

From Farms to Foundries

*Racism, Class and Resistance in the Life-Stories of Yemeni
Former-Steelworkers in Sheffield*

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Abstract

From Farms to Foundries... explores the intersections of the themes of racism, class and resistance in the life-stories of Yemeni former-steelworkers in Sheffield. These main biographical themes are explored within the broader context of post-war British history. The research is based upon life-story interviews with twenty-five Yemeni former-steelworkers who remained in Sheffield after the onset of the recession in the late 1970s. The study begins to break with two of the key conventions of literary realism which prevail in much of the literature; namely the reliance on description and the dominance of the singular voice of the ethnographer. The study does not, in the vein of much of the 'race' and ethnic relations literature, attempt to describe 'them' to 'us.' The life-story interviews with the elderly men have been accurately transcribed and reproduced in the thesis in order that they can represent their experiences in the former steelworkers' own unique industrial demotic. The study argues that in spite of the complementary process of production in the steel industry where Yemenis usually worked in tandem with white workers, a racialised division of labour soon emerged between a permanent Yemeni lower class, who were consistently denied any promotion, and a relatively mobile white class, with opportunities to flee the least desirable jobs. The thesis argues that the life-stories of the former-steelworkers have consistently emphasised the interviewees' confinement to the lowliest positions in the steel industry and in the housing market, and demonstrate the prevalence of racism in their lives, which was both overt and institutional, embedded in the structures in which they worked and lived. The migrants' stories have also revealed the pervasiveness of the often informal acts of resistance against the various exclusionary practices that they faced throughout their lives in Sheffield.

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A Brief Glossary of Arabic Terms Used in the Thesis

<i>Alhamdu Lillah</i>	Praise be to God.
<i>Al salaam Alaykum</i>	Peace be upon you.
<i>Eid Al-Adha</i>	Feast of the sacrifice. Celebrated at the end of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca.
<i>Hafiz</i>	One who has memorised the Koran
<i>Hajj</i>	The annual pilgrimage to Mecca. One of the five pillars of Islam.
<i>Halal</i>	Permitted or sanctioned within Islam.
<i>Haram</i>	Prohibited or unsanctioned within Islam.
<i>Insha Allah</i>	If God wills.
<i>Jumah</i>	Friday early afternoon prayers.
<i>Mayia</i>	Water.
<i>Ramadan</i>	The ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar during which fasting is required.
<i>Salaam</i>	Peace
<i>Saleh/Salat</i>	Prayer, worship

Introduction

The Yemeni community forms a small but important part of Sheffield's population, constituting around 4,224 people, most being families of the now redundant steel workers who migrated during the 1950s and 60s (Centre for Research and Evaluation: 2003). Yemenis have made major contributions to the industrial development of Britain, both before and after the Second World War. In colonial Aden, British capital drew on labour drawn from both the surrounding Protectorate and further afield, to feed the industrial centres of Britain with raw materials derived from her Colonial possessions in the East. On the Eastbound voyage, Yemeni labour was used to facilitate the flow of industrial exports from the 'Mother country,' through the straits of Suez and back to her Easterly colonial peripheries. It was the seamen engaged in this uneven trade who, when discharged, founded the first settlements, of mainly Yemeni men, on the British coast, in Cardiff and on Tyneside. These settlements of Yemenis constitute the longest established Arab communities in Britain, and as the studies of Little (1948) and Collins (1957) have demonstrated, for much of the first half of the twentieth century, Yemenis comprised the largest section of the Muslim population in Britain. However, despite their historical significance, there is little historical research pertaining to the Yemeni community, especially post-war Yemeni settlements in the land-locked industrial cities of Britain. The present study is the first full length qualitative study of Yemeni former steelworkers in Sheffield. The study is in part driven by the dearth of research on Yemeni communities in Britain, and aims to make an original contribution to knowledge on the post-war history of Britain by providing a life-story study of Yemeni ex-steelworkers in Sheffield. Tales of racism, class oppression and resistance are threaded through the narratives of the ex-steelworkers, from stories of being confined below deck in steerage class on their journeys from Yemen to Britain during the Suez War in 1956, to stories of being the 'first out' during the mass industrial redundancies of the late 1970s and 80s. As a consequence, the study has a particular concern with racism, class and resistance. It aims to understand how the themes of racism, class and resistance intersect in the life-stories of the migrants and to begin to contextualise these themes within the broader history of post-war migration and settlement in Britain.

Even within the context of post-war migration to Britain, the migration of people from Yemen to Sheffield provides a particularly stark contrast between the migrants' country

of origin and their country of settlement. In placing the post-war migration of Yemenis to Britain in the broader context of Yemeni emigration internationally, Fred Halliday (1992: ix) argues:

Of all the groupings of Yemeni emigrants, those in Britain are among the furthest in living and overall conditions from their homeland: the contrast between the sun-drenched villages of the Yemeni mountains and the dank Victorian streets of Attercliffe and Small Heath could hardly be greater.

Indeed, the contrast between the 'sun-drenched villages' of the Third World and the 'dank Victorian' streets of Britain, either in the industrial North and Midlands or the South East, was one that was shared by the majority of the post-war migrants who fled their colonial and Commonwealth homelands in search of a better life in the 'Mother Country.' There were however, further peculiarities in the Yemeni experience that perhaps accentuated the disparity between their country of origin and settlement. In his comparative study of West Indians and Asians in Britain, Dilip Hiro (1971: 116-126) argues that the differences in the cultural backgrounds of migrants from South Asia and the host population were more marked than those between the migrants from the West Indies and the host population. The Yemeni community share with the South Asian communities a different language and religion, which heightens their cultural differences from the host population. These cultural differences between the migrant communities and the host population have been influenced by the nature of colonialism in the countries of origin of the migrant groups. One major difference between the nature of colonial rule in Britain's older West Indian colonies and South Asia was the use of 'traditional' or 'customary' authority figures in the latter (Potter, 2000: 276-280), in a policy which would become known, and associated especially with Lord Lugard in Nigeria, as 'indirect rule.' South Yemen, was a 'zone of influence' until the official annexation of Aden in 1937, and as a result, colonialism there, was less 'direct' still. This worked, again, to make even more stark the contrast between the migrants' countries of origin and country of settlement. In addition, West Indians have largely gravitated towards the service industries in the South East, and South Asians towards occupations in light industry in the north and midlands. The majority of Yemenis however, came from agricultural backgrounds in a Protectorate with minimal contact with the British colonial powers, to work in the heavy industrial plants of post-war Sheffield. Given the combination of the colonial, cultural and industrial peculiarities of Yemeni migration, there is perhaps no greater contrast between the conditions in the

countries of origin and settlement that were faced by a migrant community in post-war Britain, and even wider British history.

Another factor in the experience of Yemeni migrants in Britain is, again, particularly unique in the broader context of post-war migration. The majority of the emigrants from Yemen came to Britain at a time when anti-Arab racism was at an apex and what the late Edward Said (1978) called *Orientalism*, loosely defined as ‘western conceptions of the Orient,’ was very frequent and negative in the popular press. The bulk of the post-war migrants from Yemen came in the mid to late fifties, around the period of the Suez War. The following poem, *Troop Deck Ballad*, published in the popular magazine *Punch* (15/08/1956) about the call-up of reservists for the war effort, whilst clearly geared to stirring patriotic fervour, demonstrates some of the then attitudes of jingoistic racism:

I could talk like one o’ Kipling’s ruddy ‘eroes if I tried
(Ballads in the barrack-rooms and royalties galore!)
But I’m just a paratrooper, and I’ve not much time for side,
And dialect is really such a bore.
Oh, I’m just a paratrooper and I’m sailing to the East
To bolster up the shares in the Canal;
And what it’s got to do with me I don’t know in the least,
And in spite of all the papers, I dare say I never shall.

But it’s: Call out the Reserve!
Call out the Reserve once more!
There’s a lot of chits that say
Class A! Class A!
Fall in the Reserve for the war!

I did five years with the Colours and I got discharged last May,
(Wallop in the sitting-room and all the neighbours round!)
And I got a job as fitter in a works up Luton way
That brought me in a steady fifteen pound.
But when they called the old reserve I gladly packed it in-
I wouldn’t see old England up the creek.
But we’ll Hang Out the Washing on the place of Abdin
And knock this dastard Nasser to the middle of next week!
For it’s etc.

There’s another whole division coming out to fight the Wogs
(And a squadron’s-worth of Canberras no further off than Malta)
And three small aircraft-carriers to show the dirty dogs
Who owns the Med from Jaffa to Gibraltar.
For the serried ranks of Gyppos (Backed by Jordan and Iraq)
Are Egyptians we’ll be very glad to spoil,
When the voice that breathes from Eden says we’ve got to have a crack
So the motorists of England shall never lack for oil.

The Suez War was seen by many as a watershed moment in the history of British imperialism. The war, for many, like the British withdrawal from India in 1947, sounded the death knell of the British Empire, after which movements for independence would mushroom across the colonial states in Africa, the Caribbean, South Yemen, East Asia and elsewhere. Indeed, one of the English teachers at the Yemeni community centre in Sheffield, involved in the present research project, has remarked that the hostile media coverage of the Suez War is one of his most distinct early memories of childhood. The present study of former Yemeni steel-workers, whose narratives often begin during the era of Suez, and which itself began in the periodic shadows of the Twin Towers attack, has, as a consequence of its pervasiveness in the lives of the interviewees, a particular concern with racism.

It is of particular importance that Sheffield's Yemeni community, which remained largely invisible to, and excluded from, its host community in England's fourth largest city, becomes better known and better understood. This is not only for reasons of historic and social equity but because it remains a powerful example of an arrivant Muslim community that has made a continuing crucial contribution to British industry and British society for half a century, during an era of rising Islamophobia and prevailing racial hostility.

The Aims, Originality and Scope of the Research

The present study explores the intersections of the themes of racism, class and resistance in the life-stories of Yemeni former steelworkers in Sheffield. The study aims to facilitate an understanding of these biographical themes through beginning to situate them within the broader context of post-war British history. C. Wright Mills (1959: 3) argued that: 'Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both', and, in a similar vein to the analytic process that Mills described as the 'sociological imagination,' this study aims to connect biography with history and society. The aims of the research have been co-generated by the researcher and community leaders at the Yemeni Community Association in Sheffield. The study makes an original contribution to knowledge as it is the first full length life-story study of Yemeni former-steelworkers in Sheffield.

The reliance of the present study on the research method of life-story interviewing is unique amongst studies of Yemenis in Britain. The academic literature on Yemeni migrants has largely been written with the use of the conventions of literary realism. Two consequences of this are that the studies have often relied on description and that the dispassionate voice of the ethnographer is dominant, with little expression of the voices of the research subjects themselves. The interviewees learned a unique form of industrialised English in the factories. These modes of speech are singularly held amongst a generation of men who are all of a very old age, and as a result there is great urgency in setting down the unique nature of these achieved modes of speech of the former steelworkers. The study aims to represent the life-stories of the former steelworkers in a largely verbatim format through the use of poly-vocalism in the final textual product. This means that the stories of the Yemeni former steelworkers themselves dominate much of the thesis.

The research method of the study has inevitably had a great bearing on the scope of the research. The study is based on life-story interviews and this may help explain why much of the content that is usually associated with conventional ethnographic inquiry is de-emphasised. I have not employed participant observation and as a result, the documentary style that details the fine points of everyday life is less prevalent, in the main body of the text. The research does not attempt, as some of the more radical analysts of 'race' and class have dubbed it, to describe 'them' to 'us' (Bourne & Sivanandan, 1980: 340). The study has as its primary concern the stories of the former steelworkers and storytelling often relies on the reconstruction of dramatic lived events. This has been observed by Narayan and George (2001: 817), who note that in some cultures people who have not lived through some sort of turmoil are not expected to have any stories to tell. Tales of racism, class oppression and resistance certainly make for some of the most dramatic and engrossing stories and this goes some way in explaining their preponderance in the life-stories of the migrants. Moreover, it is clear from much of the literature that has preceded this study that racism and class have been important structural constraints in the lives of the migrants.

In addition to the orientation of life-stories towards drama, my background has been a further factor that has exercised some influence on the scope of the present research project. The decision to base the research around the themes of racism and class was in

part based upon the concept of political blackness. The concept of political blackness loosely refers to the politics of solidarity between Afro-Caribbean and Asian migrants which arose during the 1970s and was fostered by the communities' shared structural position in society. I was particularly interested in the methodological implications of political blackness and thought that it may provide a solid foundation for the exchange of stories based around the often sensitive themes of racism and class. I, like the Yemenis, am a descendent of a particular corner of the British Empire. My grandmother, and my mother as a small child, made a similar journey, from a very small and neglected island in the Caribbean, which was also under the rule of British imperialism. They left the Caribbean in 1956, the same year that a number of the participants in this study came to Britain. My grandmother, like many Commonwealth migrants of her generation and up to this day, worked in a low level job at Heathrow Airport. I too, as a 'second generation migrant' who, like many of the children of the participants in this research project, have spent most of my childhood growing up in Sheffield, and am no stranger to menial work or racism.

The limitations of political blackness have been well documented (see for instance Modood, 1988). The research was not undertaken with a naïve view of 'black-brown' relations, on the contrary, the decision to focus the study on racism and class was made precisely with the limitations of political blackness in mind. In his study of Yemenis in New York, Staub (1989: 163) comments on how his religious and familial background came to influence the scope of his research. He writes that: 'As a function of my own status as a nonbeliever, I had minimal access to the nature of the esoteric Muslim social category. Similarly, aspects of family identity, particularly male and female identities, were beyond the scope of my own investigative identity.' Here, the implications of my own cultural background and that of the interviewees are perhaps best demonstrated in the content of the interviews. The interview transcripts consistently contain a preponderance of data about the working lives of the migrants (see also Chapter 6 'From work to home, from home to work...' for a more detailed discussion of why this may be the case). The interviewees may have felt less inhibited about relaying their experiences of racism to a non-white interviewer. However, the totality of their experiences cannot be defined by racism alone, and given the multi-faceted nature of identity, information based on the experiences of the emigrants where the cultural,

religious or generational aspects of their identity were more salient, may not have been as forthcoming.

In divergence from some of the literature on Yemenis in Britain (see for instance Collins, 1957; Dahya, 1967), the study is not based around a cultural or religious set of principles or differences. Instead, the study stems from one of the great unifying narratives of the twentieth century: The movement of peoples from many small villages, islands and locations in the colonised world to the imperial epicentre, provoked by the incursion into the lives of millions, from many places in the world, of British imperialism.

The particular analytical concern of the present study with the meanings of racism and class in the life-stories of the former steelworkers is unique within the context of the literature on Yemenis in Britain. The 'race'-relations framework, has been particularly influential in the major studies of Yemenis in Britain. The work of Collins (1957) was written within a 'race'-relations framework; he had, for instance, a particular concern with the degree to which the Yemenis had 'integrated.' Dahya (1967) drew more on an ethnic relations framework and analysed the migrants in primarily cultural terms. Halliday (1992) and Lawless (1995) too, drew on the conceptual framework of the 'race'-relations paradigm. In the work of Halliday in particular, concepts such as 'incapsulation' and the 'remote village' were central. Although the latter two authors drew on some concepts of the 'race'-relations framework, their studies however, were not written within that framework. Halliday and Lawless contextualised their study within a broader analysis of the uneven development of capitalism between Yemen and Britain. The framework of the present study is more akin to that used by Searle and Shaif (1991). This may be expected, as the present study was conceived with the assistance of Chris Searle and Abdulgalil Shaif. The work of Searle and Shaif (1991) was written within the same traditions of the writings of A. Sivanandan, the then director of the Institute of Race Relations, which produces the *Race & Class* journal in which Searle and Shaif's article appeared. This work has as its central thrust an analysis of racism within the framework of a critique of the uneven development of capitalism. The concept of racism does feature in varying extents in the literature on Yemenis in Britain. The concept is, however, often subsidiary to an analysis of the 'racial,' 'ethnic' or cultural differences of the Yemenis. The framework that has been adopted here is a

result of the method of life-story interviewing which has been employed and my own background, both cultural and academic. Similarly to the work of Searle and Shaif then, the present study does not have an analysis of racial difference as its primary concern, but an analysis of racism and class. The study breaks with that of Searle and Shaif, however, through its interpretive concern with racism and class. The aim of the research is to understand the meaning of racism and class in the life-stories of the former steelworkers and to begin to locate this meaning within the history of post-war migration to Britain.

The research method of life-story interviewing, that has been used here, limits a detailed examination of the social structures in the lives of the former steelworkers, as agents have only a partial knowledge of the structures in which they are embedded (see for instance Mills, 1959). Therefore, to reiterate, the verification of the 'facts' of racism and class discrimination is not the primary objective of the present study. The objective of the study is to understand the meaning of these structural phenomena to the interviewees. The study uses a double hermeneutic, which means that it seeks to make sense of the data through exploring it within a broader framework. In order to understand the themes of racism, class and resistance in the life-stories of the Yemeni former steelworkers, the study begins to explore them within the broader history of post-war migration and (sometimes temporary) settlement in Britain. The research does not seek, however, to subordinate agency to structure or vice-versa. Instead, the research is interested in the irreducible nature of the dialectical relationship between the social structures of 'race' and class and the agency of the migrants, as this relationship is expressed in the life-stories of the former steelworkers. The research is interested in how the dual oppressions of racism and class discrimination, which as social structures acted as constraints more than enablements, related to the agency of the migrants, which, as the literature suggests, was for the most part based on the intention of the migrants to earn money in the steelworks and then return to a more fruitful life in Yemen.

Racism and ‘The Racism Problematic’

The study uses what has been described as the ‘racism problematic’ (Solomos and Back, 1994: 155). As has already been mentioned, this means that the study prioritises an analysis of racism over an analysis of ‘race,’ or the racialised differences of the Yemeni group, whether these differences are grounded in a cultural or religious set of principles. In light of the centrality of the concept of racism in the present study, it is worth providing a definition of the term. In the vein of Miles and Brown (2003: 103-4), the concept of racism is defined in this study as an ideology:

The distinguishing content of racism as an ideology is, first, its signification of some biological and/or somatic characteristic(s) as the criterion by which populations are identified. In this way, these populations are represented as having a natural, unchanging origin and status, and therefore as being inherently different. In other words, this process of racialisation conceives of a plurality of ‘races’. Second, one or more of the groups so identified must be attributed with additional (negatively evaluated) characteristics and/or must be represented as inducing negative consequences for (an)other group(s). Those characteristics or consequences may be either biological or cultural.

The definition forwarded by Miles and Brown is sufficiently broad to take account of the continuities in the ideology of racism which make it particularly fitting given the timeframe of the present study. The life-stories of the men cover much of the period of the second half of the twentieth century. They have lived through the Suez War, and the then biologically grounded representations of Arabs, and the recession of the late 1970s and 1980s, where a ‘new’ discourse of ‘cultural’ racism, owing much to the new right, began to emerge (see, for instance, Barker, 1981). The definition of Miles and Brown also captures the incoherent nature of the ideology of racism and, as a result, can account for the shop-floor jeers that many of the men endured at some point from their colleagues in the steelworks. The authors have also been critical of the deflation of racism. They argue that in a number of studies, racism has been reduced to ‘a structural domination of ‘black’ by ‘white’’ (Miles and Brown, 2003: 77). Their aforementioned definition also takes into account how different groups, including, for instance, Irish and Jewish people, can be identified in similar and dissimilar ways, as the negative object of racism. This is important here because the Yemeni migrants have been racialised in many different ways, within a homogenous black category, as blacks, and even ‘niggers,’ and also, as Pakistanis, ‘Pakis,’ Arabs, Yemenis, etc., and often with varying, negatively evaluated, characteristics.

The concept of institutional racism is also pivotal in the present study. The notion of intentionality has proved critical in definitions of institutional racism. The definition used in the Macpherson report (1999), for example, states that a racist intention is not crucial for an instance of exclusion to be defined as institutional racism. Therefore, an instance of exclusion can be said to be institutionally racist when the outcome of a decision or practice has an effect which maintains the disadvantaged position of a racialised group or groups. Miles and Brown (2003) argue that, with the concept of institutional racism and other trends, the concept of 'racism' has become both inflated yet deflated, and, as a result, lacks discriminatory power, which makes the identification of determinacy more difficult. Their aforementioned definition identifies racism as an ideology and does not include 'intentional practices and/or unintended processes or consequences' which have the outcome of disadvantaging a particular racialised group(s). In order to 'analyse all instances where a specified group is shown to be in unequal receipt of resources or services, or to be unequally represented in the hierarchy of class relations', Miles (1989: 77) uses the concept of 'exclusionary practice.' He argues that 'exclusionary practice' refers 'only to an exclusionary act or process and does not presuppose the nature of the determination, the specification of which requires independent investigation.' The present study uses the concept of exclusionary practice, and in accordance with the work of Miles and Brown (2003: 112), the concept of institutional racism used in the present study, 'refers to circumstances where racism is embodied in exclusionary practices or in a formally non-racialised discourse.'

In spite of the variation in the definitions of institutional racism, there has been a general agreement about its covert nature (see, for instance, Carmichael and Hamilton, 1967; Macpherson, 1999; Miles, 1989; Miles and Brown, 2003). The covert nature of institutional racism can make it particularly difficult to identify. This is especially true in a research project based on interviews with a subordinated group, largely excluded from positions of decision-making power. As was mentioned earlier, agents have a limited knowledge of the structures in which they are embedded and, as the Political and Economic Planning (PEP) study (Daniel, 1968), which will be discussed in the following chapter demonstrates, often do not know when they are being discriminated against. The concept of institutional racism is often used tentatively in the present research project, and, in order to better understand the interplay of racism, both at an overt and institutional level, class and resistance in the life-stories of the former-

steelworkers, the narratives are explored within the broader context of the literature on post-war migration.

The former steelworkers are keen to stress that their rural backgrounds, language difference and broken service all contributed to the exclusionary practices with which they suffered in Sheffield. However, the present study demonstrates, and it has been well documented elsewhere (see for instance Byrne, 1977), that such non-racial claims have often been made by various commentators in order to mask racism. With the use of the conceptual tools outlined above, the present study aims to facilitate an understanding of the intersection of these phenomena in the lives of the Yemeni former steelworkers in Sheffield.

Research Questions

The method of life-story interviewing has not only given me the impetus to adopt a polyvocal mode of representation, but it has also given rise to original content. This original content does not just include the addition of multiple voices to the same themes that recur within the context of research on post-war migration. The life story interviews have encouraged a slightly atypical angle on the traditional research questions or themes that recur within the literature. The research questions that have been employed in this study have been informed by my interviews with the former steelworkers themselves. In an unstructured interview the researcher is better able to learn of what is of prior importance to the interviewees themselves. My use of a cyclical approach to data collection and analysis, has allowed me to revise my research questions in accordance with the primary themes that recur within the narratives of the former steelworkers.

The first research question explores why the migrants came to Sheffield, as well as the 'intervening obstacles' that they faced on their journey from Yemen, and how the arrivants overcame these obstructions to eventually settle in Sheffield. I argue that although, in the literature, the factors which led to migration for the Yemenis and post-war migrants more generally have been well documented, the literature contains little information about the intervening obstacles that the emigrants faced on their actual journey from their country of origin to their country of destination. In the process of conducting research for this project, I have gained valuable narratives from the

participants, pertaining to their voyages from Yemen to Britain, and the journeys from the docks to Sheffield. Such tales of the migrants' experiences of 'intervening obstacles,' often aboard ships for men, or the confrontation with immigration officials at the point of entry for women, inform what Shalom Staub (1989: 92) calls, with reference to his study of Yemenis in New York City, a 'shared folklore of emigration.' For Staub, this folklore forms the basis of a Yemeni emigrant identity in the host country.

The journey to Britain, made below deck in steerage class, and for many, during the Suez war in 1956, when anti-Arab racism was at an apex, provided early examples of the interwoven oppressions of racism and class discrimination and the struggles that were waged against them. Tales of racism, class discrimination, often through toil at the bottom of the production process, and resistance are threaded throughout the entire life-story narratives of the participants who I interviewed. In order to honour the salience of 'race', class and resistance in the narratives of the former steel-workers, the second research question addresses how the themes of 'race' and class intersected in the work and life experiences of the migrants, as they are expressed through narrative. In the Sheffield steel industry the general relationship between migrant labour and indigenous labour was a relatively shared experience, when compared to the relationships between migrant and indigenous labour in the textile mills of the Midlands and the West Riding, where South Asian migrants were concentrated, or the service sector of the South-East, which was the destination of the majority of Caribbean migrants. The posts that the Yemenis occupied in the steel industry, such as the rolling mill, the hammer or press, and crane driving, were particularly complementary, and the performance of one production process typically entailed teamwork. In these posts, the Yemenis worked side by side with the indigenous workers.

The question of the relationship between the themes of 'race' and class in the work and life experiences of the migrants is, indeed, a broad one. In the peculiar industrial context of the Sheffield steel industry, the research question aims to understand how many of the general research findings that have emerged from studies of post war migration relate to the life-stories of the Yemeni former steelworkers. Of particular concern here is the applicability of the concept of a 'racial' or racialised division of labour to describe

the working conditions on the shop floor and the role of racism in determining the status of Yemeni labour.

The final research question aims to investigate the forms that resistance to exclusionary practices took. The literature on Yemenis in Britain suggests that there were no formal political or workers' organisations prior to 1962, and that the intensification of the struggle for independence in South Yemen fuelled political mobilisation in Sheffield. The suggestion that minority ethnic communities became more defiant as the post-war years progressed, or that the children of the first generation of migrants were more militant than their parents, also features in the wider literature on post-war migration (see for instance, Cashmore, 1981: 178). The third research question has again arisen from my interviews with the former-steelworkers themselves. Tales of resistance to various instances of exclusionary practices are a common theme throughout the narratives of the ex-steelworkers. In spite of the absence of Black or Yemeni workers' organisations in the early years and the reluctance of Trade Unions to support black workers, the life-stories contain not infrequent instances of individual and often spontaneous acts of resistance. Prior to this thesis, there has been little research on the various and largely unorganised forms of resistance that were employed by the former-steelworkers in this early period of settlement. The research aims to contribute to knowledge of the Yemeni community in Sheffield by analysing the informal modes of resistance that occurred prior to, as well as after 1962.

The Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 1 comprises the literature review, where I review the various studies of Yemenis in Britain. The chapter begins with a look at the studies of Yemeni settlement in Britain's port towns and then moves on to consider the literature on post-war Yemeni settlement. The recurring themes here include the ethnographic approach, and the reliance on archival enquiries in the historical studies, which have led to the employment of literary realism within the final textual product. The use of an overall 'race-relations' framework is also common; such a framework aims to chart the degree to which the migrants have moved along what Harris and James (1993: 1) describe as 'the race relations continuum,' from competition to assimilation/integration. The review

also aims to place Yemeni migration within the broader context of post-war Black and Asian migration to Britain.

The following methodology chapter aims to address the research process. The chapter begins with an outline of the co-generative roots of the study, and continues with a look at the methods of sampling that have been employed in the study, and an analysis of data collection, which includes a description of the interview process and the ethical issues involved. The chapter also highlights the polyvocal mode of representation that has been employed within the thesis, the implications of my background in the cross-cultural research process, and the measures that I have used, derived from both quantitative and qualitative methods, in order to ensure that this study is reliable, valid and indeed trustworthy.

The main body of the thesis is written in a loosely chronological format. The third chapter analyses the 'push' and 'pull' factors of migration, as well as the intervening obstacles that the migrants faced on their journey to Sheffield and which form such an important part of their shared folklore of emigration. The chapter also analyses how the arrivants overcame these intervening obstacles to eventually settle in Sheffield. Here it is argued that the journey to Britain, made aboard ships, provided for men, in a microcosmic form in the lower decks, early examples of the interwoven yet not always consistent oppressions of racism and class discrimination and the struggles waged against them, which would thread throughout the lives of the Yemenis in Sheffield. The chapter argues that chain migration acted as insulation from, and at times formed the basis of resistance to, the racially-mediated, intervening obstacles, faced by Yemeni men on their journey to Britain.

The experiences of the migrants after their arrival in Sheffield is another subject which features heavily in the narratives of the migrants. Chapter 4 investigates the experiences of Yemenis following their arrival in Sheffield. Studies of post-war migration have more often than not found that there was an abundance of low-level jobs awaiting Commonwealth migrants on their arrival in England. The research presented in this chapter, however, found that in Sheffield this was broken by a spell in the late 1950s where the migrants from Yemen, like those from Pakistan, were the victims of particularly high rates of unemployment. The chapter presents data which demonstrates

a disjunction between the employment patterns of West Indians, on the one hand, and Arabs and Pakistanis, on the other. Based on this evidence I argue that the reasons for the high rates of unemployment amongst the latter two groups, cannot in whole be attributed to racism, at least in its conventional sense, where all non-whites and non-‘Anglo-Saxons’ are discriminated against.

Chapter 5 considers how the themes of racism and class intersected in the experiences of the migrants at work, and the ways in which resistance was mobilised against exclusionary practices. The data presented in this chapter has shown that in spite of the shared nature of production on posts such as the rolling mill, or the hammers and presses, where the Yemeni labourers worked side by side with their British colleagues, a racial division of labour was still in effect. The restrictions on the promotion of Yemeni workers and British labourers’ relative occupational mobility meant that racial disparities emerged between a permanent Yemeni lower class and a transitional, white mobile class, with opportunities to flee the least desirable jobs. The chapter argues that the role of racism was often inconsistent with the requirements of capital. The denial of promotion to skilled Yemeni employees often proved disadvantageous to the steel companies and illustrated how dysfunctional the factories proved to be in their daily operations, in the face of racism and the open discrimination against some of their most effective workers. In contradiction to much of the literature, the chapter also makes the argument that despite an absence of resistance through political or labour based organisations, and despite the migrants’ ‘myth of return,’ their obligations to families in Yemen, and their fears of repatriation, the Yemenis persistently resisted racism in various ‘informal’ ways. Such stories of resistance thread throughout many of the narratives of the former steelworkers.

While the rest of the chapters have been based around recurring themes in the narratives of the former steelworkers, Chapter 6 aims to understand how the themes of ‘race’ and class intersected in the experiences of the migrants outside of work, an area which the interviewees spent relatively little time speaking about. The chapter opens with a remark by Qassim Muthenar Obadi that bluntly illustrated how his time was unevenly spread between the workplace and ‘leisure’: ‘When I was in the factory, I go from house to work, from work to house, and there is no time to learn.’ This comment has been echoed by many of the participants in this research project. The material presented in

the chapter demonstrates that between their long and arduous shifts in the steelworks, the migrants had very little time-off. In addition, the time that the migrants spent away from work was often lived in a state of exhaustion, as they performed their necessities in time for the next shift. The chapter on time-off demonstrates as well as any other the sojourner mentality of the migrants: That they were in Sheffield to earn money in order that they could return to a better life in Yemen.

Chapter 7 aims to understand how the economic crises in which the steel industry found itself, the racialised political climate during the early Thatcher era, and the persistent feeling of cultural estrangement, affected the emigrants. The period saw two diverging trends in the responses to the disadvantages that were faced by the community. On the first hand, a process of substantial emigration occurred and, on the other, the community organisations in Britain were reformed, to deal with the new challenges that the community faced in Sheffield. The Yemeni community organisations that were still active in England at the time and had not been starved by the mass exodus of their members, began to change their function. The organisations' primary concern with the maintenance of a link between the workers in Sheffield and Yemen, and role as, what Halliday (1992: 83) describes as, 'an arm of the Yemeni state', was substituted by a new priority namely, the welfare and rights of the Yemeni unemployed in Sheffield. The change in the ambit of the work that was undertaken by the community organisations was to a large degree led by the younger generation of Yemenis who had experienced a state education in Sheffield. Finally, the concluding chapter aims to discuss the main points that have arisen in the main body of the text. The conclusion also considers what the present study adds to the literature, highlights some of the limitations of the study, and suggests possible themes for future research.

Literature Review

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a context for my research by reviewing the literature that is the most relevant to it. The literature review aims to cover most of the major texts that are available on Yemenis in Britain. I also aim to survey the broader literary context. In the review of the literature and particularly the literature about Yemenis in Britain, I hope to demonstrate the importance and the originality of the contribution that the present study makes to knowledge about Yemeni communities in Britain. The polyvocal format of the present thesis provides one of the contributions to the originality of the present study. Therefore, as well as an analysis of the general conclusions of the literature and how these findings relate to my own work, my review of each item of literature on Yemenis in Britain, at least, is also concerned with the methods that the author has employed to write his/her study.

The chapter is split into three interrelated parts. It begins with a review of the literature on Yemeni communities in Britain. Following this I turn my attention to the broader literary context. There I first look at the analyses of Yemenis in the major historical texts about 'black' people in Britain. The remainder of the literature review looks at some of the literature in three general areas that are of particular importance to the present study; immigration, the socio-economic position of migrant groups in post-war Britain, particularly the relationship between racism and class, and finally resistance.

Studies of Maritime Yemeni Settlement

In light of the paucity of literature on Yemenis in post-war Britain, it is interesting to note that those studies of migrant communities written before or during the 1948-62 period of post-war migration, when the size of the Yemeni community in Britain was more comparable to that of the black and Asian communities, did pay more attention to the Arab presence in Britain's port towns. Then, as Little wrote in the preface to the revised edition of his pioneering study *Negroes in Britain* (1948), race relations were seen as 'the colour problem of the ports.' Following Little, the earliest full length

studies of black communities in Britain were produced by his students; Anthony Richmond (1954) and Michael Banton (1955) who focused on the West Indians in Liverpool and the 'coloured quarter' of Stepney, respectively (Bourne and Sivanandan, 1980). Collins followed in 1957 with a further study of settlement in the old dock areas; his was a comparative study and included a substantial section on migrant communities in Tyneside as well. The studies of Little (1948) and Collins (1957) included two of the first attempts to describe the Yemeni presence in Britain and are my starting point here.

Fred Halliday, the author of *Arabs in Exile: Yemeni Migrants in Urban Britain* (1992), which will be discussed later, has remarked that Kenneth Little's *Negroes in Britain: A Study of Racial Relations in English Society* (1948), was the first book to describe Yemenis in Britain (Dein and Burman, 2004). As the title implies, Little's study has as its primary focus 'the 'relationships between the native population of this country and people of African descent' (1972: xi). His analysis of the Arab settlers of Cardiff, in which his study is based, is comparatively brief. In the preface to the revised edition of 1972, Little outlines his theoretical position:

'I should like to reiterate my theoretical position which is that racial relationships are to be conceived of as a function of the wider socio-politico-economic system in which they occur. The corollary of this – and it is very important – is that relationships between different sections of *the white community itself* may be just as significant for race problems as group relationships between the black and white populations themselves' (1972: ix).

For Little, 'racial attitudes' were 'more than perverse and quirky lapses from liberal traditions' (ibid. 4), but were actually interwoven into the fabric of Britain's industrial development. He argues however, that contrary to the behaviour of the African and West Indian settlers, the Arabs, 'bound together by the strong ties of brotherhood inherent in the Islamic creed', resisted 'measuring up' to English class standards. He writes that whilst the Africans and West Indians:

'look upon the possession, and in particular, the display of (European) education and middle-class social etiquette as deserving of a considerable amount of emulation and approbation. The Arabs seem to be little troubled by the colour implications – no doubt because they are least affected by the influence of the outside world ... There is no doubt that the cultural pride and solidarity of the Arabs is strong, as is also their pride in British nationality, but their general attitude towards the outside world is far more tolerant than accommodating in its implications' (ibid. 140-1).

Little's study is of particular importance because he was the first to highlight the strength of the bond amongst the Arab settlers in the face of British 'racial attitudes,' and the restrained nature of their relationship with the host population. This theme, the

reader will notice is recurrent throughout this literature review. His study is however unique as it is one of racism or 'racial' attitudes more than racialised difference.

Sydney Collins' (1957) *Coloured Minorities in Britain* is a comparative study of the Muslim and black communities on Tyneside and in what he calls 'a Welsh town,' which is likely to be Cardiff, as well as a Chinese and a black community in Lancashire. *Coloured Minorities...* like *Negroes in Britain...* is written in the conventional monovocal prose of literary realism circa 1950.¹ Unlike Little, however, who has a particular theoretical concern with racism, or 'racial attitudes' and class, Collins' study is written in a more conventional ethnographic manner and his work pioneers many of the traditions of the now more established sociology of 'race'-relations and even ethnic-relations. The general objectives of the 'sociology of 'race'-relations' are embodied in the aim of Collins' study, which is to examine the internal organisation of six 'coloured' communities, 'the alignment of these communities to British society and the processes maintaining or changing their social patterns' (ibid.: 1957: 241).

The Muslims in Collins' study are comprised of Arabs, Pakistanis and Somalis, and the Arabs comprised of Adenese and Yemenis (1957: 11-12). At the time of his study, Arabs constituted more than half of the men in the Muslim communities of Tyneside and Cardiff. Collins argues that racial attitudes are subject to regional variation. He argues that the reasons for differing regional attitudes are complex and cites the involvement of Arabs in the past riots in Tyneside and in Wales as one factor which has exacerbated anti-Arab racism in the areas of Arab settlement under study. In Tyneside and the Welsh town that is under scrutiny, he argues that 'race' and racial discrimination have been important determinants of the patterns of Muslim settlement; 'in Tyneside the Muslim community has been separated not so much of its own choosing, but as a result of the policy of the municipal housing authorities; while in the Welsh town, Moslems, like Negroes, have been separated mainly through racial

¹ It is important to distinguish here between the sociological use of literary realism and that used in literary studies, and more generally. Drawing on the work of van Maanen (1988) which is discussed in the methods chapter, Coffey et al. (1996) comment that in sociology, the representation of social reality has become contested, and: 'Literary realism has been identified as the dominant mode of representation, implying an impersonal, all-but-invisible narrator'. In literature, the term 'literary realism' is generally used to refer to a genre of fictional writing that eschews romanticism and exaggeration, and instead relies on real people, language, settings and events to 'tell it as it is.' There are nonetheless many similarities between the two genres of writing, for a more detailed discussion of these see Krieger (1984).

discrimination of a less formal kind' (ibid: 151). One distinguishing feature of the Arab group that Collins draws attention to is their tendency to marry locally and to settle permanently in Britain (ibid: 152-3). He also argues that the Arabs are more reticent than the Somalis and Pakistanis, who are members of a British Dominion and Protectorate and claim the right to reside in Britain. At the time of his study, the majority of the male non-white population of Tyneside and the Welsh town under study was engaged in seafaring occupations. There, too, Arabs were reputed to be the most obedient of the 'coloured' workers and as a result were the most successful of the 'coloured' men at finding employment on the ships (ibid.: 193). The claim that the Arabs are the most reticent and reputed to be the most obedient of the coloured group seems at odds with Collins' earlier statement about the lingering presence of anti-Arab racism, which, he argues, is linked in some measure to the memory of their involvement in the riots of 1919, 1930 and 1931 (ibid.: 245).

The prevalence of Arab marriages to local women, and the tendency of the Arabs to permanently settle in Britain notwithstanding, Collins notes that the remark, 'this is not my country', is frequently heard amongst the Arabs (ibid: 162). The study is situated within the over-arching analytical framework of what Harris and James (1993: 1) call the 'race relations' rubric'. Such an approach 'perceives relations between groups as moving from competition → conflict → accommodation → assimilation/integration.' In this framework, the concept of 'accretion' is particularly important in Collins' analysis of Muslims in Britain. What Collins means by 'accretion' is 'to keep within, and to associate closely with members of, the immigrant community' (ibid.: 19). For Collins: 'The immigrants' whole manner of life suggests that they have a preference to retain and strengthen the social relationship with members of their own group rather than endeavouring to be absorbed into the life of white society' (ibid.: 154). 'Accretion' is to a large degree based upon the pervasiveness of what Collins calls 'traditional social groupings,' and of these Islam is of utmost importance for the Muslim group. Collins writes that, 'the Chinese and Moslem communities, which preserve many of their traditional institutions and are oriented to their countries of origin, tend to maintain their social cohesion and are more resistant to assimilation with the host society than are the West Indians' (ibid.: 21). He also points out that 'accretion' and its opposite, 'dispersion', are subject to generational changes: 'The social accretion which is the tendency of immigrants, is due partly to the use made of traditional institutions and

language, but these factors have little appeal to later generations that become increasingly acculturated to the British way of life, and tend to disperse and infiltrate into the social life of British society' (ibid.: 242). In light of the work of Dahya (1967), Halliday (1992) and Tipple (1974), which will be discussed later, Collins' analysis of the causal factors of 'accretion' in the settling and settled Arab communities is particularly interesting, and demonstrates the binding force of what Collins calls traditional social groupings and, in particular, Islam. The aforementioned three authors have all shown that, in the Yemeni case at least, what Collins calls 'accretion' has, to a large extent, been the result of the intention of the migrants to return to their country of origin.

The next study to be considered here is Neil Evans' (1985) *Regulating the Reserve Army: Arabs, Blacks and the Local State in Cardiff, 1919-45*. Unlike the previous two studies, *Regulating the Reserve Army...* is a historical study, and the author has relied on a range of archival sources. At times, the author mentions how particular events are remembered amongst the present day inhabitants of the area, but the inclusion of narrative is absent. The study breaks with the race-relations approach of Collins, and in the tradition of what has been termed 'the political economy of racism,' (Phizacklea 1984: 204-205) approach, Evans' focus is on the themes of the role of the local state, employment and unemployment, white moral outrage and black resistance. When asking the question of who controlled the reserve army, Evans' response is an endorsement of a 1935 report by Harold Moody's League of Coloured Peoples: 'The Trade Union, the Police and the shipowners appear to co-operate smoothly in barring Coloured Colonial Seamen from signing on ships in Cardiff' (1985: 106). The article pays much attention to the restrictions that emerged on the employment of Arab and black labour, including the Aliens Order, and the registration and rota schemes, he also emphasises the attempts to restrict unemployment relief, and the attempts to brand the whole community as undesirable. The author links the official attitudes towards Arabs and blacks to the war and peace-time demands for labour. The article also pays particular attention to the Arab boarding house masters, who are noted for their provision of accommodation for unemployed Arab seamen at the height of the inter-war recession, and their role in the tension which developed around the issue of bribery. He writes that the Arabs came from a society where bribery was common, and a number of Arab boarding house masters attempted to protect their tenants through offering bribes

to ship engineers to give their men preference in signing on. The trade unions constantly agitated against what they saw as a growing influx of coloured seamen and the bribery of Arab boarding house masters, and Evans (ibid.: 76) mentions that local tradition insists that there was also conflict over the latter issue between different Arab tribes in 1923, and between Arabs and West Indians in 1926.

The second theme in Evans' study is the development of moral panics. These arose over the relationships between the seamen and white women, the growth of a 'half-caste' population, the alleged 'idleness' of Arab and black men, the dole and disease. He argues (ibid.: 91) that 'the moral panic had clearly served many interests' including those of the police force, who 'could use the incident to rally support for further tough measures', and the National Union of Seamen, who used the panic 'to justify their campaign for the rota.' Indeed, for the Trade Unions, Evans (ibid. 106) writes: 'Such attacks were essentially based upon economic competition.' In his analysis of resistance, Evans writes that, in contrast to the West Indian and the majority of the African groups, the Muslims were organised largely on a religious basis. They organised in defence of their specific interests including to protect themselves from the allegations of 'crimping' frequently made against them, and operated self-help schemes to cope with the effects of unemployment. He also notes an Arab-Somali split in the Muslim community which became more pronounced over the funding of the construction of a mosque in the 1940s, and the distribution of sheep for slaughter at the *Eid al-Adha* festival.

The final study of a pre-war, coastal Yemeni community in Britain that will be considered here is *From Ta'izz to Tyneside* by Richard Lawless (1995). Lawless' work is the first full length study of an Arab seafaring community in Britain. The research relies on information derived from various archival sources and oral history interviews with Arab seamen and their families, both in Tyneside and Yemen. His retrospective work provides a further break with the description based ethnographic work of Little and Collins. He relies on documentary sources a great deal more than narrative and so, whilst not entirely absent, the voices of ordinary Arab workers appear infrequently. His aim is to focus 'on the relations between the Arab seamen and the host society, on the internal organisation and the dynamics of this seafaring community, and on the links with their country of origin, the study aims to cover important aspects of the lives of

Arab seamen in Britain that have so far been neglected' (ibid.: 2). One area of neglect in the aforementioned full length studies of Little (1948) and Collins (1957) is the international context of migration. Lawless is attentive to the political and economic structure of late nineteenth, and early twentieth century Yemen and its bearing on migration. For Lawless, the vast majority of the Arab seamen were sojourners, and in light of their expectation to return, Lawless pays special attention to their relationship with their country of origin. He sets the experiences of the Yemenis in both their national and international contexts, demonstrating the impact of the war-time demands for labour and the interwar recession on the mobilisation and demobilisation of Tyneside's reserve army of Arab labour. Through the use of official documentation and the letters pages of local newspapers, Lawless shows the extent of racism at both official and popular levels and its relationship to the economy. He analyses the moral outrage that surrounded the inter-'racial' marriages of Arab men and white women. Similarly to Evans, he gives a detailed analysis of the role of Arab boarding house masters, who he calls the 'big men of the community' and demonstrates how accommodation was only one of their spheres of influence. He also pays keen attention to religion and details the role of the organisations that were active amongst the migrants in Tyneside.

In his final chapter, Lawless closes his study by briefly sketching the post-war developments in the Tyneside community. He writes: 'In the post war years prejudice against the Arab community has certainly declined although it has not disappeared altogether' (Lawless, 1995:245). He cites various reasons for this decline, but for Lawless, 'probably the most important factor in explaining the decline in prejudice is the assimilation of much of the community into the larger society of South Tyneside and the loss of their Arab and Islamic identity. The Arabs themselves have virtually become invisible' (ibid.). The contrast between the process of assimilation that is described by Lawless and the developments that began to take place around the same time, but during the second phase of Yemeni migration in the land-locked industrial cities of Britain, is marked. It is to the literature that deals with the experiences of the Yemenis in the industrial heartlands of Britain that we now turn.

Studies of Yemeni Settlement in Industrial Cities

Fred Halliday's (1992) *Arabs in Exile: Yemeni Migrants in Urban Britain* was the first full length study of Yemenis in Britain. Halliday begins with an analysis of Yemeni settlement in Britain's maritime cities at the beginning of the twentieth century and then moves on to cover post-war Yemeni settlement in the industrial heartlands of Britain. Halliday writes that his 'approach combines historical record, social and political analysis and personal observation' (ibid: ix). The author does not seem to have employed formal and unstructured interviews as a chief method of data collection. As a result of this, *Arabs in Exile...* is written in the conventional mono-vocal prose of literary realism. It is clear that Halliday has been engaged in a large number of informal dialogues with members of the Yemeni communities in Britain and occasionally Halliday draws upon these conversations in his study through the use of quotations. However, Halliday uses Standard English to represent the voice of his informants and as a result the unique modes of speech that are employed by the emigrants are inaudible. Throughout the text the voice of the author is the dominant one.

Halliday describes the Yemeni community in Britain as 'a remote village,' 'a self-enclosed urban community, one as remote from the British society around them as from life in Yemen from which they came' (ibid, 145). The status of the Yemenis as migrant workers or sojourners played a significant part in what Halliday refers to as their self-enclosure. Halliday writes that there 'was, quite simply the feeling on the part of the Yemenis that they would benefit from being as little noticed as possible' (ibid, 141). '[T]he pervasiveness of the myth of return, of being temporary, not settlers, confirmed their relative reluctance to present themselves as a community' (ibid: 142). The importance which Halliday attaches to the migrants' 'myth of return,' echoes the observation of Miles and Phizacklea (1980: 3) that 'the behaviour of 'immigrants' in Britain has to be assessed in relation to their intention to return.'

Halliday's analysis of the agency of the migrants is conducted within the context of an exploration of the political and economic background in Yemen and in Britain. The results of his examination of the industrial conditions in which the Yemenis worked are consistent with much of the wider literature on post-war migration. Halliday writes that: 'Like the Pakistanis and Bengalis, the Yemenis were employed almost wholly at the

bottom of the industrial hierarchy, working, quite simply, in jobs that the indigenous labour force no longer wanted to do' (ibid. 136). Halliday uses many of the conceptual tools that were employed by Anwar in his earlier study of Pakistanis in Rochdale (1979; 1985), and is, for instance, keen to point out the role of chain migration in the formation of ethnic work groups in British factories. Halliday pays particular attention to the political organizations of the Yemeni community. He argues that the 'unique levels of communal organisation', were 'perhaps the most striking and distinctive characteristic of the Yemenis' (ibid: 143). For Halliday, 'the very strength of the 'sojourner' mentality, and the limited contact with British society, meant that it was taken as understood by most Yemenis that their prime point of political and social contact was the home country, Yemen in one shape or another, and not the UK' (ibid: 144).

The strength of the intention to return is also apparent in the MSc thesis *Arab Housing Preferences: A Study of Yemeni immigrants in Attercliffe*, by Graham Tipple. Here Tipple presents a quantitative study of the housing preferences of Yemenis in Attercliffe. Tipple uses what he describes as 'the priority evaluator method,' which, using an ad hoc board game, demands that the participants in his research project, distribute a particular amount of game money across a number of game variables. These variables include five house facility factors: the type of house, the size of the garden, a garage, a room for guests and W.C. provision; and also five ease of travel destinations: work, shops, place of worship, three families who are friends and a social centre (Tipple, 1974: 6). However, even in 1974, the date of Tipple's study, he found that;

By comments made when the symbolic £800 was introduced into the game sheets, it seems that many of the lodging house tenants would take the money and go back to the Yemen straight away, at least for a few years, rather than spend it on housing themselves. ... This is perhaps the most important limitation to this study. As the lodging house group's characteristics are so different from those of immigrants and the host population, the use of concepts accepted by families needing houses are not easily applicable to the migrant worker who does not bear allegiance to the housing norms of the larger society in which he lodges' (1974: 26).

The study of Tipple demonstrates, with particular reference to the housing preferences of the emigrants, that the intention of the migrants to earn money in Sheffield and then to return to their country of origin with heightened status was, again, a central determinant of their behaviour in Sheffield. Tipple's study shows that the need to gain access to the means of production has been the primary concern for the arrivants, and that their tenancy in lodging houses was, in part, based upon the expectation of the migrants to return to Yemen.

In his PhD thesis *South Asian Urban Immigration, with Special Reference to Asian Muslim Immigrants in the English Midlands* (1967) Badr ud-Din Dahya presents an ethnographic study of Yemeni migrants in Birmingham. Dahya has also published a shortened paper based on his PhD research in the *RACE* periodical (Dahya, 1965). Written in 1967 and 1965 respectively, in both works the author adopts the dominant realist literary conventions of the time. Dahya has written his ethnographic monograph as a disengaged observer and in a third person voice. In the vein of traditional ethnographic research he pays meticulous attention to the sometimes mundane details of the everyday home lives of the migrants, including their rites, rituals, habits, practices and beliefs. His work analyses the Yemenis in Birmingham in primarily cultural terms and is consistent with the body of literature that Phizacklea (1984: 205-7) describes as 'the sociology of ethnic relations.' By way of a summary of the aims of his thesis, Dahya (1967: 332) concludes:

The theme of this study has been to show how a South Asian Muslim migrant community which wishes to retain its separate identity has been gradually adapting itself in order to seek accommodation with the host society; that the process of accommodation in this case is likely to lead to the migrant community's integration with, and not to its assimilation into, the host society.

The over-arching analytic framework that is employed by Dahya leans on what James and Harris (1993: 1) call 'slide-rule scholarship.' By this James & Harris (*ibid.*) mean an approach that is, 'determined to assess how far along the 'race relations' continuum 'immigrants' had come, i.e. the degree of 'strangeness' that still obtained and the extent of adaptation that still has to be achieved.' Dahya differentiates integration and assimilation. For Dahya the concept of assimilation entails the absorption of the minority group into the culture of the larger, host society, conversely: 'An integrated social system is one which is in a state of equilibrium and in which the various constituent parts articulate with one another consistently without overlap' (*ibid.*: 39). Here the concept of integration echoes J. S. Furnivall's (1948) concept of cultural pluralism. For Furnivall plural societies are only units through politics and economics.

The 'wish' of the Yemeni community to retain a separate identity, and to integrate rather than to assimilate, certainly seems consistent with the aforementioned observation made by Halliday, that the Yemenis felt that they would benefit from being as little noticed as possible. Dahya writes that, 'the Yemeni migrants restrict their

contacts with members of the host society to a minimum and fulfil roles which the host society considers appropriate for them; that is, the migrants do not appear – in the eyes of the host society – as competitors and therefore avoid conflict situations’ (ibid.:332). The avoidance of conflict however, was not the sole or even the main reason for ‘voluntary segregation.’ The main interest of Dahya lies within the internal organisation of the migrant community (ibid: 47), the socio-cultural institutions of the migrants, and, in particular, their unique interpretation of religious doctrine which, he argues (ibid.: 332-333), for the most part, came to inspire ‘voluntary segregation’:

In discussing the migrant community and its various socio-economic institutions, it was shown that religion is perhaps the major area of difference between the host society and the migrant community; that the migrants consciously resist their assimilation by emphasising socio-cultural factors which help to differentiate them from the host society and from non-Yemenis. It is through religious symbols that the migrants express socio-cultural differences between the host society and themselves for it is through religion that socio-cultural consequences follow and make for difference.

In the tradition of cultural pluralism, Dahya emphasizes the separate development of cultural institutions and particularly religious observance in his explanation of integration which, as he concedes, bears much resemblance to pluralism. Cultural pluralism and the culture-driven sociology of ethnic-relations have, of course, been criticized for negating the role of external determinants, particularly racism, by researchers writing from both liberal (Rex, 1970: 22) and radical (Bourne and Sivanandan, 1980: 343-347) perspectives. Dahya mentions that conflict avoidance did contribute to ‘voluntary segregation’ and it is clear that any conflict between members of the migrant group and the host society would more often than not take on a ‘racial’ character. The author’s analysis of racism, however, which is a central theme in many of the life-stories presented in this study, is minor. In line with the literary conventions of realist ethnography the author concentrates on the provision of thick descriptions of the institutions that he argues order the lives of the migrants. Dahya provides rich detail about the often mundane aspects of the everyday lives of the migrants at home, yet says little about their actual experiences with the host society, either at work or outside, in the main body of his monograph.

In this respect, the work of Searle and Shaif (1991)² is certainly a departure from that of Dahya. There, it is argued that the racialisation of the migrant workers came to determine much of the differential and indeed discriminatory treatment that they faced throughout their lives in Sheffield. In the article *'Drinking from one pot': Yemeni Unity, at Home and Overseas*, Searle and Shaif provide a brief history of Yemenis in Sheffield. The article is written in a dialogic format, with Searle interviewing Abdulgalil Shaif, the chairman of the Yemeni Community Association in Sheffield. The article *'Drinking from one pot'* is written with the use of a Marxist framework. For Shaif, (ibid.: 66) the uneven development of capitalism between Yemen and Britain, fostered by British Imperialism, created both the push (in Yemen) and pull (in Britain) factors of migration:

The 1950s and 1960s were a period of industrial boom in Britain. As a result, many Yemenis, encouraged by the British, came over here to fill the labour shortage. They were looking for a better standard of living than that which British colonialism was giving them. This created a large influx of Yemenis to Britain at that time.

Shaif's critical analysis of the uneven development of capitalism is consistent with the oft-quoted remark of Sivanandan, 'we're here because you were there.' In Sheffield, Shaif's description of the working conditions that were endured by the Yemeni settlers is again consistent with the work of Marxist theorists of 'race' and class. For Shaif, Yemenis, like black labour more generally, constituted the most exploited workers in the hierarchy of capitalist production: 'They had to take the worst jobs possible, those which had been vacated by British workers in the steel industry' (ibid, 67). In fact, Shaif argues that at the time of the recession, Yemeni workers were hit harder by redundancy than other non-white workers (ibid, 71). For Shaif, racism is not just of the bourgeoisie. He refers to the racism endemic in British trade unions and local working class organisations. Shaif pays particular attention to the development of Yemeni community organisations in Sheffield. He argues that their growth was linked to the development of the nationalist movement in Yemen and had little to do with the trade unions and

² As was mentioned in the introduction, the present study has been conceived with the assistance of Chris Searle and Abdulgalil Shaif. It is perhaps important to note that I am the son of Chris Searle. Their influence has had an impact on the framework of the present study which, focuses on racism, class and resistance, albeit in the life-stories of the former-steelworkers. As I discuss in the next chapter, Chris Searle worked as an English teacher at the Yemeni Community Centre for a number of years and the present study has arisen from my conversations with him about the potential for a book based on the life-stories of Yemeni former-steelworkers in Sheffield. In the methodology chapter I also discuss the impact of my relationship with my father during the research process.

working class organisations in Sheffield, which, 'didn't bother reaching them' (ibid, 71).

In Sheffield, Shaif argues that struggles against various exclusionary practices did not begin until 1971. For Shaif, the period before 1971 was one of '*experience* rather than struggle':

There were two different forms of struggle for Yemenis in Sheffield, and in the U.K. as a whole. The first period was from 1955 until 1971, which lacked any form of political organisation or leadership. It involved experiencing racism at work, exploitation at work, bad housing, experiencing all aspects of poverty and lack of finance, and experiencing the pain of divided families. This was the period of *experience* rather than struggle, of getting to know and understand the oppression of being black and working class in Britain (1991: 70).

Shaif (ibid.: 70) cites the following reasons for the absence of struggle between 1955 and 1971:

[T]hey knew they were seen as foreigners, as immigrants, and if they started fighting and struggling and shouting straight away, they thought they would be sent back. There was always that fear. Remember, many had received no formal education. They were illiterate and didn't know their rights here in Britain. They didn't know how this country worked. They didn't know the history of working-class struggles here and what they had achieved. They didn't know about trade unions – they had come from a peasant background, remember – and they didn't know about the National Health Service.

But, by 1971, Yemenis here had become a lot more confident. They had seen one and a half million people expel the British and make the revolution succeed in the south of their country. They had seen the people of the north kick out the Imamic regime which had been ruling for hundreds of years, and which had the support of Saudi Arabia and the imperialist powers. So now, they felt able to carry the struggle forward here to improve their living conditions, and that of other black and working-class people in Sheffield – even though the Yemeni revolution didn't have the support of the British people and many of the more reactionary regimes in the Arab world.

Shaif argues however, that it was a new generation of Yemenis 'young, conscious and Sheffield-bred' (ibid, 72) who built the community organisations as they exist now:

It wasn't the fathers, it was the sons and daughters who began to mobilise the resistance that was necessary. They refused to be obedient, they set out to challenge the system. They weren't like their fathers in this respect. Their parents, despite being hard, working-class people, *had* been obedient, had been reluctant to say no and fight back. They felt that their lives and those of their families would be in danger if they made that challenge. So they didn't challenge the council, the employers, the unions or the government. Their children felt none of these constraints.

This new generation would go on to lead many of the most pressing struggles that were borne out of the grim situation of mass unemployment. The article is written dialogically and far removed from the literary realism of Halliday, Tipple, Lawless and Dhaya. Shaif does not respond to Searle as a disengaged and impersonal expert, but assumes the role of an organic intellectual. He draws on personal examples, derived

from his relationship with his father, in his analysis of the working conditions of the emigrants, examples derived from his own experiences of growing up and schooling in Sheffield, and his own personal involvement as an activist in the community organisations.

There is very little historical research on black communities in Sheffield. Besides Searle and Shaif's (1991) study of the Yemeni community, such publications seem almost limited to a small number of local council reports (see for instance; Mackillop, 1981) and compilations of oral history stories (Chatterjee (ed.), 2001; Gregory (ed.), 1991; Iqbal, Ara and Riel (eds.), 1990; Majumdar, 1985). The latter texts are based almost entirely on empirical data. The editors do not attempt to make generalisations or refer to theory, but, instead, the primary data comprises an end in itself. Through the use of oral history interviews, the texts provide a voice for particular marginalized groups, which face the interwoven oppressions of racism, class, and for some of the participants featured in the compilations by Chatterjee (2001) and Gregory (1991), patriarchy. However, the editors have not reproduced the narratives in the publications in a verbatim format. In all but one of these texts (Gregory, 1991), the quotations have been substantially edited, and reworked away from the unique Yemeni/Pakistani/Bengali-Sheffield dialects and in accordance with Standard-English rules of grammar. Nevertheless, the publications provide great poignancy and an encouraging example of the possibilities of polyvocal representational modes for ethnographic research.

In *Who Cares? Reminiscences of Yemeni Carers in Sheffield* (2001), Debjani Chatterjee presents moving and inspiring stories of carers who belong to both Sheffield's Yemeni community and to Sheffield's community of carers. Through the use of oral history interviews, Chatterjee provides a voice for Yemeni carers, who face the aforementioned triple oppression of patriarchy, racism and class, albeit all laden with the added demands of being a carer. Again, the author does not explicitly refer to theory and instead the primary data comprise an end in themselves.

The study consolidates its break with conventional ethnographic work through its polyvocal format. Chatterjee includes lengthy quotations from oral history interviews, where it is possible to read the primary data apart from the minimalist analysis of the ethnographer. *Who Cares?...* is published in a multi-lingual format with English on the

even numbered pages and Arabic on the adjacent odd numbered pages and includes photographs of the carers in real-life domestic situations. Chatterjee writes that about half of the original interviews were conducted in English and half in Arabic. She concedes however, that the quotations that she has used have been edited, and obviously reworked from the unique Yemeni-Sheffield dialects and in accordance with academic rules of grammar. Similarly to the aforementioned studies of Iqbal, Ara and Riel, (1990) and Majumdar, (1985), any attempt at verisimilitude is absent.

There exist two other non-written studies of Yemenis in Sheffield which are of particular relevance to the present study. *Thankyou, that's all I knew: The Yemeni community in Sheffield* (Channel 4, 1989) is a televised documentary and *Born in Yemen, Forged in Sheffield* (Dein and Burman, 2004) is a radio documentary that was broadcast in 2004. In the radio documentary *Born in Sheffield, Forged in Yemen*, Dein & Burman draw on interviews with senior members of staff at the Yemeni Community Association in Sheffield, academics, and the former steelworkers themselves, to construct a history of the Yemeni former steelworkers in Sheffield. Through their use of the radio format, Dein and Burman are able to capture the voices of the former steelworkers verbatim. The following quotation from Dein and Burman (2004) provides one example of the humour, repetition, question tags and agrarian metaphors that are often employed in the speech of the emigrants and are often of a very poetic nature:

Interviewee: I don't know what make me to come to England, just a coincidence, [laughs] you see? You know sometime you cannot plan things. You know what I mean? So I was talking to friend of mine you know, he says me, you know, friend of mine, he's gone to England you know? I say, 'What in England?' He says, 'I know different life.' You know, when you young, you loose like a bird, you can fly from one tree to another. So I, I apply for the British passport and I got one, you know, I got one because we are British you know, from Yemen, you know we have, we have no problem.

Interviewer: What was your image of Britain before that, what, what did you know of England?

Interviewee: Nothing, blank, I heard the London on the radio stage, you know? 'This is BBC home service' or something like this, [laughs] or you know? 'This is London' you know? Seen English people in Yemen, you know, in our country.

Interviewer: What sort of people were they?

Interviewee: Oh high class people, not working class people [laughs]

Produced at the latter end of the 1980s, the documentary *Thankyou, that's all I knew...* presents a history of Yemenis in Sheffield with special reference to the impact of the collapse of the steel industry in that decade. The programme uses a similar research

base to Dein and Burman and as a result is able to relay heartfelt stories about the personal impact of the decline through the voices of the former steelworkers and their families. Both of these studies are however limited by their half an hour to one hour length.

Studies of Post-War Migrants in Britain

The present research project is especially relevant in the context of post-war migration to Britain. In this context the experience of Yemenis has been neglected amongst larger scale immigration from South Asia and the Caribbean. One reason which has contributed to what Fred Halliday calls the 'invisibility' of the Yemeni community in Britain, is the size of the community in comparison to South Asian and Caribbean communities. The Yemeni community is roughly 2% of the size of these larger communities (Halliday, 1992: 59). There have been few historical studies of Yemenis in Britain, and historical studies of migration from multiple former colonial and Commonwealth countries have said little about the experiences of Yemenis in Britain (Fryer, 1984; Hiro, 1971; 1992; Ramdin, 1987). *'Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain'* (Fryer 1984), *'The Making of the Black Working Class in Britain'* (Ramdin 1987) and *'Black British White British...'* (Hiro 1971, 1992) have all, in their titles at least, employed the term 'black' in the manner characteristic of political blackness. In political blackness, the term 'black' is typically used to refer to people of African, Caribbean and South Asian descent. In the preface to his study, Fryer defines black people as 'Africans and Asians and their descendents' (1984: ix). Yemenis are not usually referred to as Asian and it would appear then, that the experiences of Yemenis in Britain are not in the scope of Fryer's study. He uses the term 'Arab' where necessary to account for people of Middle Eastern origin (Fryer 1984: 298-316, 356-371).³

In *'Black British, White British...'*, Hiro (1992: viii) is more careful to define what he means by Asian: "Asian' should be taken to mean Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi from the Indian sub continent or East Africa. It does *not* include the Chinese, whether from

³ It is worth noting here that Dahya (1967) chose to entitle his study of Yemenis in Birmingham, *'South Asian Urban Immigration, with Special Reference to Asian Muslim Immigrants in the English Midlands'*. This peculiar title has also been pointed out by Halliday (1992: 160) who notes that: 'The term 'South Asia' has never been applied to the Arabian Peninsula, although the term 'South-West Asia' has, on occasion, been used.' Additionally, however Collins (1957) uses the noun 'Asiatic' to account for both Pakistanis and Arabs in his study.

Hong Kong, Singapore or Malaysia.’ In accordance with the popular usage of the term in Britain, such as that used by Visram to define the countries of South Asia (2002: xi), Yemen and the rest of the Arabian Peninsula are excluded, although Hiro strangely omits Sri Lanka as well. Hiro is, however, well aware of the Yemeni presence in Britain and has written an article on the older maritime community in Tiger Bay (Hiro: 1967). The experiences of the post-war migrants in Britain’s industrial cities are, however, omitted from Hiro’s 1974 and 1992 studies of post-war settlement. Ramdin presents a broader definition of the term ‘black.’ For Ramdin (1987: x), ‘‘black’ refers to non-white persons, particularly those from former colonial and Commonwealth countries.’

A great deal of the content of the studies by Fryer and Ramdin is geared to an analysis of the much longer and less well known pre-war history of Black people in Britain. The authors use the term ‘Arab’ to account for the emigrants of Middle Eastern origin and occasionally the term *lascar*, although the latter is usually reserved for Indian seamen. They pay attention to the plight of the Arab seamen in Britain’s port towns, particularly during the so-called ‘race riots’ of 1919 (Fryer 1984: 298-316 & 356-371; Ramdin 1987: 69-85).⁴ The authors include little else however, on the experiences of Arabs in Britain and especially on their experiences after the Second World War in the land-locked industrial cities of Britain.

Humayun Ansari’s *The Infidel Within: Muslims in Britain since 1800* is one broad-sweep study that pays comparatively more attention to Arab and Yemeni settlement in Britain than the aforementioned three titles. Ansari notes (2004: 9) that Muslim identity has often been considered of secondary importance to the ethnic identities (such as; black, Asian, Pakistani or Arab) of the subjects of many of the post-war studies of Muslim groups in Britain. In *The Infidel Within...* Ansari draws together much of the published research into the Muslim presence in Britain and augments it with his own primary research. The majority of Ansari’s work on Yemenis seems to be based on the earlier work of scholars such as Halliday, Lawless and Searle and Shaif. Similarly to Fryer and Ramdin, and owing to the age of the communities, much of his writing on the Arab and, in particular Yemeni, presence in Britain has as its main concern, the pre-war

⁴ The riots of 1930 have been the focus of an article by David Byrne (1977). He rejects the term ‘race riot’ and argues that the riots illustrate ‘the role of the state, the employers and the official union in using race to defuse a political issue (ibid: 262).’

coastal settlements in Tyneside and Cardiff. In his analysis of the Yemeni presence in the post-war years, Ansari pays particular attention to the movement of landed Yemeni seamen into a number of Britain's industrial cities, who, he argues (2004: 156), 'tired of waiting to 'sign on', sought onshore employment.' As a result of these Yemenis' seafaring background, he adds (ibid.) that they were seen as being particularly well-suited for steelwork: 'From the employers' point of view, donkey men used to stoking ships' steam engines were eminently suitable for the job of firing steel furnaces.' Similarly to Halliday too, Ansari is keen to emphasise the more robust 'home orientation' of the Yemenis, in comparison to Muslim migrants from South Asia. He argues (ibid: 157) that without the widespread migration of wives 'a large number of Yemenis continued to live in Britain as transient residents, at least mentally locked into Yemeni society.'

The remainder of the literature review will look at some of the literature in three general areas that are of particular importance to the present study. The first of these is the area of migration.

Migration

Phizacklea (1984: 199) argues that: 'Most works adopting a 'race relations' framework in Britain do not take as their starting point the internationalization of the labour supply and the migration process.' Authors who have written within this framework and have in some way acknowledged the internationalisation of the labour supply have often done so with the use of the 'push-pull' analytic framework in order to explain migration (see for instance Patterson, 1965: 63-68). In this model, 'push' factors refer to the causes of migration in the country of origin, and 'pull' factors refer to the factors that influence migration in the country of destination. One critic of the push-pull framework is Harris (1993). He argues that the 'pull' notion of there being a demographic 'labour shortage' in Britain and blacks forming a replacement population for the 'war dead' is misleading. For Harris (1993: 15), 'The labour force – working population – is not demographically constituted but politically determined.' Of crucial importance for Harris (1993: 10) is 'the way in which the 'social wage' curtailed the ability of capital to transform the indigenous relative surplus-population into an industrial reserve army as a

lever of post-war accumulation.' The focus for Harris, is on 'the ways in which politics and ideology structure the very constitution of *the* economic' (Harris, 1993: 12).

The body of work that has been described as 'migration theory' (Miles, 1993: 35-39) has sought to integrate the 'push' and 'pull' factors of migration within a framework that stresses the uneven development of capitalism, fostered by British imperialism (see for instance; Castles and Kosack, 1973; Nikolinakos, 1975; Sivanandan 1983). For Castles and Kosack (1973: 7-8):

'Labour migration must be understood in the historical context of the international capitalist system. Labour reserves exist, on the one hand because the uneven development of the means of production in Europe has left backward areas in the Southern parts, on the other because the European colonialism of the last few centuries has created underdevelopment in Africa, Asia, and America.'

For Sivanandan (1983: 102), 'colonialism perverts the economy of the colonies to its own ends, drains their wealth into the coffers of the metropolitan country and leaves them at independence with a large labour force and no capital with which to make that labour productive.' These authors also have a particular concern with the role of the state in institutionalising immigration control.

A further critic of the push-pull analytic framework is Anwar (1979, 1985). Anwar (1985: 14) argues that the structural-functional orientation of the race relations and, by implication, migration theory models cannot adequately facilitate an understanding of the social relationships of the migrants in his study. The work of Anwar draws on some of the analytical traditions of what has been referred to as the 'sociology of ethnic relations' (Phizacklea: 1984). Towards a definition, Phizacklea (1985: 205) argues:

Perhaps the best way of conceptualizing the distinction between the sociology of 'race' as opposed to 'ethnic' relations is to suggest that the former analyses the black migrant as 'victim' of racist belief and practice, whereas the sociology of 'ethnic relations' conceptualizes the migrant as actor and as positively identifying himself or herself as a member of an 'ethnic' (minority) group.

In his study, Anwar draws on concepts such as 'social network,' 'chain migration,' 'incapsulation,' 'situational analysis,' and 'social conflict,' and argues (1985: 14) that these concepts 'have been used by sociologists for the study of social situations where the structural-functional model is inadequate.' One criticism that Anwar makes of the structural approaches to the analyses of migration that is especially pertinent here, in the

context of life stories, is their negation of the processes involved. In his study of Pakistanis in Rochdale, he (1979: 19) writes:

One common attempt to cover all migration under a general heading is the 'push-pull' hypotheses. It suggests that migration is due to socio-economic imbalances between regions, certain factors 'pushing' persons away from the area of origin and others 'pulling' them to the area of destination. It, however does not take into consideration the intervening obstacles and personal factors involved in the process.

For Anwar intervening obstacles include: 'financial outlay, official restrictions and difficulties, particularly the role of immigration laws and their application, the process of chain migration and many personal factors' (1985: 18). Anwar argues that the concept of chain migration is particularly useful for understanding the processes involved in migration. He writes (1985: 14):

Chain migration can be defined as the movement in which prospective migrants learn of opportunities, are provided with transportation and have initial accommodation and employment arranged by means of a primary social relationships with previous migrants.

The concept of chain migration has featured strongly in studies of migration (see, for instance, Anwar (1979: P21-6; 1985: 21-6); Halliday (1992: P61-2,133); Shaw (1988: P22-5). Chain migration has also featured, albeit often implicitly, in most recorded instances of Yemeni migration. One implication of chain migration is that the migrants invariably come from a particular area of their country of origin. Abdulgalil Shaif (1991: 66) writes that the majority of the Yemeni community in Sheffield originate in the Western Aden Protectorate, particularly the provinces of Yafai, Shaibi, Hadida and Dhala. Most of the community in Sheffield who come from North Yemen came from its most populated, central region, particularly Rada, Gubin and Shar. Fred Halliday (1992: 62) notes that the majority of Yemeni migrants in Birmingham also 'come from the 'middle region' of North Yemen or adjoining areas in the South, to the north of Aden.' Similar patterns of chain migration also apply to Yemeni communities in America. In his study of Yemeni migrants in America, Jon C. Swanson (1988: 57) writes that the majority of migrants come from an area known as the 'Mantiqah al-Wustah or central region, which can be roughly circumscribed by drawing line between the cities of Rida, Qatabah, and Ibb.' In New York City, Staub (1989: 78) notes that the majority of Yemeni emigrants come from the southern highlands of Yemen, particularly the districts of Ba'adan and Riyashiyah. The process of chain migration also results in the concentration of arrivants in a limited number of different areas in the country of destination. Georges Sabagh and Mehdi Bozorgmehr's (1988: 143) study of Yemeni

settlement in the United States notes that 'the three states of Michigan, New York and California account for 82.8 percent of the 2,491 North Yemenis and a somewhat smaller 63.6 percent of the South Yemenis enumerated in 1980 in the U.S census'.

Since Anwar's study, a large body of literature has developed, pertaining to official restrictions and the role of immigration laws and their application, which are often analysed as 'pull' factors, particularly those immigration laws in the country of destination (see, for instance, Moore and Wallace, 1975). However, whether a 'push-pull' framework, or the concept of chain migration is used or not, there is less written about the particular intervening obstacles faced by emigrants on their actual journey from their country of origin, to their country of destination in many of the classic and newer historical studies of post-war migration to Britain (see for instance; Patterson, 1965; Hiro, 1971, 1992; Fryer, 1984; Ramdin, 1987). The main exception to this trend seems to be the few studies that are based on extensive oral history or life history interviews and use a polyvocal approach to the representation of the interview data in the final textual product (see, for instance, Phillips and Phillips, 1998: 53-71; Moore and Wallace, 1975). The journey to Britain is better documented in studies of pre-war, migrant communities who settled in the coastal towns of Britain, partly because their many journeys to and from Britain formed part of their seafaring work (for maritime Yemeni communities, see Halliday, 1992; Lawless 1995). In the process of conducting research for this project, I have gained valuable narratives from the participants in this research project pertaining to their voyages from Yemen to Britain, and the journeys from the docks to Sheffield. Such tales of the migrants' experiences of 'intervening obstacles,' often aboard ships for men, or the confrontation with immigration officials at the point of entry for women, inform what Shalom Staub (1989: 92) calls, with reference to his study of Yemenis in New York City, a 'shared folklore of emigration.' For Staub, this folklore forms the basis of a Yemeni emigrant identity in New York. The first research question explores the 'push' and 'pull' factors of migration, as well as the 'intervening obstacles' that were faced by the migrants on their journey to Sheffield and how the arrivants overcame these obstructions to eventually settle in Sheffield.

Racism and Class

In his study, based on the Political and Economic Planning (PEP) report, released in April 1967, *Racial Discrimination in Britain*, Daniel (1968: 57) concluded that: 'In the sectors we studied – different aspects of employment, housing and the provision of services – there is racial discrimination varying in extent from the massive to the substantial.' He writes (1968: 57):

Difficulties with regard to employment, often directly linked to discrimination or prejudice, are the most widespread single source of disappointment with life in Britain for coloured immigrants. The discrimination they face individually and collectively in employment is the factor most frequently mentioned to explain why they think some kind of colour bar exists in Britain today. The types of difficulty and discrimination referred to under this heading were many. They include the claims that some employers will not take coloured employees at all; that others will take them for only the most menial of jobs; that coloured people cannot hope for jobs at the level of their ability but have to settle for the jobs that no one else will do; that, in particular, they cannot hope for jobs of responsibility, influence or authority in society; that, consequently, they are denied any opportunities for training and advancement; that, finally, they are sometimes exploited by employers who require them to do types of work, or work the long hours or accept low levels of payment that they could not persuade white people to accept.

The report was based on a survey of approximately one thousand migrants in six different towns. These interviews were supplemented by a sample of interviews with white people in the same towns, who were in a position to exercise discrimination in the field of employment, housing and commercial services. Finally the researchers utilised situation tests. This involved sending a 'coloured' immigrant, then an immigrant of white Hungarian origin and finally a white Englishman to apply 'for what seemed to be available to all people irrespective of colour or ethnic origin' (1968: 13). In spite of his findings that in employment, housing and the provision of services, racial discrimination varies in 'extent from the massive to the substantial' (1968: 209), Daniels (1968: 79) found that 'the proportion of immigrants who claim personal experience of discrimination understates the extent of the problem'. One reason that Daniels gives for this is what he calls the immigrants' lack of knowledge. For Daniels (*ibid.*), 'the immigrant often does not know that he is being discriminated against.' As was mentioned in the introduction, the research method of life-story interviewing that has been used in this thesis, limits the examination of the social structures in the lives of the former steelworkers. Therefore, the verification of the 'facts' of racism and class discrimination is not the primary objective of the present study. The present study aims to explore the salience of these structural phenomena in the narratives of the

interviewees, and to locate their meaning within an analysis of post war migration and (temporary) settlement.

Towards this end, an analysis of the broader literature is essential. Harris (1993: 4), in his questioning of what he calls the 'explanatory dyad of push and pull or a replacement population thesis', asks the important question of why there was, 'room at the bottom', yet not room at the top or in the middle. He writes (*ibid.*: 50): 'In, short, definitions of skill are saturated with a credo of racialized meanings such that certain types of work are deemed to be unsuitable for some workers and unskilled by virtue of the occupants who perform them.' For Harris (1993: 12), 'ideological, political and economic factors thread the industrial reserve army through the labour process with an assurance that certain elements will re-emerge again to join the relative surplus-population.'

There have been many attempts, especially from scholars writing within a Marxist tradition, to examine the position of migrants through a theoretical analysis of the relationship between 'race' and class. Castles and Kosack (1973) compare the conditions of migrant workers in Britain with those in Europe, who, they argue, are not 'racially' distinct from the indigenous population, to support their argument that role allocation is determined by the 'normal' workings of capitalism, more than racism. They aim to show (1973: 2) that, 'the problems experienced by all immigrants to Europe and their impact upon society are very similar to those of coloured immigrants in Britain. If that is the case, race and racialism cannot be regarded as the determinants of immigrants' social position.' A further Marxist position lends greater salience to racism and, in that respect at least, is more consistent with the findings of the PEP report (1968). Scholars such as Sivanandan in the UK and Cox in America, have argued that racism is functional to capitalism, and is a false state of consciousness, largely instigated by the bourgeoisie, in order to prevent horizontal class solidarity by the vertical integration of race. For Sivanandan (1983: 104), capital prevents, 'the horizontal conflict of classes through the vertical integration of race – and, in the process, exploits both race and class at once.' Indeed for Sivanandan, the function of racism is clear (*ibid.* 113), 'racism is not its own justification. It is necessary only for the purpose of exploitation: you discriminate in order to exploit or, which is the same thing, you exploit by discriminating.'

Stuart Hall (1980: 337) argues, 'one cannot explain racism in abstraction from other social relations – even if, alternatively, one cannot explain it by reducing it to those relations.' With the tuition of Hall, the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) (1982) has been particularly influential in developing what Solomos (1986: 89), an original member of the group, calls the 'relative autonomy model.' This model, for Solomos (*ibid.*), is concerned with the development of 'an analysis of racism which fully accepts its relative autonomy from class-based social relations and its historical specificity in relation to the laws of motion of capitalist development.' For the CCCS: 'there is no one-way correspondence between racism and specific economic or other forms of social relations' (*ibid.*: 92). The CCCS had as its primary concern the changing nature of the politics of 'race' during the 1970s, and the development of new, often cultural, forms of racial ideologies. Errol Lawrence (1982: 48), for instance, who argues: 'The past is alive, even if transformed, in the present', has a particular concern with the racist ideologies that, he argues (1982: 47), 'form the cement of that structural configuration we have referred to as the 'new racism.'" The authors have expressed some criticism over the neglect of politics and power in many of the earlier post-war studies of race-relations (see, for instance, Solomos, 2003: 20-24) and the themes of the role of the state and political institutions in the reproduction of racism have been important in much of the work that has since been produced by the original members of the group (see, for instance, Solomos; 1989, 1993, 2003; Solomos and Back; 1996). The group, and the contributions of Errol Lawrence (1982: 95) in particular, has also argued that sociologists of 'race-relations' and 'ethnicity studies' 'have failed to question all but the most obvious common-sense racist assumptions.' Lawrence (*ibid.*) explores 'the convergence between racist ideologies and the theories of 'race/ethnic-relations' sociology', and argues that the common-sense racist imagery inherent in the theories of race and ethnic relations sociology, are 'to be found at the base of a new popular politics tailored by crises conditions' (*ibid.* 134). The work of Paul Gilroy (1987: 11) too, has been critical of the 'oscillation between black as problem and black as victim' in much of the 'race-relations' literature, and with the use of the relative autonomy model, analyses black people as subjects rather than objects. He argues (1987: 28) "'race' can no longer be reduced to an effect of the economic antagonisms arising from production, and class must be understood in terms qualified by the vitality of struggles articulated through 'race'." The relative autonomy model, used by the group has also involved a non-reductive commitment to linking racism to other social relations as well as class,

and the contributions of Hazel V. Carby (1982) and Prathiba Parmar (1982) have a particular concern with how 'race' and class intersect with gender. In spite of this, however, the work of the CCCS has been criticised for having as its primary concern cultural relations, particularly the political and ideological processes involved in the production and reproduction of racism, while subordinating production relations. The latter, Miles (1984: 221-228) argues, have a more determinate effect on the socio-economic position of black people in Britain.

The work of Anwar is again particularly important here. In the context of his critique of the structuralism of the 'race relations' literature (both liberal and radical), Anwar and others whose work may be regarded as falling into, or overlapping with the sociology of ethnic relations (see, for instance, Shaw, 1988; Werbner, 1990) pay greater attention to the social networks of migrant groups. In his analysis of the working conditions of Pakistanis in Rochdale, Anwar (1985: 114) comes to a similar conclusion as the PEP study: 'To sum up, Pakistanis were employed in occupations rejected by the indigenous population. They were concentrated in certain industrial sectors, in this case textiles. These were the sectors which had either lowest pay or dirty jobs, difficult shifts and worst working conditions...' His (1985: 15) particular concern with 'social network analysis,' which he defines as an analysis of 'those interlinkages persons build for themselves with other persons and the social relationships these people have amongst themselves', leads him to cite multiple reasons for the concentration of Pakistanis in certain occupations. He writes (1985: 215): 'At work too, sponsorship and patronage had resulted in 'ethnic work groups'. We have seen that *Biraderi* networks contributed to this concentration of Pakistanis in ethnic work groups by helping new migrants to find jobs and at the same time enabling employers to use these channels for the recruitment of more workers.'⁵ His refusal to reductively employ the concept of racism resonates to some extent with the work of Miles (1989; 2003). He is, at the same time, wary of non-racial claims and suspicious of employers' attempts to 'justify the segregation of Pakistanis into different departments and sections by referring to language difficulties (ibid: 105).' One criticism of the sociology of ethnic relations is

⁵ The word *Biraderi* is derived from the word *Biradar*, meaning brother. Anwar (1985: 62) writes, '*Biraderi* includes all the men who can trace their relationship to a common ancestor, no matter how remote. It refers to both the whole group of those who belong to a patrilineage and any individual member of it. The term *Biraderi* has several referents and its meaning changes according to the context in which it is used (for a more detailed explanation of the concept of *Biraderi* and its meanings, see Anwar, 1985: 62-95; Shaw, 1988: 85-110).'

that the analysis of the position of migrants in primarily cultural terms negates external determinants and that 'an emphasis on cultural difference or preference can be used in explaining or justifying the segregation of migrants (particularly women) into low paid, arduous and insecure ghettos of unskilled work' (Phizacklea 1984: 207). Anwar (1985: 10) is however attentive to structural constraints. He argues: 'The behaviour of Pakistanis (and other ethnic groups) in this situation needs to be understood in the framework of external constraints and their ethnic preferences.' As was mentioned earlier, the interpretive approach of the present study places limitations on the analysis of structure. Instead, the present research project aims to explore the intersections of racism and class in the narratives of the Yemeni former steelworkers, and to facilitate an understanding of these themes through beginning to situate them within the broader context of post-war migration.

Resistance

The final research question aims to investigate the forms that resistance to exclusionary practices took. Halliday (1992: 84) writes that, 'it was not the conditions in the country of work that determined the growth of their organisations, but the development of the nationalist movement at home that led to a mobilization of the immigrant workers abroad.' As was noted above, Searle and Shaif (1991: 70) describe the period from 1955 to 1971 as a 'period of *experience* rather than struggle.' The literature on Yemenis in Britain suggests that in the inland settlements there were no formal political or workers' organisations prior to 1962, and that the intensification of the struggle for independence in South Yemen fuelled political mobilisation in Britain. The writing of what Miles (1984: 218) calls 'the radical sociology of race relations' has aimed to ground the resistance of black people in Britain in the political and cultural traditions of their countries of origin. The most influential writers in this tradition include Sivanandan (1983), the CCCS (1982) and in particular Gilroy (1987). While Halliday and Searle and Shaif ground their analyses of political organisation within an analysis of the cultural and political background of the Yemenis, their work departs from the work of 'the radical sociology of race relations' through their findings. They argue that the modes of political organisation that the migrants brought with them from Yemen were, until the late 1970s, oriented not towards exclusionary practices in the 'host' society,

but towards the end of British Colonialism in Yemen and, from then, towards development projects in the Yemeni homeland.

Miles and Phizacklea have aimed to ground their analysis of racism within an analysis of production relations. Their analysis of resistance has focused on the participation of migrants in trades unions (Miles and Phizacklea, 1980). In her article on Asian women in resistance, Parmar (1982: 263) argues that such work imposes 'inappropriate and Eurocentric conceptualizations of struggle and political organization when looking at the situation of black workers in Britain.' For Parmar, such work discounts 'black workers' racist experiences of trade union and labour movements both in Britain and in their countries of origin, where there has been a history of such organizations being turned into instruments of management.' This view is certainly confirmed in the work of Halliday, and Searle and Shaif. Halliday (1992: 103) writes that: 'There was indeed a general feeling within the Yemeni community that the British unions neglected the problems of Yemeni workers and non-white workers generally.' For Searle and Shaif: 'The British trade unions and working class organisations didn't bother reaching them...' Anwar (1985: 110) points out the difficulties that ethnic work groups and night shift work imposed on union activism: 'Their work pattern affects their participation in the unions as meetings are held during the day and prevents them using other facilities at work, such as canteen, etc.'

John Rex and Sally Tomlinson have also argued that immigrant minorities have been forced to organise themselves and to develop their own political strategies, separately from those of the white working class. They argue (1979: 275), 'minorities were systematically at a disadvantage compared to working-class whites and that, instead of identifying with working-class culture, community and politics, they formed their own organisations and became in effect a separate underprivileged class.' Rex (1979: 91) describes the politics of West Indian and South Asian migrants as 'the politics of defensive confrontation.' He argues (Rex and Tomlinson, 1979: 276):

That this process of organisation takes a different form in the two minority communities: in the Asian communities it takes the form of defensive organisation within which individuals may aim at capital accumulation and social mobility; in the West Indian community it may take the form of withdrawal from competition altogether with emphasis on the formation of a black identity, even though a small minority might achieve, and a larger might continue to aspire towards, assimilation.

The suggestion that minority ethnic communities became more resistant as time progressed, or that the second generation of black and Asian people in Britain were more resistant than their parents, also features in the wider literary context (see, for instance, Cashmore, 1981: 178; for a discussion, see, James, 1993: 251-254). In the literature on Yemenis, the first generation have been described as being passive in the face of exclusionary practices as a result of their obligations to families in their countries of origin, having fears of repatriation and lacking knowledge of their rights in England (Searle and Shaif, 1991: 70). Although this lessened resistance for some respondents, the general pattern, in the interviews that I have completed, has been that resistance occurred frequently and took various and often unorganised forms. Despite the absence of Black or Yemeni workers' organisations in the early years, and the reluctance of Trade Unions to support black workers, tales of individual and often spontaneous acts of resistance to various instances of exclusionary practices are not uncommon in the narratives of the ex-steelworkers. Halliday (1992) and Searle and Shaif (1991) have written in great detail about the development of Yemeni organisations in Britain and Sheffield, respectively. There has, however been very little research on the various and largely unorganised forms of resistance that were employed by the former steelworkers in this early period of settlement. The research aims to contribute to knowledge of the Yemeni community in Sheffield, by paying particular attention to the various informal forms of resistance that occurred prior to 1962, as well as after 1962.

The broader literary context has revealed some patterns of resistance amongst the early immigrants of West Indian and South Asian origin. The work of Sivanandan has a particular commitment to resistance and rebellion. In the early days of post-war reconstruction, Sivanandan (1983: 5) writes; 'resistance to racialism took the form of ad hoc responses to specific situations grounded in tradition.' For Sivanandan (1983: 5) 'resistance to racial abuse and discrimination on the shop floor was more spontaneous than organised – but both individual and collective.' He cites the pooling of savings in order to buy houses, as an example of resistance to the discrimination that the migrants faced in the housing market. He writes that the migrants from South Asia, 'who found their social life more readily in their temples and mosques and cultural associations', did not, unlike the West Indians, have to face and at times fight the colour bar of the pubs, clubs, dance-halls and churches.

The Yemenis' self-image was that of temporary workers. In his article *Everyday forms of Employee Resistance*, Tucker (1993: 25) argues that 'temporary employees generally respond to offensive behaviour on the part of their employers in nonaggressive ways. Gossip, toleration, and resignation are popular, while occasionally grievances are expressed by theft, sabotage or noncooperation. Collective responses, formal complaints and legal action are rare.' The context of Tucker's study differs from this one. It is an American study, undertaken a generation after the arrival of the Yemenis at a time when temporary employees were one of the fastest growing segments of the workforce. I have cited it here because it draws attention to the various informal and non-unionised ways in which employees express their grievances. The acts of resistance that have emerged within my interviews have for the most part been of an indirect nature and this is consistent with the observation by Tucker (1993: 26), 'that 'nonconfrontational forms of social control are most likely among those in transient and subordinate positions.' He goes on, however, to note that (1993: 41): 'Confrontation is further discouraged in transient settings by the absence of strong alliances.' In the case of Pakistanis in Rochdale and Yemenis in Birmingham, Anwar (1985: 110) and Halliday (1992: 64) found the reverse to be true. For Anwar, strong kin-village ties amongst the mill workers offer the possibility of greater levels of exploitation:

The ethnic work group system offers possibilities of exploitation of workers unfamiliar with wages and conditions and rights by using 'go-betweens' or 'straw bosses' who speak English. In fact, in some firms in Rochdale, the appointment of Pakistani supervisors for the Pakistani workers did result in more work and fewer demands.

The present research project will explore the nature of informal modes of resistance amongst the Yemeni former steelworkers in Sheffield.

Summary

In summary, the work of Collins (1957) and Dahya (1967) has utilised a traditional ethnographic approach. Their work, and that of Dahya's in particular, relies on description. The analyses of the authors have, however, been conducted within an overarching race-relations framework, or, for Dahya, who is particularly concerned with the cultural background of the migrants, an ethnic-relations framework. They have as their concluding concerns the degree to which the migrants have 'integrated' with the

host society. The work of Evans (1985) breaks with this concern, and, in the vein of what Phizacklea (1984: 204-205) has called 'the political economy of racism' approach, he has a particular interest in 'the role of the state in institutionalising racism particularly through its apparatus of immigration control (ibid: 204).' Halliday (1992) and Lawless (1995), too, draw on the conceptual framework of the 'sociology of race relations' and the 'sociology of ethnic relations.' In the work of Halliday, in particular, concepts such as 'incapsulation' and the 'remote village' are central and Lawless, especially in his concluding chapter, has a concern with 'integration.' Although the authors draw on some of the concepts of the 'race' relations framework, their studies have not been written with the use of that framework. A central argument of critics of the 'race' relations paradigm is that it negates the uneven development of capitalism which underlies migration (see, for instance, Castles and Kosack, 1973: 1-8). Halliday and Lawless do contextualise their study within a broader analysis of the structural imbalance between Yemen and Britain, and in this respect their work is commensurate with the concerns of the scholars who write in the tradition of 'the sociology of migration' (Castles and Kosack, 1973; Nikolinakos, 1975; Sivanandan, 1982). A further criticism of the 'race' and particularly 'ethnic relations framework' is that it favours an analysis of 'race,' or 'culture/ethnicity,' over one of racism. In their critique of the 'race' and 'ethnic relations framework' Harris and James (1993: 2) argue that: 'Difference is not merely celebrated it is absolutized. ... The most apparent change that occurs is that researchers substitute the signifier 'culture/ethnicity' for the signifier 'race.' But no sooner is this done than they proceed to attach to culture a 'heritage', a 'lineage', a set of 'roots' which naturalize 'cultural difference'.' The concept of racism does feature in the above studies, but, excluding the work of Evans (1985), the concept is often subsidiary to the analysis of the Yemenis as a 'race' apart: a particularly insular group, bound together by the 'Islamic creed' and the 'myth of return' into a 'remote village.' The framework of the present study is more akin to that used by Searle and Shaif (1991) who have a particular concern with racism and class.

The present study breaks with much of the literature through its reliance on life-story interviews. One consequence of this is that the description-heavy approach of conventional ethnographic work and much of the work of the sociology of ethnic relations is less prevalent in the main body of the thesis. The life-stories of the old men are rife with drama, and in these stories racism, class oppression and resistance are

recurrent themes. The results of the PEP report (1968), however, have served in this literature review to highlight, amongst other things, the partial knowledge that agents have of the structures in which they are situated. The concern here, then, is not so much with the objective facts of racism and class in the lives of the migrants. The study aims instead to explore the intersections of racism and class in the life-stories of the former steelworkers and to facilitate an understanding of these themes through beginning to situate them within the broader context of post-war migration to Britain. The study aims, like those of Chatterjee (2001), Iqbal, Ara and Riel (eds.) (1990) and Majumdar (1985), to represent the life-stories of the former steelworkers in a polyvocal format. The study also aims, like that of Gregory (1991) and, to a lesser extent, the television (Channel 4, 1989) and radio documentaries (Dean and Burman, 2004), to represent the voices of the Yemenis in the industrialised English with which they speak. It is to the methods that have been employed that we now turn.

Chapter Two
Methodology

Introduction

The methods that have been employed in this study are based upon a convergence of paradigms. The salience of the master narratives of 'race' and class within the research project means that it would be erroneous to label the project as postmodern. However, in line with postmodern approaches to representation, the research uses a polyvocal textual format in order to represent the empirical data. The production of knowledge towards counter-discriminatory ends and historical revisionism are two key characteristics of critical theory, and they are set out as two of the main objectives of the research project. The need for historical revisionism and counter-discriminatory writing is particularly pertinent here. As the late Edward Said (1995: 3) has demonstrated, any writing, thinking or acting on the Orient has been fashioned by Orientalism:

Moreover, so authoritative a position did Orientalism have that I believe no one writing, thinking, or acting on the Orient could do so without taking account of the limitations on thought and action imposed by Orientalism. In brief, because of Orientalism, the Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought or action. This is not to say that Orientalism unilaterally determines what can be said about the Orient, but that it is the whole network of interests inevitably brought to bear on (and therefore always involved in) any occasion when that peculiar entity 'the Orient' is in question.

For Said, the objectivist notion of disengagement, a hallmark of traditional sociological research on the Orient and elsewhere, has certainly been tainted with the values of Orientalism. The method of life-story interviewing that has been employed here, has, on the contrary, been reliant on engagement. Indeed, in the tradition of critical theory, this research project is intrinsically mediated by counter-discriminatory and awareness raising values. The study is based upon an interpretive epistemology. This means that, rather than seeking to explain the behaviour of the former steelworkers through the use of various forms of measurement, the study seeks to understand the subjective meanings that the interviewees apply to the various aspects of their lives that have been reconstructed within their narratives. The narratives contain many recurring themes of hardship, where the concepts of racism, class and resistance are pertinent, and it is these themes that form the focus of the study. The concern of the study, however, with an examination of the social structures in the lives of the former steelworkers, in particular

the intersections of racism and class within their narratives, echoes the structural approach of critical-realism.

The aforementioned theoretical positions, or the qualities that have been drawn from them and then applied within this research project, perhaps find some reconciliation within the framework of post-colonial theory. Importantly the prefix 'post' in 'post-colonialism' does not suggest that colonialism, or the uneven core-periphery power relationship between the metropole and colonies, has ended, but refers to the continuities in, and new forms of, imperial intervention (for a more detailed discussion, see Shohat, 1992). Neither does the prefix 'post' suggest a link with postmodernism, as grand narratives underpin a great deal of postcolonial writing. Post-colonial thought to Said (1995: 351) is, 'most interestingly connected in its general approach to a universal set of concerns, all of them relating to emancipation, revisionist attitudes towards history and culture, a widespread use of recurring theoretical models and styles. A leading motif has been the consistent critique of Eurocentrism and patriarchy.' The emphasis is on the local, but the study is linked to many other instances of migration. The mixed paradigmatic background, as we shall see, has had various implications for the methods that have been implemented in this study.

Initially, in this methodology I will attempt to outline the co-generative roots of how this project came into fruition and the implications that this has for the wider study. Following this I will aim to analyse the methods of sampling that have been employed in this study and their limitations. An analysis of data collection comes next, where I have attempted to describe in detail the type of interviews that I have used, the interview process and the ethical issues involved. The next section is geared to explaining the polyvocal mode of representation that I have employed within the thesis. I will then go on to speak about the implications of my background in the cross-cultural research process. The final section of this chapter deals with the measures that I have used, derived from both quantitative and qualitative methods, in order to ensure that this study is reliable, valid and indeed trustworthy, the latter 'measure' being one that scholars have argued is better suited to qualitative work.

The roots of the inquiry

This research project began as a 4,000 word assignment for a history module that I studied in the final year of my undergraduate degree. The essay was well received by both the module lecturer and members of the Yemeni Community Association in Sheffield, who upon completion of my degree encouraged me to expand on my essay as part of an MPhil/PhD degree. Although I had completed life-story interviews for the piece of work, the word limit of the assignment meant that I could not possibly do justice to the richly detailed narratives that I had received, and this led me to base the essay on the experiences of the migrants at work. Therefore it was agreed between myself and three other members of staff at the community centre in Sheffield that I would, with their support, aim to write a much more detailed project that would expand on the themes of my previous assignment by focusing on the entire life course of the interviewees, as relayed to me through their narratives. The end goal was to publish a book that would detail the contributions that the Yemeni former-steelworkers had made to the economy and society in Sheffield. My father was at the time teaching English to refugees from the civil war in Yemen at the community centre in Sheffield and was well known amongst the research population that I was interested in, and so I was particularly well positioned to interview the would-be participants in the research. Furthermore, I had already established some links with the elderly men who I had interviewed as part of the assignment that I had completed during my first degree and thus was known, albeit vaguely, amongst their peers and the people that I would hope to involve within the research project. On top of the encouragement that I had received from members of staff at the community centre, I considered the potential of my already established links with the old men, both through my father and the work that I had previously done, as useful launching pads for a research degree.

The aims of the thesis have been co-generated by myself and community leaders at the Yemeni Community Association in Sheffield. On top of this, many members of the first generation of Yemeni emigrants have also lent their encouragement to the research project. The appeals of many of the members of the older generation for such written records of their experiences are given great urgency by their old age. It must be stressed, however, that although the objectives of the research project were fashioned through co-generation, and despite me having maintained a relationship with my informants

throughout the research process, this is not a co-generative study. Heron's (1996: 26) description of qualitative research as a 'half-way house between exclusive, controlling research *on* people and fully participatory research *with* people' is pertinent to my own research. For Heron, one disjuncture between qualitative research and co-generative inquiry is the limitation of subject participation to content issues in the former, and the involvement of subject participation in the full range of issues involved in research decision making, including operational methods, in the latter (Heron, 1996: 27). Although the subjects in this research project have made themselves heard in content issues, they have had less say in issues concerning research decision making. The research, therefore, bears more of the hallmarks of an action research project than a co-generative study. For Bryman, 'There is no single type of action research, but broadly it can be defined as an approach in which the action researcher and a client collaborate in the diagnosis of a problem and in the development of a solution based on the diagnosis' (Bryman, 2001: 275). The broad definition proposed by Bryman accounts for the co-generative roots of this study, my liaison with the subject participants throughout the research project, and their involvement in content issues. The problem that was identified by the members of staff at the community centre had at its essence three prongs: the dearth of research on the Yemeni community in Sheffield, the old age of the former steelworkers and the importance of obtaining written records of their experiences, and the need to counteract the rising tide of Islamophobia, the effects of which have made themselves felt locally on the community.

My own personal background also had further implications for the research questions in the project. The decision to base the research around the themes of racism and class was, in part, based upon the concept of political blackness. As has already been noted, the term political blackness loosely refers to the politics of solidarity between African, Caribbean and Asian migrants which arose during the 1970s and were fostered by the communities' shared structural position in society. I was particularly interested in the methodological implications of political blackness and thought that it may provide a solid foundation for the exchange of stories based around the often sensitive themes of racism and class.¹

¹ For a more detailed discussion of political blackness and the implications of cultural difference in the interview process see the 'Insider and outsider status in the cross cultural exchange' section later on.

Sampling

The research has used a cyclical approach to data collection and analysis. I have completed three main phases of data collection which have been interspersed with stages of reflection and revision. The methods of sampling that I employed differed slightly between the first and the next two stages. There is no complete list of the population of first generation Yemeni emigrants from which to draw a sampling frame. Many members of the original migrants that came to Sheffield after the war have become quite difficult to locate. One reason for this is that many returned to Yemen after the widespread redundancies of the late 1970s and the 1980s. I have used, in this research project, interview data that was collected as part of my aforementioned undergraduate assignment. I consider the period of data collection that I underwent then to be my first phase of data collection. In order to locate a sample for my research in this phase, I employed the non-probability method of snowball sampling. I arranged for members of staff at the Yemeni community centre to organise my initial interviews and these respondents then put me in touch with further interviewees. Through the links that I had developed with the informants, from my first phase of interviewing and members of staff at the community centre, I soon learned of an English class for the elderly male members of the community. The class convened midday from Monday to Thursday, every week during term time. I began my research by sitting in on the English classes, from which I would eventually draw the majority of my informants. I spent a number of weeks attending the classes and getting to know the students. After discovering the English class, my method of sampling changed from snowball to convenience sampling. In my second and third phases of data collection, I drew my sample from the English class. In the third phase of data collection my father actually took over as the teacher of the class, the implications of which for my research will be discussed later. The cyclical approach to data collection would actually work to bolster my research sample. The students witnessed me return completed copies of interview transcripts to people that I had interviewed on a previous occasion; this I found would encourage more men to accept or even request an interview with me, as they would gain a written record of their experiences. Seeing me return and speak about the transcripts to the interviewees also worked to dispel some of the anxieties that many of the men may have harboured about the interview process; for instance, it may have lessened the worry that I would not return and the concern that they would not be able to check the transcripts. I conducted

the majority of my interviews at the Yemeni community centre in Burngreave, Sheffield. I have, in all, completed twenty-nine life-story interviews with twenty-five of the original arrivant Yemenis who became steelworkers, with four men requesting a second interview.

A well documented limitation of snowball sampling is that interviewees may select a specific network of further interviewees. The problem of attaining a representative sample is also pertinent to the method of convenience sampling. In this case, all of the initial interviewees have of course been ex-steelworkers who did not return to Yemen during the recession, although it is worth noting that, similar to those Yemenis who did leave Sheffield at this time, the majority of those who did stay still lost their jobs. A further bias in my sample is the predominant representation of informants from the Shaibi district of Yemen. The process of migration is often characterised by chain migration, and it is likely that through my employment of snowball sampling, the local and familial social networks that were favoured through the process of chain migration and the subsequent patterns of socialisation have made their way into my research. Furthermore, Yemen is a country which, in its recent history and despite unification in 1991, has been plagued by unrest and, although as Shaif (1995) demonstrates, the roots of this unrest are very complicated, the conflict there has at times been expressed in regional terms. In an earlier article, Shaif (Searle and Shaif, 1991) noted that the support for the unification of Yemen was perhaps stronger in Sheffield than it was in North and South Yemen. Despite this pan-Yemeni consciousness, however, my sample of men who are predominantly of origin in Shaibi, in the South, suggests that certain regional cleavages may have made their way into the sampling frame of my research. Although the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen united in 1991, regional cleavages still bubble beneath the surface. A pertinent example of this was provided to me by one English member of staff at the community centre. The member of staff told me that a man who had emigrated after the war from North Yemen confronted him beneath a photograph of a village in Yemen, and asked why it was written under the photograph that the village was located in South Yemen when it was, according to him, situated north of the border. The member of staff responded, 'Well I thought that the North and South were now one, so what does it matter?' Finding agreement on the oneness of Yemen, the two then departed. The research sample that I used for the second and third phases of my interviews was drawn from an English class

in Burngreave. Although I ended up interviewing all of the regular students who wanted to be interviewed, I had a freer reign to construct a more representative research sample and I made a point to attempt to include the voices of those men who emigrated from areas outside of Shaibi and North Yemen.

A further outcome of snowball sampling is an all male sample. The research, as the subtitle suggests, is a study of the lives of Yemeni former steelworkers in Sheffield, and the gendered division of labour both in Yemen and in Sheffield meant that manual posts in the steel industry have invariably been filled by men. In the course of reading this thesis, the reader should also become aware that the implications of the 'myth of return' provide an additional reason for the male-centred nature of this study. Yemeni men held on to their intention to eventually return to their homeland for a longer period than those migrants from South Asia and the West Indies. Women from Yemen, therefore, emigrated many years later than those from South Asia or the West Indies and were not present in Sheffield for much of the time period that this thesis covers.

There is much that can be learned about the lives of the former steelworkers from Yemeni women. However, given the religious and cultural protocols that surround the public interaction of men and women who are not related, the linguistic difficulties that would arise from performing interviews with women, and the research's focus on the lives of the men, it was decided early on that I would limit my interviews to men only. In their study of the social and inspirational needs of Yemeni women, Mohamed and Makmahi (2001: 4) write that, 'In Yemen men and women lived in their own universes, which intersect only in childhood, marriage and within the family. A man's world was public and mobile whereas a women's was restricted to the home and for many their farms.' The study of Mohamed and Makmahi goes on to state that, 'Only 20% of the women interviewed said they spoke to people of other cultures. The majority didn't, as they didn't have enough confidence as they felt their English wasn't good enough. This lack of confidence keeps the women in their own circles and creates the image of self-seclusions and that they are not willing to communicate with others' (ibid: 11). The separation of men and women in public is commonplace and it is likely that the 20% of women who do speak to people of other cultures invariably speak to women of other cultures. At the community centre where I conducted my interviews, English classes for women were held in the morning and classes for men convened after midday. As a

general rule, when Yemeni men and women were present in the community centre simultaneously, women tended to occupy the ground floor and men the upper. A middle-aged English woman teacher who taught one class of men at the centre during the period of my research provided one exception to this rule, as did a younger Muslim-Syrian woman who took over the class after the English woman had left. Any attempt for me to interview the wives of the former steelworkers would have disregarded the protocol there, and may have compromised the relationships that I had developed with the older men, many of whom are most steeped in tradition. The following brief story provides one example of the separation between men and women at the community centre. En route from the English classroom to a quiet room, where I could conduct an interview with one of the original arrivants from Yemen who had agreed to speak with me, I unwittingly opened the door to a room that I thought he was signalling to, but was in fact being used to teach a group of Yemeni women. I received a sharp poke from the old man behind me, who simultaneously exclaimed, 'Women, women!' With a sigh at what he could have considered to be, at best, a misunderstanding or, at worst, a disregard for protocol, he beckoned me on to the next room.

In addition, language difference provided a further obstacle in the interviewing of Yemeni women. I am unable to speak Arabic, and the length of time that the first generation of Yemeni women have spent in Sheffield, and the division of labour between men and women, has meant that the women have not experienced the same, albeit limited, opportunities as Yemeni men to learn the English language. Thus, the obstacles to the development of a rapport that often arise when men interview women, even in interviews that rely on non-positivist techniques of elicitation that have been highlighted by feminist researchers such as Oakley (1990), would, in this case, be compounded by the difficulties inherent in the cross-cultural exchange.

In light of the sampling biases that are intrinsic to the study, and the relatively small sample which is characteristic of research projects that rely on in-depth interviews, there are clear limitations to the generalisability of the study. The study is one of the older men in Sheffield, who remained in Sheffield after the widespread redundancies of the late 1970s and the 1980s. Any generalisations that are made from the interview data must also take into account that, as a result of the snowball and convenience methods of

sampling that have been employed in this study, the majority of my interviewees have come to Sheffield from the Shaibi district of Yemen.

The Life-Story Interviews

The common nature of story-telling in everyday life has been made clear elsewhere (see for instance Atkinson, 2001). Story-telling features prominently in informal gatherings, be they at a local pub or mosque, in various professions from journalism to psychiatry, and is a means of transmitting values, folktales, myths etc. from generation to generation. Story-telling is made more salient still, amongst groups that are predominantly semi-literate or illiterate, and therefore have limited access to written print and/or electronic media, as are the subjects of this study. Dramatic lived events provide a further incentive for story-telling, so much so that in some cultures, as has been observed by Narayan and George (2001: 817), people who have not lived through some sort of turmoil are not expected to have any stories to tell. It has been noted elsewhere that life-stories are central to the process of identity construction (Candida-Smith 2001: 724). When a life-story is being revealed, dramatic events that alter the expected course of a life are often referred to as keystones within the construction of personal identities. Experiences such as emigration provide one such example of disorder within the life-course and are standard in the story-telling repertoires of the first generation of Yemenis in Sheffield. Indeed, although this study is the first life-story study of an migrant Yemeni community in the West, the authors of those studies that set the precedent for this one, have acknowledged the salience of storytelling amongst Yemeni emigrants. Staub (1989: 92) argues that there exists amongst the Yemeni community in New York, 'a shared folklore of emigration', and of course Chatterjee (2001) has presented a compilation of oral history stories of Yemeni carers in Sheffield. Robert Atkinson's (2001: 125) definition of a life-story interview seems particularly pertinent to my own method:

A life story is the story a person chooses to tell about the life he or she has lived, told as completely and honestly as possible, what the person remembers of it and what he or she wants others to know of it, usually as a result of a guided interview by another. The resulting life story is the narrative essence of what has happened to the person. It can cover the time from birth to the present or before and beyond. It includes the important events, experiences, and feelings of a lifetime.

There is some confusion over the different approaches to in-depth interviewing. A life-history interview is usually used as part of the broader life-history method, where interviews are combined with various other kinds of personal documents (Bryman 2001: 316). The presence of personal documents, particularly official documents that buttress personal narratives, allows the link between biography, history and society, endemic in personal narratives and emphasised by Mills (1959), to be made with greater accuracy. Although a small number of interviewees have shown me personal documents, normally their Curriculum Vitae, with particular reference to the employment history section of it, in order to support their stories, this has, I stress, been a small number. I have, however, outside of the interview context, more frequently been shown documents such as letters from the National Health Service and 'junk mail' that has been dropped through the letter boxes of the storytellers, and asked to read them. I have been asked to read such documents not so much so that the interviewees could corroborate their stories of the hazardous conditions in which they worked, by showing me the legacy of their industrial injuries, manifest through the almost routine appointments of some of them at the local hospital, but more for somebody to read them to them. This, in itself, demonstrated a level of trust, and I was very happy to oblige. Whether interview data is substantiated with personal documents or not, the term life-story or life-stories, is perhaps more fitting for such in-depth interviews than life-history, as the former expression 'draws attention to the fragmentary and constructed nature of personal narratives' (Narayan and George, 2001: 817). The majority of my interviews took on a semi-structured rather than an unstructured format. The notion that an interviewer can be in receipt of a continuous flow of interview data has been well criticised by feminist researchers (see for instance Oakley, 1990). However, despite my efforts to break with the positivist conventions of social research, particularly the notion of disengagement, by attempting to develop a rapport, I did not consistently receive a continuous flow of information. As a result of this my interview guide was drawn on to varying degrees over the course of the research process. As Richard Candida Smith notes, this is not so much a problem of method as something endemic to the storytelling process itself: 'Even if interviewees rely on twice-told tales to answer questions posed to them, they have usually never previously strung their stories together in a single extended account' (Candida Smith, 2001: 727). Many of the interviews, therefore, took on a semi-structured format and at times the interviews comprised of a sequence of quite separate oral history accounts that were arranged in a chronology. These were broken by spells

of questions that failed to elicit detailed responses, and then reconvened when the respondent was again able to initiate a story, possibly already present in their repertoire and told on several previous occasions.

The interview guide (see appendix) is divided into a number of sub-sections including; 'migration,' 'settlement,' and 'work,' and includes a number of descriptive questions on each sub-topic. These include questions such as, 'what do you remember about Yemen?', and 'What was your job like in Sheffield?' These open-ended questions were asked in order to encourage the interviewees to talk about their own lives and in their own terms. A number of questions which were asked early on were not immediately relevant to the research questions but were included in an attempt to establish a rapport. One example of this is; 'How do people get married in Yemen?' The interview guide also contained many probes, such as 'How old were you when you came?' and 'When did you come?', which aimed to encourage the interviewees to elaborate on their initial responses. I only heavily drew on the guide in a small number of interviews where the interviewee was particularly reticent. Writing about a past research project, which used a standardised method of interviewing, Reissman (2001: 695) comments, 'Subsequently, I realized that participants were resisting our efforts to fragment their experiences into thematic (codable) categories – our attempts, in effect, to control meaning.' In the majority of the interviews which were undertaken for the present research project, the structure of the interview guide was greatly undermined by the stories which I received from the interviewees. In response, I would ask the interviewees about whatever they had just told me, or look for a probe on my interview guide which was pertinent to whatever the interviewee had just said. The interview guide was reworked a number of times in order to include questions on themes which interviewees had mentioned. One example of this is provided by my question on the journey to Britain. The questions in the guide were informed by the literature and, as a result of the dearth of information on the journeys that migrants made to Britain in the post-war period, mentioned in the literature review, I did not initially include a question on the journey to Sheffield. Only after speaking to a number of interviewees did I realise that this was a salient part of the story-telling repertoire of the migrants and amended the interview guide accordingly. Thus, as a result of the flexibility within the interview process, the semi-structured interviews drew on some of the characteristics of what have been described as 'restructured' interviews (May, 1997: 113). The interviews

aimed to record the life-stories of the former steelworkers, and I would try to let the interviews take whatever course the interviewees wanted.

Ethics in the Research Process

In adherence to the traditions of action research, and in line with the legal requirements² set out to govern the collection of 'sensitive personal data' such as 'race', political and religious beliefs, which all entered the interviews in varying degrees, I sought to gain the explicit informed consent of the participants in this research project. The participants were informed of the aims and processes of the research, plus the possible consequences that might arise from the potential publication and dissemination of the text. At this stage, I also committed myself to returning the transcripts to the informants, so that the data could be checked by the interviewees, or, if they were illiterate in English, I made the commitment that I would read through the narrative with the interviewee. My contact details were held by members of staff at the community centre and my various return trips to the English classes throughout the research process made me easily accessible. On average, during the second and third phases of data collection, I interviewed one person every lesson, which ran for four days of every week, and so spent a number of weeks at the community centre in order to arrive at the sum of 29 interviews. As the research was based upon snowball and convenience sampling amongst a concentrated group of friends, the attainment of trust was essential for past interviewees to arrange or recommend further interviews with other members of the English class. Furthermore, the fact that there have been so few research projects on the community, and therefore many of the subjects had never relayed their stories in an interview context before, may have led to some suspicion about the research project. One frequently aired criticism of informed consent is that explanations of research projects are often minimalist (see for instance, Homan, 1992). In this research project, the need to gain trust, in order to facilitate snowball and convenience sampling and allay the suspicions of the group, diminished some of the more exploitative aspects of interviewing, such as the minimalist explanations of the research and the invasions of privacy which Homan (1992) argues are commonplace in open methods.

² The explicit consent of the data subject must be given to meet the first condition of schedule two of the Data Protection Principles of the 1998 Act, and the first condition of schedule three of the Act: Information Commissioner (1998) *Data Protection Act 1998 Legal Guidance*: Chapter 3.7

With the permission of the interviewees I used a Dictaphone to record the interviews. The use of a Dictaphone did not seem to inhibit the respondents in any great way. This is borne out by the many stories that line the following chapters of this thesis. There were however, some exceptions. Some stories which were told with great enthusiasm outside of the interview context, in the English classroom, were told with rather less fervour when I asked the respondents to repeat the story during the interview in order that I would have a spoken record. Narayan and George describe all storytelling events as 'situationally unique' and give the advice that, 'Alert researchers should ideally try to be present when stories are narrated as part of ongoing social life, and so be in a position to overhear spontaneously evoked commentaries, debates, revisions, and retellings' (2001: 819). They acknowledge that researchers can not always be so lucky as to be present and the effect that their presence brings to the story. With the context-dependent nature of story-telling in mind, I soon learned to record, even in note form, every story that was told by the informants outside of the context of the interview and at the same time, note the context in which the story was relayed. The advantages of using a Dictaphone are well documented. With the Dictaphone set to record I was relieved of the burden of taking extensive notes on the content of the interviews. I could, therefore, pay greater attention to what was being said and make notes of points that arose during the informants' often very long passages of speech, in order that those notes could jog my memory when the story was over. This aided the development of a rapport and allowed me to remember and ask probing questions about the narrative just relayed. Tape-recording the interviews also allowed me to record on paper the non-verbal gestures of the informants during the interview. Perhaps the main advantage of using a Dictaphone, however, is found at the stage of transcription. The oral records of the resultant data gave me a prolonged time in which to familiarise myself with and better understand the life-stories. This was a particularly valuable resource, as the industrial English of the interviewees can at times be difficult to understand for a non-Yemeni former steelworker. I attempted to transcribe the tapes in as much detail as possible in order that I could be as accurate as possible. Respondent validation, which will be discussed later, was also used in order to augment validity.

The research has used a cyclical approach to data collection and analysis. As was mentioned earlier, I have completed three main phases of data collection which have

been interspersed with stages of reflection and revision. This has given me the opportunity to maintain a more democratic approach to my research, I have, for instance, been able to cross-check my work-in-progress findings with my interviewees and revise the questions on my interview guide if need be. I used coding in order to facilitate data analysis. Categories were drawn up in accordance with the research questions of the study. The unstructured or semi-structured nature of life-story interviews has at times made comparison difficult. However, as has been noted elsewhere (Candida Smith, 2001; Narayan and George, 2001) storytellers tend to draw on shared conventions in order to structure meaningful narratives. The chronological ordering that was inherent in many of the narratives provides one example of this. The list of questions and probes that were set out on the interview guide also encouraged the respondents to relay their life-stories in a chronological form. There has therefore, been many opportunities to compare data.

Representation

The use of life-stories provides a break with some of the key conventions of representation used in literary realism, and employed throughout much of the literature.

John van Maanen (1988: 45) cites some of the main tenets of literary realism:

By far the most prominent, familiar, prevalent, popular, and recognized form of ethnographic writing is the realist account of a culture - be it a society, an occupation, a community, an ethnic enclave, an organization, or a small group with common interests. Published as a set of volumes, a scholarly monograph, an article, or even a subsection of an article (book), a single author typically narrates the realist tale in a dispassionate, third-person voice. On display are the comings and goings of members of the culture, theoretical coverage of certain features of the culture, and usually a hesitant account of why the work was undertaken in the first place. The result is an author-proclaimed description and something of an explanation of certain specific, bounded, observed (or nearly observed) cultural practices.

Van Maanen goes on to argue that there are at least four conventions, albeit each undergoing 'slight-to-massive revision,' that mark a tale as realist. The first convention for van Maanen (*ibid.*: 46), is what he calls 'experiential author(ity)' and entails 'the almost complete absence of the author from most segments of the finished text'. The present study has been written with the use of a third person voice and in this respect cannot boast of a radical departure from literary realism. The second convention, for van Maanen (*ibid.*: 48), 'is a documentary style focused on minute, sometimes precious, but thoroughly mundane details of everyday life among the people studied'. Such a

study is often based on observation and in the context of Yemeni settlement in Britain has already been attempted (see for instance Collins; 1957, and especially; Dahya, 1967). The present study is not based on the descriptive style characteristic of literary realism, rather the polyvocal format of the thesis aims to give voice to the participants in the research project and allow them, in their own words to narrate their own lived experiences.

The third convention of literary realism for van Maanen however is the inclusion of written records that claim to express ‘the native’s point of view.’ As the previous chapter demonstrated, in the literature, and certainly in that pertaining to Yemeni settlement in Britain, where such quotations are present they have invariably undergone substantial editing (see for instance; Chatterjee 2001; Dahya 1967). In such texts, the voices of the research participants have been presented in Standard English, typical of sociological prose, and poles apart from the form of English spoken by the majority of the migrants. The present study has aimed to accurately represent the language of the former steelworkers by attempting to reproduce accounts of the verbatim transcriptions of the interview data in the final textual product. Alterations include the removal of the voice of the interviewer from the quotations that have been included in the thesis. Additional editing has included the use of punctuation where relevant. This editing has been geared to emphasising the imperative mode of speech used by the former-steelworkers. I have not attempted to ‘amend’ the unique forms of speech of the migrants in order that they are commensurate with standard prose. The citations have been selected in order to coincide with the loosely chronological and thematic chapter structure of the thesis.

The polyvocal representation of the empirical data also acts as a safeguard against the fourth convention of literary realism that is listed by van Maanen, and what he calls ‘interpretive omnipotence.’ This means: ‘In brief, the ethnographer has the final word on how the culture is to be interpreted and represented’ (Van Maanen, 1988: 51). Here, the polyvocal structure of the thesis gives the reader a greater opportunity to separate the analysis of the ethnographer from the empirical data and to assess the consistency of the concepts that have been employed by the ethnographer with the raw interview data.

The vast majority of the interviews were undertaken in English, the second language of the emigrants and an Arabic interpreter was used in one. Apart from the inclusion of various Arabic words in the narratives of the elderly men, the thesis has been written entirely in English. An approach such as this has received some criticism: In his study of Yemenis in Birmingham Dahya (1967: 99), cites an inability to speak Arabic as one criticism of the work of one of his predecessors, Collins (1955), who, he argues, fails to discern Yemenis from Adenis in his study. The year in which Dahya conducted his study meant that the emigrants had had less time to learn the language of the host society. Moreover, the nature of Dahya's study, dependent as it is on explaining, from a conventional, realist ethnographic standpoint, the complexities of internal organisation of the migrant community, perhaps necessitates a fluency in the language of the emigrants. This study however, conducted almost four decades after Dahya's, has as its primary concern aspects of the relationship between the former steelworkers and the host society. In this relationship, English, no matter how elementary it was for the emigrants, was still the language of work and association, be it with their foreman, non-Arab co-workers, fellow trade unionists, or steelworks' officials at the workplace and elsewhere; with the police, at the employment offices, town halls, with the local council workers or medical services. English became the essential language of social and work related intercourse.

Moreover, the present study aims to represent the life-stories of the migrants in the unique form of industrialised English in which they were spoken. The language of the migrants is anything but a deficit language. The background of the migrants in rural Yemen, and the decades that they spent working in the heavy industrial plants of Sheffield have given the former steelworkers a richly distinct and particular form of English. In line with post colonial and postmodernist epistemology, writing in this research project is seen as a method of knowing and not just a method of telling (Richardson, 2000). The language of the former-steelworkers itself, speaks volumes about the lives of the emigrants. The structure and vocabulary of the language is an overt message about the form of relations and the manner of conduct within the workplace. The preponderance of the imperative mode in the speech of the interviewees is an expression of the authoritarian nature of the relationship between the foremen, the 'gaffers' and the workers, that the Yemenis experienced on a daily basis in their role as subordinates on the shop floor. The predominance of the imperative mode is also an

expression of the high incidence of deafness amongst the old men, a condition that has come about from the deafening noise levels inherent in the steel factories. Also rooted in the steelworks is the not infrequent use of swear words from some (albeit not all) of the old men, and the broken sentences where the former-steelworkers pause, in order to catch their breath, as the legacy of inhaling dirt and dust has left many with asthma and respiratory problems.

The persistence of oral tradition devices of storytelling is also important in the speech of the old men. These devices include, the use of dramatic emphasis in the retelling of significant events, the use of humour, repetition, and also the use of vivid imagery that is often expressed through agrarian metaphors derived from the rural backgrounds of the migrants and the Koran. The prevalence of the command-based language of the imperative mode and at the same time question tags, where prompts for confirmation follow statements, is also interesting. The prevalence of question tags is perhaps linked to a feeling of uncertainty over the competency of the emigrants in English. It is possible that years of language-related ridicule have contributed to the installation of such a feeling, and have resulted in frequent prompts, such as 'you know what I mean', for confirmation from the listener, which follow many of the statements made by the former steelworkers.

The language as spoken was an integral part of the Yemeni steelworkers' lives in a Yorkshire industrial city. Without it social survival would have been much more of a hardship and much less would have been achieved, both by individuals and community organisations. The form of English that is spoken by the former steelworkers is a transitional and single generational form of speech which became essential to those who spoke it. The majority of the children of the migrants either came to Sheffield at a young age, so as to obtain an education at local schools in Sheffield, or were born in the city and, as a result, have learned a much more received and common form of English as spoken by working class Sheffielders. The form of English that is spoken by the first generation of Yemeni steelworkers was learned in the 'classrooms' of the steelworks. The English of the former steelworkers is a language of achievement. When the works were demolished and the industry collapsed, so did both the need and the means to learn this unique form of English. The interviews with these ex-workers have aimed to record this unique and accurately-transcribed record of how the emigrants actually spoke in an

English social and work-related context, which is now a part of the history of the English language and the culture of migration.

Insider and Outsider status in the Cross-Cultural exchange

As a researcher, I occupied an unusual vantage point from which to carry out my study. Different in age, cultural and religious background, I was clearly an outsider. However as a result of my father, who had worked with the community for a number of years, I entered the field with some links. In the third phase of data collection, I conducted interviews drawn from my father's English class and was introduced to the students as the son of the English teacher. My familial link with the English teacher at the centre, and, in the two preceding phases of data collection, my link with members of staff at the community centre, did not seem to overly influence the students to accept an interview with me, through for instance the fear of negative consequences, such as downgrading. The classes are not geared towards the attainment of a qualification and the students attend, many fairly irregularly, in order to socialize as much as to learn. Indeed, a couple of students declined my offer to interview them, with their reason being, 'I've forgotten all of that.' The organisation to which I was affiliated did not pressure any students to take part in the research project. Such action, which has been noted by various critics of informed consent such as Homan (1992: 325), would clearly be unethical. It is not unlikely, however, that some of the students may have seen taking part as doing my father a favour for his work. The English teacher is held in particularly high regard by the students and my link with him was certainly an advantage. To say the least, the relationship between the teacher and the students is a long running one. The teacher used to be the headmaster at Earl Marshal School, which is located in the Firth Park district of Sheffield and serves many local children of Yemeni descent. My father has taught many of the children and grandchildren of the old men that he now teaches. His relationship has stretched beyond that of just teaching many of these youths. A substantial number of the youths themselves were first generation migrants, and have required special extra-curricula attention in order to address their needs, which the School attempted in various ways to respond to. Furthermore, many of the exercises that are set for the English students, who in turn consist almost entirely of former steelworkers, are based on their own life experiences. For instance, the texts that are set on the flipchart or whiteboard at the front of the classroom and form the basis of the

lesson often derived from a life experience that one of the students had relayed to the teacher. It was then common for a classroom debate to ensue on the relevance of the story to their own experiences, as the other students compared the extract with stories drawn from their own lives. The classes also addressed contemporary political issues that are particularly salient to the community. These included discussions of newspaper articles on the war in Iraq, the occupation of Palestine, and the racist article of the then chat-show host and columnist, Robert Kilroy Silk, to name a few. The content of the classes, which was of great relevance to the lives of the students, certainly encouraged discussion amongst them and warmed them up for the life-story interviews that I would conduct next door and in the prayer room upstairs. As the son of Chris, a well-liked teacher, I was particularly well placed to conduct these interviews. The following anecdote provides an example of this. Over an hour into an interview with one former steelworker, the informant asked me to turn the Dictaphone off for around five minutes, in order that he could tell me some information that he held very dear about his marriage. After he had finished, and I reset my Dictaphone to record, the informant exclaimed, 'There, I only told you that because you're Chris' son, anybody else I wouldn't have said anything.'

A further factor that may have been conducive to the interview process was my being a non-white researcher. This is so because the experience of racism has been so central to the lives of many of the emigrants and features prominently in a number of their narratives. The issue of racism is sensitive and the presence of a non-white researcher may aid the flow of information, particularly with the employment of reciprocity on the part of the researcher. In his study, based upon the PEP report *Racial Discrimination in Britain* released in April 1967, Daniel notes how the possibility of 'losing face' or self-esteem can inhibit the expression of claims of discrimination. For Daniel (1968: 78-9):

Its most overt manifestation in the main survey findings is to be seen in the proportions of people who said they were aware of discrimination but had themselves avoided it through having special personal qualities, skills or qualifications which made them immune from it ... The inference again was that discrimination was something which happened only to inferior compatriots who lacked these special virtues. All the evidence from the different surveys that were undertaken combines to suggest that the coloured informants who said this were mistaken, even though the illusion might be useful to maintain their self-esteem.

The concept of political blackness, or what Kalbir Shukra (1998: 61) calls 'black perspectivism' is particularly important here. Political Blackness is an ambiguous concept and most commonly refers to the political solidarity between people of African-

Caribbean and South Asian descent, however it has also included the political solidarity between wider minority ethnic communities and also white people who have been involved in struggles against racism. Avtar Brah (2000: 432) explains how this example of empathy emerged between African-Caribbean and South Asian communities in Britain:

The African-Caribbean and south Asian people who migrated to Britain in the post-war period found themselves occupying a broadly similar structural position in British society, as workers performing predominantly unskilled or semi-skilled jobs on the lowest rungs of the economy. Although the ideologies which racialised them were not identical in content there were similarities in their encounters in arenas such as the workplace, the education system, the housing market and the health services. ... The term 'black' was adopted by the emerging coalitions amongst African-Caribbean and south Asian organisations and activists in the late 1960s and 1970s. They were influenced by the way that the Black power movement in the USA, which had turned the concept of black on its head, divested it of its pejorative connotations in racialised discourses, and transformed it into a confident expression of an assertive group identity.

Brah is referring to African Caribbean and South Asian communities. However, my research has similarly revealed networks of solidarity amongst the Yemenis and other minority ethnic groups:

I say that time, you're born in this country, people, they look at you now different from when they used to look at me before, because now they see kids, they're born in this country. I mean same as my kids, they half-caste, what do you call it? A mother English, and a father Arab, I mean your father English and your mother African or West Indian. In that time, we never hear these things, now kids grow now, they see a English man with black woman, they see, you know, black man with you know, certain people. They look back at us you know, before, before they like, 'Oh my god! What the fuck!?' What she doing with that black man!?' You know what I mean?

Here the interviewee uses the term 'black' to account for all non-whites, he seems to identify with blacks as a result of being identified with blacks by the host population whom, in his narrative don't seem to differentiate between the different ethnic backgrounds of migrant workers. In interviews, political blackness may be conducive to the development of a rapport. This is particularly important concerning the interviewees' experiences of racism, which is often a sensitive issue. The argument has parallels with the feminist argument that, women interviewing other women is conducive to the development of a rapport, due to, amongst other things, empathy, based on a shared structural position in society.

However, as Brah, in her article, goes on to explain, the concept of political blackness has its critics. Modood (1988) for instance argues that the concept denies Asian cultural identities. Indeed the early work of Little (1948, 1972) and Collins (1957), demonstrates that, in spite of inhabiting a broadly similar structural position in the port towns of

Cardiff and Tyneside, there was little solidarity between the minority ethnic groups there. In his study of Cardiff, Little (1972: 134) writes: 'There is a tendency to regard the Arab section as being of rather higher social status than the other 'coloured' members of the community. There is little doubt that most of the Muslims themselves share this point of view, particularly in regard to the Negroes.' Collins (1957: 218) makes a similar observation: 'Arabs do not as a rule mix with the Negro population.' Furthermore (ibid.: 218), 'it is alleged that the wives of Moslems are inclined to assume a superior attitude towards the wives of Negroes.' Dahya, in his 1967 study of Yemenis in Birmingham, argues that this feeling of superiority over black people is rooted in the history of the Arabian Peninsula. For Dahya (1967: 117), the Arabic term 'abd' meaning slave 'is confined to non-Muslim Negroes, mainly of West Indian origin. 'The reason for referring to Negroes as abd is historical; from pre-Islamic to more recent times, Negroes used to be imported into the Arabian peninsula as slaves. According to a precedent set by Muhammed, a Negro who embraces Islam becomes a 'brother' and therefore can no longer remain a slave; but a non-Muslim Negro remains a potential slave, and hence abd' (for a more detailed discussion of 'Africa's other black Diaspora', see, for instance; Segal, 2001). He writes (ibid.: 119): 'The Yemeni migrants often feel hurt and puzzled when they are shouted at as 'blackies' or 'wogs...' It is likely that much of this 'hurt' and 'puzzlement' is rooted in the feeling of dehumanisation inflicted by racism. However, part of the reason for this hurt no doubt lies with the association with people of African descent. I have not during the course of my own research, come across any feelings of superiority held by the Yemenis towards people of African descent. One reason for this could be the influence of the black power movement in America, which, as Brah argues, was crucial in the development of political blackness in Britain. The work of Searle and Shaif (1991), which came after the height of the black power movement, does employ the language of political blackness and a clear identification with the struggles of all racialised post-war migrants.

In contrast, however, the events of the latter half of the post war period and the early 21st century have served to accentuate heterogeneity amongst ethnic minority communities in Britain, both in the eyes of the minority ethnic communities themselves and wider society (see for instance Gilroy, 1993: 86-94). As was mentioned before, Yemen, in its recent history, and despite unification in 1991, has been blighted by unrest which, whilst not grounded in regional differences, has at times been expressed in

regional terms. Thus, despite the fact that many non-whites may define themselves as black when recounting instances of racism, there are clear limits to the use of political blackness as a methodological tool. The interviewees may have felt less inhibited about speaking about their experiences of racism to a non-white researcher. However, information based on the experiences of the emigrants where the cultural, religious or generational aspects of their identity were more salient, may not have been as forthcoming. This is demonstrated by the following short extract from a transcript derived from an interview:

[Interviewer: I] So, where are you from?

[Respondent: R] Yemen.

[I] Yemen.

[R] Aye.

[I] Where in Yemen?

[R] South Yemen.

[I] Where, Shaibi was it?

[R] Yeah Shaibi, yeah, South Yemen, yeah Shaibi, it's true that, somebody tell you about that, Shaibi?

[I] Yeah, a lot of people are from Shaibi

[R] Oh yes it is. You know, I mean you work for yourself, for something, for family, for food, for everything, you know what I mean? You get farming, farming, farming farm, you know what I mean? That's what's happening there, if you do not do that you can't get food, you know what I mean....

That the Yemeni presence in Sheffield is little known is borne out by the terms that are frequently used to label them by non-Yemenis. In the post-war era these have ranged from 'lascar,' 'black' to 'Paki'. Here, the respondent was clearly surprised that an outsider would possess even a smidgen of knowledge about Yemen. It is likely then, that a shared cultural background would have been more conducive to the flow of information and that the informant would have given a more detailed response about his place of origin in Yemen and his life before he migrated to Sheffield without the need for such prompting. I tried in this research project to counter the general argument of adherents of insider epistemology, that 'to know others one has to be an insider oneself' (for a more detailed discussion of insider epistemology see, Fay 1996: 9), through the implementation of research methods that are particularly sensitive to cultural difference. It is of prime importance for researchers to have an in-depth knowledge of the subject under inquiry, in order that they may be able to develop a stronger feeling of empathy for the subjects of their work. I attempted to attain such knowledge through the

consultation of a wide range of secondary research sources, conversations with members of staff at the community centre and the old men themselves during my introductory period in the English classrooms. I hoped that this would sensitise me to various cultural nuances of the group. My becoming aware of the imperative mode of speech, common amongst the students provides one example of this. Through spending time with the members of staff at the community centre and the old men themselves I soon learned to speak in a way that was accessible to the students and to interpret their imperative mode of speech lightly. The questions on the interview guide were posed in a non-technical language that aimed to be as accessible as possible (see Appendix). Members of staff at the Yemeni Community Centre offered their full support throughout the research process and interpreters were available at the centre and willing to participate in the research project. I did in the end, however, use an interpreter only once for an interview. As will be discussed later, I drew upon the help of an interpreter a great deal more during the process of respondent validation.

In-depth interviews themselves are also particularly sensitive to cultural differences. As was mentioned earlier, they allow respondents to answer in their own terms, and using frames of reference with which they are familiar, as opposed to answering in the pre-formulated and culturally biased categories inherent in standardised methods of interviewing. The interviews were conducted at the Yemeni Community Centre in Sheffield, where it was hoped that the familiar setting would make the interviewees feel more comfortable and encourage the development of a rapport.

Validity, Reliability and Trustworthiness

In the course of my research project, I have implemented several methods to ensure the validity, reliability and trustworthiness of my work. Some of the methods that I have used such as triangulation and external validity have been drawn from quantitative research. The application of such methods to qualitative research is contested, and my use of such measures and the limitations of these checks will be discussed later. First, I will discuss some of the measures that I have used that are perhaps more consistent with the interpretivist epistemology of the present research project. By discussing these I hope to meet some of the standards of trustworthiness that are often recommended for qualitative research.

I used respondent validation in order to augment the validity of my findings. There were problems, however, with the implementation of respondent validation. Illiteracy in English is rife amongst the old men and few of the interviewees were able to check the transcripts by themselves. In order to overcome this, I made myself available to read through the transcripts with each interviewee. In the end, however, I read transcripts back to two of the men who had asked me to do so. The bulk of respondent validation was carried out through the use of a translator at the community centre. The translator very kindly offered to take on the task as he thought it would be a useful activity for the old men when they gathered there. Others asked their children, most of whom have had an education in Sheffield schools, to read, or give a second reading of, the transcripts for them.

The importance of respondent validation to the elderly men is perhaps best demonstrated by one interviewee whom I spoke with, in the following anecdote: I was joined by another researcher during the course of my fieldwork. This researcher also promised that he would return the fruits of his work to the participants in his project. However, after completing his field work the researcher did not return, which left one elderly Yemeni man who was one of the subjects of his research project to compare him to an Englishman who, upon their arrival in Sheffield, had promised that if he and all of his unemployed friends paid him the sum of £20 he would find them all jobs in the steel industry. On leaving what turned out to be false contact details, the man then took their money and fled. The story made clear the importance of democratic research to the old men. If the research process is not carried out in an ethical manner, then it will be viewed by the former steelworkers as a continuation of the exploitative practices that have characterised much of their lives.

I have also sought respondent validation on draft chapters. I have returned draft chapters to members of staff at the Yemeni Community Association, many of whom have an academic background in an aspect of the social sciences. The sociological nature of the writing is likely to prove difficult for my predominantly semi-literate research sample to read, many of whom struggled to read transcripts of their own interviews. In addition, many of these members of staff at the community centre are the sons and daughters of

the interviewees, whose familiarity with the stories of the former steelworkers makes them particularly worthy of validating both the empirical and analytical work.

Hindsight is often expressed as a drawback of life-story interviews. This is not so much the case for postmodernists, whose research interests are more likely to be based around the construction of narrative where, 'Verification of the 'facts' of lives is less salient than understanding the changing meanings of events for the individuals involved, and how these, in turn, are located in history and culture' (Reissman 2001: 704-5). An oft heard observation made about life-story interviewing is that the 'meanings of life events are not fixed or constant; rather, they evolve, influenced by subsequent events' (Ibid: 705). This is a particularly important point in the post 9/11 context. It is possible that the escalation of negative media portrayals of Islam may have had some influence on the interviewees' retellings of the past, particularly to the weight placed on the interviewees' experiences of racism. Indeed the reader is likely to be struck by the persistence of tales of hardship that permeate this body of work. However, with the implementation of external validity, one can see that the findings here are broadly consistent with the wider research on post war migration. The informed reader will be able to see many commonalities between the experiences of the Yemeni and other migrant communities who came to occupy a similar structural position in post-war British society. Many of the tales of hardship are set in the context of the steel industry and are instantaneously borne out by the very visible injuries that many of the old men have incurred during their working lives and are not afraid of presenting in order to corroborate their stories.

It is however, more difficult to validate the frequency of resistance, which is another theme of this study, through the use of external validity. As was noted in the preceding chapter, Halliday (1992) and Searle and Shaif's (1991) studies of the Yemeni community have certainly not described the older generation of post-war settlers as resistant. I aimed to validate tales of resistance through the use of internal consistency, which, when applied to qualitative research, entails the use of probing questions in order to check claims for consistency (Atkinson 2001: 134). I also cross-checked the responses that were inconsistent with the literature with other interviewees and members of staff at the community centre, many of whom are the sons and daughters of the former steelworkers and have a detailed insight into the lives of the interviewees.

The prevalence of stories of resistance raised the issue of whether the interviewees were indeed telling the truth, or whether the respondents were drawing on what Goffman (1959) called 'performative' identities. That stories of acts of resistance chime with masculine cultural virtues has been pointed out elsewhere, and may, therefore, reflect normative conceptions of personhood more than lived personal experience. I did, however, at the same time as receiving such tales of resistance, receive many very personal and emotive stories concerning, for instance, the pain of broken families and the feeling of hopelessness during the recession. It is unlikely, therefore, that the respondents were in any way expressing self-deluded or reductive machismo. Moreover, if such responses can not be validated, they remain important, as they are indicative of what is of importance to the interviewee and how the interviewees want others to see them.

Many of the measures that I have used in order to enhance the reliability of my research have been drawn from quantitative research methods. I have used triangulation by both drawing on the data of two other people who have used informal interviews to gain information from the former steelworkers and through the application of two different research methods; interviewing and using documents as a source of data. During the course of my research I was joined by a researcher from BBC Radio 4 who was conducting oral history interviews for a documentary on the former steelworkers from Yemen. This researcher performed half a dozen interviews a couple of months before I entered my third phase of interviewing. Since his documentary has been aired, I have been given access to some of the audio cassettes on which the records of his interviews have been stored. A further instance of the use of triangulation, by my using more than one source of data, was my receipt of oral history stories from the English teacher at the community centre in Burngreave. As has been noted above, many of the exercises that are set for the students, who in turn consist almost entirely of former steelworkers, are based on their own life experiences. The texts that are set on the flipchart or whiteboard at the front of the classroom and form the basis of the lesson often derived from a life experience that one of the students had relayed to the teacher. Indeed stories produced in such a way have undergone the most robust tests of validity, as the students debate the relevance of the story to their own experiences as much, if not more than the grammatical misgivings of the paragraph. I have drawn on these oral history stories throughout my research project and they are clearly distinguishable from the quotations

that have been drawn from my own interviews. The former usually contain a much higher standard of grammar, as they have been checked by the English teacher at the community centre. Therefore, as well as my own life-story interviews, I have been able to gain taped and written records of oral history interviews from two other sources, one researcher and one English teacher. A frequently aired criticism of triangulation or external reliability is that the subjective and context dependent nature of the research process will always yield different results. There is still however, great overlap within the content of these various tapes and written documents. Indeed the experiences of racism, class oppression and the theme of resistance are common aspects in all of the stories, regardless of their source. In fact, there is a broader case to be made for external validity, as many of the themes that have been emphasised here are also of great salience in many of the other studies of post-war migrants who came to occupy a similar structural position in British society as the Yemeni community in Sheffield.

I have also drawn on different research methods in my empirical work. Although the bulk of my empirical data was drawn from my use of in-depth interviews, I have also used documents as a further source of data. I have searched the archives of the local newspapers, the *Sheffield Star* and *Telegraph*, for relevant material in order to investigate the media response to the Yemeni presence in Sheffield.

....

In sum, this chapter has aimed to show how the convergence of paradigms that underpin this research project, have mediated the methods that have been employed throughout the research process. The chapter has aimed to give a detailed account of all of the aspects of the research process, from the co-generative roots of the study to the measures that were used to guarantee the validity, reliability and trustworthiness of the study. The study has been encouraged by members of the Yemeni community, and in the tradition of action research I have aimed to maintain transparency by liaising with the research participants through much of the research process.

'We slept next to the cows.' Migration from Yemen

Working farmer, all farmer in Yemen, got nothing else, only the farmer, everybody working in Yemen is farmer. No job, no steelwork, no nowt. We come to Sheffield for the work, we come for jobs. I'm poor. Only poor, poor people over there, no money, like. The farmer, every year he grow some corn, and working with animal like, every year, and that's all, got no trading, nowt before. That's why I come 'ere to England.

Nagi

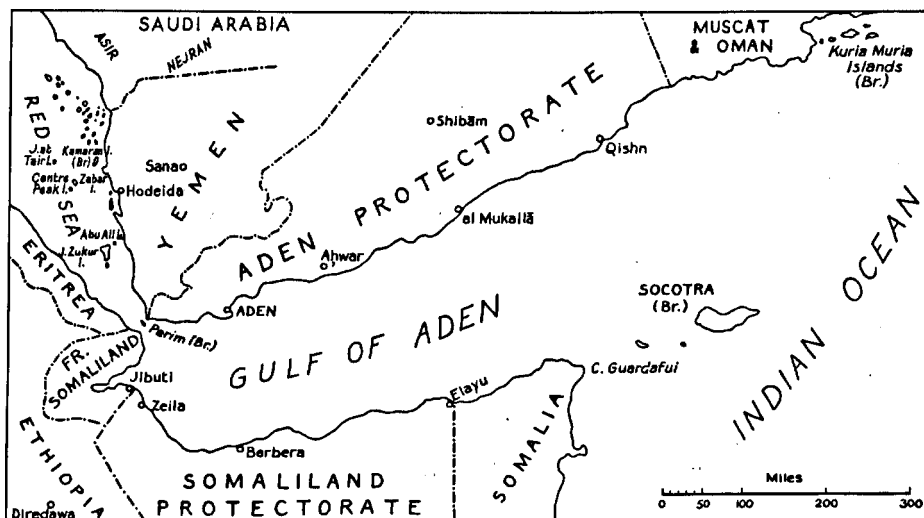
I remember Yemen being before, not very well. When the British government in Yemen, it been not very well, no school, no help, not any from minister, he take all from people. It's been not very well. Lot of people not reading, not reading Koran, lot of people, because not many people to learn. They not teach Arab anything. The British government, he give some food to share, but give everything, for our people, to our minister, but our minister never give to the people, no give to national people. No, it doesn't matter about national people, any money, nothing. The British not bad to give help, any government, but we not get any help at all. A lot of people not reading, when I came this country, I can't read my name, Saleh, English, I can't, in Arab, well, only so-so do that.

Saleh

The difficulty of life in Yemen is a recurring starting point in the life-stories of the former steelworkers. Their reasons for migration are invariably economic. The aim of this chapter however, is not to provide a detailed structural analysis of poverty and hardship in Yemen, which was the chief cause of emigration. This has been done elsewhere (Halliday, 1974; 2002). Moreover, as I have attempted to demonstrate in the methodology chapter, the research method of life-story interviewing can restrict a detailed examination of social structures, as agents have only a partial knowledge of the structures in which they are embedded (see for instance Mills, 1959). A central aim of the thesis is however, to maintain the link between biography, history and society. Towards this end, the chapter begins with a brief summary of the two Yemens that the migrants left during the mid-to-late 1950s and the early 1960s. There, I have largely drawn on secondary research sources in order to present a summary of the politico-economic conditions that prevailed in both North and South Yemen and acted as 'push' factors for the migrants. A brief look at the 'pull' factors of migration in Britain then concludes this section.

The main body of the chapter explores the narrative of the journeys that the migrants made to Sheffield and relies on the empirical data collected during the course of the present study. In particular, I use full quotations from the initial phases of many of the interview transcripts and sections of text derived from the emigrants that have been used

as aids in English classes at the Yemeni Community Association in Burngreave, Sheffield. In the literature review, I argued that a focus on the processes of migration has been neglected in much of the literature. I have gained valuable narratives pertaining to the journey across the sea from Yemen to Britain, and then from the docks to Sheffield, from the participants in this research project. Such tales of the emigrants' experiences of what Anwar (1979: 19) calls 'intervening obstacles,' inform what Shalom Staub (1989: 92) calls, with reference to his study of Yemenis in New York City, a 'shared folklore of emigration.' Staub (1989: 70-72), argues that this folklore forms the basis of a Yemeni emigrant identity in the host country, an identity that is actually predicated upon an emigrant identity in Yemen. This is derived from a tradition of emigration that, in the folklore, begins with the role of Yemenis in early Islamic expansion and is reinforced by the patterns of migration that followed the legendary collapse of the Marib dam in North Yemen in the latter part of the sixth century.





Aden Protectorate (previous page) and Yemen

A cross-section of a map compiled and drawn by the Directorate of Overseas Surveys, 1959, printed in Reilly (1960).

The 'Push' and 'Pull' factors of Migration

The emigrants from North and South Yemen left behind two countries that were extremely poor. In the North and South, peasant farming and sharecropping predominated. Trade was minimal, as the regimes that were operative in both the North and the South sought to isolate the two Yemens.

After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War, the weakened Empire withdrew from North Yemen in 1918 and the whole of North Yemen fell under

the rule of the Hamid ad-Din family until 1962. The Hamid ad-Din was led by the Zaydi Imam, Mohammed bin Yahya and then his son, Ahmad.¹ The Zaydi sect of Islam was dominant amongst the tribes who inhabited the mountains of the north and the east. The land in these areas was generally less fertile than that in the middle region and the south. The tribes of the north and the east would often rely on raiding the towns in these southerly Shafii areas of settlement.² The sectarian differences between the Zaydi and Shafii Muslims of North Yemen largely corresponded with their regional differences and Zaydism and Shafiism became the theological terms in which non-religious differences were expressed. The ruling Imam demonstrated favouritism towards the Zaydis. The Shafii Muslims of the middle region were the victims of discriminatory treatment, often through higher levels of taxation, and this uneven treatment intensified after a failed attempt by Shafii reformers to overthrow the Imam in 1948. The rule of the Imam was profoundly conservative. As Halliday (2002: 84) explains, isolation from foreign influence was crucial:

Imam Yahya (ruled 1904-48) and Imam Ahmad (ruled 1948-62) built up their position through two policies: by strengthening key social relations underneath themselves and by excluding as much as possible foreign influences that might challenge these relations. The isolation of North Yemen was not a haphazard or aberrant policy of the Imams; it served directly to conserve their position. Only when contact with the outside world was likely to strengthen them (e.g. through buying guns), were they not opposed to such contact. But Imam Ahmad was clear on why North Yemen was kept apart: 'One must choose,' he said, 'between being free and poor and being dependent and rich. I have chosen independence.'

A ban on foreign newspapers and, until the late 1930s, radios, was enacted, and exports including Yemen's major export, coffee, rapidly declined (Lawless, 1995:38). This served to consolidate the weakening position of Yemen in the global coffee market which had become increasingly competitive during the mid nineteenth century, with a rise in producing countries. Over 80% of North Yemen's inhabitants were peasant smallholders. The Imam and around 200,000 Sada owned much of the most productive land.³ For Halliday (2002: 92):

¹ Zaydism is a particular branch of Shi'ism. Shia Muslims trace leadership of Islam through the descendents of the Prophet Muhammed and his son in law, Ali. There are three main branches of Shia today: the Zaydis, the Ismailis (Seveners) and the Ithna Asharis (Twelvers or Imamis). The Zaydis follow Zaydi ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn, who was a follower of Ali. Zaydis 'represent the activists groups who believe that the imam ought to fight for his rights and be a ruler of state' (Esposito, 2003: 292).

² Shafiiis are Sunni Muslims who support the Shafii school of legal thought. The name Sunni is derived from the Sunnah, the exemplary behaviour of the Prophet Mohammed. Of particular importance here is the Sunni belief that non-hereditary, elected caliphs should be the leaders of Islam.

³ The Sada claim descent from the Prophet Mohammed, especially through his second grandson, Husayn. Sada is the plural for Sayyid. To differing extents, relative to space, time and place, they are the recipients

It was a society overwhelmed with misery. In 1962 there were only fifteen doctors – all foreigners. There were 600 hospital beds in the whole country. Over 50 per cent of the population had some kind of venereal disease; over 80 per cent were suffering from trachoma. No money at all was spent on education by the state and less than 5 per cent of the children attended the traditional Koranic schools. There was not only no North Yemeni doctor, but there were no modern schools, no paved roads, no railways, no factories. The average per capita income was \$70 a year. There was nothing romantic about it; it was a very horrible place.

During the reign of the Imam, emigration from North Yemen soared to possibly 11% of the population (Halliday 2002: 86). In 1955, in the wake of Aden's post-war shipping boom, emigrants from North Yemen made up 35% of Aden's population (Halliday, 1992: 10). The majority of the inhabitants of the areas of emigration were Sunni Muslims of the Shafii affiliation. When the British were recruiting labour for their Merchant Navy, North Yemenis were over-represented in the least desirable of maritime roles such as the firemen and stokers (Lawless, 1995: 16-20). Many of these North Yemeni seamen from the southern Shafii provinces, particularly Ibb and Ta'izz, when discharged, comprised the greater section of the Arab communities on the British coast (Lawless, 1995: 24). The emigrants who came to Sheffield after the Second World War in search of work, too, came from its most populated, central region, particularly Rada, Gubin and Shar (Searle & Shaif 1991: 66).

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there began a 'new' kind of imperialism, famously called 'the highest stage of capitalism' by Lenin (1939). Hobsbawn (2000: 60) summarises Lenin's description of this new phase of imperialism, thus: 'the new imperialism had economic roots in a specific phase of capitalism, which among other things, led to 'the territorial division of the world among the great capitalist powers' into a set of formal and informal colonies and spheres of influence.' The British founded a coaling station in Aden in 1839 and began to bring South Yemen under their sphere of influence in the 1870s through the signing of a series of treaties of protection. Aden, for almost a century, was administered from Bombay and only became an official Crown Colony in 1937. The function of Aden was characteristic of the function of strategic colonies during the imperial era. Hobsbawn (*ibid*: 68) continues:

India was the core of British strategy, and that this strategy required control not only over the short sea-routes to the subcontinent (Egypt, the Middle East, the Red Sea, Persian Gulf and South

of 'the proceeds from a special Islamic tax, khums, to prevent financial hardship and maintain dignity. They are considered both spiritually and socially supreme' (Esposito, 2003: 281).

Arabia) and the long sea routes (the Cape of Good Hope and Singapore), but over the entire Indian Ocean, including crucial sectors of the African Coast and its hinterland.

Towards a concise summary, Sichertman (1972: 33) asks the question:

Why did the British keep Aden? For two reasons: the place proved commercially convenient and militarily useful. On the first was built Aden's enormous bunkering trade, behind only New York and London in tonnage. On the second was built a coastal fortress watching West to guard East, monitoring Suez to guard India. By the end of the Second World War, Aden had become vital to the United Kingdom's Middle East strength.

In the 1870s the Ottoman Turks began to reoccupy parts of North Yemen. In order to reinforce the insulation of Aden, the British began to establish a Protectorate in the South. Treaties of 'protection' were signed with the local Emirs, Sheikhs and Sultans in South Yemen. The local rulers in South Yemen, like the peasantry and the Sada, were predominantly Sunni Muslims of the Shafii affiliation. With the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the movement from sail to steam-powered ships in the 1870s and 1880s, Aden became increasingly important and the signing of treaties would last until 1954. In return for reinforcing the buffer zone around Aden, the Sheikhs received recognition, arms, money and a promise of support in times of crises (Halliday 2002: 166). Halliday argues that Aden and South Yemen developed in a 'spectacularly uneven' way. He writes (ibid: 164):

The boom in Aden had only a limited effect on the tribal areas, due to the fact that the Aden growth was generated externally and its profits went abroad. But the insulation of Aden also reflected a political decision by the British to keep the tribal areas as unchanged as possible. This was the key to the uneven development of the area. If the economic changes in Aden had affected the hinterland's structure, the political stability and the buffer zone that Britain wanted among the tribes might have been undermined. If all the workers brought into Aden had come from up country and not from Somalia and North Yemen, or if the British had educated local Yemenis to do the jobs they had trained Europeans and southern Asians to do, the sultans and sheikhs of the hinterland would have been unable to retain complete control. Instead the British deliberately fostered a dichotomy within the economy and society of the South, so as to preserve imperialist control.

The majority of the Yemeni community in Sheffield came from the hinterland. The bulk of those who came from South Yemen, came from the Western Aden Protectorate particularly the provinces of Yafai, Shaibi, Hadida and Dhala (Searle & Shaif, 1991: 66).⁴ They worked as peasants on their, usually small, landholdings and as sharecroppers on the land of richer proprietors. Halliday (1992: 11) notes that: 'Even the food required by Aden was brought from abroad – meat from Somalia and vegetables down the Red Sea from Lebanon and Cyprus.' The British neglect of the Yemeni

⁴ As a result of inconsistencies in the method of transliteration used in the thesis and on the map on page 75, Yafai, appears as Yafa and Shaibi appears as Sha'ib on the map.

hinterland by means of the insulation of Aden, and the consolidation of the power of the local elites, encouraged a steady stream of emigration to Aden and beyond. In 1955, South Yemenis constituted 14% of the population of Aden (Halliday 1992: 10). Around this time the presence of Yemenis in Sheffield, from both the North and the South, was also steadily increasing.

The 'pull' factors of migration were economic and politico-legal. The British economy, after the Second World War faced an acute shortage of labour in key industries. In order to alleviate the labour shortage the government initially turned to other European countries. The war-time Conservative and successive Labour governments were active in facilitating the settlement of exiled Polish soldiers and their families in Britain. After the war, a substantial number of political refugees, displaced persons and prisoners of war on the continent, were directly recruited by the Ministry of Labour to work in Britain under contract migrant labour schemes as 'European Volunteer Workers.' In all, more than 350,000 European nationals entered the United Kingdom between 1945 and 1957 (Sivanandan 1982: 101). These immigrants were joined by some 70,000-100,000 Irish migrants who also entered Britain between 1946 and 1951 (Solomos 2003: 49).

The post-war government was less active in facilitating the migration of colonial labour. The beginning of the migration of post-war colonial labour was marked by the landing of the *Empire Windrush* in 1948 from Jamaica. Although the *Empire Windrush* was not the first ship to dock in post-war Britain with migrant labour from the colonies, the media attention that surrounded its arrival made it appear so. The British Nationality Act of 1948 gave the vast majority of British subjects living in her colonies and dominions the right to enter and settle in Britain. The landing of the *Windrush* was followed by an increase in the numbers of colonial migrants particularly from the West Indies and South Asia throughout the following decade. This flow of primary migrants continued until immigration from the colonies was severely curtailed with the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962, peaking in the early 1960s in a rush to 'beat the ban.' The Yemenis comprised a relatively small part of this broader migration of colonial labour.

The city of Sheffield was one of Britain's cities that underwent a boom in the post-war years. Sheffield was the epicentre of steel production in Britain and one of the largest

steel producing cities in the world. The development of industry in Sheffield, akin to the development of industry in much of the rest of Britain was intimately linked to colonialism (see for instance, Rodney, 1972; Williams, 1944). Indeed, one link between the boom in Sheffield and the occupation of Aden came with the rise of the steel-plated steam ship, which, as has already been mentioned, was reliant on the coaling station at Aden, on their voyages to the East. In the late nineteenth century the Sheffield based company Firth's, began to specialise in naval and army guns and ordnance, and in the Brightside district of the city, Vickers built their massive River Don Works. The latter works would later become the largest manufacturer of naval and marine engineering in Britain, and a place where many Yemenis would eventually find work in the post-war period (Fielder and Murray, n.d.). In addition, the manufacture of the famous cutlery of Sheffield had often used, for instance, decorative handles made from ivory and plundered from many of the now endangered species of Africa. It was perhaps expected then that in a time of crises, or labour shortage, the industry would draw on the resources of the British Empire in order to resuscitate it. The largest number of political refugees to settle in Sheffield during and after the Second World War came from Poland. Around 1,200 Poles settled in Sheffield, a number that increased to 1,500 with the arrival from Germany of displaced persons working as European Volunteer Workers in 1949-50. In addition, smaller numbers of Ukrainian, German and Italian prisoners of war who decided to stay, plus Hungarians, who arrived after the second Russian invasion of Hungary in 1956, also settled (Mackillop 1981: 24-27). The city, like many more of Britain's large industrial cities was also the recipient of migrant labour from the British Empire, and particularly the Caribbean and South Asia. West Indians began to arrive in 1953, the largest numbers of whom came from Jamaica (Mackillop 1981: 36). The South Asian groups arrived at a similar time in order to help fill the labour vacuum in the steel industry. The South Asians were mainly comprised of Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Indians. Unusually however, Sheffield was also host to a relatively large number of emigrants from Yemen. In the mid to late 1950s this group of emigrants that was comprised mainly of peasants and sharecroppers began to leave their plots in the mainly Shafii areas of the '*al-Mintaqa al-Wusta*' or the central region of Yemen in search of a better life.⁵

⁵ Although the reasons for the migration of the Yemenis were overwhelmingly politico-economic, an emotional attachment to the 'mother' country was not altogether absent. Being an informal colony, with weaker cultural ties to Britain, this attachment was not as strong as many Afro-Caribbeans who saw

The Journey to Britain

I come to Sheffield 'cause my father been here. My father come here before the Suez Canal war. My father work here in Sheffield, and he give me all the addresses, and he give me addresses in Birmingham as well, cause my father been here, and he been to Birmingham as well. He give me all the addresses, 'If you want to go to Birmingham, go to this address. If you want to go Sheffield, go to this address. If you want to go to Liverpool, go to this address, if you want to go to London, go to this address.' And he give me the name of the people who owned the house, he said, 'Tell them, when you get there, tell them my name.' My father's name, they know him. 'And stay with him.' That's how we got it. And he give me little book full up of addresses you know. When I come to London, I said, 'No, I've got a cousin here in Rotherham.' I said, 'No.' I catch train and go to my cousin you know, and after I go anywhere I want. And I wasn't speaking. My dad told me a little English, he told me, 'If I ask for water.' He told me the name of the water, because we call it, '*mayia*,' and he says, 'English call it, 'water.'" He says, 'If you want dinner..,' you know, he give me the name of dinner, and you want breakfast, tell him, 'I want breakfast.' If you want supper, ask him for supper. When I was on the ship for fourteen days, I used to go and ask him, 'I want some dinner.' 'You speak English? Oh, come on.' I don't know English, but the Arabs who with me on the ship, they think, 'How you speak English so well?' I've got little dictionary, Arabic and English, and I used to look my dictionary, and I pick words from the dictionary and I keep taking them you know. I've got big dictionary now, up to now, and I still learn from it up to now.

Nasser

The vast majority of the emigrants who came to Sheffield, had heard about the opportunities for work through their friends and family that had migrated before them. The journey of the majority of the emigrants was facilitated by chain migration, their close relationships with those that had migrated prior to them. The emigrants were young men, in their late teens and early twenties, some bachelors, and some married, with or without children. Their journey to Sheffield began with their endeavour to obtain a passport. The Yemenis from the Protectorate were entitled to a passport but, due to its 'independent' status, Yemenis from North Yemen were not entitled to settle in Britain. Passports were available from the British authorities in colonial Aden. For residents of the protectorate, passports were obtained by way of an official letter or *tawdhif* (Halliday 1992: 77) from the local sheikh or sultan, which confirmed the applicant's status as a citizen of the British protectorate. The application system was rife with corruption, and cash, or kind, for access came to characterise the process of obtaining a passport. In this way, many Yemenis from the North were able to gain

themselves as 'kinds of Englishmen' or 'a part of Britain,' (Fryer, 1984: 374; Phillips & Phillips, 1998: 10-24, respectively. See also Hiro, 1971: 11-17) but this attachment, evident prior to migration and fostered through years of residence in Sheffield, is demonstrated by the not uncommon nostalgic memories of the spectacle of colonial Aden when the maritime industry was at its height. At the extreme were a few respondents whom unusually supported colonialism in Yemen. In all such responses the interviewees counter-posed the rule of Britain with the exploitative governance of their local rulers. However, as the colonial administration was not present in the protectorates and in light of the limited knowledge that agents have of the structures in which they are embedded, the respondents may not have realised that the power of the sheikhs and sultans was actually reinforced by the British colonial power in Aden, through their treaties of protection.

official letters from the Sheikhs and Sultans of the South. Here was one of the earliest instances of chain migration, as migrants borrowed money from relatives, both in England and Yemen, or paid with farm animals from their small family holdings, in order to buy the official letter that would allow them to obtain a passport in order to gain entry to Britain. The majority of my respondents who emigrated prior to 1962 agreed that the process of obtaining a passport from the British authorities in Aden was unproblematic. This is demonstrated in the memoir of Qassim:

In Yemen, before when me young you know? Do a little bit work with my father, with my mother. My mother, father, look after me you know? And working the land, working as farmer when me growing up. And after, we going school, teaching about Koran. There's a school about one hundred years old.

After I getting older, Britain, he want some man coming to Britain. After, I going to Aden and I take passport from British Embassy. I get it from, not English man, but Indian man there. He take my name, take my old, how old me, take my everything, but he's not ask me, he just do what he like. He not ask me about life, about how old me, he just made it up. He thinking for himself on document, for everything. He make up my government, my name and my country, Shaibi. I ask, I talking to him, 'You take my how old, how old me?' He said, 'Yes, any one year, that old.'

I'm married before I come, I stay with my brother, with my mother, with my father, with my wife back home. I married about two years, or two years and a half. After, when me married, I going Britain, and I come in this country. I remember, when me still in Aden, in my country, that war, '44, with Hitler, everything down, everything from Britain, from America, from everywhere, after that war, everything down, everything, ship, everything too dear you know. Not too much you know, clothes, not much food, not much you know? Everything down, everything, so after I coming Britain. When we coming here, that Queen, she said she want some man coming from Yemen to Britain for work, she want man, about five thousand, seven thousand, eight thousand, like that. She told us to come because she been in Aden one hundred and thirty years.

So after, I coming to here, I paid for ship. First thing from Aden to France, about thirty-five pound, that all. After, ten pound from France to here, ten pound to London, after, from London to here, two pound and a half. And, no speak, no talking, no nothing, no understand, no know anywhere.

Aden was a multi-'racial' city. The census of 1955 revealed that the population of Aden comprised of Adenis (26.7%), North Yemenis (34.8%), South Yemenis (13.7%), Indians (11.4%), Somalis (7.7%), Europeans (3.2%), Jews (0.7%) and others (1.9%). Indian labour was favoured by the British in mercantile and civil service positions. In Aden, as in the Gulf and East Africa, Indians occupied the intermediate strata between the colonial power and the local population (Halliday 2002: 156-164). The behaviour of the official in the story of Qassim could have been linked to his own admission of the inappropriate nature of the questions. The process of applying for a passport was culturally insensitive. Most of the rural regions in which the emigrants lived did not have a formal system of recording such data as the dates of birth and the marriages of their inhabitants, and certainly not with the use of the Roman calendar. Although the non-referral to official documents or questioning may not have been a huge problem

then, and may have even fast-tracked the process for the emigrants, the requirement that such documents be produced after the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 and especially in order to permit the entrance of dependents would become a huge problem.

A small number of my interviewees, like Qassim, commented that they had been recruited in Yemen. They cite this as one reason as to why passports were so readily available. Mackillop (1981: 50) also mentions that both North and South Yemenis were recruited through Aden for work in Britain. The details of this recruitment scheme are unfortunately not elaborated. It is clear from the narrative of Qassim however, that the recruitment scheme on which he claims he was enlisted was severely limited and unlike some of the recruitment schemes elsewhere in the British Empire, did not lead to a specific work placement in Britain.⁶ There is a tradition of recruitment through brokers or agents in colonial Aden and these men may have been involved in the recruitment of Yemenis for work in the post-war industrial cities of Britain. The mass of Arabs who worked as fireman and stokers on the steamships, and those who worked as dockworkers in Aden had been recruited from the Western Aden Protectorate and Yemen by brokers, who were often referred to as serangs (Lawless, 1995: 21-23; Nicholson, 1990).⁷ The agents in Yemen were certainly involved in the lending of money to many of the emigrants in order that they could pay for their voyage to England and they also handled much of the correspondence between the emigrants and their families in the hinterland, including the money that the emigrants remitted. One respondent mentioned that he was lent 100 pounds for his second journey to England in 1963, this time by air. He commented that after a period of working in Rotherham on his return, he sent the agent 120 pounds as a repayment for the fare.

The emigrants were poor and the cost of the journey was relatively hefty. In order to raise money for the cost of the voyage many of the emigrants relied on the remittances of prior emigrants. Those migrants who did not have any members of their families, or

⁶ In 1956 London Transport began recruiting staff in Barbados. The British Hotels and Restaurants Association also recruited staff in Barbados, as did the National Health Service, the latter with the approval of the then Conservative Health Minister, Enoch Powell (Fryer 1984: 373).

⁷ The dockworkers were generally recruited on a two year clan basis and worked and lived together, where they remained attached to their serang and his subordinate maccadams. The system of recruitment was rife with corruption. In the docks, the serang received the wages of the workers' and made deductions for his own wages and those of his maccadams. The serang made further deductions for food, the hiring of beds, loans, remittances back home and more. The dockworkers never handled their entire wage and were rarely sure what they were being charged (Nicholson, 1990).

friends already working in Britain and did not receive any remittances, or did not receive or borrow any other local money to aid their journey, had to rely on other means to procure the necessary capital. One such man was Abdul:

After the war, I don't blame people now, understand what I mean? After the war you see, the country need very hard work to build it up again, and this is what happened, we are catch that, you know? We come 1950, the war is 1940s. We catch it, that's why the British government made us to come, they digging for cheap labour after the war. They bring it from Yemen, their own colonial place only, from Yemen, from Pakistan, from Bangladesh, from India.

The time when we started, I don't speak good English. When I came in, I was in England living for nearly 46 years and I don't speak English you know? It's very, very bad these things. I don't speak English, the problem, we growing up in South Yemen, in that time, between when I born, 1934, till 1967, under British colonialism. The British, you know, colonial, in that time. Where I come from we live in the Yemen, you know, from village. We don't come from Aden, we come from Shaibi. Shaibi you know, is about 120 miles away from Aden, and in that time nobody bother about us, even we got no Arab school, we in the mountains, that village. Just couple of miles away, the British colonial looking after couple men outside Aden, you know from Lahej. That's area where I go to the school and they look after, but we are from high mountain, from outside and nobody, nobody, do anything, we just, 'No.' Even we don't know the tea, we don't know the sugar. At that time, I remember we didn't know anything about what the people got outside, in the other country, or in the other world you know? And well, I grow up there, I was looking after sheep you know, that's what I'm doing, after cow, that's it you know? In 1958, we had some people go from Shaibi to Aden and then go straight to England, you know? In 1958 when I nineteen, I talk to myself, I said, 'I will, I'll try, I'll try go to Aden and try to pass same as anybody do,' you know? I sold some good farmland to somebody and he give me some money, you know? And I said, 'This land is your land till you get your money back, I'm going to United Kingdom.'

Then when I go to Aden, I go to the British Consulate for the passport. He give me the passport straight away, same day, no problem at all, he give me the passport and he said, 'Go, go to England.' In Yemen you know, same as when I go from here [Sheffield] to Rotherham now, when I come from Yemen to England. Just go, just give your name and your photo. Still got my passport at home you know? See, that first passport when we got to England, it's not much problem or too much question at all. This is where you come from me, even for those who come from in the North Yemen, you see? I told them where I come from: 'Who's your Sheikh?' I said, 'So and so,' you know? I give the answer and that's it you see? They not asking me for birth certificate, not asking me for anything. We self, we don't know, my big brother, he said I born 1933, 1934, but I wouldn't know when I born you know? I telling you, we got no school outside in the country, not in Shaibi. I think the same in all country, they got in Hadramout yes, Aden yes, Lahej, and all that big towns that is.

Well, when I got the passport and everything in it you know, I go to the shipping yard and pay the money to get the ticket for the ship. It's about eighty-five pound, that time, I pay eighty-five pound, and in my pocket, money is just five pound, that's it. Well, we take about, nineteen days, nineteen days from Aden to when we get to Sheffield. We go straight away to London. When we get to London, we catch the train, we got the address, I got someone to come to, you know, but it's not easy it's very hard, very hard. We go to the train station, to the London Euston, I know the name now, but not before, oh not before! He said, 'You want Sheffield.' I don't know, he's talk, you know, he just talk to himself when he see the address. I just nod my head up and down, and I said, 'Yes.' When I come to Sheffield, same, he's looked at my bag, you know? I got two cases, he's put the address on my case, you know, in case of I lost it. Honest, he's good, good people you know? When we come to Sheffield, I go straight away to outside the Midland Station, you know? Show the address, the same, and take taxi, 'Take me to the address, to where I want to go.' But it's very strange for me. I come to 27 Cinders Road, Sheffield 9. I come, my friend lives there. I take my case and go inside. Taxi man, he stay outside waiting for money and I don't give him any! The taxi man, he wants some money, he wants about two shilling, you know, like that, maybe two and six. He knock twice, he open the door again, taxi man. 'Ooh,' I said to my cousin, I said, 'I don't give to the taxi man.' I said, 'I don't give him the money.' I got, five pound, it's not finish. Not

finish from Aden to Sheffield. He's got plenty money here. The boat is take eighty-five, cause nineteen days, you know, the food and to sleep as well. His train is take only one pound, first train is take fifty pence, other train from Euston to Sheffield is take only one pound that time.

That's honest, that is the story, you know? Well I'm happy when I saw my friends you know? I don't, I don't know where I am you know? I said, I talked to myself, 'I don't last till Monday!'

The journey to Britain, made aboard ships, provided in the lower decks early examples of the interwoven oppressions of racism and class discrimination, and the struggles waged against them, which would thread through the lives of the Yemenis in Sheffield. Although colonial Aden was a bustling multi-'racial' city, the Yemenis were predominantly from 'racially' homogenous rural backgrounds. The ship provided a particularly intense example, due to the claustrophobic conditions below deck, of the 'racial' stratification endemic in the plural societies of the industrial west, to which they were travelling. In an economic sense, the port at colonial Aden was a 'free' port and many ships of non-British origin passed through. As a result, many of the emigrants made or began their journey to Britain aboard non-British and especially French ships. Those who travelled on French ships usually made an extra stop across the Red Sea in the French colony of Djibouti and terminated at Marseilles. They then travelled through France by train to one of her northern ports, usually Calais, before boarding another ship to England, normally Dover. Class divisions aboard the ships which the migrants used to make their journey to England, were certainly expressed in racial terms. The Arab passengers traveled in steerage class below deck and the differences in the conditions of their holds and the cabins of the largely white first class passengers, was very marked. This was certainly the case for Nasser:

When I first came to England from Yemen in 1959, I traveled on a ship from the port of Djibouti. We had very little money, so we bought tickets to sleep down in the lowest part of the ship. We could see the sea just below us when we looked out of the portholes.

Perhaps being so low down in the ship made me feel bad, because I became sea sick, I went on the deck to breath some fresh air and an English lady saw me. She noticed that I was sick and invited me to her cabin on the upper deck to give me a tablet or an aspirin for my headache. Her cabin was very clean and luxurious, and it had soft and beautiful furniture – very different from down below in the ship where we slept.

While she was talking to me and giving me the aspirin, the captain walked into her cabin. He was very angry when he saw me there and he told me to go back down below. He said that I had no business in that part of the ship. He was not interested in what the lady said and didn't listen to her.

So I thanked her and went back down to the bottom of the ship to tell my friends.

Another respondent, Fayed, recalled similar 'racial'-class divisions on his journey. Here the difference in culture and particularly language, between the Yemenis, the crew and the first class passengers, is marked:

First we traveled from Aden to Djibouti, across the Red Sea. There were seventeen of us Yemenis. We traveled on a French ship from Djibouti to Marseilles, a port in France. We spoke only Arabic. We could not speak French, English or any other European Language.

We couldn't understand anyone on the ship, and we didn't know that the cost of the ticket included our meals. We didn't know that there was food for us in the ship's restaurant. We slept on hammocks at the bottom of the ship, next to the cows. For three days of the voyage we had nothing to eat, only some biscuits that we brought with us.

Then we met on the ship an Algerian who spoke French and Arabic. He said to us: 'Why don't you come to the restaurant to eat?' We said, 'We don't know about any restaurant. Where is it? Show us where it is.'

When we arrived at Marseilles, we traveled to Paris by train, then to the coast of France and then we took the ferry across the English Channel to Dover. From Dover, we traveled on another train to London.

Some friendly Yemenis met us, gave us some food and we divided to go to different cities. Some of us went to Liverpool, Cardiff, South Shields, Birmingham, and here to Sheffield. We were only young men, but it was the beginning of a new life for all of us.

Many of the arrivants travelled in small groups that consisted of members of their family and/or friends. Some of these groups were enlarged through friendships that were formed aboard ships with other, usually Yemeni, emigrants. These groups provided some respite against the feeling of estrangement that the non English-speaking sojourners experienced. The 'racial'-class differences between the emigrants, the first class passengers and much of the crew were reinforced by the cultural and in particular the religious and linguistic differences between them. The different 'racial'-class groups seemed to subscribe to mutually exclusive cultural institutions. Mohammed stresses that his religious dietary requirements made his journey aboard an Italian ship especially unpalatable. These problems were compounded by a difference in language when he reached London:

When I came to England in 1956, I travelled on an Italian ship. We couldn't understand the menu in the ship's restaurant, and we didn't want to eat pork, so the only thing we ate were eggs. Every day, only eggs! Eggs for breakfast, eggs for lunch, eggs for dinner, eggs for supper! Only eggs, eggs, eggs – not even any spaghetti, we didn't know whether the food was *haram*, or *halal*. By the time we reached Genoa I was very hungry. I wanted a good dinner of lamb, like I had in my village in Yemen.

We arrived in England and took the train to Charing Cross station in London. We were lost on the platform like sheep in the corner of a field, and we didn't know what to do. I was with my friends Ali and Saleh. We needed to get to Liverpool to stay with some other Yemenis. But we couldn't speak any English at all, so we couldn't explain our problem to anyone on the station.

A station worker tried to talk to us. We said we wanted a train to Liverpool. He asked us if we had any money. We said, 'Yes we have some.' So he told us to take a taxi, so we would not get lost or catch the wrong train.

So we got a taxi all the way from London to Liverpool – more than two hundred miles away! It was very expensive, but we shared the fare and arrived safely after that very long drive.

So that was how I came to England all those years ago. Nearly fifty years ago!

The majority of the migrants travelled from Aden, through the short sea route, via Suez, a journey that lasted around two weeks. The Suez War in 1956 led to the closure of the Suez Canal, after which, shipping in Aden rapidly declined and a number of the migrants followed the long-sea route around the Cape of Good Hope, to Britain. Many of those emigrants who travelled around the time of the Suez War when anti-Arab racism was at an apex had a particularly hostile and difficult journey. Abdullah recalls his journey in 1956, prior to the Suez war:

We travelled on a French ship and the crew treated us very badly. The captain and officers said that we Arabs must stay below deck, and not come on the deck and mix with the first class passengers who were enjoying themselves in the sun and swimming in the swimming pool and having plenty to drink.

It was 1956 and just before the war over the Suez Canal. The Egyptian immigration officers supported us and told the French crew to treat us better. But we were angry at them and decided to make a protest. So just before the ship arrived at Marseilles we started to throw a lot of the ship's furniture and bed sheets into the Mediterranean Sea.

In Marseilles my friend went into a shop to change some money. The attendant dropped some money on the floor and short-changed my friend. He said he had given him less than the true amount of money. But the manager entered the shop at that moment and saw the man cheat my friend. She picked up the money on the floor and gave it to him. Then she told the man who cheated my friend that she did not want him to work for her. She sacked him there and then, and my friend was happy that justice was done.

Here, racism or racialisation 'Arabs must stay below deck,' was used to harshly reinforce the class divisions that were already extant aboard the ship. The Arab passengers were strictly kept to their 'station' and denied any relief from the stuffy atmosphere of the cargo and cattle holds in which they slept. The narrative of Abdullah also emphasises the pan-Arabism of the Egyptian officials and the Yemeni travellers at a time when the influence of the Egyptian leader, Gamal Abdul Nasser was spreading. The protest of Abdullah and his companions at Marseilles demonstrated an example of the sometimes informal modes of resistance to racism and class discrimination that would thread throughout their working lives in Sheffield. Here was also an implicit at least, example of support for anti-imperialist struggle, particularly in the Arab world,

support which would climax again during the 1960s with the escalation of South Yemen's struggle for independence.

On the British coast, the arrivants who were not met at their point of landing had to make the remainder of their journey with only the address of their hosts to guide them. They were fortunately aided at the docks, train stations and taxi ranks by many of the workers and passengers that they came across.⁸ This is demonstrated in the narratives of Taleb and Mussa, respectively:

Only little bit of work in Yemen, so I coming over. I was farmer, from Dhala, outside Aden you know? Village, not town, village. I went to Aden to get a passport then I coming over, ship. I come before Suez in 1956. I travel ship, we riding ship to Djibouti and after train to Paris. After we catch train, cause that ship, crash in the sea and get damage on it, he not damage it too much. So after we catch the train, catch train through France.

I coming on my own and I don't speak English at all. In London, when I go into dock, I looking to find a taxi man, to take me down to railway station. I don't know it's a railway station, I don't know it's a train, but when I see the people, going, moving, you know, lot of people, he going, moving, I follow him, I follow them people. After, I looking, lots of people in the station, lots of people. When I looking, I don't know what I'm going to do. I don't know about the ticket you see, I don't know. One girl coming to me, 'cause I had an address in my hand, she talking to me. I don't know what she said, I don't know. I hold my hand up and showed him like this, 'I want to go to Birmingham, to Birmingham.' After, she told me, 'Go to the cashier, go and get the tickets and catch train.' And I don't know what she said. So I stop here looking. She waiting over there. I don't know she waiting there and I stop over there, not follow the people. So she coming back, I don't know what to do. She took me down to the window and she got ticket for me, and she took me to the train. She talked to that man, 'Look after that man, he don't know, and he no understand.' He took me to Birmingham. Well I go to the train stop there. When we stop in Birmingham, he's coming to me that man, he says, 'Come down.' I going down and he looked taxi man, he says, 'Take him to that address.' Taxi man there took me straight in the house. They were good people, good people.

I'm coming to about three months to Birmingham, and I move to Sheffield, yes, looking for job in Sheffield. I come first to Birmingham, to see my mate, 'cause I don't know no one here. See, coming to see my cousin and I stop here three months. So, I learn a little bit and I move to Sheffield. Not much at that time in Birmingham, I rather move to Sheffield were there's big work.

Mussa recalls a similar experience of being helped by the locals when he and his companions first arrived in England:

In Yemen, we British subjects, see? They very good, see, British subject can come to here, he can get everything British, I mean, but government not very good because not learning anything, you see? I no go to school. The British make school in city, they got school. Where I live, no bother, no bother. Well, when British subjects come to here, I'm coming here, you see? We come to this country, for work, steelwork, see? Plenty work, plenty steelwork. When, he got money he send him for family, kids and everything, 'cause, you know, Yemen is a poor country. Here, it's good

⁸ There is no evidence from the present research project to suggest that the arrivants that were met at the point of entry in England were confronted with the 'self centred' entrepreneurs that Kelley (1988: 94) describes in his study of Yemeni farm workers in California. For Kelley these emigrants had transferred the 'generous hospitality' of Yemeni culture for the 'self-centred' entrepreneurialism of the West. Kelley writes that such Americanized Yemenis shocked the new arrivants by charging them transportation fees!

government, everything. Well, I mean, in here, I stop about first time, five years. I come in '55, from Shaibi, I was something like that, seventeen, eighteen, I'm married when we come and I had children. When the British government in Aden they told people to come to England for work, the British, they said that you come to work to here, well people come in. Oh, plenty work, plenty work, a lot of work.

We come by boat, got ship from Aden to France, we at sea, about two week. Ohh, sea, ohh, it made me feel sick and in the winter, winter time when we come, oh, very bad, very bad. We went through Suez and come to Southampton. I came with lots of people, lots of Yemenis, from Shaibi and we not speak English at all. That is before. A British policeman, or woman, or anything, he take me on here, by the arm and show me anything, show me house, show on main road. It's good people, friendly, good them people, very good.

Chain migration was not unidirectional, with prior migrants solely helping the new arrivants. Yemenis who had migrated at an earlier date, received information about their families in Yemen, and even gifts from the new arrivants. This again, is indicative of the close relations between the new arrivants and the migrants who had already journeyed to Britain. The majority of Yemenis who had migrated were illiterate, both in Arabic and English, or semi-literate in Arabic, and this limited the exchange of letters between the emigrants and their families in Yemen, which made these encounters all the more valuable. The usual practice of gift-giving upon arrival is revealed in the narrative of Swaleh:

The first time when I come over, I come over on boat, it's a big ship, took about fourteen days to Dover. It coming from France, coming from Marseilles to Dover, we catch a train from Dover to London, and we catch train here. So we falling asleep, I don't know where he carrying us, he telling us when he get Sheffield, he will call us. He tell us that man, we says, 'O.k.' When we went to go Sheffield, he says, 'Hey! Sheffield coming!' And we got a taxi from the station to my cousin's house. We couldn't speak English but we got address, we showed it to the man, and taxi, he take me to the house. When they answered the door, when I ring the bell, answered the door, he waiting, when I come in, and I hadn't got nothing! I didn't bring anything for him!

That was in 1959, and when we coming here, I say, 'I don't like it.' When we going in here, I says, 'I'm not stopping here, I'm going.' I says, rubbing my arms, like that, 'Oh too cold.'

Conclusion

The uneven development of capitalism, fostered particularly in South Yemen, by British imperialism had created the conditions of 'push' and 'pull' in Yemen and Britain respectively, which would lead to migration. The economic inequalities between the imperial West and Yemen, was reflected in the conditions in which the majority of the white and Arab passengers travelled as they made their journeys on the ships to Britain. The narratives indicate that on the journey, the subordinate status of the mainly peasant travellers, who were soon to become wage labourers in the post-war industrial economy of Britain, was expressed through 'race.' In a similar manner to the Arabs who worked

on the steamers as stokers and firemen, shovelling coal into the furnaces of their ships (Lawless 1995: 16-20), the Arab passengers spent most of their time below deck. The unequal distribution of whites above deck and Arabs below deck, meant that the ship became a very real, in steel and bolts, manifestation of the sometimes abstract and metaphorical concept of a racialised-class structure (a metaphor drawn from construction), or racialised-class hierarchy. The emigrants made their journey in steerage class, they travelled in the gloomy stench of the ships' cargo holds, they were without cabins and had to sleep in close proximity to cattle. At the worst of times, as in the aforementioned example of Abdullah who made his journey just before the Suez War, they were pressured to remain below deck.

The journey of the vast majority of the emigrants was facilitated by their friends and family who had already migrated. Chain migration provided transport, accommodation and employment for the arrivants and an aspect of chain migration is evident in most of the aforementioned experiences. Where a weak link in the chain of migration existed, namely, the struggle that many of the non-English speaking emigrants endured on their journeys in England to the homes of their addressees, many were able to rely on the helpfulness of members of the 'host' society in order to facilitate their journey. The chapter demonstrates that in the face of the structural constraints of racism and class, which heavily impacted the quality of the emigrants' journey, the arrivants were fortunate to be in receipt of many individual acts of courtesy from members of the host society. The majority of the emigrants left rural, peasant backgrounds, they were non-English speaking and few had ever left their villages before, let alone made a journey mid-way around the world on ships, trains and taxis. The conditions in the two Yemens hugely contrasted with those prevailing in South Yorkshire, which, with the West Midlands, represented the core of heavy industrial, capitalist production in post-war Britain. The unsanitary conditions in which the migrants travelled on their journey to Britain, and the feeling of estrangement that they experienced once in Britain, are recurrent themes in the life-stories of the former-steelworkers, and the elders are keen to demonstrate their gratefulness for the help that they received, in their narratives. The assistance that the migrants seemed to readily receive from many of the usually, working class people that they encountered on their journey from the docks to Sheffield appears to support the general theoretical conclusions made in the work of a number of Marxist scholars such as Cox (1970) and Sivanandan (1982). Cox (1970: 393) and

Sivanandan (1982: 104) have argued that racism stems from the bourgeoisie, that it is an ideology that is instigated from the top, down, in order to facilitate labour exploitation.

Many of the emigrants were however, aware of the limitations in the helpfulness of the members of the host society. In spite of the assistance that many of the men received from local people on their journeys to Sheffield, a number of the sojourners held an acute awareness of the manifestations of racism in British society. A solitary request for direction was a small impingement upon the mores of the host society. The need for accommodation was a more imposing one, and one where the emigrants would face a great deal more resistance from their 'hosts.' In light of these limitations, the benefits of chain migration and particularly the provision of accommodation were vital. This, the initial work and accommodation experiences of the arrivants in Sheffield, is the subject of the next chapter.

Living 'like Sardines': Settlement in Sheffield, 1955-1962

My cousin live in Sheffield, I stopped with him to look for work you know? Well, the first time when we come, one room, we got two or three people in the room. There were no jobs in Sheffield at that time, so I went to West Bromwich near Birmingham. I have friends in West Bromwich you know, at that time. I had to go and see them to go up the labour exchange you know, and everything, because I don't understand when I come here, and my friend, he speak English because he come before us.

So I started work in a wood yard. I worked with timber all day, I was picking up the wood and cutting down the wood. I worked with a long tube, we called it a shaft. We blasted it and then we brought cold water from the tank to cool it down. At work, well they show me the jobs to do, about two day, three day, if you don't learn it, he say 'There's no work for me.' More accidents if you not English, I mean place was dangerous. So I was working there. I worked nights in that factory. We got only six or eight pounds a week.

Swaleh

The aim of this chapter is to explore the experiences of the Yemenis following their arrival in Sheffield. The chapter relies on an analysis of the life-stories of the former steelworkers and also an analysis of newspaper articles drawn from the *Sheffield Star* and the *Sheffield Telegraph* in the 1950s, which reveal media responses to black immigration in Sheffield. The initial work and housing experiences of the immigrants in the host country has been a recurrent subject in the life-stories of the former steelworkers. This is also true of the life-stories of those post-war migrants who travelled to Britain from other parts of the British Empire (see for instance Phillips and Phillips, 1998: 81-94). One recurring theme in the life-stories of post-war colonial migrants is the migrants' experience of racism in the 'host' country. Instances of racism have plagued the attempts of immigrants to find work and accommodation in the various industrial cities of post-war Britain. In the context of the post-war economy of Britain, and indeed in many other capitalist contexts, racism was mediated by capital and its requirements. The chapter aims to explore the life-stories of the former steelworkers and the intersections of racism and class in those life-stories, and in the local press, in order to develop an understanding of Yemeni life in Sheffield circa 1955-62. The chapter begins by studying the available demographic data on Yemenis in Sheffield in the 1950s. I then go on to explore the migrants' initial experiences of work in the mid and late 1950s, and then their stories of the conditions in which they lived.

Yemeni Settlement in Sheffield

General statistical sources such as the national census and the electoral register, have not historically collated information on the ethnic origin of participants. Indeed, the national census did not include a question on ethnic group until 1991, and even then the categories of 'Yemeni,' or 'Arab' were excluded from the listed ethnic groups on the form (Owen, 2001: 138). In 1988 the Sheffield City Council carried out a survey of the Yemeni community in Sheffield (Sheffield City Council, 1988-9). The survey was based on interviews with 354 people, 302 men and 52 women and provides the most extensive source of demographic information on Yemenis in Sheffield. The following table is based upon the results of that survey and provides an insight into the vastly discordant dates of settlement of Yemeni men and women in Sheffield:

	Men	Women
Before 1940	2	1
1940-44	0	0
1945-9	2	0
1950-54	14	1
1955-9	127	1
1960-64	39	2
1965-9	23	4
1970-74	21	15
1975-9	7	17
1980-84	13	8
After 1984	1	3

The table shows that the mid-late 1950s was the peak period of settlement for Yemeni men. This pattern of settlement has also been corroborated by other data sources. The literature on Yemenis in Britain, the narratives of the emigrants themselves, and articles drawn from local newspapers in Sheffield also provide an insight into the population of the Yemeni community and black settlement more generally in the post-war period. In his 1944 study of Yemenis in Britain, R. B. Serjeant (1944) mentioned that there was a 'pocket' of Arab settlement in Sheffield. Some of the older Yemenis claim that they were the first non-white migrant group to settle in Sheffield. One keen participant in this and Alan Dein's (2004) research, who migrated in June, 1956 claims that, 'The first Arabs who come into Sheffield is Yemeni, 1950, 1950. No Jamaicans, no Pakistani, no

Indian, nothing, nobody at all.' In divergence to this remark, a section of the life-story of Qassim, who had lodged with Pakistanis upon his arrival in Sheffield in 1956, indicates that the Pakistani settlement in Sheffield predated the Yemeni presence:

When I come to here in 1956, no speak, no talking, no nothing, no understand, no know anywhere. Anyway when me going look job, I don't know what me said, I don't know what me talk to him, and he give me from Labour Exchange, two pound fifty. When me going Labour, you know, sign in and everything, he give me two pound fifty a week. That was not much, two pound fifty. After about four month or five month, I start work, and I go in, you know, office, day after day, after day, after day, you know waterworks. The manager said, 'Alright you take him, try him, one week, two weeks, if him working good, o.k., if him not work, give him sack.'

When I came I stayed with Pakistanis. I not got friends in Sheffield, only Pakistani. In a room they're about three or four man. One pound you know, and some place fifty p., you know, when me come in. I got, after that, friends, I got three, four, friend, I'm still same room. I go and working, come back, cooking, self. I'm not going hotel, not going you know, café, me cooking self, I get meat you know, not too dear err, maybe fifty p. a kilo, meat.

There were lots of Pakistanis before, maybe ten years before. When me coming from Aden he's working, that Pakistani who me live with, him, he got one, two, three, four houses for people you know? I said, 'How long?' He said, 'Oh ten, years, twelve years we been in here.' He's come in before Arabs.

Me rent, I don't buy because if somebody got big family in Yemen, not keep money here, just send it for him, somebody not big family only one, two, keep some money, buy him a house. You know, house before, 300, 400, 600, 800, a thousand, a big house, now too much, 120,000 now, too much. The Pakistanis, one come in, he come in, see friend, he said to him, 'Give me money.' The other one, 'Give me money, give me money.' He's give him money, he's buy a house, after he's give him back money. Arab no, because some man he got money, some man, no.

When me come in Britain, about 1956 had good, good life, but hard job, very, very hard job, ooh, dust, very, very hard, jobs.

In 1952, on Monday, September the 1st, the *Sheffield Telegraph* reported that men from Aden were amongst the Pakistani, Indian, Egyptian, and Muslims from other Middle and Far Eastern countries to attend the feast of Abraham at Attercliffe Baptist Church Hall. However, in the *Sheffield Telegraph* of Tuesday March 1st, 1955, Mr. Joe St. Elmo Hall, the then president of the Coloured People's Association in Sheffield and a medical student at the university, is quoted to have said, 'his association estimated there were 650 Jamaicans in the city, about 400 Pakistanis, 100 Somalis and 100 West Africans. In addition there were a number of coloured nurses and students.' It is possible that a handful of Yemenis joined the trickle of migrants who would arrive in the following months, as six and a half months later, on the 14th and 17th of September in 1955, the *Sheffield Telegraph* reported that there were about 2,000 'coloured' people in Sheffield. In the following years the non-white population continued to grow, and in 1957, on the 8th of July, the *Sheffield Star* perhaps over-estimated that 4,000 Muslims now lived in Sheffield. This estimate was probably not just based upon Muslim immigrants however,

but probably also included local converts, in particular the small number of white women that had married Muslim men and converted to Islam. A further estimate came from Mr. R. T. Downham, the manager of the labour exchange in Sheffield, in the *Sheffield Star* of 25th of March, 1958. Downham observed that nobody really knew the exact size of the coloured population in Sheffield, but estimated that there were about 3,000 coloured workers 'in the area'. Of this 3,000, he approximated that the Arab population was now more numerous than the Pakistani. Downham estimated that about 65 per cent, or 1,950 were West Indians, 20 per cent, or 600 were Arabs, 10 per cent, or 300 were Pakistanis and 5 per cent, or 150 were West Africans.

This apparently inconsistent chronology of the presence and numbers of Yemenis in Sheffield, circa 1944-55, is perhaps indicative of the sojourning nature of early Yemeni migration to Sheffield. It is quite likely that a handful of Yemeni migrants had already begun the circular routine of working in the Sheffield steel industry for a few years and returning to Yemen for a few months, which could explain their omission from the Coloured People's Association's estimate of the numbers of non-whites in Sheffield, printed in 1955. A further factor that may have contributed to their omission, may be what Fred Halliday (1992: 139-145) describes as the invisibility of the Arabs. For Halliday, this invisibility derived from their small number when compared to West Indians and South Asians, and the Yemeni arrivants being assimilated into larger group identities such as, Lascars, Muslims, Arabs, Asians or South Asians, and more dubiously, Coloured, Negro or Black. Halliday argues that invisibility was also self-imposed. For Halliday (1992: 141): 'This was, quite simply, the feeling on the part of the Yemenis that they would benefit from being as little noticed as possible.' However the presence of Yemenis in Sheffield would be made quite explicit by the articles that appeared in the local press in the succeeding years.

It is clear however from the evidence that has been presented that the majority of the former steelworkers arrived in Sheffield in the late 1950s. One respondent who migrated in 1955 remarked that there were only five Yemenis in Sheffield when he came. Some of the responses of the aforementioned respondent were given in Arabic and translated into English by his son. Speaking of his father his son continued, 'He goes, remember that when he came here in '55, there was five Yemenis, he went back to Yemen, when he came back in '62 there was more than six thousand Yemenis working

in steel. Most of them came before '62 but some came with their families after, in '69.' For Halliday (1992: 110) the Yemeni community in Sheffield numbered around 8,000 in the sixties, at the time of the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962. At this time Dahya (1965: 177) estimated that the total population of Yemenis in Britain was 12,000, whereas Halliday (1992: 59) estimated that, at most, they were 15,000. Abdulgaliil Shaif the chair of the Yemeni Community Association, estimates a much larger population at this time, in Sheffield alone:

I find policy makers who didn't know of the history of the Yemeni community, I found politicians who didn't know of the history of Yemenis ... In the sixties there was 20,000 Yemenis alone in Sheffield, in the steelworks, or 21,000 in the sixties, it was an enormous population, and these were active labourers, and this was a predominantly 99.9% male population in the steelworks, but some people didn't even know about it (Dein and Burman, 2004).

These local and national estimates imply that the Yemeni community in Sheffield was the largest one in Britain in the early 1960s, and outnumbered the communities in the other industrial and maritime cities of Yemeni settlement. Although one cannot be certain about the total population of the Yemeni community in Sheffield prior to 1962, it is clear that the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 drastically curtailed primary migration from Yemen, until Sheffield became the host to refugees fleeing the civil war in Yemen, 30 years later, after the fragile unification of the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, in the early 90s. Halliday (1992: 157) notes, 'A few came after 1962, but they cannot have been more than 5-10 per cent of the total; they were mainly the sons of immigrants who were already in Britain.' Yemeni women began to trickle into Sheffield at a relatively late time when compared to other female post-war migrants, and often after long legal struggles. This again, is indicative of the circular nature of Yemeni migration and the Arabs' particularly robust intention to return to their homeland. Three male respondents who were involved in this research project had migrated after 1962. One, who migrated in 1967, was issued with a passport, prior to the Immigration Bill, during his service in the British Army, which he had joined in 1955. The other two interviewees came to Sheffield in 1964 and 1967 and were eligible for category A vouchers under the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, as they had specific jobs to go to in Britain. The brother of one of the interviewees and the father of the other, were working in the steel industry and had arranged jobs for them in the same factories that they were working. Speaking of his brother, one respondent said, 'He came before me, firm, firm, give me a chance to come to here, you know, firm where my brother's working said, 'If you and your brother come, talk to

them,' ... because immigration office no take nobody who came after that times.' Thus, in an indirect way, some Sheffield steel companies recruited labour from Yemen. A particular anomaly in the general trend of migration is evidenced in an article in the Sheffield Star of March 27th, 1958, headlined 'They Come To Learn - Free of Charge.' The article reported that as well as children from the West Indies and Pakistan, the sons of some Arab arrivants were also attending school in Sheffield.

Early Settlers

Mahmood, the aforementioned respondent who migrated in 1955, claims that there were only five Yemenis in Sheffield when he arrived. However, his journey was still facilitated by chain migration. Mahmood was related to these earlier arrivants, and was met by one of them when his ship docked at Southampton. He then took him to Sheffield and helped him to find accommodation when he arrived, and a job on the fourth day of his arrival:

In 1955, we came from Aden on a ship, downstairs cause not enough money to get upstairs. December, we got to Southampton. Then when we come out, another one he get umbrella, we open it, no raining, only wind, and we have dinner under the boat. A lot of Arabs there you know, behind me, over forty Yemenis, all young uns same as me, from Shaibi, and we was there all day. An Arab bloke there, he spend the dinner and supper, for me and all my friends. Some of them, he get no clothes properly you know, he go to shop, buy for them. He was dead now anyway. And we want to move into Sheffield. He says, 'Tomorrow morning, you go there.'

Right, other day, we went to the bus station, he get ticket for us to Sheffield. When we came to Sheffield, all Attercliffe and this place before, they were knocked down. I got room from my family before me and I come out with that bloke, he show me labour exchange said, 'It's there.'

The man in the labour exchange knows I want a job, he come to me, he said, 'You look for a job?' I said, 'Yes.' He give me dirty job, just making steel, bottom job, bottom, steel, steelwork, heat treatment. He says, 'O.k., you can come Monday.'

Come Monday, walking to the firm, start work, I don't know what I'm doing, he came to me, 'Do that, do that, do that, do that, do that.' He speak Arabic a little bit, he was in army you know in Egypt, that foreman good, he like Arabs. So, first day at work, alright. When we go home, me and all my friends, three or four inside that firm, we looking, and the building, the actual firm that we working in, was still not completed because of the bomb from last war.

The German Luftwaffe bombing campaign in Sheffield affected the centre and the South-West of the city the most severely. The bombs killed several hundred civilians. Houses and shops were damaged more than industry, although the damage inflicted upon Brown Bailey's steelworks in Attercliffe and Hadfield's East Hecla Works provided two notable exceptions (Fielder and Murray; n.d.). It was likely at one of these two works that Mahmood found employment.

Ali, who also migrated in 1955, was another pioneer, although with a quite different story:

When I arrived at Sheffield Station from London after I left the ship at Tilbury, I didn't know anyone and I didn't know where to go. The Taxi driver said, 'Try Attercliffe, I think there are some Arabs there', but I didn't understand him because he didn't speak Arabic and I didn't speak English. He took me to Attercliffe, and after to Darnall Road. He started to knock on the doors of the houses to ask the people who lived there if there was a room to rent.

On the eleventh house where he knocked, a lady called Doreen opened the door. 'He can stay with me, he's welcome', she said when she saw me. So I moved into that house. It was near Brown Bailey's, the steel factory. So later at night I went there to ask for a job. I got a job there in the middle of the night. When I came back to Doreen's house she was angry and worried about me, she gave me a slap. 'Where did you go all night?' she shouted. I answered in Arabic, 'I found a job', and I was very happy. But no one understood my language.

Ali's story again demonstrates that as well as receiving help from earlier Yemeni settlers, the arrivants, and perhaps more so, the earlier arrivants were helped by ordinary working class English people. Ali was aided in particularly generous ways by both the taxi driver and the landlady in his story. A common feature in the narratives of both of these early arrivants was the ease with which they found work, despite their agricultural backgrounds and the difference in language between them and the host population.

Finding Work

Migration from Yemen increased as the decade drew to a close. Many of the Yemenis who settled in Sheffield had previously worked in the Midlands. In Dahya's (1965: 180) study of the Yemeni community in Birmingham, he writes that landed Yemeni seamen who came to Britain during the 1945-50 period, 'founded' the community in Birmingham: 'As seamen they had lost considerable time waiting to 'sign on' to vessels at various seaports and so decided to switch over to employment in industry ashore.' Ansari (2004: 156-7) also stresses the movement of landed seamen into the land-locked industrial cities. The results of this study have however been more consistent with Halliday's (1992: 61) observation that, there seems to be a tenuous connection between the Yemeni communities formed after the war in industrial cities, and those maritime communities formed earlier. I have not found evidence of large-scale movement of landed Yemeni seamen from the coastal cities to find work in the industrial cities of Britain. A number of the interviewees however, knew of Yemenis who had moved from the coastal towns to work in Sheffield. One respondent lodged with a Yemeni who used

to work in the shipping industry in Wales. A further interviewee had a cousin who worked in South Shields, albeit in masonry and not in shipping, and Taleb, whose narrative opens the sixth chapter, remembers a number of shops and cafes in Attercliffe that were owned by former-seamen.

Unlike the migrants who, in the above narratives, arrived in the mid-50s, the Yemenis who came to Sheffield towards the end of the decade seemed to have more difficulty in finding work. In her study of the Pakistani community in Oxford, Alison Shaw (1988: 34) comments that from 1958 many Pakistanis migrated from Sheffield to Oxford in search of work, because of a recession in the Midlands and the North at that time. However the Yemeni community in Sheffield were without familial links in cities where the post-war labour shortage remained, and did not have this option. In an article entitled 'No jobs for eighth of coloured population,' the *Sheffield Telegraph* (Daniels, 20/03/1957) reported figures given at the Sheffield and District Employment Committee quarterly meeting held on Tuesday, March the 20th in 1957. The figures showed 'that roughly one in eight of the city's coloured population is unemployed.' The article continued: 'Of the 187 on the register, many are Arabs, who are generally speaking, of a lower standard than other coloured workers.' It is unclear what is meant by 'of a lower standard', but later newspaper articles referred to the background and the illiteracy of the Arabs. The *Telegraph* reported that many of the Arabs in Sheffield had come to Sheffield in search of work, after being hit by the recession in the motor car industry in the Midlands. According to the manager of the Labour Exchange in Sheffield, Mr. R. T. Downham, unemployment was to grow worse for the Yemenis. Roughly one year later, in the *Sheffield Star* (25/03/1958), Downham commented, 'Sheffield industry cannot go on absorbing coloured workers if the numbers coming in continue to increase. There is a tendency over the country for a decreasing need for these workers.' The article continued by, again, depicting the Arab community as particularly problematic, albeit this time with the Pakistani: 'Pakistanis and Arabs are the chief problem. Because most are illiterate it becomes very difficult to place them in industry, and Mr. Downham said about one third of these people were unemployed in one period recently.'¹ The article

¹ It is important to note that the arrivants from the West Indies were not praised, and did receive their share of vilification in the press. Although Arabs and Pakistanis faced particular criticism over their relative rates of unemployment, the balance turned somewhat towards the West Indian community in Sheffield with reference to their alleged behaviour in dancehalls and relationships with white women (See for instance the *Sheffield Telegraph*, 28/09/1953; Blackburn 19/03/1958).

did however go on to acknowledge the role of racism in forming what was becoming a black underclass,² Mr. Harold Ulliyat, the Sheffield district secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering Union (A.E.U), commented, 'Some employers won't take them because they say they are afraid of their workers objecting, and others because they have a lot of women workers.'

Many of the arrivants found themselves collecting around £2.50 a week in social security from the labour exchange when they first arrived in the late 1950s. The period that the interviewees involved in the present research project spent on the dole lasted up to ten months. The majority of my interviewees thought, like Adnan who came in 1958, that the main reason for their unemployment was the recession, and that racism was negligible:

I came here to England in 1958. I was in Africa before, you know, when I left Yemen. I left Yemen when I was young, about 15 year old you know, and I went to Africa, place called Zanzibar, maybe you've heard it on television. Then we went to Mombasa and Dar Es Salaam. I went to the Africa place you know what I mean? Where sometime people, they walk with no clothes on, you know what I mean? Naked people you know? And I stayed there from..., first of all I went to Africa, 1948 you know what I mean? I was young then, I stayed there till about 1958, and I came here 1958, and I learn English there in Africa, 'cause most people, they speak African-English you know what I mean? So I didn't come here empty handed, come here with something you know?

In here, only the people who come from Aden could speak some English, because Aden you know there a lot of people, they speak English, but the people who come from our village from Yemen, they, they don't speak English you know, because there's no English at all. You know two in a hundred, five in a hundred they speak English, but the majority speak Arab. But in Africa the place where I was, there, the most people, lot of people they speak English so help me a little bit you know?

So when I came here in 1958, it was rough, very rough you know what I mean? Very rough 'cause the white people they never seen black people you know what I mean? They looking at, when you walk on the street, they look at you like somebody come from the space, you know what I mean? They look at you. If you go to party and people sometime, they come in you know, sitting down with you, they ask you where you come from, you know? Say you come from you know Africa, 'Where's Africa?' They've never heard of Africa, they thinking that black people, they come from the monkeys or something. Yeah it's funny, and, 'cause you explain to them, you know what I mean? They says, 'Can you come into my office and tell 'em?' 'Cause they interested, they want to know the stories. And you said, 'Well, I'll come tomorrow' you know what I mean? You talk to them you know, to put them into line because they never seen black people before because they haven't got nobody here. Anyway, I stay here about three months you know, three months, four months you know without a job, then I got a job in East Midlands gas.

² The concept of the underclass is used here in order to stress the protracted period that the Yemenis spent without work. Indeed, a number of the interviewees have implied that they began to think that they would permanently remain unemployed. The usage of the term, which is often associated with neo-conservative writers such as Murray (1990), does not endorse any of the culturally-oriented explanations of the new-right, as to why the underclass exists.

When I come here, the jobs not easy, no, the jobs you know, the job improve later on, after two years you know, something like that in the '60s, '65 there's a lot of jobs, but you know that time when we come up, there's no jobs.

There was no jobs, nobody could get one. At that time when there was a lot of jobs to go round, I mean you could get, you can get a job, three or four jobs in one day, you can leap from one job to another, you see what I mean? It wasn't because of colour, I mean the people, they want workers. But you know colour, the job what the black people do, only labourer job, or slinger job, or crane driver job, that's all they can do, or work in a roll mill. So I got a job there, and I stay about you know six months, but maybe one year, then I rest from there, I went to different places, different jobs, I work here, you working there, working there. I been in Africa, where it's sunshine you know, it's lovely, you know, it's lovely, then you come in here. But when you stay here this country grows on you, you know, grows on you, you get used to it.

Although Adnan seems to interpret unemployment during the recession as being an experience that similarly affected white and black labourers, in times of growth he is certain that the opportunities for black labourers were limited by racism. The economic downturn however, did have particular racialised implications for migrant groups. We have seen how the 'buyers' market' gave capital a greater opportunity to discriminate against black labour. The recession, as demonstrated in the following example of Fayed, also helped to create an opportunity for comen, to exploit the new arrivants:

When I arrived in Sheffield in February 1959, it took me six months to find a job in the steel industry. An Englishman said to me and all my friends: 'Listen to me! You give me twenty pounds each, and I will get you all jobs in the steel industry, there are lots of factories here.'

We thought that we could trust English men so we gave him the money. He took twenty pounds from the five people in our house and went to many other houses where Yemenis lived in Attercliffe and they gave him twenty pounds each too. So you can see how much money he took from us.

He gave us all a false name and a false address, then he disappeared, and we heard nothing from him. We went to look for him at the address that he gave us, but nobody knew him there. He took all our money and vanished!

In those days, twenty pounds was a lot of money, and it took me four weeks to earn twenty pounds. I had to borrow the money from my father-in-law who was a sailor in the merchant navy. We believed this man – we thought we could trust an Englishman. But he stole our money by the lies that he told us, and it was a terrible lesson for us as strangers to England.

Up until now, this man still owes me that twenty pound. But he was a cheat and a swindler, and we never saw him again, or our twenty pounds.

As Mr. Downham had made clear, the Arab and Pakistani migrants were in a particular position of disadvantage in the labour market. They were non-English speaking and as a result of their largely peasant backgrounds, something that they shared in common with many of the West Indian migrants, they lacked any relevant experience in heavy industry. In light of their disadvantaged position, a number of the migrants such as Nasser attempted to even out their opportunities by applying for English language classes.

I was 15 years old you know, when I come. I come by ship across the Suez canal, I tell you truth, I don't know where, which dock I come to in London, I can't remember because that time I was not speaking English. So I come to London, I know to London, but I can't remember which dock, so that time when I come off the ship, I catch train to Sheffield. I had a friends here in Sheffield you know? So I stayed with friends, an Arab house, for about two months. So I says, 'I come to look for job,' you know. 'Where's the job, where's the work, where's the industry?' I can't find job here in Sheffield, that time, that's 1959.

So when I first come to this country we came to labour exchange in Attercliffe you know, it was next to where our organisation now is in Attercliffe. They used to give us two pounds fifty a week, you know because we are out of work. I asked a man there, I says, 'Can you tell me to go to English class, I want to learn English?' He laugh at me, he says, 'You know, you come to this country not to learn English, you come to this country to work, you come for work, you don't come to learn, there is no class for you.' And that's true there was no class for me at that time. I said, 'O.k., thank you very much.'

So what happened, I move from Sheffield to Birmingham. When I went to Birmingham, I worked in foundries for about nine months, and it's heavy job, very, very heavy. I had to carry ballast, I had to carry sand from place to other, so I left that job you know 'cause it's too heavy. So I send to my family little money like you know, 'cause my family very poor family at home, my dad and mum was alive that time, but they die now. What happened, I moved from that foundry to other job in Dunlop, Warwick Road, in Birmingham 12. So I work there, it's not heavy job, it's light job. I worked there for about two years. So I worked, I had a little money like, you know, and I decided to go back home, I went back where I call home, it's my home, not here, I went back to Shaibi. I stay with family for about six months, Shaibi, then money's all gone and I had to come back again here. The agent in Aden he paid for the fare, and I send him his money, and I send him a bit money on top of his money, you know what I mean? If he lend me a 100 pounds, I have to send him 120 yeah, that's for the fare to come here right. The second time I come by air, but the first time I come, I come by ship.

So I come back here, when I come back from Yemen, I come back straight to Sheffield, that time when I come back to Sheffield, 1963, there was plenty jobs in Sheffield. I lived in Rotherham, and then I had to work in Sheffield. From Rotherham, I come to Sheffield, catch bus in morning you know and I get job in British Steel Corporation you know, and I worked there for about six years.

The employment prospects of the Yemenis were particularly grim in the late 1950s. They were told that that they were not offered work because they couldn't speak English. Yet when men like Nasser made attempts to learn English, they were told that they were here to work.

The majority of the migrants who came in 1958 and 1959, certainly in the sample that the present research project relies upon, were unemployed for a number of months. This was the only time during their lives in Sheffield, until the mass redundancies of the period of de-industrialization, that a substantial section of unemployed Yemeni migrants had a great amount of leisure time at their disposal. Hadi reflects on the early months of his life in Sheffield with much humour, but stresses that the estrangement that he felt was very daunting at times. His testimony gives a realistic and detailed picture of the life of arrivant Arabs waiting to find work:

First of all, when we come down, we come by boat you know, from Yemen, take us ten days, ten days and nights. So we come to Dover. After that, we catch train you know, we don't know where we going, see what I mean? Somebody, the police come with us to the station, we pay, you know, we don't know we have to pay some money for the train there, you see what I mean? I don't know how many, two and six you know, something like that. So, took us to Sheffield see what I mean? We go to Sheffield, the place in the station, you know 'cause we were foreigners. We come in stranger, we don't know what we doing, so when we come out from the train, 'cause the driver, he tell us to come out you know, from the train, to come out at Midland Station, you know? So when we come to where the taxi been, so we think it's free, see what I mean? Yeah, we think it's free, we get in the taxi free. So the taxi man he take us, very dark, about nine o'clock something like that, we don't know where he's going, but we give him address, you know, we get the Address from Aden, from agent. He says, 'Keep this with you,' and I keep it with me. So I give taxi man address. He said, 'Oh, oh, oh,' he said, 'Oh, oh, oh,' but I not know what he said, '62 Sharrow Lane, in Attercliffe.' So we see the trams, trams, he was in the road, it was in Attercliffe. So, and he turned round, he come out from the taxi, bang on the door, we don't know. So somebody come out, he speak Arabic, we don't know, so we come you know. Taxi man he say, 'Foreigners, they come to this country.' So he says, 'welcome, welcome, *al-salaam alaykum* you know, in Arabic, '*Al-salaam alaykum*. Oh, where do you come from, where?' You know we talk in Arabic. So somebody, so and so a man you know, he says, 'Taxi man still there.' We said, 'What he want?' He say, 'He wants some money from you.' How much he take? Six shilling, that little, six shilling, we give six shilling. He says, that man, he said, 'Come on, we'll go inside of the house.' Somebody, he said, 'Oh, you are so and so?' We said 'Yeah, yeah.' So one of those, his brother, he live in Firth Park, you know that part in Firth Park Avenue. He'd like to go to him. So he speak to him for help, so somebody said, 'We going to phone that man, Ali, somebody's brother. He says, 'Your brother is here, we have no room to give him to sleep tonight. So, you have to come down to take him with you, you know.' He, when he come back he says, 'I been phone him, phone your brother, and he's coming.' So, alright, he give us a drink. So, and then he gives us Old English, you know to drink. And I says, 'Err, what's this?' He says to me, 'Beer.' I says, 'Aarrgh? You give me beer? Huh, me, I'm a Muslim! Why you give me drink beer for?' So he says, 'Oh.' Somebody says, 'Ah don't drink with him, he don't know.' So he says to me, 'No, this is drink.' We drink it, sip it to see if we like it, we test it, I says, 'Oh I don't like it.' So he give us something to eat, we are hungry, we are very hungry, so we sleep that night, and in the morning he take us to the labour exchange, it was in Attercliffe.

Yeah, so we been to the labour exchange, we been waiting there, we don't know what to do. We've got our passport with us and he turned round to me, he says, 'Come into the office, you know, somebody there.' We go to him, he says, 'What's your name?' I says, 'Why?' You know? Somebody says, 'Give him the passport.' So I give him the passport and he write it down. And what he writes, he said, 'What's your place? 62 Sharrow Road.' So then I get back. He give us some card. He says, 'Come, come next Wednesday to sign.' We been signing two days a week, Wednesday and Friday, we got I think, two pound a week. About eleven o'clock we go home, eat dinner. So we been going like that, we been about ten months without work, without pay. Not much work at that time, not much work.

So we been you know, we did that for about ten months you know, from the same place. So we buy a ball, we went to Darnall to play football. So everyday we go to Darnall to play football. So we are happy you know what I mean? It's alright. So after about six or seven months or something like, some people got some work, some of them go to Birmingham. So I said, 'I'm not going to there.' 'Cause in that house, the landlord, he like me. Says, 'You're a very nice boy you *saleh* all the time, don't go from here, we have *saleh* me and you, same time.' I says, 'Alright.' He was working in the gas company and he was working seven days. How much he got? Fourteen pound, fifteen pound, twenty pound, plenty money that, plenty money. That fella was living with me in the same room, you know. He got bed and I got bed.

So sometimes he miss me. When I was working in the kitchen, he would come out to see me, he would sit down there in the kitchen, he says, he call me name you know, and he give me a pear. So he says, 'Yeah, take.' 'Oh,' I says, 'Oh thank you.' So everyday like that, he give me some pears every day, he says, 'I like you, because you are a very good boy, you *saleh* all the time.' I say, 'alright, *alhamdu lillah*.' He had his own Koran and he taught me to read and write the Koran. So I got something because we was very skint, we were you know, very poor.

So one day, we go to Darnall to play football and somebody, his passport came out of his pocket. He dropped it, you know, he lost it. We didn't know so we went home. So when we went to the labour exchange the next day, she says, 'Can I see your passport?' The queue's waiting, he steps back again, he says, 'I lost my passport, you know what I mean!?' I says, 'Where?' And then she opened a draw under the table and said, 'Is that yours?' Somebody found it in Darnall and they took it in to the labour exchange. She says, 'is that yours,?' Oh we been laughing you know? I says, 'You are a lucky man, you are very lucky.' He says, 'Oh, I'm alright now,' She says, 'Don't lose it again, don't lose it again!' He says, 'We been playing football in Darnall, maybe I lost it up there, maybe somebody found it, and well of course, brought it in a bit earlier.' So it was alright, fine. When we got out, you know, we were laughing and he been very, very happy.

Yeah, so everyday was like that, we have dinner, then we go everyday to Darnall. Sometimes we went to the swimming baths. We paid six pence, for half an hour. When our time was up the pool attendant would shout, but we didn't know what number we were, 'Number six, or number nine, or number three, can you come out!' Some people, he says 'What you doing?' He says, 'Your time has finished!' So he waves his hands at us and points to his watch, 'Finished, finished!' 'Cause we didn't know nothing about speaking English. It was very hard to learn quickly, so day by day, by day by day we learned a little.

So, sometimes we went to town. But we took our address with us. We caught bus to town, and we walked about. Sometimes we got lost. So what we did, we got the police, and he looked at us, he spoke to me, we went with him. He took us to the bus stop to get to Attercliffe. He says, 'When the bus comes, get on it.' Sometimes he was still with us until the driver came. He said, 'These people, they don't know what they're doing. When you get to so and so place, tell them to get off.' So when we got to Attercliffe, the driver he told the conductor, because you had a conductor as well at that time, to tell us to get off. So we got off and looked around and all the houses looked the same! One house here, one house here, one house here, you know? We looked, same house, same house, there was no difference at all!

So later on we starting work. But oh, we had a very, very difficult time here you know when we first came.

The recession was accompanied by the heightened demonisation of black migrants in the local press. The Sheffield Star ran a 9-day feature from Wednesday, March the 19th, until Thursday the 27th of March 1958, by the journalist, Don Blackburn, pessimistically entitled 'Sheffield's Colour Problem'. In the introduction, Blackburn explained the nature of the feature:

Thousands of coloured people have made their homes in Sheffield during the past few years. Today The Star begins a new investigation into the problems created by their arrival. The inquiry begins in the East End, where mainly coloured immigrants are living in over crowded conditions.

Here Blackburn's journalism is clearly grounded in the 'race'-relations problematic. He makes clear that the focus of the investigation is the problems of the 'coloured' presence in Sheffield. He makes little effort to balance his analysis of the problems of 'coloured' immigration with an analysis of the benefits. An examination of the problem of racism, which had been whipped up in response to the black presence in Sheffield, is also negligible in his work. Indeed, the negative language of Blackburn, which was on occasion sympathetic to the migrants, was sure to contribute to the arousal of 'racial'

antagonism. In his introduction, Blackburn states that thousands of coloured people have made their homes in Sheffield, and such a vague estimate invites vast exaggeration about the size of the 'coloured' population in Sheffield, which in the estimate of Downham, was about 3,000. In doing so Blackburn feeds the anxiety that coloured immigration represented a threat to the 'British way of life.' Much of Blackburn's work on unemployment, too, provides an early example of the mythology of the 'sponging migrant,' the 'parasite,' 'who gets everything for nothing.' The feature, *Sheffield's Colour Problem* was published just months before the so-called Nottingham and Notting Hill 'riots' in August 1958, which exacerbated racial sentiment to such a degree, that scholars (see for instance; Solomos, 2003: 54-6) have argued that the 'riots' were one of the main driving forces behind the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962.

Finding Accommodation

The majority of the arrivants were not met at the point of arrival and had to make the remainder of their journey with only the address of their hosts to guide them. However, given the reluctance of many landlords to accommodate the arrivants, some migrants such as Adnan, who came to Sheffield in 1958, considered even this to be a blessing:

When I first came here, I had no intentions to stay. I think maybe one year, maybe two year you know? I was thinking to go back to Africa you know? I used to have a shop in Africa, and I thought if I go back to Africa now you've got to start building from the beginning again. So I stay here, been here and I got married, kids born in this country you know, I've been here 43 years ago, it's a long time.

I got a friend, he come from Africa, same place as me, from Dar Es Salaam in Africa, and I know them, then you know, I got the address and I come here, you know, not far from here, Wellsborough you know? So I come and stay with him you know, we stay all in same house, we were single them days you know? There was a lot of people, five, six people sleeping in one room you know, like sardines you see, because was no money in them days. You know labour exchange, they used to give you two pound ten a week, you've got to pay, you know, for the accommodation, you've got to pay for the food you know, money was very, very hard to get you know?

There was racism, no doubt about that you know what I mean? You see in the newspaper, you know, 'House to let' or, you know, 'Room to let.' Black man take his bag, he come from Jamaica to Britain, he knock on the door and the white woman coming out, 'I'm sorry, the room is been gone.' You know what I mean? To all this you know, we not a stranger.

When I come in here, I've got the address to come to here, I come straight away to somebody, you know what I mean? So I got a taxi, you know, from station, I said to police, 'Can you take me to some place?' They say, 'alright.' So I come and knock on door, you have no problem. But the people coming stranger you know, from Africa, from West Indies, they have problem.

Chain migration insulated the Yemenis from some of the difficulties of finding accommodation. The Yemenis did not have to face, or were, at least, unable to understand, the xenophobic boards that were propped up in the windows of lodging houses, with messages such as 'Black-Niggers not wanted here,' 'No niggers,' 'No Colour' or 'No Irish.' Tales of the hurt of reading such notices, or nights spent homeless, in all-night cafes, on trains, beneath bridges, in telephone kiosks and sometimes in public lavatories, are a recurrent theme in the narratives of arrivants from the Caribbean (Phillips and Phillips, 1998: 81-94; Hiro, 1971: 20). Many Yemenis, such as Adnan, nevertheless, empathised a great deal with non-Yemeni migrants who were in a similar structural position. His empathy is evident in the recurrent use of the word 'black' in his narratives to describe all non-white migrant groups. However, although it was not unusual to find Yemenis from different ethnic groups in Yemen living together in Sheffield, or Yemenis from the North and South living together in the host city, Yemenis rarely lodged with non-Yemeni migrant groups. During the course of my research I came across one man who migrated without any contacts in Sheffield and had initially lodged in a Pakistani owned house, and another who had lodged with an English woman. The majority of the Yemenis who lived with English people, however, were those who had married English women.

One result of the reluctance of many landlords to accommodate the arrivants was the growth in multi-occupation housing. This was exacerbated by the unemployment problems of the late 1950s. In Friday, March the 21st's issue of 'Sheffield's Colour Problem' entitled 'Greedy Landlords Cash In On Their Plight,' Blackburn was a great deal more sympathetic to the ordeal of the arrivants. For Blackburn, 'Coloured people looking for accommodation in Sheffield face a massive problem, but thanks to the 'open-house rule' you rarely come across one that is homeless. Generally, they will help out fellow-country-men in the highest 'always-room-at-our-house' tradition.' This point is corroborated by Tipple (1974: 3) who writes that, 'Some landlords appear to accept less than the economic rent for their property especially when kinsmen need a room.' For Blackburn (21/03/1958), 'by far the worst aspect of the accommodation nightmare is the considerable amount of exploitation from the rent angle, with bewildered visitors from overseas forking out in the region of £3 a week for some drab attic abode.'

The experience of Yemeni migrants in Sheffield seems to contrast with the experiences of the Yemeni migrants who settled in Birmingham, and were the subjects of Dahya's study between 1959 and 1960. Dahya (1965: 183) writes that: 'As a rule, a room is shared between two men, and larger ones between three men.' For the arrivants in Sheffield, the barriers of the housing market meant that there was no clear cut or even enforceable rules pertaining to the numbers of tenants in each abode. The data on which the present study rests has revealed that the numbers of tenants sharing a room varied between two and eight, whereas the number of occupants who resided in the property was often in double figures. In an extreme case, one respondent claimed that twenty-six people shared one house. There were not enough beds to go around in many of the houses and a further consequence of multi-occupation was that Yemenis who worked nights and Yemenis who worked days would sometimes share the same bed, with each sleeping when the other was at work.

For some, multi-occupation housing did have some benefits. For Mohammed, multi-occupation housing insulated the arrivants from some of the difficulties of language difference:

I came from North Yemen. When I came to here, it used to be two kingdoms. King Mohammed of North Yemen and the South Yemen had its own government. My father is die in Abyssinia, because he used to be immigrant in Abyssinia. Not much work in Yemen, used to be, not much work where King Mohammed was. And then when my father died, I think until I am about fifteen maybe, I can't afford to stay in Yemen because I can't work. I can't do the work, no work even if I could do it, but there is no work. I moved to the South of Yemen when the English government used to be there, so I got my passport, I asked my cousin, my cousin went to masonry in South Shields here, and I asked him for help to get me passport to come over to England. So he did give me help and I go to the immigration and I got passport, you know, Yemeni passport, and then they give me permission to come over here, and I did in 1956, well I've been here since.

I came here alone, 1956, I think I was nineteen years, in 1956 and I stay in England and I start work, and in one go, I never been back home until 1983. About how many years, from '56 till 1983, never been back home, twenty-seven, nearly twenty-eight years. My cousin work in masonry, only. He send me this money for help, to help me come over here, I didn't go to South Shields, he's working in masonry, I could go, but I have a friend, he came into Sheffield working in metal industry and I prefer to work in steel industry.

When I came into England in 1956, the houses was very, very old. You had to go out for passing water, you know for wee, you got to go out. The toilet is outside, nothing inside, the houses got no bathroom, only rich people getting bathroom inside their house, otherwise all the houses is no bathroom, so you got to go out even in the snow.

Well, when you've got big house, maybe twenty people living in it. The room full because of English, the language problem, we stay together. We want to stick together, you know to protect each other because the language problem. One bed there, one bed there, one bed there, one bed there, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, eight bed right, this room, eight bed, bed to sleep, eight people sleep in there, oh yeah. A group, ten, twenty, in one house, oh, we had a lot of problems. The English bloke, the English people we do not living with the English people.

Coloured people, we do not, no. I do not know how the English lived at that time. We don't know, never been in English houses at that time. We don't know how many people living in English houses, we don't know 'cause we never been in English houses.

Scholars have highlighted an irony of post war migration, that the racism faced by migrants in their attempts to find accommodation, rather than force them to return to their countries of origin prematurely, would eventually force them to assert their presence more prominently through means such as property ownership. The majority of the Yemenis expected to return to Yemen after a number of years of work in the host country, and were content to lodge in Sheffield. Some arrivants did attempt to buy property not long after their arrival. However, banks and building societies were often reluctant to provide loans to members of the arrivant communities. The *Sheffield Star* (21/03/1958) reported that 'nine out of ten building societies will not entertain loans to coloured people-even if fairly substantial deposits can be laid down.' The reason given by an estate agent who was interviewed was that, 'They have been bitten too often in the past by the floating population.' Later in the article however, the author cited another argument, but one with great historical resonance in the industrial west: 'Some property owners are most particular that the property should NOT be bought by coloured folk, maintaining that if this were the case the valuation of other property in the same street or neighbourhood would slump.' For Blackburn (21/03/1958), 'the cake can be cut both ways against coloured people. Landlords pile on the price in areas where the colonies are developing, and lay 'no sale' tags where the residents are predominantly white.'

Again, differences arose between the West Indian communities on the one hand, and the Arab and Pakistani communities, on the other. The article (21/03/1958) reports that the said estate agent commented that for banks and building societies the West Indian migrants were the favourites in the 'cash-borrowing stakes,' and contrary to his earlier comments 'are in fact very good payers on mortgages and have never caused any trouble in the past.' The favouritism of banks and building societies to provide loans for West Indians, may have been a result of the Pakistani and particularly Arab groups' more robust myth of return, a robustness that was demonstrated by the aforementioned dates, shown in the table on page 95, at which Yemeni women joined their husbands in Sheffield. The circular nature of Arab migration may also have been a factor, as the majority of the Yemenis sought to return home for long periods after every three or four

years. The West Indian arrivants' better command of the English language and consequent knowledge of the property system in Britain is also likely to have made them preferable to lenders.³ The main factor, however, was likely that, the West Indians, 225 of whom were employed on Sheffield's buses and trams in 1957, did not suffer the same high rates of unemployment as the Arabs and Pakistanis (Daniels, 20/3/1957). The estate agent (Blackburn, 21/03/1958) did comment, however, that all of the 'coloured' nationalities were good savers and that it was not unusual for buyers to be prepared to put down deposits of up to £600. He said, 'Coloured folk will stint themselves to the most meagre sort of livelihood in order to save to buy their own home.'

The reluctance of building societies to provide loans to members of the arrivant communities, made them particularly vulnerable to exploitation from other quarters. Blackburn (21/03/1958) reported that there were 'reports of some paying £200 over the valuation price of property'. One such respondent describes his attempts to buy property in Sheffield:

A little while after I came to Sheffield I needed to buy a house. So I found one which I wanted to buy, but there was a family staying in it. I asked them if they wanted to stay, but they said no, they had another house where they could move.

The owner told me to use his solicitor so I can save some money. I didn't know anything about England at that time, so I agreed. I paid 200 pounds deposit on the house after the solicitor told me the family was going to move. But they didn't move, they just stayed there and paid their rent to the owner. Maybe the solicitor took some of the money too.

It took a long time for the family to move out and for me to move into the house, and all that time the owner and the solicitor made a lot of money from the rent. So I think the owner was a cheat and the solicitor was a cheat too. I learned a lot about dishonest people in this country and I lost a lot of money too.

In order to resist the discrimination inherent in the housing market, migrant groups from both South Asia and the Caribbean developed pooling, or in the case of the Caribbean arrivants, a 'pardner' system for the purchase of property (see for instance; Hiro, 1971: 22). Dahya writes that amongst Yemeni migrants, kinsmen and fellow villagers helped the landlord to purchase his house, and in return gained concessions on their rent. However, I have not been able to find any examples of pooling money for the purchase of property amongst the Yemeni community in Sheffield. Two respondents, aware of

³ In the Yemeni hinterland, as in many agrarian societies, one usually came to own property through inheritance. The fragmentation of small plots of land into smaller land holdings amongst sons, as a result of larger landowners' grip on power, would provide one of the 'push' factors of migration for the arrivants.

the pooling methods that were practiced by arrivants from Pakistan, and in light of the change in their own status from sojourners to settlers and the contemporary value of property in the North-East of Sheffield, were particularly critical of Yemenis for not pooling money. Describing his living conditions, Saleh remarked:

When I first come, I lodge with somebody. I live with somebody, lodger and job, found a job int' steel factory, but not many you understand, the first time, not many, not much. We get about five pounds sixty a week, sometime I earning six pounds, sometime, sometime seven pound if I working extra hour or if I working Saturday with five day, I've got seven pounds, 1960. It was hard work, hard work. 'Carry on quick! Carry on!' But money still lower too much, seven pounds fifty for six days, half past seven to half past four, or sometime, eight o'clock to half past four, morning.

To get a house you live with other people who been before, before you were here. You got houses, some houses bought, some houses rented. Do you know when I came in 1960 how much house rent? Only one pound fifty, for three bedroom, top and below, only one pound fifty for rent. Everything alright, one bread, one butter only about ten pence.

A man from North Yemen got a house and I go with him, that's it. This man was from North Yemen but he's been in England a longer time he's been working in Wales, he been working in France, he's been working on ship, he's been at sea. He come in here when he finish ship. He speaking to company, house company so, 'How are you...?' So whenever you want a house you could go ask that man, to speak, 'I want a house, can you...?' I say 'Oh, you go to ask him for company house.' I say, 'Somebody want a house, have you got a house?' 'Yes,' and then, so, so, so, little house two bedroom, one pound seventy bedroom, alright, alright. There was sometime three in the house, three bedrooms, three people in bedroom, one here, one here, one here, because they not many houses for the Arabs.

The men from Pakistan, that time send money from Pakistan to here, bought your houses, bought your houses very, very cheap, he bought it about 500, 500, 400 a house. Three bedroom, attic, garden, garage everything for 500 see? He decorate it, now when you buy it 70, 60,000, 70,000 now, and that's why lending money from somewhere else and buy your houses. The people from Pakistan alright, friend, they look after friend. It's not the same with Arabs, Arab not give you money, no. Pakistanis, whenever you want to buy your house, go and see friend, that friend, and that friend, and that friend and, 'I want to buy a house.' 'Yes, where? What number? So, so, so.' You coming to have a look at house, coming to see a solicitor, go to your solicitor, book a name, address, give him money, get a receipt, stamp, solicitor, 'O.k.' The Yemenis, no.

However, it is worth noting here that the terraced house which served as the original Community Centre on Burngreave Road was bought collectively with funds raised by members of the Yemeni Workers Organisation in the early 1970s.

Conclusion

Abdulgalil Shaif (Searle and Shaif, 1991: 67) describes an abundance of jobs awaiting the Yemenis when they arrived in the 1950s. For Shaif, 'The jobs were here, in British Steel, Firth Brown's and all the other firms. There was the attraction then of finding five or six jobs in one day! That's how the Yemenis found it here. You could move around from one job to another in one or two days.' The present chapter has demonstrated that

the abundance of jobs that Shaif describes did exist, but was broken by a spell in the late 1950s where the arrivants, like the migrants from Pakistan, were the victims of particularly high rates of unemployment. The disjuncture between the employment patterns of West Indians on the one hand and Arabs and Pakistanis on the other, indicates that the reasons for the high rates of unemployment amongst the latter two cannot in whole be attributed to racism. The Arabs and Pakistanis were clearly in a particular position of disadvantage because of their inability to speak English. The West Indian group, for instance, were able to find employment in public transport, where the labour shortage persisted for much of the mid to late 1950s. In the context of post-war migration, Miles (1989: 126) also stresses that the rural backgrounds of the migrants were also important determinants of their low status in Britain's industrial capitalist economy. This was certainly the case for a spokesman for one of the largest steel firms in the city which was said to employ 'many coloured men'. Under the sub-title 'no [colour] bar' the spokesman was quoted in a local newspaper as saying,

'there wasn't much difference between the standard of workmanship between the coloured and white workers. Most of them got jobs which were not easily filled by white people - semi-labouring. However, some of the West Indians and Arabs were, 'not up to the heavy work,' though this was no doubt because they had not been brought up to it' (Blackburn, 03/25/1958).

It is unclear what the spokesman means by 'heavy work,' which may be a synonym for industrial work. If 'heavy' is meant in its literal sense, then the statement, while grounded in a false assumption about the backgrounds of migrant workers, is also contrary to the conventional racialised assumptions about migrant and particularly black labour being more 'robust' (see for instance; Worswick and Hamilton, ed., 1982: 26)

The life-stories of the former-steelworkers do not stress that racism was a significant constraint in their search for work. In this, the respondents demonstrate similarities with the people who participated in the PEP study of 1968. There, Daniels (1968: 79) discovered that immigrants often underestimate racism as 'the immigrant often does not know that he is being discriminated against.' The aforementioned comments of Mr. Harold Ulliyat, the Sheffield district secretary of the A.E.U., make clear that racism did exist and that the recession gave employers a greater opportunity to discriminate against labour, and in particular black labour. In times of growth, black labour was necessary, but the presence of black people undesirable. The recession dampened the need for black labour and made the presence of blacks, on the shop floor at least, unnecessary.

In his study of Arab housing preferences in Sheffield, Graham Tipple (1974) found that the migrants' penchant for lodging houses was, in part, a result of their intention to earn money in Sheffield and then return to a better life in Yemen after a number of years. However, their residence in over-crowded lodging houses was not functional to their sojourn, and it is clear that the Yemenis found their cramped living conditions, described by one interviewee as, 'like sardines,' particularly undesirable. With the intention to return to Yemen, the interviewees gave various other reasons as to why they lived in such overcrowded conditions in lodging houses. High unemployment during the late 1950s was one reason that exacerbated overcrowding. Here Blackburn describes an 'open house rule' and an 'always-room-at-our-house tradition,' amongst migrants, in the face of the extortionate rents charged by some landlords.⁴ There is an irony that the author of a series of articles entitled 'Sheffield's Colour Problem,' would argue that discriminatory rents, applied by landlords to the racialised tenants of their properties, were the cause of multi-occupation. In spite of his awareness of discriminatory rents, which were one of the main causes of the problem of overcrowding, a problem which was expressed in racial terms, Blackburn endorses the language of racism which constructs 'coloured' migrants as problematic, rather than the exploitative landlords, and in this way Blackburn, 'blames the victim.'

In sum, multi-occupation served to depress living costs in order to maximise remittances, it was a means of resisting some of the hostilities of the host society, and the 'open house rule' acted as a social security net in times of recession for the unemployed. However, living 'like sardines' was not desirable for the arrivants, nor was it self-inflicted. Given the discrimination (albeit not wholly 'racial') faced by Yemenis

⁴ The 'ethnic-relations' approach used by Dahya reveals a great deal about the reasons which underlay the open-house rule. Dahya (1965: 188) argues that the Islamic concept of baraka governed the hospitality of the Yemenis towards others. Baraka, is roughly translated as 'blessing' or 'grace,' and 'can be said to be a function of certain situations; in the first place, those situations which give the individual concerned a preferred position before God and, secondly, those which express the social values of the migrant community and promote social solidarity at specific levels.' For example, baraka is said to be conferred upon religious teachers such as Sheikhs or Hafizes, and is also 'a quality found in those who do good turns to others, who share food and drink with others, who help illiterates by reading and writing letters' for them, who obey and respect their parents, teachers, rulers and elders; who do an act in the right way at the right moment, such as help some needy hungry person; and who offer prayers in the company of others' (ibid: 187). Although Dhaya (ibid.: 183) writes that, '[a]s a rule, a room is shared between two men, and larger ones between three men,' it is likely that where some Yemenis were housed, and the threat of homelessness existed for others, as in the narratives of the ex-steelworkers interviewed in this project, the concept of baraka underlay the open house rule of the Yemeni tenants.

in the labour market and the discrimination faced by the arrivants in the housing market, multi-occupation and overcrowded lodging houses, came to be an expression of both economic and social exclusion.

'They keep us bottom ladder': Work, Racism and Resistance

When we first started work it was very hard to understand anything that anyone said. We spoke no English and our workmates spoke no Arabic, except one or two and often they didn't work near us.

When I went to the employment office in Attercliffe I asked the man there if we could go to English classes. 'We must learn English', I tried to say to him. He looked at me and said: 'Listen to me! You are not here to learn. You're in England to work, only work!'

And that is what it was like. They did not give us any classes in English, we had to learn words in the foundries and rolling mills, and try to understand what the gaffers said to us. And it was very dangerous work too, and we couldn't read any of the safety notices or warnings they had in the steelworks when we first came. So there were some bad accidents because some of us could not read the instructions or understand what people were telling us. It wouldn't be allowed now.

I remember in the rolling mill when a rod of steel went through a Yemeni's leg because he didn't really know what to do. They took him to hospital and they cut off his leg. It was a very bad accident and he did not work again in the steelworks.

For some of us, these classes we have now, when we are old and retired, are the first English classes we have ever had, even though we have been in Sheffield for more than forty years.

Mohammed

When I come to here, I don't understand and I found somebody, Arab who knows me up here and take me to the labour exchange, it seem alright, brought me down the labour exchange about nine. I think, he give me a piece of paper with the work, I go and we disappointed, labourer, that's the only job there. What do you call it, a bar, call it a bar, carry some stuff, steel, to the furnaces and coal, been about one or two year on there and after that we are changed the job to the truck driver. He carry steel from place to the other. I take about four and half years and I get sad and I go home for two years, and I come back again.

I got the job in Brown Bailey's, I'm working in Brown Bailey's furnaces, working what do you call it Vauxhall, do you know Vauxhall, for the car? I did about three years in that job and I left, go home again for two years and come back again to here. I come back to same job in Brown Bailey's. I changed the job after, from furnaces, to examine steel. I take a long time, after that I go home. I come back again, every time we come back, little bit, little bit, we understand about the job, and little bit we understand about the talking from the foreman, the gaffer, and the manager, everything o.k. Nothing trouble, only hard work, hard work. Well, I carried on for some year and go home, and come back, and changing from examine to the crane driver, from the crane drivers to the lighting furnaces. I been at Brown Bailey's, 16 years, at Brown Bailey's. After Brown Bailey steel, go home, and come back again.

I been here about one year, got no job, we get the job and it been hard for me, crane driver, casting very, very hard job. So that casting steel like, carry on about three more, about three and a half years, we go home again. After that, we come back again, I go to the Yemen for two year again and come back here. I been back to the Yemen, and I waiting here, I been Sheffield, every day in Sheffield, one and a half years, no job at all. After that, go home again and come back again, and go to what do you call it, Birmingham. In Birmingham, I working in tube, tube worker, metal tube. About three years time, and after that time an American man come buy it, the firm, and give the people redundancy and sending the job, our job to the contractor. Then I go home, the Yemen and come back again, that's all my story about the job.

When I first come I learn with my eyes, gaffer come, and he told me, 'Do this one.' He show me how to do first time, and I do it. He come to me, change me to another job, I do it 'cause I'm looking with my eyes firstly, and this is the same thing about all the job, yeah.

I pray when I finish the job, I pray by your self, five time a day. If you want to pray on the job and so, if you want to pray, you can pray. Oh, no stop you, most of them very good bloke, telling you, very nice. I remember one man on the workshop, old man, he wanted to pray, working in the boiler. He make a hole here, and the gaffer come and he see him, and he see him to pray, and he frightened the man, because he's frightened about the job, he's frightened him, and after, that man he come to me 'cause I'm next job he said: 'I pray between the boiler and the manager now, come and he see him and I'm frightened that he's gone kick me out. Can you come and to talk to him?' I said, 'O.k., you just don't worry.' That is the place, he pray anytime he wants, he pray anytime he wants, yeah. The other morning, he send the man, the manager, he's making lines and he writing, 'Nobody is walking on this place.' Very nice, very nice bloke, and he left, he leave it to pray. He's good, good bloke, very, very nice bloke I'm telling you. He give them a place to pray, you know, writing, where nobody going to get you, write it up, where nobody making dirty, very nice.

Only one thing when we come in from Yemen years and years ago, very hard work, very hard, got no chance to have the rest, working, working hard with steelwork and it's cold as well, very cold I'm telling you, it's cold from October through winter time.

Nagi

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the stories of work in the narratives of the former steelworkers. The chapter has a particular concern with the migrants' stories of racism, class and resistance. Stories of work have comprised the largest section of the life-stories of the interviewees involved in the present research project. This is clearly because the migrants spent so much of their lives at work. Their self-image was that of a sojourner or migrant worker. Their objective in Sheffield was to earn money in the steel industry, remit their earnings to their families overseas, and then return to a better life in Yemen. The life-stories of the emigrants, have clearly demonstrated however, that the objectives of the former steelworkers were clearly complicated by the encumbrances of the various exclusionary practices that they faced in their lives.

The chapter begins with a brief introduction to the nature of the work that the migrants performed in the Sheffield steel industry. The chapter then follows a rough chronological format in an attempt to complement the structure of the majority of the life-stories of the former steelworkers. I initially analyse the early experiences of the emigrants in the steelworks and pay particular attention to the implications of language-difference in the factories, tales of which are recurrent in the narratives of the former-steelworkers. The chapter then moves on to cover the experiences of the former-steelworkers in the mid-late sixties. There, the chapter has a particular concern with the

implications of both international and domestic political events for the steelworkers. The third section covers the early to mid-seventies and has a particular concern with the now seasoned steelworkers' experiences of promotion or lack thereof.

An Introduction to the Work of the Former Steelworkers

The vast majority of Sheffield's Yemeni population found work in the steel industry. The emigrants worked at many of Sheffield's major factories in the North East of the city. They worked at Firth Brown's, Edgar Allen, Hadfields' East Hecla works, Brown Bayley's steelworks in Attercliffe and, following the Labour government's re-nationalisation of fourteen of Britain's major steel firms in 1967, at the British Steel Corporation's River Don Works in Brightside. The majority of the migrants, especially as neophytes in the steel industry, worked in unskilled posts which were unpopular with the indigenous working class and entailed little responsibility. Their first experiences of work in Sheffield were often as slingers or general labourers, where they worked in the furnaces in bulk steel production. As slingers, the Yemenis spent much of their time cleaning and working as fettlers, where they worked to repair any of the damage to the lining of the furnaces that may have occurred during the previous heat. In their role as fettlers, they amassed and shovelled dolomite and other refractory materials into fissured areas of the furnace lining. Steel is a metal alloy and once the furnaces had been fired, the Yemenis worked to feed them with the necessary compounds in order to arrive at the required composition. They would also often find work in the furnaces, on the procedure of heat treatment, a process which aimed to develop the optimum properties of the steel by heating it up to 1,000 °C. and then plunging it into vats of oil or water. The process of heat treatment left the floor covered with slippery grease and this provided just one danger of working in such a plant.¹

The Yemeni slingers also worked in the process of casting. When the molten metal had been converted into the steel of the desired composition, the steel from the furnace was released into an iron pot, which was internally walled with refractory bricks, called a ladle (Barraclough, 1989: 79). The ladle was then moved, usually suspended from above by a crane or shifted from beneath on a moving platform. Once the ladles had

¹ See also Bailey (1989) for a report on the death of a Yemeni steelworker, and a spate of accidents which occurred in the heat treatment plant of the Special Steel firm in Sheffield.

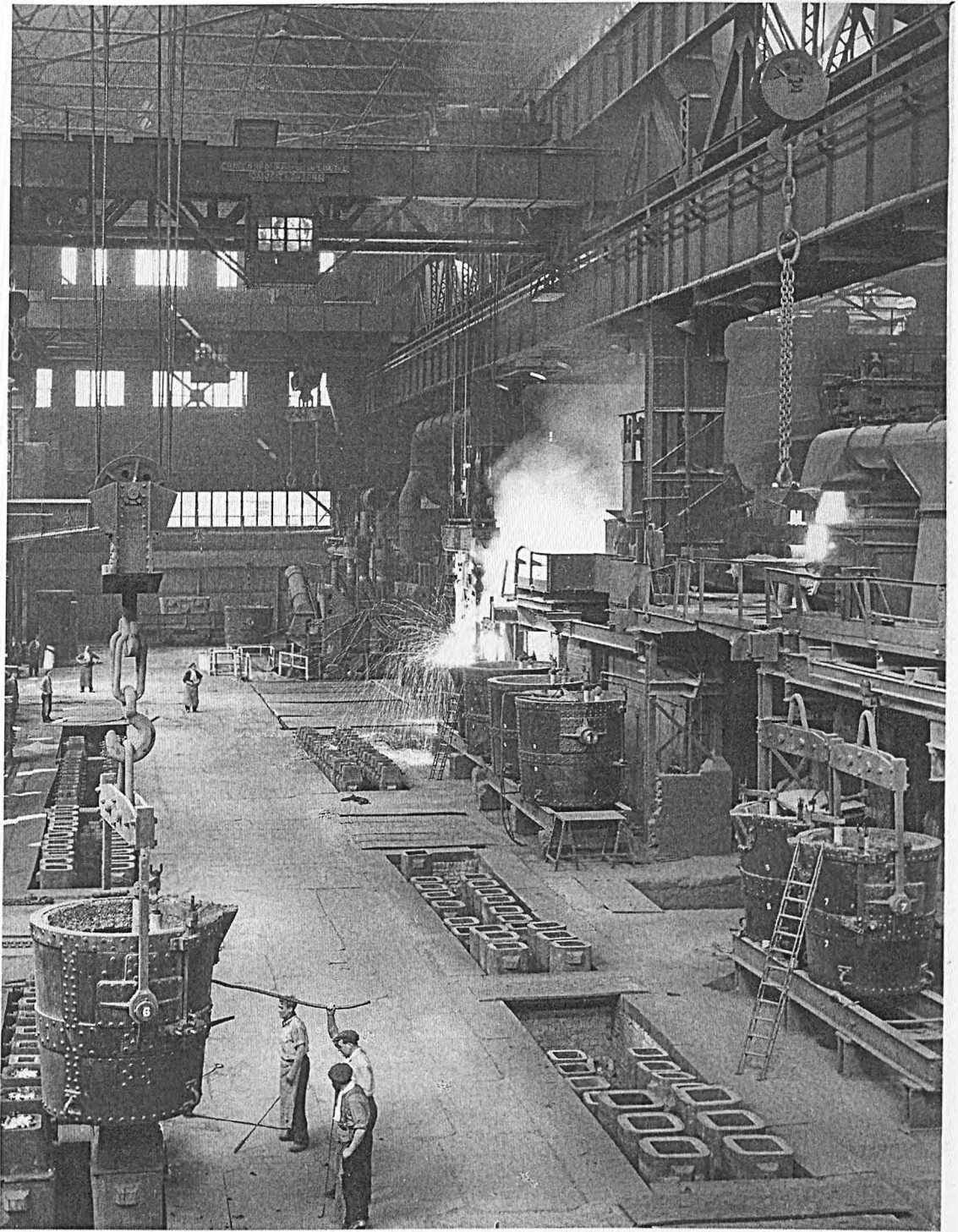


Fig. 1. The interior of a steel factory. In the foreground and on the left a ladle is suspended in mid air by an overhead crane. Ingot moulds are visible in the rectangular hollows in the floor.

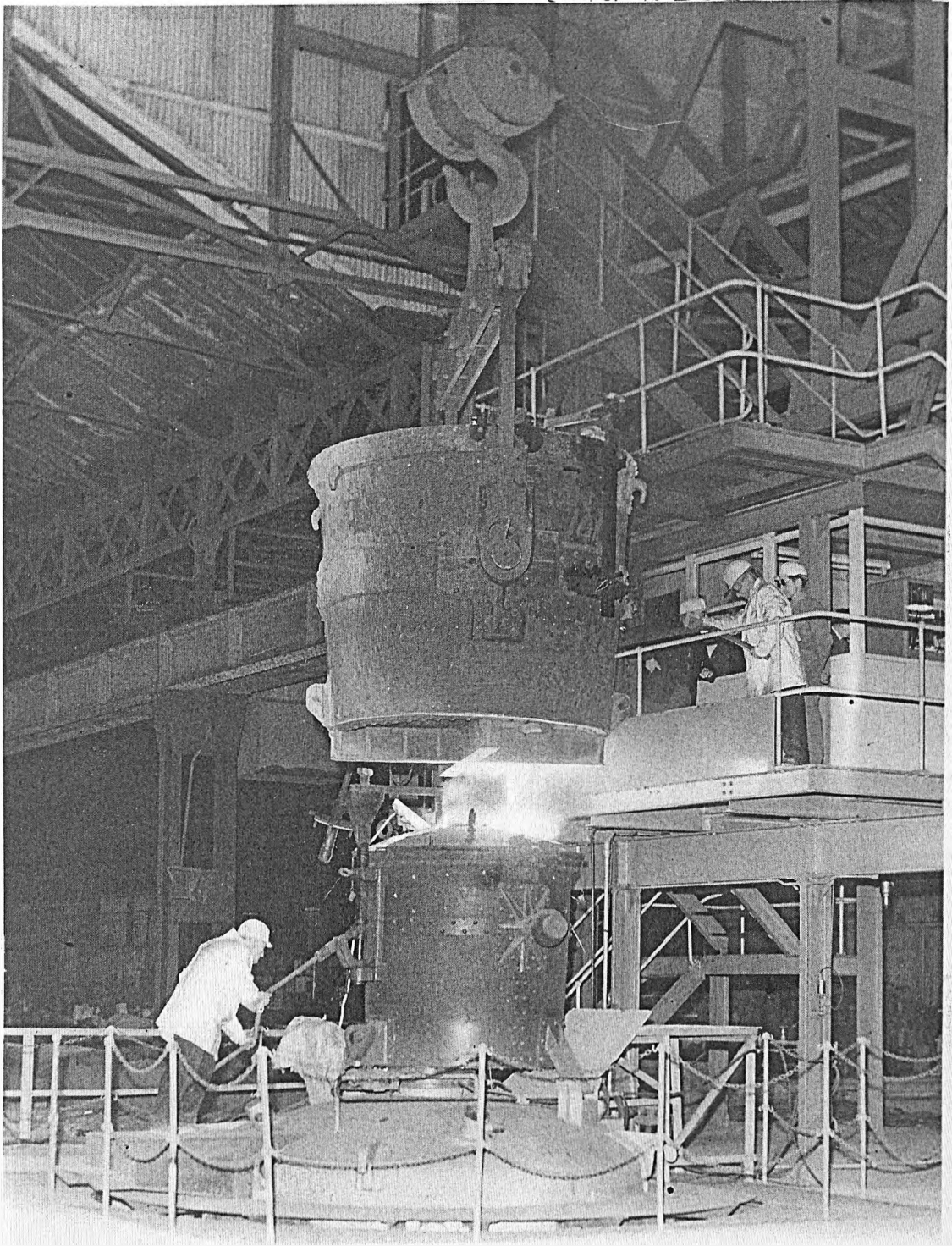


Fig. 2. Transferring molten steel with the use of cranes and ladles, circa, 1950

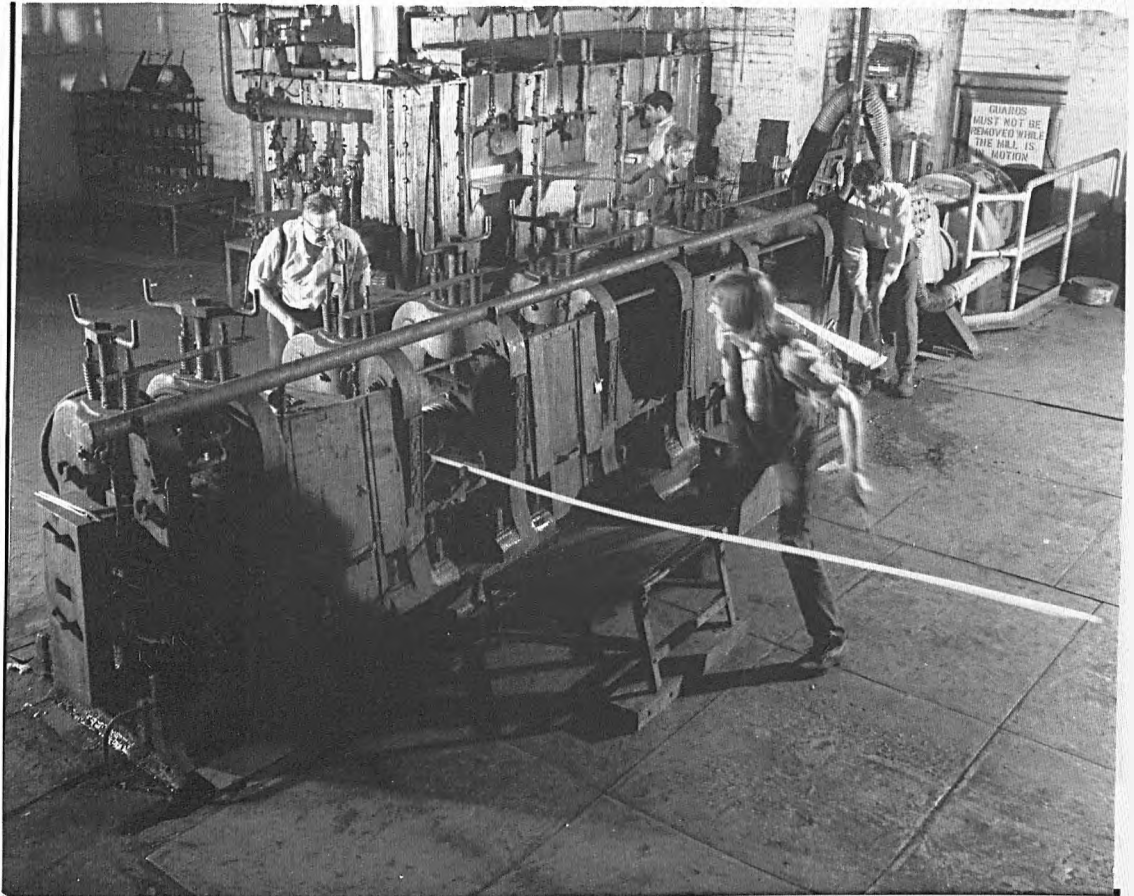


Fig 3. Hand rolling at Osborns, 1971. A man of South Asian appearance is visible in the background. Also note the sign on the right which is written in English and, even in 1971, would have been unreadable to many of the Arab and South Asian workers.

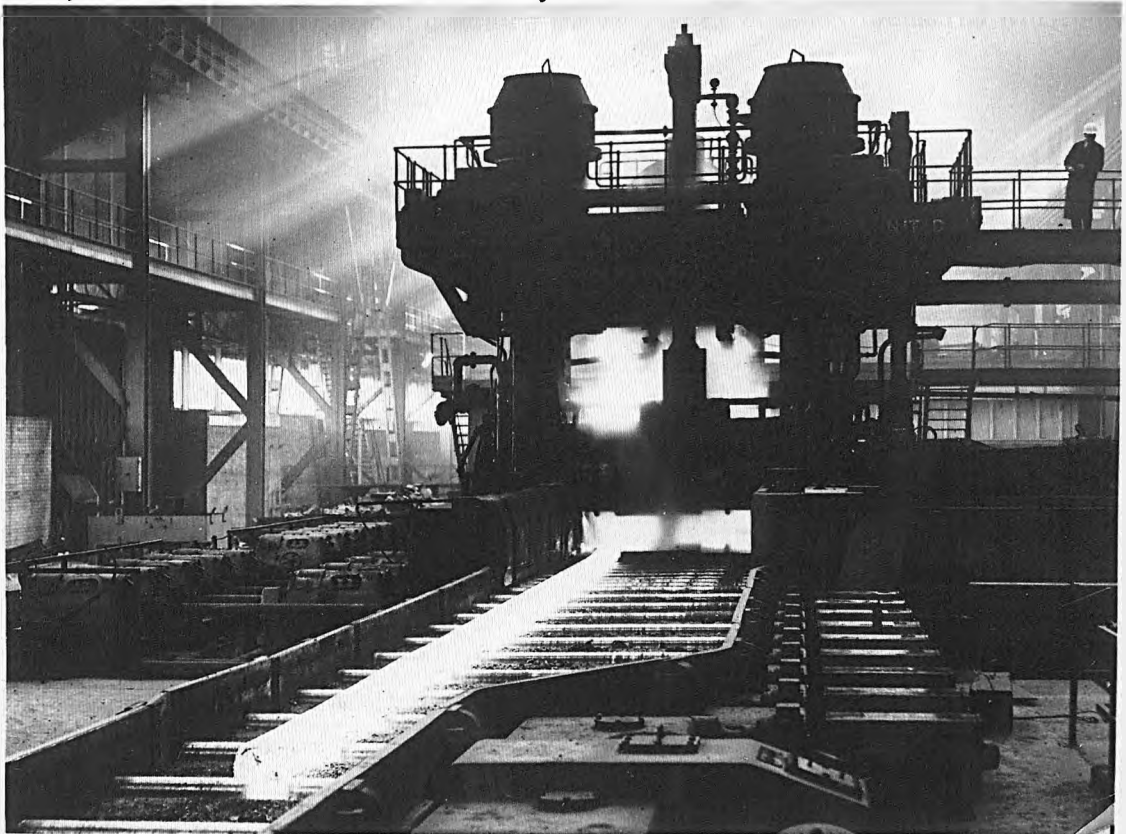


Fig. 4 (previous page). A hot bar of a steel going through a rolling mill at English Steel Corporation Ltd., circa 1960s.

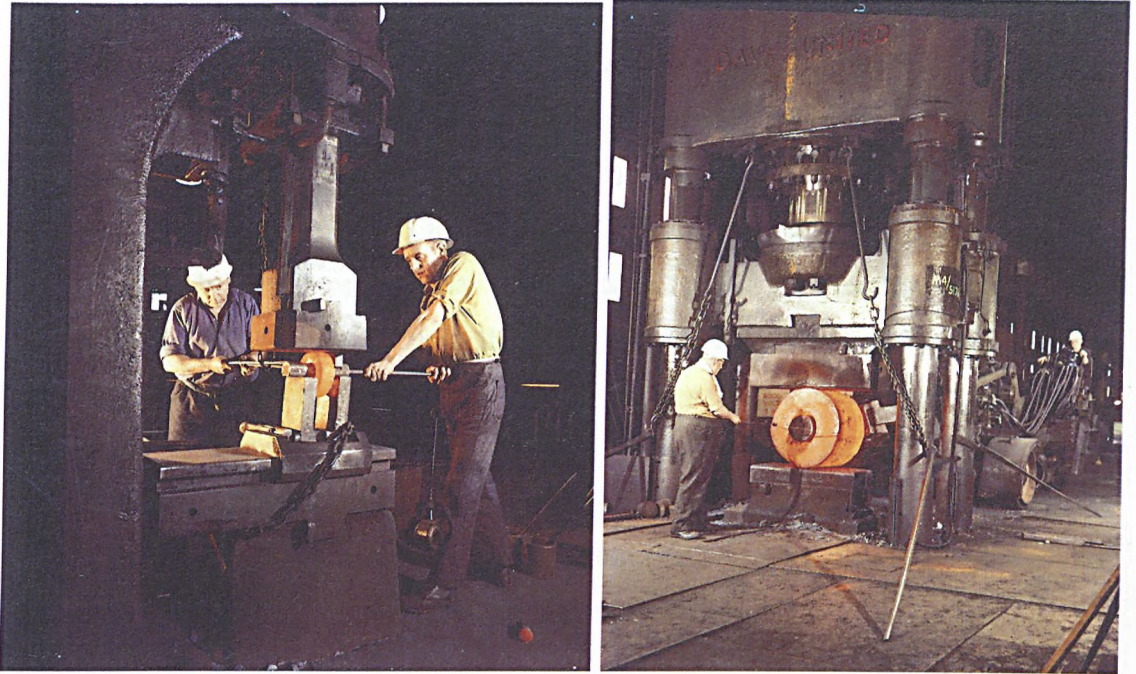


Fig. 5. Hand forging with a hammer (left) and a 1,500 tonne press (right) at Brown Bailey's Works, circa 1970.

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reached the appropriate position, the molten metal was released from the ladles into the ingot moulds. Figure 1 shows the interior of a steel factory, and a ladle, suspended in mid air by an overhead crane, over ingot moulds, and Figure 2 demonstrates the release of molten steel from a ladle. The casts and the resulting ingots were white hot and often weighed tens of tonnes. As a result, a number of slingers were required to facilitate the dangerous process. The slingers again repaired any damage that may have occurred to the lining of the ladles prior to the transfer of molten metal from the furnace. They worked to attach the appropriate chains to the crane operated ladles, and to control the outpouring of the molten metal from the furnace to the ladle, and from the ladle to the ingot moulds. When the ingots cooled they became solid and the slingers worked to remove the often multi-tonne ingots from the moulds and to facilitate the crane-led transferral of the ingots to the appropriate station for further processing into the required shape. Working on the process of casting was again a very dangerous job as the employees worked in very close proximity to molten metal.

The Yemenis also found work in the unskilled and semi-skilled posts of the machine shops of the steelworks, where the machinery which fashioned the often glowing bars of steel to the required shape was based. In the unskilled posts, the Yemenis like many other workers from post-war migrant groups (see, for instance, Majumdar, 1985: 5) found work in the machine shops where they cleaned, oiled the machinery and attempted to keep a clear space around the apparatus. In contrast to Majumdar (*ibid.*), however, the former steelworkers from Yemen have also stressed their role as machine operators in the semi-skilled posts of the machine shops. Yemeni labour was used in each of the three main processes of shaping steel, casting, rolling and forging. The process of casting has already been mentioned and involved pouring hot liquid steel into a mould of a particular shape. On cooling the steel then assumed the shape of the mould and the rough steel surface was then finished with the use of a machine process, such as grinding, milling, turning, shot-blasting or polishing. The second main process of shaping steel, rolling, was conducted in a rolling mill. In the rolling mill a hot bar of cast steel is squeezed between one or two metal rolls. As the roll(s) turn inwards the steel is drawn between them. A number of men operated the rolling mills from each side depending on the weight of the steel bar or plate in process. Figure 3 shows the process of hand rolling, and Figure 4. shows a hot bar of steel passing through a much larger mill. The rolling mill aimed to make the steel flatter and longer. Steel was rolled in

order to manufacture bars, rods, rails, girders and flat metal plates. This station, as the story of Mohammed which opens the present chapter demonstrates, was very hazardous, particularly to untrained members of staff, and a failure to control the bar properly could be fatal. The third process, of forging, involved hammering, pressing or stamping hot steel into a finished shape. The process strengthened the steel by pressing it together. The hammers, presses and stamps used varied in size depending on the job. The forging process again, often involved teams of men who used tongs and machinery to keep steady the glowing bars of steel under the multi-tonne hammers and presses. Figure 5 shows the process of hand forging with tongs, and the process of forging on a 1,500 tonne press with the aid of a motor vehicle. This station was once more a very dangerous one on which to be positioned. Quite apart from being caught under the hammer, the thumping sound of the press upon steel was constant throughout the day and left many of its operators with hearing difficulties or deaf.

Orders for steel components often came from the engineering trades and the former steel-workers are keen to stress the sheer enormity of some of the forgings that they produced. As the photographs demonstrate, the ingots with which the men worked would often weigh tens of tonnes. The interviewees have mentioned that they produced components for all manner of structures and vehicles, including miles of railway tracks. This too, in an age of limited mechanisation, when so much of this labour was performed manually. The processes of production in the steelworks then, owing in part to the size of the jobs on which many of the men worked, typically entailed teamwork.

The Yemenis also found employment in the 'lighter trades' of the industry, such as in the production of cutlery and tools. In these trades, fewer hands were required in the production of each unit. The production of cutlery and tools often utilised electric induction furnaces that were small in comparison to those furnaces used to manufacture bulk steel. There, the method of casting was usually applied to shape cutlery or tools. The artisans used long tongs to tip the white hot ladles of liquid steel into relatively small cutlery and tool shaped moulds, upon cooling they then completed the job through machining.

The Early Years: 1955-1965

The demand for labour in the steelworks, following the slump of the late 1950s, developed again in the early 1960s. The primary data presented in the preceding chapter demonstrated the importance of language difference in excluding the Yemenis from employment on public transport, and constraining the employment prospects of Arab and Pakistani labour in industry. The process of chain migration also worked to compound the concentration of the arrivants to the steel industry. The majority of the former-steelworkers received help from prior migrants in their initial searches for work in Sheffield and this constrained their employment to particular factories, posts and shifts. Taher was one man who eventually found employment through a family member who was already present in Sheffield:

At that time it costs not much, to travel, but it's very hard, the money, not the same as this time, it's very hard to get some money. I got the money to get to London from somebody and then I had to pay him. My uncle come before me to Sheffield. He good to me, he get me job the first time because it's very difficult that time. That year that I first come, been here 'bout eight months, never get job, for eight months, been looking all over, but he get, he working, and he get me some job with him in Stocksbridge, Stocksbridge long, long way. I did that about a year and then after I finished from that I found another job, about two or three jobs.

He been very good for me, he get me a job. It was very hard, very hard, can't speak English language at all. One time he get me one overtime shift, for time and a half, and he said the buses stop and he said, 'Will you do time and a half at work?' I said, 'Yes, I'll do time and a half.' He said, 'You got to have help to get you home, the buses stop.' He said, 'How can you ride back?' I don't know. I waited half an hour, and I walk from Stocksbridge to the Manor, Manor Top, oh!²

I lived with my uncle in Manor and I worked in Stocksbridge. Where we live, we got coal fire, that's all, not like now, no, you got nothing. No central heating at all, only coal fire, you had to build a fire and you got some toilet outside. Before, there was about four people in one room, it was a biggish room. You got the family, you got friends, anybody, sometimes from Shaibi, sometimes another, because we all are workers.

I work in a lot of jobs, I work in Stocksbridge, there, fire bricks, fire bricks, bar and bricks and sometimes to get the bricks, mix some bricks, and next job drive a rolling mill, and after I finished that I found other job from T. G. Lenaman's, I work in a machine cutting scissors and cutters and then after, I work with the hammer, very hard, very hard. I did work with hammer for about twenty years, very hard, I had heart attack down there. Long hours, very hard, it's very hard you get asthma, heart-break, it's very hard, it's heavy, because it's tough, dirty, very hard. Accidents in that trade yeah, I had accident a lot. Bad, I got cut, hurt my foot, it got broke.

I work same as English man, nine-six, together. Some Yemenis, and not much Pakistanis, they're some Pakistani. This T. G. Lenaman's, lots Arab and English, that's all. I learn job because he teach me, a friend and I get a little bit to know about the job. A Yemeni friend who knows a bit English and Arabic and then the management he knows me to do this job, because I'm in the factory, I come to do it understand, and he had me taught to do it.

² The distance between Stocksbridge and Manor Top is roughly 13 miles.

The Yemenis worked between eight and twelve hours a day, sometimes more.³ The majority of the migrants were also willing to work over the weekends for the premium whenever a shift was available. The former steelworkers would often favour night shift work, as they were without their family and night-time labour would also offer a premium, and could serve to maximise the remittances. As Wainwright (1989: 16) observes, the migrants often worked a 60 hour week, with 90 hours or more being quite common (see also, Bailey 1989: 3). When the majority of the respondents involved in the present research project began work in the late 1950s, they were paid around £7 for a week's labour. One respondent who was paid £7.50 a week, in 1955, commented that he had £5 remaining after securing his necessities such as food and rent. The Yemeni and white labourers received equal wages. However, wages were often lessened for Yemeni steelworkers by taxes which failed to recognise the Yemeni migrants' children in Yemen, and taxed fathers at a similar rate to single men. Income disparities between Yemeni and white labourers were further exacerbated by unequal promotion prospects, which often resulted in higher earnings for white labourers.

Saleh began work in the steel industry as a labourer. In his narrative he describes his protracted progress from a cleaner to a machine operator. His story also demonstrates the impersonations of the orders of foremen and gaffers on the shop floor, such as, 'Carry on!', 'Don't stand there!', 'Quick!', which are recurrent in the life-stories of many of the former steelworkers. They occur in their greatest number in the former steelworkers' descriptions of their initial experiences at work:

Everyday, steelwork, work in steel all the time. Been working in what do you call it, in muck, black footprints, for the British Association a long time. Hard work, hard work: 'Carry on! Quick! Carry on!' But money still lower too much, seven pounds fifty for six days. Half past seven to half past four, or sometime, eight o'clock to half past four.

I work Dutch firm and then catch another firm again, try and do job. Best firm, about eight pound, carry on about two years, and then after I working in British Association, Wicker Bank. British Association, mucky, black, black firm, black firm. Too much dust when you working in the morning. If you see me in the morning, when I start you know what I mean, but when I finish work you didn't know me for the dust. Dust, you know, change yourself dark.

People same, but the Arabs is not speaking see what I mean? Anybody who not speaking at that time, well he get nasty job. He talking with the gaffer, or the director, or the manager, or the people, he hasn't get a nasty job. Anybody who not speaking, we not speaking, because there no school in the Yemen, there was no school in the Yemen, for learning in village, so we get a nasty

³ In an article for the observer Bailey (1989: 3) reports Yemenis working a 13 hour night shift at Special Steel in Sheffield.

job, labourer. Labourer yeah, working labourer, not working machine no, nothing. It took about twelve years till I started working there operating machine: 'Carry on machine!'

After when I come, after twelve years, I get a job on a machine, and I carry on operating machine, machine operator. It cuts steel, you know, scissors, a Dutch firm, metal knives for food, knives, forks for food, forks and the spoon, and a lot of things.

Well, people before me started working, say he got to speaking, I speak him. We speaking together or to anybody and I learn job.

Saleh, states that the twelve year period that he spent performing the filthy tasks of a non-machine labourer was a result of him not being able to speak English. On their arrival in England very few of the men could speak any English at all. The emigrants often reported that they learned their jobs through Arab colleagues who were already employed in the steelworks. The process of chain migration at work facilitated the teaching of the new arrivants. The workers were already acquainted, and as Halliday (1992: 64) mentions, because the practised worker was accountable for the new recruit, the neophytes were under a greater pressure to perform. The emigrants who were without any friends, family members or indeed any other Arab colleagues in their place of work learned through observation. They, as in the case of Swaleh, quoted at the beginning of the previous chapter, were often given a trial period of work.

There was a direct link, for many of the respondents, between language difference and accidents in the steelworks. All of the respondents stressed the difficulties involved in steelwork, and this was often demonstrated by the permanent injuries that they had suffered while working in industry. The Yemenis were made particularly vulnerable to the dangers of steelwork. The narrative of Mohammed which opens the present chapter demonstrates that many of the Yemeni workers were unable to read the safety notices. Martin Bailey (1989) too, in his article on the death of a Yemeni steelworker, and a spate of accidents in the steelworks notes, that in spite of the racial composition of the workforce at the Special Steel plant, there were no safety instructions in Arabic. Indeed, a number of the former steelworkers have commented that the majority of firms that employed Arab and South Asian labour used English-only safety instructions that were unreadable to most of their Arab and South Asian workforce. The vulnerability of the sections of the workforce that were illiterate in English is brought into sharp focus in the following extract from an interview with Mohammed, when, not long after his arrival into Britain, he was placed with an English worker who had little concern for his safety:

In 1956 I can not even ask to give cup of water.

I've had two, three accident in my foot and that, because some English bloke is not that kind, when I cannot speak English, he said to me, 'Stack the bar, then move to the centre.' He says to me, 'I'm gonna move.' He don't care if I know or not, he just let go, some people get accident from that, lot of accident, lot of accident, but I've had accident from both feet. My feet, one I've got special shoes for walk from the hospital, look at that. You know, when we stacking the steel, the bar, long bar, I got some tongs, steel tongs you hold it like this, and you get someone to hold it from the other side. What the English bloke said, 'O.k. one, two, three, whoa!' I don't know he count to three, but he drop his side, I wasn't know. When his side fell over, bang, steel bar that big, anyway it fell down, it released from his tongs, what I'm holding, I still hold the top, it fall down and it hit me here, see what I mean? But when I had that accident I was trying very, very hard to speak English to save myself. Very important, before I had that accident I wasn't bothered about speaking English, but when I found out he said to me, 'Let go, let go,' I wasn't know what he said, he drop it and he broke my leg and since that day I try speak English very good and hard, day and night, maybe 6 months.

We used to go, two hours on Sunday, some school, some old school like Earl Marshal School. One school used to be in Darnall, 1960, about 1960. The government gave working people special school, for people who can't speak English there, two hour and they send a teacher, the government send a teacher to old school, to go to learn English, you know, so we learning that from that. We never been in school at all, no never, I mean, for example, public school. The teacher, to start with he was learning us how to do, how to save ourselves at work, when we went out, how to use the walkways, we can use the one way, you know, way out, way in, dangerous places, not allowed to pass from that side, customers allowed to pass from that side, for example in factory, very dangerous places. So we learn from that very important issue, as I get accident from that 'cause I didn't understand what that English bloke said, he don't care, he said, 'Let go, let go.' When I don't know, how let go? He drop the bar like that, and it fall down, it fall down on my feet, break my feet, since that time I try very hard, he don't care that time.

There used to be for example, some very good help people, English people, people who stronger, he don't speak, he don't know how to do the job good, some of them very, very kind, he learn them very easy, but some of them don't care, some of them don't care, do the job or not, see what I mean? I think a lot of English bloke, he give us good help you know? To me, he want to give me good help, he once told me, 'You do this, you do this,' but some people, he don't care, some people is learn very, very carefully, lot of them very bad people, you know, good people, he told me, 'Good work, good work.' I go work, some people, he just dropped the thing, he don't care you know? Some people is just bad, I don't know what's inside them people you know?

Mohammed continues by stating that misunderstandings which resulted from language and cultural differences, in particular the presence of vulgar language in the steelworks, were also often linked to violence in the steel factories:

There was fighting you see, the fighting in the factory, in the street, because the language problem. Some people you speak to and he said, 'He maybe swore at me,' start fighting, the language problem. I mean, English people like to joke. Some of them like to joke, some of them don't like it, but some people he joke; 'Fucking hellfire! fucking hellfire!', but he don't mean he want to fight, it's his language, always using that, 'Fuck off, fucking hell,' 'Why you do this?' 'What for?' 'Fucking hellfire!' You know what I mean? He don't mean to fight me, but his language always like this, you can imagine. Some people they don't understand what that fella means, they gonna start a fight now, because they think he's swearing at the worker or at something else. He don't take it, he start a fight, Arabs, he start a fight straight away, using knives.

But when they been after ten years, the joke of this matter, this problem slowed down. When the Arabs learn English and speak, they know the joke, how to joke, they know how the British joke. He was a bad man, good man, only joking, he swear at the job, he swear, you know, that's his nature, always swear like that. They understand after ten years, not before, before anybody who swears we think is bad man.

The processes of production in the steelworks often involved a racially mixed workforce. The life-stories of the former steelworkers have shown that the Yemeni workers' relationships with individual members of the white workforce varied a great deal. The white workers were subject to many of the same dangers of work in the steelworks, such as the hazards of working in close proximity to the furnaces and the constant thump of the hammers and presses in the machine shops. The struggles that were waged in the workplace against what were seen as the exploitative practices that the different racialised groups similarly experienced as a result of their class position, almost always included the Yemeni workforce. Indeed, tales of their involvement within industrial action are proudly referred to in the life-stories of the Yemeni former steelworkers. The Yemenis have mentioned that they were involved in struggles for higher pay with their white co-workers, and for what one interviewee described as 'one man, one job' or for more clearly defined job roles, in the face of being overstretched by senior employees. In some of the narratives, there is the implication that the managers, many of whom were very fond of their industrious Yemeni labourers, seemed to share the notion of many of the white workers and unions, that black workers could be appealed to, to break strikes (Anwar 1985: 117). The Yemeni migrants however, were oppressed both by racism and class on the shop floor. Tales of racism and, if there was no racist intention, exclusionary practices, particular to the non-white or Yemeni steelworkers, are present in the vast majority of the narratives of the former steelworkers from Yemen. The struggles that the Yemenis waged against racism and the particular exclusionary practices that they faced, seldom seemed to include white workers. Indeed, in the narratives of the former steelworkers, which often stress the fondness of the managers towards the Yemenis, the white working class were often considered to be more racist. From the outset then, the struggles that the Yemenis waged against their oppressions took on both an anti-racist and class dimension. This duality is expressed in the following narrative of Nasser:

I came to Rotherham in 1959 and I stayed with my cousin. He worked in a steelworks as a crane driver. 1959 was a very bad year for finding a job as a steelworker in Sheffield, so I went to Birmingham where I stayed with some Yemeni friends. After four months of looking for work, I found a job as a saw-cutter, cutting bars of steel.

There were a lot of Yemenis working there, and we were friendly with the English steelworkers. We all talked, and laughed and joked together. We went on strike for better pay. The managers refused to recognise our union, and one manager came to my house when I was on strike to make me come back to work. But we stayed out on strike for two weeks, and they raised our pay.

Then I went back to Yemen for six months. When I returned to England, I worked in Birmingham again, cutting sheet metal with a giant guillotine.

I came to Sheffield in 1975 and I worked with my cousin and two other Yemenis as a crane driver. I worked on a twelve hour shift from six o'clock in the morning to six o'clock in the evening, and I had to take a pot up in the crane to piss into. I used to throw the piss out of the crane cab over the workers who didn't like us Arabs. We were high up above the factory floor, and there was a lot of smoke and it was very hot up there.

The most common form of racism experienced by the Yemenis, and one that often derived from the white shop floor workers was name-calling. The Yemenis were called all manner of racist words, many of which, such as 'Paki,' and 'Nigger', would usually be directed towards other racialised groups. The narrative of Mahmood demonstrates that although the Arab workers initially had a limited knowledge of the English language and racial slurs, they were nonetheless acutely aware of some of the hostile feelings that a number of their colleagues held towards them:

In hand, wages, in hand. Come end of week when we finish, my relation say, 'Come on, we going up, wages now,' after finish, afterward. Seven pound fifty, seven days, but when you go outside a pound of meat, one shilling, half pound of butter, three pence. We worked seven days, seven hard days, used to get paid seven fifty a week.

The first three months I did the cleaning. I didn't know what he say, 'Do this, do that, do this, do that!' Then heat treatment, take it out from the furnace, my friend in the front, I'm in the back, drop it in water tank and then, two of them take it to the crane, on the crane, put it back on the fire again for burning, burn it up, drop it in oil tank, smoking, pass it on. White steel, one thousand degrees, tough, very, very hard, very hard. When we take it off furnace, one at front, one at back or one at back one at front, English as well, used to be mixed labour.

There would be some trouble. There was racism but when they used to talk to us, we couldn't understand them anyway so we used to say, 'O.k.' and just carry on with work. Int' later days there's lot more Yemenis there, so then there was a larger group of us, so nobody would talk to us. But when they did talk to us we didn't understand what they saying anyway, so they probably said a few things but we, 'Yes,' 'Hi,' 'Thank you,' 'Goodbye.'

I work about, three years and eight months in that place. Same job, then went back home after three years and eight months. Me and my friend, back to village, he's here before me two months, but went back home together. Three years and eight months total, no holidays except those public holidays, what we used to get, it was three years and eight months total, seven days a week, twelve hour, half past seven to half past seven, twelve. Hot, twelve hour, only half an hour dinner, twelve hour shift, half an hour lunch break, I'm working on the heat treatment, pulling from the furnace there wasn't no machines.

A general finding made in the literature has suggested that resistance in the early years of settlement was almost absent. One respondent in the present research project felt particularly constrained by his obligations to his family. A further respondent mentioned that for some North Yemenis, their illegal entry, through securing a passport from corrupt officials, created anxieties about repatriation and stifled resistance. However, the narrative of Mahmood demonstrates that what sometimes appeared as passivity was often a means of resistance in itself. Here the protagonist resisted the

racist taunts through belittlement. He effectively performs the stereotype of the 'dumfounded immigrant' and, in doing so, skilfully returns the ridicule to his tormentors. However, such name calling was also met with further resistance. One of his sons, comments that his father and other Yemeni labourers would often refer to those white men made to work alongside them in the production process as 'the unfortunates.'

The story of Fayed also counteracts the notion of the subservient migrant worker. The following narrative demonstrates that, even in the early years of settlement, resistance did at times take a more direct form. In the narrative of Fayed there is no ambiguity over the intended meaning of the English protagonists:

When I first came to work in the Sheffield steelworks, I used to work with another Yemeni. Every day when we arrived and clocked in, one of the white steel workers would say to my friend, 'Hello black bastard!' He said this every day for the first week. We asked him to stop, but he carried on saying it every morning: 'Hello black bastard.'

So my friend and I went to the foreman to complain about this daily insult. He said: 'Well that's what you are, a black bastard. It's true isn't it?' And he did nothing to stop it.

So my friend gave the worker a warning, 'I'll give you a week to stop. If you carry on with this insult after a week, then I will have to take action.' But every day he carried on with the same words. He did not stop.

So after a week my friend was true to his word. He brought in a knife and cut the man who called him 'black bastard.' And he never called him that insult again.

The story of Fayed and his friend demonstrate the failure of the foremen to challenge racism. The foreman in his story actually supported the taunts of the white worker. This was not an uncommon occurrence in the lives of the former steelworkers. The failure of senior employees to help Yemeni workers would work to encourage many of the Yemenis to take action in their own way.

The Years of Upheaval: The mid to late 1960s

The second half of the 1960s was a difficult time for Yemenis in Britain. Although some of the workers had begun to speak English more fluently, the international and domestic political contexts in which they were embedded became a great deal more turbulent as the decade progressed. The Imam was overthrown in North Yemen in 1962, and this had the repercussion of strengthening the anti-colonial movement in South Yemen. Indeed, as Halliday (1992: 62) comments, many Yemenis saw the

Commonwealth Immigrants Acts of 1962 as a response to the growth of the anti-colonial movement. In 1963, a guerrilla war began in the Radfan Mountains which straddled the border between North and South Yemen. The conflict would last for four years until 1967, when the rule of the British was overthrown and an independent state led by the National Liberation Front was established in South Yemen. The war for independence had ramifications amongst the Yemeni and British steelworkers who laboured together in Sheffield. The steelworkers were kept informed of the conflict by a four year stream of, often biased, press reportage on the war. The Yemeni steelworkers were also kept informed of the events in Yemen through the radio, and in particular the programme *Voice of the Arabs*, broadcast from Cairo (Halliday, 1992: 87). Their correspondence with friends and relatives in, and near, the areas of conflict, and their own return visits to Yemen provided additional sources of information which were untainted with a pro-colonial perspective. In spite of the tensions that many of the emigrants experienced, particularly during this era, and the difficulties of steelwork, the availability of work was often an essential determinant in the former-steelworkers' assessment of their experiences. This is certainly the case for Said:

I been here 1955 up till now, 10 year ago, when I finished work. Steelwork, just steelwork, Brown Bailey's first time, second, British Steel. It used to be noisy you know, I mean heavy industry in the steel industry. I mean in Brown Bailey's you know, there was noisy, noisy machinery. You know, there was rolling mill. It is noisy, it is noisy, all the steelworks you know? I mean and after they try to modernize all the steelwork, after '70s you know, try to modernize all the work, and some of that there, was a bit, you know better, but before there was you know, there was lots of dirt, yes. I used to work in the morning, after, the night, yes. So every time I working with two others you know what I mean? Rolling mill, hammer machine, you know different, different jobs, every firm is working different steel.

There used to be a sergeant, foreman, then gaffer, then manager. I tell you myself, I do you know what I mean, I work piece work, you know, like the normal shift work which I used to work in the morning, night, afternoon you know three shifts like, but I mean working like piece work. I mean I had to do it because for piece work, to get more money, more things you know, so soon I finishing my work go, come back. But it's heavy work, you know what I mean? Heavy work because not easy, you be sweating like, using gloves, man handle and burn, you know, burn you, and then your feet. You know, sometime you know, if we working in middle shop you know, with rolling mill from one side to another, all workers, I'm telling you, you know, noise everywhere you know, but I mean, we used that time to enjoy it 'cause we used to be young, enjoy it yeah.

I mean we got some of them, some Pakistani with us, some West Indies people, Irish, Polish, Poles, you know from Poland, you know, all mix you know. They were the same as us. I haven't seen any, you know, of those with foreign language to be a gaffer, especially you know coloured like us you know. All working the same you know. I mean sometimes I was working like a sergeant you know what I mean, but I mean to go top foreman, then gaffer, I haven't seen any kind of these people there. It was only English at that time.

Well I mean, I haven't got no trouble at all, some time you know, some time, of course you going to get trouble, some time you know when you go in the house or something like that you know what I mean? The site where I used to work in, had no trouble at all you know, from shop floor,

foreman and everything you know, they used to be good. What is, good management like, yeah. Those people whose on top they never call names, you know what I mean, you're never call names, but I mean those who are working in small, on floors you know with you on shop floors something like that, some of them they can call you, 'Paki,' 'the blacks,' you know what I mean? I mean even if he don't talk to you, he don't say whatever, you could see his face you know what I mean? His looks. But I mean, you know, some of them, some people is, you find them everywhere good and bad that's right, yeah. There always is someone like that int they, it must be, it must be something inside his heart.

Well I mean, the '66, '67 when, Yemen get liberated in the South, liberated from British rule 1967 we got a bit you know like, those who working with us, English people something like that, I mean some of them they go mad, you know what I mean? We been talking about that because we was kick British out, you know what I mean? Something like that. You know, they go mad, they say, 'Well what about you in this, in our country?' You know, 'We were there.' But I mean like sometime you know, make like joke you know what I mean, to each other, but I mean some of them they take it seriously, they take it seriously. Some Yemeni people, take it serious you know, if anybody starts, started fighting you know, something like that, yeah we had the argument, arguing like, until we get in the building. I don't think it made racism worse you know what I mean? Racism, it came late you know, came late. Before you know, they call you names but I mean racism it came late during, after '80 something like that you know what I mean?

I tell you one thing you know, when we used to work in steel industry we was happier, happier more than ever you know what I mean? There used to be plenty of work, plenty work there, during '60s and '50s and when we came you know? When I came in the '60s you know, plenty of work, you could go from one factory to another factory you know what I mean? You know not same these days, hard to get work you know, especially for young 'uns, for someone like that. But in our time was plenty of work. I work in only one, one factory all twenty-five years until made redundancy you know, 1981 I think, yes.

We getting older, yes everybody getting older, them days used to be good yeah.

For Said the anti-colonial movement had the effect of increasing the arguments between the Yemeni and English workers. The seriousness of the confrontations varied between the employees in question. Indeed the workers, both Yemeni and English, were often involved in the war in quite direct ways. As Halliday (1992: 88) has commented, many Yemenis in Britain sent funds to the National Liberation Front to aid the struggle for independence in Yemen. In addition, a number of white and Yemeni workers were employed in the steel firms that manufactured armaments for the British military. The year of 1967 was also marked by the Arab-Israeli War. For Abdul, the war led to a violent confrontation between the English and Arab workers in the steel firm in which he laboured:

I came to England in 1958 to earn money to support my family in Yemen. When I came to Sheffield they asked me 'what can you do?' I said I was a labourer, so they put me to work in the steelworks and let me work with another Yemeni who was a crane driver at Hadfield's.

It was different, not speaking English. One firm offered me the chance of some home tuition, and I regret now that I didn't take it, but apart from that there were no classes in English.

In 1967 during the Arab-Israeli war we had a big fight in our factory about Abdul Nasser. The English and Arabs were tormenting each other and the managers put a letter on the notice board warning us not to fight. There were only thirteen of us Yemenis and more than fifty English.

But there was more racism against us out in the streets. I remember once in 1969, a group of skinheads came up to us on the way home from work. 'Are you Pakis?' They said. We said 'No, we are Arabs' and they left us alone.

We lived sixteen or seventeen in a house-it was very hard to get a place to live. We sent nearly all our money back home, or when we went home for holidays we took lots of presents. I have twenty-three suitcases in my house in Yemen which were all full of presents for my family on my visits home. All my money went to the Yemen. The Pakistanis were different. They bought houses here and rented them to Yemenis and others who worked in the steel industry. But a lot of money we sent home was wasted on buying weapons, or on qat.

Once you fly away you lose everything. I lost my job at the steelworks when I went home, so when I came back I had to start looking for work again. It was always like that. I worked on the M6 motorway as a boiler maker, which was a better rate of money than a steelworker, and I also went to college in Birmingham to get a welding certificate.

We were sure that we'd never lose contact with Yemen. We came here in the first place because we felt that with the money we earned, we could make sure we could send it back and build Yemen. But we found out that being deprived of education worsens your chances in this society and in any society.

The early 1960s had seen the Conservative government introduce the first of Britain's Commonwealth Immigrants Acts. The mid-late sixties would see an increase in the politicisation of 'race' and immigration. John Solomos (2003: 59-64) identifies three events between 1964 and 1970 in order to demonstrate the transformation of the political climate. He describes the controversy over the electoral contest in Smethwick in 1964, when Conservative candidate Peter Griffiths ran on an anti-immigration platform with the use of the slogan; 'If you want a nigger for a neighbour vote Labour.' He also describes the campaign to halt the arrival of East African Asians which culminated in the Labour Government's introduction of the second Commonwealth Immigrants Act in 1968, and the furore over the intervention of Enoch Powell into the debate, who delivered his famous 'rivers of blood' speech in April 1968. To many, the terms of the political debates on 'race' and immigration were interpreted as an endorsement of racism by the state. This etched the period as a particularly frightening one in the memories of some of the former steelworkers such as Ahmed:

Here in Sheffield, work, work, every day, seven days week, about seventy hours a week, we have that time say, 1967, nineteen pound a week. One pound rent, one pound rent, for bed. Somebody else, friend of mine, Arab, when I stayed in house, he get half a pound of meat for me and my brothers. Every day, taking bread and butter, take bread and butter to work, bread and butter all time, all time bread and butter to eat. Eat at work, only bread and butter, that's why, I can't afford it, we got a little money to keep, send it for family. But he take tax off it, some tax, insurance, and pension I pay as well. We had a lot of problem with tax, we had a lot of problem with that. I'd say, three people come to the firm to ask me about children, oh Jesus Christ, I mean, I told them right, I told the truth, 'We got four children before I came here, are you happy? See I'm tell you!' And I got tax. So we working all that times from 1967 till '93, till '93. I worked in same firm, you call it, T. G Lenamen. My brother, he came before me, firm give me a chance to come to here, you know,

firm where my brother's working said, 'If you and your brother come, talk to them.' He got me something to work because immigration office no take nobody who came after that times.

I got asthma, I've got heart attack, I have arthritis, I've got bad eyes, I've got all spot, spot, spot, spot, spot all the times, spot from all over my body. I've got lump, I've got lump in here from work, in stomach, 'cause when I working, I working scissors, knife, scraper, hip joints as well. Yeah, cut it in machine, somebody stand there and I cut it, a lot of different job, a lot of different job. So much dust, and I working shovel up as well, sometime shovel up, you know cleaning. A lot of dust in there, and I work in the furnace, ingot, somebody in front of me, one get one, one get the other one, ingot, he keep inside in the furnace. The furnace, about six furnace.

Honestly when I finish work and I get some spit, take it from here and it is black dust, black dust, very, very dusty. Up to now, when I go to hospital, I've got something down there in my windpipe, basically they saying something dirty in my stomach, that's what he said.

I hear about that Enoch Powell, I hear about him. When he came, when I go to work, 'cause I walked, I can't afford to get bus fare, and get on bus in morning and night, can't afford it, I walked. I walked it, morning, I walked it night, and I working three shifts sometime, sometime morning, sometime afternoon, sometime night. So after Enoch Powell come, you get the people, the skinheads what do you call them, teddy boys. I feel scared now. They're going to attack me. So, it don't matter to him, why? Enoch Powell's all bigger from it, to tell the people, to make people to kill people, no. The people want some help working here that time, we go, give us something, we go home, without a problem. Made me sick, made me sick that.

A long time ago before, when Enoch Powell was around, some people told me 'Hey, now then, Sambo!' He call me, 'Sambo!' That's what they normally call black people, I know that. What can you do? If I'm strong enough, I give him a good hiding but when I hear it I can't do it, I go. If I can do it, I do it, but I can't do it. Somebody reckon you can do it, but no, won't push me, I don't.

The union, nobody never do nothing, I think nobody told them. The people told the managers, this bloke, they calling people 'Sambo,' he says, he come to me, he says, 'First time he give him a chance, but second time that's it.' That's all I remember, because I have lost my mind, sometime I want something, I go outside and I forget about it.

That's what I had in my life, not very good life, but if you got no food in your country, go somewhere else to find it, if I'm rich man, I'm not coming in here, yeah if I'm rich man I'm not coming in here, why, should I come in here? It's not my country, I'm living in my country, if I'm rich.

The common experience of racism and the least desirable work on the shop floor did work to solidify the relationships between the different migrant groups. They were all similarly the targets of racist abuse, indeed with Arab workers being labelled as 'Paki', 'the blacks' and even 'Sambo', the language of racism was not even group specific. The relationship between these migrant groups also seems to have been reinforced by the limitations in the prospects of promotion available to any of them. Speaking of the Pakistani, West Indian, Polish and Irish workers, Said remarks, 'they were the same as us.' His comments are consistent with the observation of Sivanandan (1982: 8) that the anti-racist and anti-colonial struggles of this period began to break down ethnic affiliations.

The Senior Years: The early-mid 1970s

As the 1960s drew to a close and the new decade dawned, the majority of the Yemenis who had come to Sheffield at the close of the '50s had now become veteran steelworkers, having spent well over a decade working in the Sheffield steel industry. They were certainly experienced yet most of the interviewees agreed that promotion amongst Yemenis was rare during their careers in the steelworks. The former-steelworkers mentioned different reasons as to why they thought that this may have been the case. Some cited racism as the primary factor that inhibited the upward mobility of the Yemeni steelworkers, and others stressed language difference and illiteracy. Adnan mentioned that similar promotional prospects were shared by all black immigrants despite their skill levels, and goes on to emphasise some resulting modes of resistance:

You know when we first came to this country, people was very racist you know what I mean? You know what I mean? The jobs I do, crane driving, slinger jobs. You know, sometimes it could be you know, very hard to work with English people, some of them you know, it's hard to explain because you a different race from them you know, 'maybe human being,' you know what I mean? But us you know, we haven't got the barrier, this man, this white, we a human being, we human being, you know? I mean to me, I seen white people before I came to this country, in my country, in Africa, but I don't know this man is white and this man is black, you know? I treat a man as I find him. I mean, I don't make people, God make people int it, see what I mean? That's my point of view, but you know, you come here, you find a lot of different.

I mean then, when we come in, you know, I mean in London a lot of white people, a lot people they refused to working with black people in buses you know what I mean?

We just fight it ourselves you know and work, you know what I mean? It's not in the factories. The factories, you know, you can't work with these people. You get some, you see one thing about English people, the more you try to find out things from them, you not get it from them, this is my experience. The more you keep yourself to yourself it's better, you do a job, that's on the burner, I come to work there, if he talk to me it's fair enough, if he don't talk to me that's it, see what I mean?

At work, you don't get no calling names, no. They don't call you names. When you're outside work sometime, if you work with the people you know what I mean, you found out a lot of things. But sometimes you ignore it, because you go there to work, you don't come to fight int it? If you think there that somebody not try, you know, to show his self, and then you stand for your own because you human being like them you know. I mean, I come here to work, to not insult me.

I mean, sometime you black man you know what I mean, you could be African or any, Pakistani or Indian to do the job better than English people you know what I mean? They gonna still be bottom you know, bottom ladder what do you call it, you know what I mean? But I think sometime people get, they don't bother, that's why you see a lot of Pakistani people, they're working up two, three, four years, you know they're making some money, they open their own business, they say, 'Look I want to be independent, I don't want to be working for other people,' I don't blame them.

A lot of Yemeni people, you know my age you know what I mean? When they get this retirement they went back home you know, a lot, I know they saying, 'I been in this country forty years I've

got my pension now, what I'm waiting here for in this cold weather.' So yeah they went back home.

A number of the migrants commented that there were however, limited promotional prospects. The 'spare man' was a position for experienced labourers, in the late 1950s it paid 8 pounds a week, the spare man did the occupations of absent labourers, helped workers with difficulties and taught new recruits without experience, especially those from school. Mohammed was one interviewee who performed the duties of the spare man in his factory, and very early on in his working life in Sheffield:

When I came to England in 1956, I start work. First time I been back home about 1983, that's about what, more than twenty years is it, from 1956 to '83, nearly twenty-seven, twenty-eight years.

So I been working in the steel industry. By hand we used to do by hand, no automatic at all. I got broken leg, I got broken bones somewhere you know, mark in body, accident, many accident, sound in my head is twenty-four hour now, non-stop, from the noise that we had. It hurt me because I was a bar-cutter, you know bar cutter, when the bar finish, rolling man you know rolling man, how you do it? Steelwork, have you seen steelwork?

We think, when we came into England, we think all English people know about steelwork, but when I found out, many, many people, that I've been asking for steelwork, they don't know. They say, 'I haven't been, I haven't been at all, I don't know, how's he making the steel.' He says, 'I don't know.' A lot of English, if I ask them about steelwork, lot of them say, 'We don't know, we never been in the steelwork.'

I was working with English people, yes. The job what I do was for fourteen people. One set, fourteen men, fourteen of us, every one of us he get a special job, to do one bar. One to pull it out of the furnace, and one to hold it, to cutting it down. When it come out of the furnace it's hot, very hot. So first fella get it out, ready for another, one for the next stop, and then one will hold it to cutting it down, first hole small hole, smaller and smaller and smaller to make it small, you know what I mean, and then we finish it and turn it over. Sometimes we finish it with four inch, sometimes we finish it with three inch, two inch. And then when you finished cutting, another one finish it. I was a cutter, full time job. Loud, very loud, very loud it's hot as well. I got sound, same sound, exactly the same sound, same sound, 24 hour non-stop in my head, and then when I finished there some time ago, some time, not enough work, I move to different factory in Sheffield. I been to Cromley's for months, I've been to Rotherham for about four months, I've been all over.

Because I used to do lots of jobs, I used to be spare man, ready for anybody who doesn't turn up, experienced, you got to be experienced to be a spare man. That one has not turned up today I've got to take his job, that one has not turned up, I've got to take his job, that one has not turned up today, I've got to take his job. Anyone who doesn't turn up, I've got to take it, and I do help people if I want to, otherwise, walking around in the factory, spare man, but I've got to help.

I think that the big job for the Arabs is the man who was spare man, I think that's the limit to that, no gaffer for Arabs, maybe foremen, you know telling people what to do. I used to be teacher for the English bloke when he came into the factory, you tell them what to do, I teach them, I was spare man, I teach them. People come straight from school, he don't know about steelwork at all, completely. I teach them, walk with them, show them what to do. The foreman told me, 'you teach this one, he just came from school.' I teach them how to do the job, how to finish the work.

When I start work, I start work with six pounds a week. I start work in 1956 with six pounds a week. Now people who doing sweeping job he got maybe 120 pounds, maybe 200 pounds this time, but I start with six pounds that time, not only me, everybody. I am the highest, I am the spare

man, I used to get eight pounds, the people whose below, labourer, you know he about six pounds a week, I got an extra two pounds a week 'cause I'm spare man.

So I continue 'till I got redundancy from company, Tinsley Back Road, Sheffield 9, and then I used to get house on Stokely Road across from factory. The foreman used to, not a lot of people turn up for job, then the foreman used to send somebody to wake me up to come to work, overtime.

Two of the respondents involved in the present research project mentioned that they had been employed as spare men. The promotion of Arab workers to the position of the spare man, or at least a higher paying post with duties that included the training of new recruits, did however face some resistance from both the management and the unions. This is demonstrated in the narrative of Fayed:

I arrived in Sheffield in February 25, February 1959. I from North Yemen, I was 21 year old and I am already married and I got three kids at that time. So I arrived in Sheffield, in '59, so I started, without job about six months. So I got a job George Brown's, I working in George Brown's about three months and you know, I learned some jobs you know and I left that job and I went to the other firm you know, small foundry in Meadgow Road. I been there, I worked there for another three months, three months foundry you know dusty. So after I left there, I went to Firth Brown's in Shepcoat Lane, I worked there for four years. So I been doing, got experience at job, like you know, that job what I do, cut in a guillotine, call it guillotine. So I get it out and put it in the remover to remove the paint out that steel and take it out from there and put it in hot water. So I take it out of the hot water and it burnt with the white smoke, so when white smoke come, that showed you any crack in the tin that's coming you know, where it's coming out. So I do that job about one year and I worked, I used to be experienced for that job.

So, and I used to be you know helper, with somebody else who's experienced, that guy, so that man he's left, when is that man left there was another English fella, so and they put him you know in front of me and so they tell me, 'Teach him, teach him how to do the job.' 'I teach, I teach him if he work after me, not I'm work after him, I'm not his labourer, he should be labourer because I am experienced for the job.' They say, 'Oh no,' I say, 'Why?' So that man, they put in front of me, they're going to fund more money you know, more for that you see. They no want to put me you know, more money for me, send that man 'cause they want to look after him. He says 'No, you should be still after this fella.' I said, 'If I am after this fella, he can't do the job and I'm still after him, I'm not show him anything.' They says, 'Oh no, you can't, you got to show him.' I says, 'If I got to show him, I want same money or I leave.' They say, 'No, you get, because he's you know, he's spare man.' I says, 'If he's spare man, he should be able to do the job.' They say, 'No.' So I went to the union.

So the union says, same story, it was same story in the shop. He says, 'Oh I can't help you for this.' I says, 'O.k., if you can't help me for this I go and write a letter.' So I wrote a letter to the, you know, head office in Arabic. Yeah in Arabic, he's English. Aye, so, he get somebody help read it for him and he sent me letter, 'On so and so day you attend into the committee, committee for the workers.' So I went to there. So shop steward come, he says to him, 'So this fella, not go in front of this man, and doing the job, or the shop will be shut down, going strike.' And so he sent a letter to the management. So management when he arrived and he read the letter, he called me to go the office, he said to me, 'Listen son,' and he say 'I'll change you from inspection department up to machine shop. So you can work twelve hours, days and nights, two shifts, twelve hours, you can do that for sixteen, seventeen pounds it's better for you.' 'Right,' I say, 'O.k.' So we see the manager, and he sent somebody else with him to do the job, so both of them, they don't know how to do the job, so after that the supervisor coming out, you know, the man in charge coming out and he show them how to work and how to do the job. So I worked there in machine shop in George Brown's for about three, four years and I went for the other job.

He knows it's wrong, they can't put somebody else in the job and get somebody else from outside and he don't know about the job and put him in front and make me labourer again. You know, they got to deal it right, very, very good, they got to deal it very good with you know, everybody, with no difference.

The narrative of Fayed demonstrates that the Yemeni workers did appeal to managers and unions for help in their struggles against racism on the shop floor. A further incident in the career of Fayed, in a different factory found the factory manager taking a much more supportive position towards him. A position more immune from the hostile feelings that, Fayed remembers, were held by many of the members of the white workforce at the plant:

I start you know work in another company after that, after I working second hand furnace, and after that I work furnace man, and I work there like four years. So I finished altogether from that factory but I went to get another job. So I got another job because you get more money you know in the other job. So I needed to work twelve hours but, eleven hours in day and thirteen hours in night. So and I used to get at that time from 22 pounds, 23 pounds 39p, 1968, so it was good money anyway, 1968. So, and I went home and I come back, when I come back you know, I get a little bit of trouble with that English fella. So the English fella he says to me, he says to me, 'Go get me charge for machine,' I says, 'O.k.' He says, 'Quick, if you're not back quick, I'll go and tell your so and so.' I says to him, 'Go and tell him anyway.' He says, 'Alright.' So it back fired on him anyway. So he come and he start a fight, so because I know I can't fight him because he's bigger than me and he knows how to do the boxing you know, so I picked wall bar, I says, 'If you come near me, I'm gonna hit you, you better to move away.' So all the job maker, foreman come down and he shouting.

So when I finished, you know, the job I told the in-charge person, 'I'm finished, I'm not working with you anymore.' He says, 'Why?' I says to him, 'I come to work, not come to fight, 'cause I done four years in this firm and I do a very hard job. So he says, 'I can't tell you anything, you can come to see the manager tomorrow.' I says, 'O.k.' So I went home in the morning, about seven o'clock in the morning, I went home, can't sleep, about nine o'clock, I get up, see the manager, the manager says to me, 'What's the matter? What's happened?' 'I go everything, everything.' I says to him, 'I'm going to work my shift today and I finish,' 'Why?' I says to him, 'I come to work, I'm not come to fight.' He says, he say, 'Listen son, you not worry about anything, before you come tonight, I'll call all labourers in your shift, and I'll give them a very good hiding, o.k.?'

I went, you know, six o'clock to there, when I arrived there about six, I saw everybody you know listening, in front of me in the office, all. And he says to them, 'Listen to me, I want to tell you now, no matter how long you been here, ten years or fifteen years, no matter how long you been here, twenty years or thirty years, if you do anything wrong with this bloke you will be out, everyone of you!' And this done for me. So when we comes out you know everybody looking, doing his job, his duty, everybody, everybody looking to me, you know very, very serious. They don't like me you know, English people, all English people. I'm the only Yemeni on the shift, just one West Indies, one West Indies in the morning shift, and I am the night shift. So, I ignore them, just do my job, don't talk to them and don't say anything to them.

So for few days, few weeks, I feel fed up, I says to one, 'I come in, nobody talk to me and everybody hate me, everybody hate me, what I do to them? I'm better to go to looking for another job.' So I went looking for a job you know in British Steel, so I got job, steelworks. He says to me, 'You want to sort something out?' I say, 'No, I'm going to finish from you, I'm going to look for another job from next week, 'cause no good.' So he thought I was going Yemen, so he say, 'O.k.' So I finish my week in George Brown and when I give the notice he would not accept it, the manager. I say, 'I want to leave Sheffield altogether.' He tell me, 'You're very good worker, you're very good worker, you're very good this and that.' 'I know that, but I come back to Sheffield next time I will come to see you,' I said, because you know I don't want to tell him, I'm

still in Sheffield and I don't like to work with you. I should tell that it's because nobody you know, talk to me there, and only myself, you got one West Indies working there. So I left. He said, 'It's o.k., but anytime you come back, you're welcome.' I said, 'O.k.' So I left to British Steel, to machine shop, I work there. They didn't bother me you know, friends and talk to me, laughing with me, I laugh with them, I joke with them, they joking with me, like, no problem.

The second incident in the narrative of Fayed demonstrates the esteem in which he was held by his manager. Many of the respondents have reported that they were well-liked by their seniors. Indeed, studies of Arab coastal settlements have also reported that the Arab seamen had a good reputation amongst employers, albeit often for obedience and sobriety (see for instance, Collins, 1957: 193; Byrne 1977: 263). In the steelworks, the sojourner mentality of the migrants contributed to making them particularly industrious workers. The economic migrants would, for instance, often work all available overtime. In the extreme case of Mahmood, we have seen how one man worked seven days a week, for three years and eight months, only stopping for public holidays, and in the case of Mohammed, we have seen how, even on his days off, he was always available to fill the post of any absent labourer. The work ethic of the migrants, too, was resiliently demonstrated in what were often the most disheartening sectors of the steel industry. The good-favour in which they were held by their seniors is often shown by the, not uncommon, admission that the factory managers would save the Yemenis' their jobs for when they returned from their visits to Yemen, excursions which would often last a number of months and even years. In some cases, where the job was no longer available, managers would relocate their Yemeni sojourners to other departments in the steel firms, so as not to lose them. The gaffer at the firm in which Muthana worked was one senior employee who was particularly keen to maintain such a valuable employee:

I don't bring family here. When I was in British Steel they told me, that gaffer, because as I said to you, he liked me, he says, 'Why don't bring you family, you got good job, you stop one year, two years and you go and you start again. Why you don't your bring your family?' So I give him excuse. I said, 'I've got no house, I can't afford to buy house.' He says to me, 'Don't matter about house, I'll get you house, because it's some houses for British Steel workers.' Yeah, he say, 'I get, I'm going to give you house, and then you can bring your family.' So I don't bother to bring my family here, see what I mean? So I said to him, 'Maybe next time, I don't know.' So that's it and I don't bring my family here, my sons and my wife, my family, and I keep go to see them, stop one years, one and a half years, six months, and come back, and that's it.

I do good job when I was work you see. I looked one day, the foreman show me jobs, my eye look yeah, one day, two days and straight away I, you know, do it. Well, even rolling mills, when they start straight away, see maybe two days three days, and then you know the job and that's it. So some English people they used to come very young you know and he stopped three, four weeks till he know the jobs properly, some Arab, you know, see, they know the jobs straight away, see what I mean? So you know, I been doing good job you know, and it's very, very hard, very hard, so that's it.

When I worked here they used to be good to me you know. Sometimes to get a good job, you'd have to be in queue. See some of them, some people, English or anybody they stop till they got chance see what I mean? So I got chance for good job you know, that's why the foreman tell me, he says: 'Why you? Come on man, you got good job you know, English people, they taking queue and some of them maybe one year to get good job, what about you?' He says, 'When you got good job, then you work about one years, two years and then you go home?' I said, 'yeah, I can't help it you know, 'cause I want to see my family.' So and I work about five times in British Steel, after that you know, go to Yemen and come back, go to Yemen and come back.

There was no problems at all you see, to me, there's no problems at all, but as I tell you it's very hard work. We spent our life in work, you know, see what I mean? All our life, we destroy our life in work you know son, from young till you get old, you see what I mean? Working. I came about nineteen years old, something nineteen years old or eighteen years old, 1961.

The attitude of many of the managers towards religious observance also provides evidence of the respect of many of them towards members of their Yemeni workforce. There was a pattern amongst the respondents that revealed that a number became more serious about religious observance as they grew older. In particular, they became more earnest about observing the two pillars of Islam that were particularly difficult to reconcile with the time that they spent at work; the *salat*, or the five daily prayers, including the *jummah*, or Friday noon prayers, and the fast during the holy month of Ramadan. Alison Shaw (1988: 44-50) argues that in the case of Pakistani migrants, the greater commitment to piety was often linked to the migration of the wives of the men. One Yemeni man involved in the present research project made explicit that his wife had effectively ended his drinking habit after her arrival in Sheffield. As time progressed the Yemeni men also became more fluent in English and more confident about making requests to their seniors. Many of the respondents have said that they performed all five prayers simultaneously at home after their shift, and especially in their early years at work. The respondents have mentioned that when asked, their managers often allowed them to pray. Those that did pray at work often did so during their break-time. The number and length of the breaks that the former steelworkers were entitled to varied across shift, post, firm and time. As a result the majority of the steelworkers that did pray at work had to accommodate their times of worship accordingly. A small number however, claimed that they were allowed to observe the *saleh* at the correct times during the day, determined by the position of the sun, with their break being moved accordingly. Two interviewees stated that their senior employees even found them a clean space in which to pray and prohibited other employees from entering. A further two respondents said that they were not permitted to pray while working, and a number of others mentioned that the proper performance of ablution in the filthy environment of the steelworks prevented them from properly

practising the *salat* at work. The narrative of Nasser provides one example of a manager who permitted members of his staff the opportunity to pray at work and to even observe the *jummah*:

First when I was young, I don't pray, but after when I was, you know, I know about what God said, I read the Koran, you know, I was about, thirty-four, thirty-eight, you know something like. I, first, when I started work in the factory, I asked them, 'Can you let me to pray?' And the person, he said, 'How long you take?' I said, 'I take about half an hour, to ablution and to pray, and I want a place to pray.' He said, 'I'll make you a place, o.k.' When I started British Steel, they give me a small room, he's give me the keys and he told me not to let anybody to go in there, because I told them I don't want anybody to put his shoes, and, he give me mat, and he says, 'Anybody tell you not to go, just ignore them and go.' Yeah, and I used to do prayer in the factory, I used to.

On Friday, in 1980 we asked, because our friends talking about it and I told him, shall I ask the manager to give us time to go to the mosque? I was the one in the factory who speak English only, the one who speaking, because the others is not speak English, and they says, 'Yes, will you ask him.' I says, 'They not going to pay you if you go for an hour, the firm is not going to pay you,' but we going to ask him and see what the answer he going to give us. He was a good man named Mr. George. I asked him, 'Mr. George,' he says, 'Yes,' I say, 'All them Arabs, don't say I told them.' I said, 'But I want to go to the mosque, and they want to go to the mosque especially on Friday, only for an hour.' He says, 'You're going to put furnaces off, you going to do some, you know, you're going to cause big trouble. Alright, o.k., leave it with me, and I'll let you know.' I say, 'I'll leave it with you, you're a good man, if you help us to pray, God will help you.'

He come back next day, it wasn't Friday that day, I asked him on Monday, and he give me answer on Tuesday. He says, 'How many men, he want to go with you?' I said, 'There's about fifty Arabs in that firm you know,' I says, 'About eight or ten, I think about ten.' He says, 'Where abouts are they?' I says, 'Oh, that's no bother, only me and Mohammed, so and so.' Start giving name, he take all names and he asks Mr Steve. Mr. Steve who runs the firm you know, he owns the firm, he says, 'O.k., you can go on Friday, eight of you, but we're not going to pay you for that hour when you are out, it's like dinner time you know what I mean?' I says, 'O.k.' We take our dinner time, an hour outside, we go to the mosque, and we go to Mosborough, 'cause Mosborough is near to our firm. Mosborough, it's not far from where we work, there's a mosque there, Pakistani mosque, and it's still there you know. We do it for, for about four or five years, but in the other factories, I used to pray nights, when I would come home. We pray five times, for all what we missing, you know we do them all together.

The former steelworkers that worked during the daytime found fasting during the holy month of Ramadan particularly difficult. The labour that they performed was extremely demanding, and the fast, which includes an abstinence from drinking, was perhaps impossible for those who laboured in the intense heat of the foundries. A small number of interviewees mentioned that in order to observe the fast, they would attempt to apply for their holidays during the holy month, or if they were not already working nights, request a change to night shift work. In each such case, as in the case of Asad, their requests were granted:

When I went, to ask manager, I said, 'I want to go and *saleh* every time, every time, not one time only, every time you know, *saleh*.' He said, 'O.k., o.k., good boy,' says, 'O.k.' and he give me letter, says, 'That's letter.' And that letter I took to gaffer and he read it, everything o.k., take it to somebody else and they bring it back, he says, 'O.k. you going to *saleh*.' That's what happened, he gave me a letter, sign, send back, you know and I going *saleh* every break time.

When Ramadan, I fasted, I went to see manager, first date in Ramadan, I'm going to see manager. Manager, he says, 'What you want?' I says, 'This Ramadan, if I can work in night o.k.? If I cannot working in night, I'll send you a letter from doctor.' He says, 'I will see if you will swap working.' He swap the people working in night, and I working in night. I says, 'O.k.,' So Ramadan and I still working nights. When I finish Ramadan I go to see manager, says, 'Finish now, Ramadan.' He says, 'Alright, there's still your job.' I says, 'O.k.' That's what he's like, not any wrong with that, not any trouble, everything o.k. That manager he's good him, he's been Arab country. Oh, he been Egypt, been Saudi, been Aden that manager, been those three country, and he says, 'Don't worry when you're going *saleh*, you going *saleh*, anybody told you different, come to me.' He's, I told you, give me letter to foreman and gaffer, and I take that letter and show it to the foreman and his mate, he says, 'O.k., don't worry, you go and *saleh* you time, time for *saleh*, you go and *saleh*.' I leave job and I come back to work later on.

All day, five times a day, five times. When I working just, four times. I working about two hour and a half, *saleh*, then I come back to work, that's why. He's good manager, he says, 'When he pray, leave him pray, when your finish your prayer then come back to your job.' Then that foreman and the gaffer o.k., and he says, when it's time, he looking time, he looking to me, 'You going *saleh*?' He's just talking like that, 'When you're going *saleh*?' I says, 'O.k.,' and I going *saleh* and I come back to work, that's all.

As has already been mentioned and as the last four stories seem to demonstrate, there was a general agreement amongst the interviewees that they were well liked by their seniors. However, this finding was not unqualified amongst the former steelworkers. Ali recalled a particular a supervisor who singled him out for discrimination, in an experience that severely angered him. The interviewee is not sure why he was singled out, although he mentions that racism may have been a factor. This happened late in the working life of Ali and he also implies that the pressures of the recession may have had some bearing on the attitude of his supervisor:

I been working sometime crane driver, sometime steelwork, tong, working with tong, that's all, rolling mill, very, very bad, very noisy, sometime hammer, all trade different. Them days when I working, rolling mill, come back to British Steel, furnace man, when I come back, it's call him Guillotine, working in machine, cutting steel, and they're all different, all different jobs.

I worked nights for five years, regular, regular night, and after then, two shifts, two shifts of morning and afternoon. There was Pakistani, West Indians, Irish, all, all. Yemenis were never promoted, never, never, never, all English, all English, but some English good, some English you know trouble. You know, last time when I working, last time, that gaffer bad, very, very, bad, small gaffer, but management good, look after me. That small one, when I'm working with me is very bad, trouble all the time, make me sick. He push, push, push, push nearly, nearly kick me out, try to kick me out. He never give me chance you know to have break, when you know everybody go, he want me to do more work you know. You know, breakfast time, when everybody went to breakfast, snack time, breakfast, 'You! No breakfast! Carry on!' Honestly. He just did it to me, why? 'No, you carry on work!' I will. I can't refuse because I want job, when I finish, when I finish job then what, nothing? Go to labour exchange? I'm going to labour exchange. Never been labour exchange, never have one penny from labour, from when I come, 1955 to when I finished work with my pension, never been labour exchange, just steelwork.

Oh well, I can't do nothing to him because as he says, he'll kick me out, when I refuse, they gonna sack me straight away, sack me. I can't go labour exchange because I want work for my family. Ah well, that gaffer, last time, last two years when I finish work, very, very bad honestly. I'm going toilet for pass water, gone toilet. When I come back, he says, 'You not working tomorrow.' I says 'Why?' 'You not working tomorrow, I tell you.' Everybody working Saturday, rolling mill,

so job maybe twenty pound, one day, this Saturday. He says, 'You not working, been to toilet.' Another man been toilet, 'You working tomorrow.' He hate me too much.

We did good job, everybody like me, when I working for Brown Bailey's, when I work in British Steel get same, when I working to T. G. Lenamen, got same, 'Good worker, this man, good worker.' When I been there, management, big man like me very much, 'He's good worker that,' but this man, he don't like me, I don't know why. He like everybody else, but he don't like me, everyone working, like me, everybody working rolling mill like me, just this man, this man not like me.

We getting older, but I don't forget, I don't forget all my life, because he's hate, hate me very much. Make me very mad. He tried kick me out, because the management says, 'Six month, this firm close, after six month.' He tried push me straight way, nearly kicked me out, because when I have a thousand pound or two thousand pound when I finished work, but he tried to sack me, get me sacked better, but he can't, he can't do it. I do my job, then when him tell me something else like that, I don't talk to him.

Some people bad, some racists, not friends with Arabs. I am British, you've got British passport. I am British, somebody come, English man it is, got British passport he says, 'Still you black,' and he says, 'Still you black,' and I says, 'Alright, no different,' I says, 'No different.'

Anyway, all my life, I been here 48 years, I been here, I don't make trouble with nobody, never, never been police station, never. I don't know what is it police station? I don't know see. But some gaffer very, very good, some gaffer, same one I tell you about, him, the last one is stupid, is stupid at all. But finished, me and him, finished, same, close, all pension, retired man, he retired and that's it, fair enough.

The interviewee reports that his supervisor would overwork him, withhold his breaks, deny him of overtime, and even attempt to dismiss him, in order that he would forfeit his redundancy payment. He comments that as a result of his duty to provide for his family in Yemen, he felt helpless to respond. Again, the context of the recession was likely to have had some impact upon the reaction of the respondent. As we have seen before, in the narrative of Fayed, and elsewhere (see for instance Sivanandan, 1983: 5) simply leaving the job, either formally, or just 'downing tools and walking away', as an act of resistance was not an option to Saleh as there were so few jobs available on the labour market at that time.

Conclusion

A general finding in the literature suggests that post-war migrants worked mainly in those occupations that were vacated by the indigenous working class (see for instance, Sivanandan 1982: 3; for Yemenis see Searle and Shaif 1991: 67). The narratives of the former steelworkers have emphasised, however, that for much of the time, the Yemenis worked side by side with white workers in the steel factories. The former steelworkers did feel as though they occupied the least desirable jobs, and in spite of the shared nature of production, their narratives indicate that there was a racial division of labour

on the shop floor. The posts in the steel industry such as work as a slinger or work in the rolling mill were particularly complementary, and the performance of one production process typically entailed teamwork. In those posts, the Yemenis worked side by side with the indigenous workers. However, the restrictions on Yemeni promotion and the relative mobility of the white workforce meant that racial disparities soon emerged between a permanent Yemeni lower class and a transitional, white mobile class, with opportunities to flee the least desirable jobs.

The life-stories of the interviewees emphasise the importance of language difference, in structuring the working conditions of the Yemenis, especially in their early years of settlement. The Yemenis' initial unfamiliarity with steelwork and the English language was overcome, the latter to varying degrees amongst the steelworkers. Their continual confinement to the least desirable work in the steel industry is also indicative of the significance of their broken work patterns, which were a result of the return visits that many of the men made to Yemen. In addition, the former steelworkers' experience of racism was salient in many of the narratives and worked to constrain their mobility in the steelworks. In theoretical terms, the differences in the prospects of the white and Yemeni labourers seem consistent with the general notion of Marxist theorists of 'race' and class such as Sivanandan (1983) and Cox (1959). Such theorists have argued that racism is instigated by the bourgeoisie in order to impede class solidarity and thus facilitate exploitation. However, although managers were generally reluctant to act against racism, the life-stories have demonstrated Miles' (1989: 100) observation that instances of racism that resulted in disruption amongst the workforce were not always welcomed by managers, as rates of productivity were disrupted.

In using Marxist analyses of 'race' and social class, where differences in the working conditions of white and black labour are explained as being instigated by the bourgeoisie, it is important not to sideline the racist abuse from the white working class. The former steelworkers have generally agreed that where racism existed, it was more prevalent in their day to day toil amongst their white colleagues on the shop floor. Indeed, many of the people in positions of power in the steelworks were reportedly quite fond of the Yemeni workers in their plant. This is demonstrated through the attitudes of some of the managers towards the sojourners' return visits home and religious observance. The empirical data presented is consistent with Hall's (1991) and

Harris' (1993) critiques of neo-liberal orthodoxy. In neo-liberal theory, capital is perceived 'as a rationalizing, all absorbent juggernaut which obliterates difference and particularity in its onward march to commodify everything, in its relentless search for profit' (Harris and James 1993: 50). In direct opposition to this, the narratives of the former-steelworkers have demonstrated that the steel factories, where the majority of Yemenis laboured, operated blatantly racist organisational structures which were anything but equitable. In spite of the acknowledged industriousness of many of the Arab workers, they were nonetheless, kept in the most lowly positions in the factory hierarchy. The denial of promotion to skilled Yemeni employees, as in the case of Fayed, sometimes proved disadvantageous to the steel companies. This illustrates how dysfunctional the factories proved to be in their daily operations, in the face of racism and the open discrimination against some of their most effective workers, who were excluded from promotion and greater responsibility. The evidence presented shows that racism cannot, in the context of the steelworks, be reduced to economic criteria and that racism had more autonomy.

This research is particularly significant through illuminating the frequency of the former steelworkers' acts of resistance to racism and exclusionary practices in the Sheffield steelworks. The life-stories presented in the present chapter are consistent with much of the findings of Halliday (1992) and Searle and Shaif (1991) who have written in detail about the development of Yemeni community organisations in Britain and Sheffield, respectively. There is no substantial evidence to suggest that resistance to exclusionary practices in the steelworks were waged through the Arab or Yemeni political or workers organisations. They both argue that the development of community organisations was linked to the development of the nationalist movement in Yemen. The main role of the Arab Workers Union (AWU) and the Yemeni Workers Union (YWU), the two most powerful and active groups, once established, was the development of political and economic bonds between the emigrants and their home country, and, in accordance with the migrants' intention to return, not an engagement with British society (Halliday, 1992: 104). The organisations, under the leadership of a new generation of Sheffield-educated, Yemenis were reformed to focus on the condition of the Yemenis in Sheffield after the recession in the steelworks of the late 1970s and 1980s (Searle and Shaif, 1991: 71-3). In spite of the orientation of the AWU and the YWU, prior to the 1980s, and the reluctance of British unions to support the migrant workers, the data presented

in this chapter has revealed that tales of passive and active instances of resistance to exclusionary practices in the industries in which the migrants laboured are common throughout the narratives of work of the Yemeni former steelworkers.

The Yemenis made efforts to resist exclusionary practices through orthodox channels of resistance, including working through unions and appealing to senior employees. The begrudging assistance often offered through such channels, however, often encouraged the Yemenis to 'take matters into their own hands.' The life-stories of the former steelworkers have revealed that anxieties over repatriation and obligations to financially support families were an important factor in lessening resistance for some. However, rich narratives of acts of passive resistance and more active modes of resistance are present. The Yemenis developed passive modes of resistance including toleration, which included, in one highlighted case the strategic performance of immigrant stereotypes. The Yemenis also developed more active and confrontational modes of resistance, both peaceful and violent. In some cases the narratives demonstrated instances of confrontation with knives, which were perhaps grounded in Yemeni culture. In Yemen, the carrying and use of knives for everyday agricultural tasks, and the fashionable adornment of a knife or djambia as a symbol of masculinity, perhaps transferred itself to be a significant feature of resistance in the steelworks of Sheffield.

In sum, the life-stories of the interviewees have shown that the Yemeni former-steelworkers' relationships with individual members of the white workforce did vary a great deal. In spite of this, the structural oppression of being denied promotion and confined to the lowliest positions in the steel industry was ever-present in the narratives. The difficult conditions in which the Yemenis worked, be they the result of language difference, their peasant backgrounds or racism, were certainly compounded by the more overt expressions of racism that many of the migrants faced from their colleagues on the shop floor. Yet the life-stories of the former steelworkers have demonstrated that the Yemenis persistently resisted racism and other exclusionary practices in both active and passive ways.

'From house to work, from work to house'. Time-off in Sheffield

I start six o'clock, I finish six, twelve hours. This is hard work, nearly seven days a week we worked, worked Saturday, you know, some jobs they going over the weekend. Working all the time, I have time for myself from six o'clock when I finished work, that's it. I make dinner for myself and that's it. That's it, not many television at that time, not many. Television, I think from '70s, maybe from '60s. I eating bread, soup and that.

There's Yemeni shops, some people been here long time, seamen, he got shops. Some people before me coming, seamen, one long time, he got some shop. They comin' to Sheffield and coming to Birmingham and coming all over, plenty, plenty people, seamen before, you know? Yemeni cafes on Worksop Road, and, oh, some cafes all over, not only in Sheffield, plenty Birmingham, and Liverpool and Sheffield.

We get *halal* or, see, 'cause English and all he got pork, *halal* no problem and that, meat alright, *halal* meat. This time, now, the people not clean himself, people he going, he got meat already from that factory, already cuttin' it, *halal*.

There not much mosques when we come, not much. I know one in Attercliffe, one in Rotherham, not much. Only..., after '56 he make that mosque after, not in '56, you get it? After. When the people looking, he make one, he make Pakistan, Arab mosque.

I live Rotherham, where I'm working, I living there. Not far away from work you see. No catch bus, straight in work. There's lots of Yemenis in Rotherham. I stop here fifteen years me, fifteen. I come in '56, '71, I going home, yeah. After that I keep going, working two year, going home six month, eight month, come back hard work, two year, three year, going home, back, I come back, like that. My family, they don't want to come in here. On my own here, I keep going, I keep going myself, best way.

Taleb

On the 20th of April 2004, almost fifty years after the majority of the first generation of Yemeni migrants had arrived in Sheffield to work in the steel industry, the *Guardian* newspaper ran a story about the English classes that the men were now attending in their old age. One student, 81 year old Qassim Muthenar Obadi, revealed how the imbalance between the time he spent working in the Sheffield steelworks, and the time that he spent off work during his working life, had made him unable to attend classes at that time: 'We want to know everything! When I see my doctor, when I sign my insurance, I want to know how to speak. When I was in the factory, I go from house to work, from work to house, and there is no time to learn. Because of coming here, because of Chris our teacher, sometimes life is easier.' Qassim's statement has been echoed by many of the participants in this research project. The narratives of the ex-steelworkers who have participated in this research project have all focused a great deal more on their experiences at work, rather than their experiences outside of work. Qassim's remark seems consistent with the general thrust of scholars who, writing in

the 'sociology of migration' tradition, seek to understand the behaviour of migrant workers with reference to the 'myth of return.' Their intention to earn money in the country of destination and then return to their country of origin with a heightened status and basic life security (see for instance; Miles and Phizacklea, 1980: 2).

The present chapter aims to analyse the narratives of 'time-off' by the Yemeni former steelworkers. The chapter begins with a look at the narratives that reveal how the former steelworkers carried out their necessities, namely their stories of traveling to and from work, and shopping for groceries. There, the chapter does not aim to extensively analyse the mundane details of the lives of the research subjects, in the ethnographic tradition. Therefore, little attention is paid to the rites and rituals of the emigrants. The aim is to analyse the life-stories of the migrants, and as was mentioned in the methodology chapter, life-stories tend to emphasise dramatic lived events (see also, Narayan and George 2001: 817). The chapter then moves on to study the narratives of recreation, and then to highlight two narratives in particular, that detail the struggle to gain entry for dependents and the struggle against police racism. In accordance with the objectives of the research project, the chapter has a particular concern with racism, class and resistance in the narratives.

The Necessities: Travel and Groceries

The Yemeni migrants generally prioritised work, whether contracted hours or overtime, above leisure. The steelworks provided the most enduring point of contact between the Yemeni and English workers. One of the most familiar areas of association outside work was found on the journey to work, where Yemeni steelworkers would often travel back and forth to work with their English colleagues, and colleagues from other migrant groups. The labourers also shared the shower rooms, both at work and at the public baths after their shifts had finished.¹ The journey to work has been recalled by four of the former-steelworkers in order to demonstrate the generally amicable relationship between the Yemeni and English workers, and even the police, in the early years. In

¹ The sharing of the public baths did not seem to pose a problem for the Yemeni former-steelworkers. This contrasts with the experience of Yemeni farm workers in California, as recorded by Kelley (1988: 78). There, Kelley writes, that the more modest demeanour of the Yemeni migrants, made them much more uncomfortable about sharing the showers with Mexican migrant workers.

each such case, the demonstration of past friendliness was held in contrast to the relationships which prevail today.² This was certainly the case for Said:

There used to be no hatred you know, I mean there's more, you hear it now. The '50s you know and '60s, there was some fight you know, sometimes, you know what I mean? There used to be you know, people who used to go drink, go boozier, pub, something like that. They have argument, they have fighting, because some English people, they don't know about black people who's come to work. Yeah, it was mainly after a drink, that's right, they have a bit argument something like that.

I used to finish work before, you know, some English people who's working with you, like employees, they take me in their car, home. What do you call it, some of these people we used to be got like Yemenis café you know, and some of these people they came to café, eating. Oh yeah, they always used to be mates yes, some of them, they came to your house and all have some food with you, so they taste it you know, some of these making good food, you know what I mean? That how we become friendly with some of them.

The police, they was very, very, very good, when I came the police is very good to us, the police. To be honest with you, if you came from work, three o'clock in the morning, if you working shift, night-time and you finishing three o'clock, or four o'clock in the morning and you don't know where to go, the police guide you and take you into car, all of that. Ask you question, 'Now then son look after yourself, look after yourself,' honestly. Not now, not now, not now, not now. Because now I think, I think to be honest with you, you know the immigrant too many now, I think, all of them. Immigrant too many and you know, but I mean before the police was very, very, very helpful you know, if you are going home or something like that he will carry you, he will take you, it happened to me, it happened to me you know, they was very, very, helpful.

Well I mean, you see, we used to be not many and then Pakistani, yeah, not much, women, no, not much women, no. There's a lot of women now, there's a lot of women from Somalia, Yemen, all over you know what I mean? Everywhere you know, all over the world. 'Cause only immigrant used to be Yemeni, Yemeni, then Pakistani, Bengali or something like that, West Indies, but it's normally just men, no family that time, you came to work, see.

This is happening when what his name, Edward Heath came to power, 1970. I'm not sure what year he came, and some immigrant, about 30,000 something, maybe, more, came from Uganda. They have something a bit when Enoch Powell was in the Conservative Party, you know, making all this speech against immigrant, 'British is so and so and so and so and so.' So that time when they start, more immigrants coming you know, yes there was a bit of a problem that time. Yes, Enoch Powell used to be all time you know, against immigrants.

The journey to work was not an amicable one for all of the former steelworkers. One man, who shared some of his experiences in the documentary, *Thank you, that's all I knew* (1989), recalls that the local Sheffielders would not sit next to the migrants on public transport. The journey to work was also an uncomfortable one for an Arab friend whom Mohammed remembers in his narrative. Similarly to Said, Mohammed recalls a cordial relationship between the local police force and the Yemeni migrants. However, language estrangement created opportunities for his English colleagues to ridicule his friend, on his journey to work:

² For an in-depth study of the relationship between the police and black communities in Sheffield, see Britton (2000).

I arrived in Sheffield in June 1956. I stayed with my uncle in Stoven Road, Darnall. He worked in the steel rolling mill at Balfour Down's. His wife and children were still in Yemen.

I found a job in Rotherham Forge steelworks. My friend, another Yemeni, helped me find this job after I had been a week in Sheffield. I had to cut the strap at the ends of slabs of steel.

Most of the steelworkers were friendly, but I could not speak any English, so if anyone spoke anything bad to me, I could not understand. One of my friends got into a little trouble on the trams when one of the steelworkers teased him. He told my friend: 'When you're on the tram and the conductor gives you a ticket, just say 'fuck off' to him.' He said this to the conductor, who was not very pleased.

It was very hard work, lifting up the steel with big tongs for eight hours a day. My hands became as hard as this table. Sometimes I had to do other people's shifts when they didn't come to work, and that was really hard – two shifts in one day.

We were so dirty and sweaty that we needed a shower after every shift. We didn't have proper bathrooms in our homes, so we were happy to have showers at the steelworks.

I worked at Rotherham Forge for just four months, before I moved to work with my uncle, and I stayed at the Balfour Down's for 29 years.

One recurring aspect in some of the narratives has been the altruism of the men, and how this apparent selflessness in Sheffield, was linked to the maintenance of status amongst the migrants' countrymen in Yemen.³ Many of the former steelworkers have reported that they were very prudent with their wages. They attempted to save as much of their earnings as possible in order that they could maximize their remittances. In Sheffield, this meant that they lived on the bare necessities. Their diets often consisted of bread and butter and tinned fish. In the previous chapter, we have seen how one man reported that he could not even afford his bus fare to and from work. As a result of the amount of time that many of the Yemenis spent at work, a large number of the men received deliveries of food and especially *halal* meat. Tipple (1974: 3) writes that, 'In each lodging house there tends to be one or more spokesman who liaises with the landlord, grocer, butcher and local institutions on behalf of the group or the whole house.' The Yemenis who worked on the same shifts and were home at the same time would often eat together. This point is noted by Halliday and consistent with the research of Dahya (1964), who quotes an Arabic saying, 'only a dog eats alone.' Nasser was a man who spent so much of his time at work that he had to rely on the delivery service of a local *halal* butcher. In his recollection, he is however critical of the overly selfless behaviour of many of the Yemenis in Sheffield, who maintained a strict diet, with bread and butter only:

³ See pp. 170-172 for a story which details how the loss of one former steelworker's job in Sheffield and the curtailment of his remittances overseas, led to a loss of status in his village in Yemen.

There was a butcher in Sheffield, I can't remember his name, he's died now. He used to bring meat, an Arab, you know. He says he killed the sheep, you know, in the slaughter. He said, he killed it with his own hand, and he bring *halal* meat to our home, every day. Whether you want a pound, two pound meat, whether you want ribs, neck, legs, whatever you like, you ask him, he write your name. If you want different part every day, he bring you different part, different place, you know. It was very cheap meat that time, you know, it was very cheap, but the money was little money you know, and Saturday or Sunday he'd come to collect his money, yeah we'd pay him straight away for the ration. He was Arab man, and one is Polish, from Poland, he's got big van, he brings everything what you'd like. He just want tomatoes, he want cucumber, he want..., anything you want, he write it down, he bring it with the big box, he put your name in the box, and you pay him the money at the end of the week, and that's how we do it, we don't go to shops, we don't go shopping, nothing, everything they bring it home.

He knocked the door, when we come home from work, he know, after six o'clock, he come to knock door. He says, 'Here's your ration,' every one's got a box full. We says, 'O.k., see you Saturday afternoon,' 'cause we used to work Saturday morning you know, and Saturday afternoon about five o'clock he come. We're relaxing, there and he asking for his money, because he know, Saturday when we working morning, we don't go to cinema, we only go out on Sunday. Once a week to the cinema, yeah. At the end of the week, we pay him good money. He charged me one pound fifty, two pounds, three pounds, yeah, that's for the rations, and the meat man come at the end of the week and he says, 'Two pound, two shilling,' you know, two pound two shilling, they paid shilling that time, two pound, two and six, two and six again, two shilling, six pence and we gave him his money, and if you don't, if you only give him two pound, he says, 'Oh leave two and six till next week.' Oh, got no problem you know, it's easy you know. We live for forty years you know, just like that, we don't go shopping like now you know.

We eat meat everyday, meat not expensive that time, it's cheap. I used to have meat, I used to have fish, I used to have anything I like for my sandwich you know. We take sandwich to the factory you know. We don't go to the canteen like English does, because English eat anything in the canteen you know. In the factories, we not, we make our sandwich at home and we carry it to the factory, we making dinner, we eating our lunch sometime in the canteen, sometime if we got place in the factory, you know, we eat it in the factory.

Some people they eating bread and butter because they very miser about the money, you know because they have plenty family, some of them you know, like that. But you see them now, they don't look very well, the people, whose no look after their own self, they don't look very well. But I believe myself, I'm look o.k., you know, because I used to look after myself, I am looking after myself up to now, you know? I don't bother with, if I got more money, I give to my sons or daughters you know, I help them, but first thing I have to look after myself, if I get enough, more than enough, I, I'll send them. You have to help yourself first.

The narrative of Mussa which opens the present chapter indicates that Yemeni shops were open in Attercliffe as early as the mid to late 1950s, when the bulk of the first generation of Yemeni arrivants came to the city. Mussa remembers many of them being owned by landed Arab seamen who had previously worked in the port towns of Britain. In his 1958 feature, '*Sheffield's Colour Problem*' Blackburn, too, with the use of scare-mongering language, mentions a café, although does not specify the ethnic origin of the owners: 'Pakistanis and Arabs have virtually taken over whole rows of houses as their homes; they have their own shops, their own café and public house meeting places. In fact, eventually they may see the dome of a Mosque rising above the square somber outline of houses in the district (19/03/1958).' The view of Blackburn towards the development of Arab and Pakistani community infrastructures in the mid to late 1950s

implies that there was a high degree of residential segregation in the area, and that distinctive spatial communities had begun to emerge. According to one respondent who took a less strict attitude towards his diet, the unaccommodating view of Blackburn towards the emergence of Arab and Pakistani businesses, was also typical of that of the indigenous people of Attercliffe:

To eat maybe it cost them, used to be old money five pence a day, five pence a day for food. Some people coming for holiday, some people, not we, the people who come in 1956, the worker people. We not bothered about that, we buy our food from English shops since 1956. They is no, first people whose coming to Sheffield, Yemenis. No Pakistanis, no Yemeni cafes, no Jamaica, no Indian, no Somali, no. Yemenis start in 1950 in Sheffield, especially in Sheffield. When we came in here we buy our food from English food shop, everything, but we don't eat pork, you know bacon, pork we don't eat that. This, time, the people whose coming after, used to be no Mosque, no Arab shop, this time plenty mosque, you could go and pray, one in Darnall, one in Sheffield 4, one in Sheffield 10, one, maybe twenty mosque in Sheffield now. So the people who's coming after, they starting to say, '*halal* meat, *halal*.' 'Don't eat it, no.' He say, 'it's coming from English shop, don't it eat.' I told him, I says, 'This English, I buy lamb, but I don't buy the pork, I eat lamb, I buy lamb from the English food shop.' He says to me 'No *halal*, you, *halal*?' I said, 'Well, he gives me lamb, he don't give me pork.' He said, 'No it's the knife, even the bread.' He said, 'Why you go to buy from butcher?' I said, 'What for? It's only bread.' Because he wants every Muslim, he can earn a lot of money, to buy from their own shop, from Pakistani shop.⁴

You know Arabs who is buying, 1956 buying shop, they leave it, there's no business, no business, nobody. No English people go to buy from coloured people's shop. This time they going, you know, this time they going, English people go to Pakistani shop, Arab shop you know, but before no English people. They go to open grocery, no, maybe some Arab go there, maybe they not, they bankrupt, they bankrupt.

The resistance amongst the English residents of Attercliffe and the north-east of Sheffield to shop at black-owned stores seems to have begun to give way by the 1960s. Halliday (1992: 114) writes that, in the 1960s, 'on the Worksop Road alone there were six Yemeni-owned grocery shops, five Yemeni cafes serving Yemeni food and acting as social meeting places, and five mosques frequented mainly by Yemenis.' The Yemeni-owned shops typically sold Halal meat, and various specialist foods used by the migrants in their country of origin, such as 'aubergines, ginger tubers, okra, garlic, green peppers and spices' (Tipple 1974: 38). In spite of the growth of their English clientele, the Yemeni-owned stores remained vulnerable to racist attacks. The Yemen-born father of the famous boxer 'Prince' Naseem Hamed owned a grocery store on Newman Road in Wincobank. In his double-biography of Naseem and his trainer Brendan Ingle, the author Nick Pitt (1998: 157) includes a quotation by Riath Hamed, the older brother of Prince Naseem, which demonstrates the dangers of owning a shop

⁴ Here the interviewee clearly demonstrates a less strict interpretation of what meat he considers lawful. What is considered *halal* varies amongst different Muslims groups, for instance, the consumption of shellfish often provides one area of contention.

in Sheffield. He recalls, '...we suffered a lot from racism in the early days. There were bricks through our windows, pellet guns shooting at the windows and NF sprayed on our windows and doors.'

Recreation

There was not much trouble in the factory, because they not allowed them to racism us you know. They are friends in the factory, if one of them, you know, sometimes one of them, little bit you know, bad, you ignore him. We no take notice of him you know, we never been fighting, we never did. But sometime, I remember in Rotherham sometime, they come from Manchester for demonstration in Rotherham and the police told us to keep away from them. The National Front, Enoch Powell or something that time, they demonstrated in the street, we no go out when they demonstrating, till they finish, and that's it you know, no trouble at all.

They call names sometimes, they chant, you know, then, they call it the 'Paki bashing,' and we are not 'Paki' you know, we are Arab you know? We say, 'You what? I'm not Paki bashing, I'm an Arab you know? Do you know who you're talking to?' He said, 'Oh, I'm sorry mate.' It's like that you know what I mean? Yeah, but they don't like Pakistanis that time, I know that. They call them Paki bashing. We know they don't like us you know, especially the young ones. Only the younger ones say something, but they don't know what they doing, you know what I mean? We ignore them. They, if they says to me 'Oh, you blackie!' We; 'Alright, you white man!' You know that's it, I'm blackie, you're the white man, o.k., but the old English people you know, they don't give you no trouble at all you know.

We used to talk you know, we used to sit in groups of Arabs you know and talk, and we says, 'How you come to this country?' Yemenis, I know one downstairs, that man with the beard. He had to come from Dar Es Salaam. Adnan, he come from Dar Es Salaam in Africa, Kenya. That's how he come to this country because he can't come across the Canal. He says, 'Oh I come from Kenya, from Yemen to Kenya, from Kenya to France, from France to here, yeah.'

We go to some decent places you know, work and sauna, and some pubs we go you know, some place like cinema, you know very same, same as now. First, when I come to this country I tell you truth, I go to work. I don't understand what they saying, and sometime we go to the cinema. We always see cowboy, up to here, cowboy, we looking you know, we laughing what they do you know, and we like cowboy film because we come from countries with a lot of animals. So donkeys, monkeys, cow, camels, and we like this to watch the cowboys because they have animal. We don't like other films, and we like to see snake and things like that you know, and every cinema, they have advertisements, things like that we going, if not, it not cowboys, no see animals like that, you know, we don't go, we don't go to that film, and that's it, that's all.

I tell you truth. I used to live on Worksop Road, no far from Fara's pub. Only about 100 yards, where I used to live, but I never went to that pub, that's myself. I never went to that pub, and they told me his name, Fara's pub, and we called him Pharoah. Pharoah is a bad man in the Koran, in our Koran. Pharoah is in Egypt you know, Pharoah is the bad man who do the bad things to God. The English call him Pharoah you know. He's the bad man who do bad things for God, because he used to kill the Jew, you know. Then Moses take them from Egypt and across the sea, to other part of the country, you know, to Jerusalem. And in our Koran, God don't like Pharoah because he do bad things to Moses, you know. And that man called Fara, we call him Pharoah, because he's the bad man, he's the first Arab in this country to open a pub. He come sometime, talking to Arabs, he come to the mosque to pray. I see him in the mosque, and one of our leaders you know, Muslim leaders talking to him. He says, the Muslim leader tells Fara not to do this. He said, 'That's all, I need money, that's all I doing it for money. I send money to Yemen, I send it for the poor people and I help the poor people, and I do this and this.' He said, 'But no, that's no good for you, this is against the pure religion you know?' But he still own it up to now, he still own it. When I talking to him once, he nice, he's nice, he says, 'I don't tell the Arabs to come,' said, 'Anybody want to come it's up to them, if nobody to come, he's still my friend you know.' And that's it you know.

We write to our families too, the agent, he's in Aden, he's in the city, we send a letter from here to him, he's got his address, his box number, yeah post office box number yeah and the letter get there. Every morning he opened the box, he got all the letter there and he know where to send them to, you know, to Shaibi, to Dhala to all places you know, and our family write to the agent when they send a letter, and the agent send a letter to us. That's how we communicate that time. This time it's good, if I want my son to talk to him now I could press it, my mobile phone and it's, 'hello.' He's got mobile, I send him one of these you know and I talking to him all day. I said to him, 'I'll get a card from the shop for five pounds.' I talking to him for an hour, it's good now.

Nasser

In his study of Arab housing preferences, Tipple (1974: 33) found that the Arab group showed a greater propensity for entertaining guests at home, than the British sample used in his survey. Halliday writes that Yemenis visited each other at weekends and on holidays. This was certainly the case in the above narrative of Nasser and particularly in his early years of settlement in Sheffield. A number of the interviewees have mentioned that they used to spend time outside of work at both English, and smaller Pakistani cinemas. One interviewee featured on the documentary, *Thank you...* (1989) recalls that when he and his friends would visit the English cinemas, the whole row of seats on which they were seated would be clear. The former steelworkers also mentioned that they would spend time at English language classes, at pubs, clubs, on fields, playing sports, especially football, and at swimming baths. Indeed, a *Guardian* article (Wainwright, 1989) reported the existence of a Yemeni football team, 'The Yemeni Stars Football XI' that played in Sheffield's amateur league. Outside of the home and work however, mosques and cafés were the most common meeting places. As was noted in the last chapter, the majority of the Yemenis would pray at home after work. They were generally unable to attend the mosque for the *jumma* or Friday prayers but would often visit on their days off over the weekend. The mosques began as spaces that were cleared in the front rooms of the homes of the emigrants, prior to the communal purchase of property for worship. The major Yemeni mosque was situated on Worksop Road. The Yemeni cafes, two of which, the Qahwa and the Unity, were also located on Worksop Road at the time of Halliday's (1992: 70) study, and were also important meeting places.⁵ One café was so popular amongst the migrants that Tipple (1974: 33) observed: 'There was a willingness among the Arabs to travel fairly long distances to

⁵ Although absent from many of the interviews conducted in the present research project, and in spite of the Arabic sign outside which proclaimed one café to be the 'Restaurant of Arab Unity,' (Mata'am al-Whada al-Arabiyya), Halliday (1992: 70-1) comments that, 'attendance was to a considerable extent influenced by region and political affiliation; those from the North tended to go to one set of cafes, those from the South to the others.'

cafes, some came from Rotherham, Grimesthorpe and Crookesmoor to Hassan Ali's café in Worksop Road.' One interviewee mentioned that he also ate at Pakistani and, later, Somali cafes that also served *halal* food. Yemeni cafés typically had a humble appearance on the street. The steelworkers would often play cards in the cafés and one respondent admitted to gambling. In the following story the interviewee recalls playing a game of cards with a group of Pakistani men in a Pakistani café:

One night I was playing some cards with some Pakistani blokes in a café. We were playing American Poker, and there was a lot of money on the table, about sixty pounds.

There were lots of Pakistanis stood around the table. One Pakistani man was behind me and he started speaking in his language to the other men with cards. I thought, 'Well, he might be telling him what other cards I got.' But I couldn't do anything because there was lots of Pakistanis in the café and there was only one Arab sitting down over there. So I lost all my money, and I stand up and leave the café.

I saw a policeman outside so I speak to him and told him that they were gambling in there and what is he going to do to stop it, he says to me, 'No, no, I not going in there. The only time we go in those cafés is if there's a fight. He told me to stay out and not go in.

So I left there and did not go back, I lost a lot of money, and the policeman he went away too.

Halliday endorses Dahya's observation that the Yemenis did not drink at pubs during the 1960s, but notes that this had changed by the '70s. For Halliday (1992: 70), 'at weekends groups of Yemenis could be seen in favourite neighbourhood pubs alongside other migrant groups – Irish and South Asian.' Indeed as has already been mentioned, a Yemeni-owned pub, 'Fara's', named after the owner, Fara, existed next to a Yemeni mosque on Worksop Road in Attercliffe. The pub was sold by Fara in the 1990s, but still exists under new ownership with its old name. There does not seem to be a general pattern of visiting public houses amongst the arrivants. Two interviewees rejected the line of questioning altogether, stressing that attendance at public houses and the consumption of alcohol was *haram*, or prohibited. Another two conceded that they used to attend pubs, although they maintained that they had never drunk alcohol in their lives, or had non-marital relationships with women. Another said that he enjoyed a little drink until his wife joined him in Sheffield and stopped him from drinking by reminding him of his religious obligations. The presence of Yemenis at pubs was sometimes greeted with hostility. Many of the interviewees have remarked that alcohol fuelled acts of racism. One recalled:

When I used to go out, I never used to go down town, like to the city centre. I goes to our local 'cause there was not a lot of trouble there. Many times I go there, friends, all together. Some places, you went to the toilet, you couldn't go to the toilet by yourself you had to go three or four of you at one time just in case anything happened. First, when we first come, because there's only

a few of us we couldn't go out much, but when the numbers came, we could go out in numbers. In part, sometime, some people be trouble, but some people, same as me, haven't been looking for fight, haven't been looking for anything. I like to go to work, go home to my family.

We went in a pub one day, we went for a drink in a pub, and one, this Irish guy, he come and grab one of us, he had a wrestle and a Yemeni guy got him down and he grabbed his head, and he goes, he said, 'What should I do to him?' He goes, 'Bite his ear off, his ears, bite his ears.'⁶

There was a lot of tensions, especially when we war in Yemen: 'You, you dropped bombs on Aden, you!' The police, when they see some trouble they say, 'You, you, you're Arabian you've done this to us, you've dropped bombs on us,' so it did effect us and that. And the ones that used to go out, it used to be bad then, but then, then they stopped going out altogether, and I didn't go out. In the workplace too, there was a lot, many fights. When we want to go, don't go one, only ten, twelve. When they used to go out anywhere, or they used to go out, even in work when we used to walk there, nobody would walk by themselves, we used to walk in twos.

Them, it's mostly just the ones that didn't go to work, they've drunk too much to come to work. There's always some, always some reason you know, too much drink, he can't get up one morning you know. I come in, and I start work you know. When I been work when I'm younger, making, machining, you know, turning a machine.

The public houses were places where a number of Yemeni men met English women. According to Halliday (1992: 110), there were around 30 British women married to Yemeni men by the 1980s. Many more however, had non-marital relationships with Yemeni men. Speaking of British women who were living with Yemeni men, Halliday (ibid: 80-81) writes: 'They were individuals who had crossed a barrier, rather than indications that the two communities had drawn much closer together.' In his earlier study of Yemenis in Tyneside, Collins (1955) too, makes a similar observation. Yemeni men who married or had relationships with English women did not seem to move away from, or face being ostracized by the Arab group. Three of the participants in this research mentioned that they had married English women, and many respondents spoke of such, seemingly not-uncommon, inter-'racial' relationships amongst their countrymen in a value-free manner. That the women convert to Islam was the main concern. Such women seem to have been held in high esteem by the migrants. They often acted as intermediaries between the Yemenis and wider society. Writing about a café owner's wife in Attercliffe, Tipple (1974: 4) comments; 'She is a voluntary tax agent, writes letters and finds accommodation where possible for the Arabs. However, she has not become a Moslem maintaining "It isn't usual in this area."' Indeed, Tipple's (ibid: 22) research was facilitated by what he calls an 'ad hoc translator' on two occasions: 'Where the husband had a British wife she acted as interpreter if her

⁶ Two of the interviewees in this research project have mentioned the act of biting ears. The biting or twisting of an ear is a gesture which is grounded in Yemeni culture and symbolizes the power of the perpetrator over the victim. The act is often used to forewarn somebody, and, as one former steelworker put it, means; 'you can't do nothing.'

husband spoke poor English.' The English women who married Yemeni men faced a great deal of racist abuse. In the local press, inter-'racial' relationships posed a problem for some journalists too (see, for instance: Blackburn, 19/03/1958).⁷ Indeed one Yemeni respondent featured in the documentary *Thankyou...* (1989) described it as a 'crime' to go out with a white woman. Adnan was one man who married an English woman in Sheffield. The abuse that he and his wife encountered on the streets of Sheffield, and their resilience in the face of it, are important aspects of his narrative:

I married a white girl. You see Yemeni people, that time when we come in, there is no Arab women. 'Cause you know the Arab women, they parents, they not allowed into trouble you know what I mean, especially this country, not Muslim country. If you go to Saudi Arabia or different places, the Arabs, they say, 'Take your wife with you,' but to bring them here you know different, they will frighten them, they will frighten them. Different from Pakistani, Pakistani people you know, they bring their wives you know, but us you know, we don't.

Oh, we had too many fights, you know, we come here young 'un you know twenty-five, thirty. Oh yeah, sometime you go out with your girlfriend, you know what I mean, you have a meal, to the pictures, something like this. They says, 'Oh!' They says, 'Nigger-lover!' or you know 'Black lover!' Something like this, but the English women you know what I mean, the one thing's good about them you know, without a doubt, if they love somebody they stay with him. They don't care, you know, she say, 'I like this man, and that's my view, that's my view.' If they say, 'Black,' or something like that, it don't bother them.

When I not at work, just visit friends, go from a café to another, that's all you know? Sometimes you go with your woman, take the car with her, with friends oh, spend our time you know in this country, when you're young and you want to go different places you know? Then sometimes, police will stop you, if you, well I used to drive a lot, you know what I mean? Driving a lot, sometimes they stop you, you know what I mean? They see you've got nice car, you know they say, 'Where that black man, where he get that car from?' You know what I mean?

The war in Yemen did make some trouble too, sometime, but it don't stay for long, it don't stay for long you know, because English people, they don't keep a lot inside, they forget a lot of things, you know what I mean? They really do. Because they're too busy you know thinking about football and, 'Let's go out for a pint' you know what I mean? Maybe, they don't keep it too much in sometime you know? I think if they keep it too much in, we won't be here you know what I mean? We wouldn't be here, like. You know when you been here long time, you take the good with the bad int it, that's how we look at it.

You know sometime, you get some trouble you know, from work, from people who been, I mean trouble is got to happen everywhere int it? You know what they say in England there is no smoke without a fire int it. That's it, you've got to have some trouble int it? Life's got to be like this, sometimes troubles, you know? We've been here forty years, take the good with the bad, you know, if the English man, he, you know, see you on the street call you black man something, you've heard it before, you know what I mean? Nothing strange, you've heard it before, you know, ignore it, ignore it.

I think myself you know, mixing with people, very serious life, you know, better than going to college because you respect human beings, you know? They say this man is white, this man is black, it's a human being like me, int it? Maybe then, we cannot all be white, we don't be white, you know, cannot all be rich, some rich and poor you know? We got to get on together.

⁷ In this article, the racist stereotype of the over-sexed and 'leering' 'coloured' man is clearly evident. In further stereotypical terms, the article also depicts white women who have relationships with non-white men as having particularly loose morals.

Struggles for Self-Affirmation in Sheffield: Secondary Migration & Police Racism

As the 1960s progressed a number of the men increasingly occupied themselves in their spare time by making attempts to gain entry for their dependents. Attempts made to secure the settlement of family members in the host country did not always mean a breakdown in the migrants' intention to return.⁸ A small number of Yemeni women settled in Sheffield during the 1960s, the number more than doubled in the 1970s but remained relatively small (Sheffield City Council, 1988-9). The 'intervening obstacles' that Yemeni women faced, differed a great deal from the obstacles that were faced by their husbands a few decades earlier. The post-1962 migrants faced much more rigid immigration controls. Yemeni women faced controls both in their countries of origin and destination. In Yemen, Halliday (1992: 73) stresses that the family of the sojourner-settler controlled the migration of his wife in order to maintain the flow of remittances. Indeed the economic considerations were so great that the South Yemeni government restricted the migration of women until 1980. In her study of the Yemeni community in Southeast Dearborn, Michigan, Barbara C. Aswad (1974: 62) partially attributes the predominantly male composition of the community to the Yemeni government's restrictive laws on the migration of women. In Britain, the British Nationality Act of 1948, when the primary migrants had the legal right to enter and settle in Britain as British subjects, had been superseded by the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 and a string of additional legislation by the early seventies (see for instance, Solomos, 48-75). The encounter between Yemeni women and immigration officials in Yemen and Britain was the first encounter between Yemeni women and Britain. This encounter features prominently in the narratives of many first generation Yemeni women, most of whom would make limited contact with members of the 'host' society, and particularly men, in the country of destination (see for instance Chatterjee, 2001). The struggle to gain entry for dependents into Britain is also prominent in the life-stories of the men who sought to re-unite their families in Sheffield. The nine year struggle that Mahmood waged to gain entry for his wife and children clearly demonstrates this:

When I come back to England in '62 I tried for nine years to get family over, I didn't have no luck, so I went back to Yemen after nine years. I went to the British Consulor in Aden, he put four weeks claim for me to bring family to the U.K. What they said was there was a guy called Mr.

⁸ The intention to return was so strong for one respondent in Staub's (1989: 85-6) research into Yemenis in New York City, that even when the family of the male arrivant was present in New York, he still believed that they would return to Yemen.

Fryer. He goes, 'We going to send him to visit you, so soon as you get back to England, get a job straight away, and they'll come and look at your job, they'll come and look at your accommodation, if everything's o.k. they'll send the family over.' The problem was I didn't want same job I was in before.

When I came back in '71, '72, when I came back there, three days out of work, three days. In the morning we went River Don Works, bottom part, not far from here. We been in office, in front of me, more forty people looking for a job, each one told him, 'That way,' 'That way,' 'That way,' 'No job,' 'No job,' 'No job.' I'm the last, last one, that lady said, to me, 'Come in.' I've been enter, she said to me, 'Sit down,' and talking. She had a look at record and saw I never took a holiday in three years and she asked what jobs I'd had before, and what I'd done. 'Crane driver,' she said, 'We get job for you, you come in Monday morning.' I got a job in three days.

When I been to here, said to me, 'You've got job, but not, not regular. When we need you to go to other department we can send you there.' I says, 'Thank you very much, I'll work anywhere.' She said, 'You can go fitting shop with the fitting, electrician, machining.' What they do, took me up the crane to drive and I work all day. The manager said to me, 'You alright,' been there for about six months and he give me screwing machine, screwing machine to do them screws, see, to make screws, only three days they taught me, very easy. I got good wages here, a hundred and twenty, only forty hour.

And then that Mr. Fryer come in. The guy come to check from immigration place about me job. He come to look for me with the Arabs here, do you know that man, manager, he says to him, 'Yes he's working.' He said, 'Good, tell them to wait for me, tonight I'm coming to see him when he finished work.' When I finished working go into change, and go home, and he come and knock on the door, open it. What he was doing is because I put in application form, for wife and he's come to check it up, he's an investigator.

Right he says to me, 'Is this house yours?' I says, 'Yeah.' I got the rent book, I put two hundred pounds, to one Arab, 'cause he give it to me. I say 'Alright, my wife coming?' He says, 'Alright, you have family, so this house now for you.' I said, 'Yes,' he said, 'I need proof.' Show him rent book. Then, that Mr. Fryer, he said 'Very good, what about job?' I said, 'Yeah,' I said, 'Wages, got a lot of money, hundred and twenty, enough for me and my wife and my children.' He said, 'Good lad, come in tomorrow in my office, I give you my name.' I go, sleep a little bit, go into the office, been to the secretary woman, he come in asking me question, they said, 'Now you family come in five weeks time. If they not come in, in five weeks time, come in to this office let me know, we'll talk to British Consul.' Then, in that five weeks we get telegram from Aden, 'Your wife coming to you.'

The process of gaining entry for dependents was rife with difficulties. This was especially so, after the introduction of the 1969 Immigration Appeals Act which required dependents to be in possession of an Entry Certificate in order to gain access to Britain. Moore and Wallace's (1975) study of immigration details many of the problems of obtaining an entry certificate for dependents, a number of which are alluded to in the preceding narrative. The Entry Certificates were issued by an Entry Certificate Officer at the British Embassy or High Commission in the dependents' country of residence. In order to obtain an Entry Certificate, dependents had to satisfy the Entry Certificate Officer, through interviews and official documentation, of their relationship to the person who legally resided in the UK, and that they were legally entitled to join the citizen settled in the UK. The waiting list for an interview with the Entry Certificate Officer was often long, and could entail a wait of up to, and over, a year. Potential

migrants had to travel from their respective rural districts, often more than once, to the British Embassy or High Commission in Aden in order to see the Entry Certificate Officer. As Moore and Wallace (1975: 12) write, the interview was a particularly daunting experience for the applicants and misunderstandings could easily arise from the different regional dialects spoken by the applicants and the Entry Certificate Officer. The prolonged separation of men in England from their families in Yemen often resulted in families being ill-informed of the circumstances of their sponsor in England. Inconsistencies could arise between details given by dependents in interviews with the Entry Certificate Officer in Yemen, and information gathered about the sponsor in the UK. This was exacerbated by widespread illiteracy in both Arabic and English, which limited the frequent exchange of letters between the emigrants and their dependents. In addition, as Kelley (1988: 95) and Staub (1989: 81) have noted, the descriptions that the emigrants gave of their circumstances in the 'host' country, were often vague, in order to avoid informing relatives of the undesirable conditions in which they lived, and to avoid a loss of status in Yemen. The industrial labour of Sheffield, however, did not have quite the same stigma attached to it as the plantation work in California performed by the Yemenis in Kelley's study, or the service sector-oriented work (guards, elevator operators, busboys, dishwashers, janitors, and office cleaners) performed by the majority of Yemenis in New York (Staub, 1989: 78). In light of the miscommunication that could arise in the trans-national exchange, the protagonist in the preceding story clearly felt obliged to return to Yemen in order to facilitate the process.

There is a general consensus amongst the participants in this research project, that they faced the greatest instances of overt racism outside work. As the post-war years progressed, the relationship between the Yemeni community and the local police force began to deteriorate. Abdullah's experience with the police in 1970 represented a stage in the downward spiral of police-black relations in the city. Abdullah had been the victim of a prank phone call to the police before, which resulted in the police searching his house after an allegation that someone had heard what sounded like a murder on his premises. Abdullah had many reservations about even speaking to the officers who visited his house to investigate a further complaint. It is worth quoting Abdullah's story at length, because of the shocking nature of the accusations and his determination to resist, both contained within his narrative:

I was inside, in the house, about quarter to five, I was coming out to go to see some people on the Workop Road, friends. So there was the house I lived in, and the other houses were empty, nobody in, nobody inside the houses, everybody move, except for a few houses that way, this side, a couple of yards away. So I came out from the house to go to path, I walked a couple of yards, I saw four kids, two boys and two girls about fourteen, fifteen years old, young, they trying to go inside the passage. So I turned round, looked to the kids, I shout at them from far away, I said, 'Get out from that path! Go away! You might get an accident inside the houses or whatever it is, don't go inside the house, I'm telling you!' So they shouting, they swearing. They don't, they try still. But I returned, I coming back, so when they saw me, they come out of the passage and they ran away. What they did, they throwing a stone, throwing a stone. I just laughed myself, they were swearing, and they go, they go anyway. When they go, I go.

Next day, I'm working for British Steel, next day, about five o'clock, something like that. Sunday, police is come in, knock on my door, two men and one woman. They knock on my door, they says, 'Who's the owner?' I says, 'Me.' So I says, 'What's wrong?' He says, 'We got complaining about you.' 'Complaining about me?' He says, 'Yes.' I says, 'O.k. if you come in with respect for me, you can come in, but if you want to make any particular noises or whatever it is you think, you better stay outside, and say the words please. So it's one way or the other?' So he says, 'Alright we'll come in with respect.' 'So alright, you can come in, I'll take your word.'

They coming in and they looking at a photograph, my son's photograph. So one of them, he watching the photo and he put his hand on it. I turned round to him, I says, 'Look, leave the photo on the wall, where it is, leave it alone, don't touch that photo!' He says to me, 'Why?' I says, 'It's nothing to do with you.' 'Oh,' he says, 'Yes, it's to do with us!' I says, 'Listen, I'm telling you, I told you before you came in, don't make any noises, I'm warning you!' He says, 'You warn me?' I says, 'Yes, I'm warning you, made your own choice, one way or the other, what you want? Whatever you going to say, say it.' He says to me, 'Some kids they been complaining about you.' I say, 'What is it?' They say, 'Four kids, they say they come in the passage, and you ran after them and you tried to catch the girls to kiss them.' I say, 'You what?! You must be joking! He says to me, 'No.' I says, 'Listen Mr., you go put this idea to somebody else, not to me.' I looked at him, I says, 'You are wrong Mr.' So he says to me, 'Alright you can come to the police station.' I says, 'I'm not coming with you now, I'm coming to you tomorrow after my job. When I've finish, I'll come straight to the police station.' He says, 'Can you give me your passport?' I says, 'I'm not going to give you my passport, but after I go into work, I come to your police station and we will discuss the matters. This house is my property, I'm home, you think I'm going to run away?' I say, 'No, I'm not going to give you my passport until I come to the police station.' So he says to me, 'O.k.'

Then next day, on Monday, I went to the police station about five o'clock, my appointment there five o'clock, I went to see him. So I saw him and I saw his mate and saw one woman, the same woman there, so he talk with me. He been talking with chief officer in the police station, Attercliffe police station. So he told the chief officer at the police station. So that officer had been among Arab people, and he turned around to him, he says to them, 'I don't believe that this person is going to do these things.' He says, 'People are different, you can't mix people altogether. But I'm telling you, I'm telling you, don't mix up with that person, if you mix up with that person you might lose.' So anyway, when I was talking to him, the officer himself, he come to me. And when he tried to talk to me, I says, 'No, I'm not talking to you, let them go first and then we'll talk.' So they goes, then he looked at me and says to me, 'Look Mr., tell me truth, and be honest with me, did this happen or not?' I say, 'I never do it, they swear at me and they throw stones at me as well, and I never went near them.' He says to me, 'I believe you.'

So he goes out and he told that person, he says, 'Look, if you go any further with that person, I bet you'll lose.' Because he had gone further with other people. He said, 'Don't look at people as the same, people is different.' He don't take no notice at all. Anyway, 'I says what do you want now?' He says to me, 'I want the passport and I'm going to take the case.' I say, 'Alright.' I shouted the officer, 'Inspector, come here, do you hear what he's saying now, he's saying you want my passport.' And he told him, 'Don't do it in front of me, that is, absolutely, absolutely is wrong, you're asking for his passport, he's not going to run away, because he's that person he told you, this house is his house, his own house, how he going to run anyway? And he's working at British Steel, he told you.' He says, 'No matter, I want his passport.' I says to him, 'O.k., I'll give you the

passport, but I want you to give me a receipt, I'm not going to give you my passport without a receipt. You give me a receipt, I give you the passport.' He says to me, 'O.k.' I take the receipt, I give him the passport. He says to me, 'O.k. you will receive a letter when the court is on.' I say, 'Alright, fair enough for me.' Anyway, I go.

Later, about two days, I got the permission from my job, I go to see solicitor. I went to him and I spoke to him. He says, 'Have you got any witnesses?' I say, 'Well there is some people there, but I don't know, I can't tell you if they'll speak.' He says to me, 'Alright, what are their names?' I says, 'I don't know, I can't tell you.' He says to me, 'Alright, but if they are willing to come with you to the court, fair enough, if they're not, you got problem.' I said, 'O.k. fair enough for me, problem or not, I will take action.'

Anyway I spoke to these people, they said to me, 'Anytime you want us, we'll go.' I said, 'Alright.' What happened after that, the police sent a letter to warn these people not to be witnesses. Yeah, the police itself, send that letter to these people, 'You do not go to the court to be witnesses for that black man!' So they don't tell me either.

Anyway, the letter came to me, the court will be so and so day. So alright, when the time came, I saw them. He says to me, 'Sorry we can't come.' I says, 'Why?' He says, 'the police is worrying us.' 'Can you show me the letters?' 'No we can't.'

So alright, I went to see the solicitor, the same day as the court. When we went to court, and I see the solicitor, the solicitor, he said to me, 'Listen to me, I can't go with you to the court without witnesses.' I said, 'Alright, fair enough, give me the paper and I'll go myself. If you won't go, I'll go myself.' He gave me the paper, that's when I tried to walk away. He says to me, 'Wait a minute.' I says look, 'You coming with me, don't speak, don't help, you just blocked, I'll leave me to defend myself, alright? Don't say anything just watch, so God will help.' He says to me, 'O.k., I'll come with you.' He came with me. So we come in. They're shouting for one person, because they put the four boys outside, the two boys and the two girls outside. They're shouting for the first one to come in. So that boy when he told the police what happened, surprised us, honestly, surprised us. The boy he turned around to the judge, he says, 'Tell us what happened, what did that person do to you?' He says, 'That person, he come from the passage, from his house to the passage and he walked away. We came from the other passage, from that passage, we wanted to go in, so then he turned around, because he's far away from us, a couple of yards, when he turned around, he saw us. He shout at us, he told us to come back, get out from that place its dangerous, so he says, 'What you doing?'' He said, 'We were throwing the stones, we were swearing at him. So we still keep going in, but he come back. When he come back, he not come back all the way, but to the middle of the yard, a couple of yards away. So we came out, and we ran away and we threw stones.' 'Did he do anything to you?' He says, 'No, he never did, he never come near us, because a couple of yards is far away from us.' 'Are you sure?' He said, 'Yes.' Then he says, 'That's fine.' He says, 'When we go home, we tell our parents what happened, they rung the police and that person and another person he come with him. And that person, he tell us what to do.' He says, 'What he told you?' He says, 'He tell us to say that man he holding us and he trying to catch the girls to kiss them.' The boy he says, 'I swear I talk the truth, even our parents, they push us to do this, we told them he don't do nothing to us. Nothing wrong to us, he don't do nothing wrong to us, why we take him to the courts?' He says that, 'You have to say this.' I say, 'I can't say that, how can I swear it in holy God, how?' 'Who was the person?' He says, 'That person, his self, he push us.' 'So are you sure he said this?' 'I'm sure.' 'That person, he didn't do anything wrong to you?' He says, 'No, he never, he never even talk, he just says, 'Get out from that places because dangerous, maybe you get killed.' So we did something to him, we swore at him and we threw stones at him, so why are we taking him to court? I don't know.' He says, 'O.k., step down.' He stepped down and he bring in the others, the same. The four, two boys and two girls, even the girls themselves, they saying, 'That person, he never do nothing to us, he never touch us, how we can talk about him, how we involve him in this? I can't understand it. They told us, these black people and coloured people, they do these things, and we get to get him out of this country.' The judge, he just laughed. So they surprised him. They says, 'O.k., get up.' Then the judges look to me, they says to me, 'Mr. Abdullah do you want to say anything?' I say, 'Yes, why not, of course.'

So when I came up to the court and the box, he says to me, 'Swear.' He says, 'What are you going to say?' I say, 'Look, why should I to do these things? I'm a married man, I just came from home

to the United Kingdom, I been in here since 1956. They pushed me in that police station for something, I did nothing. The police had come to me once before, for a couple of days. Four policemen, they knocked on my door and they telling me, they say to me somebody rang them saying, 'There is somebody being killed in my house.' I asked him, 'Could you tell me how he speaks? Do you think it's Arabic?' He says, 'No, it's like Pakistanis.' I said, 'What he got to do with me?' He says, 'Do you object if I look inside the house?' I say, 'No, object? You can look anywhere you like.' They were looking all over, inside the house cellar everything, they don't find anything, and they go.'

So I turned around, I said, 'Look Mr., I feel sorry for the school what you been learning from it, and the college where you studied, did they teach you to do these things to other people? I mean do you think you are an educated person? Why are you doing these things to other people for? To hate people? You are a policeman, for what? To make peace. Policeman has to be peace-man, for peace between the people. This is a policeman, now you're hating people, what for? Tell me what I take from your pocket? Anything? Did I harm anybody, from your parents or whatever it is? It's o.k., that's all what I'm going to say.' So when I stepped down, do you know how much he got? He got suspended, six months suspended for what he done.

Later, after one month, this man, he saw me walking up the street shopping. He was in a car. So he saw me, he gave me a bell, from the car, 'Beep, beep, beep.' So I thought to myself, I stopped, and he reversed. He looked at me, and he says to me, 'I feel very, very sorry for you Mr., for what happened.' He said, 'Do you remember me?' I said, 'Yes, I remember you.' I said, 'Don't mention it, forget it, something that's gone, gone and that's it.' So he turns around to me, he says to me, 'He got a punishment.' 'Well that's it, what do think, you can get away with it? I mean, you can't take action such as this, the chief officer, he told you I never did that, and you know yourself you're pushing these children, so I feel sorry for that.' And that was it, he told me, 'I'm sorry for it,' I said, 'Well that's, it don't mention it, no hard feelings, that's it.'

The struggle of Abdullah against police and parental racism, serves as a particularly dramatic example of resistance outside of the workplace. His story is a powerful example of how one Yemeni steelworker refused to be cowed in the face of dangerously provocative accusations and the manipulation of the young and vulnerable.

Conclusion

This chapter opened with a remark by Qassim Muthenar Obadi that bluntly illustrated how his time was unevenly spread between the workplace and 'leisure.' The life-stories of the Yemeni former-steelworkers are oriented around their experiences at work. The comment of Qassim has been echoed by many of the participants in this research project. This comment certainly supports the intention of the economic migrants to earn money in the country of destination and then return to their country of origin. The interviewees, as the previous chapter demonstrates worked long and arduous shifts of up to thirteen hours a day and up to seven days a week. The narratives of the former steelworkers make clear that as a result of the working patterns of the steelworkers, and the collaborative nature of work in the steel factories, the steelworks provided the strongest area of social relations between the Yemeni and English citizens. Indeed, one

of the most significant areas of social relations outside of work was found on the journey to work, where Yemeni steelworkers would often travel back and forth to work with their English colleagues, and colleagues from other migrant groups. As was mentioned in the literature review, studies that have been written in the 'race,' and particularly ethnic-relations tradition tend to focus on the cultural institutions of migrant groups, and how they facilitate or inhibit integration with the host society (see, for instance, Dahya, 1967). The life-stories of the former steelworkers have emphasized that racism too, was a major constraint in the formation of relationships with members of the host society. As the methodology chapter mentioned, life-stories are oriented towards drama, and many of the incidents the former-steelworkers tell are dramatic episodes of their lives which are deeply etched in their memories and consciousness.

The life-stories of the former steelworkers have also highlighted that the exclusionary practices that the migrants faced were met with resistance. The narratives have highlighted a number of the struggles that the Yemenis waged for self-affirmation in Sheffield during their social lives, and these parallel similar dramas in their working lives. Indeed, the majority of the former steelworkers have claimed that racism was more prevalent on the streets of Sheffield, rather than in the workplaces. On the streets the migrants faced increased overt racial abuse. The relationships between the emigrants and the host population appeared to deteriorate as time progressed into the 1960s and 1970s. In the areas where they encountered national and local officialdom and bureaucracy, the Yemenis, who attempted to secure the immigration of their families, as the narrative of Mahmood demonstrates, faced long and arduous battles against increasingly strict and unsympathetic police and immigration officials. The Yemeni former-steelworkers had very little leisure time during the time that they experienced off of work in their working lives. At these times of the day, or week, the single men were typically in a state of exhaustion, a state that was inflicted by their long, eight to twelve hour shifts, which they worked five to seven days a week. And it was in this time that they had to perform their necessities such as cooking, washing and preparing for the following day. The narratives of the former-steelworkers make clear that 'time-off' was frequently characterized by overtiredness, and, with the politicization of 'race' throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s, a gradual deterioration in the relationship between the Yemenis and the host population.

'Work going down.' Redundancy, Severance and the Search for Work

They smash it all, all factory, all machine they shutting, one after the other. Brown Bailey, Firth Brown, English Steel, Hadfield, Osborn, they all shutting.

Management making meeting in canteen. Says after couple of months factory be shut down. They put notice on wall and everyone talking about it. It was big shock, big shock – some people crying when they know about it.

We have a lot of demonstration - in London too, and we have a strike. Some people angry and mad too because he been shutting all factory. Some not mind, they old or want to finish with work and steel. We get sixteen pound every two week strike pay from union. But Thatcher she say, 'I put all union in my pocket, I shut all factory.' And after that, that it, argument with union and shutting all factory.

Some of us have broken service because we go to Yemen many times for our family. No redundancy pay for us! And if you lose one week of year, they not pay you redundancy for that year. If you over forty you can't get new job, no chance. Some young ones maybe lucky, but only a few ever get one again.

Gate lock up if you come, that it! Nobody can come in. Finish for us now.

The above quotation is a paragraph drawn from the experiences of several Yemeni emigrants which formed the basis of an exercise in an English class for the former steelworkers.

I don't make redundant myself, because the firm closed. I'm in the Yemen, Brown Bailey's closed and I'm in the Yemen, firm closed, I'm in the Yemen, closed. We lost everything, about the redundancy, lost it, because if you in the firm he give you redundancy, if you not in the firm he doesn't.

The Thatcher government, she broke all city, all firm, take it away, she come, people from Sheffield out, Mrs. Thatcher. Before, all the hospitals here, many, many firms. When she government, she close everything, close everything, and she gave the people redundancy and everything you know? The government close the big factory, big factory, steel, she closed, she got some firm, four firm. Now, too many small firm now, no casting, no nothing now, before you can't see Sheffield, smoke, all smoke.

So when I come back, still working, still working for small firm, keep working for small firm. It's not the same as before, before I big steel, big casting, big this, different, different, little bit better, little bit better, you know, little bit better, it's a big money as well this time.

I'm retired now, got a pension now. I don't know, it been ten year now, I'm retired, about, over ten year, up to now, oh, over ten year, 'cause I'm forgetting, 'cause I'm sick now, like. I had the problem with my head now. I go to hospital now, because I been to the Yemen for seven years and I come back, and I'm in the hospital now, every day, every day, every time. I mean the Hallamshire Hospital, I have something like, some problem in my head like, and I forget. You tell me something, I forget it, lost, it's not the same as before, but I have trouble.

I have too much trouble before, have too much trouble before in the job. When I'm working for steel firm, hammer, the hammer, bang and boom all day. They don't give you something to making you wear, only after ten year, or, after ten year they give you something, before nothing. You can hear the hammer, broke your head. Too late for me now, I'm old now. Now, nothing, nothing, just hang around you know what I mean? Come in to lessons, get your pension, if you want to go to the Yemen you can go, if you want to travel you can travel, it's better. I've been to the Yemen about seven years, I come back, but now I got eh, my head trouble.

I've been here most of my life. Yeah, very nice, only first time when I stay, when I come to this country you get trouble, hard job that's all. You know, that thing it's comes from here to here, what do you call them, tongs, tongs, to get the steel. Well, steelwork everyday, everyday, when I working from the furnaces carrying from that hot, hot steel from the furnaces, put 'em there. After, come from the hole to this one, well the fingers flat, flat, flat all the flat, feel it from here to here, that one, and this one as well here, 'cause you carry steel all the time, all the time, it hurt you, oh, too much.

Hard work, hard work, hard work, hard work, when I come to this country, everybody look after you, everybody there to help you, hard work, hammer, steel in here, rolling mill, some of them cut his legs, some of them, but nobody get a compensation. We no, not understand to fight for that, no understand to fight for that. Only when I get my retire, pension that's all.

Nagi

The life-stories of the former steelworkers are often relayed in a chronological form and come to an end soon after the respondents mention that they were made redundant or retired. Many of the interviewees only divulged further information after probing. Although unusually brief, the following interview extract provides a concise example of the narrative structure which was common to many of the storytellers. The narrator uses his employment history and return visits to Yemen as chronological reference points in his life-story and ends after he mentions that he finished work:

From my village I came to here, to Sheffield. After, I'm going working you know, in steel job. After, you know, maybe three years, I'm going back to Yemen, I live there one year and then I coming back, I still I'm working you know still, same job.

Then after six, six years I'm going to Yemen, to Aden, I coming back again, I'm working steel, maybe, maybe nine, nine years I'm working for that company and I'm not going back to Yemen. After that I'm going to Yemen, I'm living you know, maybe one year, I coming back, this time, and, you know '84, finish job, finish steel job. I worked for twenty-three years.

This chapter aims to provide an insight into the former steelworkers' experiences of redundancy and severance at this complex stage of their lives. In keeping with the theoretical framework of the thesis, the chapter will aim to analyse how the ex-steelworkers' experiences of redundancy, severance and the search for work were mediated by racism and class. The chapter begins by providing a background to the recession. The chapter then aims to analyse the particular position in which the Yemeni former-steelworkers found themselves. The next section looks at the steelworkers' search for work and the final section of the chapter aims to briefly analyse how the Yemeni community organisations were reformed in response to the recession.

Redundancy, Severance and the Yemeni Steelworkers

The steel industry in Sheffield was hit especially hard during the recession of the late 1970s and 1980s. In the city, unemployment stood above the national average throughout much of the 1980s (Westergaard, Noble and Walker 1989: 27). In 1979 the unemployment rate in Sheffield was below the national average at under 5%, in 1980 unemployment had risen to 6% but remained below the national average. It was not until 1981 that the rate of unemployment suddenly doubled to 12% and overtook the national average, continuing to rise until it reached its peak at 16%, 2% above the national average in 1986 (Westergaard, Noble and Walker 1989: 27). The percentage of Yemenis who found themselves unemployed from the late 1970s exceeded the local unemployment rate quite dramatically. The first spate of redundancies for the Yemenis occurred between 1978 and '79, and soon after 70-80% of the Yemenis in Sheffield found themselves unemployed (Halliday, 1992: 107; Searle and Shaif, 1991: 71). As has been argued by Marxist scholars, the economic downturn marked the beginning of a transitory period in the development of capitalism from labour imports into the advanced industrial countries of the west, to capital exports from these countries. Indeed, many of the migrants from Yemen who had come to England at the height of the post-war boom now emigrated back overseas in search of labour. The size of the community in Sheffield was estimated to have shrunk by three quarters from up to 8000 in 1972, to 2000 in 1990 (Halliday, 1992: 107). At the time of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962, Dahya (1965: 177) estimated that the total population of Yemenis in Britain was 12,000, whereas Halliday (1992: 59) estimated that at most there were 15,000. Yet Halliday writes that, 'by 1990 there were believed to be, at most, 8000 Yemenis in the UK, 6000 from the North and around 2000 from the South' (1992: 106).

The Yemeni community in Sheffield in the late 1970s and 1980s was still predominantly male. A small number of men had been joined by their families in Sheffield, a larger number were attempting to gain access for their families, while a handful had married British women and permanently settled down in Sheffield. The majority however, whether they were involved in the process of attempting to gain entry for their families or not, made frequent journeys back to Yemen every two to five years to visit their loved ones. The men who visited Yemen every few years for a number of

months, and sometimes even years, incurred broken service records in the steel industry and were made more vulnerable to the rule of 'last in, first out,' when it was implemented. There was a marked contrast in the patterns of service of English and Yemeni workers. Almost half of the sample that was used in Westergaard, Noble and Walker's (1989: 30) study of redundancy in a major Sheffield steel firm, had an unbroken service record of nearly 20 years or more, and two thirds of their sample had unbroken service for at least 10 years. Despite paying careful attention to the age, gender and the type of work that was performed by the former-employees in their research sample, Westergaard, Noble and Walker do not seem to have recorded any data on the 'racial' composition of their sample, so it is unclear whether minority ethnic groups were included and how they were affected by the redundancies at the steel plant which was the focus of their study. In the much smaller sample of Yemeni men that was used in this research project only one person had an unbroken service record of over 20 years at the time of his being made redundant. These return trips to Yemen appeared to be of crucial importance to the men, and in the narratives many used them as reference points when reconstructing their life-stories.

The length of service of an employee determined the amount that they received for their redundancy payment, and as a result of returning to Yemen for a period that was longer than that permitted as paid holiday, many of the migrants incurred a broken service record and received only a small payment. Most of the interviewees seemed to feel that the time period that was allowed them as paid holiday was inadequate for them to return to Yemen to visit their families, and pressed their managers for a longer, albeit unpaid break. The workers entered sometimes into quite lengthy negotiations with management to secure their jobs on their return and many came to informal agreements with their managers. However, there is no mention of any attempts on the part of the migrants to negotiate an official deal for an extended period of unpaid leave, the likes of which had been introduced elsewhere.¹ This is perhaps indicative of the unexpectedly abrupt nature of the recession in Sheffield and the continuing expectation of the migrants to work, 'only for a few years more,' and then return to Yemen. The Yemeni workers' return trips to their homeland also meant that many of them were not employed long enough to gain eligibility for a company pension on retirement. The broken service record of the

¹ A number of Pakistani workers benefited from unpaid extended leave at the Ford Motor Company (Smith, 1981: 153).

Yemenis meant that they were unable to make the necessary regular contributions from their salaries towards company pension funds. Abdul recalls his experience of working for a steel firm for the unusually long period of twelve years and then visiting his family in Yemen for six months only to return to a firm in decline that was unable to compensate him in any way for the loss of his job, which had taken twelve years of his life:

I was working for about twelve years you know? After, I been to Yemen and come back, it was only time when I go to Yemen. I been for six months and I come back and they give me the work. Not long after, the work started going down, then there was no work and then after that, the company finished you see? Nearly everybody was laid off. Then when they been make redundancy, they say to me, 'You lost your term, you lost your term because you been to Yemen,' you know? Everybody else you know, who got finished from that firm, he got. Some of them, he got 20,000 pounds. Some people, some people, he got none and they were same as me, the people who got none. Why? 'Because I had broken service,' he said. He told me, 'I saved you the work when you went, but I can't give you the payment, go on.' That's why I got no redundancy. And many, many Yemenis, many brothers had it like this. That was the problem, we were husbands, we had families in Yemen and everybody must go to see his family every two years, for at least two, four months, you know, or every three years you see? So that's what happened to us.

So after I been from this work, I go to Spital Hill in Sheffield you know? To work there, and I been done the rest of my time, till when I was 65 there you know, till August 1999. August 1999, that's when I got pension that's it, 'Come, you can go home Abdul, you finished now you know.' Then I got my pension and that's it. That is what happened.

Another danger of making return visits to Yemen was exacerbated around the time of the recession. Many of the workers who did visit Yemen were unable to get their jobs back on their return to Sheffield, even if they had managed to strike a deal, be it a formal or informal agreement, with their managers before they departed. Ineligible for any form of redundancy, such workers were often the worst off. This was certainly the case for Taleb:

I going home, when I come back work going down, work going down, '82, '83. Somebody left, going holiday, never going back to work, 'cause no work, work going down. Lot of people, lot of people, '82, anybody going home for holiday, never get his job back, no. Last time I stop about seven years, before. When somebody going home never job, never he get back, never going to have his job back. I stop about seven years, after, after that going home, when I come in, I started work, what he said, 'You finished, finished, cause work going down.'

When he gone, he gone. Me looking for another job, no man over 45 never get job, only wanting young people, wanting young people, young, we all over 45 before. Only, only for young, this is not for me, man over 45 no get job.

In the tight period of the recession, companies would try all means to minimise redundancy payments. One such means was using outgoing labour in one department to fill the vacancies that did arise from outgoing labour in another department, in order that the total expenditure on redundancy was lessened. In this tight monetarist context, it is

likely that Yemeni steelworkers were targeted for redundancy more than any other ethnic group in the steel industry. The steel firms could pay them less than their English working class peers and even their Afro-Caribbean and Asian working peers, as the migrants from Yemen seemed to maintain stronger ties to their homeland, manifest through the circular nature of Yemeni migration. As well as being contingent on length of service, the total value of the redundancy payment was also contingent on the wage of the employee, which in turn was based upon his position in the hierarchy of production. Given the rarity of promotion amongst non-white workers their labour was cheaper and as a result their redundancy was also cost-effective.

Most of those who were fortunate enough to receive a redundancy payment sent the money to their families in Yemen. This payment was not so much an indication that the workers believed that the decline would soon pass, as a continuation in the altruistic behaviour of the migrants who lived in deliberately frugal circumstances in the hope that their families in Yemen would have a better life. As it turned out, the search for work in the North would only lead to more disappointment.

The search for work and the experience of unemployment

It has been observed elsewhere that the rule of 'last in, first out' often breaks down in favour of a more selective approach to redundancy and severance. Such an approach is geared to the 'retention of the most 'flexible,' 'reliable' or potentially 'retrainable' sections of the workforce' (Jenkins 1986: 225). The recession presented an opportunity for employers to restructure their workforce and cast off the unfavourable sections of it. A small number of Yemeni workers did benefit from the restructuring of the workforce. Such workers were held in particularly high regard by their managers. After initially being made redundant, Hadi was instead redeployed to another department by his manager:

So on Monday, he call me to the office, I go to there and he says 'You are redundancy.' I says, 'Alright.' So he says, 'We letting you off next week, Wednesday week.' I says, 'O.k.'

So next day I been to work, they call me to office again. He says, 'We found you a job at so and so place, the Forgemaster up there.' Some place, I don't remember what it was called. I says, 'O.k. very nice.' He says, 'Next Monday, go to here, there will be somebody with you, he'll take you up to there.' I said, 'O.k., very nice.' So I went to my locker to take everything and he said, 'You're going to Forgemaster you know, don't take them with you.' I say, 'I'm not taking them home, I'm

going to take them to that other department at Forgemaster.' He says, 'Alright, I'm only joking with you!'

So I been working there for, I think for more than one year, something like that, and then he pay me redundancy. He give me three hundred. So I go home and when I come back I got retired, I got my pension, so that's it up to now.

So I got British citizenship you know, so when I go home I can get my pension you know? So I went home, I been there eight years at home, with my kids you know, with grandchildren and you know, ohh. When I go back to Sheffield, 'Well, when you coming back dad? When you coming back, when, when?' 'Alright, alright, I'm coming back, *inshallah!*' So I got some problems with my pension. They don't pay me properly up to now. I went to the, what do you call them Citizen's Advice. So he has been phoning and writing letters. But up to now I get nothing, only my pension. I get 68 pounds a week, so that's my story.

Hadi's story of initially being made redundant and then being re-employed to fill a vacancy that had arisen on the internal labour market was, however, rare amongst the Yemenis.

The fourth chapter of this study found that the migrants initially used word of mouth and the method of directly approaching manufacturing firms in order to find work when they first came to Sheffield. Indeed, the direct approach and word of mouth method remained the dominant means of conducting job searches whenever the migrants were out of work. At a time when unemployment amongst the Yemenis was at an apex, the possibility of finding work through the use of word of mouth channels that were largely based on an employed network of fellow Yemenis was greatly diminished. Indeed, that the word of mouth method of finding work reproduces in the job seeker the socio-economic status of his peers, was demonstrated by the recurrence of joblessness amongst the Yemeni community. Those Yemenis that had managed to retain their jobs were still confined to the lower echelons of the labour hierarchy and therefore had little access to information regarding vacancies on the internal labour market. In addition, the barriers that were imposed on the former steelworkers in their hunt for work by internal labour markets and word of mouth recruitment were compounded by the lack of fluency with which the migrants spoke English and their lack of knowledge of the state services that were available to them in England. Even after more than two decades in England, language difficulties and problems of illiteracy still remained rife amongst the steelworkers and ex-steelworkers, consequently few could negotiate the state employment services. The documentary, *Thank you that's all I knew* (1989) reported a 95% illiteracy rate amongst the older generation of Yemenis. As a result, the Yemenis were less likely to secure even those often less desirable positions that were not

advertised in internal labour markets, or filled through restructuring but forwarded to the job centres. Indeed, many found it difficult to even claim the unemployment benefits to which they were entitled.

The late 1970s and 1980s saw a rise in racism both locally and nationally. Beginning in the St. Pauls district of Bristol in 1980 and then moving on through the inner city neighbourhoods of Brixton and Toxteth in 1981, uprisings began to sweep through many of Britain's multi-racial urban areas. Although the result of a combination of complex factors, such open political confrontation on the streets of many of Britain's inner cities were conveniently reduced to being called 'race riots' by the mainstream media. The most shocking incident to effect the Yemenis in Sheffield came in 1989 when a sixty-six year old retired steelworker named Musa Mohammed was attacked on a bus with an elderly friend when returning from Friday prayers. His attackers were youths who ripped off his prayer hat, threw it out of the window, and were shouting 'Black Bastard' and 'Get out you wogs.' Within two hours after the attack Musa died. The Yemeni community responded with outrage. Around 600 people came out onto the streets at the funeral of Musa Mohammed, and meetings were held with the City Council and the chief constable of South Yorkshire Police, who called the attackers, 'thugs' but not 'racists' (Halliday, 1992: 116; Searle and Shaif, 1992: 72; *Thank you....*: 1989). Soon after this, an armed gang burst into a popular Yemeni café and proceeded to smash the furniture in the shop. Incidents of anti-Arab racism continued into the 1990s. In the run up to the Gulf War, the Yemeni Community Centre was daubed with racist graffiti, individual Yemenis have regularly been insulted and received threatening telephone calls, and a minibus that took Yemeni school children to and from Arabic language classes was attacked and stoned (Searle and Shaif 1992: 80-1). With the election of Thatcher in 1979, these events were accompanied by a renewed politicisation of race. In the early Thatcher era especially, employers felt quite strongly, 'the need to maintain a racial balance.' In his study of racism and recruitment Jenkins (1985: 182) argues: 'What 'balance' actually means, however, is a majority of white workers. It is clear from the interview material that 'balance' may also mean keeping black workers in their place, that is, in unskilled or otherwise undesirable jobs.'

As the recession spread across the North and the Midlands and the period of unemployment became more prolonged, any hope of finding a job was gradually stifled.

For Shaif: 'Unemployment raised issues which weren't there before, issues of loneliness, isolation and depression.' Indeed, the ends of the narratives of the former steelworkers, which typically comes soon after the men mention that they were made redundant or stopped working for some other reason, are perhaps indicative of the value that the storytellers place on the period of their lives that they spent out of work. The continual rituals of standing in dole queues and experiencing repeated rejections from employers, all while living under the grey skies of Attercliffe and Burngreave, epicentres of industrial decline, places that were increasingly marked with boarded up factories and served as a constant reminder of the hopelessness of their search, all worked to consolidate the feeling of depression amongst the former steelworkers. This personal sense of despair was compounded by a loss of status in Yemen. The families of the emigrants in Sheffield would at times become the objects of ridicule in their countries of origin. In his study *Unemployment and Racial Minorities*, Smith (1981: 149) comments that people with many dependents tend to fare particularly badly with unemployment. He writes: 'This affects the minorities on average more than other groups, because they tend to belong to large families with many dependents to each wage earner.' In Yemen, the remittances of the Yemeni former steelworkers in Sheffield would often benefit the extended family. The interviewees in the present research project have spoken about their money being received by their parents, wives, children, and even uncles and cousins. Saleh Muthana Muflahi notes the mockery faced by his family in Yemen and describes his feelings of frustration at being unable to provide financial support for his family in Yemen and at the same time support himself sufficiently in Sheffield:

I'm married and I got kids. That is the number of kids, four kids. They won't let them in, he says, 'Nothing to do with us, only your Mrs.' Now, no Mrs, no four kids, no nothing, only me self, he make me single and I got, honestly, I got twenty-three grandkids and I got eight kids grand-grandkids and I got big family, more than thirty-eight inside, waiting for every penny from me. Because in the Yemen, no work. If you got hospital, you must be pay, if you got chemist, you must be pay, everything in Yemen. So some people honestly, they get one chicken a year, to give ration to family, and I don't want anybody else to believe the Yemen what he saw on the news. In Yemen, it's only lying them people, especially now in Yemen. You know, when the people come and visit to Yemen, and they said they been to hospital and they do so and so, and do so, only lying, honestly. If you poorly or your kids poorly, if you no money, you kids, or you die without help from anywhere. Now, anybody there, no work, sit down there, for nothing. I don't like to stay there, 'cause I can't get money to stay with my family. I'm old now, more than fifty years from my family. If I go every five, six years for two months, if I'm lucky, if not sometime only six, seven weeks. When I come back two, three week, letter come or telephone come, 'Please no money, kids, he want clothes, he want everything.' It's very hard honestly, since when I started and up to now very, very hard.

I tried to bring family but I can't afford it, I can't afford it. If I have to, my Mrs. now, she want to go to British embassy in Sana'a, and after them people, they working with the British embassies, Yemeni people, want money, everything, some money. You go to Sana'a, come back next week or week after, you need some money for them people working with embassy, especially in Yemen, not anything free, not anything. You working for any embassy people, you need money, if you go hospital, pay money, go chemist, pay money. All doctor, when they working with government now in Yemen, every doctor, he got chemist, private for himself, with any stuff, with any medicine, anything coming, help from abroad, you know, for help for Yemen, government send him to hospital. Them people, they nick everything, carry on to their chemist. So when you go to the doctor, 'Oh, you want some so and so and so and so and so, everything, so go to chemist.' When you go to chemist, '50 pound,' '60 pound,' '100 pound,' so all that money for doctor, everything, no anything in Yemen free. You believe people, he says free in Yemen it's lying, believe me, not anything, if you go as guest any house, you can't get anything free. Anybody, police, if you got on street and do damage me, and you got car and I got car, got big damage, it's your fault not my fault, police coming. You give him something else, 'O.k. everybody go home!' Oh yeah, all policemen, they only stay inside towns. Everybody look after self, that's it.

Everywhere, very, very difficult, very hard, honestly, in Yemen, some people blind, some people only walking, he don't know where he walking. Honestly, sometime I don't sleep all night, thinking what can I do, all my life working hard, help for my family, my family waiting for every penny, knowing if I get 62 pound or a 100 pound a month, how much I spend for myself, how much for bill, how much I save for my family. You know what I mean? It's very, very hard, don't thinking, if they're here single, they must be single. He can stay maybe two, three years single, after he go and get family, and after family, he get kids, he get so and so, and he get big family, big family, after kids married, and he got family self, some more. So, no income support, no nothing from Yemen or anywhere. Them people who you get here, honestly, some people he buy only tuna fish, a little bit tomatoes, anything, sandwich, every penny saving him for family, sending for family, because family no money. It's very hard.

Very hard, honestly, it was very hard living with no family here, very, very hard. Sometime I'm poorly, only I get a telephone, I use somebody else place, sometime your friend he help you, if not phone to hospital go and see your doctor. So to live, somebody else live with you, to help you and to help them. Council tax more, then after more to spend gas, more to spend electric, more to spend everything. So I don't know what to do, sometimes thinking, I don't know what to do, if any, somebody help me. I spent my money, and my family without anything, because them asking for help, nothing. I get property, I want help, I can't afford to pay gas, electric, tax, council tax, insurance, so and so, what I need to do, for me. So he make everything hard for me to get. Honestly, thinking fed up, up to here sometime, honestly, I don't sleep all night. Sometime I thinking, I says from that 1955 up to now I'm help for my family. If I want to buy for family, I can't afford it, that one is waiting same thing, everyone waiting same thing. So he can't afford you know, to get out, and after I can't afford to fetch 'em over here.

So it's very hard living honestly, fed up. If you go to Yemen you get fed up even more. I don't know what to do, save money for my family, or save money for anything for myself, very hard, you can't get nice shirt, I can't buy a nice shirt, I can't buy a nice shoes, always second hand believe me, and I don't know what to do for jobs for electric. Sometime, I got two or three days not got one penny in my bank, one penny. So very bad life honestly, very hard, you know in Yemen, it's very hard, big family, you should be fine to look after your family, I don't care if you got kids there, most of them big family, he got lot. Anybody else here, they got big family in Yemen, oh well.

We lost everything. I lost my life, I get five, six operation in my stomach, self, and I'm waiting now for another one, so, and I says to you before, I wish I can get six months, from 1955 to 2003, I wish I got six months to stay with my family, but I can't afford for six months, family, and I can't afford myself here. If I like nice shirt, or I like nice trousers, or I like nice shoes, or I like to go somewhere holiday for one day, I can't. Looking for the shoes, two pounds, three pounds, I bought it for myself, trousers same thing, I look with just enough for two pound, three pound, 'cause I can't afford it and I'm working hard all my life, first in British Army and after in factory, in steel factory, now what I'm telling you. Honestly it's very, very, hard for any Yemeni, not only for me, for all Yemeni very hard. If him in Yemen, very hard, if him in Britain, hard, twice. From 1950 up

to now, all Yemeni out from country, believe me, thousand, thousand not only in England, everywhere, in Africa, in Malaysia, and every country, all Yemeni people.

Honestly, we fed up, we go out, fed up, stay at home, fed up all the time, especially when you got property. I thinking, what to do for yourself, for your property, for family, waiting, shouting, 'No food, no clothes, no nothing,' and after being here, what you think? Your family got to ask people, you know for some help, 'Well can't got money from you,' and they say, 'Ooh look them! He got somebody in Britain and he got no food, no clothes for them kids' and, ain't that a real shame to get help, you know what I mean? He need very, very help when your family says, 'Well them people laughing about kids, because kids no shoes, no clothes.' He says, 'You're in Britain and your, kids, you know not, not anything, house and after to get eat, to get eat, they get hungry.' Sometime honestly, believe me all Yemeni, they are old people, they strain to get one piece lamb to eat it, and he can't, he love to eat, but he can't buy it. They sell them two pound for that meat, he gonna say 'No, the two pound for my family, so that's it.' Some people he buy it, two chicken leg a week, and always bread and butter, tomatoes, sandwich, cornflakes, tuna fish, that what Yemeni be living on here. Very, very hard, because everybody got families, shame to leave family without anything else understand, and he need that money for himself.

This loss of status was clearly related to the feeling of depression that many of the single men felt after they had been made redundant. Such feelings were by no means limited to the victims of redundancy in the Yemeni community (for stories of the post-redundancy experiences of mainly white former-steelworkers in Sheffield, see Beattie, 1998). However, the depression amongst the Yemeni former-steelworkers was compounded by the feeling that they had been cheated, given their long but broken service which in the end yielded a much smaller redundancy payout than that received by their English workmates. It is within this context that the period saw a significant reform in the function of the Yemeni community organisations. These newly restructured organisations were in the vanguard of the struggle for English language training, vocational re-training and compensation for the injuries gained from decades spent in the steelworks.

The reformation of community infrastructures

Until the onset of the depression in Britain, the Yemeni organisations that had functioned in the cities of post-war Yemeni settlement had as their primary concern the link between the migrants in England and their country of origin. The editorial of the first issue of the paper of the Yemeni Workers Union (YWU), which was perhaps the largest organisation, with an official membership of around 1900 at its height of activity, at the end of 1975, gave a clear exposition of the function of the YWU, beneath the title 'Why the workers Union?':

The establishment of the YWU in this country is intended, in the first place, to forge a link between workers here and the workers' movement and the revolutionary socialist movement in the

homeland, and therefore to transform work within the ranks of the workers and to increase their understanding of our Yemeni homeland and of the affairs of the Arab homeland and of the affairs of the Arab nation (quoted in Halliday 1992: 91).

The depression served to weaken the Yemeni organisations in Britain. Halliday (1992: 105) cites two main reasons for the collapse of the YWU:

First, the recession in the engineering industry from the mid 70s onwards led to increased unemployment among Yemenis, and many then left to find work in the Gulf or in Yemen itself. Some of the main organizers of the YWU were among those who were so affected and who departed. Second, the apparent unity which the South Yemeni leadership had been able to maintain in the early 1970s came to an end in 1977 and early 1978, culminating in the outbreak of factional fighting on 26 June 1978, in which President Salim Rubiyya Ali lost his life. This crisis in Aden had its impact on the YWU and on the community as a whole, and made it more difficult to operate.

The debilitating effect that the recession had on Yemeni organisations in Britain was compounded by political events in Yemen. As the recession set in and unemployment became more prolonged and generated a string of its own new problems for the declining migrant community, with racism becoming more entrenched and internal divisions within the Yemeni community more pronounced, it became clear that the remainder of the community would have to re-organise in order to address the problems that those who had decided to stay in Sheffield would endure. Awad, the treasurer of the Yemeni Economic and Training Centre in Attercliffe, explains the reasons that underlay the transition towards the new ambit of work that was performed by the community organisations:

There used to be a Yemeni community organisation, we called it the Yemenis Workers' Union, but till 1982 or '83, I think it was '82, we were less a part of the Workers Union in Yemen. We were members yes, in the Third World, but for us here, it's better to be thinking of Community Organisation. So then in 1982 we start to re-organise the Yemeni Community Organisations, and then from there it's the Yemeni Community Association. Why is it? Because if we say Yemeni Workers' Union or Yemenis Migration Workers' Union, something like that, from South Yemen and North Yemen, then it's only for the workers, for the working class. But by that date we had a lot of people out of work and we had two or three or four doctors, and well, it was our kids as well you see, they were growing up, and they were learning, and then some people were coming from Yemen, and others were going back to there. So we changed it to the Yemeni Community Association, for all Yemenis who come to the United Kingdom. That's one thing, the first step. The second step is, like the British workers' union who don't get no support from the government, who get no support from public funds, they get no support from charities, we get no support. What they got, only came from their workers, what they've got, from their own members. We used to be like that because we were a workers' union it was the same. We don't get no income from anywhere else. It was only from our members and it's very little money. But we thought about becoming a community organisation because we could get the chance to get funds from public money, from charities, from different sorts you know, so that's why we changed the organisation like that.

If we didn't organise we wouldn't get this place, if we still the Yemeni Workers' Union, we wouldn't get this place [The Attercliffe centre]. We used to be on the Burngreave Road as the Yemeni Workers' Union. If we were still the Yemeni Workers' Union, under that name and doing

what we did then, we wouldn't get no chance to get funds, we get funds under the Yemeni Community Association. Now the Yemenis' organisations have come under the Yemen Republic, so we changed again after the two governments became one.

The difference was, we have a different, broken Yemen, South Yemen and North Yemen, but Yemenis here, we working together, we never been broke in two. Two separate, maybe separate community, but by the end we coming together. If I say about Yemenis' community in Sheffield, we come in 1989 or '88, into Yemenis' community altogether, South and North. And the Yemen is not coming united until 1990, but before, we working together. It's different you know, the end of the name, but in 1982 we name it the, 'Yemenis' Community,' for all Yemenis people. We dream about it, we was dreaming about the Yemen coming together, but it's not take us long, it's not take us long, it's only about 28 years and then it's coming to the Yemenis' Community.

As Awad mentions, the Sheffield City Council began to work more closely with the two new Yemeni community organisations in the 1980s; the Yemeni Community Association, which represented the Yemenis from South Yemen and the Yemeni Immigrants' General Union, which represented those from the North. A further change was that a new generation of the Yemenis were also heavily involved in the new organisations. Many of these young men and women were bilingual and had, throughout their childhood, supported their parents in their dealings with the various infrastructures of the host society and were particularly well positioned to aid their fathers in the struggles to claim their rights after they had been made redundant.² With the sponsorship of the City Council, the Yemeni Community organisation began to provide a variety of new services for the community, including English language classes and training programmes for the unemployed (see, for instance, *Thank you...: 1989*). It was clear however that literacy and skills were not the only thing that was impeding the progress of the migrants. Abdulgalil Shaif (Searle and Shaif, 1991: 72), an activist at the time, gives one example of how racism manifested itself in the search for work, and how the Yemeni jobseekers, with the advice of the Community Centre, attempted to overcome it:

The other factor in causing us to begin seriously to organise ourselves was racism. We were beginning to see how corrosive and violent this was, not only in an institutional sense, in the ways which we were denied jobs through it – so much so that some of our unemployed had to anglicise their names on application forms to stand any chance of getting work – but in the number of racist attacks we faced.

In addition to this, a number of firms across the country introduced literacy tests and the requirement that applicants complete their own forms in English. Such measures acted as a further obstacle for the Yemeni and South Asian unemployed, in particular. In

² Abdulgalil Shaif (Searle and Shaif, 1991: 74) provides a personal account of how he acted as an interpreter, a translator and a support mechanism for his father, who would take him to the DHSS, to the tax office and even to the steel firm in which he worked in order to collect his wages.

1979, British Steel refused employment in unskilled posts to seven Bangladeshi applicants who had previously worked for the firm, because they had failed a literacy test (Newnham, 1986: 24). The Corporation eventually conceded that the tests were discriminatory. As Newnham (ibid) writes, an inadequate knowledge of written and spoken English was 'frequently used to discriminate against black people even where such knowledge of English is not actually required for the kinds of tasks which are to be performed.'

The Yemeni community organisations were also deeply involved in the struggle to gain compensation for the industrial injuries that had been incurred by the former steelworkers. The Yemenis worked in an environment where the level of noise reached up to 40 decibels each day. In a survey of 800 Yemeni men, the Sheffield Occupational Health Project found that 90% had developed hearing loss significant enough to enable them to claim compensation, and one in seven suffered from tinnitus, a permanent ringing in the ears (*Yemeni Community Profile*, 1988-9, quoted in Halliday, 1992: 111-114). The high levels of dust in the steelworks, left 30% of the former-steelworkers with asthma, and, has also created skin conditions including dermatitis (Searle and Shaif 1991: 67-8). A large number of the former steelworkers also incurred burns, broken limbs and amputations during their working lives. The narratives of the former steelworkers, such as that of Nagi, which opened the present chapter, and the following one of Moonasa, certainly include many complaints about the injuries that were suffered in the steelworks:

I think redundant yeah, yeah redundant at this firm, after you see, we get little bit money. I don't know year, British Steel, I'm sorry, I forgot, it's a long time you know? Well after redundant, years and years, finished the job altogether son, stayed at home after, you get me? That's it, finished. We can't do it now you know, when I young. We finished, that's it up to now.

I bring my wife, daughter and son, he's here now. It's alright now, look after me, wife, everything, daughter eighteen, son twenty-five. Oh yeah, there's not work in here now son, not work, some of them sometime, maybe working sometime you know. There's no steel anymore.

I got some money from government you know, init, some government money because poor. Me and family, wife, we get money little bit, you see? It's alright life, yeah, alright, get money now, between me and her, lovely, not too bad you know, oh smashing yeah. Because I got, I'm a little bit poorly, you understand? I got something, little bit money to help me, because I got little bit badly, you get me? Too much dust, yeah, when we work, oh terrible, oh don't give you nothing, they don't care a fuck, you dead, they don't care when you die. They give you mask something like that? No. Well, you can't see, see shop, you know, fucking dust. Aye, dust too much, every day, every day, every day. Well some nights I went out some week, when I go home and eating I get a little bit sick, that's dust, int it? Dust, 'cause working machine, and machine, and machine, and machine, it shot up in you, get sick sometimes, that's right yeah.

Oh yeah, too much smoke, too much in shop, you not seen it, you know what I mean? Because when you go home some week, when you eating you get sick, oh why? You get sick 'cause of dust, that's what happened, you get me? He don't give you mask, he don't give you nothing you know. He just go to pub, British Steel, he not bother. Hundred, hundred, thousand people in the firm, bigger, and second what do you call that? Firth Brown, yeah. Well, and that's it son, after, when I finish, very happy, you know what I mean? Yeah up to now, I got some money, also I tell you, he got some money from government, and that's it and I got little bit from somewhere else, because been work hard. Doctor says you got something wrong inside him, you know what I mean? Doctor, yeah, because he says, 'He not serious, just a little bit damaged son.' And that's all son.

Abdulgalil Shaif (Searle and Shaif, 1991: 77-8) gives the following personal account of how his concern for his father led him to spearhead the campaign to gain compensation for industrial injuries:

As we saw, the health problem within our community was directly related to the work problem, the exploitation of our people and the terrible conditions in the steel firms where they worked. I remember speaking to my father one day and he said to me, 'Are you speaking, or are your lips just moving without speaking?' 'I'm speaking to you', I said. 'Can't you hear me?' 'No', he said. So I took it seriously and went to the doctor with him. He said, 'You've lost a lot of your hearing, you'll have to go and see a specialist.' This was typical of hundreds of Yemeni workers in the deafening noise of the steel industry and those who worked in very close proximity to it. Why weren't they provided with muffs, with ear protection?

It wasn't until 1978-9, when the majority of Yemenis were being made redundant, that the employers started providing this. By this time, it was too late for most of our fathers. They had worked for thirty years without any protection at all. I read in the *Guardian* about the problem that white workers in similar jobs were having. So I thought, 'Well, what about the Yemenis?' People were coming to see me at our advice centre about problems with the DHSS, etc., and I suddenly thought to myself, 'Why am I talking so loud to these people?' They were coming right close, putting their ears next to me and asking to repeat everything I said. So I phoned the occupational health project, and they said, 'Well let's test ten people.' We did, and they were all deaf. So we did a lot more tests, week after week. Then we realised that almost the whole community of ex-steel workers were deaf. So we contacted lawyers and said, 'Can we get our fathers and uncles compensation for this?' They said, of course we could. So we made eventually over a million pounds for people in the community who had suffered industrial deafness. Most of this money has been sent to families back home, to buy tractors for their farms, or to buy themselves houses here. It was seen within the community as a real victory, and a reward for struggling and not giving in.

But it also showed another injustice. People who made their compensation claims from insurance companies could get it, but those who claimed through occupational pensions from the DHSS could not get it. There was a time limitation – they had to make their claim within five years of being made redundant. By 1986, when we waged this compensation campaign, that time had passed for most of our ex-workers. The trade unions they belonged to – the Transport and General Workers' Union was the main one – not one of them had informed them about this limitation, so millions of pounds of potential compensation was lost. Over 700 claims were turned down by the DHSS. This was the real evidence of the neglect of the Yemeni workers by the trade unions, by other workers and by progressive white organisations generally. It was also further proof of why we had to build and struggle through our own organisations rooted in our own community life.

Abdulgalil Shaif's account of the campaign for compensation demonstrates that the Yemenis were less well officially supported in their claims than other workers. Abdul recalls the discrimination in the legal process that followed his claim for compensation:

I cut my finger one day when I was burning and welding. I got some steel wire, from a wire brush in my finger, it damaged that one. Wire, from a wire brush, go inside it you know? I take the wire brush out of my finger but that had nothing to do with it, the damage was there and it go very bad after. I cut it, took it out then leave it you see. One small wire go inside the finger and I don't feel it at all, I take the wire away 'cause it's a long wire you know? Yeah a long, thin wire you know? And what, after two years it go bad. After, it go bad you know, after that, they cut my finger off altogether. They did that in Yemen. It was 1979, I kept working after, but there's got not much work you know, the work is go a bit slow.

In 1995, I went to court in the Wicker about my finger, about this finger you know, and I told him this story and what happened you see. I go that time you know, and I got my reference and everything on paper about what happened to my finger and they don't believe me. They don't believe what I said, they said, 'It's long time ago, I cut it a long time ago, in another way.' Alright the social security they give me the form, they give me the everything to fill in, but one thing, the man whose what do you call him, the man who does sit there, he said, 'I cut it in Iraq.' That's what he told me, honestly.

That's what I got, that's the important thing what I get all my life in England you know, he told me, honest to God, he said, he said, 'You cut your finger in Iraq.' You know, that time Iraq got some problems, it was after 1990. That man after, when he said that, I don't know if he's joking or what he's, what he's trying to do. I been to the court to try to get my compensation, to get some money you know, for my finger you know, but you sit me down in here and witnesses are there and three men at the front. It was the man next to the, you know leader man you know, he told me, he said, 'You cut your finger in Iraq.' You know I said 'I've never been Iraq' and then I took my hat and then go home, never come back, yeah, you see? When I heard him say that from first time, I said, 'I'm not going to talk no more.' And that's it, that is what happened to me in England. Now I lost my finger, this is go for nothing, honest I didn't get no money for it. I don't get why this man he said, 'You cut this in Iraq,' you know? At that time you know, people were talking about you know the war in Iraq, you know. I said, 'I never been Iraq, first time I come from Yemen, I come to England, and I work all my life in England, some wire brush go through, inside my finger.' I don't tell him this story, after that, that's it. 'Cause since when I heard him say that, I just take me out, self up and go outside, one woman come after me, 'Come back, come back,' I said, 'No.' One woman, she's working there, take the people in and take them out. I mean if he's joking with me that time, I don't like to be joke, you know? I don't want to get a problem like this, but if he's mean it, I never been to Iraq, now, up to now, I get nothing for it.

I got, I got all paper, I got all my paper at home, and that is make upset me. It was only that time you know, when I was upset. In England everything is alright, nothing, don't make no difference, doesn't matter where you go to looking for work, doesn't matter where you go work, National Health, anywhere, everything's alright, doesn't matter where, foreigner, who's no foreigner, but that thing, this is what happened to me and I got upset. That's what happened you know? I don't know where we going, we are a pensioner now, I don't know whether we are going to die in England or in Yemen, but I like to go to Yemen maybe.

That's the problem now, we are still foreigners, here and in Yemen. You know, all Yemenis, brothers in here, but in England we still foreigners, you know? We don't know what happened to us in the end. Yes, if you go to Yemen you are a foreigner, you see, you are English, when you got the British passport, when you are in here, you still foreigner you know? You see I can't go get medicine in Yemen, for free or anything you know, for nothing, anything you know, you see? We lost our country for that, for what we done, for steelwork in Sheffield, and for that, we lost our country, this is the truth. You know, imagine Yemen, if you are a Yemeni now, and you are a *hafiz* and I come to talk to you, you get everything right to insult me, where I spending my life, where I working for. I was working for British town, for British, in the steelworks, you know, you see? For British you know power, and why we should ask the Yemeni government to give me that and that and that you see? But in here, I'm not sure either, that's upset me, that what I told you, when I go to Attercliffe court and he told me, 'I cut my finger in Iraq.' You know but I can't, I can't, you know, I been two days sick after, when he told me that. I don't talk nothing, telling you, some woman tried to come after me, to outside, 'Come back,' they said, saying, 'Come back,' I said, 'No, I'm not going to the court no more, that's it.' And I got this now, I've, I carry on, I lost, that is I lost from my own body you know, one finger, you know, you see, because that situation.

When he said that to me, that means I am foreigner, he thinks I am foreigner you see? And he said, 'I cut my finger in Iraq,' and I never been Iraq, now or never, you see? His mind you see, he's got something in his mind, you know, but not everybody, not all English are like that you know, maybe only him. All my life in England, and you here it from the court, it's from special, from special place you know? That is the problem, that's why I get upset. I don't mind, you see, maybe if I win the case I'm going to get 10,000 pound, 20,000 pound and I don't mind about this honestly, but what he said, 'You are cut your finger in Iraq,' and I don't been to Iraq and I never been, I was working for Redfire you know. It don't come, this talk from somebody else in the road, it come from the court you know? They think you should not do this, you should not ask for this, you see? I don't talk to him, I don't have argument with him, after when he said that, I just take me home, take me self home and that's it. Since that day, I never done anything about this, this is what's happening.

Abdul clearly lacked adequate legal representation to counter the wild claim that was made against him and to provide the evidence to support his account. This in turn made him particularly vulnerable to the crude media-informed racial remark that was made against him, an insult which depressed and angered him so severely.

Conclusions

The empirical data presented in this chapter shows that the economic crises in the steel industry and the resultant tight monetarist policies, the racialised political climate during the early Thatcher era, and the persistent feeling of cultural estrangement that was felt by the emigrants, all converged to strike the Yemeni steelworkers and former steelworkers in a unique way during the recession. The effects of these combined phenomena yielded a response in the Yemeni community unlike that of any other migrant community.

The Yemenis, who had once fed through the port of Aden, the industrial centres of Britain with raw materials derived from Britain's colonial possessions in the East, while facilitating the flow of industrial exports from the mother country back to her colonial peripheries, and had, in the early post-war period, filled the most dangerous and unpopular posts in the heavy industrial plants of the North and the Midlands with cheap labour, were now subjected again to a further shift in the international division of labour. As the manufacturing base of Britain, 'the workshop of the world' since the industrial revolution, increasingly shrank, more and more industrial workers found themselves unemployed. Just as the relationship of the colonial subjects in Yemen and then Yemeni emigrants in Britain to British Capital was mediated by 'race,' so it was in this latest transformation in the international division of labour.

The definition of institutional racism forwarded by Macpherson (1999), argues that a racist intention is not crucial for an instance of exclusion to be defined as institutional racism. For the proponents of such a view, an instance of exclusion can be said to be institutionally racist when the outcome of a decision or practice has an effect which maintains the disadvantaged position of a racialised group or groups. Although the intention of making those sections of the workforce with the shortest or broken service redundant may have been to lessen expenditure on redundancy payments, the, perhaps unintended, outcome was that racialised fractions of the working class and the Yemenis in particular, who seemed to have maintained unusually strong ties to their homeland, were affected in particularly large numbers. If indeed such an outcome was the unintended result of an essentially economic decision, then its qualification as an instance of racism or institutional racism is valid, based upon such a broad definition. In line with the results of Smith's (1981: 149) PSI study, the majority of the participants in the present research project did not seem to think that racial prejudice was a factor in their own redundancy. He notes however (ibid: 158), a point that has been raised in the previous chapters, that black applicants have no means of knowing that they were refused on racial grounds. As a result of the climate of racism during the early Thatcher era it is very likely that considerations of maintaining a 'racial' balance, which as Jenkins reminds us means 'a majority of white workers' (Jenkins 1985: 182), entered the process of selection for redundancy and severance.

Whether defined as institutional racism or not, the decision-making process, which left unemployment amongst Yemeni men a great deal higher than amongst white men, can hardly be said to have been the consequence of purely economic concerns. In contrast to the sons and daughters of the migrants of West Indian and South Asian parentage who began to vehemently reject the inferior job roles that were allocated to them in industry, and the younger generation of Yemenis who are often startled to hear of the working conditions endured by their fathers when they are relayed to them through their progenitors' narratives, the older generation of Yemeni emigrants retained that trait of migrant labour to occupy, albeit not always without some resistance, the least desirable posts in industry. The Yemeni emigrants, in particular, doggedly held on to their myth, or what turned out to be a non-myth for three quarters of the emigrant population, of return, and, therefore, their intention to earn money in Britain and then return to a better

life in Yemen persisted. In many cases this meant that when they were employed, the Yemenis were willing to work over the weekends, they were willing to work the shifts set in unsociable hours, in order to earn the money for their families in Yemen. As the empirical data presented in Chapter Five has shown, although the Yemeni workers were by no means subservient they did, for the most part, work in the least desirable posts in the steel industry, and were willing to work extremely hard and work many hours in order that they could maximise the remittances that they sent home. In light of the resolute work ethic of the migrants, the wave of redundancies that unevenly struck the emigrant community seems an irrational measure that flies in the face of industrial efficiency. It is clear that some employers, like those who had tried to persuade some of their Yemeni workers to bring their families to Sheffield so that they could curtail their long and relatively frequent trips abroad, were keen to retain some of their Yemeni workforce. Here, the renewed racialisation of political debate during the early Thatcher era and, in particular, 'the need to maintain a racial balance' on shop floors throughout the country seemed to have had an effect that was disadvantageous to production.

The period saw two diverging trends in the responses to the disadvantages which beleaguered the Yemenis. On the first hand, a process of substantial emigration occurred and, on the other, the community organisations were reformed, to deal with the new challenges that the community faced in Britain. The Yemeni community organisations that were still active in England at the time and had not been starved by the mass exodus of their members, began to change in their function. The organisations' primary concern with the maintenance of a link between the workers in Sheffield and Yemen, and their role as 'an arm of the Yemeni state' was substituted by a new priority, namely the welfare and rights of the Yemeni unemployed in Sheffield. The change in the content of the work that was undertaken by the community organisations was to a large degree led by the younger generation of Yemenis who had experienced a state education in Sheffield.

The oft-quoted saying, that it was the labour of the migrants that was wanted, and not their presence, became particularly evident after many of the steelworkers had been made redundant. The harsh words of an official at the labour exchange when the emigrants first came to Sheffield, 'you come to work you don't come to learn', took on a resounding meaning now. After almost three decades in the steelworks, many of the

unemployed did not even have the basic English language skills to negotiate the state employment services and had little means with which to conduct job searches beyond their own ethnically homogenous social networks of similarly unemployed former steelworkers. Under the sponsorship of the local council, the Yemeni Community Association established a Yemeni literacy campaign and training programmes for the unemployed (Halliday 1992: 111). However, despite the impact of these programs, other forms of discrimination persisted to exclude Yemeni job-seekers from employment, such as word of mouth recruitment. Whether word of mouth recruitment and the use of internal labour markets qualify as institutional racism is contingent upon conceptualisation, and, in particular, whether intentionality is essential in the definition of institutional racism. However, the harsh outcome of such methods of recruitment were the same; to consolidate unemployment and all of the ancillary effects of joblessness amongst those who were not so well connected, a category which invariably included most non-whites. Intentionality, however, was clearly present in the tendency of employers to discriminate against non-whites in the written application stage of the recruitment process (see for instance; Jowell and Prescott-Clarke, 1970; McIntosh and Smith, 1974; Smith, 1977: 104-151; Brown & Gay, 1985). Similar to the findings of these studies, Shaif's (Searle and Shaif, 1991: 72) comment that a number of Yemeni applicants had to anglicise their names on job application forms in order to stand any chance of finding work, make clear that much of the discrimination suffered by the Yemenis was rooted in decision making processes which were mediated by racism.

Thus, economic decline, unemployment and institutional racism became the 'push' factors of a new wave of migration to oil producing countries in the Middle East. The mushrooming of the economies of oil producing countries in the Middle East from the mid 1970s, provided the major 'pull' incentive for many of the Yemeni ex-steelworkers to return to the Arabian Peninsula.

The period of the late 1970s and 1980s represented a marked shift in the working patterns of the Yemeni community in Sheffield. Although unemployment has decreased somewhat since the 1980s, the community has not, yet, recovered from their disproportionately high levels of unemployment. In 2003, over two decades after the onset of the recession, a survey conducted within the community found that 40.1% of the adult population (those above 16 years of age) were unemployed. The

unemployment level for those who were 19 years of age and over was higher still at 57.2%. For men in this age sector, unemployment stood at 42.1% and for women unemployment stood at 72.9% (Centre for Research and Evaluation, 2003: 1). These figures clearly demonstrate that despite the progress that has been achieved by Yemenis in the post-recession period in Sheffield, the community continues to face a great deal of structural disadvantages. An analysis of these is beyond the scope of the present research project but could provide one avenue for future research.

'They take flesh from different countries'. Racism, Class and Resistance in the Life-Stories of the Yemeni Former Steelworkers – A Conclusion

A major aim of the present study has been to accurately represent the voices of a sample of twenty-five Yemeni former steelworkers. In order to further honour this aim, the conclusion begins with the narratives of two of the participants who were involved in the research project. The narratives have been quoted at length, and, in different ways which will be discussed later on, demonstrate the salience of racism, class and resistance in the lives of the former steelworkers:

I'm from South Yemen, but now they call it Yemen, since 1990, when they come together the South and North. But before that time, before they got together, I'm from South Yemen. Since when I know, since Second World War, I'm in Aden that time, I think so, twelve or thirteen years old, that time. Then, we living in village, far away, about 75 mile, 80 mile from capital, from Aden to Yafa.

Then, when I working, you know before, it's only working look after your children, I mean if you're young, help your parent, that is work for him, to give him a little bit, to help another young brother, something like that. In 1950, I working in dock. When I was in Aden, I working in dock, loading ship, crane driver, working in that ship. So, and then 1955, I go to Saudi Arabia before I come to here. Then when I go to Saudi Arabia, not much, still travelling, I walking from Yafa, to I don't know what you call him, that village, from Yafa near to that place, the Ma'bah I think so, from Yafa to Ma'bah. I then walk, nights, afternoon, morning, when you get sunset, making for you camp, and then I stayed. Then I carry on from this place, where I tell you, and then to Sana'a, and I stayed in Sana'a. Then, I travelled again from Sana'a to Sa'dah, and from Sa'dah to Najran. I count 'em that, since when I leaving my village, and I walking twenty-three day walk, long way, no car, no anything, but he walking from village to village. I stopped about a week, I been six days in Sana'a, and that all, I only stop in Sana'a six day, and I walking to Sa'dah, from Sa'dah to Najran, Najran in Saudi Arabia, but it is Yemeni, Saudi Arabia take it, take Najran and take a lot of place from Yemeni territory by force, like what the Israeli take from Palestine, so what you going to do? And after I go to work in Saudi Arabia, only two years.

Then I working about two years in Saudi Arabia, since Suez Canal war. Then Saudi Arabia, 'cause Saudi Arabia, no justice to people. They call you, 'Yemeni!' when they see you, like when you looking to cat or something here. And everything in Saudi Arabia, if you got some money, you want to buy some things, buy shop to making business, 'No put your name! Saudi Arabia man name only,' because not only a little bit, everything, up to now, people from Yemeni, from another country, got plenty of money, not let him to buy, like to buy house for his name, or to building house or to making anything. They don't like anybody, Yemeni or other Arab in Saudi Arabia, they don't like anybody to buy, 'No, not allowed,' he said, 'Not allowed, it's Saudi Arabia people's territory.' Not same here, freedom, you can do what you like, if you got money, pay tax, you buy what you like, Saudi Arabia, no. Some people, millionaire, not let him to buy if you not Saudi Arabian, like citizen. We no get any Saudi Arabia, like citizen, so back home.

I working in dock, load, I loading the ship, when you come, cargo from America, from everywhere, I loading from ship to dock, in Jizan, that's Saudi Arabia. So one day, after Suez Canal war, the work going down 'cause no ship, Suez Canal closed, what I'm going to do? What I can do? Twenty-three day, go, I been go to Saudi Arabia, and I twenty-three day back to Yemen. That's forty-six day, horrible, so what I can do? Turn back to Yemen, no work or anything. After when I go back to Yemen, I went to apply to come to England. That time, the British were in South Yemen, what he said to us, the representative people in head office in Aden, he said to us,

'You going to pay 2,000 shilling.' Yeah, 2,000 shilling, I said, 'What do you need me to pay that 2,000 shilling for?' And he said, 'If you not work, you can bring you back for that your money to Yemen.' I said, 'O.k.' I pay 2,000 shilling, and he give me a visa to come England. When I come to England, stay there. He give me the passport, and when I come to England, I come by Aden to Southampton, by ship. I think so, for fourteen days, yeah two week from Aden dock to Southampton. Well, you see, the journey was like a blind one, come and sleep, you get up, walking a little bit, and back to your room, and you sleep, go for your dinner, 'cause you pay company for dinner, for travelling. Then I come and stay about two or three week, I look for work and I got work.

I got work in Sheffield, I come to Sheffield because he don't know, no understand speak English, no know anybody in London, or Southampton. I got some people, they come in 1956, before that, in Sheffield. I come to these people, like friend to show you, to go with you to speaking, to look for job, or anything if you need it, because no understand myself.

And when I stay, find that job, I working like forklift truck drivers for my first employment, first, call him, Dutch Clark. I think so, I left to Sheffield, end the 1959, I think so, not remember exactly, before. So I stayed in Sheffield working till 1964, that '59 and '64. So I said to this manager, I said, 'I want back to visit to my wife, and my parent, and my brother,' and then the manager said to me, this manager is good manager, I'm good worker to him, and he said to me, 'Why you going home for? Why not pay for your wife, and your children and bring them here?' He give me bit of advice that manager, and I said, I talk myself, not said to that manager, I said, 'If I coming, me and my wife, I bring my wife and my children here, and I leave my parent over there, then they get poor, same what I got, I'm not bringing my wife. That money what I'm saving, I send that money for my wife and for my parent, father and mother and for my brother, I got two brother and one sister.'

So I working and I go, I stay about six months. I come back, to my job, he gave me a letter, 'Back, anytime you back, your job ready for you.' And I back, and I stayed till 1969. And I back again, and I stay about six month, and I back again, and then 1983, then I back again to Yemen, and I stay till about six months, back again. This time not same firm, that firm, I working about twenty years in this firm, and after they close this firm, sell them to somebody else, tell me to go to Rotherham, and I said to this foreman, I said, 'Tell that manager,' I said, 'Too far for me to Rotherham. I like to stay here because no friend, not much friend in Rotherham, and too far to travelling morning and afternoon, seven day a week.' And this manager, good manager to me, and I'm good worker to him, and he phone another manager, he find for me a job himself, and that manager taking me with his car to this manager, sign, start work in another firm, close, not far away from Penistone Road. That first one, Penistone Road, and second Green Lion, and I started, I said alright, 'I start next week,' because next week that week, I finish next week, 'cause next week's notice. This manager takes me to his office, he said, 'Oh, come in here, working here and I pay you that week money.' 'Thank you very much,' and I back working, been working eighteen year on this next firm. That firm, only forklift truck driver in that firm, forklift truck driving and loading and heat treatment, working very hard, eighteen years.

One day, the manager, I don't like to go, and he said to me, one day that manager come to me he said, 'Follow me.' This head manager from office. I followed him to his office, what happened I think maybe sack me, and then when I'm in his office, me and my manager, and shop steward, he said to me, 'Err, Ali.' I said, 'Yes, are you going to sack me?' He said, 'No, I like you to stay, but I mean, company not let anybody, even me, even your manager, even the shop steward, when he 65, finish work.' I said, 'I'm not 65, I like working.' I said, 'I'm not 65!' He said, 'I wish.' He said to me, 'I wish, if you not 65 I like you to work in here, but your record, 65, and you retired in the company, but one thing I tell you, go and bring your passport, and your document, what you got, if you not 65, I like you to stay to work in here, but if you 65 year old, the company not allow you.' So what I can say, 'Err, thank you very much.' When I back, he says, 'Alright, we pay you that week's money.' And I back to my locker picking all my things from that locker putting it back, 'Bye, bye,' and that's since '92, since 1992 when I got retirement.

What I can do now? Only sometime here, English classes, and sometime in 1998, I bring my wife here, 'cause she not very well, poorly all that time, and first time, they take one kidney out, and they going to diabetic, she got heart attack, eye, only can see one eye, no other eye. Oh well, we

waiting, waiting for that day when we finish from Earth, I'm waiting for that day, that's all. Nobody can move when he die, nobody can move.

That day I said, when I come to here, I'm working, all right, I'm working since all that time. I'm living in Broomhall, over the University, underneath the Hallamshire. Broomhall, everyday seven day a week, working from Monday till Friday, six, started work six o'clock, till seven, half past seven, eight o'clock, honest, and Saturday, six while four, Sunday, six while four, seven day week working. With that I got, from all that time, £100, £110, £150, no take anymore. Since, from 1959, never got more than that, I take home, when I'm working, 200, 250. Aye, that what you're making bonus, if you working hard, you making bonus, you got double, when you got good money.

I'm pension now, I'm retirement, no time to work now, people, when he do that, my job, if he working five nights, he get a thousand pound to his hand, and I working for that twenty years, what I can do? Can't do anything, that's it. Then, 28 years, I walking, morning, afternoon that job, about 10 minute, 15 minute, from Broomhall to Penistone Road, and now can't get there in half an hour, if I'm walking. Well, too old, young, and now old, and the other firm I got another road, sometime I got bus and sometime I walking. I speak to you, that what I got. Now, waiting to get, to rent house, no working no, only waiting, and my son he got fifteen kids. I help him a little bit if I got left anything from my pension, going to help him that money.

When I'm working never got any trouble with anybody, never hear anything from anybody, but we working, we, from home to work, from house to work, working that's all, no messing about no anything, that's all. Oh, I've told him, do you know when I get to *hajj*, 1997. I going from here, me and wife, and in Saudi Arabia, some friend, and making for me a party for me and for my wife, friend of mine, next door in my village, neighbours. I come out, me and him, my wife and his wife were talking and I been out with him. He's coming, that Saudi Arabian man, he's got shop, with my friend working in his shop, and he said to me, my friend, he tell him my name, what my name, and my nephew, he working with him in that shop before when he was in Saudi Arabia, now in United States, in America. He said, 'Who that?' He said, 'This is Ali uncle,' my nephew, call him, Ali. He said to me, that Saudi Arabian, he said to me, 'You not come from Yemen?' 'No,' I said, 'No, I come from United Kingdom.' 'Oh,' he says. 'Yeah, you can see your body, you know, not like what they come from Yemen.' He said to me, 'What's your best place for you? What's best Saudi Arabia or United Kingdom?' I said to him, I'm not ashamed, and I said to him, I said, 'Best to me, a thousand times, United Kingdom is better than Saudi Arabia.' 'What!?' I said, 'I been working here, 1956 to 1957. When he looked to me, the Saudi Arabian, he look to me like foreigner, not neighbours to you. What do I like the country for? Only come for *hajj*, that's all.' And this, my friend, shame. I said, 'Don't, I tell the truth,' I said to him, 'Look,' he says, 'What?' I says, 'Come to England, bring some money, if Queen Elizabeth, she want to sell her house, and you want to buy it, the Queen, not tell you, 'No, not put your name, put English man's name, same what you do here, no justice, no rights.' And he said, 'Every country got law for itself.' I said, 'No, only this country, you never get country like your country.'

I never get trouble in England, because I'm not drinking, no after woman, that's how he making trouble that, drinking, or after girls, make you trouble in England, if you walking straight nobody talk to you. All that time, since that time when I come to here, one time about 35 years ago, I went to Rotherham, I visit to my friend, when half past seven, I come out the café, I pass the road, some young 'un in car call me, 'You black bastard!' But is running away. That time, 35 years ago in Sheffield, I never heard anything call me, and not making trouble with anybody, from my house to my work, that's it, all that time. That's what I got since I come to England, but England give me a letter other day, when I pick it up, 'What do you like best in England?' And you need an answer from me, 'What's best in England?' I says, 'Best? The law.' He says, 'What's no best?' I says, 'The weather!'

Rashid

When I came in, before when I coming to Sheffield, I been in Yemen, and I been in British Army, when the British army was in South Yemen. So before, when British Government been in South Yemen, in Aden, a lot of people coming to England, because before there's a lot of work in Britain, especially in Sheffield, and the people coming to Sheffield or anywhere in Britain. The

British people in this country, he don't want to work hard. He don't want to work, like dirty jobs, or hauling, or furnace or roll mill or anything, because all different people, they coming from abroad, they take flesh from different countries to go work here. Now, after 1980, you have a lot of problems in work, in everything in lot of thing. People, where they coming from abroad, you know, it's very, very hard to get work again. Only the people they get some work already, and some people, you know, he give him more hard work and everything, you know, 'cause he refuse to go out from the job, to give them to British people. Now, up to now.

Before, when British in the Yemen or any country, 'to make it very nice, very happy you know, so on and so on,' but I've been in the army more than twelve years in Aden. The British government, when I in the Yemen, they take all thing, Yemeni thing for British family in Aden. Before, when British army in Aden, more than 30,000 family you know? The government send money from London, and after, only in Aden city got school, but all over South Yemen, no school, no road, no hospital, no anything. Over there, people that blind, when he walking and he got blind, walking, he don't know which way he go. The British, he like the people to go to work, he like hard job, because British people he don't want to work hard, he don't want to work, he want sleeping that's all, and he want money to have house, and he want coloured people, carry on. He force you finish cleaning out, sweeping up, 'Go clean!' 'Clean that ship!' 'Oil!' and anything, so got all men working very hard to bring back two, three gallons a day of water, so he don't give you any clothes or any overalls or anything else, 'No, buy it from your money!' I mean when I ask anything, 'No.' It's easier to force you to get you to work job, because you need job to do, because British people refuse, he want money, and he want to sleep, and he want house, and he want it nice. So too much difference before, up to now, too much difference, honestly. British family go there, he get what he wants, go yourself, you got family, you can't get like British family, I mean too much difference, it's very hard honest. The captain, major, corporal, staff sergeant, everything, all British. Soldier, Yemeni soldier, but you know, lance, corporeal, staff sergeant, sergeant, major, captain, all British. He want you to do what he want, and carry on from six o'clock in the morning while one o'clock. I, give you one hour, and after from two o'clock while five o'clock, 'Carry on, training!' 'Carry on!' 'Do this!' 'Do that!' for five pounds, that's all. I had to fight against Yemenis when they fighting for independence. I feel very hard, I feel more and more sorry, but I can't, you know, I can't refuse to do it. He force me to do it, if don't force, he kick me off his side, you know what I mean? It's like a catch, so no food, only once a day, no money, no nothing. You should, you forced to do it, if you want, kill your family, carry on that way.

I've finished from British army, I start 28th May 1955 and I stay, and carried on, we get about five pounds a month in the army in Yemen, and after 1967, I come to England, 25 August 1967. Yes, from finishing the army it's 13 July 1967, and I come into Sheffield, 25 August 1967. So when I coming, when I finished army, my cousin there before me, he come in 1955, and he tell me, 'Come in,' you know. Army maybe after is not enough money, you know, he give me nice, he make everything nice to me there, so I say, 'o.k.'

When I come in there, sixteen pound, get up early morning, six o'clock, already work, carry on, work hard, and hard, and hard, and hard, drink a lot of water to half past four, five o'clock and we got six days hard work for sixteen pound, rent from that sixteen pound, food from there, clothes from there, overalls from that money, anyhow, honestly. So I've been working small money you know, well it's very hard you know, fourteen and a half years when I been in the British army, then carry on from British army, finish British army come and be here. Start work, he want me to go to work crane, when you finish, coming down, dirt, slinger, for another job, different pay, when you finish there, machine pull, machine man shouting 'I want labourer!' You ask him, 'Come on, you know, you pushing, you treat like animal.' 'Oh carry on,' 'Carry on,' 'Carry on,' 'Carry on,' 'Carry on,' 'Don't stand there!' 'Don't sit down!' 'Labour machine!' 'Clear that machine!' It's working, honestly, 'when you've finish, go and sweep up all this area!' 'You!' 'You!' 'You!' 'You!' You can't leave it and stop five minutes, you can't have time to yourself, smoke one cigar.

I understand English a little bit more, better than the people coming from home straight away to Britain. When I stay in the army, you always start somewhere you know, like, 'Come on,' or like from the dorm or something, you have training or understand, you know, 'March!' 'Quick march!' 'Left, right!' You know, he got little bit more, yeah. He can't read, you only understand, how you can stay in the army, when you don't understand? I mean when you come to this country, before in the army you called something like that, but you not understand what it mean, 'black' and so and

so, you know what I mean? So when you coming here you understand black and white and something like that you know, that what I'm talking, that what you get hard now. When you come in, you black, come to them, you ask him for help or you ask him for income support or you ask for... I mean council tax or tax. You know, he thinking, you too much different from him, oh, hard, hard very hard, I can't. British people, when he need you, he need something from you, he smile you like that, if he need you, because you black, because you different skin, it's crazy people, honestly it's crazy people, 'Because you are a different.' What different? Black, white, brown, anything all, all the same, all same, same God same thing, no, British people, some people; 'I'm white.'

So one day I got 72 pound and I go to income tax, ask him, I says, 'My code number is 'single' and I got family in the Yemen, don't think that I'm starving here for myself 'cause my family not working and I send them money because they don't get no money in Yemen, no work in Yemen.' They said, 'Oh show me that book,' I showed them my book. 'Oh no, I'm sorry you can't get anything.' 'Alright,' I go home. You know, people spend life working hard, everything Britain, anywhere I been, any country, they take all them thing, all people money, all people thing.

So now, been working in Forgemaster from 1970 to 28 May '99 and I'm poorly and I had five operation in my stomach, poorly from work, because you can't give you easy job, or can't give you anything, only working hard and very heavy jobs. So I have too many operation in my stomach, and I'm going now, again, for operation from hard work.

Now, only white people working, go anywhere, only if they get lucky some people they, you know, get work. Well it's very, very hard, all coloured people have now, like animal, give them their money. Their money, it not from British government what they got now, it's what, you working hard for, people working fifty years, forty years, forty-five, it costs you tax, insurance, it costs you everything from your money. I pay more than 10% a week and he taxing me when I work, now that my money mine when I'm off, I'm you know, off from work, he want tax me again. So very, very bad, honest, very bad, too much difference, very, very, different. You treated different from police, different for work, different for neighbour, different for income tax, different if he want the housing, different for benefit, everything different, too much different between English people and coloured people. Very hard, from everywhere, so them coloured people in this country, honestly, it's very hard, and I feel sorry for every person, and tell people, we not coming for a holiday or anything, people working very hard, young people coming, some people sixteen, seventeen, twenty, twenty-five years, now old people. So like animal honestly, some people, you know, he speak to you like when he speak to animal, no, can't speak you like this. So too many problem honestly, very, very, hard, very hard, gas, electric, telephone, water rates, I don't know what do to, I don't have no money to pay it, no income tax, he say, 'Nothing to do with us.' It should be their tax, I say, 'What about, gas, electric, telephone, motor rate insurance and so and so?' He say, 'Nothing to do with us.' So it's very hard honestly.

There's people before in Sheffield, especially in Sheffield, I don't know about anywhere else because I hadn't been working anywhere, was only in Sheffield since when I came back from Yemen. So too much you know, the British man, English man, it's in everything you do, he wants you to do what no one wants, and if he go to ask for anything, you know, like property, it's very hard, waiting, waiting, waiting, hope you go to get flat or house from council, same thing, very hard, but many people, British people, he get everything easy for him. Yemeni people or any, very, very, very hard to get anything else, too much difference, you know different, very, very different, in Sheffield or any town in Britain.

Saleh Muthana Muflahi

With the use of a poly-vocal format, this thesis has detailed aspects of the life-stories of twenty-five Yemeni former steelworkers who decided to remain in Sheffield after the recession of the 1980s. The existing studies of Yemenis in Britain have employed a variety of research methods including participant observation and various forms of

interviewing. There has however been a convergence in the use of literary realism as the principal mode of representation (see for instance; Little, 1948; Collins, 1957; Dahya, 1965, 1967; Tipple, 1974; Halliday, 1992; Lawless, 1995). In particular, the studies have, to varying extents, relied on description, and the third person voice of the ethnographer is dominant, with the voices of the research subjects few and far between. The present study adds to the literature on Yemenis in Britain as it begins to break with these two key conventions of literary realism. The research has made an important and original contribution to knowledge about post-war history by recording the stories of the men which line the pages of the thesis. These stories have been accurately transcribed and are represented in a specific demotic which honours the industrial English in which the life-stories were spoken and is unique to one generation of Yemeni men.

The research project used a particular approach which, in comparison to Searle and Shaif (1992), albeit with the use of life-story interviews, focused on racism, class and resistance. In the introduction and literature review, I argued that the ethnic-relations (Dahya, 1967), 'race'-relations (Collins, 1957) and sociology of migration (Halliday, 1992; Lawless 1995) paradigms had been used, and to great effect, in the literature on Yemenis in Britain. I made the point that in the literature, an analysis of 'race'-relations, particularly the degree to which the migrants have integrated (see for instance Collins, 1957), or the ethnic or cultural peculiarities of the Yemeni group (see for instance Dahya, 1967), was often the main, or concluding (see, for instance, Halliday, 1992; Lawless, 1995) concern, and was prioritised over an analysis of racism in the lives of Yemenis in Britain. In addition, I argued that as life-stories often emphasise drama, and not rites and rituals, which is often the focal point in the sociology of ethnic and 'race'-relations, a focus on racism, class and resistance was particularly conducive to the research method employed in the present study. A further argument was made about the implications of political blackness or black perspectivism in epistemology, where I argued that my status as a non-white researcher may facilitate the flow of information about racism. The main objectives of the research questions that were presented in the introduction were to explore the intersections of racism and class in the life-stories of the Yemeni former steelworkers. As a consequence, one limitation of the present study is its, sometimes reductive, focus on the themes of racism, class and resistance in the life-stories of Yemeni men. In contrast to much of the ethnography based literature (in particular, Collins, 1957; Dahya, 1967), the research has paid little attention to the

mores of the Yemeni group. The aim of the present chapter is to summarise the findings that have been presented in the thesis.

The research has found that the narratives of the old men are full of stories about racism, class and resistance. The old men came from districts in Yemen which, owing much to the treaties of protection which were signed between the British colonial powers and the local emirs, sheikhs, and sultans, and resulted in the insulation of Aden, were effectively alienated from the wealth that was generated in the port. The uneven development of capitalism between Yemen and Britain would comprise the main reason that the Yemenis came to Britain. The aim of the initial empirical chapter was not however to provide a detailed structural analysis of the reasons that underlay migration, but to highlight the journeys of the emigrants that have been neglected in much of the literature, yet are so prominent in many of the travellers' stories. The economic imbalance between Yemen and Britain certainly found an expression in racial terms on the journeys that the emigrants made to Britain. The narratives indicate that on the voyage to Britain, the subordinate status of the Yemenis was expressed through 'race.' The Arab passengers occupied steerage class and their narratives have revealed that they were often pressured to remain below deck by the European crew. This was especially the case around the time of the Suez war. A number of the interviewees recounted some of their first stories of resistance against racism and class discrimination onboard the steamships. The gloomy conditions in which the Yemenis travelled created a slight parallel with the environment in which the Arab stokers of Cardiff and Tyneside worked in the pre-Second World War period (see for instance Lawless, 1995: 16-20). Indeed, the post-war emigrants who were heading to work in the heavy industrial plants of the West Midlands and South Yorkshire would find a form of labour that, in its dusty and hot environment, was not too dissimilar to that performed by the steamship firemen. The chapter also revealed a theme which would recur throughout the thesis. In the context of structural hardship, which was characterised by the class position of the men, the cultural estrangement, and both the overt and institutional racism that they faced in England, the Yemenis were keen to stress the amicable relationships that they developed with a number of English men and women who assisted them on their journey.

In contrast to much of the literature, the narratives of the former steelworkers have revealed that on their arrival in Sheffield, many of the emigrants, especially those who migrated in the late 1950s, found themselves in the midst of a short-term recession. The second empirical chapter discovered that the Yemenis, along with migrants from Pakistan, found themselves occupying a particularly disadvantaged position in the labour and housing market. They were disadvantaged by racism, class, language difference and their rural backgrounds. The salience of language difference was demonstrated by the recruitment of West Indians for jobs on public transport and the exclusion of Arabs and Pakistanis. The chapter introduces a common theme which has been highlighted in the PEP/PSI (Daniel, 1968; Smith, 1981) studies and would return throughout the thesis, that the migrants were not fully aware of the racialised structures in which their lives were embedded. The life-stories of the Yemenis do not stress that racism was a significant constraint here, and this finding feeds into the classical sociological conundrum that agents often have a limited knowledge of the structures in which they are embedded. The unawareness of the Yemenis was apparently heightened in the early years, as the emigrants were unable to speak and understand the English language. A number of the narratives however, demonstrate a sense of intuitiveness amongst the migrants and that they were able to decipher the attitudes of many of the men with whom they came into close contact, particularly their new workmates. The Yemenis used the direct approach method and relied on word of mouth in order to find work. The reliance on a largely unemployed network of fellow Yemenis however, greatly reduced their chance of finding work. The word of mouth method and internal labour markets can comprise two important examples of institutional racism in recruitment. Although often the result of unintended decision making practices, the effect of such methods of recruitment is usually one that alienates less well connected groups, which typically include racialised minorities. The research also revealed the more openly prejudiced attitudes of a number of employers, landlords, estate agents and building societies. In comparison to the West Indian and South Asian settlers, who began to establish systems of pooling money amongst their countrymen in order to purchase property and to resist the discrimination inherent in the housing market (see for instance; Sivanadan 1982: 6; Hiro, 1992: 28 and 120), the stories of the Yemenis, such as the two stories that opened the present chapter, have stressed the bonds that existed between each other, when addressing this period of their lives. At that time, what Blackburn (21/03/1958) describes as the 'open house rule,' but what was seen as

overcrowding by many locals, was thought a necessary response to the shortage of housing available to the unwaged Yemeni migrants.

The third empirical chapter discovered that the steel industry in Sheffield provided a unique context for migrant labour. In the steelworks, the Yemenis worked in teams with white men. The Arabs worked as slingers, where they performed labour in the foundries producing steel, and they worked in the machine shops, where they refined the steel ingots. The life-stories of the interviewees have demonstrated that the Yemeni former-steelworkers' relationships with individual members of the white workforce varied a great deal. A number of the interviewees, such as Rashid in the aforementioned narrative, who contrasts attitudes towards Yemeni migrant workers in Saudi Arabia with attitudes towards migrant labour in Britain, have stated that they experienced very few overt acts of racism in their lives. In contrast, the lived experience of racism in the Sheffield steelworks is ubiquitous in the narrative of Saleh Muthana Muflahi and commonplace in many more of the stories of the old men. The research demonstrated that in spite of the variation in the experience of overt, commonsense racism on the shop floor, from the Yemenis' working class colleagues, institutional racism was ever-present. There was apparently more consistency in the relationship of the Yemenis with the people in positions of power in the steelworks. Many of the interviewees reported that they were well-liked by senior employees and this was particularly well demonstrated in the narratives by those who found their old jobs again after making return visits to Yemen. However, it was in this relationship that the Yemenis faced their greatest instances of institutional racism. In comparison to black workers more generally, the narratives of the Yemenis have revealed that they formed a particularly disadvantaged section of the working class. The difference between this, what Miles and Phizacklea (1982) would call a racialised fraction of the working class, and the white men with whom they worked, was clearly demonstrated by the restrictions on the mobility of Arab labour. Here the existence of racism at an organisational level was clearly evident. The Yemenis comprised one of the most industrious sections of the workforce. They worked between eight and twelve hours a day and were often willing to work overtime. Their initial inexperience and difference of language was overcome as time progressed, the latter to varying extents. Yet in spite of their industriousness, in a decision-making process that seemed counter-productive, the Yemenis were consistently denied any significant promotion and throughout their working lives, were

confined to the least desirable sectors of the industry. This was true even for the small number of men who had spent relatively long, such as ten year plus, periods in Sheffield without returning to Yemen. The migrants' stories of their experiences at work have also revealed the pervasiveness of the acts of resistance which were waged against the various exclusionary practices that they faced on the shop floor. These include the racially specific acts, such as racist name-calling and the denial of promotion, and the class centred, such as low-pay. The stories are rich in tales of both informal and formal modes of resistance, including verbal and physical confrontation and the pursuit of struggle through workers' unions and management.

An irony of the research is that the chapter on time-off perhaps emphasises the work patterns of the migrants with as much clarity as any other. The working patterns of the emigrants meant that time-off was never really leisure time. The migrants, as the opening narratives of Rashid and Saleh Muthana Muflahi again demonstrate, worked long and arduous shifts of between eight and twelve hours a day, between five and seven days a week. They spent the time that they had between shifts performing their necessities such as washing, travelling to and from work, cooking and sleeping. They often performed these domestic chores in a state of exhaustion and it was only on their days off that they could find any relief let alone recreational activities to enjoy. The stories of the former steelworkers have highlighted their devotion to the betterment of the lives of their families in Yemen. The experience of racism was both overt and institutional and both were damaging. Yet there was a general agreement amongst the emigrants, particularly those who attempted to enjoy some kind of social life by visiting cinemas, cafes etc., that they faced the hard edge of everyday racism, such as name-calling and attacks, outside of work.

The interviewees ended their narratives not long after they had mentioned that they had been made redundant. The final empirical chapter highlighted the uneven patterns of severance between white and Yemeni labour. The Yemenis' return trips to their country of origin had meant they had incurred a broken service record and made them particularly vulnerable to redundancy. The relatively high incidence of unemployment amongst the Yemenis could be described as being a result of institutional or unwitting racism, with the use of a broader definition of the term. With such a concept, a racist intention is considered unnecessary in a decision or process which has the outcome of

creating or maintaining the disadvantage of a racialised group or groups. Although issuing many of the Yemeni workers with a redundancy package may have been cheaper for the steel firms, the steelworks suffered a loss of some of the most industrious members of the workforce. With the election of the Thatcher government in 1979, the country was witness to a renewed politicisation of 'race.' In line with the results of the PSI study, published in 1981, the majority of the Yemeni former steelworkers did not regard racism to be a factor in the decision-making process that brought about their unemployment. However, the chapter highlighted that a number of studies of the recession have demonstrated that the issue of 'race', or what Jenkins (1985: 182) describes as maintaining 'a majority of white workers', often entered the decision-making process in selection for redundancy and recruitment. The vast majority of the redundant Yemeni steelworkers found little success in their search for work. Again, they relied on the direct approach and word of mouth methods, two approaches which the second empirical chapter demonstrated were often unrewarding. Widespread unemployment was certainly one cause for the re-invigoration of the climate of racism. In Sheffield, a city where unemployment exceeded the national rate throughout much of the 1980s, there was an increase in racist attacks. In light of the increase in both overt and institutional racism and unemployment, the Yemeni community organisations began to reform themselves to address the problems that Yemenis faced in England. One measure that was implemented by the staff in order to assist their members to find work, was to advise them to anglicise their names on job application forms. Here the racialised discrimination of employers became every bit as explicit, especially in its effects, as the overt racism that the Yemenis encountered on the streets. The response of the majority of the Yemeni steelworkers was however, unprecedented. A mass exodus of Yemenis ensued from the declining industries of South Yorkshire and the West Midlands, back to the oil producing states of the Arabian Peninsula. In Sheffield, the size of the community shrank by three quarters.

The research project ends here and leaves a gap in the research of the experiences of the majority of the emigrants who returned to the Arabian Peninsula and went elsewhere in search of work. Indeed, the study includes little information about the lives of the men who remained in Sheffield after the recession. The study also says little about Yemeni women and the successive generation of Yemenis who came to Sheffield as secondary migrants, or were born and raised in South Yorkshire. In the following decade, the

numbers of Yemenis in Sheffield would grow again slightly, after the unification of Yemen in 1990, as men and women came to Sheffield in order to flee the civil war which followed in 1994. These themes would comprise important subject matter for future research. The study of Chatterjee (2001) includes some oral history stories of refugees from the civil war, and a number of important reports have also touched on these themes, including a report on the social and inspirational needs of Yemeni women (Mohamed and Makmahi, 2002), and a report that details proposals for achieving success for Yemeni young people (Assinani, 2002). Much of this research has demonstrated that, in spite of many of the goals that have been achieved by Yemenis in Sheffield, they continue to face a great deal of structural constraints. This has clearly been highlighted by the report of the Centre for Research and Evaluation (2003) noted in the previous chapter, which found that unemployment amongst Yemeni adult males, 19 years of age and over, stands at 42.1%, while unemployment amongst Yemeni adult women, 19 years of age and over, stands at 72.9%. These studies have been action-oriented and have been undertaken by committed members of the younger generations of Yemenis who continue to channel their labours towards the betterment of the conditions of Yemeni, black and working class communities in Sheffield.

The old Yemeni men of Burngreave have lived extraordinary lives. The majority of the emigrants left their small agricultural villages of the central region of Yemen unaware of the nature of the industry that would confront them in Sheffield. Many had never even seen the sea and were startled by the spectacle of Aden at the height of its maritime boom. Yet on their first encounter they would be thrust into the deep and spend two weeks aboard a steamship rocking across the waves of the Suez strait and through the Mediterranean Sea. The chimneys which dominated the skyline of the North-East of Sheffield and spat fire into the air every few moments, and the trams which rumbled across the cobbled streets, which were lined with strings of soot-coated terraced housing, came as huge culture shock, too, upon the emigrants' arrival. As young and middle aged men in Sheffield, however, they have spent much of their working lives in the dusty environment of the Sheffield steelworks, feeding the furnaces, transferring white hot liquid steel into ingot moulds, transporting the multi-tonne ingots to the machine shops, and honing the ingots to the required specification. The men were hard. They travelled to Britain amidst a rising tide of anti-Arab racism during the years before and after the Suez War and laboured in the worst conditions in

the steelworks under the rubric of seniors, who would often find justification for the working conditions of the non-white labourers through recourse to a mixture of racist ideology, both overt and institutionalised, language difference and broken service. They did this throughout the 1960s and 1970s, at a time of rising anti-immigration hysteria and racist discourse in the host country. Through all this the men remained steadfast. They were by no means subservient and they resisted discriminatory and exclusionary practices in a number of ways, yet their commitment to the improvement of the condition of their families in Yemen and their desire to return home in the end, meant that they pressed on in their labours. The Yemenis have made a huge contribution to the economy and society of the West Midlands and South Yorkshire, yet the buckets of sweat, blood and severed limbs that they have lost in their labours to sustain production in the factories, remains little-known amongst the mass of people in the surrounding vicinities. Indeed, most people who take a bus ride up Spital Hill and through Burngreave won't think twice about the group of old Arab men who can often be seen sitting on the park benches and feeding the pigeons, their walking sticks propped up by their side, as the bus rounds the corner by the library. Most who would notice them would probably think of these men as a group of Pakistanis. Yet their story, like that of the migrants from South Asia, the West Indies and elsewhere, has been one that has helped to keep the lifeblood of the city flowing into the present day.

The Interview Guide

Yemen

Where are you from in Yemen? What did you do in Yemen before you came to England (go to school, read and write Arabic)? What kind of work did you do in Yemen (subsistence/cash-crop farming)? Who did you live with? Were you married? How do people get married in Yemen? Did you have any children? What were the ministers like?

What was Aden like (what work available)? What were the British people like out there? What did you think of British rule in South Yemen? Were the British in Yemen trying to get Yemeni people to come to Sheffield for work? What did you think Britain would be like? Because the British were in South Yemen did you see yourself as being British? Did you think that you would stay in Sheffield for so long?

Migration

What year did you come to England? How old were you? Why did you leave Yemen? Why did you come to Sheffield? How did you get a passport? How much did it cost to come to England and how did you pay? What was it like leaving you friends and family in Yemen? What was the journey on the ship like (Suez War)? What was it like not being able to speak English? Were there lots of other Yemenis in Sheffield? Did you know any Yemenis in other cities? Were there any Pakistanis or black people in Sheffield? How did you find a job and a house (friends, relatives who had already migrated)?

Work

What work did you do? What hours? Was it hard coming from farm work in Yemen to steelwork in Sheffield? What was it like not knowing any English? How did you learn the jobs (sign language, interpreter)? Were there any classes? Were there many accidents (asthma, deafness, dermatitis, lost limbs)? Were you able to get compensation for them (how and when)? Were there many other Pakistani or West Indian workers? How were you with them? Was there any difference between all the workers (shifts, pay, breaks, promotion)? Was there any trouble at work (racist name-calling or attacks)? What did you do when/if there was trouble? How were the unions? Were you a member of any organisations (Yemeni Workers Union, Arab Workers Union)? What did they do (meetings, literacy classes, magazines, raise money for Yemen, demonstrations, help with problems concerning taxation employment and passports)? What did you do with your wages (remittances)? Did the taxes recognise your children in Yemen? How often did you go back to Yemen? How long did you stay? How was finding a job again when you came back to Sheffield? Could you pray 5 times a day at work, or fast during the holy month of Ramadan?

Housing

What was your house like (where, central heating, toilet, need lots of fixing, cook separately, together, decorations - Yemeni pictures)? How many people did you share it with (people from North and South Yemen, any people who weren't from Yemen)? How was rent (any need for rent tribunals)? Did you try to buy it? How did you buy it

(pool money with other Yemenis)? Were the houses different to British people's houses? Did you live in the same areas as whites (Asians, Blacks)?

Time-Off

What did you do when you were not working? Were there Yemeni cafes or shops? What were they like (play Yemeni music, serve Yemeni food, qat)? Were there many shops or butchers selling Halal meat (Pakistani, what year)? Were there many mosques when you came (use of Pakistani mosques)? What was it like not having your wives or families around you? How did you stay in touch with Yemen (send letters, Arabic newspapers both require literacy or radio shows)? Did you try to bring your family to Sheffield (what year, how, problems)? Did your wife and children come at different times? Did it effect you when the British tried to limit the amount of people coming to Britain in 1962 (1968, 1971, etc.)? What did your wife do in England? Did any Yemenis go with English women? How was the relationship between people from North Yemen and people from South Yemen? Did you have Asian or black friends? Did you have white friends who you could see outside of work? Did you go out (pubs/dancing)? Was there ever any trouble? Did you ever have trouble from racist groups like the British National Front, Teddy Boys or Enoch Powell? Did the struggle against the British in South Yemen effect you in England? Were there any particular times when racism was worse (Suez War, Yemeni independence)? How were the police?

Redundancy

Were you made redundant (when)? Did you get money for losing your job? What did you do with it (remittances)? How did losing your job effect your family in Yemen? What did you do after (search for work, non-steel jobs)? Why did you not go back to Yemen or to an Arabic country like Saudi Arabia to find work? Did a lot of people go back? Did you have a more difficult time in these years then when you first came (no work, racism, death of Yemeni man on bus)? Do you think that the younger Yemenis now have a harder time then you when you first came because there is less work (racism)? What do you do now? Is there anything else that you would like to add?

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