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FAMILY ABUSE IN SCOTLAND

Contesting Universalisations and
Reconceptualising Agency

Nughmana Mirza

PhD in Social Policy
University of Edinburgh
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Author's declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Edinburgh or any other institution.

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ABSTRACT

By focusing on women's lived experiences of family abuse, this thesis argues that state policy shows a lack of understanding of the nature of family abuse in one of Scotland's largest minority communities: South Asian Muslims. Through a combination of a critical exploration of mainstream conceptualisations of domestic abuse, empirical research and policy analysis, I argue that by focusing on one-dimensional explanations such as gender and culture, state policy and some research evade the more practical and structural issues that operate against women. By adopting an intersectional approach, I focus on the complex interplay between factors such as socio-economic status and structural inequalities at the micro- and macro-levels bound up with experiences of family abuse. Through in-depth interviews with South Asian Muslim women, this thesis highlights the specificity and complexity of South Asian Muslim women's experiences of family abuse within the home, framed through the impact of kinship structures and immigration status. Furthermore, my focus on the macro- as well as the micro-level brings to light structural inequalities and harmful policies, such as immigration rules, that act as additional constraints on women in abusive relationships.

This thesis then examines women's strategies and choices within abusive relationships by exploring the relationship between agency and oppression. I identify a crucial point: access to resources, such as economic support, ultimately shapes women's strategies, including if, when and how to exit. I do not posit an overarching theory to explain family abuse, nor do I offer one key solution to the problem. I do, however, argue for nuanced and sensitive policymaking not only for South Asian women, but for all marginalised women. By underlining the specific experiences of one group of women I emphasise that needs are likely to differ in other groups of women.

Keywords: family abuse; Scotland; multiculturalism; intersectionality; agency; oppression; South Asian; Muslim; Pakistani

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GLOSSARY

Afsos – Sympathy

Allah – God

Arthi – Corpse

Azān – The Islamic call to prayer

Azādi – Freedom

Be-ghairat – Dishonorable

Be-sharām – Shameful

Birāderī – Close relatives and all caste members

Doli – Bridal palanquin

Eid (id) – Muslim festival marking the end of Ramadhān

Ghar-jamāī – The in-living son-in-law

Gore – White people

Hajj – The holy pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia

Imām – Islamic religious specialist, usually the leader of prayers at a mosque

Izzat – Respect

Jumā – Friday prayer

Lenā-denā – Taking and giving

Namāz – The five daily prayers

Parāyā dhān – Property belonging to someone else

Qur'an – The Holy Book of Islam

Ramadhān – The ninth month of the Islamic year, when Muslims fast from dawn to dusk

Ristedārī – Relationship

Sharām – Shame

Shaykh – Islamic scholar

Zimmadārī – Responsibility

Transliteration

The transliteration of the Pakistan-born interviewees' quotes from Urdu to English follows John T. Platt's (1911) *A Dictionary of Urdu, Classical Hindi and English*. For simplicity, I have not demarcated the different T, D, F, S, or Z. I am only specifying the long and short vowels.

The long vowel *ā* sounds like 'far', or 'father'; the short vowel *a* like the English *a* in 'apple'; *ī* as in the word 'police'; *i* as in the word 'it'; *e* as in the French 'é'; *ū* as in the word 'rule'; *u* as in the word 'under'; *ō* as in the word 'owner'; *o* as in the word 'on'.

ABBREVIATIONS

CAADA – Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse
DVR – Domestic Violence Rule
DAP – Domestic Abuse Project
ESRC – Economic Social and Research Council
EU – European Union
HMIC – Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary
ILR – Indefinite Leave to Remain
MARAC – Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MAT – Muslim Arbitration Tribunal
MWRC – Muslim Women’s Resource Centre
NAWP – Newham Asian Women’s Project
NKS – Nari Kallyan Shangho
NRPF – No Recourse to Public Funds
SCJS – Scottish Crime and Justice Survey
SBS – Southall Black Sisters
WHO – World Health Organization

Kinship Terminology

I adopted the standard notation structure for kinship terminology adopted by anthropologists:

M = Mother	F = Father
W = Wife	H = Husband
D = Daughter	S = Son
Z = Sister	B = Brother
e = elder	y = younger

These can be combined to describe the full range of kin relationships which conform to kin terms used in South Asia more generally, and those expressed by the interviewees, as in ‘HeBW’ (a woman’s husband’s elder brother’s wife). In South Asia the English term sister-in-law can mean one of the following: the ‘HBW’ (husband’s brother’s wife), ‘HZ’ (a woman’s husband’s sister), and ‘BW’ (brother’s wife). They have distinct roles, rights and responsibilities as well as different kinship terms in Urdu.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis argues that women's experience of family abuse must be understood within the context of women's individual positions at the micro- and macro-levels: the family and the state. This claim rests on the foundation of my work with a particular marginalised population in Scotland – South Asian Muslim women – exploring their own understandings of how they came to, experienced and ultimately left abusive situations. By adopting an intersectional approach, I argue that state policy and mainstream conceptualisations of domestic abuse, which focus on one-dimensional explanations of abuse such as gender and culture, evade the more practical and structural issues that operate against abused women. Through in-depth interviews with South Asian Muslim women, I show how women's experience of abuse at the micro-level, framed through the impact of kinship structures and immigration status, are affected by policymaking decisions and service-provision responses at the macro-level. Furthermore, access to resources, such as economic support, ultimately shapes women's strategies and choices within abusive relationships, including if, when and how to 'exit' these relationships. The themes explored in this study, such as household structures and affinal kin relationships (HM, HZ), must feature in policy documents and state responses. Furthermore, the UK Government must critically evaluate policies, particularly immigration rules, that add to, and intensify, women's constraints and vulnerabilities. This thesis pushes for nuanced and sensitive policymaking not only for South Asian women, but for all marginalised women. This, however, cannot be achieved without the inclusion of their voices, opinions and needs.

Domestic abuse is a social ill, understood to be rooted in the historical inequalities between men and women and recognised as an obstacle to equality, development and safety (Thiara and Gill, 2010a: 15). According to the Scottish Government (2009: 10), one in four women will experience domestic abuse from a partner in their lifetime. Domestic abuse, a key policy priority of the state, was defined by the (then) Scottish Executive (2003: 3) as

consisting of physical, sexual, and mental and emotional abuse, ‘perpetrated by partners or ex-partners’ within the home. Additionally, mainstream literature and some feminists conceptualise it as a universal phenomenon, affecting women in all societies irrespective of race, class and faith. Researchers such as Gangoli et al. (2011: 35) have, however, challenged this perspective for representing a unified category of relationships (intimate), context (nuclear household) and image of women (white western) which does not represent or encapsulate the reality and diversity of women’s experiences of abuse. It is not representative of the structures and multiple relationships I deal with in this thesis; that is a joint, extended patrilocal social unit where two or more generations of close relatives, who are affiliated by blood and/or relationship, live together (Wardak, 2000). These relationships include the husband’s mother (HM), the husband’s sister (HZ), and the husband’s brother’s wife (HBW).

While there are commonalities in women’s experiences based on gender, researchers such as Thiara and Gill (2010b: 44) point to the specificity of South Asian women’s experiences both in the nature of abuse and the barriers to help-seeking. Anitha (2011: 1271) and Abraham (2008: 314) argue that South Asian women who have insecure immigration status, and who live in an extended patriarchal affinal household, experience specific and intense forms of spousal abuse. Immigration status can itself isolate migrant South Asian women who enter the host country with little or no economic, social, linguistic or familial resources and support (Menjivar and Salcido, 2002: 906). Immigration status (and all the factors associated with it) not only intensifies and facilitates the abuse experienced by women, but also creates new methods by which perpetrators can control and dominate women. Moreover, this exemplifies that as well as distinctions between categories of women, there is also differentiation within categories of women; in the context of this research, between UK-born Pakistani and Pakistan-born women. Researchers such as Fernandez (1997) and Raj et al. (2006: 942) elucidate the role of wider kin in the abuse and oppression of other women: mothers-in-law (HM) and sometimes sisters-in-law (HZ) can instigate and perpetrate family abuse against in-married women; and lack of natal kin support post-marriage, and (sometimes) pressure to stay in an abusive relationship due to factors such as socio-economics. Contrary to mainstream conceptualisations, it is one

woman weighed down by multiple perpetrators, multiple relationships, and multiple constraints. Furthermore, all too often such abuse is separated from the wider political and socio-economic environment in which it emerges (Gill and Thiara, 2010: 238). Women's groups such as Southall Black Sisters (SBS) have demonstrated South Asian women's struggles within the context of the UK Government's multiculturalism and assimilation agendas (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 105).

Women's groups have criticised the UK Government's multiculturalism agenda, which arguably places an overemphasis on cultural sensitivity, as having shielded from scrutiny discriminatory practices affecting women and girls in the South Asian community (Phillips, 2010: 2). Women's groups are not, however, questioning the defining principles of multiculturalism, namely that minority groups are disadvantaged and institutional and societal changes are required to remedy this. Rather, their concern lies with women having to bear the costs of these changes (Phillips, 2007: 10). Even Susan Moller Okin (1999: 13) known for her controversial essay, 'Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?' saw the two projects (gender equality and multiculturalism) as 'in some ways, related struggles'. She goes on to argue that what we need to strive for 'is a form of multiculturalism that gives the issues of gender and other intra-group inequalities their due – that is to say, a multiculturalism that effectively treats all persons as each other's moral equal'.

The assumption that feminism and multiculturalism are 'natural allies' is out of step with current media and political opinion (Phillips, 2010: 2). Phillips (2010: 3) argues that multiculturalism is increasingly described as a 'misguided failure of nerve in liberal democracies that need more confidently to assert their own identities and values'. The 'retreat' from multiculturalism (Joppke, 2004: 243) has been attributed to its failure to integrate newcomers and its promotion of 'parallel lives', arguing that the accommodation of diversity has gone too far and is challenging 'our' way of life (Phillips, 2007: 5). The consensus of 'beyond multiculturalism' within British policy and public debate is rooted in ideas of social cohesion, common values and shared citizenship (Kymlicka, 2010: 98). Joppke (2004: 249) notes a 'seismic shift' from a language of multiculturalism to one of civic integration and assimilation to British core values. He further believes that the emphasis on civic integration accounts for the increasing willingness of governments to

tackle issues of gender abuse within ethnic minority communities. Therefore, gender equality has become an elevated feature of government policy and practice, tackling practices that were once considered private, such as domestic abuse and forced marriage, in the public domain.

The problem with any assimilationist model of integration, however, is that by promoting ideas of commonality, in practice there is a risk of deploying notions of inferiority and superiority in relation to certain cultures (Vlopp, 1996: 1602). It creates a cultural hierarchy where some cultures are 'more advanced' and others are 'more backward'. Within this hierarchy the West is portrayed as a model of progress and modernity, where the notion of the rational 'free self' is deeply embedded, and the South Asian community is portrayed as being the antithesis of this. Furthermore, the treatment of women is employed to differentiate between the two, and has been employed within debates on multiculturalism and civic integration. Phillips (2010: 3) argues that when the rights of women are used as a marker of modern, liberal societies, it creates a stereotypical binary of 'Western', liberal societies and 'non-Western', illiberal societies. Consequently, this not only represents the South Asian community as resistant to gender equality, but also assumes that South Asian women are passive in the face of abuse and are dictated to by a backward culture which, for example, inhibits women's access to help-seeking (Gill and Mitra-Kahn, 2010: 145). In response, the UK Government has devised policies that are intended to 'save' women by facilitating their exit from harmful communities and abusive relationships (Phillips, 2007: 133). This right to leave operates if women do not agree with the majority beliefs and practices within their community and families, seeking egalitarian alternatives outside (Gill and Mitra-Kahn, 2010: 141). This approach has a number of implications for South Asian women, particularly for those experiencing family abuse: firstly, it elides forces beyond culture (structural, economic, political) that affect women's lives (Vlopp, 2005: 39); secondly, it reduces women's agentic behaviour to physical acts of resistance such as leaving; and, thirdly, it overlooks the reality that state policy and practice not only intensify and facilitate abuse at the micro-level, but create new forms of oppression and constraints at the macro-level. These implications are notable in the effects of the UK Government's stringent immigration policies, such as 'the two-year rule' and 'no recourse to public funds'

(NRPF), on South Asian women's experiences of family abuse. Not only do immigration policies facilitate family abuse by providing perpetrators with new and effective ways to control and coerce women within the home, but also inhibit the exit of women who otherwise are faced with economic destitution (Phillips, 2007: 147; Anitha, 2008: 194).

Considering the potential ramifications of one-dimensional understandings of South Asian women's experiences of abuse, contemporary feminist scholars promote an intersectional approach, in which structural inequalities such as race, class and gender are taken into account (Crenshaw, 1995; Anitha, 2011), and which recognise the 'simultaneous, multiple and interlocking' ways that culture intersects with these inequalities (Mann and Grimes, 2001: 8). Through an exploration of South Asian women's lived experiences of family abuse, I attempt to elucidate a more nuanced understanding of family abuse, in which the significance of culture and gender is taken into account without these aspects of identity becoming catch-all explanations. In doing so, this thesis aims to elucidate two key points: firstly, women's experiences are not the same simply because they are women, but rather that differences exist between categories of women and within categories of women; and, secondly, the complexity and diversity of South Asian women's experiences of family abuse cannot be reduced to culture alone. As an analyst, it is my task to unpack one-dimensional understandings and look to the bigger picture of practical factors that add to women's constraints in a family abuse context.

Following Chapter One, which offers a reflexive discussion of the methodology employed in this thesis, Chapter Two interrogates mainstream academic literature, policy, and certain feminist conceptualisations of domestic abuse, exploring in more detail the issues alluded to above. I have structured the remainder of this thesis into three parts each with an introductory preamble, which outlines themes and the rationale for the coupling together of those specific chapters.

Part One: 'The Family'

The aim and contribution of this part of the thesis is to show that, contrary to mainstream conceptualisations, South Asian women's experiences of abuse are rooted in multiple relationships and complicated family structures that play a pivotal role in these experiences.

By utilising Stark's coercive control model (2013), Chapter Three begins with a descriptive exploration of women's experiences of spousal abuse within the home. This is followed by the specificity of, and differentiation between, South Asian women's experiences created by immigration status and wider kin abuse. Drawing on interviewees' accounts, it demonstrates that recently arrived migrant women are more vulnerable to spousal abuse than those born in the UK or those with UK citizenship. A woman's immigration status also creates new forms of coercion and control that are not mentioned in policy documents, such as threats of deportation.

The interviewees' accounts also elucidated the role of female affinal kin (HM, HZ), which is the central theme of Chapter Four. I show that mothers-in-laws' instigation and perpetration of family abuse is best understood, and explained, by utilising a domestic abuse framework. The tactics employed by mothers-in-law resonate with Stark's coercive control model (2013): tactics of control, isolation and degradation. The interviewees' accounts show the intensity of abuse South Asian women can experience within an extended family structure, where they can be subjected to simultaneous physical abuse and threats from both their mother-in-law (and sometimes HZ) and spouse.

Prohibiting and limiting natal kin contact is an effective tool of control and isolation utilised by affinal kin (H, HM) and is the central theme of Chapter Five. I argue that this blocks natal kin support, as women have no means by which to inform them of the abuse. Additionally, the interviewees' accounts demonstrate that natal kin involvement in post-marital family abuse can range from lack of support, pressurising women to stay in an abusive marriage, or encouraging them to leave. Ultimately, natal kin support can be shaped and limited by factors such as economics, distance, type of marriage and cultural ideologies of honour and shame.

Part Two: 'The State and Community'

The central aim and the main contribution of this part of the thesis is to elucidate the manner in which the micro- and macro-levels are intertwined by critically exploring government policy and how it directly impinges on women's experiences of abuse within the home and the community. An exploration of how women's experiences of kinship,

immigration and socio-economic status intersect with structural factors, policymaking decisions and service-provision responses to shape women's experiences of abuse, constraints, and help-seeking.

In Chapter Six, I turn to discourse that highlights the oppressive nature of the community within the framework of critiquing the UK Government's simultaneous and often-conflicting agendas, particularly those of multiculturalism and gender equality. By utilising the development of Shariah Councils and Muslim Arbitration Tribunals (MAT) as an example, I argue that the 'non-interventionist' approach taken by the government has not only served to privatise mediation of family law matters, but also exacerbate the existing pressure women experience from the community to stay in violent homes and marriages.

In light of such issues, the UK Government has adopted policies that expose women to new forms of constraints and oppression, the central theme of Chapter Seven. I offer an analysis of how immigration policies, such as the 'two-year rule', the 'Domestic Violence Rule' (DVR) and 'no resource to public funds' (NRPF), interact with family abuse by equipping perpetrators with powerful tools to oppress South Asian women. This chapter indicates how government policies thereby impact on women's distress and pose significant obstacles to exit.

Anitha (2008: 197) argues that it is all too often assumed by research studies that South Asian women's help-seeking, or lack thereof, is shaped by cultural factors such as honour and shame. However, in Chapter Eight, I push for an understanding of South Asian women's experiences of, and barriers to, help-seeking that critically explore the adequacy of service provision. For instance, the Scottish Government (2009) has employed a multi-agency partnership and awareness-raising approach to tackling 'violence against women'. This, however, overlooks the reality that a migrant South Asian woman, for example, who cannot speak English, is severely isolated, and has no family support will have a lack of, or no, awareness of support services and rights. Moreover, the UK Government's 'symbolic' top-down interventions do not only fail to offer 'victim friendly' support, but have taken funding away from service providers working on the ground to help vulnerable women (Phillips, 2010: 3).

Part Three: Agency

In Chapter Nine, I concern myself with conceptualising women's agency in severely subordinated contexts. Drawing on the interviewees' accounts, I show that South Asian women employ a number of diverse strategies in oppressive contexts that range from compliance to more overt forms of resistance. These strategies are shaped by women's access to resources, and their survival and economic options outwith the marital relationship and the community: the more marginalised a woman is, the more difficult leaving becomes. Furthermore, leaving an abusive relationship can be difficult for any woman, but more so for South Asian women due to the factors specific to them. This is a reality that is overlooked by UK Government policies that are rooted in a right-to-exit rationale. Equally, I caution against painting a rosy image of women's agency or the efficacy of such resistance, which at times can be counter-productive and self-destructive. Chapter Ten provides a summary of the main points and arguments alluded to throughout this thesis. This is followed by a discussion of implications for policy and practice such as the inclusion of marginalised women's voices in order to achieve nuanced and sensitive policy and practice. The practicality and feasibility of such proposals are also explored in this chapter.

A Note on Terminology

The Scottish Government definition of, and terminology relating to, domestic abuse is unhelpful in understanding the complexity of South Asian women's experiences of family abuse. It works under the assumption of a nuclear family and intimate couple. As I will show in greater detail in Chapter Two, this does not reflect the structures I deal with in this thesis, such as extended family structures and female affinal kin. Because of this I use the terms 'spousal abuse' to encapsulate abuse between husband and wife, and 'family abuse' which pertains to wider kin abuse (HM, HZ).

There is much discussion regarding the use of the terms 'survivor' and 'victim', which have vastly different connotations (Anderson and Gold, 1994). For instance, victim implies powerlessness and denies agency. The interviewees overcame significant obstacles in order to leave the abusive relationship and 'victim' would not have done justice to their courage.

On the other hand, survivor denies the stark reality that some women die as a result of family abuse. In order to overcome this difficulty, I avoid using either of these terms, instead utilising the following: when speaking about women in general (i.e. all UK female citizens) I use phrases such as ‘non-South Asian women who experience abuse’ to distinguish them from ‘South Asian women who experience spousal abuse and family abuse’.

As I will show in Part Two of this thesis, the ‘state’ is complex and overlapping in the UK, where some matters are devolved from Westminster to Holyrood while others are not. Because of this it is crucial to clarify the terminology utilised in this thesis when referring to different parts of the state:

- ‘State policy and practice’ encapsulates UK and Scottish Governments, and all service providers.
- I refer to the ‘UK Government’ or ‘Scottish Government’ individually when matters pertain to them, or ‘the government’ when it concerns both.
- UK Government also requires qualification: in this thesis, I am dealing with policies from 1997 to present under Conservative (to April 1997), Labour (May 1997 to May 2010), and Coalition (May 2010 to present).
- ‘Service providers’ encapsulates public bodies, local authorities and front-line workers such as police officers, NHS staff, social workers, education professionals and women’s groups.

CHAPTER ONE

Research: Design, Methods and Ethics

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I outline the central aims and objectives of this research and the means by which it was achieved. Feminist approaches to social science in women's studies, particularly concerning domestic abuse, articulate guiding principles where, as stated by Fonow and Cook (2005: 2213), 'there isn't one correct feminist epistemology generating one correct feminist methodology'. In this way, methods can be varied and diverse, where feminist researchers do not need to feel overdetermined by having to collect evidence in one particular 'correct' way (Fonow and Cook, 2005: 2214). Furthermore, feminist researchers are not in agreement on the meaning and consequences of experience, justice, power and relationships. Despite divergence, Ramazanoğlu and Holland (2002: 3) argue that feminist research and methodology is 'imbued with particular theoretical, political and ethical concerns that make these varied approaches to social research distinctive'. Feminist methodology encourages reflexivity, which is the willingness and ability of researchers to reflect on and examine critically the nature of the research process, while not losing sight of ethics and harm (Lee, 1993: 106; Fonow and Cook, 2005: 2218). Focusing on this, I discuss the methodological foundations of this study, and the justification for method selection. This is followed by a description of the sampling and recruitment strategies I employed, and the difficulties I encountered in gaining access to subjects to interview. I outline the analytical framework of this study, such as the different stages of data analysis, transcription, and transliteration. Finally, I address ethical considerations, with particular attention to participant confidentiality, and personal and participant harm.

1.1 Research Aims and Questions

The primary aim of this research is to gain an insight into Muslim Pakistani women's lived experience of family abuse in Scotland at both the micro-level and macro-level: the family and the state. I show how women's experience of abuse at the micro-level, which is defined by women's individual positions at the intersection of kinship structures, marriage patterns, language and culture within the household, are affected by policymaking decisions and service-provision responses at the macro-level. I focus on the interplay of these two arenas, as opposed to viewing them as separate, individual levels distinct from one another.

According to Blaikie (2010), the significance and contribution of research can vary, depending on its audience and the expectations they hold of it. This research will add to the developing discourse that gives importance to women's voices and experiences as an essential element of understanding the social world it aims to explore. The literature on mainstream domestic abuse, by focusing solely on intimate relationships and gender inequality, overlooks the specificity and nature of South Asian women's experiences. Whilst not overlooking the similarities in women's experiences of domestic abuse, this research will provide an insight into South Asian women's experiences of family abuse within the context of complex kinship structures and marriage patterns (see Chapter Two). While recognising the importance of culture and gender as contributory factors to women's experience of abuse, this research also elucidates socio-economic factors, language, immigration status and structural constraints as overlapping and mutually reinforcing, shaping women's experience of abuse and help-seeking (see Chapters Seven and Eight). Therefore, this research aims to add to an understanding of South Asian women's experience of family abuse, adding to the theoretical underpinnings of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1995), which has informed this research.

Although there is a growing body of research exploring women's agency within oppressive contexts, there is sparse research on women's 'choices' and strategies in a family abuse context. While this research shows the diverse ways South Asian women strategise in the face of abuse, the limitations of sample size make it difficult to explore in great detail aspects of women's agency; for example, the use of religion as agentive behaviour (see

Chapter Nine). Therefore, a contribution of this research is to highlight the pertinent need for researchers to explore these issues further.

Furthermore, this research aims to make a substantial contribution to the evidence base of policymaking in this important area at the intersection of two key areas of equality policy: gender and ethnicity. In the area of gender equality, domestic abuse has long been a policy priority area of the Scottish Government, with a string of notable achievements to date. However, policy understanding of the nature of, and responses to, family abuse in a key minority ethnic community in Scotland has been poorly developed. In critically evaluating policies such as ‘the two-year rule’ and ‘no recourse to public funds’, which can create new forms of oppression and constraints at the macro-level, this research outlines recommendations which push for more nuanced and sensitive policymaking for all marginalised women (see Chapter Ten). The Scottish Government’s long-standing commitment to social inclusion will also be served by a better understanding of the issues explored in this research, since family abuse can further isolate those already at risk of social exclusion on cultural and linguistic grounds.

The research would not have been possible without the participation of the interviewees, who I hope were empowered by the opportunity to represent their experiences of family abuse on their own terms and in their own voice and language (a point I will return to later). This research has a cyclical significance and benefit: if research bodies have a better understanding of women’s experiences, they can better inform government bodies, who in turn can better inform service providers, thereby resulting in an improvement in assistance to South Asian women generally. This results in more women being reached, who in turn give researchers, policymakers and practitioners a better understanding of women’s experiences of abuse. Furthermore, underlining the specific experiences of one group – Muslim Pakistani women – also emphasises that needs differ in other groups. Black and other ethnic minority women may also face similar constraints in language, insensitive service responses, and harmful immigration policies to those faced by the women this thesis aims to represent. Thus, this research also pushes more generally for nuanced and sensitive policies towards marginalised women in Scotland experiencing family abuse.

Following on from these aims, the key questions were grouped and addressed as follows:

Part One – The Family (Chapters Three, Four and Five):

- In what ways are South Asian women's experiences of family abuse distinct from mainstream understandings of domestic abuse? (Chapter Two.)
- How do women experience and understand spousal abuse? (Chapter Three.)
- What is the role of affinal kin (HM, HZ) in women's experiences of spousal abuse? How do kin instigate spousal abuse, and perpetrate family abuse? (Chapter Four.)
- What is the role of natal kin in women's experiences of family abuse? (Chapter Five.)

Part Two – The State and Community (Chapters Six, Seven and Eight):

- What role does the community play in women's abuse and oppression? (Chapter Six.)
- How do UK Government policies and agendas facilitate women's abuse and oppression at the domestic and community level? (Chapters Six and Seven.)
- Do women experience new forms of constraints and oppression from the state? (Chapters Six, Seven and Eight.)
- What are women's experiences of service provision? Do women access them, and if not, why? (Chapter Eight.)

Part Three – Agency (Chapter Nine):

- In the face of micro-level and macro-level constraints, how do women respond to abuse?
- What factors affect women's strategies and choices in an abusive relationship?
- What factors galvanise women to leave an abusive relationship?

Summary – Implications for Policy and Practice (Chapter Ten):

- How can we achieve a more nuanced and sensitive policy and practice framework in Scotland that responds to the needs, desires and constraints of marginalised women?
- How can we include the voices of marginalised women in this dialogue?

1.2 Research Strategy and Paradigms

A feminist methodological approach highlights the dangers of focusing on the pursuit of an essentialised, universal ‘truth’ that often overlooks the experiences of disempowered sections in society. The nature of human action and interaction is unpredictable and often contradictory, and what human beings perceive as ‘fact’ is affected by distinctive social, cultural and life contexts (Ackerly and True, 2010). This then suggests the existence of numerous interpretations of ‘truth’ or ‘reality’, and thus when exploring human relationships it may be more appropriate to strive for a deeper understanding of human actions, decisions and perceptions (Conway, 2013: 88). Thus, the research design was extensively informed by feminist methodologies and critical theory which have sought to promote the value of individual narrative, particularly from those who are marginalised in the study of society (Skinner, Hester and Malos, 2005). Feminist researchers adopt differing epistemological positions from one another and utilise any and all combinations of methods to conduct their research – as stated earlier, there is no one single, unified feminist methodology (Fonow and Cook, 2005: 2213). Nevertheless, Ramazanoğlu and Holland (2002: 16) posit that there are certain characteristics which are often associated with feminist research, in stating that ‘feminist research is politically for women; feminist knowledge has some grounding in women’s experiences and in how it feels to live in unjust gendered relationships’. Feminist approaches to the analysis of knowledge and reality, the role of power in shaping them, and the importance of reflexivity, underpin the focus, aims and objectives of this particular study.

I adopted a qualitative ‘bottom up’ abductive strategy which Blaikie (2010: 90) feels to be the most appropriate when answering ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions. My research had an affinity with this strategy as it is grounded in the understanding and meaning that social actors give to their experiences, whilst acknowledging the danger of researchers’ contaminating the data with their own constructions (Blaikie, 2010: 90). In light of this, a constructivist standpoint was taken where it is considered that everyday knowledge is the outcome of people having to make sense of their encounters with the physical world and with other people, and where social scientists have to reinterpret this (Blaikie, 2010: 95).

Intersectionality provided both a theoretical and analytical basis for this study – a critical exploration of intersectionality is provided in Chapter Two. Intersectionality asserts that oppression is multilayered rather than single-faceted, and strengthens the focus on the individual (Yuval-Davis, 2006). It shows how personal identities are complex, and demonstrates the ways in which this complexity often conflicts with one-dimensional notions of ‘women’, in this instance abused women. Therefore, a constructivist standpoint validates sometimes conflicting, subjective interpretations of reality, and intersectionality, which ‘emphasises the interaction of categories of difference’ (Hancock, 2007: 63), offers a theoretical explanation for how these different perceptions might be created (Conway, 2013).

According to Mason (2002: 149), detachment in research is unachievable where the understandings and experiences of the researcher can influence social research. Therefore, without losing the integrity of the phenomenon, and the interviewees’ understanding of their own experiences and the actions of other actors, I adopted a reflexive approach that constructed and understood these experiences in light of global socio-cultural issues (a detailed exploration of reflexivity is provided later in this chapter).

1.3 Method

The history of work on domestic abuse began with qualitative descriptions obtained by interview, which has been considered to be one of the most effective ways of conducting research on this subject (Oakley, 1981, 1998; Arksey and Knight, 1999; Fonow and Cook, 2005). Quantitative research such as survey sampling may be a more appropriate method in the study of the prevalence and incidence of domestic abuse, and is crucial when making ‘inferential and generalisable conclusions that can guide policy and practice across organisations and inform government decisions’ (Griffiths and Hanmer, 2005: 38). It is not, however, appropriate for the nature and purpose of this study, and for the women being studied. South Asian women are not well represented in quantitative studies such as the

Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS).¹ This may be for a number of reasons: not being able to speak or read English; not understanding the nature or vocabulary of the questions; not understanding the nature or purpose of the study; and perpetrators not allowing women to participate in such studies. Furthermore, the central aim of my research has been to enable women to tell their stories, to transmit their own realities in their own voice and language, which can only be achieved by adopting qualitative research methods. Arksey and Knight (1999: 32) state that, ‘the purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on a person’s mind ... to access the perspective of the person being interviewed’.

I selected the South Asian community to study as it is the largest ethnic minority group, representing 3 percent of the Scottish population as shown in the 2011 census. At the time of developing my research proposal, the 2001 census data, which have no major disparities to the 2011 census data, were used (Scottish Government, 2004). Within this, Pakistani is the largest category accounting for 1 percent of the total population (Statistical Bulletin, 2013: 10). Also, I am able to speak Urdu, Punjabi and Patwari, and before beginning my doctoral research I worked in the voluntary sector² for three years supporting mostly Pakistani women who had left, or were still in, abusive relationships. So, I presumed relative ease of access to the desired population, a point I will return to later. It was for reasons such as these that my research is a qualitative case study of 11 Muslim Pakistani women living in Scotland, where information was obtained through one-off, face-to-face semi-structured interviews.

My work in the voluntary sector gave me insight into the complexity of South Asian women’s experiences of abuse, and the difficulty they face in accessing support and leaving abusive relationships. Thus, it inspired this research as I wanted to acquire a deeper understanding of women’s experiences and needs, and if and how these needs can be met. My experience in the voluntary sector also played a role in my decision to organise a consultation with practitioners. Having worked with abused women, I was aware that discussing experiences of abuse could sometimes be traumatic and difficult. Thus, I wanted

¹ For more information on SCJS: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/crime-and-justice-survey>

² Amina: MWRC and Women’s Aid Edinburgh.

to ensure the research tools being used were effective and sensitive to the needs of Muslim Pakistani women. The consultation was carried out with four leading domestic abuse organisations in Scotland: Amina, The Muslim Women’s Resource Centre (MWRC); Glasgow Training Consortium; the Domestic Abuse Project (DAP); and Shakti Women’s Aid.³ The aim of the consultation was to gain expert advice on the possible shortcomings of the research tools, access to participants, and the appropriateness and sensitivity of the questions within the interview guide. I obtained feedback from the practitioners and made the necessary amendments before conducting the interviews. I submitted a level three Research Ethics Policy and Procedures document, ensuring that the methods of research were within the ethical framework upheld by the University of Edinburgh.⁴ I will return to ethical issues in more detail later in this chapter.

I originally aimed to achieve a sample of 25 Pakistani women from Edinburgh and Glasgow. I anticipated that due to the sensitivity of the topic being researched and the vulnerability of survivors, this might be difficult to achieve. I also planned to structure my sample around the following variables: age, country of birth and country of birth of spouse. However, due to difficulty in recruitment (a point I will discuss in detail later) I interviewed 11 Pakistani women who varied according to:

- Birth-country of interviewee (W)
- Birth of husband (H)

Table 1

Age	H UK-born/ W UK-born	H Pakistan-born/ W UK-born	H UK-born/ W Pakistan-born
18-30	0	1	4
30-50	2	2	2

The issue of generalisability from qualitative research findings is a crucial one. In this study, the question is whether data gathered from 11 Pakistani Muslim women can be judged reflective of the experiences amongst a much greater population. However, Bryman

³ Appendix One.

⁴ Appendix Two.

(2008: 391) points out that ‘... the people who are interviewed in qualitative research are not meant to be representative of a population ...’. The intention of this study is not to produce concrete truths which can be universalised, but rather to show that differences and similarities exist between women’s experiences of abuse, and how particular factors can make some women more vulnerable to abuse than others. Furthermore, an original contribution made by this research is the questioning and problematising of mainstream understandings of abuse that fail to encapsulate the diversity and complexity of women’s experiences of family abuse. I was also aware that by conducting one-off interviews the opportunity for follow-up questions or to clarify the interviewees’ inputs would not be possible. Due to the sensitivity of the research topic and the ethical implications involved, it was not feasible to conduct a series of interviews with each respondent. As anticipated the interviewees became physically upset during the interviews, and they overcame practical and emotional hurdles to participate in this research. Going back to the interviewees for another round of interviews might have made them vulnerable to further emotional and possibly even physical distress (points I will return to later in this chapter).

The strength and uniqueness of this study lie in being able to show, through women’s own words, how particular factors such as immigration status can feed into a particular power dynamic in a domestic setting (see Chapter Seven). In other words, I was able to get women to reflect on their experiences, which cannot be done in survey sampling, and gain in-depth analysis of how women’s focus and experience can change over time, and what factors at the micro- and macro-levels shape and limit this. Through this level of in-depth analysis, I could extract and understand the factors that shaped women’s arduous marital journeys. For instance, the interviewees explained that at the beginning of their marriage they could never have contemplated leaving but, with time, this changed and eventually all the interviewees did leave (see Chapter Nine). The interviewees also varied in the following ways, which I explored during the interview process and analysis phase:

- How the marriage came about (i.e. forced or arranged);
- Employment of the interviewee and spouse;
- Education of the interviewee and spouse;
- Religious and cultural practices of the interviewee and spouse;

- Natal kin;
- Family structure (i.e. nuclear household or living with affinal kin).

The aforementioned factors created a variation in the nature and extent of abuse, for instance, if the interviewees were financially independent they were less likely to experience intense forms of family abuse (HM, HZ). Again, this variation was not part of an intended sampling strategy, but happened due to the difficulty in recruitment.

1.4 Access

My decision to recruit Muslim Pakistani women in Edinburgh and Glasgow was based on the 2011 census data, which documents that the highest number of ethnic minorities located in Scotland are in Glasgow and Edinburgh (Statistical Bulletin, 2013: 10). I initially started my recruitment by sending an email to a number of organisations in Edinburgh and Glasgow introducing myself and stating the purpose of my research. I assumed my ‘insider’ position would mean recruitment would not be too difficult. However, due to the sensitive nature of the topic and women’s fears of confidentiality (which I discuss later in this chapter) access was more difficult than anticipated. Furthermore, I realised that recruitment solely through women’s groups would have led to a focus only on women who have accessed services, and would exclude women who have not accessed services. As a result, I engaged in personal recruitment, what Blaikie (2010: 179) terms ‘snowball sampling’, by chain referral and networking.

In ensuring I was able to access a wide range of Muslim Pakistani women, where some had accessed services and some had not, I took the following steps:

- I accessed community groups such as mosque groups, mother-and-toddler groups, study circles, social groups; and I depended on word-of-mouth.
- I made a poster explaining the project and the importance of Muslim Pakistani women’s participation in the research. It consisted of information on the project, the profile of the participants required, and my contact details.⁵

⁵ Appendix Three.

- I created an alias contact for safety purposes recognising my own potential vulnerability to violent men if they found out I was talking to their wives. I placed this poster around Edinburgh and Glasgow in places where Muslim Pakistani women may attend, such as those mentioned previously. (I discuss issues surrounding safety in more detail later in this chapter.)
- I created an alias Facebook account for wider advertisement of the research project.

Table 2

Women's Group	Number of Women Interviewed
Shakti Women's Aid (Edinburgh-based)	3
Glasgow Women's Aid (Glasgow-based)	1
Amina: MWRC (Glasgow-based)	2
DAP (Glasgow-based)	2
Personal Recruitment (Glasgow-based)	3

Table 2 illustrates the number of women who took part in the interviews via women's groups and personal recruitment. I had accessed a larger number of women and interviews were arranged but, due to a number of reasons, such as fear and an unwillingness to discuss sensitive experiences, three of the women did not follow through, taking the number of interviews from 14 to 11. Personal recruitment aided the recruitment process (but not as much as I hoped): the interviewees knew other women who had similar experiences and they informed them directly of the research, giving them assurance regarding confidentiality and anonymity.

1.5 The Process of Data Collection and Analysis

I conducted face-to-face semi-structured interviews which, as already discussed, are crucial in doing interviews on sensitive topics, as the presence of the interviewer will encourage the interviewee to feel relaxed and be forthcoming (Oakley, 1981: 31). The overall aim was to tip the balance of power in the research relationship in favour of the participant, allowing

her to tell her own story and to construct her own framework of meaning for her experiences. For this reason, I developed a thematic interview schedule as a guide to be used during the interview process.⁶ The interview guide also featured scenarios and real-life case studies of women's experiences of family abuse. I read these to the interviewees in either Urdu or English. The rationale behind this approach was two-fold: firstly, speaking of traumatic and sensitive experiences such as abuse can be difficult. Women can fear their experiences will not be taken seriously, or may simply feel embarrassed about them. I wanted to encourage, in a subtle manner, not pressurise interviewees to discuss their experiences. All the interviewees responded to the scenarios by echoing Nazia's (UK-born) words: 'That's exactly what happened to me.' Discussing the scenarios prompted the interviewees to discuss their personal experiences; moreover, terms such as 'domestic abuse' and 'rape' are difficult to translate into Urdu – some of these terms have no Urdu equivalent. I wanted the interviewees to define their experiences of abuse according to their own vocabulary, perceptions and understandings, rather than pre-empt or influence this with mainstream conceptualisations and terms, such as 'domestic abuse'. (A detailed exploration of the interviewees' responses to the scenarios is provided in Chapter Three.)

I conducted the interviews in a flexible and informal format, and I anticipated that they would vary in length, which they did (from two to three hours). I left the choice of the venue to the interviewee but, for the purposes of safety, the home of the interviewee was not an option. I conducted the interviews at the organisations from which the interviewees were recruited. The environment was private, quiet and comfortable. I conducted the interviews at a time suitable for the interviewee to accommodate other commitments, such as children or work. In respect to personal recruitment, I booked a room in a community building in central Glasgow called Andalus,⁷ which was easily accessible for all the interviewees. In Edinburgh, I interviewed the women at the organisations where they were recruited. (There was no personal recruitment in Edinburgh.) In cases where the interview had to be cut short for reasons such as time or other commitments, which happened with two interviewees, I arranged a second interview.

⁶ Appendix Four.

⁷ A community centre attended by children, men and women for multiple purposes.

It is important to provide opportunities for interviewees to consent to the research and to be fully aware of the purpose of the interview. In doing so, I obtained verbal consent from the interviewees, explaining the purpose and aims of the research and their right not to answer questions. I also provided this in written form if requested by the interviewees in English and Urdu.⁸ I sought advice from service providers (women's groups) via the consultation on the appropriateness and clarity of the written and verbal informed consent. After I obtained permission from the interviewees, I collected the data by audio recording the interviews, which I stored on an encrypted hard drive. This allowed me to devote full attention to the interview by listening and probing, without having to concentrate on writing notes. To prevent loss of data, I backed the recordings up on a re-writeable CD, which I have stored in a secure location.

Transcribing and Transliteration

I transcribed the interviews after they had been conducted to allow for certain identifications, such as physical appearance (i.e. traditional clothing or western clothing), body language (i.e. comfortable or uneasy), and emotion (i.e. physically upset) to be captured and included in the text of the transcript. Five of the eleven interviewees spoke in Urdu throughout the interview, and I transliterated their transcriptions into Roman script. In retaining the integrity of the interviewees' experiences, and wanting to uphold the central organising principle of my data collection to include the women's voices, I have included the original transcript (Urdu transliterated into Roman script) in the body of the thesis in footnotes.

As the interviewees spoke a mixture of Urdu and English, I have adopted the following transliteration convention: I have italicised the English words utilised by the Pakistan-born interviewees in the body of the text and the footnotes; the same has been done for the UK-born interviewees for Urdu spoken words, with the translation in square brackets. Syma was the only Pakistan-born interviewee who spoke English during her interview. I found some of her interview very difficult to decipher due to the quality of English spoken. As I want to retain the authenticity of all the interviewees' speech, as well as create ease for the

⁸ Appendix Five.

reader to be able to understand what is being said, I have edited parts of Syma's quotes in square brackets within the original quote. I have kept the data on my laptop, which I have password encrypted, ensuring safety of the data. I have kept the hard copies in a locked filing cabinet. As required, I will review the legitimacy of retaining the data. If, at some point in the future, I no longer require the data, I will dispose of it through professional services.

Data Analysis

I transferred the transcribed data to NVivo for analysis purposes. I treated the interview data as accessing actively constructed narratives through which people describe the world. I examined the interview data with reference to the theoretical framework of the study as a whole. As mentioned earlier, this study was extensively informed by a feminist methodological approach which problematises the pursuit of an essentialised, universal 'truth'. This approach is underpinned in this study by intersectionality, which asserts that categories of difference and disempowerment, such as race, class and age, construct and shape how experiences are perceived and understood (Yuval-Davis, 2012; Conway, 2013). Therefore, I acknowledged the existence of 'multiple truths and perspectives' (Mason, 2002: 117) in this study and as a result the analytical approach adopted was interpretive, which '... respects the differences between people ... and requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of the social action' (Bryman, 2004: 16).

In order to gain a nuanced understanding of the women's experiences, it was important for me to be reflexive throughout, focusing on my positioning during the data collection and analysis process (Sultana, 2007: 378). According to Mason (2002: 149): 'A reflexive reading will locate you as part of the data you have generated and will explore your role and perspective in the process of generation and interpretation of data'. Therefore, I was aware of my assumptions, and pre-conceived knowledge and positioning. For example, while writing the research proposal for this study, I assumed religion would feature strongly in Pakistani women's experiences of family abuse, shaping the nature of abuse, and women's responses to it. During the data collection and analysis process, I realised this was not the case and that women were affected by more practical factors such as

economics. Although the Muslim aspect of my case study is present in this thesis, it does not feature to the extent I had initially expected.

My analysis was influenced by bottom-up grounded theory, viewing theory generation as a flexible process, and emerged throughout the course of the research process, as opposed to before or after (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The analysis process was a constant reflexive movement between the interview data, academic literature and an acknowledgement of my own positioning. Additionally, an important part of my data analysis and overall research method was a continuous and iterative review of literature, which is why my literature review has been located after this chapter on methods. My reading and review of literature developed in parallel with my interview work and analysis. It was not the case that I reviewed all the literature, decided on data collection and analysis, and presented my findings. Rather, issues which arose in the interview data were always explored in light of the literature, and I was constantly moving from the interview data to the relevant literature. For example, women's agency was a theme which arose at the later stages of data analysis, and so I had to explore the relevant literature on this topic. Also, before beginning a new chapter, I re-read the interview transcripts, which I also continuously explored in light of new themes and a continuous exploration of literature.

I recognised that Pakistani women are not a homogeneous group: there are similarities and distinctions in their experiences of family abuse. Therefore, I used a process of 'generalisability', or logical inference, between the interviewees, whereby I identified the similarities, repetitive patterns and differences between them (Blaikie, 2010: 196). Due to the size of the sample, I utilised a small number of variables in recognising similarities and differences: for instance, the comparison of Pakistan-born interviewees and UK-born interviewees, which also brought to light additional variables such as distance of natal kin and language proficiency. I used Pat Bazeley's (2007) framework for qualitative analysis as a guide for my own analysis, to which I now turn.

Stage 1:

I started initially with a paper element of analysis that involved reading the interview transcripts and highlighting key words and statements. I would make notes (memos) of these in a journal I kept throughout my PhD. Stage one was a process of open coding, where initial ideas and concepts were generated from the data.

Stage 2:

From the notes made from stage one, I tried to establish themes before moving on to the computer phase of the analysis. I noted themes which emerged in each transcript and tried to link these across all the interviews. Some of the initial themes or similarities between interviewees that emerged from initial stages of analysis were:

- Education;
- Nationality;
- Religion and culture;
- Children.

These became more detailed open coding, which I intended to analyse further in NVivo at a later stage.

Stage 3:

At this stage, I revisited stage one and developed some additional codes, themes and memos. My aim was to establish some basic themes on paper before starting with NVivo.

Stage 4:

I imported the developed themes and codes to NVivo for further analysis, creating axial codes which allowed me to think about causal conditions, links, contexts and motives. It was a process of, 'describing, classifying and connecting' (Blaikie, 2010: 211). At this stage, I had developed a number of key codes and themes, some of which went on to become key themes within the thesis, such as:

- Pakistan-born and UK-born;
- Affinal kin;

- Natal kin;
- Agency;
- Male spousal abuse.

Stage 5:

With the emergence of these new themes, I revisited the academic literature to analyse differences, consistencies, and anything new that could aid the development of the themes. For example, this process aided development of the theme on ‘intersectionality’, which became an essential element of the interviewees’ experiences and this thesis.

Stage 6:

I revisited the codes and themes via NVivo with any new information obtained from stage five, which could assist in further developing themes or in creating links between the interviewees.

Throughout the analytical process, I was continuously moving from paper analysis to computer analysis and would re-visit different stages at different times, particularly stage one and two. I found the writing process aided analysis and allowed for themes to be unpacked and structured. Overall, my data analysis was a combination of all the above stages.

1.6 Dealing with Ethical Dilemmas: A Feminist Standpoint

Family abuse is an extremely sensitive topic to research and raises many issues that can have ethical and political implications, and dealing with these dilemmas practically can be complex. Feminist methodology refers to the practical and ethical dilemmas that can arise when one’s prospective sources are vulnerable women. It is the duty of the researcher to conceptualise and manage, prior to and during the data collection process, issues such as power imbalances, harm and researcher positionality, which can have an effect during data collection and analysis (Sultana, 2007: 382). To make these difficulties more manageable, feminist research is underpinned by a commitment to critical reflection, or reflexivity. In order to gain effective reflexivity Ramazanoğlu and Holland (2002: 119) suggest that the

researcher needs to consider and be willing to discuss the effect of power relations on the research process; and an open acknowledgment by the researcher of her assumptions, beliefs and sympathies. They go on to advise that if researchers consider themselves to be in a position of power, there are ways by which attempts can be made to subvert the exercise of power.

The ESRC's Research Ethics Framework (2005: 20) provides six key principles of ethical research which need to be addressed: ensuring integrity and quality; upholding confidentiality; avoiding harm to the participants; the research must be free from conflict of interest; individuals participating must be free from coercion; they must also be fully aware of the ethical issues which may arise from one's research. Avoiding risk to the researcher and the respondent is imperative within all studies conducted. The Research Ethics Framework defines risk as the potential of physical or psychological harm, discomfort or stress to human participants that a research project might generate (ESRC, 2005: 21).

The World Health Organization (WHO, 1999) has put forward ethical and safety recommendations for researching domestic abuse which also stress the importance for researchers to conduct studies in a manner which does not harm anyone involved. For instance, obtaining information on domestic abuse requires individuals to confront, admit and discuss extremely sensitive issues in detail. This can be a very painful and emotional experience that can most likely lead to distress for both the respondent and the researcher. My ethical framework and conceptualisations and management of difficulties, such as power imbalances, were underpinned by feminist thinking, and the ESRC and WHO guidelines.

Reflexivity: Harm and Power Imbalances

According to Kelly (1990: 124) in her study on 'victims' of rape, women can forget or block out experiences of abuse in order to cope, and minimise them. I was aware that this was the case for the interviewees, who stated: 'I haven't spoken about this for a long time' (Nazia UK-born); or 'I try not to think about that part of my life' (Khadija UK-born). The interviewees were recounting experiences from 2006, which, at the time of interviewing, were five years previously and they may have been speaking about an experience for the

first time, such as when Farah (UK-born) says: ‘I have never spoken about this to anyone.’ In this context, I was mindful that these events are women’s interpretations of their experiences from a different standpoint, as they may no longer be immersed in the relationship, or weighed down by its constraints. In hindsight, a woman may minimise her experience, and recounting trauma or unearthing oppressive and harmful experiences may create a form of re-victimisation, as women have to relive their experience of abuse and the feelings it created (i.e. depression, helplessness and fear). Being mindful of these issues, particularly throughout the interview process, I developed safety protocols to minimise and avoid harm. (I will deal with personal harm and safety later in this chapter.) I noted that the interviewees found it very difficult and painful to recount experiences of abuse, as having to do so meant speaking about other traumatic events, such as the death of a parent or sibling (Aliyah Pakistan-born). When interviewees cried during the interview process, I asked them if they wanted to stop, have a drink of water, or take a break. A positive side effect of this process, however, was the value the interviewees ascribed to taking part in this research, for two reasons: firstly, they felt it was empowering that their voices and experiences were being used in a positive way to benefit other abused women, and to improve policy and practice, as when one interviewee said: ‘At least some good is coming of my experience’ (Naseem UK-born); and, secondly, some of the interviewees had never before spoken of some aspects of their experience of abuse (i.e. rape), and so found it therapeutic and helpful. Asma (Pakistan-born) commented that, ‘no one ever asked.’⁹ Through my interest in their experiences, and the importance I attached to it – telling the interviewees that without the sharing of their experiences my research would not be possible – the interviewees felt valued and empowered.

Ramazanoğlu and Holland (2002: 113, 159) argue that all social researchers can exercise power simply by turning people’s lives into authoritative texts, and taking reflexivity personally means reflecting critically on power imbalances that can occur during the data collection and analysis phase. Feminist researchers such as Anne Oakley (1981) document the power imbalances that are inherent between the researcher and the participant in the context of face-to-face interviews. Being a Muslim woman with a Pakistani background, I

⁹ ‘kisī ne kabhī pūchā bhī nahīn.’

considered myself to be an insider (a point I will return to later). Despite this, I was mindful of the differences between myself and the interviewees on the basis of age, nationality, education and the ability to speak English. This, together with the imbalance in the exchange of information, whereby the interviewee provides information while the researcher simply receives it, could have led to the interviewees' feeling relatively powerless or unwilling to engage fully in the research process. Means of avoiding power imbalances are provided by feminist researchers such as Skinner, Hester and Malos (2005: 14) who suggest tactics such as catering for childcare and transport needs, ensuring the data collection does not result in re-victimisation and trauma for women, and enabling safe, equal and confidential participation. Oakley (1981: 35) and Ramazanoğlu and Holland (2002: 159) suggest that in order to subvert exercise of power, research should be undertaken as a collaborative interactional process, with reciprocal inputs from the researcher and the researched. As a researcher, I am committed to the pursuit of a more equitable relationship between the participants and myself. Recognising the interviewees' potential vulnerability and the potential power imbalance, I did as Oakley (1981: 32–33) suggests: I engaged in a reciprocal dialogue, and answered any questions asked by the interviewee. The interviewees asked me where I was from in Pakistan, my age, if I was married, if I had any children, and so forth. In my expectation of obtaining personal and sensitive information from the interviewees, I stepped out of my role of questioner, and expressed my own feelings and provided information about myself. However, I was also mindful of not influencing the interviewee's responses, or treating the interview too much like a friendly conversation. In light of this, and in light of the advice given by Rubin and Rubin (1995: 135) that there should be 'empathy without getting over involved', I had a research agenda that I tried to cover during the interviews, but not to the exclusion of the women's personal or emotional concerns.

I was mindful of power imbalances that can arise through data interpretation, which Ramazanoğlu and Holland (2002: 116) argue is a key process in the exercise of power. It is difficult for researchers to set aside their own lives and understandings when they produce interpretations. I cannot determine in advance what interpretations can be made of these data. I was mindful, nevertheless, that doing research on specific forms and patterns of

family abuse among a marginalised community carries risk; that findings may be used to reinforce cultural essentialism about violence within minority communities, or that my research would be read as making stereotypical generalisations of patterns and features of abuse. It was my aim not to recreate harmful stereotypes or popular depictions of the South Asian community, and the Muslim community as backward, misogynistic and oppressive: that domestic abuse is more prevalent in the South Asian community than in the white community. For this reason, I reiterate and reinforce the following throughout this thesis: the findings and themes of this research pertain to the small number of women who were interviewed and affected by these factors. All migrant South Asian women do not experience spousal abuse, and not all mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationships are abusive or oppressive. I also recognised that my Pakistani Muslim background had the potential both to enrich and to complicate the research relationship. I will now focus on this point in the following section.

The Insider Dilemma

I was acutely aware that variables such as my education, dress and accent could have been viewed by the interviewees as separate from their own, and may possibly position me as an outsider. However, someone who is completely an outsider might seem, in some sense, less threatening. Women may be more willing to disclose their experiences, as they do not fear being judged or exposed. Also, participants would not expect the outsider researcher to have loyalties to the Pakistani community. The researcher may feel more able to conduct research without worrying about negative feedback from the community professionally or personally. Although there were many differences between myself and most of the interviewees, I feel my Pakistani Muslim background placed me more as an insider than outsider. Feminist researchers such as Imam and Akhtar (2005) show the benefits and drawbacks that being an insider can have on the research process and analysis, whilst researchers such as Fonow and Cook (2005: 2213) debate whether or not insiders have 'access to truer or better knowledge'. Finch (1984: 76) states that when both parties share a subordinate structural position by virtue of gender, 'particular types of identification will develop'. She feels that the ease with which one can get women to share and talk in the interview situation has not so much to do with good social and interview skills, but rather

with one's identity as a woman (Finch, 1984: 78). Being from the same community as those being researched can provide a special insight, rendering such researchers better qualified to conduct research in that specific community where an insider is 'endowed with special insight into matters necessarily obscure to others' (Zinn, 1979: 210). Therefore, as an insider, a researcher has empirical and methodological advantages such as easily obtaining trust and access; having an understanding of cultural, political and religious issues; and being able to ask questions and gather information that others cannot.

My assumption that shared ethnicity, language, religion and culture would instill the trust and confidence needed for women to share their experience of violence were confirmed in the interview situation. I was able to speak to the women in their first language (Urdu) and understand cultural concepts such as honour and shame which characterised their experiences of abuse, and life more generally. This increased the women's comfort and willingness to be open, as they did not feel judged. To an outsider, these concepts may require explanation, where women may feel judged and misunderstood, whereas an insider position can prevent misunderstandings that, according to Straight (2002), can be common in fieldwork. Additionally, my previous experience of working in the voluntary sector supporting abused Pakistani Muslim women aided my understanding of the issues and constraints women grapple with in an abusive context. I appreciated and understood the difficulties the interviewees faced in disclosing certain aspects of their experiences; for instance, the interviewees found it particularly difficult to speak about experiences of sexual abuse.

On the other hand, doing insider research can result in many practical, political and ethical issues. It may cause difficulties in accessing the desired sample for a number of reasons. The notion of 'izzat' (honour) is a distinctive patriarchal tool used in South Asian communities to control women (see Chapter Two). Often the punishment for bringing shame on the family can result in community and family ostracism. As families are closely knit in the Pakistani community, the concern for this was both implicit and explicit in interviewees' fears about confidentiality and their concerns that the information they shared might become common knowledge and bring dishonour. The interviewees asked me if I was well known in the community, and if I knew certain members of the community. Also,

the Muslim community has been so negatively portrayed in the media that the reaction to this research could have been one of distrust, defensiveness and rejection. I reassured the interviewees of confidentiality and that I have taken certain steps to ensure their anonymity, which I will discuss later.

Insider researchers need to examine critically how their perspectives, positions and presence can affect the research process and their relationships with their research respondents (Small and Uttal, 2005: 938). Lee (1993) argues that the social characteristics of the researcher, such as gender, ethnicity and religion, can create expectations and biases which can create a danger of generalising the respondents. Furthermore, the competing certainties of 'knowing the truth' (Straight, 2002) and being told something which is incompatible with it, and the researcher's subjectivity, may lead to bias in data gathering and interpretation (Zinn, 1979: 213). If there is a great emotional investment in a certain topic and understanding, this can possibly result in the biasing of information, especially if the researcher feels loyalty to the community being researched. For instance, this can affect the amount of damaging information publicised that can consequently affect the overall image of the community, of which the researcher is a part. I was aware of my position within this research in regard to pre-conceived ideas, expectations and assumptions, some of which I have already discussed. I took great care not to let my own understandings overshadow those of the interviewees by adopting a reflexive approach to analysis and interpretation.

Confidentiality and Safety

While respecting the rights of participants' confidentiality, I recognised the possibility that participants might disclose information relating to abuses which constitute a crime in the UK, such as child protection issues. I explained in advance to the interviewees that in such cases I am legally obliged to identify this to the appropriate agencies.¹⁰ Taking into consideration the tight-knit nature of the Pakistani community, I ensured the interviewees' confidentiality by arranging to meet in venues that were discrete and private. I did not include detailed information such as specific employment and education of the interviewee,

¹⁰ Appendix Five.

and used pseudonyms throughout the interview process and write-up stage. I maintained ongoing communication with my supervisors and I would have sought the advice of the ethics committee if any specific situation had made me feel uncomfortable or compromised in any way.

Whilst researching sensitive topics such as domestic abuse there is a strong potential of the researcher enduring threats and harassment from the spouses of the interviewees; to be ridiculed and attacked by the community; to experience emotional pain, fear, anger; and feel powerless and overwhelmed (Skinner, Hester and Malos, 2005: 16). Researchers can also feel isolated, and unable to talk about certain aspects of their work because of confidentiality. After seeking advice from the service providers through the focus group regarding these issues, I put mechanisms in place to deal with any distress and damage experienced by myself whilst conducting the interviews. There were occasions when I was visibly upset during or after an interview. I discussed the nature of the interviews with my supervisors, bearing in mind confidentiality. I also arranged time with a counselor from Amina: MWRC with whom I discussed specific interviews that I found emotionally distressing, as I spoke with women who recounted experiences of rape and severe physical abuse.

1.7 Profile of Interviewees

There are striking contrasts and distinctions between the UK-born and Pakistan-born interviewees in their experiences of abuse. The abuse experienced by the UK-born interviewees ranged from spousal abuse to family abuse from affinal kin (HM, HZ). However, spousal abuse seemed to be more severe and to have greater physical and psychological bearing on the interviewees than family abuse, which was mainly perpetrated by the mother-in-law and consisted of verbal and emotional abuse, as opposed to physical abuse.

The Pakistan-born interviewees were financially and socially dependent upon their husbands and affinal kin (HM, HF), which increased their vulnerability to spousal and family abuse compared with the UK-born interviewees. They experienced severe forms of

spousal abuse from their husbands, ranging through physical, sexual, emotional and verbal abuse. Their affinal kin had a more active role in the abuse perpetrated against them, such as the mother-in-law and sister-in-law (HZ) instigating spousal abuse, and perpetrating family abuse (for example, physical, verbal and economic abuse). In light of these distinctions, I have organised the material in Table 3 as Pakistan-born and Table 4 as UK-born, which will echo throughout the thesis as an organising principle.¹¹

The tables provide an overview of the interviewees' profiles in relation to employment, education, children, residency, and so forth. I have noted 'age' as the age of the interviewee when they left the marriage and the marital home. I have listed 'abuse perpetrated' in order of severity expressed by the interviewee (see Chapter Three for discussion on severity).

In summary, in this chapter I have outlined the aims and objectives of this thesis, and discussed the methodological foundations by which I achieved them. I have discussed the analytical framework of this study, such as the way in which I transcribed and transliterated the data, and the reflexive manner in which they were then analysed. I have also addressed ethical dilemmas, paying particular attention to personal and participant harm, and how my 'insider' position had the potential to both benefit and complicate the research process. As noted above, an important part of my data analysis and overall research method was a continuous and iterative review of literature. For this reason, I have located my literature review after this chapter, and it is to this review which I turn to next.

¹¹ See Appendix One for list of participants.

Table 3: PAKISTAN-BORN INTERVIEWEES

Interviewee	Age	H's Birth Place	Residency H/W	Marriage Forced or Arranged	Education	Employment	Children	Natal Kin	Living with H's Family	Co-resident Affinal Kin	Abuse Perpetrated	Abusers
ASMA	20s	UK	W UK resident	H forced	Pakistan Degree	Unemployed	N/A	Pakistan	Yes	-HF -HM -HyB	-Physical -Financial -Isolation -Threatening behaviour -Verbal -Sexual -Emotional	-H -HM -HeZ
KHALIDA	20s	Pakistan	H UK resident W UK resident	W forced	Pakistan Degree	Unemployed	3 S	Pakistan	No	N/A	-Physical -Financial -Isolation -Verbal -Emotional	-H
ALIYAH	27	UK	W UK resident	H forced	Pakistan Degree	Unemployed	1 D aged 4	Pakistan	Yes	-HF -HM -HyZ x3	-Physical -Emotional -Threatening behaviour -Isolation -Financial -Verbal	-H -HM -HyZ x3
FATIMA	27	UK	W UK resident	H forced	Pakistan Degree	Part-time paid employment	N/A	Pakistan	Yes	-HF -HM -HyB x3 -HeB & HBW	-Emotional -Isolation -Financial -Physical	-H -HM
SYMA	29	UK	W UK resident	H forced	Pakistan basic	Unemployed	1 S	Pakistan	Yes	-HF -HM -HB & HBW + 1 child -HZ & HZH + 2 children -HZ & HZH + 2 children	-Financial -Emotional -Isolation -Verbal	-H -HM
MERYAM	27	UK	W UK resident	Arranged	Pakistan basic	Unemployed	3 D aged 2-5	Pakistan	Yes	-HF -HM -HyZ x3	-Physical -Financial -Verbal -Emotional -Isolation	-H -HM -HeZ

Table 4: UK-BORN INTERVIEWEES

Interviewee	Age	H's Birth Place	Residency H/W	Marriage Forced or Arranged	Education	Employment	Children	Natal Kin	Living with H's Family	Co-resident Affinal Kin	Abuse Perpetrated	Abusers
NAZIA	25	Pakistan	H UK	W forced	UK Degree	Part-time paid employment	1 S aged 6 1 D aged 3	Same neighbourhood	Yes	-HFB -HFBW -FBS x3 -FBD -HFM -HFF	-Physical -Financial -Emotional -Verbal -Sexual -Control	-H -HM
NASEEM	26	UK	N/A	Self-arranged	UK Degree	Unemployed	1 D aged 11	Same city	Yes	-HM -HB	-Physical -Emotional -Financial -Isolation -Verbal	-H -HM
KHADIJA	33	UK	N/A	Self-arranged	UK Degree	Full-time paid employment	N/A	Same city	Yes	-HM -HB & HBW + 2 children -HB & HBW	-Emotional -Verbal -Isolation -Threatening behaviour -Physical	-H -HM
AISHA	30s	Pakistan	H UK	Self-arranged	UK Degree	Full-time paid employment	5 S from first marriage. No children from this marriage	UK	No	N/A	-Physical -Sexual -Financial -Threatening behaviour -Verbal - Emotional	-H
FARAH H1	20s	Pakistan	H UK	W forced	UK Degree	Unemployed	4 children (age & sex not mentioned)	Same neighbourhood	No	N/A	-Financial -Emotional -Physical -Verbal	-H
FARAH H2	30s	UK	N/A	Self-arranged		Full-time paid employment	1 D	Same neighbourhood	No	N/A	-Physical -Threatening behaviour -Emotional -Verbal	-H

CHAPTER TWO

An Intersectional Approach to Understanding Family Abuse

2. Introduction

In this chapter, I outline and critique mainstream conceptualisations of domestic abuse in research, (some) feminist theory and policy documents. I argue that the reality of women's experiences cannot be understood or captured if we are to concern ourselves with one-dimensional explanations that are predicated on universal tendencies, by focusing solely on gender or culture. There are common assertions made within some feminist literature and policy discourse on domestic abuse which do not represent or encapsulate the specificity of South Asian women's experience of abuse (Gangoli et al., 2011: 35): firstly, that it is male violence against women in an intimate, domestic relationship (Scottish Executive, 2003: 3; Gangoli et al., 2011: 35); secondly, that it is a universal phenomenon (Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005: 3; Thiara and Gill, 2010b: 42); and, thirdly, that the root cause is gender inequality (Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005: 2; Scottish Government, 2009: 2). Furthermore, in attempting to understand and tackle abuse against women in the South Asian community, the UK Government's policy and practice has been to frame and label these abuses as 'harmful cultural practices' as opposed to being located within the wider framework of 'domestic abuse' and 'violence against women' (Siddiqui, Ismail and Allen, 2008: 38). In this chapter I, like many other contemporary feminist scholars, introduce an intersectional approach to understanding women's experience of abuse (Crenshaw, 1995). In doing so, I show the 'simultaneous, multiple and interlocking' (Mann and Grimes, 2001: 8) ways that factors such as culture, immigration and kinship intersect with structural inequalities such as race, class and gender (Bograd, 2005: 25; Gill, 2013: 143) to create specific and distinct experiences of family abuse for South Asian women.

2.1 Chapter Outline

I begin with a critical exploration of mainstream conceptualisations of domestic abuse that assume all women have the same experience of abuse simply because they are women. In highlighting the specificity and differentiation of South Asian women's experience of abuse, I draw on kinship structures and immigration status. These two key elements can be broken down into multiple strands of discrimination and oppression that are often interrelated and mutually reinforcing. I show how immigration status is a category which can include race, ethnicity, class, religion, language, and structural constraints, all of which contain dimensions of discrimination.

Following on from this, I firstly allude to community as a structure which is overlooked within explorations of kinship frameworks; and, secondly, to the manner in which the UK Government conceptualises the 'South Asian community' as homogeneous, dictated by a rigid and static culture. This perspective also creates a collective 'victimhood' where South Asian women are depicted as passive 'victims' of 'cultural practices'. Furthermore, by overemphasising culture as a causal factor, it hides the structural, social and political forces that affect women's lives (Vlopp, 2005: 39).

Finally, in trying to understand women's experiences of abuse while staying clear of the pitfalls of universalisation and one-dimensional explanations of abuse, I introduce and critically explore the theory of 'intersectionality'. This theory allows for an exploration of how factors at the micro- and macro-levels are intertwined, overlapping and mutually reinforcing.

2.2 Mainstream Conceptualisations of Domestic Abuse

Policy documents such as 'Together We Can End Violence Against Women and Girls' (Home Office, 2009) and 'Safer Lives' (Scottish Government, 2009: 3) outline a clear strategy to tackle domestic abuse which puts emphasis on public awareness of domestic abuse and the (legal) protection of 'victims', making what was historically private now political; it is firmly on the policy agendas of both the Scottish and UK governments. (I

provide a detailed and critical exploration of the Scottish Government strategy in Chapter Eight.)

Researchers such as Dobash and Dobash (1979, 1980, 1992), who attempt to understand and explain domestic abuse, have been crucial in securing social and political acknowledgment of the scale and scope of the problem, and have guided much of the work of the state (Dobash et al., 1999; Jasinski, 2001; Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005). State interventions are validated by research studies that quantify the extent of the problem: on average two women per week are killed in the UK by a male partner or former partner (Women's Aid, 2013: 2); in Scotland alone there were 60,080 incidents of domestic abuse recorded in 2012–13 (Scottish Government, 2013: 1). Feminist research and theory has also been instrumental in establishing domestic abuse as an acute social problem, and framing state and more general understandings and responses.

A Feminist Perspective – Gender Inequality

As domestic abuse developed into a public concern, researchers and theorists attempted to understand and explain this social phenomenon. Researchers such as Dobash et al. (1999: 21–33) focused either on the individual pathology of the perpetrator, human behaviour and emotions, or emphasised social characteristics such as class, and social institutions such as the family. Jasinski (2001: 6–12) terms these micro-level and macro-level oriented theories. In this context researchers assume that ‘in an intimate relationship human emotions such as jealousy and resentment may generate physical aggression which might well be exacerbated by poverty, ignited by alcohol or drugs and intensified by mental disorder’ (Conway, 2013: 28). Acknowledging the importance of micro-level and macro-level theories in understanding domestic abuse, feminist theory suggests that an understanding of gender is essential as we are dealing with issues which are rooted in the consistent and persistent oppression of women by men (Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005: 2; Burman et al., 2009: 9; Conway, 2013: 29). Thus, gender inequality is the central organising framework of feminist theory: the general power imbalance between men and women in both the domestic and public realms perpetuates violence against women in the family (Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005: 2; Burman et al., 2009: 11; Conway, 2013: 28–29). Walby (1990: 129)

explains women's subjugation and oppression as a continuum of violence in many forms, created and perpetrated by persisting patriarchal values and attitudes by the state and its public and private institutions, as well as by individual men against women. The feminist analysis of domestic abuse is accepted by the Scottish and UK Governments' and informs and guides much of their work. The Scottish Government's 'Safer Lives' (2009: 4) policy document firmly posits gender inequality as the root cause of 'violence against women'¹² and the mechanism by which it is perpetrated: 'Violence against women is not only a consequence of gender inequality, it also perpetuates it'. It is also clear from this policy document that tackling violence against women is necessary to address gender inequality: 'Tackling violence against women is therefore a pre-requisite to reducing inequality between men and women in Scotland' (Scottish Government, 2009: 2). Such attention to gender is also warranted by statistical evidence that indicates that the overwhelming majority of violent incidents consists of male perpetrators and female 'victims': 80 percent fall into this category (Scottish Government, 2013: 7; Conway, 2013). From this perspective, domestic abuse is understood to be a couple problem caused by gender inequality.

This viewpoint is also represented in the abundant research on domestic abuse that mainly explores the abusive tactics men employ in intimate relationships in order to control, oppress and dominate women (Dobash and Dobash, 1998; Dobash et al., 1999; Stark, 2007, 2013). For instance, the Duluth wheel of 'power and control', which originated with activists in the battered women's movement in northern Minnesota in the early 1980s, is based on what they term 'intimate partner violence'.¹³ It notes the different ways in which men exercise control over women, including male privilege, minimising women's experiences of abuse, economic control, coercion and threats, using children as leverage, and isolating and intimidating women (Gangoli et al., 2011: 35). Evan Stark's (2013: 21) 'coercive control' model offers a comprehensive understanding of domestic abuse, which he describes as, 'a strategic course of self-interested behavior designed to secure and

¹² A term utilised to encapsulate all forms of abuse against women, including domestic abuse.

¹³ For more information on the origins and nature of the Duluth wheel:
<http://www.theduluthmodel.org/>

expand gender-based privilege by establishing a regime of domination in personal life'. The feminist perspective that underscores gender inequality as the root cause of domestic abuse, and research which demonstrates the manner in which men exercise coercive control in intimate relationships, has greatly informed my understanding and exploration of South Asian women's experiences of spousal abuse (see Chapter Three). A gender analysis considers the different opportunities and resources to which women have access and how these are limited because of their gender, thus elucidating the similarities between women's experiences of abuse based on their gender. Important as this perspective of domestic abuse is, the universalising tendency of mainstream conceptualisations of domestic abuse does not fit the experiences of the women this thesis aims to represent.

False Universalisation

Researchers such as Gangoli et al. (2011: 35) have criticised the aforementioned perspective of domestic abuse as being limited to the experience of white women within intimate relationships with men. As a consequence, the experiences of women who do not fit this particular mould, such as South Asian women, have tended to go unacknowledged by mainstream feminism (Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005; Thiara and Gill, 2010a, 2010b). My first point of contention is with the (then) Scottish Executive (2003: 3) definition of domestic abuse, which is not representative of South Asian women's experience of family abuse for two reasons.

Firstly, this 2003 Scottish Executive definition views abuse as existing in a nuclear household within which a couple and, possibly, their children reside. A point introduced in this chapter, and explored and elucidated in Part One, is the nature of South Asian households (natal and affinal) which are characterised by extended family structures that extend over more than one or two generations; moreover, I am concerned by the confinement of women's experience to intimate relationships ('partner or ex-partner'). Researchers such as Rew, Gangoli and Gill (2013: 147) show that South Asian women can experience abuse outwith intimate relationships: female affinal kin such as mothers-in-law (HM) and sisters-in-law (HZ) can instigate spousal abuse, and perpetrate family abuse against in-married women (see Chapter Four). Women can also experience abuse from

members of the wider community, and from the state, where harmful policies can reinforce and facilitate abuse at the domestic and community level (Gangoli et al., 2011: 36) (see Chapter Six).

My second concern is with feminist research and theory that privileges gender inequality as the sole cause of domestic abuse. Ramazanoğlu and Holland (2002: 3) comment that (some) western feminists have been criticised for relying on an undifferentiated category of 'women' that assumes that to share female gender means a shared female experience. There is a crucial difference between building limited generalisations about women's social existence based on relationships and experiences and making universal generalisations about women (Ramazanoğlu and Holland, 2002: 6); that all women share the exactly same experience of domestic abuse simply because they are women. This is not appropriate to this, or any, study of women's experiences, as the women represented by this thesis are located by class, race, ethnicity and immigration status, as well as by gender. Furthermore, researchers such as Sumi Madhok (2013b: 5) argue that progress and emancipation – in the sense of freedom from male domination and the politics of transformation – that are central to (some) western feminism is inherently problematic (see Chapter Nine). As I will now go on to show, the specificity and differentiation of South Asian women's experience of abuse stems from two key factors: kinship structures and immigration status.

2.3 Gender Relations Framework: Kinship Structures

There is extensive general research exploring kinship and gender in South Asia (Dyson and Moore, 1983; Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon, 1988; Palriwala, 1996; Mathur, 2004; Merry, 2009) as well as a small amount of research that has been conducted in the UK (Shaw, 1988; Wardak, 2000; Ballard, 2002, 2004) pertaining to South Asians more generally. The gender inequality theory has largely influenced the work of South Asian feminists and researchers. Mathur (2004: 45) in her study of kinship in India comments that natal and affinal homes are characterised by gender relations. Central to these relations are cultural conceptualisations of masculinity and femininity where gender-specific behaviour is socially constructed, creating power differentials which are exhibited in roles and representations, abilities and desires that are attributed to them. Unlike the aforementioned

perspective of some feminist researchers and literature, gender and kinship is explored in relation to socio-economic and structural factors which can intensify existing forms of gender inequality and oppression at the micro-level (see Part One). In the next part of this chapter, I aim to explore the nature and structure of the natal and affinal home as characterised by gender, age and economic hierarchies, offset by a cultural ideology of son preference and concepts of honour and shame.

Natal Home

The literature on gender and kinship in South Asia alludes to the practice of son preference and daughter aversion that can exist within households. The nature and extent of this is dependent upon the region being studied (i.e. southern South Asia, northern South Asia, Indo-gangetic plain and surrounding areas) (Dyson and Moore, 1983; Palriwala, 1996; Mathur, 2004; Patel 2007a, 2007b). These patterns of domestic gender relationships apply, more or less, to all South Asian women, whether Muslim or not. Patel (2007a: 30) in her study of gender in India argues that son preference is apparent in the gender disparity which exists in the upbringing of daughters compared to sons. She terms this ‘daughter discrimination’, which can include neglect and, in more extreme cases, sex-selective abortion and even female infanticide. Patel (2007b: 154) found that when a daughter is born people come to express ‘*afsos*’ (sympathy) with the ‘unfortunate family’.

Girls tend to be born into a household structure with gender dichotomised roles, where sons are raised and educated to be earning members, while daughters, argue Jeffery and Jeffery (1996: 6), are responsible for household chores, housekeeping, and child rearing.

Consequently, women and girls are socialised to place complete trust in the men (F, B, H, S) in their lives for financial and social well-being. This not only limits women’s access to education and to paid work in the public sphere, but also, as Bina Agarwal (1997: 8) argues, seriously curtails women’s bargaining power within the home. Interestingly, Chowdhry (2005: 5192) claims that men are also, but not equally, constrained by patriarchal pressure which assumes a traditional pattern of marriage, employment, having children and taking financial and social care of their families. Men who fail to do so are viewed as powerless and immature, giving rise to what Chowdhry (2005: 5192) terms a

‘crisis of masculinity’. (I return to this point later in this chapter in my exploration of transnational marriage.) But what factors contribute to daughter aversion and son preference, and subsequent gender dichotomised roles? There seem to be three points put forward in the literature which may help answer these questions: status, upbringing and economics (Patel, 2007a, 2007b). In relation to the former, motherhood is understood as one of the major roles of a woman, as it not only marks her sexual and social maturity (Patel, 2007b: 141) but also provides her with social and domestic standing (Patel, 2007a: 43). Additionally, giving birth to sons is of prime importance and significance to a woman’s status in her conjugal home, as ‘she grows one fist in height’ (Sagar, 2007: 186); but if she has a daughter, ‘she shrinks one fist in height’ (Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon, 1989: 145). As it is perceived that women derive value and status only as the mothers of sons, their happiness and (minimal) power within the conjugal household is dependent upon this.

The caution and excessive care in raising a daughter begins early. Her mobility beyond the domestic arena is closely monitored and controlled in order to ensure she does not engage in behaviour considered to be a threat to the ‘izzat’ of her family (Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon, 1989: 24), such as sex before marriage, or simply talking to an unrelated (or even related) male. Before exploring this further, it is important to note that ‘izzat’ and its by-product ‘sharām’ are global concepts with a wide spectrum that tend to be glossed over by the terms ‘honour’ and ‘shame’. Werbner (2007: 162) refers to izzat as a broad concept, ‘encapsulating caste and class status, public reputation and symbolic capital accumulated through generosity towards guests and inferiors’. Since it covers a wide range of issues, of which the politics of sexuality is only one, its use for analytical purposes is misleading. Nevertheless, this vocabulary, izzat (honor) and sharām (shame), was used by the interviewees and is representative of their experience and views. These terms have been employed by feminist researchers such as Amrit Wilson (2006: 12) to understand the foundations of gender hierarchy and the contexts in which they arise, serving to disempower and oppress women, shaping how individuals act, and socially controlling women. Gill (2009: 477) has worked extensively within the realms of these ideologies and describes them as mutually reinforcing, embedded within the sexuality of women whose potential transgressions can become the antithesis of this model. While women uphold

these ideologies by controlling their own and others' behaviour and sexuality, men uphold it by getting married and taking care of their families. Within the South Asian community terms such as 'be-ghairat' (dishonorable) and 'be-sharām' (shameful) tend to be associated with female transgression (Gill, 2009: 479). Within this framework women are invested with immense negative power, carrying the burden of representation and perceived to be the symbolic bearers of identity and honour (Gill; 2006: 6; Wilson, 2006: 5).

The South Asian aphorisms 'parāyā dhān ('property belonging to someone else') (Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon, 1989: 25; Ghosh, 2004: 106) and 'raising a daughter is like watering a shade-giving tree in someone else's courtyard' (Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon, 1989: 23), shed light on why girls are kept under close surveillance, as well as shedding light on their position in the natal home. In the natal home a girl is prepared throughout her childhood by her parents for her inevitable marriage, for, as the previous aphorisms suggest, she is a temporary resident in her parents' home and destined to live elsewhere (Jejeebhoy and Sathar, 2001: 690; Ghosh, 2004: 106–107). From childhood, girls are told time and again that their aim in life is to be good daughters, and later good wives, mothers and housewives (Patel, 2007b: 156; Sagar, 2007: 187). Marriage is central to a woman's life, as her home, identity and prestige come through her marriage and in turn affect the prestige of her natal and conjugal family. In order to ensure that daughters are, so to speak, 'marriage material', excessive care and caution is taken in their upbringing. As I will show in Chapters Five and Eight, notions of family honour and cultural norms can become so deeply internalised that women often find it difficult to break away from them. These concepts can prevent women from leaving abusive relationships, and can constrain women from making disclosures of abuse and seeking support for fear of jeopardising personal, natal and affinal kin honour (Gill, 2009: 478).

Economics can also be attributed to daughter aversion and gender inequality within the natal home. As mentioned earlier, household structures have gender dichotomised roles that can leave women unemployed before, and after, marriage. Furthermore, girls (D) are perceived as someone else's property, whereby after marriage the groom's parents obtain long-term benefits from the bride, unlike her parents (Jeffery, 2014: 179). Thus, girls (D) provide no long-term financial, emotional or physical security to their parents, though

receiving anything from the daughter is disapproved of (Jeffery, 2014: 179). In this context, Jeffery (2014: 180) argues that the patrilocal nature of marriage patterns, that is, a bride leaves her parents and joins her husband and his wider family, itself perpetuates son preference, because sons and their wives will contribute financially and care for them in old age. Furthermore, the process of marriage, argues Patel (2007a: 34), can be an expensive and burdensome affair for the bride's family. This, Patel (2007a: 34) and researchers such as Jeffery and Jeffery (1996: 8) argue, is because of the dowry¹⁴ whereby the bride's family is expected to provide gifts to affinal kin, such as money, household furniture and gold. This is a practice which can continue long after the marriage ceremony. In the power relations between the bride's and groom's families, the former always have to give in and put up with any humiliation, indignity, oblique or direct insults, and sometimes demands for money and gifts on the part of the latter (Patel, 2007b: 170). A dowry is not merely economic loss but communicates love, affection, status and honour, and so 'when honour is positively correlated and measured through the monetary extent of the dowry gifts, collectively evaluated by the concerned families and other relatives, the economic burdensomeness of the daughter heightens' (Patel, 2007b: 165). Furthermore, parents prefer to give more to ensure their daughter has a comfortable time in her conjugal home, and does not endure taunts and possible violence as a result of an unsatisfactory dowry (Ghosh, 2004: 103).¹⁵ The natal home is characterised by gender inequality and disparity in all aspects of a girl's life. Through the demographic composition of the household, where a woman is privileged by having a son, and concepts of honour and shame, and marriage and dowry practices, daughters are perceived to be sexual, social and economic burdens. Once a woman enters her affinal home she is exposed to new hierarchies, inequalities and disparities.

¹⁴ Dowry has traditionally been understood to be gifts by parents to daughters in upper caste Brahmin weddings, but is now an almost universal aspect of marriage negotiations in different communities and castes, and can take the form of jewellery, cash, property, household goods and a myriad of consumer items (Gangoli and Rew, 2011: 422).

¹⁵ For example, bride-burning in India, see Gangoli and Rew (2011: 422).

Affinal Home

Charsley and Shaw (2006: 335) comment that marriage is considered primarily a relationship ‘between groups rather than individuals’, which reflects the transfer of the bride out of her natal family and into her affinal family. Ultimately, this sets up an additional, or new, ‘ristedārī’ (relationship) between two corporate extended families, creating new traditions such as ‘lenā-denā’ (taking and giving), of which women tend to be in charge (Shaw, 2000: 226; Wardak, 2000: 52). Upon marriage, a woman, who is no longer referred to as a ‘girl’, becomes a daughter-in-law in her affinal home and holds multiple new roles and responsibilities. The traditional South Asian household is viewed as a joint, extended patrilocal social unit where two or more generations of close relatives, who are affiliated by blood and/or relationship, live together (Wardak, 2000; Gangoli and Rew, 2011). Thus, a young woman’s marital home can usually consist of numerous relationships and members: mother-in-law and father-in-law; their sons and their wives and children; unmarried daughters; and sometimes divorced daughters with their children. Once married, a woman has to adjust and identify her own interests and ways with those of her husband’s kin (HM, HF, HZ) (Dyson and Moore, 1983: 44). It seems that young girls are socialised into surrendering to their parents’ wishes and then to those of their husband and their husband’s family.

Similar to the natal home, the affinal home is characterised by gender hierarchies that place women in subordinate positions to men. Women’s age, husbands’ position within the household and economics can also play a role within the affinal home. Women are not powerless amongst themselves in relation to age, where senior daughters-in-law can exert control and dominate younger daughters-in-law (Dyson and Moore, 1983: 44; Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon, 1989: 31). Researchers such as Jeffery and Jeffery (1996: 9–10) portray the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship to be fraught with tension, hostility and control. As I will show in Chapter Four, a mother-in-law can verbally abuse, taunt, beat and physically exhaust her daughter-in-law (Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon, 1989: 31; Gangoli and Rew, 2011: 424). This represents a stark difference from mainstream conceptualisations of domestic abuse, which does not take into account abuse from other members of the husband’s family (HM, HZ). According to Mand (2008: 289) a woman’s status in her

conjugal home is not static, but alters through the different stages in her life course. The subordinate new bride's positioning (such as a degree of autonomy and respect) within her affinal home will eventually change, usually by having a son (Shaw, 2000: 126). As time goes on, a woman's position as the subordinate daughter-in-law will shift to that of a powerful mother-in-law (see Chapters Four and Nine). This also clarifies the aforementioned preference of sons, which not only raises women's status within the household, but also ensures their life-long survival strategy in a patrilineal-patrilocal kinship system. If women keep their heads down now, so to speak, they will achieve status and power later.

Economics is a factor which tends to be overlooked within literature when exploring hierarchies within the affinal home. As shown earlier, due to a number of factors women tend to be unemployed before and after marriage, making them economically dependent on the men in their lives. There is also a class difference between women, with educated women often having paid employment and women at the bottom of the class hierarchy being employed, perforce, outside the home, but with low wages. Palriwala (1996: 216) and Jejeebhoy and Sathar (2001: 695) argue that women can enter their affinal home with no employment skills or earning capacity, which can affect their vulnerability, manoeuvrability and valuation. In other words, economic dependency can intensify gender and age hierarchies, inequalities and oppression within the affinal home. As I will show in Chapter Five, economic dependency can engender a situation whereby natal kin contact can be limited or prohibited by affinal kin (H, HM) by, for instance, refusing to provide economically dependent women with the resources to contact natal kin, such as a phone card. A new, young and economically dependent daughter-in-law has little or no freedom of movement or decision-making authority within these structures.

As I will show in Part One, the patrilocal nature of these structures does not only facilitate the context within which abuse can be perpetrated, but adds an additional dimension to women's experience of (affinal kin) abuse. This has not only been overlooked but also made invisible by mainstream conceptualisations of domestic abuse, which depicts it as a couple-problem existing in a nuclear family household. However, I do not feel that kinship structures, as explored in this thesis, are specific only to South Asian women. As we are all

embedded in some form of kinship, and kin can impact on abused women even if they are not residing under the same roof, it is possible that non-South Asian women may also feel supported and at times oppressed by them. A white woman may face pressure from her mother to stay in an abusive relationship for the sake of the children, or because her economic prospects outwith the marriage are bleak. The nature of kinship structures of South Asian women and non-South Asian women are distinct, but the reality that kinship structures may feature as part of any women's experience should not be overlooked. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, one of the aims of this thesis is to elucidate how women's experiences are not the same simply because they are women. A feature of South Asian women's experiences which allows me to make this claim is immigration status through transnational marriage, which I show in Chapters Seven and Eight not only creates specificity in South Asian women's experience of family abuse, but also differentiation among them.

2.4 Marriage and Migration

South Asia is characterised by various marriage patterns that serve different purposes: for example, researchers such as Shaw (1988: 138) and Ballard (2004: 10) show that Pakistani Muslims tend to prefer 'close kin' marriage where the spouse can be, but is not always, a first or second cousin (for example, FBS or MZD) to ensure natal kin contact and the good treatment of daughters (see Chapter Five). My focus here, however, is on transnational marriages in the UK.

Researchers such as Charsley and Shaw (2006) and Ballard (2002) have documented and tried to understand transnational marriages within the context of migration and kinship. Migration and settlement from South Asia to Britain began as far back as the eighteenth century, when a promise of a more secure lifestyle was one of the many pull factors (Wardak, 2000). The main migration, however, began in the twentieth century in the post-World War Two era, and especially from Pakistan in the later 1950s. It initially started with male migration, with women and children migrating later, from the 1960s onwards. Migration did not entail a rejection of culture or an adoption of a completely new identity, rather, South Asian migrants and their children found inspiration from their religion,

language and culture, restructuring their lives ‘on their own terms’ (Ballard, 2004: 8). What initially was intended for economic gain became a process of settlement which arose through chain migration. However, this thesis is concerned with something rather different: young people domiciled and possibly born in the UK who are being married to someone from South Asia.

Questions pertaining to the motivations behind transnational marriages have been raised at the level of public discourse: for example, why would a modern British-born individual want to marry a traditional spouse from back home? Why would the parents of a girl in South Asia give their daughter to strangers or to a family living in the UK? These questions have generated much debate surrounding coercion and consent, where such marriages have become popularly conceptualised as forced (Phillips and Dustin, 2004: 546; Shaw and Charsley, 2006: 406). If we first look at the motivations of the bride-givers, women can be viewed as powerful agents within the migration process, having the means to boost their families’ economic position, either by sending money back home, or facilitating the migration of other family members (Mand, 2002; Shaw and Charsley, 2006). Anitha (2011: 1271) states that the ‘myth of a prosperous life in the West prevails among many communities in the subcontinent where parents often pay huge dowries to marry their daughters to the UK’. Furthermore, if the marriage is between cousins this ensures (as perceived by natal kin) that their daughter will be treated well and natal kin contact will be easily maintained (Charsley, 2005: 86). From the perspective of bride-takers, researchers such as Shaw and Charsley (2006: 408) and Werbner (1990: 96) argue that the significance of transnational marriage is in its reinvigoration of kinship weakened through living continents apart. As I will show in Chapter Five, transnational close-kin marriage can potentially break down kinship ties if the marriage does not last, or it may pressurise individuals to stay in unhappy, abusive relationships in order to maintain kinship ties.

For parents who fear their children are being ‘westernised’ and losing their cultural roots, bringing a ‘traditional’ bride from back home can ensure preservation of cultural and religious practices which can be passed on to grandchildren. It may also be the case, argues Anitha (2011: 1271), that South Asian men and parents often subscribe to ‘the myth of the passive South Asian woman who is family oriented, accustomed to large age differences,

accepting of a gendered division of housework, subservient and willing to please, who can also bring home an income if needed'. She would be easier to control and would not challenge the gender, age and economic hierarchies within the affinal home (see Chapter Four). As mentioned earlier, transnational marriages tend to be viewed as gendered where it is presumed the bride is migrating. As this was not the case for some of the interviewees, this is an issue which requires further exploration.

The 'Ghar-Jamāī'

Here, I provide a brief overview of the literature on the 'ghar-jamāī': the in-living son-in-law, and part of the migration and transnational process (Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon, 1989: 36; Charsley, 2005: 91; Shaw and Charsley, 2006: 413). In doing so, I highlight an additional and overlooked dimension of South Asian women's experiences of abuse, which also clarifies the specificity and differentiation of women's experiences; that is, UK-born South Asian women with migrant male spouses.

Charsley (2005: 86) argues that even though in recent years there have been equal numbers of male and female migrants through marriage, the interactions of migration and masculinity have been somewhat neglected, the focus being on women and their experiences as migrant wives of overbearing affinal kin (HM, HZ) and natal kin distance (Fernandez, 1997: 436; Anitha, 2011: 1274). The literature on discussions of ghar-jamāī speaks of two issues: firstly, the ways in which the combination of migration with social and economic processes of Pakistani kinship and masculinity produce difficulties for some migrant husbands; and, secondly, men 'tricking' women into marriage solely for the purpose of obtaining a visa (Charsley, 2005: 90). The focus of this section is on the former. The 'ghar-jamāī' tends to arise in situations where a father does not want to be distanced from his daughter, or where there is no son to carry on the family name, and possibly business (Charsley, 2005: 92). Whatever the reasons, the ghar-jamāī is seen to be an undesirable position and men are looked down upon because of this for a number of reasons. Firstly, Charsley (2005) speaks of male migrants having to 'start from scratch again' in light of socio-economic constraints, which means their qualifications are not recognised and which, coupled with a lack of knowledge of the system and compounded by

poor English, create limited employment prospects. Many male migrants come from good jobs in Pakistan to doing manual labour in the UK (Charsley, 2005: 91). During this transitional phase sons-in-law have to reside in the wife's family home, which undermines Pakistani ideals of masculinity and creates new domestic power relationships. A defining feature of the masculine ideology, which defines successful ways of 'being a man', is the economic provision for family members, which is perceived to be boosted by migrating, and providing for those back home. Ironically, through marriage migration, the effort to fulfill the masculine role of provider may impose on a migrant groom the emasculating experience of the *ghar-jamāi*. Therefore, marriage migration can limit a man's ability to fulfill several of his expected roles, and he experiences the increased pressure of a double responsibility to provide for his dependants in Britain and to contribute to the household of his family in Pakistan. Further, a husband's migration disrupts the conventional configuration of kinship after marriage, resulting in an unusual absence of some relations: while the wife has her family at hand the husband has no relations in close proximity. Therefore, he may become subservient to his overbearing affinal kin (WM), where there is no senior member of the household to whom the *ghar-jamāi* can appeal for help with his complaints.

Consequences of Marriage Patterns

I will now explore how the marriage patterns alluded to above place women in vulnerable positions, which ultimately facilitate and intensify family abuse. In the case of the *ghar-jamāi*, the realignment of kinship patterns and structures may seem beneficial to the bride at face value, and it is undeniable that it can potentially place men in vulnerable positions. In light of the power dynamics between men and women, specifically within a spousal abuse context, the literature has failed to acknowledge the affects of the *ghar-jamāi* process on the female UK-born spouse. As I will show in Chapter Seven, it is unwise to believe that the restructuring of kinship patterns within the *ghar-jamāi* phenomenon will create a power differential in favour of the woman. Her natal kin, who may still hold cultural ideologies of masculine and feminine behaviours and roles, may not intervene. Furthermore, the perceived loss of masculinity and power differentials can lead to abusive behaviour by the male spouse.

In the case of migrant brides, Menjivar and Salcido (2002: 903) show, in their research on migrant women generally, how migration alone can isolate and increase women's vulnerability in the 'host' country: firstly, women are leaving behind friends and family, entering into a country where the only source of support is affinal kin; secondly, they face stringent immigration policies which question their right to citizenship (for example, the 'two-year rule') (Abraham, 2008: 314); thirdly, women may come to the UK unable to speak English and unaware of their rights (Menjivar and Salcido, 2002: 903); and, fourthly, irrespective of educational qualification and skills, women may find it difficult to get paid employment due to institutional racism and lack of recognition of non-British qualifications (Hague et al., 2006: 5). As argued by Menjivar and Salcido (2002: 903) what affects women's experience of migration are the resources they bring to, and find in, the host country. In other words, the experience of immigration itself can make women vulnerable, isolated and discriminated against (on the basis of race and gender), irrespective of family abuse. The exploration (and critique) of government policies in Chapters Seven and Eight show how a 'two-year probationary period', 'no recourse to public funds' and the constant fear of deportation can constrain women at the macro- and micro-levels. It is within these contexts that South Asian women with insecure immigration status experience intensified and specific forms of abuse (Anitha, 2011: 1260), when gender, race, class and immigration status converge. For example, a South Asian woman wanting to leave an abusive marriage may be constrained from doing so for fear of racism from service providers, and she faces an immigration system which threatens deportation if she has not resided in the marriage for two years. In recognising the difference in women's experiences, and the 'special needs' of some communities, the UK government has attempted to understand and tackle abuses against women and girls within the South Asian community. In doing so, however, the 'South Asian community' and 'South Asian women' are conceptualised as a solid unit defined by a static culture.

2.5 Community and Culture

It is not my aim here to elucidate the oppressive and harmful nature of the community; this is provided in Chapter Six. Rather, I want to draw the reader's attention to two things:

firstly, the manner in which community and culture are conceptualised by the state as reified and static, to the detriment of South Asian women; and, secondly, that this creates a new collective victimhood based on culture.

Very few researchers have examined the nature of the South Asian community, for instance, by exploring the layers of the community and how they interact. Ali Wardak (2000) and Alison Shaw (2000) are amongst the few who have done so in relation to the Pakistani community in Britain. The Pakistani community is defined and termed by Shaw (2000: 140) in terms of the 'birāderī', which she describes as: 'At the most restricted, denoting one's closest relatives in Britain and Pakistan, and the most generally, referring to all caste members'. The Pakistani community in Edinburgh is understood by Wardak (2000) to be divided into three levels: national, local and kin. The kin level is made up of affinal and natal kin, structures I have already explored. My understanding of the national community is that it consists of the wider Pakistani community who share common social bonds on the basis of 'community language, religion, cultural values and customs, and country of origin' (Wardak, 2000: 50). As we delve deeper within the levels, from the national to the local, solidarity and collectivity become more concentrated. Irrespective of 'feuds, economic rivalries and political and ideological difference, and the existence of more than one caste association and mosque', the interdependence and community-belonging remains unchanged (Wardak, 2000: 53). This creates what Wardak (2000: 53) terms a 'conscience collective'. The relationships and bonds at the kinship level are more concentrated than in the other two levels, where as well as the sharing of common bonds mentioned above, there are strong reciprocal relationships (Wardak, 2000: 52). As mentioned earlier, 'lenā-denā' ('taking and giving') occurs after marriage between the natal and affinal kin. Shaw (2000: 226) explores lenā-denā as a notion of reciprocity that can exist not only between immediate (close) families, but also between members of the local community such as friends and neighbours, making this concept central to understanding the notion of solidarity. This usually takes place during celebrations such as weddings, birthdays, a newborn boy's circumcision and a child's first completed reading of the Qur'an (Shaw, 2000: 228). Furthermore, the local community is made up of institutions such as the mosque, which facilitates a degree of social interaction (Wardak, 2000: 51). Two important

features of the community, which I explore in Chapter Six as reinforcing domestic control and inequality, are community responsibility and solidarity. As mentioned earlier, marriages have diverse patterns but, it seems, particularly amongst Pakistanis, that the wider community has a role to play in building these alliances. The male and female elders of the community feel it to be their responsibility to help parents find a good husband for their daughter. In order to ensure the suitability of the partner, mainly the female partner, information is exchanged between the elder women of the community, usually in a communal place such as Friday prayer at the mosque. The behaviour of the girl is observed, as well as her physical beauty. Thus, the fate of an unmarried girl is largely in the hands of the women surrounding her. If she conforms to the 'good girl' ideology, they will either arrange her marriage or upon request provide her with a good reference. If she does not adhere to the culturally prescribed ideology of femininity, then she is gossiped about by the elder female generation. This form of community responsibility can extend to ensuring women do not transgress prescribed norms and behaviours, by ensuring women do not leave an abusive marriage.

Community solidarity has been expressed in studies such as the Edinburgh-based study conducted by the women's group 'Nari Kallyan Shangho' (NKS), which explores health and inequality amongst South Asian women (Jones et al., 2013). Similar to Wardak (2000), their findings highlight a strong sense of solidarity and belonging to community and culture (Jones et al., 2013: 13). The women identified ways in which they maintained this: ensuring that children used the familial mother tongue and had an understanding and knowledge of their cultural and religious heritage; and attending functions and celebrations organised by NKS (Jones et al., 2013: 13). In Chapter Six, I allude to the community as having the power to control the behaviour of women and girls, which is facilitated by the strong sense of solidarity and belonging held by women, which inhibits women from challenging community structures.

A Static Community Based on a Reified Culture

Gerd Baumann (1996: 17) in his ethnographic study of Southall, London, argues that the terms 'community' and 'culture' are mutually reinforcing to each other, 'for those defined

as ethnic minorities must form a community based on their reified culture; and their culture must appear in reified form, because they are, after all, identified as a community'. This has led to general statements being made about 'the South Asian community' or 'the Muslim community'. Brah (1987: 44), speaking of the representations of South Asian women, notes how 'many of the contemporary academic, political and popular discourses ... operate within a totally reified concept of culture as some kind of baggage to be carried around'. The importance and essentialisation of culture is reflected in the UK Government's multiculturalist and assimilation agendas (see 'Introduction'). This, however, creates a new form of universalisation of the South Asian community as dictated by a static and backward culture, and South Asian women as passive 'victims' of this culture (Vlopp, 2005: 40; Anitha, 2011: 1264). Thus, women are trapped between two discourses: one that calls for cultural sensitivity and respect (multiculturalism), and another that views women's abuse as traditional 'cultural practices'. Within these discourses, it seems that gender inequality is secondary both to cultural sensitivity and to the UK Government's assimilation agendas. Women's groups such as SBS show that within the agenda of multiculturalism, community leaders (male elders) are taken to represent the needs and views of the collective community (Phillips and Dustin, 2004: 532; Patel and Siddiqui, 2010: 105). This rigidifies culture and portrays it from a male-elder perspective, but it also presumes that culture is static, uncontested and solidified. Furthermore, as argued in Chapter Six, this overlooks the conflicting interests inherent within the community, and thus facilitates women's oppression and abuse at the community level (Siddiqui, 2003: 74, 90; Joshi, 2003: 151). Additionally, exaggerated notions of cultural sensitivity have shielded from scrutiny discriminatory practices affecting girls and women in the South Asian community, thereby paralysing service providers such as social workers and police officers from carrying out their work (Phillips, 2010: 2) (see Chapter Eight). In their unwillingness to intervene, whether due to complacency, or a desire to avoid being regarded as culturally insensitive, service providers can unwittingly reinforce cultural perceptions of South Asian women by making assumptions about their needs and by not responding to them as individual service users (Siddiqui, Ismail and Allen, 2008: 147). On the other hand, the hyper-visibility of South Asian women's experience as 'harmful cultural practices' is equally problematic for a number of reasons: firstly, it adds to the racist discourse which portrays the South Asian

community as backward and inherently patriarchal; secondly, it overlooks forces beyond culture (structural, economic, political) that can affect women's lives (Vlopp, 2005: 39); and, thirdly, it absolves the state, including service providers, of taking responsibility for a failure to respond to South Asian women's experience of abuse adequately (see Chapter Eight).

I am not arguing for culture to be disregarded. As I will show throughout this thesis, culture does have a role in explaining South Asian women's experiences of family abuse, and enables us to understand the manifestations of abuse in specific contexts and the meaning women and perpetrators ascribe to particular acts, such as leaving (Anitha and Gill, 2011a: 60). So how can we understand women's experiences of abuse beyond one-dimensional explanations, such as gender or culture, and what accounts for the multi-faceted and multi-dimensional nature of women's identities and experiences of abuse? How can we incorporate culture and gender into our understanding of women's experiences without falling into the trap of essentialism and reinforcing stereotypes of the South Asian community? I will now discuss intersectionality as the means by which this can be achieved.

2.6 'Intersectionality'

The term 'intersectionality' was first coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) in her exploration of black women's experiences of discrimination and subordination, which she argued is more powerful than the sum of their race and gender. While intersectionality has become a scholarly buzzword, the notion the term encompasses has pervaded black feminist scholarship for decades. Feminist scholars such as bell hooks (1981, 1984) criticised the common discourse in feminist political theory of the 1980s which would constantly draw analogies between the situation of women and the situation of Blacks in America. This implies, she argued, that 'all women are white and all Blacks are men' (hooks, 1981). This was the starting point of an analytical and political move by Black and other feminists to deconstruct the categories of both 'women' and 'Blacks' and to develop an analysis of the intersectionality of various social divisions, most often focusing on

gender, race and class (Yuval-Davis, 2006). To that end, intersectionality has provided a name to a pre-existing theoretical and political commitment (Nash, 2008).

Intersectionality, ‘the notion that subjectivity is constructed by mutually reinforcing vectors of race, gender, class and sexuality’ (Nash, 2008: 2), has become the primary analytical tool that feminist scholars deploy for theorising identity and oppression (Cho, Crenshaw and McCall, 2013). Leslie McCall (2005: 1771) stresses intersectionality’s importance, calling it ‘... the most important theoretical contribution that women’s studies, in conjunction with related fields, has made so far’. Intersectionality is, however, a contested term within feminist thought, where some suggest that it is a theory, while others regard it as a concept or heuristic device (Davis, 2008; Yuval-Davis, 2012). Due to its vagueness and the uncertainties that it generates, differences have emerged in the usage of intersectionality amongst scholars (Yuval-Davis, 2012).

McCall (2005: 1771) notes that ‘... despite the emergence of intersectionality as a major paradigm of research in women’s studies and elsewhere, there has been little discussion of how to study intersectionality that is, of its methodology’. This, argues McCall (2005: 1771), is due to the complexity that arises when the subject of analysis expands to include multiple dimensions of social life and categories of analysis. Despite this, McCall (2005) provides a typology of intersectionality, arguing that studies that have used an intersectional approach differ as to whether they have used the ‘anti-categorical’, ‘inter-categorical’, or ‘intra-categorical’ approach. Without rejecting categorisation completely, the former approach problematises the exclusionary repercussions of the act of categorisation (Nash, 2008). It takes marginalised intersectional identities as an analytical starting point ‘... in order to reveal the complexity of lived experience with such groups’ (McCall, 2005: 1774). The inter-categorical approach focuses on the way the intersection of different social categories, such as race, gender, class and so forth, affects particular social behaviours. McCall (2005: 1784–1785) favours this methodological approach, ‘... which begins with the observation that there are relationships of inequality among already constituted social groups, as imperfect and ever changing as they are, and takes these relationships as the center of analysis’. The intra-categorical approach, on the other hand, is less occupied with the relationships amongst various social categories and instead

problematizes the meaning and boundaries of the categories themselves, such as whether black women are included in the category 'women'. Nira Yuval-Davis (2012: 6–7), however, highlights the inadequacy of using an inter-categorical approach on its own, arguing that unless it is complemented with an intra-categorical approach, 'it can be understood as as an additive rather than a mutually constitutive approach to the relationships between social categories'. Like her, (Yuval-Davis, 2012: 6) I do not see the two approaches as mutually exclusive, but instead propose an intersectional approach which combines the 'sensitivity and dynamism' of the intra-categorical approach with the more 'macro socio-economic perspective' of the inter-categorical approach.

Crenshaw (1989: 139) defines intersectionality as 'the multidimensionality of marginalised subjects' lived experiences'. One of the issues represented in much of the literature is how many social divisions are involved and which ones should be incorporated into the analysis of the intersectionality process (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Some black feminists consider race, gender and class to be the three major social divisions, while other feminist theorists add other dimensions they are interested in such as age, disability, and sexuality (Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2012). Feminists attempted to develop complete lists and included in them much higher numbers, as many as fourteen categories (Yuval-Davis, 2012: 8). Yuval-Davis (2006: 195) argues that beyond the ontological questions of how many social divisions there are and whether we are dealing with 'axes of social divisions, dualistic lines of difference or specific forms of discrimination', it is important to note that there is often conflation or separation of the different analytical levels in which intersectionality is located. She (Yuval-Davis, 2006: 204) argues that we need to 'attend to the differential positionings of power in which different identity groups can be located in specific historical contexts, and the dynamics of power relations within these groups'.

A concept as complex, vague and open-ended as intersectionality (Davis, 2008) cannot be perceived as offering a singular, cohesive path forward when conducting research.

However, in the context of this research, an intersectional approach affords an opportunity to understand one form of oppression in relation to other forms, and consequently see how factors at the micro- and macro-levels can marginalise and endanger women. One of the fundamental contributions of intersectionality is that it points to the 'limitation of gender as

an analytical category' (McCall, 2005: 1771). Intersectionality shows how it is impossible to theorise about women's lives by looking at one part of a person's complex and multidimensional identity. Like myself, researchers such as Aisha Gill (2013: 143) have questioned and criticised the universalising tendencies of (some) feminist literature, and policy documents that treat culture as a solid entity and simply lump together women, with similar experiences that require similar responses and support. In doing so, these feminist researchers (Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005; Thiara and Gill, 2010a, 2010b; Anitha and Gill, 2011a, 2011b; Gill, 2013) have adopted intersectional theory as a framework to understand women's multiple identities and diverse experiences of abuse better.

An intersectional approach to identity seeks to overcome the problems inherent within mainstream understandings of the terms 'domestic abuse' and 'South Asian women', where too heavy a focus on singular identity traits obscures the experiences of women who do not fit this mould (Gill, 2013). Society is marked by multiple systems of domination where individuals' experiences cannot and are not shaped by single identities: i.e. by being 'a woman', or 'a black person' (Thiara and Gill, 2010a, 2010b; Anitha and Gill, 2011a). As already noted, while we can argue that there is commonality in women's experience of abuse on the basis of gender, structural factors such as race and immigration status can make some women more powerless than others; also, an intersectional approach allows an exploration of the specificity of South Asian women's experience of abuse while also appreciating the differences among them. While kinship structures, culture, socio-economics and structural factors can shape South Asian women's experiences of abuse, factors such as immigration status create an extra dimension to these experiences, where these factors can play out very differently for them.

The central task of this thesis does not end with simply highlighting differences, but by analysing how these differences are created and entrenched at the macro-level and the effects these have on women at the micro-level. As I will show in Chapters Three and Seven, threats of deportation and refusal to renew an expired spousal visa feature in South Asian women's experience of family abuse, but this is not categorised in policy documents as abusive behaviour. This example highlights two key points: firstly, if we pay attention to women's individual circumstances, such as immigration status, language, distance of natal

kin, we are able to move beyond abstract understandings of abuse and women's experiences; and, secondly, this foregrounds the role of the state which provides the perpetrator with power and the tools to control and manipulate vulnerable women (see Chapter Seven). Thus, an intersectional approach facilitates the central task of this thesis: to show how women's experiences at the micro-level are affected by policymaking decisions and service-provision responses at the macro-level.

2.7 Summary

Mainstream understandings of domestic abuse have universalised an image of women, relationships and domestic structures which does not accurately, if at all, capture women's multiple identities and diverse experiences. Furthermore, the assumption that South Asian women are part of a solid community and are 'victims' of a reified backward culture is equally problematic and is a perspective which characterises state policy and practice. All women do not share the same experiences simply because they are women or because they come from the same community. In this chapter, I have introduced immigration status and kinship structures as not only creating specificity in South Asian women's experiences, but also differentiation among them. By adopting an intersectional approach, I shall now concern myself in this thesis with elucidating the claims made in this chapter, to show, firstly, that South Asian women's experience of abuse within the home is characterised by multiple relationships and perpetrated within extended family structures (see Part One); and, secondly, to show the role of the state in intensifying oppression and abuse within the home and in creating structural constraints at the macro-level (see Part Two). By pushing for a change in mainstream perceptions that women's identities and experiences are one-dimensional, I show that gender and culture are not the only factors that place particular women at the margins of society. In order to grasp insight into, and understanding of, South Asian women's experience of abuse we must look to the way the macro- and micro-levels are intertwined and mutually reinforcing, compounding and constraining South Asian women in complex and specific ways.

PART ONE

THE FAMILY

Preamble

In Chapter Two, I have suggested that mainstream conceptualisations of domestic abuse – intimate relationships and nuclear households – do not recognise or represent the kinship structures and household compositions I deal with in this thesis. Because of this, I have grouped together the following three chapters (Three, Four and Five) in a section on ‘The Family’, which elucidates the multiple relationships and complex kinship structures within which South Asian women experience family abuse: namely, spousal and affinal kin relationships (HM, HZ, etc.), and natal kin relationships (M, B, etc.).

In the following chapters, I argue that these dimensions intertwine and overlap, oppressing and constraining women in different ways. They are intensified and facilitated by factors such as immigration status, economics and distance of natal kin, creating specificities and distinctions in women’s experiences. A woman can experience spousal abuse in the affinal home (Chapter Three) instigated by female affinal kin, who also directly perpetrate family abuse (Chapter Four), whilst simultaneously facing pressure from natal kin to stay in the abusive relationship for fear of jeopardising the honour and marriage prospects of younger siblings (Chapter Five). These explorations foreground how experiences of family abuse do not always consist of just an abused woman and a male perpetrator, but may consist of multiple relationships – all of which add to women’s abuse and constraints in various ways.

The main contribution of Part One is twofold: (i) the sociological and anthropological studies on gender and kinship address the structures and relationships I deal with in this thesis, such as marriage patterns, kinship structures, mother-daughter relationships and household structures and dynamics. These studies are not, however, specific to spousal or family abuse, but explored more generally. Conversely, the conventional domestic abuse literature explores the nature and features of abuse with limited, or no, inclusion of ‘the family’. In view of this, the following chapters combine the two bodies of work by applying a domestic abuse framework to kinship dimensions while exploring family composition in sociological studies on gender and kinship more broadly; and (ii) this will

inform policy practice which does not categorise the specificities and distinctiveness of South Asian women's experience, such as the nature of the abuse and factors which intensify and facilitate abuse (e.g. immigration status), and the structures and relationships within which these exist.

Before I begin, the following points must be noted: firstly, although the focus of my doctoral research is Muslim Pakistani women, the issues explored in the following chapters resonate with non-Muslim South Asian women generally, and to some degree also other migrant women; secondly, my examination of spousal and family abuse is based on the interviewees' perceptions and interpretations of this. I did not directly speak to the mothers-in-law or the husbands. My exploration is thus limited to what the interviewees told me, and their subjective interpretation and understanding of it. Furthermore, I am reliant on the interviewees' inferences about perpetrator intent such as an apparent desire to control and to dominate (see Chapter Three). So, in my exploration of spousal and family abuse I talk about the 'result' and 'outcome' of the abuse, as it is impossible for me to truly grasp the perpetrators intentions, unless specified by the interviewee; and, thirdly, the findings and arguments made are based on the experiences of the interviewees. As I have stated in Chapter One, we must steer clear of generalisations and stereotyping, as not all affinal kin are abusive, and not all migrant South Asian women experience spousal and family abuse.

CHAPTER THREE

Spousal Abuse:

Women's Perceptions and Experiences

He would agree to his mum's every word. If she [HM] said, 'you can't go out with her [Fatima]', he would say, 'okay'. [If she said,] 'You can't sleep with her', [he would say] 'Okay'.¹⁶ (Fatima Pakistan-born)

He would always use my *visa* to *control* me, saying, 'If you don't do this [give her child benefit to him] then I'll send you back to Pakistan'. So, I would agree to his every word.¹⁷ (Khalida Pakistan-born)

He became obsessive, he became very, very controlling. Everything, right down to what I ate and what I wore had to be on his say so, and he changed me as a person. I was this outgoing, bubbly, friendly person. I completely changed altogether and stopped contacting and going out with my friends. He wasn't violent to me then, [but] he was very aggressive in his nature, the way he would stand up or the way he would grab me or punch the doors. (Farah: H2 UK-born)

3. Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to firstly describe the features of domestic abuse all women can experience within the home, which Evan Stark (2013) terms as tactics of 'coercion and control'. While looking into the similarities in women's experiences, in this chapter I also explore the distinction in South Asian women's experiences based on their immigration status and their experiences of wider kin abuse, as exemplified by the quotes. The mainstream domestic abuse literature and policy documents do not address the manner in which immigration status increases South Asian women's (or any migrant women's) vulnerability to spousal abuse. I introduce factors in this chapter that are explored throughout this thesis, such as socio-economic status, language and natal kin distance,

¹⁶ Voh apnī ammī kī har bāt māntā thā. Agar voh kahe, 'tum bahār nahīn jā-sakte is-ke sāth', voh kehtā thā, 'thīk hai', 'is-ke pās so nahīn sakte', 'thīk hai'.

¹⁷ Us-ne hameshā *visa* istemāl kiyā, mūjhe *control* karne ke-liye kehā, 'agar tum-ne yeh nahīn kiyā to phir meh tumhe Pakistan vāpis bhej-dūngā'. Meh phir us-kī har bāt mān letī thī.

which facilitate tactics of coercion and control. Furthermore, Fatima's quote clarifies wider kin abuse as being not only a feature of spousal abuse – in this instance, mothers-in-law instigating abuse – but also as being a central part of their wider experience of family abuse, such as mothers-in-law directly perpetrating abuse (the central theme of Chapter Four). The findings of this chapter contribute to the overarching argument of this thesis: in order to achieve nuanced and sensitive policy and practice it is vital to avoid false universalisations of women and their experiences. As I have argued before, and will show in this chapter, all women do not have the same experience of abuse simply because they are women. Instead, by adopting an intersectional approach we can focus on individuality as well as collectivity, specificities as well as similarities, and descriptive as opposed to abstract understandings of spousal abuse.

3.1 Chapter Outline

As I have shown in Chapter Two, the Scottish Government's description and conceptualisation of domestic abuse is not only limited in its representation of most abused women, but in its understanding of what constitutes a 'victim'. For this reason, I begin this chapter with an exploration of interviewees' perceptions and understandings of spousal abuse.

This is followed by the descriptive part of this chapter, which explores spousal abuse within the home. By utilising Evan Stark's (2013) 'coercive control' model, I argue that physical abuse is just one feature of men's control and domination. I show that many women experience being financially controlled and socially isolated, but not being physically or sexually assaulted. By overemphasising the physical dimension of women's experiences, the sometimes more harmful, subtle tools of coercion and control can be overlooked.

The final part of this chapter explores the specificity of, and differentiation amongst, South Asian women's experiences created by immigration status and wider kin abuse. Although these themes will be explored in greater detail in the following chapters (Four and Seven), it is essential to an exploration of South Asian women's experiences of spousal abuse that these factors, albeit briefly, are addressed. I argue that not only do these factors add an

additional layer to South Asian women's experience of abuse, they also intensify and create new methods of coercion and control.

3.2 Summary of Interview Findings

The Pakistan-born and UK-born interviewees experienced spousal abuse which ranged from physical abuse to control and isolation. It is clear from the findings that the interviewees found tactics such as emotional and sexual withdrawal, financial abuse, and methods of isolation such as prohibiting and limiting natal kin contact, more difficult to endure than physical acts of abuse. The specificity and distinction of the interviewees' experiences are based on immigration status and affinal kin interference. The Pakistan-born interviewees experienced threats of deportation, greater forms of control and isolation, and more frequent forms of physical abuse (i.e. pushing). The UK- and Pakistan-born interviewees explained that their husbands' confidence in abusing them in front of affinal kin stemmed from their husbands knowing that they would not face reprisals from affinal kin (HM, HZ) who were themselves either instigating abuse, or also directly perpetrating abuse against the interviewees (see Chapter Four).

3.3 Women's Perceptions of Spousal Abuse

Liz Kelly (1990: 114), in her study of sexual abuse, comments that in order to define something a name has to exist with which to name it. What is not named is invisible and, in a social sense, is non-existent. During my literature review of domestic abuse, I found a lack of consensus amongst researchers in relation to terminology: for example, 'common couple violence' (Johnson, 1995: 283), 'intimate partner violence' (Jasinski, 2001: 5) and 'patriarchal terrorism' (Johnson, 1995: 287) are just a few of the terms utilised, consequently making it difficult for researchers to explore women's experience of abuse.¹⁸ Most importantly, this can affect public perception, service provision, and women's own understanding of their experiences which may not fit the conventional understanding of abuse. This strengthens Kelly's (1990: 117) central recommendation: a definition and

¹⁸ Also making 'domestic abuse' difficult to measure (Desai and Saltzman, 2001: 35).

understanding of women's experiences of abuse that is not abstract or stereotypical but, rather, encapsulates the diversity of abuse. To put it simply, if a woman's experience of abuse does not reflect or match public and state understandings, she may minimise the effects and seriousness of the abuse, or not recognise it as abuse, possibly fearing her experiences will not be taken seriously. As I will show in this chapter, women can experience mechanisms of control and isolation that do not feature in policy documents on domestic abuse. For instance, a woman who is controlled and manipulated by her husband who deploys her immigration status as leverage to ensure she accedes to his wishes. As researchers, we must question who is responsible for defining women's experience of abuse, and question policymaking for women experiencing abuse, and question who decides what constitutes a 'victim', and what constitutes abuse?

A central recommendation of this thesis (see Chapter Ten) is the inclusion of women's voices and opinions and to hear their experiences from their own perspectives – feminism's fundamental commitment to the importance of subjective, lived experience. The process of defining women's experience of abuse, and creating policy initiatives towards ensuring their safety should, of course, include women's voices. However, I recognise the difficulty of establishing a single overarching definition which captures and represents all women's experience of abuse. Dekeseredy and Schwartz (2001: 29) pose the question: 'How do we achieve consensus in defining violence against women?' Price (2005: 15) argues this can be done by rejecting the pursuit of objectivity and strive instead for 'collective subjectivity'. If we look to how women themselves define and understand their experiences of abuse, not only to definitions constructed by the state and by researchers, then we might achieve 'a broad consensus on social definitions of violence against women' (Price, 2005: 15) (see Chapter Ten).

The following section is an exploration of my discussion with the interviewees of four fabricated scenarios and two real-life case studies which, as explained in Chapter One, featured in the interview schedule.¹⁹ I wanted to gain an understanding of the interviewees' perceptions, and the terms they use to explain and describe their own experiences of abuse

¹⁹ The case studies and scenarios can be found in Appendix Four.

without contaminating or pre-empting them with how others think they should be labelled and defined. This is a small step towards the inclusion of women's voices, empowering them to define and understand their abuse on their own terms, and I hope state policy and practice will follow suit.

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born Interviewees

The cases studies and scenarios cover a range of abuse (e.g. physical, sexual and emotional) perpetrated by wider kin (such as H, HM). I began by reading the scenarios and cases studies to the interviewees, answering any questions they had, followed by a discussion.²⁰ Initially, the interviewees responded, as Aliyah did, by saying: 'I am *shocked*.'²¹ They then condemned the perpetrator's behaviour (H), saying, 'he should not hit'²² (Khalida), labelling it as 'wrong'²³ (Asma), 'horrible'²⁴ (Fatima) and 'dreadful' (Syma). The interviewees identified who was being abused (women) and the types of abuse in the scenarios and case studies:

She is being threatened and hit by her husband, he abusing the financial way also.
(Syma)

Syma, like the rest of the Pakistan-born interviewees, had a sound knowledge of the overt and subtle forms of abuse being perpetrated in the scenarios and the case studies. The interviewees attempted to understand and explain the perpetrators' behaviour: for instance, Aliyah felt the perpetrators' '*mentality*'²⁵ was 'horrible'²⁶, while Fatima associated the abusive behaviour with a lack of education, saying: 'They [H] have no *education*, no *understanding* how to *treat a wife*.'²⁷ It was unclear what type of education she was

²⁰ Due to time constraints, I was not able to do this with Meryam.

²¹ 'Meh to *shocked* hū.'

²² 'us-se mārnā nahīn chāhiye.'

²³ 'ghulat'

²⁴ 'būrā'

²⁵ Refer to explanation of transliteration convention in Chapter One.

²⁶ 'būrī'

²⁷ 'Un-ke pās kōī *education* nahīn hai, kōī *understanding* nahīn *wife* ko kese *treat* karte hai.'

referring to, whether Western academic education or Islamic education. Although all the Pakistan-born interviewees condemned the abuse, Syma and Khalida also placed blame on the wives in the scenarios, whom they argued have a role to play and must take responsibility. Syma explains:

The women is [are] making the mistake at the first step ... they treat the men as he [they] wants first of all, then when he was used to it she is trying to change he wouldn't be changed. When it's happening the first time she should stop then.

Syma places the responsibility for stopping or preventing the abuse on the woman: for example, if she stops her husband the first time it happened he would know not to do it again. In other words, according to Syma, women should not expect to be treated well and not be abused if they do not demand it. As shown throughout this thesis, it is not as simple as Syma presumes. The discussion of the scenarios prompted Khalida to voice, what she felt, are the roles and responsibilities of a wife, explaining:

The wife should agree to everything her husband says. His food should be *ready* before his *time* to come [home]... If she does this and still he hits and beats her then this is not good.²⁸

Although Khalida is condemning the abuse, like Syma, she is also attributing the cause of abuse to the wife's behaviour. Interestingly, specific aspects of the scenarios resonated with the interviewees' personal experience of abuse. The interviewees responded to the economic abuse experienced by the women in the scenarios by saying, like Aliyah, 'this *situation* happened to me'²⁹; or, in Khalida's case, 'my *story* is also like this.'³⁰ This clarifies the main point of this section: if a woman's experiences and perceptions of abuse do not match public and state perceptions, this can lead to women either minimising the effects and seriousness of the abuse, or simply not recognising it as abuse. The interviewees were able to relate to and recognise their own experiences in the scenarios. This not only encouraged open discussion of personal experiences of abuse, but also gave the

²⁸ Bīvī ko chāhiye voh apne shohar kī har bāt māne. Us-kā khānā us-ke *time* se āne se pehle *ready* ho ... Agar voh ese kare aur phir bhī voh māre aur pīte, phir to achchī bāt nahīn.

²⁹ 'yeh *situation* mere sāth thī.'

³⁰ 'merī bhī esī-hī *story* hai.'

interviewees a sense of confidence that their experiences would be taken seriously. Although the Pakistan-born interviewees did not use terms such as ‘domestic abuse’ to describe or label abuse, it is clear that they have a sound grasp of what constitutes abuse.

Interview Findings: UK-born Interviewees

Similar to the Pakistan-born interviewees, the UK-born interviewees responded to the scenarios and case studies as ‘shocking’ (Naseem). They voiced their disapproval of the abuse, stating it was ‘absolutely disgusting’ (Aisha and Khadija), ‘horrific’ (Farah) and ‘unacceptable’ (Nazia). They also condemned the perpetrators’ (H) behaviour, Aisha stating, ‘you don’t hit anybody.’ A distinct feature of my discussion with the UK-born interviewees was their awareness of mainstream terminology, and knowledge of the diverse range of abuse being perpetrated in the scenarios and the case studies. Farah explains:

They’re all about control, about men controlling the women, and abuse. It comes in all different shapes and forms, but it comes under one label, domestic abuse.

Terms such as ‘rape’ (Aisha), ‘economic abuse’ (Naseem), ‘isolation’ (Nazia), and ‘control’ (Khadija) were used by interviewees to describe the abusive behaviour in the scenarios and the case studies. For instance, Aisha states: ‘If he is forcing her to have sex then that’s rape.’ This distinction between the UK-born and Pakistan-born interviewees’ vocabulary may be attributable to a number of factors such as: being able to speak and understand English; having access to information where such terms are utilised (see Chapter Eight); and it may simply be, as mentioned earlier, that as there are no Urdu equivalents for these terms, they cannot feature in the Pakistan-born interviewees’ vocabulary when describing abuse. Reading and discussing the scenarios, the UK-born interviewees also recognised personal experiences of abuse, notable in Aisha’s following account:

Listening to these ladies’ experiences of rape and sexual abuse – that was me. It’s like listening to my own story.

Like the Pakistan-born interviewees, this encouraged the UK-born interviewees to speak more openly and confidently of their experiences. However, the UK-born interviewees did

not justify abuse, nor did they place the responsibility for preventing the abuse on women.

Farah explains:

It doesn't matter what has happened, if she hasn't made dinner on time or even if she behaves badly, he should never hit under any circumstances.

To summarise, I have presented the interviewees' perceptions and understandings of abuse to clarify the importance of the inclusion of women's voices, and nuanced and sensitive policy and practice cannot be achieved without them. How women define, understand and respond to abuse is dependent upon whether or not these experiences are meaningful to them and resonate with public perceptions of abuse. It can lead to women minimising personal harm and risk, or not recognising it as abuse; or, as shown in the interviewees' responses, it can lead to openness, confidence to disclose, and assertively condemning perpetrators' behaviour. In order to achieve any kind of understanding of women's experiences and perceptions of abuse, the inclusion of their voices is crucial.

3.4 Women's Experiences of Spousal Abuse

Despite the inclusion of psychological and emotional abuse in the (then) Scottish Executives definition of domestic abuse (2003: 3), there is a lack of understanding and awareness about how many women live in relationships with controlling men and who are being financially controlled and socially isolated, but not being physically or sexually assaulted (Conway, 2013: 23). Wilcox (2006: 724) argues this is due to the overemphasis on physical acts and the public perception of 'victim' as a battered and bruised woman, and that this has hidden 'minor' infringements of women's emotional and physical integrity. Harwin and Barron (2001: 206) argue that domestic abuse is not a one-off incident, but part of an ongoing pattern of controlling behaviour. They go on to comment that, 'often very subtle signals can be extremely threatening: violence does not have to be overt to achieve its ends'. Furthermore, a survey of abuse 'victims' by Women's Aid (2014) found that 88 percent of 'victims' said the criminal justice system did not take psychological harm into account and 94 percent said mental cruelty could be worse than physical violence. These researchers are arguing that physical abuse is not the only feature of domestic abuse, and

the overemphasis on physical acts obscures the pervasiveness and damaging nature of subtle forms of control and coercion: abuse becomes even more hidden and unidentifiable when the focus is on the physical dimension.³¹

The aim here is to provide a descriptive overview of the abuse all women can experience within the home, alluding to Stark's (2013: 17) coercive control model as an organisational framework: violence, intimidation, isolation and control. His conceptualisation of coercive control was explicit in the interviewees' experiences, illustrated in the ways abusive husbands effectively tied women to them by breaking their self-confidence, isolating them from friends and family, while simultaneously utilising extreme levels of physical and sexual abuse. I will also use survey data such as the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) 2009/10 (Scottish Government, 2011) and reports by the police such as 'Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland, 2012–13' (Scottish Government, 2013). The aim of using survey data and statistics is to provide an insight into the prevalence and nature of the abuse being explored. However, I am mindful of certain issues relating to survey data, particularly in relation to South Asian women (see Chapter One). Before I begin my exploration, a fundamental point needs to be highlighted: I am in no way undermining or downplaying the pervasiveness and effects of physical violence, which can be a central feature of many women's experience of spousal abuse. Rather, I am pushing for an exploration of women's experiences from an abstract level to an individual level: to show that physical abuse is not the only means by which perpetrators dominate and control women.

3.5 Violence: Physical and Sexual

The Scottish Executive (2003: 3) definition of 'domestic abuse' categorises physical abuse as 'assault and physical attack involving a range of behaviour'. Researchers such as Stark (2013: 22), Dobash et al. (1999: 15), and the SCJS (Scottish Government, 2011: 2) expand

³¹ While finalising this chapter, the Home Office (2014b), recognising the catastrophic consequences of psychological and emotional abuse, commissioned a consultation on whether there should be a specific offence that captures patterns of coercive and controlling behavior in intimate relationships. The government is expected to put forward its proposals in late October 2014 (McVeigh, 2014).

on physical abuse (which the 2003 Scottish Executive policy document fails to do) to include: pushing, punching, slapping, kicking, choking, burning, and the use of weapons or other objects (knife, hammer, fire poker, wall, stairs) that cause severe injury. According to recorded police statistics on domestic abuse, the most frequent crime was common assault, accounting for 42 percent of all incidents (Scottish Government, 2013: 5).

Sexual abuse has been defined as ‘acts which degrade and humiliate women and are perpetrated against their will, including rape’ (Scottish Executive, 2003: 3). Women’s Aid expand on this definition, stating that partners can use force, threats or intimidation to engage in sexual activity; they may taunt or use degrading treatment related to sexuality, and force the use of pornography, or force their partners to have sex with other people.³² According to a report on sexual victimisation and stalking amongst adults in Scotland in SCJS 2009/10, 53 percent of adults who had experienced serious sexual assault since the age of 16 were assaulted by their partner (MacLeod and Page, 2010: 6). Within a spousal abuse context sexual violence, such as rape, can (but does not always) include acts of physical violence, whilst sexual violence can become (but is not always) part of a violent assault.

Interview Findings

I have presented the interviewees’ experiences in a table format which is followed by a brief description. Researchers such as Dobash et al. (1999), in their presentation of findings, document physical acts in relation to severity and frequency. While understanding the reason and purpose for this, I am not comfortable with the category ‘severe’. What one woman may consider severe, another simply may not: a slap can be done with force or done lightly; one woman may consider a slap (of any force) to be severe, while another woman may not. Also, to group together some acts as severe and some acts as the opposite, I feel, undermines and underplays the effect of these acts. Furthermore, it is the organising principle of my methodology and this thesis that women describe their experiences in their own terms and in their own voices (see Chapter One). For these reasons, I have

³² This information is provided on the Women’s Aid webpage:
http://www.womensaid.org.uk/domestic_violence_topic.asp?section=0001000100220022§ionTitle=Sexual+violence

documented the interviewees' experiences according to frequency, characterised here as 'regularity', and only describe acts as severe if the interviewee has done so herself. The 'type' of abuse is according to the interviewee's description of the acts. For example, instead of using the word rape, Asma described it as forcing her to have sex. The table also shows that the interviewees experienced abuse during the marriage and post-separation, and in some cases in front of affinal kin, characterised here as 'context'.

Pakistan-born Interviewees

Five of the six Pakistan-born interviewees recount experiencing physical abuse – Syma was the only interviewee not to experience this. The following table (Five) provides an overview of the range of physical abuse recounted by the interviewees, which varied from pushing and shoving, to attempted strangulation and the use of a weapon (knife). Asma was the only interviewee to experience (or speak of) sexual violence, such as being forced to perform degrading acts, and being sexually humiliated.

The interviewees' experience of physical abuse varied in regularity. Fatima experienced physical abuse only once (slap across the face) while others such as Meryam experienced it frequently. As I will show later, Fatima's experience of spousal abuse was more characterised by control and isolation. Meryam and Khalida experienced the most diverse forms of physical abuse.

Khalida was the only interviewee to recount a weapon being used against her – a knife. She explains: 'Sometimes when he used to fight with me, he would pick up a *knife* and try to kill me.'³³ It is difficult to determine why the other interviewees did not experience the use of a weapon. Alcohol may be a contributory factor, which Khalida describes as the cause of the abuse, saying: 'He would always hit me after he drank.'³⁴ Research demonstrates alcohol as a factor which can intensify forms of abuse, or which can become a source of disagreement – for example, arguments over the husband's use of the household income for purchasing alcohol (Dobash and Dobash, 1998: 149). Alcohol featuring as a source of discord and marital abuse, in Khalida's experience, raises two key points: firstly, looking to

³³ 'Kabhi jab mere saath jagra kartā thā *knife* utā-ke mujhe mārne kī koshish kartā thā.'

³⁴ 'Voh mujhe hameshā marta thā pine ke bad.'

differences in women's experiences does not preclude the existence and acknowledgment of similarities. In this case, a common feature of (some) South Asian and (some) non-South Asian women's experiences of abuse may be alcohol; and, secondly, as argued in Chapter Two, communities such as 'Muslim' and 'Pakistani' should not be homogenised or stereotyped as holding the same tenets of belief and practice – that alcohol is forbidden and so cannot be, and is not, consumed. It should not be so readily assumed that Muslim Pakistani women's experiences of spousal abuse would never feature alcohol. Khalida's source of marital discord was her husband's alcohol consumption, not because she felt it to be un-Islamic, but because she felt it was the cause of his abusive behaviour.

Asma was the only Pakistan-born interviewee who recounts experiencing sexual abuse. She explains:

When my *period* would start he would say, 'I want to have *sex*' ... I would hate it, I am a Muslim.³⁵

This is an interesting quote, as it raises religion and identity as something which can be attacked and affected as a result of spousal abuse. Asma explains that the sexual degradation and humiliation did not only have physical, emotional and psychological consequences, but also challenged and ridiculed her religious belief that sex while menstruating is forbidden. It adds an extra dimension to women's experiences of abuse on the basis of religion, something which women of any faith can experience and feel.

³⁵ Mere *period* jab shūrū hone to phir yeh kahe, 'mūjhe *sex* karnā hai' ... mūjhe bāhot būrā lāge, meh Musilmān hū.

Table 5

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE							
Interviewee	Regularity			Type	Context		
	Frequent	Occasional	Once		Together	Separated	In front of affinal kin
Meryam				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Punching in stomach, back, sides - Slapping across the face with force - Kicking lightly whilst sitting down and with force whilst on the floor - Pushing with force and lightly - Strangulation to the point she felt like she was going to pass out 			
Khalida				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Punching her face, broke her nose - Slapping across the face with force - Kicking lightly whilst sitting down and with force whilst on the floor - Pulling hair with force - Throwing things at her such as pieces of furniture - Using a weapon; trying to stab her with a knife 			
Fatima				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Slapping across the face with force 			
Asma				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sexual violence; forcing her to have sex, making her perform degrading acts such as oral sex and sex whilst menstruating - Slapping across the face with force - Punching in the stomach with force - Pushing with force and lightly 			
Aliyah				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Punching in the stomach with force - Slapping across the face with force - Pushing with force and lightly - Kicking lightly whilst sitting down 			

Interview Findings: UK-born Interviewees

The following table (Six) provides an overview of the types of physical abuse experienced by the UK-born interviewees which ranged from pushing and shoving to strangulation and the use of a weapon (knife). The main distinction between the Pakistan-born and UK-born interviewees is in regularity and context (a point I will explore later in this chapter).

Farah (H2) describes her second husband's 'controlling, manipulative and obsessive' behaviour as developing into 'extreme forms of physical abuse' post-separation.³⁶ She describes the following incident as the severest physical abuse she was subjected to by her husband.

He wanted to bite my face. He wanted to damage my face ... He had me up against the wall. He threw me over ... I'd hurt my stomach ... He got my hair in his hands [crying] ... He's waving a knife and he's smashed the window because we used to have glass panels. He's got this knife and he's telling my daughter [from H1], 'I'm gonna kill her and you're gonna watch'.

The severity and effects of this incident were apparent in Farah's physical state when recounting it. She was uncontrollably crying which prompted me to stop the interview until Farah felt able to resume. I proposed to stop the interview completely, but Farah refused. Farah attributes his erratic and 'mad' behaviour to drug use, explaining that, 'he started using drugs, cocaine and heroin, that's what made him become so violent and erratic.' Again, for reasons alluded to in my exploration of Khalida's experience of alcohol as a contributory factor in abuse, Farah's experience of her husband's drug abuse clarifies the importance of recognising the similarities in women's experiences, as well as the differences.

³⁶ Chapter Eight explores the increased risk of abuse for women post-separation in relation to service provision responses that expect child contact.

Table 6

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE							
Interviewee	Regularity			Type	Context		
	Frequent	Occasional	Once		Together	Separated	In front of affinal kin
Nazia				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Punching in the stomach, back and sides - Slapping across the face with force - Kicking lightly whilst sitting down and with force whilst on the floor - Pulling hair with force 			
Khadija				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strangulation with force to the point she felt like she was going to pass out - Pushing with force up against a wall 			
Naseem				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Punching in the stomach, back, sides, and face; broke her nose - Slapping across the face with force - Pushing with force on to the ground 			
Farah H1				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Slapping across the face with force - Pushing with force up against a wall - Using a weapon; trying to stab her with a knife 			
Farah H2				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Punching in the stomach, back and sides with force - Kicking lightly whilst sitting down and with force whilst on the floor - Jumping and sitting on top of her - Pulling hair with force - Biting her face - Using a weapon; trying to stab her with a knife - Grabbing shoulders with force 			
Aisha				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sexual violence; force and performing derogatory acts such as making her wear certain types of clothing; sex whilst menstruating - Grabbing shoulders, arms and wrist with force - Pushing lightly and with force 			

3.6 Intimidation and Degradation

Intimidation is a central feature of coercive control and instils fear, dependence, compliance, loyalty and shame through threats, surveillance and degradation (Stark, 2013: 23). Intimidation succeeds because the perpetrator's threats are made credible by the physical acts to which he has subjected a woman (described above) and which she believes he can or will repeat if she does not accede to his wishes and demands. It can consist of an array of behaviours and actions: including threatening to hurt the children; withholding things the woman depends on, such as food, money and clothes; withholding affection or sex; having an affair; and stalking (Dobash et al., 1999: 24–30). Degradation, argues Stark (2013: 26), is the most common feature of domestic abuse, the primary aim being to deny self-respect to their partners, which can include name-calling, swearing, insults and belittling them. Police statistics on domestic abuse show threatening and abusive behaviour is the second most common crime and offence, accounting for 19 percent of incidents where a crime or offence was recorded relating to abuse (Scottish Government, 2013: 5).

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born interviewees

As shown in the following table (Seven), the most common acts of intimidation and degradation were: having an affair, verbal abuse, and emotional and physical withdrawal. All the interviewees recount experiencing verbal abuse such as shouting, swearing and insults, which made them feel humiliated and worthless. The interviewees explained that enduring and listening to insults about natal kin had the most bearing and effect. Aliyah explains:

He would always, in front of everyone [affinal kin], talk badly about my mum, that she's like this. I would get very angry, upset and feel embarrassed too.³⁷

Aliyah felt embarrassed and upset by this for two reasons: firstly, she explains, 'I respect my mother a lot'³⁸, so could not endure her husband's negative comments about her

³⁷ Voh hameshā, sab ke sāmne, merī ammī kī būrāyā kartā thā, ke voh esī hai. Mūjhe bāhot ghūsa lagtā thā, dūkh aur sharam bhī.

³⁸ 'Meh apnī ammī kī bāhot izzat kartī hū.'

mother; and, secondly, it was done in front of her affinal kin (HM, HZ), as was the case with five of the six Pakistan-born interviewees.

As shown by Stark (2013: 26) and Dobash et al. (1999: 24–30), physical, emotional and sexual withdrawal can degrade and humiliate women, and was experienced by Fatima:

He never came to me [physically], we had no wife-husband relationship [intimacy]. I would feel, *is something wrong with me?*³⁹

Unlike Asma being forced to perform sexual acts, Fatima recounts the opposite, which was also humiliating and degrading. Fatima lost her confidence in her physical appearance and self-worth, which made her question her femininity. Extra marital affairs are another means by which to humiliate and intimidate women (Dobash et al., 1999: 24–30). Syma explains:

I find out he was having an affair. I feel shameful and humiliated. I feel they [affinal kin] are all laughing at me.

The shamefulness can also lead to fear that he will leave her for another woman, and ultimately leave her to deal with the socio-economic and cultural repercussions of becoming a divorcée (see Chapter Two). Syma continues by saying: ‘I feel no one in the house is gonna give me the respect now.’ This shows that the affair does not only affect a woman’s self-esteem and self-respect, but may also affect her position within the conjugal household; if Syma’s husband does not give her any respect, affinal kin (HM, HZ) may follow suit.

³⁹ Us-ne mere pās nahīn ānā, hamāre kōī mīyā bīvī kā rishtā nahīn thā. Mūjhe ese lagtā thā *is something wrong with me?*

Table 7

INTIMIDATION & DEGRADATION							
Interviewee	Regularity			Type	Context		
	Frequent	Occasional	Once		Together	Separated	In front of affinal kin
Meryam				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verbal: shouting and swearing - Taking his family's side in arguments - Smashing her mobile phone - Speaking negatively of her natal family 			
Khalida				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verbal: shouting and swearing - Threatening to kill her - Coming home drunk - Behaving aggressively; throwing things around 			
Fatima				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emotional withdrawal: not talking to her; not sleeping in the same room as her - Physical withdrawal: refusing to have sex with her - Siding with his mother 			
Asma				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verbal: shouting and swearing - Emotional withdrawal: refusing to talk to her - Speaking negatively of her natal family - Having an affair which made her fear divorce 			
Aliyah				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verbal: shouting and swearing - Speaking negatively of her natal family - Having an affair which made her fear divorce 			
Syma				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having an affair which made her fear divorce 			

Interview Findings: UK-born Interviewees

Like the Pakistan-born interviewees, all the UK-born interviewees experienced the tactics illustrated in Stark's (2013) coercive control model in relation to intimidation. As shown in the following table (Eight), the interviewees recount experiences of verbal abuse, emotional withdrawal, death threats, and fearing for the safety of their children.

The UK-born interviewees recount experiences of verbal abuse such as shouting and swearing, which Khadija describes as 'very intimidating and scary.' The interviewees recount insults towards natal kin as particularly difficult to endure, Khadija explains:

He would put her [Khadija M] down, saying she's this and that, and you can't go [to a family function] ... just a lack of respect and he would actually swear in his conversations [with Khadija, and HM] as well.

She goes on to describe this as embarrassing and hurtful, particularly because 'he would do it in front of every one [affinal kin].' Similar to the Pakistan-born interviewees, this was described as the most effective and frequent form of verbal abuse and humiliation.

Three of the five interviewees recount experiences of emotional and physical withdrawal which, explains Stark (2013: 23), can affect a woman's self-esteem and self-worth. Nazia explains:

He would just go quiet and not talk to me for days. I had to walk around the house on eggshells. At least when he was shouting at me he acknowledged me.

Interestingly, Nazia found emotional and physical withdrawal more difficult to endure than verbal abuse. This may be attributed to the uncertainty it creates: not knowing when he is going to strike next and how severe the abuse is going to be. This can leave women in a constant state of fear and anxiety.

Table 8

INTIMIDATION & DEGRADATION							
Interviewee	Regularity			Type	Context		
	Frequent	Occasional	Once		Together	Separated	In front of affinal kin
Nazia				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verbal: shouting and swearing - Emotional withdrawal: i.e. ignoring her - Accusing her of child neglect - Phoning the police on her - Writing messages on the mirror with her lipstick: 'I will divorce you.' - Speaking negatively of her and natal kin 			
Khadija				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verbal: shouting and swearing - Emotional withdrawal: i.e. ignoring her; refusing to spend time with her - Aggressive behaviour: i.e. punching the door whilst she is in close proximity; raising his hands to punch her but not doing it - Speaking negatively of her natal family 			
Naseem				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verbal: shouting and swearing - Emotional withdrawal: i.e. ignoring her - Speaking negatively of her natal family - Siding with his mother 			
Farah H2				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verbal: shouting and swearing - Aggressive behaviour: i.e. standing over her while shouting at her - Abducting their daughter - Threatening to kill her, and to kidnap her other children - Locking her out of the house 			
Aisha				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verbal: shouting and swearing - Talking about her dying 			

3.7 Control and Isolation

Even though all forms of abuse can be mutually reinforcing, I have grouped together control and isolation simply because control tactics can lead to isolation. Economically controlling a woman, or controlling who she can and cannot see, will inevitably isolate her from the outside world and from support structures such as friends and family. Stark (2013: 27) explains that, what he terms ‘controllers’, use tactics such as depriving women of vital resources and support systems, and dictating every aspect of their life, as a way of compelling obedience. Tactics consist of depriving women of the resources needed for independent living, such as money, clothing, food, sleep and transportation, ‘fostering dependence which consequently isolates women’ (Stark, 2013: 28). Perhaps the most significant facet of control is the extent of regulation of how women dress, clean, cook, eat, walk, and so forth. Complying with these demands can become a source of self-esteem for women: if they accede to his wishes they will be praised. However, Stark (2013: 31) explains that if the central goal of the abuser is domination, the rules are continually revised or reinterpreted. For instance, changing his mind as to what he wants, making it impossible for women to satisfy their partner, which can leave them in a state of chronic anxiety. As potential sources of support, family members and friends are major targets in isolating women. The SCJS (Scottish Government, 2011: 17) shows that of the 13 percent of adults who had a partner since the age of 16 and experienced psychological abuse, 5 percent said their partners had stopped them from seeing friends or relatives. To put it simply, controllers, by inserting themselves between women and the outside world, become their primary source of information, interpretation and validation. As I will show in Chapter Eight, this can have consequences for South Asian women’s help-seeking.

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born Interviewees

As the following table (Nine) shows, control and isolation tactics specified in Stark’s (2013) ‘coercive control’ model are explicit in the experiences of the Pakistan-born interviewees. The tactics range from prohibiting natal kin contact, economic control and threats of deportation. (I will explore immigration status later in this chapter.)

Five of the six interviewees recount either natal kin contact being controlled or completely prohibited. As a detailed exploration of natal kin contact is provided in Chapter Five, my aim here is simply to highlight it as a type of spousal abuse, which served to isolate the interviewees. As I will show in Chapter Five, economic dependency can facilitate and intensify the nature and extent to which affinal kin (H, HM) control natal kin contact. As argued by Stark (2013: 28), these tactics can foster dependence, consequently isolating women from family, friends and the outside world. Economic abuse was a feature of all the interviewees' experience, such as taking the child benefit and having their wages taken away if they were in paid employment. Syma explains:

Financially, he abuse[d] me a lot. Controlling all these things. I didn't have money to buy the clothes or food for my son even.

Asma explains, 'I wanted to *study*, wanted to work [employment], so that I can become *independent* and do something for myself. But, they [H, HM] wouldn't let me.'⁴⁰ As argued by Stark (2013), if the ultimate goal of a perpetrator is domination, the interviewees working outside the home, or outside the family business, would create the possibility of financial and social independence. All the interviewees, like Asma, wanted to, and asked, to work (employment) and study but were refused.

⁴⁰ Meh *study* karnā chatī thī, kām karnā chatī thī, ke meh *independent* banū, apne ke-liye kūch karū. Par voh nahīn karne dete the.'

Table 9

CONTROL & ISOLATION							
Interviewee	Regularity			Type	Context		
	Frequent	Occasional	Once		Together	Separated	In front of affinal kin
Meryam				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not allowed contact with natal kin - Prohibited from making friends, socialising and going out alone - Prohibited from working outside the family home - Deprived of economic and basic resources: i.e. H took child benefit - Refusing to renew visa - Constant threat and fear of deportation 			
Khalida				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not allowed contact with natal kin - Prohibited from making friends, socialising and going out alone - Deprived of economic and basic resources: i.e. H took child benefit - Locked in the house 			
Fatima				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not allowed contact with natal kin - Financial control: paying H's loans off; wages taken from her and given to his mother 			
Asma				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not allowed contact with natal kin - Prohibited from making friends, socialising and going out alone - Prohibited from working outside the family home - Refusing to renew visa - Constant threat and fear of deportation 			
Aliyah				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not allowed contact with natal kin - Prohibited from making friends, socialising and going out alone: i.e. she was not allowed to attend her daughter's nursery - Prohibited from working outside the family home - Deprived of economic and basic resources - Refusing to renew visa - Constant threat and fear of deportation 			
Syma				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deprived of economic and basic resources 			

Interview Findings: UK-born Interviewees

As shown in the following table (Ten), all the UK-born interviewees experienced control and isolation similar to the Pakistan-born interviewees based on natal kin contact and economics. The UK-born interviewees were more economically and socially independent than the Pakistan-born interviewees. Most of the UK-born interviewees were employed, earned their own money, owned property, had a car and had independent interaction with the outside world. Yet, they still experienced economic abuse and control of natal kin contact, though not to the same extent. This is an important point as it challenges the false perception of a ‘victim’ as a woman who is, for example, financially dependent and isolated from the outside world.

Stark (2013: 28) argues that perpetrators engineer situations guaranteed to alienate women from their families. Like the Pakistan-born interviewees, the UK-born interviewees were discouraged from or prohibited natal kin contact (a point I explore in Chapter Five).

Economics was another feature of control and isolation where the interviewees recount the following tactics: their wages being taken away (Nazia), and being forced to leave (Farah H1). Nazia explains:

He has never supported me in any sort of way. He has never been emotionally supportive [and] he has never been financially supportive. I worked. I worked very hard. I studied very hard. He took all my wages. I even sold my gold so he could start up his business.

Nazia’s husband, who is from Pakistan, was finding it difficult to get paid employment. Consequently, Nazia had to work in two jobs so that she could fund his business projects. She felt exploited by him. Interestingly, in hindsight, Nazia, attributes this to a need to please her husband. She explains:

He would always talk about how girls from Pakistan can do this and do that. He would constantly put me down, [saying], ‘You can’t cook properly’. I wanted to show him I am better than a girl from Pakistan.

Stark (2013: 31) refers to the controlling of women’s actions, behaviour and dress as a form of regulation. He argues that complying with these demands can become a means of self-

esteem as well as safety: gaining a compliment or avoiding a beating. If the aim is domination, it is impossible for women to satisfy their partner, leaving them in a state of chronic anxiety. In Nazia's case, she over-worked herself, working two jobs, studying, cleaning and cooking, looking after their two children and helping him in his business. It was to no avail, she explains, because, 'he would never be happy – I was never good enough.'

Aisha was a second wife, and did not live with her husband simply because his first wife, who still lived in the marital home, did not know of the marriage. Aisha would travel to England every second weekend to visit her husband in secret. Aisha's experience of control was distinct from the other interviewees, possibly because of the nature of her marriage agreement. She explains:

When I was working ...⁴¹ he would always say things to me [like], 'if you don't come out right now, I'm gonna come up there and I'm gonna tell them what you do'. The blackmail and the things he did were just so out of order.

Stark (2013: 29) shows that acts such as these, turning up at her work unannounced and making unreasonable demands, can be done in order to impact on women's employability as well as on their performance or chance of promotion.

⁴¹ To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, I have omitted her place of work.

Table 10

CONTROL & ISOLATION							
Interviewee	Regularity			Type	Context		
	Frequent	Occasional	Once		Together	Separated	In front of affinal kin
Nazia				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discouraging contact with natal kin: i.e. they are no longer your concern - Prohibited from making friends, socialising - Deprived of economic and basic resources - Wages taken 			
Khadija				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discouraging contact with natal kin: i.e. they are no longer your concern, or not allowing visits, or to attend family functions (e.g. weddings) 			
Naseem				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discouraging contact with natal kin: i.e. they are no longer your concern - Prohibited from making friends, socialising - Deprived of economic and basic resources 			
Farah H1				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forced to leave paid employment - Deprived of economic and basic resources 			
Farah H2				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Telling her what to wear - Following her - Not allowed to see friends or to go certain places 			
Aisha				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making demands and threats: i.e. turning up at her work and demanding she come meet him outside or he will ruin her reputation - Befriending her natal family with whom she is not on good terms 			

Thus far, I have addressed and explained the features of spousal abuse that all women can experience – physical, financial, and sexual. I have shown that physical and sexual abuse are not the only means by which domination and control can be perpetrated, where some

women can be more affected by non-physical acts of coercion and control. Furthermore, I have shown how factors such as alcohol and drugs can also feature in Muslim South Asian women's experiences of abuse, just as they can in non-Muslim and non-South Asian women's experience. However, just as it is important to explore the similarities in women's experiences, so must the specificities and distinctions, which not only exist between categories of women, but also within categories of women, be examined.

3.8 The Specificity of South Asian Women's Experiences

Researchers, such as Anitha (2011: 1271) and Abraham (2008: 314), argue that the specificity of South Asian women's experience of spousal abuse lies with their insecure immigration status, and living in an extended patriarchal affinal household (Raj and Silverman, 2002: 376). Although I explore affinal kin abuse and immigration status in greater detail in Chapters Four and Seven, it is important to an exploration of South Asian women's experience of spousal abuse to allude to these factors here, albeit briefly. Equally, it is important not to generalise or stereotype South Asian women's experiences (see Chapter One): not all migrant brides are vulnerable to, or experience, spousal abuse. In the context of this research study, I spoke to women who believed that these factors contributed to their vulnerability to spousal abuse, and shaped the nature and extent of the abuse.

Immigration

As noted in Chapter Two, immigration status is a direct result of transnational marriage. Here, and in Chapters Four and Five, I aim to explore how immigration status can intensify and facilitate South Asian women's experiences of family abuse within the home. The crux of the argument made by researchers such as Anitha (2011) and Hague et al. (2006) is that immigration, which itself can isolate women (see Chapter Two), makes it easier for men to control women in every aspect of their life (Menjivar and Salcido, 2002: 906). As shown above, women can experience domination, isolation and control as a direct result of the perpetrators' abusive tactics; that is financial control, prohibiting employment and prohibiting or limiting contact with friends and family. Factors specific to migrant South Asian women not only facilitate these tactics, but also create new methods of control and

coercion, which, as I argued at the beginning of this chapter, do not feature in policy documents. For example, another consequence of transnational marriage is that migrant South Asian women, on arrival to the UK, become considerably distanced from natal kin. Raj and Silverman (2002: 368) argue that this distance intensifies and facilitates control of natal kin contact. As I will show in Chapter Five, this can have a direct consequence on natal kin support.

Menjivar and Salcido (2002: 903) comment that the inability to speak the language of the host country greatly influences the process of resettlement and adaptation to the new culture, as well as the nature of abuse. If women cannot speak or read English, they will be less likely to go out, socialise, seek employment or know about their rights. In other words, they will be socially and economically dependent on their husband and his family. It is for reasons such as these that men, argue Raj and Silverman (2002: 380), prohibit and prevent women from learning English. The NKS study alludes to their female participants' (migrant South Asian women) not being allowed to learn English, or being discouraged by their husbands from doing so (Jones et al., 2013: 9). As Hague et al. (2006: 5) and Abraham (2008: 314) document, women can feel fear and vulnerability due to a lack of information about their rights and due to language difficulties (a point I will return to in Chapter Eight). Immigration status (and all the factors associated with it) not only creates a distinction between categories of women, but also creates differentiation within categories of women. This is a point that is made explicitly by interviewees.

Interview Findings

The UK-born interviewees were affected by immigration status, but in a different way from the Pakistan-born interviewees. The husbands of Nazia and Farah were on spousal visas. Although this situation was utilised as a tool of coercion by their husbands, I deal with this more fully in Chapter Seven as it is better placed within the central theme of that chapter: the manner in which women's experiences at the micro-level are shaped and intertwined with their experiences at the macro-level, such as harmful immigration policies. For the purposes of this chapter, I will briefly explore how immigration status affected the

Pakistan-born interviewees' experience of spousal abuse and created specificities and differentiations.

Pakistan-born Interviewees

Four of the six Pakistan-born interviewees had insecure immigration status at the time of their marriage. The main distinction in the Pakistan-born interviewees' experience of spousal abuse is in the specificity (nature) of abuse. The interviewees recount how their immigration status was utilised by their perpetrators as the primary tool of control. Meryam explains:

He had put it into my head that I couldn't get a *visa* without him and I was sitting there [with him] out of fear. He would say, 'they will send you back to Pakistan ... your brother will get you married again'. I was really *scared*.⁴²

The Pakistan-born interviewees' experiences of abuse and acceding to perpetrators' wishes were shaped by 'misinformation' (a theme explored in detail in Chapter Seven) compounded by their inability to speak English, natal kin distance, dependence (financial and social) on affinal kin, and being isolated to the affinal home. Asma, Aliyah and Meryam were told if they left the marriage, or told anyone of the abuse, they would be automatically deported back to Pakistan and their children would be taken away from them. As shown in Table Nine, Asma was not allowed to seek employment, she explains being told by affinal kin, 'You are not *permanent* here so you can't work. If you do they will *deport* you.'⁴³ Even if the interviewees did want to and tried to work, as stated by Hague et al. (2006: 4) they would be faced with an institutionally racist 'host' society where their educational qualifications and skills would not be recognised. The tactics of coercion and control explored above become much easier to carry out when the woman does not have UK citizenship.

⁴² Us-ne mere dīmagh mai dāl diyā thā ke us-ke baghair mūjhe *visa* nahīn mil saktā aur meh vahā dar ke sāth behtī thī. Voh kehtā thā, 'voh tumhe Pakistan bhej-denge ... tumhārā bhāī tumhārī dūsrī shādī kar-degā'. Meh bāhot *scared* thī.

⁴³ 'Tum yahā *permanent* nahīn ho to tum kām nahīn kar-saktī. Agar tūm karogī to phir voh tumhe *deport* karenge.'

Another distinction between the UK-born and Pakistan-born interviewees' experience is in the regularity of abuse. For example, as can be seen in Tables Five (Pakistan-born) and Six (UK-born), the incidents were less frequent for the UK-born interviewees than for the Pakistan-born interviewees. The Pakistan-born interviewees described the abuse as continuous, where acts such as pushing and shoving became a daily routine. This can be attributed to the increased vulnerability of the Pakistan-born interviewees on the basis of their immigration status compared to the UK-born interviewees. The UK-born interviewees are employed, can speak English, are more independent, and have more of a sense of exit options (see Chapter Nine). Although this did not prevent them from experiencing abuse, it did ultimately shape their experience of abuse. The Pakistan-born interviewees experienced more frequent forms of abuse possibly because they spent more time with their husbands, which was due to not being allowed to take up employment and the level of isolation they experienced. This, together with the levels of vulnerability and constraint the Pakistan-born interviewees felt in regard to language barriers, socio-economic status and immigration status, facilitated and intensified the abuse.

Affinal Kin

A theme which arose from the interviewees' experience was female affinal kin involvement in spousal abuse. As shown in the tables, spousal abuse was perpetrated mostly in front of affinal kin; Table Five shows that four of the five Pakistan-born interviewees experienced physical abuse in front of affinal kin. As Table Six shows, the UK-born interviewees did not equally experience this. This could be due to a number of reasons, such as not living with affinal kin (for abuse to be perpetrated in front of them), and the level and extent of affinal kin instigation and involvement in spousal abuse. Hanmer (2001: 14) explores the role of affinal kin structures in women's experiences of spousal abuse in the context of gender hierarchies, roles and responsibilities. She argues that, as head of the household with responsibility for managing family hierarchies, men can be protected from criticism in the extended family, even in the case of spousal abuse. A woman may be told (by affinal kin) to accede to her husband's demands. To refuse was to bring upon herself abuse that is understandable in the eyes of other family members. Ali (2011: 53) states: 'If men have no

fear of reprisals from other family members then they will have the confidence to continue to do so [abuse their wives], and in front of them’.

An issue for the interviewees who spoke of affinal kin involvement was their husbands’ complicity in the abuse against them. As I will show in Chapter Four, mothers-in-law would control the amount of time couples spent together; they would control marital relations, such as sex; and they would financially control the interviewees. This would not have been possible without the complicity of the son. Fatima (Pakistan-born) explains: ‘He would say, “I am taking Fatima out”. She [HM] would say “No”, and then he would say [to me], “Mummy said we can’t go”, and we didn’t go [laughs].’⁴⁴ I address these issues – the son’s complicity and female affinal kin involvement – in the following chapter.

3.9 Summary

The aim of this chapter has been to elucidate the similarities in women’s experiences of spousal abuse where physical acts are just one of the means by which women are isolated, controlled and dominated. In doing so, I highlighted that factors such as alcohol and drugs can feature in (some) Muslim Pakistani women’s experience of abuse, just as they can in (some) other women’s lives. To presume the opposite is a consequence of the tendency by the government to view South Asian communities as homogeneous and universally determined by religion and culture (see Chapters Two and Six). Equally, just as it is important to look at similarities, we must also turn our gaze to the specificities of women’s experience of spousal abuse. It is clear from the literature and interview findings that immigration status automatically places migrant South Asian women in a vulnerable situation. This vulnerability facilitates and creates specific forms of coercion and control; for example, in the use of a woman’s immigration status as leverage to ensure she accedes to her perpetrator’s demands. This is a form of abuse that is not mentioned in policy documents yet is the most effective tool of coercion and control utilised against migrant South Asian women (a point further explored in Chapter Seven). Additionally, the interview findings highlight that living with affinal kin can intensify forms of spousal

⁴⁴ ‘Voh kehtā thā, “Meh Fatima ko bahār le-ke jā-rahā hū”. Voh kehtī thī, “No” aur phir voh mere pās ā-ke kehtā thā, “Mummy ne kahā ham nahīn jā-sakte” aur ham nahīn jāte the [laughs].’

abuse, where husbands do not only perpetrate spousal abuse in view of affinal kin, but are also complicit in family abuse perpetrated by their mothers (HM). The involvement of female affinal kin in the abuse of other women is a complex issue, and was a significant theme which arose from the interview data. Furthermore, as I have argued in Chapter Two, this feature of South Asian women's experience is not represented in mainstream, conventional understandings of domestic abuse that focus on a nuclear household, and an intimate, gendered couple. For this reason, the instigation and perpetration of family abuse by female affinal kin is the central theme of the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

Female Affinal Kin:

The Oppression of In-Married Women

On Eid day my *husband slap* [slapped] me on the *instruction* of his *mother* ... She [HM] said to him, ‘look how she [Fatima] is using her tongue against me. She is answering back to me’. He said, ‘I told you from day one not to talk back to my mother’. I said, ‘I didn’t answer back, I am not even speaking’. She [HM] then said, ‘look, because of you she is like this with me’. So then he slapped me.⁴⁵ (Fatima Pakistan-born)

His mum would often encourage him [saying], ‘throw her out, hit her. What has she said now? Do this to her’. (Naseem UK-born)

He hit me because some man was sending him a *message* on his *phone*, but it was his older sister [HeZ], we found out after. She would send a *message* to Arif [Meryam H] pretending to be a man, saying, ‘I like Meryam. I want to meet her’. She didn’t like me so she put suspicion in his mind against me that I meet other men. Then he beat me so badly because of this, because of her.⁴⁶ (Meryam Pakistan-born)

4. Introduction

In this chapter, I aim to explore the direct and indirect involvement of female affinal kin, particularly the mother-in-law, in the abuse of in-married women. As can be seen by the quotes, the interviewees experienced spousal abuse which they describe as being instigated (and sometimes perpetrated) by either their mother-in-law (Fatima and Naseem) or their sister-in-law (HZ) (Meryam), and in most cases by both. I argue that family abuse

⁴⁵ Eid vāle din mere *husband* ne mūjhe *slap* kiyā us-ke *mother* ke *instruction* pe ... Voh us-se kehtī hai, ‘dekho yeh mere āge zūbān kese chalā rahī hai. Yeh mūjhe jawāb āge se de-rahī hai’. Voh kehtā hai, ‘Meh-ne pehle dīn keh-diyā thā ke merī mā ke āge bolnā nahīn’. Meh-ne kahā, ‘Meh jawāb nahīn de-rahī, meh kūch bolī bhī nahīn’. To kehtī hai, ‘dekhā tumhārī vajā se yeh mere sāth ese hai’. To us-ne mūjhe tapar mar-diyā.

⁴⁶ Tab mārā thā kyo ke us-ko kōī bāndā *message* bhejthā thā *phone* ke ūpar, par us-kī barī bahen kar-rahī thī jo bād patā chal-gayā thā. Voh *message* bhejthī thī Arif [H] ko jese larkā ban-ke aur kehtī thī, ‘Meh Meryam ko pasand kartā hū’. Voh mūjhe pasand nahīn kartī thī to us-ne vahm dālā us-ke dimāgh mai ke meh dūsre mard se miltī hū. Phir us-ne mūjhe bāhot mārā is-ke vajā se, us-kī vajā se.

perpetrated by mothers-in-law (direct and indirect) against daughters-in-law is motivated, as believed by the interviewees, by personal gain and self-interest: to control daughters-in-law in order to maintain a joint extended household which benefits their (HM) long-term economic and social gain. I show how instigation of spousal abuse is both a means of and a consequence of family abuse, which can feature tactics such as ‘domestic despotism’, control of marital relations, and physical abuse. Rew, Gangoli and Gill (2013) suggest that family abuse perpetrated by the mother-in-law is best understood (and explained) utilising a domestic abuse framework, as these tactics resonate with Stark’s (2013) coercive control model (see Chapter Three) – using tactics of control, isolation and degradation. However, I argue that in order for Stark’s model to be utilised effectively, it needs to be more inclusive of the specificity of South Asian women’s experience of family abuse; namely, extended family structures and affinal kin relationships.

The literature on this is both limited and varied. The popular explanation in South Asia, particularly in India, of mother-in-law abuse is dowry violence and demands, such as the abuse of a bride for bringing a small dowry, or not acceding to dowry demands post-marriage (Ghosh, 2004: 110). On the other hand, researchers such as Vera-Sanso (1999: 578) argue that studies giving a stereotypical image of an oppressive mother-in-law and oppressed daughter-in-law fail to problematise how factors such as economics can result in daughters-in-law gaining power and mothers-in-law losing it. Unlike this thesis, these explorations (of the mother- and daughter-in-law relationship) are not within the context of spousal and family abuse.

As well as adding to the limited research on female affinal abuse, this chapter contributes to the central argument of this thesis in the following way: it shows that unlike the UK state’s definition and conceptualisation of domestic abuse, South Asian women experience family abuse by multiple perpetrators (H, HM, HZ). These experiences exist within, and are facilitated by, the gendered dimensions and structural dynamics of extended family structures. It is one woman experiencing abuse by multiple others, within multiple relationships. Furthermore, I argue that family abuse (by HM, HZ) should be viewed as part of a continuum of abuse experienced by South Asian women within the framework of

power and control. It needs to be understood as not always directly mediated by male power, but (also) motivated by self-interest (Rew, Gangoli and Gill, 2013: 157).

4.1 Chapter Outline

I begin this chapter with an overview of the (sparse) literature on family abuse against daughters-in-law, which is mainly from the perspective of female affinal kin relationships in South Asia. I argue for a need to move away from functionalist explanations of this phenomenon as being underpinned by greedy affinal kin, dowry demands and mothers-in-law who are ‘victims’ of socialisation and male control. If we turn our attention to the gendered and structural dynamics of households, which can leave daughters-in-law relatively powerless (see Chapter Two), it becomes clear that mothers-in-law have a vested interest in the abuse of daughters-in-law.

This is followed by an exploration of the interviewees’ experience of family abuse (by HM), which I have termed and organised as ‘indirect involvement’ and ‘direct involvement’. The former features subtle acts, such as being overworked, control of marital relations and constant ‘ear-filling’, which cannot only instigate spousal abuse but can also cause physical exhaustion and depression. The latter is characterised by overt, direct acts such as physical and verbal abuse, and isolation.

Finally, I explore the sister-in-law relationship which literature (pertaining to South Asia) has depicted as competitive, painting a picture of rivalries and jealousies. I show that while this is true of the husband’s sister (HZ), the same cannot be said for the husband’s brother’s wife (HBW).

4.2 Summary of Interview Findings

As shown in Tables Three and Four in Chapter One, eight of the eleven interviewees lived with affinal kin. The interview findings show that five out of six Pakistan-born interviewees, and three out of five UK-born interviewees, experienced abuse (indirect and direct) from mothers-in-law. There was a distinction among the interviewees’ relationships with the two sets of sisters-in-law. Three of the Pakistan-born interviewees experienced

indirect and direct involvement from the husband's sisters (HZ). Farah was the only UK-born interviewee with a sister-in-law (HZ), but she did not recount similar experiences to the Pakistan-born interviewees. In contrast, the husband's brother's wife (HBW) was described by the Pakistan-born interviewees as loyal, supportive and sympathetic. The UK-born interviewees did not recount any experiences (positive or negative) of the husband's brother's wife.

The interview findings show that there were differences between the experiences of the Pakistan-born interviewees and the UK-born interviewees in the extent and degree of involvement and abuse by mothers-in-law. The Pakistan-born interviewees experienced more direct and regular involvement from their mothers-in-law. As discussed in Chapter Three, the distinction lies in the Pakistan-born interviewees' immigration status, which positions them in a relatively powerless and vulnerable situation in terms of financial dependence, education, language barriers and natal kin distance. As noted in the 'Preamble', my exploration of abuse by female affinal kin is limited to what the interviewees told me, and their subjective interpretation and understanding of it.

4.3 Understanding Abuse by the Mother-in-law

The very few researchers who have written about the involvement in abuse by mothers-in-law against their daughters-in-law have tried to explore the possible reasons and causes for this (Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon, 1989; Vera-Sanso, 1999; Raj et al., 2006; Gangoli and Rew, 2011; Rew, Gangoli and Gill, 2013). Before delving into the interviewees' experience of this abuse, I aim here to provide an overview of this literature, and the differing perspectives within it.

Within South Asia, particularly in India, the popular explanation for abuse by the mother-in-law has been dowry violence (see Chapter Two for discussion on dowry). Greedy affinal kin and dowry demands underpin popular explanations of abuse by the mother-in-law, particularly in India, resulting in abuse of the daughter-in-law or, in extreme cases, bride-burning (Gangoli and Rew, 2011: 422; Rew, Gangoli and Gill, 2013: 156). Other explanations centre around male control and socialisation, as mothers-in-law who are

involved in the abuse of other women are themselves controlled by men through, for example, fear of the wrath of their husband or son for not controlling their daughter-in-law. In response to this, Rew, Gangoli and Gill (2013: 157) argue that these explanations overlook two key points: firstly, the gendered dimensions of mother-in-law violence and the structural dynamics of the household that facilitate this; and, secondly, the self-interest of mothers-in-law, which can motivate the abuse of daughters-in-law. This self-interest they explain as rooted in key socio-cultural norms regarding household relations: the importance of being mothers of sons, and the importance of maintaining a joint, virilocal household (Rew, Gangoli and Gill, 2013: 150).

My exploration of the structural dynamics of the traditional South Asian household in Chapter Two elucidates the relatively powerless position of a young daughter-in-law within the conjugal home (Raj et al., 2006: 945). Researchers such as Mand (2008: 289) argue that a woman's status in the conjugal home is not static, but alters through different stages in her life course. With the birth of a son, an oppressed daughter-in-law lives in the hope of one day becoming a powerful mother-in-law, ultimately superseding the power and control of her mother-in-law (Rew, Gangoli and Gill, 2013: 152). Researchers, working from this standpoint, explore the various clashes and tensions within the mother- and daughter-in-law relationship. For example, the mother-in-law, having suffered the trials and tribulations of being a submissive daughter-in-law herself, comes to identify with the same traditions that proved so oppressive during her own youth now that she is a 'beneficiary of these practices' (Rew, Gangoli and Gill, 2013: 153). This is understood and termed by Kandiyoti (1988) as the 'patriarchal bargain', where the subordinate new bride's positioning (such as a degree of autonomy and respect) within her affinal home will eventually change, usually by having a son. Long-term gain, through being the mothers of sons reflects the experience of the interviewees; that is long-term economic and social gain by maintaining the joint extended household (Rew, Gangoli and Gill, 2013: 150).

For reasons such as these, Kakar (1978) argues, South Asian mothers tend to develop very close relationships with their sons, making it difficult, if not impossible, to share their sons with another woman. A new bride is viewed as a potential threat to a mother-in-law's long-term plans and security. The bride may convince her husband to break the traditional joint

household by moving into their own home and forming a nuclear household. This can leave the mother-in-law alone in old age, particularly if there is only one son, and potentially with no economic security. Thus, it falls to the mother-in-law to preserve the joint family structure, and ultimately to ensure her daughter-in-law does not develop the confidence nor gain the loyalty of her son sufficient to encourage him to break the joint family. In doing so, researchers such as Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon (1989: 31) elucidate that the mother-in-law prevents the development of intimacy between her son and his wife (a point I will return to later in this chapter). Moreover, the preservation of the extended family structure can also aid the control and isolation of a wife by her husband. Anitha (2011: 1273) argues that sons stress their mothers' responsibility for keeping their daughters-in-law in line, such as by monitoring the wife's behaviour while the son is away at work. As I will show in this chapter, the nature of the joint household and the roles of women within it (e.g. gender segregation and gendered household responsibilities) make it easier for mothers-in-law to regulate women's behaviour. For instance, to employ tactics such as restricting intimacy by ensuring their daughters-in-law are too busy with household chores to have opportunities to be alone with their husbands.

This explains the causes of tension between mothers- and daughters-in-law, but it does not explain when or why this relationship will turn violent. Rew, Gangoli and Gill (2013: 156) propose the application of a domestic abuse framework to understanding abuse by mothers-in-law, particularly Stark's coercive control model (2013). This model was developed to explore 'women's entrapment' by men within an intimate relationship from a feminist perspective of gender inequality (Stark, 2007: 5). Thus, its effective applicability to understanding South Asian women's experience of family abuse is questionable. My work pushes Stark's model to understand and explore coercive control as existing within multiple relationships and complex family structures where, as well as gender, factors such as immigration status can make some women more vulnerable to abuse than others.

Many of Stark's (2013) findings and arguments on domestic abuse, that the structural roots of women's inequality and their vulnerability to abuse need to be taken into account, hold true regarding women's violence against other women. Controlling the spatial freedom of daughters-in-law and restricting and controlling their behaviour can create the potential for

abuse by mothers-in-law. The indirect and direct involvement of mothers-in-law in the abuse of daughters-in-law can be understood through Stark's (2013: 17) coercive control model, where abuse is conceptualised as everyday forms of humiliation, degradation and isolation, which often, though not always, lead to physical abuse. In doing so, we can understand how factors specific to South Asian women such as immigration status, economics, language and natal kin distance interact with the structural dynamics of the household and spousal abuse to facilitate and intensify family abuse (by HM). As already noted, the central recommendation of this chapter is the recognition of abuse by mothers-in-law as part of the continuum of family abuse experienced by South Asian women; that is, to recognise it as a form of abuse in itself, which may or may not be mediated by male control (Rew, Gangoli and Gill, 2013: 157). To gain a nuanced understanding of South Asian women's experience of family abuse, we must explore the reality that women can be actively complicit in the violence and oppression of other women. As I will show in Chapter Nine, it is for reasons such as these that we should recognise the power and control some women can hold in affinal homes that can be utilised in often troubling ways (Jeffery and Jeffery, 1996: 20). Nevertheless, I would like to reiterate the gendered nature of women's experience of abuse, in that the perpetrators of abuse are predominantly male while the abused are female. It is important not to lose sight of this pertinent reality when exploring complex issues such as woman-on-woman violence. I will now go on to explore the interviewees' experiences of family abuse which I have termed 'indirect involvement' and 'direct involvement', explained and understood in relation to Stark's (2007) coercive control model on domestic abuse.

4.4 Indirect Involvement by Mothers-in-law

Similar to Stark's (2013) coercive control model, indirect involvement is characterised by subtle tactics that control and regulate certain aspects of a daughter-in-law's life. It can feature domestic despotism, control of marital relations, and constant 'ear filling'. Interestingly, these acts, as explained by the interviewees, were not mediated by male control, but rather were perpetrated by mothers-in-law for self-interest. The interviewees explained that their mothers-in-law intended to control and dominate them as a means to

maintain the joint household, and to sustain their exploitation (forced economic and domestic labour). These acts not only caused direct emotional and physical exhaustion and strain, but also instigated spousal abuse and discord: for example, when a mother-in-law overwhelms her daughter-in-law with housework so that she is too physically exhausted to spend time with her husband this can become a cause for marital discord. Most importantly, these subtle and specific tactics are aspects of abuse that do not receive attention from government policy and practice, making it more difficult to recognise and identify them as abusive (by service providers and by the women experiencing it).⁴⁷

Domestic Despotism

Domestic despotism, or what researchers such as Raj et al. (2006: 942) term ‘domestic servitude’, is one of the most common forms of abuse perpetrated by mothers-in-law. South Asian women in Anitha’s (2011) study commonly recount feelings of being treated like a servant and forced to cook and clean. Anitha (2011: 1273) argues that the gendered distribution of household labour is a feature of most relationships (see Chapter Two) and that these inequalities are magnified for women who have little power to negotiate a fairer division of labour, particularly for migrant South Asian women. I will now elucidate domestic despotism as an effective tool of coercion and control, facilitated by the gender dimensions and structures of the extended family home. I will also explore the physical, emotional and mental consequences of domestic despotism, as reflected in interviewees’ experiences which is not adequately, if at all, reflected within literature.

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born Interviewees

An expectation of domestication and housework was indicated by the Pakistan-born interviewees, as Meryam explains: ‘We are told from a young age [by our parents], “when you go to your affinal home you have to cook and clean”’.⁴⁸ The nature and extent of this upon entering the affinal home was not expected, as noted in Fatima’s account:

⁴⁷ See Chapter Three: ‘3.3 Women’s Perceptions of Spousal Abuse’.

⁴⁸ ‘Jab ham chote hote hai hamen batāya jātā hai ke, “apne susrāl jā-ke safāī aur khānā banānā partā hai”.’

It was *shocking* for me, *suddenly* all at once, so much. ‘These clothes you put in like this ... You have to wash all of these. This is the *cooker*, put it *on* like this. We make food like this. You have to clean the *washroom*, you have to *hoover*’ [said by HM]. This work wouldn’t have finished but she [HM] would give me a new one [to do]. And she would also say, ‘Come down for 7am and you cannot go upstairs to your *room* before 2am’.⁴⁹

Similarly, Aliyah recounts having to ‘*cooking* [cook] for them, *cleaning*, iron their (HM, HZ) clothes and place it in their hands. Everybody’s work was on me.’⁵⁰ This, of course made the interviewees feel physically exhausted, but the emotional and psychological consequences were striking, notably in Meryam’s account:

Believe me, this caused my *depression*, that I was even ironing their *underwear* [H, HM, HZ]. Everything, ‘do it like this!’ Like I am their servant. I did not even feel like their daughter-in-law.⁵¹

The nature and extent of housework can demean women, creating periods of depression and low self-worth. The interviewees questioned their mothers-in-law’s motives and agendas for overworking them. Meryam explains: ‘I don’t think she [HM] was concerned with cleanliness [of the house]. I think she didn’t want me to *spend time* with him [H].’⁵² Furthermore, Meryam says marital discord may be attributable at times to housework:

⁴⁹ Mere liye *shocking* thā, ek dum *suddenly* itnā kūch. ‘Yeh kapre ese dālte hai ... Yeh sare dhonvāle hai. Yeh *cooker* hai, is-ko ese *on* karnā hai. Ham ese khānā banāte hai. *Washroom* sāf karnā hai, *hoover* karnā hai’. Yeh kām *khatm* nahīn honā to phir dūsrā denā. Yeh bhī kahe, ‘sāth baje nīche ā-jānā, rāt do baje se pehle tumhe apnī *room* mai nahīn jānā’.

⁵⁰ ‘un ke-liye *cooking* karo, *cleaning*, un-ke kapre istrī kar-ke un-ke hāto mai pakrāo. Har bānde kā kām jo thā voh mere pe hai.’

⁵¹ Yakīn kare yeh chīz merī *depression* ban-gāī thī ke meh in-ke *underwear* tak istrī kar-rahī thī. Har chīz, ‘istarā kar-ke dho!’ Jese meh in-kī naukrānī thī. Mūjhe lagtā bhī nahīn thā meh in-kī bāhū hū.

⁵² ‘Mūjhe nahīn lagtā ke us-se safāī kā thā. Mūjhe lagtā hai ke voh chātī thī meh us-ke sāth *time* nā *spend* karū.’

They [HM, HeZ] used to make me do so much work, I would get so tired I couldn't give my own *husband time*. Because of this he would argue with me, [saying], 'you don't have time for me'. Now, you think, waking up at 7am to do work until 10pm or 11pm, I only had five or six hours [left to sleep].⁵³

This tactic resonates with Stark's (2013) coercive control framework which shows how perpetrators can control women by regulating their behaviour and movements. Through the gendered role of a wife, and the expectation to do housework (Chapter Two), mothers-in-law were able to regulate, monitor and control the movements (and sleep patterns) of their daughters-in-law. Although it is difficult to determine whether or not control of marital relations was the intention (or motivation) behind domestic despotism, it is clear that it was one of the consequences. The Pakistan-born interviewees experienced more extreme forms of domestic despotism, which were not recounted by the UK-born interviewees (as I will go on to show), such as having to sleep and wake at specific times. This may be attributed to factors specific to the Pakistan-born interviewees that facilitate and intensify forms of domestic despotism, such as daughters-in-law not being able to speak English, compounded by natal kin distance and being isolated at home, making control of this sort easier to perpetrate.

Interview Findings: UK-born Interviewees

Feelings of 'immense pressure' (Nazia) to do housework can be determined from the UK-born interviewees' accounts, with Naseem describing it as an expectation held by her mother-in-law:

She made an announcement on my wedding day that I had one week off and then I was going to be put to [house]work.

She goes on to explain feeling like 'a lamb to the slaughter' on her wedding day because of this comment. Nazia describes her worries in relation to housework:

⁵³ Voh mūjhse itnā kām karvāte the meh apne *husband ko time* nahīn de-saktī thī meh itnā thak jatī thī. Is vajā se voh mere sāth larāī kartā thā, 'tumhāre pās mere liye waqt nahīn hai'. Ab āp soche, sāth baje ūtnā kām ke-liye dās gyāra baje tak, mere pās to sirf pānch yā che gante the.

I think it was kinda expected of me. I did it out of my own free will as well because I didn't want them to go back to my parents and say, 'you said your daughter can do such and such ...' That would be so embarrassing for them.

Similar to Naseem's account, Nazia felt there was an expectation and pressure to do housework. For Nazia, the pressure of doing housework was associated with fear that if she did not, her affinal kin would complain to (or taunt) her natal kin for their daughter's inability to fulfil her roles and responsibilities. Nazia did not want to give her affinal kin an opportunity to do this. Similarly, Khadijah recounts feelings of pressure and physical exhaustion associated with housework, describing it as,

a constant state of anxiety. I felt like I had to do it, otherwise if I wasn't doing it then I wouldn't be seen as doing anything for the family ... Seen as lazy, you know, a negative sort of view of me. But, it was very tiring, coming back from work and then having to do all that.

Unlike the Pakistan-born interviewees, the UK-born interviewees did not mention domestic despotism as a source of spousal abuse or marital discord. This may be due to the greater extent of housework required of the Pakistan-born interviewees, as well as the aforementioned factors specific to them.

Control of Marital Relations

As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, researchers such as Rew, Gangoli and Gill (2013: 152) have elucidated the importance of the mother-son relationship as causing tension within the mother- and daughter-in-law relationship. For instance, the bride may be a potential threat to the long-term benefit of living in an extended household (economic, and care in old age). For reasons such as these, and the difficulty a mother may have to share her son with another woman (Kakar, 1978), mothers-in-law can thwart the development of intimacy between a son and his wife (Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon, 1989: 31). Writers such as Kishwar (1997) argue that although in the context of the South Asian family the daughter-in-law's sexuality is deemed as inferior to motherhood, her sexual potential is still seen as a threat to the security of the extended household. In this context, Sonpar (2005) alludes to the tactics employed by mothers-in-law to prevent intimacy, such

as keeping their daughter-in-law busy with household chores to prevent her from having opportunities to be alone with her husband.

In other words, this research implies the reason for the mother-in-law's control (and sometimes prevention) of intimacy between her son and his wife is fear that this may lead to separation from her son emotionally, or that the power will shift from the mother-in-law to the daughter-in-law, by, for example, her giving birth to a son. But, in the context of this study, family abuse, a power shift of this sort is doubtful. It is unlikely that a daughter-in-law, whose husband is actively complicit in family abuse (by HM), can ever be a threat to a mother-in-law. I aim to show through the following exploration of interviewees' experiences that mothers-in-law control marital relations firstly as a means to maintain spousal abuse and, secondly, as a tool of control, coercion and intimidation. This is one of the many multiple and mutually reinforcing features of family abuse.

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born Interviewees

The Pakistan-born interviewees recount attempts to prevent marital relations and limit the time spent with their husbands. Aliyah explains being told by her mother-in-law that she controlled the intimacy in her relationship:

If he came near me for *sex*, my *mother-in-law* would say to me, 'If I *allow* it, then he will go near you'. She used to keep her eye on that thing too.⁵⁴

Considering the modesty and privacy that tends to be attributed to women's sexuality and marital intimacy, this is an interesting point. As discussed in Chapter Two, concepts (and what they denote) of *izzat* and *sharām*, sexuality and intimacy, are not openly spoken about, or considered appropriate to do so, and particularly not with affinal kin. Aliyah goes on to explain the tactics employed by her mother-in-law to prevent marital relations in order to 'create distance'.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Agar voh mere pās āyegā bhī, *sex* ke mutāliq, merī *mother-in-law* mūjhe kehtī thī, 'agar meh *allow* karūngi to phir yeh tere pās āyegā'. Voh ūs chīz pe bhī nazar raktī thī.

⁵⁵ 'dūrī ho-jāe.'

When I came back from *hospital* [after giving birth] I used to keep the *light on* in the *bedroom* [at night] ... She [HM] said to her son, ‘You sleep upstairs as you won’t be able to sleep in the *light* and you have to go to work in the morning’. *Eight to nine months* later he still hadn’t come downstairs [to their bedroom].⁵⁶

Fatima explains her mother-in-law’s behaviour in similar terms, saying: ‘*More than one-and-half years* had passed and still my *mother-in-law* made my *husband* sleep in her *bedroom*.’⁵⁷ She attributes this to her mother-in-law’s insecurity, saying, ‘if children are born the woman becomes *secure*.’⁵⁸ However, most of the interviewees had children; Syma gave birth to a son, but this did not affect her security or power within the affinal home. Interestingly, some of the tactics employed to prevent and limit marital relations could not have been possible without the compliance of the son: if Aliyah’s husband had refused to sleep in another room, her mother-in-law’s tactic would have faltered. As noted in Chapter Three, the interviewees did not understand the nature and extent of their husbands’ compliance with family abuse. I do not aim to resolve this issue, rather I am noting it as a point which not only requires further exploration (in future research), but also needs to be recognised as a form of spousal abuse experienced by South Asian (and possibly non-South Asian) women.

The UK-born interviewees did not experience control of marital relations by mothers-in-law. As shown in Chapter Three, Pakistan-born interviewees experienced more intense and frequent forms of spousal abuse, and their husbands also engaged in extra-marital affairs (which the UK-born interviewees did not experience). Thus, it may have been easier for the mothers-in-law of Pakistan-born interviewees to gain the complicity of their sons in order to control and prevent marital relations. Furthermore, the added vulnerability of their immigration status and socio-economic factors, explored in Chapters Two and Three, can facilitate specific forms of abuse. Migrant South Asian women may be less likely than UK-born South Asian women to challenge family abuse for fear of deportation.

⁵⁶ Jab meh *hospital* se vāpis āyī meh apnī *bedroom* kī *light on* raktī thī ... Voh apne bete ko kehtī hai, ‘tum ūpar so jāo, tum *light* meh nahīn so sakoge aur tumhe sūbā kām pe bhī jānā hai’. *Eight to nine months* ke bād voh phir bhī nīche nahī āyā.

⁵⁷ ‘*More than one-and-a-half-year* hoge aur merī *mother-in-law* mere *husband* ko apne *bedroom* mai solātī thī.’

⁵⁸ ‘agar bachche ho-jāe aurat *secure* ho-jātī hai.’

‘Constant Ear Filling’

The interviewees recount a popular tactic employed by their mothers-in-law, termed by Syma as ‘constant ear filling.’ Raj et al. (2006: 944) refer to this as the mother-in-law’s incitement of spousal abuse by making complaints about a daughter-in-law. The literature does not cover this in any great detail, where researchers such as Fernandez (1997: 447) and Raj et al. (2006) gloss it over as a form of control perpetrated by the mother-in-law to maintain the loyalty of her son. If we apply Stark’s (2013) framework, it is best understood as a tool of coercion, control and intimidation utilised by mothers-in-law to sustain spousal abuse, and also a feature of family abuse perpetrated by the mother-in-law towards her daughter-in-law. The son (husband) is simply used as an intermediary as a means to this end. For example, if the mother-in-law wants to teach her daughter-in-law a lesson, or punish her for not acceding to her wishes, she simply has to ‘fill her son’s ear’, which can lead to spousal abuse.

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born Interviewees

Syma describes her husband as not physically abusive, but after an ‘ear filling’ from his mother, she recounts he would become, ‘emotionally and physically distanced from me.’ Similarly, Fatima explains:

She would always say to him, ‘don’t go near Fatima. If you have a baby, she will leave you and take the baby’.⁵⁹

This clarifies Fatima’s aforementioned theory of her mother-in-law’s control and prevention of marital relations as fear she may become pregnant. The other interviewees also recounted their mother-in-laws’ complaining to their husbands about various things: she does not do the housework properly (Asma), and she does not cook properly (Syma). In some instances this instigated spousal abuse, notably in Aliyah’s experience. Aliyah explains:

⁵⁹ Voh us-se kehtī rehtī thī, ‘Fatima ke pās nahīn jānā. Agar tumhārā bachche hoge voh tumhe chor ke bachcho ko le jāegī’.

Because of this he would hit me [saying], ‘Why did you say to my *parents* that I go out?’ His mother, to annoy me, would tell him this, so he would hit me more and go out more.⁶⁰

Aliyah was certain that the reason for her mother-in-law’s ear filling was to sustain spousal abuse, and to create distance between her and her husband.

Interview Findings: UK-born Interviewees

The UK-born interviewees did not mention this as a major source of control, or marital discord. Naseem was the only UK-born interviewee who mentioned ear filling, as she explains:

They [H, HM] would sit together, I could hear them, as she would say to him, ‘she doesn’t cook properly, [and] she is rude’. I could hear it in his voice, he would get angry.

She, like the Pakistan-born interviewees, attributes this to her mother-in-law’s instigation of spousal abuse and also, she explains, ‘to show me who’s boss.’ Again this is best understood as a tool of control and intimidation – for instance, filling her son’s ear, which may lead to spousal abuse, is the consequence of Naseem’s non-compliance with her (HM) wishes and demands.

4.5 Direct Involvement by Mothers-in-law

Direct involvement represents the mother-in-law’s direct perpetration of abuse against her daughter-in-law, in front of, or in isolation from, other family members (H, HF, HZ, HBW). The interviewees experienced this in varying degrees, and it is similar to the tactics outlined in Stark’s (2013) coercive control model, such as physical, verbal and economic abuse, and isolation (see Chapter Three). When these acts are explored and understood in the context of household dynamics and spousal abuse, it clarifies the ease and confidence mothers-in-law have in perpetrating abuse against their daughters-in-law.

⁶⁰ Is ke pīche phir yeh mūjhe mārṭā thā, ‘tum-ne mere *parents* ko kyo kahā meh bahār jāṭā hū?’ Us-kī mā mūjhe tang karne ke-liye us-se ese kehtī thī ke voh mūjhe ziyādā māre aur ziyādā bahār jāe.

Physical Abuse

Researchers such as Raj et al. (2006: 943) and Fernandez (1997: 446) show that as well as instigating spousal abuse, mothers-in-law can directly perpetrate physical abuse against daughters-in-law. Rew, Gangoli and Gill (2013: 156) understand and conceptualise this within the framework of domestic abuse, particularly Stark's (2013, 2007) coercive control model, whereby threats of, or actual, physical abuse is a tool of power and control, creating fear in the abused woman. Thus, women can be subjected to simultaneous physical abuse and threats from both their mothers-in-law and spouses, highlighting the intensity of abuse South Asian women can experience within an extended family structure.

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born Interviewees

Three of the Pakistan-born interviewees recount their mother-in-law either attempting to, or actually, physically abusing them. Aliyah explains:

My mother-in-law *push* [pushed] me because I *phone* [phoned] my *parents* ... Everyone was sitting there [H], her daughters too, they were *laugh* [laughing] ... She came near me to hit me. I moved back.⁶¹

Similarly, Asma explains: 'She [HM] used to hit me.'⁶² The interviewees describe fearing their mother-in-law and what she was capable of (in relation to physical abuse) in similar terms to their description and experience of spousal abuse (see Chapter Three). The interviewees explain agreeing to their mother-in-law's wishes and demands for fear of physical abuse, notable in Fatima's account:

She was sitting next to these *pipes*. I was thinking, if she picks them up and hits me with them I will die. So, I just did as she said.⁶³

The UK-born interviewees did not recount experiencing direct, or attempts of, physical

⁶¹ Merī sās ne mūjhe *push* kiyā is-liye ke meh-ne apne *parents* ko *phone* kiyā ... sab behthe the, betiyā bhī thī, *laugh* kar-rahī thī ... mere pās āyī thī mūjhe mārne. Meh pīche ho-gāī.

⁶² 'Voh mūjhe mārī thī.'

⁶³ Voh *pipes* ke pās behī thī. Meh soch rahī thī agar us-ne utā ke mūjhe mārā meh to mar jāungi. To jo voh keh-rahī thī meh-ne kiyā.

abuse from their mother-in-law. As already mentioned, factors specific to the Pakistan-born interviewees, such as immigration status, may not only increase their vulnerability to such abuse, but also facilitate physical abuse from mothers-in-law. A migrant South Asian woman who is socially, economically and structurally dependent upon her perpetrators is less likely to seek outside support and assistance, such as the police, either because she does not know how to, or has been misinformed about her rights (see Chapters Seven and Eight). Thus, in the way that this facilitates spousal abuse, family abuse perpetrated by mothers-in-law is also facilitated.

Verbal Abuse

Rew, Gangoli and Gill (2013: 150), like other researchers, show verbal abuse and degradation as another method of controlling the daughter-in-law, similar to Stark's (2013) coercive control model: exerting control over her clothes and appearance (by belittling her); verbally abusing and belittling natal kin (F, M); and questioning her character and her contributions to the family and household (Raj et al., 2006: 942).

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born Interviewees

All the Pakistan-born interviewees who lived with affinal kin endured verbal abuse and taunting from their mothers-in-law. Fatima describes her mother-in-law as, 'constantly talking [negative speech]. She *use* [used] a lot of *loose language* [Punjabi swear words].'⁶⁴ Meryam describes her depression as stemming from her mother-in-law's constant degradation and belittling of her physical appearance. She explains:

[HM was] always saying to me, 'you're so fat', saying things like that all the time, giving me a *complex*.⁶⁵

Similar to their experience of spousal verbal abuse, the interviewees also endured taunts from their mothers-in-law about their natal kin, which they explained as the most difficult to endure. Aliyah explains: '[HM] always speak badly about my mother, starting to

⁶⁴ 'bāhot boltī thī, bāhot ziyādā *loose language* [Punjabi swear words] *use* kiyā.'

⁶⁵ hameshā kehnā, 'tum kitnī motī ho'. Ese hameshā kehnā, mūjhe *complex* denā.

swear.’⁶⁶ Asma explains that her mother-in-law would taunt her for the clothes her mother gave her, saying: ‘My mother bought me very expensive clothes. Even still, my mother-in-law would say that my clothes are not nice. “What kind of clothes has your mother given you?”’⁶⁷ This exemplifies the intensity of abuse South Asian women can experience within an extended family structure, where they can be subjected to abuse such as the taunting of natal kin simultaneously from the mother-in-law and the spouse (see Chapter Three).

Interview Findings: UK-born Interviewees

Naseem was the only UK-born interviewee who recounts experiencing verbal abuse from her mother-in-law. She explains: ‘She was very verbally abusive, all the time, to the point she would stand outside my bedroom door and just shout abuse. “You’re this and that”.’ Like the Pakistan-born interviewees, she also endured natal kin insults and taunts, which she also describes as more difficult to endure, and more emotionally taxing than verbal abuse, such as swearing:

My mum discovered she had cancer. She spent two years dying, literally, in the hospital. The whole time she [HM] would curse her [M] [saying], ‘when is her mum going to die? Why isn’t she hurrying up and dying? I pray to God she dies’.

Researchers such as Gangoli and Rew (2011: 422) comment that in popular discourses dowry is seen as the instigating factor in verbal abuse, when, for example, a mother-in-law taunts and ridicules her daughter-in-law for bringing a small dowry. But the interviewees’ experiences show that there were no specific factors which instigated verbal abuse. Rather, it should be understood in the framework of domestic abuse, something which was constant and endured on a daily basis to undermine and ridicule the interviewees as a form of power and control.

⁶⁶ ‘hameshā merī ammī kī būrāyā karnā, ghaliyā shūrū kar-denā.’

⁶⁷ ‘Merī ammī ne mūjhe bāhot mehngē kapre khurid ke-diye. Merī sās phir bhī mūjhe kehtī ke yeh achche nahīn hai: “kese kapre tumhārī mā ne diye hai?”’

Isolation

The literature on affinal kin abuse illustrates the range of tactics employed by mothers-in-law to isolate daughters-in-law, similar to those outlined in Stark's coercive control model for domestic abuse. Raj et al. (2006: 940) and Anitha (2011: 1274) show how women are prevented from having economic autonomy in the following ways: not being allowed to work outside the home; being forced to work unpaid in the family business; having their income taken away from them. As shown in Chapter Three, this is the most effective means by which to create dependency and in turn isolate the woman from the outside world. Threats of deportation for South Asian migrant women also feature in experiences of family abuse. Rew, Gangoli and Gill (2013: 149) argue that mothers-in-law can threaten to send daughters-in-law back to their natal homes if they do not accede to their (and their sons') wishes and demands. The most effective form of isolation, particularly in the case of South Asian migrant brides, is through control of natal kin contact (Fernandez, 1997: 448; Dasgupta, 2005: 63), which can be limited or prohibited – the central theme of Chapter Five.

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born Interviewees

As well as experiencing tactics of isolation, such as financial abuse, from husbands as part of spousal abuse (see Chapter Three), the Pakistan-born interviewees also experienced this from their mothers-in-law. Aliyah explains that as well as domestic despotism, she was forced to work in the family business, unpaid:

When I came here [to the UK], my mother-in-law said, 'you have to work in the *shop* [family business]. I did it, so you have to do it too'.⁶⁸

She goes on to explain that her child benefit was taken away from her. 'She [HM] would say, "I do *shopping* for her [Aliyah's D] so I should get her [child] *benefit*".'⁶⁹ This left Aliyah financially dependent on affinal kin (H, HM) for basic resources such as clothing, of

⁶⁸ Jab meh yahā āyī thī, merī sās ne mujhe kahā, 'tumhe *shop* mai kām karnā hogā. Meh-ne bhī kiyā, tumhe bhī karnā paregā'.

⁶⁹ 'Voh kehtī thī, "Is ke-liye meh *shopping* kartī hū, to is-ke *benefit* bhī mujhe āne chāhiye".'

which she explains they deprived her. This also facilitated her isolation from natal kin, a point I have mentioned before and will explore in detail in Chapter Five. Similarly, Fatima was initially not allowed to work (employment), and when she eventually did (after convincing her H), her mother-in-law took her wages from her. Fatima recounts her mother-in-law making her do housework in an attempt to make her late for work: ‘She said, “if you want to go to work you have to do all the housework before you go”. Whenever I would be leaving, she would say, “do this before you go”.’⁷⁰ As noted in Chapter Three, Stark (2013: 29) shows how, in a domestic abuse context, acts such as these are done in order to impact on women’s employability as well as their performance or chances for promotion.

The interviewees explain being isolated at home, and not being allowed to leave without a chaperon (i.e. HM, HF, HZ). Aliyah explains the only time she was allowed to leave the affinal home was to work in the family business or to go to the doctor’s; even then her mother-in-law accompanied her:

I wasn’t allowed to go anywhere on my own. *Even* she accompanied me to the *doctor’s* [starts crying]. I had never even been to my daughter’s *nursery*.⁷¹

This level of economic dependency and isolation is compounded and facilitated first by the interviewees’ immigration status and by socio-economic factors which placed them in a vulnerable position, and also by existing spousal abuse. The interviewees felt the aim of their mothers-in-law (together with their husbands) was to prevent their economic autonomy, in turn affecting their freedom of movement and isolating them from the outside world, including natal kin.

The aim thus far has been to explore South Asian women’s experiences of family abuse perpetrated by mothers-in-law. The tactics employed by the mother-in-law (indirect and direct) are facilitated both by the structural dynamics of the household (e.g. gendered household responsibilities), and by women’s experiences of spousal abuse. This ultimately

⁷⁰ ‘Us-ne kahā, “agar tumhe kām pe jānā hai to tumhe ghar ka sārā kām khutm kar-ke jānā hai”. Jab bhī meh janeh vāli thī, mūjhse kehñā, “janeh se pehle yeh karo”.’

⁷¹ Meh akelī kahī bhī nahīn jā-saktī thī. *Even* mere sāth *doctor’s* ke pās bhī jāī thī [starts crying]. Meh apnī betī kī *nursery* bhī kabhī nahīn gāī thī.

facilitates the husband's compliance in family abuse. In other words, the already turbulent and abusive nature of the marital relationship was utilised and intensified by mothers-in-law to maintain the control and domination of their daughters-in-law. This highlights two key issues: firstly, the manner in which South Asian women are constrained and weighed down by multiple perpetrators and multiple relationships, where spousal and family abuse is not only mutually reinforcing, but experienced simultaneously; and, secondly, the specificity of family abuse, such as domestic despotism, which is overlooked within policy documents and mainstream literature on domestic abuse.

It is clear that a distinction in South Asian women's experience from other women is affinal kin involvement, but as noted in Chapters Two and Three immigration status also creates differentiation between South Asian women's experiences. The Pakistan-born interviewees experienced more intense forms of direct involvement, and unlike the UK-born interviewees, experienced control of marital relations and economic exploitation (forced to work in the family business unpaid). I argue that the Pakistan-born interviewees' immigration status, and the factors which stem from this, create new forms of constraint and vulnerabilities that facilitate and intensify family abuse. Factors such as natal kin distance, economic dependency and lack of English proficiency, which intersect with constraints at the macro-level (Part Two), make tactics such as domestic despotism, economic exploitation and isolation easier to carry out. It may also be the case that mothers-in-law purposely marry their sons to women from Pakistan, due to these vulnerabilities that facilitate self-interest and the long-term gains explored above. Although my research does not attempt to resolve this, it is worth acknowledging and exploring in future research. In addition to experiencing abuse from husbands and mothers-in-law, the literature addresses the indirect and direct involvement of sisters-in-law in family abuse.

As shown in Chapter Two, researchers such as Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon (1989: 31) argue that women are not undifferentiated and equally powerless in relation to one another. Older married women (eBW) can police and control younger married women (yBW). Women in the affinal home are depicted as having divergent interests and conflicting loyalties, and are linked to men who are themselves competing: the eldest son having authority over the younger son (Jeffery and Jeffery, 1996: 137). Thus, their wives will fight and criticise one

another, creating an atmosphere of distrust and disunity (Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon, 1989: 50). It is within this context that anthropological literature depicts the sister-in-law (HeBW/HyBW) relationship as competitive, painting a picture of rivalries and jealousies. Interestingly, however, the interviewees spoke of loyalty and empathy from the wives of their husbands' brothers (HBW), a point I will now explore.

4.6 Loyalty Among the Wives of Brothers (HBW)

Syma and Fatima lived with their husbands' brothers' wives (HBW) who were also Pakistan-born. They used words such as 'loyal' (Syma) and 'very nice'⁷² (Fatima) to describe them. It can be determined from both their accounts that the wives of brothers can also be a source of comfort and can act to save and protect women from abuse, most notably in Syma's account. The background context to the following account is as follows: post-separation, Syma's husband's brother (HeB) invited Syma to his house intending, in her own words, 'to abort [she was pregnant] me by pushing me down the stairs.' Realising this, her husband's brother's wife (HeBW) tried to intervene:

She [HeBW] found out what his [HeB] intention was and she warn[ed] me. Then I came down and he came and I said, 'open the door', [as] it was locked and he have [had] the key. She said, 'give her the keys, and then she can go'. She open[ed] the door and he just came at me, and she stood like that [makes arm gesture of blocking someone]. He [HeB] pushed her [HeBW] and she fell.

She (HeBW) arranged for a friend to take Syma home: 'My sister-in-law's [HeBW] friend phoned me. She [HeBW] phoned her and said [to her friend], "she [Syma] is at the bus stop, get her and don't let her go home".' In hindsight, Syma ponders the possible outcomes if her husband's brother's wife had not intervened, saying: 'He [HeB] could have killed my baby.' By actively trying to warn Syma and stop her own husband from harming Syma, she (HeBW) risked her own personal safety. This could have led (and possibly did lead) to verbal and/or physical abuse from her husband, and/or to consequences from affinal kin. The sympathy and loyalty of this particular sister-in-law (HBW) towards Syma contradicts the literature that paints a picture of rivalry, competitiveness and jealousy. But

⁷² 'bāhot achchī.'

the literature is speaking from the perspective of sisters-in-laws in South Asia, where this description may be an accurate picture of this relationship. As Syma and the husband's brother's wife are first cousins (Syma's FBD), this could have made a difference to the loyalty and safeguarding expressed by her (HBW) towards Syma. However, Fatima also expressed loyalty and support from her husband's brother's wife, with whom she had no previous relationship.

As previously mentioned, Fatima's mother-in-law was unhappy with her having paid employment outside the home and so would employ tactics to try and make Fatima late for work. During this time, her husband's brother's wife (HyBW) arrived from Pakistan, which she describes as '*a blessing*.' The reason for this she explains:

My *sister-in-law luckily* came in those days. She was in the house and she lived really well with me. She would tell me to go [to work] and she will do my share of the [house]work. She [HM] would say to her, 'Why do you *help* her?'⁷³

As already seen from Syma's account, this can incur the threat of, or actual, harm to the safety of the husband's brother's wife. Fatima's mother-in-law would question her (HyBW) support for, and encouragement of, Fatima's work, which, Fatima explains, would sometimes result in, 'a slap [across the face of HyBW], because of it.'⁷⁴ It may be the case that as Fatima and her husband's brother's wife were in the same boat, so to speak, as they both experienced similar abuse from their mother-in-law, this could have affected the sense of loyalty and empathy for one another. It is not clear exactly why the relationship between the brothers' wives depicted in the interview findings is one of loyalty and safeguarding, but what is clear is that, unlike the picture painted by literature, this is not a relationship that is necessarily always beset by jealousy, rivalry and power. However, a relationship that both the academic literature and the interviewees describe as turbulent and difficult is that of the husband's sister (HZ). It is to this relationship which I now turn.

⁷³ Merī *sister-in-law luckily* un-nī dinō mai ā-gāī. Voh hotī thī ghar mai aur voh mere sāth bāhot achchī rahī. Us-ne mūjhe kehna tum chalī jāo meh tumhāre hise kā kām karlū ghī. Us-ko kehtī thī, 'tum is-kī kyo *help* kartī ho?'

⁷⁴ 'is-kī vajā se us-ko phir tapar mārtī thī.'

4.7 The Pampered Daughter (HZ)

Researchers such as Fernandez (1997: 444) and Raj et al. (2006: 937) document the active participation and involvement of the husband's sisters (HZ) in the abuse of the brother's wife in the affinal home. The Pakistan-born interviewees' relationships with their husbands' sisters fits the image of rivalry and competitiveness portrayed in the literature (Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon, 1989: 50; Fernandez, 1997: 444; Raj et al., 2006: 937). Farah, the only UK-born interviewee who had a sister-in-law (HZ), did not recount similar experiences, possibly due to two reasons: firstly, her husband's sister is from Pakistan so may not have felt confident to interfere in such a manner; and, secondly, unlike the Pakistan-born interviewees, Farah did not live with her (HZ). For this reason, the focus of this part of the chapter is on Pakistan-born interviewees only. Asma, Aliyah, Meryam and Syma were the only Pakistan-born interviewees whose husbands have sisters. Asma's husband has one sister who is married and living in her own (marital) home; Meryam's husband has three unmarried sisters still resident in their natal home, and one married sister who lives in her own (marital) home; and Aliyah's husband has three unmarried sisters still resident in their natal home. Syma's husband has two married sisters still resident in their natal home, but Syma did not speak of them in any great detail.

Difference in Treatment

Asma, Aliyah and Meryam recount differential treatment from their mothers-in-law. The first distinction was housework, which the interviewees explain they were forced to do (including for their HZ), while their husbands' sisters were absolved from doing anything. Aliyah explains: 'I had to cook and clean for them [HZ]. They [HZ] did nothing.'⁷⁵ As I will show in Chapter Five, research describes the natal home as a place of rest, solitude and respite for women (Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon, 1989: 32). This is reflected also in the interviewees' descriptions and experience of their natal home pre-marriage: 'I never did anything [housework] in my mum's home. They [natal kin] never even asked me to' (Meryam).⁷⁶ Within the affinal home, women are restricted and controlled by their mothers-

⁷⁵ 'Mūjhe un ke-liye safāī aur khānā banānā thā. Voh kūch bhī nahīn kartī thī.'

⁷⁶ 'Meh-ne kūch bhī nahīn kiyā apne ammī ke ghar. Uno ne kabhī kahā bhī nahīn.'

in-law (Jeffery and Jeffery, 1996: 10). It is difficult to determine whether or not the difference in treatment was intentionally abusive, or simply because this, as depicted in literature, is the normal set up of affinal and natal homes. It may be the case that when the interviewees' sisters-in-law (HBZ) are married, they will also experience similar treatment in their affinal home. Meryam recounts her experience of difference in treatment, describing it as intentionally done by her mother-in-law:

I was *nine months pregnant* when the month of Ramadhān first came, and there was so much *pressure* on me to keep all the fasts. The fasts here are so long ... Two of their daughters didn't fast and two did. 'They are weak' [said HM]. They are their daughters.⁷⁷

This, she explains, was done to 'show me my place',⁷⁸ that is, her lesser status and value as a daughter-in-law compared to the daughter.

Sabotage

Aliyah and Meryam recount sabotage as a tactic utilised by their respective husbands' sisters to instigate spousal and family abuse against them: as the mother-in-law employed tactics to instigate spousal abuse, the husbands' sisters employed sabotage to instigate spousal abuse (by their brothers) and family abuse (by their mothers). This exemplifies South Asian women's experiences of family abuse that can involve multiple perpetrators and multiple relationships within an extended family structure.

Aliyah describes her husband's sisters (HyZ) as, 'ruining my [house]work and then saying [to their M and B], "look she can't even do housework properly".'⁷⁹ Consequently, Aliyah would be verbally abused by her mother-in-law, and sometimes physically abused by her husband, which, she explains, 'they [HZ] really enjoyed.'⁸⁰ The detrimental consequences of sabotage are notable in Meryam's experience. To explain the quote used in the

⁷⁷ Meh *nine months pregnant* thī jab pehlī bār roze āye the, aur itnā *pressure* thā ke meh pūre roze rakū. Idr rozā bhī itne lumbe hote hai ... Un-ke do betiyā nahīn raktī thī aur do raktī thī. 'Voh kāmzor hai'. Voh apne betiyā hai.

⁷⁸ 'merī jāgā dekhāna.'

⁷⁹ 'merā kām hārāb kar-denā aur phir kehnā, "dekho yeh ghar kā kām bhī nahīn kar-saktī".'

⁸⁰ 'voh bāhot pasand kartī thī.'

introduction of this chapter, Meryam's husband's sister (HeZ), pretending to be a man, sent Meryam's husband texts claiming to like Meryam, and requesting to meet her. This placed suspicion in the mind of Meryam's husband that she was having an affair. As a result, Meryam explains being physically and verbally abused by her husband in front of his sister (HeZ), who Meryam describes as 'a disgusting girl'⁸¹, explaining that, 'all the *trouble* is her making. The days I have seen today are because of her [starts crying]'.⁸²

Verbal Abuse

As well as experiencing indirect, subtle forms of instigation and abuse, interviewees also recounted more overt forms of abuse by the sisters of their respective husbands. This included verbal abuse, as explained by Asma:

She would fight with me so much all the time. She would call me a *cow* and *slut*. I don't know why.⁸³

Similarly, Aliyah recounts her, 'always swearing at me, [telling me] "*shut-up bastard*"',⁸⁴ which she goes on to describe as, '*mentality* [mental] *torture*.' This, together with the other Pakistan-born interviewees' experiences, exemplifies both the nature of the husband's sister's interference and instigation of spousal and family abuse, and the catastrophic consequences it can have for in-married women: severe physical and verbal abuse. It is difficult to ascertain the causes of this, and it is something this study does not aim to explain. Nonetheless, it is clear that the husband's sister, similar to the husband's mother, can pose a significant threat to a woman's safety and relationships within the affinal home, as well as feature as part of their experiences of spousal and family abuse. This is a dimension of South Asian women's experiences that tends to be overlooked (or is unknown) within policy documents and literature.

⁸¹ 'bāhot *ghatiyā* larkī hai.'

⁸² 'sarī *trouble* us-kī banī hai. Joh āj meh-ne din dekhe hai voh us-kī vajā se hai [starts crying].'

⁸³ 'Voh hameshā mere sāth lartī thī. Mūjhe kehī thī *cow* aur *slut*. Mūjhe nahīn patā kyo.'

⁸⁴ 'hameshā mūjhe ghalī nikālna, "*shut-up bastard*".'

4.8 Summary

In this chapter I have explored and elucidated South Asian women's experience of family abuse perpetrated by female affinal kin (HM, HZ) within the context of the gendered dimensions and structural dynamics of the extended affinal household. I have shown how abuse by mothers-in-law was understood and explained by the interviewees as motivated by self-interest and long-term gain. This, I have argued, is best understood within Stark's (2013) coercive control framework on domestic abuse. Furthermore, I have explored and described how the various sister-in-law relationships (HZ, HBW) can add an additional layer to women's experience of abuse within the affinal home, either by intensifying and instigating abuse (HZ) or by supporting and comforting them (HBW). There are unresolved and unanswered issues and questions, such as what do sisters-in-law (HZ) gain in the abuse of other women? Do mothers-in-law choose to marry their sons to women in Pakistan because they are easier to control and pose less of a threat to their (HM) self-interest? I do not aim to address these issues, but rather highlight them as matters that require further exploration.

This chapter does more than just clarify the central argument of this section of the thesis, which is that women's experiences are not universal, gendered and limited to intimate relationships. It also emphasises that state policy and practice need to understand the oppressive structural dynamics of the extended affinal home, and the relationships within it, within a domestic abuse framework (see Chapter Ten). Doing so will show how South Asian women's experience of abuse are rooted in multiple relationships and complicated family structures that play a pivotal role in these experiences. Another angle that elucidates this point further is the role of a woman's natal kin. I have referred to the role of natal kin in this chapter, albeit briefly, as a factor which can make some women more vulnerable than others. In the next chapter, I aim to explore in greater detail the manner in which natal kin can shape South Asian women's experiences of abuse at the micro-level, either by constraining them within abusive structures (simply through distance) or encouraging them to leave. This is again a feature of South Asian women's experiences of family abuse that is usually overlooked.

CHAPTER FIVE

Natal Kin:

Contact and Support Post-marriage

I *phone* [phoned] my *family* and said, ‘I am getting a *divorce* and coming back [to Pakistan]’. They [M, B] said, ‘if you come back we will be humiliated’. I am not here [affinal home], nor am I there [natal home]. I thought I should just eat something and die [starts crying].⁸⁵ (Asma Pakistan-born)

My *mum* said to me, ‘if someone is not giving you your rights, what are you doing [there]?’ She would tell me to *leave*. ‘We are with you’.⁸⁶ (Aliyah Pakistan-born)

My dad [in response to Farah telling him she wants to divorce her husband] ... ‘No woman can live on her own, and how are you going to cope? What are you going to do with your children? What are you going to do when you’re older?’ (Farah: H1 UK-born)

5. Introduction

By utilising a domestic abuse framework, in this chapter I explore the manner in which prohibiting and limiting natal kin contact, particularly by the mother-in-law, is utilised as an effective tool of control and isolation. I argue that family abuse is an obstacle to natal kin contact, where natal kin intervention and support are blocked simply because they (M, F, B) do not know of the abuse. As shown by the quotes, if women do confide in natal kin regarding abuse and marital distress they can be met with diverse responses: some interviewees, such as Asma and Farah, were encouraged to stay, others such as Aliyah were encouraged to leave.

The sociological studies on gender and kinship explore natal kin contact and support post-marriage, and the various demographic, economic and social factors which can impinge on

⁸⁵ Meh-ne apne *family* ko *phone* kar-ke kahā, ‘Meh *divorce* le-ke vāpis ā-rahī hū’. Uno ne kahā, ‘agar tum yahā vāpis āyī hamārī bhezātī hai’. Nā meh yahā kī nā ūdar kī. Meh-ne sochā meh kūch kā-ke mar jāo [starts crying].

⁸⁶ Merī *mum* ne kahā, ‘agar tumhe kōī hāq nahīn de-rahā, tum kya kar-rahī ho?’ Voh mūjhe kehī thī *leave* karo. ‘Ham tumhāre sāth hai’.

this, which are not specific to spousal and family abuse (Dyson and Moore, 1983; Jejeebhoy and Sathar, 2001; Grover, 2009). The domestic abuse literature does not include natal kin, and so the impact of natal kin contact and support on other women (i.e. white western women) is unknown. Although, natal kin contact and support is explored in family abuse literature, this is limited to women in South Asia or migrant South Asian women. This chapter adds to the current literature on natal kin contact and support from a family abuse perspective, and provides an insight, albeit limited, into the experiences of UK-born South Asian women.

Due to the lack of research, and the limitations of my sample size, it is difficult to explore certain issues which arose from the interviewees' experiences fully; such as, the variation in natal kin response and support, and which factors have most bearing on support. It is not my aim to address these issues, but rather to elucidate the central argument of Part One of this thesis: the significance of exploring and categorising 'the family' as an important feature of South Asian women's experiences of abuse. The previous chapters (Three and Four) show the family as a structure within which women can experience multiple forms of abuse, by multiple perpetrators. This chapter adds an additional dimension and layer to South Asian women's experiences in the form of natal kin support or its lack, which can act either to immerse women in abusive structures and intensify experiences of abuse and helplessness, or encourage and facilitate exit. Nuanced and sensitive policymaking requires the government not only to take note of such specificities of women's experiences of abuse and access to (family and economic) support, but also requires that it is actively implemented within strategies to tackle gender inequality in the form of domestic abuse (see Chapter Ten).

5.1 Chapter Outline

I begin this chapter with an exploration and overview of sociological literature on gender and kinship which emphasises the importance of natal kin contact and support. I explore the nature and function of the natal and conjugal home, and the multiple roles women acquire within them. I also address the factors which pull women back to their natal home, such as the intertwined and mutually dependent mother-daughter relationship, which remains

largely neglected in the academic literature in favour of the mother-son relationship and male models of kinship (Grover, 2009: 5).

By applying a domestic abuse framework to the aforementioned issues, I show that prohibiting and limiting natal kin contact is an effective tool of control and isolation utilised by affinal kin, particularly the mother-in-law. This acts to block natal kin support, by making them unaware of the abuse, as women often have no means by which to inform them.

The remaining part of this chapter explores what support natal kin can, and do, offer to daughters experiencing family abuse. In doing so, I argue that the nature and extent of natal kin responses and support can be diverse; they can entail lack of support, or pressurising women to stay in an abusive marriage, or encouraging them to leave.

Before beginning my exploration it is essential to note that the points raised in this chapter have been shaped by the experiences of the interviewees, and as I have noted in Chapter One, it is important not to generalise. While some women can be met with unsupportive natal kin, other women may experience the contrary.

5.2 Summary of Interview Findings

Five of the six Pakistan-born interviewees and three of the five UK-born interviewees recount experiences of natal kin contact being limited or prohibited by affinal kin (H, HM). The remaining three interviewees did not experience this, possibly because they did not live with affinal kin. The interviewees recount experiencing pressure and various tactics from affinal kin to control, limit and prevent natal kin contact, such as monitoring communication and overtly prohibiting contact. The Pakistan-born interviewees' experiences of this was distinct and more intense due to factors such as immigration, which created distance, and economics (e.g. the costs of phone calls), which facilitated control of natal kin contact.

Five of the six Pakistan-born interviewees eventually confided in natal kin regarding the abuse. Two of them were met with pressure to stay in the abusive marriage, but were offered refuge once they left the conjugal home. However, they recount experiencing

ongoing pressure from natal kin to reconcile. The remaining three interviewees were encouraged to leave and offered refuge and economic support. Four of the five UK-born interviewees confided in natal kin of the abuse. Two were encouraged to leave, the remaining two were met with pressure to stay in the marriage.

5.3 Natal Kin in Sociological Research

Before I begin my exploration of South Asian women's experiences of natal kin contact and support in a family abuse context, it is important to provide an overview of sociological perspectives on this relationship. As shown in Chapter Two, upon marriage a woman is expected to assimilate into her conjugal home, but researchers such as Raheja and Gold (1994: 116) argue this does not preclude contact with natal kin: 'natal ties can never be supplanted by conjugal ones, that even genealogically very distant natal ties are really "closer" than any ties to the husband's kin'. For married women, the natal and conjugal home are the two most important structures in their lives, serving different functions within which women hold multiple and distinct roles (Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon, 1989: 32; Grover, 2009: 16). Within the conjugal home, a bride is a subdued daughter-in-law and her movements are restricted and monitored (Jeffery and Jeffery, 1996: 10). They are under the tutelage of male authority and female (HM, HZ) control, and are weighed down by domestic and (sometimes) agricultural labour (Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon, 1989: 30; Jejeebhoy and Sathar, 2001: 687) (see Chapters Two and Four). In contrast, the natal home represents 'benefits, affection, consideration, succour and peace' (Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon, 1989: 32). Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon (1988: 323) describe the dichotomy as 'azādi' (freedom) in the natal home compared to 'zimmadārī' (responsibility) in the affinal home. Jeffery and Jeffery (1996: 155) note that the husband's sister can add further strain on the daughter-in-law in her affinal home through the insistence on treating visits to her parents as holidays. As I have shown in Chapter Four, the husband's sister (HZ) can intensify in-married women's (BW) experiences of abuse by either instigating spousal abuse, or perpetrating family abuse.

Women cherish contact with natal kin and sustain post-marital bonds, especially the mother-daughter bond (Jeffery and Jeffery, 1996; Jejeebhoy and Sathar, 2001; Grover,

2009: 16). This is a primal relationship which remains largely neglected by sociological studies of family and kinship (Grover, 2009: 7). Grover (2009: 21) describes a mother and daughter's lives as being 'intertwined' and mutually dependent, which is disliked by mothers-in-law. As already discussed, a woman gains respite, comfort and solace from frequenting her natal home, but a mother also stands to gain from this. Whilst giving comfort and empathy, a mother can also receive the same from her daughter. Grover (2009: 21) highlights how mothers and daughters mutually empathise with each other's predicaments and marital troubles; for instance, husbands neglecting their responsibility as providers. Palriwala (1996) found in her study of kinship and marriage in India that women visit their natal home to assist their mothers with domestic chores and agricultural labour, and to look after parents when they are sick. Thus, these strands of mutual dependence, material help in the form of labour and emotional support create bonds that encourage mothers to 'call' their daughters and for them to answer this call. Interestingly, Grover (2009: 21) speaks of a 'conflict of interest' between the natal and conjugal home. She argues that natal kin reluctance, and sometimes active resistance, in letting daughters return to their conjugal home after a marital dispute can be motivated by selfish reasons of domestic and economic labour. Whether or not natal kin contact is maintained for self-interest (i.e. economic motivation) is unclear. Grover (2009: 23) herself notes this cannot be considered as overriding, but it is clear, however, that natal kin contact is valued by women, and this can cause disputes within the marital home (a point I will return to later). Sociological studies on gender and kinship focus on factors affecting natal kin contact, simply because the nature and extent of natal kin support is predicated upon it, which I will now explore.

Factors Limiting Contact – Distance and Economics

The aforementioned studies, which are largely based in South Asia (particularly India and Pakistan), emphasise distance created by marriage patterns as primarily affecting natal kin contact (Das, 1973; Dyson and Moore, 1983; Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon, 1988; Palriwala, 1996; Charsley, 2008). Dyson and Moore (1983: 45) note in their analysis of kinship in south India that 'close-kin' marriages in nearby familiar locations enable women to maintain regular natal kin contact, and extract better treatment from their affines, as

opposed to women who marry strangers in far-off places. This is the primary reason, argues Das (1973: 39), that marriage with cousins is occasionally preferred to marriage with non-relatives: women married in close proximity to natal kin tend to have regular visits and are less cut-off from family support. Palriwala (1996) recognises women who live in close proximity to natal kin as constantly moving between the conjugal and natal home for visits and periods of rest. Broadly, these researchers, along with others, indicate that long-distance marriages with non-relatives result in alienation from natal kin and women's vulnerability in the domestic realm because of the absence of support structures (Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon, 1988: 323; Grover, 2009: 5).

This assumes that natal kin support is a certainty post-marriage, and overlooks the problematic nature of 'close-kin' marriages and close proximity to natal kin: marital distress experienced by daughters is in direct view of parents, who can be distressed by their inability to intervene (Jeffery and Jeffery, 1996). This inability to act is cultural rather than something that is physically impossible, and determines that parents should not meddle. In relation to 'close-kin' marriage, natal kin and daughters may feel pressure to preserve the marriage, irrespective of abuse, for fear of severing kinship ties (Charsley, 2008: 267) – a point I will return to later in this chapter. And in cases of transnational marriages, natal kin distance is inevitable whether or not it is a 'close-kin' marriage, where contact and good treatment of daughters cannot be ensured when marriages span continents. To say 'close-kin' marriages enable protection and the good treatment of daughters, and ensure natal kin contact and support, is inaccurate. Furthermore, Grover (2009: 23) and Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon (1988: 327) show that some women may not prefer close proximity to natal kin for two reasons. Firstly, they cannot achieve respite and freedom of movement when they are also in direct view of affinal kin. Secondly, the near presence of parents can thwart women's prospects of marital adjustment and resolving marital discord: instead of stabilising the conjugal union, complex and unpredictable dynamics between daughters and natal kin may lead to marital breakdown.

In response to Dyson and Moore's study (1983), Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon (1988: 328) argue that although distance can impinge on natal kin contact, other factors such as economics can have an equal, if not more, bearing. The low economic position of affinal

kin can increase women's workload within the conjugal home. For example, if affinal kin cannot afford to employ servants, the domestic and (sometimes) agricultural labour is dependent upon the women of the house, mainly the daughter-in-law. Furthermore, as discussed in previous chapters (Two and Four), Rew, Gangoli and Gill (2013: 152) highlight the continued financial and ritual obligations natal kin have to the bride's new household; the expectation of gifts by affinal kin every time the bride visits her natal household. Consequently, this not only places an economic and social burden, as monetary gifts represent stature and respect, but can inhibit daughters from frequenting their natal home, or parents may stop inviting their daughter for visits (Jeffery, 2014: 174).

Having children can reduce the likelihood of travelling long distances and can increase a woman's workload (Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon, 1988: 327). Thus, economics, domestic labour and distance compounded with the maternity cycle of women can limit and even prohibit natal kin contact, and ultimately block natal kin support. For South Asian women experiencing family abuse, the limitation of natal kin contact is not only a consequence of these factors. Irrespective of these obstacles, the limitation and prohibition of natal kin contact by affinal kin is an effective tool of control and isolation that blocks natal kin support, and is facilitated by factors such as distance and economics.

5.4 Natal Kin Contact – A Tool of Control and Isolation

The sociological research on natal kin contact shows that frequent visits and close marital bonds between brides and natal kin can lead to disputes between married women and affines (H, HM) (Grover, 2009: 18). As noted above, Grover (2009: 23) explains that the near presence of parents often thwarts women's prospects of marital adjustment. The affines, particularly the mother-in-law, can become disgruntled by what they consider to be the unnecessary amount of time brides spend with their mothers, so they (H, HM) attempt to control and limit it (Jeffery and Jeffery, 1996: 34).

The limited family abuse literature which addresses natal kin contact highlights this as a strong feature of South Asian women's experiences of isolation and control (Fernandez, 1997; Dasgupta, 2005). Fernandez (1997: 448) argues that natal kin contact in the eyes of

mothers-in-law, creates a threat of women's insubordination, and so attempt to limit and control it by monitoring or prohibiting natal kin contact. This, argue Dasgupta (2005: 63) and Anitha (2011: 1262–1263), can be intensified for South Asian migrant brides who are already so distanced from natal kin and who are financially dependent on affinal kin (H, HM). In my exploration of the interviewees' experiences, I aim to show that limiting and prohibiting natal kin contact is not only an effective tool of control and isolation, but also inevitably blocks natal kin support. It is another means by which perpetrators limit women's access to resources and, as Stark (2013: 27) states, act as a barrier between them and the outside world, thereby intensifying the constraints that keep women in abusive structures.

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born Interviewees

As shown in sociological studies, the Pakistan-born interviewees, as migrant spouses, faced obstacles to maintaining natal kin contact such as economics, distance and immigration status. The interviewees were unable to travel to Pakistan to see natal kin due to their immigration status and economics, so the only means of contact was by telephone, email, letters and Skype. It can be determined by the interview findings that affinal kin did not want the interviewees to maintain contact with natal kin, and attempts to do so were facilitated by these obstacles the Pakistan-born interviewees faced as migrant spouses.

The Pakistan-born interviewees recount feeling pressure from affinal kin (H, HM), in Asma's words, to 'forget the ones you have left behind [natal kin].'⁸⁷ Aliyah also recounts a similar statement from her mother-in-law: 'We are your *family* now, forget them.'⁸⁸ Some of the interviewees experienced outright prohibition of natal kin contact, such as Asma:

My *in-laws* would always say to me, 'don't talk to them, don't *share* anything with them'. So then I didn't *phone* them, because they [affinal kin] wouldn't let me.'⁸⁹

⁸⁷ 'pīche vāle ko būl jāo.'

⁸⁸ 'Ab ham tumhāre *family* hai, un-ko būl jāo.'

⁸⁹ Mere *in-laws* mūjhe hameshā kehte rehte the, 'un-se bāt nā kiyā karo, un-se kūch *share* nā kiyā karo'. Phir meh un-ko *phone* nahīn kartī thī kyo ke voh karne nahīn dete the.

If Asma did contact natal kin, such as via email, her husband and mother-in-law would physically and verbally abuse her: ‘One time they [HM, HZ] found out I *email* [emailed] my *sister*. He then [H] beat me a lot.’⁹⁰ According to Asma, her mother-in-law monitored natal kin contact, which is how, explains Asma, ‘they found out I *email* [emailed] [my sister], they had all my *communication*.’⁹¹ The interviewees who were permitted limited contact felt, like Asma, that their contact was being monitored, as Aliyah explains:

Whenever I would *phone* them [natal kin] they [HM] would *listen*, always *listening*.⁹²

As argued by Fernandez (1997: 448) and Jeffery and Jeffery (1996: 34), affinal kin (H, HM) can fear insubordination, which may explain why communication was monitored. For example, if the interviewees told natal kin of the abuse, they may have been encouraged to leave, which did happen, as I will show later. Consequently, fearing she was being listened to, Aliyah felt limited as to what she could openly discuss with her mother, including her experiences of spousal and family abuse explored in Chapters Three and Four. As well as monitoring contact, the interviewees also recount natal kin contact being limited and controlled. Fatima explains that her mother-in-law would never tell her when her parents called, and ‘[was] always telling them I was not home.’⁹³ Meryam explains being told by her mother-in-law, ‘you just spoke to them, do it [phone] next week’,⁹⁴ which would put her off from contacting them. Aliyah’s following account shows that the financial dependency and abuse experienced by the Pakistan-born interviewees discussed in Chapters Three and Four facilitated the extent to which affinal kin were able to control and limit natal kin contact:

⁹⁰ ‘Ek dufa un-ne patā lagā ke meh-ne apne *sister* ko *email* kiyā. Us-ne phir mūjhe bāhot mārā.’

⁹¹ ‘un-ko patā lagā ke meh-ne *email* kiyā, merī sarī *communication* un-ke pās thī.’

⁹² Jab bhī meh un-ko *phone* karū voh *listen* kare, hameshā *listening*.

⁹³ ‘un-ko hameshā kehñā meh ghar mai nahīn hū.’

⁹⁴ ‘tum-ne abī to bāt kī, āgle huftē kar-lenā.’

They [H, HM] wouldn't give me a [phone] *card*. The one time they gave me a *card*, they never gave me one for another *six month[s]* and that *card* was only for *thirty* or *thirty-five minutes*. They thought this was *enough* for *five or six months*. If I said, '*I need another card*' they would say, 'we gave you one, why do you need one again?'⁹⁵

In order to contact her mother in Pakistan, Aliyah needed a phone card, which was provided by her mother-in-law. Due to her financial dependency (a direct result of the economic abuse she endured as seen in Chapters Three and Four), she had no means of purchasing the phone card herself. As the quote shows, to limit and control natal kin contact, Aliyah's mother-in-law could simply refuse her request for a phone card. In other words, distance from natal kin together with financial dependency made limiting and controlling natal kin contact easy to do – an experience of all the Pakistan-born interviewees who recount this as a feature of family abuse. This highlights specificity and distinctions between women's experiences of abuse (in this case Pakistan-born and UK-born) on the basis of factors such as immigration, distance and economics. By blocking and monitoring natal kin contact as a tool of control and isolation, the interviewees were unable for a long period of their marriage to confide in natal kin about the abuse, which inevitably prevented natal kin support.

Interview Findings: UK-born Interviewees

As already noted, the main distinction between the UK-born interviewees and Pakistan-born interviewees was distance. The UK-born interviewees lived in the same city and even the same neighbourhood as natal kin.⁹⁶ The UK-born interviewees also experienced affinal kin (H, HM) limiting and controlling natal kin contact, but not to the same extent as the Pakistan-born interviewees. They explain feeling pressure from affinal kin to reduce or limit natal kin contact, notable in Khadija's experience:

They [HM] said that, 'well you won't be speaking to your family as much we take it, we are like your family now'.

⁹⁵ *Card nahīn dete the. Ek dufa card de-diyā to phir six month nahīn denā aur voh card hotā thā thirty ya thirty-five minute kā. Un-ko yeh keyāl thā ke yeh enough hai five or six months ke-liye. Agar meh kehtī, 'I need another card', voh kehte the, 'ham-ne diyā thā, ab phir kyo zārūrāt hai?'*

⁹⁶ Refer to tables Three and Four in Chapter One.

It seems affinal kin expect the bride to dissociate from natal kin and assimilate into their family. This expectation, and the vocalisation of it by affinal kin, prevented the interviewees from frequenting their natal home even if they lived in the same neighbourhood, as Nazia explains:

I just didn't want them thinking, you know she's always at her parents, because you know my in-laws started getting really fussy and a wee [little] bit annoyed if I went to my parents house.

Nazia's account elucidates Grover's (2009: 18) finding that natal kin visits can disgruntle affinal kin such as the mother-in-law. Additionally, the interviewees recount being told not to attend family functions (Khadija), and being 'put-off' contacting natal kin (Naseem). Interestingly, even though the UK-born interviewees did not face the same challenges and obstacles to natal kin contact, such as distance and economics, as the Pakistan-born interviewees did, they still experienced pressure and control from affinal kin in relation to natal kin contact. This clarifies that limiting natal kin contact is one of the many (and possibly most effective) tools of control and isolation as it is part of the continuum of abuse South Asian women experience in the affinal home.

As can be seen by the quotes at the beginning of this chapter, the interviewees did at various times in their marital relationship and experiences of abuse confide in natal kin about the abuse. The remaining part of this chapter aims to explore the following questions: what support, if any, can natal kin provide to daughters experiencing family abuse? What factors shape this response? And can natal kin support, as the literature suggests (Dyson and Moore, 1983: 46), affect a woman's autonomy and power within the conjugal home?

5.5 Lack of Support and Pressure to Stay

The limited literature on natal kin support in a family abuse context tends to paint a picture of unsupportive parents who are unwilling or unable to intervene in marital abuse. As I will show later, this does not accurately reflect the experiences of all women. The studies suggest that natal kin can be unforthcoming in supporting abused daughters for a number of reasons, such as: cultural ideologies of honour and shame that assume no interference in

marital disputes; the stigmatisation of divorce; and poor economic status (Rabbani, Qureshi and Rizvi, 2008: 417; Ahmed, Reavey and Majumdar, 2009: 16; Dasgupta and Rudra, 2011: 71; Sayem, Begum and Moneesha, 2013: 17–18). In this part of the chapter, I aim to show how these factors do not only impinge on natal kin support, but also prevent daughters from confiding in natal kin.

As I have shown in Chapter Two, girls are seen as the property of their affinal kin (H, HM), and the bride's entry into her conjugal home is seen as permanent. This is reflected in parting advice from a mother to her daughter on the day of her wedding, noted in Mathur's (2004: 334) study: 'We are sending your 'doli' [bridal palanquin] today, let only your 'arhti' [corpse] come out of that house'. Although studies indicate that living in close proximity to natal kin can add to women's resources (i.e. emotional and economic support) equally it is seen as shameful for natal kin to interfere in marital disputes, where 'caring' daughters are expected not to worry their parents by telling them of their marital woes (Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon, 1989: 39; Jeffery and Jeffery, 1996: 17). From the perspective of migrant South Asian women in the UK, in cases where daughters do confide in natal kin, researchers such as Ahmed, Reavey and Majumdar (2009: 16) show that women are told to stay with their husbands regardless of violence. They are expected to put up with abuse as a 'normal' part of marriage. Within this analysis, women are expected to shoulder the burden of maintaining the marriage at all costs. Women who divorce and reside in their natal home face social exclusion and gossip that can affect marriage prospects of younger sisters (Kallivayalil, 2010: 790). Charsley (2008: 267) writes, 'the failure of a woman's marriage may cast doubts on the character of other siblings, potentially damaging any unmarried sisters' chances of securing a good match'.

Grover (2009) argues the type of marriage entered into by a woman can crucially affect the level of support from natal kin post-marriage. She argues that adhering to the cultural ideal of marriage being arranged by parents can secure natal kin support and refuge as a 'right'. However, if women do not adhere to this framework, partaking in what Grover (2009: 26) refers to as 'love marriages', this can severely curtail their access to natal kin support post-marriage. Also, in 'love marriages' women are hesitant about complaining or bringing their marital grievances to their natal kin as they feel they cannot hold their parents accountable

for their situation. Furthermore, their parents may have washed their hands of them, so to speak, and refuse to take any responsibility. In the context of ‘close-kin’ marriage, as already stated before, the complexity of the relations involved can make daughters-in-law less willing to complain and natal families less willing to support their daughters. In such cases, natal kin are more inclined to pressurise women into staying, for fear of jeopardising kin relations.

Economics may make the practicalities of supporting daughters difficult, thereby inhibiting natal kin support. Support and refuge may mean incurring the economic cost of providing basic necessities such as food and clothing for the daughter and possibly her children. This prospect can be burdensome for economically poor natal kin, due to which they resort to telling daughters to suffer in silence, to ‘bear it’.

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born Interviewees

Similar to the research explored above (Ahmed, Reavey and Majumdar, 2009: 16; Sayem, Begum and Moneesha, 2013: 17–18), the Pakistan-born interviewees recount experiencing extreme pressure from natal kin to stay in their abusive marriage for fear of stigmatisation and loss of reputation caused by divorce. Asma’s comment at the beginning of this chapter, exemplifies this. She explains that natal kin (M, B) spoke of embarrassment and the loss of face that returning home would cause. This left her feeling helpless and with no other option but to stay and endure family abuse. The concepts of honour and shame either prohibited the interviewees from disclosing abuse or limited the amount of detail they provided. Aliyah explains whenever she contemplated divorcing her husband or telling her mother of the abuse, ‘you think of your *parents’ reputation*.’⁹⁷ Meryam explains that her natal kin emotionally blackmailed her to stay in the marriage, irrespective of the abuse, and even attempted reconciliation for fear of the affects her divorce or separation would have on their reputation:

⁹⁷ ‘apne *parents’ ke reputation* kā sochte hai.’

My brother came twice to the UK to resolve things between us. He would *force* me to go back [to him]. ‘It is our self-respect, you are from a good family’. He would *emotionally blackmail* me.⁹⁸

When the abuse became more frequent and severe, Meryam decided to leave her husband, but recounts still facing continued natal kin pressure to return: ‘They [M, B] still want me to go back to him, “he hits you, it doesn’t matter”. This is *normal* for them [natal kin].’⁹⁹ These accounts not only clarify the literature which attribute lack of natal kin support to cultural ideologies of shame, honour and respect (Charsley, 2008: 267; Kallivayalil, 2010: 790), but also elucidates the perception by natal kin that abuse is a ‘normal’ part of marriage (Ahmed, Reavey and Majumdar, 2009: 16).

As Syma was married to her first cousin (MBS), her father-in-law was also her maternal uncle (MB), which she explains as the reason for natal kin pressure to stay in the marriage. The ‘close-kin’ marriage, and natal kin pressure to maintain the marriage, also made Syma feel bound to the marriage irrespective of the abuse:

He [HF] is my mum’s brother, that is the main problem with me to be suffering. If they were not relatives I wouldn’t suffer any single thing ... Their [HF] relationship could break up with my mum.

As I stated at the beginning of this chapter (and showed in Chapter Four) contrary to the literature (Dyson and Moore, 1983: 44–45; Charsley, 2008: 266), ‘close-kin’ marriage does not always ensure natal kin contact, nor does it ensure the good treatment of daughters. Rather it can act to constrain natal kin support, and daughters from leaving abusive marriages for fear of severing kinship ties. Meryam’s account shows that the practicalities of divorce that place the economic burden of looking after the daughter and her children on the shoulders of her natal kin, can also impinge on, and prevent, natal kin support. In other words, the social and economic constraints that weigh down the natal kin themselves can shape their responses to abused daughters:

⁹⁸ Merā bhāī do bār UK āyā thā hamen razī karāne ke-liye. Voh *force* kartā thā vāpis jāo. ‘Izzat kī bāt hai tum ek achche khāndān se ho’. Voh mūjhe *emotionally blackmail* kartā thā.

⁹⁹ ‘Voh abī bhī chate hai meh us-ke pās vāpis jāo. “Mārtā hai kōī bāt nahīn”. Un ke-liye *normal* hai.’

My brother found out I was *pregnant*, and there was the greed that if she lives with us, then we will have to look after her daughter too. They wanted me to stay here [with in-laws], because, firstly, my mother and brother's situation was not good as they married us sisters off with respect, but gradually marrying six sisters in Pakistan is a big thing, especially if you are not working. As much as my father's property was, my mother sold it and brought us up with it. So their situation was not good. They did not want their sisters to get married only to then come back.¹⁰⁰

The lack of natal kin intervention placed the interviewees in an even more vulnerable position. Meryam explains:

If they [H, HM] got an opportunity [to abuse] then it was because of my brother who said, 'keep her as you will, but keep her there'.¹⁰¹

Similarly, Asma explains that when her husband realised that her natal kin refused to intervene: 'he did more to me [abuse], he knew my *family* were not *support* [supporting] me.'¹⁰² Thus, a refusal to intervene by natal kin did not only leave the interviewees helpless and without support, but instilled confidence in the perpetrators that their actions are free from repercussions and consequences, and so increased the severity and frequency of spousal and family abuse.

Interview Findings: UK-born Interviewees

The UK-born interviewees also recount natal kin responses being shaped by cultural ideologies of honour and shame which depict divorce as unacceptable, and possibly leading to social ostracism. As reflected in other research, the interviewees were expected to shoulder the burden of maintaining the marriage at all costs (Mathur, 2004: 334; Ahmed, Reavey and Majumdar, 2009). Farah explains being pressurised by her father to make the marriage work: 'My dad obviously told me to give him a chance ... being the typical man

¹⁰⁰ Mere bhāī ko patā chāl gyā meh *pregnant* hū, aur un-ko yeh bhī lāluch ho-gyā thā ke agar yeh hamāre pās rāhe ghī to us-kī bachche ko bhī hamen simbālnā paregā. Voh chate the meh idr rāhū, kyo ke, pehle mere bhāī aur ammī ke hālāt bāhot achche nahīn the jese uno ne izzat ke sāth hamārī shādī kardī, sab baheno kī, lekin āīsta kar-ke che baheno Pakistan mai shādī karnā bāhot barī bāt hai aur agar kōī kām bhī nā kartā ho. Jitnī abū kī jedāt thī bahech ke ammī ne pāla hai. So un-ke hālāt bhī itne achche nahīn the. Voh nahīn chate the baheno kī shādī karo aur phir voh vāpis ājāe.

¹⁰¹ Agar un-ko mokā milā hai to is-liye ke mere bhāī kehtā thā, 'is-ko jese bhī rāko par ūdar hī rāko'.

¹⁰² 'us-ne mere sāth ziyādā kiyā, us-se patā thā is kī *family* is kī *support* nahīn kar-rāhe hai.'

... don't upset the barrel.' Natal kin (F, M), explains Farah, were unsupportive when they heard of her decision to divorce:

My mum and dad weren't on my side, they were more for the 'make it work and everything will be fine, just listen to what he [H] says, do what he says, everything will be fine'.

Similarly, Nazia recounts, 'I knew at the back of my mind my dad would always want me to make things work.' Like the Pakistan-born interviewees, Farah and Nazia felt lack of natal kin support, and pressure to stay in the marriage was attributed to fear of shame and the effect divorce would have on their own and parental reputation. Naseem recounts natal kin as simply not acknowledging the existence of abuse. She explains that the physical marks on her face from the abuse did not require her to tell natal kin of the abuse, it was obvious enough. Even so, they did not intervene, or question the physical marks on her face. Naseem did not understand the reason behind this, as according to her, they were not 'bothered by culture' and were not economically constrained. The lack of intervention did, however, encourage her husband's abusive behaviour:

He was confident that, well her parents don't say anything to me, so I can continue doing this. Even if he came round to my family home, they welcomed him, he was allowed in.

Farah and Aisha's experiences resonate with Grover's (2009) thesis regarding arranged and 'love' marriages. Farah describes her second marriage, which was very abusive, as a 'self-arranged' marriage¹⁰³ against her father's wishes. As a result, she felt unable to turn to him (F) for support. She explains: 'It was my decision to marry him. I couldn't speak to them [F, B] about it.' Similarly, Aisha's first marriage was against her parents' wishes causing them (natal kin) to sever contact with her, so she was unable to confide in them for emotional comfort or seek support or refuge. However, as I stated before, to paint a picture of unsupportive natal kin weighed down by factors such as economics and cultural ideologies is not accurate for all women's experiences, or the interviewees' experiences.

¹⁰³ See Table Four in Chapter One – 'Marriage Forced or Arranged'.

The remaining part of this chapter will show that some natal kin do offer support (emotional and practical), but it can be shaped and limited by the factors examined above.

5.6 Emotional Support, Respite and Refuge

Grover's (2009: 5) study indicates that during marital distress the women in her study confided in natal kin, who responded by offering support and refuge. Similarly, Dyson and Moore (1983: 45) argue post-marriage women can obtain access to social resources such as information, economic assistance and political support from natal kin. As already stated, these studies indicate support to be affected by distance and type of marriage, for example, 'close-kin'. Furthermore, they assert that parental support and refuge can place women in a powerful position to renegotiate domestic arrangements during marital distress (Dyson and Moore, 1983: 44; Grover, 2009: 14). This overlooks the greater influence a woman's economic earning capacity and independence within a household can have on her bargaining power than the access to parental refuge on its own. Grover (2009: 15) argues that while natal kin refuge can provide women with respite and comfort, it comes with its own set of difficulties and constant renegotiation for women. For example, the woman may have a brother who is residing in the natal home with his wife and children. Her prolonged stay may create disputes within the home fuelled by the brother's wife's dislike for her periods of refuge.

Through an exploration of the interviewees' experiences, I aim to show that it is unlikely that natal kin support and refuge can alter the position of abused women in their conjugal home. The nature of support provided can be limited by factors such as distance: physical refuge was not a possibility for the Pakistan-born interviewees. Nevertheless, the interviewees' accounts show that natal kin support (emotional and/or practical) can provide women with respite and comfort in the midst of unalterable constraints and structures.

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born Interviewees

It can be determined from the interview findings that the nature of natal kin support experienced by the Pakistan-born interviewees was shaped by distance, in that they could not enjoy periods of respite by visiting their natal home. Instead, the interviewees recount

emotional and economic support such as being sent clothing and money, particularly in cases where the interviewees experienced extreme forms of economic abuse and dependency (Chapters Three and Four). Aliyah explains: ‘My mum would send me clothes’,¹⁰⁴ and Syma recounts, ‘I am getting money from my dad.’

Syma did not feel reluctance or guilt to involve her father in her marital problems, expecting him to mediate and resolve marital discord. Her reasoning for this coincides with the discourse equating arranged marriages as consolidating natal support post-marriage (Grover, 2009: 26). Syma explains that as her parents arranged the marriage according to their wishes and interests, they have to shoulder any marital problems which arise: ‘I asked my parents to come over here and sort this problem. You got me married here so you have to sort this.’ Even so, and irrespective of her close-kin marriage (to her FBS), Syma’s position within the house remained unchanged. She received practical, emotional and economic support from her natal kin, but this did not alter her experiences of family abuse.

When natal kin learnt of the severity of abuse experienced by the interviewees, they encouraged, and in some cases, assisted them to leave, notable in Aliyah’s quote at the beginning of this chapter. Similarly, Syma explains, ‘I spoke to my dad and told him every single thing. He said, “okay child, we are helpless now, we tried every single thing. You tried your best now leave it, leave him”.’ Asma was offered refuge and respite from natal kin in Pakistan after her husband had abandoned her. She describes them (M, B) as accepting her, irrespective of their initial fear of shame and dishonour, explaining: ‘They quietly *accept* [accepted] me.’¹⁰⁵ However, as I will show in Chapter Seven, the acceptance of daughters by natal kin, and offering them refuge and support post-divorce may be partly attributable to the status and respect tied to obtaining a permanent visa.

Interview Findings: UK-born Interviewees

The UK-born interviewees received respite, refuge and support during their abusive marriage, and during post-separation and divorce. Due to Farah’s economic destitution caused by her first husband’s gambling habit, natal kin offered support by providing food

¹⁰⁴ ‘Merī ammī mūjhe kapre bhejje.’

¹⁰⁵ ‘Uno ne chūp kar-ke mūjhe *accept* kar-liyā.’

for Farah and her children while she was still living with her husband: ‘I was having to take my children to my mum’s house and feed them there.’ Farah explains that her parents’ support, which was essentially to eradicate the source of marital discord (economics), was more to do with rectifying the problem. She explains, ‘they should have said, “leave him, he doesn’t provide for you and your kids”. Instead they didn’t want to rock the boat.’ According to Farah, preserving the marriage was the primary focus and aim of natal kin support.

The remaining UK-born interviewees recount natal kin trying to convince them to leave or mediating between them and their affinal kin (H, HM). Nazia’s parents were vocal about their dislike for her husband’s abusive behaviour:

My mum was upset with me, [be]cause she was, like, ‘why didn’t you tell me?’ My mum was screaming and shouting at his aunties [HFZ] that they should tell their nephew to sort his act out. ‘I’m not gonna send my daughter back to someone like him’. They [M, F] didn’t let me go back to him.

Natal kin also employed subtle mechanisms of support, particularly where the interviewees were reluctant to confide in them, or reluctant to receive support. This is an important point and often overlooked within literature as an obstacle to natal kin contact and support: women themselves being unwilling to accept or tolerate support from their natal kin. This was apparent in Khadija’s case:

I never told her [M] and we never discussed it as such but she kinda knew I wasn’t happy, which obviously made her unhappy as well ... she tells me now that was the reason she planned to go for Hajj [with me].

As Khadija’s mother knew she would be unwilling to disclose abuse, and possibly unwilling to accept support, she employed a subtle tactic of intervention – taking her daughter on Hajj.¹⁰⁶ Khadija explains that her mother took her on Hajj as a means of providing her with ‘peace of mind’, and to encourage Khadija to talk about the spousal abuse with her. This shows that natal kin can intervene and support daughters during marital distress and abuse, without being prompted by daughters to do so. Khadija sought

¹⁰⁶ The holy pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

refuge in her natal home post-separation and divorce, explaining, ‘She [M] didn’t say go back to him or anything like that.’

The main distinction between the UK-born and Pakistan-born interviewees was natal kin proximity, which affected the nature and extent of support. While the UK-born interviewees were able to get respite and refuge during their abusive marriage, the Pakistan-born interviewees could do so only post-separation and divorce, when they attained permanent residency (see Chapter Seven). Contrary to researchers such as Dyson and Moore (1983) and Grover (2009), natal kin support did not alter the interviewees’ bargaining power in the conjugal home, nor did it alter the abuse experienced. This, however, may be due to the specific experiences of my sample; most of the interviewees explained requesting and receiving natal kin support more post-separation and divorce than before, and affinal kin were not made aware of the support being received during the marriage. In other words, the interviewees did not attempt to use natal kin support as bargaining power.

5.7 Summary

By utilising a domestic abuse framework, in this chapter I have explored the importance and nature of natal kin contact and support alluded to in sociological research. The shared view amongst some of these studies is that natal kin contact and support can affect a woman’s bargaining power and autonomy in the conjugal home (Dyson and Moore, 1983; Jejeebhoy and Sathar, 2001; Grover, 2009), where factors that impinge on contact and support, such as economics, type of marriage and distance are explored (Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon, 1988; Charsley, 2008). I have argued and shown that irrespective of these obstacles, in the context of spousal and family abuse, affinal kin (H, HM) limit and prohibit natal kin contact as an effective tool of control and isolation. This blocks natal kin support because if women have no means by which to inform natal kin of the abuse, they cannot intervene. Furthermore, I have elucidated the various responses and support women can be met with which are shaped by factors such as economics, type of marriage, cultural ideologies of shame and honour, and distance. It does not reflect women’s experiences to assume that close proximity and ‘close-kin’ marriages ensure contact and support, nor is it appropriate

to paint a picture of unsupportive and unresponsive natal kin. As I stated in the beginning of this chapter, there are issues and questions that arose from the interview data that remain unresolved, such as how natal kin support can alter an abused woman's experience in the conjugal home. The size of my sample and the specificities of their experiences limit the scope within which I can explore these issues. Nevertheless, the discussion in this chapter adds an additional layer to the experiences of women who endure abuse simultaneously from the husband, mother-in-law and sister-in-law (HZ).

In Part One of this thesis, I have challenged mainstream literature and understandings of domestic abuse that falsely universalise women's experiences. In doing so, I have explored kinship relationships and complicated family structures that further oppress South Asian women in a family abuse context: relationships and structures that are overlooked by mainstream domestic abuse research, and policy documents in the UK. I have shown how South Asian women can be subjected to simultaneous physical abuse and threats from mothers-in-law, spouses and, occasionally, husbands' sisters. I have also examined an often-overlooked dimension in women's experiences of family abuse; namely, a lack of natal kin contact and support, which adds an additional layer to women's vulnerability and isolation. The explorations in Part One of this thesis highlight the crucial need for state policy and practice to understand the oppressive structural dynamics of the extended affinal home, and its natal and affinal relationships, within a domestic abuse framework (see Chapter Ten). Doing so will show how experiences of family abuse do not always consist of just an abused woman and a male perpetrator, but may consist of multiple abusive relationships – all of which add to women's suffering and constraints in various ways. Additionally, by adopting an intersectional approach, I have been able to show in these chapters how, for example, immigration status, natal kin distance and kinship structures converge with structural inequalities, not only to create specificity in South Asian women's experiences, but differentiation among them. However, in order to understand the nature, specificity and differentiation of South Asian women's experience of family abuse more fully, an exploration of the social constraints that exist beyond the intimacy of the natal and affinal home and beyond familial relationships (H, HM, HZ) is required, which leads me to Part Two of this thesis.

PART TWO

THE STATE AND COMMUNITY

Preamble

To gain a nuanced understanding of the extent in which women feel pressure and constraint at the micro-level, there is also a need to recognise abuse as nested within socio-political constraints at the macro-level: the community, UK Government policies and service provision (Dasgupta, 2005: 59; Anitha, 2011: 1261; Gangoli et al., 2011: 40–41). The rationale behind structuring this part of the thesis in this fashion is the complicated nature of state organisation and the manner in which it branches off into different levels of policy. For instance, it is difficult to talk about ‘the state’ as there are different levels and sections: it is not a homogeneous body. There are different levels of policy which focus on a range of issues such as immigration, culture and social policy. Furthermore, some of the policies I explore in the following chapters are devolved to the Scottish Parliament, such as health and social services, while others are reserved to the UK Parliament, such as immigration. For this reason, I refer to the UK Government, Scottish Government, or both (the governments), depending on the matter being discussed (see ‘Introduction’ for terminology).

As noted in Chapter Two, the UK Government has deployed an essentialist cultural understanding of South Asian women’s experience of abuse. Researchers have problematised this as reinforcing harmful, cultural stereotypes and fuelling racist discourse, while it has also been critiqued for eliding ‘forces beyond culture’ (Vlopp, 2005: 44) that shape women’s experience of abuse (Anitha, 2011: 1264). The central aim of the next three chapters is to elucidate the manner in which the micro- and macro-levels are intertwined, by critically exploring government policy and how it directly impinges on women’s experience of abuse within the home and the community. Chapter Six shows how the government’s multiculturalism and community cohesion agenda that advocates dialogue generally with elder male community members, intensifies and facilitates the oppression South Asian women face from the community. Chapters Seven and Eight show how immigration policies and poor service responses can consign women to an abusive

marriage, and can also create new forms of oppression at the macro-level; for example, racist and culturally insensitive service responses and unequal citizenship rights. These crucial issues strengthen the central argument of this thesis, which advocates an intersectional understanding of women's experience of abuse that takes into account their location within a matrix of intersecting inequalities; some of which are generated, perpetuated and exacerbated by the nature of state policies. I add to current research on community oppression, harmful immigration policies, and conflicting UK Government agendas which are detrimental to gender equality, while flagging up issues which have been overlooked or require further exploration. For instance, the effect of immigration policies on UK-born South Asian women whose husbands are on a spousal visa, an issue which has been completely overlooked in the literature. Although many of the policies and issues discussed (such as poor service response) can affect all women experiencing abuse, the factors specific to South Asian women mean that these issues become much more acute for them.

CHAPTER SIX

The Government's Accommodationist Policies: Bolstering Community Pressure and Power

I don't think the community wants involved, nobody wants involved in that situation [family abuse]. Who would you turn to? If I was to go to the leaders of the community at the mosque, they're not interested. They tell you, 'read your *namāz* [prayers]'. Fair enough, turn to God ... [but] I was there doing all that and I still had all these problems. (Aisha UK-born)

People said, 'she doesn't want to stay with him because she has someone else in her heart'.¹⁰⁷ (Meryam Pakistan-born)

The reaction of the community was absolutely strange ... All my friends stopped talking to me ... I lost a lot of friends through that [divorce]... their men actually thought that I was going to lead them astray. (Farah UK-born)

6. Introduction

In this chapter, I identify the role of the South Asian community in reinforcing and intensifying the oppression and regulation women face within the home. As the quotes show, the interviewees faced ostracism by the community after separation and divorce (Meryam and Farah), or were met with unsupportive responses (Aisha). In light of this, I aim to highlight how the involvement of male elders and community leaders adds to the pressure women face to stay in abusive marriages, or return to their conjugal homes (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 13). I also show that the UK Government's multiculturalist agenda, which has granted communities a level of privacy in their affairs (Phillips, 2010: 39), bolsters the community power and pressure that South Asian women struggle with in a family abuse context. Furthermore, these policies have led to the state practice of privileging the more powerful members of the minority community as 'gatekeepers'

¹⁰⁷ Lōg keh-rāhe the, 'is-liye us-ke sāth rehna nahīn chatī kyo ke kōī aur hai us-ke dil mai'.

between the majority and minority communities (Anitha and Gill, 2009: 174) – the policy term being ‘community cohesion’.

In this regard, I highlight two key points: these policies are blind to conflicting interests and gender power differentials within communities, thereby reinforcing the oppression and abuse South Asian women face within the home and in the community (Anitha and Gill, 2009: 174); and, by accommodating cultural and religious difference, the needs of women are being overlooked (see Chapter Two). In order for researchers and state policy and practice to gain a nuanced understanding of the level of pressure felt by South Asian women experiencing family abuse, I propose the following: firstly, that the community needs to be targeted as a research priority; and, secondly, nuanced and sensitive policy requires the inclusion of abused women’s voices on matters such as gender equality and domestic abuse initiatives.

6.1 Chapter Outline

I begin with an exploration of the community as a source of belonging and security, attributed not only to cultural and religious identity, but also to additional factors such as the ‘othering’ of ethnic minority communities, which in turn has led to racism and exclusion by wider society. This, coupled with socio-economic constraints (explored in Part One), can result in women ‘clinging’ more tenaciously to their community for survival (Dasgupta, 2005: 63).

Following this, I examine the community as a source of power and oppression that can constrain women to remain in violent and abusive conjugal homes in various ways. Additionally, some researchers, and the interviewees, label the position taken by the Muslim community – specifically, Imāms – on issues such as family abuse as contradictory. On the one hand, they are publicly condemning it, but on the other they are either unresponsive to women experiencing family abuse or are telling them to return home.

Finally, I turn to research that highlights the manner in which the UK Government’s simultaneous and, often, conflicting agendas of multiculturalism and gender equality bolster the oppressive nature of the community. By utilising the development of Shariah

Councils and Muslim Arbitration Tribunals (MAT) as an example, I argue that the ‘non-interventionist’ approach taken by the government has served to privatise mediation of family law matters. Additionally, it has exacerbated the existing pressure women experience from the community to stay in violent homes and marriages. It is not my recommendation to abandon the enhancement of minority cultures or to prohibit intra-community mediation and support. Rather, it is to review the efficacy of such initiatives through a conceptual understanding of the unequal gender power relations and conflicting interests inherent in all communities.

6.2 Summary of Interview Findings

The Pakistan-born interviewees felt dependent upon the community due to the lack of family presence and economic or linguistic resources. Thus, community-belonging was a matter of survival. The UK and Pakistan-born interviewees’ accounts also elucidate the community as a power structure that confines women to violent and abusive homes through pressure, gossip and ostracism. The Pakistan-born interviewees experienced more intense forms of pressure to reconcile and stay in an abusive marriage than the UK-born interviewees. Interestingly, the Pakistan-born interviewees acknowledge and attribute this difference to perceptions of family abuse as normal in Pakistan, and so women from there are expected to be more tolerant of it.

6.3 Community Belonging

In my critical exploration of UK Government policies later in this chapter (and in Chapters Seven and Eight), I argue that the state does not only overlook community pressure and oppression, but also undermines women’s belonging and attachment to their community. Yet little research has been conducted that explores why a community that can be oppressive is also so important to its women. As I noted in Chapter Two, the UK Government conceptualises the South Asian community as homogeneous and dictated to by a static culture and religion. This assumes that ‘community belonging’ is synonymous with cultural and religious belonging (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 105). The accounts of the

interviewees, however, together with the limited literature, identify community-belonging as attributed to socio-economic factors, racism and feelings of exclusion that have become intensified after the terrorist attacks of '9/11' (Dasgupta, 2005: 63; Amina: MWRC, 2008: 10; Anitha and Gill, 2011a: 55). Additionally, a strong sense of community-belonging and attachment may be in response to the current climate of civic integration and assimilation that requires the adoption of 'British core values', and to communities' feeling that their cultural and religious beliefs are under threat (Shachar, 2001: 38).

Wardak (2000: 51) and Shaw (2000: 266) (explored in Chapter Two) outline the structural framework of the Pakistani community, as well as highlighting belonging and solidarity to community, culture and religion. Additionally, the literature highlights racism, exclusion and feelings of being 'other' as reasons for community belonging. In this regard, Wardak (2000: 53) explains that Pakistani parents in Edinburgh are perceived as being more strict by parents from Pakistan in ensuring their children's adherence to strict cultural norms and traditions. This, he argues, is not due to parents' fear of their children's westernisation but is instead due to racism and exclusion from their 'host society', making them cling more tenaciously to their community and culture. Furthermore, Wardak (2000: 57) argues that experiences of racism and discrimination against the Pakistani community, particularly in relation to employment, have resulted in the making of a 'closed community'. The Pakistani community has become a community of self-employed shopkeepers, restaurant-owners and businessmen. They also provide employment, financial help, advice and social support to kin and friends during financial hardship or to open businesses themselves. This has resulted in economic interdependence (or even exploitation) and a relative economic self-sufficiency within the community (Wardak, 2000: 58). Thus, within this discourse, community-belonging extends beyond concepts of mutual faith and culture, to race and exclusion. Wardak's study (2000) of this, however, focuses more on male experience of racism than women's experience of it.

The NKS study (Jones et al., 2013: 15) reports on South Asian women's perceptions and experiences of racism and cultural stereotyping from the wider society. Women spoke of being called 'paki', whilst others felt their daughters were not being supported at school because cultural stereotypes of early marriage made them appear unlikely to continue to

further education. A study conducted by Amina: MWRC (2008: 9) explores this within the context of integration and assimilation and the suspected rise of 'Islamaphobia' post-9/11. Their report highlights women's experiences of racism, harassment and prejudice from the wider Scottish society. As a result, the women recount feeling vulnerable, like unequal citizens and unsafe outside their own community (Amina: MWRC, 2008: 10). Interestingly, Shaw's (2000: 266) research identifies a different trend where certain members of the Pakistani community are wary of their children 'mixing' with the wider western society whose morals and practices are perceived as the antithesis of their own: with the perception of free sexual relations that encourage women to dress revealingly to provoke men; the high divorce rate; and the increasing number of illegitimate births (Shaw, 2000: 266). This provides two standpoints: on the one hand, community-belonging is exacerbated by external racism that does not facilitate inclusion; and, on the other hand, the Pakistani community does not want to integrate into the wider community due to a reverse 'othering' whereby western society is viewed as 'immoral'.

Dasgupta (2005) explores community-belonging from the perspective of South Asian migrant brides whom she identifies as 'clinging' more tightly to their community than non-migrant South Asian women. She partly attributes this to racism and discrimination, but feels that distance from natal kin (Chapter Five) and economic and language dependence have more bearing. Similarly, the NKS study (Jones et al., 2013: 9) highlights these factors together with education and women's experience of isolation as mutually reinforcing, which makes Pakistan-born women more dependent on family and community for conducting 'everyday activities'. As Dasgupta (2005: 63) puts it, 'a community may not only meet the psychological needs of an immigrant woman, but also supply her with a lifeline. If she doesn't speak much English, can she leave her community? Where can she go?' Her research does not touch upon South Asian women's community-belonging in any great detail and so it is difficult to ascertain contributory factors fully. It seems that community-belonging is not so much a choice as a necessity for survival. Factors such as racism, exclusion from wider society and socio-economic factors make women cling to their community as leaving would mean entering into a racist society, with no access to economic resources or familial support (a point I will return to in Chapter Seven). I will

now go on to explore the interviewees' perceptions of community, and the importance they attach to belonging and solidarity. In doing so, I will revisit some of the concepts discussed in Chapter Two in relation to Wardak (2000) and Shaw's (2000) studies.

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born Interviewees

The Pakistan-born interviewees made a distinction between family and community by referring to the latter as 'the outside ones' (Fatima).¹⁰⁸ This has been translated literally, but Fatima was referring to people 'outside' her conjugal and natal home, for example, her mother's and her mother-in-law's 'friends and acquaintances.'¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, the Pakistani-born interviewees highlight a distinction between impersonal acquaintances one sees at functions and events, and reciprocal relationships (Wardak, 2000: 52) where gifts are exchanged and there is frequenting of each other's homes. Asma referred to her mother-in-law's impersonal acquaintances as women she saw and spoke to only at gatherings such as the Friday prayer in the mosque:

She only met them [female acquaintances] in the mosque, on the day of Jumā [Friday prayer].¹¹⁰

She goes on to describe 'friends'¹¹¹ of her mother-in-law as women who frequented her affinal home. They had 'lenā-denā' (gift exchange) with one another on occasions such as Eid, the birth of a child and family weddings. This is identified by Shaw (2000: 228) as the type of reciprocity that exists amongst friends, neighbours and kin (Chapter Two). The same distinction is made when the interviewees spoke of community members in Pakistan where Aliyah refers to people she saw rarely as 'people from the neighbourhood'¹¹² with whom there was only 'Salām [Islamic greeting], duā [prayer].'

The interviewees refer to male members of the community as '*Imāms*' (Asma and Fatima) and '*councillors*' (Meryam) who hold the power and influence in the community, a point I

¹⁰⁸ 'bahār vāle.'

¹⁰⁹ 'dost aur janeh vāle.'

¹¹⁰ Voh un-ko sirf masjid mai miltī thī, Jumā vāle din.

¹¹¹ 'dost'

¹¹² 'mohale ke lōg.'

will return to later in this chapter. Asma and Fatima both refer to Imāms as important members of the community who have the ability to influence the minds of abusive men: ‘If *Imāms* tell them this [abuse] is wrong, they will listen [to them]’¹¹³ (Asma). ‘I told him, “let’s talk to the *Imām* of the mosque about it”. He did not agree’ (Fatima).¹¹⁴ Khalida’s account of community is similar to Wardak’s (2000: 52) concept of ‘national level’ Pakistani community where there is a sense of solidarity and belonging irrespective of where you are in Britain. She takes this one step further to an international level of solidarity and community by stating:

We Pakistanis, we are like brothers and sisters. No matter where we are in the world ... we have the same morals and beliefs.¹¹⁵

The Pakistan-born interviewees felt a need to belong to a community, particularly as natal kin and friends were based in Pakistan: ‘If I am not here, where will I go, what will I do? I will lose my identity’ (Syma). I find this level of solidarity interesting as the level of isolation the interviewees experienced (Chapters Three and Four) prohibited interaction with the community. It seems that the interviewees’ fear and perception of racism and hostility from the host society created a need for community belonging. Similar to Wardak’s research (2000: 57) and the NKS study (Jones et al., 2013: 15), the interviewees felt they would be discriminated against and excluded from their ‘host’ society, and because of this they feared the prospect of leaving their community as Asma explains:

The white people here do not like us. If I leave [the community] and they [host society] don’t *accept* me, then I will be left with nothing.¹¹⁶

Asma’s sense of community-belonging was not only due to factors such as cultural and religious identity, but associated with structural inequalities such as race. Interestingly, even though Asma did not recount experiencing racism, she assumed that by leaving her

¹¹³ ‘*Imāms* agar un-ko kahe ke yeh *ghalut* hai, woh sūn-enge.’

¹¹⁴ ‘Meh-ne us-se kahā, “masjid ke *Imām* ke sāth bāt kar-enge”. Us-ne nahīn mānā.’

¹¹⁵ Ham Pakistani, ham bahen bhāī hai. Jāha bhī hai dūnyā mai ... hamāre thaur aur tharīke ek hai.

¹¹⁶ ‘Yahā gore hamen nahīn pasand karte. Agar meh chorū aur woh nahīn mūjhe *accept* karenge, meh to phir kahī kī nahīn rahī.’

own community, she would be entering into a racist society which would not accept her. This could be taken as a form of racism or stereotypical assumptions against the ‘host’ society. This, however, fails to acknowledge that Asma’s feelings may be the result of a tactic employed by affinal kin to prevent women from venturing into the wider society (discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight).

Interview Findings: UK-born Interviewees

Similar to the Pakistan-born interviewees, Nazia spoke of the community being made up of impersonal and personal reciprocal relationships, mostly between women. Nazia refers to impersonal relationships as, ‘women that you only ever see at weddings and functions.’ She goes on to explain that Pakistani women, especially older Pakistani women, identify with one another and speak and acknowledge one another purely on the basis of being Pakistani:

Pakistani women speak to each other, even if they have never seen each other before, because they feel like they have to. It’s like some code. You’re Pakistani so you’ve got to talk.

Similar to the Pakistan-born interviewees, Imāms are described as powerful members of the community who have the capacity to ‘speak sense’ (Aisha) to male perpetrators of abuse. Khadijah explains:

Imāms need to give more time to marriage and how to treat women during *Jumā* [Friday sermon]. Maybe a man who is being abusive to his wife is sitting in the crowd. That might open his eyes.

The interviewees recognise the value and benefit in community-based interventions, where Imāms can change the mindset of male perpetrators of abuse and possibly mediate between couples. This point is of great importance and will be returned to in my exploration of UK Government policies that give authority to Imāms to resolve marriage, divorce and even spousal abuse within the privacy of religious tribunals such as Shariah courts and MAT (Bano, 2010: 182; Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 16).

The UK-born interviewees felt ‘*gore* [white people]’ (Aisha) to be racist and unaccepting of their culture and beliefs. Presumably having been brought up here and gone through

various stages such as education and work, the UK-born interviewees may have more first-hand experiences on which to base claims of racism in UK society, however, the interviewees did not provide any specific experiences of racism. The interviewees felt a need to be part of the Pakistani community simply because they did not feel excluded by it on the basis of their ethnicity: ‘The Pakistani community isn’t perfect but I feel part of the community ... there is no racism or hostility’ (Nazia). By using Nazia’s quote, I am not arguing that internal conflict and discrimination does not exist within the Pakistani community, a point I did not consider Nazia herself to be making. As I will show later, Nazia describes the community as oppressive and judgemental. Rather, Nazia’s quote highlights that even though ‘the Pakistani community isn’t perfect’, she would rather be part of it than enter into a racist society that may discriminate against her in different ways. The interviewees’ accounts and experiences of community-belonging, similar to the literature (Dasgupta, 2005: 63; Amina: MWRC, 2008; Jones et al., 2013: 13) extend beyond women’s cultural and religious identity to concepts of survival based on race and socio-economics. This finding is crucial to my critique in Chapters Seven and Eight of the UK Government’s ‘right-to-exit rationale’ and immigration policies that fail firstly to recognise the nature and extent of South Asian women’s belonging to their community; and secondly, such policies do not take into account the capacity for women’s survival outside their community when they have no access to social and economic resources. Irrespective of the interviewees’ belonging to their community, membership is not always a certainty where women can be excluded for not conforming to prescribed behaviour, referred to as ‘involuntary-exit’ (Phillips, 2007: 147). This leads me from an exploration of the interviewees’ accounts of community-belonging to their accounts of the community as a source of oppression.

6.4 The Community – Power and Exclusion

In returning to my exploration of Ali Wardak’s study (2000: 82), he identifies the community as being highly concerned with ‘izzat’ (honour). Wardak (2000: 82) notes a phrase utilised by the community when it is felt a member is behaving in a manner that challenges the ‘izzat’ of the community: ‘izzat kī bāt hai’ (it is a matter of honour). Whilst

he sees 'izzat' as applying to both men and women within the Pakistani community in Edinburgh, other researchers such as Wilson (2006: 10) and Dasgupta (2005: 63) identify it as specific to women. As noted in Chapter Two, women's behaviour is considered to be the marker of the South Asian community's reputation and honour, making women the possessions not only of their family but also the community. I would like to explore this point further by referring to studies and research conducted in South Asia.

Women Belonging to the Community

Mathur's study (2004: 49) of women in India is helpful in understanding the community as a power structure that not only acts to reinforce gender differentials that exist within the home, but also perpetuates certain forms of violence. Research identifies women as guardians of family honour and being the property of the men in their natal and affinal family (Wilson, 2006: 9). Mathur (2004: 98) identifies this as being reinforced by the community where women's bodies are utilised both as a means of seeking revenge and during periods of conflict. For instance, to rape a man's wife is to isolate and ostracise him from the community and is seen as the ultimate form of humiliation (Mathur, 2004: 98). The positioning of women as guardians of family and community honour is notable in the existence of 'panchāyats' in India and Pakistan that handle and decide disputes based on customary law and traditions (Baxi, Rai and Ali, 2006: 1239). Panchāyats can take various forms, such as informal or formal institutions that operate at the village or community level comprising village or clan elders, religious leaders or a group of local tribesman (Baxi, Rai and Ali, 2006: 1239). Panchāyats have been documented as distributing punishment to women who are deemed to be transgressors of social norms through marriage by choice, illicit relations or seeking of divorce (Baxi, Rai and Ali, 2006: 1240). Cases tend to be brought to the panchāyat by family members or community members who have witnessed the 'crime' (Baxi, Rai and Ali, 2006: 1240). Women can also be used by members of panchāyats to be traded at the time of sentencing as compensation, regardless of the nature of the dispute.¹¹⁷ The panchāyat represents the level of community power, pressure and

¹¹⁷ Mukhtara Mai was raped on the orders of her village council as punishment for her brother's alleged illicit relationship: see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-13163169>

violence that can be exerted on women, and that can potentially supersede the violence experienced within the home.

Within a UK context, the SBS report 'Safe and Sane' (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 13) identifies concepts of 'izzat' as increasing pressure on South Asian women to conform to traditional gender roles within the community. The active involvement of community leaders and elders may not be as extreme or violent as the involvement of panchāyats can be (Mathur, 2004; Baxi, Rai and Ali, 2006), but nevertheless is still harmful. The report highlights the involvement of male elders, community leaders and young men in curtailing women's ability to escape family abuse (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 13), thereby showing the ways in which familial abuse can intersect with community pressure and oppression to constrain women.

Unresponsive Community – Denial and 'Silencing'

As already identified, as women are considered guardians of community honour and reputation, they are also considered as possessions of, and belonging to, the community (Wilson, 2006: 10). A method of maintaining the reputation and honour of the community is to deny the existence of family abuse, which is achieved by preserving women's 'silence' of the abuse (Dasgupta, 2005: 64). It seems that when the burden of honour and shame is placed firmly upon women their experiences of violence become secondary to the reputation of the family and the community. Furthermore, the UK Government's civic integration agenda, which is marked by assimilative language that requires the adoption of 'British core values' (Joppke, 2004: 249), may provide more reason for South Asian communities to deny the existence of family abuse. The treatment of women has been held as a marker of certain cultures' backwardness and 'otherness' (Vlopp, 1996: 1602), which has led to communities feeling their behaviour and practices are under threat by being scrutinised and watched by the state (Phillips, 2010: 39). As a result, South Asian communities may become even more pre-occupied with portraying a flawless image back to the mainstream, masking 'intra-community' family abuse and pressurising women to preserve their 'silence' (Dasgupta, 2005: 63–64).

Gangs, Gossip and Ostracism

Macey's study (1999: 48) of the Pakistani community in Bradford identifies a sense of responsibility and ownership felt by the community towards women. 'Policing' women's behaviour was one of the ways this was expressed. This was organised through gangs and Pakistani male networks called the 'mobile phone mobs', who harassed and pressurised women to conform to 'traditional and appropriate behaviour'. Parents of Pakistani girls would receive phone calls complaining about their daughter's inappropriate 'Western' clothing, or for being out too late. Siddiqui and Patel (2010: 13) highlight the involvement of male elders and community leaders in the form of 'groups' and 'gangs' that track women who leave home due to family abuse or attempted forced marriage in order to force their return.

Wardak (2000: 82) and Shaw (2000: 172) highlight gossip in the Pakistani community as a mechanism of social control and a means by which to evaluate community membership. As highlighted in the discussion on community-belonging, the social and cultural connectedness and interdependence among members make it possible for gossip to operate effectively. The interviewees identified Friday prayer in the mosque as a time when their mothers-in-law would meet friends and acquaintances. This would be an ideal opportunity, as highlighted by Wardak (2000: 82), to evaluate people's behaviour through gossip. Macey (1999: 50) identifies gossip as a key strategy in 'policing' women's behaviour simply because women fear it (a feature of South Asian women's experiences of abuse that is not categorised or recognised in policy documents). Dasgupta and Rudra (2011) argue that this is because gossip and rumours against a woman's character not only affect her reputation, but also have repercussions on her family's honour and future marriage prospects of younger sisters. It is a powerful mechanism of social control as it can cause women's involuntary exit from the community (Phillips, 2007: 147), and this occurs when a woman is excluded against her wishes due to her 'behaviour' that challenges the honour and reputation of the community (Wardak, 2000: 87): for instance, by speaking out about her experiences of family abuse or leaving an abusive relationship. Community members who do not want to hold on to recalcitrant members are all too happy to get rid of them. In light of community-belonging discussed in this chapter as essential to women's survival

and security, the community can effectively threaten women with community ostracism in order to ensure ‘silence’ and preservation of the marriage. This is intensified for Pakistan-born women who are dependent on their affinal family and the community for material resources and have no capacity for economic or social survival outside the community. For many women community ostracism is too high a price to pay (Dasgupta, 2005: 64).

It is difficult to say whether or not policing is planned by community members, in that they sat down together and discussed and planned tactics of policing. This could, however, be said of bounty hunters. Siddiqui and Patel (2010: 13) show that bounty hunters can be used to intimidate women who leave home to force them to return, or harass and even kill them for bringing shame and dishonour. In light of the interviewees’ experiences, I do not think community policing was as organised or planned as this. Rather, it seems that the structure and nature of the community, which reinforces the oppressive and hierarchical workings of the family home, facilitates the policing, monitoring and controlling of women’s behaviour.

Unresponsive Imāms

Abdugideiri (2005: 4) argues that members of the religious community, such as Imāms, have failed South Asian women experiencing family abuse. Fortune (2001: 373) describes the religious community as unhelpful in healing, where it can serve as a ‘roadblock for victims and survivors, abandoned by their faiths, left to experience shame and guilt’. They note that some Imāms have, for example, blamed the woman for the abuse, or insisted that she return to her husband, encouraging ‘patience’.

SBS (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 116) argue that religious community leaders’ manner of dealing with these issues is to deny their existence or categorise them as issues outside their jurisdiction, as ‘their’ religion does not condone abuses against women. This is an interesting point considering the strong appeal by Imāms for the development of Shariah councils and MAT to deal with precisely these issues (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 111), which I discuss later in this chapter. Saying this, there has been a positive move towards tackling spousal and family abuse from within the Muslim community in Scotland. Shaykh Amer Jamil is an Imām residing in Glasgow who has launched a national campaign against spousal abuse and has raised this as a priority agenda within mosques (Hamill, 2010). As

noted earlier, the interviewees regard Imāms as powerful members of the community who have the capacity to resolve matters such as marital discord and family abuse, but it seems from the interviewees' experiences, Imāms have simultaneous concerns and beliefs which may not always serve the best interests of abused women.

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born Interviewees

Similar to the findings of the SBS report, 'Safe and Sane' (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 13), the Pakistan-born interviewees recount community members trying to reconcile them to the idea of returning to their affinal home without challenging the abusive behaviour. After leaving her abusive husband and affinal kin (HM, HZ), Asma sought refuge with a 'well-known' family in Edinburgh who worked with 'women's organisations' to provide shelter to women with 'no recourse to public funds'. Asma explains the family tried to force reconciliation with her husband despite his abusive behaviour:

They were saying to me, 'save your marriage and go back to them'. Pakistani people think, make a marriage work at any cost. They told me to just suffer in silence.¹¹⁸

Meryam's quote at the beginning of this chapter explains that even though members of the community knew she experienced extreme family abuse from her husband and his family, they still 'gossiped' about her intentions for leaving. As the quote shows, they presumed she liked another man. The interviewees described gossip by community members as a form of '*mentality* [mental] *torture*' (Fatima) and 'very upsetting' (Meryam).¹¹⁹ The Pakistan-born interviewees recount more intense forms of gossip than the UK-born interviewees, possibly because not having anyone such as natal kin to defend them increased their vulnerability to such jibes and gossip.

Similar to Fortune's research (2001: 373), the Pakistan-born interviewees described Imāms as disempowering and unhelpful: 'Like the people from the *mosque*, they don't *support*

¹¹⁸ Mūjhe keh-rāhe the, 'apnī shādī bāchāo aur un-ke pās vāpis chālī jāo'. Pakistani lōg sochte hai ke ghar jistārā bās-sake us-se bāsāo. Uno ne mūjhe kahā chūp kar-ke bārdāsh kar.

¹¹⁹ 'bāhot dūkh lagā.'

girls at all. Instead, they send them back to their home' (Meryam).¹²⁰ Interestingly, Meryam attributes the community's unhelpfulness to expectations they had of girls from Pakistan. On a few occasions, members of the community told her she would never have left her husband if she were in Pakistan:

One *uncle* and *aunty* came to give 'azān'¹²¹ in my daughter's ear. They were against this [divorce], they were telling me to go back to my house ... Because they said, 'our girls that come from Pakistan they come here and find out that the *government* will *support* them and then they get ready to leave' ... They said, 'if this husband beat you in Pakistan, would you ever leave your home?'¹²²

Meryam uses her husband's sister (HZ) as an example to clarify her point, explaining that the community did not frown upon her divorce because she is UK-born:

Like my sister-in-law, after one month of marriage she was back sitting in her mother's home ... nobody dared say anything about her ... if I do this people will say, 'her *character* is bad'.¹²³

Meryam did not attribute the community's unsupportiveness to a general belief that women should suffer silently for the sake of preserving marriage, but because as a Pakistan-born woman she was expected to act in a certain way, one which did not involve leaving or divorcing her husband. I understand this to be a form of intra-community discrimination where UK-born Pakistanis are given more value and respect. It can also be considered as a form of 'othering' where women from Pakistan are expected to be more tolerant and accepting of abuse as it is perceived to be a normalised practice in Pakistan.

¹²⁰ 'Jese *mosque* ke lōg, voh bilkūl *support* nahīn larkīyā ko karte. Ūlta un-ke gharo mai yeh vāpis bhejte hai.'

¹²¹ The Islamic call to prayer.

¹²² Ek *uncle* aur *aunty* āye the merī betī ke kān mai azān denī thī. Voh is chīz se kafī *khilāf* the, voh keh-rāhe the, vāpis jāo apne ghar ... Kyo ke voh kehte the, 'hamāre larkīyā jo Pakistan se āthī hai un-ko idr ā-ke patā chal-jatā hai ke *government support* kare ghī aur voh bhī chorne pe tayār ho-jate hai' ... Voh kehte hai, 'agar tumhe yeh-hī kāvand Pakistan mai mārta to tum kabhī ghar se nikhāltī?'

¹²³ Jese merī nānād, ek māhīna shādī ke bād voh apne ammī ke ghar behī thī ... kisī kī jurāt nahīn hai us-ke bare bāt kare ... agar meh ese karū to lōg kahenge, 'is-kā *character* hī *ghundā* hai'.

Interview Findings: UK-born Interviewees

As Farah's quote at the beginning of this chapter shows, the UK-born interviewees recount experiences of exclusion from the community and social circles post-separation and divorce similar to the concept of 'involuntary-exit' (Dasgupta, 2005: 64; Phillips, 2007: 135). Nazia felt alienated at events and functions:

I went to this wedding. It was the first event I went to after my separation. No one spoke to me, not even my mum's neighbours. I've known them for years.

Similarly, Khadijah explains, 'I felt excluded from community get-togethers. I used to always get invited.' Similar to the Pakistan-born interviewees, the UK-born interviewees describe Muslim leaders as being uninterested in family abuse, as Aisha explains:

What has happened [family abuse] is a violation of Islamic law and a violation of British law and a violation of women in general, a mockery of everything. And here I am, a prime example who is willing to talk, and they're all [the community] not wanting to talk about it.

Aisha goes on to describe her ill feelings towards a well-known Imām in the community who publicly campaigns against family abuse:

Yeah, he [Imām] talks about it, but when it comes to the crunch he does fuck all.

I think it is important to consider that the Imām's promises and advice may have seemed empty and unhelpful to Aisha, which is particularly reflected in her quote at the beginning of this chapter, possibly due to the Imām's simultaneous concerns and beliefs. An Imām's belief in the promotion of gender equality and the preservation of marriage may lead to advice that promotes marital counselling: trying to reconcile the parties and preserve the marriage. In Aisha's case, or any woman's for that matter, an approach which promotes reconciliation may not serve their best interests, a point I will return to later in this chapter.

The interviewees' accounts highlight the community as a place within which women can experience pressure to return to, or stay in, an abusive marriage through gossip and threats of, or actual, ostracism. Furthermore, accounts of community pressure can also be

attributed to intra-community discrimination where women from Pakistan are expected to be more tolerant of abuse as this is considered to be normal practice within Pakistan. Thus, women can experience discrimination both by their own communities and by outside communities. The interplay of women's community-belonging and survival, with the threat of ostracism utilised by community members, can act to jeopardise the safety of South Asian women (Dasgupta, 2005: 63). Furthermore, as argued by Phillips (2010: 39) and Thiara and Gill (2010a: 20) government policies that play into the hands of power-holders in the community increase women's risk of pressure and constraints at the community level, to which I will now turn.

6.5 Multiculturalism: Increasing Community Power and Women's Vulnerability

Writers such as Siddiqui and Patel (2010: 102) and Wilson (2010: 55) have documented the struggles of South Asian women experiencing family abuse within the context of the UK Government's simultaneous and often contradictory and shifting agendas (see 'Introduction' at the beginning of this thesis). My concern is that the continuities between the 'early multiculturalism' and current community cohesion approaches are evident in the same representations of migrant culture and religion as deterministic, static and inherently patriarchal (Anitha and Gill, 2011b: 118). As noted in Chapter Two, the UK Government's conceptualisation and construction of community that reduces identity to religion and culture has become the overarching framework through which the needs of minorities are addressed (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 105). This has resulted in continued dialogue with (only) male community leaders who are deemed to represent the needs of the 'whole' community (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 105). In the remaining part of this chapter, I argue that the UK Government's continued collusion with community elders, enabled by adopting a 'non-interventionist' approach, has privatised issues such as familial matters 'outside' state jurisdiction (Shachar, 2001: 38). It has also provided community leaders with more power to constrain women to accepting abusive and violent homes (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 16). This serves not only to marginalise alternative voices (usually women's)

but adds to the existing pressure faced by women in communities to preserve their ‘silence’ about abuse (Dasgupta, 2005: 63). This is notable in the development of Shariah councils and Muslim Arbitration Tribunals (MAT). The issues raised in my exploration of MAT can affect any Muslim women accessing this service, not only South Asian or Pakistani women. This strengthens the central aim and recommendation of this thesis: to push more generally for nuanced and sensitive policies towards marginalised women in Scotland experiencing family abuse (Chapter One).

The Muslim Arbitration Tribunals (MAT)

The MAT is an alternative form of dispute resolution which operates under the Arbitration Act 1996¹²⁴ and is available in the United Kingdom to Muslims who wish to resolve disputes without recourse to the court systems. This and the Shariah Council were developed in response to the increased ‘recognition’ of the Muslim community and the demands from the male leaders to have matters such as domestic abuse and issues related to marriage settled according to the precepts of their religion and culture (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 119). This can place women in a better position to obtain their rights, for example, in gaining an Islamic divorce, which the alternative UK legal system has failed to do (Phillips, 2010: 175). However, Siddiqui and Patel (2010: 105) argue that policies aimed at recognising religious rights and protecting religious identity increasingly undermine the rights of women. By reducing a community to a faith community the UK Government overlooks the complex political, social, economic and cultural factors that make up an identity. Furthermore, writers have critiqued the development as antithetical to gender equality and women’s rights in its usage of religious interpretation that has historically oppressed women (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 119).

In critiquing this approach, we must caution against reproducing stereotypes that stem from government policies and agendas – gender politics versus ethnicity politics. Amina: MWRC (2008: 2) document that women require more faith- and culturally-sensitive counselling and mediation services. As highlighted above, the interviewees acknowledge

¹²⁴ For more information see: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/23/contents>

Imāms within the mosque as powerful community leaders who have the capacity to change and influence abusive men. If we return to an earlier point made by Khadija:

Imāms need to give more time to marriage and how to treat women during *Jumā* [Friday sermon]. Maybe a man who is being abusive to his wife is sitting in the crowd. That might open his eyes.

This quote raises a number of interesting analytical points: it attributes a lack of religious understanding as a cause for men's abusive behaviour, which differs from popular feminist discourse that posits gender equality as being in tension with religion and culture (Lamble, 2006: 1). It adds to the growing demonstration by Islamic feminists that rights and religion do not have to be in conflict. Indeed, Muslim women can 'translate, construct and reconstruct' religious texts in ways that resonate with human rights claims¹²⁵ (Lamble, 2006: 6). Questions of choice, capacity and agency become crucial to this discussion, as Khadija identifies religion as an avenue that can be utilised to challenge abuse. This requires a rethinking of liberal notions of 'secularism' and 'freedom' which reinforce divisions between public and private: 'Secularism posits the sovereign, autonomous self in opposition to a self that is constrained by religious belief' (Lamble, 2006: 6). Furthermore, promoting a Western framework as the model of human rights, and the only system that can provide Muslim women with access to equality, autonomy and justice is problematic because it overlooks the sophisticated ways women manoeuvre within constraints (Bano, 2010: 186). (I will return to this in my exploration of women's articulation of agency in Part Three.) Thiara and Gill (2010a: 22) advise that approaches such as MAT need to be understood and explored through the ways in which they reinforce women's victimisation and erode safety and rights. It is in this regard I argue that the privatisation of MAT, coupled with the oppressive nature and power of the community, can increase women's vulnerability and disadvantage.

¹²⁵ See writers such as Fatima Mernissi (1987) and Amina Wadud (1998) who have become known as 'Islamic Feminists'.

Inside-Outside Dichotomy

The creation of MAT in resolving family law matters within the community has created a harmful 'inside-outside' dichotomy. Issues that exist 'inside' the community are private affairs and deemed 'outside' the jurisdiction of the state (Shachar, 2001: 6). This 'non-interventionist' policy turns a blind eye to coercive practices that institutionalise women's subordination (Phillips, 2010: 39). Additionally, the privatised nature of the mediation protects from scrutiny the decisions of community leaders that may be detrimental to women in cases regarding divorce, domestic abuse and marriage (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 16). Thus, the state-sanctioned delegation of jurisdiction to authorities within an identity group, when accompanied by a 'non-interventionist' policy, plays into the hands of power-holders in the groups. It protects the behaviour of community members from criticism, giving them more confidence and power to pressurise women to return to, or stay in, violent homes. It also opens the space for Imāms to condemn in public arenas practices affecting women such as domestic abuse, but in practice offer no assistance or support to women, as exemplified in Aisha's aforementioned experience of Imāms.

Shachar (2001: 39) argues that the 'single-axis perception' of identity fails to recognise membership as mediated by other social factors such as gender, age, marital status, family or culture. This affects in-group power relations and overlooks the contested character of religious practices, and the conflicting interests inherent within these groups (Bano, 2010: 185). In this regard, the development of community mechanisms to resolve matrimonial disputes based on religious interpretations views the Muslim community through a homogeneous lens. Samia Bano (2010) explores the experiences of a heterogeneous group of British Muslim women who choose to resolve matrimonial disputes via the community mechanisms of the Shariah Councils. She describes a conflict of opinion between some of the 'scholars' within the Shariah Council and the women who utilised this service (Bano, 2010: 203). The 'scholars' were of the opinion that reconciliation is both a moral duty and religious obligation, and their interest was in keeping the family intact by 'saving' the marriage (Bano, 2010: 194). Some women described the initial advice to be helpful and sympathetic, whereas others were critical of the initial impression given by scholars that 'divorce was wrong ... but in some circumstances it was allowed' (Bano, 2010: 202). The

women felt this approach was antithetical to their own interests, which were not solely based on ‘saving’ the marriage, but making a choice that was in the interest of their safety and well-being (Bano, 2010: 194). As noted earlier, Aisha felt the promises of a ‘well-known’ Imām to be empty, which could be attributed to conflicting interests. The Imām’s agenda of keeping the family intact was antithetical to Aisha’s interest in obtaining a divorce. Aisha approached the Imām informally, so she did not feel the need to take his advice. However, the privatised and formal nature of intra-community religious mediation may add pressure on women to agree to mediation and take advice that may be unsupportive of their interests, and possibly detrimental to their safety.

A way forward is not to abandon intra-community mediation that is sensitive to the religious and cultural needs of women. To do so would dismiss the needs and rights of women such as Aisha, Khadija, Asma and Fatima, who see benefit in, and requested, religious mediation. Furthermore, I want to steer clear of bolstering the debates that adopt a language of competing equality claims, in this instance, that gender equality and multiculturalism are irreconcilable. Rather, I advocate that gender and ethnicity politics’ claims are equally important, but need to be balanced in circumstances where they appear to collide (Phillips, 2010: 47). The UK Government needs to conceptualise community and identity as being shaped by a number of factors (political, social and economic) which are not reducible to only culture and religion, which are themselves perceived as deterministic and monolithic (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 119). A way forward is to locate South Asian women’s experiences of abuse within intersecting inequalities which feature the community and the state. In this light, the nature and manner in which intra-community mediation operates needs to be questioned. Is it beneficial to women’s needs? Is it reinforcing and facilitating oppression and abuse faced in the family and the community? When it comes to the safety of women and promoting gender equality, we should not hold back from asking such questions for fear of being perceived and labelled as racist or culturally insensitive. Furthermore, nuanced and sensitive policy and practice cannot be achieved without inclusive participation that sees the equal involvement of ‘women and men, young and old, of the less as well as the more powerful members of the society’ (Phillips, 2010: 33). Whether or not these proposals are without obstacles will be explored in Chapter Ten.

6.6 Summary

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, limited attention has been paid to the role of the community in shaping women's experiences of family abuse. In this chapter, I have attempted to elucidate women's experiences of the community, as both a place of belonging and a structure that pressures women to return to, or stay in, violent homes. The literature, together with the interviewees' experiences, attribute community-belonging to factors beyond culture and religion to the issue of survival. Factors such as racism from the wider society and socio-economic constraints make women, particularly South Asian migrant women (Dasgupta, 2005: 63), cling more tenaciously to their community (Amina: MWRC, 2008; Jones et al., 2013). This need for community-belonging has facilitated the 'policing' of women's behaviour by community members through threats of social ostracism. The complexity of women's experiences at the community level is not only overlooked by UK Government policies that collude with community leaders, but also plays into the hands of male power-holders who have personal agendas and interests that may be antithetical to gender equality. The way forward is not to abandon culturally- and religiously-sensitive intra-community mediation, but to evaluate their suitability critically, ensuring they are free from conflicting interests and gender disparity. This can be achieved only through the inclusion of women's voices. In light of such issues, the UK Government has adopted policies, such as the right-to-exit, which opens women up to new forms of constraints and oppression, the central theme of the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The UK Government's Conflicting Agendas and 'Harmful' Policies: Shaping Women's Experiences of Abuse and 'Exit'

He felt like he needed me because of the visa. He hated that. I never threw it in his face. He always tried to act macho to show me, 'look, I am boss'. He started to get really abusive because of it. (Nazia UK-born)

I was living in a *refuge*. I had no money to give my kids food. I was *pregnant* as well. She [support worker] gave me some money for food and clothes, but it wasn't *enough*. So, I went back to him.¹²⁶ (Meryam Pakistan-born)

I had gone for the first time back to Pakistan with my daughter, they [H, HM] thought 'we will leave her [Aliyah] there and bring the girl [D] back'.¹²⁷ (Aliyah Pakistan-born)

7. Introduction

In this chapter, I critically explore the UK Government's immigration policies: 'the two-year rule', the 'Domestic Violence Rule' (DVR) and 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF). In light of the interviewees' experiences, such as those represented by the above quotes, I argue that these policies facilitate family abuse by providing perpetrators with new and effective ways to control and coerce women within the home (Phillips, 2007: 147; Anitha, 2008: 194). Feminist writers such as Sharma and Gill (2010: 212) have explored these policies within the context of shifting and simultaneous agendas (gender equality, multiculturalism and civic integration), arguing that the UK Government is more concerned with controlling the 'borders of the nation' than protecting vulnerable women (Joshi, 2003;

¹²⁶ Meh *refuge* mai reh-rahī thī. Mere pās pese nahīn the ke meh apne bachcho ko khānā dū. Meh *pregnant* bhī thī. Us-ne mūjhe pese diye khānā aur kapro ke-liye, par *enough* nahīn the. To meh us-ke pās vāpis chalī-gāī.

¹²⁷ Meh pehlī dafa gāī thī bachchī ko Pakistan le-ke, uno ne sochā, 'ham is-se Pakistan chor denge aur bachchī ko vāpis leāyege'.

Patel, 2003; Phillips, 2007). Anitha (2008: 191) and Wilson (2006: 79) argue that the intertwining of gender equality and immigration control has directly impacted on migrant South Asian women's experiences of abuse and exit. As well as adding to the literature that explores the impact of immigration policies on migrant South Asian women, I show in this chapter that UK-born women with husbands on a spousal visa are also being adversely affected by these policies: a dimension of a specific category of women's experiences that is overlooked by literature and research. By critically exploring the intersection of immigration policies and family abuse, this chapter adds to the overarching argument of Part Two of this thesis: to elucidate the manner in which the micro- and macro-levels are intertwined. This chapter shows how government policies and interventions that overlook the complex and intersectional nature of South Asian women's experiences of family abuse (Anitha, 2011: 1261) impact directly on women's distress because they make leaving even more difficult (Wilson, 2007: 28–29; Anitha, 2008: 194; Sharma and Gill, 2010: 219).

7.1 Chapter Outline

I begin by highlighting the workings of the 'right-to-exit' rationale that has become a potent part of the UK Government's response to family abuse. I argue that it is not enough to provide women with the 'right-to-exit' without evaluating and understanding, firstly, the conditions that make this a viable option and, secondly, the 'psychological costs' that are attached to it (Phillips, 2007: 133).

Then, I offer an analysis of how immigration policies, such as the two-year rule, DVR and NRPF, interact with family abuse by equipping perpetrators with a powerful tool to oppress South Asian women. I indicate how state policies impact on women's distress directly and pose significant obstacles to exit. Before beginning my exploration, the following points require noting: firstly, the policies I deal with in this chapter affect all non-EU women entering the UK on a spousal visa. Due to factors alluded to in Part One of this thesis, such as the numbers of transnational marriages, and language and economic factors, these policies play out differently for South Asian women and others; and, secondly, these policies and their effects do not apply to my entire sample. It reflects only the experiences of Pakistan-born interviewees and UK-born interviewees whose husbands are from

Pakistan, but not the experiences of UK-born interviewees whose husbands are from the UK.

7.2 Summary of Interview Findings

The issue of how immigration status connects with family abuse emerged as a strong theme in the interview findings. All of the Pakistan-born interviewees arrived in the UK on a spousal visa and were subject to the two-year probationary period. Four of the six Pakistan-born interviewees mention immigration status as a factor that shaped their experiences of abuse. They experienced control and fear through threats of deportation. Furthermore, the evidentiary requirements and NRPF clause maintained perpetrators' control and the interviewees' economic dependency, which acted to constrain them within the abusive marriage and within the affinal home. 'Misinformation' emerged as a strong feature of abuse, which was exacerbated by language barriers, isolation and economic dependency.

The UK-born interviewees whose husbands were subject to 'the two-year rule' also attribute immigration status as a cause of abuse. From their accounts two issues can be identified: firstly, migrant husbands who marry UK-born women for the sole purpose of attaining a permanent visa; and, secondly, migrant husbands who use the process of visa applications and renewals as a means to exercise pressure and control.

7.3 The 'Right-to-Exit'

The focus on the 'right-to-exit' has become more visible within the UK Government's response to South Asian women's experiences of abuse (Anitha and Gill, 2011a: 61). For instance, the Scottish Government policy document 'Ministerial Priorities for Gender Equality' (2010: 30) and 'Scotland's Strategy to Tackle Violence Against Women and Girls'¹²⁸ focus on the attainment of safety, often presumed best secured through leaving the home and the relationship. This rationale refers to women's right to leave their families and communities and to seek egalitarian alternatives outside if they do not agree with the majority beliefs and practices within them (Phillips, 2007: 133; Gill and Mitra-Kahn, 2010:

¹²⁸ For more information see: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/violence-women>

141). According to this approach, the solution is not to critically evaluate policies that pose a threat to women's safety; it is simply to permit women to leave if they do not like group practices. This not only relieves the state of any responsibility and imposes the burden of resolving the conflict upon the individual, but also does not touch the basic structures that have made the situation arise (Shachar, 2001: 41, 17). It also suggests that the woman (the injured party) should be the one to abandon the very centre of her life, family and community (Shachar, 2001: 41), leaving her with a 'cruel' choice of penalties: either accept all group practices, including those that violate your fundamental citizenship rights, or leave (Shachar, 2001: 41; Phillips, 2007, 2010).

Critics such as Anne Phillips (2007) argue that the 'right-to-exit' approach highlights a contradiction in the UK Government's conceptualisation of culture as something that is all encompassing and something that can simply be 'put on or taken off'. Furthermore, Gill and Anitha (2011) add that this approach serves the government's integrationist agenda as opposed to protecting vulnerable women. The issue, however, is not whether an individual should have the right to exit one's family or community. The issue cited by writers such as Phillips (2007, 2010) and Shachar (2001) is the 'costs of exit', such as economic destitution, and fear of family and community ostracism, that make exit a non-viable option (a point I will return to in Part Three). A possible solution to this dilemma lies in the work of Aylet Shachar (2001: 41, 17) who argues that it should be possible for the oppressed to stay and fight for change. I agree with Phillips (2010: 36) and Shachar (2001: 18) when they say the right to leave must be complemented with the right to stay, and voice matters as well as exit. But, this is not practical for women who live in fear of daily abuse and see no prospect of living outside of their family. Furthermore, people can only voice their complaints when they see realistic prospects of change (Phillips, 2007: 157) or when the UK Government offers viable alternatives and solutions. As I now go on to argue, immigration policies that have been put into place to facilitate women's exit from abusive relationships in reality lead to the opposite.

7.4 Immigration Policies: Shaping Women's Experiences of Abuse

Immigration control features in the UK Government's response to discriminatory practices against women and girls in the South Asian community (Bredal, 2011: 91). Within policy and public discourse, immigration has been reconstructed as a 'problem', responsible for importing 'backward cultural practices' (Anitha and Gill, 2011b: 120) that has ultimately resulted in the failure of 'newcomers' to integrate (Joppke, 2004: 254). This anti-immigration rhetoric has gained currency in the UK, more so after the '9/11' and '7/7' terrorist attacks in the US and the UK respectively, and it has paved the way for tighter immigration control (Anitha and Gill, 2011b: 120) that is strongly focused on 'securing the borders and reducing immigration'.¹²⁹ Furthermore, these policies, as argued by Gill and Anitha (2011: 11), have been justified by using claims of gender equality, ostensibly 'saving' women from misogynistic and backward cultures. The intertwining of gender equality and immigration control has directly impacted on South Asian women's experiences of abuse and exit (Wilson, 2006: 79; Anitha, 2008: 191), notable in the immigration rules that attach a two-year probationary period to spouses entering the UK.

The 'Two-Year Rule': Reinforcing Power Differentials

The 'two-year' probationary period, introduced in 2003, applies to those who migrate to marry or live with spouses settled in the UK (Home Office, 2014a: 14). This regulation was in response to governments' worries about 'bogus' marriages and addressing gaps within immigration rules that made residency too easy a route (Joshi, 2003: 151; Wilson, 2006: 78). But, the tightening of what was perceived as a 'loophole' in immigration regulations has proved to be problematic for women experiencing spousal abuse (Burman and Chantler, 2005: 65; Wilson, 2006: 79; Phillips, 2010: 128).

Research explains the ways in which this rule is utilised by perpetrators of abuse as a powerful weapon to strengthen and intensify existing domination and control over women (Joshi, 2003: 150; Wilson, 2007: 29). For women facing spousal abuse who are subject to this rule, the choices are stark – stay in the abusive relationship or face deportation. The

¹²⁹ For more information see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/securing-borders-and-reducing-immigration>

Hague et al. (2006: 28) study on immigrant South Asian women in the UK identifies affinal kin (H, HM) as exercising control over women by removing, keeping or hiding their passports and deliberately not regularising visas. Threats of deportation are also identified by similar studies as a method utilised by perpetrators to control and keep women in abusive relationships (Raj and Silverman, 2002: 381; Anitha, 2011: 1274). This makes it much easier for men to abandon and end the marriage, either by leaving women in their home country, or by refusing to renew their visa, thereby making women ‘overstayers’ subject to immediate deportation (Anitha, 2011: 1268).

When we add to this that many of the women in this study, as seen in Part One of this thesis, are not fluent in English and have no family or friends close by except the family of their spouse, it becomes more clear how this rule can be utilised to exacerbate existing vulnerability. Additionally, as identified in Chapter Five, divorce can carry consequences of dishonour and social ostracism. As a result, deportation can leave women vulnerable to abuse and persecution from natal kin, and the community to which they have been deported (i.e. Pakistan) (Wilson, 2007: 29; Anitha, 2008: 199; Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 48).

Anecdotal evidence provided in the SBS report ‘Safe and Sane’ (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 47) explains that when women are deported, they not only face persecution but might be separated from their children born in the UK, who are allowed to stay in Britain and often permitted to stay with their husbands’ families. In recognising the difficulty in which a vulnerable woman is placed by the state, perpetrators feel confident to control and dominate women in various ways.

The limitation of the preceding literature lies in its failure to acknowledge the effects, if any, of this rule on UK-born women whose husbands are subject to the two-year probationary period. This gap may be due to the gendered nature of migration, a problem highlighted by Charsley’s work (2005) as seen in Chapter Two. From what I have discussed, it is easy to assume that this rule places UK-born women in powerful positions within their marriages, leaving men who are subject to this rule powerless. To do so, however, would be to overlook the gendered nature of spousal abuse and the manner in which control and power are exerted and maintained by the male perpetrator (Stark, 2007, 2013). Furthermore, these policies may affect female migrants more than male migrants:

men may have employment and have financial resources, which is less likely to be the case for migrant females. Phillips (2010: 128) in her exploration of this rule briefly touches upon this point arguing that UK-born women may feel constraint and pressure to remain in the marriage for the necessary two years in order to give their spouses residency rights.

Charsley (2005: 90) argues that UK-born women can be left abandoned by men who marry only for the purpose of obtaining a visa. In this regard, it is not just the level of power that this rule affords to a spouse that needs to be acknowledged, but also the gendered nature of its utilisation to control and dominate. To understand the effect of this policy and the points and limitations that arise from the literature, I turn to the interviewees' experiences of this rule.

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born Interviewees

In order to gain a more nuanced understanding of the probationary period as a powerful tool utilised by perpetrators, the importance South Asian migrant women attach to obtaining a visa is essential yet something which has been overlooked within the literature. It is apparent from the accounts of two of the Pakistan-born interviewees that obtaining the visa was important to them and natal kin for various reasons. This influenced the interviewees' decision to stay in the marriage, and was consequently utilised by perpetrators as a weapon of control and abuse. As seen in Chapter Five, natal kin can pressurise women to stay in abusive structures for fear of dishonour and the social ostracism that can result from cultural perceptions of divorce. Asma spoke of an additional pressure from natal kin, which was to stay in her abusive marriage for the purpose of obtaining a permanent visa:

They [natal kin] said, 'get the *visa* and then leave him'. But my *family* were right. If I was to *divorce* and go back [to Pakistan] without a *visa*, I have two little sisters that need to get married.¹³⁰

Her immediately succeeding comment shows that obtaining a visa can (sometimes) prevent the social ostracism and lowered status that can be attributed to divorced women:

¹³⁰ Uno ne kahā, '*visa* le-ke chor denā'. Par merī *family* bhī sāī the. *Divorce* kar-ke agar meh vāpis gāī, *visa* ke bager, merī do chotī bahene hai, un-kī shādī honī hai.

After this [getting a visa] my aunty [FZ] asked for my hand in marriage for her son. Whenever anyone hears I have a *visa* they come and ask for my hand in marriage.¹³¹

Meryam argues that women are given more ‘*respect*’ if they possess a visa: ‘Everyone respected me there [Pakistan] only because I have a *visa*.’¹³² It is possible that the interviewees were proposed to for the sole purpose of obtaining a visa. Irrespective of the motivations behind such proposals, the interviewees and natal kin attribute respect to possessing a visa. This provides considerable insight into the pressure women can feel to stay in an abusive marriage when subject to this rule.

The Pakistan-born interviewees identified immigration status as a prominent feature of their experiences of abuse. Perpetrators utilised verbal threats, such as having them deported, to maintain power and control in varying ways (Gangoli et al., 2011: 36). Meryam explained that her husband refused to renew her visa, which was also the main cause for marital conflict:

My husband would not get me a *visa* ... Whenever we spoke of the *visa* we would argue. This was another *reason* [for staying], my *pregnancy* and [my] *visa*. He was refusing to give me a *visa*.¹³³

Meryam attributed this to her husband’s fear, explaining that he felt, ‘if she [Meryam] starts going out, she will not do my housework, her thinking will change. She will meet white girls. They will turn her against me.’¹³⁴ Asma tried bargaining with her husband in order to obtain a permanent visa: ‘I told him, “get me a *visa* and I will leave you”. He said, “I will never let you stay here”.’¹³⁵ As argued by Wilson (2006) and Anitha (2008, 2011), the nature of this rule exacerbates the existing power differentials within abusive marriages.

¹³¹ Is ke bād merī pūpo ne merā rishta manga apne bete ke-liye. Jo bhī sūntā hai mere pās *visa* hai merā rishta māngta hai.

¹³² ‘Sab ne merī bāhot izzat kī vahā is-liye ke mere pās *visa* hai.’

¹³³ Mere khāvand mūjhe *visa* nahīn le-ke deta thā ... Jab bhī *visa* kī bāt karū to larāyī ho-jāe. Yeh bhī ek *reason* thā, merī *pregnancy* aur *visa*. *Visa* nahīn le-ke de-rahā thā.

¹³⁴ ‘agar yeh bahār jānā shūrū kare, yeh merā ghar kā kām nahīn kareghī, is-kī soch badul jāe ghī. Yeh gorīyo ko mile ghī, yeh is-ko mere *khilāf* kar-denge.’

¹³⁵ ‘Meh-ne us-se kahā, “tum mūjhe *visa* le-ke do aur meh chalī-jāo ghī”. Us-ne kahā, “Meh kabhī bhī nahīn tumhe yahā rehne dūngā”.’

Asma and Meryam's experiences highlight the manner in which this rule can be utilised by perpetrators to keep women tied to abusive marriages.

This rule provides men with an easy exit from marriages they no longer want to maintain (Anitha, 2011: 1268). Meryam's husband's refusal to renew her visa meant she 'was staying here *illegal* [illegally]',¹³⁶ which is a prime example of how many women can become, as noted by Anitha (2011: 1274), 'overstayers', leaving them abandoned and facing deportation. The extreme form of this – abandoning women in their home country (Burman and Chantler, 2005: 64) – is notable in Aliyah's quote at the beginning of this chapter. Aliyah's affinal kin tried to end the marriage by taking her to Pakistan under the pretence of a family holiday, hoping to leave her there. As the findings in the Hague et al. study (2006: 29) indicate, had this attempt been successful, Aliyah could have been abandoned in Pakistan and separated from her daughter, where state laws provide men with the power and the means to do so. Alongside this, threats of deportation loomed over the interviewees and their natal kin, creating insecurity and fear. Khalida's husband would constantly threaten to send her back to Pakistan if she disobeyed him. Aliyah's account identifies that threats of deportation can also be made to natal kin:

[H speaking to Aliyah's M] Everything is in our [H, HM] *control*. I can just leave her there [Pakistan]. I will bring the girl [D] back. I would like to see who stops me.¹³⁷

As stated previously, if natal kin do attribute importance to attaining a visa, threats of deportation from affinal kin contribute to the level of pressure, as seen in Chapter Five, that natal kin can place on women to stay in abusive marriages. The experiences of the Pakistan-born interviewees confirm that, for women subject to this rule, the shadow of deportation hangs over them, and can do so even beyond the two years if their husband has not attained permanent residency for them. Their immigration status therefore becomes a source of intimidation and control of them (Wilson, 2006: 83) and their natal kin.

¹³⁶ '*illegal* jese reh-rahī thī idr.'

¹³⁷ Hār chīz hamāre *control* mai hai. Meh is-se vahā hī chor jāogā. Meh bachchī ko vāpis le-aūngā. Meh dekhta hū mūjhe kon roktā hai.

Interview Findings: UK-born Interviewees

As acknowledged previously, the experiences of UK-born women have been largely overlooked by research that critically explores the intersection of the two-year rule and family abuse. Two of the UK-born interviewees had husbands from Pakistan who were subject to the probationary period. Due to the limitations of the sample size and literature, it is difficult to discern patterns or the extent to which this rule impacts on UK-born women. By exploring Nazia and Farah's experiences of this, however, I aim to highlight this as an issue that requires further exploration and research.

The experiences of Farah and Nazia raise a crucial point: it is not just the level of power that this rule affords to a spouse that needs to be acknowledged, but also the gendered nature of its utilisation to control and dominate. As seen in Chapter Three, Charsley (2005: 91) speaks of men's migration for the purpose of marriage affecting the conventional power differentials within a conjugal home by undermining Pakistani ideals of masculinity of the economic earner and maintainer of the household. Nazia and Farah's experiences indicate that the probationary period increases migrant men's feelings of power differentials and dependency that can lead to abusive and 'macho' behaviour, as can be seen in Nazia's quote at the beginning of this chapter. Farah explains:

He would accuse me of looking down at him ... I didn't. Because of that, he would hit me.

Migrant men may already feel insecure due to the unconventional power differentials within the marital home created through migration. This can become intensified by an increased sense of dependency on the female spouse who is perceived as having the power to deport him. As identified by Farah and Nazia's experiences, men may feel 'unmanly' (Farah) because of it, and abuse and 'macho-ness' (Nazia) are utilised as methods to exert masculinity and power, which are perceived to be under threat.

Nazia's experience identifies the manner in which the visa application process can be utilised by a perpetrator to maintain power and control. She explained feeling extreme 'pressure' from her husband and being expected to 'drop everything' on his 'order'. She explains:

Even when I used to sit in lectures in university, he used to phone me from Pakistan and say you need to get to Mr. William's [pseudonym] office [solicitor] in ten minutes because he needs this paperwork and I'm gonna phone his office and you better be there. There was a lot of pressure that way.

As seen in Part One of this thesis, Evan Stark's conceptualisation (2007) of coercive control offers an understanding of spousal abuse that serves to entrap women by utilising methods of control, intimidation and threats. Nazia felt her husband used the 'visa application' as an 'excuse' to monitor where she was and what she was doing. Likewise, Farah described her husband's constant 'pressure' and 'control' when it came to the visa application as, 'do this, do that, you didn't do this right, do it again. He was so controlling, it was too much.' This can be understood as a form of coercive control where men are utilising the visa application process as a method to exert pressure, control and power.

Under pressure from minority groups, the UK Government agreed that a woman who 'proves' marital breakdown because of violence could apply for 'Indefinite Leave to Remain' (ILR) before the full two years, which is known as the 'Domestic Violence Rule' (DVR) (Home Office, 2014a: 14). DVR is undoubtedly a success for women's groups and feminists who have campaigned for the UK Government's recognition of the repercussions of the 'two-year' rule for women experiencing spousal abuse. However, until a decision is reached on their application for ILR, women have 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF) such as benefits or social housing, making refuges inaccessible to them (Anitha, 2011: 1263). The evidentiary requirements¹³⁸ attached to a successful ILR application overlooks the hidden and complex nature of South Asian women's experiences of family abuse. In the next part of this chapter, I critically explore the workings of this concession which researchers such as Anitha (2008: 190) argue inhibit non UK-born women's exit and keep them in abusive relationships.

¹³⁸ A medical report from a hospital doctor; a letter from a GP; an undertaking given from the court; a police report; a letter from the social services department; a letter of support or report from a women's refuge.

7.5 Standard of Proof and NRPF: Overlooking the Hidden Nature of Family Abuse

As seen in Part One of this thesis, South Asian women's experiences of family abuse can feature severe forms of isolation. Research indicates that language difficulties create the greatest barrier to women's awareness of, and access to, their rights (Dasgupta, 2005: 66; Anitha, 2008; Sharma and Gill, 2010: 218). This increases women's dependence on their perpetrators (H, HM) for material resources as well as everyday activities such as visiting a doctor (Jones et al., 2013: 9). A point I explore in detail in the next chapter, but that also requires note here, is misinformation. Burman and Chantler (2005: 64) argue that 'ethnic minority' women have little access to relevant and appropriate information and, in many cases, perpetrators become their primary source of information. When this is coupled with misinformation, where perpetrators misinform women of their rights and the workings of the state, South Asian women are highly unlikely to know about DVR. The Domestic Abuse Project (DAP) informed me during the focus-group discussion that women only become aware of this rule upon contact with women's organisations, and usually once they have left an abusive relationship. Meryam's experience confirms this point:

When she [worker from DAP] told me that I could apply for a *visa* without him, I didn't believe her. How? I was *shock* [shocked].¹³⁹

Meryam comments: 'If I had known [of DVR], I would have left him a long time ago.'¹⁴⁰ Meryam's account exemplifies how hidden this rule is for women who are susceptible to isolation and misinformation, exacerbated by language barriers and economics.

Furthermore, ILR highlights the failure of the UK Government to recognise that women's experiences of abuse can create barriers to disclosure. Anitha (2008: 194) argues that women do not manage to disclose abuse until after they have left the family home, which would make meeting the evidentiary requirements of this rule impossible. A concession that is dependent on successful contact with service providers shows that the UK

¹³⁹ Jab us-ne mūjhe batāyā ke meh *visa* le-saktī hū us-ke bager, meh-ne us-kā yākin nahīn kiyā. Kese? Meh to *shock* ho-gāī.

¹⁴⁰ 'Agar mūjhe patā hotā, meh to bāhot pehle is-se chor detī.'

Government fails to understand women's pathways to help-seeking which do not always entail service providers (Anitha, 2008, 2011). For instance, nine of the eleven interviewees did not access a service provider until after they had left the abusive relationship. Thus, through this concession, migrant South Asian women are left with a stark choice; deportation or returning to an abusive relationship. Both 'choices', as argued by Sharma and Gill (2010: 220), leave women facing either persecution or escalated forms of abuse.

NRPF

Financial insolvency is one of the most paralysing problems that (migrant) South Asian women experience as a result of family abuse (Dasgupta, 2005: 65; Anitha, 2011). As seen in Chapters Three and Four, isolation and language barriers are mutually reinforcing factors that are exploited by perpetrators of abuse and increase abused women's economic dependency (Stark, 2007). For instance, as a direct result of their abusers' tactics to isolate them, women are not allowed to take up employment, or if they are allowed to do so, have to hand their wages over to affinal kin (H, HM) (Anitha, 2011: 1274). Furthermore, these factors, together with issues such as access to transport, educational qualifications, and structural inequalities (e.g. racism) not only exacerbate women's economic dependency, but can also make seeking employment difficult irrespective of abuse (Dasgupta, 2005: 65).

In the 2003 consultation paper 'Safety and Justice', the UK Government acknowledged that welfare benefits and access to housing are essential prerequisites for all women experiencing violence, as they provide safety to 'victims' of abuse (Home Office, 2003; Sharma and Gill, 2010: 219). Yet the UK Government's NRPF policy denies migrant women this provision, and preserves women's economic dependency on their abusive affinal kin (Sharma and Gill, 2010: 219). Most women (migrant and non-migrant) cannot contemplate leaving an abusive relationship without having a place to go or some sort of economic resource (Anitha, 2008: 193). The devastating consequences of this rule have left migrant women feeling they have no choice but to stay in an abusive relationship.

Moreover, due to economic destitution, women are sometimes forced to return to an abuser where they may face escalated forms of abuse and isolation (Sharma and Gill, 2010: 220). Anecdotal evidence suggests that in cases where migrant women who are subject to this

rule do leave the marital home, they are forced to rely on social and community networks because of the distance of their natal kin and lack of ‘public support’ (NAWP¹⁴¹, 2003). As seen in Chapter Six, the involvement of community leaders can open women to pressure for mediation. In addition, in cases where women take refuge in other people’s homes, this may expose them to new forms of abuse and control, such as domestic servitude (Sharma and Gill, 2010: 219). Although NRPF affected only the Pakistan-born interviewees, I will also draw on the experiences of the UK-born interviewees to highlight the extent to which all women require economic security and a place to go in order to exit an abusive relationship.

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born Interviewees

Four of the six Pakistan-born interviewees recount being affected by NRPF whilst waiting for ILR applications to be processed. Khalida’s comments confirm the point that women require economic security and safety in order to leave:

I had no place to go, no money to buy food for my children. There was no way I was leaving, nobody was going to help me.¹⁴²

Her point does not highlight an unwillingness to leave, but rather that her socio-economic conditions did not permit her to do so. For Khalida, leaving meant replacing one form of abuse with another perpetrated by the state in the form of economic destitution and, most likely, deportation (Burman and Chanter, 2005: 68). Therefore, if women have access to material resources provided by the state, this may encourage them to seek support and leave. As the situation stands, women who do leave end up sometimes returning because of NRPF (Sharma and Gill, 2010: 220), notable in Meryam’s account at the beginning of this chapter.

Meryam obtained a place in a specialist refuge as the state has a duty to house British-born children and their mothers, irrespective of NRPF. On some occasions, the workers provide women with financial support sometimes from their own pockets or from community-based

¹⁴¹ Newham Asian Women’s Project

¹⁴² Mere pās janeh kī kōī jāgā nahīn thī, pese nahīn the apne bachcho ko khānā dilvane ke-liye. Meh to nahīn janeh valī thī, merā kōī bhī nahīn mādāt karne vāla thā.

donations, but this is not a stable form of support. Many of these organisations experience funding cuts and are also affected by the NRPF rule that gives them no resources to support women (a point to which I return in Chapter Eight). In other cases, women take refuge in other people's homes, leaving them vulnerable to new forms of abuse and oppression (Sharma and Gill, 2010: 219), exemplified by Asma's account in Chapter Six.

Interview Findings: UK-born Interviewees

Similar to this, the UK-born interviewees explain that the fear of economic destitution and 'not having a place to stay' (Naseem) can prevent exit. Naseem explains that although she had natal kin (F) close by for support and refuge, she still 'did not feel secure enough to leave' her husband. Irrespective of the financial abuse Naseem endured, she explained, 'at least I had a roof over my head and food.' Therefore, if leaving entails losing the little financial security that is provided, this makes women stay in abusive relationships.

7.6 Summary

The aim of this chapter was to elucidate the nature of state policies that impact on women's experiences of family abuse in the context of shifting and simultaneous agendas: gender equality and civic integration. The UK Government response that is rooted in the 'right-to-exit' rationale overlooks the conditions that can make exit a realistic choice as well as the psychological costs of exit. This is notable in immigration policies that place a probationary period of two years on women subject to spousal visas, equipping perpetrators with a powerful tool of oppression, where threats of deportation hang over women's heads, creating fear and insecurity. This highlights the manner in which the UK Government's immigration policies are in direct conflict with their gender equality policy.

The importance attached to possessing a visa by the interviewees and natal kin further aids a nuanced understanding of the ways in which this rule serves to reinforce power differentials. In my exploration of the literature, it is clear that UK-born women have been overlooked, which can possibly be attributed to the gendered view of migration. It is not just the level of power that this rule affords to a spouse that needs to be acknowledged, but also the gendered nature of its utilisation to control and dominate. This, however, is an area

that needs considerable exploration and research as there is a danger that the abuse and pressure which UK-born women experience will remain hidden due to the assumption that only women migrate for marriage. Furthermore, the effects of immigration cannot be evaluated or understood in isolation, but as intersecting with additional factors and inequalities such as ideologies of honour and shame attached to divorce, socio-economic factors and the role of natal kin. Thus, it is essential for the UK Government to adopt an intersectional approach, not only when creating policies for South Asian women, but also when evaluating the risk of harm that certain policies can create for women.

In addition to this, the UK Government's DVR that has a high standard of proof and a clause of NRPF fails to recognise the socio-economic factors that maintain women's place in abusive relationships. These policies intensify migrant women's economic dependency by leaving them economically destitute, consequently inhibiting their exit. Women's groups, such as SBS, have argued that the only way forward is for the government to lower the standard of proof and abolish NRPF, which are both attached to DVR¹⁴³ (recommendations I will revisit in Chapter Ten).

A critique of ILR application, raised in this chapter, is that it overlooks the barriers to disclosure as well as the reality that women do not manage to disclose abuse until after they have left the family home, which make meeting the evidentiary requirements of this rule impossible (Anitha, 2008: 194). Anitha (2008: 199) indicates that it is essential to explore the barriers women face to disclosing abuse to service providers. Yet service provision itself also needs attention, for it can be highly variable and inconsistent in meeting South Asian women's needs (Anitha, 2008: 199) – a point to which I now turn in the following chapter.

¹⁴³ For more information of this campaign:
<http://www.southallblacksisters.org.uk/campaigns/abolish-no-recourse-to-public-funds/>

CHAPTER EIGHT

Service Provision:

Conflicting Interests and Failing to Protect

I never used to go out, but if they [service providers] had come on *TV* then maybe I would have found out about them. But, my affinal kin [H, HM] took all *communication* away from me, *TV, Internet, phone*. I would never have found out about them.¹⁴⁴ (Asma Pakistan-born)

Social work gave me a really *hard time* ... all the time threatening to take the kids away, that ‘you are *stress* [stressed] with the kids, you will not *look after* the kids properly’ ... giving me *tension* all the time.¹⁴⁵ (Meryam Pakistan-born)

I got a ‘Congratulations you’re pregnant’. I was shocked, and I remember standing up and sitting back down saying, ‘no I can’t be’, I blurted out, ‘my husband beats me up, I can’t be pregnant’. She [GP] heard me out and then I left. That was the first time I ever told anyone ... but she did nothing about it. (Naseem UK-born)

8. Introduction

In this chapter, I explore three themes that arose from the interviewees’ experiences, as can be seen in the quotes, which provide an insight into factors that can affect and shape women’s help-seeking: firstly, a lack of, or no, awareness of support services and rights (Asma); secondly, the conflicting interests and aims of multi-agency partners that do not serve the best interests of vulnerable women (Meryam); and, thirdly, a ‘failure to see the signs’ (Burman, Smailes and Chantler, 2004: 338), or probe or ask questions (Naseem). Researchers such as Burman, Smailes and Chantler, (2004: 338) and Thiara and Gill (2010b: 54) argue that service provision responses of this kind, or the lack of it, are due to cultural stereotypes, a fear of being labelled racist, and a lack of understanding of the issues that frame service responses.

¹⁴⁴ Meh bahār nahīn jāī thī par agar voh *TV* pe āthe to mūjhe patā lag jatā. Par mere sūsrāl ne hār *communication* mūjhse le-liyā thā, *TV, Internet, phone*. To meh kabhī nahīn jantī in-ke mutāliq.

¹⁴⁵ *Social work* ne mūjhe bāhot *hard time* diyā ... har waqt bachche chīne kī bāt karte rehte the, ke ‘tūm *stress* mai ho, bachcho ko sāī *look after* nahīn karogī’ ... har waqt voh mūjhe *tension* dete.

The Scottish Government's (2009: 4) multi-agency approach has placed a firm duty to tackle 'violence against women' upon the voluntary and statutory sectors. Amongst its many aims, ensuring women's safety, raising awareness, and the provision of information and advice are at the forefront of the agenda (Scottish Government, 2009: 16). Research studies, however, argue that family abuse is under-reported amongst South Asian women who cannot, or do not, access service provision (Burman, Smailes and Chantler, 2004: 343; Anitha, 2008: 197). As can be seen from the discussions throughout this thesis, a number of factors can constrain women to remain in an abusive relationship, and these can also inhibit access to service provision: cultural issues such as shame; the stigma of divorce (Gill and Mitra-Kahn, 2010: 145); socio-economic factors (Burman and Chantler, 2005: 62); and the 'costs of exit' such as community and family ostracism (Phillips, 2007: 147). Whilst acknowledging these barriers is essential to a nuanced understanding of South Asian women's pathways to help-seeking, this chapter adds to the literature by focusing on the nature of service responses as well as the women themselves.

The following can be determined from research studies together with the interview findings: firstly, a need to highlight the inadequacy of support services in the face of the barriers South Asian women face in disclosing abuse, and women's unawareness of the services; and, secondly, a re-evaluation of the Scottish Government's multi-agency partnership and awareness-raising approach that overlooks conflicting interests, and the nature of family abuse that can make their awareness-raising agenda inefficient. By showing that the nature of service provision, or the lack of it, can intensify women's constraints and vulnerabilities, this chapter adds to the overarching argument of Part Two of this thesis: women's experiences of abuse are nested within socio-political constraints at the macro-level.

8.1 Chapter Outline

I begin with an overview of the Scottish Government's (2009: 6) multi-agency partnership and awareness-raising approach to tackling 'violence against women'. Research studies (Anitha, 2008: 195; Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 42; Thiara, 2010: 161; Jones et al., 2013: 9), and the interview findings show that South Asian women, particularly migrant South Asian

brides, are unaware of services and of their rights. Recognising that the Scottish Government's approach is a Scottish agenda, whilst some of the research studies are UK-based, these findings nevertheless exemplify the nature of family abuse in the form of inhibited access to communication and isolation from the outside world, which governments fail to recognise.

Next, I will explore South Asian women's experiences of service provision. I will show first the conflicting interests that can arise within the Scottish Government's multi-agency partnership approach where the interests of vulnerable women may not be served in practice. This is notable in the workings of social work, whose primary goal of ensuring child safety and family preservation can undermine the safety of women; and, secondly, in the failure of service providers such as the NHS and police 'to see the signs' and validate women's experiences. State intervention is not suitable for any vulnerable women through this framework. This becomes more intensified for South Asian women because of factors specific to them and because service responses are framed by cultural stereotypes and a lack of understanding of the complexity of family abuse.

Finally, the knock-on effect of UK Government policies (multiculturalism, community cohesion and NRPF) provides a context within which service responses are characterised by a scarcity of funds. Furthermore, women's groups are left competing with faith-based and community-based mediation which has developed out of the UK Government's community cohesion agenda (see Chapter Six).

8.2 Summary of Interview Findings

Unawareness of supportive services was a strong feature of the experiences of all the Pakistan-born interviewees, attributed, by them, to factors such as misinformation from perpetrators and poor advertising. This, they felt, was exacerbated by the dependency on perpetrators that is created by their lack of proficiency in English and the nature of family abuse. Naseem was the only UK-born interviewee unaware of service provision: she did not know of services beyond the police that can assist women experiencing family abuse. The remaining UK-born interviewees highlighted language barriers, misinformation and poor

advertising as factors that can cause unawareness of services amongst women, in effect inhibiting access.

Two of the four Pakistan-born interviewees with children had negative experiences of social workers, and feared that their children would be taken away from them, and that they would be left to manage continuing post-separation abuse during child contact. Farah was the only UK-born interviewee from the four who had children to have come into contact with social workers, but she did not discuss her experience of them in any great detail.

Seven interviewees (three Pakistan-born and four UK-born) came into contact with the police, and two UK-born interviewees came into contact with the NHS through the GP and the health visitor. Their experiences were highly variable, and seemed dependent on the empathy and understanding of the individuals who dealt with them. Eight interviewees (five Pakistan-born and three UK-born) accessed specialist women's groups and had experiences that overall were very positive.

8.3 The Scottish Government's Multi-Agency Framework

Family abuse, as seen throughout this thesis, is a complex issue, which cannot be tackled by one profession or organisation in isolation. This growing realisation by researchers and policymakers (Rummery, 2013: 213) is reflected in the Scottish Government's multi-agency framework, which has become a potent means of addressing and supporting women experiencing abuse (Izzidien, 2008: 6; Burman et al., 2009: 13; Scottish Government, 2010: 6). The Scottish Government policy document 'Safer Lives' (2009: 14) gives a specific role to, and lays out the foundations for, multi-agency partnerships to prioritise and tackle 'violence against women', and it holds partners accountable through policy instruments such as the 'Gender Equality Duty'.¹⁴⁶ Domestic abuse services such as women's groups, criminal justice such as the police, NHS and social work are some of the key partners involved in the Scottish Government's multi-agency framework.

¹⁴⁶ 'which expects all public bodies to have due regard to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality between men and women ... it will take into account actions which authorities and agencies undertake to address violence against women' (Scottish Government, 2009: 4).

The policy document provides an overview of the shared understanding and integrated approach to guide the work of all partners. Joined-up policy and practice around what are termed the ‘four Ps’ – ‘Prevention, Protection, Provision and Participation’ – are marked as the key elements of the success of this approach (Scottish Government, 2009: 16). Each partner is integral to fulfilling the common goals of ‘providing appropriate support’ and ensuring ‘protection and safety’ for women and children affected by abuse (Scottish Government, 2009: 16). The duty of the NHS, as part of the Scottish Government’s Healthcare Policy and Strategy, is to address the health consequences of ‘gender-based violence’ via routine enquiry during all aspects of health care (Scottish Government, 2009: 21; 2010: 51). Support and refuge are central to the focus of women’s groups such as Scottish Women’s Aid,¹⁴⁷ to ensure that women and children get the services they need, both from local Women’s Aid groups and from other agencies they are likely to contact, such as social work and housing. Specialist women’s groups, such as Amina: MWRC,¹⁴⁸ work with mainstream organisations to provide Muslim South Asian women with culture- and faith-sensitive services, as well as ensuring they are given the support and advice required by other partner organisations. The multi-agency framework places a duty on all partners to work together towards the common goals of safety and protection, most notably in a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). The MARAC is facilitated by Police Scotland’s specialist Domestic Abuse Task Force, which was launched in 2008 (Burman et al., 2009: 14). The task force actively targets the most persistent offenders whilst also providing protection and support for women through MARAC meetings (Scottish Government, 2009: 19). The purpose is to share information on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of local police, health, child protection, housing practitioners, probation and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sector. The workings of MARAC represent the heart of the Scottish Government’s multi-agency approach: the assumption that no single agency or individual can see the complete picture of the life of an abused woman, but all may have insights that are crucial to her

¹⁴⁷ For more information: <http://www.scottishwomensaid.org.uk/about-us>

¹⁴⁸ For more information: <http://www.mwrc.org.uk/about/4575275819>

safety (CAADA¹⁴⁹, 2012: 1). Groups such as Amnesty International and SBS (2008: 5) have commended the Scottish Government's approach, commenting that, of the devolved governments, only they have developed a strategy with the aim of improving responses and delivering integrated services. Whether or not this framework is suitable in meeting the needs of abused women, particularly South Asian, will be explored later.

The Scottish Government's Awareness-Raising Agenda

Public awareness goes hand-in-hand with multi-agency work. In order for women to utilise these services there needs to be a heightened awareness of 'violence against women' and the available help and support. This is a long-term goal of the Scottish Government, first set out in the (then) Scottish Executive's 'Preventing Domestic Abuse' (2003: 8). The policy document encourages all partner organisations to publicise domestic abuse and outlines the services they provide through a range of resources. The agenda for this approach, as stated in the 'Safer Lives' (2009: 16) report, has been broadened to 'violence against women', with domestic abuse remaining a key issue. For example, Police Scotland have raised public awareness of 'violence against women' through national television adverts, billboard posters and leafleting. Amina: MWRC also launched a similar campaign to raise awareness of their religiously and culturally sensitive helpline for women and girls across Scotland.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, organisations work in partnership to raise awareness of services and share information on vulnerable women. This is notable in ongoing work between Amina: MWRC and Police Scotland. Amina: MWRC facilitates dialogue and information days between the police and South Asian women in order to tackle issues such as institutional racism. It does so in order to dispel the stereotype that all police officers are racist in a bid to increase women's confidence to report crimes.¹⁵¹

The (then) Scottish Executive campaign 'Domestic Abuse: There's No Excuse' is well known for its hard-hitting television adverts providing a powerful message that domestic abuse is unacceptable and needs to be challenged by all (Scottish Government, 2009: 1).

¹⁴⁹ Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse.

¹⁵⁰ For more information: <http://www.mwrc.org.uk/helpline/4575283292>

¹⁵¹ For more information: <http://www.mwrc.org.uk/racial-incident-reporting/4575283344>

The ‘Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline’ number is publicised at the end of the adverts and there is also a website dedicated to providing more information and advice on the support available.¹⁵² Taking the first step towards help and support can be a difficult task for all women experiencing abuse. The uniqueness of this campaign is in its delivery of information and advice directly to women.

Violence against women is, however, under-reported by South Asian women (Gill, 2004; Izzidien, 2008) – a concern also raised in the policy document ‘Safer Lives’ (2009: 22) as an issue that needs to be addressed. Researchers such as Anitha (2008: 197) argue that in order to understand South Asian women’s under-use or non-use of service provision, we must look to factors beyond the women themselves (i.e. ‘cultural’ factors). This is a point which requires further exploration in order to gain a nuanced understanding of women’s help-seeking.

8.4 Unawareness of Services and Rights

I begin with a finding from Abraham’s (2005: 266) study of South Asian women’s experiences of abuse where it is identified that women born in the country are more likely to use services as opposed to migrant women. Although Abraham’s study was conducted in America, it nonetheless has resonance for my work in relation to migrant women’s experiences of abuse. The under-use of services by (UK-based) South Asian migrant women may be because they have no means of knowing the law, the workings of the health service or police in their host country (Anitha, 2008: 195). The findings from SBS (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 42) casework identify factors contributing to unawareness, highlighting that ‘foreign-brides’ lacked ‘Western education’ and sometimes had no formal education at all. This, together with a lack of proficiency in English and the nature of family abuse experienced, can leave women unaware of services and their rights (Anitha, 2008: 195; Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 42). For instance, aspects of isolation and control explored in Part One featured prohibition of access to certain, if not all, forms of communication, such as television, radio, internet and the outside world. In addition,

¹⁵² For more information: <http://www.domesticabuse.co.uk/>

women's lack of proficiency in English, which perpetrators tend to sustain by hindering women from learning English (Jones et al., 2013: 9), can create a constant state of anxiety and dependency for women. Together, these mutually reinforcing factors result in women having very little access to relevant and appropriate information (Burman and Chantler, 2005: 64), particularly where perpetrators (H, HM) who sustain and exploit gaps in women's knowledge become their primary source of information (Dasgupta, 2005: 63; Anitha, 2008: 195; Thiara, 2010: 161; Jones et al., 2013: 9). It is no wonder that researchers such as Sharma and Gill (2010: 212) and Anitha (2008) cite isolation and language as the greatest barriers to women's awareness of, and access to, their rights. The Scottish Government's strategy needs to be conscious that not knowing about support services is a feature of South Asian women's experiences: this is the centrepiece of my own argument that unawareness contributes to women's under- or non-use of services (Thiara, 2010: 161). It is detrimental to the safety and needs of such women to attribute this solely to an unwillingness created by cultural and socio-economic factors.

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born Interviewees

Unawareness of support services was a feature of the experiences of all the Pakistan-born interviewees. The accounts of the Pakistan-born interviewees clarify a lack of proficiency in English as a feature of women's anxiety, which causes unawareness of the 'environment and culture of the country'¹⁵³ (Fatima), intensified by the nature of family abuse. Syma emphasises language to be 'the biggest problem', explaining that when she came to the UK in 2008 she 'didn't know anything, the situation, the climate, the environment is totally changed.' Fatima explains:

Women who cannot speak *English* and are not allowed to go out, *they don't even know how to use the phone* ... the *majority* of girls who come here are *uneducated* and know nothing, so how are they going to know [of services]?¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ 'mūlk kā mahol aur thaur tharīke.'

¹⁵⁴ Aurte jo *English* nahīn bol saktī, bahār nahīn jā-saktī, *they don't even know how to use the phone*. Yahā kī *majority* jo āthī hai *uneducated* hai aur kūch nahīn patā, phir un-ko kese patā hogā.

Fatima shows the vulnerability migrant South Asian women face upon arrival in their host country, as also seen in Dasgupta's (2005: 63) study, as a result of unawareness of the new culture and environment, as well as their lack of competence in the English language. Isolation and lack of language skills are mutually reinforcing factors affecting women's awareness of services. The language barrier can be seen from Khalida's account as a more determining variable, which can inhibit women's awareness of service provision irrespective of isolation. She explains:

If I look at myself, we come from Pakistan and we know nothing ... how can I go [anywhere] if I don't know the environment here? Even if I saw one of these *advert[s]* on *TV*, I can't even read or speak *English*.¹⁵⁵

It can be maintained from this crucial point that the government's advertising campaign could fail to reach any abused woman affected by the language barrier. Even though leaflets and posters are provided in community languages, television adverts and billboard posters, which are more visible, are not. Furthermore, the agenda is premised on the assumption that all women are literate. As can be seen from Khalida's account, this is not the case and can prevent some South Asian and non-South Asian women from learning about help and their rights. These are points which need to feature in the Scottish Government's post-campaign evaluation reports.

Misinformation, introduced in Chapter Seven, is a strong feature of the Pakistan-born interviewees' experiences of family abuse, which consisted of perpetrators misinforming women about the nature or even existence of service provision. Meryam explains:

I was always told [by H] that it would be difficult [to leave]. If you leave the house then this will happen, some [people outside the immediate family] hit so much, and some white people mentally *torture*.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Agar meh apne āp ko dekhū, ham Pakistan se āthe hai, hameh kūch nahīn patā ... meh kese jāo ghī agar mūjhe patā nahīn bahār kā mahol. Agar meh-ne dekh bhī liyā *advert TV* pe, mūjhe *English* parne nā bolnī āthī hai.

¹⁵⁶ Mūjhe hameshā dekhāya jatā thā ke mūshkil ho ghī. Agar tum ghar se niklo ghī to phir yeh ho jāī-ga, kūch to itnā mārte hai, kōī gore zehnī *torture* karte hai.

Her husband also told her: ‘You have no *rights* here [UK], no one will *help* you.’¹⁵⁷ As a result, she explains, ‘the woman does not dare [to leave], thinking no one will help her.’¹⁵⁸ Due to lack of proficiency in English, coupled with forms of isolation and dependency on husbands for information, the interviewees, such as Meryam, did not know about available services and had no means of finding out. The interviewees’ accounts were not limited to these factors alone: the failure of service providers ‘to *advertise* properly’¹⁵⁹ (Fatima) was also raised as a contributory factor to women’s unawareness. The following account from Fatima clarifies this point:

I think more advertising. They [service providers] will provide an *interpreter* if they [women] say we need it ... but if you don’t have the *information* about how to *access* these services then how will you go? I found out about *Glasgow Women’s Aid* for the *first time* after *three years*. I used to work as well, but there were never any *advertisements* for them.¹⁶⁰

Two points can be extracted from Fatima’s account: firstly, the issue is not only the provision of sensitive services for South Asian women, but women’s unawareness of them; and, secondly, if Fatima, who could speak English and was able to leave the house unaccompanied, was unaware of support services, then the likelihood of severely isolated and non-English-speaking women knowing of services is minimal. The interviewees, in this regard, felt the government needs to re-evaluate its current approach in two key ways: firstly, they need to have ‘more *advertising*’¹⁶¹ (Aliyah), and, secondly, an emphasis on training NHS staff is required; points I will revisit as part of my recommendations in Chapter Ten.

It is clear from the interviewees’ accounts that the current agenda for mainstream public advertising overlooks the complex nature of family abuse. Isolation and misinformation

¹⁵⁷ ‘Tumhāre yahā kōī *rights* nahīn hai, tumhe kōī *help* nahīn karegā.’

¹⁵⁸ ‘aurat kī jurāt nahīn hotī, yeh soch ke kōī us-kī mādāt nahīn karegā.’

¹⁵⁹ ‘sāī tara *advertise* kare.’

¹⁶⁰ *I think more advertising.* *Interpreter*, voh to yeh lōg denge agar yeh kahe hameh chāhiye ... lekin agar āp ke pās *information* nahīn hai in tak *access* karne ke-liye phir āp kese jāoge. *Glasgow Women’s Aid* kā mūjhe *first time* patā chalā ke yeh hai *three years* ke bād. Meh kām bhī kartī rahī phir bhī kabhī *advertisement* nahīn hūī.

¹⁶¹ ‘ziyādā *advertising*.’

compounded by lack of English proficiency keep women in the dark regarding available services, or instil a ‘fear’ in women of the host country. The misinformation and isolation was so extreme for some of the interviewees, such as Aliyah, that when she did want to disclose abuse and wanted to access support she did not even ‘know the *number* for the *police*.’¹⁶² This begs the question, how can we reach severely isolated women? The difficulty in this task is clear, and will be explored in Chapter Ten.

Interview Findings: UK-born Interviewees

Naseem was the only UK-born interviewee who was unaware of available support services. But, unlike most of the Pakistan-born interviewees, Naseem was not severely isolated, can speak English and had access to mainstream forms of communication. Naseem attributes this to ‘poor advertising’. She goes on to explain: ‘A simple case. If there’s no advertising, then how was I supposed to know about it?’ Furthermore, it can be determined from this that language and isolation are not the only contributory factors, but the government’s advertising strategy also needs to be addressed, as it is failing to reach women who are not constrained by these factors.

The remaining UK-born interviewees did not experience misinformation, attributing their awareness of support services to ‘being British-born’ (Nazia), being ‘able to speak English’ (Farah) and ‘knowing the culture and the way things are done’ (Aisha). Nazia explains:

I think most of the women that are suffering abuse are women here from Pakistan. There are not very many British-born girls [suffering abuse] because I think they are probably more confident and would walk out of a relationship. There’s a definite big language barrier ... they’re not really aware of the services available to them because they’re so housebound and so restricted to where they can go and who they can meet and see.

According to Nazia, the distinction between the confidence to leave of ‘British-born girls’ and the suffering of Pakistan-born girls is based on an awareness of support services and help, which the latter do not have. However, as I have shown in previous chapters (Six and Seven) practical issues such as economics have greater bearing on women’s leaving. The

¹⁶² ‘*police kā number bhī nahīn patā thā.*’

NHS is mentioned by the interviewees as a route through which this issue can be remedied. Khadija identifies doctors' surgeries and health visitors as services all women access irrespective of isolation and abuse. Therefore, they, Khadija argues, would be 'best placed to equip women with the necessary information.' Furthermore, she claims the best way of reaching isolated women is by raising awareness of support services and help in the places women are most likely to access, such as schools and doctors' surgeries, which may create a pathway to hard-to-reach women. The suitability of such an approach in light of interviewees' accounts that they were prohibited from attending their child's nursery (Aliyah), or prohibited from leaving the home at all (Asma), will be explored in Chapter Ten.

8.5 Experiences of Service Provision

In order to gain a nuanced understanding of women's experiences of help-seeking, as argued by researchers such as Anitha (2008: 197) and Burman, Smailes and Chantler (2004: 333), the adequacy of services needs to be critically explored. In doing so, I argue firstly that, contrary to the Scottish Government's multi-agency partnership framework, most services have conflicting goals and aims which do not serve the best interests of vulnerable women (Hester, 2013: 42; Rummery, 2013: 218). Agencies with differing goals contradict those of other agencies, and then there are also individual agencies who simultaneously pursue separate goals which cannot be reconciled, to which I now turn.

Conflicting Interests

Multi-agency work is essential to achieving women's safety, but the well-intentioned strategy has overlooked the divergent and conflicting goals of partners (Rummery, 2013: 218). In practice, the best interests of vulnerable women may not be served, which may prevent women from seeking assistance, or expose them to different forms of oppression and constraints. Exploring how these dilemmas can manifest in practice, I will utilise social work as a case study as its primary goals of ensuring child safety and preserving the family unit can undermine the safety of women (Anitha, 2008: 198; Hester, 2013: 36). These issues were identified as key concerns by the interviewees. Furthermore, these issues affect

all women, but become more intensified for South Asian women because of factors specific to them.

'Preventing Domestic Abuse', produced by the Scottish Executive (2003: 3), has clear guidelines which tie together policies and practice concerning 'violence against women' with those concerning children's safety from harm and abuse. The strategy highlights domestic abuse as a key issue for local authorities, particularly social workers, responsible for 'providing direct services to women and children' (2003: 7). The Scottish Executive report 'The Need for Social Work Intervention' (2005: 6) identifies the different branches and goals of social work such as abused women's safety and family preservation. Furthermore, children's safety, as laid out in the policy document 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (Scottish Government, 2005), is the main focus of the state, where local authorities, in the form of social work departments, are responsible for ensuring that a child does not suffer significant harm within its family. The social work approach tends to focus on partnership with parents rather than prosecution, with removal of children from their families of origin into public care existing solely as a last resort (Hester, 2013: 41). According to social work policy, child safety is achieved only when the mother leaves an abusive relationship; her failure to do so is seen as 'failing to protect'. Threats of, or actual, removal of children by social workers can follow, partly as a means of 'pushing' women to leave a violent relationship (Hester, 2013: 42). Alternatively, social workers may deem the mother in a violent relationship to be an unfit parent and have her children removed into care (Rummery, 2013: 218).

In light of my study, this approach raises two key issues for me, and for women experiencing spousal abuse: firstly, by pressurising women to leave for the sake of child safety overlooks the constraints that prevent women from doing so; and, secondly, the mother is regarded as responsible for dealing with the consequences of the male abuser's abuse. In effect, the violence may disappear from the picture and the mother who fails to leave the abusive home and spouse then comes to be construed as the main problem (Hester, 2013: 45). In reality, studies reveal this approach to be counter-productive. When local authorities make threats to remove children, which Amnesty International and SBS (2008: 25) argue is common, South Asian women are unlikely to approach social workers

again, or indeed divulge personal details for fear of having their children taken into care. Furthermore, women can be coerced into leaving abusive relationships, as identified in Humphreys and Thiara's study (2002) on South Asian women, before they are ready or without the support they require.

Following on from this approach, women are faced with the issue of child contact with their father post-separation. These contradictory approaches can leave abused woman confused: on the one hand, they are told to leave an abusive relationship in the interests of child safety, and on the other, contact with the ex-partner is also seen as in the child's best interests (Hester, 2013: 45; Radford, 2013: 53). Furthermore, women are still, if not more, susceptible to abuse post-separation (Burman and Chantler, 2005: 70; Thiara and Gill, 2010a, 2010b), a factor which this approach overlooks. Humphreys and Thiara's study (2002) found that 76 percent of the 200 South Asian women they interviewed suffered post-separation violence and more than half had child contact arrangements with an abusive ex-partner where they continued to have serious, on-going problems with the arrangement. Similar research shows how perpetrators utilise children as 'pawns' through child contact to control and manipulate women in a number of ways, such as telling children 'to hit their mothers, disobey them or call the police when they were told off' (Thiara, 2010: 171). In this regard, the Scottish Government in its 'National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People' (2008) had safe contact for children as one of the priorities. This fails, however, to recognise the need to assess women's safety both when making decisions on child contact and when the contact itself takes place. The social work approach needs to allow for an evaluation of women's safety that recognises that it may not always be achieved by leaving, and most certainly will not be sustained by insisting on post-separation child contact with the abusive ex-partner. By exploring the interviewees experiences of social work, I will now show the manner in which these issues become more intensified for South Asian women due to factors specific to them.

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born Interviewees

Children's safety was a concern for the Pakistan-born interviewees. Khalida explains that her children 'feared'¹⁶³ their father:

When he used to hit me, the kids would get scared, they would go quiet. When we used to fight in the house, they would cry.¹⁶⁴

Aliyah's daughter, who witnessed the physical abuse, questioned her father's behaviour, '*Why [does] 'papajee' [father] hit my mum? ... Why [do] you shout on [at] my mum?'* Aliyah explains they (H, HM) would ignore her, telling her to '*shut-up, why [are] you asking that?'* The two accounts highlight the effect on children of witnessing family abuse, confirming the need for child protection and safety. So, I am not, by any means, questioning the need for a focus on child protection and safety in cases of family abuse. Witnessing the abuse, as stated by Women's Aid in their 'Survivors Handbook' (2009: 59), is a form of emotional abuse that is recognised as a 'significant harm'.¹⁶⁵ Its effects can be detrimental to the child's long-term well-being and his/her mental and physical health (Women's Aid, 2009: 59; Scottish Women's Aid, 2010: 1–3). The impact that the process of child protection and child contact have on women's safety, together with the fear of losing their children, need to be brought into question.

Three of the Pakistan-born interviewees came into contact with social work, being told that it was in their best interests to 'separate'¹⁶⁶ (Meryam) from their husbands, as 'it [witnessing the abuse] is not good for the kids' (Khalida).¹⁶⁷ In Khalida's case this was not problematic as it provided her with the exit strategy for which she was waiting. Although

¹⁶³ 'darte the.'

¹⁶⁴ Jab mūjhe mārtā thā bachche dar jate the, chūp ho jate the. Jab ham ghar mai larāyī jugre karte the voh rone lagte the.

¹⁶⁵ s.120 of the Children and Adoption Act 2002, which came into effect on 31 January 2005, recognises that witnessing 'domestic abuse' as a form of emotional abuse that can cause 'significant harm' to a child.

¹⁶⁶ 'ālag'

¹⁶⁷ 'bachcho ke-liye thīk nahīn hai.'

she explained that she was scared that ‘they [social work] might take my kids away’,¹⁶⁸ she described her experience as ‘okay’¹⁶⁹ as they got her a house. Contrary to Khalida’s experience, Meryam explains:

I never told them everything [about the abuse] because I feared they [social work] would take my kids away.¹⁷⁰

Meryam’s experience is indicative of the counter-productiveness of threats to take the children away (Anitha, 2008: 198; Hester, 2013: 42), as women are unlikely to divulge personal details for fear of having their children taken into care (Amnesty International and SBS, 2008: 25). Furthermore, fearing that social workers might take her children, as explained by Meryam, made her feel ‘*pressure* to leave him.’¹⁷¹ However, leaving without any material resources and being subject to NRPF eventually led to Meryam’s return (as seen in Chapter Seven). In such cases, women can face escalated forms of abuse and isolation (Sharma and Gill, 2010: 220).

Child contact tends to be encouraged by social workers and family law courts, something which can create fear and insecurity in abused women (Hester, 2013: 45; Radford, 2013: 53). This is a concern expressed by Aliyah:

They [social work] wanted them [H, HM] to have contact with her [D]. He and his parents were very bad to me. I was *shocked* by this.¹⁷²

This confirms the point made by Radford (2013: 53) that women are left bewildered by this process. Child contact created a context for the perpetrators (H, HM) to utilise her daughter as a ‘pawn’ in order to continue abusing and manipulating Aliyah. They employed tactics, as also shown in Thiara’s study (2010: 171), to turn Aliyah’s daughter against her: ‘Tell everyone, “my *mummy* hits me”. This is not an *issue* now, she is only four’ explains

¹⁶⁸ ‘voh mere bachche na mūjhse le-le.’

¹⁶⁹ ‘thīk’

¹⁷⁰ Meh-ne un-ko sab kūch nahīn batāyā is-liye ke meh dartī thī voh mere bachche na le-le.

¹⁷¹ ‘*pressure* is-se chorne ke-liye.’

¹⁷² Voh chate the ke voh us-se mile. Voh aur us-ke mā bāp ne mere sāth bāhot būrā kiyā. Meh to *shocked* thī is-se.

Aliyah, ‘but, when she gets older, what if she *believe*[s] them?’¹⁷³ Aliyah’s experience exemplifies the concerns and dilemmas that confront women as a consequence of child contact but that are overlooked by the state, and which they are left to manage alone (Thiara, 2010).

By encouraging child contact with the father post-separation, social work is undermining women’s safety. Furthermore, they overlook the socio-economic factors that make leaving problematic as well as disregarding the consequences of leaving (Chapter Six and Seven), in effect, heightening the likelihood of women returning, where they may face escalated forms of abuse and isolation (Sharma and Gill, 2010: 220). These issues become even more intensified for South Asian women who cannot leave an abusive relationship because of immigration policies explored in Chapter Seven (i.e. fear of deportation). In order for a multi-agency approach to work, the values and aims of all partners involved need to be mutual and consistent (Thiara, 2010: 171). In relation to social work, the focus must be on women’s safety as well as child safety, as one cannot be completely, if at all, achieved without the other.

Failing to Protect

In addition to conflicts of interest, research studies indicate that women’s experiences of service responses from the police and NHS are highly variable. In their study of South Asian women’s experiences of services such as the police and NHS, Burman, Smailes and Chantler (2004: 365), argue that culturally mediated responses to domestic violence can overlook or even excuse it on cultural grounds, as a ‘homogenized absence’. This stems, they argue, mainly from a dynamic of ‘cultural privacy and respect’ that conceptualises the community as monolithic and where ‘they look after their own’ (Burman, Smailes and Chantler, 2004: 344); and creates a fear of being labelled racist and culturally insensitive for intervening in what has been deemed to be a private ‘cultural issue’. SBS argue that the UK Government’s multiculturalist agenda, as discussed in Chapters Six and Seven, has shaped this type of response (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 13). Notions of cultural respect,

¹⁷³ ‘Sab ko batāo, “mummy mujhe mārī hai”. Ab to yeh *issue* nahīn hai, voh sirf char sal kī hai, par jab voh barī hōgī, agar us-ne *believe* kar-liyā?’

where matters such as domestic abuse can be viewed as private cultural issues to be resolved by the community and family, not only prevent service providers from doing their work properly (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 12) but also make women's experiences of abuse invisible.

Service providers such as the NHS have been criticised, as in Anitha's study (2008: 198), by South Asian women for not attempting to question injuries. Such women have also reported dissatisfaction with the service due to a failure to deal with the causes of their symptoms, namely mental and physical harm. Furthermore, the NKS study (Jones et al., 2013: 15) documents South Asian women being 'put off' by service providers, such as the NHS, by reports of midwives treating women who cannot speak English in an unpleasant fashion; for example, laughing with each other when the women were trying to give birth. 'Routine enquiry' and a commitment to vulnerable women's safety and care are fundamental to the NHS duty to tackle 'gender-based violence' (Scottish Government, 2009: 21; 2010: 51), yet studies reflecting women's experiences highlight a failure to 'see the signs' (Burman, Smailes and Chantler, 2004: 337) or to ask questions. Women's perhaps cautious accounts are also taken at face value without considering factors that might constrain them from being more open (Wilson, 2006: 127). Furthermore, according to Burman, Smailes and Chantler (2004: 337), cultural and stereotypical views of abuse as 'normal' within South Asian communities can lead to it being viewed as something which can be 'excused' for cultural reasons, or to women being exposed to racist responses when accessing services. Dasgupta (2005: 65) claims that abused South Asian women who access refuges and police are met with racist and cultural assumptions regarding their 'arranged marriages', being told to conform to Western core values 'now that you are here'.

Whilst writing this chapter, the HMIC report 'Everyone's Business' (2014), commissioned by the Home Secretary, was published. Although this report focuses on the police forces in England and Wales, its findings provide an insight into 'police failure to tackle domestic abuse' (Casciani, 2014). Amongst the many 'depressing and worrying' findings (Casciani, 2014), the report is concerned with the 'poor attitudes that some police officers display towards victims of domestic abuse'. South Asian and non-South Asian women reported, according to the HMIC report (2014: 12), not being 'taken seriously', feeling 'judged' and

that some officers demonstrated a considerable ‘lack of empathy and understanding’. Furthermore, South Asian women whose first language was not English, or who were not born in the UK, raised particular concerns around communication: they were not able to understand the police officer and were not able to describe what had happened (HMIC, 2014: 32). In response to these findings, the chief executive of the charity Refuge, Sandra Horley, argues that ‘police failure is just the tip of the iceberg. Women are let down by many different agencies’, and recommends that the UK Government should ‘open a public inquiry into the responses of all state agencies to domestic violence’ (Casciani, 2014). I understood from this report that police failure can also be attributable to a lack of understanding of the complexity of domestic abuse, and the multi-dimensional nature of family abuse (HMIC, 2014: 34). This crucial point sheds light on the often-overlooked fact that police officers may not be capable of recognising the hidden and coercive nature of abuse, particularly when making home visits. For example, a police officer can be met with a dishevelled, panicked woman, and ‘a very gathered gentleman, fantastically well-educated, calm’, claiming, ‘he’d never laid a hand’ on her (HMIC, 2014: 34). Furthermore, in a family abuse incident with multiple perpetrators, police officers may not manage to recognise the signs while being culturally and religiously sensitive at the same time. The HMIC report (2014: 53) recommends that a fundamental review of police training is required that provides police officers with the confidence to deal with a range of complex issues, a point to which I will return in Chapter Ten.

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born Interviewees

Three of the Pakistan-born interviewees came into contact with the police during and when leaving an abusive relationship. Meryam and Aliyah describe their experiences of the police as ‘very good.’¹⁷⁴ Meryam explains:

They helped me a lot whenever I *phone*[d] them, they came immediately and took him away. They made sure the kids and I were okay.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ ‘bāhot achchī.’

¹⁷⁵ Uno ne merī bāhot mādāt kī, jabī meh-ne *phone* kiyā voh foran āye aur voh us-se le bhī jate the. Uno ne dekhā ke meh aur bachche thīk hai.

Aliyah was forced to leave her daughter when she left the family home, as a result feeling ‘worried and *guilty*.’¹⁷⁶ The police, she explains, ‘took her away from the home *safely*’¹⁷⁷ and referred her to Shakti Women’s Aid, advising her ‘get your daughter *through* the *court[s]*.’¹⁷⁸ Both Aliyah and Meryam’s experiences and accounts of the police were of their needs being met, by ensuring their safety and providing them with appropriate information and advice.

By contrast, Asma’s experience shows a different side of the police response that corresponds with the findings of the HMIC report (2014) and the other studies mentioned (Burman, Smailes and Chantler, 2004: 338; Dasgupta, 2005: 65). Asma’s first interaction with the police came at a crucial point, when she was leaving her affinal home. Upon their arrival, she informed them ‘Bilal [H] [pseudonym] is not good to me and doesn’t love me’,¹⁷⁹ to which the police responded, ‘we cannot take you anywhere.’¹⁸⁰ Shocked, Asma pleaded with them to take her out of the house. She was taken to a Travel Lodge hotel but as there was no vacant room in the hotel she had to spend the night in a police cell. She explains her treatment there was ‘*not good*’. When she requested to use the bathroom, they told her ‘there’s a *MacDonald’s across the road*, go there.’¹⁸¹ It is understandable, at such short notice, that getting a refuge place would prove difficult, particularly considering her NRPF status (an issue I will return to later). But to attempt to leave her at a hotel with no money, and the refusal of access to bathroom facilities is indicative of the bad practice cited in the HMIC report (2014: 12): ‘police officers not taking domestic abuse seriously’. Asma explained that she decided to disclose her experiences of family abuse, realising ‘they [affinal kin] would not let me go back [affinal home]. I had no other *choice*.’¹⁸² As argued by Burman, Smailes and Chantler (2004: 337), there are a number of factors that can constrain women from ‘being more frank’. In Asma’s case it was the ‘shame it would cause

¹⁷⁶ ‘parashān aur *guilty*.’

¹⁷⁷ ‘mūjhe *safely* ghar se legāe.’

¹⁷⁸ ‘betī ko *court* ke *through* lenā.’

¹⁷⁹ ‘Bilal thīk nahīn hai aur mūjhse pyār nahīn kartā.’

¹⁸⁰ ‘ham tumhe kahī nahīn le jā-sakte.’

¹⁸¹ ‘*across the road MacDonalds* hai, vahā chalī-jāo.’

¹⁸² ‘voh ab nahīn mūjhe vāpis janeh denge. Mere pās ab aur kōī *choice* nahīn thī.’

for them [affinal kin] and for me.’¹⁸³ The police failed to recognise that women can be cautious when disclosing abuse, and responded by asking: ‘Why didn’t you tell us sooner? Are you *sure* about this?’¹⁸⁴ As shown in the HMIC report (2014: 12), instead of reflecting support and safety, Asma’s account reflects judgement and a lack of understanding of the complexity of family abuse, and the barriers to disclosure that South Asian women face (Anitha, 2008: 189; Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 45; Sharma and Gill, 2010). Furthermore, the diversity of Meryam, Aliyah and Asma’s experiences clarify that police responses are a ‘bit of a lottery’ where some police officers can be ‘brilliant’, whilst others are ‘diabolical and seem to have no understanding of what they are dealing with’ (HMIC, 2014: 50).

Interview Findings: UK-born Interviewees

All the UK-born interviewees came into contact with the police. Their experiences were highly variable, with the police’s responses described as ‘good’ (Khadija); ‘okay’ (Nazia); ‘basic’ (Farah); ‘rubbish’ (Naseem); and ‘doing nothing about it [spousal abuse]’ (Aisha). Nazia explains the police response as:

They didn’t seem like they actually cared. They wanted to do their job, which was to arrest him. But, what about me and what I needed?

This point raises two main issues; firstly, it clarifies the preceding point that multi-agency partners have conflicting goals, which are not always in the best interests of vulnerable women. In this case, the police, more concerned with arresting and prosecuting the offender, overlooked the safety and needs of the abused woman; and, secondly, the lack of empathy demonstrated by the police response, as seen in the HMIC report (2014: 51), can result in women being ‘put off’ by the police, which is also notable in Naseem’s account:

I also started calling the police. I don’t know what the point was, they came in looking bored. I didn’t want to call them again.

¹⁸³ ‘Jo sharam un-ko aur mūjhe lage ghī.’

¹⁸⁴ ‘Tum-ne pehle kyo nahīn batāyā? Tum *sure* to ho?’

She goes on to explain that, ‘on a few occasions they threatened to arrest me because he was complaining about a scratch mark. That’s fine, take me to jail because he had a scratch mark on his neck, not that they checked it.’ Naseem was left ‘disempowered’ and ‘disheartened’ by her interaction with the police, resulting in her not wanting to contact them again. Similarly, Aisha explains:

Police, they take statements and you have a crime reference number, unless there is something physical, they don’t care. I was raped, he financially and emotionally tortured me, what about that? Just because you can’t see it doesn’t mean it’s not happening. They don’t have a clue.

For any service response to be sensitive to the needs of vulnerable (South Asian and non-South Asian) women, an understanding of the complexity of spousal and family abuse is required. By over-focusing on the physical elements of abuse, the police are fundamentally overlooking its hidden and coercive nature (see Chapter Three). Together with a lack of empathy, vulnerable women are left, following a police response, feeling ‘misunderstood’ and ‘judged’ (HMIC, 2014: 51), which can hinder women from contacting them again.

Two UK-born interviewees recount very distinct experiences of the NHS, in the form of the health visitor and GP. The UK-born and Pakistan-born interviewees, discussed previously, identified the NHS as a service with which all women come into contact at some point in their life. Research also indicates that the NHS is a service which most women experiencing family abuse access, whether accident and emergency departments, GP, health visitors or midwives (Anitha, 2008: 198). Thus, it is vital that the NHS provides appropriate health care and onward referral. They must also fulfil the Gender Equality Duty that NHS Scotland is bound by, which states that attempts must be made to question injuries and identify the possible underlying causes of symptoms such as headaches and panic attacks (Wilson, 2006: 111; Anitha, 2008: 198). Nazia’s account involving her health visitor demonstrates the life-changing, and life-saving, effects good practice and understanding can have on women:

She knew that something just wasn't right because when I had my daughter he [H] didn't speak to me the whole time. I couldn't even breastfeed because of the emotions and the health visitor was saying to me, 'are you okay, I think something is wrong?' After that, I started opening up to her. She was like a lifeline for me.

The health visitor, recognising and approaching the issues sensitively, as put by Nazia, 'exceeded all that she could possibly have done, all that she could have possibly given me.' The effectiveness of services in understanding issues, validating experiences, and meeting needs remains crucial to ensuring women have the required resources to deal with abuse, which may or may not involve leaving an abusive relationship. Voicing concern or helping women recognise abuse by questioning abusive behaviour can sometimes be the only response required; galvanising women to leave or deal with the abuse. Failure to provide this simple response can have catastrophic effects on women, as explained by Naseem in her quote at the beginning of this chapter. To aid safety, provide appropriate health care and ensure onward referral, it is vital that services such as the NHS probe, question and validate experiences of family abuse (Burman, Smailes and Chantler, 2004: 337). Failure to do so can result in women being, in Naseem's words, 'disempowered and alone. A feeling of no one is going to help.'

8.6 Impact of UK Government Policies

Just as service responses can shape women's experiences of accessing support services, UK Government policies and agendas also shape the aims, focus and responses of service providers to all vulnerable women. In the remaining part of this chapter, I aim to explore the ways women's groups have been, and still are, severely affected by the UK Government's policies and agendas: community cohesion, NRPF and 'Big Society' (Amnesty International and SBS, 2008: 13; Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 120).

Women's groups such as SBS, Women's Aid and Amina: MWRC have been at the forefront of campaigns to improve the safety of vulnerable South Asian women. These groups provide services such as counselling, refuge, and information and advice, on the basis that they do not turn away any woman seeking help. These groups, however, depend on government and public bodies for their funding. Government policies and agendas have

a large bearing not only on the services they can offer, but also on their existence. For instance, NRPF, leaves women's groups specialising in migrant women's issues economically destitute. UK refugees have historically been and currently are under-funded, dependent on rental income paid to them via public funding such as the housing benefit due to each individual resident (Burman and Chantler, 2005: 67). Women subject to NRPF do not have access to this benefit. This constraint on women's groups, particularly those specialising in migrant women's issues, has left them trying to facilitate the needs of vulnerable women with no resources, which has resulted in many of them being turned away. The Scottish Women's Aid (2008) survey shows that 176 women without recourse to public funds requested support from Women's Aid groups. Whilst 139 sought refuge, only 33 were accommodated, with lack of funding cited as the main cause. In most cases, women are referred onto specialist organisations such as Shakti Women's Aid. Burman and Chantler (2005: 67) argue that most generic services do not consider immigration issues to be of significant concern. In Scotland there are 45 Women's Aid groups, of which only two are specialist services, one in Edinburgh and one in Glasgow. The Scottish Women's Aid survey (2008: 7) identified that 65 of the 139 women contacted the two specialist Women's Aid groups. The groups could accommodate only 18 of these women, again citing lack of funding as the primary issue. They go to great lengths to try to find safety for these women, even resorting to providing accommodation from the groups scarce resources or finding places within the community from personal contacts which, as seen in Chapter Six, can raise a whole new set of dilemmas for vulnerable women. The government and other services have placed the responsibility for ensuring the safety of women subject to NRPF on the already overstretched and under-funded voluntary sector and specialist groups (Amnesty International and SBS, 2008: 15; Wilson, 2010: 61).

Furthermore, these already-scarce specialist women's groups are facing further funding cuts and possible closure as a result of the UK Government's community cohesion agenda (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 18). At the heart of the community cohesion agenda, as seen in Chapter Seven, is the promotion of integration based on the assumption that organising around race and ethnicity encourages segregation (Joppke, 2004: 249). Yet, at the same time, this approach also encourages segregation on the basis of religious identity. The

former view has led to questioning the need for specialist refuges: why do they not just merge with mainstream organisations? (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 118). The latter approach has seen the creation of faith-based community mediation, such as Muslim Arbitration Tribunals discussed in Chapter Six, which overlooks the need for non-faith based women's groups that specialise in migrant women's issues (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 120). Consequently, specialist women's groups have faced closure or funding cuts, or have been merged with mainstream organisations as a means of promoting integration and cutting costs (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 118). I am also concerned that the 'Big Society' agenda of the Coalition Government will continue this trend as a result of major public sector cuts and an over-reliance on voluntary work rather than fully-funded service provision (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 18).¹⁸⁵ South Asian women need greater support and advocacy, including interpreters and outreach services. They need to be able to choose specialist services because they meet their cultural needs, such as food which is familiar to their children and which their religion permits, or to receive counselling in their mother tongue from a counsellor who understands 'cultural issues' (Amina: MWRC, 2008: 2; Wilson, 2010: 68). Nine of the interviewees accessed women's groups, of whom eight accessed specialist groups: Shakti Women's Aid, Amina: MWRC, Hemat Gryffe Women's Aid and DAP. The interviewees described them as 'sensitive to my needs' (Nazia UK-born), giving the interviewees 'strength'¹⁸⁶ (Fatima Pakistan-born) and 'support'¹⁸⁷ (Aliyah Pakistan-born). Meryam's account encapsulates the positive experiences of the interviewees who accessed specialist women's groups:

¹⁸⁵ The 'Supporting People' programme (House of Commons, 2009) claims to offer vulnerable people the opportunity to improve their quality of life by providing a stable environment, which enables greater independence. In reality, it is a cost-cutting exercise, which in the name of 'best value' is closing down specialist refuges or merging them with mainstream organisations and drastically reducing specialist organisations (Wilson, 2006: 67).

¹⁸⁶ 'himat'

¹⁸⁷ 'hoslā'

As much *support* as she [DAP worker] has given me, no one in the world has given me, even my mother hasn't supported me that much. I could speak to her in Urdu and didn't have to *explain* all the *cultural* issues. She understood everything. What I am now is because of her.¹⁸⁸

The government cannot encourage a multi-layered strategy to tackle 'violence against women' when resources are scarce and women's groups are facing closure and severe funding cuts. Even if service providers attempt to improve policy and practice, they are hemmed in by scarcity of funds. In order to effect changes, the UK Government needs to direct more resources towards providing financial security for specialist support services, a point to which I will return in Chapter Ten.

8.7 Summary

Research rightly identifies the cultural and socio-economic factors that shape South Asian women's help-seeking, namely that they cannot readily access service providers (Burman and Chantler, 2005: 62; Gill and Mitra-Kahn, 2010: 145). If the government and researchers focus on the women, the inadequacy of government policies and service responses tends to be unnoticed and overlooked. The Scottish Government's (2009: 16) well-intentioned and commendable approach to tackling 'violence against women' has specified both the need for a multi-agency response because no one profession can tackle the issue in isolation, and a need to raise public awareness of the available support services (Scottish Executive, 2003: 8). This, I have argued in the light of existing research, together with the interview findings, overlooks a number of factors that shape not only women's help-seeking, but also service responses. Firstly, this chapter has explored the often overlooked reality that a lack of, or no, awareness of support services can inhibit South Asian women's access. This, I have argued, is due to the nature of family abuse, characterised by severe isolation and prohibition of communication, exacerbated by factors such as a lack of proficiency in English and 'poor advertising' (Naseem). These findings confirm the need for the Scottish Government to re-evaluate its agenda to include a sound

¹⁸⁸ Us-ne merī jītnī *support* kī hai, dūnyā mai kisī ne nahīn kī, merī ammī nā mūjhe itnā simbalī. Meh us-se Urdu mai bāt kar-saktī thī, us-se kōī *cultural* vālī bāt meh-ne *explain* nahīn kī. Us-se hūd patā thā. Meh ab jese hū us-kī vajā se.

awareness of the nature of family abuse. Secondly, once these services have been accessed, women can encounter responses that are not in their best interests (Rummery, 2013: 218), and they are often met with attitudes which are culturally stereotyping (Burman, Smailes and Chantler, 2004: 344) and lack understanding (HMIC, 2014: 12). The experiences of the interviewees and of South Asian women more generally, as shown in research studies of the police, are highly variable and mixed (Burman, Smailes and Chantler, 2004: 337; Anitha, 2008: 198; HMIC, 2014: 11). All too often, the quality of the service that a woman receives is entirely dependent on the empathy, understanding and commitment of the individual with whom they are faced. A good or bad service response can shape women's future experiences of help-seeking, as well as the manner in which they deal with the abuse by either feeling mobilised or disempowered through their experience. This 'lottery response', which leaves the competence and capability of the service provider almost entirely to chance (HMIC, 2014: 50) is not a suitable approach to dealing with any vulnerable woman. The issues I have highlighted in this chapter strengthen the central aim of this thesis: to push for nuanced and sensitive policy and practice for all marginalised abused women in Scotland. This cannot, however, be achieved without a re-evaluation of the Scottish Government's multi-agency approach. The conflicting interest and aims that can arise amongst and within agencies and that can result in women's interests and safety not always being best served need to be acknowledged and rectified. And, sensitive and appropriate service responses most definitely cannot be achieved without an increase in resources for women's groups, increased training and education for all potential service providers, and a shared understanding of family abuse, achievable only once the UK Government makes this a financial priority (see Chapter Ten).

The aim of Part Two of this thesis has been to show the manner in which the micro- and macro-levels are intertwined and mutually reinforcing. I have done this by critically exploring government policy and how it directly impinges on women's experiences of abuse within the home and the community, and if, when and how they exit. By utilising the development of Shariah Councils and Muslim Arbitration Tribunals, I have shown in Chapter Six that the UK Government's simultaneous and, often, conflicting agendas of multiculturalism and gender equality bolster the oppressive nature of the community.

Similarly, in Chapter Seven I explored the effects of the UK Government's immigration policies on migrant, and UK-born, South Asian women's experiences of abuse and exit: the 'two-year rule', the 'domestic violence rule' (DVR), and the 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF) ruling. I argued that these policies provide perpetrators with new and effective ways to control and coerce migrant women within the home by utilising threats of deportation. I also show that these policies can adversely affect UK-born women with husbands on a spousal visa. Furthermore, DVR, which was put in place to facilitate migrant women's exit from an abusive relationship, exacerbates the economic dependency women endure as a result of spousal and family abuse.

Finally, Chapter Eight explores factors that can shape women's help-seeking, and also service responses. I argue that, due to factors specific to them, South Asian women may not know of service provisions or how to access them. Once these services have been accessed, women can encounter responses that are not in their best interests, and they are often met with a lack of understanding of the specificities of their experiences. Furthermore, service provision responses are also shaped by government policies. The NRPF ruling can leave women's groups specialising in migrant women's issues economically destitute, leaving them trying to facilitate the needs of vulnerable women with no resources.

In light of these discussions, a point which echoes throughout Part Two, and Part One, of this thesis is the state's lack of understanding of the complexity of family abuse that South Asian women experience. For instance, a concession such as indefinite leave to remain, which is dependent on successful contact with service providers, shows that the UK Government fails to understand women's pathways to help-seeking which do not always entail service providers. This point, that the state lacks understanding of the complexity of family abuse, is particularly evident in the conceptualisation of women's 'choices' in response to abuse, which leads me to the final part of this thesis on women's agency.

PART THREE

AGENCY

Preamble

It is clear from my critical exploration of state policy and practice in Part Two, that a woman's exit from an abusive relationship is deemed the most, if not the only, appropriate response to confirm her unwillingness to tolerate violence (Cavanagh, 2003: 232), and the only means by which personal safety (and child safety) can be attained (Hester, 2013: 42; Rummery, 2013: 218). These simplistic assumptions, argues Cavanagh (2003: 233), create binary narratives of victim or agent, passive or active, which overlook the diverse strategies women employ in response to violence. The rationale behind positioning discussions on agency at the end of this thesis is to show that irrespective of all the constraints and pressures discussed thus far, there are possibilities of deploying agency. I aim to show that the manner in which South Asian women respond to family abuse and the strategies they employ are dependent upon their access to material resources and the constraints they face at the micro- and macro-levels, which may not always consist of leaving. The basis for recognising and understanding women's resistance in abusive contexts is complex and requires a deeper exploration of the arguments surrounding the notion of 'agency'. So, I will first outline and critique some of the ways in which agency has been conceptualised by feminists as well as other scholars.

The Turn towards Agency

In response to a long tradition of representing 'third world' women as passive, feminist scholars have highlighted women's agency (Mohanty, 1988) and broadly defined it as 'the socio-culturally mediated capacity to act' (Ahearn, 2001: 112). This 'bare bones' definition (Ahearn, 2001: 112), together with the imprecise nature of agency, however, lends itself to multiple distortions and interpretations (Madhok, Phillips and Wilson, 2013b: 259). Researchers, such as Anne Phillips (2010), have problematised the 'free choice' discourse that characterises feminist conceptualisations of agency as being rooted in classical liberalism and ideas of the Enlightenment (Madhok, Phillips and Wilson, 2013a, 2013b). Phillips (2010: 108–109) argues that individuals are not completely free and unrestrained to

make choices from an infinite variety of possibilities, but are tied to social structures in some manner that shapes ‘choices’ and limits agency. The ‘free choice’ discourse is even more untenable, argues Madhok (2013b: 7), within severely oppressive conditions as it does not reflect the reality that agents exercise agency within particular social contexts, which in turn influences the ‘mode, site and practice of their agency’.

Equating agency with the ethnocentric paradigm of ‘free will’ means that agency is most commonly viewed as synonymous with resistance: ‘agency as inequality’s opposite’ (Hemmings and Kabesh, 2013: 31). Madhok (2013a: 106–107) terms this ‘action-bias’, where agency is almost exclusively understood as the politics of transformation articulated through individual, autonomous acts aimed at directly challenging relations of power. Mahmood (2001: 205) argues that by making agency coterminous with resistance, feminists exclude a whole range of possibilities that could be relevant for understanding agency. Furthermore, it places a high expectation on individuals to demonstrate a direct correspondence between, what Madhok (2013b: 36) terms, their ‘preferred preferences’ and actions. This point is of great interest and benefit to my own exploration of agency in abusive contexts. The difficulties women will incur in translating their preferences into action is clear, and thereby accords precedence to the very real possibility that choices reflected in action might not be the women’s ‘preferred preference’. To put it simply, staying in an abusive relationship may not be a reflection of women’s ‘preferred preference’, which may be to leave, but a reflection of the constraints that have shaped this response. I will now turn to the growing body of scholarly work on agency which provides a richer sense of how women critique their subordination at the micro-level.

Agency under Oppression

Ethnographers such as Saba Mahmood (2001) and Patricia Jeffery (1998) have considered agency and oppression not as mutually exclusive alternatives, but as entwined and implicated with one another. The unsettling of this binary is most notable in Sumi Madhok’s ethnography (2013b) of the normative and political trajectory of developmentalism and rights in northwest India. Madhok (2013b: 38) argues that most lives are constrained in all manner of ways, and so we must shift our thinking from free action to

evaluating speech practices, motivation, desires, and aspects of ethical activity. The basis of her argument is not to preclude the importance of 'agentival' actions, but simply to assert that under social contexts of severe oppression it becomes important to rethink how we conceptually capture agentive behaviour.

The centrepiece of James Scott's (1985: 242) ethnographic study of peasant resistance in southeast Asia is that behaviour which seems to be passive is actually agentive when explored and understood in light of the constraints within which individuals are embedded. In the context of Scott's ethnography (1985, 1992), the peasants know that open resistance would be futile, and realising that they were working within unalterable structures, they engaged in minor acts of backstage resistance and offstage speeches and gestures as their 'weapons of the weak' and 'hidden transcripts'. Similarly, Jeffery and Jeffery (1996: 15) discuss the 'weapons of the weak' to highlight the spontaneous and individual ways women in rural India challenged the structures that oppressed them. These low profile challenges and critiques, such as putting too much salt in the food, were by no means spectacular nor did they challenge the status quo but they confirm, argues Jeffery (1998: 222), that South Asian women have the capacity for agency. To portray them as passive and obedient can provide only a 'seriously lopsided' account of agency (Jeffery and Jeffery, 1996: 15). Equally, Jeffery (1998: 222) and Madhok (2013b: 7) caution against portraying a rosy image of women's agency or of the efficacy of such resistance, which at times can be counterproductive and self-destructive, and/or deployed towards an end that gives feminists much less cause for celebration. This is notable in Deniz Kandiyoti's notion of the 'patriarchal bargain' (1988) within the context of patrilocal households in South Asia.

Kandiyoti (1988) suggests that although a daughter-in-law's compliance in the face of hardships in the affinal home might indicate passivity, she is actually coping within patriarchal constraints by deploying strategies that involve making bargains. It is important to note that 'making bargains' does not usually entail overt discussion with affinal kin of the bargains being made. Rather, young women work out how to behave, and may well be told by their mothers what is wise in the years before their marriage. Some women tolerate negative treatment from affinal kin (HM, HZ), or they may appear to consent to patriarchy

rather than critique it. They endure and comply rather than overtly challenge (Jeffery, 1998: 223) in exchange for long-term financial security and in the hope that they will eventually attain a place of power within the home (Kandiyoti, 1988). The ‘patriarchal bargain’ that women make can, however, reproduce and perpetuate gender arrangements that disempower them in the first place. Derné (1994) highlights how women’s use of tactics such as docility and special treatments of their husbands may improve their situation and achieve some goals but they also reproduce a restricted set of gender roles. In such situations women may be able to ameliorate their situations, but gender inequality will remain untouched. Moreover, as seen in Chapter Four, the patriarchal bargain can involve the coercion and abuse of other women. Is this a result of a patriarchal bargain the mothers-in-law made when they themselves were submissive daughters-in-law? What can we make of such behaviour and can it be deemed as agentic? Interestingly, Jeffery (1998: 223) notes that how agency is read depends on who is reading. Some women may consider the patriarchal bargain to be unproblematic, whilst others may consider it to be of questionable benefit. Chaudhuri, Morash and Yingling (2014: 12) argue that such ‘patriarchal arrangements’ are a reflection of women’s resources, constraints and the potential benefits of alternative outcomes. It is understandable why women are drawn to the ‘patriarchal bargain’, as short-term resistance might risk long-term well-being, and to openly resist may result in a beating.

In my analysis of South Asian women’s articulation of agency within abusive constraints, I make contributions in two main areas: firstly, concerning the limited research and studies on what South Asian women do when faced with abuse, the various strategies employed to manage or resist the abuse, and the constraints within which these strategies are employed; and secondly, with regard to policy and practice conceptualisations of women’s articulation of agency in relation to women’s desires and goals that are irreducible to binaries of survivor/victim, resistance/subordination, and staying/leaving.

CHAPTER NINE

Reframing Agency: Beyond ‘Free Choice’ and ‘Open’ Resistance

I used to think he would *change*. I stopped *complain* [complaining] to him that his mum doesn’t give me clothes. I didn’t make this into an *issue*. I never said to him, ‘give me money’. If I am not getting anything *it’s okay*, at least I am getting food. *I am fine* in the house. I am with my daughter. I stopped *complain* [complaining] so he would stop hitting me.¹⁸⁹ (Aliyah Pakistan-born)

She [HM] started saying to me, ‘you don’t wear nice clothes’. I work [housework] from morning. I don’t have *time*. Then one day, I wore one of my expensive *suit[s]* they [HM] gave me and started making food. Then, my mother-in-law was saying, ‘get back, you will burn your *suit*’. I said, ‘but you’re the one always saying wear your expensive *suit[s]*’. She never said it to me again after that.¹⁹⁰ (Asma Pakistan-born)

It just hit me. My baby in the cradle is either going to grow up watching me go in and out of hospital crying, bleeding, broken bones, bruises ... She grows up watching all of that and/or he starts on her [D]. And I think that was the trigger point. I got up and left. (Naseem UK-born)

9. Introduction

In order to capture women’s experiences and practices in any meaningful way, I concern myself with conceptualising women’s agency and their responses to violence not in binary or oppositional terms, but as suggested by Anne Phillips, Sumi Madhok and Kalpana Wilson (2013a: 8). This involves bringing together agency and oppression upon a ‘common conceptual canvas’ (Madhok, 2013b: 36) to explore how we might be able to conceptualise the agency of women in severely subordinated contexts.

¹⁸⁹ Meh sochtī thī ke yeh *change* ho jāegā. Us-kī ammī agar mūjhe kapre nā le-ke de to meh-ne is bāt pe *complain* karnā chodī. Meh-ne yeh *issue* nahīn banāyā. Meh-ne is-se kabhī nahīn kahā, ‘mūjhe pese dho’. Agar mūjhe nahīn chīz mil-rahī, *it’s ok*, mūjhe khānā to mil-rahā hai. Ghar mai, *I am fine*. Meh apnī bachchī ke sāth hū. Meh-ne *complain* karnā chor diyā is-liye voh mūjhe māre nā.

¹⁹⁰ Phir yeh mūjhe kehne lage, ‘tum kapre achche nahīn pahentī’. Meh-ne sūbā se kām karnā. Mūjhe *time* nahīn milta thā. Ek dīn meh-ne inhīka diyā huwā mengā *suit* pehna aur meh khānā banāne lagī. Phir merī sās kehne lagī, ‘pīche hut jāo tum *suit* jālā doghī’. Meh-ne kahā, ‘par āp to har waqt kehtī hai menge *suit* pehna karo’. Us-ke bād us-ne phir nahīn kahā.

As can be seen by the quotes, together with the growing body of research on agency, women employ diverse strategies in oppressive contexts that range from compliance to more overt forms of resistance (Jeffery and Jeffery, 1996: 137; Abraham, 2005: 253; Chaudhuri, Morash and Yingling, 2014: 13–14). The strategies women engage in are complex, subjective, non-linear and lengthy as processes, shaped by structural limitations and vulnerabilities which, at times, can be counterproductive and self-destructive (Jeffery and Jeffery, 1996: 16; Zakar, Zakar and Kramer, 2012: 3269). Nevertheless, they challenge notions of passivity, and they bring to light agentive behaviour best understood in the context of subordination and oppression that created the conditions of its enactment (Mahmood, 2001: 212).

Before beginning my exploration, I would like to note that such a conceptual shift in our thinking of agency does not preclude the existence of overt acts of resistance. As can be seen in Naseem's quote, and will be shown in this chapter, women do resist openly, for example, by leaving an abusive relationship. I am simply suggesting that, in defining agency, we do not insist on overt acts of resistance that can be difficult to commit within conditions of severe oppression. As suggested by Agarwal (1997: 25), it is 'an error to take the absence of overt protests as the absence of a questioning of inequality'. Furthermore, as I will show in this chapter, women's agency can reinforce the status quo and does not necessarily alter to any great extent the violence and oppression experienced. Thus, this part of the thesis should not be read as downplaying the need for state support, nor should it create complacency in policymakers by reframing women as agents perfectly capable of altering the structures and constraints within which they are embedded. To clarify: I propose that government policy and service-provider practice be shaped by an alternative perspective on women's agency, one that recognises 'exit' as a task laden with difficulties and consequences for abused women, and one that does not insist upon physical acts of resistance to oppression as markers of agentive behaviour. UK Government policies and interventions that insist on 'saving' women from misogynistic and 'backward' cultures discern a 'false consciousness' in those who 'accommodate themselves to what others perceive as indefensible' (Phillips, 2010: 11). Women do not need to be told how to think,

or told how to act. Rather the state needs to facilitate a context within which women can reduce their vulnerabilities, and are able to put their ‘preferred preferences’ into practice.

9.1 Chapter Outline

I shall begin with a summary of the micro- and macro-level constraints explored in Part One and Two of this thesis, to provide the background context within which South Asian women exercise agency.

I shall proceed to show the diverse ways in which women exercise what I have termed ‘compliant’ and ‘resistant’ agency. The former, ‘compliant’, explores the manner in which women, aiming to ameliorate their situation, manage and minimise the abuse; and the latter, ‘resistant’, features low profile and open forms of resistance. I will explore the efficacy of women’s agency in fulfilling their desires and goals, and the factors which prompted them to shift from compliant to resistant agency. I argue that the agentive behaviour of women is shaped by the nature and extent of micro- and macro-level constraints. By exploring the manner in which gender intersects with other forms of oppression, I show that the more marginalised women are, the less likely they are to engage in overt forms of resistance.

9.2 Summary of Interview Findings

All the interviewees wanted to ameliorate their situation whilst staying in the relationship. They engaged in compliant agency, employing strategies such as placating the abuser in order to minimise and reduce the probability of abuse, premised also on the hope the abuser would change. It is clear, however, that the Pakistan-born interviewees engaged in more extreme strategies, such as offering to accept a second wife in the household (Asma).

Subsequently, realising that compliant agency resulted in no long-term gain, such as financial security and minimising the abuse, the interviewees engaged in resistant agency. This ranged from minor tactics such as sabotage; for example, Meryam ruined her sister-in-law’s clothes by feigning ignorance of how to use the washing machine, to more overt acts such as talking back or leaving. All the interviewees eventually left the abusive relationships (by force as well as personal choice) prompted by personal and child safety,

and economics. It is clear from the findings that factors specific to Pakistan-born interviewees, such as language barriers, distance of natal kin and immigration status, increased their tendency to engage in compliant agency for longer than the UK-born interviewees.

9.3 Constraints at the Micro- and Macro-Levels

As shown in Part One of this thesis, there are aspects of abuse that resonate with all abused women, but the specificity of South Asian women's experiences of family abuse lies in kinship structures and immigration status, both of which constrain them to accept abusive relationships in more complex ways. Several intersecting and mutually reinforcing factors, such as culture and economics, can make leaving an even more difficult task for South Asian women than for other women. Agarwal (1997: 17) in her writings on the 'bargaining approach' to intra-familial relations in India argues that a woman's exit options in marriage would depend not only on her economic prospects outside marriage, but on the social acceptability of divorced women and their possibilities for remarriage. Divorce in the South Asian community can carry with it shame and the questioning of a woman's character (see Chapter Two). This can adversely affect natal kin, because the marriage prospects of younger female siblings can be damaged after the divorce of a sister. Thus, along with personal fear and guilt that cultural factors can create, women can also endure pressure from natal kin to stay in abusive relationships and endure them 'silently' (see Chapter Five). In this context, the emotional and 'psychological costs' (Phillips, 2007: 138) of divorce can be too high for women. When we add to this that some women have no capacity for economic survival outwith the relationship, leaving becomes even more unviable. If women were to leave an abusive relationship, where would they go? How can they sustain exit if they have no economic resources? Moreover, for Pakistan-born women, factors such as lack of English proficiency, distance from natal kin and severe economic dependency compounded by structural inequalities such as those produced by immigration law, means leaving can become even more difficult.

In Part Two, I have shown how immigration policies can be a means by which perpetrators control and dominate women (Raj and Silverman, 2002: 381; Joshi, 2003: 150), and can

also create additional constraints that limit women's resources, thereby adding to the unviability of leaving (Anitha, 2008: 190). When women do eventually leave or are contemplating doing so, they can be faced with inadequate and racist service responses as highlighted in Chapter Eight (Anitha, 2008: 198). Thus, at the macro-level women, particularly Pakistan-born women, are faced with new forms of hurdles and oppression that can either put them off utilising services, or make them return to an abusive relationship. Furthermore, leaving may mean entering into an unknown society where they are unable to communicate or be understood, with little or no access to economic and/or familial support, and where they may be met with racism and hostility. Thus, should a woman decide not to leave a family, the difficulties she faces there are offset by the security it provides.

Studies, together with my own research, show that women employ a number of strategies in an abusive relationship irrespective of these constraints (Abraham, 2005: 254; Chaudhuri, Morash and Yingling, 2014), which the next part of this chapter will explore in terms of 'compliant agency and resistant agency'. Research studies show that women can move back and forth between strategies, constantly evaluating their options, resources and limitations (Zakar, Zakar and Kramer, 2012: 3292; Hayes, 2013). Thus, these strategies must not be understood in isolation, but understood in the context of the multiple strategies women use in a relationship (Abraham, 2005: 254). I argue that women's agency is best understood as a decisional balance of weighing the pros and cons of 'choices', where the benefits of ending the relationship are weighed against the cons of internal and external constraints. Although exit may not be the first 'choice' women make, or ever be their choice, it must not be assumed that leaving is not women's 'preferred preference'. Rather women's decisions must be viewed as a reflection of the aforementioned constraints in which they are embedded, which does not always make exit a viable or even a safe solution.

9.4 Compliant Agency

Managing the Abuse

Abraham (2005: 253), from a South Asian migrant perspective, alerts the reader to the

subtle manner in which women ‘strategically negotiated’ within the cultural and structural constraints to end the violence perpetrated against them. She clarifies ‘hiding, avoidance and silence’ as ‘forms of resistance’ that are undertaken in order to manage the abuse. The most common strategy employed by women is ‘placating and avoidance’ (Abraham, 2005: 256), or what Zakar, Zakar and Kramer (2012: 3269), in their study of women’s agency in Pakistan, term ‘emotional-focused strategies’. This is achieved by doing what the abuser wants, such as praising him, apologising to him, wearing the clothes he wants, cooking what he desires, and so forth. Placating, argues Abraham (2005: 257), tends to be coupled with avoidance, which consists of minimising the time spent with the abuser, by going quiet, and leaving the room. Cavanagh’s (2003) research paper, which draws on data from interviews with 136 women partners of abuse and is not specific to South Asian women, indicates similar findings to those of Abraham (2005). Cavanagh (2003: 237) documents similar strategies employed by women in general to placate the abuser, which she terms ‘doing gender’. It can be determined from this term, and her description of it, that women often respond to violence in ways that present no direct threat to a man’s overall authority and power.

Zakar, Zakar and Kramer (2012: 3270) argue that unobservable and emotional efforts tend to be categorised as passive acceptance or acquiescence. However, as Agarwal (1997: 24) notes, the appearance of compliance can reflect a survival strategy ‘stemming from the constraints on their ability to act overtly in pursuit of personal interests’. Chaudhuri, Morash and Yingling (2014: 13) suggest that these methods and tactics may be best understood in the context of the ‘patriarchal bargain’ framework, where women take active steps such as being ‘quiet, agreeable’ and employing ‘avoidance’ in exchange for not being abused and for being financially supported. As outlined earlier, such strategies are counterproductive as they reinforce the gender inequalities and patriarchal systems that abusers may be trying to impose on women. But, in reality, women with no alternative options have no choice but to employ such strategies. Factors such as socio-economic resources, language and culture compel women to find ways to resist within the constraints they encounter, a type of resistance that does not fit into mainstream understandings of agency. Furthermore, this strategy may be best understood in light of women’s desires and

motivations, which may be to ameliorate their situation without having to leave an abusive relationship; and to avoid antagonising the abuser, which would be a possible consequence of overt forms of resistance, and could lead to violence or even divorce (Zakar, Zakar and Kramer, 2012: 3269).

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born Interviewees

The Pakistan-born interviewees' response to family abuse was shaped largely by the circumstances of the abuse, cultural factors, and their assessment of the available options (Zakar, Zakar and Kramer, 2012: 3269). They believed that staying and ameliorating their situation was the most viable, if not only, option.

Aliyah's account at the beginning of the chapter is interesting here. Aliyah's unhappiness with the lack of financial support, and the refusal by her affinal kin (H, HM) to provide basic necessities such as clothing and food, was a source of marital discord that often led to spousal abuse and verbal abuse by her mother-in-law (see Chapters Three and Four). Recognising this as a catalyst for the abuse, Aliyah's tactic of endurance and avoidance was to take the cause for marital discord out of the picture. In other words, by not requesting basic necessities Aliyah assumed and hoped that this would inevitably mean minimising the abuse. A sense of self-placating can also be understood from Aliyah's account, where she can be seen as trying to convince herself that the good she has (her daughter) outweighs the bad (the abuse). Aliyah's approach was framed and shaped by her perception, as seen in Chapter Eight, that the abuse she experienced was offset by the security her marriage offered, exemplified by a roof over her and her daughter's heads. Leaving was not an option. Improving the situation was the only means by which Aliyah could survive, and avoidance was a means to this end.

Interestingly, all the interviewees had 'hope' that with time the abuse would stop and that the abuser would change. Asma's account touches on hope as a means of survival, as a way to manage one's mental and emotional state to endure the context within which one is embedded:

I always thought, if I just do what he wants he will change, but to be honest I knew he wouldn't. I just needed to have a bit of hope.¹⁹¹

If women hoped there was, as you might say, a light at the end of the tunnel, such as change, then this would probably make their arduous pathway of avoidance and agreeability a bit easier to follow through.

Along with tactics such as staying quiet, it is clear from the interviewees' accounts that women in abusive contexts may directly negotiate with their abuser in exchange for some long-term benefit. This is a feature that is notable in Asma's account:

I wanted to save my *marriage*. I was even ready for him to have another wife. I told him to marry her [H's ex-girlfriend] and bring her home. I thought, let me give him this *option*, maybe he will change.¹⁹²

The reason for this she explains further: 'I was doing it for survival, [so] that he would not send me back to Pakistan, [so] that my sisters could get married properly.'¹⁹³ As shown by Chaudhuri, Morash and Yingling (2014), women's behaviour may seem passive and to signal acceptance of the abuse, but it is actually a reflection of women's manoeuvring within cultural and structural constraints, as exemplified by Asma's account.

Acknowledging the consequences of leaving her husband, Asma made what was a conscious decision to make the abusive marriage as enduring and safe as possible. It also shows that the immigration factor, specific to Pakistan-born women, not only immerses them further in abusive relationships compared to the UK-born women, but causes more extreme and overt forms of compliance and bargaining.

Interview Findings: UK-born Interviewees

As with the Pakistan-born interviewees, the UK-born interviewees wanted to 'make the marriage work at any cost' (Naseem). The UK-born interviewees engaged in tactics that

¹⁹¹ Meh hameshā sochtī, agar jo chatā hai meh karū voh badul jāegā, par agar meh such kahū mūjhe patā thā ke voh nahīn hogā. Mūjhe sirf ūmīd chāhiye thī.

¹⁹² Meh apne *marriage* ko bachānā chathī thī. Meh yahā tak tayār thī ke voh us-se shādī kar-ke us-se ghar leāye. Meh-ne sochā meh is-se yeh *option* detī hū, kya patā yeh badul jāe.

¹⁹³ 'Meh guzārā ke-liye kar-rahī thī, voh mūjhe Pakistan na vāpis bhejje, ke merī baheno kī thīk se shādī ho-jāe.'

reflected their management of the abuse that are similar to those illustrated in the findings of Abraham (2005) and Chaudhuri, Morash and Yingling (2014). Naseem explains: 'I just toddled along and did whatever he said.' She did not put up a fight, nor challenge his behaviour. Instead, Naseem explains: 'I just avoided him, went quiet, didn't speak to him much.' Interestingly, this highlights women's realisation of what triggers the abuse, and, in order to minimise the abuse, they consciously attempt to eliminate the trigger. Nazia explains:

There were a lot of arguments ... I just kept myself busy because I was always doing things for him. Just kept out of his way. You know, I thought, if we didn't see each other much then he doesn't have an opportunity to hit me.

Nazia felt firstly, by doing 'things' for her husband, such as applying for his visa and cooking him nice food, she is, as Cavanagh (2003: 237) illustrates in her study, keeping the abuser happy in order to divert the violence. She is also employing avoidance as a tactic to keep out of her husband's way and not provide him with an opportunity to abuse her. The UK-born interviewees, such as Naseem, attribute this form of compliant agency to 'hope that he will change.' This was a factor, as it was for the Pakistan-born interviewees, which was largely recounted by the UK-born interviewees. Nazia explains:

I really wanted to make it [the marriage] work and at the time I didn't even have any children. I did everything and anything to make him happy. I just hoped I suppose that maybe one day he will change. If I do what he wants he will change.

Nazia, like most of the interviewees, hoped that in exchange for 'good behaviour' her husband would stop abusing her. This is not specific only to Pakistani women or South Asian women; 'hope that he will change' is something which most women experience when immersed in an abusive relationship (Cavanagh, 2003: 236). This is a point clarified by Khadija: 'I think a lot of girls go through that [hope], that maybe he will change, it will get better ... maybe he is telling the truth this time ... So there's always hope.'

Religion

As outlined earlier, women employ multiple strategies in an abusive relationship. Research studies (Shaheed, 1998; Zakar, Zakar and Kramer, 2012; Chaudhuri, Morash and Yingling, 2014) and the experiences of the interviewees show the manner in which religion can be utilised as part of women's agentic behaviour; for instance, to carve out spaces within power structures that tend to be dominated by men. This finding is particularly interesting and important as it epitomises the diversity of women's agency. This diversity does not always fit into the strand of feminist analysis of agency that views religion as a primary factor in women's oppression (Shaheed, 1998: 153). However, the interviewees' use of and perception of religion do not echo such a view (see Chapter Six).

Shaheed (1998: 153) argues that, from the perspective of women in Pakistan, religious practices, such as prayer, give a sense of communion and peace that, aside from the spiritual and psychological aspects, also provide a break from daily routines and give women a space which is completely theirs. Katy Gardner (1998: 203) draws the reader's attention to the ways in which religious practices such as veiling and fasting are a means by which women's respect and standing within their conjugal household can be enhanced. Zakar, Zakar and Kramer (2012) and Chaudhuri, Morash and Yingling (2014) demonstrate the use of religion in a family abuse context, showing how women draw on patience and physical acts of worship as a means of dealing with abuse. Zakar, Zakar and Kramer (2012: 3282) highlight the courage, hope, strength and patience to seek 'out-of-the-box' solutions that women attained from engaging in religious practices.

The concept of patience as agentic leads me to Saba Mahmood's ethnography (2001, 2005) of the 'piety movement' in Egypt. In recognising situations where women feel they cannot affect or reform the oppressive situation and so are forced to endure it, Mahmood (2001, 2005) explores agency in greater depth. She draws on the capacity to endure, suffer and persist as agentic, and provides examples of patience experienced by the women she studied. Patience can be seen as passive and inactive, but Mahmood (2005: 175) argues 'this does not mark a reluctance to act, as it can be a site of considerable investment, struggle and achievement'. Utilising researchers' theoretical frameworks such as Mahmood's (2001, 2005) and applying them to one's own research must be done with

caution. Mahmood (2001: 222) comes to the conclusion that suffering is agentic in the context of Egyptian women who, for example, have to endure taunts for being unmarried at a certain age. The same cannot be said of victims of family abuse, as the context of their suffering (e.g. physical, financial and sexual abuse) is completely different, and thus a similar framework cannot be directly applied. An aspect of Mahmood's study that resonates with my own, however, is the concept of patience as agentic. Viewed as part of the multiple strategies women employ, patience allows women to persist in their aim. It can also be seen as a form of 'hope' as discussed previously. In a family abuse context, to persist can be associated with engaging in tactics to manage and reduce the abuse. Thus, faith and the patience and solitude it evokes in women cannot be understood in isolation from other strategies, and nor can it be reduced to passivity. It is one of the many means by which women aim to reach their goals and desires, and is notable in the interviewees' experiences.

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born Interviewees

Four of the six Pakistan-born interviewees cited religion as a source of solace and strength. 'Sabr [patience]' was cited by Aliyah, Asma and Meryam, and achieved by praying to God. Patience, however, was not employed in order to accept the abuse, but it facilitated women's hope for change and their ability to persist in achieving their goals and desires, as is notable in Asma's account:

I prayed a lot for God to help me, to give me strength so I could tolerate it.¹⁹⁴

Similarly, Aliyah explains that she prayed regularly to God in an attempt to gain 'patience and strength to live like this.'¹⁹⁵ The level of physical and mental exertion that must be involved in compliant agency can be appreciated here: to be on constant guard and watchful of one's behaviour and speech, not showing one's true feelings or emotions of unhappiness and discontent. The interviewees did not seem complacent about the reality of religion as a form of support Meryam explains:

¹⁹⁴ Meh-ne Allah se bāhot duā mangī voh mūjhe himat de is-se bārdāsh karne ko.

¹⁹⁵ 'sabr aur himat ke meh ese jī-sakū.'

I knew that praying to God wouldn't mean he would stop hitting me. I just liked it, it made me feel good, it gave me a lot of peace and hope that maybe, one day, he will change.¹⁹⁶

In the face of constant abuse and oppression both at the micro- and macro-levels, with no family support or comfort, religion, as explained by Meryam and illustrated in Shaheed's study (1998), allows women to carve out a space for themselves. It allows women to attain comfort and solace in the face of severe oppression, loneliness and abuse.

Interview Findings: UK-born Interviewees

Three of the UK-born interviewees spoke of religion in a similar way to that of the Pakistan-born interviewees, namely through 'prayer' (Aisha), 'solace' (Farah) and 'patience' (Khadija). Religion gave the UK-born interviewees strength to fulfil their aims and desires, particularly to gain patience in order to conceal their true feelings and desires in order to placate the abuser in an attempt to minimise the abuse. Farah explains:

I was praying and turning to God to give me strength to help me through this situation.

Interestingly it was the case for some of the interviewees that their 'imān [faith]' strengthened as a result of the abuse. This is most notable in Khadija's account:

My imān [faith] strengthened. I did my *salahs* [prayers] more regularly and started wearing the [head] scarf, and so I did become stronger in my faith and that really helped. It gave me a lot of comfort and patience to deal with the situation.

Khadija's physical practice of faith, manifest in wearing the headscarf, and acts of prayer, became a source of marital discord. Khadija did not, as she did in regard to other things, placate or please her husband by stopping. Her faith progressed to the point where she wanted to go on Hajj, knowing that her husband would react 'very badly.' Khadija's following explanation of the nervousness she felt in discussing her intentions of going on

¹⁹⁶ Mūjhe patā thā ke Allah se duā kar-ke woh mūjhe mārṇā nahīn chor degā. Mūjhe achchā lagtā thā, mūjhe achchā mesūs hotā thā, is-se mūjhe bāhot sakūn miltā thā aur ūmīd ke kya patā ek din yeh badul jāe.

Hajj with her husband represents the making of subtle resistance as opposed to compliant agency:

I put it to him, what if I wanted to go to Hajj ... and he didn't believe me, that I was going to go ... I booked up with my mum and I said to him eight weeks before and he wasn't happy. He knew it is my Islamic right to go, and it would be un-Islamic of him to stop me.

Khadija's account highlights that authentic Islamic teachings and rights can create a basis for challenging abusive behaviour. The effectiveness of this strategy is, of course, determined by the abuser's religiosity and their understanding of authentic Islamic doctrine. Furthermore, how likely is it that a man would stop abusing his wife if she claims that, according to Islamic law, abuse or refusing her trip to Hajj are against her human and marital rights? However, Khadija's preceding account exemplifies that if women are educated in Islamic rulings and their abusive spouses give merit to such rulings, it can be utilised as a strategy to negotiate. Khadija, through attendance of Islamic classes and courses, was aware that according to Islamic rulings it is frowned upon, if not forbidden, to prevent anyone from performing Hajj. Thus, knowing her husband would be unhappy at the prospect of her travelling without him, as well as performing Hajj before him, Khadija claimed her husband was threatened by her religious advancement. Knowing that he could not (Islamically), and did not, voice his annoyance at her going, however, gave Khadija confidence to propose her intention to him.

A question that remains to be asked is whether compliant agency made any difference to the abuse? These strategies, particularly those that resonate with the 'patriarchal bargain' framework, did not alter the structures of oppression in which the interviewees were immersed, nor did it affect the nature or extent of abuse. Nevertheless, these strategies show that in the face of abuse women are constantly grappling with structural and cultural constraints and with their own vulnerabilities to attain safety and security.

9.5 Resistant Agency

Research demonstrates that women are constantly involved in evaluating the efficacy of their strategies, and can engage in resistant agency to demonstrate their discontent with their abuser's behaviour (Zakar, Zakar and Kramer, 2012: 3285; Chaudhuri, Morash and Yingling, 2014: 14). This can include minor low-profile acts that challenge the abuser's control (Zakar, Zakar and Kramer, 2012: 3269). There are several factors that can induce this shift from compliant agency to resistant agency, or what Chaudhuri, Morash and Yingling (2014: 14) term 'breaking with patriarchy'. Abraham (2005: 257) notes that at some point in the relationship South Asian women realise that compliant agency is not always, if at all, effective and that there may be no long-term benefit; for instance, in relation to financial security and reduced levels of abuse. Zakar, Zakar and Kramer (2012: 3288) label compliant agency a 'wait and see' approach, where women do not actively resist violence at the beginning of their marriage as they need some time to understand and analyse the situation.

Mainstream domestic abuse literature highlights fear for their children's safety as mobilising women either to resist the abuse in more overt manners, or simply to leave abusive relationships (Dobash et al., 1999). A change in circumstances can also motivate women. As seen in Chapter Eight, gaining a visa may provide South Asian women with the confidence and encouragement to engage in resistant agency, for example, by leaving an abusive relationship. There is not a great deal of research in this area, specifically in the context of South Asian women. It is difficult to understand why people do what they do, or why they make certain decisions at specific times in their lives. In order to gain a nuanced understanding of women's strategies, the remaining part of this chapter will explore South Asian women's engagement in resistant agency based on their own accounts, and the factors that may have contributed to their change of strategy.

Subtle Resistance

Like compliant agency, subtle resistance reflects women's realisation that they are working in unalterable structures and so they do not engage in grand overt acts of defiance. Subtle resistance, as documented by the interviewees, resonates with Jeffery and Jeffery's research

findings (1996: 15) where women engaged in sabotage such as putting too much salt in the food or refusing to make food, as a way of displaying their dissatisfaction with structures of subordination and control. Unlike compliant agency, however, engaging in subtle resistance is not to please and placate the abuser but to signal dissatisfaction with their situation, which may potentially antagonise the perpetrator.

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born Interviewees

All the Pakistan-born interviewees eventually employed subtle forms of resistance because, as shown by Abraham (2005: 257) and Chaudhuri, Morash and Yingling (2014: 14), they could not see any benefit in compliant agency. This is evident in Aliyah's account:

When I saw that he wasn't going to change and that he would always hit me, I thought that's it, *enough*. So, I didn't *care* as much any more.¹⁹⁷

This quote could be understood as Aliyah resigning herself to being abused, but she had actually recognised the inefficacy of compliant agency, as demonstrated by the lack of change in her husband's abusive behaviour. Scott (1985: 29) argues that the ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups avoid direct confrontation with authority or elite norms, as they know such resistance will be futile, or will result in dire consequences. Thus, they engage in subtle acts, as exemplified in Asma's account at the beginning of this chapter. Asma contested her mother-in-law's incessant taunting by feigning ignorance. This form of resistance is appealing to women as it allows them to challenge certain types of oppression and abuse in a manner that neither exposes their intentions, nor places them at risk of abuse.

Furthermore, Scott (1985: 34) notes that powerless groups show their discontent by doing work carelessly and inefficiently, notable in a tactic employed by Meryam. As shown in Chapter Four, Meryam felt over-worked by affinal kin (HM). In an attempt to challenge this, Meryam decided to ruin their laundry by also feigning ignorance of technology: 'One

¹⁹⁷ Jab meh-ne dekhā yeh nahīn badlegā aur yeh mūjhe hameshā māregā, meh-ne sochā bās, *enough*. To phir meh itnā *care* nahīn kartī thī.

time I ruined their [HM, HZ] clothes in the *washing* [machine].¹⁹⁸ Meryam explains how affinal kin taunted her for not being able to speak English properly, calling her ‘*stupid*’ and ‘*crazy*’. Meryam used these very taunts and insults to her own benefit claiming, as a result of not being able to speak English and being ‘*stupid*’, she was unable ‘to read the *instructions* [for the washing machine] properly.’¹⁹⁹ It is clear that these strategies may provide short-term gain, and inhibit certain forms of oppression such as taunting, but they did not alter the nature of abuse, nor did it open up many more spaces for manoeuvre within the marital home.

Interview Findings: UK-born Interviewees

Like the Pakistan-born interviewees, the UK-born interviewees realised the inefficacy of compliant agency. Nazia explains: ‘If he is gonna hit, he will hit.’ In response, the UK-born interviewees also engaged in subtle resistance. The parallel between the Pakistan-born interviewees and UK-born interviewees in this regard is the desire to ameliorate their situation whilst staying in the abusive relationship. The UK-born interviewees, however, engaged in subtle resistance that was more obvious and open, and thus exposed them to greater risk of abuse. Let us take Farah’s (H1) following account as an example:

I never cooked anything that day. He needs to know there is no money and I’m having to go to my mum’s to beg for food. Why should I? I didn’t want to do that. I wanted to show him the consequences of his actions [gambling], that there’s no food in the house.

Not cooking dinner in response to her husband’s failure to support the family financially was not a grand act of resistance by Farah, but it was also not discreet, as is also notable in Naseem’s account:

I’ve always had a survival instinct, so irrespective of how many times he would knock me down on to the floor, I kept getting up. That would annoy him, she’s not staying on the floor, because I kept getting back up and that has always been within me, this survival instinct that I’ll get up and stand on my own two feet. Irrespective of what I was going through and how much I was aching physically and mentally.

¹⁹⁸ ‘Meh-ne ek dafa un-ke kapre hārāb kar-diye *washing* mai.’

¹⁹⁹ ‘*instructions* sāl nahīn par-sakī.’

Jeffery and Jeffery (1996: 16) describe such acts as counterproductive: they argue, by not cooking food women themselves will also go hungry. Both Farah and Naseem endured physical violence as a result of their actions. Farah explains, 'he became very angry and violent, grabbed me by the throat and tried to stab me.' Similarly, Naseem explains not staying down during a beating 'would annoy him' and so 'he would continue hitting.' The interviewees also engaged in more overt forms of resistance which challenged the perpetrators' behaviour, either by talking back or telling others of the abuse.

Challenging the Abuser

Women can become increasingly reluctant to endure abuse and, as argued by Cavanagh (2003: 239), 'play by his rules', particularly when they see no long-term gain in doing so. Women's attempts to 'do something' can involve deploying a range of different, more challenging responses including 'talking back', 'hitting back', and 'telling others of the violence' (Abraham, 2005: 257–259). Talking back includes all forms of verbal resistance; it involves questioning the abuser's attitude and behaviour and telling him to stop the abuse. It is a point at which women refuse to remain silent, where all previous efforts have been unsuccessful. 'Talking back' is an important strategy of resistance because it voices women's resentment at their treatment and challenges their oppressor's power and control. Abraham (2005: 259) and Zakar, Zakar and Kramer (2012) argue that women can defend themselves by hitting their abuser back. The effectiveness of this strategy is highly questionable because of differences in physical strength. It is no wonder that Abraham (2005: 259) goes on to show that this strategy was least used amongst her interviewees (South Asian migrant women). Furthermore, these acts are not without risk as there is a greater chance of exacerbating violence and antagonising the perpetrator than putting a stop to the abuse.

Telling others about the violence is the most popular strategy employed by women in relation to challenging the perpetrator. Women told their families and friends – 'going public' as Cavanagh (2003: 240) terms it – in order to shame the perpetrators and exert pressure on them to 'own' their behaviour. This tactic may be difficult for migrant South Asian women who are severely isolated and lack social networks (Dasgupta, 2005).

Abraham (2005: 263) argues that irrespective of these constraints, South Asian migrant women in her study sought the assistance of others, including the perpetrator's kin. This may not be feasible in a family abuse context where affinal kin can also perpetrate and instigate abuse.

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born Interviewees

As shown by Abraham (2005: 259) and Cavanagh (2003: 239) 'talking back' was the most employed strategy by the Pakistan-born interviewees. Khalida explained: 'I said to him many times, "stop drinking alcohol, don't hit me".'²⁰⁰ Similarly, Aliyah recounts 'talking back' to her mother-in-law who, 'would always speak about them [natal kin]'.²⁰¹ In response to this, Aliyah explains: 'One day I said to her, "I am here so do it to me, you don't have the *right* to say it about my *family*".'²⁰² My impression of Aliyah and Khalida was that they are timid and introvert, and fearful of their affinal kin (H, HM). Out of all the interviewees, they came across as the least likely to challenge the perpetrator's behaviour, and they faced the most extreme constraints. Yet, towards the end of their marriages both challenged the perpetrator's behaviour by 'talking back'. They both attributed this to similar situations arising. As Khalida explains:

too much had happened. If I am doing everything and he is still hitting me, *then* what is the point? It's better that I speak up.²⁰³

In other words, as argued by Abraham (2005: 257), once some abused women realise that placating and pleasing the perpetrator is of no benefit and effects no change, they resort to more open and challenging strategies. Syma explains that she endured her mother-in-law's abusive behaviour because, 'my husband was good with me.' Once she realised he was

²⁰⁰ 'Meh-ne us-se bāhot dafa kahā, "shārāb nā pīo, mūjhe muth mārō".'

²⁰¹ 'hameshā un-kī bāte karte the.'

²⁰² 'Meh-ne ek din un-se kahā, "meh yahā hū to mūjhe karo, tumhe yeh *right* nahīn hai ke tum merī *family* ko kaho".'

²⁰³ bāhot kūch ho-gyā thā. Agar meh sab kūch kar-rahī thī aur voh phir bhī mūjhe mār-rahā hai, *then* kya fāīda? Bhetar hai ke meh bolū.

having an affair, however, she began challenging her mother-in-law and her husband's behaviour:

I confront him [about the affair]. 'Why you do this to me? I stuck by you, for what? Stop this now and tell your mum to change her behaviour to me'.

The interviewees also began telling others of the abuse. Asma told her sister in Pakistan about the abuse:

I told my *sister*, 'they [H, HM] treat me badly. All day they make me do housework and then they will say, 'we didn't tell you to do housework'. He [H] doesn't come home, he comes in at night and he is on his *phone*.²⁰⁴

It was definitely the case that the interviewees wanted to voice and demonstrate their discontent and frustration about their situation and the perpetrator. Talking back, however, antagonised the abuser who would, explains Khalida, 'hit more.'²⁰⁵ Syma explains:

He said, 'what you can do, but cry? You have nothing, where you gonna go?' He laughed at me.

The perpetrators (H) mocked the interviewees by reminding them of the reality of their situation: that they had no choice but to endure, to 'put up and shut up', explains Syma. The interviewees also realised that telling natal kin of the abuse was not beneficial, as they could not, and sometimes refused to, offer any practical support, encouraging them to endure silently (see Chapter Five).

Interview Findings: UK-born Interviewees

The UK-born interviewees also engaged in acts such as talking back and telling someone about the abuse. Nazia was the only interviewee who recounts 'talking back'. Nazia's husband believed she was having an affair. When she received an anonymous call on her phone, he broke her SIM card and told her to get a new one.

²⁰⁴ Meh-ne apnī *sister* ko butāyā, 'Yeh mere sāth būrā salūk karte hai. Sarā din kām bhī karate hai aur phir kehte hai ham-ne to nahīn kahā tum kām karo. Voh ghar nahīn āthā, rāt ko āthā hai apne *phone* pe lagā rehta hai'.

²⁰⁵ 'ziyādā mārṇā.'

If you don't trust me, even a new SIM card is not going to change it, because whoever this person is I could remember their number by heart and I could be phoning them behind your back anyway. What difference does it make? You don't trust me, take my phone off me altogether. From there it was just a slap.

Nazia's 'talking back' was trying to reason with him and explain that if she was having an affair, getting a new SIM card would not put an end to it. But this resulted in physical abuse as her husband, explains Nazia, 'could not take being spoken back to.' Interestingly, the UK-born interviewees spoke to affinal kin about the abuse, which Abraham (2005: 263) shows as a strategy employed by migrant South Asian women. In the context of family abuse, where the affinal kin are also complicit in the abuse, this is not a beneficial strategy. For example, Khadija had an outburst in front of her affinal kin (HM, HF, HZ), which was spontaneous as opposed to planned. She explains: 'I just said it out, "he is insecure, something is not right with him".' Nazia confided in her husband's aunt (HFZ) and her mother-in-law of the abuse, whilst Aisha told her husband's son (from his first marriage). This did not, however, result in the response for which the interviewees hoped. Affinal kin did not try to put a stop to the abuse, nor did they scold the perpetrator. Instead, explains Nazia, 'I was told [by HM], "oh *pūtar* [child], it's all right *asī-vī barīyā mārā kadīyā*"²⁰⁶ [we endured a lot of beatings too].'

The UK-born interviewees hoped that these strategies would effect a change in the abuser in a way that compliant agency did not. Even though it was counterproductive and did not result in this outcome, it demonstrates that women utilise different methods to achieve safety without having to leave the marriage. As shown by research studies, some women do eventually leave abusive relationships, irrespective of the constraints and their vulnerabilities (Zakar, Zakar and Kramer, 2012: 3292; Hayes, 2013: 5). This is explored in a separate section because the manner in which women leave, and the factors that motivate them to do so, are diverse and complex.

²⁰⁶ This was spoken in Punjabi and transliterated in accordance with the convention noted in the 'Glossary'.

Leaving

As I have argued throughout this chapter, leaving an abusive relationship is difficult for any woman, and not always taken as the first or only option available. Women strategise in a manner which serves their individual needs, and reflects the nature and extent of their constraints. Research studies together with the interview findings, however, show that irrespective of these constraints, some women do leave (Lacey, Saunders and Zhang, 2011: 1039; Zakar, Zakar and Kramer, 2012: 3292; Hayes, 2013: 5). Researchers such as Pinnewala (2009: 82) highlight the diverse factors that impel women to leave, such as a lack of financial support from their husband and concerns for child safety. Women's narratives in research studies, such as Abraham's (2005: 267), are testimonies to the types of struggles women encounter in resisting their abusers and how they work out ways to leave and regain control, with or without external support. Leaving, however, is a dangerous time for abused women because they are at an increased risk of violence (Hayes, 2013: 5). Additionally, leaving cannot be understood or viewed as a single, one-off event, but a lengthy process that may have involved leaving and returning multiple times (Lacey, Saunders and Zhang, 2011: 1039). As outlined earlier, factors (micro- and macro-levels) that are specific to South Asian women can make leaving a much more complex and dangerous process. Thus, when South Asian women do leave, they are often forced to do so; they tend to be, for example, thrown out by affinal kin (H, HM) or deported back to Pakistan or India (Raj and Silverman, 2002: 381; Anitha, 2011: 1274; Chaudhuri, Morash and Yingling, 2014: 14). The research on why and how women leave is limited, particularly in the South Asian context. In order to explore these issues further, I turn to the experiences of the interviewees.

Interview Findings: Pakistan-born Interviewees

The Pakistan-born interviewees all left their abusive marriages in different circumstances and for varying reasons; for example, three of the interviewees were forced to leave by affinal kin (H, HM). This raises a number of questions. Would they have ever left if they were not forced to do so? Can women ever consider exit a viable option? And is this a form of agentive behaviour, despite its being forced upon them?

Aliyah could not speak English, was economically dependent on affinal kin, and was an ‘overstayer’ (Anitha, 2011: 1268). Because of these factors, and many others, she perceived leaving as more detrimental to her own and her daughter’s long-term security. She explains the prelude to her leaving in the following account:

Maybe God took pity on my patience, she [HFZ] told me everything. ‘They are going to take your daughter away from you ... if you can do something, do it’. Then I said to her, ‘what can I do here?’²⁰⁷

She goes on to explain: ‘Then I thought I should leave. When I leave I am sure I will see some way. Then I thought about the way I have lived my life here. I don’t want my daughter to live like this. I *phone* [phoned] the *police* and left the house.’²⁰⁸ Aliyah felt backed into a corner and explains being forced to consider leaving the relationship as an option because of what her husband’s aunt (HFZ) had told her. This prompted her to think of her daughter and the disadvantages of staying in the relationship. Aliyah’s account also highlights patience as a form of hope and desire for change as opposed to passivity, as discussed earlier. It also reflects how, if women are provided with resources or given an opportunity to leave, they take it. In this case, it was Aliyah’s husband’s aunt (HFZ) who provided her with the opportunity, encouragement and support to leave.

Asma and Fatima were both thrown out of their affinal homes: Fatima came home to find the locks had been changed, and Asma was sent back to Pakistan. In both cases, the women fought to stay in the marriage. Asma explains: ‘I said to her [HM], “I will see who will throw me out [from affinal home]”. I was not willing to leave my *marriage*.’²⁰⁹ In Asma’s case, her fight to stay in the marriage stemmed from the socio-economic and cultural consequences of leaving the marriage, and the fear of deportation. By contrast, Fatima, being financially independent, was more concerned with the shame associated with being a

²⁰⁷ *Maybe* Allah ne mere sabr pe tars liyā, us-ne mūjhe sab kūch batāyā. ‘Voh tum se tumhārī bachchī lenge ... agar tum kūch kar-saktī ho to karlo’. Meh-ne phir un-se kahā, ‘Meh yahā kya kar-saktī hū?’

²⁰⁸ ‘Phir meh-ne socha meh chalī-jāo. Jab meh bahār niklū ghī kōī rāsta to mūjhe dīke gā. Phir meh-ne socha ke jese meh-ne yahā zindagī guzārī hai meh nahīn chatī merī betī bhī esī zindagī guzāre. Meh-ne *police* ko *phone* kiyā aur ghar chor diyā.’

²⁰⁹ ‘Meh-ne us-se kahā, “Meh dekhtī hū kon mujeh nikhāltā hai”. Meh apne *marriage* ko nahīn chorne vālī thī.’

divorcée. She explains: ‘I knew he was *gay*. What kind of marriage would we have had? But, I didn’t want to be a *divorcée*.’²¹⁰

The remaining interviewees left of their own accord, prompted mainly by two factors, children and finance, as explained below by Syma. During this part of the interview, Syma was extremely upset and crying, and so it was difficult to decipher her exact words during transcription:

Whenever he come [...] home my son [would] go to the corner because he [H] never loved my son. Whenever he [H] put [a] hand on him [S], he [would] say ‘come on’ [demonstrating the rough nature in which he would do this]. A child doesn’t need [...] that. [...] strict [financial] conditions. I suffered all the things, but I won’t let my son suffer.

The basis of her explanation for leaving was the lack of love and care her husband had towards their son, and by ‘strict conditions’ she is referring to the lack of financial support provided. Khalida and Meryam recount how leaving instilled fear in them of the unknown and of being left economically destitute, which for Meryam resulted in her returning and leaving several times (see Chapters Seven and Eight). Irrespective of this, their fear for their children’s safety and the reality that they would have to endure abuse for the rest of their lives encouraged them to leave. Meryam explains:

I never used to have one *pound* that I could buy my children, you know, ‘*Freddo*’ [chocolate] for *twenty pence*. That, I couldn’t even get for them. This is what my situation became like, I thought of my kids. Now I have to get out of here, for my kids.²¹¹

This takes me back to an earlier point regarding bargains where Chaudhuri, Morash and Yingling (2014) explain that women are prompted to engage in more open forms of resistance when they are not seeing any long-term gain through compliant agency. In Syma, Meryam and Khalida’s cases, this meant leaving the abusive relationship. Research shows

²¹⁰ ‘Mūjhe patā thā voh *gay* hai. Hamārī kesī shādī hotī? Par, meh nahīn chatītī ke meh *divorcée* banū.’

²¹¹ Mere pās ek *pound* nahīn hotā thā ke meh apne bachcho, jese ‘*Freddo*’ nahīn hote *twenty pence* ke. Voh nahīn le-ke de-saktī thī. Ese merī halat ho-gāe, jese meh-ne apne bachcho kā socha. Ab mūjhe yāhā se nikhālna paregā, apne bachcho ke-liye.

that women are most vulnerable to abuse upon leaving an abusive relationship (Hayes, 2013: 5). Although continued abuse from perpetrators is a consequence of leaving, research fails to address the nature of service responses that can expose women to new forms of oppression and constraints. As discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight, government policies, such as ‘no recourse to public funds’ (NRPF) that cause economic destitution and insensitive service responses, can force migrant women to return to abusive relationships in which they can be exposed to new forms of constraints and oppression (Anitha, 2008: 198; Hester, 2013: 36).

Upon leaving, whether by choice or force, the interviewees felt helpless and vulnerable. As time progressed and they overcame certain hurdles such as NRPF, however, they felt encouraged, as explains Aliyah to ‘do something with my life’²¹², realising, ‘I am better off without him.’²¹³ Additionally, as they came to know of their rights and the options available to them, such as ‘Indefinite Leave to Remain’ (ILR), which had been hidden by the perpetrators’ misinformation, it further encouraged them. Once the interviewees attained ILR, they recounted being financially supported by the state through access to benefits, learning English, attending college, and entering into employment. The interviewees’ experiences suggest that women would leave or engage in more overt acts of resistance if they had access to, and knowledge of, more realistic livelihood options, and support once they have left.

Interview Findings: UK-born Interviewees

Similar to the Pakistan-born interviewees, the UK-born interviewees accounts show that they had very few options: they could either leave the abusive marriage of their own accord, or be forced to do so. Unlike the Pakistan-born interviewees, Khadija and Nazia were forced to consider leaving as an option by their husbands who, explains Khadija, ‘threatened me with divorce, [by] telling me to go to my mum’s and think about my options.’ It may have been the case that the husbands had no intention of leaving their wives, but utilised divorce as a threat and method of control, possibly as a response to the

²¹² ‘apne zindagī ke sāth kūch karū.’

²¹³ ‘Meh us-ke bager bhetar hū.’

interviewees more open forms of resistance such as talking back. On the other hand, the husband's intention may have been to get rid of the wife but in such a way that the wife would look bad for abandoning the husband, rather than her being thrown out by him. This is clarified by Nazia's following account. The prelude to this is as follows: Nazia's husband attempted to threaten her with divorce, and 'put her in her place' by forcing her to stay at her mother's. He assumed, explains Nazia, that 'I would return and just do everything he says in fear that he would just leave me at any point.' However, when she did not return, Nazia explains:

he came to my door ... He was looking very ill and looking really down and just saying to me, 'look I've realised what I've done, please come back to me'.

Khadija and Nazia explain that they would have never contemplated leaving their marriages because of cultural reasons such as shame and community ostracism. But, being forced to think about this as an option by their husbands' suggestions, or threats, that they live apart for a period of time galvanised them to take the previously viewed-as-impossible step of leaving. It gave the interviewees, explains Khadija 'a taste of what it would be like to live without him. I liked it, and my mum was being so supportive, which I was shocked by. So I thought, I am not going back.' This is an interesting point, because forcing Khadija and Nazia to go and live with their respective parents for a trial separation also encouraged (or possibly forced) Khadija and Nazia to confide in natal kin about the abuse. Khadija, who assumed her mother might not have been supportive or may have encouraged her to endure more, to Khadija's surprise, responded in the opposite manner. Furthermore, this clarifies how women's access to resources and the nature of the constraints shape and limit their agency. In this case, knowing that she had natal kin support encouraged Khadija to leave. The remaining interviewees left of their own accord due to a number of factors similar to those raised by the Pakistan-born interviewees, namely consideration of finances and their children's welfare. Farah and Naseem left on the grounds that they feared for their children's future, as well as not having experienced any long-term gain from staying in the relationship, such as financial security. Naseem, as seen in the quote at the beginning of the chapter, felt that irrespective of the love and fear she felt, the safety of her daughter

encouraged her to leave. It also seems that these factors negate cultural factors that can cause community and family ostracism, as Farah explains:

Who cares about culture and shame when your kids are crying out of hunger and you are getting beat every day? No one is going to come and help you.

Additionally, Aisha spoke of fear, explaining:

He told me I was gonna die. You're gonna die, you're gonna die. And I was like, shit, I am going to fucking die. I can't be doing with any of this and I did leave him and I am so glad I did.

Research indicates that the nature of abuse can increase women's fear of leaving: they fear such action will antagonise the abuser and exacerbate the extent and nature of abuse (Lacey, Saunders and Zhang, 2011: 1037). Interestingly, in Aisha's case, fear had the opposite result as it motivated her to leave. Whatever the cause or nature of women's exit, it is clear that women are constantly grappling with and negotiating their safety through forms of resistance that are achievable and conceivable at certain times in their lives. Exit may have seemed impossible at the beginning of the relationship, when there was hope for change. But as the abuse progressed in its nature and extent, the safety of children became questionable, and there was no long-term gain, women viewed exit in a very different light. Irrespective of the constraints, for some women staying may mean death or serious harm to their children, which inevitably is the greatest factor that motivates women's exit.

9.6 Summary

In exploring agency in a family abuse context, I first identified the context within which women exercise agency: constraints at the micro- and macro-levels. In doing so, it becomes clear that although leaving can be difficult for most women, factors specific to South Asian women make it even more difficult for them. But, despite these constraints, there are possibilities of deploying agency.

Previous research together with the interview findings show that abused women employ a range of strategies throughout their marriages that reflect an awareness of their strengths,

options, resources and limitations. These strategies show how women struggle to make the relationship non-violent and devise strategies to this end. Women react and reflect on the efficacy of these strategies, as well as the abusers' responses to them, and manoeuvre accordingly. These strategies are shaped by structural and cultural constraints where, for instance, a Pakistan-born woman who cannot speak English and has no family support is less likely to engage in overt forms of resistance than a UK-born woman who is financially independent and has her natal family close by. Moreover, women's personal goals can also change throughout the course of the marriage. Initially the interviewees wanted to stay in the abusive marriages at any cost, but as time went on the goal was to achieve personal and child safety and it is important to acknowledge that these goals were also shaped by cultural and structural constraints. Furthermore, by providing the interviewees' accounts, I illustrated how women are more likely to leave an abusive relationship when they are provided with resources and support to do so. Thus, not only does this negate the assumption that women do not want to leave an abusive relationship, or that they do not want to get help, but also elucidates that the more marginalised a woman is, the less likely she is to employ overt acts of resistance.

Equally, I argue that we must be mindful that women's strategies can be counterproductive and self-destructive. They do not alter the structures within which women are embedded, but can reinforce the status quo, and at times antagonise the abuser, which can lead to further physical abuse. For reasons such as these, I have argued that this chapter must not be read as downplaying the significance of state support, nor should it create complacency in state policy and practice which assumes that women are perfectly capable of altering the structures within which they are embedded. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the state must view agency and oppression as entwined and implicated, and acknowledge that women's 'choices' and actions are shaped by cultural and structural constraints, some of which are created by policy itself, and which do not affect all women in similar ways. But, how can state policy and practice improve its understanding of, and responses to, South Asian women who experience family abuse? What implications does this research, and its findings, have for state policy and practice? It is these questions that lead me to the final chapter of this thesis.

CHAPTER TEN

Summary:

Implications for Policy and Practice

The government's role is to provide more funding for support services and to raise awareness. (Aisha UK-born)

Doctors and social workers, health visitors, they should always do house *visit[s]* and they should check if the girls have a *visa* or not. They should give them *information* in their house.²¹⁴ (Meryam Pakistan-born)

There definitely needs to be more awareness, religiously and throughout mosques. They should be made aware of exactly what the hell they [H] are doing to their wives, that after they read their *namāz* [prayer], they go home and beat their wives. (Nazia UK-born)

10. Introduction

Hitherto, I have explored South Asian women's experiences of family abuse in Scotland at the micro- and macro-levels, also revealing the shortcomings of government policy and service-provider practice. As noted in Chapter One, the task of this thesis does not end here, but is also to propose avenues by which we can better understand the social ill that is family abuse and thereby improve responses to it – the theme of this chapter. This, however, is not an easy task. I do not intend simply to lay out a 'wish list' of things I would like to see happen. Instead, I aim to put forward realistic and achievable proposals, exploring the obstacles and how, or if, they can be overcome.

Staying true to the central organising framework of this thesis, which is the inclusion of women's voices and opinions, the proposals in this chapter are inspired by, and developed from, points made by the interviewees. As can be seen from the quotes, the interviewees were of the opinion that South Asian women's experiences in Scotland can be improved by,

²¹⁴ *Doctors aur jese social workers, health visitors*, in-ko hameshā ghar ke *visit* karnā chāhiye aur dekhnā chāhiye agar larkīyā ke pās *visa* hai ya nahīn. Un-ko *information* dehnī chāhiye gharo mai.

for example, increasing funding for service providers (Aisha); reaching severely isolated women through, for example, home visits (Meryam); and raising awareness at the community level through religious education (Nazia). I hope, like myself, other researchers and policymakers will be inspired by the interviewees' words and experiences, particularly by Fatima's statement:

‘Until we tell them [the government] we are here, we have these *needs*, [and] we want them [needs] like this, *then how* [will] *they know and how can they do* [anything]? Only then can they *improve* it [women's experiences].’²¹⁵

I not only recommend dialogue between marginalised women and policymakers, but also the facilitation of dialogue through the kind of qualitative methods conducted for, and promoted by, this thesis. As researchers, we must question who is responsible for defining women's experiences of abuse, question policymaking supposedly tailored with their best interests in mind, and ensure the inclusion of these women's voices, opinions and desires, without which nuanced and sensitive policy becomes much more difficult to achieve.

10.1 Chapter Outline

I begin with a brief overview of the main points raised in this thesis in relation to the family, the state and agency. This is followed by proposals for change and improvement pertaining to three key areas: research, government policy, and service-provider practice, and many of the proposals are overlapping and mutually reinforcing. For example, a more detailed focus on kinship structures by researchers may better inform government policy of the structures and relationships within which South Asian women experience family abuse, which is not limited to nuclear households and the intimate couple, thereby producing better guidelines that promote nuanced and sensitive service-provider responses. Moreover, underlining the specific experiences of South Asian women also emphasises that needs differ between and within different community groups. For instance, immigration policies can affect all migrant women who experience spousal abuse in diverse ways. Thus, the

²¹⁵ ‘Jab tak ham in-ko bātāenge nahīn ke ham yahā pe hai, hamāre yeh *needs* hai is-ko hamen istāra se chāhiye, *then how they know and how can they do?* To voh phir us-ko *improve* kar-sakte hai.’

proposals in this chapter push more generally for nuanced and sensitive policies in relation to all marginalised women in Scotland experiencing family abuse.

Furthermore, this chapter was initially drafted before, and finalised after, the Scottish Independence Referendum, held in 2014. Scotland voted by a 10.6 percentage-point margin against ending the 307-year-old Union with England and Wales (Wintour, Carrell and Mason, 2014). The Prime Minister, David Cameron, promised a ‘devolution revolution’ across the UK as he hailed Scotland’s decision to reject independence. The ‘vow’ signed by the three UK party leaders, David Cameron, Ed Miliband and Nick Clegg, promised ‘extensive new powers’ for the Scottish Parliament. This will include power over income tax rates, spending and welfare, and a guarantee to make the Scottish Parliament permanent (Travis and Clark, 2014). However, exactly what these constitutional reforms will entail, and how, if at all, they will be delivered remains to be seen after the general election in May 2015. What these changes will hold for Scotland’s future and its marginalised women is unclear. Thus, the proposals made in this chapter are directed mainly towards the UK Government, and the Scottish Government when matters pertain to them.

10.2 Summary of Interview Findings

As well as wanting to gain an insight into the experiences of South Asian women of family abuse first hand, I also wanted to glean their opinions and proposals on how their experiences, and all abused women’s experiences, could have been improved. I posed questions such as ‘what do you think your needs are in Scotland?’ and ‘how can we improve service provision?’²¹⁶ As noted above, the proposals in this chapter (and throughout this thesis) have been inspired by and developed from the points made by the interviewees.

The UK-born and Pakistan-born interviewees alike raised a number of proposal such as: an improvement and an increase in advertising of support services and government strategies; making the visa process easier; increased training and education for service providers; and more funding and resources for women’s groups that support vulnerable women. The

²¹⁶ Appendix Four.

central proposal that can be determined from the interviewees' accounts, towards which all their recommendations lean, is as follows: instead of the government's encouraging women to leave abusive relationships or an oppressive community, the government should work towards reducing women's vulnerabilities that constrain different subjects to accepting these relationships; for instance, by abolishing immigration-related policies such as NRPF, and by increasing women's access to job opportunities or education (in the form of English classes). It is unclear how beneficial access to job opportunities are to women experiencing family abuse, particularly in relation to what I have said regarding women's domestic obligations, especially those from Pakistan: it is unlikely that they would be 'allowed' to take up job opportunities. It is clear, however, that the interviewees' accounts and proposals reflect the reality that some women desire to effect change from within the family and the community.

10.3 Part One – The Family

The central argument of Part One of this thesis is that mainstream literature and government policy conceptualise women's experiences of abuse as universal and existing within an intimate (gendered) relationship and perpetrated within a nuclear household, but is not applicable to the women this thesis aims to represent. I have shown how South Asian women can experience spousal abuse in extended family households that are characterised by gender, age and economic hierarchies. New brides, whether from Pakistan, or UK-born, enter their affinal homes relatively powerless. Chapter Four highlights female affinal kin as players in South Asian women's experiences of family abuse: mothers-in-law and (sometimes) husband's sisters (HZ) may instigate spousal abuse and perpetrate family abuse. The crucial point here is the intensity of abuse South Asian women can experience within the extended family structure, where they can be subjected to simultaneous physical abuse and threats from their mothers-in-law and their spouses. Interestingly, contrary to the common stereotype of the husband's sister (HZ) and the brother's wife (BW) being rivals and competitive, the husband's brother's wife (HBW) was described by the interviewees as a source of comfort, acting to save and protect them from abuse. This also elucidates a point I have echoed throughout this thesis, that we should not generalise women's

experiences of abuse, as, for example, not all female affinal kin are abusive any more than they are all supportive.

I have also shown that the role of natal kin has been largely unaddressed within family abuse literature. As shown in Chapter Five, family abuse is often an obstacle to natal kin support, because not knowing of the abuse means they cannot assist or support their daughters. Moreover, natal kin responses and support are shaped and limited by factors such as economics, distance and cultural ideologies of honour and shame. Nevertheless, the interviewees also mentioned natal kin support in the form of economic support, refuge and encouragement to leave.

It was also clear in my exploration of South Asian women's experiences of family abuse within the home that immigration status (and all the factors associated with it) adds an additional layer to migrant South Asian women's experiences. Not only does it facilitate spousal and family abuse, but can create new ways in which women can be controlled and coerced within the affinal home, which is a point I will return to later. In light of these issues, I propose the following.

Contesting One-Dimensional Explanations

In order to understand the experiences of abuse of South Asian women in particular, I recommend that researchers and policymakers steer clear of one-dimensional and universalising explanations based on gender or culture. Such a standpoint is beneficial to no one. One-dimensional and universalising explanations represent a failure to address the needs of some of society's most vulnerable members properly, a failure that is underlined by a more general tendency to overlook the specific socio-economic and socio-cultural factors impacting on marginalised South Asian women affected by family abuse. In Chapter Four, I deal with certain features of South Asian women's experiences of family abuse that do not sit well with some feminists, such as woman-on-woman violence. If we are to achieve any real grasp of the reality of women's experiences, however, we cannot shy away from delving into areas which unsettle conventional conceptual framings of abuse that portray women as victims but not perpetrators. Thus, I advocate the inclusion of themes of gender and culture in our understanding of family abuse, but without their

becoming catch-all explanations. It is my recommendation that, like feminist researchers such as Sokoloff and Dupont (2005), Thiara and Gill (2010a), and Anitha and Gill (2011a, 2011b), government policy should be framed by an intersectional analysis of women's multiple identities and diverse experiences – a point that echoes throughout this chapter.

Recognising the Specificities

As I have shown in Part One, the specificities of South Asian women's experiences of abuse do not feature in policy documents; for example, some of the tactics employed by mothers-in-law could not have been possible without the compliance of the son (H) and the use of domestic despotism (by HM) is a key mechanism utilised to exhaust women physically and mentally within the home. Nuanced and sensitive policymaking requires the government to take note of such specificities within women's experiences of abuse, and include these specificities within strategies to tackle gender inequality in the form of domestic abuse. A means by which nuanced and sensitive policymaking can be achieved is a focus on the oppressive nature of kinship structures, which recognises 'the family' as a potential structure within which women can experience multiple forms of abuse by multiple perpetrators. Failure to do so not only leads to insensitive responses (a point I will return to later), but can make certain aspects of women's experiences invisible. Furthermore, if we are to stay true to recognising women's experiences of abuse as a continuum, I propose that family abuse perpetrated by female affinal kin (HM, HZ) is best understood and explained within a domestic abuse framework; namely, through Stark's (2013) coercive control model (see Chapter Three). My work, however, pushes Stark's model to understand and explore coercive control as existing within multiple relationships and complex family structures.

10.4 Part Two – The State and Community

By critically exploring government policy and service-provider practice in Part Two, I elucidated the manner in which the micro- and macro-levels are intertwined and mutually reinforcing. I have shown how policy and practices directly impinge on women's experiences of abuse within the home and the community. Furthermore, I demonstrated the struggles of South Asian women experiencing family abuse within the context of the UK

Government's simultaneous and often contradictory equal opportunity agendas, especially those of multiculturalism and gender equality.

Chapter Six demonstrates women's experiences of the community, both as a place of belonging and a structure that can pressurise women to return to, or stay, in violent homes (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 13; Dasgupta and Rudra, 2011: 14). Government policies such as multiculturalism, which grant communities a level of privacy in their affairs, have led to the privileging of the more powerful members of the minority community as 'gatekeepers' between the majority and minority communities (Anitha and Gill, 2009: 174). I argue that this adds to the existing pressure faced by women in communities to preserve their 'silence' against abuse (Dasgupta, 2005: 63), which is conspicuous in the development of Shariah councils and Muslim Arbitration Tribunals (MAT). Although the importance of intra-community mediation that is sensitive to religion and culture is visible in the interviewees' accounts, writers such as Bano (2010: 185) critique it on the basis of conflicting interests, intra-group gendered power relations, and the viewing of the Muslim community as homogeneous. In this regard, how can we accommodate cultural and religious differences without undermining the needs of women? A way forward is not to abandon intra-community mediation that is sensitive to women's religious and cultural needs: to do so would dismiss the needs and rights of women who see benefit in, and want, religious mediation. Furthermore, it would bolster the debates that adopt a language of competing equality claims, which imply that gender equality and multiculturalism are irreconcilable. Both claims are equally important and need to be balanced in circumstances where they appear to collide (Phillips, 2010: 47).

Contesting Cultural Essentialism

The government needs to conceptualise community and identity as shaped by a number of factors beyond the cultural. Anne Phillips (2007: 126) suggests that an understanding of culture needs to be adopted which recognises that some individuals are constrained by religious and cultural pressures without concluding that all individuals are. It is also important, however, that cultural arguments are not dismissed, but nor should they be accepted uncritically. I propose that culture and religion should not be the overarching

framework by which the needs of the South Asian community and the women within it are addressed. To do the opposite would mean that the root causes of family abuse – the ‘structural and institutional contexts that sustain particular forms of gender-based violence’ (Gill and Anitha, 2011: 10) – will remain unchanged.

The Community – A Research Priority

The reality that government policies bolster community power to the detriment of South Asian women experiencing family abuse also brings to light an additional issue: the oppressive nature of the community and how it features in South Asian women’s experiences is overlooked. In order for researchers, government and service providers to gain a nuanced understanding of the level of pressure felt by South Asian women experiencing family abuse, the community needs to be targeted as a research priority.

Promoting Gender Equality

The nature and manner in which intra-community mediation operates need to be questioned. Is it reinforcing and facilitating oppression and abuse from the family and the community? Ultimately, is it beneficial to women’s needs? The government needs to evaluate the suitability of intra-community mediation to ensure that they are free from conflicting interests and gender disparity. When it comes to the safety of women and promoting gender equality, we should not hold back from asking such questions for fear of being perceived as, or labelled, racist or culturally insensitive. A way of achieving this is the inclusion of marginalised women’s voices in the forums that decide on their best interests and needs (a proposal that echoes throughout this chapter). Amina: MWRC facilitate dialogue between South Asian Muslim women and service providers such as the police. A similar framework can also be applied in assessing the suitability and need for intra-community mediation such as the Muslim Arbitration Tribunal (MAT): obtaining information in a safe, confidential and comfortable manner from women about their needs, opinions and experiences, and whether or not intra-community mediation is the best way forward. Furthermore, it is not enough simply to facilitate the development of a service such as MAT but not to ensure quality of service: there are various issues to consider for

best practice. Who is the Islamic judge that presides on the MAT? What is his educational and experiential background? Are there conflicts between the judge's viewpoints and the needs of the client?

UK Government's 'Right-to-Exit'

The framing of South Asian women's experiences of abuse as harmful cultural practices has led to UK Government policies and interventions that insist on 'saving' women from a misogynistic and 'backward' culture. The right to exit an abusive relationship or oppressive community has framed government policy and service-provider responses. I argued that UK Government immigration policies not only intensify and facilitate family abuse, but also create new forms of constraints at the macro-level. For instance, other research, together with the interviewees' accounts, show how the 'two-year' probationary period is utilised by perpetrators of abuse as a powerful weapon to strengthen and intensify existing domination and control over women (Raj and Silverman, 2002: 381; Joshi, 2003: 150; Wilson, 2007: 29). For such women the choices are stark – stay in an abusive relationship or face deportation. I identified threats of deportation as a method utilised by perpetrators to control and keep migrant South Asian women in abusive relationships (Raj and Silverman, 2002: 381; Anitha, 2011: 1274). Although this rule applies to all non-EU women, factors specific to South Asian women make the effects more detrimental: suffering socio-economic hardship and experiencing cultural factors associated with honour and shame. I have shown that by introducing the 'Domestic Violence Rule' (DVR), the UK Government has acknowledged the vulnerability and danger immigration policies pose for migrant women experiencing spousal abuse. Yet the attachment of a high standard of proof and no recourse to public funds (NRPF) serves to prohibit exit as opposed to facilitating it, inevitably keeping women trapped within abusive structures (Anitha, 2008: 191; 2011: 1261; Gangoli et al., 2011: 40). Basically, women are left economically destitute and abandoned by the state (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 114).

I argued that in reality this concession represents a failure of the UK Government to comprehend the hidden nature of abuse experienced by South Asian women and the barriers that women face to disclosure (Anitha, 2008, 2011). For example, a South Asian

woman who is severely isolated, economically dependent on affinal kin, with no natal family support, misinformed of her rights and fearing that the culture of the host society is racist, may not even know of the concession let alone be able to utilise it (a point I will return to later). For these reasons, it is unlikely she will have accessed support services and so she will not have the relevant information to obtain successful 'Indefinite Leave to Remain' (ILR). In light of these issues, I propose the following.

Reducing Vulnerabilities and Facilitating Change From Within

Writers such as Gill and Thiara (2010: 240) argue that in practice too much emphasis is placed on exit and not enough on prevention. It seems the approach by government is not to amend policies that risk women's safety, it is simply to facilitate women's exit. This not only relieves the state of any responsibility and imposes the burden of resolving the conflict upon the individual, but also does not impact on the basic structures that have made the situation arise, namely the patriarchal positionings of the perpetrator and the abused woman. It also suggests that a woman (the injured party) should be the one to abandon the very centre of her life, family and community (Shachar, 2001: 41).

The issue raised by writers such as Anne Phillips (2007) and Aylet Shachar (2001) is the viability of such an option and the costs of exit. Can a woman survive economically outwith her community and marital relationship? What are her job prospects? A possible solution lies in the work of Aylet Shachar (2001: 41, 17) who argues that it should be possible for the oppressed to stay and fight for change. For example, 'Reclaim the Night' was a strategy developed to protest about how women have to negotiate the threat or reality of rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment in every sphere of life – for example, by being told not to go out at night. The Reclaim the Night march gives women a voice and a chance to 'reclaim' the streets at night in a safe and empowering event.²¹⁷ Thus, I agree with Anne Phillips (2010: 36) and Aylet Shachar (2001: 18) when they state that the right to leave must be complemented with the right to stay and that voice matters, as well as the right to exit. This reflects the desires of the interviewees who wanted to ameliorate their situation by finding a way to stop the abuse without leaving their spouses, (affinal) families

²¹⁷ For more information see: <http://www.reclaimthenight.co.uk/why.html>

and community. But, this is not practical for women who live in fear of daily abuse and see no prospect of living outside of their families. It is not possible for a migrant South Asian woman distant from her natal kin, economically dependent and unaware of her rights to voice her frustration or dissatisfaction. The right to stay is not safe for women who may face continued forms of abuse from affinal kin. Furthermore, it is not possible for a woman to stay in a community where she may face ostracism, exclusion or pressure to return to an abusive relationship.

The Pakistan-born interviewees propose that the government needs to focus on facilitating women's empowerment through increasing access to necessary resources such as, explains Syma, 'language and more job opportunities'. Aliyah explains:

They [government] say, 'leave your [marital] home'. They don't give us a chance, like *English classes, job opportunities*. That we can do something, change something for our *community*, for ourselves.²¹⁸

It is clear from her account that women such as the interviewees do recognise the source of their vulnerabilities and want to rectify them: namely the language barriers and economic dependency they face. Interestingly, the UK-born interviewees proposed change from within the community, as in Nazia's quote at the beginning of this chapter. Aisha explains:

The Imāms need to speak about it at the *khutbahs* [Friday sermon in the mosque]. There needs to be more community-level education for men and women about their rights, and that marital abuse is wrong. Maybe this will change something.

The limitation of such an approach is two-fold, however: firstly, it would reach and benefit only those men and women who attend the mosque; and, secondly, it may take more than Islamic scripture to change the mind-set and behavioural patterns of a perpetrator. Additionally, Nazia recommended a more practical approach:

Anger management, stress classes or marriage counselling ... These should be made available in our community.

²¹⁸ Voh kehte hai, 'ghar chor ke chale-jāo'. Hamen moka nahīn dete, jese ke *English classes, job opportunities*. Ke ham kūch kare, kūch badle apne *community* ke-liye, apne āp ke-liye.

The interviewees propose alternative options that do not insist on leaving or ending the marriage, but would try to effect change from within, which can also be facilitated by government provision of resources for women, such as more job opportunities, that would reduce their vulnerabilities.

Critically Re-evaluating Immigration Policies

In light of the previous recommendation (to reduce women's vulnerabilities), the UK Government needs to assess its immigration policies in the following ways. Firstly, it needs to recognise the manner in which the two-year rule can be utilised as a tool of coercion and control in a family abuse context for migrant South Asian women. Furthermore, the literature does not touch upon the experiences of UK-born South Asian women whose husbands are subject to this rule. I propose that it is not just the level of power that this rule affords to a spouse that needs to be acknowledged by research, policy and practice, but also the gendered nature of its utilisation to control and dominate; and, secondly, by acknowledging the hidden nature of abuse and the economic dependency which characterises spousal and family abuse, the government needs to lower the standard of proof and abolish 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF), both of which are attached to the 'Domestic Violence Rule' (DVR). The government needs to recognise that these rules serve to constrain women to remain in abusive relationships, or force them back to abusive relationships when they experience economic destitution.

All the Pakistan-born interviewees stressed the need for the UK Government, in Meryam's words, to 'make the *visa* easier, give girls support to leave.'²¹⁹ Aliyah explains:

Because of the *visa*, this [family abuse] happened to me. If the *government change* this and are not so *strict*, so many women's lives will become easier. They would never stay with their [abusive] *husband[s]*.²²⁰

While I have been writing this thesis, the UK Government introduced the 'Destitute Domestic Violence' rule, which allows victims of 'domestic violence' on spousal visas

²¹⁹ '*visa ziyādā āsān kare, larkīyā ko sāholte de nikhalne ke-liye.*'

²²⁰ '*Visa ke vajā se yeh mere sāth hūa. Agar government yeh change kare aur itnā strict nā ho, kitnī aurto kī zindagī āsān ho-saktī hai. Voh apne husband ke sāth kabhī nā rāhe.*

with NRPF to have access to public resources for three months. Yet what can be seen as a positive step forward by women's groups has itself been effectively countermanded by the increase in the probationary period from two to five years, which undermines women's ability to escape abuse and gain access to safety and support. It seems that initiatives on gender equality have become entangled in immigration issues and the 'right-to-exit' rationale, both of which shape women's experiences of abuse. It is for reasons such as these that commentators such as Sharma and Gill (2010: 212) critique UK Government policies as being preoccupied with controlling the 'borders of the nation' as opposed to protecting vulnerable women.

10.5 Service Provision

In this part of the thesis, I argued that in order to understand South Asian women's help-seeking, we must explore the nature and suitability of service-provider responses. In doing so, three themes arose from the interviewees' experiences:

Overlooking the Complexity of Family Abuse

Firstly, the Scottish Government has invested much in raising awareness of domestic abuse as well as in making support and help available, to leave an abusive relationship, obtain advice and information, or simply to provide a listening ear. It has, however, overlooked the complex nature of family abuse that leaves women severely isolated and unaware of support services and personal rights. As noted earlier, the likelihood that a South Asian woman who is severely isolated will know about support services is minimal. South Asian women cannot use services they do not know exist.

Conflicting Interests and Aims

Secondly, conflicting interests and aims within and between agencies do not serve the best interests of vulnerable women. In a social work context, the primary goal of ensuring child safety and contact with the (perpetrator) father can undermine the safety of women (Anitha, 2008: 198; Hester, 2013: 36).

Insensitive and Unsuitable Service-provider Responses

Thirdly, researchers critique service responses for ‘failing to see the signs’ or probing or asking pertinent questions (Burman, Smailes and Chantler, 2004: 338). Notions of cultural respect, where matters such as domestic abuse can be viewed as private cultural issues to be resolved by the community and family, not only prevent service providers from doing their work properly (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 12), but also make women’s experiences of abuse invisible. South Asian women criticise service providers, such as the NHS, for not attempting to question injuries (Anitha, 2008: 198). Furthermore, women experiencing domestic abuse have reported that the police lack empathy and understanding (HMIC, 2014: 12).

Reaching Isolated Women

Those responsible for framing the well-intentioned Scottish Government strategy to tackle domestic abuse need to be conscious of the reality that not knowing about support services is an important feature of South Asian women’s experiences, and crucial to my own argument that unawareness contributes to women’s under- or non-use of services. Acknowledgement of this alone is insufficient; those responsible for the framing of this strategy need to take steps to ensure the accessibility of it.

All the interviewees raised this as a concern, and two key recommendations can be determined from their accounts: firstly, ‘more *advertising*’²²¹ (Aliyah, Pakistan-born); and, secondly, a focus on training NHS staff, the only service that women presumed to be accessed by all women. Nazia (UK-born) claims the lack of ‘proper’ advertising is a cause of migrant South Asian women’s unawareness of service provision, in effect preventing access:

It’s not really out there, the way other things are advertised. It’s not really promoted enough, how to help women who are suffering from abuse. If women don’t know, how are they gonna use the services?

²²¹ ‘*ziyādā advertising*’

In light of this, the Pakistan-born interviewees, in acknowledging the barriers to service provision, stated that the NHS was a service all women access in the form of health visitors, general practitioners and accident and emergency staff. Syma explains:

The government can train health visitors and doctors [because] our women don't have access to other services. It's just the first access to the health visitor or the doctor and that's it.

Meryam made a similar recommendation, clarifying what the role of the NHS should be:

I think girls that come from Pakistan and India, they need to be *interview* [interviewed]. The *doctors* need to always ask them what *problems* there are in the house. *Doctors* and *social workers*, *health visitors*, they should always do house *visit[s]* and they should check if the girls have a *visa* or not.²²²

The UK-born interviewees also mentioned the NHS. Khadija identifies doctors' surgeries and health visitors as services all women access irrespective of isolation and abuse.

Therefore, Khadija argues, they would be 'best placed to equip women with the necessary information.' Furthermore, Khadija claims the best way of reaching isolated women is by 'subtle advertising', as she explains:

More advertising in places that, you know, women will go, like doctors or primary school, nursery.

Doctors and health visitors can obtain access to homes, and can even obtain private time with women, which is the basis of Syma and Meryam's recommendations. The NHS, as part of the Scottish Government's multi-agency approach, has incorporated routine enquiry for 'gender-based violence'. But, as I have shown in Chapter Eight, South Asian women can be met with unresponsive NHS staff. Nevertheless, raising awareness of support services and help in the places women are most likely to access, such as schools and doctors' surgeries, may create a pathway to hard-to-reach women. It does not, however, address the nature of all women's experiences of abuse, as seen in Chapters Three and

²²² Mūjhe lagtā hai jese Pakistan, India se yeh larkiyā jo āthī hai, in-ko thora *interview* karnā chāhiye. *Doctors* ko un-ne hameshā pūchnā chāhiye ke ghar mai kya *problems* hai. *Doctors* aur *social workers*, *health visitors*, in-ko hameshā ghar ke *visit* karne chāhiye aur dekhna chāhiye agar larkiyā ke pās *visa* hai ya nahīn.

Four, when interviewees were prohibited from attending their child's nursery (Aliyah Pakistan-born), or prohibited from leaving the home at all (Asma Pakistan-born). Thus, the question remains, how will the Scottish Government's strategy for awareness-raising reach extremely isolated and misinformed women? The difficulty in this task is clear and also recognised by Fatima:

If they [women] are in the house, then *I don't know*. You cannot go into each house *individually* and *encourage* them. *That's very difficult*. How can you *reach* such women?²²³

As proposed earlier, a way forward would be firstly to reduce the vulnerabilities women face as a result of the UK Government's harmful immigration policies. And, secondly, factors such as unawareness of services need to feature in the Scottish Government's post-campaign evaluation report, in order to shape future awareness-raising campaigns. Interestingly, a proposal put forward by Fatima (Pakistan-born interviewee) may be the way forward to reduce the vulnerabilities many migrant South Asian women face as a result of 'misinformation':

Like, you know, how the *government* has started this *English test*. Like this, they should give every woman who comes from outside [i.e. Pakistan] *information* about *immigration* and *visa* [processes]. Then no one can *threat* [threaten] her, like her mother-in-law, [saying] 'we will send you back [to Pakistan]'.²²⁴

The reality of the effectiveness of such a strategy is difficult to foresee. For instance, migrant women could be provided with an immigration pack in their first language at the airport upon their arrival. This assumes, however, that all women are literate and it does not cater for women with disabilities such as visual impairment. Furthermore, as has become more than clear, perpetrators of abuse go to great lengths to control and dominate women. Prohibiting women's access to this information would simply be another means by which they can achieve this. Yet, there are avenues by which isolated women can be reached and

²²³ Agar gharo mai hai to *I don't know*. *Individually* gharo mai jā-ke kisī ko *encourage* nahīn kar-sakte. *That's very difficult*. Ese aurto ko kесе *reach* kar-sate hai?

²²⁴ Jese *government* ne yeh *English test* nahīn shūrū kiye, ese un-ko har aurat jo bahār se āthī hai, us-ko *immigration* aur *visa* ke mutāliq *information* denī chāhiye. Phir us-se kōī nahīn *threat* kar-sakta, jese us-kī sās, 'tumhe ham vāpis bhej-denge'.

vulnerabilities can be reduced. It is the role of the government to develop conventional and unconventional approaches through which to reach isolated women. It is necessary to acknowledge that such approaches are not without obstacles, but to be committed nevertheless to manoeuvring around them.

A Single Overarching Definition of Family Abuse

A step towards resolving the divergent and conflicting goals within and between agencies is to have a single overarching working definition of abuse that all service providers utilise and recognise. This definition of abuse could incorporate the following:

- the diversity and complexity of all women's experiences of abuse;
- the inclusion of kinship structures and relationships beyond the couple;
- the categorisation of the specificity as well as the similarities in women's experiences.

Nevertheless, I recognise the difficulty of establishing a single overarching definition which captures and represents all women's experience of abuse. As noted in Chapter Two, this can be done by rejecting the pursuit of objectivity and striving instead for 'collective subjectivity' (Price, 2005: 15). If we look to how women themselves define and understand their experiences of abuse, not only to definitions constructed by the state and by researchers, then we might achieve 'a broad consensus on social definitions of violence against women' (Price, 2005: 15).

Mutual and Consistent Values and Aims

In order for a multi-agency approach to work effectively, the values and aims of all partners involved need to be mutual and consistent (Thiara, 2010: 171). Therefore, I recommend a more victim-centred (Gill and Thiara, 2010: 238) and intersectional approach by service providers which recognises the socio-economic consequences of leaving a marriage, as well as the implications for safety when pushing for child contact post-separation. A victim-centred approach will focus on the abused woman, judging each case according to its merits and circumstances as opposed to having a one-size-fits-all approach: encouraging a woman

to leave or pushing for child contact post-separation are not necessarily suitable approaches for abused women with specific circumstances.

Training and Education

Seeking help is a complex, ongoing process for South Asian women experiencing family abuse. Gill and Thiara (2010: 240) argue that the ‘quality, consistency and reliability’ of service-provider responses that abused women receive have the greatest impact on whether or not effective outcomes for the women themselves and their families can be achieved. Therefore, it is crucial that service providers are willing to explore their personal beliefs in relation to the problem of family abuse in South Asian communities critically; ‘to ensure that personal biases do not negatively influence their responses to women’ (Gill and Thiara, 2010: 239). In this regard, the interviewees proposed more education for the people who work for support services. UK-born Naseem explains:

The government needs to educate services more, whether that is offering them more support in how to deal with these issues [family abuse], or whether that’s through instructing the police to change their attitude.

Similarly, Aisha (UK-born) explains the following in regard to her dealings with the police:

They didn’t know what I was dealing with, the cultural pressure, the hidden abuse. I think it was too much for them to get. There’s definitely a need for more education, definitely for the police [laughs].

As seen in Chapter Eight, the HMIC report (2014: 53) recommends a fundamental review of police training to provide police officers with the confidence to deal with a range of complex issues. The report (2014: 8) recommends that women’s voices need to be heard in order to make sure the police response is focused on them: the same can be said of all service providers as a means of evaluating performance. As recommended by Aisha, training and education are a means by which this can be overcome. This has already been outlined in the (then) Scottish Executive report ‘Preventing Domestic Abuse’ (2003: 11), but in light of South Asian women’s experiences of service responses needs to be critically assessed. Service providers must address and understand why violence and abuse in South

Asian communities is under-reported; why women often flee marital homes without seeking support from the relevant authorities; and why women can sometimes hold back on fully disclosing the nature and extent of abuse.

Implementing changes requires all those working in public support services to understand the larger picture and adopt a more holistic viewpoint with regard to the complexity of family abuse: by being able to understand the complex nature of kinship structures; the cultural concepts of honour and shame; and the socio-economics that can trap women in abusive marriages. Additionally, an appreciation of the structural inequalities and factors at the macro-level, such as immigration policies, is essential to understand how women can be prevented from accessing service providers, or how women may fail to disclose aspects of abuse fully for fear of losing their children.

Equally, we must not lose sight of the reality that some South Asian women may never access services such as the police or women's groups. Consequently, we must look to training and educating 'the services all women have to access' (Khadija UK-born), as recommended by the interviewees, such as the NHS (GP, midwife, health visitors) and school staff (nursery, primary), also known as 'front-line' workers and noted also in 'Preventing Domestic Abuse' (2003: 11). Equally, as noted in Chapter One, it is crucial not to stereotype and create a collective victimhood on the basis of culture and religion. Rather, South Asian women's experiences need to be incorporated within the government's overarching violence against women framework.

Support for Services on the Ground

Specialist women's groups are a key part of the training strategy, as they not only provide safety and support to South Asian women, but also specialist training to all front-line and public services. Naseem (UK-born) proposed more support for specialist women's groups:

Supporting those that are working against this issue [is important] ... They have got the financial means, so that's the second thing that is required from the government.

Nazia (UK-born) adds: 'They should give a lot more funding to projects like these and help towards centres.' UK Government policies such as NRPF have significant implications for

service-provider responses. Specialist women's groups such as Amina: MWRC and Shakti Women's Aid have historically been, and currently are, under-funded and dependent on rental income paid to them via public funding such as the housing benefit due to each individual resident (Burman and Chantler, 2005: 67). Women subject to NRPF, who are applying for indefinite leave to remain, do not have access to housing benefit that could provide them with a refuge space. This has left women's groups trying to meet the needs of vulnerable women with no resources, which has resulted in many women being turned away. Furthermore, these specialist women's groups are facing further funding cuts and possible closure as a result of the UK Government's community cohesion and Big Society agenda. The creation of faith-based community mediation such as Muslim Arbitration Tribunals overlooks the need for secular women's groups (Siddiqui and Patel, 2010: 120). By closing down or cutting funds for specialist organisations, the government 'is endangering the lives of South Asian women and children fleeing domestic violence by closing down the routes to, and places of safety ... it is doing away with the very mechanisms which make women stronger' (Wilson, 2010: 67). How can the government encourage a multi-layered strategy to tackle 'violence against women' when resources are scarce and women's groups are facing severe funding cuts and even closure? Even if service providers attempt to improve policy and practice, they are restricted by scarcity of funds. In order to effect changes, the UK Government needs to direct more resources towards providing financial security for specialist support services.

10.6 Part Three – Agency

In the last part of the thesis, I elucidated why the assumption that women can and should simply get up and leave an abusive relationship is problematic: firstly, it overlooks the reality that leaving is difficult for most, if not all, women experiencing spousal and family abuse, and is more so for South Asian women due to the factors outlined in this thesis. It overlooks the substantive conditions that make (or rather do not make) exit real (Phillips, 2007: 138). And, secondly, these simplistic assumptions create binary narratives of passive or active, victim or agent, which overlook the diverse strategies women employ in response to abuse. I argued that irrespective of the difficulties, constraints and oppression South

Asian women can experience in a family abuse context, there are possibilities for deploying agency. Ultimately, the resources women have (or do not have) shape their agency and choices.

Research studies, together with the interview findings, indicate that South Asian women employ a range of strategies throughout their marriages that reflect an awareness of their strengths, options, resources and limitations. The interviewees wanted to ameliorate their situation while staying in the marriage, believing that this was the most viable, if not only, option. As a result, they employed strategies to manage the abuse, such as making bargains (compliant agency), undertaken with the aim of making the marriage as safe as possible.

Over the course of the marriage they determined the efficacy of their actions, and modified and adjusted them to achieve their end goal. Realising that compliant agency is not always effective, and can be without long-term benefit (because the abuse was unchanged), the interviewees all eventually adopted resistant agency. This consisted of subtle tactics such as sabotage to more overt acts such as talking back. All the interviewees left the marriage either by force or were galvanised to take action due to factors such as economic and child safety concerns. The exploration of the interviewees' exit from abusive marriages elucidates an important point: no matter how abusive the marriage can become, South Asian women want to ameliorate their situation while staying in the marriage. This is due to factors such as socio-economic constraints, structural inequalities and immigration policies that make leaving impossible. If women have resources or the opportunity to leave, such as Aliyah (Pakistan-born), they take it (see Chapter Nine).

The interviewees' experiences show how women's personal goals can change throughout the course of the marriage and are shaped by a lack of resources: from wanting to stay in the abusive marriage at any cost, to achieving personal and child safety. The interviewees' accounts show that the journey from compliant agency to resistant agency, on which many women embark, is a journey which at times can be counterproductive and self-destructive but which nevertheless shows that South Asian women are by no means passive in the face of abuse.

Reconceptualising Agency

Like researchers such as Sumi Madhok (2013a, 2013b), I propose a shift in our thinking of agency as overt acts of resistance, such as leaving, to thinking of agency under oppression as entwined and implicated in one another. For example, a migrant South Asian woman who is economically dependent, susceptible to immigration policies, and distant from her natal kin is less likely to resist overtly than a woman who is not constrained by any of these factors. Nevertheless, the strategies women employ should not be portrayed as passive and obedient, but shaped by the very structures to which they are a response. Equally, I refrain from painting a rosy image of agency or of the efficacy of resistance. To clarify my recommendation: I propose that state policy and practices adopt an alternative perspective of women's agency, one that recognises exit as a task laden with difficulties and consequences for all women, and does not insist upon exit in the face of the oppressor/s as a marker of agentive behaviour.

The Inclusion of Marginalised Women's Voices

Many, if not all, of the recommendations made in this chapter, which push for nuanced and sensitive government policy and service-provider practice, cannot be achieved without the inclusion of women's voices. In order to acknowledge and understand agency under oppression, regular and ongoing dialogue with marginalised women is required that enquires about their needs and what areas of service they feel need improved. As noted earlier, the suitability of intra-community mediation such as MAT as a means of responding to the needs of women cannot be known without actually asking them. I do not think this is an impossible task. As noted previously, service providers such as Amina: MWRC regularly facilitate dialogue between South Asian women and, for example, the police. The same can be achieved in a policy and practice context. Moving away from a state- and researcher-led process of defining women's experiences of abuse and agency to utilising women's voices and opinions, as I have done in this thesis, affords a more nuanced understanding of family abuse. This is an understanding that recognises, for example, the contexts within which individuals deploy strategies to make a marriage safe, or resist by leaving an abusive relationship.

10.7 Conclusion

Conducting research on such a sensitive and important topic has not been without its challenges. Beyond the immediate ethical considerations and difficulties in accessing participants (see Chapter One), I was conscious of the importance of not fuelling racist and essentialist cultural discourse. This research was conducted amidst a ‘seismic shift’ (Joppke, 2004: 249) in policy from multiculturalism to civic integration and assimilation to British core values. Within this discourse, public and political debates on the treatment of women have created a cultural hierarchy – the West perceived as advanced and liberal, and others, such as the South Asian community, viewed as ‘backward’ and illiberal. Thus, I was aware that a focus on a ‘community’ could be problematic. As Gerd Baumann (1996: 8) commented, ‘by stereotyping informants as “belonging to” or even “speaking for” a pre-defined “community”, one runs the risk of tribalizing people, instead of listening to them, and might end up studying communities of the researcher’s own making’. While the focus on the South Asian community has been justified (see Chapter One), I was fearful of reifying ‘South Asian culture’ and recreating harmful stereotypes or popular depictions of the South Asian community, and the Muslim community, as ‘backward’, misogynistic and oppressive, and thereby seeming to imply that domestic abuse is more prevalent in the South Asian community than in the white community. For this reason, I have reiterated throughout this thesis that the issues discussed in this thesis, and the points raised, pertain to the specific experiences of the women being interviewed. Not all migrant women are abused, and not all female kin are abusive. I caution against the application of the findings of this thesis to ‘all South Asian women’, as this goes against one of the central aims of this thesis: contesting false universalisations.

Rather than speak for South Asian women, I have explored the complexities and specificities of family abuse in their own voices and from their own experiences. But, this thesis does not offer an overarching theory to explain family abuse, nor does it offer a ‘solution’ to the problem. By critically exploring South Asian women’s experiences of family abuse at the micro- and macro-levels, I have not only argued for nuanced and sensitive policymaking for South Asian women, but for all marginalised women. As I have

noted in Chapter One, underlining the specific experiences of one category of women also emphasises that needs differ for other categories of women.

In doing so, I have contested one-dimensional explanations of abuse that are focused either on gender or culture. When people view South Asian women's experiences of abuse through the lens of cultural essentialism, there is a tendency to demonise the South Asian community as 'backward' and misogynistic, which creates an environment in which racist policies can be enacted and normalised (Anitha and Gill, 2011b: 112). Furthermore, one-dimensional explanations also inhibit attempts to understand the complexities and specificities of family abuse. Highlighting factors such as kinship structures and immigration that are tied up with experiences of family abuse has demonstrated that those most at risk tend to experience multiple inequalities on account of their disadvantaged position within society. Approaching family abuse from an intersectional perspective not only enables us to sidestep the pitfalls of one-dimensional explanations, but also offers a more nuanced understanding of family abuse in which the significance of culture and gender is taken into account without becoming a catch-all explanation.

Extending this point further, I have shown the specificities of South Asian women's experiences of family abuse by providing an analysis of the micro- and macro-levels as intertwined and mutually reinforcing. I have shown how a number of intersecting variables such as kinship, immigration and socio-economic considerations bear down on South Asian women within the home, and intensify and facilitate family abuse. This exploration also shows that as well as specificity, there is also differentiation among South Asian women's experiences. It is not enough, however, to acknowledge the existence of differences in women's experiences and the factors which compound these experiences. It is also necessary to elucidate how these differences are created and entrenched at the macro-level. Thus, a crucial part of this thesis has been to highlight the shortcomings of government policy and service-provider responses. It is detrimental to women's safety, and counterproductive, for culture and religion to be utilised as the overarching framework by which the needs of South Asian women are addressed. To put it more bluntly, it is foolish to assume that culture is the sole factor shaping women's experiences of abuse and their responses to it: for instance, a belief that if the root cause of women's oppression (whether

by a spouse, or by the community) is a 'backward' and misogynistic culture, then the only solution is for women to leave and seek egalitarian alternatives elsewhere. By doing so, the government evades the major structural issues such as education, employment and immigration policy that operate against women. I believe it is this false universalisation – that the actions of South Asian women who do not leave abusive relationships are dictated by cultural factors such as shame and honour – which has shaped the UK Government's right-to-exit response to South Asian women.

In this thesis, I have unpacked this false perception and got behind this rhetoric. In doing so, I have shown that as well as culture, we must look to the substantive conditions that can make exit real, such as economic opportunities. Women, especially those with children, are not going to leave an abusive relationship when they have no means by which to survive, or feed their children. Furthermore, when we add to this a lack of English proficiency, no qualifications or job prospects, and a lack of, or no, family support, it becomes even more glaring how absurd it is to assume that South Asian women will so easily leave, and that if they do not it is because of culture. Moreover, the government has to acknowledge its role in facilitating and intensifying South Asian women's experiences of family abuse both at the micro- and macro-levels. The UK Government must accept the crucial failings of its immigration policies for migrant women who experience spousal and family abuse. It needs to acknowledge that policies such as DVR, put into place to protect vulnerable women, have not been adequately thought through in light of the factors that consign women to abusive relationships – factors such as economic constraints. While Farah and Nazia's accounts provided invaluable insight into the experiences of UK-born women with migrant spouses subject to immigration rules, there needs to be further research on the experiences of this group of highly vulnerable women. Very little is known, in particular, about the welfare of female migrant spouses who are deported after their applications for ILR have been refused. As Anitha (2011: 1270) explains, such 'cross-border research will no doubt be difficult and costly but will enable the gathering of much-needed evidence that could make the case for informed and gender-sensitive policy responses'.

When women do leave or seek support, they can be faced with service-provider responses that do not meet their needs and desires, and where conflicting internal aims of agencies

such as social work do not serve the best interests of vulnerable South Asian women. This highlights the failure of service providers to understand the complexity of family abuse and the factors which bear down on women and constrain them to remain in abusive relationships. This is an issue which calls for a re-evaluation of the Scottish Government's multi-agency approach, and training and education agenda. Additionally, the UK Government's NRPF policies and funding cuts add to the existing economic strain that dictates the support that women's groups can provide to vulnerable South Asian women.

State policy and practice represents a failure to grasp the reality of most women's experiences of abuse. It fails to look at the larger, more practical, factors that shape women's marital journeys, and so fails to understand why some women stay, and others do not, why some women leave at certain points, and why some women never leave. Additionally, South Asian women's strategies to manage simultaneously the abuse, their personal safety and the safety of their children are misunderstood and falsely framed as passivity and complacency. Yet, it is because the government does not provide women with viable solutions and alternatives that women adopt such strategies to begin with.

UK Government policies that focus on 'saving' women from a misogynistic and 'backward' culture assume a 'false consciousness' in South Asian women; namely, that they are unaware of the gender inequalities and oppression to which they are being subjected. This does not sit well either with me, or the experiences of the interviewees. The role of the government and service providers is not to tell women how to feel or act, but to facilitate a context within which women can reduce their vulnerabilities, and respond to their oppressive conditions in a manner that reflects personal desires and motivations. To put it as Agarwal (1997: 25) does in relation to women in India, what is required is 'less making women realise they deserve better, than having them believe they can do better, and by helping them in fact do better through strengthening their bargaining position'. Agarwal (1997: 25) proposes that this can be done by building women's self-confidence and providing them with information. This 'bargaining position' could also be enhanced through the interviewees' proposals alluded to above: the availability of English classes, and abolishing harmful immigration policies such as NRPF. I firmly believe, however, that nuanced and sensitive policymaking will only be achieved by the inclusion of all

marginalised women's voices, those to whom the policies and strategies apply. This is my central argument and recommendation, which is not an unrealistic or undoable task. Instead of viewing a woman's 'choice' to stay in an abusive relationship with critical eyes, we need to strive for government policies and service-provider practices that understand the bigger picture of practical factors, and ultimately provide women with the resources to support their motivations and put their 'preferred preferences' into practice.

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APPENDIX ONE

List of Participants

Focus Group Consultation

Consultation 1: Took place in Shakti Women's Aid, Edinburgh, 11 March 2011

- Miridul and Jane (2011): From Shakti Women's Aid, Edinburgh, 11 March 2011

Consultation 2: Took place in Amina: The Muslim Women's Resource Centre (MWRC), Glasgow, 13 March 2011

- Meryam (2011): From Domestic Abuse Project (DAP), Glasgow
- Caterina (2011): From Glasgow Training Consortium, Glasgow
- Tabassam (2011): From Amina: MWRC, Glasgow

Interviews

Pakistan-born Interviewees:

- Asma (2011): Spoke Urdu during her interview; Shakti Women's Aid, Edinburgh, 28 April
- Aliyah (2011): Spoke Urdu during her interview; Shakti Women's Aid, Edinburgh, 16 June
- Khalida (2011): Spoke Urdu during her interview; Amina: MWRC, Glasgow, 11 November
- Meryam (2012): Spoke Urdu during her interview; DAP, Glasgow, 15 May
- Syma (2012): Spoke very broken English during her interview; Shakti Women's Aid, Edinburgh, 23 May
- Fatima (2012): Spoke Urdu and English during her interview; Glasgow Women's Aid, Glasgow, 18 September

UK-born Interviewees (all English-speaking):

- Nazia (2011): DAP, Glasgow, 25 May
- Naseem (2012): Personally recruited; interview in Andalus, Glasgow, 30 October
- Khadija (2012): Personally recruited; interview in Andalus, Glasgow, 15 November
- Aisha (2013): DAP; interview in Amina: MWRC, Glasgow, 18 February.
- Farah (2013): Personally recruited; interview in Amina: MWRC, Glasgow, 26 March

APPENDIX TWO

SSPS Research Ethics Procedures



University of Edinburgh
School of Social and Political Studies
RESEARCH AND RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
Ethical review form for level 2 and level 3 auditing

This form should be used for any research projects carried out under the auspices of SSPS that have been identified by self-audit as requiring detailed assessment – i.e. level 2 and level 3 projects under the three-tier system of ethical approval that has been developed by the Research and Research Ethics Committee of the School. The levels within the system are explained in the SSPS Research Ethics Policy and Procedures document. Please tick the appropriate box to indicate which level applies to your research.

This form provides general School-wide provisions. Proposers should feel free to supplement these with detailed provisions that may be stipulated by research collaborators (e.g. NHS) or professional bodies (e.g. BSA, SRA). The signed and completed form should be submitted, along with a copy of the research proposal (or a description of the research goals and methodology where this is unavailable) to the relevant person (Head of School/Institute for proposals for external funding; Course Organiser for undergraduate student projects; supervisor or Programme Director for postgraduates) and also lodged (if possible electronically) with the School Research Administrator for forwarding to the Research and Research Ethics Committee.

Research and Research Ethics Committee will monitor level 2 proposals to satisfy themselves that the School Ethics Policy and Procedures are being complied with. They will revert to proposers in cases where there may be particular concerns or queries. For level 3 audits, work should not proceed until Research and Research Ethics Committee has considered the issues raised. Level 3 applications should be submitted well in advance of a required date of approval.

SECTION 1: PROJECT DETAILS

1.1 Title of Project

Muslim Women's Experiences of Family Violence in Scotland

1.2 Principal Investigator, and any Co-Investigator(s) (Please provide details of Name, Institution, Email and Telephone)

**School of Social and Political Science
University of Edinburgh
Chrystal Macmillan Building
Edinburgh
EH8 9LD**

Does the sponsor require formal prior ethical review? **YES** ✓ **NO**
If yes, by what date is a response required

No date but fieldwork depends on this.

.1 Does the project require the approval of any other institution and/or ethics committee? **YES** ✓ **NO** ✓

.2

If YES, give details and indicate the status of the application at each other institution or ethics committee (i.e. submitted, approved, deferred, rejected).

.1 This project has been assessed using this checklist and is judged to be **LEVEL 2** (for information to Research Ethics Committee)

LEVEL 3 (for discussion by Research Ethics Committee)

.1 If Level 3, is there a date by which a response from the committee is required?

Name..... Signature.....

PLEASE ATTACH A COPY OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL (OR
ALTERNATIVELY A DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH)

SECTION 2: POTENTIAL RISKS TO PARTICIPANTS

2.1 Could the research induce any psychological stress or discomfort? **YES** ✓ **NO**

If YES, state the nature of the risk and what measures will be taken to deal with such problems.

As mentioned in the proposal, the fieldwork consists of interviews with victims of family violence, where they will be disclosing incidents of violence which may induce emotional discomfort. In an attempt to prevent or reduce this, the researcher will encourage breaks between topics as well as provide information on support services if needed. [Refer to section 4.2 of Research Design (RD)].

2.2 Does the research require any physically invasive or potentially physically harmful procedures? **YES** **NO** ✓

If YES, give details and outline procedures to be put in place to deal with potential problems.

2.3 Does the research involve the investigation of any illegal behaviour?

YES NO

If YES, give details.

The research is focusing on family violence which consists of illegal behaviour such as physical, sexual and emotional harm.

2.4 Is it possible that this research will lead to the disclosure of information about child abuse or neglect?

YES NO

If YES, indicate the likelihood of such disclosure and your proposed response to this. If there is a real risk of such disclosure triggering an obligation to make a report to Police, Social Work or other authorities, a warning to this effect must be included in the Information and Consent documents.

As mentioned in the research proposal, there is the possibility of disclosure of harmful behaviour towards children [refer to s.2.1.2 of RD]. The researcher is mindful of one's legal duties when dealing with children. Thus, the policies and standards stipulated within the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 must be adhered to. There may be instances in which the researcher comes to know of a child in need of or may be in need of protection from an abusive father or member of their family. In such instances it is clearly stipulated in the 'Protecting Children and Young People: Framework of Standards' that the necessary agencies be contacted immediately. Before conducting the research, appropriate agencies will be contacted regarding child protection protocol, as well as the researcher aiming to attend at least one child protection training session.

2.5 Is there any purpose to which the research findings could be put that could adversely affect participants?

YES NO

If YES, describe the potential risk for participants of this use of the data. Outline any steps that will be taken to protect participants.

As stated in the research proposal, protecting the identity of the participants is paramount. However, the closeness of the Pakistani community in Scotland may give rise to difficulty in achieving this. In an attempt to reduce risk to participants, personal information will not be mentioned and the details of the cases will be changed [refer to s.4.2 of RD].

2.6 Could this research adversely affect participants in any other way?

YES NO

If YES, give details and outline procedures to be put in place to deal with such problems.

2.7 Could this research adversely affect members of particular groups of people?

YES NO

If YES, describe these possible adverse effects and the protection to be put in place against them.

The study is looking specifically at the Pakistani community. As mentioned in the proposal, this is a very small and close community. As a result participants could easily be exposed. Also, while honour killings and forced marriages are not regular occurrences amongst the South Asian population, the interviewer must ensure that the confidentiality and safety of both the participant and the interviewer are upheld. This might be done by changing some of the background details of the participant or not including them at all at the point of writing up. The researcher will also use pseudonyms throughout the interview process and write-up. In-depth interviewing can be a stressful and emotional experience for the participant, and the interviewer needs to manage this throughout the course of the interview [refer to s.4.2 of RD].

2.8 Is this research expected to benefit the participants, directly or indirectly?

YES NO

If YES, give details.

The aim of the research is to better inform government policies, such as no recourse to public funds, impacting on Muslim women dealing with family violence. As well as this, information will be provided as to the different avenues of statutory and voluntary support which can be accessed.

2.9 Will the true purpose of the research be concealed from the participants?

YES NO

If YES, explain what information will be concealed and why. Will participants be debriefed at the conclusion of the study? If not, why not?

SECTION 3: PARTICIPANTS

3.1 How many participants is it hoped to include in the research?

Up to 40 participants including Muslim women, service providers and policymakers.

3.2 What criteria will be used in deciding on the inclusion and exclusion of participants in the study?

As mentioned in the research proposal, service providers will be accessed who have been working directly with Muslim women for a period of time within the voluntary and statutory sectors. Muslim women will be recruited based upon certain variables, such as UK born and non-UK born (please refer to Table 1 in the research proposal for additional variables) [refer to s.4.3 of RD].

3.3 Are any of the participants likely to:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| be under 16 years of age? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| children in the care of a Local Authority? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| known to have special educational needs | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| physically or mentally ill? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| vulnerable in other ways | YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| members of a vulnerable or stigmatized minority? | YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| unlikely to be proficient in English? | YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| in a client or professional relationship with the researchers? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| in a student-teacher relationship with the researchers? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| in any other dependent relationship with the researchers? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| have difficulty in reading and/or comprehending any printed material distributed as part of the study? | YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |

If YES to any of the above, explain and describe the measures that will be used to protect and/or inform participants.

The researcher will be dealing with women whose first language may not be English. However, the researcher is proficient in spoken Patviri, Urdu and Punjabi, which will be the languages spoken by the participants. Thus, the participants will be kept well informed.

3.4 How will the sample be recruited?

Muslim women will be recruited via statutory and voluntary groups such as Women's Aid, refuges and community groups. However, the possible lack of contact from Muslim women with these groups has been taken into consideration. In order to remedy this possible drawback, the researcher will approach community groups such as mosque groups; mother and toddler groups; study circles; social groups; and

through word of mouth. Service providers will be contacted and recruited via statutory and voluntary organisations (please refer to the research proposal for a specified list) [refer to s.2.1.1 of RD].

- 3.5 Will participants receive any financial or other material benefits because of participation? YES NO

If YES, what benefits will be offered to participants and why?

Before completing Sections 4 & 5 please refer to the University Data Protection Policy to ensure that the relevant conditions relating to the processing of personal data under Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 are satisfied. Details are available at: www.recordsmanagement.ed.ac.uk

SECTION 4: CONFIDENTIALITY AND HANDLING OF DATA

- 4.1 Will the research require the collection of personal information from e.g. universities, schools, employers, or other agencies about individuals without their direct consent? YES NO

If YES, state what information will be sought and why written consent for access to this information will not be obtained from the participants themselves.

- 4.2 Will any part of the research involving participants be audio/film/video taped or recorded using any other electronic medium? YES NO

If YES, what medium is to be used and how will the recordings be used?

The interviews will be audio-recorded, which will then be transcribed. The recordings will be kept in a locked cabinet and saved on a password-encrypted laptop.

- 4.3 Who will have access to the raw data?

The researcher alone will have access to the raw data.

- 4.4 Will participants be identified? YES NO

.1 If yes, how will their consent to quotations/identifications be sought?

- 4.6 If not, how will anonymity be preserved?

As mentioned in the research proposal, this might be done by changing some of the background details of the participants or not including them at all at the point of writing up [refer to s.4.2 of RD].

4.7 Will the datafiles/audio/video tapes, etc. be disposed of after the study?

YES NO

4.8 How long they will be retained?

As required, the researcher will review the legitimacy of retaining the data. The data will not be retained if the researcher no longer requires them.

4.9 How they will eventually be disposed of?

If at some point in the future the researcher no longer requires the data, they will be disposed of through professional services.

4.10 How do you intend for the results of the research to be used?

The aim of the research is to produce findings that will be used by service providers and the Scottish Government to better inform them in how to cater to the needs of Pakistani victims of family violence and develop relationships with the police.

4.11 Will feedback of findings be given to participants? YES NO

If YES, how and when will this feedback be provided?

The findings will eventually be presented at a conference where service providers who participated will be invited to attend. Due to anonymity and confidentiality, it does not seem feasible for the Muslim women participants to attend this. However, feedback can be given to them on a one-to-one basis if requested.

SECTION 6: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT

5.1 Will written consent be obtained from participants? YES NO

If YES, attach a copy of the information sheet and consent forms.

The consent form will be verbal, not in written form unless requested by the participant. The script, which will be read out to the participant at the start of the interview, has been attached.

In some contexts of ethnographic research, written consent may not be obtainable or may not be meaningful. If written consent will not be obtained, please explain why circumstances make obtaining consent problematic.

Administrative consent may be deemed sufficient:

- a) for studies where the data collection involves aggregated (not individual) statistical information and where the collection of data presents:
- (i) no invasion of privacy;
 - (ii) no potential social or emotional risks:
- b) for studies which focus on the development and evaluation of curriculum materials, resources, guidelines, test items, or programme evaluations rather than the study, observation, and evaluation of individuals.

5.2 Will administrative consent be obtained in lieu of participants' consent?
 YES NO

If YES, explain why individual consent is not considered necessary.

5.3 In the case of minors participating in the research on an individual basis, will the consent or assent of parents be obtained? **n/a** YES NO

If YES, explain how this consent or assent will be obtained.

If NO, give reasons. **n/a**

5.4 Will the consent or assent (at least verbal) of minors participating in the research on an individual basis be obtained? **n/a** YES NO

If YES, explain how this consent or assent will be obtained.

If NO, give reasons. **n/a**

5.5 In the case of participants whose first language is not English, will arrangements be made to ensure informed consent? **YES** NO

If YES, what arrangements will be made?

The researcher will explain informed consent to the participants in their first spoken language.

If NO, give reasons.

5.6 In the case of participants with special educational needs will arrangements be made to ensure informed consent? **n/a** YES NO

If YES, what arrangements will be made?

If NO, give reasons. **n/a**

SECTION 6: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The University has a draft 'Policy on the Conflict of Interest' (copies available from the Research Support Office). Regarding research the draft states that a conflict of interest would arise in cases where an employee of the University might be

'compromising research objectivity or independence in return for financial or non-financial benefit for him/herself or for a relative or friend.'

The draft policy also states that the responsibility for avoiding a conflict of interest, in the first instance, lies with the individual, but that potential conflicts of interest should always be disclosed, normally to the line manager or Head of Department. Failure to disclose a conflict of interest or to cease involvement until the conflict has been resolved may result in disciplinary action and in serious cases could result in dismissal.

6.1 Does your research involve a conflict of interest as outlined above
YES NO

If YES, give details.

APPENDIX THREE

Flyer/Poster



Violence Against Women in the Muslim Community

Have you or someone you know been victim to physical, emotional, financial or sexual abuse?

Are you or someone you know still experiencing this?

A research project at the University of Edinburgh is looking at Pakistani Muslim women's experience of such abuse in order to improve service provision and Scottish Government policy on Immigration; Gender; Religion and Ethnicity.

Please help us improve service provision and governmental policy for Muslim women by taking part and sharing your experience in a safe and confidential manner.

PROFILE FOR PARTICIPANTS:

- Muslim
- Pakistani women
- Fluent in any of the following languages: English, Urdu, Punjabi and Patvari

Please contact me on the number below. All interviews will be conducted in a SAFE and PRIVATE environment. All personal information and data will be kept CONFIDENTIAL.

This project is funded by the Scottish Government and the Economic Social Research Council (ESRC)



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APPENDIX FOUR

Interview Schedule

QUESTION	URDU TRANSLATION	PROBES
Background information		
<u>Pre-amble:</u> I would like to start off by getting some background information about yourself	Mūjhe ab āp ke mutāliq saval pūchne hai	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Information: • Name? What would you like me to refer to you as? 	Meh konse nām se āp ko pukārō?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reiterate here that her real name will not be used
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where were you born and raised? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp pehdā kahā huī thī? Āp ne apna bachpan kahā guzārā? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban/rural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was there a local school/madrassa in your area • Did you attend school/madrassa? • For how long? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp ke pās school ya madarasa thā? • Āp gāī thī? Kitnī der ke-liye • Kōī āp ke ghar āthā thā āp ko parhāne ke-liye? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish between attending a madrassa and a man coming to teach in the home: i.e. did you attend school/madrassa or did someone come to the house to teach you? i.e. teacher or imam?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What languages do you speak? • What circumstances would you speak these languages in? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp konsī zūbān boltī/jāntī hai? • Āp kab yeh zūbān istemāl kartī hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you speak Urdu at home with the family and English outside?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long have you been living in this country for? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp kab se yahā rehtī hai? • Āp kī ūmar kya thī jab āp yahā āyī? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How old were you when you came to this country?
<u>Pre-amble:</u> Now I would like to ask a bit more about your natal family.	Mūjhe ab āp ke mā bāp ke mutāliq saval pūchne hai	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natal Family: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp ke mā bāp kahā rehte hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are they based in the UK or abroad?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where are your natal family based? • Where were they born and raised? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Un-kī pehdāsh kahā huī thī? • Uno ne apna bachpan kahā guzārā? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural/urban?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did they go to school? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voh school gāe the? • Kōī un-ke ghar āthā thā un-ko parhāne ke-liye? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish between attending a madrassa/school and a man coming to teach in the home: i.e. did they attend or did a teacher or Imam come teach them in the house?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do they do? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voh karte kya hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they work on their own land: unemployed/professional?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What made them move here? Or why haven't they moved here? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voh yahā kyo āye aur kab āye? Voh yahā kyo nahīn āye? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For work/family etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have any brothers or sisters? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp ke kōī bhāī bahen hai? Kitne? • Un-kī ūmar kya hai? • Voh kahā hai aur voh karte kya hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many? How old are they? Where are they based and what do they do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have any family here? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp ke rishtidār yahā rehte hai? (i.e. mamō, mamī, chachō etc.) • Āp ke yahā kōī nazdik hai jin ko āp apna rishtadār mantī hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Such as uncles, aunts, cousins as well as natal family; or do you have people you consider as family?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often do you see your natal family? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sal mai kitnī dafa āp apne mā bāp, bhāī bahen ko miltī hai? Kese? • Vahā jātī kese hai? • Āp akeli safar kartī hai? Ya kisī ke sāth jānā partā hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Times, certain functions, i.e. marriages in the family etc. • How does it come about? How do you travel? Can you travel on your own or do you have to go with someone or be dropped off? i.e. husband/mother-in-law
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do your natal family tend to give you when you visit them? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp ke mā bāp āp ko kya dete hai? Jese kapre, pese etc. • Āp un-ko kya detī hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • i.e. money, clothing etc. • Do you take gifts for them? (i.e. money, clothing etc.) • What did your natal family give you when you got married? (i.e. jahaze)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp ke mā bāp ne āp ko shādī ke waqt kya diyā thā? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often do you contact them and how? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Un-se bāt kitnī dafa kartī ho aur kese? i.e. letter; phone; skype • Āp ka phone hai? Pese kon deta hai? • Āp yeh sab akelī kar-saktī hai? Ya kisī ke sāth; rāzāmandi le kar? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skype, mobile, letters. • If it is by mobile, who pays the bills? • How private is the contact in general? • Can you contact them without someone knowing? i.e. permission/ independently?
<p><u>Pre-ample:</u> I would now like to ask you some questions regarding your husband and his family.</p>	<p>Mūjhe ab āp ke sūsrāl aur husband ke mutāliq saval pūchne hai</p>	
<p>Husband & In-laws:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where were your in-laws born and raised? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Un-kī pehdāsh kahā thī? Uno ne apna bachpan kahā guzārā? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban/rural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What made them move here? Why haven't they moved here? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voh yahā kyo āye aur kab? Voh yahā kyo nahīn āye? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For work/family etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long have you been married for? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp kī shādī kab huī thī? • Āp kī ūmar kya thī? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How old were you when you got married?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did the marriage come about? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp kī shādī kese huī thī? i.e. bachpan kī mungānī ya kisī ne karvāī thī? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was it a direct kin marriage such as a childhood engagement or a non-kin marriage such as introduced by a third party?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does your husband do? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp ke husband kya karte hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional; shop; unemployed; studying etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you live with your in-laws? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp apne sūsrāl rehtī hai? Kyo? • Kis ka fesalā thā un-ke sāth nā rehne ka? Sab is bāt se thīk the? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If doesn't live with in-laws: Why? • Whose decision was this? Was it amicable?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the household made up? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp ke ghar mai kon rehta hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sister-in-law; brother-in-law; children; anyone else such as an uncle etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have any children? If yes, how many? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp ke bachche hai aur kitne? Larka/larkī? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender

<p><u>Pre-amble:</u> I would like to ask you some questions relating to your daily routine</p>	<p>Mūjhe ab āp ke din ke mutāliq saval pūchne hai</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does your daily routine look like? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp batā saktī hai ke āp rozanā din mai kya-kya kartī hai? • Kām? (bahār aur ghar kā) • Pese? (kahā se āthe hai? Āp ke husband āp ko dete hai? Āp apnī kamāī un-ko detī hai?) • Āp apne husband ke-liye kya kartī hai? (khānā pakāna) • Ghar ke kya-kya kām hai? • Bachcho ko school kon le-ke jātā hai? • Shopping: bachcho kī; ghar kī; khane kī; hūd kī? • Masjid: bachche jate hai? Āp jātī hai • Namāz; rozā • Bahār jānā; dosto ko milnā; ek dūsre ke ghar jānā? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work (employment, household) • Money (Where does her money go? Is she financially independent/dependent? Does her husband give her money? Does he give all his earnings to her? What does she think of the Islamic concept “the wife's money is hers and the husband’s money is theirs”?) • Duties towards her husband (i.e. has to make him breakfast, lunch for work etc.) • Household duties (Is it always her that does this?) • Take kids to school (Is it always her who does this? Transport?) • Shopping (Is it always her who does this? What kind? i.e. food, clothing etc. What does she decide? Who does most of the decision-making? Who pays for it?) • Mosque (personal/taking the kids) • Prayer, fasting etc. • Socialising (friends, family)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this the same for everyone in the household? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yeh sāb ke-liye barābar hai? • Āp safāī kartī hai aur kōī aur khānā pakāta hai? • Ya āp sab kartī hai? • Ghar ke admī kūch karte hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you expected to do the cleaning and someone else does the cooking? Do you do everything? • Do the men of the house take part in any household chores?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this different from how you were 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yeh āp ke bachpan ke jese ya ālag hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where there any adjustments/changes you have had to

brought up?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp ne apne āp ko badlāya thā jab shādī kī? i.e. kapre; dost; khānā pakāna? 	make moving into your in-law's home/getting married? i.e. clothing, cooking, attitude, friends, socialising.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Ramadan, Eid, Jumma etc. like in your household? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp ke ghar mai Ramzān, Eid aur Jumā kese manāte hai? • Sab shāmil hote hai? • Aurte masjid jātī hai namāz ke-liye? • Yeh tumhāre bachpan se ālag hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it fun; busy; difficult, etc? • Does everyone take part? • Do the women stay home for things such as Eid prayer/Tarawih prayer? • Is this different from your childhood/natal family? (i.e. going to Eid prayer but now at in-laws so don't)
Topic 1: Understanding and defining family abuse		
<p><u>Pre-amble:</u> I would like to discuss some scenarios with yourself; what you think of them and your understanding of them</p>	Mūjhe ab āp ko kihse batane hai aur un-ke mutāliq saval pūchne hai	
1.1 What do you think of the above scenarios?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp in kihse/kahāni ke mutāliq kya sochtī hai? • Aurat ko kese lagtā hogā? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does it make you feel? (angry, sad) How do you think the woman in the scenario feels?
1.2 Is anyone behaving unfairly/badly? If yes, in what way?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yāhā kya kōī in mai se nā-insāfī kar-rahā hai? Kese? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • i.e. wife/husband
1.3 What is your understanding of this behaviour?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp is salōk ko kese samajtī hai? • Āp is salōk ko pehchantī hai? Kisī janeh vāle ke sāth hūa hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is okay/wrong? • Are you familiar with this type of behaviour? Happens to people you know/doesn't happen?
1.4 Do you think any of the behaviour is acceptable? If yes, what and why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp ko lagtā hai ke yahā kōī salōk thīk hai? Konsa aur kyo? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts of the behaviour are acceptable? If yes, what? • Culturally/religiously acceptable?
1.5 Do you think anyone is at fault here? If yes, who and why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kisī kī gultī hai? Kis kī aur kyo? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wife, husband
1.6 What would you recommend the women to do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp in aurto ko kya salā de? i.e. husband se bāt kare?; larāyī; kūch nā kare; us-se chorde?; apne āp ko badle? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing; leave; fight back; be a better wife; talk to the husband about it etc.
1.7 What would you recommend the men to do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp in murd ko kya nasīhat de? i.e us-se nā māre: sabr kare; us-kī mādāt kare ke voh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing; not to hit her; be more patient; get help; help her be a better wife etc.

	achchī bīvī bane; kūch bhī nahīn	
Regarding Scenario 4:		
1.8 What do you think of the above scenario?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp is-ke mutāliq kya sochtī hai? • Aurat ko kese lagtā hogā? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does it make you feel? (angry, sad) • How do you think the woman in the situation feels?
1.9 Is anyone behaving unfairly/badly? If yes, in what way?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kya kōī in mai se nā-insāfi kar-rahā hai? • Agar karte hai, kese? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • i.e. wife/husband/mother-in-law
1.10 What do you think of the man's behaviour?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp mard ke salōk ke bare mai kya sochtī hai? i.e thīk hai; ghulat hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is okay; wrong; it is his right to act this way?
1.11 What do you think of the mother-in-law's behaviour?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp sās ke salōk ke bare mai kya sochtī hai? i.e thīk hai; ghulat hai ? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is okay; wrong; it is her right to act in this way?
1.12 What is your understanding of the behaviour?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp is salōk ko kese samajtī hai? • Āp ke kisī janeh vāle ke sāth hūa hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you familiar with this type of behaviour? • Happens to people you know/doesn't happen?
1.13 Do you think any of the behaviour is acceptable? If yes, what and why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp ko lagtā hai ke yahā kōī salōk thīk hai? • Konsa aur kyo? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts of the behaviour are okay such as giving her a fixed allowance but beating her is not?
1.14 Do you think there is a difference between this scenario and the above scenarios? If yes, what and why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is mai aur dūsre kihse/kahāni mai farq hai? Kyo aur kya? i.e. Bartāo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • i.e. behaviour; perpetrator; acceptability; reasoning etc.
1.15 What would you recommend the wife to do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp bīvī ko kya nasīhat de? i.e. husband se bāt kare?; larāyī; kūch nā kare; us-se chorde?; apne āp ko badle? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing; leave; fight back; be a better wife; talk to the husband about it etc.
1.16 What would you recommend the man to do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp is murd ko kya nasīhat de? i.e us-se nā māre: sabr kare; us-kī mādāt kare ke voh achchī bīvī bane; kūch bhī nahīn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing; leave; fight back; be a better wife; talk to the husband about it etc.
Topic 2: Understanding of Islamic perspective		
<u>Pre-amble:</u> I will now go through some case studies with you. These are real life court cases. I would like to get your opinion on them.	Mūjhe ab āp ko kahāniya ke mutāliq batāna hai aur saval pūchne hai	
Regarding Case studies 1&2:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp in-ke mutāliq kya sochtī hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does it make you feel? (angry, sad)

2.1 What do you think of the above scenarios?		
2.2 Is anyone behaving unfairly/badly? If yes, in what way?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kōī zūlm kar-rahā hai? Kon aur kese? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I.e. wife/husband/mother-in-law
2.3 What is your understanding of this behaviour?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp is salōk ko kese samajtī hai? • Āp kisī ko jāntī hai jis-ke sāth ese hūa hai? • Āp ke samne hūa hai? Voh aurat kesī thī i.e. mazhab, Pakistani etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you aware of this type of behaviour? • Happens to people you know/doesn't happen? • Has it happened in front of you? What was the woman like? i.e. her faith, background, etc.
2.4 Would members of your family agree with the father in these examples?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp ke rishtadār/janeh vāle kya soche? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would your in-laws think of this? • What would your natal family think of this?
2.5 What would your husband think of the scenarios?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp ke husband kya soche? thīk hai; ghulat hai; us-se nā māre: sabr kare; us-kī mādāt kare ke voh achchī bīvī bane; kūch bhī nahīn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is okay/wrong/she deserved it/the husband does not have a good religious understanding etc?
2.6 Is there any space for such behaviour in Islam?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Islam ke hisāb se yeh salōk thīk hai? • Islam is salōk ke mutāliq kya kehtā hai? • Is ke mutāliq āp ko jankārī kahā miltī hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it against the Islamic faith? i.e. It is Islamically acceptable/ parts of it are? • It is the husband's God-given right to do this?/It is her Islamic duty to be a good wife? • Where do you get your information regarding this?
2.7 Do you think anything can be used to justify their behaviour?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yeh kūch istemāl kar-sakte hai ke yeh salōk thīk hai? Kya? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • i.e. culture/stress/wife's behaviour/religion • Would you use anything to justify the behaviour?
Topic 3: Experiences of family violence		
<u>Pre-amble:</u> I would like to speak to you about some of your experiences of the issues discussed.	Mūjhe ab āp ke experience ke mutāliq saval pūchne hai	
3.1 What have been your own personal experiences of the issues discussed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp ke sāth ese kabhī hūa hai? • Āp in aurto ke sāth relate kar-saktī hai? Kōī salōk āp ko daratī hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you had any such experiences? • Has this ever happened to you/something similar ever happened to you?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp kisī ko jantī hai jis-ke sāth ese hūa hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you relate to any of the women in the scenarios? Has any behaviour made you feel unsafe/uncomfortable? • Has this happened to someone you know? Does this happen a lot in your community/family?
3.2 In what contexts do these experiences occur?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kab aur kese? Kyo aur kese? i.e. ghar mai; kisī ke samne? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • i.e. within the home, in private. • What are the immediate causes of these incidents? And how does it happen? i.e. dinner is late etc.
3.3 Who are the incidents perpetrated by?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yeh salōk āp ke sāth kartā kon hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Husband; in-laws; children etc.
3.4 How do these experiences/incidents make you feel?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp is-ko kese samajtī hai? i.e. yeh thīk hai; thīk nahīn hai. • Āp ese kyo sochtī hai? i.e. mazhab, khandān, bahār vāle, rītī/rāvāj) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • i.e angry, depressed, resigned, normal. • Do you think the behaviour is wrong/unjust/normal? What factors influence your feelings? i.e. religion, culture etc.
Topic 4: Responding/resisting		
<p><u>Pre-amble:</u> It is essential for us to understand women's coping mechanisms in these situations in order for us to improve our services. I would like to ask you some questions regarding this.</p>	<p>Mere purhāi ke-liye bāhot zarūrī hai jāneh ke-liye ke aurte is salōk kā sāmna kese kartī hai. Is mutāliq mūjhe āp se saval pūchne hai</p>	
4.1 Have you spoken to anyone about this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp ne is-ke mutāliq kisī se bāt kī hai? • Kon? Aur us-ke sāth kyo? • Us-ke sāth kab bāt kī? Un-kī salā kya thī? • Agar nahīn bāt kī kisī ke sāth, kyo? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who? • Why that person and not others? • When did you speak with them? What was their reaction? • If no, why?
4.2 How do you deal with it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jab āp ke sāth ese hota hai āp kya kartī hai? i.e. rokna, vāpas larnā, khamosh rehna 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • i.e. behavioural responses: resist/fight back/ stay quiet
If she does not resist in any way:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp kī thara bāhot aurte kūch nahīn kartī. Ese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear; religion; culture; don't know how; children;

4.3 Some women, like yourself, tend not to physically react to such behaviour. I am interested to know why this is the case?	kya hai? i.e. dar; mazhab; rīti/rāvāj; malōm nahīn ke kya mādāt hai/kya kar-sakte hai?	family etc.
4.4 How do you deal with it?	• Āp kese bārdāsh kartī hai?	• Internal response; coping mechanisms i.e. prayer etc.
4.5 What gives you the strength to deal with it the way you do?	• Āp kī himat kahā se athī hai? (sahārā/mādāt?) • Āp kisī chīz kā intezār kar-rahī hai? i.e. bachche bare ho-jāe?	• Children, family, “milestone theory”; Do people support you/advise you?
4.6 Role of religion and culture in this?	• Mazhab aur rīti /rāvāj kya ehem rakhte hai āp ke-liye? • Āp ke salōk kā kūch nā karnā kya vajā hai?	• Do they have a positive or negative role? • Are they causes of the behaviour and your reasons for not resisting?
4.7 Do you want to resist?	• Āp is-se rokna chatī hai? • Konsī vajā se i.e bachche, agar abuse ziyādā ho-jāe?	• What would make you do so? • i.e. children, if violence became more extreme? milestone theory?
Topic 5: To what extent and at what points do Muslim women seek support? If so, how and from whom? (e.g. Muslim population, formal services)		
If she does resist:		
5.1 At what point did you resist? Why?	• Āp ne kab se rokna shūrū kiyā thā? Kyo? • Āp kī samaj is salōk ke mutāliq kese badlī hai? • Konsī chīz āp ko influence kartī hai?	• How has your response/resistance varied over time? • How has your view of the violence changed over time? • What factors influence your thinking/reaction to it over time? i.e. media, Indian serials etc.
5.2 How?	• Kese? Apne kiyā kya? i.e. larī; ghar se chalī-gāi; samajne kī koshish kī	• What did you do? i.e. fought back; left; subtle resistance (put too much salt in the food)
5.3 Did you get any outside help/support?	• Āp ko mādāt milī thī? i.e. rishtadār; bahār vāle se; dost	• i.e. service providers; family; community; friends
5.4 What gives you the strength to do so?	• Āp kī himat kahā se āthī hai? i.e. bachche; rishtadār; dost	• Children, family, friends etc.
5.5 Role of religion and culture in this?	• Mazhab aur rīti/rāvāj kya ehem rakhte hai āp ke-liye is bāt mai? • Āp ko lagtā hai is salōk kī vajā hai yai?	• Do they have a positive or negative role? • Are they causes of the behaviour or do they encourage and help you to resist?

5.6 What is the reaction of the perpetrator?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jo āp ke sāth yeh salōk karta/karte hai, uno ne kya socha is bare mai? i.e. un-ne achchā nahīn laga; aur ziyādā karte the • Is ke mutāliq āp ne socha ke mūjhe kūch nahīn karnā chāhiye? Ya āp ko ziyādā himat milī? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did they respond? Get annoyed; more abusive etc. • What affect did this reaction have on you and your resistance?
5.7 What was the reaction of others?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dūsro ne kya socha is bare mai? i.e. rishtadār; dost; mā bāp; bhāī bahen; bahār vāle • Uno ne mādāt dhī; kūch nahīn kiyā; socha ke tum <u>ghulat</u> ho? • Is ke mutlāliq āp ne socha ke mūjhe kūch nahīn karnā chāhiye? Ya āp ko ziyādā himat milī? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did different people respond to this? i.e in-laws, natal family, friends, community. • How did they respond? • Were they supportive/dismissive/wanted to help/told you to just deal with it? • What affect did these reactions have on you and your resistance?
5.8 Has this made a difference?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kōī farq hūa hai is-ke sāth? i.e. uno ne yeh salōk chora; kum hūa; ziyādā hūa • Tumhāre liye kōī farq hūa? Bahār vāle farq karte hai tumhāre sāth? i.e. āp kī <u>ghultī</u> hai; ese kyo kiyā? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To the perpetrators behaviour; i.e. has he stopped doing it, got worse? • Those around you? i.e. treat you differently; exiled from your community • Has it made a difference to you? Your mental and physical state?

Topic 6: Service provision

<p>Pre-amble: I would like to ask you some questions regarding service provision. By service provision I mean voluntary and statutory bodies such as NHS; police; procurator fiscal; community agencies such as Shakti, Amina MWRC; CAB etc.</p>	<p>Mūjhe ab āp se saval pūchne hai un-ke mutāliq jo aurto ko bachāne mai aur un-kī mādāt mai kām karte hai. Jese <i>NHS, police; bahār vāle; Amina: MWRC; Jo nasihat dete hai i.e. CAB (Citizens Advice Bureau); wākīl</i></p>	
<p>Regarding not using service provision as part of her resistance/support mechanism:</p> <p>6.1 Some women tend not to use service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kōī aurte in bahār vāle kī mādāt nahīn letī jese ke āp. Kyo? 	

provision as part of their resistance like yourself. I am interested to know why this is the case?		
6.2 Barriers to support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp ke-liye mushkil kya hai? i.e. zūbān, vahā jānā, malōm nahīn, mazhab/rītī/rāvāj nahīn jante, racist • Āp in-ke mutāliq kya sochtī hai? Dūsre in-ke mutāliq kya kehte/sochte hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust; access; language; religious/cultural sensitivity; bad experience; don't know of any etc. • What is your opinion of service providers such as Shakti and Amina? What have you heard about them and from whom?
6.3 What would encourage you to access service providers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kya farq chāhiye in mai ke āp in-kā istemāl kare/pās jāe? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the above mentioned barriers did not exist i.e. more religious/cultural sensitivity; better advertising etc.
6.4 What kind of service provision would you never access? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Konsī chīz āp kabhī nahīn istemāl kare aur kyo? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police; NHS etc.
<p>Regarding why she thinks other women she knows do not use service provision</p> <p>Pre-amble: I would like to ask you some questions related to why you think women tend not to use service provision as part of their resistance.</p>	<p>Mūjhe āp se dūsre aurte ke mutāliq saval pūchne hai, ke voh in mādāt karne valo ko istemāl kyo nahīn karte?</p>	
6.5 In your experience, why do you think other women do not use service provision?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dūsre aurte kyo nahīn in-ko istemāl kartī? 	
6.6 Barriers to support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Un ke-liye mushkil kya hai? i.e. zūbān, vahā jānā, malōm nahīn, mazhab/rītī/rāvāj, nahīn jante, racist • Voh in-ke mutāliq kya sochtī hai? Dūsre in-ke mutāliq kya kehte/sochte hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust; access; language; religious/cultural sensitivity; bad experience; don't know of any etc. • What is their opinion of service providers such as Shakti and Amina? What have they heard about them and from whom?
6.7 What would encourage them to access service providers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kya farq chāhiye in mai ke voh in-kā istemāl kare/pās jāe? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the above-mentioned barriers did not exist i.e. more religious/cultural sensitivity; better advertising etc.
6.8 What kind of service provision would they never access and why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Konsī chīz voh kabhī nahīn istemāl kare aur kyo? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police; NHS etc.
Regarding use of service provision as part of her resistance/support mechanism (ask questions separately for each service provider accessed):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp ne in-kā istemāl kyo kiyā? • Āp in-ke mutāliq kya sochtī hai? Dūsre in-ke mutāliq kya kehte/sochte hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your opinion of service providers such as Shakti and Amina? What have you heard about them and from whom?

6.9 Why did you use service providers as part of your resistance/support?		
6.10 What kind of support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kis kisim kī mādāt? i.e. sala; pese; rehnī kī jāgā 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling; advice; financial support; place to stay etc.
6.11 Why did you choose that particular service provider?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yahā se kyo lī? • Āsanī kī vajā se? Ya sab se behtar mādāt thī āp ke-liye? Agar āp jā-saktī, āp kahī aur jāti mādāt ke-liye? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was it out of necessity? i.e. it's the only one you had access to/ the only one that spoke in the same language as you?
6.12 Were they easily accessible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vahā janeh mai āp ke-liye asān thā? • Āp vahā kese gāi thī/mādāt kese lī thī? i.e. phone pe; computer pe; amne samne 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (i.e. physical, telephone, Internet) How did you access them?
6.13 How did you find out about the service?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp ko in-ke bare mai kese patā lagā? i.e. kisī ne āp ko batāyā 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word of mouth; advertisement; family; friend etc.
6.14 What was your experience of the service provision?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In ke sāth āp kī experience kya thī? i.e. achchī, būri, zūbān, rīti/rāvāj/mazhab ka samaj • Jo āp ko chāhiye thā āp ko milā? • Jab uno ne dekhā ke tum Muslimān ho tumhāre sāth voh kese behave hue? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally/religiously sensitive, meet your needs such as language. • What was their reaction to you as a Muslim woman?
6.15 What was their advice/support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uno ne āp se kya kahā? Konsī salā/sahāra dhī? i.e. ghar chordo • Jo jāwāb āp ko chāhiye thā āp ko milā? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did they encourage you to stay; leave; provide you with different options and let you make the decision for yourself? • Did you get the advice/support you were looking for?
6.16 Did you find it to be sensitive to your needs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yeh salā/mādāt āp ke mazhab/rīti/rāvāj ke mutāliq ya khilāf thā? • Āp ke bachcho/rishtadār/apne āp ke-liye thīk thā? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religion/culture/family/personal/health/children etc.
6.17 What kind of service provision would you never access? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp konsī mādāt kabhī nā le? Kyo? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • i.e. police, women's groups etc.

Topic 7: Needs/improvement

<p><u>Pre-amble:</u> I would like to finish by asking you some questions regarding needs and improvement in respect to women experiencing abuse.</p>	<p>Mere purhāī kā muqsād hai patā lagāna ke Musilmān aurte kī zarūrate kya hai aur in-ko behtar kese kare.</p> <p>Mūjhe āp se is-ke mutāliq saval pūchne hai</p>	
<p>7.1 What are your needs in Scotland having experienced such abuse?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Āp ke khās zarūrat kya hai is mūlk mai? • Muslimān/Pakistani/Pakistani <i>Scottish</i> aurat hone kī vajā se? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • i.e. as a Pakistani woman; Muslim woman; Pakistani-Scottish woman.
<p>7.2 How do you think we can improve service provision to cater for these needs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jo aurtō ke-liye kām karte hai aur jo sab ko mādāt dete hai voh apne khidmat kese behtar kar-sakte hai? i.e. mazhab/rīti/rāvāj mai ziyādā samaj 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • i.e. training for service providers • Be more religiously/culturally sensitive? • More accessible/language/better advertising etc.
<p>7.3a How do you feel it can be prevented/reduced within the general community and the Muslim community (different communities' roles such as mosque community, local community, service provision community etc.)?</p> <p>7.3b What role do you feel the Government can/should play in this?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is salōk ko kese rokh sakte hai? Masjid; mādāt karne vāle (amina); NHS; police, yeh sab kya kar-sakte hai? • Ziyādā Islamic education; sab ko is mutāliq batānā? • Yeh sirf Muslismāno ki zimadārī hai? Kya Government kā kōī mutlab hai is bāt mai? Voh kya kar-sakte hai? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • i.e. Islamic/public general education; Public shaming, education. • i.e. their responsibilities to the Muslim community; Is it an internal community issue in that the Government should not intervene?; funding; advertisement; better their gender policies and not favour multiculturalism over gender?

Scenario 1:

A woman (S) has been married for 3 years. She is a housewife and her husband has a very stressful job. He likes his dinner on the table as soon as he gets home from work. If the dinner is even 5 minutes late he gets very upset and reacts by pushing, hitting, kicking and slapping ‘S’. Would you like some additional information?

Ek aurat kī shādī ko thīn sal ho-choke hai. Us-ke *husband* kā kām bāhot *stressful* hai. Voh chatā hai ke khānā tayār ho us-ke āne se pehle. Agar tora sa bhī *late* ho to voh bāhot guse hota hai aur us-se mārne lagtā hai. Kōī aur *information* chāhiye?

Scenario 2:

A woman (A) and her husband both work full-time. However, ‘A’ has to give all her earnings to her husband from which he will give her a certain amount of expenses a week. She has to provide him with receipts for all her expenses and has a limit of spending which she must adhere to. If she would like extra money for the week she has to ask him. Would you like some additional information?

Dohno *husband wife* kām karte hai. Bīvī apnī sab kamāī apne *husband* ko detī hai aur us-kā *husband* us-ko hafte kā ghar ke karche ke pese deta hai. Voh us-ko ziyādā pese ya kum nahīn kurchne deta is-liye voh us-se *receipt* māngtā hai har chīz ke-liye. Agar us-ko ziyādā pese chāhiye to us-se apne *husband* se pūch ke lenā hai. Kōī aur *information* chāhiye?

Scenario 3:

There is a man who has recently married his wife. He feels that his wife should perform sexual acts for him including sexual intercourse whenever he desires, irrespective of her wishes. He can become very forceful and hits her if she refuses. Would you like some additional information?

Ek admī kī nayī shādī huī hai. Voh chatā hai ke us-kī bīvī us-ke sāth jinsī talōqāt ruke jab bhī voh chāhe, agar bīvī kī marzī ho ya nā. Agar voh nā kehtī hai to phir voh us-ke sāth zabardāstī kartā hai aur us-ko mārta hai. Kōī aur *information* chāhiye?

Scenario 4:

A woman is being physically abused by her husband. She is given a fixed allowance a week, which is barely enough for her to buy the necessities for her two children. She has attempted to speak to her husband about the abuse and lack of financial support. He responded by beating her and forcing her to have sex. He also threatens her that he will get married again if she does not do as she is told. Her husband’s family know of the abuse but do not intervene. Her mother-in-law threatens to take her kids away if she leaves her husband. Would you like some additional information?

Ek aurat kā *husband* us-ko martā hai. Voh us-ko ghar ka aur do bachcho ke karche ke-liye bāhot kum pese deta hai. Us-ne apne *husband* ke sāth bāt karne kī koshish kī, par us-ne us-ko marā aur us-ke sāth zabardāstī (jinsī talōqāt) kī. Voh us-ko dumkī bhī deta hai ke voh phir shādī kar-lega agar voh us-kā kehnā nā mane. Us-ke susrāl vāle jante hai is bare mai aur voh kūch bhī nahīn karte. Us-kī sās us-ko dumkī detī hai ke voh bachche le-jāegī agar voh us-ke bete ko chore. Kōī aur *information* chāhiye?

Case Studies 1 & 2:

In February 2011, Aurang Zeb wanted to arrange a marriage for his daughter, Rozina, in Pakistan against her wishes, and if she did not marry she would be dishonoring the family. He threatened Rozina and his wife that if this did not go ahead he would kill them. Would you like any additional information?

Aurang Zeb chatā thā ke us-kī betī Rozina Pakistan mai shādī kare us-kī marzī ke sāth. Agar voh nā mane to phir voh apnī mā bāp ko zalīl kare ghī sab ke samne. Us-ne apnī bīvī ko aur Rozina ko jān se mārne kī dumkī dhī agar voh shādī ke-liye nā mane.

Tulay Goren was killed by her father in 1999 for wanting to marry a Muslim man from a different sect to her father. In these examples, and the ones provided above, Islam is used as a justification. Would you like any additional information?

Ek bāp ne apnī betī kā kutal kar-diyā is-liye ke voh chatī thī voh ek Musilmān admī se shādī kare par us-kī zāt us-ke bāp se ālag thī. In kiso mai Islam kā istemāl hūa hai, ke Islam ke mutāliq yeh salōk thīk hai. Kōī aur *information* chāhiye?

APPENDIX FIVE

Participant Information and Consent Form



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Working Title:

‘Muslim Women’s Experiences of Family Abuse in Scotland’

Researcher Details:

Nughmana Mirza, PhD student in Social Policy, University of Edinburgh

The Purpose of this Research:

The aim of this project is to explore in depth family violence amongst the Pakistani community. Family violence exists in all communities and this project’s focus on Pakistani women by no means assumes that it is more prevalent in this community. The Pakistani community was chosen due to ease of accessibility and languages spoken.

The Aim of the Interview:

The main purpose of this interview is to understand family violence from the perspective of Muslim women. The interview will be recorded. You have the right not to answer certain or any questions asked. If at any time you would like to stop for a break we can do so.

Data Confidentiality:

The data collected from today’s interview will be kept in a private, secure laptop which is only accessible to myself. The data will be used and mentioned in the final PhD thesis as well as used as evidence to inform policy in the Scottish Government.

Participant Anonymity:

Your identity will be kept confidential. No personal information (e.g. name, location etc.) will be used. All participants will be allocated pseudonyms. However, there are limits to confidentiality. If any information is given about a child or someone at risk of harm then I have to take the appropriate action to ensure their safety.

Do you understand and agree with this?

Is *project* kā maqsud hai ke Pakistani gharo mai hone vāle gharelu tashadud (mār peet) ke mutāliq pūchā jāe. Pakistani birāderī par tāwajo karne ki wājā yeh nahīn ke Pakistani gharo mai gharelu tashadud (mār peet) dūsre *Scottish* birāderīo se ziyādā ya kum hai. Mūjhe sirf yeh janeh meh dil-chāsbī hai ke Pakistani aurte jo gharelu tashadud (mār peet) kā shikār hotī hai voh kis-tarā mādāt hasil kartī hai, kis-tarā us-kā muqabla kartī hai aur un-ko kese mādāt di jā-saktī hai.

Is *interview* kā maqsud hai ke gharelu tashadud (mār peet) ko muslim aurto ke nazrīe se dekhā jā-sake. Yeh *interview record* kiyā jāegā aur āp ko kisī bhī sawal ko nā dene kā pūra haq hai. Agar *interview* ko rokna hai to ham rok sakte hai.

Interview se milne vāla *information* mere zaītī *computer* pe hogā. Āp kī *personal information* ko rāz mai rakha jāegā. Kōī bhī zaītī mālōmāt jese ke nām aur pata kabhī bhī istimāl nahīn kiyā jāegā. Sab hisa lene vālo ko dūsra nām diyā jāegā. Barhal, agar āp kōī bhī esī *information* de, jese bachcho ke *safety* ke mutāliq, mūjhe is bachche kī hifāzat ke-liye munāsib qadam ūtānā paregā.

Kya āp in sab bāto ko samaj kar *interview* ke-liye razāmand hai?