reference to Islam, and outline how selected elements of these theoretical developments may be relevant to the study of marriages within the transnational Pakistani community.

Homogenisation and Cultural Difference

Aspects of the earlier World Systems Theory’s core and periphery model (Featherstone 1990: 5) remain implicit in some writing on globalisation, which is often taken to mean the spread of aspects of Western (or American) ‘cultural forms and institutions because of colonialism, trade, missionary activity, technological change and the incorporation of tribal peoples into states and large-scale systems of exchange’ (Eriksen 1995: 278). In anthropology, concern over the ‘fatal impact’ (Sahlins 1999: 400) on small societies of cultural contact and integration into world systems can be found as early as Malinowski (Eriksen 1995). Others, however, view some of these changes involved in such processes in a more positive light.

Of particular interest to the current study are Giddens’ remarks on marriage and the family. The ‘traditional family’, he writes, has at its heart inequality between men and women. Hence the global decline of the ‘traditional family’ and the rise of ‘coupledom’ or the ‘pure relationship’, with its focus on intimacy, love, and the ‘democracy of the emotions in everyday life’, should be welcomed (1999; see also Giddens 1992). It might then be expected that Pakistani arranged marriage, and therefore most transnational marriage between Pakistanis, might dwindle to extinction in the face of the globalisation of intimacy. However, recent work in Hindu India has shown that what might be considered the ‘traditional’ kinship practice of the co-resident joint family to have increased rather than declined in the age of globalisation, as migrant men leave their families living with parents or brothers in the village (Wadley 2002). Moreover, the empirical basis for the rise of the ‘pure relationship’ in the West has been brought into question (Jamieson 1999), and Giddens’ ‘traditional family’ may also turn out to be a straw man. Recent work on marriage in India suggests that rigid, unemotional models of marriage may have been an elite

‘invented tradition’,⁴ taken as social fact by European colonists and scholars (Parry 2001). Debate has also raged for many years as to whether it is appropriate to describe gender roles and divisions of labour and space as inequalities (e.g. Strathern 1987). Furthermore, although Giddens admits cultural variation in form, a concept that essentially collapses contemporary Chinese arranged marriages with medieval European ones may be increasingly unacceptable to academics sensitised to the discursive othering of contemporary cultures by temporal distancing (Fabian 1983).⁵

Suggestions of increasing global homogeneity are undermined by work on consumption or ‘indigenisation’ (Appadurai 1990: 295). It has become standard practice to note that although goods and images have worldwide dissemination, they may be interpreted and used in a wide variety of ways. Among *sapeurs* in Brazzaville, for example, the strategic placing of an imported soft drink in a car window forms part of a system of competitive prestige based on the consumption of a set of key goods (Friedman 1990), and in Bangladesh, households without electricity proudly display collections of British electrical goods (Gardner 1993; cf. on rural Pakistan, Shaw 1988: 57). In South Asia, Breckenridge’s edited collection, *Consuming Modernity*, documents how consumption practices surrounding a variety of things from cricket to the cinema create a diverse, contested and distinctive Indian modern public culture (1995). A focus on the products in circulation and their (Western) point of origin would thus mask the variation in their meanings in cultural context.

Indeed, the politicisation of cultural, national or ethnic differences seems, if anything, to be on the increase in the age of globalisation. Culture, in the very bounded and reified form so vehemently rejected by contemporary anthropologists and sociologists, seems to be in unparalleled demand (Sahlins 1999; Stolcke 1995; see also AlSayyad & Castells 2002; Friedman 2002), ethnic identity remains an important issue for British South Asians (Baumann 1996) and ethnic conflicts occur with unfortunate frequency. In Pakistan, several internal ethnic conflicts have arisen (see Van Hollen 1987). In addition, after the civil war that culminated in the accession of Bangladesh in 1971, saris (a form of women’s dress common in India and the former East Pakistan, Bangladesh) fell out of favour as what was

⁴ See Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983.

⁵ Fabian writes of anthropology as ‘a discourse whose referent has been removed from the present of the speaking/writing subject. This “petrified relation”’ he continues, ‘is a scandal. Anthropology’s Other is, ultimately, other people who are our contemporaries’ (1983: 143).

West Pakistan attempted to establish an independent cultural identity, and women were encouraged to adopt the *shalwār qamīṣ* (Rouse 1998).⁶

For Giddens, neo-traditionalism is a child of globalisation in two ways. The nation-state has become not only too small for global issues, but too large and weakened to deal with local problems, leading to a drive for other identities. Tradition is also in conflict with global modernisation, with institutions such as marriage becoming crucial sites of struggle between ‘fundamentalism’ and ‘cosmopolitanism’. ‘Fundamentalism’, which presumably includes the wish to maintain religiously-prescribed marriage forms, is here seen as a ‘refusal of dialogue in a world whose peace and continuity depend on it’ (1999). Others, however, avoid the thorny question of whether globalisation is an inevitable process of modernisation. For Friedman, a culture’s position in the world system contributes to its habitus, which may be more or less similar to the cultures with which it comes into contact, in turn leading to varying degrees of disruption and change (1990).

Tension between homogenisation and heterogenisation can also be seen in the contradictory role of place in Appadurai’s writing on globalisation. Global deterritorialisation and the spread of people, media and communications produce a situation in which ‘primordia (language, kinship, neighbourhood) have become globalised’ (Appadurai 1990: 306). Sentiments with the ‘ability to ignite intimacy in politics and turn locality into a staging ground for identity’ (Appadurai 1990: 306) have become spatially dispersed. Simultaneously, however a phenomenon of ‘production fetishism’ has developed, in which location of production becomes all important (e.g. Free Trade Zones, or the ‘Buy British’ campaign). Appadurai suggests that this fetishism, and the ideology of consumer choice, serve to mask the transnational flows and power relations involved in production and consumption (Appadurai 1990).

In a more actor-centred, less Marxist interpretation, Robin Cohen quotes Hall to explain ‘the apparent paradox of particularism in the midst of globalisation’:

The face-to-face communities that are knowable, that are locatable, one can give them a place. One knows what the voices are. One knows what the faces are. The re-creation, the reconstruction of imaginary, knowable places in the face of the global postmodern which has, as it were, destroyed the identities of specific places, absorbed them into this postmodern flux of diversity. So one understands the moment when people reach for those groundings. (Hall quoted in Cohen 1997: 169)

⁶ Although, as seen in the description of Iram’s wedding, saris are currently making a comeback as a fashionable garment in Pakistan.

With reference to the Pakistani diaspora, such a ‘reach for groundings’ may be seen in the aim of creating *des par-des*, or home from home, in the form of a Pakistani ‘community’ and facilities in Britain (Ballard 1994a).⁷ Rather than refusals of dialogue with modern global realities, the continuation of kinship ties and obligations seen in transnational marriages between diasporic Pakistanis and people from Pakistan can be viewed as part of the work of maintaining broader ‘groundings’ such that *des par-des* is not merely an enclave in a foreign culture, but forms part of a wider transnational Pakistani community.

The idea of deterritorialisation, of course, has its limits. Although much has been made of the troubled relationship between state and nation in the age of globalisation, nation-state boundaries remain crucial in many domains. World Systems Theory’s ‘internationalism’ was criticised for using nation states as the building blocks of the system, rather than treating globalisation as a process that operates relatively independently of these conventional units (Featherstone 1990: 5). Nevertheless, transnational marriages must negotiate national immigration systems, and issues of citizenship come to the fore when dealing with international migration.⁸ Even in these matters, however, there is scope for supranational processes to intervene, as immigration decisions and policies may be appealed in the European courts, or with reference to international declarations of human rights (e.g. Alibhai-Brown 1998). Nonetheless, the term ‘transnational’ has additional value as mnemonic to signify the continuing role of the nation-state in shaping and limiting transnational kinship practices.

Dissecting Globalisation

The mention of several global processes above (migration, communication, power) brings us to the key theme of Appadurai’s influential paper, the dissection of ‘globalisation’ into multiple strands. Rather than a single process, he proposes several complex, overlapping, and disjunctive elements. Using the suffix ‘scape’, he calls these: ‘ethnoscapes’ (movements of people), ‘technoscapes’ (movements of technology), ‘financescapes’, ‘mediascapes’ (including images created by media) and ‘ideoscapes’ (images, often political, such as state ideologies, which may be closely related to mediascapes). Appadurai particularly focuses on the flows that occur in the ‘disjunctions’ between these processes, for

⁷ Literally: (home) country abroad. During earlier fieldwork, this concept was mentioned repeatedly by a Bristol Asian voluntary organisation during an exercise to design a new community centre. It also forms the title of a well known volume on South Asians in Britain, *Desh Pardesh* (Ballard 1994a)

⁸ See also Gardner (2002) on the bureaucracy involved in burial of British Bangladeshis in Bangladesh, and Mand (2002) on organising Sikh marriages in Africa and India.

example, the changes brought about when states with ideologies of cultural separation find themselves under pressure to stay open to the movements of finance and technology (Appadurai 1990). Such a point of disjuncture is demonstrated by Anita Weiss' (1994) account of women in urban Pakistan, where government Islamic ideology and traditional practices of seclusion are at odds with the changing labour market and international feminist agendas. Urban centres in Pakistan have had direct and indirect contact with other parts of the world through trade and travel for centuries, but it is the speed and scope of these networks that have changed. Where previous developments primarily affected Pakistani men, the new techno- (and therefore) media- (and therefore) ideo-scapes have penetrated the domestic sphere and had increased impact on women. Weiss goes so far as to suggest that an increase in sexual assault may be attributed to male frustration caused by these disjunctures between local and global ideologies and practices (1994).⁹

Across the world, many members of the transnational Pakistani community are experiencing increasing access to new Pakistani, Asian, or Islamic media- and ideoscapes, in addition to the 'Western' ones more commonly discussed in relation to globalisation. Ideas about marriage are not only influenced by Western models encountered through the media or residence in Europe or North America, but also the spread of influence of romantic Hindi movies through video, satellite and, most recently, cable television. In addition, the Islamic press and religious leaders in Britain appeal to interpretations of doctrine with diverse regional origins, and which have dynamic relationships with world current affairs. A good illustration of this is provided by Werbner (1997), writing on British Pakistani 'fabulations' of the Gulf War, of which more will be said later.

A marriage partner from either Pakistan or a Western country may be chosen with reference to any number of these ideoscapes. Western-born Pakistanis may be considered suspect by Pakistani residents, as they are thought likely to have been influenced by the type of behaviours and values demonstrated in American films, or in accounts of British life relayed by returnees. Equally, the UK may be pictured as having material advantages.¹⁰ A Pakistani husband or wife may also be viewed by British-born Pakistanis as representing anything from a bastion of religious or moral purity, to uneducated 'hicks from the sticks', although such evaluations are not mutually exclusive. Influenced by Hindi films, young women in particular may hanker after the romantic splendour of a Pakistani wedding.

⁹ If, on the other hand, this statistic is an artefact due to increased reporting, one might ask whether the same ideo- and media-scapes had influenced women's decision to report.

¹⁰ Pakistani television has featured dramas with story-lines concerning Pakistani families living in Western countries, often with luxurious lifestyles.

Increased ease of international travel both adds to the numbers of ‘ideoscapes’ encountered, and makes the practice of transnational marriage increasingly possible, whilst techno- and mediascapes influence material expectations: from the benefits of migration, to the composition of marriage gifts. The styles of the many items of clothing Iram was given on her marriage, for example, were the product of dynamic interactions between British and Pakistani fashions. Towering platform sandals popular with young women in Britain at the time took on a distinctly Pakistani character with gold ornamentation set into clear plastic soles, the fashion for thick bases providing an opportunity to elaborate the local passion for gold decoration.

Global Village or Global Pillage:¹¹ Resistance and Hegemony

Although Appadurai states his position in opposition to centre-periphery theory, he might well agree with Ahmed and Donnan that ‘because of their origins, some flows – mainly those “in the West” – have more force than others and so reach a wider audience’ (1994: 3). Small societies, Appadurai writes, always fear cultural absorption by larger societies, and states may exploit this fear to protect their own hegemonic strategies (1990: 295).

Such assertions, however, provoked a cry of exasperation from Marshall Sahlins (1999). ‘Resistance’ theories of sustained heterogeneity, he suggests, are the outcome of a backlash within anthropology against the concept of culture. ‘[S]howing political function’, he writes, ‘is not adequate interpretation’ (p402). In other words, description of power relations does not adequately account for the variety of cultural responses to the processes termed globalisation. Creating ‘cultural space in the (modern) global scheme of things’ through the use of cultural markers, he argues, is merely the ‘normal mode of cultural production’, and one that, far from being a novel phenomenon, was familiar to social scientists long before the postmodern turn (Sahlins 1999: 410-11).

It is also, he asserts, a conceit to imagine that only contact with the West can endow a sense of cultural awareness (ibid: 411). Similarly, as Featherstone outlines, globalisation itself is a concept developed in a particular time and place. ‘Western’ concepts and the English language, however, form dominant discourses in many fields of transnational communication including much scholarship and economic activity. The West ‘is both a particular in itself and also constitutes the universal point of reference in relation to which

¹¹ Unnamed source in Giddens (1999).

others recognise themselves as particularities' (Featherstone 1990: 12). Drawing out the political consequences of such a situation, Hay and Watson warn that the wholesale acceptance by governments of the inevitability of globalisation, a concept they consider most meaningful and beneficial to the privileged, risks denying opportunities for alternative forms of development (1999).

Islam and Globalisation

The influence of, and reactions against 'the West' are not only theoretically, but ethnographically important. 'Westernisation' is a topic about which strong opinions are held amongst Pakistanis in both Britain and Pakistan, to the extent that proper Muslim behaviour may be defined in opposition to 'Western values'. Young women at the University in Rawalpindi frequently made statements to me about the decadence of the West, contrasting single motherhood to sexual continence, or old people's homes to the warmth of the extended family. Needless to say, both pictures present ideologically motivated stereotypes.

Recent writings on Islam, however, present an alternative perspective on transnational processes. The growth of world religions such as Islam has been linked to globalisation. Easier travel allows growing diasporas contact with religious epicentres, which, combined with the passion created by absence, rejuvenates both the pilgrim and the centre. Moreover, Appadurai views deterritorialisation as at the core of religious 'fundamentalism' (1990; also Giddens 1999). This is not, however, the only interpretation of the current global features of Islam. Featherstone's aetiology of globalisation in sociology points to the importance of the nation-state and its perceived decline for the development of the concept (1990: 2), but it has been suggested that while European nationalism was developing, the Muslim World was turning not to the veneration of the nation, but to its own high culture in the form of certain interpretations of Islam (Gellner 1994).

In support of an Islamic perspective on global processes, Ahmed and Donnan point to a long history of Muslim networks and travel (1994, see also Netton 1993). Certain forms of travel are actively encouraged by Islam: *haj* (pilgrimage) and *hijra* (migration, breaking ties, and forming a new religious brotherhood); whilst tradition urges the quest for knowledge abroad.¹² These journeys, and the networks they create, are seen as strengthening the *umma* (Muslim community) – a concept of a global unit and processes that predates globalisation theory by several hundred years (see also Lubeck 2002). The relationship of

¹² Each of these prescribed types of travel, however, have been subject to varying interpretations in different times and places. (cf. Masud 1990; Gellens 1990)

this global Muslim perspective with what the processes that have been termed globalisation is, however, contested. Whilst some of this scholarship seems to suggest the separate development of globalising Islam, others have suggested that the flows of globalisation lie at the basis of contemporary transnational Muslim movement and movements. AlSayyad writes that although ‘many Muslims resist Euro-American postindustrial culture on moral grounds, they often thrive in the infrastructure of globalization, which is the product of capitalism’ (2002: 10). Lubeck suggests that globalisation has in effect united the once isolated communities of the *umma*, quoting Turner’s ironic observation that, ‘while Islam had always claimed universalistic status, it was, prior to the emergence of contemporary communications systems, actually unable to impose this type of uniformity and universalism’ (2002: 79).

Just as in globalisation theory, however, contact with Muslims of other cultures may also lead to increasing differentiation: ‘the encounter with the Muslim “other” has been at least as important for self-definition as the confrontation with the European “other”’ (Eickelman & Piscatori 1990a: xv).¹³ The issue of centre and periphery in globalisation also has direct parallels in Islamic studies. Although Mecca may appear to observers as a paradigmatic centre, recent Islamist scholarship suggests a more complex position in which centres may be multiple, shifting, ‘fantasy’ or absent; and indeed there may be multiple ‘islams’ or interpretations of proper religious belief and practice (Eickelman & Piscatori 1990b; Mandel 1990). For some British Pakistanis, while Mecca undoubtedly has a special significance, Pakistan itself can be seen as a secondary religious centre, where people practice a purer form of the religious traditions found among British Pakistanis.¹⁴ As with earlier critiques of centre-periphery theory, such observations must cast doubt on whether these concepts are the most appropriate analytical tools in this context.

Global flows, culture and agency

At this point, some illustrations drawn from Pnina Werbner’s ethnography may ground the theoretical argument by showing the various processes outlined above ‘in action’ among British Pakistanis. In examining Manchester Pakistani support for Saddam Hussein during the 1991 Gulf War, she suggests that the media assisted in the creation both of an

¹³ Hansen’s work on Muslims in Bombay describes the opportunities to participate in this global Muslim culture and produce knowledge of both Muslim and non-Muslim through labour migration (2001).

¹⁴ Although it should also be noted that there is a common discourse that asserts that British Pakistani practice is often the more ‘pure’ because it rejects some of the mere ‘traditions’ that have come to sully South Asian Islam over the centuries.

‘imagined community’ of ‘ordinary Muslims’ and a perception of Western attempts at domination. Meanwhile, a local desire to create a political space for Pakistanis in Britain at this stage in the community’s development also interacted with divisions and discourses within Islam to produce this stance, which may be counter-intuitive from the point of view of local interests (1994).

A second study explores ‘fun spaces’, or arenas for culturally sanctioned enjoyment. In addition to reformist Islam and Western ‘commonwealth’ culture, she identifies a third ‘world’ for British Pakistanis in the form of a ‘pan South Asian aesthetic’ dominated by women’s wedding culture and young men’s sport, and made public through the media (Hindi movies and cricket). Again stressing the historical context of the community’s stage of development, Werbner foregrounds the agency of actors in negotiating new ‘fun spaces’, and argues that migration should not be seen as simple cultural transplantation, but as a process of material and cultural creativity (1996).

It is here that the strength of ethnography to balance theory becomes apparent, as this agency and creativity has been largely lacking from the accounts above. While Sahlins criticises globalisation theory for its universalism and lack of attention to culture and structure, his reification of culture has equally been attacked by those with a more postmodern bent. In the examples above, global processes combine with cultural habitus and individual creativity, demonstrating that the three are not necessarily at odds with each other, but rather operate on different but interacting levels.

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

Just as it is not necessary to state an opinion on which element of anatomy is the defining feature of a human – skeletal structures (which could be metaphorically treated as either global structures or structure in the more conventional cultural sense), connective tissue (‘scapes’?), blood (‘flows’?) or individual vessels, viruses and so on (people?) – a model of society should incorporate all these levels. The strength of ethnography is that at least sections of all of these processes may be visible from the ground, whereas individual acts of creative agency may be lost from the great height of theoretical overviews. Of course, the two have (to carry the biological metaphor yet further) a symbiotic relationship in anthropology, and current globalisation theorists often evoke earlier, more ambitious and universalist styles of writing on culture in their bold global perspectives.

Cosmopolitanism and Diasporas

A final aspect of the literature on globalisation that may be mentioned here is the concept of the ‘cosmopolitan’ as opposed to the ‘local’. The ‘cosmopolitan’, Hannerz argues, has an orientation towards learning about other cultures and is crucial to global cultural flows: ‘If there were only locals in the world, world culture would be no more than the sum of its separate parts’ (Hannerz 1990: 249). Hannerz’s characterisation excludes most British Pakistanis as labour migrants merely in search of ‘home plus’ wages, along with tourists (home plus sunshine) and exiles (home plus security). True cosmopolitans, for Hannerz, are disproportionately intellectual and Western due to opportunities afforded by largely Western transnational employment cultures. Small wonder, then, that Friedman criticises transnationalism and globalisation theorists as elitists who base their models of ‘globalization-as-transcendence’ on their own experiences of rapid and frequent academic travel and communication, looking down upon the ‘multiethnic bazaar or ethnic neighbourhood’ (2002: 27).

For the purposes of the current study, but bearing in mind earlier caveats on the privileging of ‘homeland’, it may be more useful to engage with Robin Cohen’s characterisation of diasporas as a ‘double facing type of social organization’ (1997: 170). This ability to negotiate the relationship between the local and the global diaspora, he suggests, means that diasporic communities have been able to take particular advantage of the processes described as globalisation, using kin and ethnic bonds to facilitate transnational trade and bringing creativity to improving their local situations (Cohen 1997: 170).¹⁵ Examples of this creativity among Muslim diasporas, however, are often submerged behind perceptions of Islam as a rigid religion that leaves little room for personal expression (Runnymede Trust 1997). Although popular perception of South Asian arranged marriages often focuses on the restrictive compulsion of tradition, as Ballard and Gardner point out, ongoing transnational marriage has allowed Mirpuris to ‘drive a coach and horses’ through the British government’s attempts to control immigration (n.d.).¹⁶

¹⁵ The success of diasporas is not, of course, universal – and Cohen has been criticised for such ‘over-celebratory’ pronouncements (Anthias 1998: 562). While Ceri Peach predicts a ‘Jewish’ future for Pakistanis and Indians, he sees Bangladeshis and Afro-Caribbeans as charting an ‘Irish’ path of continued blue collar occupation (1994: 50). The Pakistani population, however, currently shares many of the poor socio-economic and health indicators of the Bangadeshi community (Modood *et al.* 1998; Nazroo 1997).

¹⁶ However, this neutral language of cosmopolitanism and cultural flows should not be allowed to obscure issues of discrimination and disadvantage in the lives of members of diasporic minorities (Werbner & Modood 1997). Although multi-sited ethnography in the wake of globalisation may expand the scope of research, local and global relations of inequality remain part of the experiences of ethnographic subjects.

Perhaps the other most potent symbol of this perceived restrictiveness in recent years has been women's veiling, which in France in particular has become an issue of public and political contention. Watson's interviews with Muslim women in Western countries, however, suggest that veiling is a personal and political choice, a symbol employed in negotiating identity in two cultures, as well as a reaction to chaotic change (1994). Antoun's (1994) case studies of Jordanians gaining education as 'sojourners' in Western countries also illustrates ways in which individuals seek to regulate cultural flows engendered by residence abroad. By associating only with other Muslims outside his workplace, for example, one sojourner in Britain may have fitted stereotypes of immigrants who refuse to assimilate, preferring to live in an ethnic enclave. Antoun, however, interprets this as a strategy of 'compartmentalisation' of spheres of social activity in order to maintain a rooted identity.

In the control of cultural flows, marriage holds a crucial position. Women, it has been noted, are often treated as the bearers of community (Jeffery & Basu 1998; Yuval-Davis 1997), so unions between the sexes are critical cultural markers. In addition, marriage and childrearing are the means for cultural reproduction (Moghadam 1994; Yuval-Davis 1997). Thus, one of Antoun's informants who had experimented with girlfriends wanted a wife from 'back home' and planned to return to Jordan to ensure proper schooling for his children (1994: 106). Two young women in Bristol, Azra and Sumera, both married to men from Pakistan, also told me that they hoped to relocate to Pakistan after taking advantage of the better medical facilities for childbirth in the UK, in order to raise their offspring in a Muslim environment. However, such management of flows may not be as straightforward as it sounds. After the collapse of her marriage, Sumera is now unlikely to move to Pakistan and leave behind her remaining networks of support. Azra's first child is yet to be born, so it remains to be seen whether she and her husband do take the huge step of migrating. This is not to say, however, that such a move is impossible – as mentioned in the Introduction, the true extent of 'return' migration to Pakistan is not easily gauged – but simply that the upheaval of migration is likely, just as for an earlier generation, to mean that for most such dreams remain a 'myth of return'.

Moreover, such migration does not ensure success in the attempt to control cultural flows. One British couple I met in Pakistan had returned to the land of their birth to run a bakery near where I was staying, but their bored teenaged son was eagerly anticipating going back to a more exciting urban British life in order to pursue his studies. In the aftermath of the war in Afghanistan, sad tales also emerged of young British Pakistani men sent 'back home' to Pakistan in an effort to keep them away from drugs by parents presumably unaware of the extent of indigenous heroin use.

Being transnational: lifestage and engagement with transnationalism

Several of the authors discussed above have taken steps to deconstruct the conceptual homogeneity of globalisation, either in terms of differentiating participants, or the processes themselves. These range from perhaps questionable attempts to divide travellers into a cosmopolitan elite with the power to change the world and the masses who remain essentially local despite migration, to Appadurai's various flows. Clifford points to the need to take account of gender and other category distinctions in understanding the 'routes' of culture, asking:

What is the mix of choice and compulsion in the different mobilities of men and women? Are there significant class, racial, ethnic or religious factors cross-cutting gender? Does a focus on travel inevitably privilege male experience? What counts as 'travel' for men and women, in different settings? (1997: 6)

Pnina Werbner (1996) introduces gender and age into the ethnographic picture of transnational variation in the article on cultural 'spaces' that demonstrates ways in which women and young and old men have access to differing transnational arenas. Whilst older men dominate religious debates and organisations, young men follow sport, and women participate in 'Wedding Culture'. Katy Gardner (2002) documents how gender influences Bangladeshi women's ability to travel and participate in transnational ritual, leading many to experience additional grief when they cannot attend their husbands' funerals in Bangladesh. Ballard and Gardner (n.d.) have also pointed to the role of differing marriage practices in producing variation in the extent to which South Asian communities overseas preserve transnational links. Whilst Sikh populations have rapidly 'gone offshore' as they put it, maintaining exchanges with each other more than with the original 'home base', close kin marriage has meant that Pakistani connections to the homeland have remained stronger.

In this section, I would like to go further, suggesting that there is great *individual* variation in engagement with the transnational. Personal preference undoubtedly plays a role – two sisters I know consider their Pakistani relatives rude and 'backwards' and so do not want to visit the country again, let alone marry there. I will, however, argue that lifestage and crucial life events have a major role in producing both variation between individuals, and changes in orientation over the lifecourse. The two sisters in question thus hold opinions of Pakistan that are in large part a product of unhappy experience with migrant Pakistani husbands. The historical changes in pioneer Pakistani migrants' orientation from a 'five year plan' of return, to gradual acceptance that their settlement was permanent, as children were born and their lives became more and more entangled with their 'host' country, have been well documented. Here I will argue that life events – birth, death, and most importantly

marriage – can have comparable but diverging effects in re-orienting the next generation away from Britain or, on the other hand, in loosening transnational connections. Some case studies will serve to illustrate the argument.

Bushra, now in her forties, was brought to Britain as a young child and had all her schooling in the UK. With air travel expensive, she did not visit Pakistan frequently in her childhood and adolescence – although the family did make one mammoth overland trip to the subcontinent. When she married a Pakistani man of her parent's choosing, she thought that she would not have to make such choices for her own children. By the time they reached marriageable age, she presumed that practices would have changed and young people would be finding their own spouses in Britain.

Bushra speaks good Urdu, and during my fieldwork I would sometimes discuss my language learning with her. One day she confessed that she had not always spoken Urdu. As a child, her family had spoken Punjabi, so when she married she spoke only Punjabi and English. Then came her first trip with her husband to visit his family in Pakistan. Since the birth of Pakistan, Urdu has become increasingly spoken both as a marker of education and of national identity. Families are spoken of as Urdu- or Punjabi-*bolnewale* (-speaking), and matrimonial adverts in English language newspapers may specify that the advertiser is looking for a spouse from an Urdu-speaking background. Bushra's husband's family spoke Urdu, so during her first visit she was ashamed to talk and vowed to learn the language. By her next trip to Pakistan, she had learnt enough to communicate happily with her in-laws.

The couple keep up close communication with family in Pakistan and Bushra looks forward to the visits that she and her husband make as frequently as they can afford. The most recent of these was to organise and attend the marriage of her younger brother to a Pakistani relative. On another recent trip, a female relative of her husband approached her to suggest marriages between her children and their cousins in Pakistan, to which she happily agreed. At least one of the young couples is likely to settle in America, where other close relatives are prospering.

In her youth, Bushra was thus predominantly oriented towards Britain, and imagined a future for her family here. By contracting a transnational marriage, however, she became involved with networks that inevitably entailed closer engagement with Pakistan by necessitating visits, remittances, and involvement in the decisions of a family that now spanned the globe. In motherhood she became the pivotal figure in these transnational ties as future connections between the families were decided – it was, for example, Bushra rather than her husband with whom the Pakistani relative discussed the *rishta* between their

children. Her transnational involvement will be broadened and intensified as the families make arrangements to celebrate the marriages, multiply the kinship links between them, and continue to disperse across further continents.

In contrast, Rasham's transnational involvements have decreased as her life has progressed through crucial junctures. She suffered violence at the hands of her Pakistani migrant husband, and eventually divorced him. As her parents had also died, there was then less to bind her to either Pakistan or to the Pakistani community in Bristol. She now frequently dresses in 'Western' clothes in public, including sleeveless tops considered risqué by many, and has a close friend who is both Black and male – something that also might be viewed as a minor scandal by some. I was not surprised, therefore, to witness tensions come to a head when a heated argument broke out between her and the mothers of children who had been making critical remarks of her daughters. She does send her children to the mosque to learn the Quran, and to Urdu language lessons. It is unlikely, however, that she will arrange marriages for any of them in Pakistan, and as the years go on, the next generation may have little reason to visit their ancestral lands.

The power of marriages, above all lifecourse decisions, to ensure ongoing transnational involvement is not lost on parents eager to maintain connections with places and kin they left behind when they themselves migrated. Ghalib, who came to Britain for marriage in the 1970s, hopes that his son's wedding to a relative from Pakistan will facilitate his eventual retirement there. If he does retire to Pakistan and his wife, Rashida, goes with him, she will have come a long way from the little girl who was the 'only brown face' in her class, and who Ghalib found shockingly British when he arrived in the country to marry.

The lives of these older people present the opportunity for documenting changes in those who have experienced most of the crucial events of kinship. However, they have also seen great technological changes, and it must be born in mind that 'being transnational' in whatever sense and to whatever degree is greatly facilitated by improvements in communications and the increasing affordability of travel. Bushra and her children, for example, keep in regular contact with Pakistani relatives by email – live-time chatting is even possible at a fraction of the cost of a telephone call – and biennial or even annual visits to Pakistan are now within the financial reach of many.

The final section of this chapter looks at the generation who have grown up with these developments. It returns to Iram's wedding, as a starting point for an examination of how some young British Pakistanis, often in collaboration with their parents, manage their transnational experiences. This discussion moves away from the issue of variation in

transnational involvement, which I take as a given. Those discussed here do not represent the universal behaviour of the younger generations, but merely those with whom I have had the opportunity to spend most time, and I make no claims as to their representativeness. The special characteristics of this group were discussed in the Introduction.

'Just miling everybody': language, culture and code-switching

Many of the British Pakistanis I have met mix Punjabi/Urdu and English as Shanaz did at her daughter's Iram's *walīma* when she told her son to *mil* his sister. At another family wedding, I heard Iram's sister Shabanna respond to a cousin's enquiries about what she had been doing in Pakistan by saying, 'Nothing, just *miling* everybody'. Her answer was particularly striking not only for the anglicisation of the verb *milnā* (to meet),¹⁷ but because the question had been asked in Punjabi, and Shabanna had chosen to respond in English.

Roger Ballard, in his introduction to the 1994 volume *Desh Pardesh: the South Asian Presence in Britain*, focuses on language use to address the ways in which British South Asians navigate their dual cultural environments – the 'ethnic colony' and relationships with the 'indigenous minority' (p29). He suggests that while the discourse of cultural and generational conflict epitomised by the title of James Watson's influential *Between Two Cultures* (1977) has been appropriated by young British Asians, it does not reflect the true experience of hybridity.¹⁸ Instead, he uses linguistic theory to draw an analogy between bilingualism and the way people negotiate the demands of multiple cultures. Conflict is avoided, he argues, by code-switching in different environments, or in other words by changing their behaviour, speech, dress and so on as appropriate to varying spaces and encounters.

From this perspective, Shabanna's English response is a refusal to code-switch, which Ballard views as a strategic action:

...advantages can often be gained by those who deliberately code their behaviour inappropriately. For example, young men or women who begin to act in an over-anglicised way at home may well simply be seeking to assert themselves: efforts to resist parental hegemony should not be misread as 'culture conflict'. Exactly the reverse of this process occurs when young people set out to make space for themselves in majority contexts. Hence to switch 'inappropriately' into Urdu or Punjabi speech, to wear a turban or *shalwar kamiz*, to condemn the publication of *The Satanic Verses*, to praise arranged

¹⁷ Gardner calls such mixing among British Bangladeshis 'Banglish' (2002).

¹⁸ The concept has also been influential in academic circles – see Hall (2002), or Bradby's more subtle reformulation of Punjabi women's perceptions of their 'dual loyalties' as expressed in geographical metaphors (2000).

marriages – or indeed to reject any other aspect of Western orthodoxy – is a particularly effective way of re-establishing personal dignity in the face of racial and ethnic denigration (1994: 33).

But this argument is undermined by the fact that Shabanna's mother Shanaz, who came to Britain for marriage many years ago, herself often uses English with her children, even in 'Pakistani' environments such as the wedding. I have frequently heard the use of English to respond to parents' Punjabi or Urdu and the casual nature of many of these responses lead me to believe that they are not always part of a strategy of self-assertion. This linguistic mixing may rather be one of the new styles of interaction that Ballard himself suggested young British Asians to be developing among themselves, delighting in 'drawing eclectically on every tradition available to them'. In other words, rather than Bakhtin's conscious forms of hybridity that have the power to shock, this is the genre of unconscious hybridity through which culture evolves and develops (Werbner 1997: 4-6).

Friedman has argued that hybridity is in the eye of the beholder; that anthropologists label objects or behaviours hybrid when they consider them to be matter out of place, and that this 'hybridity-for-us' does not reflect indigenous experience that sees nothing remarkable in the use of what we might see as 'foreign' matter into their practices (2002). I would not go this far. Some of the behaviour of young British Pakistanis undoubtedly contains an element of conscious creation of cultural matter out of place. During my fieldwork, even some older Pakistani women with limited English seemed to delight in the political potential of humorous language mixing – one well-received joke from an elderly lady on a community group day trip involved imitating 'modern' young Pakistani women saying 'Hi' (hello), which quickly turned into '*Hai! Hai!*' (a Punjabi/Urdu lamentation) and melodramatic clutching of her chest, poking fun at the 'hybridity' of youth. But much of the daily, casual mixing of language, dress, music, and so on should not be over-interpreted.

For many of my young informants, these behaviours are not just developed among their peers, but are negotiated within the household. I was often surprised at the open relationships many young women had with their mothers, freely discussing subjects such as marriage or their non-Pakistani friends' romantic lives in their presence. It is worth noting at the outset the socio-economic factors which may enable such a situation – the mothers of the young women to whom I am referring are generally very different from the stereotype of the uneducated village woman with little English who does not work outside the house, and certainly not outside the ethnic 'enclave'. Such women do exist, and their lack of knowledge of the cultural environments their children experience daily can lead to problems. To give a light-hearted example, one woman I met in Pakistan said that while she was studying in

Britain, her daughter had been coming home from school laughing about the other Pakistani girls in her class with ‘one-bottom underwear’. Eventually, this woman realised that the other girls’ mothers had no idea that they would be changing in a uni-sex gym class, and were sending them to school with underpants made from scraps of dressmaking material, with no elastic to prevent them riding up over their buttocks.

For the purposes of this discussion, however, I will be dealing with a very different group of women. Many have or have had jobs in predominantly English environments, are from relatively educated urban backgrounds, or, like Bushra, came to Britain themselves as children and so experienced the British school environment. Bushra talked to me about the difficulties of bringing up children, particularly girls, in non-Muslim Britain. While she felt she needed to limit what they were allowed to do, she realised this was hard for the children and made sure she discussed the reasons behind the rules, and gave them alternative opportunities to enjoy themselves. In several cases I know, young people and their parents have reached amicable agreements about permitted behaviour, removing much of the need for code-switching between home and outside environments. Many young women do change into ‘Western’ clothes to go to school or work, and back into *shalwār qamīṣ* at home, but a study of young Bristolian Asian women’s attitudes towards dress found that this change was in order to be accepted by mixed-ethnicity peer groups, rather than pressure to behave in more ‘Asian’ ways at home (A. Haq pers. comm.). The arrangements young women make with their mothers about behaviour at home, however, may include agreements about code-switching in other environments, and in the presence of other members of the Pakistani community. So Saika, who has just finished her degree and lives at home in Bristol, says that she wears what she likes within reason, and even goes to the pub with her White friends as her parents trust her not to drink, but she has an agreement with her mother that she will wear Pakistani clothes in certain situations such as at functions.

In another example, I was at Nasreen’s house one day when her sister and sister-in-law dropped in for a visit, as they do most days. Relatives from London arrived unannounced, sending the girls into a panic – Nasreen was just back from University and was still wearing her ‘English’ clothes – a long skirt and top. Her sister and sister-in-law were in *shalwār qamīṣ*, but had left their *dupattā* scarves at home – another sister was also *dupattā*-less, but was able to find one quickly in her room. To top it all, there I was – a White friend – resulting in the London relatives questioning Nasreen’s family about who this *gorī* (White woman) was. While these young women do not need to change their behaviour at home, their panic when they could not manage to alter their appearance in the presence of

more distant relative serves to illustrate that they still expect and are expected to code-switch for certain extra-domestic audiences.

What happens, however, when these young people go to Pakistan? At Iram's wedding there are other examples of young people displaying 'British' behaviour – the hip-hop played on the *meñhdī* night, and the young men making fun of the *meñhdī* traditions. In other instances, Nasreen's brothers refused to wear Pakistani clothes to their sisters' weddings, and are conspicuous on the wedding videos with their UK street-style ultra-short hair, thin beards, tight T-shirts and seemingly confident swagger. Their sister was adamant that she wouldn't let the beauticians lighten her skin for the marriage, as is common practice, as it offended her racial-political sensitivities. When Asma's *ubtan* was applied she was instructed not to shower or change her clothes, but washed and changed the minute she was left alone. I was with another young woman in a fancy clothes shop in Pakistan when she led her cousins in displays of cheering when they finally haggled the price of her sister's wedding *lahñgā* down to their target, attracting disapproving stares from other shoppers. Later, she publicly chastised a tailor for his 'backwardness' in never having spoken to his young fiancée despite a two-year engagement.

I found these assertive refusals to code-switch surprising, particularly as I myself was directing much effort into attempts not to stand out – to dress in local styles, speak in local languages and behave in culturally accepted ways. Why, I wondered, did these young people react so differently? Another example from Iram's wedding may be particularly illuminating in this regard.

When kicking a lump of henna around, one of the young men at Iram's *meñhdī* joked, 'I don't understand this', and lack of understanding may be precisely the point. Young British Asians know what to do where code-switching is required of them in a limited number of mainly familiar situations in the UK. In Pakistan, however, they find themselves at a disadvantage in terms of cultural and practical knowledge. Even with their best efforts, they will not know what is expected of them in every situation, and can seldom pass as locals. A young man in Birmingham complained to me that he and people like him didn't fit in anywhere – they are seen as foreign both in Britain and Pakistan.¹⁹ This point is picked up by Katy Gardner writing of British Bangladeshis whose imaginings of 'home' are exploded when they visit Bangladesh, leading them to perceive themselves as more British. She

¹⁹ A 'between two cultures' type of statement referred to earlier.

describes a young British man's sulking in his ancestral home as 'asserting his Britishness' (1994, see also Gardner & Shukur 1994). Faced with the impossibility of fitting in, of code-switching effectively, it seems that many decide not to try.

This can take the form of small retreats to the comfort of the familiar under conditions of heightened stress, as Bushra's daughter Leyla explained of her behaviour during a visit to Pakistan soon after becoming engaged to one of her cousins there:

I think my Punjabi isn't very good, but think my Urdu is OK. I know when I go there I pick it up really quickly and when I come back to England I forget it really quickly.... Even when I'm in Pakistan I'll say [to relatives] 'Do you want some tea? Do you want some tea?', and I'll speak in Urdu, and then I'll come to him [the fiancé] and I'll say in English – I speak to him in English! I don't know why I do that. I'll speak to everyone in the room in Urdu but when it comes to him I'll speak in English... I think because I'm not that confident in speaking the other language and I don't want to make a fool of myself in front of him, so I always speak the language I'm comfortable with... [Is he fluent in English?] I don't really know. He doesn't really speak it back to me... He speaks Urdu back to me... Because he doesn't feel comfortable... I was thinking about that the other day, I was thinking, 'Why do I do that?' But it is because I feel more comfortable... Every evening I'd have my cup of tea but I made my English tea by diluting the milk and I'd go round everybody and I'd be like, 'Shama – *ćā'e?* [the Urdu for tea]', and she'd say '*jī*' [yes, contraction of *jī hāñ*] sort of thing, '[next relative] – *ćā'e?*', and then I'd be like 'Asif [fiancé] – do you want some tea?'

Whilst this is a familiar phenomenon, a response shared by many language-learners, the young men playing with the henna take it further, by actively playing up their difference. As in their case, this is often done with a sense of irony. Irony is a very fashionable type of humour in contemporary Britain, from 'New Laddism' to kitsch styling, so it may not be the form, but the fact of the humour which is significant. Joking and poking fun are, of course, classic 'weapons of the weak' (Scott 1985). British visitors to Pakistan are hardly in a weak position financially, indeed British families often remit substantial sums to support their relatives in Pakistan. But what they have economically they may lack in cultural terms, and stories abound in Pakistan of wealthy overseas families who are easily taken advantage of by unscrupulous locals, or even their own relatives. Often it is precisely their wealth which leaves them vulnerable – if you are foolish enough to take a taxi more than a hundred miles from Islamabad airport to Mirpur, I was told, you're bound to be charged over the odds. Similarly when Uzma visited relatives in Pakistan, boasting about the many hundreds of pounds she had brought to spend on clothes (which would, however, have to last herself, her mother and several other relatives in Britain two years until the next trip) her cousins conspired to take her to the most expensive shops they could find so that she would run out

of money more quickly. In addition, there is the weakness that stems from generational difference and gender, so that young British Pakistanis visiting with their parents may find that they have little authority over what happens to them during their stay as plans are made by their parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. Even Rashida, a middle aged mother of adult children complained that she had no control over many of the arrangements for her son's wedding as negotiations with (male) caterers, and so on, had to be done by male relatives.²⁰

Weddings compound all these factors. Young British Pakistanis at their own marriage, or that of a close relative, in Pakistan may find themselves on the brink of a life-changing event, in unfamiliar surroundings, unsure of what exactly will happen during the next few days, and with very little control over the process. It is my suggestion that the assertive and often humorous refusals to 'play the game' outlined above, are means by which they may regain some small measure of control. Not only is code-switching problematic – a game they cannot win as they are not, as it were, fluent in the local culture – but by holding fast to a reified British identity, they may provide themselves with some sort of ontological security at a time of profound change and insecurity.

This line of argument further strengthens the case, made by research cited earlier in this chapter, for viewing veiling as a potentially positive strategy rather than an imposition. One of the most powerful unified identities a young British Pakistani can adopt is to emphasise religion. By wearing the *hijāb* (women) or growing a beard (men) and following religious practices, they may be able to transcend the need to code-switch, without sacrificing respect either in Pakistan or from the Pakistani community in Britain.²¹ Following Roger Ballard, 'inappropriate' behaviour, such as wearing the *hijāb* in a British street or work-place would also serve as self-assertion in the face of racist denigration, making such statements of religious identity uniquely effective in all three domains – with regard to the ethnic majority populations in Britain, the British Pakistani community, and providing acceptance and respect while in Pakistan. Thus two very different lifestyle/identity choices made by young Pakistanis in Britain – the Islamic revivalist and the self-assured British urban street-style – can be seen as adaptations to the same conundrum posed by adaptation to three different cultural environments necessitated by engagements with transnationalism. Earlier work has tended to see such actions as a product only of experience in Britain (e.g.

²⁰ See also Gardner and Grillo (2002) on gendered difference in involvement in transnational rituals.

²¹ But see Schmidt (2002) for comparative material on the pan-Islamic identity among young Muslims in Sweden and the United States suggesting that such behaviour can cause conflict with 'co-ethnics'.

Ballard 1994; Gardner & Shukur 1994). The unitary identities that some young Pakistanis in Bristol have negotiated within their peer groups and households to replace the code-switching of earlier generations have proven to be valuable resources with which to withstand the increasingly common experience of marriage in a country that was home to their parents, but often presents all the challenges of a foreign culture to a young person who has grown up in Britain.

Writing on Muslims in Sweden and the US, Schmidt offers a different explanation for the adoption of a pan-Islamic rather than regional identity, noting that the young do not have as...

direct and deeply felt connection to the country of migration as their parents. 'Back home' may be a country of ideals and longing during childhood, but often short or even extended visits are disappointing. Then dreams and hopes may crumble, leaving only disappointment (2002: 12).

Given that they have not yet gone through many of the important life course events noted above, young people are likely to be 'less' transnational than their parents, or indeed perhaps than their future selves. If they contract a marriage in Pakistan, this may change and new dreams, hopes, and transnational involvements emerge. There may also, however, be greater demands on them to adapt their behaviour to accommodate an immigrant spouse used to different social norms. The issue of 'culture clash' (my informants' term) that can arise in this situation will be addressed in later chapters.

Conclusion: Collapsing Dichotomies

Globalisation has been the subject of debate and disagreement in the academic community, not only over its nature and mechanisms, but also on the very desirability of accepting globalisation discourse as an inevitable trajectory. Nonetheless, several elements of globalisation theory appear pertinent to the project of providing a deeper understanding of Pakistani transnational marriages.

When split into its constituent processes (or scapes), diverse new technologies, media and ideologies influence not only the frequency, but the form and grounds for choosing such marriages. Although globalisation is often associated with deterritorialisation, transnational marriages are positioned at an intersection of national and supranational immigration systems, and, in addition, may be part of a project of re-territorialisation as members of an 'imagined' transnational community are united in space and kinship. Islam provides not only an example of a world religion facilitated by the processes described above, but as a religion with an alternative tradition of expansion and global-orientation, it

provides a challenge to hegemonic globalisation theories. Finally, although convergence theories of (Western centred) homogenisation have been criticised, 'Westernisation' is an important concept to those with whom this study is concerned. Indeed, the choice of a spouse from Pakistan may be partly due to an individual or family's wish to fend off 'Westernisation' and ensure that spouses and any future children have a better chance of being a 'good Muslim' or of retaining a Pakistani identity.

The literature on globalisation is peppered with explicit or implied dichotomies. Global implies its opposite, the local; modernity assumes tradition; Westernisation creates a non-Western other; Western concepts of globalisation stand in opposition to Islamic worldviews often described by the West as fundamentalism; and globalisation theory, as we have seen, is often preoccupied with processes of localisation and differentiation. Ethnography, however, reveals interactions between the theoretically polarised local and the global which have led to the coining of the somewhat inelegant term 'glocalisation' to denote the interpenetration of the two fields (Robertson 1992). Although this goes some way towards collapsing the dichotomy, Marcus (1995) provides a particularly sophisticated methodological model for ethnography to take account of these processes. Whilst ethnographers influenced by world-systems theory sited their ethnographic subjects within macro-processes of global capitalism, Marcus sees globalisation theories as part of a subsequent wave of 'accounts of dissolution and fragmentation' that de-stabilised the distinction between 'lifeworld' and 'system' (ibid: 98). These theoretical developments, together with empirical changes, like the technological innovations mentioned earlier, produce the need for 'multi-sited ethnography' such as this study.

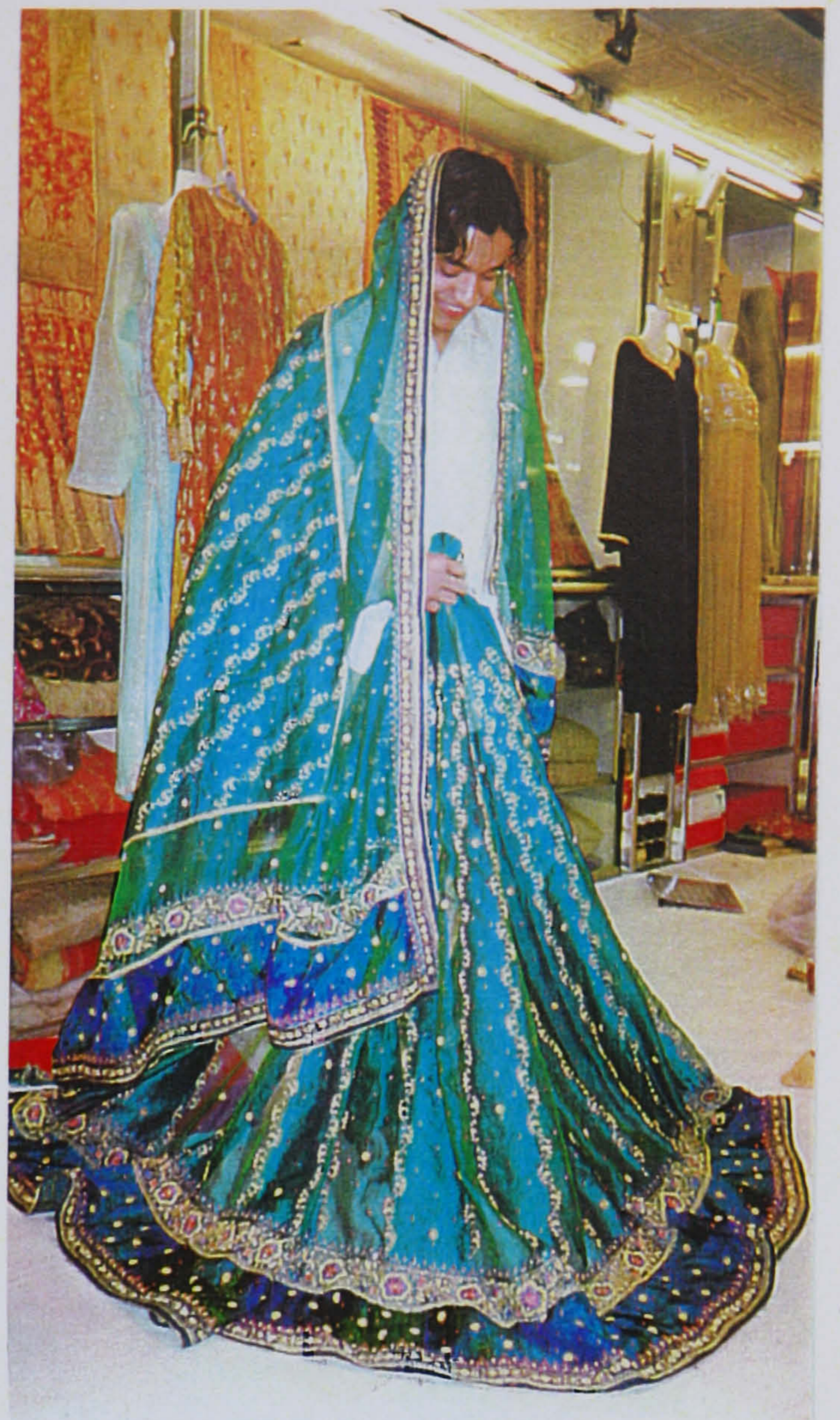
[T]he world system is not the theoretically constituted holistic frame that gives context to the contemporary study of peoples or local subjects closely observed by ethnographers, but it becomes, in a piecemeal way, integral to and embedded in discontinuous, multi-sited objects of study. Cultural logics so much sought after in anthropology are always multiply produced, and any ethnographic account of these logics finds that they are at least partly constituted within sites of the so-called system. (ibid: 97)

Dichotomies also tend to eclipse possible interpretations which do not relate to these poles, a problem which Marcus suggests is also avoided in an ethnography which,

... maps a new object of study in which previously situated [dichotomous] narratives like that of resistance and accommodation become qualified by expanding what is ethnographically 'in the picture' of research both as it evolves in the field and as it is eventually written up. (ibid: 101-2)

– This ethnography of transnational Pakistani marriages demonstrates these multiply produced logics by following individuals as they participate in a process that is at once

intensely personal and part of massive and increasingly politicised global 'flows'. The young British Pakistanis I have described present an interesting paradox by being assertively local even as they form and perpetuate transnational links through their marriages. Most significantly, it demonstrates that transnational processes are varied and dynamic. The ways and extents to which people live transnationally vary over their lifecourse, and between individuals. Nevertheless, as so few are untouched by transnationalism, thanks in no small part to the prevalence of transnational marriage, I would assert that we can still speak, in this qualified way, of a transnational Pakistani community. The following chapter looks at how such marriages are arranged and what is sought in a spouse, but returns to the issue of globalisation and transnationalism in examining how indigenous Pakistani conceptions of these relationships can be employed to refine our conceptualisation of this transnational community.



Picture Thirteen, Fourteen and Fifteen Wedding goods on display in Pakistan.

Chapter Three

Zarūrat Rishta: Making and Maintaining Connections

This chapter explores the search for a good *rishta*, which means a proposal or marriage partner. After discussing what people want in a spouse and how marriages are arranged, I argue that clarifying the connotations of the term *rishta* (plural: *rishte*) leads to a better understanding of what is sought in arranging marriage, and one which resolves some difficulties in the literature on Pakistani marriage preferences. Transnational marriages prove to be a powerful heuristic tool in this exercise, as they exaggerate features that are present in the local search for a *rishta*. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how the concept of *rishta* might influence models of transnationality, augmenting the previous chapter's review of globalisation and transnationalism.

Zarūrat Rishta: Proposal wanted

Alongside *zarūrat plat* (house plot wanted), and other similar titles in the personal advertisement sections of Urdu newspapers in Pakistan, the matrimonial columns carry the heading *zarūrat rishta*. English language papers, in common with those in India, employ the term 'Matrimonial', but the phrase *zarūrat rishta* would probably be translated by English-speaking Pakistanis as 'proposal wanted'. The text of English language matrimonial adverts often includes phrases such as 'proposal sought from...' with a list of the desired characteristics of the prospective spouse and their family.

The matrimonial sections of Pakistani papers are, however, much shorter than is often the case in India, where pages may be devoted to requests for spouses. An explanation for this difference can be found the norm of kin-group exogamy amongst Hindus in North India,¹ which contrasts with the ideal of *barādarī* endogamy for Pakistani Muslims. Most Pakistani marriages are contracted either with kin, or through personal contacts, making matrimonial advertising less popular. In addition, given the desirability for matches to be made through relatives or trusted personal contacts, advertising may be viewed as a

¹ For details, see for example Fruzzetti 1982: 109-117. In urban north India, Vatuk has reported that while rules on *gotra* ('clan') exogamy have been relaxed due to a shortage of suitable spouses, her informants reject the possibility of marriage between 'known blood relatives' (Vatuk 1972: 96-7).

somewhat dubious method for finding a spouse.² Whilst the number of private advertisers can be low, *zarūrat rishta* columns do, however, generally carry advertisements for the services of matchmakers, such as:

ISLAMABAD Social Service matrimonial contact parents from educated, cultured families, Mrs Khawaja 051-5593179, 5506613, www.khawaja.bigstep.com (The News, 14/1/01)

Two American national engineer boys, in addition ladies and gentlemen education matric to MA. Bachelor, divorcee, widower. International Marriage bureau. Begam Rehana Sayid phone 2211236/2873886 (trans. from Urdu, Daily Jang, 8/12/01)

More people may use such services than would like to admit. One advert from the Daily Jang, for example, plays on the stigma that can surround the activity, stating that some people do not like to be seen to be going to matchmakers or do not want their parents to know they are using these services, so Begam Hashmi would like to meet parents of potential spouses in her home, or to be invited to theirs (Daily Jang, 2/12/01).

The majority of Pakistani marriages may be arranged without resort to matrimonial adverts or matchmakers, but *zarūrat rishta* entries can nevertheless prove useful in exploring what is sought in a *rishta*. In the Daily Jang, typical adverts are from marriage brokers simply giving the age, qualifications, *zāt* (caste) and employment of men seeking brides. In the English-language *The News*, more emphasis seems to be placed on education and employment than on caste, for example:

EDUCATED Family in F- 10 [wealthy area of Islamabad] requires suitable match for their son 27 MBA, settled in America, beautiful tall educated girl living in posh area of Islamabad may contact Box No. 364, C/o The News, Rawalpindi

Whilst lodging at the University hostel in Rawalpindi, I found these adverts to be a convenient tool to stimulate conversations with young women about the search for a spouse. One hostel inmate, Naseema, pointed out that adverts about ‘boys’ never said whether they were handsome, but only gave information which would indicate their income. On the other hand, ‘girls’, tend to be described as beautiful, humble **and** educated – to broaden their appeal to those seeking looks, personality or education. As this and the examples above suggest, the attributes most desired differ between the sexes. A beautiful bride is valued, with the result that most young women put great effort into making themselves attractive,

² The reasons for this will be discussed further in this and the following chapter.

particularly for occasions such as weddings when they may be spotted as a potential *rishta*. Their family may also take an interest, so that one young woman with an acne problem told me despairingly that her father was always on at her to do something about her skin. In Pakistan, as in India, facial lightening creams such as 'Fair and Lovely' are popular as women try to achieve the 'fair' skin considered to be a sign of beauty. On her wedding day, the bride is normally made up with thick pale foundation, so that she conforms to this ideal of beauty whatever her natural colour. A dark husband is also dreaded, and handsome young men's fairness is praised, but the issue is seen as more crucial for the marriageability of women.

As will be clear, Pakistani discourse on the matter of *rishte* tends to focus on the desired qualities of brides rather than husbands, so Wakil notes that 'preferred traits in a male seldom get any mention or scrutiny. An able bodied male – of the right origins – is all that seems to count' (1991: 45). 'However,' he goes on, 'implied in much talk are the traits of being "responsible" and able to earn a living' (1991: 45). The young women and their families whom I met in Pakistan and Bristol certainly seemed to have strong opinions on what makes a good husband. Chief among these for the students at the hostel was indeed that he should be financially stable.³ In the majority of middle class Pakistani households, men are the main earners, so a potential husband's educational achievements and employment are crucial in determining a woman's standard of living after marriage.

Some attributes are desired by my informants in both men and women. Among these, I would like to highlight education, as an issue that will recur in discussion of spousal selection throughout this thesis. As in India, among the middle and aspirant classes, education has become 'fetishised to the point that qualifications are the status symbol par excellence' (Elliot 2002 citing Varma 1999), so that the ideal bride, although she may never be employed, is also expected to be educated. In Bangladesh, Gardner reports, the education of daughters has become an important source of prestige to 'attract better quality husbands, and was crucial if a marriage with a Londoni [someone settled in the UK] was on the cards' (1995: 130). For the same reason, some staff at the women's university were cynical about their students' (and the students' parents') commitment to academic work, commenting that the university was used as a kind of finishing school before marriage. In addition, Vatuk notes of urban India that education gives a young woman something to do: 'Studying is the only socially acceptable way that she can occupy her time, aside from needlecraft and

³ The following chapter will also examine the valued 'mental understanding', which the young women at the University hoped to find in a husband.

housework, while waiting for a match to be arranged' (Vatuk 1972: 79). In the run up to exams at the university, I heard one young woman encourage a friend to neglect her revision, saying it didn't matter as they would just get married anyway. Others, however, view educational achievement not as conflicting with the realities of marriage, but as important if they are to teach their own children, and as a fall-back in case they are not married quickly, or fall on hard times later in life.⁴ Those with ambitions to pursue a career after marriage, however, acknowledged that their husband's consent to go out to work would be crucial.

Other forms of cultural capital are also sought in both brides and grooms. As the adverts above suggest, foreign nationality or domicile can be a valuable asset, and entries seeking matches for, or requesting proposals from, Pakistanis settled overseas appear fairly frequently. The couple I lodged with in Pakistan, for example, received a large number of replies to an advert in *The World* placed following the woman's mother's request for a *rishta* for a son in Britain. A 'good background', 'good family' or 'respectable family' is also commonly required. Not only is this important in a society where much rides on reputation, status and networking – one popular guide to Pakistani culture writes that almost everything is accomplished through friendships and connections (Mittmann & Ihsan 1991) – but is crucial for the prospects of the bride who will normally go to live with her in-laws.

Although I use *zarurat rishta* adverts as a starting point for this discussion, they are not the normal way of finding a spouse, and represent those who are going outside the societal norms of marriage within the kin group or social networks. Many adverts are seeking partners for divorced or widowed people, those who are older than the conventional marriage age, or settled overseas, and so whose ability to find spouses through normal routes may be curtailed. As such, they concentrate on what Donnan has called the 'personal expectations' (1994: 325) of marriage in terms of advantageous characteristics and connections, rather than the conventional cultural or social expectations as to who will be married. This latter category include preferences and obligations to marry within the caste and kin group, and a preference for marriage within the locality. Such social norms act as 'strategic resources', which can be used to propose, accept or reject a marriage. As such they have the 'double utility of specifying which categories of women are culturally good to marry... as well as providing the rhetoric or idiom for negotiations where they can be used to enforce claims on others' (Donnan 1994: 325).

⁴ See Jeffery, Jeffery and Jeffrey (forthcoming) on Islamic views of education for women.

I would argue, however, that for middle class Pakistanis in both the UK and Pakistan, education is fast becoming a matter not just of personal, but also of social expectation, displaying the characteristics of Donnan's 'strategic resources'. In Bristol, for example, families who fulfilled social conventions of kin marriage by marrying their educated British children to uneducated relatives from Pakistan were often discussed with disapproval. The rhetoric of education is also commonly used to justify or reject *rishte*, so a woman married outside the family told me that her mother had refused all *rishte* from uneducated kin on the grounds that she was only looking for educated spouses for her children. In several cases, marriages were refused or delayed on the grounds that the young person had not yet completed their studies, suggesting the acknowledged importance of education. This rhetoric may mask other agendas – I was told that if a really good *rishta* is received, it will be accepted no matter what the stage of the young woman's studies. Several students from the university in Rawalpindi had indeed left their courses for matrimony, and a few were married but had stayed on to complete their studies.⁵

The rishta as match

Rishta has thus far been translated as 'proposal' or potential spouse, but also carries the sense of 'match' as in the English usage connoting a suitable partner (e.g. 'matchmaker'). There is a strong ideal that couples should literally be well matched in terms of background (in terms of socio-economic status, education and often *zāt* or caste), character and appearance, a type of preference which has been termed 'homogamy' (Samad & Eades 2002).⁶ The ideal is that the couple should be of similar builds and skin colour, and that the husband should be slightly taller and older than his wife. Comments will be made if one is much darker, fatter or taller than the other. Equally, wedding guests and those viewing photos of marriages often comment approvingly if the couple fulfil these criteria.⁷ When I asked my host in Rawalpindi what kind of husband he would want for a daughter, he stressed similarity – if she looked beautiful in the framed photographs beside his bed, she should not be standing next to 'a monkey'; if he felt happy talking to her, he should feel the same with her husband. This logic is also used to explain why marriages between people of different castes are undesirable. Although my host's wife was from a different *zāt*, he told me that the

⁵ Cf. Jeffery 1976b on rhetorics of spouse selection among Muslims in Delhi.

⁶ Mohāmmad is also traditionally held to have taught that marriage should be between equals (Ahmad 1978a: 14).

⁷ Cf. Carsten 1997 for a comparable value placed on similarity in Malay marriages.

two castes were of the same level in terms of social standing and so they could understand each other – he would not like a match with, for example, the grandchild of a cleaner (cf. Fischer & Lyon 2000).

A mis-match in age is one commonly-given reason for refusing a *rishta*. In interviews I carried out in Bristol several people who explained that they had married a particular relative because there were no other possible *rishte* in their family turned out to have other cousins of a similar age – but the man was younger by a year or two, making the match impossible. This would again appear to be less a firm rule than part of the rhetoric of refusal and justification of choices. In this excerpt from an interview, Asma from Bristol revises her reliance on this discourse as contradictions from her own family emerged:

There's no-one on my Dad's side, to tell you the truth, because they're all younger than me... I was the eldest granddaughter. I had a cousin who was a month younger than me [and so was not a match]... Even though he's married to a twenty-six year old now and he's twenty-four himself... So I could have married him, but I think because I know him too well – I've lived with him, went to nursery with him, school with him. He's like your brother and you're like, 'Yeuch [noise of disgust], I don't want to marry you!'

Saif, a twenty seven year old from Bristol, was concerned when he learnt that the *rishta* proposed for him was with a nineteen year old girl, and several of his contemporaries were disapproving. Nevertheless he went ahead with the wedding, and now justifies this apparent mis-match by saying that not only did she appear to be particularly mature, but that she looks older than her age while he looks younger – thereby implying that they represent a match in practice.

The value placed on similarity, a 'good match', might be thought to discourage transnational marriages as a husband and wife brought up in different countries are likely to have many significant differences. Indeed, many British Pakistanis disapprovingly relate stories of catastrophic mismatches – most often an uneducated 'boy' from the village married to an educated British 'girl'. As one woman told me – 'if one wheel is high and one wheel is low, the car can't go.' However, wealth, an urban background, and education are credited with being able to bridge the differences, particularly if the British spouse is not overly 'Western'. Thus Bushra explained why she had faith in the match between her Bristolian children and her husband's sister's children in Pakistan:

I think it may have been different if they lived in a village and they weren't so educated – I think they may have had different thoughts. But because they live in quite a modern environment, and they're quite modern as well – as in dress – and the way they are. They're sort of pretty well off as well and they've got mod cons... They're quite similar to our children here because obviously our

children, we keep them a little bit restricted because we're living in a Western environment, Western culture. So I think they feel they've got a lot in common. They seem to get on very well.

Education is once more seen as particularly important, allowing the Pakistani spouse to transcend cultural differences. A lack of education in one of the couple is seen as negating the possibility of the 'mental understanding' the Rawalpindi university students hoped for in a marriage. Amina, who had come to Bristol from Lahore two years previously, told me, 'You can't understand and adjust with an uneducated man – the minds won't go together.'

Doing rishtas

'Doing *rishte*', or suggesting matches, is a heavy responsibility involving decisions which can, if things go wrong, cause offence or lead to deep unhappiness. Nevertheless, particularly among the women I have encountered in Britain and Pakistan, the subject also provides an endless topic of conversation and source of enjoyment.

Some *rishte* are settled in the family in childhood. Many would not dream of betrothing their children when they were too young to consent, but the assessment of availability of suitable matches among the kin group inevitably starts early. Opposite-sex cousins of similar ages, or where the boy is a few years older than the girl, are talked about as matches from a young age, and children and adolescents are teased and tease each other about these nascent *rishte*. The pairing may be particularly strong if the two are also a good match in other ways, so Azra from Bristol and her Pakistani husband, both thin and strongly religious, were always considered a match even though she was originally inclined towards another cousin. When a match is obvious to the rest of the family, it can take quite some effort to resist. Salma in Islamabad and her cousin in Lahore, both high-achieving 'modern' young people, were considered such a match that Salma's mother had to announce to relatives that she would not be looking for a *rishta* from within the family.

If a *rishta* is not settled early, or if a childhood match is refused, the search for a husband or wife really takes off as young people approach marriageable age. Parents, aunts, uncles and so on may ask friends and relations if they can think of a good *rishta*, and social gatherings such as weddings provide opportunities to spot potential matches. If they are not well known to the family, enquiries will be made to find out about the background and character of any likely seeming person. The young man's family conventionally takes the initiative (Wakim 1991: 43). In Bristol, one mother of a single woman in her twenties told me that although she would have been able to talk to a sibling about a match between their children, she cannot approach people outside the family to suggest a *rishta*, as the suggestion

must come from the ‘boy’s’ side. Among those families I know in Pakistan, the practice is that once a suitable match has been identified, the ‘boy’s’ family will visit the ‘girl’s’ home for snacks or a meal, giving the potential bridegroom and his family a chance to ‘view’ the young woman and the environment in which she has been brought up. This visit may also take place in the absence of the prospective bride – one young woman I met in Pakistan was away at University when her engagement took place, her fiancé and his family having visited her parents and been shown photographs and a wedding video in which she could be seen.

The groom and his family may visit several homes and consider several different matches before deciding to offer a proposal. Although the woman’s side can refuse proposals, and may also see a variety of suitors as part of this process, the ‘boy’s’ side is generally considered to have the upper hand. If a proposal is accepted, it is often followed by a formal engagement when the groom’s family present a ring, money and other gifts for the bride. Sometimes there is no engagement as such, but the marriage is agreed upon by the sides giving their word (*zaban denā*).

Looking for a *rishta* is a delicate process. Timing is crucial – ask too early and you risk being rejected on the grounds that the child is too young or in the middle of their education, but too late and a desirable prospect may already have their *rishta* settled elsewhere. Being ‘viewed’ and then passed over can also be disappointing or insulting. Here Talib’s father Ghalib describes how they went about discretely looking at the options on a visit to Pakistan:

So we went to few families, shown few girls. Not like face-to-face you know, but obviously we went there and sat down and having our food. Then quietly I said to him, ‘Look, this is the girl which we would like to see, what do you think about this?’... He did have little word, like: ‘*Salām-`alai-kum*, how are you? What are you studying?’, things like that. Not letting the family know why we are here – but they do have little bit [of an] idea.

Young people themselves may not be told about all the *rishte* proposed for them, and as in this case, the purpose of these exploratory visits may be concealed. Mumtaza from Jhelum, who came to Bristol in 1984, told me how a matchmaker employed by her future husband had brought him to her house. Mumtaza’s mother called her home from an aunt’s house, saying her grandmother was ill, and asked her to take a glass of water to the female guest in another room, who was in fact the matchmaker. This allowed the young man accompanying her to see Mumtaza, but he wanted another look, so her mother sent her in with something else, whereupon the matchmaker took her arm and started asking her questions.

Although most families I know do without the services of paid matchmakers, some kind of mediator is usually required unless the match is between very close family or friends – two sisters, for example, may discuss between themselves arranging a marriage between their children. The use of intermediaries in other cases is partly in order to spare the feelings of those involved, or ‘save face’ (Wakim 1991: 430; see also Das 1994). Bushra’s husband’s brother, for example, had been thinking of asking for Bushra’s children’s *rishte* for some time, but the family did not mention it directly for fear of rejection. Instead, a mutual relative told Bushra what they were thinking.

The use of go-betweens seems to be even more important in the case of ‘outside’ (*bāhar se*, i.e. non-kin) *rishte*, and here also has connotations of propriety. Although these matches are considered different from marriages between kin, some connection such as a mutual friend, must usually exist for these negotiations to begin. When my host in Pakistan was asked to come up with a *rishta* for his wife’s brother, for example, he thought of an attractive young woman he had met through work. As an unrelated man he could not approach her directly on the matter, but after some enquiries, he found a link through mutual friends from the army to the woman’s father, whom he could then approach. The need to go through proper channels of mutual connection also applies without the gender barrier. Gafoora in Islamabad related with shock how when a British relative’s son pointed out a pretty girl at a wedding, his mother ‘went straight over’ to the girl’s mother and said directly that they wanted to come to their house to talk about it.⁸

The process of finding, assessing and securing *rishte* is obviously complicated in the case of transnational marriages where visiting is curtailed by distance. British families looking for matches for their children often rely on relatives in Pakistan to suggest suitable people. Decision-making is assisted by technologies that help bridge the distance – likely candidates may be viewed in photographs and videos of weddings they have attended, while telephone and the internet facilitate discussions between the two sides and the gathering of information from third parties. When Rubina in Bristol was in her late teens, her parents decided to look for a *rishta* for her in Pakistan:

What they said was, would that be OK if we told one of my mum’s brothers? They told him they were looking for a match, and the type of person that they might need, and that sort of thing. I said that’s OK... It happened a lot quicker than I expected that they actually had found a match and they told us about it. And my dad asked, ‘Are there any other matches?’ but my uncle said none that

⁸ N.b. Also thought improper here is the idea of proposing a *rishta* simply on the basis of looks, although as the mother of an unmarried girl, Gafoora may be particularly sensitive about this.

we sort of considered were really good ones. So the in-laws they sent a photo, that sort of thing, and mum and dad liked the look of it.

After being told about the young man by relatives in Pakistan, the engagement was settled over the telephone, and Rubina did not meet her fiancé until she went to Pakistan to get married the following year. Her cousin Jamilah was married at the same time, but she had the choice of a few possible matches:

Even before we got there, we started scanning a few pictures. I went through a few suggestions from my parents and a few pictures. So I'd already seen his picture before I went to Pakistan. And he's got some family here as well, so people just advised my parents what they thought was appropriate, and they just give you suggestions. And then when I got there, of all the ones that my parents had suggested, this seemed like the best one. Only from picture, mind, it was not from conversation or anything like that.

We had a short meeting, the two of us, but it was accompanied by other people, it wasn't on a one-to-one basis. And that was supposed to help me decide and make the final decision, although I couldn't tell much from it at all. It was very frustrating... it all felt uncomfortable. And then that was in June, and then in July we got married. So it was all really from one picture and then one visit... My parents had told me things about him... The most obvious things were his age, his height, education and just things about him. Things about his family, and little things... my father doesn't like... like smoking is a big no-no, so if he'd been all perfect but smoked, it would have been a no. So I think my parents – they met him before, and my brothers had met him – they asked him lots of questions. So it was all based around what everybody had asked him – if he fitted the bill...

We all [the cousins] went to each other's weddings. It was kind of – all of us got married at the same time. It was amazing. But it wasn't planned like that though, if we didn't find anyone then we'd just come back. It would have been all right. But because everybody else was doing it, [I thought] – 'Oh, I'll get married too!'

Betrothals and even marriages, anticipated or not, often take place when families are visiting Pakistan from Britain to attend family gatherings, the most common being weddings. As Jamilah's comments suggest, there may be something about the excitement of attending a relative's marriage which inspires others to follow suit, particularly given the opportunities such occasions present for networking and identifying matches. In addition, on a rare trip from Britain, families will be expected to visit as many of their relative's homes as possible, providing a perfect opportunity to inspect potential spouses.

These multi-purpose visits also make greater financial sense than a separate trip to Pakistan specifically to view matches, and indeed there are often additional functions of the trip. Iram's wedding, it will be remembered, took place just after both *choṭi* Eid ('little' Eid,

Eid ul-Fitr) and the anniversary of her father's death, allowing the family to mark these occasions with relatives in Pakistan. This logic is also common in Pakistan, with many marriages taking place around the two Eid celebrations when families are already gathered together. Although weddings do take place across most of the year, this has the effect of producing a kind of marriage season – from after the fasting of *Ramazān* when marriages are not prohibited but fasting makes hospitality difficult, until just after *barā* Eid ('big' Eid, Eid ul-Adha) when the mourning month of *Muḥarram* begins. This is apparently particularly the case when, as during my fieldwork, the period coincides with the more comfortable cool winter months.

Transnational *rishte* also introduce another element into the dynamics of power between the families involved. The implications of this are most visible when British Pakistani women like Jamilah are taken to Pakistan to select a husband. Pakistani girls and their parents often view themselves as fairly powerless, waiting for a suitable 'boy' to come along and hoping that they are chosen. Several young women in Bristol, however, recounted stories similar to Jamilah's of being presented with a number of young men to visit in order to see if any are suitable, dramatically reversing the traditional pattern of viewing visits by prospective grooms. The opportunity to move to Britain, the US, or elsewhere in 'the West' that such marriages present is often extremely desirable to Pakistani residents, and can lead to competition for these *rishte*. In addition, the brief visits that families from Bristol are able to make to Pakistan for the purpose of identifying a match, mean that parents of young women cannot sit around waiting to see what *rishte* come, but must be more pro-active than has generally been the custom in Pakistan.

As might be imagined, making such an important decision after very few chaperoned meetings, or even without having met the proposed partner at all, can be difficult. Three interlinked factors – parents, religion and attraction – emerged in conversations with young British Pakistanis as influencing the acceptance of a match. Parents may be a source of both advice and obligation. They are often viewed, or at least view themselves, as able to make better choices because of their greater experience, combined with a concern for their child's best interest. Equally, the young person may feel their parents' wishes should be followed because of the duty to reciprocate the care they have given. One man, for example, eventually gave in to pressure from his mother to marry his brother's wife's sister because his mother was getting old. Another made what he called an 'emotional decision' to accept the match which his mother had favoured while she was dying:

... afterwards I thought, 'What am I doing? I hardly know this girl. I don't know what I'm doing, but this is what my mum wanted.' And I think the overriding feeling was this is what my mum wanted. She sacrificed so much for me, I just thought, and my whole family actually, I just thought this is the only way I can repay them. That's not really a religious decision at all. Maybe it's a bit of a thing about our culture – to sacrifice things for our family and to repay them for any debts that you think you owe. And that's why I made the decision at the time. (Saif)

Although Saif denies that his decision was based on religion, a passage from later in the interview suggests that in retrospect he does see some element of *qismat* or fate in the marriage.

It's really strange. I've had barriers in front of me for the last eight years that I've been studying and it's like I'm finally getting over these barriers... These things are finishing one by one. The only thing left now in my life is to get a job, a decent job. Which is my plan at the moment. Once I've got that I've got everything I need really, and a new wife as well. She's brought me a lot of luck since we got married, a hell of a lot of luck. And it's funny – my mum said something along the same line before she passed away: 'she's a lucky girl'... My sister said the same thing as well, just talking: 'she's going to bring you a lot of luck'. And it seems to be true. She's bringing a lot of luck at the moment.

After initially saying that this is the kind of thing mothers say to encourage a reluctant son to accept a *rishta*, his sister explained how the idea of a bride bringing luck was connected to *qismat*. People often notice, she said, that when a new wife comes into a family, good things start to happen, as they have done for Saif. Sometimes comments may be made to the opposite effect – that bad things have been happening since the new wife arrived – but more often girls are associated with positive 'luck'. Girls are born with their own *qismat*. A daughter may be destined to fly the nest, but the *qismat* she brings means that she is not a burden to her family. In Bushra's experience, this is borne out in her observation that families with many daughters tend to be rich. When she marries, a girl takes this *qismat* to her new family. Boys also have *qismat*, but they can study and work to improve their life, where a girl is more dependent on her fate.

Marriages are seen as a matter of fate, of *qismat*, but religion can also be another source of authority to which young people turn for help with making these important decisions. In particular, a prayer called the *istikhāra* may be used to divine the right path to follow. *Qismat* is also employed to place the responsibility for bad marriages with fate rather than the parents who arranged it. Marriage is a *qismat kī bāt*, a thing of fate, so when I asked one mother visiting from Pakistan why she had married her daughter in Britain, she replied

simply *uskī qismat yahān hai*, her fate is here. This is also phrased as someone's *khāna-pina yahān likhā huā hai*. This literally means their eating and drinking is 'written' here.

A final factor that influenced many of those I talked to was attraction. In this excerpt, Talib, a religious young man from Bristol, gives an explanation of his choice of bride in which religion, parental advice and attraction melt into each other:

I actually kept praying to God, thanking God and saying, 'If I did marry, will everything be alright?' There is a thing in Islam called *istikhāra*, where you ask Allah for help in something, could be anything, marrying a woman, could be buying a house, could be buying a car. You actually pray to Allah asking him, 'Well, is this thing that I'm going to do now – is it good for me? If it's good for me then please give it to me now. If it's not good for me then put it away from me.' And I actually made that kind of prayer, there is a special prayer that you have to learn, and I just kept making that prayer.... What happens is you actually see it in your dreams, or you see that the situation is turning good – in other words, you see that people want you to get married to that person, and you can see that situation at the time is good for you.

There were available [other *rishte*] but I did keep on making prayer to God and I didn't see anything within that. And always throughout my whole life, twenty-four years, I've noticed that whatever my parents have said comes true. Wherever they say, because they've got experience, and because they've lived life. Whatever they say, they always look for the child's goodness, they always want to see that the child, what's best for the child... Actually my heart was very inclined towards her at that time anyway. I think Allah... put love in my heart. And I didn't have any problems, to tell you the truth, and Allah... made it easy for me... I could see the situation at the time being easy for me.⁹

The next section will explore attraction in transnational arranged marriages a little further.

Doing your own rishta: transnational 'love marriage'

Pakistanis both in Britain and Pakistan differentiate between 'love' and 'arranged' marriages, with arranged marriages being the more respectable norm. As Mody writes of

⁹ His father, however, sees his parental role as more instrumental:

So one of those girls, I said to him, 'Look, I think this is right for you'. He was bit fifty-fifty – 'Shall I? Shan't I?' Unfortunately he haven't got the ability to make decision. That's another reason why parents involve themselves in the wedding because in young age every shining things look like gold, but it might not be. But if experienced person is with them, he can check it and see it – is it really gold or is it rolled gold? He wasn't sure, so I said to him, 'OK, take your time, think about it and then tell me'... We came home, we talked to her [sic – his] mother on the phone, to his sister, and then we came here and he said, 'Well, if you want it – OK'. I said, 'It's not us – it's your decision, because we don't want to be accused for that all our lives: "I done it because of you."' So you better make a decision'. Unfortunately he's not very decisive. So with a little talk to him he said, 'Yeah, fine. I'll get married. That's the girl.'

North India, personal love affairs are seen as disruptive to social relationships and the social order (2002b). A Quranic injunction specifies that a woman should not contract a union herself, but be given in marriage by a male guardian (Yamani 1998: 154).¹⁰ In Pakistan, this is sometimes expanded so that Donnan reports informants saying that a father ‘can make the marriage where he wishes’ (1994: 307). The social expectation that the process will be controlled by the parents is reflected in the use of the terms ‘boy’ and ‘girl’ (in Urdu: *laṛkā* and *laṛkī*) of the potential spouses even when they are well into adulthood, implying their childlike passivity and obedience to their parents in the arrangement.¹¹

In practice, however, the generally opposed categories of ‘love’ and ‘arranged’ marriages appear as a continuum, with varying degrees of parental/wider family involvement. At one end of this continuum are the increasingly rare cases in which a couple do not meet until their wedding day, while at the other are the also infrequent cases where couples meet and marry in secret. I am treating forced marriages (*zabardastī kī shadi, marzī ke ba-gair*), arranged marriages without consent, as a separate phenomenon for the purposes of this discussion. In transnational marriages, marriage without meeting used to be more common before the advent of affordable air travel, with reports of weddings being conducted over the telephone, and spouses meeting on the tarmac of British airports. The other end of the continuum, elopements, occur both in Pakistan and among British Pakistanis, but are, for obvious reasons, less possible transnationally. In practice, therefore, even those marriages which are classed by the participants as ‘love’ marriages involve some degree of outside ‘arrangement’.

Fischer notes that love marriages are most likely to occur between cousins (1991: 102), who are likely to have more opportunity to meet and form attractions than unrelated young people of the opposite sex. Raisa’s family, for example, had decided that she should marry her paternal cousin, but on visiting Pakistan, she found him ‘village-y’ and unattractive – she showed me a picture of a thin, dark, moustached man. Whilst staying with her family, however, a maternal cousin was delegated to show her around, and even to take

¹⁰ Mohammed is reported to have said that marriages should be arranged by ‘proper guardians’ (Ahmad 1978a: 14), but ‘nobody has got the right to give [a woman] away in marriage without her wish and consent. And if she marries a Muslim by her free choice, nobody can stop her doing so’ (Maududi 1939: 151). Nonetheless, it is ‘not proper for a woman to marry anybody she pleases against the wish of the responsible people of her family’ (Maududi 1939: 149), and cases of marriages without parental consent have been brought to court in Pakistan – with a recent judgement in favour of the daughter’s right to choose.

¹¹ In addition, Mody notes that ‘unmarried people are still considered to be dependants on their families and as such, do not qualify for the more exalted ‘*admi*’ (man) or ‘*aurath*’ (woman)’ (2002a: 225).

her to meet her intended spouse. This cousin was handsome, fair, fashionably dressed and articulate, and the pair ended up talking to each other into the early hours of the morning. On her return to Britain, Raisa told her mother how much she liked this cousin, and, at the cost of rifts within the family, her mother broke off the previous agreement and arranged for her to marry the man with whom she had fallen in love.

As across South Asia, there is a fascination with romance among the young in Pakistan (Fischer 1991: 102). When Amina's British cousin declared to his parents at the end of a visit to Pakistan that he wanted to marry her, the wedding (including venues, clothes, guests and photographers) was organised in two days. To her surprise, Amina then quickly obtained a 'fast track' visa, and within a very short period of time was leaving Pakistan to join her husband in Bristol. Amina described this whole whirlwind period in her life as 'filmy' – in other words, like something from a romantic Indian film.

The contracting of an 'arranged' marriages can equally be remembered as a time of love and romance, approached 'along with some trepidation, [with] a degree of eager anticipation and romantic expectation' (Mines & Lamb 2002: 8). This is often evident in my informant's descriptions of their weddings. Nabila was born in Pakistan and has been married to her mother's sister's son Farooq in Bristol for four years. Her mother, mother's sister and maternal grandmother were all keen on the match when Nabila came from Pakistan to visit her relatives in Bristol eight years ago, but she was nervous of marrying into an unfamiliar environment, particularly as she had seen the difficulties caused in the household by a family member with mental health problems. It was only when Farooq himself proposed and promised to be faithful to her while he completed his University degree that she was swayed. Her mother was worried about her marrying into the uncertain moral climate of the West, but 'he said to my mother that he loved me and he will die in front of my house, and this and that'. Nabila's eyes shone as she showed me the gold pendant he gave her to mark their engagement and that she has worn constantly ever since. She came on a fiancée visa to Britain, and, to avoid antagonising his mentally ill relative, their marriage was a simple affair at home with only two witnesses, but her husband did his best to make the occasion special for her, asking her to dress in her bridal clothes for him once they were alone, and taking her on a two week honeymoon.

During my research, romance was more often present in the narratives of women than men, and Farooq himself explained his personal proposal as his 'Islamic duty' rather than the romantic act Nabila perceived. Of course, this may be an alternative discourse considered more suitable for a man to present to me, a woman and a non-Muslim, and a

romantic impulse is also visible in other young men's action. Bushra's son, for example, got together with the brother of his fiancée in Pakistan, who is marrying his sister (i.e. a brother-sister pair 'exchange'), and the two young men took their future wives out to dinner to present them with rings that they had bought in secret.

The rishta as connection

Because my grandmother, she want to marry [me] with my cousin because my mother and my aunt, they just both sisters [i.e. no other siblings]... If I married here then they will stay together (*ikhāṭṭe rehngē*). (Nabila, partial translation from Urdu.)

So far the term *rishta* has been translated as 'proposal' or 'match', but in a more general sense it also means 'connection' or 'relationship'. Relatives are called *rishte-dār* (the *-dār* suffix indicates possession), but a *rishta* does not need to be a relationship of kinship, so that my host in Pakistan explained to another guest at a wedding that our *rishta* to the couple was that we were neighbours of the girl's family. These senses of *rishta* are also important to understand what people are looking for in a proposal or match: in the connection or relationship of marriage.

Most obviously, and as has been often repeated, South Asian arranged marriages are not simply relationships between individuals, but between families. Connections made through marriage create relationships beyond the couple, and new networks of *rishte-dār*. Some University girls I spoke to in Pakistan told me about marriages in their family between, for example, the children of two men who were friends, and who thought of each other as 'like family' before the marriage (see also Shaw 2000a: 145). In such cases a *rishta* transforms kin-like bonds into kinship, which may then be reinforced by further marriages in the same or subsequent generations. However, given that so many Pakistani marriages are between cousins or other kin – and indeed in many cases the ability to trace a kinship connection is desirable for the *rishta* to be considered a good one – what is the significance of viewing what is sought in a match as a 'connection' when a relationship often already exists?

One response is that not all relatives are the same. A *rishta* may transform someone who is merely a member of the wider *barādarī* kingroup, but with whom a precise relationship might not be traceable, into a *rishta-dār*. A person's 'closest' relatives are often those to whom she is related several times as the result of marriage: for example two women may be both matrilineal and patrilineal first cousins, and sisters-in-law. One result will be

that these women will probably meet more frequently at functions held by relatives such as marriages, death anniversaries, or Eid gatherings, and through more casual visiting, as many of their close relatives will be in common. Visiting, particularly on significant occasions, is one mechanism for producing and indicating closeness. My host in Pakistan, for example, compares army class-mates to family in how close they are, and how much they can rely on each other, giving the example that after his mother died many of those he trained with came for *afsos* (condolence) and to lend their support. Such considerations may be taken into account when considering *rishte*, so Gafoora in Islamabad remembered that when she was helping to think of matches for a younger brother, she was in favour of a marriage with a relative living in Lahore so that the two sections of the family would meet more frequently as in-laws visited each other.

As this suggests, kin relationships are not permanent and given, but will weaken without efforts to sustain them. A Punjabi proverb reflects the ephemerality of kinship without continued intermarriage: ‘when the fence is old, it is your duty to put new wood into it’ (in Werbner 1990: 96) and Shaw reports the alternative construction: ‘A new brick strengthens the wall’ (2000a: 155).

Transnational Rishtas

The importance of *rishta* as connection or relationship is thrown into relief in transnational marriages, which are, as detailed in the Introduction, frequently between close kin. For many British Pakistanis, marriage represents an opportunity to strengthen their connections with Pakistan and with relatives who live there. This is partly a matter of identity – Talib chose a bride from Pakistan to ‘keep myself with my origins’ and Bushra wanted to keep this ‘link’ with Pakistan so that her children’s Pakistani cultural identity would not be too ‘diluted’ by residence in Britain. This concern is shared with another South Asian group – a Sikh woman in Bristol told me that an announcement had been made in the local *gurudwara* (Sikh place of worship) to the effect that all those who were willing should be married to partners from India in order to preserve their language and culture.¹² Her *barādari* across the country, she said proudly, has taken two hundred young men and women to India for marriage.

¹² Research is also being carried out on Sikh transnational marriages (Mand 2002).

For most of the Pakistanis I met in Bristol, however, the connections sought are to people and places. Talib's father Ghalib explained his reasons for marrying his son to a relative in Pakistan:

I wanted to keep a link with Pakistan. If I have found all my three kids *rishtas* here, my link to Pakistan would have been broken... As long as my parents are alive, I will keep going back... I can go, see my mum, see my dad, my brothers are there, my sisters are there, but as soon as my parents gone, my link will start getting weaker and slowly, slowly it will break. I don't want to break that link to my homeland, to my family, to my country, so that is a main reason which I actually went to Pakistan [to look for a bride for my son]. So that link can only be continued if at least one of my family members is married there. So my son is married there [so] my link has gone positive again. If I stopped it, my son will continue it... And then maybe I will retire myself back home. I personally do want it. If I'm going to retire I would like to retire in Pakistan. As you might have seen – you went to Pakistan – [the] elder you are [the] more respect you get. People look at you and ask your experiences. So I don't want to go in an old people's home here and die. That is the reason.

Now that he and his wife have fulfilled their desire and obligation to maintain this connection through the marriage of their son, however, they are searching for a husband for their daughter in Britain, believing that the risks of importing men are too high.¹³

Most writing on British Pakistani arranged marriages focuses on the parental motivations of maintaining contact with the land and family they left behind when they themselves migrated (e.g. Ballard 1987), but the young British Pakistanis getting married may themselves, like Talib, value this connection too. When Azra was considering her options, she reflected that if she married in Britain she, and indeed her children, might never again have the pleasure of visiting Pakistan.

Marriages are thus used both within Pakistan and in the diaspora to maintain connections, *rishte*, in the face of distance. This power of a marriage *rishta* to renew close kinship between people in different places is clearly illustrated in one case I encountered in Bristol where a marriage was arranged between a woman from Britain and a man resident in America in order to maintain the linkages between relatives living in two different villages in Pakistan. She explained why so many of her relatives had pressed for the match:

Well basically because there wasn't anybody else and also to start a new link... They were from a different, sort of, village, you know... [And our marriage would] bring them closer as well – link up with them. Cos I don't think there was anybody else in our family who'd get married there... We're from near Mirpur and my husband's from Jhelum.

¹³ This issue is discussed further in later chapters.

Donnan's study of Pakistani marriage choices noted strong preferences for both geographical and social proximity in choice of spouses, linking distance in terms of geography and kinship. A study of transnational marriage is of course unlikely to uncover strong preferences for local marriage partners, but connections between geography and kinship also emerge strongly from my data. As already noted, visiting, encouraged by geographical proximity or kinship ties, produces 'closeness'. As in English, the same term, *qarīb*, is used to indicate spatial nearness and immediacy of kin relationship (*qarīb rishte-dār*).

The distance people seek to diminish by these marriage connections is not just physical, but also emotional. Just as Gafoora sought to use a marriage to bridge the distance between Lahore and Islamabad, her sister, Farida who migrated to Bristol for marriage in the 1970s, is now eager to arrange a match between her daughter Uzma, and Nadir, the son of her other sister in Lahore (Tayiba). Gafoora's daughter told me that all her *māmū* (maternal uncles) were keen on the match – at the moment their sister visits Pakistan to see her father, although she comes less frequently than when their mother was alive, but given that the bond between siblings is less strong than between parents and children, she will have less reason to visit after his death. Another woman in Bristol compared parents to the roots of the family tree, which becomes weak and can fall apart after their death: 'When the father dies, it shakes, and when the mother dies, everything falls down'. As the next generation are growing up in different countries, they see each other less frequently, so are less emotionally close, and may not keep contact.

Distance has affected relationships in the older generation. Farida herself told Gafoora during the latter's stay in the UK of her own difficulties since her migration. When Gafoora asked why she had not said anything earlier, Farida replied that there was no point: 'You were so far away'. But Farida now seems to be trying to include her own children in the closeness born of association between young cousins, sending Uzma and her younger brother Javed to Pakistan to spend Eid with the extended family. According to Gafoora, this visit was primarily in order for Nadir and his parents to see more of Uzma, to increase the likelihood of the *rishta* being secured.

In addition to visiting, Pakistanis create and maintain ties between both friends and relatives through gift giving (Shaw 1988; Werbner 1990). Uzma and Javed brought with them whole suitcases full of gifts, mostly jeans and fleeces, for their relatives. Later, Gafoora told me that Farida had won Tayiba over by her generosity in giving without expectation of return. There were also, however, hints that this strategy had also been divisive: Gafoora,

while insisting that she didn't mind, told me several times that Farida always sends far more gifts for Tayiba's family than for her own.

Uzma and her mother's attempts to secure the match that may strengthen ties with their family in Pakistan appears inadvertently to have reinforced distance with other sections of her kin group. Gafoora's daughter Salma is the only female first cousin of a similar age to Uzma apart from Nadir's own sister, and she and her mother feel that Uzma and Farida have treated her as a threat, particularly during their spell in England when Salma was an adolescent. Gafoora has told her sister directly that she is not interested in a match with Nadir or his brother for Salma, but hostility between the two young women persists. Uzma recently emailed Salma to report on the engagement of a cousin in Bristol, who had at one stage been considered a possible match for Salma (and also Uzma), telling Salma that she had 'lost'. Nonetheless, when sometime later I asked Salma which 'side' ('boy's' or 'girl's') she would be on at Uzma and Nadir's wedding, as both were first cousins, she replied that although usually you join the party of the person you are closest to, she would probably be on the girl's side (*larkī ki taraf*) as Uzma has no real sisters and so will need female friends to play their roles in the proceedings. Part of these duties, she pointed out with a grin, is to demand and receive money from the groom's side. Since then Salma stopped returning Uzma's emails, and received news of her through another female cousin.

Part of the appeal for many British Pakistanis of visiting Pakistan is undoubtedly shopping. Not only does the money they may have worked very hard to save go a lot further in Pakistan, but particular goods such as *shalwār qamīṣ* and jewellery are available in the latest styles, and in much greater choice than in Britain. Lavish consumption may impress some Pakistani relatives, and perhaps give a misleading impression of the standard of living these families enjoy at home. As with the generous gifts presented above, the intention may even be to impress in order to attract *rishtas*, or simply prestige, but such displays also have the potential to be divisive. Thus while Nadir and his brothers in Lahore look out for bargains for Gafoora's family, when Uzma, as mentioned above, talked gleefully about how much money she had to spend on clothes, the cousins decided to take her to the most expensive shops.

This delicate relationship between closeness and division may be intrinsic to the search for a 'good *rishta*'. While matches between close kin generally attract most approval from the kin group, a *rishta* can also be an opportunity for making new connections – to influence, wealth, or opportunity – and non-kin marriages have been seen as sometimes risky attempts to maximise such benefits (Ahmad 1978b: 175-6; Donnan 1988: 173-97; Jeffery &

Jeffery 1996: 98-9). Within Britain or Pakistan, however, the opportunities for marrying 'up' are limited by the fact that families generally look for *rishte* from similar socio-economic backgrounds. In addition, it has been noted that *barādarī*s tend to fracture along class and residential lines into smaller in-marrying groups (e.g. Shaw 2000a: 144). Thus in the Lahori district studied by Fischer, marriages are an expression of status, rather than the vehicle for improving it (1991).

A transnational kin marriage, however, seems to present those living in Pakistan with a particularly attractive blend of a connection to new opportunities in other countries, prestige, and real or imagined wealth, together with social approval for marrying 'in'. From the perspective of British Pakistanis, there may also be gains to be made in terms of prestige in the quality of *rishta* they can attract as British citizens. Several young people I know in Bristol have married 'up' in terms of education or social class by bringing spouses from Pakistan: the beautician daughter of a Bristol market trader married to a doctor; an unemployed man with no qualifications married to a cousin who gave up medical studies to come to Bristol; or a telesales manager whose beautiful wife came from a wealthy family living in the best area of Lahore. Even for these better-off Pakistanis a connection to the UK or another developed country can be valuable. Professionals such as engineers and doctors are often keen to gain training or experience abroad, although they may not intend to move overseas permanently, but to return to Pakistan after some years with their earning power increased.¹⁴

Nevertheless, from the Pakistani perspective, opportunities abroad are not necessarily the primary motivation for such marriages. Nadir, who is to marry Uzma, has independently obtained a visa to study in London, and in any case hopes to return to live in Pakistan, so it does not seem that this is the principle motivation for his family in agreeing to the marriage. More important has been the pressure from Farida and her brothers in Pakistan for connection to be maintained with this British section of the family. This interpretation is supported by the fact that his father, who is not related to his wife's family (i.e. she married 'out'), is much less keen on the marriage. The father does not get on with many of his wife's relatives, and without the multiple ties which unite close *rishte-dār*, he sees the prospect more as losing the son who was to look after him in his old age, rather than, as for his wife's side, cementing, mending and ensuring close relationships despite distance.

¹⁴ This path is not always straightforward, however, an issue which will be addressed in Chapter Seven.

Distance, however, also disguises the failures and disappointments of migrants. A man whose financial position in Britain is fairly insecure may still be able to send money back to Pakistan, or it may be easy for a woman to hide marital problems from family in Pakistan to spare them distress or shame. When Gafoora and her family visited Britain, for example, they were surprised at how small their relatives' houses were. She recounted several examples of relations who, although they may have built smart properties in Pakistan, lead less salubrious lives in Britain: working while claiming benefits, sub-letting council houses, or other activities that she had not known about from their visits to Pakistan. These deceptions, however, may be at the price of the often prized emotional closeness with those in Pakistan – as when Farida could not confide in a distant sister, and so reinforced their distance by her lack of communication, a distance that she has recently been attempting to bridge with visiting, gifting, and most importantly and, she must hope, permanently, with the marriage of her daughter to her sister's son.

Rishta: connecting strategy and emotion

Rishtas are connections between people. Two main strands seem to be intertwined in *rishta* as a proposed connection of marriage. It may be the consequence of, or intended to maintain, emotional connections and kinship bonds with relatives or close friends, and a good *rishta* can be one that brings wealth, prestige or political connections.¹⁵

Focussing on this indigenous term for affinal connections, may prove useful in uniting some of the evidence on Pakistani marriages in the literature, by undermining the distinction between preference and practice. Hastings Donnan (1988), as I mentioned earlier, divides the factors involved in marriage choice into socio-cultural preferences and 'personal expectations'. This distinction, however, begins to appear a little artificial when it is understood that **both** strategic advantages **and** the value of marrying where connections already exist are part and parcel of the concept of the good *rishta*. In other words, maximising personal advantage is an intrinsic part of the socio-cultural expectations of choosing a marriage partner.

¹⁵ Indeed, in somewhat archaic usage, the word connection or connexion also carries this range of connotations in English. In the work of Jane Austen, for example, kinship and marriage 'connexions' are valued for the material and social advantages they confer. In her novels, as in Pakistan, such connexions are seen as fragile and prone to dissolution through offence or neglect so that a character wonders: 'How to have this anxious business set to rights, and be admitted as cousins again.' (*Persuasion*: 146) Like *rishte*, Austen's marriage connexions also have emotional content – while a disagreeable person may be suffered for the sake of the advantages the connexion brings, the ideal in marriage is to combine wealth and status with personal fulfilment: 'A most suitable connexion everybody must consider it, but I think it might be a very happy one.' (*Persuasion*: 157-8).

Donnan also starts his volume with a review of the debate on marriage preference and attempts to reconcile a preference for patrilineal parallel cousin marriage, or at least marriage within the patrilineage, with a far more varied practice – many people marry matrilineal relatives – by explanations in terms of strategic behaviour, such as maximising the useful contacts gained through a match. This contrasts with Veena Das' explanation of matrilineal parallel cousin marriage as the result of dominant mothers insisting on matches with their beloved sister's children rather than their husband's relatives (1974). If, as I understand it, strategic matters, kinship obligations and emotional connections are all part of what is understood by *rishta*, then these disparities of interpretation are no longer in need of explanation, but are in fact consistent and cognate phenomena.¹⁶

Transnational marriages emphasise these different facets of the concept of *rishta* by exaggerating the dangers of losing connections, even between close kin, and the difference in opportunities, wealth or status that may be (hoped to be) achieved by connections through marriage. Other than through this chance of migration it would be unusual for a person to change their situation so dramatically on marriage, given that marriages rarely take place across great class divides.

It is worth noting that most of my discussions and observations about these matters have been with women. The differences in discourse on emotion between men and women may help to explain the differences between my focus on emotion, and Donnan's emphasis on strategy and patrilineage, derived more from conversations with men. A young woman I met in Pakistan had a sister living in England, married to the son of a friend of her father, but her father rejected a proposal for her to marry this man's other son. This might be viewed, following Donnan, as socio-economic strategy: having established a connection to the UK, the marriage of the next daughter could be used to fulfil family expectations, or establish other relationships. The girl's explanation, however, was that having sent one beloved daughter so far away, her parents did not want a second to be married overseas.

Of course, it could be suggested that this narrative provides a culturally acceptable gloss over 'real' motivations, but given the obvious importance of this demonstration of her parents' affection to this young woman, to dismiss discourses of emotion as mere appeals to convention, or disguises for more important matters, would be to weaken our understanding of the experience and meaning of marriage. It is on such experiential matters that future

¹⁶ Further evidence for the importance of emotional relationships in influencing *rishte* is provided by Fischer's observation of the very large proportion of kin marriages that are between the children of same-sex siblings (1991), a relationship considered particularly close.

behaviour is based. To give a final example, another girl's father has withstood *barādari* pressure for a match for his eldest daughter, the first woman in the family to go on to further education, in order for her to pursue her studies and even continue them overseas. She sees his strength on her behalf as proof of his admirable character and love for her, and she takes very seriously her reciprocal responsibility to him, and to the other women in the family who may wish to follow her, to set an example of irreproachable behaviour and high achievement.¹⁷

The concept of *rishta* thus provides a bridge between the strategic and emotional considerations involved in arranging marriages. The next chapter will demonstrate how these issues emerge again as explanatory factors in the popularity of close kin marriage.

Conceptualising Transnational Connections

Through this exploration of the concept of *rishta*, a picture starts to emerge of a Pakistani social world structured by networks of connections, some of which span continents. I would now like to consider how this indigenous image can be used to enhance the conceptualisation of what I have been calling the transnational Pakistani community.

James Clifford argues that the study of transnational communities features an overwhelming concentration on 'roots' – the 'diaspora' concept, for example, gives primacy to 'homeland' as the origin of identity. The privileging of place, he suggests, means that anthropology has sought its subject in stasis: 'Dwelling was understood to be the local ground of collective life, travel as supplement; roots always precede routes' (1997: 3). He advocates giving travel – 'routes' – a more central role in our understandings of the basis of social and cultural life.

I would like to consider whether the concepts of *rishta* and 'routes' can be compared. Both take the attention away from the places where people 'dwell' and refocus it on the connections – the routes or *rishta* – that link these spatial points. Implicit in both is dynamism: development and change over time. And both move away from a model of bounded groups to one that allows for wider traffic and networks. Both also might be seen to undermine the idea of a transnational Pakistani community as an analytical category, showing it to be more like a loose bundle of connections across space or time, which could be conceptualised either as routes or *rishte*.

¹⁷ A potential spouse's character may be judged by the behavior of close relatives of the same sex, as character traits are thought to run in families and along gender lines (Fischer & Lyon 2002).

But there is a logical difference between routes and *rishta* that, I suggest, makes *rishta* a more useful way of thinking about these transnational social and cultural linkages. Routes join places without necessarily retaining connections between people. Put bluntly, migration without ongoing relations ‘back home’ or networks formed in the new location involves transnational experience for the individual or family, but such a migration does not create transnational social formations.

Rishta, of course, is all about connections between people. The ‘routes’ of Pakistani migrants have been for decades tracing the path of these connections. Starting in the middle of the twentieth century, the pioneer migrants to Britain allowed *rishte-dār*, fictive kin or co-villagers the opportunity to follow the route of a *rishta* that had been stretched across the globe. Most of the transnational marriages that occur today are still treading the path of a pre-existing *rishta*, with only a few modern-day pioneers forging new *rishta* and so new routes through less conventional methods that do not rely on the pre-existence of *rishta* of some sort in order to locate the match – such as matrimonial advertising. This type of migration is commonly known by commentators as ‘chain’ migration, but adding the indigenous concept of *rishta* makes explicit of what these chains are constituted. The *rishta*-chains of individuals and families linked by consanguinity, marriage, or another close social bond not only facilitate migration but, for most Pakistanis in Britain, remain in place as enduring transnational bonds.

The idea of networks may move away from that of bounded communities, but even networks must have points of closure. ‘[T]he task confronting humans is not to sustain human relationships... [but] to place a limit on relationship’ (Weiner quoted in Strathern 1996: 529). As Marilyn Strathern points out, marriage may be one way of curtailing the infinite expansion of networks:

...when a descent group whose members share common substance truncates claims over its members at the exogamic boundary; making new relations through marriage stops the flow... Or, again, the kind of marriage rule that invites persons to think of themselves as marrying cousins or exchanging siblings invites them to think of substance as turning back on itself. Here networks are stopped in the persons of relatives who become the turning point for directing the flow of fertility back (1996: 528)

Thought of in these terms, Pakistani close kin marriage preferences effectively constrain the expansion of *rishte*, along which flows not just of spouses but also gifts and opportunities take place. Strathern writes that where ‘claims cease or turn back, they become truncated by their intersection with other claims, signified by a hybrid figure (human being or wealth item or ritual substance) who gathers them within, so that they are seen to

stop in his or her person' (Strathern 1996: 529). Indeed, the very term for relative – *rishte-dār* – suggests someone who holds a connection, and as such is a potential stop for the flow. Following Strathern into the territory of Latourian networks encompassing the human and the non-human (Latour 1993) and the development of the hybrid character, the Pakistani cousin-bride could well be viewed as the ultimate flow-stopper. Both an affine and a consanguine, by moving to her husband's home in marriage she turns back the flow of *rishte*, creating an eddy in the stream of gifts and further *rishte* between relatives in the network. The description of the bride in her wedding finery as a 'total prestation' could easily become a portrayal of a hybrid of the woman and the objects in the form of the gold and fine clothes she wears. As she accepts the money gifts from guests and slips them into the handbag that matches her wedding dress, she literally stops and contains this flow.

However, it should be noted that the Pakistanis with whom I worked share Strathern's Euro-Americans' 'cultural predisposition... to imagine that social relationships concern commonalities of identity before they concern difference, and that heterogeneity is inevitable in combining the human with the nonhuman' (1996). A *rishta* can only be with another person – a separate term, *ta'alluq*, is used for a connection between objects or concepts.

Hannerz, commenting on the proliferation of terms used by anthropologists to write about transnationalism, notes that many of these concepts may be appealing in their imprecision and ambiguity, 'as we try to take a fresh look at the world around us, because they seem to offer an immediate grasp of some central quality of whatever we are referring to' (2002: 3-4), but that we should remember that they are but a provisional conceptual toolkit, and may have little to do with the 'native's point of view' (2002: 4). My suggestion is that *rishta*, as an indigenous concept, may provide a more appropriate tool with which to explore Pakistani transnationalism. Given current anthropological orthodoxy it seems extraordinary that a large section of the discipline seems to ignore the heuristic potential of exploring indigenous conceptualisation, but such an accusation can easily be levelled at writing on transnationalisation and globalisation. Some of the vocabulary employed, such as hybridity, creolisation, or code-switching originates in other academic disciplines – notably linguistics. A cluster of other terms, as Hannerz (2002) points out, stem from liquid metaphors concerning flows, or others relating to boundaries. Perhaps the most intriguing example from the transnational ethnographies is Pnina Werbner's adoption of a term from business analysis – 'chaordic' – to describe political and religious networks. It had originated as a description of the global organisational structure of the Visa credit card (2002a).

The ethnography of South Asian communities in Britain is littered with the analytical adoption of indigenous concepts: an urban ethnic concentration conceptualised as a Bangladeshi village (Khanum 2001); community formation analysed as the creation of *des par-des* (Ballard 1994); or the product of gifting understood as the creation of 'izzat' (Werbner 1990). This exploration of *rishta* demonstrates that not only the 'community' relationships among those settled overseas, but also the continuing transnational relationships between British Pakistanis and Pakistan can fruitfully be conceptualised in indigenous terms.

One problem with the analytical use of indigenous concepts is, of course, that they are likely to be limited in their generalisability and therefore in their comparative utility. Other South Asian groups do share the concept of *rishta*, but even here great care would have to be taken in extending the *rishta* conceptualisation of transnational networks to these other populations, given that their very different kinship practices have implications for the concept of the *rishta*. Sikhs, for example, marry out of the kin group, and British Sikhs seeking spouses in India often have to resort to locally non-standard methods of finding matches such as matrimonial advertising due to their lack of local social networks (Mand 2002).¹⁸ This is a very different picture from that of Pakistani migrant marriage *rishta* routed along existing connections.

Nevertheless, it is unlikely that Pakistanis are the only diasporic group whose own concepts can be of help to anthropologists attempting to document what is for us a new field. Clifford asks of the nascent transnational anthropology: 'What can be known at dawn?' But migration, diaspora, and travel are hardly recent phenomena. Those involved are likely to structure their transnational lives through the adaptation of practices and concepts whose origins have traceable roots and routes, and which may well offer up more specialised tools with which to grapple with the specificities of varying transnationalisms.

The last two chapters have dealt with Pakistani transnationalism from several perspectives: relating it to the theoretical literature; arguing for increased recognition of variation in engagement with the transnational; exploring the everyday consequences of transnational experience for the self-presentation of young British Pakistanis; and finally suggesting the utility of indigenous conceptions of these global relationships. The remaining chapters turn away from issues of transnationalism to explore other themes emerging over

¹⁸ Although existing marriage connections may be used to find out about potential spouses (P. Jeffery pers. comm.).

the course of these discussions, and to probe my informants' experiences of transnational marriage. To start this process, the following chapter takes forward the examination of what is sought in a spouse by looking at the enduring appeal of close kin marriage.

Chapter Four

Close Kin Marriage: Reducing and reproducing risk

One of the most striking features of transnational Pakistani marriage is the high rate of unions between close kin. A good *rishta*, as has been seen, is often one where a *rishta* of kinship already exists. This overlaying of a new marriage relationship on pre-existing ties is a mechanism to reinvigorate the bonds of kinship, seen as particularly vulnerable in the context of transnational migration when physical distance can lead to emotional distance even in relations between siblings. This chapter will take a look at close kin marriages from a different perspective, demonstrating that they are also favoured because they are perceived by participants as reducing the risks involved in what has already been seen to be the delicate process of finding and securing a good *rishta*. This indigenous perception of reducing danger stands in marked contrast to the dominant bio-medical and popular view of such marriages as intrinsically risky in genetic terms. However, while I have suggested that the introduction of migration heightens and highlights the strategic and emotional facets of the concept of *rishta*, transnational marriages are shown in this chapter to highlight new risks.

The recent, largely sociological, literature on risk grew out of concerns over the dangers to human health and the environment presented by new technologies (Krimley & Golding 1992; see also Sagan 1993 on the nuclear industry). As such, the problem of risk has been seen as a distinctive feature of late modernity (Beck 1992; Giddens 1991). Beck, for example, has argued that contemporary overproduction of resources has replaced the problem of fulfilling basic human needs with the risks accompanying the new technologies of production. Hazards have always existed, but he suggests that these were visible in the past, whilst the risks of late modernity are more unknown – piles of untreated sewage replaced by invisible chemical pollution (1992: 19-21).¹ For Giddens, risk is essentially a feature of modern society ‘taking leave of the past, of traditional ways of doing things, and which is opening itself up to a problematic future’. The calculation of risk opens up the possibility of insurance, and a ‘colonisation’ of the future towards which society is now oriented (1991: 109-112). Elsewhere Giddens has consigned arranged marriages to the category of ‘traditional’ past-oriented societies (1999), and yet it could be argued that these

¹ It is worth noting, however, that people have in all times and in all places suffered from diseases whose causes, science tells us, are equally invisible bacteria and viruses. The untreated sewage may be visible, but its microscopic contamination of a drinking water supply is not.

participants in the impeccably modern project of globalisation are suffering new risks precisely because of the newly affordable technologies of travel that make transnational marriages possible for so many. Ultimately, however, the question of the ‘modernity’ or otherwise of transnational marriage practices is of limited heuristic value. The present exploration will examine the nature and management of the risks involved in marriage. Much of the available literature, with its focus on the state, corporations or the environment, has little to say about such small-scale negotiations of risks.

Until recently, anthropology has made limited contribution to this area of investigation (Harriss 2003). A notable exception is the work of Mary Douglas, first in collaboration with Aaron Wildavsky in *Risk and Culture* (1983), and later in the sole authored *Risk and Blame* (1992). Whilst risk assessment has its roots in the study of probabilities in gambling, these works situate risks in their social and moral environment. The risks each society singles out for particular attention are, they write, indicative of its values and must be understood in the context of the wider social structure. This brand of ‘cultural theory’ postulates a typology of societies building on Douglas’ ‘grid’ and ‘group’ classifications, by which risk and responses to risk can be understood. In the heartland of risk studies – the management of dangerous technologies – echoes of this linking of risk to social structure can be seen in arguments about how the structures and values of corporations may be changed to reduce the risk of accidents (e.g. Sagan 1993). Gardner has made interesting use of the idea that social conditions and attitudes to risk might be linked, suggesting that the insecurities of the life of Bangladeshi villagers that had encouraged their belief in the miracles of Sufi *pirs* also pre-disposed them to take the risk of overseas migration in the hope of economic transformation (1995: 262-3).

Perhaps the most useful aspect of Douglas’ work is, however, the fundamental point that people do not treat risk as a matter of calculable probabilities. Rather risk is a social matter. Risks are not taken in isolation, but after consultation with kin and friends, and moral obligations, values, and relationships are taken into account in decisions about risk taking. In a recent volume, *Risk Revisited* (Caplan 2002), intended to boost the anthropological input to debates on the subject, contributors draw attention to the cultural and the social settings in which risks are evaluated and negotiated. Such work is in sharp contrast to the universalising theories of a global ‘risk society’ postulated by some sociologists. This chapter joins the project of recontextualising risk in the cultural understandings and small-scale interactions between individuals that have traditionally been anthropology’s area of investigation. Here some of the health-related research on risk is also pertinent. Luker (1975), for example, describes the process of contraceptive risk taking. Where earlier approaches had attributed

unintended pregnancy to lack of information or psychological resistance, Luker shows how an understanding of the local meanings of contraception, sex and motherhood, people's relationships, and the influences most prominent at that particular time for that individual, reveal the decision to take risks with contraception to be rational on its own terms. Further studies by anthropologists of health – Shaw on genetic risks (2000b) and Bujra (2000) on AIDS prevention – will be employed as comparative ethnographic material later in this discussion.

A final aspect of the literature on risk that proves useful in this context is Adams' (1995) observation of the existence of parallel risk management strategies. He calls these the formal (e.g. governmental) and the informal. The current and following chapters deal predominantly with the informal, the strategies employed by British Pakistanis to reduce the risks involved in marriage. As Adams points out, however, the development of informal strategies takes formal provisions into account. In this case, it should be remembered that attempts to manage marital risk are set against the background of current immigration policies and legal definitions of marriage and divorce. Both assessments of risk are dynamic, part of what Douglas and Wildavsky call the 'dialogue on how best to organise social relations'. They go on, 'For to organise means to organise some things *in* and other things *out*' (1983: 6). From this perspective, the political debates following David Blunkett's advice to British Asians to seek partners from within Britain in light of the dangers of 'bogus' transnational marriages, and the quotation in the Introduction from a young British Pakistani woman simultaneously demanding protection and freedom, can be seen as a process of negotiation of acceptable risk. This dialogue echoes Adams' observation that the formal sector tends to try to reduce risk, while the informal seeks to balance risks and benefits (1995: 4). Each system responds to the other. At the time of writing, the abolition of the Primary Purpose Rule has made it far more likely that Pakistani husbands will be granted visas to join wives in Britain. In response, the number of British Pakistani women marrying men from Pakistan seems to be rising. This in turn has heightened other risks, addressed by the Home Office in the immigration White Paper (2002). The exploration of risk presented in this and subsequent chapters captures a certain point in this dynamic process. The practices described here, such as the prevalence of close kin marriage, should thus be viewed as at least partly the product of this dialogue, and as capable of further change and development, rather than as a fixed aspect of a reified Pakistani culture.

In this chapter I also draw upon suggestions from work on emotion to investigate risk as it is perceived and managed in relations between participants in transnational marriages. As noted in the Introduction, Lutz and White stress the importance for

understanding people's actions of documenting what is considered dangerous and why (1986). This exploration of risk in transnational marriage will start with the issue of genetic hazards, moving on to discuss the risks of a failed marriage, and how matches with close kin are considered safer, before ending with the irony that the attempt to reduce risk in this way may produce its own dangers in terms of damage to relations between kin. In the process, we move towards clarifying the position of affinity in this largely endogamous in terms of kinship, but geographically expansive situation.

The central section of the chapter takes the form of an extended interview excerpt in which Shareen from Bristol talks about her decision to marry a cousin from Pakistan. Her narrative recalls themes from the preceding chapter, whilst also providing a commentary on risk and trust that leads into the main body of the discussion. First, however, it is necessary to outline some of the features of Pakistani endogamy, and review some of the literature on the subject.

Endogamy, cousin marriage and genetic risk

The *zāt* or *qaum*, commonly translated as caste, is a conceptually endogamous unit.² The use of the term 'castes' of South Asian Muslims has been disputed (Ahmad 1978a), and some Pakistanis deny the existence of caste in Pakistani society (Shaw 1988: 86). During my fieldwork, I heard the term caste used frequently, although sometimes with the qualification that the system is different from that in India.³ Matches between higher *qaums* and *kammi* (artisan) *qaums* are considered particularly inappropriate (Shaw 1988: 91). However, '[i]n most cases the question of caste status in marriage does not arise explicitly because of the traditional Pakistani Muslim preference for marriage with first cousins'. This, in turn, is related to a desire to maintain the 'purity of the blood' (Shaw 1988: 98). In contrast to ethnographic data on conceptions of procreation from elsewhere in the subcontinent (Inden & Nicholas 1977: 52-3), blood is thought to be transmitted from the father (Jeffery 1979: 10; Werbner 1990: 283), so purity of the blood can be understood to mean patrilineal endogamy.

In practice this has been reported to mean a preference for marriage with the father's brother's daughter (Alavi 1972; Donnan 1988: 114-51), or another first cousin within the *barādārī*, a term commonly translated as 'patrilineage' (Alavi 1972; Shaw 1988: 102). My

²The former may be used less frequently because of its Hindu connotations.

³ Other possible translations for *qaum* are: tribe, nation, sect, people, and religious or ethnic group (Donnan 1988: 47).

informants in both Bristol and Pakistan do not express a preference for patrilineal marriages, and Shaw's survey in Oxford found no statistical preference for father's brother's daughter marriage, and only a slightly higher rate of marriages to patrilineal than matrilineal relatives (2001). Father's brother's daughter preference is common in other Middle Eastern Islamic societies, and the existence of groups described as patrilineages encourages observers to think in terms of matri- and patri-lineages. However, it should be born in mind that given repeated close kin marriage many members of the *barādarī* are related to both one's mother and one's father. As Veena Das points out, if a pair of brothers marry a pair of sisters, their children will be both patrilineal and matrilineal first cousins (1973:38). In other cases, the 'closest' link between husband and wife will be stressed,⁴ so the majority of marriages I have encountered may be classified by those involved as *mān kī taraf* (mother's side) or *bāp kī taraf* (father's side). Nevertheless, it should be remembered that although the term is translated as 'patrilineage', *barādarī* members are not only related through the male line.⁵

Barādarī is also a concept with a 'sliding semantic structure' (Alavi 1972). As seen in the previous chapter, marriage tends to take place within a smaller sub-group, reflecting the distinction between what Alavi calls the *barādarī* 'of participation' and the *barādarī* 'of recognition' (1972), or Wakim terms the 'effective' *barādarī* and the *barādarī* 'at large' (1991). At one end of the scale, people may talk about their *barādarī* as this former fairly close-knit group of relatives. The next level is that of those they recognise as related, although a precise relationship may not be able to be traced. Another level up, all members of the same *qaum* from the same village might be considered *barādarī* members. Finally, the concepts of *barādarī* and *zāt* may collapse into one another, so that when I asked for a definition of *barādarī*, some people responded by saying that it is *zāt*. This ambiguity can be useful in negotiating who may be married, as will be seen in Chapter Six.

In a recent survey of Pakistanis in Oxford, 59% of marriages were with first cousins, and 87% were within the *barādarī/zāt*. These figures are substantially higher than those reported either for Pakistan, or indeed for the parental generation in Britain. Moreover, 71% of the marriages surveyed were to spouses from Pakistan, and 90% of the first cousin

⁴ Compare Good on Hindu India: 'All marriages are terminologically correct in retrospect because the relationships they create supersede those existing beforehand' (in Barnard & Good 1984).

marriages were transnational in this way (Shaw 2001: 323-7). These data seem to suggest a marked increase over time in the numbers of consanguineous and, in particular, first cousin marriage amongst British Pakistanis (see Shaw 2000b), but this increase has only been in transnational marriages – less than half of the marriages to spouses in the UK were to relatives. Coupled with these high rates of close kin marriage amongst the Pakistani populations in Britain, elevated levels of infant mortality and disability have generated several recent studies by social and medical scientists. Such research has reached differing conclusions about the genetic implications of consanguineous marriages (Shaw 2001), although the consensus now seems to be that the offspring of such couples suffer from raised levels of genetic illnesses and disabilities (Shaw 2000b and forthcoming). Whilst all the Pakistanis with whom I discussed genetic risks were familiar with the issue, they seldom saw it as a reason to avoid marrying within the family. They may appeal to fate, or assert that children are gifts from God – a common reason reported for avoidance of both termination and testing during pregnancy (Shaw 2000b). Moreover, many are able to appeal to reasons why this danger would not affect them – there are no disabilities in their family, or their own parents married ‘out’ and so the probability is reduced. Others narrate stories of the ‘Uncle Norman’ variety, such as an example of a family who married out and bore disabled children, while others had healthy offspring, despite repeated cousin marriage across generations.⁶ Responses to these risks – testing, termination, and indeed whether genetic causes for disabilities are accepted – must also be ‘negotiated with respect to the authority of senior and other relatives, and the authority of religious leaders’ (Shaw forthcoming).

Genetic factors were a major concern for two families I met, but did not prove a complete deterrent in either case. One educated middle class woman in Pakistan declared that she had decided not to marry her children within the family because she attributed her own multiple miscarriages to consanguineous marriage. On other occasions, however, she told me that she had at one point had her eye on a certain cousin as a match for her daughter, and she would not prevent her son from marrying his first cousin if he wished. Another woman who shared her congenital disability with two siblings married a distant relative, but the family intended to have genetic testing carried out on the husband before the couple decided to have children (cf. Shaw 2000b). Shaw (forthcoming) suggests that some families who have experienced ill-health attributed to genetic causes may take information on genetic

⁵ See Boddy 2003 for an interesting discussion of the suppression of matrilineal linkages to create the impression of patrilineages in Sudan.

⁶ A concept from social medicine – Uncle Norman is the folk model of the man who flouts health advice and lives to a ripe old age (Davison *et al* 1989).

risks into account when making marriage choices. However, finding a spouse for someone with a disability can prove difficult, and it may be that a suggested *rishta* within the *barādarī* resulting from obligations between kin is the only option available. The opportunity to migrate may make marriage to a disabled relative in Britain a more acceptable proposition for Pakistani nationals.

The lure of consanguineous matches is evidently strong. ‘As your children grow up,’ said one mother in Bristol, ‘it just becomes harder to imagine going outside when there are perfectly good *rishte* within your own family’. This chapter will explore the attraction of kin marriage, and attempt to explain its particular appeal to the diasporic communities in Britain.

Obligations and assets

In his 1988 Pakistani ethnography *Marriage among Muslims*, Hastings Donnan argued for a shift from an account of marriage practices that gives explanatory priority to marriage rules and preferences, such as ‘close kin marriage’, to a focus on the purposive strategies involved in marriage choices (see also Bourdieu 1977), noting that marriages that go against the preferences for *quam* and *barādarī* endogamy do occur. Anthropologists, he argues, have sought explanations only for these exceptions, implying that the remainder are ‘explained’ by the marriage prescription or preference. This situation has arisen, he suggests, because anthropologists treat marriage as belonging to the sphere of kinship,

... and have concentrated on marriage rules expressed in terms of kinship. Even though we know that marriage choice can involve political and economic considerations, we have not worked out a mode of analysis which incorporates them on an equal footing. (Donnan 1988: 209)

The model he proposes for interpreting marital decisions includes factors in two categories: a set of cultural preferences, and considerations defined by individual goals. Matters of kinship preference fall into the former category, and may also conversely form the basis for claims or expectations to marry a child to a certain person. While requests from close kin may be hard to ignore, decisions are made by weighing the social implications of neglecting these expectations against other priorities (Donnan 1988: 119-51). These other factors, the personal goals involved in a marriage choice, include strengthening kin ties, making new connections, or a having wealthy or beautiful spouse. The considerations relevant to each arrangement vary. A father with many daughters and thus a high financial burden, for example, chose to marry the first few to *barādarī* members to strengthen kin ties and establish the family in the village where this section of the *barādarī* live. With his family

size diminished and economic situation improved, however, he was in a stronger position to resist pressure to marry another child within the *barādarī*, and took a risk by arranging marriages to non-kin, thereby forging new networks (Donnan 1988: 173-97). Even marriages identical in terms of genealogy, writes Bourdieu, may have,

different, even opposite, meanings and functions, depending on the strategies in which they are involved. These can only be grasped by means of a reconstruction of the entire system of relationships between the two associated groups and of the state of these relationships at a given point in time (1977: 48).

This strategic perspective on marriage arrangements has been a pervasive one in the study of British Pakistani marriages, although the factors involved in decisions differ from those proposed by Donnan in Pakistan, as they must incorporate the incentives introduced by migration. Varying predictions of British Pakistani marriage patterns have been due to the different weighting given to the factors employed in the calculations. In Shaw's (2001) schema, socio-economic interests in Britain are balanced against obligations to kin and opportunities for financial connections in Pakistan. Twenty years earlier, she had predicted that local socio-economic interests would outweigh those in Pakistan, so that 'families may tend to select a spouse from among kin in Britain rather than in Pakistan, on the basis of economic interests, equality of status and the compatibility of spouses', and might for the same reasons increasingly marry non-relatives in Britain (1988: 107). As it became evident that the trend has been towards increasing transnational marriage, largely with close kin, she revised her assessment by introducing two additional explanatory factors. The first is that under current immigration restrictions, marriage is the primary means to continue labour migration to the UK. However, the fact that equal numbers of (economically inactive/non-remitting) women come to Britain for marriage suggests that this is not the main motivation. Instead, she stresses obligation to family in Pakistan as the chief factor in British Pakistani's choice of a spouse from Pakistan for their children (2001). Fulfilling these obligations, she notes elsewhere, has the additional benefit of enhancing reputation. Close kin marriage is thus publically 'expressive' of the solidarity of the kin group (Shaw 2000a: 154).⁷

Roger Ballard wrote in the late 1980s that Pakistani parents in Britain:

...usually find themselves under intense pressure to accept offers of marriage on behalf of their siblings' children back in Pakistan. And they also know that if they refuse, they are likely to be charged with having become so anglicized that they have forgotten their most fundamental duties towards their kin. These pressures are extremely hard to resist. So as more and more migrants' children

⁷ See Chapter Six for an outline of the importance of such solidarity for *'izzat* (honour).

reach marriageable age, the frequency of marriage with partners back in Pakistan is rising rapidly. (Ballard 1987: 27)

A major part of this obligation is economic. One of the stock answers an ethnographer receives in Pakistan when enquiring about the reasons for close kin marriages is that they are arranged in order to keep the family assets together. As sons inherit land and property, and daughters receive dowry, intermarriage between sibling's children prevents the fragmentation of resources. Pakistani University students told me stories to illustrate how women may suffer as a result: girls married to unsuitable men (younger/much older/disabled/ugly) simply because they are cousins; or Pathans or 'tribal lords' who marry their daughters to the Quran Sharif under the guise of a religious act, to prevent them marrying out for lack of a match within the family. Some of my Bristol case studies could be interpreted in this light. Nabila's marriage to her mother's sister's son in Bristol, for example, was described in the last chapter as being arranged in order to strengthen the relationship between two sisters without other siblings. However, the match was also desired by Nabila's grandmother in an attempt to strengthen her descendants' claim to a row of shops in Pakistan. The old woman's British-resident daughter's husband had given power of attorney over the shops to his step-brothers, who then refused to relinquish it, so marrying a granddaughter into this son-in-law's family might re-establish a right to the property. Forms of cultural capital, particularly education, may also be guarded within the family. On hearing of my project, one British father's first words to me on the subject were, 'If a boy – it used to be a boy in those days – has a degree or something, [then] the family should benefit'.

This statement, however, also suggests another perspective on the role assets play in marriage. Rather than an obligation to keep assets within the kin group, marriage can be an opportunity to share benefits. So one woman told me that her friend wanted to marry her daughter to her sister's son, despite the daughter's doubts, in order to give her sister in Pakistan a large dowry. While men living in Britain commonly remit money to their family in Pakistan, a woman's family is not expected to receive anything from her after marriage, as outlined in Chapter One, so the wedding of a child presented an opportunity to share the comparative wealth of life in Bristol with a sibling.

However, as the argument over Nabila's family's shops (above) would indicate, discussion of sharing, obligations, and mutually owned assets should not give the impression of the extended family or *barādarī* as a homogenous or necessarily harmonious unity.

The [marriage] choices that are made have a far-reaching impact upon the parents, their siblings, their siblings' children, and a range of other relatives, affecting the futures and socio-economic positions of a much wider range of kin

than just parents and children. For this reason, decisions about marriage are a matter of corporate, not individual, concern. At the same time, the interests of those with a stake in the outcome of a marriage negotiation are often quite conflicting and competing (Shaw 2001: 325).

Differing interests within the *barādarī* do not just concern socio-economic matters, but extend to considerations of power within the kin group. A Bristol taxi-driver elaborated on this theme, describing a system called *hāth* (hand) or *bawān* (arms) (cf. Kurin 1984: 211), in which spouses are chosen on the basis of ‘points’ in a network of male power. He himself was married out of the circle of cousins, to his brother’s wife’s sister, and so if he needed support within the family, the only ‘hands’ he had to help him were his own brothers. Those who married cousins, on the other hand, can count on support from all the cousins, with whom consanguineal bonds have been strengthened by affinity. In addition, if a man’s wife has many brothers, they gain more ‘points’.⁸ ‘It’s all about power’, he said, relating a story from their village in Pakistan where a ‘Beauty’ was married to a ‘Beast’ from Bristol:

Everybody wanted to marry her, but they were all two points, four points. The Beast was twenty points, because he was her first cousin. That gives the most power, family-wise. Not just with the brothers and sisters, but all the cousins. Power means if anything happens in the family they will back you, be with you.

Although only a few older women among my other contacts in Bristol recognised the term *bawān*, and those who did said that it had fallen out of use, most old and young recognised the advantages of marrying into a large family within your close kin group.

Bawān, how many hands or arms you have behind you, only gives power within the family with whom you share blood. Nonetheless, networks of male relatives do operate to defend family interests if threatened from outside. During my previous research in Bristol, a young man in charge of the family shop boasted to me that if there was any trouble, he could make one phone call and summon immediate back-up from relatives in businesses around Bristol, and such a network did appear to be put into action after an attack on an elder member of another prominent shop-keeping family. Brothers may feel they have to defend family honour by challenging men or boys who may be involved with their sisters (e.g. Shaw 2000a: 169), and in a very few cases, ‘blood feuds’ between families in Pakistan have led to murders in Britain. I will return to issues of masculinity, honour and rifts within kin groups in the final chapters of this thesis.

⁸ Jeffery and Jeffery report a North Indian wife’s description of her husband without brothers as ‘alone’ and so vulnerable to mistreatment and exploitation (1996: 208).

The advantage of a large family in terms of support is, however, only one side of the coin. Just as involvement in the ‘community’ is both valued and resented, there may be negative aspects to marrying into a large family. Hence, one mother who had recently arranged her daughter’s marriage said she was glad that the fiancé’s family was small because her daughter would face less competition from sisters-in-law.⁹ Significantly, this also hints at something that does not feature in models of marriage choice as strategies for maximising assets, social capital, or social power: the wish to protect yourself, or those you care about, from hurt – in other words, to manage risk.

The other side of the benefits of marrying ‘in’, are the dangers of marrying ‘out’. I have heard Sumera from Bristol, who married a non-relative from Pakistan, described as ‘alone’ because her male support networks were weak – her father had died and her brother was mentally ill. When her husband mistreated her and married again in Pakistan without her permission, I was told that he was able to do this only because of her lack of support. The plight of a woman ‘alone’ is considered so great that in this case other members of the community stepped in as surrogate kin: work-mates ostracised the husband, and one even offered to have him arrested or injured the next time he went to Pakistan.

The issue of risk in transnational marriage re-occurred time and time again during my fieldwork. Lutz and White, in their work on the anthropology of emotion, suggest that frequently appearing emotions may illustrate ‘points of tension’ in social structure (1986: 421).

The fact that emotions are, in many societies, a critical link in cultural interpretations of action implies that emotion concepts are likely to be actively used in the negotiations of social reality... Attention to emotional rhetoric and discourse, then, should be a fruitful focus for ethnographic investigations of social life as an active and creative process (ibid: 420)

The risks involved in transnational marriage present one such ‘point of tension’. As such, the issue may be used to illuminate the wider field of marriage and kinship negotiated over distance.

Shareen’s cousin marriage: Already I know him

At this point, I would like to introduce Shareen, a 27 year old Bristolian woman who married her mother’s brother’s son in Pakistan when she was nineteen. Whilst much of the

⁹ Patricia Jeffery reports that North Indian informants point out that large families can also create heavy burdens in terms of cooking for in-marrying brides (pers. comm.).

literature above focuses on parental motivations for marriage, Shareen provides information on her own involvement in the process. Nonetheless, the couple now have children of their own, so she is able to talk not only of her own decisions on which *rishta* to accept, but also of her thoughts on her own children's future marriages. In her narrative some themes recur from the last chapter, such as the desire to keep connections with Pakistan, but are interwoven with new threads concerning trust, risk and kinship as she describes how her family tried to ascertain which of the young men would make a suitable match. Her options included kin and non-kin, and British and Pakistani candidates. She talks rapidly in a soft Bristolian dialect.

When we went to their houses, my mum would say to me... [whispering] 'This is the one that we were thinking of giving you to'. So anyway, my eyes were sort of sealed at them. And then I'd look, I wouldn't just focus on him, 'cos at the end of the day – OK, I'm going to marry him – but it's the family, the people, everything, that you need to look at. So obviously I had my sister with me for an opinion, my brother, and my mother there – other people doing their observations as well as my own. But we never ever had an opportunity to be alone. Because it wasn't allowed for us to be on our own unless something official was sort-of said. So we were never on our own, it was always with the family. So there's certain things you can say to one another, rather than getting more to know each other.

We had our meetings with a few of the families... they were family – my dad's side of the family, and my mum's side of the family, and there were one or two of my dad's friends. So we went to all of their houses because my mum and dad said, 'Well, we'll go and see them all'... They called us for a meal and everything, and we sort of sit together and have a chat.... And he was actually the third family that I'd seen. Because he was obviously my relative anyway, I already knew his parents and the sisters and everything. It was just straight in there, have a chat. It was a lot more easier. Anyway, it wasn't the fact that that was why I thought I want to marry him. I don't know – I liked his dad, my uncle, my *māmū*. I really liked him from the beginning. When we were little he used to talk to me, and he used to always send me things, and I used to always really like him. I thought, 'It'll be really nice if I have a nice father-in-law'. Because he was already so sweet and nice with me from before, you know, I'll

always have that nice with him [i.e. things will always be nice between them], already I know him.

So I said to my mum, I want to go to their house again... and this time it was OK because it was me, my sister, and his sister. And we had our little group, and just talking. But Oh! – It was a bit shy; bit shy to say your words and everything! But we got there in the end. Sort of spoke about each other, and what do you do and everything. And I said to my husband that actually, yeah I quite like him and everything, even though we'd just had two times to visit each other. But I said I could understand, and I could see from what I could see that I'd be quite happy with him. Said you know, 'His family's nice, his house is nice and everything, his sisters are nice'. And I said, 'You know I think I'll feel more comfortable there than going to somebody that I'm not even sure with, and family that I've never heard about... I don't think I really want that'.

I did have other people ask me proposals from over here, but I said to my mum, I said, 'You know, boys' understanding is a lot more different to what they are over there... I've seen the boys here, but I also want to go and see families there'. And I said 'You know, if I'm happy with somebody there then I'll go for it. If not, then I've got all these people who've asked for my hand here anyway'... Their understanding of, their life is a lot more different, they're more laid back. Thing is here is like, I don't know, I've just seen lots of people and their marriages here and I think you know you don't probably have that more respect that you probably do with a husband over from Pakistan. I think you understand the culture, whereas if you get married here you never go back to your own country, you never ever show your kids that.... the only way to have that bond is for you to get married to somebody like from over there. And I said, 'I quite like that actually'. But I said to my mum, 'You know, we'll go and have a look'. Cos my brothers were married you see and they're from that same sort of: married-over-there-and-come-here... So I did have *rishte*, but my mum said [to them] we're going to go hopefully [to] Pakistan and if we do find somebody for her, get married, if not then we'll think about yours when we get back.

...We had loads of proposals from my dad's family as well as friends and everything, so obviously if [non-relatives] weren't in mind my dad could have

said no to them – just said we’re not interested in friends and whatever, but they never. They said if it’s a good family, good people then I don’t see why... [but] I think it’s quite a bonus, because if you marry in the family, you know, they know you. You’ve got that strong bond before you even start from like day one getting to know the people. And then you’ve got the family support as well. And instead of a person coming from all that distance to here, and not having a family here apart from his wife, and building that – it’s hard for them at one, but I feel that it’s more comfortable for a girl or a boy to come into a family which they don’t, OK, *know*, but they’re related to in a sense. Just makes it a lot more easier and everything. And I felt that I wanted it like that anyway.

...I’ve got my dad’s cousin-sisters here [i.e. first cousins], and I’ve got my mum’s cousin-brothers and their kids and that here, but I didn’t really want to marry them. They’re more like dosser sort of boys. I just thought, I don’t think I could see them being married and settled! I said they’re already into their life here and you can’t really develop or change them in any way. If a person’s come from there, they’re obviously going to change because the lifestyle’s different. And I thought, well – it will give them a time to do something better for their life. I may as well give somebody an opportunity from there than somebody that’s already here, d’you know?

Two [of my sisters], the two after me, they went to get married. And I’ve given them the same advice. I said, ‘Go and have a look... Spend a bit of time with them, as well as with the family’. And I didn’t say there are things that you should look out for – I said, ‘Don’t just focus straight on the boy’. OK, you do that automatically, but I do say the family is equally important. ‘OK, look at the style of life they’ve got, the way they do things. That’s how you’re going to be able to fit yourself in that picture’. If you can’t see yourself fitting in there, then I said you need to think really seriously... I said, ‘Don’t just do it thinking that you want to go ahead and do it, and your parents aren’t really happy for you. I said don’t make that decision, because you can’t lose your family over your husband to be’...

I went over [to see the her future husband], I had my brother with me, so my brother was asking lots of questions. And they went out together with my husband there, and my brother said, ‘It’s really good, he’s not a waster and he

doesn't even smoke!' And he goes, my brother was saying to him, 'Come on, let's have a fag!' or something, just like boys do, just sort of testing. He said 'No, I don't smoke, and my dad's never taught me to smoke, and I'm not going to smoke'. [So the brother said] 'Oh, I'd better put my fag away then' – but my brother don't smoke, it's was just, you know, a test that you do. And my brother said they went to a café to have a drink and everything and my brother said to him, 'Let's go and sit over there. There's some girls over there, let's go and tease them!' – just to see what the person's nature's like. And my husband said, 'No – we shouldn't really do that because we've got sisters of our own, and somebody could do that to our sisters'. And my brother said, 'He's a good lad, he's a decent guy – you'd better go for it!'... I said [to my sisters], 'Get to know his sisters and they'll be able to tell you a bit more about him'. Because I said, 'You're not going to go to him directly and ask him, so you've got his family there as well, so why not use them'.... If you're happy, mum and dad happy, they're happy – then I said, 'Go for it – you've got nothing to worry about! It's only a matter of time that you have to wait to get them [to Britain], that's the only hardest bit!'

Well it's difficult [to say where her children will be married], because all my family lives here, you see. All my brothers and sisters live here. And my husband's only got two sisters, and they're not even married yet, so they haven't got children that match with my children. And my brothers, they've got kids. I'm not saying, 'Yeah – they'll marry there' [to her brother's children]. Somebody good can just come from Pakistan, because my husband's brought up there and he's really in contact with his friends and everything there. Some of them are married and everything and I went to see them when I went to Pakistan. You never know, if it's a good friend and it's a good family, persons like each other and everything, you never know. I would never say, 'Yes, they will marry from Pakistan'. I would never say, 'They'll marry from here'. Cos at the end of the day, we have to look where they're going to be happy.

Because our time was different – how we were brought up. And we're a lot more independent with things, so our children will grow up like that. But at the end of the day, I will tell them of families over there because again, I don't want them to stop having that relationship that we did. So I will encourage them and take them to Pakistan, but I would never force them or I'd never say to them

that this is what we've chosen for you because it didn't happen to me and I don't see why it should happen to them

I say to my sisters, 'It's a shame my husband hasn't got a brother', cos I would have asked my sisters to marry my husband's brothers. Then they could have been my sister-in-laws!

Reducing Risk: Knowledge and nature

'At the end of the day', said Shareen, 'we have to look where they're going to be happy'. Arranging a marriage is an emotionally risky business, and the marriage of a daughter is considered particularly difficult. The literature on South Asia stresses the financial burden of marrying a daughter, providing a dowry which she will take to another household: 'Feeding a daughter is like watering a tree in another man's garden' (Brown, cited in Bradby 2000).¹⁰ But for Pakistani mothers in Bristol, it is the danger of causing their daughter unhappiness by an unwise choice that is of most concern.

A wife, at least conceptually, is in the vulnerable position of moving to her in-law's home. In Bristol, Humera told me that 'everything depends on the husband, what he's like', but even if her husband is good to the bride, her sisters- and mother-in-law may not be. This fear is evinced by the stereotypes of cruel mothers-in-law that abound throughout the subcontinent, and in the traditional attempt to divine whether the mother-in-law will love the bride by the strength of colour given by her bridal *meñhdī* patterns. Stories circulate among women in Bristol about husbands who have serious drug or alcohol problems, are violent, have left their wives for other women (most often non-Pakistanis), or contracted second marriages.

Humera also complained that women are always blamed for any trouble in a marriage. If the marriage does end in divorce, suspicion that the woman may have caused the problem may contribute to the difficulty for the woman to re-marry (cf. Jeffery 2001).¹¹

¹⁰ Note the contrasting discourse on daughters bringing luck in the preceding chapter. Although Muslims and Hindus in North India state preferences for sons, Jeffery's survey found gender ratios less weighted to the masculine amongst Muslims (2001). This may suggest that ambivalence surrounding the desirability of daughters is translated into practice. Equally, however, it may reflect Islamic views on the God given nature of children and prohibitions on abortion (cf. Shaw 2002).

¹¹ There is no prohibition on women remarrying after divorce or the death of their husbands, but the acceptability of the practice seems to decline with age. Sumera, who was still in her twenties when her marriage broke down, was encouraged by family and friends to consider marrying again. On the other hand, I have heard an older widowed woman who wished to remarry ridiculed by other women, and Shanaz's declaration that she wouldn't want to marry someone other than her late husband was met with approval.

Even if a second match can be found, the motivations for accepting a wife who has already been married might be suspect. If a divorced woman has children, the second husband might not treat them well, or even insist that they be sent to live with their father's family. Hafza in Bristol, who endured years of verbal and physical abuse before leaving her husband, said she had seen one man – '*bas!*' (enough/stop). Nighat, a Mirpuri woman whose husband left her and her daughters for his Indian girlfriend, attempted to commit suicide rather than face the prospect of life as a divorced woman. It is no wonder, then, that parents of girls are described as *majbūr* (helpless; oppressed; in need) in the matter of arranging marriage, with the knowledge that if it goes wrong, their daughter is likely to come off worse. For this reason, as many people have told me, 'if a good *rishta* comes [for a girl], you take it.'

Ghalib married into Britain in 1976. He explains the risk he would be taking if he found *rishte* for his children outside the family:

I'm a really very open-minded person... but I must admit my weakness. I'm still stuck in that family resistance [i.e. tied to the idea of marriage within the kin group]... I don't know why, but it's just in my mind. I think if I stick in my family it will be better than if I go out. And that's only a fear. And that fear is I don't know what they will be...

The most common reason given for marrying close kin is that they are known and so whether they would make a good match, and whether the in-laws will treat a daughter well, can be more effectively judged. As Shareen said of her mother's brother as a prospective father-in-law, 'already I know him'. In Pakistani fiction, matches with non-kin are often disastrous. In one case reported by Das, an outspoken educated wife dragged her husband to England, where his life was so miserable that he contracted tuberculosis (1973: 36) The need for knowledge of the spouse's nature is particularly important in transnational marriages, with the fear that Pakistani spouses may just be 'marrying a passport', or that British Pakistanis' values may be contaminated by growing up in the decadent West, leading to unacceptable behaviour such as alcohol use or premarital liaisons.¹² Marrying within the family provides a range of trusted referees in the form of mutual kin, who can advise on the character of the proposed spouse and their family. In other words, risk is managed through trust based on the bonds of kinship.¹³

¹² The dangers are discussed at greater length in the remaining chapters of this thesis.

¹³ Cf. Caplan (2002) on willingness to eat British beef during the BSE crisis, where trust was also based on 'knowledge'. Knowledge in this case came not from kinship but from locality – knowing the locals who raised and sold the meat.

The ‘nature’ of close kin is also thought more likely to be similar (cf. Carsten 1997; Fischer & Lyon 2002). Fischer and Lyon suggest that Pakistani understandings of similarity between kin helps account for the statistical preference they found in Lahore for marriage between the children of same-sex siblings. Brothers, they write, ‘are more like each other than they are like their sisters, and *vice versa*’. Similarity travels down the generations, so the children of same-sex siblings are likely to be most alike from the pool of available first cousins (2002: 305). A couple who are similar in this way are more likely to ‘understand’ each other. Along with wealth, the female University students I met in Pakistan rated this ‘understanding’ – the mutual compatibility of their personalities – very highly in what they hoped for in a husband. Although girls are told from a young age of the need to ‘adjust’¹⁴ and compromise in marriage, parents hope that similarities will ensure the couple’s compatibility, and therefore their children’s future happiness. At the British High Commission, I was told that many British Pakistani women who report being forced to marry a Pakistani relative, say that they later came to love or be contented with their husband, as parents want their children to be happy, and so tend not to choose someone completely unsuitable. One woman who was married at sixteen, while stressing the trauma of the experience of being suddenly married to a man she had never met before told me: ‘I was lucky, I was forced to marry a really nice bloke’.

In Pakistan, Gafoora and her family have decided there is no match for her daughter Salma within the family, and are now in the rather tricky position of looking for an ‘outside’ *rishta*. The risks involved not only concern the marriage itself, and knowledge of the character, background and assets of the candidates and their families, but include the increased emotional risks taken in negotiating such matches, which are distinguished from kin marriages as ‘*bāhar se*’ – from outside. Relatives will probably have met at functions, but if a *rishta* with an outsider is suggested by a third party, arrangements have to be made for the families to meet, and for the girl to be ‘viewed’ (by either just the boy’s family, or for the couple to meet too, depending on the families’ views).

Salma has been viewed and saw it as a humiliating experience – sufficient details about the girl and boy and their families have been given to each side for the *rishta* to have been considered suitable, so she feels that she can only have been rejected on the grounds of looks. The balance of power may have shifted in transnational marriages, and I have been

¹⁴ The students in Pakistan and Pakistanis in Bristol both use the English word ‘adjust’, even when speaking in Urdu: ‘adjust’ *karna* (to adjust, *karna* being the verb to do).

told that girls' families among the middle classes in general have started to be more active in looking for *rishte*, and sometimes make the first visit. Nevertheless, the boy's family is usually in a stronger position in these situations, as the side that decides whether to make the official proposal. Young women at the University also worried about this imbalance and felt that it added to the concern about finding a match for a girl, which depended more on her personal attributes than was the case for boys.

Mines, writing of Tamil Muslims in South India, goes so far as to suggest that endogamy is based not on notions of substance, but on the desire to arrange matches between 'spouses who share the same economic backgrounds and the same cultural and, especially, religious traditions' (1978: 164). Salma had mixed with her male cousins, so she and her mother could judge their suitability for marriage with each other on this basis, but as these known quantities are not to be pursued, Gafoora's plans for her daughter again involve looking for similarities – for example, she does not want a family much richer than theirs because their lifestyles and values would be too different, and she feels that Salma would not adjust well. In addition, family cultures or lifestyles will also be closer so the couple will be able to adapt to their in-law's ways more easily, and the two families will be able to get along. One woman I was told about in Pakistan rejected all proposals from outside the family for her son because she could not stand the idea of visits by people she did not know, but who were relatives of the bride. Couples who are relatives are more likely to be able to 'mix up' easily with each other and each other's families.

Continua and Processes of Relatedness

This similarity and compatibility is not simply due to sharing substance, being 'of one blood', and attributed to all members of the *barādarī*. Ties of kinship are also created, as Carsten has demonstrated in work on the 'process of kinship' in Malaysia, documenting how marriage and everyday acts such as feeding and exchange incorporate newcomers and create and maintain bonds of relatedness (1997). These practices, which blur the division between substance and code set out in Schneider's (1968) classic study of American kinship, may also be seen in kinship practices in Pakistan and among Pakistanis in Britain.¹⁵

In the context of the British Pakistani community, Werbner (1990) discusses a 'process of ethnicity', in which the flow of gifts and marriage partners between Britain and Pakistan underpins 'ethnic renewal'. Undermining the separation between spheres of

¹⁵ Schneider himself later retracted any claims for the universality of such a distinction (1980).

ethnicity, kinship and friendship, she suggests a continuum of relatedness, created through and indexed by a 'hierarchy of exchange'. She criticises studies of South Asians in Britain that overemphasise kinship at the expense of friendship, such that friends are regarded as 'quasi-kinsmen' (Werbner 1990: 174), and she postulates a single scale of increasing 'value, exclusivity and trust' linking the categories of neighbours, work-mates, business associates, close friends, kinsmen and close kinsmen (Werbner 1990: 221) in a 'friendship-cum-kinship network' (Werbner 1990: 128, cf Bauman 1995). Just as friendships are made through exchange and unmade through quarrelling or refusing gifts, kinship relations can be made or unmade through marriage or residential proximity, which sustain or neglect connections (Donnan 1988). As demonstrated in the preceding chapter, geographical distance mediates 'closeness' between kin in purely genealogical terms, so that a first cousin residing in the same city in Britain will often be considered 'closer' than another living in Pakistan.

Nonetheless, the linear image of a continuum should not be allowed to obscure differences in the nature of these relationships. In a study of relatedness among Hindus in North India, Lambert (2000a) suggests a continuity in the conceptualisation of consanguineal and 'optative' relations created by substance and sustenance (which correlate with affection), but a contrast with relationships of kinship alone with affines. Such a division is, however, unlikely among Pakistanis. For exogamous Hindus, the non-sharing of substance is a prerequisite for marriage, whereas in Pakistani marriages between close kin, the non-separation of kin and affines is reflected by the fact that only husband and wife alter their use of kinship terminology towards each other after marriage (Das 1973: 42). Bonds of kinship are ideologically divided from friendship by notions of shared substance (Das 1973: 175), and marriage choices are influenced by hierarchies of caste and class where friendships are based on relations of equality. Werbner suggests that the independent ideologies of hierarchy and Islamic equality are mediated by the *barādarī*, conceptualised not only as a 'brotherhood', but also as the local marriage unit (1990: 81-120).

In Shaw's Oxford survey, informants categorised marriages as either with kin or 'outside' (2001), but Werbner (1990) notes distinctions within the category of kin: the *ghar* (literally house, meaning extended family), close kinsmen, and kinsmen. Kinship, to make a rather weak pun, is evidently relative. In discussing matches, my informants make clear distinctions between close kin (usually first or second cousins) and more distant relatives (e.g. *dur se* – far). Where a relationship was distant and complicated, or the exact connection between husband and wife unclear, they might be described as 'just *barādarī*'. The closer the relative, the more secure the knowledge about the potential spouse, and so the safer the

marriage is considered to be. In theory, then, a match with a close friend's child might be considered preferable in terms of security to one with a distant relative. It will be remembered that Shareen has her eye on the children of Pakistani friends of her husband with whom he maintains close contact as possible matches for her children.

In practice, however, other factors might deter matches with non-kin. One of the reasons for a preference for kinship-based similarity, above, was that the spouse should be able to fit in socially with their in-laws, and there are limits to the extent of difference that families will tolerate. Some elders do insist on marriage within the family. In Bristol, one man's father threatened to cut him off financially and did not speak to him for months until he abandoned his plans to marry the woman of his choice and accepted a match with a relative. A middle-aged woman said her father was 'very strict': if you married outside of the *barādarī* you were 'ex-communicated' for seven generations. Some will accept marriages out of *zāt* but may, as Punjabis, object to a Mirpuri spouse, or *vice versa*. For others, the boundary is the ethnic group: a father who has accepted that his children will marry out of the *barādarī* told his daughter she could not marry an Indian Muslim because the wider family would not accept it. 'Some people are brave,' he said, 'but I won't allow my children'.

Baumann has documented the commonalities that transcend ethnicity in friendships and interactions in Southall (1996), and most young Bristol Pakistanis have White, Afro-Caribbean, Indian and Bangladeshi friends, but marriage is another matter. Although many younger people appeal to the laws of Islam to argue that the limit should be religion, most families would object to a marriage with a non-Pakistani.¹⁶ In addition to the ease with which the spouse could mix within the family, a concern with cultural reproduction is demonstrated by cases of Pakistani fathers abducting their children after splitting up with the White mothers, in order to raise their offspring in Pakistan. The issue of trust based on similarity is also an important factor. There is a general sense, writes Werbner, that 'relations between Pakistanis are underpinned by a set of shared cultural premises' such that the *kameṭī* rotating credit schemes, for example, can operate on trust. This ethnic bond of cultural morality should extend to marriage – when Sumera's husband married again, she complained

¹⁶ But see Chapter Six for an example of one woman's creative solution to this situation.

that although she knew Pakistani men used White women to gain visas, she hadn't expected him to do it to 'one of his own'.¹⁷

Ranger (1992) suggests that people deal with risk not as the standard calculation of 'probability x consequences', but are concerned with 'fairness', rooted in considerations of 'trust', 'liability' and 'consent'.¹⁸ Kin links provide the basis for all three – trust based on moral obligations and similarity between kin, group sanctions to hold a transgressing spouse to account, and kinship provides networks along which marriages can be negotiated. Harriss (2003) suggests that formulations of trust are based on characteristics, process/experience, or institutions such as societal norms, and that character assessments can be specific or generic. Close kin marriages, I suggest, are felt by my informants to hold out the possibility of solid and multiple routes to trust. Specific knowledge of the character of a close relative is cemented by trust in the general commonalities felt to exist between kin and co-ethnics. The success of other relatives' close kin marriages may further increase confidence in this type of match, whilst the values of kin solidarity and mutual obligation provide a further basis for trust.¹⁹

The literature on trust, like that on risk, tends to focus on organisational or citizen-state relations, and on the question of the 'modernity' of the concept. Seligman (1997), for example, writes that trust is not an issue in pre-modern societies governed by strict norms of status or kinship behaviour, but becomes a serious problem with which complex, market-oriented, individualistic modern states must grapple.²⁰ As with risk management, the concern of many of those writing on trust is the application of theory to produce what is seen as a public good (e.g. Hollis 1998). Again, the emphasis is often on variation in trust between societies with different social organisations, the most celebrated of such studies being Fukuyama's (1995) comparison of levels of solidarity, trust and prosperity. One angle on the betrayals perceived by British Pakistanis such as Sumera is to question whether her husband in fact felt that his wife was 'one of his own'. Ethnicity, it has often been noted, is contextual (e.g. Nazroo 1997: 8-9). In a previous chapter I described situations in which young British

¹⁷ Interesting here is the question of whether the husband would consider her, as a British Pakistani, as 'one of his own'. I will return to this question later in a discussion of what my informants often call 'culture clash' between transnational couples.

¹⁸ A triptych he frivolously contracts to 'TLC'.

¹⁹ Barbalet (1998) suggests the need to distinguish between trust and confidence on the one hand, and trust and faith on the other, according to the degree of evidence necessary for each. Elsewhere in the same volume, however, he points out that emotions shade into each other, and suggests that our concern should be for what they do, rather than for descriptions and definitions. In concordance with this second statement, I am not overly concerned with delineating the point at which trust tips over into confidence, or becomes simply faith.

Pakistanis perceive and present their identities as separate from those of Pakistani nationals. The security of close kin marriage, on the other hand, relies heavily on commonalities and a shared identity: in Mary Douglas' terms, on the assumption of strong 'group'. Moreover, ethnicity has a dual nature – the identity a group claims for itself, and that attributed to them by others (Guibernau & Rex 1997). It seems that the assessments of transnational ethnic unity, or even kin-based solidarity, relied upon by some of my informants in Britain for the purpose of arranging marriages are not shared by all Pakistani immigrant spouses. The converse may be also true of cases in which Pakistani spouses are mistreated or abandoned by British relatives with whom they have contracted marriages.

In Muslim and Hindu marriages in North India, knowledge and trust are crucial, not only in assessing matters that may affect the future happiness of a son or daughter, but also in predicting dowry and other demands. Ahmad suggests that the security of endogamy is a feature of low status marriages among Muslims in India, whereas the socially mobile are more likely to take the risk of exogamy with its possibility of new and fruitful alliances, and increased status (1978b: 175-6). Jeffery and Jeffery, however, report hearing that even urban Hindus were adopting close kin marriage for just the reasons of trust and risk outlined above (1996: 98-9). Transnational marriages introduce an additional distance, and therefore additional risk. Even between close kin, for example, the distance between the two countries may increase the chances of concealing love affairs, or rumours of love affairs, which could damage reputation and marriage prospects, particularly for a girl (Shaw 1988: 175). In this sense, migration has introduced additional risk by undermining the trust based on knowledge of one's kin. Nonetheless, this section has suggested that the concern to reduce risk plays an important role in Bristol Pakistanis' frequent choices of relatives as spouses for their children. Assumptions of similarity and greater knowledge, together with cultural deterrents for marrying 'out' mean that they are likely to prefer matches with close kin. Moreover, transnationalism and close kin marriage may be mutually reinforcing. The hazards involved in transnational marriage, and the danger that British-raised children have developed unacceptable behaviour, intensify the need for security, leading many to cling to what is perceived to be the safety provided by close kin marriage.

Thus far, the discussion has focused on similarity between spouses, but affinity 'is always a precarious balance between too much and too little closeness' (Carsten 1997:

²⁰ Anthropologists may wish to argue with the implicit portrayal by some risk and trust theorists of members of 'traditional' or 'pre-modern' societies as norm-bound automata with unitary roles and transparent social relations.

191).²¹ Again, geographical, emotional and genealogical proximity combine in creating what is thought of as ‘too close’, just as they create distance that is held to entail risk. Among Muslims in North India, for example, Jeffery and Jeffery write of the need to balance the physical distance between a girl’s natal and marital homes carefully. The parental bond must be adequately broken to avoid interference in the daughter’s married life, but if a marriage is arranged too far away, then kin are physically missing and emotionally missed (Jeffery & Jeffery 1996: 216-7). A mother in Bristol, for example, said that she would prefer to find a *rishta* for her daughter outside Bristol. Whilst she would love to keep her daughter close, if she lived nearby the danger of becoming involved in the couple’s marital problems and making the situation worse for her child would be too great. The other side of such concerns was illustrated with regard to transnational marriage in Chapter Three, when the father of a student in Rawalpindi decided he could not bear to send both his daughters overseas in marriage.

Marriage migration is thus a double-edged sword. It may strengthen relationships between kin in disparate locations, but simultaneously reproduces distance between the migrant and the kin they leave behind; it creates ‘orphans’. In addition to the loss of companionship or emotional support, there are practical implications of ‘missing’ kin, as women with no mother-in-law to assist with children may be burdened with an unusually heavy workload.²² Other families compensate for the loss of resident kin, so that Asma may not have her Pakistani husband’s relatives around to help care for her two young children, but she spends a great deal of time at her mother’s home, where sisters, brothers and her mother all help with childcare. The final chapter in this thesis will reflect on the implications for immigrant husbands of leaving their kin in Pakistan.

Place of residence and the environment in which the young person has grown up are also thought to influence their character. Here, too, there may be such a thing as too much similarity, as I have heard of marriages between two British-raised people described as unlikely to succeed because they will both be too strong-willed. The implication is that in marriage it is necessary for at least one party to compromise. Pakistani girls may be taught from a young age that they will have to ‘adjust’ to their husband’s family’s ways of life, but

²¹ This topic was broached in the discussion of mock fighting in Pakistani weddings in Chapter One.

²² My thanks to Roseanna Pollen for stimulating comments on this matter. It might also be noted, however, that women may also appreciate escaping the control of a mother-in-law. However, see Jeffery, Jeffery & Lyon 1989 (pp49-52) for the costs and benefits of living with the mother-in-law or *alag* (separately) in terms of the level of and responsibility for household chores, and the ability to visit natal kin provided by having others in the household who could take over these duties.

some view young women raised in Britain as less likely to heed this traditional advice. Residence in Britain thus seems in this respect to erode gendered difference, damaging the complementarity between husband and wife, and leading to potential conflict.

Pakistanis in Bristol are often wary of matches with other British Pakistanis, for fear that they will have been contaminated by the amoral climate of the West. This issue comes to the fore in the context of cultural and religious reproduction implied by marriage and childbearing. A spouse from Pakistan may be thought to be more religious, or more traditional, bringing another element of difference that will benefit the marriage and present the loss of such traits in the next generation through two similarly 'modern' or religiously lax British-raised parents. When Gafoora from Islamabad went to Britain, she heard the term 'practising Muslim' for the first time, and finds the phrase ridiculous. Nevertheless, the idea that a *rishta* in Pakistan is also a connection to more Islamic behaviour is pertinent to British Muslims. When Gafoora asked one of her relatives why she was looking for a *rishta* in Pakistan, the woman replied with a list of marriages between British-born Pakistanis that had failed, suggesting that one hope is that a Pakistani will bring with them a more committed approach to marriage as a result of growing up in a Muslim country.

One young man in Bristol, Wasim, told me at length about the failings of the local Pakistani community – children affected by the behaviour of other pupils at rough inner city schools, the proliferation of mobile phones leading to illicit communication between the sexes, and fathers who neglect their children's moral development in order to devote their lives to working long hours in shops or taxis. He said that when he was ready to marry, he decided to abandon his desire for a beautiful wife, in order to have 'someone who won't be going out all the time and who'll always be there for me'. Aware of his own lack of religious practice and knowledge, he hoped that a wife from Pakistan would be able to teach their children about Islam.

Talib also explained why he preferred to marry a woman from Pakistan:

I really didn't actually want to marry somebody from this country – not really, no. I really wanted to marry with somebody from back home, to keep myself with my origins, you know. I didn't actually really want someone who was, you know – bossy and pushy... That's how people are here, and that's how the Muslim girls especially, the environment that they're brought up in nowadays, I don't think I could have adjusted with one of them – any of them. That's why I really wanted someone from Pakistan. I wanted someone who would be quiet, loving, caring, understanding. You know – someone to be with you in joy. And someone in the family... And that's what Allah Tallah wanted, that's what God wanted, and he set me up with a nice person.

For many British Pakistani men there is a conceptual opposition between the archetypal British Pakistani girl who wants to go out all the time, may be loud and argumentative, ‘does fashion’ and might have indulged in immoral activities, and a quiet, cooperative, sheltered, religious Pakistani girl who will make a good mother. The latter is described as ‘simple’. Wasim, whose desire for a simple bride is mentioned above, also hinted at the perceived benefits in terms of domestic power relationships that a ‘simple’ wife might bring when he asked her only to address him in Urdu so that she would use the respectful ‘*āp*’, similar to the French ‘vous’, a distinction unavailable in English.

When looking for a *rishta*, outwards symbols of religious commitment can be employed to make judgements in the context of limited interaction before making a decision. For women, the *hijāb* is the most powerful such symbol, and some young men specifically look for wives who wear it. Concerned over the morals of British-raised Pakistanis, Omar, from Karachi, was reassured when he saw that the young woman from Bristol who had been suggested for him wore a headscarf.

My opinion after college – it’s my wish to get married a girl who is wearing *hijāb*. So [wife] wears *hijāb* yeah... So that’s why I was ready to marry her – ‘Oh yeah she’s wearing *hijāb*’ ... The thing is actually, as I told you earlier on, I really like it because [in] Islam – to be a wife, you’ve got to be, nobody can see her like in the dress where she wear in front of me. Obviously my wife I know better than **anybody** else. After marriage, even her parents they don’t know... obviously what I know about her... because obviously there is no secrets between husband and wife. So that’s why I wanted to get married to a girl who wear *hijāb*, because it’s part of Islam as well.

Azra, a religious young woman from Bristol, was also specifically searching for someone who shared her commitment to Islam. She was looking for:

A kind person, and a beard! [giggles] Because it’s religious you see, it’s *sunnat*, which means Muslim men have to have a beard.

A match between two religiously committed people tends to be considered ideal, but one such spouse in a marriage is often seen as preferable to the dangerous similarity of a husband and wife, and later mother and father, who both neglect religious knowledge and practice.

In terms of kinship, there are obviously clear rules as to who is ‘too close’ to marry. Whilst the children of parents’ siblings may be married, one’s own siblings may not. This may seem a facile point, but has interesting linguistic ramifications as people create and narrate levels of closeness and distance between those who are potential spouses and those

who are not. The term *bhā'ī* (brother), it has been noted, is used by Punjabis to address cousins and indeed acquaintances of similar age, but seldom as a term of address for actual brothers (Das 1994: 216-8). Bauman (1995) reports the widespread use of the classification 'cousin' among young people in Southall, and suggests that Sikh parents encourage relations of cousinship for their children in order to discourage love relationships. Muslims, he observed, used the term less, because of its directly opposite connotations of marriageability. In Bristol, I heard the term cousin used frequently, but often in combination with statements like 'he's my brother', or in the compound nouns 'cousin-brother' or 'cousin-sister'. I would suggest that the ambiguity of these terms – *bhā'ī*, brother/sister, cousin – in terms of what they imply of marriageability is employed by young people to negotiate the category of potential spouses.

Many young British Pakistanis, influenced by the dominant discourse of disapproval of cousin marriage in Britain (see Shaw 2001), consider their local cousins 'too close' to marry. Nineteen year old Leyla reflected:

It just wouldn't seem possible to get married to someone in England who's your cousin, because we've got quite open relationships with each other, cousins, and brothers and sisters. It's all like one big family, we just regard it as a family, rather than, you know. And then when it's mentioned – there's a possibility of you getting married – it's a very strange way of understanding. But there it's very common.

Asma, it might be remembered from the previous chapter, attributed the fact that she knew her British cousin 'too well' to marry him, to the well-trodden linkages between residential proximity, association, and emotional closeness: 'I've lived with him, went to nursery with him, school with him. He's like your brother and you're like, "Yeuch [noise of disgust], I don't want to marry you!"'. These young people might otherwise be considered by their elders to be potential matches on the basis of close kinship links and knowledge derived from residential proximity. By saying that these cousins are like brothers, or indeed calling them *bhā'ī*, or cousin-brother, these young women are indicating to their families that they are in fact too close to marry. This sentiment may even be extended to unrelated men living locally, so that one young woman explained that she would not like to marry a boy from Bristol as she would 'know too much about him'. A certain distance, then, is necessary to make space for affinity within bonds of kinship and locality.

Young British Pakistanis often do not have these uncomfortable feelings about cousins in Pakistan whom they may only have seen occasionally. Some young people I have spoken to retained a slight uneasiness about the situation, as for example, they might have to

justify their marriage with a cousin to non-Pakistani friends. Saif, Leyla's mother's brother, worried about both the closeness and the generational difference in his arranged marriage:

I wasn't sure whether it was legal or not, but they convinced me. I was a bit wary. I mean cousin's quite close in itself, but cousin's daughter – I think it's even worse. It sounds even worse when you explain it to people. If they understand the generation gap and the number of years between us – nine years between us – I guess you can get away with it. But it's still a bit scary. 'Cos it's my, my two brothers – their two wives, [are] Aisha's eldest sister. Sorry – I even get confused by that. My elder brothers... their wives are the sisters of Aisha's mother... Yeah, Aisha's aunts.

Nevertheless, many British Pakistanis agree to marriages to cousins in Pakistan rather than Britain. Transnationality thereby doubly influences their negotiations of the position of affinity in kin relations. Exposure to British ideas on close kin marriage may lead them to attempt to place the boundaries of the marriageable further away in genealogical terms among their cousins in Britain. On the other hand, the possibility of transnational marriage introduces potential spouses who are equally close in terms of kinship, but distant enough in other ways to be acceptable partners, whilst fulfilling the criteria of connection needed to be confident of social approval and the reduction of risk involved in such arrangements. Leyla's mother Bushra is happy with the decision for her daughter to marry in Pakistan.

Both my sisters [in Britain] have got sons, but my daughter has always said that she felt they were like her brothers. And she always made it a bit clear that she'd seen them more and more often – they were more like cousins and brothers rather than to see them in that sort of light. And I wasn't sure about it anyway because she'd been brought up with them and they'd seen each other quite a lot. Whereas because they were in Pakistan, we didn't see him that often. It just seems more of a – kids find it easier. It does happen here, kids marry cousins here as well, but with my kids that's how it was.

Reproducing Risk: Dangers of the 'double rishta'

A final reason often given for viewing kin marriages as less risky comes into effect when marriages do run into difficulties, or where one partner is behaving badly. Unions within the family are thought to have more chance of enduring because the family will get involved to resolve the problem. I have heard accounts of couples on the verge of divorce whose differences were solved by the interventions of parents, but I have also encountered many examples where this safeguard did not appear to operate. One of the common complaints from women is that their husband's family take his side in disputes, making the conflict worse.

Although one intention of a kin marriage may be to strengthen family ties, if conflict does occur between husband and wife, and particularly if they divorce, the effect can be to cause rifts within the family as other relatives take sides (cf. Carsten 1997). The root of this problem is what some called the 'double *rishta*', meaning a relationship of both blood and affinity, which leads to the fragmentation of allegiances within the family. The breakdown of a transnational marriage can be particularly serious. If the imported spouse has not yet been granted permanent right to remain, they may be deported, but women who have secured their immigration status may still face the choice of returning as a divorcée to be a cause of shame and financial burden to their families, or remaining in Britain with limited support networks. The implications of the rifts among kin groups that can result from divorce will be examined in detail later, in Yasmin's story and the chapter on conflicting interests that follows.

But if marriage choices can cause family conflict, the same can be said of refusals, as parents may be insulted by the rejection of their child. One man from Britain proposed a childhood engagement between his daughter and the son of a relative in Pakistan, but the boy's father declined as he disapproved of marital decisions being made for the very young. This resulted in bad feeling for years. Nabila had several proposals from relatives in Pakistan, who were jealous when she married in Bristol, and tried to sabotage her visa application by withholding documents sent by the British High Commission. Later, when she did not get pregnant for over a year, rumours were spread that her husband never touched her. Her grandmother began to worry over the state of the marriage and phoned frequently to ask the boy's father if she was expecting yet. Another woman, who came to Bristol as a fiancée twenty years ago, told me she did not really want to come to the UK, but her sister's husband's brothers were all fighting over her hand. She did not want to cause a long-term rift by marrying one and rejecting the others, and so accepted a proposal from abroad.

The dangers of the 'double *rishta*' may also undermine one of the sources of security in arranging marriages, the use of kin as referees and informants. A group of sisters I know in Bristol were scandalised by the engagement of one of their British cousins, a notorious womaniser by their account, to a cousin in Pakistan. They had heard that he was even chatting up a girl on the plane to Pakistan, and everyone in the family in Bristol was aware that he had a girlfriend. 'Didn't anyone tell the Pakistani girl's family?' I asked. They replied that relatives would be too afraid of being accused of causing trouble or being jealous, and of being blamed for the failure of the *rishta*, to have said anything about the situation.

One response to the hazards of marriage arrangements is to take someone from a family, or 'house', which has already been proven; where one marriage has been seen to be

successful. Jamilah, who married a cousin from Pakistan, told me about a *rishta* her husband's brother had received from a relative:

...[the proposal] was a very recent thing – after [her husband] came to England... Can you understand how that changes people's view now? Because there's already someone here, they can see that someone's already in a house where he's financially stable, so [they think], 'If I was to marry my daughter in that house it would be very easy for me'. Whereas to bring somebody from a different family is much more difficult. So I think there would be less chance of somebody else going [i.e. another transnational marriage being arranged with the husband's family] if he wasn't here to begin with.

Shareen, it will be remembered, wished that her husband had brothers so that her sisters could marry them. Not only would this provide husbands from a tried and tested source, but would negate some of the difficulties of the double *rishta*, as her sisters-in-law (her sisters) would be allies rather than potential rivals. However, for a parent, putting all your marriage eggs in one basket does negate the possibility of compensating for rejecting a *rishta* from one side, with the marriage of a subsequent child to someone from that family. Bushra told me about the proposals for her children from her husband's family, which occurred while she was visiting Pakistan.

She [husband's sister] said, 'What it is I wanted to bring your daughter into my family, but I wanted to also give my daughter to your family'.... That was new to me because I thought it was just Leyla, and I thought, 'OK'. And then straight away without even consulting my husband – it was his sister [who was suggesting the match] – but without even consulting him, we were sort of stood talking in the kitchen, and I said, 'What else could be better!' Because, the thing is, the children match up very well – the way they've been brought up, and we're quite similar. They're lovely kids and it just seemed like it would be OK, and I said 'yeah, that would be great!' And she was like over the moon, suddenly 'yes' had been said – because I think she was always afraid. The other thing is I've got sisters and they've got sons and daughters as well, and I think she thought that by taking both my children, you know, my sisters might not feel good about that. Because you know when you're in our families, when you've got your husband's side and then your side, there's a lot of problems sometimes where your sister wants your daughter's hand in marriage and your husband's sister as well – your sister-in-law. And there's always problems and your husband might side with their sisters, say they want your daughter to be married on that side...

This kind of marriage represents in effect an exchange of opposite-sex siblings. Veena Das reports a prohibition against this type of marriage (1973), but I encountered several instances of the type of brother-sister pair match described in the passage above. This type of

marriage is known as *wattā-sattā* (Eglar 1960, Wakil 1991), meaning giving and taking.²³

This arrangement may reduce the costs of marriage as dowry expectations will be low (Eglar 1960; Wakil 1991). It is also intended to provide security, but for many women I know in Bristol, *wattā-sattā* epitomises the dangers of the double *rishta*. Some told me that it was a village custom and that only a few families kept up the tradition, although Bushra is from an educated urban background. Most people I spoke to about the practice agreed that it is dangerous, running the risk of direct revenge being taken out on your daughter should your son's marriage run into difficulty. So when one man in London refused for a decade to apply for a visa for the wife he had not wanted to marry, her brothers in Pakistan retaliated by preventing their brother from co-habiting with his wife, the British man's sister. Another woman in Bristol praised a male relative as 'really good' for staying with his wife, despite the fact that her brother had divorced his sister. So, for many, *wattā-sattā* represents the point where the balance shifts in the risks and benefits of close kin marriage; where an attempt to reduce dangers by marrying close kin ends up producing other equally serious risks. Rifts within the family are a hazard of all unsuccessful consanguineous marriages, but in *wattā-sattā* each side has a the potential to inflict a direct blow to the other's family honour, and cause suffering to a daughter of the other's house.

The marriage of same sex sibling pairs is considered ideal, however, leading not only to harmony with spouses' siblings' spouses, but also to a situation in the following generation where there is no conflict between matrilateral and patrilateral first cousin unions (Das 1973) – a double reduction, it would seem, of the double *rishta*'s potential for conflict. The *wattā-sattā* exchange marriage, on the other hand, represents a complication rather than a simplification of corporate interests within the kin group, as affinity and consanguinity become entangled in a dangerously unstable web where delicate connections may be torn apart by these opposing forces.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that whilst the move from a concern with marriage prescription and preference towards an understanding of the strategic, pragmatic and

²³ The spelling used by these authors differs from that employed here. Alavi reports the practice to be called simply *watta* (1972). The term comes from *sattā-battā*, meaning 'interchange, exchange, barter; a mercantile transaction' (Platts 2000 [1884]: 641). 'W' and 'b' sounds often change between Urdu and Punjabi. My Punjabi informants in Bristol use a mixture of these two languages. They say that Sindhis speak *sāf* (clean or pure) Urdu.

symbolic considerations involved represents a step forwards, it neglects a powerful motivating force in most Pakistani marriages that comes to the fore when considering transnational unions. I have suggested that interpretations of marriage choices among Pakistanis and the Pakistani diaspora must incorporate an understanding of the role of risk in these deliberations, and that concern to protect against the dangers intrinsic to marriage should be given a more prominent position in analyses. Shaw suggests that discourses concerning the daughter's best interests are 'rationalisations', 'best regarded as symbols of the values of "real" or "fictive" kinship solidarity (2000a: 158). Such marriages undoubtedly have a symbolic function as public representations of the trust between kin. However, just as the last chapter argued for the incorporation of both strategy and emotion in models of spousal selection, this chapter demonstrates the value of making space for issues of risk along side pragmatic considerations in interpreting the popularity of close kin marriage.

Barbalet (1998) suggests that fear can lead to social change through efforts aimed at containment of the danger. Close kin transnational marriage is here presented as one such attempt to contain the hazards involved in marriage. Risk theorists, as outlined earlier, have stressed the dialogic, processual nature of risk selection and management (Adams 1995; Douglas & Wildavsky 1983; Douglas 1992). Nevertheless, Adams (1995) points to what he calls the 'cultural filters' through which information on risks and benefits are understood, and which produce a cultural bias towards certain responses. This chapter has outlined aspects of Pakistani conceptions of relatedness, and perceptions of the dangers and benefits of selecting spouses from Britain or Pakistan, or from within or outside the kin group. Although the mechanical metaphor of cultural filters inserted into a flow chart of rational decision-making may not appeal to many anthropologists, this chapter has demonstrated multiple reasons for the thus-far enduring appeal of close kin transnational marriages as a response to the various risk involved in choosing a spouse.

The interactions between transnational marriage and the selection of close kin as spouses are multiple. British Pakistanis may find Pakistani spouses preferable to locals either because of doubts over the character of British-raised young people, or because they perceive local cousins as too close to marry. In transnational marriage, on the other hand, the dangers involved encourage families to seek the security of close kin marriage. Such overlaying of affinity and consanguinity can promote good relationships by removing conflicts of interests, but some types of double *rishta* are seen as particularly prone to the danger that difficulties within one marriage will then spread to the wider kin group. Further, as will be seen in Yasmin's story later in the thesis, the incentive of a British passport can undermine the assumed solidarity between kin. The following chapter suggests alternative mechanisms

that may be employed to reduce the risks involved in transnational marriages, whilst Chapter Six explores the consequences when these measures fail.

Chapter Five

Married but not married: the divisibility of weddings and the protection of women

This chapter will detail ways in which legal pluralism, migration and individual circumstance lead to the stretching out of the marriage process through both the addition of British legal requirements, and the ability of the Pakistani wedding to be separated into its constituent parts. In particular, two ceremonies will be highlighted: the *nikāḥ* and the *rukḥṣatī*. In Pakistan, in common with some other Muslim societies, the religious marriage ceremony (the *nikāḥ*) may be held some time before the rest of the wedding, and I will describe some reasons why this occurs. In the transnational marriages that have been the subject of my research, however, delaying the *rukḥṣatī* (when the bride leaves her natal home to go to her in-law's house) also appears to be common practice. Taking up the theme of risk from the preceding chapter, I will argue that the primary motivation for this delay is to protect brides from the risks involved in transnational marriage. The chapter concludes with a discussion of these dangers, and of the inadequacies in Pakistani practice of Quranic provisions for the protection of women in marriage through the payment of *mahr*.

Legal pluralism and the multiplication of marriage rituals

Pakistani weddings tend to be lengthy and complicated affairs consisting of a variety of events normally spread over several days. These most commonly include three main festivities: the pre-wedding *meñhdī* celebrations, the *bārāt* (feting of the groom's party), and the *walīma*. The signing of the *nikāḥ-nama*, the Islamic marriage contract, takes place on or before the *bārāt*. When the *nikāḥ* is carried out in Pakistan, it is recognised as a legal marriage by the British immigration system, but when carried out in Britain the *nikāḥ* alone does not fulfil British marriage requirements. Not only are officiants and venues often not registered for marriages, but Islamic marriage declarations can be made by the couple in separate rooms, while in English law the bride and bridegroom must both be present to recite set vows (Yilmaz 2002: 348). Hence, if a couple marry in England, they will usually have a civil ceremony so that their marriage is legally registered in the UK. Since the early 1990s, changes in legislation have allowed more mosques and community centres to become



Picture Sixteen and Seventeen: Signing the *nikāḥ- nāma* at a hotel wedding in Pakistan.

registered as venues for weddings, and some mosque officials have been recognised as empowered to wed couples on behalf of the registry (Yilmaz 2002: 348), but many couples still employ the services of a separate registrar.¹

Yilmaz (2002) draws attention to this legal pluralism in England, where in particular, marriage, divorce and polygamy are dealt with very differently by Muslim and English law. ‘Muslim law,’ he writes, ‘is still superior and dominant over English law in the Muslim mind and in the eyes of the Muslim community; and many Muslim individuals follow Muslim law by employing several strategies in England’. This is an example of ‘new’ rather than ‘classic’ legal pluralism (Merry cited in Fuller 1994). Where ‘classic’ legal pluralism refers to a colonial and post-colonial context in which foreign law was superimposed on pre-existing indigenous practices, the ‘new’ legal pluralism ‘pertains to the existence of plural normative orders within modern, western societies in particular’ (Fuller 1994).

Transnationalism produces a third type of legal pluralism, as marriages become involved in the legal institutions of two countries. Islam permits polygyny, for example, with a man allowed to have up to four wives. In Pakistan, second marriages require court permission, taking the views of the existing wife into account. However, second marriages that occur without this permission are still considered legally valid (Yamani 1998: 156), providing a loop-hole that allows men to remarry without their first wife’s consent or even knowledge. During my fieldwork I encountered several examples of polygyny in the older generations, where it seems to have been not uncommon practice for an immigrant man to have one wife in Britain – sometimes a White woman – and another in Pakistan.² With the recent closing of a legal loophole (Yilmaz 2002: 349), immigration regulations permit only one wife to be resident in Britain (see Appendix). Even before this, wives in Pakistan were often never brought to Britain, or at least not while the first marriage was ‘subsisting’, in the Home Office’s terms, and these cases still occur today. Bilqis, a young woman I met in Pakistan, for example, has only just been granted her visa to come to Britain after ten years of marriage as her husband did not apply for her to join him until his first marriage, to a White woman, ended in divorce. On the other hand, Manzoor, who is in her sixties, told me how her husband did manage to bring a second wife to Britain, where she lived until the polygamy was discovered by the authorities and she was returned to Pakistan. Even within

¹ Such practices form part of the developments in legal practice among migrant Muslim populations in Britain that Menski has termed *Angrezi (English) Sharia* (Menski [unpublished] cited in Bano 1999).

² This practice featured in the popular recent British film *East is East*.

Britain, however, the duality of Muslim and English law can be manipulated to allow a man to have more than one wife resident in the UK: I have been told of rare instances in which a man has married one woman by *nikāḥ* only in Britain, and another either in a British civil marriage, or in a Pakistan ceremony later recognised by UK immigration (cf. Shaw 1988: 57).

The concept of legal pluralism has been criticised on the grounds that ‘the coexistence of multiple plural legal or normative orders is a universal fact of the modern world [so] the concept points to nothing distinctive; it merely reminds us that from the legal perspective (as from any other) isolated, homogenous societies do not actually exist’. It also risks blinkering the researcher by its focus on law, ‘reproducing law-centred misconstructions’ (Fuller 2002: 10). This criticism holds true in the British Pakistani context, as such a perspective tends to privilege these religious and legal marriages over the ‘common-law’ unions that some Pakistanis form, particularly with non-Pakistani and non-Muslim partners. Nevertheless, such a privileging is common amongst British Pakistanis themselves – marriages not solemnised by *nikāḥ* may not be recognised by the community in Bristol and are generally subject to disapproval. Hence it was only towards the very end of my fieldwork that I learnt that the son of a woman I had been meeting regularly was cohabiting with a White partner (and may even be married), as the matter was never mentioned.

The dual legal system can be employed in another way to circumvent the problems of the immigration system. Current Home Office regulations allow for a transfer of visa category from study or visit to spousal settlement – so that students or visitors who marry UK nationals may be granted the right to remain in Britain without the need to return to their country of origin and apply for a spousal visa. The recent White Paper on immigration proposed disallowing such ‘swapping’ (Home Office 2002), but at the time of writing, no such changes have yet been made. In Bristol, Rasham, now in her thirties with teenaged children, married her husband while he was in Britain as a visitor. They had two weddings – a quick registry office marriage before his visa expired, allowing him to stay in the country, and the ‘proper’ Pakistani wedding a few months later.

Uzma’s fiancé Nadir came to Bristol on a student visa, and the family was planning to hold the civil marriage while he was in the country, although the couple would not cohabit until after a wedding in Pakistan the following year. They had been advised that this would be the simplest and quickest route to secure his immigration status in Britain. When I told them of the Home Office’s proposals to close this option, they considered doing without the

expense of two weddings, and concentrating on the celebration in Pakistan. This hints at other motivations for the timings of weddings. These will be illuminated further by their full plans for celebrating the union.

Nadir gained a student visa to study for a year in Britain, and lives in an empty house owned by a family member next door to Uzma's family. This meant that the couple could not be accused of cohabiting before the marriage, whilst Uzma's family could provide him with meals and any assistance he required. Early on in the year, Uzma's grandfather visited from Pakistan, and his daughter, Uzma's mother, decided this would be the perfect time to hold the official engagement party – partly inspired by the excitement of attending another family wedding. During another visit by her father (at short notice due to the serious illness of a relative in Britain), the family considered staging the *nikāḥ* while he was there to enjoy it – on these visits the grandfather had been remarking that he was old and unlikely to live much longer. These plans were shelved, however, when a friend of the family died and festivities seemed inappropriate. They decided to stick to the earlier plans of having a joint *nikāḥ* and civil ceremony, with a large function for their relatives in England. The couple's marriage would finally be completed, they hoped, with a full three-day affair in Pakistan to celebrate in style with Nadir's family and other relatives there. In the event, however, the ill-health of a close member of the family meant that they could not travel to Pakistan when they had planned, so the *rukḥṣatī* was held in another function at a hotel in Bristol six months after the civil and religious wedding. A few months later, when Uzma and Nadir were travelling to Pakistan to attend Nadir's sister's wedding, they planned to hold a party to celebrate the union with relatives in Pakistan, although the wedding was theoretically complete as the *walīma* had taken place in Bristol.

This example demonstrates the many interacting factors – cultural, geographical, legal, political, financial and emotional – that can result in the multiplication of the ceremonies of marrying. The transnational family means that visits can be such rare occasions that important life events that cause a gathering of kin may be scheduled to coincide with them. The ability to hold the religious marriage as a separate function increases such possibilities. Legal pluralism creates another opportunity for division because a separate civil ceremony can be held, and current immigration policies provide an incentive for such 'paper' marriages. Finally, a wedding in Pakistan presents opportunities to celebrate in much greater style than would be possible in Bristol, given the favourable exchange rate and the availability of wedding venues, goods and services. It is also a chance for parents who migrated to Bristol several decades ago to mark this important life event – the marriage

of their child – with the siblings and other relatives they left behind, and for Pakistani parents to participate in the marriage of their migrant child. Where the main events of the marriage are held in Pakistan, a function may also take place in Britain to celebrate the arrival of the bride or groom with friends and family here.

The divisible wedding

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

Religious reasons why people may not have a *meñhdī* were mentioned in the chapter on weddings. Several informants stressed that the *walīma* meal held by the groom's family to celebrate the arrival of the new bride is a religiously-prescribed element of a marriage, while other festivities are merely Pakistani customs. Nevertheless, I have come across occasional cases where no *walīma* was held. The *bārāt* day is in any case generally the most extravagant, in keeping with the general pattern across South Asia for the woman's side to spend more on the wedding. Nabila, however, was sent off from Pakistan as a fiancée, and had a simple *nikāḥ* ceremony at her husband's home in Bristol, so missing out on the *bārāt* – conventionally thought of as the wedding day – all together. Photographs from the family celebration in Pakistan, however, show the conventional *rukḥṣatī* leave-taking scene being enacted, with Nabila being guided (although not, as would be normal, to her husband's waiting transportation) by relatives holding a copy of the Quran over her head.

It seems that the two elements of the wedding that always occur are the *nikāḥ* and the *rukḥṣatī*. It is of course hardly surprising that the *nikāḥ* is indispensable, as without this the marriage would not be recognised as legitimate by members of the religious community. *Rukḥṣatī*, meanwhile, refers to the final ritual of the wedding day when the bride is sent off to her new home, accompanied by lamentation and weeping by her female relatives. It is also understood, however, to have the more general meaning of leaving the parental home to



Picture Eighteen (top) A *rukḥṣatī* at a hotel in Bristol.

Picture Nineteen (bottom) At a function to welcome a Pakistani bride to Bristol, the groom's cousin notes down the *salāmī* gifts.



Picture Twenty: Details from a set of wedding invitation cards illustrated with scenes depicting (from bottom to top) the *mehndī*, *bārāt* and *walīma*.

cohabit with the husband, and implies the consummation of the marriage. As such it is an equally inevitable element of being wed – where the *nikāḥ* is the contract which establishes the union as legitimate, *rukḥṣatī* is the practical act of marriage that transforms the virgin bride into a wife.³ This double meaning of the term *rukḥṣatī* was reflected in occasional confusion in talking about the issue, such as when I asked Jamilah and her husband Omar whether they had had their *rukḥṣatī* in Pakistan. Jamilah first said that they had not, but then her husband disagreed:

Omar: The thing is it was *rukḥṣatī*, they did *rukḥṣatī*.

Jamilah: But they didn't send [me] home with you [KC: So you did the crying and everything?] No, no, no, we didn't.

Omar: Yeah you did – when you were making the movie and everything.

Jamilah: This is what happened. We went home together and we had dinner – because we didn't have dinner in the hall because it's difficult to eat at them [presumably because of the ban on serving food at weddings mentioned in Chapter One]. And then he went to his house [and] I went to mine. So it was like a *rukḥṣatī* but not a complete... We went home together, but we did not actually, if you know what I mean. And then I went home. He stayed for about a week... not even a week – couple of days... We arranged for him to stay at a family member's house.

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

Saying that there was no *walīma* is often the same as saying there was no *rukḥṣatī*, as the *walīma* is not held until the *rukḥṣatī* has taken place and the bride has gone to her husband's home. Other people talk about their marriage in Pakistan as not having been a 'full wedding'.

³ Indeed, in the *nikāḥ-nama* the term for a virgin (*kuḥwarī*) also means an unmarried woman. It must be specified whether the bride is a virgin, divorced or widowed.

The *nikāḥ* and *rukḥṣatī* can thus be separated and held on different occasions, sometimes with many months or years intervening. The reasons for doing so are diverse, as we shall see, but for the purposes of this chapter, I will separate this phenomenon into two categories: the ‘separate *nikāḥ*’ and the ‘delayed *rukḥṣatī*’. In the former case, a smaller function is held for the *nikāḥ* some time before the marriage celebration proper. In the latter, the normal wedding is held, with the arrival of the *bārāt* and the signing of the *nikāḥ*, but the ‘complete’ *rukḥṣatī*, in Jamilah’s terms, does not take place. The bride may, like Jamilah, initially depart with the groom, or the conventional *rukḥṣatī* scene may be staged for the cameras, but the bride will not accompany the groom to his home to spend the night with him and consummate the marriage. Of course, the two types may theoretically be combined in one marriage – a *nikāḥ* could take place, followed some time later by the wedding celebration, but the consummation of the marriage could be delayed until after the Pakistani spouse has been granted a visa and arrived in Britain. I have not, however, come across any such cases.

The separate nikāḥ

The *nikāḥ* and *rukḥṣatī* often take place on the same day, or at least within a few days of each other. This is not, however, essential – the *nikāḥ* may take place several months or years before the couple start to cohabit. This practice exists in Pakistan as well as amongst Pakistanis in Britain – Gafoora in Pakistan told me that the *nikāḥ* was really a ‘strong engagement’ – the couple weren’t really married yet, but it would be unusual for the match to be dissolved once the *nikāḥ-nāma* had been signed. Many Muslims, however, would be unhappy with the term ‘engagement’, as it undermines the importance of the *nikāḥ* as the religious marriage.

When I asked one woman from Mirpur why her *nikāḥ* to her Bristolian husband had been held years before she came to Britain, she simply answered that this was their culture. Other women in Bristol, though, told me of a variety of motivation for holding the *nikāḥ* separately. If the families were not well known to each other, this time might allow them to get to know each other better and make sure that the *rishta* was indeed suitable. Parents might want to finalise the *rishta* before the couple were ready to marry – they might still be studying, the groom might wish to establish his career, or the families might need time to

save for the wedding. In addition, one woman told me, families might push for an early *nikāḥ* if they feared that the groom might change his mind later on.

Other reasons for a separate *nikāḥ* might not concern the couple themselves – such as when Uzma’s mother wanted to hold the *nikāḥ* for the benefit of her father. This is not a new practice in the family. The *nikāḥ* of her sister in Pakistan, twenty years or more ago, had been two years before the wedding. An uncle had apparently been visiting Pakistan from Britain and the *nikāḥ* had been held at that time in order to gather the family for a celebration during his stay.

As a religious marriage, the *nikāḥ* also has a legitimating effect. As such, an early *nikāḥ* can permit behaviour that might otherwise provoke disapproval, or be considered dangerously ‘modern’. If a couple are already religiously wed, for example, they may sit side by side at a joint *meñhdī* celebration. When Sonam, from Pakistan, was about to embark on studies abroad at the same university as a male cousin, her *nikāḥ* to her British intended husband was carried out so that she could travel with this theoretically marriageable young man without causing worry or gossip.

In Bristol, one couple took advantage of the freedom provided by this state of being religiously but not practically married by going out unchaperoned on shopping trips to buy jewellery during the year in which they were ‘*nikāḥ*-ed’ but not living together, overcoming the traditional prohibition on contact between engaged couples. There was another reason that this couple had their wedding so long after their *nikāḥ*, however, and here we return to the issue of legal pluralism raised above. They could not have their civil marriage, or publicly celebrate their union, until the groom’s divorce from his non-Pakistani first wife had been finalised, so they chose to solemnise their relationship initially through the religious marriage contract.

A separate *nikāḥ* may therefore be held for a number of reasons: to secure the *rishta*, as an excuse for a party that gathers kin together, to circumvent the British legal or immigration systems, to legitimate behaviour, or to buy time. Finally, for Shareen, whose *nikāḥ* was held very quickly after the match was decided, it was largely a matter of practicality, as she needed to return to Bristol quickly. She could also, however, see other benefits:

...we didn't do the *rukḥṣatī* then because I was short of time because I was working and I had to go back. And I wanted to spend time with him after marriage [rather] than me just staying with him [for a] couple of days after marriage and then going back to England.... So that was all fine. And in that time I said [to husband]: 'You can do your training and everything, and then by the time I come up [i.e. back to Pakistan], you can save a bit more money and then we could do the wedding like that'.⁴

The delayed rukḥṣatī

While the separate *nikāḥ* seems to be an accepted tradition in Pakistan, during my fieldwork I came across what seemed to be an unusually high number of cases of transnational marriages in which the *rukḥṣatī* was delayed, so that the marriage would remain unconsummated until the Pakistani spouse arrived in Britain. I did not hear of this situation in Pakistan when international migration was not involved. Moreover, among those I interviewed, this arrangement was more common where a British bride was marrying a Pakistani groom, than vice versa.

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

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

Nasreen: The *rukḥṣatī* means, obviously, spending the night together. Everybody was worried – like we don't really want babies and things involved if we're trying to get you over [i.e. during the visa application process]. And we knew it was going to be complicated for me because... I wasn't working. And um, I think that was it really. That was the only main reason... Me and my mum and dad all sort of thought that it was a better thing to do. I don't know really. I guess if you become heavily physically involved with someone, it's not

⁴ In Bangladesh, Gardner reports the opposite phenomenon, as the traditional delaying of the couple's cohabitation is relaxed in some circumstances where grooms must quickly return to work abroad (1995: 167).

necessarily the right thing to do I suppose – to not see them for months and months in that same situation. Maybe it's not mentally healthy or something.

Although acceptance rates for spousal visa applications have risen, I have indeed heard of cases of 'immigration widows' whose husbands' visa applications were refused, but who have conceived children on visits to Pakistan. The risk of rejection may help to explain why *rukḥṣatī* is more often delayed for British women. Not only is the risk run by women higher than that for men – as the plight of an effectively single mother is unenviable – but there is considered to be a greater risk of husbands being refused visas than for wives. Entry clearance officers I talked to in Islamabad did seem to place a greater burden of proof on male applicants than female. They understand that it is normal for women to move on marriage and to be economically inactive, whereas men are considered more likely to be motivated by the economic incentives of migration and so are treated with greater suspicion.

Moreover, as Nasreen suggests, prolonged separation might be difficult after embarking on a physical relationship. Pakistanis believe sexuality to be a powerful force – a common justification for purdah practices is that an unrelated man and woman left alone together would be unable to resist each other. Whilst this temptation towards illicit sex is seen as wicked – one woman in Pakistan told me that the devil runs through all our veins – regular sex within marriage is considered healthy, and the separation of husband and wife thought difficult for both. Veena Das, writing on Punjabi conceptions of kinship in North India, much of which is equally applicable in the Pakistani Punjab, notes that, 'shared sexuality is considered to create strong natural bonds which are extremely difficult to resist' (Das 1994: 205).

The three girls' cousin is Jamilah who, together with her husband Omar, was encountered earlier in the chapter talking about her delayed *rukḥṣatī*. She added another matter in which her father sought to protect her:

We had a *nikāḥ* – that guarantees that you're married. We had that straight away... No engagement. Straight away we had the *nikāḥ* – two, three weeks after we first saw each other. I saw him one day, [and] on that weekend I went back to Lahore – because that's where my parents are originally from – and we held the *nikāḥ* in Lahore, because the girl's side of the family is who actually arranges that. And the *bārāt* came from Karachi to Lahore and then they went back. I didn't see him afterwards and all that. [No *rukḥṣatī*] ...because my father had doubts in his mind that what if he never got to England, the visa was rejected, and then [she said in giggly whispers] he still wanted me to be 'pure'. I'm the only daughter you see, so my dad's very protective of me.

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

Of course, parents in Pakistan may also have similar concerns for their daughters who are marrying British men. As already noted, however, it is considered easier to bring wives from Pakistan than husbands. Moreover, it may be that the British side, with its promise of a better life, holds greater sway in the negotiations over such matters. So while Pakistani families may wish to delay the consummation of a daughter's marriage to a man from Britain, they may not be in a strong position to press for this to happen. In one case, however, the uncle who was acting as go-between in the marriage discussions apparently told the British groom that he would be taking his new bride home, whilst assuring the bride that she would only have her *nikāḥ* and be able to continue with her studies – a duplicity that was discovered only after the ceremony. In the end the Pakistani bride did get her way. When Talib from Bristol married Zahida from Pakistan, his mother clearly recognised that the consummation of the marriage might cause her new daughter-in-law problems, but avoided shouldering responsibility by employing the common discourse of fate:

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

Amina, a young woman from Lahore whom I met in Bristol, had a 'full' wedding, but her *rukḥṣatī* did not have a great impact on her as she returned to live with her parents while she applied for a visa.⁵ The sexual bond between husband and wife may be strong, but the ties it creates are weaker than those between children and their parents. In particular, childbearing and breast-feeding create a very powerful relationship between mother and child (Das 1994). Amina's real *rukḥṣatī*, she told me, was when she had to leave her parents at the airport in Pakistan.

⁵ Bilqis, on the other hand, lived for ten years in her in-laws house in Pakistan before her migration to Britain in 2002.

Fears for British Pakistani women

Even if a husband's visa application is successful, there are other fears for British Pakistani women marrying men from Pakistan, and for Nasreen and Rubina it seems that delaying the *rukḥṣatī* was also intended to protect against these additional dangers. The sisters' marriages were held in age order on three consecutive days, with the eldest, Asma, married first, and Rubina the youngest last. Asma's husband came to Britain first. The two other young men were granted visas on appeal, after a second visit by Nasreen and her father to Pakistan left her feeling confident about the match. The family brought Nasreen's husband over next, with the intention that Rubina's husband would follow after a few months. In the event, Nasreen's marriage failed. Worried by this experience and the fact that the two sisters' husbands are friends, the family have decided not to bring Rubina's husband to Britain at all and are seeking a divorce.

My assertion that the main reason for separating the *nikāḥ* and *rukḥṣatī* – not having a 'full' wedding as they put it – was to reduce the various risks to Nasreen and Rubina, is backed up by the contrast with their sister Asma's wedding. Although the family took care that all three functions were identical in all other respects, Asma's *rukḥṣatī* took place on the day of her marriage. This difference can be explained by the divergent degrees of danger perceived in these matches. Nasreen and Rubina married in the family, but to relatives who are not considered very close as the families did not mix much at the time. Nasreen's husband was her second cousin (her mother's mother's sister's daughter's son), while Rubina is unclear as to her direct relationship to the man she married, although one of his brothers is married to Nasreen's husband's sister. She put it this way:

I felt to one degree that I was still in the family, because my mum knew them while we were kids and they were kids, but she didn't know them that well, so to that degree maybe it was out of the family...

Asma's match, on the other hand 'is really close' (Rubina). Her husband is her mother's sister's son. While Asma's husband had professional qualifications, the other two men were relatively uneducated and from poor families. As will be clear from previous discussions of risk, then, Asma's close kin marriage to an educated boy whose family was well known was far less risky than those to two lesser-known quantities with clear potential incentives for economic migration. The family could thus feel much more confident in allowing Asma's marriage to be completed by cohabitation.

One concern for many British Pakistani women marrying men from Pakistan, as it is for the Home Office, is that their marriages should not be contracted simply for the opportunity for economic migration. The criteria on which Entry Clearance Officers decide whether a marriage is 'genuine' are somewhat vague, but, as set out in the Introduction, the government wishes to ensure that such marriages should not be motivated primarily by immigration or financial advantage.⁶ For Pakistanis, however, as I argued in the discussion of the concept of *rishta* in Chapter Three, connections to wealth and opportunity are an accepted and intrinsic part of the search for a spouse. Many discussions of transnational Pakistani marriages have taken the obligations to provide such opportunities to non-migrant kin as the main impulse behind these unions (e.g. Ballard 1987). Accordingly, young British women may be realistic about the economic aspect to their marriages. In the last chapter, for example, it will be remembered that when Shareen was deciding whether to marry in Britain or Pakistan, she thought: 'I may as well give somebody an opportunity from there [rather] than somebody that's already here – d'you know?'

Nevertheless, the potential or perceived gains from such marriages are such that they may undermine confidence in the Pakistani husband's commitment to the marital relationship. Most serious is what the Immigration and Nationality Directorate term the intention to 'live permanently with the other as his or her spouse'⁷ – in this case, the husband's intention to stay with his wife once he has gained the right to remain in Britain. A few husbands in Bristol have deserted their wives – either having gained 'permanent right to remain' after a year of cohabiting with their wife, or (and my impression is more commonly) having waited until they 'get their British passport' (i.e. are granted British citizenship) after at least three years legally residing in the country. In some cases, such as that of Sumera, once the husband's position in Britain is secure, he has secretly contracted a second marriage in Pakistan. It is difficult to judge whether this was the husband's original intention, however, or a decision made later as a result of dissatisfaction with their first marriage.⁸

The literature on Muslim marriage notes that polygyny can be a source of severe anxiety for women (Usman 1991: 35, cf. Abu-Lughod 1988: 228-9; Jeffery 1976a: 10). Manzoor, the woman in her sixties mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, was clearly still upset several decades on as she told me how her husband had married as she was giving

⁶ Immigration regulations, writes Menski, are peppered with the potential for subjective judgements by individual officials in terms such as 'adequate' and 'satisfied'. There are rumours of 'hidden quotas' and 'secret instructions' (1999).

⁷ See Appendix for UK spousal immigration regulations.

⁸ This issue is discussed further in Chapter Seven.

birth, and neglected her for his second wife, taking the money from her menial work to send to the other woman in Pakistan.⁹ The instances with which I am familiar where men imported as husbands for British Pakistani women then marry again have indeed caused great upset to the first wife (and no-doubt also to the second if she was not aware of the situation). In Pakistan, when a man marries a second wife without court permission, the first wife is allowed to petition for divorce (Yamani 1998). For women involved in these transnational polygamous marriages, however, this decision can be further complicated by the fact that if she does divorce her husband under British law, he is then free to bring his second wife to Britain. Many women in Bristol advised Sumera against a divorce for this reason, but she has gone ahead with it to allow herself to re-marry, although she views the prospect of her husband bringing his new wife to live in the same city as deeply unfair.

The possibility of being deserted, perhaps like Sumera with young children to support, while your husband of only a few years gains the right to remain in Britain and even import another wife, understandably worries many of the British Pakistani women I have spoken to. These concerns are intensified when news of such an event spreads through the Bristol grapevine. When it emerged that Nasreen's husband intended to leave his wife once he had gained settlement rights, her happily married sister caused great upset to her own husband by asking if he was going to leave her too. Azra, who knew the sisters from school, caused arguments with her own new Pakistani husband over similar concerns.

A further fear is that the husband will not be sufficiently oriented towards his new commitments in Britain, neglecting duties to his wife and children in favour of his relatives in Pakistan. The aspect that women most commonly mentioned was the issue of remittances. Many, if not most, women accept that their husbands will fulfil their filial duties by sending money to support their parents, but I have heard of some cases in which British families feel they have been forced to live with severe financial constraints in order to finance luxuries in Pakistan.

Some men are considered more of a risk than others, and other tactics may be employed to reduce these dangers. Zaynab, for example, has suffered two failed marriages. One husband's visa application was rejected, while the other left her immediately after gaining his British citizenship and is now married again. Zaynab says she has been offered

⁹ The Quran, however, states: 'Marry the women of your choice, two or three or four. But if you fear that you may not be able to deal justly with them, then marry only one.', a passage which is widely interpreted as meaning wives should be treated with complete equality (Usman 1991: 35; Yamani 1998: 156). Whether precise equality is possible in practice, and therefore whether polygamy is actually effectively prohibited is a matter of debate (P. Jeffery, pers. comm.).

other *rishte*, but has rejected them. She will not marry someone in Britain on a visit visa who might only be looking for a way to stay in the country, and she is hoping for an older man in his forties or fifties who, she feels, will be less likely to leave her for another (younger) woman.

As noted above, poor men are thought more likely to be driven by economic gain, so several women have told me that the fact that their husbands were from financially stable backgrounds was a factor in agreeing to the marriage. Azra, who feels strongly that their finances are too limited for her husband to remit money to his family, told me why she rejected another proposal:

His mother came in to see my mother. It's funny, because she said she wants her son to get married to me, and she wants her son to send money to them when he's over. And I thought, 'I really don't like that'. She just came out with this... and I thought, 'I don't want to get married to him'. I know my husband – they're quite wealthy and they're doing OK, touch wood, so I know he won't be... I had some sort of indication, but at the end of the day you don't know how a person may behave – only God knows. But they're all wealthy. They're OK – they're doing fine. He doesn't seem *lālci* (greedy).

This sentiment was repeated by Jamilah:

...when we were looking in Pakistan, we did look for financially stable people. Because there's always a problem when people are coming to England – it's more boys than girls – to try and support families at home. If they're not stable already then we have a hard life to support two families you see.

Nasreen and Rubina's family, who did take boys from poorer backgrounds as husbands for their daughters, apparently tried to reduce the financial incentive for the marriage by refusing to offer a dowry.¹⁰ With hindsight, after Nasreen's husband had proved to be very much motivated by money, one relative criticised the decision not to give dowry, telling me that it only increased his family's financial hardship and therefore made them more desperate.

I have been told that another Bristol relative of this family brought a man from Pakistan to Britain as a daughter's fiancé on a trial basis. The marriage did not take place in the end, as the family had developed doubts over his character during his stay. In two other cases, I met people in Bristol whose future spouses had come over on visits, allowing the families concerned to see how they acted in this environment. This option is not, however,

¹⁰ N.b. As Gardner points out, distinction should be made between the various parts of a dowry (1995: 178-80). In this case, although the family did not send money or goods to Yasmin's groom and in-laws, they still presented their daughter with substantial quantities of gold jewellery and clothing.

open to all. Those without financial securities in Pakistan may find it harder to obtain a visa, and it is commonly thought that visitor visas are less frequently given to the young and unmarried for fear that they will try to evade the normal spousal immigration routes by marrying during their stay.

Later in our conversation, Jamilah summed up the uncertainties faced by several young women I spoke to in Bristol, expressing a range of concerns, anxiety and frustrations:¹¹

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

Mahr: Islam's protection of women in marriage

Islam does make provisions to protect women against casual divorce and hardship after the end of a marriage. In the *nikāḥ-nāma*, a sum of money to be paid by the groom to

¹¹ A section of this quotation was used in the Introduction to illustrate the ambivalence of some young British Pakistanis towards immigration regulations.

his new bride must be specified. This payment, the *mahr*, should be made before consummation of the marriage, but may be deferred or ‘forgiven’ by the bride.¹² At the latest, however, it should be paid to the woman if her husband divorces her, and as such has been viewed both as a deterrent to divorce and a kind of alimony to support the divorced woman.

Wakil notes that the institution is flexible: ‘the amount of *mehr* varies, the mode of payment varies, the subjective motives and meanings vary, and so on’ (1991: 55). Studies show that the amount and implications of *mahr* differ greatly both cross culturally and within societies, and change over time, so that while a token sum of one Jordanian dollar has recently been gaining popularity in Palestine (Moor 1991), in Sumatra, some *mahr* payments were so large that they could not be paid in the lifetime of the groom (Tugby 1959). In the latter case *mahr* payments were superimposed over pre-existing exchange practices, and their interaction with these traditions varied so that *mahr* was sometimes treated as equivalent to one type of payment (‘the great gold’), sometimes another (‘the gold that disappears’) and sometimes specified separately. In pre-1950s Palestine, prompt payment of the *mahr* gave women direct access to productive property (Moor 1991), whilst Tugby (1959) reports that in Sumatra, the deferment of *mahr* payment was more advantageous for the wife, incorporating her securely into her husband’s lineage through debt. It did not, however, provide an effective deterrent against divorce, as a man might separate from his wife without pronouncing the final *ṭalāq* to complete the divorce – leaving her to renounce the *mahr* if she wished to remarry.

In Pakistan, Donnan reports that *mahr* is usually deferred (1988: 109), although other work suggests this may be a recent development (Wakil 1991). Studies demonstrate that higher sums correlate with, and indeed confer, higher status (Donnan 1988: 150; see also Wakil 1991: 55-6). Wakil notes that families of low economic standing may engage in exchange marriages such as those discussed in the previous chapter, in which costs, including *mahr*, are low.¹³ Small *mahr* payments are not only, however, driven by economic constraints. In Britain, Shaw reports that small symbolic amounts are traditional, and seen by older women as symbols of trust in close kin marriage (2000a: 243). In addition, prestige may be gained by an agreement on the ‘Prophet’s *mahr*’ of 32 rupees, also known as *rasūlī mahr*, which ‘may indicate faith in the stability of the marriage and a concern with religious

¹² My informants in Bristol generally referred to the payment as *ḥaqq mahr*, *ḥaqq* meaning true, just or appropriate.

¹³ This practice has also been noted in Palestine (Moor 1991).

tradition rather than with material benefit, since this is the amount said to have been pledged on the Prophet's daughter Fatima' (Donnan 1988: 150). Several of my informants reported this amount (or one approximating to it), which is in effect a token *mahr* given the current value of the Pakistani rupee, and which they more commonly called *shar`ī mahr*, i.e. the amount prescribed by Islamic law.¹⁴ In addition, a woman in Bristol told me that large sums were not required in kin marriage, as this type of union is expected to provide its own security. Moreover, to demand a large *mahr* is to risk appearing *lālī* (greedy). In any case, a 'good wife' is often expected to excuse the payment of *mahr* (Shaw 2000a: 243). In this context, to attempt to manage risk by asking for a large *mahr* could produce other dangers by undermining the presumption of trust between kin, in a similar way that requests for condom use to reduce the risk of AIDS have been shown to engender distrust between couples in Tanzania (Bujra 2002). An understanding of the interlinking of risk and trust illuminates why neither *mahr* nor condoms have proven effective or popular methods of risk reduction in these cases.

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

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

Mahr – yes, well the first night... let me remember what I did with it a little bit... I had to buy a present for the first night, so what happened [was] that I didn't really have the time – or I didn't know what I was going to do the first night. People told me at the last moment, 'Oh you have to give a present, you have to give the *mahr*'... My mother told one of my aunts to bring over a present and

¹⁴ In North India, Jeffery's informants report the amount of the *shar`ī mahr* to be 125 silver rupees (2001).

they gave me it as a surprise and said, 'You give it to your wife'... It was a watch... [Then on reflection he says:] No – it hasn't anything to do with the *mahr*, but I paid around 5000 rupees – but I didn't know it was *mahr* at that time until later on. My father asked me in the morning, 'Well, did you pay your *mahr*?' I said 'Oh right, did I have to pay that as well?' So next day or a few days after I asked her to just forgive it if she wanted to. Otherwise I could have paid it to her. It's not that much...

His wife's memories are also vague, and differ from those of her husband. When I asked about her *mahr*, she said:

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

In this statement, *mahr* is again viewed as a matter of little importance. Saif, from Bristol, seems to have been even less aware of the practice. He told me what he and his wife had done with the *salāmī* money gifts from their wedding:

Well we spent it. She keeps ten thousand rupees. I don't know if you know that – ten thousand rupees she keeps for, um, [tries to think of the word] haq mut? [I suggest *ḥaqq mahr*] *Ḥaqq mahr*. So she kept that. That was on the wedding night itself. That was something completely – I wasn't sure if she was pulling a fast one on me! But I just accepted it anyway. She said, 'Right – this is ten thousand rupees for me, this is my *ḥaqq mahr*.' And I said, 'All right then... What's *ḥaqq mahr*?'

It might be possible to speculate on why the payment takes on these characteristics in some Pakistani weddings by referring to pre-Islamic patterns of marriage exchange (à la Tugby), the implications of modes of production (Goody and Tambiah 1973), or changing labour markets (Moor 1991), but such questions are beyond the scope of the present enquiry. For current purposes, the important matter is that, despite Tugby's assertion that 'the structural concomitants of the institution of *mahr* are so rigidly defined that they will prevail in the long run' (1959: 639), for many Pakistani women, *mahr* does not seem to provide any kind of marital or financial security. This may be because the amount involved is very low,

particularly with the value placed on the *shar`ī mahr*, which has by now become a token payment, but even a large *mahr* may not be paid if the wife ‘forgives’ it.¹⁵

Moreover, even if *mahr* were operating effectively in Pakistan, it is unlikely that it could afford any real protection to British Pakistani women engaged in transnational marriages to men from Pakistan. Given the exchange rate between sterling and the Pakistani rupee, even the most generous rupee *mahr* would provide neither an effective deterrent to divorce once the husband is earning in Britain, nor any kind of adequate financial support to the divorced wife. Given the heightened risks that British women and their parents run in arranging transnational marriages, it is hardly surprising that other methods of protection have been sought.

Conclusion

In the last chapter, I suggested that close kin marriage is often one attempt at reducing these risks. This chapter has detailed ways in which the divisibility of Pakistani weddings can be employed to further protect brides. In Pakistani weddings that do not involve international migration, the *nikāḥ* may be held some time before the rest of the marriage. In the transnational context, however, the possibilities and motivations for the multiplication of marriage rituals are increased. British, Pakistani, and Muslim laws relating to marriage combine to create a kind of double legal pluralism in which the co-existence of civil and religious law in Britain is complicated by the involvement of the Pakistani legal system. The meaning of marriage rites then depends on context – a *nikāḥ* held in Pakistan is treated as legally valid by British law, whilst the same procedure carried out in the UK is not. The mechanisms of divorce are also complicated by the situation, and women in Britain who were married in Pakistan may find it difficult to obtain a religious divorce from the Pakistani authorities (Shah-Kazemi 2001). In Bristol, I heard of a case in which a British Pakistani woman divorced her Pakistani husband under British law, but he denied that the divorce was valid as the religious marriage had not been declared at an end. Nasreen and Rubina have spent many months negotiating the complex system of divorcing their Pakistani husbands from a distance and against the young men’s wishes.

An early section of the present chapter outlined ways in which this pluralistic situation can be used to the advantage of those involved, including circumventing the British

¹⁵ Jeffery (2001) describes a similar situation of confusion and scepticism surrounding *mahr* in rural North India. Whilst many of her informants either did not know the amount of their *mahr*, or reported a low figure, not one of them had actually received the money.

prohibition on polygyny. In other cases, it is simply the need to fulfil the requirements of both religious and British civil law that leads to the multiplication of wedding ceremonies, so that a registrar may be asked to solemnise a marriage to allow a groom's immigration status to be secured. In addition, however, migration leads to further motivations for additional ceremonies as families hope to celebrate with relatives in both countries. In the end, it will be remembered, the process of Uzma's wedding was extended to include multiple functions in Britain and a party in Pakistan in response to the family's need to allow her fiancé to remain in Britain, the practical demands of health and travel, and a desire to celebrate the union with kin in both countries, or on the occasion of valued visits from Pakistani relatives. These additional factors remind us of criticisms that have been levelled at legal anthropology and the study of legal pluralism, pointing to a blinkered focus on the legal at the expense of other influences on behaviour, and how law operates in practice (e.g. Fuller 1994).

An additional picking apart of the elements of marriage that has been described in this chapter is the practice of delaying the consummation of the marriage until after a Pakistani groom has been accepted for immigration to Britain. Whilst what I have called a 'separate *nikāḥ*' has long been practised, I have argued that the 'delayed *rukḥṣatī*' is designed to protect British brides from dangers that are specific to transnational marriages, and which I have outlined above. It is used in combination with other methods such as the selection of a husband from a financially secure background, and in response to the assessment of risk involved in the marriage, a calculation that includes the perceived security of close kin marriage. Finally, I described a religious institution for the protection of women in marriage, *mahr*, and documented its widespread lack of financial impact on those with whom I have worked. The dominant model of reduction of risk through marriage to close relatives is again seen to interact with other methods of protection. In this case, the effectiveness of *mahr* is undermined in two ways. Participants are encouraged to think that a token payment will suffice, as a financial guarantee is not necessary in arrangements between trusted relations, and the giving of a small *mahr* is promoted as a demonstration of that trust. A picture has thus developed over the course of these chapters of multiple and interacting modes of risk reduction in transnational marriage, which have led to distinctive patterns of spousal selection in terms of high rates of transnational close kin marriage, to new forms of marriage ceremonies, and has further reduced the practical importance of *mahr* to the point that some young people seem to have very little knowledge of the custom.¹⁶ The following narrative

¹⁶ I wish here to differentiate between the practical importance of *mahr* as protection for women in marriage and divorce, and the religious importance of the practice.

interlude takes up the story of Yasmin, whose *rukṣatī* was delayed, to give provide further illustration of these practices, and introduce an example of what happens when all these safeguards fail.

Yasmin's Marriage

Here Yasmin from Bristol, whose *rukḥṣatī* was delayed and whose marriage later failed, will tell her story in her own words. This narrative provides a bridge between the questions of risk, trust and protection explored in the last two chapters, and the issues of rifts within families, 'izzat, and the position of in-marrying husbands, which will form the remainder of the thesis.

When Yasmin's older sister's marriage had been arranged, the young women's paternal grandmother suggested to their father that it was time to think about Yasmin's marriage. At the time, Yasmin, born and raised in Bristol, was nineteen. Her father thought that it would be difficult to find a husband for Yasmin because she suffers from a serious disability, but he asked his wife's brother in Pakistan to make enquiries. The uncle later phoned to recommend a match, a maternal second cousin (MMZDS). Her parents spoke with the boy and his parents, and photographs were sent over.

I personally was amazed because I always said to my mum that I don't think arranged marriage can work for me because I didn't think anyone would agree to marry me on arrangements – it would have to be a proper love marriage, as it were. He would have to know me because of the disability factor. But I think my dad was quite reluctant, and he sort of thought, 'No, it can work'. And I was quite flattered that there had been a proposal, so I agreed.

The family went to Pakistan two months before the wedding, and she got to know her fiancé.

Because of living here [my parents have] got a bit more Western ideas. I mean, a lot of people aren't even allowed to talk to their partners-to-be before marriage... I saw him nearly every day, or every other day, or spoke on the telephone and I thought, 'Yeah, this is fine'... He seemed caring and genuine.

The wedding took place, and they applied for his visa. The application was rejected, but later granted on appeal. During the appeal process, Yasmin and her father went back to Pakistan.

But I was only *nikāḥ*-ed so I didn't live with him. I stayed with my dad when we went there, but he came around and brought me flowers, brought me gifts,

constantly phoned me, met me at the airport when I got there. And he was really upset when I had to leave...

Basically, when he got here, we had booked the halls and arranged for the rest of the wedding ceremonies to take place. I think it was a Friday when he got here and we had the wedding ceremony on Saturday, *rukḥṣatī* was on Saturday, *walīma* was on Sunday... [His father's younger brother] lives in London and he's married, he's got his own kids. The other thing that might be of importance is that one of my mum's sisters is married to another of his dad's brothers... She was at the airport as well to receive him... and when he came out she sort of whisked him away and I found out later that was to show him how the telephones work... And the next day was the *rukḥṣatī*, which is supposed to be the wedding night, which he spent mostly talking about how long it takes to get permanent in the country, how long it takes to get British nationality, which is I think three years now...

I was on the pill because I didn't want to get pregnant. Most Asian brides, they're pregnant straight away, and because of my disability I wasn't sure if I wanted to have kids or even if I was ready to have kids, 'cos the doctor said they could do genetic tests on my husband to see if he carried the genes of [her condition], in order to know if my kids would have the [disability] as well. So I wanted to wait for that, and I had already spoken to my doctor to send a referral. So I remember the wedding night, he was really, you know: 'Surely it's not important'. He's not interested in this genetic stuff. He was quite under-educated so he didn't understand. I am the worst in my family in Urdu-speaking or Punjabi-speaking. English is my best language. He didn't speak any English, although my parents had been telling him from here: 'Learn English and driving'

... My uncle that set up [the match], he's my mum's brother, but his wife is also my husband's mum's sister, right? So the reason why I remember these things really, really well is because I had a lot of feelings of anger towards my uncle and his wife because I think they were doing it as a favour to her sister – get him married so he can come here. Personally, I think a lot are motivated by money – arranged marriages abroad... He wanted us to have kids as soon as possible, probably because that's what people over there do, and probably

because that's what he was told – that you can stay [in the UK] if you have a baby or something. The next day was Sunday, the *walīma*, and that night it continued. I got a fever because it was winter and the clothes weren't really warm. It was rainy and we had to stand outside and get our pictures done. I got really, really sick and he said I was deliberately being ignorant, 'cos I said I wanted to go to sleep 'cos I didn't feel well. And he didn't like it that my parents – they're very protective about... [me] because of the disability thing... and when I was sick they came upstairs to bring me medicines and hot milk and things, and he got really annoyed at that.

And he sort of looked around the room and saw – we had a lot of cultural differences, which he thought was a reason to argue. Like, he was into Indian movies and Indian music. I'm into R'n'B music and English films. And he said, 'I don't like the kind of clothes you wear', 'cos obviously, for going out here we wear trousers and stuff like that. Although I would say, our sisters, we're a lot more cultural than most of the girls in our family because we do wear a lot of our own *shalwār qamīṣ* and stuff at home as well. He sort of saw – I really love shoes – and he was really annoyed: 'There's no need to have so many shoes'. Most of it revolved around money, expenditure, things like that. So he spent most of that night disagreeing and after that, 'cos Monday it was just normal life, it was supposed to settle down into normal life. We'd visit lots of people for dinner, and the family thing where you go round to visit people, and you wear your fancy clothes and people usually give money. And he kept all of that money even though it was supposed to be split between us... And he spent a lot of the time going out, saying, 'I'm going for a walk'. Which I found out later was to make phone calls from public telephones to his uncle in London.

Then it came on to comparing my physical appearance, my attitude... If he slept in later than I did I went down and sat with my family, but he was like, 'Why are you sat with your sisters? It's different now, you're married'. Or he'd get out of bed at two in the afternoon and say, 'Go upstairs and make the bed!'. And it would be directly like that, no 'Can you make the bed please?' or, 'I'm up now'. Like an order. Like I'm a servant girl or something.

He started complaining: 'Your sister's a bad mother. Your mother's cooking's not that nice. Your dad's so forcive [sic] and he doesn't understand and he

doesn't listen. Your brothers have got attitude problems. Your mother hasn't taught you much about marriage and being a wife'... I was willing to accept if he said things about me. And a lot of people in my family told me that everybody has problems, and settling in takes a while... But when he came to insulting my family I couldn't stay quiet and it got into major arguments. And he started saying things like, 'I didn't want to marry you anyway, it was all your uncle who set it up'. He wouldn't say it was his auntie because she was his direct blood auntie... 'They said that your dad would send eight thousand rupees to my house every month for looking after you.' And he didn't intend to work basically. Just expecting money to be sent to his house for being married to me... We did ask, but obviously they denied it. And ever since then it's been really difficult in my household cos my dad says, 'He must have said it, it can't have come from nowhere', and my mum says, 'No, he can't have said it' because that's her brother, 'He wouldn't have said anything like that'. Because that uncle had changed, he was different to me after I got married...

... Everybody got involved. Whenever anything happened I told my dad and he had a word with him, and he said, 'Why do you always tell your dad? It's our marriage, it's got nothing to do with your parents'. [Another of his mum's sisters] came down and said, 'I'll take him to London, maybe he needs a bit of space, and I really sympathise cos I've got daughters of my own'...

My parents were getting a lot of hard time from my dad's brothers who all live here. [Her father's older brother is married to her husband's aunt] ...So that family had a lot of problems with us. [His aunt] came here and tried to talk to me about it. She took him to her house and told him stuff like, 'Try and apologise, try buying her flowers and chocolates and stuff like that'... I later found out that all the letters and cards he sent me with all that meaningful stuff in them from Pakistan, they were all written by one of his friends because he doesn't know English so he got one of his friends to write them. He told me things like, 'All my friends read your cards and letters'... I like writing poetry so I wrote all these poems to him on Valentine's day and stuff, and it was all just a big joke to him.

He came down with his auntie and uncle and they sat down and talked to my dad... Cos that day my dad asked his brothers to come down to help represent

our side of the family as well. And they all said, 'No, we don't agree with what you're doing. Once someone is married they should stay married. Your daughter probably isn't putting all the effort in and you haven't taught her what you should have, so we're not going to represent you.' So we had nobody to represent us and he had all his family with him. For the sake of my parents – and my mum and dad were really affected by it – I said that he could stay and I'd give it a go, try and make it work.

... So he was back to normal in front of me and sweet as pie in front of my parents. So that was the problem, my parents thought I was being too hard on him and I was being difficult and things like that. And that's what my brothers and sisters thought. And there was a lot of disagreeing and a lot of arguing and I think that was making me more and more ill. Plus it was *Ramazān* and we were fasting. The other thing is, I don't know if you're aware in Pakistan they sell these 'blueprint' movies about sex and things... A lot of wives are getting abused by their husbands because of those videos, because of the violent things they've done to their wives. And he confessed to me that he had watched a lot of those. And he told me threatening things like how his dad beats up his mum and that's how he's got her obeying him and she does everything he says. Which really told me that that was the way it was going to be with us once we moved into our own house. Cos a lot of the time he went on about, 'When are we going to move to our own place?' The worst thing was when I told him about council flats he said, 'Well why do they give us a flat? Can't they just give us money that we can do what we want to?'

He saw pictures of my school dance, we had a school dance when I was leaving, when I was sixteen, and he saw photos and he accused me of having boyfriends, illegitimate relationships. And he wouldn't believe me if I told him that I hadn't... And he was really, really violent. If I didn't do something that he wanted me to he would grab me and pull me around by the wrists. I had bruises on my wrists. And he was sexually being violent as well... After a couple of nights, I used to stay up. I used to send him to bed and then I'd go up later. And then I used to wake up really early, and basically I spent most nights not sleeping. I was really out of it – not eating, not sleeping. Now when I think back to it it's like a dream, it's really airy everything that went on. It just went by really quickly. But he was really, really violent. I had a lot of bleeding and a lot

of pains... I told my parents about that, which is the point where my dad, my dad was the one who totally flipped out: 'Verbal, I can handle, because she can handle that, but when it comes to physical!' – because it's a known natural scientific fact that men are more strong than women. That was the point where it had gone too far for my dad, he didn't want to even push for it to be sorted out any more.

... One of my aunties, she's a bit younger and a bit more blatant and she just comes out with it about sex and stuff, whereas my mum's not so open about it, and she found out about the kind of experience that I had, from my parents. And his auntie... said 'Well that's just the way it's supposed to be. My daughter had a hard time with her husband and these things happen, but girls don't have rights, they're supposed to do what their husbands say'. She had a lot against me. She said a lot of things about me to people in public in Pakistan. We have not got on with that family for years and years. Recently [they] went to do Haj.... It is the duty of all other Muslims to forgive the things they have done. And that's the only reason I'm speaking to them now... otherwise even if we saw each other in public nobody said hello or anything.

I just pushed for it. I said there was no way he was staying here. I didn't want to live with him. People said to me, 'If you let him stay for about a year either it'll get sorted out or you don't have to let him get permanent', cos it takes about a year to get a permanent visa, 'and then he can go back. At the moment it's not right to send him back'... I just wanted him out of the house, I didn't care where he was, in Pakistan or in England.... He was stalking me round the house, I was scared to get up in the night, I was scared to go to the toilet, I used to have to take one of my brothers or my dad with me. He just kept pulling me around: 'Why won't you listen?' The worst thing was, there were so many people in the house but no one could stop him.

So my dad booked his ticket and said, 'I think you should go back for now and I'll try and talk to my daughter and sort it out, but it's safer if you're not here at the moment because she doesn't want you around'. My parents weren't happy, they were just sending him because that's what I wanted... And on that day [his aunt] phoned my husband's uncle in London... She denied doing it, but it's too

obvious because she was the only person who knew and she knew because my dad told his brother...

Everybody during this time span was telling me about [bad] experiences they had had when they were newly-weds... [But since then] so many of my cousins have said that, 'It's so good that he's not here any more. Because if we're still finding it hard – we have to raise the kids by ourselves, we have to do everything for ourselves, we have to do all the outdoor work, the bills, the statements, the washing, the cooking and if [you're disabled] it would never have got done, he would never have changed'. Cos my cousins have been married for ten years, eleven years and their husbands have not changed. They don't do nothing.

Yasmin's husband, with the help of his London relative, attempted to evade being sent back. When this failed...

he said, 'Why don't you drop me off at my uncle's?' This is what he said: 'I'll work there in his shop and I'll pay you back the money for the ticket that you lost'. So there was nothing to do with the marriage, he was happy to live in London and just work there... [Dad] brought him back and everybody in the family abused him and he got dumped on the downstairs living room to sleep on the floor, and the phones were unplugged so he couldn't phone anybody. He wasn't allowed out of the house... His family started phoning from Pakistan as well saying, 'What's the problem? Let me talk to him, we can sort it out'... In that time I heard [listening at the door] that when our *rishta* had been set in 1997, a year before we were married, his relatives in London had phoned his family in Lahore and told them that, 'What are you doing? That family is the wrong family to get your son married into. You should not be getting him married there. The girl is [disabled], she can't do anything, she's useless, no education, no nothing. She's totally not going to be the right kind of wife for him – you're making a mistake'. And his parents had said, 'It doesn't matter, at least he'll get there. When he's permanent there he doesn't have to stay with her'. So his auntie and uncle had arranged that in a year's time when he got a permanent visa to stay here, because obviously they would need my signatures to do that, so for a year he would have to cut it with me. And then that's it, he was going to leave me and get a new wife...

This time my dad did not even tell his brothers about the flight... the only people who knew were the people in this house.... When my dad got to the airport with him he saw another guy that was related to the London relatives, who was also going on the same flight to Pakistan.... He said to him, 'Listen, if you phone and tell anyone that you've seen us here, you're going to have me to deal with'...The next thing you know my husband's uncle and auntie turn up at the airport... and said that the boy was being forcibly taken to Pakistan, by which time my dad thought that was it, he was going to get away again because there was nothing my dad could do about it. It was his legal right to stay here for a year. All of a sudden, being crafty as he is... cos my dad had really enticed him with the idea that [he] was going to give money to [Yasmin's husband's] dad to open a proper shop and a new house in Pakistan.... [he thought] 'I'll just tell the police people that I want to go to Pakistan cos my mother's ill... I'm going to come back later'... It was like a movie!

... [My parents] are there now. They've gone to a wedding in Karachi, but they don't intend to go to Lahore, because that family is lethal. There are people in that family, not directly my husband's family but their relatives, they've got murder charges on them and everything. So my parents don't want to go to Lahore. Even though one of my mum's sisters has passed away a year ago and my mum hasn't still been there to pay her condolences... We have heard from other people, rumours that they want money otherwise they won't divorce me.

The year that I was married for, because he came in 1999 and I was married in 98, I was really happy... I never ever would have predicted things to turn around to be that way. It didn't turn around, that's the most scariest thing of all, because they were planned like that before the wedding even happened ...his dad sort of admitted it [to my father], 'Yeah, that was the way it was planned, but he sort of rushed it – he did it all a bit too quickly'. His mum said, 'We're really poor. You did the right thing to get her married to him because religiously you would have done a good thing for someone poor. Can you please take him back with you?' She was phoning my uncle... to say that, 'Try and get him away from them and sent to London so he can get to stay there'. And that's why I think even more that my uncle, even if he didn't know, his wife definitely knew.

Yasmin's father returned the clothes and other *barī* items.

I didn't want none of their stuff. They gave me clothes which if you wash them the colours were going to run anyway, and they gave make-up which just didn't suit my skin colouring anyway because it was all light fair skin makeup, and all really cheapy stuff you know... The stuff that my parents gave me I've just kept. There's all the gold jewellery that my parents gave me obviously which I don't wear. I mean I wear some of it, but most of it is stuff you wear when you're married and you're out with your husband and stuff. But the clothes they gave me I wear them to weddings and when we go to parties... My parents gave him a gold chain and a gold ring which we kept because he was here and we went through his stuff and kept it.... My mum gave his mum gold bangles... and my parents also gave all of his family loads of clothes and there was all the extended family, because all his sisters are married, so we had to give to all of them. And we know that's stuff we're never going to see again. His family gave me clothes, makeup and some gold jewellery which we didn't return... because we thought there's so much we've spent on them and we're never going to get it back... [there was *mahr*] but I don't think it was a large amount because it's family nobody thought it was going to go wrong. Nobody expects this to happen to them anyway. Especially when it's family – you just think it's family, they won't do that kind of thing.

Chapter Six

Conflicting interests: rifts, concealment, 'izzat and emotion

The preceding account in Yasmin's own words of her experience of the failure of her transnational marriage, and the fall-out in terms of damage to wider kin relations which followed, gives an example of the failure of a family's attempts to manage the risks involved in a marriage, and also of some of the dangers that they were trying to avoid. This chapter takes a close examination of Yasmin's narrative, together with other examples from my fieldwork and the literature, to illustrate several sets of potential tensions in Pakistani kinship. One issue that runs through the discussion is tension in the most literal sense of conflicts between family members surrounding marriages. In addition, having discussed concerns for British Pakistani women marrying men from Pakistan in the preceding chapter, the second section will examine difficulties that face some women coming from Pakistan to Britain for marriage. Finally, I will explore the role of honour in the type of conflicts outlined here. Two alternative explications will be proposed, one relying on a distinction between personal and group honour, and the other on a tension between honour and emotion. In the final analysis, however, I will suggest that such conflicts point towards a re-examination of the concept of honour that contextually dissolves these oppositions.

Taking Sides: Rifts in the Family

While close-kin marriages are thought to deter divorce, I have noted that there is parallel awareness that difficulties within a marriage between relatives can lead to the splitting of the kin group as individuals take sides, often with those they are closest to in either genealogical or emotional terms. The archetype of such risks is the *wattā-sattā* arrangement in which families 'exchange' daughters, with the danger that if one of the women is mistreated, revenge may be taken on her husband's sister (her brother's wife).

Rifts in the family can be related to marriage in two ways: either pre-dating and helping to channel *rishtas*, or forming as a result of the breakdown of the marital relationship. Yasmin's marriage featured both varieties. First, her mother's brother in Pakistan seems to have colluded with his wife's relatives in arranging *rishte* for the two young men in England under false pretences, against the interests of his more distant sister, brother-in-law and British nieces. Then, when her marriage ran into difficulties, other family members became involved in arguments over whether Yasmin should be allowed to divorce

and deport her husband. These conflicts led to lasting ill-feeling. As this case shows, these disagreements can be very serious, entailing a reported complete halt to interaction. In a few cases a denial of kinship can result, such as when parents disown children (declaring them ‘dead’, or saying that they have no son/daughter) over severe disagreements (cf. Mody 2002b).

It may seem obvious, but matches may be more likely between sections of the *barādarī* (patrilineage/kin group) who have good relationships with each other. It was only gradually, however, that such information emerged in discussion about the choice of marriage partners. Raisa, for example, whose ‘love marriage’ to a cousin from her mother’s side of the family was mentioned in an earlier chapter, let slip that the original ‘unattractive’ cousin whom she rejected was from her father’s side of the family, with whom there is bad feeling. Azra, on the other hand, had originally liked her father’s sister’s son, but her mother does not get on with her father’s side of the family. Over the years she came round to the idea of marrying a maternal cousin (MZDS) and now sees serious flaws in the man towards whom she was originally inclined. I did come across one marriage that took place across such a rift, although the details of the case only serve to reinforce the importance of these divisions. The couple in question were first cousins, but I was told that while one family had become extremely prosperous, the other had not done so well.¹ The two families did not get on and visiting relationships between the women of the two sides had apparently ceased. Nevertheless, the pair fell in love and married. The arrangements were carried out by the bride’s family in secret because of the sensitivity of the match, but when the matter came to light it only served to worsen the split because offence was taken at both the secrecy and a decision not to invite some close relatives to the wedding.

As this suggests, the process of arranging marriages and choosing *rishte* can also be a source of tension. Not only, as mentioned elsewhere, does rejection of proposed matches have the potential to cause offence, but competition for desirable matches can in itself be divisive. Shabaz, the taxi-driver in his thirties who explained the *hāth* (hand) system of assessing power within the kin group, described cousins as ‘like vultures’:

If I had a daughter and she’s 15, 16, 17, if I went back, all the cousins will treat you like royalty, give you anything, treat you so nicely – you’ll think they’re your best friend. They’re trying to come round you [i.e. persuade you to agree to a marriage between your children]. This is if you have daughters or sons. It’s

¹ And *barādarīs*, as has been noted, tend to sub-divide into inter-marrying units along socio-economic lines.

blatant – you know what they're doing, but they treat you so nicely you go along with it.

He described how his elder sister's husband's elder brother used to pick him and his siblings up and make a fuss of them when they were young. As soon as Shabaz's sister was of an age to marry, this avuncular character asked for her hand for his brother. However, after this marriage had taken place and his brother's migration to England had been secured, Shabaz said with bitterness: 'he forgot us'. Further examples of attempts by relatives to influence *rishte* in this way can be found elsewhere in this thesis – as when Uzma's mother besieged one sister with gifts while trying to secure a *rishta* between their children, leaving another sister feeling somewhat neglected. It may also be remembered from the chapter on close kin marriage that Shareen's choice of husband was influenced by her memories of the attentiveness of his father to her as a child.

Shabaz went on to give another example of a relative in Pakistan who was once a close friend. This cousin stopped being friendly towards him, Shabaz said, because he did not want to damage the chances of a *rishta* between his family and another relative with whom Shabaz does not have a good relationship. Of course, this very negative portrayal of marriage negotiations is likely to have been influenced by Shabaz's experience of a number of conflicts within his family. Others may have a less critical view of family members, so one woman in Bristol told me that they were indeed treated 'like royalty' by relatives when they visited Pakistan, but that this was because they had come all the way from England, and not due to any ulterior motives. However, most of those with whom I spoke were keenly aware of the potential for *rishte* to cause division. Many told me tales of rifts if not within their own, then in other families, and Bushra, who has arranged the marriages of both her children to relatives on her husband's side of the family, repeatedly said how lucky she was that all her siblings were fine with this arrangement, as her sisters could easily have been upset that their children were not chosen.

Concealment, Hope and Fear in Marriages of Pakistani Women to British Men

In discussing the dangers of the 'double *rishta*' connection of both consanguinity and marriage, I noted the potential of mutual kin networks to inhibit referees from mentioning problems with proposed matches for fear of attracting blame. The distances involved in transnational marriage can facilitate the concealment of undesirable characteristics, such as the problems with Yasmin's marriage, which did not emerge until after the marriages had taken place. It is not only, however, the families of young men eager

to migrate to the West who attempt to cover up their flaws. This danger also exists in intra-national arrangements. Jeffery and Jeffery, writing of North India, for example, report a case in which the young woman who arrived as the bride was not the same as the one who had been originally 'viewed' (1996: 98-9). When marriages span continents, the ability of families even to visit potential *rishte* is curtailed. This section will examine instances where the families of young women from Pakistan were misled about the character, and in one case the physical health, of husbands based in Britain. Some of these deceptions may be carried out in hope: parents may believe the marriage will redeem their son's defects and be successful, but the failure of this optimism to be realised can leave migrant wives in very difficult situations.

Pakistani families are intensely concerned about the fate of daughters after marriage. Their fears can be increased when the daughter is marrying overseas into an environment, which, although perceived to offer a 'better life' in material terms, most believe to be morally decadent and corrupt. Not only are American films increasingly available through the proliferation of new media, and Western pornographic sites frequently visited by the predominantly male clients of the internet cafes which have sprung up in every town,² but Pakistan is party to the pervasive rhetoric found across the Muslim World in which 'the West' is held to be opposite in every way to decent Islamic values. When Nabila's mother's sister's son in Bristol proposed marriage, she and her mother were very worried about the prospect of her coming to live in this *maḥaul* (environment). It's not that they don't trust the 'British-born', she said, but they know they are independent – 'they don't want to stay in'. Not having seen the young man since he was in Pakistan ten years before, her mother worried that he might have a girlfriend in the 'free environment' she had seen in films.

A few women do indeed arrive in Britain to find that their new husbands have partners, or even pre-existing families. One of the women who provided the inspiration for this study was in just such a situation. When I first met Tasneem she invited me to the sparsely furnished terraced home where she lived with her toddler son, while her husband lived with his White partner and their children. She told me that all she did was cry. Several years later she claims still to have hope that her husband might return to her. She insists that he liked her when they married, pointing to the existence of her son as evidence that he had been pleased with the match.

² At the launch of the *Pak Watan* (Pak Homeland) website in Islamabad, a Pakistani official proclaimed the government's intention to ensure that Pakistan would rapidly develop more comprehensive internet access than India. If we can't beat them at cricket, he said, we'll beat them at IT!

My suspicion is, however, that some of these cases are concealed forms of male forced marriage in which a young man whose behaviour, such as having a girlfriend or using drugs, is worrying his parents. They are taken to marry a Pakistani woman in the hope that this will bring them back to the desired path. The corrective power of marriage to someone from a less 'corrupt' society is certainly given as a normal justification for forcing young women to marry (cf. Samad & Eades 2002). Mariam, for example, who was forced to marry a cousin, told me that her parents had arranged the marriage because she was 'running wild' as a teenager. Although I have no direct interview data from men or parents in this position, anecdotal and second-hand information supports the suggestion of similar motivations for male and female forced marriage (see Samad & Eades 2002: 56). Bushra, for example, told me of a family she knows who got their son married in Pakistan in an unsuccessful attempt to put an end to his drug-taking life-style. Another man told me that his brother was forced to marry a cousin in Pakistan, but left home as soon as his wife came to the UK. The option to resist such compulsion by refusing to consummate the union is probably more readily available to men than to women (e.g. Das 1973: 34; 1994: 204), but it may be that many decide that the easiest path is to go along with the wedding and immigration application, in the knowledge that, unlike most women in forced marriages, they may be able to carry on with their chosen lifestyle after their spouse has come to Britain.

Other men who turn out to be very different from the image portrayed of them to their Pakistani wife and her family may have been very much in favour of the marriage. Hafza, for example, told me how her cousin (FFBSS) from England had visited Pakistan. He had liked her and told his *ghar-wāle* (family, lit. house-people) that he wanted to marry her. After arriving in Britain, however, she found him very different from the man she had married. He and his friends drank heavily, moving on to injecting drugs in the house while she sat frightened upstairs. He abused her verbally (*tang karnā*) and physically, and said that if she told anyone she would be sent back to her parents in Pakistan. She hoped that things would improve once they had children, but the beatings became worse after her son was born. Unaware of her legal rights, she withdrew several statements to the police for fear that she would be deported and lose her children.

In perhaps the most extreme case of concealment I came across, one family from Pakistan did not find out until the day after their daughter's wedding that the man settled in England whom she had married was physically handicapped, unable to work and requiring constant attention. This marriage was *bāhar se* (outside the kin group), however, and it is unlikely that such a visible problem could have been hidden from family members. Indeed, it

is sometimes seen as a duty for family to provide spouses for disabled or otherwise unmarriageable children. Sometimes the benefits of migration are explicitly weighed against the problems of the potential spouse. Nabila says that many people have suggested that she should get her brother married to her disabled sister-in-law so that he can come to Britain, but she thinks that this burden would ruin his life. Another woman I met, however, has recently come to Britain as the wife of a relative with severe mental illness. Whilst others I know in Bristol criticised this decision, the new wife professes herself very happy, and enjoys the fact that her husband holds her hand affectionately in public despite the obvious disapproval of older South Asian women in the community.³

As I noted in the Chapter Three, some women with severe marital difficulties said they had not told their parents of their problems, despite their distress and loneliness that is often compounded by lack of language skill and support networks. Women may wish to protect their parents from worry (cf. Jeffery 2001). Hafza did not tell anyone about the abuse she was suffering for fear of being sent back to her parents in Pakistan, which would be experienced as an insult by them. The word Hafza used to describe how this would be perceived was *besti*, a contraction of *be-‘izzatī*, which translates as ‘ingloriousness, disesteem, dishonour, disgrace, ignominy’ (Platts 2000). The term ‘*izzat*’ is, of course, used across the Middle East, and it is to the role of this concept in conflict over marriage that the next section will turn.

‘Izzat and Emotion

‘Izzat has been translated as prestige (Eglar 1960; Raheja & Gold 1994), status (Fischer 1991), and as opposed to (generally sexual) shame (Jeffery 1979), but is perhaps more commonly translated as honour (Abu-Lughod 1988; Fischer 1991; Lefebvre 1999). All of these inter-linked meanings are present in the term, and which definition is employed may depend on the context under consideration. While ‘prestige’ has been the most appropriate English term for some writing on the accumulation of *‘izzat* through gifting (Eglar 1960; Raheja & Gold 1994, Werbner 1990), sexual issues come to the fore when discussing purdah practices (Jeffery 1979). For the purposes of the current discussion, I will employ the term ‘honour’ as the character which, as will be seen, emerges as primary in the context of marital conflict.

³ Public displays of affection between husband and wife are considered shameful (cf. Das 1994).

A substantial volume of writing on honour has emanated from the anthropology of the circum-Mediterranean. In scholarship on this region, however, the concept has also been the subject of two inter-linked lines of criticism: that the primacy given to honour in the analysis of these societies has led to a premature conceptualisation of a Mediterranean unity, and that the term conceals significant difference in indigenous concepts (Delaney 1987; Gilmore 1987; Herzfeld 1980, 1984, 1987). In Turkey, for example, *seref* refers to honour in a general sense while *namus* relates only to sexuality.⁴ ‘The confusion or conflation of these interrelated but separable forms of honor has marred the discussion of this topic’ (Delaney 1987: 36).

Nevertheless, as many of these critics agree, a concept of honour of may be a near universal, as public opinion arbitrates by evaluating conduct against an ideal standard (Peristiany 1965; Pitt-Rivers 1965). So whilst the category of ‘honour and shame societies’ may well be open to Leach’s famous charge of ‘butterfly collecting’ (1961), there may yet be profit to be had from extracting elements from the varying discussions of honour that will prove useful in illuminating *‘izzat* in the Pakistani context. Campbell, in his ethnography of the Greek Sarakatsani, gives one foundation of the concept as the qualities on which the reputation of the group or individual are dependent (1964: 268). This general formulation provides scope for variation of the precise content of these qualities between societies. Moreover, for the Sarakatsani, as for Pakistanis, these desired attributes are gendered: while men are judged by their ‘manliness’, women achieve honour through demonstrating sexual shame (1964: 269). Abu-Lughod (1988) expands on these observations by adding other power dynamics to the gendering of honour so that women and low status men who share the inability to achieve ‘honour’ through the dominant model of autonomy may attain it instead by voluntary deference, itself a sign of independence. Similar observations have also been made about Muslim women in North India (Jeffery 1979).

The Bedouin value of autonomy is closely related to the ability (of a man) to control assets and other people (Abu-Lughod 1988), and the idea of control also emerges strongly in the literature on honour in Pakistani society.⁵ Land-ownership is one powerful method of gaining *‘izzat* (Eglar 1960), whilst Fischer writes that *‘izzat* is also based upon the control over women, most importantly, followed by younger males in the family, and then by that over other men in the extended family (1991: 108). Veena Das suggests that for Punjabis,

⁴ A similar distinction exists in Iraq between *sherat* and *ird* (al-Khayyat 1990: 21).

⁵ See also Wadley on control over family members in Hindu joint households (2002).

honour also implies controlling the ties and emotions that are thought to stem from local concepts of ‘the biological facts of procreation and copulation’, so that,

...honour, which is one of the most valued ideals among the Punjabis, is acquired and enhanced by transcending natural forces rather than succumbing to them. The transcendence, insofar as it violates human nature, is often represented either as a mask which is worn to disguise the pre-social or anti-social currents operating in the biological substratum, or it is represented as a sacrifice which lifts an individual from his ‘lower-self’ to his ‘higher-self’. The negation of honour is expressed in shame or ‘loss of face’. (Das 1994: 198-9)

These categories parallel Islamic conceptions of *nafs*, the animal self, which should be curbed by the opposed category of *aql*, or reasoned discrimination (Metcalf 1984; cf. Kurin 1988), and echo Campbell’s observation of the Sarakastani that, ‘One aspect of honour, then, is a struggle of self-discipline over cowardice and sensuality, flaws of animal nature that continually threaten to limit the natural nobility of man’ (1964: 269).

Thus arranged marriages may be viewed as based on ‘social’ matters and carried out in a cool and controlled fashion.⁶ The ‘personal’ choice of a ‘love’ match contracted in the heat of passion, on the other hand, can bring dishonour (Mody 2002a: 226). The picture of honour that emerges, therefore, is of a dual system of value in which the powerful gain or lose through the extent of their control over assets and persons, and all – men and women, powerful and powerless – aim to exert control over their ‘natural’ impulses. To make Das’ categories completely clear, ‘natural’ here refers not to the assertion of a scientific ‘truth’, but to a cultural understanding of the substances exchanged in procreation and childrearing and the emotional bonds that these, Punjabis believe, inevitably create. In other words, there are two co-existing Punjabi discourses and models for behaviour concerning kinship, one viewed as ‘natural’ and the other as ‘social’. Honour, she suggests, is gained by overcoming these ‘natural’ impulses and relating to others in accordance with what are seen as the ‘social’ rules of kinship, depicted here as wearing a mask.

We now return to Yasmin’s story and the second role of rifts in the *barādarī* – those stemming from the difficulties and dissolution of marriages. Pakistanis in Britain and Pakistan regard divorce as a serious and shameful matter, particularly for the family of the woman involved. Fischer notes that,

[t]he marriage of daughters is seen as difficult, for if daughters are badly married this will reflect on the family. Women are the core of the family’s *izzat*. They define its range and their behaviour reflects on this. After marriage the

⁶ Although see the role of conflicts in arranging marriages, discussed above.

family of the husband assumes responsibility for her behaviour. If that responsibility is not taken, this reflects on the family of the girl; they take the blame, although she is not under their direct control, because it was their responsibility to find a respectable family and to provide a woman who would maintain the honour of both families... If she behaves badly, such as abandoning her husband without cause, or has sexual relations with men other than her husband (*zina*, fornication), then it is the responsibility of her family to remedy the situation, in the latter case sometimes by her death (Fischer 1991: 104).

Further, as a social evaluation, the idea of honour connects the individual and the group. For Pakistanis, 'all the members of a *biraderi* have a feeling of collective honor, the protection of which serves as collective security' (Eglar 1960: 79). Conversely, the dishonourable actions of one member of the kin group entail a loss of honour for all, which may deter future *rishte* (Eglar 1960: 78). Disharmony between kin demonstrates a lack of unity or control, and so is bad for the 'izzat' of the group. Divorce makes public all of these failures: the choice of an incompatible spouse, lack of control over a daughter and disunity among kin.

Thus Yasmin's wider kin-group put pressure on her father to control his daughter and so maintain his and the family's honour. The criticism came in particular from relatives who were 'close' to her husband through links (*rishte*) of kinship and affinity, such as the maternal uncle married to her husband's mother's sister. Yasmin reports that her father was criticised for failing to maintain control when his brothers refused to represent him, saying '... we don't agree with what you're doing. Once someone is married they should stay married. Your daughter probably isn't putting all the effort in and you haven't taught her what you should have...'. In other words, the loss of honour was cumulative – perceived to have lost control over his daughter, he could no longer command the support of his brothers, with the ultimate result that his son-in-law was in a stronger position in negotiations and Yasmin was made to drop her demands: 'For the sake of my parents – and my mum and dad were really affected by it – I said that he could stay and I'd give it a go – try to make it work' (Yasmin).

Finally, however, something happened that made Yasmin's father change his mind. This was the point when Yasmin's parents came to know that their son-in-law was being physically and sexually violent to their daughter. In Yasmin's words, her father 'totally flipped out... That was the point at which it had gone too far for my dad, he didn't want to even push for it to be sorted out any more'. Despite the efforts and opposition of his relatives, and risking the ultimate loss of honour as a man rejected by his kin, he himself took the young man back to Pakistan.

I would like to propose two interpretations of this turning point, one based on the concept of honour through control, and the other on the relationship between *'izzat* and emotion. Here the importance of recognising differences not just in indigenous conceptions of honour, but also in their social contexts comes to the fore. Campbell notes that for the Sarakatsani, where the 'elementary family' is the 'only relatively enduring kin group', the fact that honour has two points of reference, the individual and the family, 'rarely leads to any conflict of loyalties since the solidarity of the elementary family is so complete' (1964: 268). For Pakistanis, however, the concept of honour has a wider spread, encompassing relatives outside the household, and potentially the whole *barādarī* – a Punjabi proverb both differentiating and linking family and *barādarī* says that 'one does not share bread but one shares the blame' (Eglar 1960: 75). The potential for conflicting aims in terms of honour is thus far greater. From this perspective, it could be argued that Yasmin's father was faced with a conflict between the demands of his own personal honour, undermined by losing control over a junior male member of the household to the extent that he was being violent towards his daughter, and the demands of group honour in preventing divorce. Threats to the personal honour of others involved may also be imagined. Having arranged a marriage to facilitate the migration of his wife's sister's son, for example, Yasmin's mother's brother in Pakistan might well feel that he would lose honour if this project failed and the bridegroom returned ignominiously. From this interpretation, a picture emerges of individuals vying for control over each other and the situation, and with the definition of the interests of the group's honour.

Another viewpoint sees Yasmin's father trapped not only in a conflict between individual and group honour, but also between the pulls of *'izzat* and emotion. This tension can most clearly be illustrated by a brief examination of the issue of 'honour killings' that are a feature of Pakistani, South Asian and Middle Eastern societies. When an individual, most often a woman, is felt to have brought shame upon the family, commonly for having committed or being suspected of sexual impropriety or an inappropriate union, there may be calls for her to be killed to protect family honour. Such cases do occur both in Pakistan and amongst Pakistanis in Britain.⁷ In one widely publicised recent British case, Rukhsana Naz was killed by her mother and brother for being pregnant by a man other than her husband, who was still in Pakistan (Boggan 1999).

⁷ The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan reported 227 such deaths in Pakistani Punjab in 2001, with the real figure likely to be higher (*Dawn* 2002).

In practice, however, notes Abu-Lughod, such killings are quite rare as ‘the ideals of honour and the realities of family closeness... are in conflict in such cases’ (1988: 286 n16). For the Pakistani Baluch, the potentially disruptive *nafs* (the baser aspect of the person, contrasted to ‘*aql*’), is valued in certain context, such as when it provides aggressiveness in confrontations. ‘A praiseworthy man must be able to juggle these two conflicting elements of human nature’, but when ‘*nafs* and ‘*aql* collide... the former is at least as likely to prevail as the latter’ (Pastner 1988: 168-72). Equally, when emotional ties and honour are in conflict, the former may win. In other words, the strength of emotional bonds between family members means that fathers, for example, are unlikely to kill their daughters to satisfy the demands of honour. Veena Das phrases this in terms of the distinction in Punjabi thought between the ‘natural’ bonds of kinship as locally perceived, and the requirements of what is thought of as ‘social’ morality. The belief in an underlying pre-social force, she suggests, provides an alternative discourse and source of justification for action. Thus while Ahmed told me of the importance of marriage within the *barādarī* and the maintenance of family assets, his daughter says that he has told her affectionately that when she is ready to marry he will make all the available men line up for her, so that she can choose the best. This duality of moral codes also explains the varying moral judgements Das encountered on one case of honour killing:

Some of my informants felt that the sister had been a victim, but the victimization was for higher ends. Surely, they argued, the brothers had to sacrifice their own *selves* in killing their beloved sister. Other informants were plainly horrified and repelled. An old man said that he would have preferred to live in shame than have the murder of his own daughter on his hands. This shows that as in the smaller victories and defeats, in the larger victories and defeats of life also, a person can make choices deriving the legitimacy of his conduct from biological or social kinship (Das 1994: 214-5).

Following this line of argument, Yasmin’s father’s ultimate actions in going against the wishes of the *barādarī* to protect his daughter may be viewed as acting in accord with his emotional ties rather than the duties of honour, or in Punjabi terms, prioritising natural over social kinship, even being true to himself. ‘The social symbols *are* masks and the father who preserves his honour by killing his errant daughter may save his face, but he is doomed to irredeemable alienation from his true self’ (Das 1994: 222). Thus the brother in the British ‘honour killing’ mentioned above, is said to have wept while he strangled his sister (Boggan 1999). Hafza and other migrant wives’ decisions not to tell their parents about their difficulties may be seen as avoiding putting them in this difficult position of choosing

between the impulse to rescue their daughter, and the prospect of suffering *besti*, loss of honour.

The choice Yasmin's family faced was stark, but in other cases seeming to present similar dilemmas, solutions may be found that allow the maintenance of close emotional bonds whilst avoiding obvious damage to group honour. During my fieldwork I came across some instances in which people had decided on a 'love marriage' against their family's wishes. A standard reaction in this type of case is for parents to threaten to disown their children in the hope that this will deter them from going through with the union, or that severing relations will protect family honour if the couple do marry. Saif, for example, told me that his elder brother had called off his wedding to the woman of his choice at the last minute after his father had threatened to disown him if he did not agree to his pre-arranged engagement to a relative in Pakistan. In other cases the repudiation is temporary. Once parents have got over their anger and upset, the wayward couple may be recognised by the family once more. Although such instances can damage the honour of the family, particularly in the case of a daughter, the temporary estrangement of the child seems to be recognised as at least a token defence of this honour, but one that allows emotional bonds to be maintained in the long run. So when Shabaz secretly married his girlfriend of six years without his parent's permission, they accepted the situation after a week and allowed him to return home with his new wife.⁸

Related examples are found in Perveen Mody's sensitive analysis of the construction of elopements as abductions in New Delhi. In one enigmatic case, she suggests that while it is possible that the young woman in question staged her own violent abduction, the family themselves might have initiated the deceit in order to save themselves from dishonour. Despite the fact that the elopement came publicly to light, after her father initially disowned his runaway daughter, she was eventually taken back by her family. Her family then filed charges against her husband for abduction (Mody 2002b).

One woman in Pakistan, however, told me about a female relative in Britain whom she described as 'very clever'. Several of this woman's children had contracted what were widely assumed by relatives to be 'love marriages', some with non-Pakistani partners. In each case, however, the mother had asserted that she herself had arranged the matches, so that one son-in-law, for example, had been a regular visitor to the house as a friend of the daughter. She told relatives that she had observed that he did not eat pork, and would make a

⁸ Other estrangements may last longer: weeks, months or even years.

good match for her child, and had arranged the marriage after he converted to Islam. A Pakistani relative, however, cast aspersions on his conversion, suggesting that only his mother-in-law calls him by his Muslim name. In the course of my fieldwork, I heard from a different relative that another of this woman's children was to be married, this time to a university classmate. The mother was again saying that she had arranged the marriage – this time after assessing the suitability of all the potential South Asian candidates in her child's graduation photograph. The relative who told me of the *rishta* said that everyone else in the family was fairly sure it was a love-match. Although she has obviously not avoided gossip about her children's marriages within the *barādarī*, this woman has managed to negotiate the presentation of these unions to avoid public smears on the family's honour without sacrificing her relationship with her children. She has maintained her honour by asserting that she still has control over the junior members of her household, but at the same time prioritised the happiness of her children – a clever move in the eyes of her relatives. It might be noted here that a woman is maintaining honour through control, rather than deference. As the head of the household, this reaffirms the multiple pathways to honour determined by power as well as gender (Abu-Lughod 1988; Jeffery 1979).⁹

Das reports a similar case in which a pre-marital conception was disguised as a premature birth. The parents were privately the subject of gossip and ridicule, but were not insulted by *barādarī* members to their face. She notes that although gossip about girls' moral character is a popular pastime, it is done warily lest the same thing is happening in one's own household (1994: 215). Whilst rumour and derision cannot be escaped, it seems, suspicion alone is not always sufficient to justify the risk of publicly smearing another's honour. This creates a space of ambiguity in which creative solutions to the tension between honour and emotion may be attempted.¹⁰ Similarly, Mody presents a type of case in which the children rather than the parents are the main agents in negotiating the definition of their marriage. In 'love-cum-arranged' marriages, the couple marry in secret and then return to their homes, where over time they bring their parents round to the idea of the match. Second ceremonies are then held, despite the risk of loss of honour to the parents if the origins of the marriage in a love relationship became known (Mody 2002a).

⁹ In addition, this woman illustrates one of the possible effects of migration on gendered relations of power as it may be due to her residence in Britain rather than Pakistan that, as a widow, she is able to act as the head of the household in this way (cf. Rauf 1982 on male migration from Pakistan to the Gulf and 'matrifocal households').

¹⁰ Nevertheless, honour killings may sometimes be prompted by mere suspicion (e.g. on Jordan: Sawalha 2002)

In addition to Das' two forms of Punjabi kinship, the 'social' and the 'natural' emotions, there are other sources of legitimacy to which Pakistanis may appeal if they hope to follow courses of action that might be seen as subversive. Amongst young people trying to make space for alternative views in negotiations over their marriage, the most common of these is religion. So Mina, seeking release from her forced marriage, silenced her mother's objections by pointing out that Islam allows women to ask for a divorce. Divorced Rubina, who now thinks that her best chance of remarriage is a love-match, attempted to broaden her opportunities by arguing that Muslims are permitted to marry any other Muslim, and so her parents should not object if she was to marry someone who was not Pakistani – even a Black man, despite the widespread bias towards fair skin, and indeed the prejudice against Afro-Caribbeans and other *kālā* (a black person) that sometimes exists among Pakistanis in Britain. Meanwhile, a young cousin came to her seeking religious advice on whether Muslims were duty-bound to marry cousins. Rubina assumes that her family have claimed that this is the case, and informed her that cousin-marriage was a matter of tradition rather than religion.

Nonetheless, 'tradition' can provide yet another source of legitimacy. When I accompanied Arifa on a visit to her relatives in another British city, the conversation turned to marriage. Arifa, who does not want to marry a cousin, seemed to attempt a strategic definition of the boundaries of *barādarī* to broaden her choice of marriage partners, whilst maintaining the cultural acceptability of such a marriage. Taking advantage of the expandability and conceptual slipperiness or 'sliding semantic structure' (Alavi 1972) of the concept outlined in Chapter Three, she asserted that people were allowed to marry not just someone with whom a relationship may be traced but any member of the same *zāt* (caste), and still maintain *barādarī* endogamy.

Rethinking honour: collapsing categories

In an earlier chapter I suggested that the concept of *rishta* provided a bridge between the issues of strategy and emotion in the analysis of Pakistani marriage choices. In a similar fashion, the concluding section of this chapter will argue for rethinking Pakistani experiences of honour. Das's valuable opposition of the 'natural' and the 'social' forms of Punjabi kinship, I suggest, is nevertheless too rigid. The polarisation of these terms disguises the leakages between honour and emotion, the points at which these categories meet and slip into each other to the extent that it becomes impossible to distinguish them.

To elucidate this argument, I will return once more to the issue of ‘honour killings’, this time to a case that occurred in Bristol some years before my fieldwork. Although I have heard several different accounts of the incident, the gist of the story is that a husband whose wife was having an affair killed her and their daughters. I discussed the case with Humera and Bushra, who agreed that he was justified in Islamic terms in killing his wife, but that it was terrible that the children had died. In one version I heard of the case, the husband actually surprised his wife with her lover and killed in a rage. Humera, on the other hand, told me that she believed he was a good man, but that his family had put him under incredible pressure as they felt that their honour had been besmirched, and eventually the strain had been such that it ‘turned his head’ and he committed the killings.

Here, the way in which honour makes its demands on the individual is through influence exerted along the bonds of close kinship. Moreover, the requirements of honour are believed to have been perceived as intense emotion to the point of a temporary madness. Evidently, then, indigenous conceptions of honour do not exclude emotion, but rather, emotion is integral to the experience and mechanisms of honour. Honour is maintained by control – both of others and of one’s lower, natural self and emotions. A quarrelling family brings dishonour upon itself. But where honour is challenged, a reaction of anger is often expected. Furthermore, these examples suggest that honour is not simply, as Das suggests, a ‘mask’ presented to the world through the sacrifice of true selves and instinctual bonds, but something that itself can result from seemingly ‘natural’ reactions to the transgressions of wives, daughters and sisters, or duty towards and pressure from kin. In Jordan, the defence of honour is naturalised to the extent that the killing of a wife by a husband who discovers her adultery is justified in law on the grounds that under such circumstances it is inevitable that the man’s ‘blood will boil’ (Sawalha 2002).

Returning, finally, to Yasmin, who described how her father ‘totally flipped out’, this chapter has presented two interpretations of his sudden *volte face* in going against the wishes of the *barādarī* to return his son-in-law to Pakistan: that his personal honour as father and head of the household was undermined by the situation in his household, or that his ‘natural’ instinct to protect his daughter overwhelmed the imperatives of maintaining family honour. In the moment of discovering that someone had been hurting his daughter under his own roof, however, it seems likely that the pain and anger of his damaged honour and the urge to protect his daughter were so inter-linked as to be indistinguishable.

I do not deny the undoubted utility of Das’s categories in the analysis of Punjabi kinship, and she provides ample evidence of instances in which the two models do stand as

distinct discourses on behaviour and rationales for action. Indeed, although Das' emphasis is on the disjunction and dialectic between the two strata, she does acknowledge at the start of her paper that they 'may partially overlap' (1994: 199). The preceding argument has been an attempt to augment this analysis by suggesting that these categories, like so many others encountered in the social sciences, are contextual. These slippages, the collapsing of categories, seem from the ethnography presented above to occur most in times of crisis when the challenge to honour and the attack on the bonds that stem from 'procreation and copulation' (Das 1994: 198) become one. This suggestion may also help disentangle an apparent inconsistency in the elegant metaphor of Masks and Faces which forms the title of Das' paper. Throughout the argument, the 'mask' refers to the system of honour and kinship morality concealing the true 'natural' self with its emotional bonds to close kin, but at the same time a loss or redemption of honour is described as losing or saving 'face'. It is my contention that this seeming duality – the true face behind the mask, as well as that which is at stake in crises of honour – in fact reflects the experiential eliding of 'izzat and emotion under the highly-charged conditions in which honour is most threatened.

It might be suggested that the strength of the discourse of fatherly love that encouraged Yasmin's father to act against the interests of the honour of his kin group is at least in part a product of the family's prolonged residence in the UK. In Britain, the priority of emotional ties between members of the nuclear family is often held as self-evident, exemplified by the horror with which exceptions to the rule (such as parents who harm their children) are viewed. Indeed, Das' informants themselves were middle class urban Punjabis, and historical research has demonstrated that the middle classes under British Indian rule were affected by the colonists' opinions, remodelling representations of religion, gender and kinship as a result (cf. Chatterjee 1994; Mani 1989; Metcalf 1994). One response would be to question the utility or possibility of isolating a 'pure' Pakistani discourse on kinship and emotion in isolation from the influence of Britain and the West. More pertinently, however, recent scholarship has suggested that the very model of a rigid, unemotional South Asian approach to kinship and marriage upon which these criticisms rest is itself more 'our' imagining than either a historical or contemporary reality (Parry 2001). As Mody (2001b) notes, descriptions such as her account of Delhi love marriages, present a marked counter to the common stereotype of South Asian arranged marriage. This exploration of Yasmin's family's highly emotional response to her marital difficulties is another blow to this dominant image.

A further challenge to stereotypes is presented in the following chapter. My discussions of risk have shown how concern over the dangers involved in marriage have

focussed on women. Brides are considered more vulnerable to mistreatment or unhappiness, thanks in large part to the fact that they normally migrate on marriage to live as an in-comer in their husband's household. As I set out in the Introduction, however, almost half of the spousal immigrants to Britain from Pakistan are now men, so male marriage migration has come to represent a challenge to the norm of the migrant bride. The next chapter will piece together some of the difficulties that men in this position can face, leading to a discussion on masculinity and emotion in which the issues raised in this chapter will be revisited. The concluding chapter will situate the reintegration of emotion in anthropological models of Pakistani transnational marriages, for which I have argued in chapters dealing with risk, trust, connections, rifts and honour, within the context of the classic anthropological literature on marriage, and argue for both the ethnographic and political necessity of such a move.

Chapter Seven

Unhappy Husbands

I didn't even cry on my wedding day. Everybody said, 'Why didn't you cry?' I said I was going to come back to England. He should be crying – he's leaving his house.

These words belong to Asma, a young woman from Bristol. Her husband was going to leave Pakistan and his natal home to join her in Bristol, whilst she would be staying in the bosom of her family, so she saw no reason to follow convention and grieve at her *rukḥṣatī*. Her statement makes the connection discussed in earlier chapters between marriage, migration, and emotional loss. Conventionally, this is the experience of the bride. Here Asma points out that it is her husband, Tahir, who will suffer the losses of migration. He would not be expected to publicise these 'female' emotions in a show of tears for the wedding guests, and indeed might be judged as lacking in masculinity if he did. Nevertheless, interviewing Tahir in Bristol revealed that his migration had indeed been a traumatic time. This chapter features an extended interview excerpt in which Tahir describes the difficulties he has faced.

The plight of unhappy South Asian brides has been documented both within the subcontinent (e.g. Jeffery & Jeffery 1996) and in the UK (e.g. Fenton & Sadiq 1993), but less attention has been paid to the experiences of those men who, like Tahir, find adjusting to life in Britain difficult. I deal here with what I have broadly termed immigrant husbands' 'unhappiness' by exploring their culturally informed experiences of migration and expressions of emotion. Research with South Asian women has revealed a tendency to speak in terms of their 'heart' when discussing sadness and depression (Fenton & Sadiq 1993), with implications for improving medical diagnosis. The question of whether some of the men discussed here might be considered clinically depressed is also an interesting one, with ramifications in terms of possible psychotherapeutic approaches to the problems encountered by some participants in transnational marriages. However, such clinical judgements lie outside both my expertise and the scope of this ethnographic exploration of the emotional experiences of migrant husbands.

The interactions of gender and migration are the subject of a growing literature, with a number of volumes dealing with migrant women (Anthias & Lazaridis 2000; Buijs 1993, Gamburd 2000). In Pakistan, researchers have studied the impact of male migration on the gendered experience of non-migrant women (Naveed-i-Rahat 1990; Raif 1982; see also

Gardner 1995 on Bangladesh). The interactions of migration and masculinity have, however, been somewhat neglected, although Gamburd's (2000) work on husbands left behind by Sri Lankan migrant maids is one notable exception. This chapter will examine the encounter of male marriage migrants from Pakistan with their new lives in Bristol, to show how the combination of the social and economic processes of migration interact with features of Pakistani kinship and masculinity to produce difficulties for some immigrant husbands. Aspects of Tahir's story relate to more general social, cultural and economic issues facing such men. These include problems of employment and downward mobility, loss of social networks, the culturally unusual position of residence in their wife's household, and the experience of cultural difference. It is not my intention to suggest that all husbands coming to Britain from Pakistan are unhappy, but that aspects of the model of the unhappy migrant husband presented here can be used to shed light on the experiences of many Pakistani men migrating for marriage.

In extreme cases, the processes unearthed here may help to explain the catastrophic ways in which some marriages encountered during my research have gone wrong. These have been presented largely from the perspective of the wives and their families in earlier chapters. In more instances, however, the experiences explored here may constitute a phase that is resolved to a greater or lesser degree as the husband adjusts to married life in Britain. Finally, I suggest that this model can be useful in understanding the positive experiences of some male marriage migrants, as differences from the 'unhappy husband' ideal type help account for the ease with which others have adapted to life in Britain.

This exploration will also revisit Yasmin's narrative (addressed from the perspective of her father in the preceding chapter) to bring to light the submerged figure of the errant husband. I will suggest that Yasmin's reports of their disagreements and his complaints reveal frustrations that have wider relevance for Pakistani immigrant husbands to Britain. In doing so, it becomes possible to address two different masculine responses to a set of events, those of both the husband and the father of a bride, leading to a discussion of masculinity and emotion which will conclude the chapter.

Tahir's Marriage Migration

Tahir's marriage to his cousin (MZD) in Bristol was arranged by his parents when he was twenty:

Once I saw her a few times after our engagement it was all right. There are some suspicions in mind obviously, but I think the way their family behaved

and all that – it seemed like it was quite like our own family, so it was all right... Like, to tell you the truth, a lot of girls [in Britain], even in Asian families over here, they go around with boys and have relationships with other people. And for a boy from there, especially for myself, I would say it's unacceptable, something that really demoralises a person... There could have been something like that because of the different circumstances prevailing over here, but as we saw the family, how they behaved, I thought it was all right, that she was a nice girl, decent behaviour, so I didn't really mind... I think what [his parents] saw in her [was] that she was simple, and secondly that she would mix up in the family [i.e. fit in well]... These days [even girls in Pakistan] don't behave like her, most of them. Some of them are like her – I wouldn't say that she's one in a million – but a lot of them have become a little different in thinking. Family-wise, they want to get married, get separate [i.e. move out of the extended family home].

I came over in April [to Britain from Pakistan]... The same time, about a week earlier my father went over to *haj* [pilgrimage to Mecca]. A week later I left, so my father he got quite emotional at that time. First time really I saw him emotional... They do miss me. I miss them too, but it [being settled in Britain] has grown with time, it has gone a little more firm – I have children. But in the long run we have decided to move over there. Maybe next year we might be going over for a couple of years [to Pakistan in order to complete his medical studies]... I knew that there would be problems [coming to Britain without completing his studies], but what it was – I couldn't stay any longer, she was pregnant at that time. Secondly, financially we were a little bit disturbed at that time so I had to come over immediately, otherwise I might have stayed a little bit longer... She likes it over there as well. It's a more social life. She's adjusted herself quite well in the family. She didn't have to make any major changes, but still she likes it more over there, so might as well go over there – she gets a little more helping hand with the kids and all that.

...When I came over, when I came off the plane [I thought]: 'All right. New place... All right, nice place, motorway's nice'... [Then after a] couple of days, a week – getting more and more annoyed. Because I'd left everything – friends, family. It's a totally new situation, and so [Asma] helped me out a lot. She always used to listen to me, stay close to me, whatever the adjustments were.

There are differences in families – the way of thinking, everything, but she always stuck over to my side, more like she was grown up in *my* family! So she's been very helpful for my initial adjustments... The boys over here, they're just terrible! No respect – nothing!... A lot of different things I had to adjust on in life over here. I tried to get control, but it took some time before I could. Because I used to get those day nightmares: 'Where am I? What? Can I go home? Let's go!'... because over there I spent most of the time outside. I was at home at night time and some of the time at dinner time, but most of the time I was outside with friends, or in college, or at the hospital. So total change, like. Go out – just stare about, can't even talk to anybody because if I start talking [the other person will think], 'Oh, what does he want? Who is he?' It's natural, because it takes a whole new time to build up those things that took me about maybe twenty years of my life to build up. So I say it's a zero start. I have to start again... but it takes me time to make friends. Secondly, I'm very cautious about what kind of friends I make. Over here I have found a few people, but it's just spending time – I haven't got anybody really close. Except Asma. She's the only friend I've managed to get.

For two or three weeks he tried to find medical jobs, but was unsuccessful as his training was not quite complete. He then found work through an agency.

... they were terrible jobs. I had to work in the rain holding things.... manual jobs. So for the time being it was all right – shook out the rust out of me... Later on I managed to get another job. It was same type of job, manual job, but a little better... I worked there for four months. It was a refrigerator – I had to work inside it! But then I found [his current processing job]... They advertised it, and secondly there are a few people around here that work [in the same place]. Some are our relatives. They told me the address to phone up over here... It's nice and comfortable, just sitting around. Just have to spend the time... It's all the same, so it just becomes like a robot or something. So keep on doing it, keep on talking.... In the beginning it was very hard, because I had never thought in my life that I would have done anything like this. Maybe I didn't know what it was like over here, but over there you know most of the students they are leeches on their family, basically. They don't work much. They do some tuition or something sometimes, but work like this – no. So it was quite an

extraordinary experience, but later on I realised I had to do it. Got a family to manage. Maybe later on in life when good times come...

It's been the opposite way round – usually girls make adjustments... Some things I can't change like certain habits of mine. I've changed most of them – I don't smoke inside, I smoke always outside now... I think it's more comfortable [since we have moved out of the extended family home]. We have our own privacy. Secondly, the lifestyle we want to develop for our own selves, we can. That's most important to me – I can grow my children the way I want to. Teach them the things I want. Otherwise if I lived in joint family, somebody comes around [and says to his child]: 'What are you doing?' – gives my child a slap [and shouts]: 'Go over there!' It's not right...

Before they are ten years old, I would like them to go back. Even if I'm here or I'm over there, I would like them to be brought up over there... After ten they can go either way – they can stay straight, they can go the other way. If after twelve or fourteen I take them over, it wouldn't be right for them because they will be mixed up in a mixture of environments... Before ten I think they can adjust... Secondly, they know a little bit about over here as well, they still have quite a memory about over here, so maybe later in life if they come over they won't have such a problem... Our main aim is to stay together, but the only reason I might be over here after they are ten is for studies in the long run. Otherwise if it's just for gathering a few more rupees – no, I wouldn't do that. I would prefer my own family life... I think they might turn out well, but there are chances. I don't want to take those chances. There are a lot of children here that go well. Everybody has their own characteristics but, like Asma's family for example, it's very nice, they're nice to their parents and everybody. But if... my parents had children like Asma's family, there were a lot of things that they couldn't have tolerated. Like if we talk rude to our parents, even in early ages, maybe in later life we can still get beaten!... And second thing is religion. [That's the] most important thing. Over here they do religion, but to learn something, and to see something, is two different things. Like, it can be in your mind, but if you don't see, if religion isn't around you, you'll certainly say, 'What is this? This is something bookish, or something related to books'...

In the first year I [kept thinking]... 'Isn't there any way out? Isn't there any way to go back?' That's sort of a little more, it has cooled down a bit. I think [that's because of] different factors like my children, my wife – we've grown quite close together. My sister's come over, so it's sort of a small family like we have. So I think it's all right – a little bit all right. But I would love to go, we'd all like to live with our parents all together. My father he said, 'All right – I'll grow your children up for you'. I said, 'That's very nice'. Different things we cherish, we can cherish all together [with the family], we do miss over here. I would like those things to be all together, but sometimes I have sort of grown sort of immune to it now. I try to keep those a little back now and see the new world...

I would say if I'd come over for holiday over here it would have been wonderful, but coming into the circle of a new life, it's difficult to adjust to it... I think I'm getting used to it now, but life over here is quite stressful. Like jobs, to run about [paying] the bills – mentally you're crowded all the time [thinking]: 'Got to do this, that'. Maybe the job that I'm doing, maybe that's why I have to give more hours. Sometimes, most of the months, I'm working seven days a week. Maybe it's that that I can't really find time for myself to think, sit down... Because if I just work plain [without overtime] I can just manage, maybe hardly manage the life I'm living with my wife over here. Sometimes I do send money over – every three, four months maybe one hundred, two hundred pounds. That isn't that much, but to manage all that we are affording at the moment, I have to work that much. Because it isn't a very, very well paid job.

Migration and Downward Mobility: 'Starting from scratch again'

Migration to the UK offers most Pakistani men the opportunity to earn far more than they could in Pakistan. Nevertheless, the conditions in which these financial gains are to be made can come as a shock to newly-arrived husbands, as Tahir's narrative clearly demonstrates.

For most Pakistanis, the impression gained through the media of the wealthy West is reinforced by the smart new houses built in Pakistan with money remitted from overseas, and conspicuous consumption by Pakistanis from Europe or America on visits 'back home'. Many migrant husbands expect, if not streets paved with gold, then certainly material

advantages to life in the West. Even photographs of British-resident relatives' lifestyles may be misleading when seen through Pakistani eyes. A student in Rawalpindi, for example, showed me pictures of her sister's house in the UK. To me, it seemed a clean but modest affair, but to her the fitted carpet and kitchen units were indicative of a high standard of living. Such items are usually only found in the more wealthy and 'Westernised' homes in Pakistan and as such are status symbols, so that I found a fully fitted kitchen in the village home of a family with many members living overseas. Their British relative who was showing me around told me that she had advised against it, but that the family remaining in Pakistan had insisted they have one. It now sits unused while the family's cooking is done in the traditional manner at floor-level in another room.

Pakistani migrants to Britain are not drawn from the poorest sections of their home society (Ballard 1987), and often have relatively comfortable lives before coming to Britain. Migration itself requires a certain level of resources, and remittances from previous migrants in the family have often helped boost the economic standing of those left in Pakistan still further. In Bristol, as is many other British cities, although there are high levels of home-ownership, many Pakistanis live in small properties in deprived inner city areas. The environment in which their British spouse and relatives live often comes as a surprise to new arrivals. Hamid, a recently-arrived husband, told me that his expectations of a clean, honest country had been destroyed when he arrived in Bristol and was robbed by a customer while working in a petrol station near his new inner city home. Ghalib, who came to Britain for marriage in the 1970s, remembered:

When I came here I had dreams... A big myth that is in the Third World... about Europe and England – they think that everything is rosy, the grass is greener on the other side, people live luxuriously. Because they watch the films, the TV and they see all these big houses, cars... When you come here and reality hits you, it's all shattered, it's all different.

When Salma came from Pakistan to Bristol as a girl, she asked where the rest of her aunt Farida's house was, assuming that the small rooms in which they had stayed on their arrival must be an annex of a more substantial property. Since her mother's sister had migrated over fifteen years before, the immediate family left in Pakistan have gone up in the world, moving to large properties in good areas of the cities. Whilst much of this is due to their own efforts in education and career building, their upward mobility has been assisted by remittances from abroad. One of Salma's mother's brothers, for example, has built a smart new house in the suburbs from the proceeds of his work in America. It was thus a surprise for Salma to find that her cousins in the countries which are seen as a source of prosperity were existing in relatively meagre circumstances. Her aunt in Bristol is hardly living in

poverty, but she and her husband have had to work in low paid, low status jobs rather than pursue education, and have not been able to consider private schooling for their children, or moving to more prestigious areas of the city, as relatives in Pakistan have done.¹

The Pakistani population in Britain is characterised by high levels of unemployment, large numbers in semi-skilled manual work, and low levels of professionals, managers and employers. Pakistani and Bangladeshi employees also take home an average of two-thirds of the pay packets of White men. In terms of employment, the picture is bleak: 'While the men in these groups have experienced some improvement in their job levels since 1982, it is from a very low base' (Modood *et al* 1997: 342). It is into this context of low paid, low skilled employment that the migrant husband arrives. Questions of racism in the job market aside, a family in this position is unlikely to be able to offer contacts or advice on more interesting and lucrative opportunities to the new arrival.

There is also evidence that overseas qualifications are not recognised at the same level as their British equivalents. British Universities, for example, traditionally treat an Indian MA as equivalent to a British BA (Modood *et al* 1997: 64). The perception amongst my informants in Bristol is that devaluation of Pakistani qualifications is standard practice. Shareen, for example, advised her husband to quit his studies in Pakistan and concentrate on learning practical skills while his visa application was being processed, as she felt that his education would count for little once he came to the UK. Many new arrivals are forced to take employment well below their status in Pakistan, let alone their expectations for their new life, and those from relatively high-status families, or who held good jobs or professional qualifications at home may find themselves, like Tahir, doing repetitive manual labour. Poor English often compounds the problem. Not only is employment harder to find, but language skills present a barrier to gaining qualifications in the UK, and those fluent in English may still find the technical language used in college courses difficult.² Cost is another deterrent. Even if migrants are not expected to start contributing to both their new and natal families' budgets immediately, it is several years before they will qualify as a 'home student' and so avoid prohibitive foreign student fees, by which time they have often established themselves in work and have children for whom they must provide.

¹ Although Farida is very proud of the fact that her father's sister's daughter, who was born in Britain and gained professional qualifications, is sending her child to a private school.

² Local accents and slang can also be challenging – when Ghalib first heard the phrase 'the dog's bollocks', for example, he was understandably extremely offended until a friend explained that it meant the same as 'top banana'.

In addition, lack of language skills, resources and knowledge about the new environment mean that husbands have to rely on their wives or in-laws for help with filling in forms, applying for jobs, dealing with bills, for transport and so on. From the wives' and their families' perspectives, such men may seem frustratingly helpless, an impression compounded by the prevalent expectation that their wives will carry out the bulk of domestic tasks. One woman, talking of how much her husband had 'improved' over the years, noted that when he first arrived he was a 'typical Pakistani man – not willing to wipe his own bum. And he had a terrible temper.' The husbands' perspective on the frustrations of this dependent status will be elaborated upon later in this chapter.

Modood *et al* (1997) see the high level of self-employment among Pakistani men in Britain as one response to discrimination and lack of opportunity in the job market, providing a 'culture of hope' and conferring status within the community. Among Pakistanis, taxis are a particularly popular enterprise, with one in five Pakistani men in the PSI survey in transportation, primarily as taxi and mini-cab drivers (Modood *et al* 1997: 348). In order to maximise their income, many work at night, putting up with problematic passengers in order to earn fares quickly without daytime congestion. Taxi driving is potentially highly remunerative, but the poor conditions and low status can be troubling. Hence one immigrant husband told me delightedly of becoming an insurance salesman. The income, he told me, was irregular and much lower than from his taxi work, but it was a good job – a white collar job.

The Post Office is another popular employer among Pakistanis in Bristol, but Azra complained that there were no jobs available in such reputable places by the time her husband arrived at the start of 2000. So many young men are coming over, she said, that everywhere is fully staffed and employers can pick and choose the cream of the applicants. Moreover, unlike Tahir, she lacked family contacts already in such relatively desirable employment to help her husband find jobs. He eventually started work in a dry cleaning factory, long known in the city as somewhere that men and women with little English can find employment, but he finds the work heavy and demeaning. Azra told me angrily that even toilet breaks are timed, and that the White foreman shouts in Urdu/Punjabi: '*Jaldi karo!*' (The familiar/impolite form of 'Do it quickly!').

Because these jobs are poorly paid, men like Tahir and Azra's husband often have to take the better paid night-shifts and/or lots of overtime, particularly if they want to remit money to family in Pakistan. This can leave them with little spare time to make new social networks to replace the friends and family lost through migration. Some immigrant husbands

are lucky enough to have congenial kin of a similar age living locally, but others find that long hours and cultural differences make them very isolated. While Tahir finds the behaviour of young British Pakistanis objectionable, Omar, as a Karachi urbanite, has not made friends amongst the Punjabis in his place of work. The fact that others from similar backgrounds are also working long hours in factories, shops and taxis, further limits social opportunities. Azra's husband's only social life is gathering at the mosque for prayer, so he was upset when another member of the congregation told him that all husbands from Pakistan ended up working in the dry cleaners. 'Why do they say that – rub it in?' he complained to his wife. While many of the pioneering Asian community groups in Bristol were set up by men, the sector is now dominated by female-run groups serving Asian women, children and the elderly. None that I know of provide social support for young Asian men.³

Tahir's narrative, however, reveals something more than the difficulties of 'starting again'. The boys whose behaviour he criticises are his own brothers-in-law, and his account is punctuated by his rejection of his wife's family lifestyle.

The Ghar Dāmād: being an imported son-in-law

Pakistani marriage, as is often remarked, is an alliance between families rather than individuals. It entails new kinship relationships and statuses, not just for the bride and groom, but in the wider field of new affines. In both the academic literature and among Pakistanis I met in the UK and Pakistan, it is the relationships marriage forges between women that are most commonly discussed, with strong stereotypes of the overbearing mother-in-law, jealous sister-in-law and the vulnerable new bride. The reason for this gendered discourse lies in conventional virilocal residence patterns – a bride goes to live in her husband's family home, and so the nature of her relationships with his relatives are of fundamental importance to the quality of her married life.

However, the literature on South Asia also reveals the existence of uxorilocally-resident grooms, or *ghar jamā'ī*, literally meaning 'house son-in-law'. My informants in Pakistan and Bristol, however, more commonly use the term *ghar dāmād* (*dāmād* also meaning son-in-law) than *ghar jamā'ī*. In North India (Patricia Jeffery pers. com.), and among Muslims in Gujerat (Lambatt 1976: 54-5), they occur largely in relatively wealthy

³ Although the Bristol Pakistani Women's Organisation is changing its name to become more inclusive, and hopes to start sessions for men.

families without sons to farm their land. In Hindu Bengal, *ghar jamā'ī* are described as a mechanism for parents without sons to keep their married daughters living with them, providing someone to inherit their property, and to care for them in old age (Lamb 2002: 58). University students in Pakistan told me that this type of husband can also be obtained through promises of money if a wealthy father does not want to lose a cherished (and by implication, spoilt) daughter by sending her as a bride to another household. In Bangladesh, Gardner reports that *ghar jamā'ī* are generally landless and lacking an established household to which they could take their wife. But they can also be the result of migration as fathers working overseas leave a son-in-law to look after their womenfolk at home (1995: 167). Like the female characters in an affinal household described above, the *ghar jamā'ī* / *ghar dāmād* is also the subject of stereotypes, and is generally considered to be an undesirable position (Gardner 1995; Jeffery *et al* 1989) with its connotations of being, like the conventional daughter-in-law, dependent on and subservient to the in-laws.

Most grooms imported from Pakistan to Bristol find themselves, at least initially, living in their wife's family home. Two British Pakistani women did tell me that they viewed the opportunity to stay with their parents as a reason for choosing a husband from Pakistan, but by and large this situation is not the intended result of the marriage, but a by-product of the economic implications of migration. It is highly unusual for unmarried Pakistani women in Bristol to live apart from the family, and a husband just arrived from Pakistan is unlikely, for the reasons outlined above, to be able to afford a place of his own. One woman I met in Bristol had managed to save up and buy a house before her husband's arrival, and some families do purchase properties for their children. However, given the often strained family economic circumstances following an expensive marriage, the cost of airfares, the addition of a new member to the household, and the economic constraints on new migrants, many will spend at least some time living with the wife's parents.

Nevertheless, imported husbands living with their in-laws are not spoken of as *ghar dāmād*. Of course, the derogatory connotations mean that people are unlikely to describe themselves or their husband as being in such a position. One young woman who told me I was wrong to use the term of immigrant husbands said that she had heard of the concept from Hindi movies, suggesting that it is not in everyday usage. It may also be that stigma is avoided in migration. A model for the transformative power of travel may be found in pilgrimage, and in the early years of 'pioneer' male migration to Britain, many cultural norms were relaxed. These were often restored once large numbers of women and children started coming to join their husbands and the idea of residence in Britain as merely a sojourn

was abandoned (Anwar 1979, Shaw 1988), but it may be that contempt for the *ghar dāmād* has faded in a diasporic context where uxori-local grooms are a common feature and so no longer a curiosity. In addition, this often temporary residence against the virilocal norm dwindles in importance in the face of the issues of risk and migration that dominate people's concerns – the fact that the groom lives with his in-laws is simply not considered the defining feature of the marriage. In analytical terms, however, and with apologies to informants who resisted the use of the term *ghar dāmād*, I would argue that the concept is helpful in understanding elements of many Pakistani men's experience of marriage migration to Bristol.

The issue of 'missing kin' was raised in a previous chapter, but the pertinent point here is not simply the absence of certain relations, but also the unusual presence, or at least proximity, of others. Whilst the groom is in the abnormal position of being the in-comer without family support, and facing a new family's habits and way of life, his wife starts her married life with her parents and siblings close at hand. The loss of social capital in terms of networks of kin and friends normally suffered by brides (Jeffery 2001) is reversed in this situation. Even if the couple do not live in the wife's parents' home, the 'boy' may still feel himself lacking support, and under scrutiny from the wife's relatives, as young couples' new residences are often very close to the existing family home. In one case, a young man's parents bought the flat next door to their house for their son and his new wife. Other families have branches in neighbouring streets, or at least the same area, an arrangement that facilitates frequent visiting and even shared cooking so that Uzma and Nadir, for example, have moved to a separate house but still eat with her family. This kind of arrangement in effect erodes the distinction between extended family households and couples who live separately. Becoming 'separate' can, however, help ease the husband's discomfort, as was the case for Tahir and Asma, who now live across the road from her parents in a house owned by Asma's father. Nevertheless, the concept of the *ghar dāmād* will here be extended to husbands who, although living separately, are in structurally similar positions to the traditional *ghar dāmād*. Thus, one young man living with his wife in a rented flat near his in-laws complained: 'You've got all your family and I have no one'.

The wife's strong ties within the household or neighbourhood in which the husband is an outsider can disrupt conventional power relationships, giving the woman more support in case of conflict. Equally, part of becoming a wife is being a daughter-in-law, and the lack of this position of subordination and training, combined with the husband's want of family support, may also alter the dynamics of power between husband and wife. Thus Yasmin, for

example, was able to turn to her parents and siblings for support when she and her husband argued, with the eventual result that he was sent back to Pakistan.

The importance of support from the kin group has been discussed in previous chapters, with men without brothers described as ‘alone’ and so vulnerable to victimisation (Jeffery & Jeffery 1996: 208). A *ghar dāmād* can be in a similarly weak position, unable to defend himself from criticism. In Bristol, Azra told me that her husband’s friend, recently arrived from India, was thinking of returning home and abandoning his marriage. Azra said that she could tell me straight away what the problem was – his wife must be listening to her parents. *Sās* and *sasur* (mother- and father-in-law),⁴ she said, are always critical, but the important thing is not to listen to them, and to be loyal to your husband. Her own parents, for example, moan about her husband’s difficulties in filling out job applications, but she knows that he works hard and she will not criticise him.

The situation can also lead to conflict if the young man tries to assert his authority, or dislikes the family in which he finds himself. In Yasmin’s marriage, it was when her husband started to criticise her family that the serious arguments started. He complained:

‘Your sister’s a bad mother. Your mother’s cooking’s not that nice. Your dad’s so forcive and he doesn’t understand and he doesn’t listen. Your brothers have got attitude problems. Your mother hasn’t taught you much about marriage and being a wife’...

This list of complaints is in itself significant, with each element worthy of individual consideration for what it can tell us about the experience of what I am calling the *ghar dāmād*.

‘Your sister’s a bad mother... Your brothers have got attitude problems’

Some husbands’ dislike of the local cultural environment has already been mentioned as a factor contributing to their isolation, but these accusations are also about child-rearing. Tahir, it will be remembered, also expressed concern about being able to raise his children in his own fashion. Marriage and childbearing are centrally about cultural reproduction, and in addition to the wider issues of religion and discipline that worry Tahir about British Pakistani culture, he is also eager to pass on his own particular family ‘culture’. With virilocal residence, this type of small scale cultural reproduction is in effect patrilineal, so Tahir’s father offers to ‘grow’ his son’s children, and men are used to the idea that their family’s lifestyle will be dominant in the raising of their children. As men do not take a

prominent role in childcare, this system relies heavily on the inculcation of the husband's family's habits on the incoming bride by her mother-in-law and other female elders, a training that is absent in the situation of male marriage migration. As transnational *ghar dāmād* they therefore risk the end of this micro-cultural lineage, producing sons who may carry on the family name, but behave as foreigners.

This issue of men's expectations of continuity in 'family culture' across their lifecourse is in marked contrast to those of young unmarried women, and is exemplified in the next comment:

'Your mother's cooking's not that nice'

A 'boy' who brings a wife into his family home will eat the same food before and after marriage, and his wife will be trained in her new household's style of cooking. Yasmin's husband's complaint can be seen as symptomatic of the broader adjustments he has to make to the family culture of his wife's household. Interestingly, these culinary complaints were echoed by Sumera's husband, who disliked both his wife's and his mother-in-law's cooking. When his mother visited from Pakistan, Sumera realised that her mother-in-law used far more chilli and green coriander (considered an expensive ingredient in Bristol) in her recipes, something that she would have picked up immediately had she gone to live in her husband's home.

'Your mother hasn't taught you much about marriage and being a wife'

In Pakistan, girls are prepared from a young age for marriage. They are told not to get too attached to ways of life because once they arrive in their husband's home they will have to adjust and adopt their in-laws' patterns. Female children may be chided for being demanding, and told they won't be able to behave like that in their *susrāl* (in-law's household). Alternatively, girls who are overly shy may be asked teasingly if they are already in their *susrāl*. In Bristol, I heard a girl of ten being corrected by her sisters while she talked of wanting to be a teacher – she wouldn't be Miss Maiden-name, she'd be whatever her husband's name will be. Some, on the other hand, say that the need to prepare daughters tends to be neglected in Britain.

⁴ The term is the same for the in-laws of both bride and groom.

In an interview, Omar and Jamilah debated this point, leading to some interesting observations about gender roles with regard to marriage and childcare in Britain and Pakistan, and the religious basis for these matters:

Omar: ...The parents should tell [the girl what marriage will be like]

Jamilah: Are you complaining? My parents were hunky dory! They're like: 'Woah! She's doing it herself! She's wanting to get married at 19! What more can we ask for?'

Omar: I'm not saying her parents. My sister... my dad since when she was fourteen used to say, 'Look *betī* (daughter), don't do this. When you go to your in-laws it will be changed. Everything will be changed'. They were making her mind to do the things, and this thing is really absolutely classic and absolutely perfect to tell a daughter, to make her mind before it's going to happen.

Jamilah: This is where the cultural difference comes in again... My parents never did that because we never expected that to happen, we expected to live an equal life.

Omar: This is a separate issue, and I'm talking about a separate thing... She said, 'My parents never told me'... Tell me, it's an Islamic question... God has explained everything in Quran, yeah?

Jamilah: But your interpretation is different from mine. I did read them, I did read them. In there it says everything's equal... I read about five or six books about women in Islam, women and marriage, women as mothers. I read all of those books and I read them out of interest, rather than [because] I felt I should read them and prepare. It was more out of interest, [to find out] what my role was... Much before he came, I used to read them all the time... but from my interpreting those books, I don't see the culture match that he's talking about – that your father starts training you from a young age. They do train you for adulthood, but they don't train you for, you know, 'You mustn't raise your voice', little issues like that... These things aren't in the book. It's general things like, 'Respect your husband'. He [Omar] puts that slightly higher than where I would put the level, if you know what I mean... But I think he's improved, he's definitely improved. So all of this is doing something, isn't it? Little things like pushing the pushchair. Like some Asian men think, 'Oh my God, I'm pushing the pushchair, I must be some kind of sissy man' or something like that. In Pakistan, men wouldn't even dream of picking up a child. People used to make fun of him because he was picking up his daughter. They would be like, 'My God he's picking up the baby!' For me, it doesn't say in Islam about... Your cousin would say, 'What are you holding her for? Give her to your wife'... It was offending to me.

This discourse of cultural difference, or 'culture clash' as it is often called by my informants, is a common one, and this conflict interacts with the powerlessness of the *ghar dāmād* position. Shaw (2000b) suggests that young women raised in Britain may have very different expectations of domestic relations of authority from those of their Pakistani

husbands, as suggested by Jamilah's comments on marriage. These views are influenced by the model set by wives of pioneer migrants who, like the wives of contemporary transnational *ghar dāmād*, found themselves living outside their mother-in-law's household, and so with greater levels of autonomy.

During my fieldwork I was told stories to illustrate the problem of 'culture clash' on several occasions. The typical plot, told as a real story or as an example of what can happen, is of a young man who comes over and sees his wife talking to unrelated men with whom she has studied in school or college. They may call her by her first name, and seem to be overly familiar. The boy does not understand that this is normal behaviour in Britain, and becomes enraged, leading to arguments and perhaps the break-up of the marriage. Here is Ghalib's version:

There's one article I read here a few years back – you can put it in your thesis, [it's] very interesting... A young girl [who had] grown up here, done a degree, had a good job and her parents said we'd like to marry you in our clan. So they went to Pakistan, found a boy – he was absolutely illiterate, never went to school, grown up in a small village somewhere in Pakistan, I don't want to give any name of particular area [enquiries suggested that it was Mirpur, but he did not want to appear prejudiced] ...

He came up here [to Britain] and the girl went to an airport to collect him. As they were coming out from the departure lounge, the girl – one of her class fellows in University came down, English fellow. And he said to her, traditionally as they say [in Britain], 'Hello Amina, how are you?' And he just go and embrace her in front of her husband and her father and her mother. They [the parents] could understand it – it's just student friends and that's not a problem... [It was] not a really big embrace, [just a] showbiz kiss, cheek to the cheek, 'Mwa, Mwa'... She just said, 'I'm fine, thank you, meet my husband'. And he [the class fellow] just say [to the wife], 'Ok then, nice to see you.' And [they were] talking and looking into each other's eyes and smiling. To a strange man. It's a very new experience for a young man coming from Pakistan. So they went home and all night he could not sleep and next morning he said, 'I don't want to be married with this girl. I don't want to get on with this girl. I want to go home. She's got boyfriends, she's corrupt' and this and that. And he divorce her and he went back to Pakistan.

Now, what exactly went wrong here?... A very big culture clash. And if the boy was educated or went to school or college in Pakistan, and he came here and he had seen a little bit of this he might have said, 'Oh it's two school friends saying hello to each other'. [Lack of education] and culture clash, two things together made worse. And that's why their marriage has broken. And when I came here it was very, very new for me as well. If somebody had done like this in front of me to my wife, I might well not be far off either....

Yasmin reported that her Western tastes in music, films and clothes were also a source of tension with her Pakistani husband. The attempts to increase similarity,

compatibility and understanding between the couple by marrying close kin that I discussed in an earlier chapter can thus be negated by being brought up in different countries. This mutual incomprehension is given as a reason why some young women, and some parents, are resisting transnational marriages. ‘I mean, I like football, you know?’ one young woman explained, using her enjoyment of a conventionally male pursuit to sum up why she didn’t want to marry a man from Pakistan who, she assumes, would expect her to conform to Pakistani models of feminine behaviour. In the balancing of similarity and difference in affinity, then, some consider the differences between people raised in Britain and Pakistan to be too great for a successful marriage.

Some young men’s parents do, however, attempt to prepare them to enter a new household. A young woman currently engaged to a cousin in Pakistan told me about his visit to stay with them in Bristol, explicitly comparing the preparation for marriage given to daughters and the instruction given to her fiancé by his mother:

The mothers tell the girls, ‘When you go to a household, you adjust totally with what they do, with their ways of living, with their friends, how they talk to their friends, their relatives. You just go along with what they do – no ifs, no buts, no questions. You just adjust without making any fuss.’ Whereas the boys – I think it’s because the girls go to the boy’s house, that’s why – but I think when the boys do come to the girl’s house, I’m sure they’re told by their mothers more. You know, ‘When you go to their house be polite, don’t be silly’ sort of thing, ‘Don’t do anything stupid’, because I think I remember Asif said, ‘Mum told me so many things. Mum said, “Don’t do this, don’t do that. If you want some water, you get it yourself. If you want something, you do it yourself – get up.”’ And he said, ‘My mum told me all these things before I came’ and he was saying, ‘Oh God, I felt like a two year old when she was telling me all these things!’

The (rare) opportunity to visit Britain also serves as a kind of preparation. Tahir, for example, brought his sister to Bristol to toughen her up before marriage, and in one very successful marriage, both the husband and wife had spent extended periods in each other’s countries – he lived in Pakistan as a child and she came for a six month visit before they were engaged. Other men were warned by friends or relatives in Britain that they would have to work much harder in Bristol than in Pakistan. Nonetheless, it is clear that most men are not prepared, or culturally pre-disposed, to ‘adjust’ as girls are traditionally trained to do, in order to reduce conflict within the new household.

Marriage, Migration and Masculinity

One more of the criticisms that Yasmin’s husband is reported to have made remains to be examined, his complaints about his father-in-law:

‘Your dad’s so forcive [forceful] and he doesn’t understand and he doesn’t listen’

This accusation speaks of the frustration of the *ghar dāmād*’s weak position in the household structures of power. While his father-in-law is forceful in support of his daughter, there is no senior member of the family to whom the *ghar dāmād* can appeal for help with his complaints.

‘Globalisation’ writes Kimmel, ‘disrupts and reconfigures traditional, neo-colonial, or other national, regional or local economic, political and cultural arrangements. In so doing, globalisation transforms local articulations of both domestic and public patriarchy’ (2001: 24). In transnational Pakistani marriages, male migration creates new domestic power relationships. These have been seen from two perspectives in this and the previous chapter – that of the father dealing with the behaviour of an immigrant *ghar dāmād*, and now from the viewpoint of the migrant husband who finds himself living under the scrutiny of his father-in-law. In Yasmin’s case, her husband and father were brought into conflict by this situation.

Caroline and Filippo Osella (forthcoming) note that,

In comparison to the multiplicities of femininity in South Asian studies, men emerge in a lesser and often two-dimensional range. Commonly they are householders; sometimes priests or renouncers; workers – be they landlord-farmers or landless labourers; patrons or clients – and always almost everywhere ‘patriarchs’. Too often men become mere ciphers, as in Dumont’s version of Dravidian kinship (1983) – brothers-in-law who exchange women in order to maintain relationships whose affective or gendered content is rarely written about.

In women’s narratives of failed transnational marriages, men do at times appear as somewhat two-dimensional villains. However, the approach I have taken here is to use these tales in combination with interview material from men, and other discourses on immigrant husbands, to start to build a more complicated picture of Pakistani masculinity in the context of transnational marriage. As such, these chapters represent a contribution to the study of South Asian men in their cross-sex relationships, which Osella and Osella hope will mitigate what is generally a depressing portrait of aggressive masculinity performed at the expense of women.

Residing in his father-in-law’s household can undermine the migrant husband’s ability to act in accordance with Pakistani ideals of masculinity. These ‘hegemonic masculinities’ ‘define successful ways of “being a man”’ and so consequently ‘define other masculine styles as inadequate or inferior’. The *ghar dāmād* represents one of these other, ‘subordinate variants’ (Cornwall & Lindisfarne 1994: 3) of Pakistani and North Indian

masculinity, and as such may be perceived as emasculating or infantilising by men aspiring to a hegemonic masculine role. So Asif, the visiting fiancé, describes being made to feel like a child when his mother gave him the kind of instruction usually given to young women to prepare them for life in their marital home. Tahir, it will be remembered, wanted to take his children to Pakistan while they were young enough to 'adjust'. While women and children are expected to adapt themselves to new environments, men emphatically are not.

My examination of Yasmin's father's behaviour on behalf of his daughter centred on what might be thought of as a central feature of hegemonic Pakistani masculinity, that of honour based on control. Whilst subordinate positions have been examined in recent years (Cornwall & Lindisfarne 1994), hegemonic masculinity is less often problematised. For Yasmin's father, however, honour was not only problematic in the accepted sense of competition with other men, but was seen at times to create internal conflict, bound up with bonds between kin, and experienced as strong emotion. As Osella and Osella astutely observe, men can appear as, 'especially fragile persons who insist on especially powerful personae'. Break beyond this front, and masculinity is, not only for the subaltern, but also for the apparent patriarch, 'an ambivalent complex of weakness and strength' (forthcoming).⁵

As has oft been noted of women, men are not simply men, and masculinity is braided with other identities. Tahir's wish to control the way his children were raised, for example, was not simply a drive to assert his masculine authority in the matter, but a heartfelt concern over the future loss of Pakistani, Islamic, and his individual family's cultural identity. Although it has been suggested that South Asian men's positions vary less than those of women across their life course (Mines & Lamb 2002), ideals concerning manhood also change as a man ages and takes on different roles in relation to others. A son should respect his parents, and provide for them when they are older. As a husband and father, a man should both provide for his family and, as outlined in the previous chapter, be able to exert a certain level of control over his wife (or wives) and children.

Marriage migration can limit a man's ability to fulfil several of these roles. In a virilocal context, the son would contribute to the household budget, which is normally controlled by his parents, thus fulfilling his duties to both his parents and his wife and children. After migration, however, this becomes a 'double responsibility' to provide for his dependants in Britain, and to contribute financially to his family in Pakistan. This burden may be particularly onerous for the elder brother after his father has died, when he becomes

responsible not only for the day-to-day expenses, but for the marriages of any unmarried siblings. In some low-income households in Bristol, the husband's desire to remit money to Pakistan from an already stretched family budget can become a point of tension between husband and wife. Having accepted a *rishta* from a financially stable family in the hope that funds would not be drained by the need to support her husband's relatives, Azra says her husband has only mentioned the matter of remittances once, and does not dare repeat the suggestion as he knows it will make her angry.

The 'new economics of labour migration' views emigration in search of opportunities as part of collective processes of family 'survival strategies' (Castles 2002; Massey *et al* 1997). A Pakistani man's migration, whether to Britain or to the Gulf states, is often motivated by a desire to increase his ability to contribute to the family finances. Although poverty makes the need more urgent, even the better-off like Azra's husband are likely to share the general aspiration to fulfil this important part of a son's duties. It is ironic that in marrying into Britain, the effort to fulfil the masculine role of provider may impose on a migrant groom the emasculating experiences of the *ghar dāmād*. Moreover, in Azra's case, his weak position in the household has denied the migrant husband the ability to remit money at all.

As in the cases of both Tahir and Yasmin's husband, living in the father-in-law's home can also undermine a man's authority over his wife and children. In the latter case, Yasmin was largely able to deny her husband sexual access to her by staying up late with her sisters, or turning to her father for support. In this, the young man's ability to be a 'proper' husband was denied when it came into conflict with the more senior male in the household's exercise of his duties as a father to protect his daughter.

These pressures may help in understanding the more extreme actions of some imported Pakistani husbands. As in other chapters, the suggestion here is that the emotional response highlighted by an exploration of cultural models provides more nuanced insights into motivations for behaviour. I have already argued that Yasmin's husband's anger can be understood by his position as a *ghar dāmād*. Sumera, whose husband liked more chilli and coriander in his food, said that small arguments like these built up gradually to his violence, and his taking a second wife in Pakistan. While not excusing his actions, it is interesting to note that he was also under several of the other forms of pressure described in this chapter:

⁵ See Alter (2002) for an interesting account of the 'degenerative, nerve-wracking, biomoral dis-ease' of masculinity in the context of Indian wrestling.

having given up what he described as an ‘executive job’ with a foreign firm in Pakistan, he found himself doing long nightshifts of repetitive low status work; having married outside the family, he had a complete lack of kinship networks for support in Bristol; his wife, although highly religious, is confident and assertive; and he feels he has suffered racism in his workplace.

It is not my intention, however, to suggest that all or even the majority of incoming Pakistani husbands are unhappy class casualties and *ghar dāmāds*. As Cornwall and Lindisfarne make clear, ‘hegemonic forms [of masculinity] are never totally comprehensive, nor do they ever completely control subordinates. That is, there is always some space for subordinate versions of masculinity – as alternative gendered identities which validate self-worth and encourage resistance’ (1994: 5). It is possible for the *ghar dāmād* to find subtle ways of re-defining his position, as Ghalib, who came to Britain in the 1970s clearly demonstrates:

It was very difficult. But I remember one thing my father said to me, like they say to girls: ‘When you go from here, he is your father, and she is your mother, and you respect her’. They say to the girl, you know... ‘Your in-laws are your father and mother and you should respect them’. In my case, my father said a similar thing, he said, ‘We are your parents, but now you are going to live with them. They will be like your father and mother, do not disobey them’. That’s what my father given me – the last lesson, in airport. And believe you me, I’m not saying trying to blow my own trumpet, as they say in England, [but] if my father-in-law comes here and you ask him, ‘How do you find Ghalib here as [son-]in-law?’ he will say, ‘I personally think he’s not my in-law, he’s my son’. And that’s the way he treated me, all the way. He was there for me financially, physically – in every way and I admire him... He says to me, ‘Daytime is night’ I say, ‘Yes, it is night’, even [though] I knew it is daytime and I can say to him, ‘It’s wrong, it’s daytime’ – I never say to him. At that time, I agree, but then quietly, politely, I say to him, ‘What do you think if we just go outside and see if it’s day or night?’ Then he say, ‘Yeah, yeah’. So that’s why I think we had a relationship between ourselves very successful. I’m never, never outspoken in front of them. That’s the key for success I think.⁶

Instead of railing against the new structures of authority in which he found himself, Ghalib paints a picture of a young man fulfilling the role of a good son by obeying his father’s instructions to regard his father-in-law as his father. His deference to his wife’s father can then be understood at one level as fulfilling kinship obligations, but at another he makes clear that it was in fact he who, by his tactful cunning, had the upper hand in the

⁶ Interestingly, this formulation is sometimes given as advice to women as to how wives can influence their husbands (P. Jeffery, pers. comm.).

relationship, allowing him to emerge from a potentially weak position with his masculine authority unscathed.

For those with good relations with their in-laws, the home environment can be welcoming and supportive for a new immigrant. For Omar, life got worse when, after he had been in the country a year, they moved out of his wife's family home. Where before he had had money left over for travel, leisure and remittances, he now finds it difficult to afford the expenses of independent living. Nevertheless, as demonstrated above, some aspects of the *ghar dāmād* model are useful in understanding his experience of marriage migration, and this may be the case for the majority of husbands.

Hamid, for example, is happy in his new life. Of course, a host of personal attributes may have contributed to his success: he is adaptable, well-liked, is eager to improve his already competent English, and as tall and fair-skinned as his British relatives, blending in unremarked at social occasions. But his lack of conflict can also be partially understood in relation to the *ghar dāmād* model. First, he has a good relationship with both his wife and mother-in-law. One imported wife with in-law troubles told me that if the husband and wife's relationship is good then it doesn't matter if the rest of the family are hostile, and the same may be true for imported husbands. Tahir, it will be remembered, found sanctuary from the rest of the family in his wife's friendship. In addition, far from being unsupported, Hamid has several male relatives of his own age whom he had met in Pakistan and with whom he socialises regularly. He has also been given a relatively interesting job in a firm owned by a kinsman, and he has been able to send money back to his family in Pakistan. Sadly, his wife's father died before their marriage, and her only adult brother lives outside the family home, so Hamid did not come into conflict with established structures of male authority in the household. Just as I have suggested that the *ghar dāmād* model can be used to help explain some of the worst examples of failed transnational marriages between British woman and Pakistani men, in this sense, reference to the model can illuminate reasons for the success of this marriage, and the positive experience of this migrant husband.

Some marriages, however, do not last under the type of pressures outlined above. Other unhappy husbands may continue to argue with their wives, and resent the Britishness of their children. For Humera, the conflict that has been a feature of her marriage from the start, when her husband was shocked at his outspoken and outgoing British bride, emerged again recently as her eldest daughter approached marriageable age. After Humera's own experience of 'culture clash', she and her daughter want to find a husband of similar

‘understanding’ in Britain. When her mother-in-law declared pointedly that she knew where her granddaughter would be married, implying that the decision had been made, Humera asserted that, on the contrary, she would not be marrying anyone from her father’s family. Humera’s husband was furious both at his wife’s independent decision about the marriage, and that she had dared to argue with his mother, and serious arguments ensued.

I suspect, however, that most husbands eventually adjust to their changed circumstances. Migration, as Werbner has pointed out, is a process which extends well beyond the physical relocation (1990). As years go by and the couple perhaps move to their own home, the husband becomes head of his own household, develops more social networks, and maybe climbs the employment ladder, the causes of friction may decrease. Although there are cases of return migration, those who, like Tahir, plan to take their family back to Pakistan to escape the indignities of life in Britain, may find (like an earlier generation) that they give up on their plan to return as their lives become entwined in their new country through their children, homes, businesses and relationships. Eighteen, twenty or more years later, a new generation of fathers may be hoping to take the opportunity of their children’s marriages to reaffirm and strengthen ties with the Pakistan to which they have returned only as visitors.

Conclusion: Gendered Emotion

This chapter has presented the immigrant husband as in a precarious position. His expectations of life in Britain and of his role as husband, son, and father may be challenged by the conditions in which he finds himself on arrival in Britain. Whilst the complete *ghar dāmād* model may apply to few, some aspect of the social, economic and cultural weaknesses and frustrations described above will be familiar to many. In this final section, I would like to highlight some patterns in emotional responses to the problems of transnational marriage that have been presented in this chapter and over the course of this thesis.

Pakistanis connect transnational marriage, and indeed many of the central events of a woman’s life – her own marriage, and those of her sisters and daughters – with sadness, loss, separation and risk. They see women as vulnerable; as potential victims. Descriptions of men, on the other hand, have concerned honour and control. Challenges to ‘*izzat*’ or other masculine forms lead to frustration, anger and even violence. These have emerged as publicly recognised discourses on male and female emotion in response to the problems faced by men and women. ‘Honour killings’, for example, are sometimes explained as a natural male emotional response to threats to their ‘*izzat*’. These gendered discourses on

emotion were, as I have mentioned elsewhere, reflected in the different ways men and women presented their marriages to me. Whilst women talked of love and loss, men tended to stress duty and the proper Islamic practices, showing themselves as controlled, honourable men.

Nevertheless, as Das (1994) shows in the context of kinship codes, there are other discourses on emotion and behaviour. The cross-sex relationships explored in this thesis demonstrate how men and women participate in both 'sets' of emotions in their intimate relationships. A father's honour is intertwined with protectiveness for a beloved daughter, and some husbands experience the 'female' role of marriage migration. Tahir experiences this as loss, loneliness and bewilderment, whilst others seem to react with frustration and anger. Azra is seen wanting to control the household income to which she contributes more than her recently arrived husband by preventing him sending money to his parents in Pakistan. Azra describes herself as getting angry in this situation, and says she actually enjoys these arguments with her husband. The influence of seniority also mediates gender, producing less acknowledged emotional models such as the frustration of the young man, or the power of a mother-in-law. Even in the most extreme examples of 'female' and 'male' patterns of emotion, both genders are visible, so that Rukhsana Naz's mother took an active part in the 'honour killing' of her daughter. This chapter ends where it started, with the archetypal image of the new bride and her female relatives crying at her *rukhsati* replaced by that of a just-married son leaving his weeping father at the airport as he boards a plane to join his wife in Britain.

In these examples, men are transformed from two-dimensional ciphers to people with comprehensible emotional lives, and women redeemed from the image of passive victimhood. These stereotypes are, of course, perpetuated not only by the popular orientalist imagination, but in part by the discourses of self representation of Pakistani men and women themselves. Nevertheless, as anthropologists have long been aware, what people say is not necessarily the same as what they do, and behaviour is subject to context. This chapter has illustrated how Pakistani discourses on gender and emotion belie a more complex behavioural reality. The conclusion to this thesis will draw together the strands of emotion, gender, migration, and motivations for and experiences of transnational marriage, to show how the approach taken here enriches anthropological understanding of this growing phenomenon.

Conclusion: Balancing the Picture

Anthropologists have often suggested that marriage is primarily a relationship between groups rather than individuals. For Lévi-Strauss, the exchange of women between groups is the foundation of society. Weddings usually involve not just the exchange of women – the gift of the bride – but lots of other gifting, often between a large number of people. Even the wedding itself can be seen as a gift in the same way as we talk about ‘giving a party’ in English. Women, Lévi-Strauss suggests, are just one among the gifts that maintain social relations, albeit the most important – the ‘supreme gift’ (1969). South Asian arranged marriage might seem to provide an archetypal instance in which this model of marriage can be applied. In North India, after all, the bride is explicitly talked of as a gift (*kanyā-dān*, the gift of a virgin), and the importance of gifting in Pakistani weddings has been discussed earlier in this work.

Recent South Asian ethnographies, however, provide examples that seem to undermine this conceptualisation of marriage. In Cecilia Busby’s (2000) study of a Catholic fishing community in the South Indian state of Kerala, residence after marriage is uxorilocal, so men normally go to live with their wife’s family once they are married. Men do the fishing, so part of the dowry given by the wife’s family is meant as compensation to the husband’s parents for loss of the income that their son would have brought into the household (if he was not leaving to live with his wife’s family). It could be argued that if anything, marriage here is an exchange of men rather than women. At the time of writing, the numbers of men coming to Britain for marriage roughly equal those of women. The model of marriage as implying the movement of women and its attendant sadness is still, however, dominant. For Punjabis, ‘womanhood implies travel’ (Bradby 2000: 236). In this context, the effect of marriage migration in creating unhappy migrant *ghar dāmāds*, in my term, remains concealed. Should this practice continue, however, new folk models of this type of marriage may emerge.

Furthermore, in Busby’s Keralan study, the families of the husband and the wife do not carry on exchanges after the marriage. In other words, marriage does not start an ongoing relationship between the two groups. The exchange relationship created by marriage is purely between the husband and wife, who are new economic unit. This example thus challenges two of Lévi-Strauss’ assertions: that marriage is always the exchange of women, and that it is a way of starting or continuing relationships between groups. Given the prevalence of close kin marriage among Pakistanis in Bristol, marriage often does not start a

relationship, as the families involved tend to be related or at least known to each other before, but Pakistani marriages are often motivated by a desire to **strengthen** relationships between kin. However, as has been seen, they carry the danger of having the opposite effect if things go wrong.

Raheja and Gold (1994, see also Raheja 1988), writing on Hindu North India, describe a situation where women are viewed as gifts, and marriage does start a gifting relationship between the two families. However, exploring the significance of gifts in indigenous, rather than Maussian, terms reveals the bride to be a type of gift called *dān*. Giving *dān* removes inauspiciousness from the donor, and so it is very important that it should not be returned. In other words, there should be no reciprocity. All the gifts in this relationship flow in one direction – from bride’s family to the bride and her in-laws.¹ The relaxation of this requirement in Pakistani close kin marriages was mentioned in an earlier chapter.

Raheja also worked intensively with women, and found other gendered discourses on giving that echo the differences between Donnan’s informants’ stress on strategies, and the emphasis on emotion that came to light during my research. Where the men she spoke to stressed *‘izzat* or prestige gained by giving generously, women viewed the gifts from their natal family, and particularly their brothers, as signs of affection and ongoing ties. Where other scholars writing on Pakistani marriage have focussed on strategy, or a Lévi-Straussian duty of exchange with kin, my own work, like that of Raheja, reveals discourses on emotional ties. These are, however, not only between women, but are found even in the heart of masculine *‘izzat*. In arranging transnational marriages to relatives, British parents seek both to protect their children, and to renew their emotional linkages with much missed kin in Pakistan. Two young women mentioned in this study even saw such marriages as a way of avoiding migration for marriage, thus preserving the close relationship with their parents that conventionally suffers through marriage.

This, finally, contradicts the assertion that marriage is primarily a relationship between groups rather than individuals. Matters of group interest certainly do influence Pakistani transnational marriage, but here relationships between individuals have also emerged as crucially important. These are not, however, necessarily that between the couple getting married, although ethnography has been presented here that supports the view that romance is not incompatible with arranged marriage. Indeed, the imagery and narration of

¹ Cf. Parry 1986, “The Gift”, The Indian Gift and the “Indian Gift”.

weddings is often richly romantic. Instances of great affection between husband and wife, which appear in contrast to stereotypes of such relations, have also been reported here. However, the emotional relationships that have come to the fore as explanatory factors for both transnational and close kin marriage among Pakistanis in Bristol, are those between members of the natal family: parents and their distant siblings, and parents and the children about whose futures they care deeply. It seems that relationships between individuals can, after all, play a strong role in influencing Pakistani arranged marriages, and it is likely that similar considerations have a part to play in more nuanced investigations into the practice among other South Asian groups.

Transnational marriages between Britain and Pakistan might at first glance appear to be a fairly narrow field of study. As I argued in the Introduction, however, this practice is on the increase, and constitutes an important social trend worthy of serious consideration in itself. Moreover, the course of this thesis has shown that the practice also sheds light on wider areas of interest, not only in the anthropology of South Asian kinship, but also in the study of transnationalism.

The description of a village wedding between a British bride and a Pakistani groom in Chapter One allowed for an exploration of changing marriage styles both in Pakistan and among diasporic Pakistanis in Bristol. This augments earlier ethnographic material on wedding rituals in the Punjab (Eglar 1960). Werbner provides a more recent description of Pakistani weddings in Britain (1990), but the diversity of practices, the rapidity of change in fashions, and the increasing availability of new marriage-related services in Britain provide ample reason for an ongoing project of documentation. The utility of this attention to wedding ceremonies was illustrated in Chapter Five, where I discussed the development of new forms of dissected marriage process in response to participants' encounters with multiple legal systems and the heightened risks involved in transnational marriages.

The issue of risk formed a pivotal theme of many chapters, and takes several forms. Chapter Three argued that the danger that migration will weaken the bonds of kinship provides a central motivation for transnational marriages, which, it is hoped, will strengthen these relationships. However, in addition to perpetuating the problem of migration and loss for another generation, such marriages in themselves produce further risks. The first of these to be discussed was the danger that the 'double *rishta*' of kinship and affinity will lead to tensions and rifts between relations, an issue discussed in more depth in Chapter Six. In addition, the introduction of greater distance and perceived material benefits into the marriage equation produces risks that often vary by gender and origin. These include the

danger that marriage to British women will be used simply to gain entry to the UK, or that women from either Britain or Pakistan will be mistreated by husbands or in-laws; the problem of isolation and lack of local language and other knowledge for immigrant spouses from Pakistan; young people being coerced into marriage and, I have suggested, a largely hidden phenomena of male forced marriage. Finally, there are the potential problems of the *ghar dāmād*. This latter issue may not be recognised by participants in advance, as concern is focussed on women who are seen as more vulnerable in marriage.

Various chapters addressed measures taken in an attempt to reduce the risks inherent in marriage, and amplified in transnational arrangements. Chapter Four showed how unions between close kin are thought by many of my informants to provide security by increasing similarity between the couple, as well as kin-group pressure to prevent the failure of the marriage. Chapter Five explored the delaying of the *rukḥṣatī* to reduce the risks to British brides incurred by consummating the marriage. This chapter also outlined other strategies, such as the selection of a husband from a financially-stable Pakistani family, the reading of dress and appearance as indications of religious commitment, and the less frequently possible option of bringing Pakistani *rishte* to Britain for ‘trial’ periods. It concluded by reviewing the widespread failure of the Islamic institution of *mahr* to provide security for British women engaging in transnational marriages.

The study of these marriages also provides a critical commentary on the academic study of globalisation and transnationalism. A review of relevant the literature in Chapter Two drew attention to an Islamic perspective on these matters, and suggested that this contemporary kinship practice, which is itself aided by the proliferation and acceleration of global processes, undermines suggestions of global homogenisation, and of popular assertions of a unilinear global development of the family (e.g. Giddens 1999) in particular. I argued that the broad brush strokes of theory do little to capture the variation in experience of and engagement with transnationalism. A focus on transnational marriage draws attention to change across the life course, differences between actors in different sites, and between individuals whose lives take them in divergent directions. This chapter also put into practice the suggestion that ethnography is needed to balance the birds-eye view of globalisation and transnationalism theory, by revisiting the wedding described in Chapter One as a starting point for an exploration of the behaviour of some young British visitors to Pakistan, taking in a re-examination of work on dual cultural identity among British South Asians. Chapter Three addressed another broad criticism of writing in this field, its imposition of categories and metaphors with little relation to the ethnographic context, and suggested that the

Pakistani idea of the *rishta* connection provides a pioneering example of an indigenous category that can provide a more subtle conceptual tool.

The discussion of the *rishta* concept in Chapter Three first introduced the benefits of integrating emotion into interpretations of transnational marriage. The concept of a good *rishta* was examined for its intertwined indigenous connotations: that of a proposal, a match, and finally a connection. Whilst strategic considerations of wealth, influence or opportunity come into play in assessing what constitutes a good proposal, I argued that *rishta* as connection highlights the role of marriages in strengthening the bonds of kinship. Transnational marriages amplify these different elements of *rishta* as connection, increasing the gains that can be made by marriage connections to new lands, and the dangers that connections between kin will be weakened by the introduction of greater distance.

The following chapter provided further scope for the incorporation of emotion in models of transnational marriage by focussing on another of the definitions of *rishta*, that of a match. Parents' concern to secure the happiness of their children, it was argued, leads to increased numbers of marriages between close kin in the hope of finding a spouse who is literally a good match in the form of similarities that will ensure compatibility. Again, transnational marriages heighten pre-existing motivations by increasing the risk of deception or marital breakdown that kin marriages are generally thought to deter, and as residence in a non-Islamic society may lead those seeking *rishte* to think of local candidates as morally suspect.

Women are considered to be particularly vulnerable in marriage, largely due to the tradition of virilocal residence, which leaves them open to mistreatment in their in-laws' home. Where Chapter Five examined the use of an elongated marriage process and other mechanisms to protect British brides, Chapter Six went on to discuss instances in which these measures had failed to ensure the success of the marriage. Here I outlined the dangers of souring relations within wider kin networks that are inherent in this situation. Yasmin's story was subjected to a more detailed examination in order to put flesh on the bones of one of the men who appear in such womens' narratives: her father. His reaction to the failure of his daughter's marriage and pressure from his relatives were examined in terms of 'izzat or honour. Although honour is often implicitly contrasted with emotion, so that parents who kill their children for the sake of family honour are seen as violating the emotional bonds between parent and child, I argued that this case presents moments at which 'izzat and emotion are experientially elided as personal honour and the suffering of a beloved daughter are experienced as anger that, in turn, motivates Yasmin's fathers' subsequent action.

This forensic exploration of male emotion is continued in Chapter Seven, which proposed a model of the unhappy *ghar dāmād*. These two chapters form a tentative exploration of the gendering of emotion in Pakistani discourse and practice surrounding marriage. Whilst women are often associated with risk, loss and love, and men with control, 'izzat and anger, the material presented across this thesis provides much needed glimpses of how these stereotypes merge into a more complex and context-dependant whole when cross-sex relationships are examined.

By investigating men's expectations of marriage, I argued, a better understanding can be achieved of the frustrations that face some immigrant husbands. Such an approach redeems husbands from appearing as mere ciphers or two-dimensional villains. They become comprehensible and human characters. It is perhaps here that the political necessity of integrating emotion into models of transnational arranged marriage becomes most clear. By understanding the cultural, social and economic forces that may lead some immigrant Pakistani husbands to mistreat or abandon their wives, it becomes possible to envision services and policies that could ameliorate the situation. These might include the provision of the kind of community group support more often available to women, or language courses and practical tuition in the skills needed to negotiate the employment and immigration systems, at times that are convenient for men who may be working long hours and nightshifts in order to make ends meet. As the British authorities are currently concerned about the political activities of some mosques, a strong argument could be made for governmental funding for the creation of alternative social spaces for such young men. More generally, an understanding of the intensity with which transnational marriages are bound up not just with migration strategies, but also emotional relationships, is vital to allow service providers and policy maker to address this practice sensitively and avoid criticism such as that recently levelled at David Blunkett over his immigration White Paper and documented in the Introduction to this thesis. These marriages are often between people who are often not greatly attached to each other before their engagement, but they reach to the heart of bonds between parents and children, and migrants and distant siblings, and have implications for the harmony of much wider kin relations.

In the Introduction I noted that legal anthropology has been accused of pathologising its subject, dealing predominantly with matters coming into contact with the judicial system: relationships gone wrong and laws that have been broken. One fear in writing this thesis has been that my focus on emotion might be open to a similar criticism. It is probably true that a disproportionate amount of the material presented in this thesis concerns fears about and

examples of marriages going badly. The emotions discussed in these chapters are largely (with the exception of the caring attachments between kin, spouses and friends) negative ones: risk, fear, loss, loneliness, frustration, and anger.

One defence of this apparent bias is, of course, that these are also the preoccupations of my informants. Whilst successful marriages are talked about, they do not provide the rich source of fascination and gossip of those that go wrong. In a context in which many are considering marriage choices for themselves, their children or siblings, these instances provide a vehicle both for examining risk and for justifying decisions. In addition, most of my conversations on these matters have been with women, and there may be a tendency among Pakistani women to dwell on the negative. Such displays of endurance have, after all, been described as one way in which Pakistani *Puxtun* women create and demonstrate honour (Grima 2002). In other cases, interviews and conversations with me may have provided opportunities to discuss problems and unhappiness with an 'outsider' without fear of repercussion or stigma. One young woman who described her difficult marriage at length ended by comparing our interview to therapy.

I do not, however, rule out the possibility that my own interests have also steered the research in this direction. In the proposal for this research, I outlined the cases of three women who had inspired the project: one whose husband had abandoned her soon after she arrived in Britain, another who told me she had wanted a husband from Pakistan so that she would be able to tell him how things worked here and so have more control in the marriage, and a third who valued the religious commitment she felt she shared with her Pakistani husband. Part of the motivation for this study was to counteract the overwhelmingly negative popular portrayal of transnational marriages, in which women are portrayed as at best passive recipients of parental direction, or mere pawns in their relatives' plans for the migration of family members, and at worst the victims of coercion and sometimes violence. Two of the three women were very happy with their marriages at the time I first met them, and both British-born wives had actively decided on the choice of a spouse from Pakistan. When I revisited these two women during the course of my research, however, I found their lives had changed. The feisty young wife who told me that she would work for several years before having children in order to put her husband through courses of study is now a contented mother. But the shock came when I heard that the last couple, whose religiously-inspired match had seemed so encouraging, had split up amid rumours of domestic violence. When I met up with the young woman again, now with two children, she told me a story of great unhappiness. The first woman I mentioned, from Pakistan, remains in a similar position to when we first met, living alone with her child and hoping that her husband will eventually

return to her. The balance in the cases on which I had initially chosen to focus had thus shifted from a positive to a negative majority. Of course, this was an arbitrary and tiny sample, but it is conceivable that this sad encounter early on in my research with the failure of what had seemed a promising marriage may have influenced the focus of later discussions. As Mitchell notes:

... anthropologists are not just learners. We are also rememberers. We talk to people, watch them and make notes – elaborating our notes later on, on the basis of our memories. Even if we record our informants on audio or video tape, we still rely on our memories for context. Our memories, or ‘head notes’, as Ottenberg (1990: 144) first called them, give us the overall feel for the ethnographic situation that leads us, almost instinctively, to ‘make sense’ of what we experience in the field. They are the raw materials with which we make our interpretations of particular situations, and from which we create our representations of those interpretation: the ethnographic text (1997: 91-2).

He goes on:

But the memories of fieldwork do not exist in a social vacuum. Because we learn in a social setting, our memories of that setting are also social. Our memories as ethnographers are bound up in the memories of our informants, whose semiotic, practical and emotional knowledge is bound up in ours (1997: 91-2).

These unhappy stories are not just aspects of my fieldwork experience, but are also part of the memories of my informants. Nevertheless, in many cases, transnational Pakistani marriages work well. Even those with rocky beginnings can develop into caring and positive unions. This thesis has been an attempt to ‘balance the picture’ in several ways: in filling in a gap in the literature on contemporary Pakistani diasporic kinship practices; providing ethnography to counterbalance the ‘top down’ perspective of much writing on transnationalism and globalisation; introducing emotion into a predominantly strategic view of marriage, and the voices of women into arrangements sometimes presented as controlled by men. Here, I would like to balance the picture in one final way, by presenting a vignette of a successful transnational marriage. This closing portrait is of ‘modern’, urban young people behaving in non-’traditional’ ways. I do not wish to suggest that this is the only model for a good relationship, it is merely a pleasant and positive image with which to close this work, ending as it does with the cinematic cliché of a young couple walking off into the sunset.

On a visit to Bristol during the writing up of this thesis, I attended an open-air musical event in the city centre one evening, where I met Tariq and Miriyam. He is a Bristolian young professional. Miriyam, his educated and beautiful wife from a prestigious area of Lahore, was wearing flowing Western clothes. I introduced them to the White friends

I was with, and we enjoyed a pleasant chat about my research during which their affection for each other was obvious. I noticed that she frequently touched her husband as we talked, and I joked with the couple about the disapproval such behaviour would attract in Pakistan. Miriyam told me about the part time job that she enjoyed, and how nice it was that her sister was also married in Bristol and lived locally. Later, when they left, hand in hand, to attend a dinner engagement with relatives, one of my White companions looked after them with envy, not believing that such a happy outcome could be the product of an arranged marriage between two people who were relatives, but barely knew each other when they married.

Glossary

The following Urdu and Punjabi words appear more than once in the text. Where words have multiple meanings, I have given the senses in which they are used in this thesis. The transliteration system used is that set out in Platts (2000 [1884]).

`izzat	Honour
bāhar	Outside
barādarī	Patrilineage, kindred
bārāt	Marriage procession, groom's party
barī	Wedding gifts sent from the bridegroom's family to the bride (Punjabi : <i>varī</i>)
besti	Contraction of be-'izzatī: dishonour, insult
ćā'e	Tea
dāmād	Son-in-law
desi	Of or belonging to a country, native, indigenous; homemade; local; provincial
ḡholkī	Small drum.
dupattā	Long flowing scarf
ghar	House, household
gorā/ gorī	White, fair-skinned, White man/woman
hāth	Hand
ḡjāb	Headscarf
jahez	Dowry
jamā'ī	Son-in-law.
lahḡgā	Long skirt
lālćī	Greedy
laḡkā/ laḡkī	Boy/girl
mahr	Money given by groom to bride
māmū	Mother's brother
meḡhdī	Henna, celebration held before a wedding when henna patterns are traditionally

	applied to the bride's hands and feet
milnā	To meet, to be met, to mix
muñh-dikhāī	Occassion of showing the bride's face.
nikāḥ	Islamic marriage
nikāḥ-nāma	Islamic marriage contract
pindu	Village-y
qaum	People, nation, caste
qismat	Fate, destiny, fortune
rishta	Relationship, connection
rishta-dar	Relative
rukḥṣatī	When the bride departs to cohabit with her husband
salāmī	Congratulatory present of money
shādī	Wedding
shalwār-qamīṣ	Tunic and loose trousers
shar`ī	Relating to religious law
sunnat	Traditions and sayings of the prophet
tel	Oil
ubṭan	Yellow paste containing turmeric
walīma	Meal to celebrate the arrival of the bride in her in-law's home
waṭṭā-saṭṭā	The marriage of a brother and sister to another brother and sister, so that the brother's wife is the husband's sister.
ẓarūrat	Need, want
ẓāt	Caste

Appendix: Excerpt from UK immigration rules

SPOUSES

277. Nothing in these Rules shall be construed as permitting a person to be granted entry clearance, leave to enter, leave to remain or variation of leave as a spouse of another if the applicant will be aged under 16 or the sponsor will be aged under 18 on the date of arrival in the United Kingdom or (as the case may be) on the date on which the leave to remain or variation of leave would be granted.

278. Nothing in these Rules shall be construed as allowing a person to be granted entry clearance, leave to enter, leave to remain or variation of leave as the spouse of a man or woman (the sponsor) if:

- (i) his or her marriage to the sponsor is polygamous; and
- (ii) there is another person living who is the husband or wife of the sponsor and who:
 - (a) is, or at any time since his or her marriage to the sponsor has been, in the United Kingdom; or
 - (b) has been granted a certificate of entitlement in respect of the right of abode mentioned in Section 2(1)(a) of the Immigration Act 1988 or an entry clearance to enter the United Kingdom as the husband or wife of the sponsor.

For the purpose of this paragraph a marriage may be polygamous although at its inception neither party had any other spouse.

279. Paragraph 278 does not apply to any person who seeks entry clearance, leave to enter, leave to remain or variation of leave where:

- (i) he or she has been in the United Kingdom before 1 August 1988 having been admitted for the purpose of settlement as the husband or wife of the sponsor; or
- (ii) he or she has, since their marriage to the sponsor, been in the United Kingdom at any time when there was no such other spouse living as is mentioned in paragraph 278 (ii).

But where a person claims that paragraph 278 does not apply to them because they have been in the United Kingdom in circumstances which cause them to fall within sub paragraphs (i) or (ii) of that paragraph it shall be for them to prove that fact.

280. For the purposes of paragraphs 278 and 279 the presence of any wife or husband in the United Kingdom in any of the following circumstances shall be disregarded:

- (i) as a visitor; or
- (ii) an illegal entrant; or
- (iii) in circumstances whereby a person is deemed by Section 11(1) of the Immigration Act 1971 not to have entered the United Kingdom.

SPOUSES OF PERSONS PRESENT AND SETTLED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM OR BEING ADMITTED ON THE SAME OCCASION FOR SETTLEMENT

Requirements for leave to enter the United Kingdom with a view to settlement as the spouse of a person present and settled in the United Kingdom or being admitted on the same occasion for settlement

281. The requirements to be met by a person seeking leave to enter the United Kingdom with a view to settlement as the spouse of a person present and settled in the United Kingdom or who is on the same occasion being admitted for settlement are that:

(i) (a) the applicant is married to a person present and settled in the United Kingdom or who is on the same occasion being admitted for settlement; or

(b) the applicant is married to a person who has a right of abode in the United Kingdom or indefinite leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom and is on the same occasion seeking admission to the United Kingdom for the purposes of settlement and the parties were married at least 4 years ago, since which time they have been living together outside the United Kingdom; and

(ii) the parties to the marriage have met; and

(iii) each of the parties intends to live permanently with the other as his or her spouse and the marriage is subsisting; and

(iv) there will be adequate accommodation for the parties and any dependants without recourse to public funds in accommodation which they own or occupy exclusively; and

(v) the parties will be able to maintain themselves and any dependants adequately without recourse to public funds; and

(vi) the applicant holds a valid United Kingdom entry clearance for entry in this capacity.

For the purposes of this paragraph and paragraphs 282-289 a member of HM Forces serving overseas, or a permanent member of HM Diplomatic Service or a comparable UK-based staff member of the British Council on a tour of duty abroad, or a staff member of the Department for International Development who is a British Citizen or is settled in the United Kingdom, is to be regarded as present and settled in the United Kingdom.

Leave to enter as the spouse of a person present and settled in the United Kingdom or being admitted for settlement on the same occasion

282. A person seeking leave to enter the United Kingdom as the spouse of a person present and settled in the United Kingdom or who is on the same occasion being admitted for settlement may, in the case of a person within paragraph 281(I)(a), be admitted for an initial period not exceeding 2 years or, in the case of a person within paragraph 281(I)(b), indefinite leave to enter may be granted provided a

valid United Kingdom entry clearance for entry in the appropriate capacity is produced to the Immigration Officer on arrival.

Refusal of leave to enter as the spouse of a person present and settled in the United Kingdom or being admitted on the same occasion for settlement

283. Leave to enter the United Kingdom as the spouse of a person present and settled in the United Kingdom or who is on the same occasion being admitted for settlement is to be refused if a valid United Kingdom entry clearance for entry in this capacity is not produced to the Immigration Officer on arrival.

Requirements for an extension of stay as the spouse of a person present and settled in the United Kingdom

284. The requirements for an extension of stay as the spouse of a person present and settled in the United Kingdom are that:

- (i) the applicant has limited leave to remain in the United Kingdom, other than where that limited leave is of 6 months' duration or less; and
- (ii) is married to a person present and settled in the United Kingdom; and
- (iii) the parties to the marriage have met; and
- (iv) the applicant has not remained in breach of the immigration laws; and
- (v) the marriage has not taken place after a decision has been made to deport the applicant or he has been recommended for deportation or been given notice under Section 6(2) of the Immigration Act 1971; and
- (vi) each of the parties intends to live permanently with the other as his or her spouse and the marriage is subsisting; and
- (vii) there will be adequate accommodation for the parties and any dependants without recourse to public funds in accommodation which they own or occupy exclusively; and
- (viii) the parties will be able to maintain themselves and any dependants adequately without recourse to public funds.

Extension of stay as the spouse of a person present and settled in the United Kingdom

285. An extension of stay as the spouse of a person present and settled in the United Kingdom may be granted for a period of 2 years in the first instance, provided the Secretary of State is satisfied that each of the requirements of paragraph 284 is met.

Refusal of extension of stay as the spouse of a person present and settled in the United Kingdom

286. An extension of stay as the spouse of a person present and settled in the United Kingdom is to be refused if the Secretary of State is not satisfied that each of the requirements of paragraph 284 is met.

Requirements for indefinite leave to remain for the spouse of a person present and settled in the United Kingdom

287. (a) The requirements for indefinite leave to remain for the spouse of a person present and settled in the United Kingdom are that:

- (i) the applicant was admitted to the United Kingdom or given an extension of stay for a period of 2 years and has completed a period of 12 months as the spouse of a person present and settled in the United Kingdom; and
- (ii) the applicant is still the spouse of the person he or she was admitted or granted an extension of stay to join and the marriage is subsisting; and
- (iii) each of the parties intends to live permanently with the other as his or her spouse; and
- (iv) there will be adequate accommodation for the parties and any dependants without recourse to public funds in accommodation which they own or occupy exclusively; and
- (v) the parties will be able to maintain themselves and any dependants adequately without recourse to public funds.

(b) The requirements for indefinite leave to remain for the bereaved spouse of a person who was present and settled in the United Kingdom are that:

- (i) the applicant was admitted to the United Kingdom or given an extension of stay for a period of 2 years as the spouse of a person present and settled in the United Kingdom; and
- (ii) the person whom the applicant was admitted or granted an extension of stay to join died during that 2 year period; and
- (iii) the applicant was still the spouse of the person he or she was admitted or granted an extension of stay to join at the time of the death; and
- (iv) each of the parties intended to live permanently with the other as his or her spouse and the marriage was subsisting at the time of the death.

Indefinite leave to remain for the spouse of a person present and settled in the United Kingdom

288. Indefinite leave to remain for the spouse of a person present and settled in the United Kingdom may be granted provided the Secretary of State is satisfied that each of the requirements of paragraph 287 is met.

Refusal of indefinite leave to remain for the spouse of a person present and settled in the United Kingdom

289. Indefinite leave to remain for the spouse of a person present and settled in the United Kingdom is to be refused if the Secretary of State is not satisfied that each of the requirements of paragraph 287 is met.

Refusal of indefinite leave to remain in the United Kingdom as the victim of domestic violence

289A. The requirements to be met by a person who is the victim of domestic violence and who is seeking indefinite leave to remain in the United Kingdom are that the applicant:

- (i) was admitted to the United Kingdom or given an extension of stay for a period of 2 years as the spouse of a person present and settled here; or
- (ii) was admitted to the United Kingdom or given an extension of stay for a period of 2 years as the unmarried partner of a person present and settled here; and
- (iii) the relationship with their spouse or unmarried partner, as appropriate, was subsisting at the beginning of the relevant period of leave or extension of stay referred to in (i) or (ii) above; and
- (iv) is able to produce such evidence as may be required by the Secretary of State to establish that the relationship was caused to permanently break down before the end of that period as a result of domestic violence.

Indefinite leave to remain as the victim of domestic violence

289B. Indefinite leave to remain as the victim of domestic violence may be granted provided the Secretary of State is satisfied that each of the requirements of paragraph 289A is met.

Refusal of indefinite leave to remain as the victim of domestic violence

289C. Indefinite leave to remain as the victim of domestic violence is to be refused if the Secretary of State is not satisfied that each of the requirements of paragraph 287A is met.

FIANCÉ(E)S

289AA. Nothing in these Rules shall be construed as permitting a person to be granted entry clearance, leave to enter or variation of leave as a fiancé(e) if the applicant will be aged under 16 or the sponsor will aged under 18 on the date of arrival of the applicant in the United Kingdom or (as the case may be) on the date on which the leave to enter or variation of leave would be granted.

Requirements for leave to enter the United Kingdom as a fiancé(e) (ie with a view to marriage and permanent settlement in the United Kingdom)

290. The requirements to be met by a person seeking leave to enter the United Kingdom as a fiancé(e) are that:

- (i) the applicant is seeking leave to enter the United Kingdom for marriage to a person present and settled in the United Kingdom or who is on the same occasion being admitted for settlement; and
- (ii) the parties to the proposed marriage have met; and
- (iii) each of the parties intends to live permanently with the other as his or her spouse after the marriage; and

- (iv) adequate maintenance and accommodation without recourse to public funds will be available for the applicant until the date of the marriage; and
- (v) there will, after the marriage, be adequate accommodation for the parties and any dependants without recourse to public funds in accommodation which they own or occupy exclusively; and
- (vi) the parties will be able after the marriage to maintain themselves and any dependants adequately without recourse to public funds; and
- (vii) the applicant holds a valid United Kingdom entry clearance for entry in this capacity.

290A. For the purposes of paragraph 290 and paragraphs 291-295, an EEA national who, under either the Immigration (European Economic Area) Order 1994 or the 2000 EEA Regulations, has been issued with a residence permit valid for 5 years is to be regarded as present and settled in the United Kingdom even if that EEA national has not been granted permission to remain in the United Kingdom indefinitely.

Leave to enter as a fiancé(e)

291. A person seeking leave to enter the United Kingdom as a fiancé(e) may be admitted, with a prohibition on employment, for a period not exceeding 6 months to enable the marriage to take place provided a valid United Kingdom entry clearance for entry in this capacity is produced to the Immigration Officer on arrival.

Refusal of leave to enter as a fiancé(e)

292. Leave to enter the United Kingdom as a fiancé(e) is to be refused if a valid United Kingdom entry clearance for entry in this capacity is not produced to the Immigration Officer on arrival.

Requirements for an extension of stay as a fiancé(e)

293. The requirements for an extension of stay as a fiancé(e) are that:

- (i) the applicant was admitted to the United Kingdom with a valid United Kingdom entry clearance as a fiancé(e); and
- (ii) good cause is shown why the marriage did not take place within the initial period of leave granted under paragraph 291; and
- (iii) there is satisfactory evidence that the marriage will take place at an early date; and
- (iv) the requirements of paragraph 290 (ii)-(vi) are met.

Extension of stay as a fiancé(e)

294. An extension of stay as a fiancé(e) may be granted for an appropriate period with a prohibition on employment to enable the marriage to take place provided the Secretary of State is satisfied that each of the requirements of paragraph 293 is met.

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