

**Pakistani women in the labour market: Exploring structure,  
choice, and constraint**

Daisy Payne

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his/her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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## **Abstract**

This research uses a mixed-method approach to build on previous research which has shown Pakistani women have low rates of labour market participation. In doing so, this thesis contributes to the argument that intersectionality is crucial when exploring labour market participation, whilst contributing to a body of research that continues to problematise the gendered nature of labour market participation in the UK. Through the exploration of factors relating to life-stage, education, and skills, this thesis demonstrates a variety of ways Pakistani women might seek to participate in the labour market, and therefore differ in the types of support they need. Although cultural preferences do have an impact, this thesis characterises Pakistani women's labour market participation as heavily constrained by structural factors, shaped by a climate of Islamophobia as well as a labour market that is persistently gendered, and therefore challenges lay conceptions of Muslim women as 'submissive' and 'oppressed'. This thesis makes policy suggestions that aim to support Pakistani women who wish to participate in the labour market, as well as those who are distanced from the labour market, and suggests that future research could consider Pakistani women's experiences in the work place, and could also explore the experiences of a wider range of ethnic groups.

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## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Context: Paid work as a route out of poverty

Currently, a great deal of value is placed on paid work as a key route out of poverty (e.g. Kemp et al., 2004; Newman, 2011). In this vein, welfare reforms are commonly based on, and their success measured by, a decrease in worklessness (Department for Work and Pensions, The Rt Hon Stephen Crabb, 2016). More specifically, the former Work and Pensions secretary Stephen Crabb related the decrease in worklessness to 'Universal Credit, the Claimant Commitment and the benefit cap', concluding that:

*'There are now nearly half a million fewer children living in households where no one works; where they can see one or both their parents benefitting from the dignity of a job and the value of work is related to both economic security and a reduction in child poverty, the security that a pay cheque brings.'* (Department for Work and Pensions, The Rt Hon Stephen Crabb, 2016)

In relation to this, in 2010 the Conservative and Liberal Democrat government pledged to create 'more flexible, family friendly workplaces.' (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, hereafter BIS, 2010). This indicates that they recognise family commitments as a barrier to labour market participation, and intend to alleviate such constraints. In so doing, they have created a climate in which it is increasingly difficult not to participate in the labour market, since it is evident that the purpose of welfare reforms is to get as many people into employment as possible; indeed in a recent research briefing, Kennedy et al. (2016) reported that the purpose of the benefit cap is to increase incentives to work, as well as incentives to reduce benefit dependency. This is in keeping with a policy shift from the male breadwinner model, which Lewis (2001; 153) describes as: '...based on a set of assumptions about male and female contributions at the household level: men having the primary responsibility to earn and women to care for the young and the old', and in which, therefore, 'female dependence was inscribed.' By contrast, Lewis characterizes the subsequent shift to an adult worker model as a way of dividing household labour '...whereby it is assumed that all adults are in the labour market.' (Lewis, 2001; 154).

As well as being a key focus for the government, ideas about work, worklessness, and welfare claimants are prevalent within mainstream media and public opinion. For example, Baumberg et al. (2012) conducted research on perceptions of benefit claimants in Britain, finding that participants over-estimated instances of false benefits claims and benefit fraud,

and that one aspect of being a 'deserving' benefit claimant was the extent to which people were perceived as taking responsibility for their circumstances. The idea that people should take responsibility for their circumstances understates the role of structural inequalities whilst overstating the extent to which people have the power to choose. Furthermore it creates a context in which further research is essential in order to explore the role of choice in the face of such structural inequalities. Therefore this research in part aims to challenge lay perceptions that everyone has unhindered access to the labour market.

Although a decrease in worklessness is presented by the DWP (2015) as a success story, the reality is more complex. Firstly, it is not necessarily accurate to suggest that participating in paid employment decreases poverty. Many of those in poverty are also employed. For example, when researching experiences of poverty in Bradford (with poverty '...defined as those who have precarious livelihoods or restricted lives'), Athwal et al. (2011; 12) found that:

*Although not having paid work was seen as problematic in many cases (and several informants felt or saw pride in working), paid employment was not necessarily always seen as resolving financial difficulties, and may bring with it other kinds of household stresses. These potential stresses included the need to organise appropriate childcare and transport to work.*

In short, it is possible to be both in paid employment, and in poverty. Indeed, Collingwood (2012) states that less than half of the people living in poverty do so in workless households.

Secondly, statistics on decreased worklessness are misleading. Wright and Case (2016) argue that job growth is most prevalent in London, whilst in contrast, employment in Yorkshire and the Humber has actually fallen. This geographical variation is one example of how changes to welfare and employment policy do not necessarily serve to lift everyone out of poverty. Indeed, it could be argued that the government's focus on worklessness, and 'making work pay', as well as the aforementioned association between gaining paid employment and dignity, assumes that most people of working age have equal access to the labour market. However, there is much evidence to the contrary: The Office for National Statistics (hereafter ONS, 2013a) reports lower employment rates for women compared to men, while Bell and Casebourne (2008) report higher unemployment rates among ethnic minority groups. This is before taking into account penalties incurred by having children (Joshi, 1998), access to education (McGuinness, 2003), or living in certain areas (Simpson et al., 2009), amongst other factors that might affect access to the labour market. Brah (1993; 151) states that: 'It is crucial, in my view, to conceptualise the labour market as mediated by 'race', class, gender, ethnicity, age, disability, and sexuality', and furthermore that

'...structure, culture and agency are...inextricably linked...'. Consequently, labour market participation should be viewed as the outcome of numerous interconnected factors, and the complex process of negotiating between them within the constraints associated with belonging to certain groups.

Having argued that the extent to which labour market participation might draw people out of poverty is overstated, it is evident that employment *is* a key route out of poverty for many people (Kemp et al., 2004). Furthermore, there are other perceived, non-financial, benefits to participating in the labour market. For example, Athwal et al. (2011; 20) found that their participants placed a great deal of value on work, and that this '...contradicts the widespread impression that many people make an active choice to remain on benefits and avoid working'. In particular, participating in paid employment was linked to self-worth, self-esteem, and the opportunity to have a 'life outside the household', as well as financial independence (Athwal et al., 2011). Consequently, this research seeks to explore how and why certain decisions are made regarding labour market participation. Participating in paid work may not be the right choice for everybody, but there are many people who wish to take part in paid work but are not able to do so.

This introductory section has outlined the importance of continued research on labour market participation, given an increased policy focus on encouraging all adults to participate in paid work. Further, it has argued that adults of working age might face numerous constraining factors that complicate and constrain their access to the labour market. Therefore, the next section of this chapter discusses the incorporation of intersectionality theory into labour market research, arguing for approaches that highlight the complexity of experiences. Following this, Section 1.3 outlines the geographical context of this research, which takes place in Leeds and Kirklees, West Yorkshire. Next, the specific research questions to be answered within this thesis are discussed. Finally, the thesis structure is outlined, with a brief synopsis of each chapter.

## **1.2 Gender and the labour market**

In Section 1.1 it was argued that not everyone has equal access to the labour market, and before discussing the specific experiences of Pakistani women in the labour market, and how this research seeks to explore these, it is prudent to outline, briefly, the ways in which the labour market is gendered. As argued by Brah and Shaw (1992; 4), 'The position of Asian women within and outside employment is located within this broader social context in Britain.'

In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, women's participation in the labour market has fluctuated, in response to two world wars, as well as changing opinion about the importance of the mother in their children's upbringing. Brah and Shaw (1992; 4) state that, with the growth of certain sectors of industrial work, women's employment declined, and further, '...to have a wife doing paid work outside the home came to constitute a social stigma', with this becoming '...much more generalised a phenomenon across different socio-economic groups.' However, World War I, and World War II even more so, brought about a shortage of male labour that drew women into the labour market out of necessity (e.g. Bakker, 1988; Briar, 1997). Since 1950, women's participation in paid employment has continued to increase, with a slight levelling off in the 1980s (Bakker, 1988). ONS (2017; 7) report that 70.2% of women aged 16-64 are in employment, stating that this is '...the joint highest female employment rate since comparable records began in 1971'.

Nonetheless, women's employment continues to be characteristically different to that of their male counterparts. Women are more likely to work part-time, in less senior roles, for less pay (e.g. ONS, 2013). Grant et al. (2005; 2) found that their participants in Wakefield, West Yorkshire, identified a lack of higher level part-time jobs, and furthermore some women worked 'below potential' '...because of the intensity of work in senior level, full-time jobs and because of the absence of effective work-life balance policies and practices within workplaces.' The nature of women's participation in the labour market may be an indication that women are still expected to take on a 'dual role', combining care giving with paid labour (Briar, 1997). Indeed Briar (1997) argues that the rise in women's labour market participation was not reflective of any policy changes, whilst Daly (2010) argues that policy designed to support women in the labour market remains gendered. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3, but an understanding of this context is intrinsic to an understanding of how gender and ethnicity intersect in the labour market, in that it explicates the ways in which women's choices are constrained in the first place, irrespective of other factors.

### **1.3 South Asian women in the labour market: Intersectionality**

The focus of this thesis is Pakistani women in the labour market, and the rationale for this is given in Section 1.4. The purpose of this section is to outline what is meant by intersectionality, what this means when researching labour market participation, and what this means when exploring the experiences of South Asian, and more specifically Pakistani women, in the labour market.

The premise of intersectionality theory is that race, sex, and other social categories, are viewed as inter-connected, rather than separate. Crenshaw (e.g. 1991) is often credited with

bringing intersectionality to the fore, by critiquing the focus on relationships *between* groups at the expense of exploring relationships *within* groups. Consequently, social inequality must be investigated in a 'non-additive' way (Choo and Ferree, 2010), meaning that different social categories are viewed as being interrelated with, rather than superseding, one another. To assume that adults have equal access to, and opportunities within the labour market is to overlook the heterogeneity and diversity of experience.

Indeed, there is a great deal of recent research indicating that the intersection of gender and ethnicity is associated with specific labour market outcomes. For example, much of Angela Dale's work focuses specifically on the experiences of South Asian women in the labour market (e.g. Dale et al., 2002a; Dale et al., 2002b; Dale, 2008; Dale and Ahmed, 2011), and demonstrates that the experiences of these women are distinct from the experiences of women of other ethnic groups. In particular, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in the UK are commonly found to have the lowest levels of labour market participation compared to women of other ethnicities. Other examples of work specifically exploring labour market participation among South Asian women come from West and Pilgrim (1995), Salway (2007), and Turner and Wigfield (2012), all of which serve to highlight ways in which both gender and ethnicity shape women's experiences of the labour market. Some research discusses intersectionality more explicitly. For example, Bhopal (1998) compared South Asian women to Afro-Caribbean and white women to explore the impact of marriage for different ethnic groups, concluding that marital status has a greater impact on economic activity for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women compared to women of other ethnic groups. Brah (1993) discussed the 'Racialised Gendering of Labour Markets', whilst Browne and Misra (2003) explored existing research on the intersection of race and gender in the labour market, with a particular focus on the US labour market, finding that race and gender intersect 'under certain conditions', and arguing in favour of an intersectional approach to labour market research.

Having reviewed other related research (e.g. Dale, 2005; Botcherby, 2006 Salway 2007; Turner and Wigfield, 2012), it is evident that South Asian, and specifically Bangladeshi and Pakistani women, differ from women of other ethnic groups in their labour market participation in the UK. This is demonstrated in Table 1, which shows labour market participation rates for women belonging to 10 different ethnic groups (some ethnic groups have been grouped together in line with the 2001 Census, this is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1.2), aged 16-64, living in England and Wales. In Table 1, it is evident that labour market participation differs between ethnic groups. Further, Table 1 shows that Pakistani and Bangladeshi women have the lowest rates of participation in paid employment, along with the highest rates of inactivity due to looking after home or family.

**Table 1: Labour market participation rates of women aged 16-64 in England and Wales<sup>1</sup>**

	White British	White Other	Mixed/multi-ethnicity	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Chinese	Other	African	Caribbean
In employment	74.1	78.2	71.4	72.0	40.1	36.3	74.1	64.2	69.8	74.2
Unemployed	3.9	4.9	9.0	5.7	7.9	9.3	5.0	6.3	12.7	9.9
Retired	8.3	3.5	2.2	4.5	2.7	3.7	5.9	3.2	1.4	2.9
Looking after home/family	8.7	10.9	11.7	13.9	42.0	44.6	13.5	22.3	12.4	7.8
Sick or disabled	5.0	2.5	5.7	3.9	7.3	6.0	1.4	4.0	3.7	5.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The findings in Table 1 demonstrate the importance of exploring labour market participation through an intersectional lens that recognises, rather than obscures, diversity of experiences. Within a context that is already gendered, it is evident that both Pakistani and Bangladeshi women engage in the labour market differently to women of other ethnic groups. Given the increasing policy focus on dual-earner households, a focus on those who are not engaged with the labour market serves to highlight a diversity of experiences and the importance of different types of policy interventions and different types of support.

#### **1.4 Geographical context: Pakistani migration to Britain; Leeds and Kirklees**

For practical reasons, this research took place in West Yorkshire. Within West Yorkshire, Leeds and Kirklees were chosen since they provide a contrast between a city (Leeds) and a conurbation made up of small towns (Kirklees), while being easily accessible. Having established in Table 1 that both Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are characterised by lower levels of labour market participation, the 2011 Census was consulted in order to ascertain the Pakistani and Bangladeshi populations in both areas. Kirklees has a much higher than average Pakistani population, whilst Leeds has a slightly higher than average Pakistani population (9.6% and 2.9% respectively, compared to 2.0% for England and Wales

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<sup>1</sup> All tables use data from the 2011 Census Microdata Individual Safeguarded Sample (Local Authority), unless otherwise stated.



as a whole). Conversely, both areas (and Kirklees in particular) have very small Bangladeshi populations, at 0.6% for Leeds, and 0.2% for Kirklees (compared to 0.8% for England and Wales as a whole). In light of the practical issues – resources and access to participants – the decision was taken to focus this research on the experiences of Pakistani women of working age (16-64) living in Leeds and Kirklees. Section 1.4.1 summarises the processes of Pakistani migration to Britain, and then more specifically West Yorkshire, whilst Section 1.4.2 provides demographic profiles of Leeds and Kirklees.

### **1.4.1 Pakistani migration to Britain**

As well as understanding the characteristics of the areas from which research participants were recruited, an understanding of the context in which Pakistanis first began migrating to Britain will facilitate an understanding of divisions of labour amongst Pakistani communities. This section begins with a broad overview of Pakistani migration to England, before focusing more specifically on migration to West Yorkshire.

A key factor in Pakistani migration was the displacement of men who had worked in the allied armies and navies during World War II and subsequently sought work in munitions factories in Britain, as well as participating in other types of war work (Anwar, 1979). News of economic success, as well as the creation of an 'environment of migration' began a process of chain migration, whereby a few pioneer migrants sponsor further migrants, and assist them with housing and jobs (Kalra, 2000; Dahya, 2013). Simultaneously, three key events, or 'push' factors (factors leading to out-migration), led to further displacement of Pakistanis: the partition of India into India and Pakistan, the partition of East and West Pakistan into Pakistan and Bangladesh, and the building of the Mangla Dam (Anwar, 1979; Kalra, 2000; Shaw, 2000; Peach, 2006a). These events, as well as poor job opportunities in certain parts of Pakistan, made migration to Britain an attractive prospect (Dahya, 2013; Kalra, 2000).

While employment prospects in Pakistan were poor, the British textile industry was flourishing, with insufficient indigenous labour to meet production demand (Kalra, 2000), and post-war labour shortages in Britain led employers to recruit from further afield (Fevre, 1984). Simultaneously, more jobs were created in the light industrial and engineering sector, and in some sectors wages increased too, which led many white British men and women to leave the textile industry in favour of more attractive, non-manual work (Fevre, 1984). Furthermore, women were not allowed to work certain shifts, thus creating a gap that needed to be filled (e.g. Fevre, 1984). Consequently many vacancies were created that were eventually filled by South Asian migrant workers (Brah, 1993).

The 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act stipulated that those seeking to enter the UK should either:

*Have a job to come to; Possess special skills which were in short supply or; Be part of a large undifferentiated group whose numbers would be set according to the labour needs of the United Kingdom economy. (Spencer, 1997; 129).*

This led to an increase in immigration from those wishing to move before the Act could place limits on mobility (Spencer, 1997), and meant that

*South Asian single male sojourners were faced with the decision of whether to bring their wives to join them or to return to their homeland (with little certainty of being able to regain admission to Britain). (Peach, 2006; 136-137)*

This led to more permanent settlement in Britain. While initially many workers planned to return home, this change in immigration law forced economic migrants to choose between staying in Britain and returning to Pakistan, with the risk of losing earnings. The arrival of Pakistani women joining their husbands signified the start of more permanent settlements in Britain (Shaw, 2000).

It has been suggested that, at this time, female migrants joined their husbands with no expectation of participating in the labour market themselves (e.g. Leslie and Lindley, 2000). This should be borne in mind when considering the labour market activity of Pakistani women today, given that many will only be one generation removed from this first group of female migrants.<sup>2</sup> For example, Leslie and Lindley (2000; 588) link female Pakistani migrants' work expectations to their lower levels of English fluency, arguing that 'women are less fluent than men...because many join their husbands and language ability may not be a crucial factor in their migration decision.' Also of importance is the economic position female migrants would have found themselves in upon relocating. Brah (1993; 445) states that:

*In the early phase of post-war migration Pakistani men had arrived predominantly without their female kin. The class position of these men as low wage workers resident in declining inner areas of British cities was to have a crucial effect on the nature and type of employment on offer to Pakistani women as they began to arrive.*

Furthermore, the employment of Pakistani men within the manufacturing industry meant that its collapse in the 1980s had a disproportionate effect on migrant workers, particularly given their lower human capital in the form of qualifications and English proficiency (Dale et al.,

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<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this thesis, first generation refers to women who received their secondary education outside Britain, whilst second generation refers to those who received their secondary education in Britain (Evans and Bowlby, 2000).

2002b). As well as considering women's labour market participation as a function of '...cultural expectations and family and community pressures' (Dale, 2002; 9), the lasting effects of economic migration and precarious employment are likely to have had a sustained impact on many Pakistani families in Britain.

Due to the types of work available, the migration of Pakistanis initially saw them concentrated within certain parts of the UK. There is little research that focuses specifically on migration to Leeds and Kirklees, but a concentration of Pakistanis in West Yorkshire is well documented. For example, Husband and Alam (2011; 2) argue that 'the towns and cities of West Yorkshire have a centuries-old history of in-migration', and that the presence of existing migrant communities meant that West Yorkshire remained an appealing prospect for migrants. Having already stated that many Pakistanis initially came to Britain as economic migrants, it is highly relevant that three quarters of the wool textile industry was located in West Yorkshire (Cohen and Jenner, 1968). Similarly, Fieldhouse and Gould (1998) cite high labour demand as a reason for in-migration to West Yorkshire in the 1950s and 1960s, while Peach (2007; 11) states that 'Pakistanis were drawn to the Manchester and Leeds/Bradford conurbations in the 1950s and 1960s to prop up the failing textile mills.'

Leeds has a rich history of migration, which can be explained by its industrial history, with the textile industry attracting Jewish and Russo-Polish migrants in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (Honeyman, 2000). While Pakistanis represent a relatively recent group of migrants, it could be argued that, just as poor work prospects and displacement lead to a culture of out-migration in Pakistan, the existence of already established migrant communities in Leeds, as well as the availability of work, created a culture of in-migration to Leeds. Phillips et al. (2007; 224) state that Pakistani post-war migrants to Leeds moved to the poorer inner city areas, '...shaped by the availability of cheap housing, proximity to work, and the presence of other migrant households.' Further, it has been suggested that close connections in specific parts of a city replicate the structure of Pakistani village communities (Phillips et al., 2007), which may in part explain the persistence of these clusters, as illustrated in Tables 2 and 3. Kirklees also hosted a large number of mills, particularly in Huddersfield, which saw many Pakistanis join the textile industry there (Scott, 1972).

In sum, the availability of textile work in Kirklees and Leeds, as well as the pre-existing migrant population in Leeds, would have made both areas attractive to Pakistani migrants in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Section 1.4.2 outlines some of the key characteristics of Leeds and Kirklees.

### 1.4.2 Location profiles: Leeds and Kirklees

Having outlined why this research will be conducted in Leeds and Kirklees, this section will briefly summarise some of the key characteristics of both areas, in particular as they pertain to the nature of their labour markets.

Leeds is a city in West Yorkshire with a population of 774,100. Within this population, 78.8 % are white British, whilst 2.9% are Pakistani. Kirklees is a conurbation in West Yorkshire that consists of small towns and villages; the main town in Kirklees is Huddersfield. The population of Kirklees is 434,300, 74.6% of whom are white British, and 9.6% of whom are Pakistani. There is clustering of the Pakistani populations of Leeds and Kirklees at ward level, as illustrated in Tables 2 and 3, which show the wards in Leeds and Kirklees with the highest Pakistani populations, in comparison to the white British populations in those wards. A Pakistani population of above 6.0% was considered high, given that the average for England and Wales is 2.0%.

**Table 2: Wards with high Pakistani populations in Leeds**

Ward	All	White British	Pakistani
Chapel Allerton	23,536	51.2	6.9
City and Hunslet	33,705	60.8	6.6
Gipton and Harehills	27,078	35.8	20.9
Moortown	22,792	68.9	6.1
Roundhay	22,546	65.9	9.8

*Source:* 2011 Census aggregate data, Crown Copyright, 2011

**Table 3: Wards with high Pakistani populations in Kirklees**

Ward	Total	White British	Pakistani
Batley East	19,189	41.2	15.6
Batley West	19,384	63.0	17.0
Crosland Moor	18,723	55.4	27.0
Dewsbury South	18,793	52.0	20.2
Dewsbury West	20,021	45.2	40.7
Greenhead	19,912	49.6	28.6
Heckmondwike	16,986	74.3	20.4

Source: 2011 Census aggregate data, Crown Copyright, 2011

The majority of the populations of Leeds and Kirklees are of working age; 65.8% and 62.9% respectively are aged 16-64 (ONS Population Estimates, 2015). However, there are variations in economic activity rates. In Leeds, overall economic activity is 77.8%, compared to 74.2% in Kirklees (Annual Population Survey, 2016). This is compared to 76.8% in Yorkshire and the Humber, and 77.8% in Great Britain. In both areas there is a gender difference in economic activity. In Leeds, 81.9% of men and 73.9% of women are economically active, whilst in Kirklees, 81.7% of men, compared to 66.7% of women are economically active. There is, therefore, a larger gender gap in economic activity in Kirklees, compared to Leeds, of 15 percentage points, compared to 8.1 percentage points. The gender gap in Kirklees is also 10.1 percentage points higher than the gender gap in Yorkshire and the Humber, and 10.5 percentage points higher than in Great Britain. Overall, women in Leeds are more likely, and women in Kirklees less likely, to be economically active compared to women in Yorkshire and the Humber, and Great Britain.

Economic inactivity in Leeds is 22.2%, compared to 25.8% in Kirklees, 23.2% in Yorkshire and the Humber, and 22.2% in Great Britain (Annual Population Survey, 2016). The majority of those who are economically inactive in Leeds are students, at 39.0% (compared to 22.2% in Kirklees), whilst in Kirklees the majority of those who are economically inactive are 'looking after family/home' (31.7% compared to 20.8% in Leeds). Therefore, as well as having differing levels of economic inactivity, those living in Leeds and Kirklees are likely to be economically inactive for different reasons. Of those who are not economically inactive in Leeds, 26.0% want a job, whilst 74.0% do not want a job. In Kirklees, 17.6% of those who

are economically inactive want a job, compared to 82.4% who do not (Annual Population Survey, 2016).

As well as differences in economic activity and inactivity in Leeds and Kirklees, there is also a difference in the occupational levels of those who are economically active. The Annual Population Survey (ONS, 2016) shows that the majority of those in paid employment in both Leeds and Kirklees are concentrated in the higher occupational levels, with 47.2% in Leeds, and 39.6% in Kirklees in managerial and professional occupations. This is compared to 40.6% in Yorkshire and the Humber, and 45.1% in Great Britain. 17.3% of those in Leeds and 21.6% of those in Kirklees are employed in administrative and secretarial or skilled trade jobs, compared to 21.1% in Yorkshire and the Humber, and 20.9% in Great Britain.

Residents of Leeds are more likely than residents of Kirklees to be in caring, leisure, other service, sales and customer service occupations, at 17.7% compared to 15.6% in Kirklees, 17.9% in Yorkshire and the Humber, and 16.8% in Great Britain. In contrast, people in Kirklees are more likely than people in Leeds to work in elementary occupations or work as process, plant or machine operatives, at 23.3% compared to 17.9% in Leeds, 20.4% in Yorkshire and the Humber, and 17.3% in Great Britain. There is also variation in education and qualification levels in Leeds and Kirklees. 33.0% of those in Leeds, compared to 32.6% of those in Kirklees, have qualifications at NVQ4 (degree level) or above. In both areas this is slightly higher than the average of 30.6% in Yorkshire and the Humber, and lower than the average of 37.1% for Great Britain. People in Kirklees are more likely than people in Leeds to have no qualifications, at 10.5% compared to 8.8% in Leeds, 9.8% in Yorkshire and the Humber, and 8.6% in Great Britain (Annual Population Survey, 2016).

In sum, Leeds and Kirklees differ in terms of population size, Pakistani population size, and economic activity and inactivity. Economic activity is higher in Leeds. There is a gender gap in economic activity in both Leeds and Kirklees, but this is higher in Kirklees. Women in Leeds are more likely, and women in Kirklees less likely, to be in employment compared to women in Yorkshire and the Humber, and Great Britain. Economic inactivity in Leeds and Kirklees is likely to be for different reasons, with those who are economically inactive in Leeds more likely to be students, and those who are economically inactive in Kirklees more likely to be looking after home/family. Economically active people in both Leeds and Kirklees are more likely to be concentrated in the higher occupational levels, but this number is greater in Leeds than in Kirklees. Furthermore, people in Kirklees are more likely to work as process, plant and machine operatives than those in Leeds, Yorkshire and the Humber, or Great Britain. This indicates a variation in the type of labour market, and should be borne in mind when considering participants' experiences in either area. In terms of qualification levels, there is a small difference between those qualified at NVQ4 or above in Leeds and

Kirklees, but it is noteworthy that people in Kirklees are more likely to have no qualifications than people in Leeds, Yorkshire and the Humber, or Great Britain.

## 1.5 Structure, choice and constraint

So far, this introduction has outlined the necessity of research that explores labour market participation in the UK, through an intersectional lens. Whilst the gendered nature of the labour market is well established, focusing purely on gender overlooks the extent to which this intersects with other factors such as ethnicity in shaping labour market outcomes. Other key concepts when considering labour market participation are those of structure, choice, and constraint. Commonly held perceptions of benefit claimants as not participating in paid employment through choice (e.g. Baumberg et al., 2012), ignore the role of structure in shaping labour market participation. Specifically, Giddens (1984; 24) states that

*The most important aspects of structure are rules and resources recursively involved in institutions. Institutions by definition are the more enduring features of social life. In speaking of the structural properties of social systems I mean their institutionalized features, giving 'solidity' across time and space.*

Within this, agents are viewed as '...skilled, reflexive and knowledgeable in their interactions and negotiations with other individuals and social structures' (Tomlinson, 2006; 368) whilst 'agency concerns events of which an individual is the perpetrator' (Giddens, 1984; 9). Giddens's emphasis on reflexivity, knowledge, and agency is also inherent in Hakim's (2000) 'preference theory'. This argues that women's labour market participation is an expression of their preferences, and Hakim categorises women into those who prioritise their careers (work-centred), those who prioritise family life (home-centred), and those who combine both whilst prioritising neither (adaptive). Hakim argues that these decisions take place within the context of socio-economic conditions that afford women greater choice over their life-styles, such as the contraceptive revolution, and the increase in white-collar, and part-time, work.

Tomlinson (2006) critiques both Hakim and Giddens (1984) on the grounds that they both fail to consider the amount of information available to women when making decisions about their participation in the labour market. Further, she argues that, while Giddens (1984) views structure as simultaneously constraining and enabling, he fails to consider the circumstances under which structures are more, or less, constraining. Instead, Tomlinson (2006; 368) argues that women make

*...decisions with regards to their local contexts, and what they believe to be possible courses of action within their structural settings. It is not the case that individuals are*

*equally skilled and will always factor in all potential courses of action. Thus, individuals often act within a more restricted framework and rather than acting with full information, act only on what they think their options and choices are.*

Expanding upon work by Crompton and Harris (1998), Tomlinson (2006; 380) suggests that:

*Constraint is evident in both reactive and compromised choice transitions and outcomes lead to dilemmas and trade-offs in attempts to reconciling work and family life. Reactive and compromised choice transitions demonstrate that women differ in their capacity to overcome constraints and make preferential choices in the labour market. The different transitions also highlight the significance of care networks, work status and the welfare policy context in shaping women's abilities to carry out preferences....*

Similarly, Crompton and Harris (1998; 121) argue that although women *can* choose, their choices are constrained, and that this '...lies at the root of sociological explanations of behaviour.' Indeed, Crompton and Harris (1998; 131) also criticise Hakim for under-stating the role of structure and providing voluntaristic explanations of behaviour. They state that:

*We have seen that whilst women do indeed make choices, these choices are not necessarily between the alternatives of home-centredness and career-centredness. Some women want both - that is, their work orientations are not single-stranded - and they choose accordingly.*

Tomlinson (2006) and Crompton and Harris (1998) are clear that women differ from men in the extent to which they are able to make choices, and the extent to which these choices are constrained. However, within this, it is likely that different women have different access to information, different support networks, and must contend with differing forms of structural inequality. Pakistani women have access to a labour market that is gendered (Brah, 1993) but the nature of constraints they experience is likely to differ, and their engagement with the labour market is therefore an outcome of their status both as women operating within a structure that is already gendered, and as Pakistani women. This thesis therefore seeks, through the lens of intersectionality, to explore the ways in which Pakistani women's labour market participation is constrained.

## **1.6 Research questions**

So far, this chapter has outlined the rationale for continued labour market research, given increased pressures to participate in the labour market despite the fact that not everyone has equal access to it. Further, it has highlighted the importance of intersectionality and the



contribution that this can make to such research, in recognising heterogeneity, diversity, and complexity of experiences. Given the rationale, discussed in Section 1.4, for conducting this research in Leeds and Kirklees, this research considers the following questions:

- What are the key factors affecting labour market participation for Pakistani women in Leeds and Kirklees?
- What is the influence of structure on labour market participation for Pakistani women in Leeds and Kirklees?
  - To what extent are Pakistani women able to exercise choice within the labour market?
- What are the policy implications of these findings for local, regional, and national policy makers?

In aiming to explore ‘the key factors affecting labour market participation’, this research will draw, loosely, on distinctions made between ‘life-stage’ and ‘human capital’ factors, as per Salway (2007) who suggests that:

*In seeking explanations for the low levels of participation by Bangladeshi and Pakistani women, particular attention has been given to two sets of factors: firstly the influence of life-stage factors relating to marriage and childbearing; and secondly, the relatively poor human capital possessed by these groups. (Salway 2007; 826)*

Consequently, Pakistani women’s experiences of the labour market can be viewed as diverging in relation to these two sets of factors (Salway, 2007), where ‘poor human capital’ is taken to reflect skills pertaining to labour market participation, such as educational attainment, participation in non-compulsory education, and language proficiency. Although these factors are inter-related, they are utilised as a means of structuring this thesis. Having outlined the rationale for the proposed research questions, Section 1.7 provides an overview of this thesis.

## **1.7 Thesis overview**

This section outlines the structure of this thesis, providing summaries of what will be covered in each chapter. Each chapter is now introduced in relation to the content it will cover.

Although placing the Methods chapter second is perhaps unconventional, it makes sense since this thesis contains two literature based chapters, from which the related analysis chapters follow directly.

### 1.7.1 Methods

As previously highlighted in this chapter, the idea that gender and ethnicity intersect, and influence specific labour market outcomes (e.g. Crenshaw, 1991; Browne and Misra, 2003), is central to this research. As such, this chapter discusses debates surrounding intersectionality, specifically in terms of the practicalities of applying this approach to social research. Such debate particularly focuses on the formulation of social categories and what this means in terms of research methods. Therefore this section details decisions regarding the relevant categories in this research and their conceptualisation, drawing on the work of McCall (2005), Hancock (2007) and Walby et al. (2012). Specifically, it argues in favour of what McCall (2005) terms 'intercategorical complexity' whereby pre-existing groups (in this case white British men and women, and Pakistani men and women) are used to measure between-group inequality. Additionally, by placing Pakistani women at the forefront of this research, the approach taken is also 'group centred' (Choo and Feree, 2010).

In order to explore the labour market participation of Pakistani women in Leeds and Kirklees, this research used a mixed method approach, drawing on quantitative data from the 2011 Census, as well as data collected through interviews and focus groups conducted with Pakistani women in both areas, and interviews with two ESOL teachers. Therefore, this chapter also puts forward a case for using mixed methods. In this research specifically, the theoretical issues associated with using mixed methods are twofold. Firstly, a commonly held critique of mixed methods is the blending of two conflicting ontological and epistemological perspectives (e.g. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Secondly, the appropriateness of quantitative methods to conduct research focusing on women is a contentious issue (e.g. Oakley, 1998; Westmarland, 2001). Given the strength of quantitative research in informing policy decisions (e.g. Jayaratne, 1999), it is argued in this chapter that the strengths outweigh the ontological issues. Also, using qualitative methods in addition to quantitative methods means that a critical approach can be taken to the data obtained from the Census, adding complexity to a picture that risks being overly simplistic (e.g. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004), despite the fact that intersectional research should instead embrace complexity.

In addition to dealing with the theoretical aspects of the methodological approach adopted, this chapter considers more practical issues. In terms of the use of 2011 Census data, this chapter argues that using microdata (which is defined in Chapter 2) is appropriate since it facilitates more control over the data analysis, whilst being a large enough data sample to look at an ethnic minority group. Further practical issues relate to the collection of qualitative data, through the use of interviews and focus groups, and these are discussed with specific

consideration of research positionality and how this is likely to have affected the data collection and recruitment processes. Finally, this chapter will outline the ethical implications of this research.

### **1.7.2 Life-stage, family formation, and domestic labour**

Chapter 3 explores literature that focuses on life-stage factors, specifically in terms of their role in shaping Pakistani women's labour market participation. It begins with a broader discussion of women's participation in paid and unpaid work, and how this is shaped by ideas about gender. In particular, this chapter draws on literature that critically explores the prevalence of the male breadwinner model and the adult-worker model (e.g. Lewis, 2001; Daly, 2011). This chapter explores Pakistani, and more specifically Pakistani Muslim, cultural preferences, specifically focusing on what is meant by *izzat* and *purdah* and how they might shape the experiences of Pakistani women. Central to this is the idea that women are responsible for family honour (*izzat*), and are protected by adhering to *purdah*, which translates to 'curtain' and seeks to maintain female modesty (Papanek, 1971); women's behaviour serves to maintain a family's *izzat* (e.g. Papanek, 1973). Linked to this are ideas about the segregation of men from women, as well as an emphasis on marriage and the impact that might have on women's behaviour leading up to it. Further, parallels are drawn, in this chapter, between *izzat* and the male breadwinner model, of which Lalani et al. (2014) argue that a preference for the male breadwinner model is likely to be reinforced by other aspects of belonging to a migrant community.

Next, this chapter considers marriage, exploring the extent to which, for Pakistani women, marriage affects labour market participation in-and-of-itself. This chapter outlines the role of marriage within Pakistani culture, as well as the particularities of marriage that are more strongly associated with the experiences of Pakistani women than other women, such as arranged marriage and the process of marriage migration. Finally, this chapter will outline literature that explores how women, and how Pakistani women in particular, seek to consolidate work and care. This discussion focuses specifically on the use of formal and informal childcare, and the availability of flexible and part-time working arrangements. More specifically it considers the utility of such arrangements, how accessible they are, and who uses them.

### **1.7.3 Marriage and gendered behaviours**

Chapter 4 is the first of two analysis chapters exploring issues related to the life-stage factors outlined in Chapter 3, which presented marriage as a key issue in understanding labour market participation for Pakistani women, and as an issue that affects their experiences irrespective of childcare responsibilities.

The relationship between domestic partnerships and labour market participation is not something that is exclusive to Pakistani women. In Hakim's (e.g. 2006) 'preference theory', home-centred women are postulated as being those who give up paid work after marriage. Nonetheless, this chapter demonstrates that marriage has a greater affect on labour market participation for Pakistani women than for their white British counterparts, and therefore explores some of the reasons for this, drawing on data from the 2011 Census, as well as qualitative data from Pakistani women living in Leeds and Kirklees.

#### **1.7.4 Children**

Chapter 5 explores the relationship between motherhood and labour market participation, exploring prior research that has found that the presence of dependent children has a greater effect on women than on men (e.g. McRae, 2003; Hardill and Watson, 2004). Not only do dependent children make women less likely to work in general, but they affect the types of work women participate in (ONS, 2013). This chapter demonstrates that the affect of dependent children on labour market participation is greater for Pakistani women than it is for white British women.

Following this, this chapter explores how motherhood affects labour market participation for Pakistani women, and whether they differ from other women in terms of the ways they seek to consolidate work and childcare. In doing so, this chapter returns once more to Hakim's (2006) preference theory, and considers perceptions of motherhood. Finally, this chapter explores how Pakistani women use flexible working, and informal and formal childcare, to enable themselves to participate in the labour market.

#### **1.7.5 Education, qualifications, and English proficiency**

Chapter 6 explores the relationships between education, qualifications, language proficiency, and labour market participation. Formal education serves as a key route into the labour market in the UK, and ONS (2013b) report greater employment levels and higher earnings amongst graduates in comparison to non-graduates. Initially, this chapter focuses on gender more broadly. It begins with a consideration of subject choice, which, according to Thomas (1990) shapes and is shaped by expectations of how women will participate in the labour market. Following this, it explores the complex relationship between gender and academic attainment. Having established that education is gendered, and also suggested that the relationship between education and academic attainment, and labour market participation, is gendered, this chapter then considers academic attainment for Pakistani women specifically.

Following this, discussion turns to how Pakistani women utilise their qualifications, focusing on over-education, spatial flexibility, and discrimination in the labour market, all of which are

argued to constrain the abilities of Pakistani women to capitalise on their qualifications. Although this chapter argues that under-education is a less prevalent issue, this is also considered particularly in relation to first generation migrants who may arrive in the UK with no qualifications beyond compulsory level. Finally, language proficiency is identified as another key issue affecting access to the labour market for Pakistani women. This is firstly considered in relation to migration, and secondly to potential issues with accessing ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes.

### **1.7.6 Skills for the labour market**

Chapter 7 explores the themes addressed in Chapter 6, beginning with education and qualifications. This initial analysis ties experiences of education to the themes outlined in the earlier chapters, in considering the link between educational attainment and 'marriageability' (e.g. Shaw, 2000), as well as how common understandings and misconceptions of Pakistani women affect and shape experiences throughout the education process, and the extent to which education is, in fact, often viewed as an asset. This chapter highlights the extent to which participation in non-compulsory education, in particular, is complex for Pakistani women. Related to this, is the complexity surrounding translating qualifications into jobs which, this section argues, is constrained by both the nature of university attendance, and discrimination in the labour market.

The next section of this chapter considers issues that might have a greater affect on first-generation migrants; academic attainment, language proficiency, and accessing ESOL classes. The final section departs from formal qualifications and language proficiency, in considering how women might benefit from the opportunity to develop other types of skills. This was identified by the participants and is in line with prior research by Turner and Wigfield (2012).

### **1.7.7 Conclusion**

The concluding chapter offers a synthesis of the findings of this research, and outlines how the key findings answer the research questions that were introduced in Section 1.6. It reiterates the key issues affecting the labour market participation for Pakistani women in Leeds and Kirklees, explores the roles of choice and constraint, and, based on the findings of this research it offers a series of policy suggestions. Finally, this chapter revisits some of the limitations of this research, and offers scope for future research.

## 1.8 Conclusion

This introductory chapter has outlined the rationale and need for research that considers the intersection of gender and ethnicity, and what this means for Pakistani women's participation in the labour market in the UK. It has argued that, although work does not always pay, it is valuable as a route out of poverty, and can be enjoyed for non-financial reasons, too. It has outlined the ways in which, despite increases in women's labour market participation, the labour market remains gendered and the nature of women's participation differs to men's. Within this context, it has also outlined the ways in which South Asian, and more specifically Pakistani women participate in the labour market differently to women of other ethnic groups. Having established that this research will focus on the labour market participation of Pakistani women, this chapter has also considered the geographical context: it has outlined the reasons for and timing of Pakistani migration to Britain, and then provided profiles of Leeds and Kirklees, the two areas in West Yorkshire from which participants were recruited. This chapter has argued that Pakistani women's labour market participation should be considered in terms of structure, choice, and constraint, and the research questions are formulated as such. Finally, an overview was provided of the remaining chapters of this thesis.

Chapter 2 outlines the methods that were used in this research, beginning with a consideration of the theoretical issues surrounding intersectionality and mixed methods in social research, before detailing the practical aspects of conducting this study.

## 2 Methods

### 2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the rationale for and focus of this research, which explores labour market participation among Pakistani women in Leeds and Kirklees, with specific reference to intersectionality, structure, choice, and constraint. The research questions centre on exploring the key factors affecting Pakistani women's labour market participation, the influence of structure (which is defined in Section 1.5), the extent to which Pakistani women *choose* how they participate in the labour market, and the policy implications of the findings of this research.

This chapter outlines the methods that were employed to answer the research questions. It begins with a discussion of the application of intersectionality to social research. Following this, key debates surrounding the use of mixed methods in social research are discussed, and, drawing on Mason's (2006) identification of six approaches to mixing qualitative and quantitative research methods, the use of a mixed method approach in this research is justified.

Having identified how an understanding of intersectionality will be applied to this research, and having justified the use of a mixed method approach, Section 2.4 focuses on secondary analysis of Census data, with specific reference to several key issues: a critique of secondary data analysis; justification of using the Census over other, similar datasets; and issues with the use of Census variables.

Section 2.3.2.2 discusses firstly the sampling approach used for the Census, as well as the exclusion of certain cases from the dataset for the purposes of this research, and secondly the sampling strategy used for obtaining focus group participants, and issues therein, which led to some changes in the data collection process. Related to this, Section 2.3.2.4 provides a discussion of the positionality of the researcher, and the use of gatekeepers to recruit participants.

The penultimate section outlines the data analysis process, firstly focusing on the quantitative analysis and secondly the qualitative analysis. The final section considers the ethical issues that arose in this research, and the steps that were taken to mitigate against these issues, as well as a consideration of how such issues might have affected the outcomes of this research.

## 2.2 Applying intersectionality to social research

As discussed in Chapter 1, central to this research is the argument that gender and ethnicity intersect, and that this shapes the ways in which people participate in the labour market (Browne and Misra, 2003). Intersectionality theory takes a distinctive stance, whereby race and sex (along with other social categories, such as class) are viewed as being interconnected, rather than separate; social inequality is investigated, therefore, in a 'non-additive' way (Choo and Ferree, 2010). This means that different social categories are viewed as being interrelated to, rather than superseding, one another. As such, research that focuses on the experiences of women in the labour market cannot be applied to the experiences of all women. The treatment of social categories within intersectionality theory necessitates some consideration of how such categories were conceived of and treated in this research, since although its popularity within the social sciences is increasing, '...intersectionality as a research paradigm has yet to gain a wide foothold in political science' (Hancock, 2007; 63). Subsequently, there has been much debate regarding how it can be applied methodologically to studies of inequality (e.g. McCall, 2005; Walby, 2009; Choo and Ferree, 2010). The purpose of this section is to consider different approaches to the methodological application of intersectionality, and to outline how intersectionality will inform the methods used in the research.

Discussion of the methodological applications of intersectionality has largely focussed on the treatment of different categories and the implications of this for social research. McCall (2005) differentiates between anticategorical, intracategorical, and intercategorical complexity, which each have different implications for research in terms of the conceptualisation of categories and the relationships between them. Anticategorical complexity views social life as too complex to be viewed as categorical, and deconstructs analytical categories (rejecting categorisation altogether). Intercategorical complexity (which is the approach advocated by McCall) involves the adaptation of existing categories to examine the nature of inequality in social groups, thus comparing the experiences of different groups. Finally, intracategorical complexity focuses on groups at the points of intersection (looking at experiences within a category). McCall also argues that not all research can be classified as belonging firmly to one of these approaches, and may instead cross-cut them.

Choo and Ferree (2010) also suggest three routes through which intersectionality might be applied to social research. The *group centred* route places marginalised groups at the forefront of the research; the *process centred* route is concerned with the intersections, and how these reveal the structural processes that organise power; and the *system centred*



approach is concerned with interactions between groups, rather than main effects. Like McCall (2005), Choo and Ferree (2010) suggest that each approach will have different implications for the way the research is conducted.

McBride et al. (2014; 1) argue that, within the field of work and employment relations ‘...the intersectional approach contains an important caution against over-generalization that has been obscured’, and that research benefits simply from an understanding of intersectionality, at the stages of both design and interpretation. In discussing McCall’s (2005) proposition of the different ways in which research might be intersectional, McBride et al. (2014; 5) argue that researchers of work and employment relations are reminded:

*...that individuals within an intersectional space (i.e. of two overlapping categories) may be experiencing something significantly different to those occupying one of the categories.*

McBride et al. (2014) appear to advocate a slightly softer approach than Choo and Ferree (2010) or McCall (2005), whereby they call for researchers to be ‘intersectionally sensitive’ at each stage of their research, so as not to obscure the experiences of those ‘within an intersectional space.’

In this research, therefore, Pakistani women are perceived as occupying an ‘intersectional space’, whereby both their ethnicity and their gender are central to their experiences of the labour market. By focusing on the experiences of those within a category, this research could best be described as utilising McCall’s (2005) ‘intracategorical’ approach, or Choo and Ferree’s (2010) ‘group centred’ approach. McBride et al. (2014; 7) caution against essentialism when using the intracategorical approach; specifically, they highlight the risk of taking insights ‘...as representative of all workers who might fall within the same intersectional categories.’ However it was hoped that the methods used in this research would highlight the diversity of experiences, by drawing the focus away from ‘typical’ experiences of Pakistani women, and towards other forms of structural inequality.

## **2.3 Mixed methods**

Mixed methods research is ‘...a synthesis that includes ideas from quantitative and qualitative research’ (Johnson et al., 2007; 113). This research used a mixed methods approach, combining analysis of quantitative data from the 2011 Census with analysis of primary qualitative data collected from focus groups and semi-structured interviews with Pakistani women of working age, as well as two ESOL teachers, in Leeds and Kirklees. This

section considers the theoretical issues associated with the use of mixed methods, and justifies why such an approach was selected for this project.

Perhaps the most common critique of the use of mixed methods is that quantitative and qualitative research methods are associated with conflicting epistemological and ontological stances (e.g. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Quantitative research has traditionally been associated with positivism, whereby observations about the social world are treated in a more scientific manner, with a focus on objectivity, reliability, and validity (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). By contrast, qualitative research rejects positivism in favour of constructivism, whereby '...knower and known cannot be separated because the subjective knower is the only source of reality' (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; 14). Whilst quantitative research, in valuing objectivity, maintains a separation between the 'knower and the known', this is not deemed possible within qualitative research, which instead recognises and accepts subjectivity (e.g. Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, positivism and constructivism, and in turn quantitative and qualitative research methods, are associated with conflicting ways of viewing the social world, and conflicting views of the nature of social reality.

However, it has also been argued that these different approaches need not contradict one-another. Kelle (2001) argues that specific methods of research do not have to be associated with specific epistemological assumptions, while Irwin (2011) suggests that the use of mixed methods depends on specific research questions, and how well they link theory and data. Hammersley (1992; 51) suggests that '...there can be multiple, non-contradictory and valid descriptions and explanations of the same phenomenon.' Indeed, Johnson et al. (2007; 129) suggest that mixed methods research '...offers a powerful third paradigm choice that often will provide the most informative, complete, balanced, and useful research results', and further, that:

*This type of research should be used when the nexus of contingencies in a situation, in relation to one's research question(s), suggests that mixed methods research is likely to provide superior research findings and outcomes.*

For this research, the use of mixed methods was deemed appropriate for the research questions, in particular given that this research seeks to ultimately make policy suggestions: here, the use of some quantitative data is deemed invaluable (e.g. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie; Jayaratne, 1999). As such, the decision to use mixed methods in this research was a pragmatic one, whereby methodological decisions were made unconstrained by an adherence to specific paradigms (e.g. Feilzer, 2009).

Aside from the debates surrounding the mixing of qualitative and quantitative methods in terms of conflicting ontological and epistemological standpoints, the use of quantitative methods in this research is contentious for other reasons. Firstly, the association between quantitative research methods and positivism presents a conflict with feminist epistemologies and ontologies (e.g. Westmarland, 2001), having been criticised for 'ignoring' women (Oakley, 1998), or 'adding women to male knowledge' (Westmarland, 2001; 2). Further, the grounding of quantitative methods within theory that has historically privileged white men, as highlighted by Oakley (1998) and Westmarland (2001) is viewed as potentially contentious within this research, which seeks to explore the experiences of Pakistani women.

Nonetheless, Hancock (2007) argues that the conflicting ontological assumptions underlying feminist theory do not mean that the use of rich data sets (such as the Census) should be abandoned, whilst Oakley (2004; 107) argues that 'what matters most is the fit between research question and research method.' Furthermore, due to its appeal to policy makers, some view the use of quantitative methods as invaluable in feminist research (Jayaratne, 1999). The use of mixed methods in this research in part mitigated against the issues associated with using purely quantitative research to study women, with the qualitative data invaluable in highlighting the complexity of the issues studied (the strengths of qualitative research are discussed in greater detail in Section 2.3.2). Additionally, the use of quantitative analysis of Census data is used to strengthen its appeal outside of academia, as suggested by Jayaratne (1999).

In combining qualitative and quantitative methods, Mason (2006) suggests six strategies that are commonly used. The first uses what she terms 'rhetorical logic' (Mason, 2006; 2), combining two methods to obtain a 'fuller picture', and is often used by those who tend towards either a qualitative or quantitative orientation. The second approach uses 'parallel logic', whereby different research methods are suited to different parts of the study; indeed Mason (2006; 5) suggests that within this approach, each different element of the research might be treated as its own 'mini-study.' The third approach uses 'integrative logic' (Mason, 2006; 6), whereby different methods are suited to different elements of the research, and contribute to the full 'picture'. The fourth approach suggested by Mason (2006; 8) uses 'corroborative logic', where '...different forms of data are used to corroborate what they are measuring'. The fifth approach uses a 'multi-dimensional logic' (Mason, 2006; 9) where different methods are used for different questions and there is a dialogue between them, so that explanations of a research problem are based on multiple ways of seeing them. The sixth and final approach is to mix methods 'opportunistically' and with 'no intrinsic logic', whereby different methods are combined accidentally (Mason, 2006; 11).

This research adopted Mason's (2006) 'integrative logic', whereby different research methods were viewed as best suited to different parts of the research, and contributed to a fuller picture of the overall research problem. In exploring the experiences of Pakistani women in the labour market, it was deemed necessary to use Census data in order to ascertain overall patterns of labour market participation, particularly given the appeal to policy makers of using official statistics (e.g. Jayaratne, 1999). However such data does not explain people's motivations or reasoning behind their actions, it shows 'what' happens but not why. Furthermore, although some motivations for particular decisions vis a vis the labour market could be analysed quantitatively with the aid of prior literature, such data fails to show any complexity in decision making processes, nor does it illustrate how choices and decisions are constrained. Finally, since this research drew on intersectionality, it was deemed essential to place Pakistani women at the forefront of the research (e.g. Choo and Ferree, 2010), and this was achieved by speaking to them about their experiences. Therefore the decision to combine qualitative and quantitative methods partially stemmed from the theoretical underpinnings of this research, being grounded in intersectionality. Having outlined the issues inherent in using mixed methods research, justified its use for this project, and stated how the methods will be mixed, Section 2.3.1 describes the quantitative data that was used for this research.

### **2.3.1 Using the 2011 Census**

Smith (2008; 331) views the use of official data as integral to enabling social scientists to describe the world around them, arguing that:

*Without the official data we cannot produce the national picture to put alongside these localised reports – and, if there are injustices, to enable social scientists to challenge policy and demand equity.*

In this research, the analysis of data from the 2011 Census was perceived as providing valuable context to the qualitative data that was collected, consistent with Smith's (2008; 331) argument that official data enables researchers to '...produce the national picture to put alongside...localised reports'. Therefore, exploratory analysis using the Safeguarded Microdata (discussed in Section 2.3.1.1) was used to provide an overview of the key issues affecting Pakistani women's labour market participation, whilst a qualitative approach was deemed better suited to exploring choice and constraint, as well as considering potential policy interventions. This is in line with Mason's (2006) 'Integrative logic', which was discussed in Section 2.3.

Because secondary data analysis involves the analysis of data collected by someone else, and for a different purpose, a common critique levelled at secondary data analysis is the lack

of control it affords the researcher. Since it involves using data that was not collected with the specific research project in mind, those working with secondary data must work with the questions that have already been asked (e.g. Vartanian, 2010). This necessitates flexibility on the researcher's part, including exploration of the data set prior to developing research questions. This lack of control was most evident when it came to deciding which variables to use, and how they ought to be re-coded, which is discussed in Sections 2.3.1.2 and 2.3.1.3. Nonetheless, using the Individual Safeguarded Microdata, as outlined in Section 2.3.1.1, did provide some degree of flexibility. Furthermore, the use of mixed methods meant that the qualitative data was collected for the specific purpose of this research; a combination of both sources of data meant that the questions could be answered. Having justified the use of secondary data analysis for this research, Sections 2.3.1.1 to 2.3.1.3 describe the specific dataset that was used, how the dataset was prepared, and key analysis decisions that were made based on the dataset used.

### **2.3.1.1 The 2011 Census: Standard Releases and Microdata**

This research used data from the 2011 Census – both the standard releases and the Individual Safeguarded Microdata, which is a 5% sample of all Census returns at local authority level (UK Data Service, 2014). The Census is collected every 10 years, therefore at the time of writing the most recent Census was collected in 2011, and this should be borne in mind when considering the data analysis. It is also recognised here that other datasets could have been used instead, and as such this section begins by considering (and rejecting) these alternatives, before describing in more detail the specific Census products that were used for this research.

Since the Annual Population Survey is collected annually, and the Labour Force Survey is collected quarterly, both could have been used in this research and would have provided more up-to-date data, whilst containing variables relevant to the project. However, neither dataset was available at local authority level, and, although no notable differences were found within the different local authorities, initially the Census, and in particular the Individual Safeguarded Microdata, were selected because they provided that level of detail. Aside from this, the Census is based on a population count of 56,075,912, therefore the sample size for the Individual Safeguarded Microdata is 2,803,796 compared to 320,000 for the Annual Population Survey, and 40,000 households or 100,000 individuals per quarter for the Labour Force Survey. Therefore the Census was also selected on the basis of its considerably bigger sample size.

The purpose of the Census is to provide an overall picture of the UK population (ONS, 2017). It aims to collect data from the entire population, asking core questions so that data

can be compared nationally (ONS, 2017). Since some cases are missed, the counts are adjusted to take this into account. The standard releases consist of four table types: Key Statistics cover the full range of Census topics at output area level (where the minimum size is 40 households or 100 people); Quick Statistics provide 'the most detailed information available from the Census about a single topic', also at output area level; Detailed Characteristics are cross-tabulations of two or more topics for middle layer super output areas (where the minimum size is 2,000 households or 5,000 people); Local Characteristics provide the most detailed results for all output areas, and contain two or more variables. In sum, the data that is readily available using the whole Census comes from these four different table types, which contain differing amounts of detail.

Whilst the standard Census releases consist of tables, the microdata provide an alternative source where data is available at individual level and can be used in researchers' own analyses (UK Data Service, 2016). Not all cases are available, and the number of topics is limited. There are several different 'microdata products' that balance sample size and detail of the available data, with access to the larger files less restrictive than for the smaller files.

The Individual Safeguarded Microdata, which was used for this research, is a random sample of 5% of all Census returns (ONS, 2017), and must be accessed through the UK Data Service. This dataset includes variables on the full range of Census topics, and they could be used for more complex data analyses than the aggregate Census data (Li, 2004). Unlike the aggregate data, the Individual Safeguarded Microdata consists of a dataset that can be downloaded to a statistical programme (SPSS in this case) and analysed in detail by the researcher.

Data analysis took the form of cross-tabulations to illustrate key themes and patterns pertaining to Pakistani women's participation in the labour market, and the themes that were analysed in this way were drawn from reviews of prior literature, as well as from the qualitative data that was generated (discussed in Sections 2.3.2 and 2.5). Cross-tabulations are a technique commonly used in exploratory data analysis, of which Seltman (2012; 61) states that '...loosely speaking, any method of looking at data that does not include formal statistical modelling and inference falls under the term exploratory data analysis.' Further, Seltman (2012; 61) states that exploratory data analysis can be used for 'determining relationships among the explanatory variables.' In sum, therefore, the Census data was explored using cross-tabulations to assess relationships between variables that were selected on the basis of prior research, and the primary qualitative data. Having outlined the reasoning behind choosing this dataset, as well as how the data was analysed, section 2.3.1.2 describes how the dataset was prepared for analysis.

### 2.3.1.2 Working with Census variables

As previously stated, an issue when analysing secondary data is that the researcher is confined to the variables that already exist in the dataset. However, using the Individual Safeguarded Microdata allows for some manipulation of the variables to better tailor them to the research being undertaken. Even so, some decisions must be made about how to use the pre-existing variables, and whether any changes need to be made to them. This section will discuss issues with using Census variables, and how the data was prepared to best suit this research.

Firstly, it is important to consider how ethnicity is operationalised in the Census, since it has been argued that the Census definition of ethnicity is limited (Iqbal et al., 2009). It has also been argued that measures of ethnicity should simultaneously be consistent, and take into account people's own perceptions of their ethnic identities (Burton et al., 2008). Therefore, the use of the ethnic categories provided by the Census should be approached with caution, since they potentially over-simplify ethnic identity.

However, the ethnicity classifications in the Census are the result of a wide ranging consultation process (ONS, 2007). Furthermore, it was anticipated that, in this research, other aspects of ethnic identity, such as religion, would be important discussion points in the focus groups, based on previous research (e.g. Brah, 1993; Khattab, 2012); thus using a mixed methods approach would help to take account of the complexity of ethnic identity by giving participants the opportunity to discuss it. Additionally, due to its influence on social policy (Killick et al., 2015), there are benefits to using the Census to research ethnicity.

Another issue regarding the ethnicity question in the Census is the change in ethnicity categories over time, which can make it difficult to compare ethnicity data from different years. This means that researchers using the Census to study ethnicity need to make decisions about how many categories are used. Between the 1991 and 2001 Censuses there was an increase from 9 to 18 ethnicity categories. The ESRC Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity (hereafter, CoDE; 2014a) suggests that for those wishing to compare 1991-2001-2011 Census data, a 9 category comparison is sufficient, because these categories are stable across all three censuses. This research used the 2011 data, so an argument could have been made in favour of using a greater number of ethnicity categories. However, since this research focused on Pakistani women, the ethnicity categories provided in the 2011 Census were reduced to 10, to simplify the analysis. Unlike the categorisations suggested by CoDE (2014a), this separates the 'white British' from 'white other' categories; the quantitative analysis in this research compares Pakistani men and women of working age to their white British counterparts; including 'white other' in this category would obscure the

experiences of those who are white but not British. Table 4 shows the ethnicity categories in the 2011 Census, alongside the re-coded categories that were used for this research.

**Table 4: 2011 Census ethnicity categories and re-coded ethnicity categories**

Original ethnicity category	Re-coded category
White: English/Scottish/Welsh/Northern Irish White Irish White Other	White British White other
Mixed/multi-ethnic group White/Black Caribbean White/Black other Mixed/multi-ethnic group White + Asian/Other mix	Mixed/multi-ethnic group
Asian/Asian British Indian Asian/Asian British Pakistani Asian/Asian British Bangladeshi Asian/Asian British Chinese Asian/Asian British Other Asian Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	Indian Pakistani Bangladeshi Chinese Other
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African Black/African/ Caribbean/Black British: Other Black	African Other Black

Source: 2011 Census; Crown Copyright

Gender is potentially another contentious issue, since it is not the same as sex; the World Health Organisation (2014) associates sex with biological characteristics, and gender with 'socially constructed roles'. In failing to distinguish between gender and sex, when using Census data it is necessary to use sex as a proxy for gender. This is further complicated by the fact that 'sex' has only two possible responses in the Census in England and Wales; male or female. Those who identify as non-gender binary, or who do not identify as the 'sex' they were assigned at birth may have difficulty answering this question, since responding according to the pre-specified answers might not truly reflect their gender (e.g. Mitchell and Howarth, 2009). Some countries have included an additional option for gender to account for this. For example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016) released a 'Standard for Sex and Gender Variables', where they identify sex and gender as distinct concepts, and recommend the use of an 'other' category, with the option for users to further specify their gender in a way they feel comfortable with .



The limitations of Census variables are also part of the reasoning behind the exclusion of social class as a main analytical variable in this research despite the argument that:

*...it remains important to...consider the intersection between class, ethnic and gender divisions...in the development of particular forms of political consciousness and action (Anthias and Yuval Davis, 1983; 63).*

Using the Census to analyse social class would have meant using either the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (hereafter NS-SEC; ONS, 2010; Rose and Pevalin, 2005) or Social Grade (ONS, 2010; Lambert and Moy, 2013) variables. The NS-SEC was developed from the Goldthorpe Schema (e.g. Goldthorpe, 1987), which bases social class on occupational status. It measures employment relations and conditions of occupations, and places respondents into one of 8 analytic classes depending on whether they are an employer, self-employed, or an employee; whether they are a supervisor; and the number of employees at their workplace (ONS, 2010). The ONS (2010) states that the unit of analysis for the NS-SEC should be the household rather than the individual, due to the 'interdependence and shared conditions of family members'. Therefore, a classification is assigned to households based on the occupational status of the Household Reference Person (hereafter HRP; ONS, 2010). The use of HRP as a unit of analysis is an important issue that will be discussed in more detail in Section 2.3.1.3.

The concentration of women in certain sectors of employment also brings into question the occupational categories that are used to ascertain class; the Goldthorpe Schema has been criticised due to its focus on male dominated occupations, and relative insensitivity to female dominated occupations (Oesch, 2003). Indeed, Evans (1996) argued that the Goldthorpe Schema is less able to account for variation in women's occupations, compared to men's. Brauns et al. (1997) found that, in Germany, Britain, and France, women were concentrated in only two classes, which Crompton (2008) viewed as demonstrating the inadequacy of the Goldthorpe Schema (and subsequently the NS-SEC) when applied to women. Thus, the very structure of the NS-SEC is difficult to apply to women, indicating that it may not be appropriate in this research.

In response to the application of NS-SEC to a HRP, Dale (1985) suggests occupational status should be considered at an individual level. However, an issue with this is the treatment of people who have been placed in the 'never worked and long-term unemployed' category, since the HRP is not likely to fall into this category. Two issues arise here: 'never worked and long-term unemployed' is not really a 'proper' class category within the NS-SEC, and more generally, occupational status cannot be used as a proxy for class for people who do not have an occupation. Indeed, ONS (2010) suggests excluding this category and

classifying long-term unemployed people according to their last jobs; however the use of secondary data analysis means relinquishing this kind of control over the data, and in any case ONS (2010) agrees that both these groups are hard to define. Another concern with this category is that it conflates never having worked with long-term unemployment, when there is arguably a difference. Furthermore it overlooks reasons for long-term unemployment, a group that contains a large proportion of those with long-term life-limiting illnesses.

An alternative to using the NS-SEC is the Social Grade variable, which is used in marketing and market research and ‘...differentiates groups of people with regards to some attitudes and behaviours, as well as discriminating well on the types of goods and services consumed’ (Lambert and Moy, 2013; 2). Ordinarily, Social Grade is calculated based on a complex set of questions. However,

*These questions would be too long to include in the Census questionnaire, and instead a model can be used to assign respondents to a Social Grade category, based on a restricted set of questions common to both the data on which the model is built and the Census (Lambert and Moy, 2013; 2).*

Therefore Social Grade is based on: employment status, qualifications, tenure and full or part-time working. As with the NS-SEC, Social Grade is assigned to the HRP. Just as Lambert and Moy (2013) suggest Social Grade can only be based on a limited number of questions, ONS (2013b) argues that is not possible to allocate Social Grade precisely using Census data, and advocates the use of the NS-SEC instead. However, by focussing on employment, the NS-SEC does not account for all the things that class might consist of, such as social and cultural processes (e.g. Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu, 1986; Savage et al., 2013).

Therefore, there is no ideal way of identifying class using the Census, particularly where the focus of the research is on women, who, as argued by Dale (1985), and Oesch (2003) are not well represented using the NS-SEC. Because of these issues, the decision was made not to use class as a main analytical variable in this research, despite arguments in favour of incorporating class into intersectional research (e.g. Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1983).

### **2.3.1.3 Issues with using Household Reference Person as a unit of analysis**

Some of the key variables that were used in this analysis could be analysed using either the HRP, or the respondent as a unit of analysis. For the 2011 Census, the status of HRP applies to lone occupants, but if the household is occupied by a family, the HRP is the same as the Family Reference Person (hereafter FRP). Families with no generational divide do not have a FRP; each member is treated as a lone occupant. In households occupied by

more than one family, the HRP is selected from among the different FRPs using the criteria that are used to select a FRP. Selection of HRPs and FRPs is based on economic activity, so that those who are employed full-time are prioritised over those who are in part-time employment, followed by those who are economically active but unemployed, and then those who are economically inactive (ONS, 2014).

The choice between HRP and respondent as a unit of analysis presents a challenge given that HRP status is assigned on the basis of economic activity, which means that those who are employed full-time are prioritised over those who work part-time, who, in turn, are prioritised over those who are unemployed or economically inactive. On the whole, men earn more than women (ONS, 2013), both in terms of salary and their lesser likelihood of participating in part-time work (e.g. Grant et al., 2005). As a result, the HRP is most likely to be a male household member. This is perhaps an even more pertinent issue given the lower levels of economic activity amongst Pakistani women; using HRP as a unit of analysis would obscure their experiences. As such, where relevant this research used the respondent rather than the HRP as the unit of analysis.

This section and sub-sections have justified the use of the 2011 Census and explained how the data was used in this research, in order to conduct exploratory analysis, largely using cross-tabulations, to explore variables identified in the relevant literature, and also in the qualitative data that was generated. It has also explained and justified how the dataset was used, and certain decisions that were made when working with this dataset. Section 2.3.2 begins with a general discussion of qualitative research methods, before outlining the specific methods that were used for this research.

### **2.3.2 Qualitative Research Methods**

Section 2.3, in discussing the use of mixed methods in this research, referred to the tension between quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Whilst arguing that it ‘...cannot be neatly pigeonholed and reduced to a simple and prescriptive set of principles...’, Mason (1997; 4) offers a working definition of qualitative research. Firstly, she states that qualitative methods should usually be ‘...grounded in a philosophical position which is broadly ‘interpretivist’’. This contrasts with the philosophical position associated with quantitative research, which tends to be associated with positivism (e.g. Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Secondly, Mason (1997; 4) suggests that qualitative research should be ‘based on methods of data generation which are flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data are produced (rather than rigidly standardized or structured...)’. Therefore it follows that qualitative research is associated with different methods of data collection than quantitative research. In the context of this research, the Census data used, as outlined in Section 2.3.1,

represents the rigidly standardised or structured data that might ordinarily be rejected by qualitative researchers. Thirdly, and finally, Mason (1997; 4) suggests that qualitative research should be:

*...based on methods of analysis and explanation building which involve understandings of complexity, detail, and context...There is more emphasis on 'holistic' forms of analysis and explanation in this sense, than on charting surface patterns, trends and correlations.*

Therefore, as well as being associated with different methods of data collection, qualitative research is associated with different ways of understanding and interpreting the data.

Similarly to Mason's (1997) third tenet of qualitative research, Guba and Lincoln (1994), as well as Oakley (2004) argue that qualitative methods, unlike quantitative methods, are valuable to the extent that they provide context. The ability of qualitative research to add complexity and context meant that, in this research, it was a crucial way of building on the findings gained through analysis of the Census. Additionally, qualitative methods are often favoured by feminist researchers who deem them appropriate for researching oppressed groups (Metso and Le Feuvre, 2006), by ensuring that the relationship between the researcher and the researched is not exploitative, and by rejecting oppressive power relations that are viewed as intrinsic to quantitative research (Oakley, 1998).

In Section 2.3 it was argued that the aims of quantitative research are not necessarily in tension with those of qualitative research (e.g. Westmarland, 2001), and that there is a strong case for combining the two methods. Nonetheless, the role of qualitative methods in the provision of context was considered invaluable when exploring the roles of choice and constraint in Pakistani women's labour market participation. Having briefly addressed the tenets of qualitative research methods as put forth by Mason (1997), and having justified the use of qualitative methods for this research, the remainder of this section will discuss explicitly the methods that were used in this research and why.

### **2.3.2.1 Focus groups and semi-structured interviews**

The two methods of primary data collection used in this research were semi-structured interviews and focus groups. This section begins by outlining the rationale for using focus groups, before highlighting some of the issues that arose due to this method of data collection, which ultimately necessitated using semi-structured interviews in addition (this is discussed in greater detail in Sections 2.3.2.2 and 2.3.2.3). 'Focus groups are a form of group interview that capitalises on communication between research participants in order to generate data' (Kitzinger, 1995; 299). They are a quick and easy way to collect data, they benefit methodologically from group interaction, and '...group processes can help people to

explore and clarify their views in ways that would be less easily accessible in a one-to-one interview' (Kitzinger, 1995; 299).

There are several aspects of focus groups that make them complementary to quantitative methods, and therefore appropriate for use in mixed methods research. Focus groups are a useful way of interpreting survey results, or for providing meanings to reports of attitudes or behaviour (Bloor et al., 2001), which indicates that they are an appropriate means of expanding upon findings from the Census, and adding context to the findings that is lacking from the quantitative data analysis (e.g. Mason, 1997). In this way, the use of focus groups enabled me to capitalise on the benefits of both data collection strategies.

Another strength of using focus groups lies in the interactions between participants, and the types of data this elicits. By creating a supportive environment, and by empowering participants to speak about their experiences (Kitzinger, 1995), focus groups provide privileged access to in-group conversations (Bloor et al., 2001), and are a good way of addressing sensitive topics, since

*... the less inhibited members of the group break the ice for shyer participants. Participants can also provide mutual support in expressing feelings that are common to their group but which they consider to deviate from mainstream culture (or the assumed culture of the researcher).*

(Kitzinger, 1995; 300)

Focus groups are also identified as being a valuable technique by feminist methodologists. For example, Wilkinson (1998; 23) suggests that they '...shift the balance of power away from the researcher towards the participants.' Furthermore, in keeping with the call from McBride et al. (2014) for 'intersectional sensitivity', in-depth interviewing techniques such as focus groups can also be a way of challenging 'the assumption of typicality/normality of one group's experience' (Cuádras and Uttal, 1999; 163). Given that Cuádras and Uttal (1999; 161) describe in-depth interviewing as an approach that entails '...the collection of extensive and rich data from a few interviewees, rather than collecting responses to a set of close-ended questions from a large sample', focus groups can be viewed as a form of in-depth interviewing under this definition. In this respect, focus groups provide an important challenge to quantitative methodologies, which run the risk of homogenising the experiences of different groups. This reflects the suggestion that focus groups are a way of learning about feelings that '...deviate from mainstream culture' (Bloor et al., 2001). In short, focus groups can be a means of demonstrating the heterogeneity of group experiences. Kitzinger (1995) also considers the heterogeneity of focus group members to be a strength, viewing disagreements as both likely and of importance in the data collection process.

A further benefit of using focus groups lies in the shift of power away from the researcher and towards the participants (e.g. Kitzinger, 1994), which I hoped would enable participants to discuss experiences that diverged from my own. Related to this is the way that 'group work ensures that priority is given to respondents' hierarchy of importance, *their* language and concepts, *their* frameworks for understanding the world' (Kitzinger, 1994; 108, original emphasis). As such, focus groups can be viewed as having the ability to challenge any preconceptions that might be held by a researcher, despite the fact that questions and prompts used in such research are likely to be based on prior literature and ideas about what the focus groups might view as important.

As well as their strength in eliciting a certain type of data, and placing participants at the forefront of the research, focus groups were chosen for practical reasons too. Specifically, they enable the researcher to obtain a large amount of data, within a short time-scale (Gibbs, 1997). This was beneficial firstly because I was working with two sets of data, and secondly due to limited time and financial resources; both my own and those of the organisations I was working with to recruit participants.

There were also some weaknesses associated with the use of focus groups, some of which were anticipated and some of which were not. One criticism of focus groups is that they risk merely capturing processes of existing groups (Bloor et al., 2001; Kitzinger, 1994). This issue was pertinent given that the sampling strategy (outlined in Section 2.3.2.2) meant that the participants were likely to already know each other. Furthermore, some issues emerged in relation to the sampling strategy used, and this meant that ultimately not all of the data was collected from focus groups. In particular, the use of gatekeepers, as well as the places I recruited from (community centres and charities) affected the types of participants I spoke to initially, so that, at first, my qualitative data extensively reflected the experiences of women who were not currently economically active. Furthermore, it was quite difficult to garner interest from potential organisations or indeed from potential participants. These issues related to my sampling strategy and ultimately led me to adjust my data collection techniques slightly. Therefore, the next section discusses sampling, and this precedes the section outlining the use of semi-structured interviews.

### **2.3.2.2 Sampling**

The rationale behind focusing on Pakistani women in Leeds and Kirklees was outlined in Chapter 1; I wanted to focus specifically on a group with lower levels of engagement with the labour market compared to the majority (white British) population. This meant either researching Bangladeshi or Pakistani women; however, because the research was to take place in Leeds and Kirklees for practical reasons, and because both areas have very small

Bangladeshi communities, I decided to focus on Pakistani women. This approach might best be described as 'extreme case sampling', which involves identifying cases of interest, under the premise that they will enable researchers to learn more about a given phenomenon (Patton, 1990; Emmel, 2013). In this sense, the under-representation of Pakistani women in the labour market means that they serve as an 'extreme case' amongst women. Emmel (2013; 37) states that those who use extreme case sampling begin with an understanding of the phenomenon they are investigating, and that 'the logic underlying the selection of cases is that lessons may be learned about unusual conditions or extreme outcomes that are relevant to the research.' I began this research with the knowledge that Pakistani women experience the labour market in ways that differ considerably from other groups of women, and, as such, by selecting this group I hoped to learn more about the conditions under which Pakistani women make decisions about their participation in the labour market.

Extreme case sampling is one strategy of purposive sampling, which '...is instrumental in the research to search out information rich cases to be studied in-depth' (Emmel, 2013; 33). Because this research focused on the labour market participation of Pakistani women in Leeds and Kirklees, in order to address the research questions the participants had to be Pakistani women of working age (16-64) who lived in either area. As well as ensuring the participants selected were relevant to the questions being asked, this sampling approach was the most appropriate for practical reasons too. Purposeful sampling has been identified as an appropriate way of obtaining data relevant to specific research questions where there are significant time or financial constraints. 'It is not driven forward by theoretical categories but practical and pragmatic considerations' (Emmel, 2013; 33).

In their research on Pakistani-Kashmiri women, McLean and Campbell (2003) found the use of a third person contact, or gatekeeper, to be crucial in accessing potential participants. Similarly, in this research participants were recruited via gatekeepers, who could liaise with potential participants on my behalf. Organisations in Leeds and Kirklees that worked closely with Pakistani women were contacted via a standard email where I introduced myself, explained the purpose and aims of my research, and asked for assistance with identifying participants who might be willing to discuss their experiences. These organisations ranged from charities and community centres to local mosques and schools in areas with large Pakistani communities identified through preliminary analysis of the Census aggregate data (see Section 1.4.2). Drawing on the aggregate data in this way is consistent with McLean and Campbell's (2003; 44) suggestion, in relation to their own research, that 'the contribution of local knowledge to framing the research questions and identifying appropriate ethnic groups was vital to the design and implementation of the project.'

This approach to recruiting participants yielded mixed results; positive responses were received from two community centres and two ESOL providers in Leeds, and one community centre in Kirklees - specific locations will not be discussed here in order to protect the anonymity of the participants. However, it should be noted here that the respondents only represented a small number of the organisations I contacted. This may have reflected my ability to adequately 'sell' the project to potential gatekeepers. However, one community centre contacted informed me that they had participated in research projects before, so there is the potential that other organisations that were contacted experienced what Sanghera and Thapar-Bjorkert (2008) term 'research weariness'. Further, Sanghera and Thapar-Bjorkert (2008) link the wariness to participate to the socio-political context, which is currently characterised by heightened Islamophobia (e.g. Hussain and Bagguley, 2012).

Aside from not yielding as many responses as I had hoped, there were also issues with the use of gatekeepers to assist in the recruitment of participants. Sanghera and Thapar-Bjorkert (2008) suggest that when recruiting marginalised groups via gatekeepers, the way that gatekeepers identify and select participants is likely to have an effect on the data collected, based on their ideas about the research. This was largely the case in this research; after running the focus groups, the participant demographics (outlined in Appendix A) were reviewed and it was apparent that the majority were either unemployed or economically inactive, and many did not have English as their first language. Although data from these participants was invaluable, I felt that the data were skewed in favour of a particular type of participant; in particular because the focus groups took place in community centres during the day, and because of the types of people more likely to visit community centres, my research lacked data from people in employment. As such, the sampling strategy was adjusted in order to include the perspectives of women in paid employment. This is discussed in Section 2.3.2.3, which also discusses the use of semi-structured interviews.

### **2.3.2.3 Semi-structured interviews**

For the next wave of recruitment I wanted to focus on workplaces in Leeds and Kirklees, in order to recruit women who were in employment. Therefore I contacted Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups at three large employers in Leeds and Kirklees; one in the education sector and two in the public sector. As with my first wave of recruitment, I sent a standard email introducing myself, outlining my research, and requesting assistance with recruiting participants. Again, this elicited mixed results, and I recruited one participant in Leeds and two in Kirklees using this method. Finally, a further two participants in employment were recruited through personal contacts.



Because the participants did not know one-another and were recruited from a variety of locations, they participated in one-to-one semi-structured interviews rather than focus groups. This method benefited from a looser structure, as well as an informal, conversational style, and a focus on interaction with participants, with 'the assumption that data are generated via the interaction' (Mason, 1997; 38). As discussed previously, Cuadrez and Uttal (1999) suggest that in-depth interviewing should be used for research that focuses on intersectionality.

Indeed, the use of one-to-one semi-structured interviews mitigated against some of the issues with conducting focus groups, particularly relating to the danger of focus groups merely reflecting existing group processes (.e.g Bloor et al., 2001). Another related issue is that:

*Personal information may most likely be disclosed when assurances of privacy, confidentiality and a non-condemnatory attitude can be provided. The focus group format guarantees none of these (Wellings et al., 2000; 255).*

It is likely, therefore, that the focus group participants were guarded with the information they gave, and as such the semi-structured interview participants might have been more candid in terms of the types of information they gave me. The issue of disclosure in focus groups is also highlighted by Hollander (2004; 610), who also suggests social desirability might be more of an issue in focus groups, whereby 'social desirability pressures induce participants to offer information or play particular roles, either to fulfil the perceived expectations of the facilitator or other participants'. This may have been a particularly pertinent issue within the context of perceived differences between me as the researcher, and my participants, which is discussed in greater detail in Section 2.5.

Given the potential benefits of conducting semi-structured interviews, in both practical and theoretical terms, this method was deemed the best approach when working with the second wave of research participants. Nonetheless the use of focus groups in the first wave is likely to have made participation in the research more accessible for some participants, as discussed in Section 2.3.2.1. Data collection processes are discussed in Section 2.3.2.4.

#### **2.3.2.4 Sampling, qualitative data collection, and positionality**

Throughout the qualitative data collection process, my own positionality as a white, female, university researcher, as well as my use of gatekeepers to recruit participants, will have affected the research outcomes. Therefore this section considers more specifically how my research will have been shaped by my own positionality, and in particular focuses on my use of gatekeepers.

The use of gatekeepers is something that was considered at length by Sanghera and Thapar-Bjorkert (2008; 543) in their research on members of Pakistani communities in Bradford. They view the relationship between gatekeeper and researcher as one which ‘...may facilitate, constrain or transform the research process by opening and/or closing the gate’. Willingness to facilitate the research may have depended on gatekeepers’ perceptions of both me and the nature of the research I was conducting. Sanghera and Thapar-Bjorkert (2008; 549) also suggest that ‘gatekeepers sometimes attempt to control who does research on what topic, who you speak to, and the research findings’. The research that I was doing on labour market participation might not have been perceived as valuable by gatekeepers, and furthermore, ideas about the division of paid versus domestic labour might potentially be culturally sensitive; this may well have had an effect on both the types of participant I was able to recruit, and the data I was able to collect. Another effect of recruiting via gatekeepers, and their interpretations of my research, might have been that they selected participants they felt would best fit my research. In this way, recruiting via gatekeepers will undoubtedly have shaped my research findings, and may ultimately be why I had to adjust my strategy for a second wave of recruitment. Nonetheless, gatekeepers proved to be invaluable in enabling me to access a potentially difficult-to-recruit group of participants, though it should be noted here that my research lacked any engagement with participants who were not either involved in specific organisations or employed in one of the workplaces I contacted.

Another issue stems from heightened Islamophobia and the effect of this on recruiting predominantly Muslim participants. Bolognani (2007; 279) states that:

*In what is a critical moment for multicultural relations in Britain after September 11th and July 2005 bombings in London, however, social researchers are allegedly struggling in gaining access.*

Furthermore, Bolognani (2007; 287) states that

*I experienced how the religious identity and its perceptions by outsiders strongly influenced the contribution of the interviewees and access to the sample. I found that many interviewees were concerned about the effects of what they had to say, as they felt they were seen as representatives of Islam.*

As a white, British researcher, it is likely that some of the participants were wary of me, and understandably so. This may partially explain participants’ reluctance to be recorded, and the lack of response I received from the community organisations I contacted to aid participant recruitment. Ultimately, it is crucial, when reading and interpreting my research, to recognise the ways in which the outcomes will have been affected by my knowledge and

understanding of the communities I was researching, and how gatekeepers and participants responded to me as a white, female, university researcher.

## **2.4 Secondary data analysis**

The labour market activity of Pakistani and white British women was explored using the aggregate data from the 2011 Census, and my own analysis of the Individual Safeguarded Microdata. The analysis of the Individual Safeguarded Microdata entailed some preparation of the dataset prior to analysis. Firstly, any respondents who were under 16 or 65 and over were removed from the dataset, as well as all students. This was done to ensure that the data analysed reflected experiences of people who were likely to be participating in the labour market. Ethnicity was re-coded into fewer categories to simplify the analysis, as illustrated in Table 4. Finally, a second dataset was created that contained records for just white British and Pakistani men and women. This meant that clear comparisons could be drawn between Pakistani men and women and their counterparts in the majority white British population. As well as recoding ethnicity, some of the other key variables were re-coded for ease of analysis, which will be highlighted in the analysis chapters (Chapters 4, 5 and 7), where relevant.

Analysis of the Individual Safeguarded Microdata was largely undertaken using descriptive statistics and bivariate analysis, which was discussed in Section 2.3.1. Such statistics were obtained in SPSS, and any tables or graphs were made in Excel. The variables analysed were initially selected on the basis of common themes identified through reviewing relevant literature. Following the analysis of the qualitative data, further quantitative analysis was conducted where relevant, if new themes or ideas were discussed by the participants. For example, some participants for whom English was not their first language, perceived certain types of jobs as being more readily available to them than others, and consequently further analysis explored potential clustering in certain occupational sectors according to language proficiency. As such, both the literature and the qualitative data were used to provide a critique of the quantitative analysis, in line with Mason's (2006) 'integrative logic', discussed in Section 2.3.

## **2.5 Qualitative data analysis**

Some participants expressed concern about being audio-recorded, and therefore none of the interviews were audio-recorded or transcribed (this is discussed in greater detail in Section 2.5.1.1). Instead, hand-written notes were taken of the discussions, which were typed up directly after they had taken place. It was important to type up the notes as close to the

interviews as possible, to ensure that I was able to remember enough contextual detail. In addition to this, field notes were written, reflecting on the running of the focus groups and interviews. This was a useful practice because it enabled me to reflect on what did and did not work, and also enabled me to adjust any questions before the next interview was conducted. Care was taken to write down direct quotes where possible, although simultaneously facilitating the group and doing this was a challenge, and was another reason why the notes were written up as soon as possible, since I was partially reliant on my memory. For consistency, and because I thought it might encourage more people to participate, all interviews were recorded in the same manner.

The data were then analysed thematically. Boyatzis (1998; vii) describes a theme as ‘...a pattern found in the information that at the minimum describes and organises possible observations or at the maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon.’ Further, Boyatzis (1998, vi) describes thematic analysis as ‘...a process for encoding qualitative information’ requiring an ‘explicit code’ which may be a ‘list of themes’. Similarly, Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) describe thematic analysis as:

*...a search for themes that emerge as being important to the description of the phenomenon...It is a form of pattern recognition within the data, where emerging themes become the categories for analysis.*

The aim of collecting primary qualitative data for this research was to allow the research themes to emerge according to what was deemed important by the participants, which is in keeping with an inductive approach to analysis; Thomas (2006; 238) states that:

*The primary purpose of the inductive approach is to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies.*

With this in mind, I read through the interview notes and detected themes that commonly occurred, and constructed a table in which I recorded evidence of the themes arising. I repeated this process several times as my writing and analysis of quantitative data lead me to consider other explanations for my findings.

Having discussed the rationale behind each research method used, as well as identifying practical issues and how these were overcome, and having also outlined how the data was analysed, Section 2.5.1.1 outlines the more practical aspects of the qualitative data collection process. Following this, Section 2.6 outlines the ethical considerations inherent in this research and how they were addressed. In order to do this, it addresses each of the ESRC’s minimum ethical requirements (ESRC, 2015), and states how they were adhered to.

### 2.5.1.1 Qualitative data collection

In total, I recruited 28 participants for this project, details of which are in Appendix A. The interviews and focus groups were largely conducted on-site, and refreshments provided, with the exception of two of the semi-structured interviews that were held in locations convenient to the participants. Participants were not remunerated for their time, though I hoped that they would find it a rewarding and enjoyable experience, and I also offered to make my results available to them by means of a written report.

Various numbers of focus groups and interviews have been suggested as sufficient within a qualitative study. For example, Morgan (1997; 17) suggests that 3-5 is enough participants for a focus group, dependent on the '...variability of participants between and within groups.' Despite some issues with recruitment, I did achieve this, by making my cut-off point for data-collection slightly later than I had initially anticipated. In terms of focus group size, Krueger (2009) suggests they should be small enough to enable all participants to share their insights, and large enough to allow for diversity between participants, and proposes recruiting 8-10 participants to each group, with common characteristics. None of my focus groups exceeded 8 participants, and I made it clear to the gatekeepers that helped me with the set-up and running of the focus groups that I did not want them to exceed 10 participants. Keeping the sizes small was particularly important given that translators were used in each of the focus groups; having large numbers of participants would have made my task as facilitator and note-taker extremely difficult where questions and responses were also being translated from English to Urdu and back again.

Literature on labour market participation, as well as preliminary analysis of the 2011 Census, was used to create loose interview schedules (included in Appendix B), with key questions and prompts. The questions covered particular themes: domestic life; education, training, and qualifications; perceptions of the local labour market; and specific barriers to the labour market. A different interview schedule was used for the two ESOL co-ordinators who were interviewed, which focused on the services they provided, their knowledge of Pakistani women's labour market participation, the barriers they perceived Pakistani women as facing, and ways they felt Pakistani women could be assisted to participate in the labour market. Because of my desire to place participants at the forefront of the research, and because I was very aware of time constraints, particularly as many of my participants had young children, not all of the questions in the schedule were asked in each interview or focus group. Furthermore, some of the questions proved quite difficult for my participants to answer. In particular, questions about participating in employment were not relevant to one of the Leeds-based focus groups, who had very little engagement with the labour market. Therefore I often had to adapt my questions slightly once I learned more about each group,

which in any case is a strength of using qualitative interviews as a data collection technique. This could perhaps have been avoided had I collected demographic information from all of my participants prior to data collection, however because we did not always know who would attend the focus group, this was logistically impossible.

Prior to participating in focus groups or interviews, participants were given an information sheet and a consent form to sign, both of which are included as Appendices C and D respectively. Additionally they were provided with a short questionnaire, the aim of which was to collect demographic information, included in Appendix E. All the forms were filled out directly before the focus group or interview, with the help of a translator where necessary. For one of the focus groups and one of the interviews I was unable, due to time constraints, to obtain demographic data from the participants, and had to obtain verbal, rather than written, consent. As such, I made clear the aims of my research, and that the answers the participants gave were being written down and would be used in this research. All participants agreed that they were happy for me to use the data I obtained from them in this way. Further, Guillemin and Gillam (2004) argue that signed consent forms do not necessarily constitute informed consent, providing participants are aware of what the research is about and what participation in the research constitutes. As such, I was satisfied that, although these participants did not sign consent forms, they had still given informed consent.

Another issue that arose related to recording the focus groups and interviews. I had initially planned to audio-record and transcribe each session. However, when I was invited to a community centre in Kirklees to recruit participants, it became evident that some were not comfortable with being recorded in this way. This included one participant who seemed extremely keen to be involved in the research, but said that her husband might not be comfortable with her being recorded. As such, I decided to take notes instead of audio-recording; given that recruiting participants was quite difficult I did not want to risk losing any because they were not comfortable with being audio-recorded. For most of the interviews and focus groups I took notes alone; however, for one of the larger focus groups I was accompanied by a colleague who took additional notes. This issue has been noted in other research too: Exley et al. (1996) conducted focus groups as a white research team with Asian participants, who were suspicious of being audio-recorded, and therefore the authors opted to take hand written notes.

## 2.6 Ethical considerations

This research received ethical approval from the University of Leeds ethical committee, and the ethical issues associated with this research will be discussed here in relation to the ESRC ethical guidelines (2015), since they were the funding body for this research, and they stipulate that their framework should be adhered to by ESRC funded researchers. The ESRC specify 6 core principles for social research, and each will be discussed in turn, in relation to the implications these principles had for my own research.

The first principle is that 'research should aim to maximise benefits for individuals and society and minimise risk and harm'. Steps to maximise benefits and limit harm have already been taken by ONS when collecting and disseminating data from the Census; Section 2.3.1.1 detailed the ways in which anonymity is protected by the amount of data available at different geographical levels, which ensures that individuals cannot be identified. Further, this thesis has already outlined, in Chapter 1, the potential benefits of this research in furthering understanding of labour market participation and how this might be constrained. Also, although I did not anticipate labour market participation to be a particularly sensitive topic, it could not be discounted that it might be for the participants, especially given that some of my questions touched on the division of household labour and therefore their relationships with significant others. In order to minimise risk and harm to the participants, steps were first taken to ensure that informed consent was gained from the participants, and that they were fully aware of what participation in the research would entail.

The complexity of obtaining informed consent is an issue identified by Mason (1997). This was further complicated by the language barrier between me and some of my participants, and the fact that the focus groups were run with the aid of facilitators who, in some instances, translated both questions and answers. An information sheet was prepared detailing the aims of the research and inviting participants to contact me with any questions they had (Appendix C). Furthermore, care was taken to write the information sheets in a way that was easy to follow for the participants, free of academic language, and also straightforward for facilitators to translate if necessary. It should not be discounted that in some instances it was the gatekeepers who gave initial consent on behalf of their participants, and indeed selected participants to take part. Therefore, it was important to be clear about the research to everyone involved in it, from the initial recruitment process onwards. In addition, it was made clear to the participants that they were free to leave at any point and did not have to answer any questions that they were uncomfortable answering. A strength of both focus groups and semi-structured interviews is that the loose structure makes it easier to tailor the sessions to what the participants wish to speak about. This

helped to mitigate against participants discussing subjects that they were not comfortable with, whilst enabling them to discuss topics that they felt were important. As well as minimising harm to participants, obtaining informed consent also adheres to the third point in the ESRC's ethical framework, whereby participation in research should be voluntary and appropriately informed.

In addition to obtaining informed consent from the participants, steps were taken to ensure that they would not be identifiable. Participants were given pseudonyms, and in addition, other identifiable information was excluded from the data analysis. Furthermore, minimal information was provided regarding the organisations I approached to recruit participants, as well as their precise locations. Maintaining confidentiality is slightly more difficult when conducting focus groups, since I was also reliant on the participants not to disclose information about each other. To mitigate against this I obtained agreement from the participants that they would not discuss anything that had arisen in the focus group outside the research setting. It should be noted though that this may have affected the amount of information focus group participants were willing to give, nonetheless, as outlined in Section 2.3.2.1, the benefits of conducting focus groups outweighed potential issues.

The ESRC also stipulate that 'the rights and dignity of individuals and groups should be respected'. In doing this, I ensured that participants were clear that they could leave at any point, withdraw from the research after participation, and understood that they did not have to respond to questions that they were uncomfortable with. This was detailed on the consent form that was given to participants prior to participating in this research, which was, where relevant, verbally translated into Urdu. As mentioned in Section 2.3.2.4, I also took further steps to ensure my participants' rights were respected by not audio-recording the interviews. Finally, participants were all given my contact details should any concerns arise, and informed that they could request a copy of my notes to review.

The fourth ESRC ethical principle is that 'research should be conducted with integrity and transparency.' They refer to a checklist from the UK Research Integrity Office (hereafter, UKRIO, no date). This checklist refers to the overall quality of the research that is conducted. They stipulate that research should contribute to existing knowledge, with questions suitable for the purpose, and that researchers should have the appropriate skills and resources to conduct the research. The contribution of this research to existing knowledge has been outlined in Chapter 1, whilst the research questions have been refined over the course of this project, and are appropriate to the research. The use of secondary data analysis, and the decision to conduct the qualitative research in Leeds and Kirklees, means that this research was conducted within my range of skills and resources. UKRIO also outline the need for ethical review, and, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, this research



received ethical approval from the University of Leeds, as well as being subject to a risk assessment, prior to its commencement. Where practical, this research followed the proposed design; any changes to the design were discussed with my supervisory team and were not deemed to place the participants at risk – indeed one of the changes to the research design was to take notes rather than audio-record interviews, which further protected the participants' anonymity.

Another aspect of research integrity, as stipulated by UKRIO, relates to the storage of data. As such, the Census data needed to be treated in accordance with the terms of the data supplier. The analysis was also conducted in accordance with the 8 principles of the 1998 Data Protection Act. Therefore, steps were taken to ensure that the analysis was: fairly and lawfully processed; processed for limited purposes; adequate, relevant and not excessive; accurate and up-to-date; not kept for longer than necessary; processed in line with the researcher's rights; secure; and not transferred to other countries without adequate protection (SRA, 2005). This was largely achieved by adhering to the data storage guidelines provided by the University of Leeds, and ensuring that my data was only accessible to me, and that I was clear about data storage timeframes, as well as the aims of my research, which ensured that my data collection and analysis fulfilled these aims. Since the Safeguarded File is only accessible for research purposes, the data were stored securely and only accessible to me. Notes from interviews were typed up and stored in a folder only accessible to me, whilst hard copies of forms and notes were stored in a file in a locked cabinet, in an office only accessible to other research post-graduate students.

After completion of the research, UKRIO state that research and findings should be reported 'accurately, honestly, within a reasonable time-frame.' To ensure accuracy, participants were given the opportunity to read through interview notes, though only one requested them. However, care was taken to ensure that participants' accounts were not misrepresented in this research. Furthermore, I agreed to send a research report to the organisations I worked with, in order to ensure honesty and transparency. I was also clear with all involved in this research project about my expected time-frame for completion. Contributions to the research project will be acknowledged where appropriate, however specific community centres will not be named since this poses a threat to participants' anonymity. The research must also be retained in a 'secure and accessible form and for the required duration.' PhD theses are published online and a copy will also be held in the University library, furthermore participants will have access to a report based on my research.

The fifth ethical principle of the ESRC is that 'Lines of responsibility and accountability should be clearly defined.' They state that 'researchers have a responsibility to respect the rights and dignity of research participants and users who, in turn, should treat researchers

and the research process with appropriate respect, and not attempt to influence either in a way that would distort the research.’ As the sole researcher on this project, I was aware that I was responsible for all decisions pertaining to ethics. In turn, before conducting any interviews I was clear with participants about the ethical implications of my research. Furthermore, all those involved with my research were given my contact details and encouraged to contact me should they have any concerns about the ethical implications of my research.

The sixth and final ethical principle of the ESRC relates to maintaining the independence of the research and making explicit any conflicts of interest, where relevant. This meant, for this research, that care was taken when constructing topic guides, to maintain an objective stance when interacting with participants. Furthermore, I was clear about the aims of my research and the fact that it would contribute to me receiving a PhD.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has described, in depth, the methods that were used in this research. It has explained the contribution of intersectionality theory to this research, and justified the use of a mixed-method approach to data generation and analysis. It has discussed issues inherent in using Census data, particularly relating to the limitations that come from working with Census variables. It has outlined the rationale behind using focus groups and semi-structured interviews to generate qualitative data, as well as discussing issues to do with recruitment processes and researcher positionality, and it has explained how the quantitative and qualitative data were analysed. Finally, making reference to the ESRC minimum ethical requirements, it has outlined how different ethical issues were approached in this research, particularly when working with participants rather than secondary quantitative data. Chapter 3 considers literature on life-stage, family formation, domestic labour, and labour market participation.

### 3 Life-stage, family formation, and domestic labour

#### 3.1 Introduction

Having highlighted, in Chapter 1, the role of life-stage factors in shaping labour market participation (e.g. Salway, 2007), this chapter examines existing literature that explores these relationships. Further, it considers how these factors might relate to structural constraints, and how they might impact upon choice. Salway (2007) states that life-stage factors relate to ‘marriage and childbearing’, while Giele and Elder (1998) outlined the key elements of the ‘life-course framework’ as

*...location in time and place, which includes the cultural background experienced by individuals; linked lives, referring to family norms and cultural expectations, for example with respect to women’s roles concerning employment and childcare; and individual agency, the decisions that an individual makes and the priority they give to different aspects of their lives (Dale et al., 2005; 2).*

Chapter 1 outlined the process of Pakistani migration to the UK, but ‘location in time and place’ should consider both the context in which individuals are living and making decisions, and their own, often more complex, cultural backgrounds. This links to Brah’s (1993; 448) argument that Pakistani women in Britain must negotiate between both the Pakistani (and Muslim) context, and the British context:

*...Asian patriarchal discourses and practices in Britain do not exist outside discursive and material practices that are endogenous to British society...British Asian cultures are not simply a carry-over from the subcontinent, but rather, they are organically rooted in regional and local specificities within Britain.*

Therefore, this chapter begins by considering these ‘discursive and material practices’, by considering the ways in which labour is divided along gender lines in Britain, and how this links to, and is affected by, family formation. Having done this, Pakistani, British-Pakistani, and Muslim gender norms are discussed. More specifically, Section 3.3 outlines, through discussion of *izzat* and *pardah*, practices that seek to segregate women from men, the position of women in the family, and the implications of such practices and norms for the division of labour, and women’s participation in domestic and paid labour. Following this, Section 3.4 explores marriage and how this might affect labour market participation, focussing both on common marital processes amongst the Pakistani community, and the prevalence of arranged marriage. Finally, Section 3.5 examines the ways in which women

(and in particular mothers) might seek to consolidate work and care, through using formal and informal childcare, as well as flexible and part-time working arrangements. Whilst parallels are drawn between Pakistani women and white British women, ultimately this chapter demonstrates some of the many complexities Pakistani women face when engaging with the British labour market.

### **3.2 The British context: Male breadwinner or adult worker model?**

As highlighted in Chapter 1, labour market participation in Britain has consistently been gendered, in terms of pay, hours, and occupation types (e.g. ONS, 2015), demonstrating that paid labour and domestic labour remain divided along gender lines. This section will begin by outlining the history of women's labour market participation in Britain, arguing that, although it has gradually increased, it remains qualitatively different to men's labour market participation. Further, this section describes how women's labour market histories are often characterised by periods out of work for childbirth, and returning to work after maternity leave, or sometimes later (e.g. Joshi et al., 1996).

Since the mid-19th Century, women's labour market participation has steadily risen, aside from a slight levelling off during the recession in the 1980s (Bakker, 1988). The labour shortage created by the World War II produced an immediate demand for women's labour, and '...could potentially have altered long-term patterns of women's employment.' (Briar, 1997; 70). More recently, ONS (2013b) has reported an increase in women's labour market participation of 9.3 percentage points between 1994 and 2015, as well as a decrease in women's economic activity due to looking after the family or the home, which could be taken to signify a shift in assumptions regarding the types of labour that should be performed by women. Nonetheless, Briar (1997; 36) suggested that the post-war increase in women's labour market participation '...took place within prescribed limits', whereby women continued to occupy a '...subordinate and supportive role.' As such, the increase in women's participation in paid labour arguably shaped the labour market in other ways beyond merely shifting the gender balance; perhaps fearing that no-one would be able to look after the children or do the housework, employers and policy makers sought out ways to ensure that women were able to combine both paid and unpaid labour. Thus, in spite of increased labour market participation, women were still perceived as secondary, rather than primary, earners, whilst men were perceived as the main 'breadwinners.' In this vein, Dale and Holdsworth (1998) relate the rise in women's employment to an increase in part-time work as a way of ensuring work '...would fit in with what was seen as women's primary responsibility – home and children' (Dale and Holdsworth, 1998; 79). As well as taking steps to ensure that women

did less paid work, assumptions were also made about the *types* of work women should and should not be doing. For example, Fevre (1984) links the influx of migrant workers in the textile industry to the fact that women were not permitted to do shift-work, or work long hours.

Even now, women's labour market participation is qualitatively different to men's. ONS (2013b) reports that, in spite of rising employment for women and falling employment for men, men have higher employment rates than women over the age of 22. Furthermore, ONS (2013b) states that men are more likely to work in occupations associated with higher pay than women, while women dominate caring and leisure occupations. Finally, women are consistently more likely than men to work part-time; indeed the concentration of women in part-time work has been explored extensively (e.g. Dale and Holdsworth, 1998; Warren, 2004; Grant et al., 2005; Tomlinson, 2006).

Women's patterns of labour market participation must also be understood in terms of how their employment trajectories are likely to differ from men's if they have children, since having dependent children is likely to influence participation in part-time, as opposed to full-time work:

*Alongside a few (no more than one in ten) balancing their babies and their briefcases, there are many more for whom childbearing modifies employment more radically* (Joshi et al., 1996; 342).

The effect of motherhood on labour market participation is well documented in more recent research, too. For example, ONS (2014) report that mothers of dependent children are less likely to participate in the labour market than women without dependent children. Therefore, despite notable increases, motherhood and the way women seek to combine this with paid work, or decide not to, continues to shape women's labour market participation.

The male breadwinner model, which serves as a descriptor of the way families divide labour, is defined by Lewis (2001: 153) as follows:

*The male breadwinner model was based on a set of assumptions about male and female contributions at the household level: men having the primary responsibility to earn and women to care for the young and the old. Female dependence was inscribed in the model. The male breadwinner model built into the post-war settlement assumed regular and full male employment and stable families in which women would be provided for largely via their husbands' earnings and social contributions.*

Dale and Holdsworth (1998) link the male breadwinner model to the work of John Bowlby, who emphasised the importance of the mother-child bond in a child's development. For example, in his book 'Maternal Care and Mental Health', Bowlby (1952; 59) states that '...maternal care in infancy and childhood is essential for mental health.' This emphasis on *maternal*, as opposed to *paternal*, or even just *parental*, care was in tension with the labour market opportunities brought about by the post-war labour shortage. Women were simultaneously expected to provide paid labour in response to the shortage, and provide unpaid labour to ensure the wellbeing of their children (Dale and Holdsworth, 1998); women's participation in paid work was increasing, but within these constraints.

Nonetheless, the shifting social climate and the steady increase of women's employment has led to debate about the possibility of a shift from the male breadwinner model to an adult worker model (e.g. Lewis, 2001), whereby it is assumed that all adults in a household will participate in the labour market. Indeed, this assumption is highlighted in Chapter 1, which outlined the negative connotations of not being in paid employment, as well as an increasing emphasis on all adults in a household participating in the labour market. Lewis (2001; 153) states that:

*...in the United Kingdom and in The Netherlands there is evidence of a pendulum shift toward what might be termed an "adult-worker model family", whereby it is assumed that all adults are in the labor market.*

Such a shift is reflected in policy changes that aim to facilitate women to participate in the labour market. For example, Stadelmann-Steffen (2008) highlights the role of childcare arrangements in increasing women's labour market participation (although the efficacy of this is discussed in greater detail in Sections 3.5.1 and 5.5). Daly (2011; 4-5) argues that:

*The adult worker model thesis holds that social policy is increasingly treating women and men as individual (actual or potential) workers. Individual agency – "choice" in everyday terms – is both valued and assumed and labor market participation is promoted as an expression of this "choice".*

Daly's (2011) connection between the adult worker model and 'choice' is worth highlighting because this model operates under the assumption that all adults in a household are able to *choose* whether to participate in the labour market or not; throughout this chapter, it is suggested that there are numerous ways in which women's choices are constrained. Nonetheless, some policy changes appear to rest on the assumptions of an adult worker model.

The introduction, in 2015, of shared parental leave, which enables both parents to share their leave following the birth or adoption of a child (Gov.UK, 2017a), could signify a change in assumptions about the importance of maternal care. However, in April 2016, the Guardian reported that, a year after its introduction, a ‘tiny proportion of men are opting for shared parental leave’ (Osborne, 2016). For fathers, the opportunity to take shared parental leave is at the discretion of their employer; after 6 weeks statutory leave is capped at 90% of the parents’ average earnings before tax, or £139.78, whichever is lower (Gov.UK, 2017a). This should be considered within the context of men’s average weekly earnings in Britain being £580.6, compared to £480.8 for women (Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2016). Therefore, financial decisions are likely to depend on the generosity of employers, who may *choose* to pay more, and also the earnings of each parent. Given that women are likely to earn less than men, the likelihood is that they will be sacrificing less income by taking an extended period of maternity leave.

Parents’ attitudes, as well as others’ attitudes towards parenting, are also likely to have an impact on the uptake of shared parental leave (e.g. Duncan et al., 2003). Osborne (2016) reports that 55% of mothers state that they do not wish to share their maternity leave, while fathers choosing to take parental leave may feel stigmatised. This suggests a mismatch between policy changes and assumptions, and social reality, as argued by Lewis (2001; 153), who states that, in relation to the possibility of an adult worker family model replacing the male breadwinner model ‘...this shift in assumptions has outrun the social reality.’ Daly (2011; 5) suggests policy reforms, particularly relating to ‘...benefits, tax allowances, and access to services...’ serve to disincentivise single-earner families, and in doing so, promote a dual-earner family. In this way, ‘...family and other institutions are treated as a backdrop to individual functioning.’ Here, Daly (2011) is suggesting that policy reforms promote dual-earner families without considering the impact of ‘family and other institutions’ on a person’s ability to make unconstrained decisions. Nonetheless, the persistence of gender inequality in the labour market, as well as deeply entrenched moral obligations for women to ‘care’ (Duncan, et al., 2003) indicates that this cannot be the case; for women, labour market participation continues to be shaped by commitments to domestic labour.

Indeed, whilst some policy reforms appear to support an adult worker model, Daly (2011) argues that others contribute to the persistence of a male breadwinner model. For example, ‘...the support for and promotion of part-time work’, which is also ‘implicit, and sometimes explicit, in social policies’ is, Daly (2011; 12) argues, a way of supporting the family as an institution. Although the assumption that women, rather than men, will participate in part-time, rather than full-time work, is implicit, it should not be overlooked that ‘...mothers’

gendered moral rationalities still involve their primary responsibility for their children' (Duncan et al., 2003; 327). As such, policy reforms that place the family at the forefront implicitly prioritise men's earnings over women's earnings. The result is that a one-and-a-half earner model may be a more accurate descriptor of familial labour divisions than an adult worker model (Lewis, 2001; Daly, 2011), whereby men are the primary earners and women are expected to combine work with care.

This section has explored how, despite a steady rise in women's labour market participation, and despite policy changes that aim to promote an adult worker model, rather than a male breadwinner model, women's labour market participation is likely to remain constrained by family commitments and assumptions about male, rather than female earnings. It has highlighted a tension between policy changes and the increasing requirement for all adults to be in employment, and a persistent norm for women to care and perform domestic labour whilst men work, which is further complicated by women's moral obligations to care (Duncan et al., 2003). In this way, the British labour market is gendered, and, as argued by Brah (1993) it is within this context that Pakistani and British Pakistani women make decisions about if and how they will participate in it. Section 3.3 explores the Pakistani context, considering the ways in which Muslim<sup>3</sup> and Pakistani cultures have sought to segregate women from men, and the role of women in Pakistani families.

### 3.3 The Pakistani context: Izzat and Purdah

This section will review literature that demonstrates the extent to which life-stage factors are, for many Pakistani women, underpinned by *izzat* and *purdah*, whilst also drawing parallels between these seemingly more formalised processes and the gendered divisions of labour discussed in Section 3.2. *Izzat* refers to the process of honour, and '...is closely related to the nature and function of the kin unit...' (Papanek, 1971; 528). Further, 'Pakistani females are considered the 'repositories' of *izzat* of *khanedan* (family) and *biraderi* (community)' (Basit, 2012; 5). *Purdah* is a mechanism through which *izzat* can be maintained and,

*...meaning curtain, is the word most commonly used to describe the system of secluding women and enforcing high standards of female modesty in South Asia, particularly Pakistan and India* (Papanek, 1971; 517).

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<sup>3</sup> It should be noted here that, according to the 2011 Census, 91.5% of Pakistanis living in England or Wales are Muslims, and therefore this research will largely refer to Pakistani Muslims.



Furthermore, Ahmad (2001; 143) states that 'Muslim families are often observed as placing strict cultural or 'patriarchal constraints' on the movement of women ('purdah').

These mechanisms should not be seen as central to all Muslim women's experiences – indeed Ahmad (2001; 143) refers to '...the heterogeneity of Muslim expression.' Further, while notions of *izzat* and *purdah*, depending how strictly they are applied, are likely to exert a great influence on the behaviour of female family members, it should also be noted that men's behaviour plays a central role in maintaining them. Particularly post-marriage, Pakistani men are expected to contribute to their families financially, and in-so-doing, ensure that female family members do not *have* to work (e.g. Charsley, 2005). Indeed, Werbner (2007; 166) states that: 'Defending familial honour in feuding relations and protecting the chastity of its women endows a person, as he grows older, with *izzat*...' In this way, men and women might best be viewed as interdependent. Nonetheless,

*...women who are sheltered become important demonstrators of the status of their protectors, and their behaviour becomes important in terms of honor and family pride for an entire kin group* (Papanek (1973; 293).

The emphasis on female modesty is central to the practice of *purdah*, and this is achieved through two mechanisms, which Papanek (1971; 518) refers to as 'separate worlds' and 'provision of symbolic shelter'. 'Separate worlds' refers to the different spaces occupied by men and women under a *purdah* system. Papanek (1971; 518) suggests that this separation of worlds

*...relates most closely to the division of labor, in terms of actual work allocated to different categories of people, which underlies the distinctions made between the men's and women's separate worlds through the institution of purdah.*

'Symbolic shelter' reflects the asymmetrical separation of the sexes, and relates to impulse control and control of women's sexuality, both of which are linked to *izzat* (Papanek, 1973). Central to the idea of symbolic shelter is the '...strongly felt tension between the kin unit and the outside world', and the idea that 'women become vulnerable when they move outside the home, but men do not suffer a corresponding vulnerability when they move from the outside world into the home' (Papanek, 1973; 315).

This quote explicitly describes the ways in which the separation of sexes is asymmetrical, and relates to the 'separate worlds' occupied by men and women. While men are safe in women's 'worlds', the reverse is not true, and this limits women's mobility outside the home. Papanek (1971; 1973) suggests two different instruments that are used in the observance of *purdah*: physical segregation of women from men, and the covering of women's faces and bodies. These will now be discussed in greater detail with specific reference to the impact

they might have on labour market participation, given that *purdah* has been described as imposing 'tighter limits on women's spatial mobility' (Ballard, 1990; 240).

### 3.3.1 Physical segregation of women from men

Where *purdah* is strictly observed, men and women occupy separate spaces (Papanek, 1971). In Pakistan, the physical segregation of women from men is reflected in the layout of houses, whereby a *purdah* curtain means that women may speak to men to whom they are not related without actually seeing them or being seen by them. Furthermore, living rooms may have a separate entrance, so that male visitors to the household might never encounter any of its female members (Shaw, 2000). However, the practical implications of physically separating men from women vary, and may depend on wealth;

*Within any village, strict observance of purdah is generally associated with families wealthy enough to allow their women not to work. In poorer families, women have to work in the fields alongside men and usually their contribution to the household economy...is essential to the household's survival* (Shaw, 2000; 75).

By contrast, smaller houses in the UK compared to those in Pakistan make '...no allowances for purdah' (Shaw, 2000; 81), whilst the concentration of Pakistani men in low-paying and precarious work, as well as higher poverty amongst Pakistani families, is likely to affect familial decisions regarding the division of labour, which can in turn create a necessity for women to participate in a labour market where gender segregation might not be practical if it involves relying on a single, and unreliable, income. Lalani et al. (2014) estimate 46% of Pakistanis to be in poverty, while Catney and Sabater (2015; 23) report higher occupational segregation among Pakistani men, compared to men of other ethnicities, as well as a greater likelihood of being in self-employment, which '...could be an indicator of entrepreneurial success, but may more likely be an outcome of discrimination by potential employers.' Just as women from poorer families in Pakistan may be expected to work out of necessity (Shaw, 2000), the employment prospects of Pakistani men in the UK may create the need for an additional wage. This is even more complex where Pakistani men move to the UK to join their British wives, given that immigration laws mean women being joined by spouses must provide evidence that they can 'meet the financial requirement' by earning a minimum annual income of £18,600 before tax (Citizens Advice, 2016). The segregation of men from women as an instrument of *purdah* therefore is more difficult to implement for Pakistanis living in the UK.

Nonetheless, lower levels of employment, and higher levels of economic inactivity amongst Pakistani women in the UK could be viewed as an indication of strongly demarcated gender roles and continued gender segregation amongst the Pakistani community. Shaw (2000)

argues that, within Pakistani families, the gendering of activities begins at puberty, with girls encouraged to engage in domestic tasks, while boys are encouraged to socialise. This continues into adulthood, where the division of labour and therefore physical space remains highly gendered, and reflects previous findings by Papanek (1971; 520) who stated that:

*The allocation of labor in a purdah society is the counterpart of the allocation of living space - that is, women work with other women in and around the home at one set of tasks, while men work with other men at another set, outside the home.*

The gendered division of labour and space also means that men and women are interdependent, since men need to earn a large enough wage to support their families. For example, Ramji (2007; 1176) says, of British Muslim men in her own research, that ‘...their ability to provide was directly related to the duty of Muslim men to enable Muslim women to observe Islamic ‘modesty.’ Thus, the gender segregation that is central to *purdah* is dependent on members of both sexes occupying the ‘correct’ roles.

### **3.3.2 The covering of women’s bodies**

The second ‘instrument of *purdah*’ outlined by Papanek (1971) is the covering of women’s bodies, by wearing a burqa or veil. Such covering maintains the separation of women from men, providing another form of ‘curtain’, but provides greater flexibility for women in terms of the spaces they can occupy. In this way, the burqa is ‘...a liberating invention, since it provides a kind of portable seclusion which enables women to move out of segregated living spaces while still observing *purdah*’ Papanek (1971; 520).

Nonetheless, veiling, however it is done, plays a complex and multi-faceted role in the lives of Muslim Pakistani women. Whilst veiling is, on the one hand, liberating in terms of the greater mobility it affords wearers, it has also been perceived as a symbol of patriarchy. For example, Papanek (1971; 520) states that in some cultures men wear veils, a practice which ‘...serves to increase the status and power of an individual’, whilst for women the veil serves to reinforce the ideal attributes of ‘attractiveness and vulnerability.’ Chakraborti and Zempi (2012; 269) state that:

*In the current climate, the veil is the key visual symbol of Islam. The veiled female body is central in the construction of discourses on the difference of the Muslim as ‘other’ with the non-Muslim ‘self’. The effect is that the multiple meanings of the veil are erased, and only one stands out: the veil as a symbol of gender inequality.*

Despite this, for Pakistani women in Britain, the veil plays another important role; here, veiling and other forms of Islamic dress have been used by Pakistani women as a way of asserting religious identities and realising rights, whilst adhering to Islamic dress-codes

(Dwyer, 2000; Brown, 2006). As such, wearing a veil can be a liberating act. First, it increases mobility whilst enabling women to observe *purdah*, thus helping to maintain familial *izzat*. Second, it enables women to reassert their religious identities in a country where they belong to a minority.

Nonetheless, veiling can be simultaneously liberating and limiting; the relationship between looking visibly Muslim and labour market participation is not straightforward. Conducting research in Bradford, West Yorkshire, Hussain and Bagguley (2012) found that South Asian Muslims experienced a backlash from the 7/7 bombings due to their skin colour as well as their Islamic dress. Islamophobia in the labour market has also been documented by Khattab and Johnston (2012), Evans and Bowlby (2000), and Steill and Tang (2006; 14) who stated that in their research:

*The women felt that their experiences of racism were further compounded by sexist attitudes and assumptions based on their dress. This was particularly relevant to those Muslim women who wear the Hijab... Some women linked their experience to September 11th.*

This further demonstrates the complexity of Pakistani women occupying two different and sometimes conflicting contexts. For some, veiling facilitates greater mobility outside the home, and enables them to participate in education and paid work that is not gender segregated. However, within the British context, Islamophobia has increased in response to a spate of terrorist attacks perpetrated by Muslim extremists post 9/11 which, exacerbated by some sources of mainstream media, might place women who wear veils at a disadvantage. Therefore, Pakistani women living in the UK run the risk of being disadvantaged both by limited mobility outside the home, and negative perceptions of attempts to increase their mobility; in short it is potentially difficult to observe *purdah* and also participate in the labour market.

Nonetheless, there is great variation in the ways in which *purdah* is practiced, and it is not undertaken in a uniform manner (Brah, 1993; Ahmad, 2001). To perceive *purdah* and *izzat* as instruments of the oppression of Muslim woman firstly ignores the role of policies that shape labour market participation for *all* women, secondly ignores the impact of discrimination perpetrated by employers, and thirdly overlooks the argument that *purdah* is merely another system of patriarchy with a more formalised name. The next section, therefore, considers parallels between *izzat* and *purdah* and the male breadwinner model; it has already been argued that gendered labour divisions and policy interventions remain underpinned by this model, though this may be more implicit than *purdah*.

### 3.3.3 Izzat, purdah and the male breadwinner model: drawing parallels

The segregation of men and women, and subsequently the gendering of labour, that has been described as central to *purdah* also echoes the male breadwinner model discussed in Section 3.2. Indeed, Papanek (1971; 517) states that ‘...purdah shares many fundamental features in common with other societies.’ Furthermore, Brah (1993; 163) argues that

*...where families do wish to observe such norms the prospect of women going out to perform paid work causes deep concern because it is thought to signal the inability of men to provide for the economic maintenance of the household.*

This echoes the male breadwinner model, which also describes a household where men work so that women do not have to. Additionally, the interdependence inherent to the *purdah* system, outlined in the quote above, echoes the male breadwinner model whereby women’s participation in unpaid domestic labour supports men’s participation in paid labour, and vice versa; this has also been highlighted by Marxist-feminists (e.g. Hartmann, 1979), who have argued that men’s role as primary earner depends on women taking responsibility for domestic work. Similarly, young Muslim men may rely on women to be their ‘dependents’ as a way of reinforcing what they view as their duty as a primary earner (Ramji, 2007). Men and women are therefore interdependent in order to maintain moral obligations to participate in paid or unpaid labour respectively.

Caplan (2000; 100) describes *purdah* as ‘...a morally sanctioned system of differentiation that in practice varies considerably’, but the relationship between morality, gender roles, and labour divisions is certainly not exclusive to those who observe *purdah*. For example, Gerson (2002) asserts that in modern societies, women and men are ‘divided into different moral categories’, where men demonstrate their capacity to care for others by sharing ‘financial rewards.’ These different moral categories are also reflected in the work of Duncan et al. (2003) who suggest that women’s moral obligation to ‘care’ contributes to the persistence of the male breadwinner model. Papanek (1973; 289), too, argues that:

*On any continuum of the ways in which societies define a ‘woman’s place’, the purdah system - which sharply limits a woman’s mobility outside her home - occupies one of the more extreme positions (Papanek, 1973; 289).*

In this way, therefore, the *purdah* system might just as well be viewed as another example of a patriarchal system, even if it is potentially more strict.

The purpose of these sections has been to highlight the gendered context within which Pakistani women might participate in the labour market. Despite policy shifts, men and women do not participate in the labour market the same way, and women are

simultaneously expected to earn money and provide domestic labour. Pakistani families in the UK may adhere to a *purdah* system, whereby women and men play interdependent roles that enable women to preserve their modesty. The ways in which *purdah* is observed vary (Brah, 1993), and some aspects of it are not dissimilar to the assumptions of the male breadwinner model, which continues to describe British households (Papanek, 1973; Daly, 2011). Nonetheless, the roles of *izzat* and *purdah* must not be overlooked in considering how Pakistani women engage with the British labour market. Central to *izzat* and *purdah*, and also a key life-stage factor, is marriage, which is discussed in Section 3.4.

### 3.4 Marriage

Dale et al. (2006) argue that although white British women were historically expected to give up work once they were married, by the 1970s, labour market participation tended to be interrupted by children rather than marriage (Dale et al., 2006). This means that it can be difficult to separate the effects of dependent children and childcare from the effects of marriage, particularly since the two are often interconnected - for example ONS (2016) report that lone parents and cohabiting parents with dependent children are outnumbered by married couples or civil partners with dependent children. Given that parents are more likely to be married or in a civil partnership, it is therefore difficult to determine whether women's labour market participation is shaped by marriage or dependent children. Nonetheless, Dale et al. (2006) suggest that, for Pakistani women, marriage affects labour market participation irrespective of dependent children. Similarly, Bhopal (1997) found that marital status had more of an impact on economic activity for Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi groups than for other ethnic groups, whilst Salway (2007; 825) argues that marriage is one of several '...important predictors of economic activity' for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women living in the UK, and found lower economic activity rates among partnered or married Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, irrespective of whether or not they had children.

Papanek (1971) suggests that one of the purposes of 'symbolic shelter', a mechanism of *purdah* that describes the separation of men from women, is to exert control over women's sexuality (see Section 3.3). Similarly, Shaw (2000; 164) states that '...these restrictions are designed to control sexuality, to ensure virginity at marriage and chaste behaviour thereafter', whilst Dale and Ahmed (2011; 903) assert that '...marriage for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women tends to be seen as a family, rather than an individual, affair and is directly related to the status and honour of the family.' Therefore it is evident that, not only is women's behaviour shaped by the value of marriage, but that an emphasis on the

importance of marriage within Pakistani communities potentially shapes women's behaviour leading up to the event.

Indeed beliefs and values concerning marriage and being a wife might shape women's behaviour from an early age, which is likely to affect their labour market participation, too. Bhopal (1997a) argues that, leading up to marriage, women's lives are overshadowed by perceptions of what makes a 'good' wife. While girls are encouraged to engage in domestic activities, boys are encouraged to engage in activities outside the home (Shaw, 2000). Therefore, such limits to 'public mobility' (e.g. Ballard, 1990; Peach, 2006) have implications for both participation in paid employment, and activities that might facilitate paid employment, such as education (e.g. Shaw, 2000; see also Chapters 6 and 7). The role of marriage in shaping labour market participation is not exclusive to Pakistani women: Arber and Ginn (1995: 23) suggest that:

*Where women earn less than their husbands this will tend to perpetuate their relative powerlessness in marriage; the ideology that women's labour market contribution is less valuable and more easily dispensable than that of their husband is reinforced. This in turn leads to the expectation that women will perform the bulk of their domestic labour, constraining their opportunities in the labour market.*

However, it would be remiss not to consider the role of ethnicity in shaping the relationship between marriage and labour market participation for Pakistani women, given literature that suggests both that this continues to be the case for Pakistani women (Bhopal, 1997a), and that it is becoming less likely to be the case for white British women (Dale et al., 2006). Further, there are some aspects of marriage that are more specific to Pakistani women, such as arranged marriage, which will now be discussed.

### **3.4.1 Arranged marriage and choice**

It is difficult to find statistics on rates of arranged marriage, since it is often conflated with forced marriage (a discussion of which is beyond the scope of this research). The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (2013; 101) define an arranged marriage as one where '...the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage, but the final choice of whether to marry or not remains with the spouses.' By contrast, forced marriages are those in which at least one party does not have a say and cannot refuse the marriage. Therefore, whilst most arranged marriages are not forced, most forced marriages are arranged. Arranged marriage remains a relatively common practice in the Pakistani community in Britain, though this may be generation dependent, with Pakistani women being increasingly involved in choosing their marital partner (Aston et al., 2007). Berthoud (2005) found arranged marriage to be more common amongst Muslims and Sikhs who moved to Britain

aged eleven or over, compared to Hindus of the same age. Amongst those born in Britain, or who moved to Britain at an early age, just over a third of Muslim and Sikh marriages had been arranged, compared to only 9% of Hindu marriages.

Drawing on her own research with Pakistani families in Oxford, Shaw (2001) distinguishes between different marriage types among Pakistanis and British Pakistanis. Conventionally arranged marriages are those whereby major decisions are made by guardians, and the bride and groom have little control over the decisions made. This category may include what Shaw (2001) terms 'shot-gun' marriages, which are arranged quickly, and are often to cousins. The purpose of such marriages is to avoid a 'potentially shameful liaison' (Shaw, 2001; 323). Although less common among Shaw's participants, there were also some marriages that had been arranged, but where the bride and groom had had considerable influence, which are sometimes described as 'arranged love marriages'. Finally, there are 'love' marriages, which Shaw (2001; 324) states '...constitute a public defiance of parental plans.' However, these marriages can be turned into 'arranged love marriages', and '...presented as if they were conventionally arranged.' The increased rate of 'arranged love marriages' reported by Shaw (2001) further indicates that women are gaining more control over their choice of marital partner.

For Pakistani women, marriage is often presented as constrained, and is pitted against the Western ideology of controlling one's own marriage. Shaw (2001; 323) argues that:

*British Pakistanis, like many other British South Asians often describe their marriages as 'arranged', contrasting a traditional, ideal arranged marriage with that of the 'love marriage' of the West. The ideology that underpins a South Asian 'arranged' marriage is that obligations to one's immediate and more extended family have priority over personal self-interest. In contemporary Western ideology; by contrast, marriage is an expression of a fundamental liberty, the individual's right to choose a partner (even though the choice is in practice constrained by such factors as social class, ethnic group, and parental interests).*

This indicates that marriage choices are, in fact, constrained for everyone, and in this respect, arranged marriage could also be viewed as an extreme example of a process that is more commonly practiced in Britain, particularly given the extent to which Pakistani women are increasingly able to exercise some control over their choice of marital partner (Aston et al., 2007).

Nonetheless, the process of arranged marriage is emblematic of both the extent to which marriage is a family affair, and the importance of the role women occupy within the family. Bhopal (1997b) links arranged marriage to the ideals underlying *purdah*, and suggests that



agreeing to an arranged marriage is a way of showing respect towards one's parents, and upholding a family's *izzat*. Dale and Ahmed (2011; 903) also link arranged marriage to family honour, describing it as a way of strengthening family ties (for example through marriage to paternal cousins), creating good business alliances, or ensuring that daughters make a 'safe' choice of marital partner. They state that agreeing to an arranged marriage reflects 'an ideology of putting one's family's interests before one's own interests.'

Although this section has largely discussed arranged marriage in relation to exerting control over women's behaviour, arranged marriages serve other purposes too, which are closely linked to the status of Pakistanis as fairly recent migrants to Britain. For example, they may assist in maintaining links with Pakistan (Shaw, 2006, though she focuses on consanguineous marriage). Indeed, Shaw (2006; 315) states that '...to assert that marriages take place with close kin because it is a cultural preference offers no insight into the processes that have led to this pattern.' Furthermore, arranged marriage may be used as an immigration strategy (Shaw, 2006; 327), since '...for many Pakistanis, the marriage of a man to a woman raised in Britain is the only way that a potential wage-earner may enter Britain...' The next section explores the relationship between marriage migration and participation in the labour market, outlining how the gender of the migrant is likely to have an effect on labour market participation and the division of labour more generally.

### **3.4.2 Marriage Migration**

In Chapter 1 it was argued that migration processes have shaped labour market participation for Pakistani men and women, influencing the types of work men are likely to participate in, as well as contributing to women's own expectations of their engagement with paid work. Further, Section 3.4.1 argued that arranged marriage can serve to both maintain links with Pakistan, and as serving as an immigration strategy (Shaw, 2006). It therefore follows that marriage migration is likely to play a key role in women's labour market participation, and that this will also depend on the gender of the migrant.

For women who have moved to the UK to join their husbands, marriage migration is linked to lower levels of labour market participation (Dale and Ahmed, 2011). Literature on the migration process, which has already been outlined in Chapter 1, indicates that women who moved to the UK to join their husbands often did not necessarily expect to find employment; consequently this also had an effect on skills relating to employment, such as qualifications and language proficiency, which are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6. The Migration Observatory (2017) report that people who migrate to the UK for family reasons are most likely to be spouses or children, that the majority of migrants granted settlements on the basis of marriage were married to British citizens, and further that over half of those settling

in 2015 were from Asia. Furthermore, Shaw (2001), and Simpson (1997) both describe fairly consistent levels of marriage migration amongst the Pakistani community in the UK.

The impact of marriage migration on labour market participation differs according to whether the migrant is male or female. For women, there is an ‘...expectation that brides will adjust to their husbands’ and in-laws’ ways and support their interests’ (Charsley, 2005; 396). This indicates that brides moving to join their husbands in the UK are in a potentially vulnerable position, since they must adjust to a different culture, as well as the norms of a different household. The discussion of migration processes in Chapter 1, although it focuses on the first wave of migrants in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, argues that women moving to join their husbands might not have any expectations to participate in the labour market, and this is perhaps exacerbated by beliefs and values concerning honour and shame and what makes a ‘good’ wife, which have already been discussed in this chapter in Section 3.3. The impact of migration, for women, is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6, in relation to the effect it has on obtaining the skills and qualifications associated with labour market participation.

What is more complex, however, is the effect of women being joined by husbands who have migrated from Pakistan. Dale and Ahmed (2011; 909) suggested that husbands from Pakistan were viewed by their participants as being more traditional,

*...which usually meant an assumption that women should be responsible for the home and childcare, should not go out to work, and should be subservient to the wishes of their husband.*

However, many of their participants also stated that their husbands were supportive of their work outside the home. This is significant since immigration laws state that women being joined by husbands from overseas must be able to prove that they can support them financially, and this usually necessitates women being in employment themselves (Dale and Ahmed, 2011). Charsley (2005; 90) also wrote about men moving overseas to join their wives, and suggested that:

*Migration to the UK offers most Pakistani men the opportunity to earn far more than they could in Pakistan. Nevertheless, the conditions in which these financial gains are to be made can come as a shock to newly arrived husbands.*

This suggests that, although it might seem attractive for economic reasons, the reality of migration to the UK for Pakistani men might not match expectations. This is particularly evident when considering the concentration of Pakistanis in low paid, precarious employment (e.g. Bradshaw et al., 2010), which in turn may necessitate both partners being active in the labour market.

This section has discussed the role that marriage might play in shaping labour market participation amongst Pakistani women, and explored the ways in which the emphasis on marriage links to *izzat* and *pardah*. It has also drawn parallels between Pakistani and Western marriage practices, although marriage migration remains more common for Pakistanis. Having described the role that women play in the family, Section 3.5 explores work-care consolidation in terms of the use of formal and informal childcare, and part-time and flexible working arrangements.

### 3.5 Work-care consolidation

The need to combine work and care has been identified as a key life-stage factor that affects labour market participation (e.g. Viitanen, 2005; Salway, 2007; Yeandle and Joynes, 2012). Therefore, given the increasing promotion of individualisation, whereby both adults in a family are expected to work irrespective of family commitments (Daly, 2011), this section will consider firstly how policy makers have sought to facilitate the combination of work and care, and secondly whether, by enabling more women to participate in the labour market, such initiatives increase the chances of both parents working. Specifically, availability, affordability, and quality of childcare, and the availability of flexible or part-time working have been discussed extensively in terms of the opportunities they afford mothers (e.g. Crompton, 2002; Chevalier and Viitanen, 2002). One way in which both parents might be able to participate in the labour market is by outsourcing the care of their children.

Although childcare is not the only form of care, this section largely focuses labour market participation amongst women with dependent children. Dependent children affect work trajectories for both men and women, but in different ways. Although ONS (2014) reports slightly higher rates of employment amongst women with dependent children than those without, this says nothing about the ways in which having dependent children affects women's employment qualitatively, which in turn is arguably based on the assumptions of the male breadwinner model, outlined in Section 3.2. For example, Joshi (1998) suggests that child-rearing, for men, is based on the fulfilment of a breadwinning role, whilst Hardill and Watson (2004) found that men with dependent children were slightly more likely to work than those without dependent children. ONS (2015; 9) report that:

*In 2015, 79.8% of people aged 16 to 64 with dependent children were employed compared with 69.9% of people without. Those with dependent children make up 37.0% of all workers that were employed in 2015. Employment rate for married or cohabiting men was 91.8% and for women, 72.9%. The disparity in employment rates between men and women without dependent children was much smaller, at*

*71.8% for men versus 67.8% for women. This indicates that where couples had dependent children, men were more likely to be in employment than women.*

In sum, men with dependent children are more likely, and women with dependent children less likely, to participate in paid employment. As well as affecting employment rates per se, mothers are penalised for taking maternity leave; Joshi (1998; 166) found that women who returned to work after leave were paid less than childless women, whilst women with children who maintained 'employment continuity' were paid as much as childless women. Nonetheless, none of these women were 'remunerated as well as men.' Similarly, Tomlinson et al. (2009) report higher levels of occupational segregation amongst women returners, particularly if they return to work part-time. Indeed, the potentially negative effects of choosing to take up part-time work are discussed in greater detail in Section 3.5.2.

This thesis has already stated that Pakistani women have distinct patterns of labour market participation, with a lower concentration in paid employment and a larger percentage who are economically inactive. Further, this chapter has highlighted the central role women play in maintaining a family's *izzat*, whereby key life-stage decisions such as choice of marital partner become a family, rather than an individual affair. Dale et al. (2005; 8) state that, in comparison to women of other ethnic groups,

*South Asian families traditionally have strongly demarcated gender roles, reinforced by a belief in the importance of the family and of the role of a mother in bringing up children.*

This indicates that, for Pakistani women, concepts of motherhood are likely to shape decisions regarding the consolidation of work and care, and in turn participation in the labour market. Furthermore, Nandi and Platt (2010) report higher numbers of children per household in Pakistani and Bangladeshi families, whilst Ahmad et al. (2003) state that many of the Bangladeshi and Pakistani women they surveyed preferred to look after children themselves rather than leave them with a stranger, which '...poses a significant barrier to employments amongst Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in particular' (Turner and Wigfield, 2012; 648). Similarly, Badawi (1971; no pagination) argued that:

*Islam regards her [woman's] role in society as a mother and a wife as her most sacred and essential one. Neither maids nor baby sitters can possibly take the mother's place as the educator of an upright, complex-free, and carefully reared child.*

Having and caring for dependent children invariably affects labour market participation for *all* women. However, Pakistani women are likely to have more children than white British women, and may also have a preference for looking after their children themselves, which is

likely to be shaped by a cultural emphasis on the role of the mother in raising children. Historically, this has also been the case for white British women. Nonetheless, Pakistani women and white British women might differ in their strategies for consolidating work and care. Such strategies will now be considered in terms of two key mechanisms through which women might combine work and care: outsourcing of childcare, in either a formal or informal capacity; and working part-time or flexibly.

### **3.5.1 Formal and informal childcare**

For women who wish to participate in the labour market, one of the ways they might seek to consolidate work and care is through entrusting their children to someone else while they work. The provision of formal childcare services is highly relevant to this research not only because it aims to help women into the labour market, but also because of the message it communicates about adults working. Indeed, the provision of formal childcare, given its aim to increase the chances of both parents working, can be linked to individualization and the adult worker model, as suggested by Daly (2011; 11), who writes that:

*Individualization is furthered also by the moves to provide childcare services outside the family and the increasing interest on the part of European welfare states in the availability and range of childcare services.*

Here, it is suggested that the provision of childcare services signifies a move towards an adult worker model, in ensuring that both adults in a family can participate in the labour market. However, this section will argue firstly that the high costs of formal childcare serve as a disincentive from using it, secondly that the arrangement of formal childcare remains a women's issue, and thirdly that women, and in particular Pakistani women, may have reasons for not choosing to take up formal childcare, irrespective of prohibitive costs.

The Childcare Act 2006 stipulates that English local authorities should 'so far as is reasonably practicable' provide sufficient childcare to enable parents to participate in paid employment, or undertake training or education that would enable them to do so later on. Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to, where relevant, support *both* parents to work. Certainly, it signifies a move away from the male breadwinner model and towards an adult worker model, by demonstrating that assumptions have shifted regarding the importance of maternal over paternal care. It is, as suggested by Daly (2011), a move towards individualism that simultaneously recognises the role of the family in determining decisions regarding paid labour. However, if local authorities are able to provide childcare, this does not come free of charge. Currently, 3-4 year olds are entitled to 570 hours of free early education or childcare per year, which amounts to 15 hours per week for 38 weeks of the

year; this must be with an 'approved childcare provider', and stops once children reach school age (Gov.UK, 2017b). For children aged 2, parents are entitled to free early education or childcare if they are in receipt of: income support; income-based Jobseeker's Allowance; income-related Employment and Support Allowance; Universal Credit; tax credits and an annual income of under £16,190 before tax; the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit; support through part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act; the Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (Gov.uk, 2017b). An entitlement of 15 hours of free childcare a week is evidently insufficient if both parents work full-time. In addition, the application of this Act is likely to vary between geographical locations, with different councils having different interpretations of what 'reasonably practicable' means, and as such, provision of affordable childcare is not always sufficient for the amount of people who could benefit from it. For example, in Leeds, Yeandle and Joynes (2012; 10) report a deficit in nursery places, compared to a growth in demand, and furthermore that

*The Council's 'sufficiency assessment' in 2011 found that only 15 of 42 areas had enough childcare places for both 3-4 year olds and 4-11 year olds. Most areas where provision was insufficient for both age groups were inner city localities characterised by high levels of deprivation and worklessness (LCC, 2011b; 7, in Yeandle and Joynes, 2012)*

Furthermore, they report that the effect of austerity measures implemented after 2010 meant that although spending on early years services rose, it fell in real terms.

Cost is a key consideration in the uptake of childcare services. Viitanen (2005) found that the cost of a typical nursery place exceeded average household expenditure on food or housing. Furthermore, demand for childcare is postulated as leading to increased prices (Chevalier and Viitanen, 2003). This is significant, since the stipulations of the Childcare Act 2006 are such that provision of formal childcare is likely to vary according to local authority; this means that in some areas it is likely to be less accessible than in other areas, not just financially. As such: 'The affordability of childcare remains a problem' (Yeandle and Joynes, 2012; 11). Even so, there are some schemes in place to enable more families to access childcare. For those working over 16 hours a week, extra tax credits will cover some of the costs of childcare, providing the care is 'registered or approved', and employers can also provide childcare vouchers for up to £55 per week (Gov.UK, 2017b).

However, despite the availability of some assistance with costs, many families must pay for formal childcare (Viitanen; 2005). Furthermore, navigating the different systems for credits and vouchers is not simple, and Daly (2011; 17) suggests that '...if mothers want to be in employment on anything other than a short part-time basis they have to put together rather

complex care packages.’ Moreover, Bell et al. (2005; 13) argue that, in relation to childcare, ‘...a recent DfES survey showed that 40 per cent of parents of three and four year olds felt they did not have sufficient information.’ The costs of childcare, paired with the complex process of accounting for some of these costs, may mean that although childcare costs tend to be shared for partnered women (Hall et al., 2004) it is a more attractive prospect for one partner not to work (Viitanen et al., 2005). This relates to women’s earnings or projected earnings; Hall et al. (2004; 48) found that

*...when weighing the cost of childcare against the household income, there was often an assumption that the woman’s wage must be significantly higher than the cost of the childcare to justify the woman working.*

They also found that:

*Despite the choice to work not always being financially motivated, many felt forced out of the labour market, as their employment could not always support the cost of formal childcare (Hall et al., 2004; 49).*

The disincentivising nature of childcare costs amongst low-income families, whereby it is not financially viable to use formal childcare so that both parents can work (Hall et al., 2004), is not the only issue affecting access to formal childcare for Pakistani women, though national statistics show that lower incomes are more common amongst Pakistani families. For example, ONS (2012) report that people living in households headed by someone from an ethnic minority are more likely to live in low-income households, and that this is particularly pronounced in Pakistani and Bangladeshi households. The complexity of obtaining support with childcare costs serves as an additional issue. For example, as well as specifically discussing the financial costs of childcare, Hall et al. (2004) suggest that the complexity of childcare arrangements might have a disproportionate effect on parents from ethnic minority groups, particularly if they have difficulty reading and understanding the information available to them. This language and understanding barrier could, for some Pakistani women, characterise attitudes towards childcare. Furthermore, it has been argued that there might be an issue with the ‘cultural sensitivity’ of formal childcare (Clark and Drinkwater, 2007), or a lack of formal childcare that is sensitive to the needs of particular ethnic groups. This is relevant not only because second generation Pakistani children might not be used to speaking English in the home, but also because of the specific needs of Muslim children, that might diverge from those of non-Muslim children.

However, formal childcare is not the only option available, and some parents opt instead to use informal childcare, described by Bell et al. (2005) as care provided by ex-partners, grandparents, friends, relatives, or siblings. This runs counter to common definitions of

formal childcare, which is generally paid for (ONS, 2013). Indeed, research by the Daycare Trust (Rutter and Evans, 2012) indicates that informal childcare is more popular than formal childcare. This is also supported by findings from Simon et al. (2015), who found that care from grandparents was proportionally the most popular form of childcare. Rutter and Evans (2012) also found that informal childcare was often used in conjunction with formal childcare as a way of navigating costs, while Simon et al. (2015) found that childcare most commonly consists of a combination of formal childcare and care from grandparents. This may be one example of what Daly (2011), has termed a 'complex care package'. Informal childcare may also be more popular among women who work part-time. For example, Ward et al. (1996), found that women who worked part-time, and who had school-age children, were more likely to use informal childcare than formal childcare, whilst women who worked full-time were equally likely to use either formal or informal childcare. This is in keeping with Simon et al.'s (2015) more recent research, which found formal childcare was most popular among employed, higher income families, while informal childcare was favoured by younger mothers, and those who were not in employment. Evidently, where earnings are lower, or where women are economically inactive, it makes more sense to use informal childcare (Ward et al., 1996).

However, decisions about childcare, including whether it should be performed by the mother, are likely to be affected by more than costs. The extent to which informal childcare is used varies culturally. For example, Aston et al. (2007; 3), writing about childcare preferences among Bangladeshi and Pakistani women, state that:

*Many women wanted to look after their children themselves, with the help of their families. Informal childcare from the extended family was common, but use of formal childcare was relatively rare.*

A preference for informal childcare might be linked to Pakistani women living in larger households, whereby multiple family members are available to provide childcare (Bell et al., 2005). Furthermore, among Asian families '...use of informal care was linked with working at atypical times, having a low household income and using a large number of hours of childcare overall' (Bell et al., 2005; 2). Nonetheless, Bell et al., (2005) found the use of informal childcare among Asian families to be lower than expected, though they speculate that this could reflect under-reporting among Asian parents, since they consider this finding to be surprising. A key point here is that use of childcare amongst Pakistani women ought to be viewed within the context of lower earnings among Pakistani households in general, given that cost is often cited as a disincentive to use of formal childcare (e.g. Viitanen, 2005). Salway (2007) also identifies cost as a disincentive to using childcare among ethnic minority women.



This section has demonstrated that the provision of formal childcare, given that it is determined by local councils, is often insufficient, particularly for those who live in deprived inner-city areas. For all women, cost has been identified as a major disincentive to using formal childcare, whilst cultural norms regarding gender, motherhood, and the role of the family are likely also to affect the uptake of formal childcare, particularly for Pakistani women. Other research has suggested that informal childcare is a popular alternative to formal childcare, though its use will no doubt be affected by existing social networks, as well as others' decisions about paid versus unpaid labour. For various reasons, women may wish to reduce the extent to which they rely on others to provide childcare, and part-time and flexible working are identified as further strategies for negotiating childcare and labour market participation.

### **3.5.2 Part-time and flexible working**

ONS (2014) report that 54.4% of women with dependent children work part-time, whilst over two thirds of women without dependent children work full-time. Overall, they find that 42% of women work part-time, compared to 12% of men. This indicates that, despite the increasing participation of women in the labour market (discussed in Section 3.2), the nature of their participation differs to the nature of men's participation. The creation of part-time and flexible roles has historically been viewed as a way of enabling women to participate in the labour market (Dale and Holdsworth, 1998), although these roles are also associated with a lack of job security or benefits such as maternity leave or sick pay (Crompton, 2002). Further, Dale and Holdsworth (1998) argue that, because employed Pakistani women are concentrated in particular types of work, they are unlikely to use part-time working as a means of work-care consolidation. This section explores part-time and flexible working, and their role in work-care consolidation.

The gendered nature of work-care consolidation is reflected by the larger numbers of women, and particularly mothers, in part-time or flexible work, compared to men. Women's lower working hours in comparison to men's (ONS, 2014) are likely to reflect an attempt to consolidate work and care. Indeed, Connolly and Gregory (2008: 908) suggest that part-time work is:

*...frequently the route which women choose in order to combine continuing labour market involvement with household responsibilities, particularly during the childcare years.*

Another option is flexible employment, which Gov.UK (2016) define as '...a way of working that suits an employee's needs, e.g. having flexible start and finish times, or working from home.' Perrons (2000) and Crompton (2002) both distinguish between numerical flexibility,

which focuses on matching labour to demands, and functional flexibility, which entails performing different roles, though they note there is some overlap between the two forms of flexibility. Under this definition, part-time work is a type of flexible working, which also encompasses '...flexi-time, annualised hours, zero hours, and temporary and seasonal contracts' (Perrons, 2000; 1720). Having already stated that part-time roles are dominated by women, it should now be noted that women dominate in *all* forms of flexible working (Perrons, 2000).

At first glance, flexible working might appear to be a positive step in enabling parents to combine work and care, and supporting women's participation in the labour market (Dale, 1998). Nonetheless, this way of working is also associated with a potential loss of opportunity, with Perrons (2000; 1729) arguing that '...opportunities in employment are segregated by time', finding in their case study that managerial roles were '...reserved for employees prepared to work full-time hours', and that training offered for flexible employees was 'task-specific rather than career-enhancing.' Connolly and Gregory (2008; 1468) also associated flexible and part-time working with a loss of opportunity, stating that a quarter of women who shift from full-time to part-time work experience a downgrading, and further making an association between women working part-time and an 'underutilisation of skills.' Similarly, Grant et al. (2005) argue that although part-time work is an important way of increasing women's labour market participation, many women in such roles are 'working below potential'. Of the women they surveyed, 53.0% were not using their skills, qualifications or experience, and their managers were not aware of these, or of their aspirations. Furthermore they found that women employed part-time lacked opportunities for career progression and promotion, with managers unwilling to create higher level part-time jobs. This loss of opportunity for women working part-time was also noted by Tomlinson (2006), and Joshi (1998).

Aside from the loss of opportunity associated with part-time and flexible working, such roles also contribute to the perpetuation of the male breadwinner model outlined in Section 3.2. Perrons (2000; 1999) argues that '...different gender expectations still play a role in practice, equal opportunities policies notwithstanding', and further that the availability of flexible work does not result in equality of opportunity. This is echoed by Crompton (2002; 544), who states that '...if women's paid work remains concentrated in flexible service employment, it is possible that the broad division of labour by sex may not be substantially altered.' Similarly, Atkinson and Hall (2009) argue that flexible working continues to be viewed as a 'women's issue.'

Having argued that part-time or flexible working are popular amongst working mothers overall, but not necessarily the best option in terms of pay, job security, and career

progression, Dale and Holdsworth's (1998) suggestion that this might be less common for Pakistani women is now explored. Although there is not much written about this, the large percentage of Pakistani women who opt out of employment altogether could be taken as an indication that they are less likely to choose part-time working as a means of balancing work with care; this is in keeping with the suggestion that Pakistani women may be less inclined to entrust others with the care of their children (see Section 3.5.1). Shaw (2000) mentions wives of pioneer migrants who have entered the workforce on a part-time basis once their children are older and they have fewer caring responsibilities. By contrast, Dale and Holdsworth (1998) suggests that Pakistani women are less likely to take up part-time work, and associates this with their concentration in certain sectors that simply do not offer such flexible work patterns. This is supported by Grant et al. (2005), who found relatively low levels of part-time working amongst Pakistani women compared to women of other ethnicities. Dale and Holdsworth (1998; 92) conclude that

*Minority ethnic women record lower levels of part-time working than White women, irrespective of life-stage and partnership status. With the exception of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women they are also more likely to work full-time...In a wider European context it is the high part-time rates of White women that are distinctive, rather than the employment patterns of minority ethnic groups.*

They associate this with the concentration of white women in non-manual jobs, which they argue is significant since employed Pakistani women tend to be concentrated in semi-skilled factory work (Dale and Holdsworth, 1998).

This section has considered the role of flexible forms of working in enabling women to consolidate work and care, as exemplified by the number of women in part-time jobs. It has argued that, although part-time work might be an important route into the labour market, it is also associated with a loss of opportunity and the perpetuation of an unfavourable (for women) division of labour. Having stated that many women work part-time, it is also noteworthy that Dale and Holdsworth (1998) suggest this is more specific to white British women, and this brings into question the extent to which part-time or flexible working are seen as viable options for Pakistani women who wish to participate in the labour market.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined and discussed literature that links life-stage factors to participation in the labour market. In order to do so, it has dedicated considerable discussion to considerations of both British and Pakistani contexts, in-so-far as they could be described as representing two patriarchal systems that constrain women's choices, particularly in relation

to participation in paid work. The British labour market is gendered (e.g. Brah, 1993), and this, as well as policy aimed at work-care consolidation, are underpinned by the view that care is a woman's responsibility, and earning is a man's. In addition to this, the practice of *purdah*, depending how it is applied, represents another patriarchal system that has the potential to restrict women's behaviour and affect their decision making, depending on how this is observed. These are the contexts in which Pakistani women in the UK must seek, if they wish, to navigate the labour market.

Given the increasing policy focus on individualisation, whereby '...social policy promotes and valorizes individual agency and self-sufficiency and shifts some childcare from the family' (Daly, 2011; 1), it is evident that patterns of labour market participation, particularly amongst Pakistani women, do not reflect this. Choice is instead constrained by expectations vis-à-vis women and care, and the value placed on marriage. Pakistani women must navigate between two patriarchal systems, and are still faced with additional constraints that make it more difficult for them to enter the labour market. The next two chapters explore firstly marriage, and secondly the role of dependent children, in terms of how they contribute to and shape Pakistani women's labour market participation, drawing on data from the 2011 Census, and data collected from the research participants. Though inter-related, they have been divided into separate chapters due to the association between dependent children and more practical considerations relating to flexible working and childcare, which were outlined in Section 3.5.1, and also because, as this chapter has argued, marriage has an effect on Pakistani women's labour market participation in and of itself.

## 4 Marriage and gendered behaviours

### 4.1 Introduction

The literature explored in Chapter 3 suggested that there is a particularly pronounced relationship between marriage and labour market participation amongst Pakistani women living in England and Wales (e.g. Bhopal, 1997b; Salway, 2007). Specifically, marriage rates tend to be higher in the Pakistani (and Bangladeshi) communities (Dale and Ahmed, 2011), and the link between marriage and *purdah* means that, for Pakistani women, marriage affects labour market participation irrespective of dependent children, whilst for white British women, the relationship between marriage and labour market participation tends to be mediated by dependent children (Dale et al., 2006). Furthermore, the *purdah* system, which Shaw (2000) links to ideas about what constitutes a ‘good’ wife, might also relate to the gendering of behaviours from childhood, as discussed in Chapter 3. Therefore, although marriage and children are no doubt interrelated, for the purposes of this research they are explored separately, given that they are likely to shape labour market participation in different ways; the relationship between dependent children and labour market participation is considered in Chapter 5.

In exploring the complex connection between marriage, gendered cultural practices and labour market participation, this chapter begins, in Section 4.2, with a broad overview of this relationship. Next, Section 4.3 considers the relationship between marriage and gendered behaviours, focusing on what this means for women in paid employment and how it might relate to discrimination in the labour market for Pakistani women. Finally, this chapter explores the effects of marriage migration for both male and female migrants, and how this might influence the relationship between marriage and labour market participation for Pakistani women (having already identified this as a key issue in Section 3.4). This chapter therefore considers the role of marriage as a key life-stage factor with the potential to affect Pakistani women’s labour market participation, as suggested by Salway (2007) and Dale et al. (2005).

### 4.2 Gender, ethnicity, marriage, and the labour market

Dale and Ahmed (2011) report high marriage rates amongst South Asian communities in the UK, as well as suggesting that South Asian women in particular get married at a younger age than women in other ethnic groups. This is illustrated in Table 5, which shows marital

status according to ethnicity, age, and gender (for simplicity, this table divides marital status into two categories, so not married includes those who are divorced or widowed/separated). For those aged 16-64, the Pakistani group are the most likely to be married, but there is a gender difference; 21.2% of Pakistani men in this age group are married compared to 43.8% of Pakistani women. In each ethnic group, women are more likely than men to be married in this age-group, but Pakistani, followed by Bangladeshi women, are the most likely to be married. In the 25-49 age group, Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi men and women are the least likely to be single and the most likely to be married; in this age group the gender gap is lessened, whilst the ethnic gap persists. In the 50-64 age-group, all groups with the exception of mixed/multi-ethnicity and Caribbean are more likely to be married than single, though marriage rates remain highest for the Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi groups. Table 5 therefore demonstrates both higher marriage rates in general, and a greater likelihood of early marriage, for Pakistanis. What should also be noted here, however, is that this table does not show incidence of co-habiting; the high percentage of white British people who are 'single' excludes those who are living with partners. This is illustrated in Table 6, which shows living arrangements according to ethnicity, and shows low levels of co-habiting for the Pakistani group, with the highest levels of co-habiting amongst the white British, white Other, and Mixed/Multi-ethnicity groups. Therefore this table demonstrates an emphasis on marriage rather than co-habiting among Pakistanis (e.g. Bhopal, 1997b; Shaw, 2001; Berthoud, 2005; Peach, 2006; Salway, 2007).

**Table 5: Marital status in England and Wales for all ethnic groups according to age group and gender<sup>4</sup>**

			White British	White other	Mixed/ multi-ethnicity	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Chinese	Other	African	Caribbean
16-24	Male	Not married	98.0	92.0	97.8	93.1	78.8	90.2	93.7	89.9	91.5	97.6
		Married/Civil Partnership	2.0	8.0	2.2	6.9	21.2	9.8	6.3	10.1	8.5	2.4
	Female	Not married	95.8	84.5	94.9	74.5	56.2	58.7	89.3	63.1	82.9	94.2
		Married/Civil Partnership	4.2	15.5	5.1	25.5	43.8	41.3	10.7	36.9	17.1	5.8
25-49	Male	Not married	55.8	54.9	67.7	31.5	25.1	24.8	46.9	39.1	47.5	68.7
		Married/Civil Partnership	44.2	45.1	32.3	68.5	74.9	75.2	53.1	60.9	52.5	31.3
	Female	Not married	51.8	51.9	66.6	26.7	24.3	19.6	38.4	28.9	54.2	72.6
		Married/Civil Partnership	48.2	48.1	33.4	73.3	75.7	80.4	61.6	71.1	45.8	27.4
50-64	Male	Not married	32.6	35.8	51.7	10.4	11.3	6.3	19.1	20.2	33.8	54.4
		Married/Civil Partnership	67.4	64.2	48.3	89.6	88.7	93.7	80.9	79.8	66.2	45.6
	Female	Not married	34.3	41.0	52.5	22.9	27.8	38.5	29.0	34.8	58.8	66.5
		Married/Civil Partnership	65.7	59.0	47.5	77.1	72.2	61.5	71.0	65.2	41.2	33.5

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<sup>4</sup> All column totals add up to 100%.





The higher marriage rates amongst Pakistanis were reflected in the demographics of the research participants, who were all married with two exceptions (one of whom was widowed). The marriage rates amongst the participants could also be accounted for by their ages (since Table 5 shows that marriage is more likely the older people are). However, the quantitative data so far indicates that, if the participants were white British, for example, it might be reasonable to expect a more diverse array of marital statuses. Further, several participants spoke of the importance of marriage for Pakistani women in particular. For example, Fiza (University employee, Leeds), said that 'it's a huge thing not to be married as a Pakistani woman.' Similarly, Hadiqa (University employee, Leeds), mentioned concerns from other members of the Pakistani community regarding whether or not she would get married if she pursued her education, in terms of education potentially pricing her out of the marriage market (this is discussed in greater detail in Chapters 6 and 7). These accounts not only support the idea that marriage is valued amongst Pakistanis, but also that the value placed on it has the potential to shape women's behaviour. This, and particularly Hadiqa's account, supports Shaw's (2000) findings that, from an early age, girls are encouraged to remain in the home, and boys are encouraged to participate in activities outside of it (though it should be noted that Hadiqa's parents supported her pursuing her education).

Dale and Ahmed (2011; 905) state that 'on the supply side, both qualifications and life-stage (partnership and children) have a very big influence on levels of economic activity for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women'. Subsequently, through analysis of both data sources, this chapter has so far supported the contention that a great deal of value is placed on marriage within the Pakistani community, demonstrating a trend for early marriage and high marriage rates, as well as indicating how the importance of marriage might shape life experiences from an early age. Notably, Tables 5 and 6 have demonstrated higher marriage rates and a greater likelihood of early marriage for Pakistanis, as well as a lesser likelihood of cohabiting, compared to, for example, the white British group. The findings in Tables 5 and 6 are supported by qualitative data that suggests firstly the importance of marriage, and secondly the way that this might contribute to and shape engagement with the labour market. Table 7 points to more explicit links between marriage and labour market participation, demonstrating a relationship between marital status and economic activity for white British and Pakistani men and women aged 16-65 in England and Wales (as with Table 5, marital status has been simplified to two categories).



Table 7 shows that marriage affects economic activity for white British and Pakistani men and women, but to differing degrees. For both groups of men, marriage is associated with an increase in employment, though this increase is larger for Pakistani men (a difference of 7.7 percentage points for white British men, compared to 14.5 percentage points for Pakistani men). For white British women, marriage is associated with a very small (less than two percentage points) decrease in employment, whilst for Pakistani women this decrease is much larger, at 20.8 percentage points. Additionally, Pakistani women have lower rates of employment than white British women, irrespective of marital status. 54.7% of Pakistani women who are not married are in employment, compared to 74.8% of white British women who are not married. Nonetheless, Pakistani women who are not married have the second highest rates of unemployment, and this indicates that they would like to be in employment. From this analysis, therefore, two things can be concluded. First, there *is* a relationship between marriage and labour market participation; for each group, marriage was associated with at least a small change in rates of employment. Second, this effect differs according to both gender and ethnicity: it increases economic activity for men whilst decreasing it for women. However, the effect of marriage is considerably larger within the Pakistani group for both men and women, in comparison to the white British group.

The value placed on marriage has been posited as something that shapes men's and women's experiences from childhood, and this is perhaps exemplified by Pakistani women's low employment rates, irrespective of marital status. The increase in men's employment once they are married supports this, alluding to the idea that men, and particularly husbands, are expected to provide for their wives (e.g. Ramji, 2007, and see Chapter 3). This division of labour, and the emphasis on the husband as provider, was also discussed by several of the participants. For example, Sanam (Not in employment, Leeds) and Meesha (Not in employment, Leeds) both stated that they were not *allowed* to work by their husbands, and Nida (Not in employment, Leeds) said that 'husbands work and bring everything home'. Fiza (University employee, Leeds) said that, when she worked rather than her husband, his cousins expressed concern because 'men should be the providers...women shouldn't work because they have to.' Indeed, despite the fact that she was employed, she also endorsed this, saying that 'a husband's role is to be primary supporter.'

So far, this chapter has explored the relationship between marriage and labour market participation, by demonstrating the value placed on marriage in Pakistani culture, and the way that this might shape divisions of labour. It has also argued that, for Pakistani women, marriage affects their labour market participation irrespective of whether or not they have dependent children, whilst for white British women, the relationship between marriage and labour market participation is more likely to be mediated by dependent children. Section

4.2.1, therefore, seeks to explore the extent to which this is the case, and considers whether Pakistani and white British women, as has already been argued, experience this differently.

#### **4.2.1 Marriage and dependent children**

As outlined in the introduction to this chapter, this research views marriage and dependent children as separate but interrelated life-stage factors that have the potential to shape labour market participation. This is supported by research that views marriage as being highly valued amongst the Pakistani community (e.g. Bhopal, 1997a; 1997b; Shaw, 2000; Dale and Ahmed, 2011). White British women may have a slightly different experience, given that attitudes to marriage are changing, and marriage now plays a less deterministic role. Dex (1985), and later Dale et al. (2006; 325) argue that, although in the 1950s women were still expected to cease work once they married, by the 1970s 'it was child-bearing rather than marriage that interrupted women's labour market activity.' Furthermore, Dale et al. (2006; 325) argue that, for white British women 'although this relationship [between marriage and labour market activity] is still present, it is much more muted than in the past.' Therefore, in the UK, marriage and dependent children no longer *necessarily* mean leaving the labour market (though they are likely to shape labour market participation in other ways). Indeed, Table 7 shows a minimal difference in labour market participation rates for married and non-married white British women. Table 8 explores the extent to which the relationship between marriage and labour market participation illustrated in Table 8 is mediated by dependent children.



Table 8 shows that, irrespective of gender and ethnicity, the relationship between marriage and economic activity *is* mediated by dependent children. Simultaneously, the extent to which this is the case, and the effect of this on economic activity, varies according to both gender and ethnicity. For white British men without dependent children, marriage is associated with a small reduction in employment, whilst for those with dependent children, marriage is associated with an increase in employment of 12.5 percentage points. For Pakistani men, marriage is associated with a more pronounced increase in employment, irrespective of dependent children. For those without dependent children, marriage is associated with an increase in employment of just below 10.0 percentage points, whilst for those with dependent children, there is an increase of 24.2 percentage points. This suggests that, for both groups of men, the relationship between marriage and labour market participation is mediated by dependent children, but that for Pakistani men, marriage affects labour market participation in and of itself. This reflects the participants' accounts in Section 4.2. of the husband-as-provider, and also appears to demonstrate the diminishing relationship between marriage and labour market participation in the UK more broadly, where for the majority of the population the affect is minimal.

For both groups of women without dependent children, marriage is associated with a decrease in employment and an increase in inactivity due to looking after home/family. However, this difference is greater for Pakistani women. For white British women, marriage is associated with a decrease in employment of 15.3 percentage points, whilst for Pakistani women, marriage is associated with a decrease in employment of 22.1 percentage points. Furthermore, 38.4% of married Pakistani women are looking after home/family, compared to 5.6% of white British women. For married white British women, those who are not in employment are more likely to be retired (at 20.0%) than to be inactive due to looking after home/family. Evidently, white British and Pakistani women without children are all affected by marriage. For white British women with dependent children, marriage is associated with decreased employment: 79.9% of married white British women with dependent children are in employment compared to 68.5% of white British women with dependent children who are not married. By contrast, Pakistani women with dependent children who are not married are more likely to be in employment than Pakistani women with dependent children who are married (49.5% compared to 31.5%). For white British women with dependent children who are not married, their lower employment rates could reflect the greater likelihood of lone-parenthood, whilst employment rates may increase for those who are married due to more egalitarian childcare arrangements. For Pakistani women, however, it is evident that marriage has a significant effect on labour market participation irrespective of dependent children.

Again, the effect of marriage on labour market participation is demonstrated in the accounts of participants who framed the importance of men taking on a traditional provider role in terms of marriage, rather than marriage and children. For example, Heera (Not economically active, Kirklees) said that 'having a child and a husband makes it difficult to work', suggesting a separation in the role of her husband, and her role as a mother. Similarly, in saying 'it's a huge thing not to be married as a Pakistani woman', Fiza (University employee, Leeds) could be viewed as emphasising the importance of marriage, irrespective of other domestic 'duties', in shaping labour market participation. The role of the husband as the provider is a demonstration of his being 'man enough', according to Hadiqa (University employee, Leeds), because 'women working is a taboo.' As such, some married men are expected to demonstrate their role as a provider by ensuring that their wives do not *have* to work, irrespective of whether or not their wives are also expected to care for children.

The data collected in this research reflects findings by Ramji (2007: 1176), whose male participants viewed being a provider as central to their identities as Muslim men, linking this to their shared views about women's modesty. Specifically, Ramji states:

*A key way of enabling Muslim women to observe modesty was abstaining from public sphere activity, particularly waged employment. Modesty was in all cases seen as the duty of Muslim women. However, the ability to observe it was contingent on how successful men were in their perceived Islamic role as providers, as this determined the necessity of their female relatives working.*

This chapter has, so far, outlined the relationship between gender, ethnicity, and labour market participation, and argued that for Pakistani women this relationship exists independently of whether or not they have dependent children. For white British women, however, the relationship between marriage and labour market participation has become less pronounced and is, conversely, more likely to be mediated by dependent children. As such, this chapter has, so far, focussed on the ways in which marriage potentially constrains labour market participation for Pakistani women. Nonetheless, many Pakistani women are active in the labour market, and therefore Section 4.3 considers the ways in which they participate, and how this is affected by gendered expectations that, as discussed in Chapter 3, are intrinsically related to marriage.

### **4.3 Women in paid employment**

Given that many Pakistani women *are* in employment, the ways in which ideas about marriage and more 'traditional' gender roles might shape the types of employment they are in should also be considered. Table 9 shows occupation types for white British and Pakistani

men and women aged 16-64 in England and Wales. Here, differences according to both gender and ethnicity are evident. For both groups, men are more likely than women to work as managers, directors, or proprietors, and men and women in both groups are more likely to work in professional occupations than in any other occupational category. However, for the other categories there is evidence of clustering along lines of both gender and ethnicity. Women are more likely than men, overall, to work in administrative and secretarial roles, though this is more common amongst white British women. Furthermore, both white British and Pakistani women are more likely than their male counterparts to work in caring, personal service, and leisure. Men in most groups are more likely than women to work as process, plant and machine operatives, but Pakistani men clearly dominate in this category.



**Table 9: Occupation type for white British and Pakistani men and women aged 16-64 in England and Wales**

	White British male	White British female	Pakistani male	Pakistani female
Managers, directors, proprietors	13.0	7.7	10.7	5.7
Professionals	14.9	16.3	13.0	17.1
Associate professionals	13.6	10.3	7.8	8.7
Administrative and secretarial	4.8	20.3	5.0	16.0
Skilled trades	21.1	2.9	9.8	2.1
Caring, personal service, leisure	2.9	16.6	2.6	16.0
Sales and customer service	4.7	12.0	12.0	16.6
Process, plant and machine operatives	12.9	2.4	24.6	6.0
Elementary occupations	12.0	11.5	14.4	11.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The data presented in Table 9 demonstrates a gendering of occupation type that is consistent with previous research, and that applies to both white British and Pakistani women in the UK. For example, Borghans and Groot (1999) argue that boys and girls are 'presorted' into certain types of occupation, whilst Arber and Ginn (1995; 22) argue that 'women are often side-tracked into 'occupational niches'.' Some of the participants also discussed employment in terms of jobs that were or were not appropriate for women. Indeed, there was an awareness of this even amongst the participants that were distanced from the labour market. Heera (Not economically active, Kirklees) and Atiqa (Teaching assistant, Kirklees) both agreed that teaching assistant or childcare jobs were considered 'good' jobs for women, which reflects the way that the labour market is gendered in the UK. For example, DfE (2016) report that 73.9% of full time equivalent (hereafter FTE) teachers are female, including 84.6% of FTE nursery and primary school teachers, and further that 91.4% of teaching assistants and 82.2% of school support staff are female. This is indicative both of a higher representation of women in roles that not only mirror the gendering of domestic labour, but are more readily associated with the flexibility that enables women to participate in both paid and unpaid labour. For example, Connolly and Gregory (2008; F73) found that in nursing and teaching '89% of women who move to part-time work remain within the profession.'

However, as well as reflecting a preference for roles that might be more accessible to women with caring responsibilities, a concentration of Pakistani women in certain types of employment might also reflect the gender segregation posited by Papanek (1971) as an 'instrument of *pardah*.' For example, the participants in one of the focus groups held in Leeds all agreed that 'husbands do not like their wives working with men, they think women should work with women.' Therefore, the concentration of Pakistani women in certain occupational types could reflect both the gendering of the labour market in the UK, that is likely to be shaped by the need for more flexible working patterns (Connolly and Gregory, 2008, and see Chapter 5 of this thesis), and a preference for roles where gender segregation is more feasible.

While some women were encouraged not to work, or to work in roles that would serve to maintain gender segregation, others spoke of being encouraged to work in more prestigious positions. Indeed, even the participants who were distanced from the labour market said that Pakistani families wanted their daughters to do 'respectable' jobs, illustrating that some jobs were viewed more favourably than others. For the participants in this research, this seemed to be shaped by two things. First, some parents were concerned that their daughters should be able to provide for themselves and maintain some independence. Shaw (2000) echoes

this, associating these concerns with an awareness of increased divorce rates in the UK, in comparison to Pakistan, where divorce is uncommon. A desire for daughters to be successful is also related to *izzat*; where female family members are the carriers of family honour, it is unsurprising that parents might have high aspirations for their daughters. For example, Ayesha (Teacher, Kirklees) said that her parents had wanted her to study pharmacy at University, but also said that Pakistani parents tend to know only about 'traditional' jobs, whilst Mehreen (Doctor, Leeds) said that she was strongly encouraged by her parents to pursue a career in medicine. She felt that this was partly shaped by her parents' perceptions of gender appropriate careers, and partly by concerns that she should be able to maintain some independence, with her father telling her 'if you become a Doctor it will be your meal ticket...it's a good career for a woman. You will be able to stand on your own two feet.' Hadiqa (University employee, Leeds) said that her parents were keen for her to have a career as they wanted her to 'stand on [her] own two feet and not be controlled by a husband.' The prioritisation of certain 'appropriate' careers over others reflects findings from Bagguley and Hussain (2007), who, in their research on South Asian women in higher education, found that female university applicants favoured five subject areas:

*Medicine and dentistry, subjects allied to medicine, mathematical and computer sciences, law and business and administrative studies...families generally wanted their daughters to study 'traditional' professional subjects such as law, medicine and dentistry.*

Regrets about their own career trajectories and opportunities might also shape parental aspirations for their daughters. For example, Mehreen (Doctor, Leeds) stated that her father had obtained a PhD, but suspected he regretted not going into medicine himself. Similarly, Hadiqa (University employee, Leeds) said that her father had chosen to move to the UK to work in the textile industry, rather than pursue his education in Pakistan. This may be reflected in his desire for her to pursue her education. Thapar-Bjorkert and Sanghera (2010; 255) also found that parental hardship could serve as a motivation to succeed in both education and the labour market, and found that 'working-class parents have ambitions for upward mobility for their children and regard education as the vehicle for achieving these ambitions.'

A final theme that was evident amongst those who were active in the labour market was that value was placed on employment, irrespective of financial gains. Atiqa (Teaching assistant, Kirklees) said that working 'is not about money, but about

spending the time to do something for myself, and to use my qualifications.’ Nadia (Administrator, Leeds) said that going to work gives her a break and ‘it gives me independence’. Farzia (Administrator, Kirklees) said that ‘having a job is about sanity, being out and learning about social life. If I was sat at home, I wouldn’t know what to do.’ This raises two key points. The first is that, by placing an emphasis on skills rather than the money, traditional gender roles can be maintained. If women’s work is associated with utilising skills and having a break from the house, men can maintain their role as provider. Related to this, Zara (Not economically active, Leeds), said that although she was not permitted by her husband to work, she was allowed to learn new skills, and Nida (Not economically active, Leeds) said that she had completed a beautician course but was not allowed to open a shop, so taught other women from home instead. The other key point raised here is that employment is an invaluable means of decreasing social isolation, meaning that facilitating Pakistani women into the labour market remains a critical issue.

This section, and Section 4.2, have linked the importance of marriage for Pakistanis to the ‘strongly demarcated gender roles’ that are central to the *purdah* system (Papanek, 1971), and considered how this shapes labour market participation. Although this has presented some of the ways in which choices to participate, or not participate, in the labour market might be constrained, this section has demonstrated how for many women, employment is viewed positively. Where choices *are* constrained, therefore, this must not be viewed as purely a product of Pakistani culture. Many of the women involved in this study were keen to participate in the labour market, but aware of constraints beyond their own religion and ethnicity. In keeping with this, Section 4.4 considers how other peoples’ perceptions of Pakistani women, particularly in relation to the views about marriage and gender that have already been outlined, might affect labour market opportunities for Pakistani women.

#### **4.4 Discrimination and perceptions of Pakistani women in the labour market**

Discrimination is likely to prevent many Pakistani women from participating in the labour market and, where it is perceived as considerably limiting options, some women may opt out of the labour market altogether if it is anticipated that work will not pay (as discussed in Chapter 1). Discrimination on the basis of ethnicity means that Pakistani women are discriminated against in additional ways, and as such, whilst employment options are limited for white British women too, this is a far more

prominent issue for Pakistani women. Failure to engage with the labour market is therefore likely to be as much a product of the labour market itself as it is of cultural practices that restrict women's access to it.

As discussed in Chapter 3, one way of preserving female modesty for those who observe *purdah* is through veiling, which is an example of what Papanek (1971) terms 'symbolic shelter'. The purpose of veiling is to create a portable barrier, and therefore this is associated with greater mobility for many Pakistani Muslim women, enabling them to leave the house whilst still reducing interactions with men. However, veiling takes on a more political meaning too, by providing a visual cue of religion. Dwyer (1999; 7) describes the veil as 'the dominant signifier for Islam'. Werbner (2007; 162) argues that the multitude of different meanings ascribed to veiling means it can 'endow or deny agency to young South Asian and Muslim women in highly ambivalent ways.' She also describes how Muslims in Britain might adopt veiling in a strategic way to give themselves greater bargaining power, and states that:

*Veiling is a mobile form of purdah that secludes a woman while at the same time allowing her to move around freely in public. For Pakistani girls living in encapsulated, highly conservative, immigrant residential areas, veiling is often a small price to pay for freedom of movement (Werbner, 2007; 175).*

Therefore, for some women, the practice of veiling is empowering and affords them greater mobility. However, it is simultaneously associated with discrimination in the labour market (e.g. Evans and Bowlby, 2000; Steill and Tang, 2010). This section deals firstly with discrimination in the workplace based on religion and religious dress specifically, and secondly with discrimination based on others' perceptions of Pakistani and Muslim cultural practices.

Given that veiling is common practice amongst Muslims, and given that, according to the 2011 Census, the majority of Pakistanis in the UK are Muslims, Table 10 shows the relationship between religion and economic activity for Muslim and non-Muslim white British and Pakistani men and women aged 16-65 in England and Wales. It shows that being a Muslim is associated with lower rates of employment for all groups. However, it has a greater effect on women, with Pakistani Muslim women having the lowest employment rate. This chapter has already argued that the observance of *purdah* is likely to shape Pakistani women's experiences of the labour market but, as demonstrated in Section 4.3, this does not necessarily take the form of non-participation. The lower employment rates amongst Pakistani women could just as easily be linked to increased Islamophobia post 9/11 and 7/7,

which has been associated with increased disadvantage for Muslims in the labour market (e.g. Khattab and Johnston, 2012). Further, Rabby and Rodgers III (2010) report a decrease of 10 percentage points in labour market participation amongst young Muslim men following these attacks, compared to non-Muslim men, as well as declines in real earnings and hours worked, though the affect was lesser for older Muslim men. Further, Abbas (2010; 22) argues that

*In the post-9/11 and post-7/7 period, there has been a sharp focus on the identities of Muslim minorities, but with little or no appreciation of the structural constraints often facing many communities.*

**Table 10: Economic activity for white British and Pakistani Muslim and non-Muslim men and women aged 16-64 in England and Wales**

		White British		Pakistani	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
Muslim	In employment	76.8	55.1	80.2	38.8
	Unemployed	11.0	8.3	10.2	7.8
	Retired	1.4	4.2	1.5	2.7
	Looking after home/family	2.1	22.6	2.2	43.4
	Sick or disabled	8.7	9.8	5.9	7.3
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Non-Muslim	In employment	82.8	74.2	81.4	54.6
	Unemployed	6.3	3.9	10.9	8.3
	Retired	4.5	8.3	1.4	3.2
	Looking after home/family	1.0	8.6	1.7	26.9
	Sick or disabled	5.5	5.0	4.6	7.1
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Whilst veiling can provide Muslim women with greater mobility, as suggested in Chapter 3, Martin et al. (2010; 2) argue that: 'Wearing distinctive dress such as the hijab or a turban allows easy identification of adherents of some religions which may lead to discrimination.' Furthermore, the Telegraph (Bingham, 2016) reported that overlooking job applicants who wear hijabs remains an 'acceptable' form of discrimination. A report by the House of Commons and Women and Equalities Committee (2017; 20) demonstrated that potential employers perceived women who wore hijabs in a very specific way, with one participant in their research saying:

*...Muslim women tend to be asked more than white British women about marriage, about their childcare, about whether they are looking to have this marital status...It is definitely a difference between white British women and Muslim women.*

This anti-Muslim sentiment was also demonstrated in a poll conducted by Ipsos Mori (2006) for the Evening Standard, where over half the respondents stated that 'Muslim women concealing their face is bad for race relations'. Similarly, Tell MAMA (2015), who offer an alternative place for victims to report hate crimes, received 437 reports of anti-Muslim crime in 2015. Further, 61.0% of those who reported such crimes were female, and of this 61.0%, 75.0% were 'visibly Muslim'. They suggest that the hijab is a symbol of 'Muslimness' and

*Consequently, a perpetrator identifies this person as a 'Muslim' in conjunction with the notion, disseminated through Islamophobic ideology, that the person is 'oppressed', a 'terrorist', or pathological. (Tell MAMA, 2015; 15)*

Pakistani women's labour market participation, therefore, must be considered in relation to such accounts of anti-Muslim hate crime and more generalised discrimination against Muslims. This is in terms of both direct discrimination, and perceptions of Muslim women as 'oppressed' (e.g. Chakraborti and Zempi, 2012), which are likely to affect their experiences both within the labour market and in the lead up to entering it (discussed in greater detail in Chapters 6 and 7). This is despite the fact that *purdah* can be adhered to in a multitude of ways (Brah, 1993), and despite the fact that many Muslim women living in the UK are keen to participate in the labour market, viewing it as a valuable way of maintaining independence.

None of the participants in this research discussed their own difficulties in finding employment based on religious or traditional dress, although Farzia (Administrator, Kirklees) said that a friend of hers felt that she had failed to obtain employment because she wore a veil. Nonetheless, several participants spoke of traditional dress in terms of how it affected others' perceptions of them once they were in the workplace. Mehreen (Doctor, Leeds) said that 'you become invisible when you wear a head covering' and also that '[I] always had to apologise for my religion.' Hadiqa (University employee, Leeds) said that people think it's 'weird' to wear traditional dress, and stereotype those who do. Further, she suggested that some students do not see those who wear traditional dress as academics, though she also felt that traditional dress had not hindered her ability to obtain employment. The fact that not

many participants spoke of traditional dress as a barrier to the labour market might, however, reflect the fact that those who were not in employment had not yet had the 'opportunity' to experience this type of discrimination, and also that those who were distanced from the labour market were likely to be constrained by a multitude of barriers, beyond those associated with religious discrimination.

However, participants did discuss other forms of discrimination that directly related to their religious and ethnic identities. Ayesha (Teacher, Kirklees), on taking up a new post, was told by other members of staff that they were concerned she was going to 'Islamify the school', and she expressed concern about the way such attitudes would shape the experiences of the, predominantly South Asian, students at the school (experiences of Pakistani women in educational institutions is discussed in greater detail in Chapters 6 and 7 in terms of skills and qualifications). This was behaviour she observed among other members of staff, who made assumptions about parents' abilities to utilise various communication channels and failed to explain to them, adequately, their children's progress at school. Related to this, Hadiqa (University employee, Leeds), said that, on reflection, her experiences in school were partly shaped by people's perceptions of her as a Pakistani girl, saying that her tutors at school and college did not expect her to continue her education: 'People didn't send their girls on to Uni, *especially Pakistani girls.*' Furthermore, she spoke of the assumption of her careers advisor that she would get married and have children rather than pursue a career. This was, for Hadiqa, counterbalanced by having parents who valued independence and encouraged her to pursue her education, but this will not have been the experience of all women.

These accounts from participants are reflected in other research that specifically posits the veil as a 'key visual symbol of Islam' and a 'symbol of gender inequality (Chakraborti and Zempi, 2012; 269). Subsequently, not only do women who wear veils provide a visual 'threat' to British values, but they are perceived as participating in 'gender based practices identified with Islam that have been perceived as oppressive to women' (Chakraborti and Zempi, 2012; 271). Further, 'veiled women are routinely perceived as submissive, passive, and with very little power over their own lives' (Chakraborti and Zempi, 276). White British women are far less likely to dress in a way that communicates passivity and a lack of power to others (though there are accounts of white British Muslims being perceived in similar way to South Asian Muslims, e.g. Franks, 2010). It becomes difficult, therefore, to tease out the effects of 'tradition' from the effects of structural constraints routinely experienced by Muslim women seeking to participate in the labour market. While it is evident that some women were discouraged from working



by their families, others were encouraged to succeed both academically and in the workplace, but then had to contend with the assumptions of educators and others who might play important roles in shaping their career trajectories. This is discussed in greater depth in Chapter 7.

So far, this chapter has outlined the relationship between marriage, and more broadly expectations of Pakistani women, and labour market participation. This relationship is not straightforward and is extremely varied, resulting in some women disengaging from the labour market, whilst others were encouraged to pursue their careers. This chapter has also outlined the ways in which perceptions of Muslim women are likely to lead to discrimination in the labour market. In particular, whilst veiling can create greater mobility, others may also read it as a symbol of women's oppression. The next section draws a more direct link between marriage and labour market participation by considering marriage migration. This means that a distinction can be drawn between women who live or grew up in the UK and those who migrated later on, and also brings into focus the ways in which labour is divided when the husband is the marriage migrant.

#### **4.5 Marriage Migration**

This section focuses on marriage migration and what this means for both male and female marriage migrants, and subsequently how this affects Pakistani women's labour market participation. Shaw (2006; 211) states that 'most Pakistani immigration is now spousal immigration', and, further, 'the migration of spouses to the UK is a characteristically South Asian phenomenon, but Pakistan accounts for more marriage migrants than India and Bangladesh combined.' Related to this, Charsley (2006; 1169) states that:

*In recent years, the number of British Pakistanis marrying Pakistani nationals has increased, and the majority of British Pakistanis now probably marry transnationally in this way. For many Pakistanis, marriage is one of very few routes for migration to the UK still possible under the current immigration regulations.'*

Marriage migration is, therefore, a significant issue for some Pakistani women, and there are several reasons why it is likely to affect their engagement with and participation in the labour market. First, there are benefits associated with having been born or brought up in the UK as opposed to having moved to the UK later on. Dale (2008; 3), for example, states that:

*For women, in particular, we may expect to see considerable change between first and second generations, not only through greater access to education but also in the extent to which traditional cultural norms concerning women's roles may be changing.*

The extent to which women that were educated in the UK benefit from having experienced the British education system, as well as language fluency, is discussed in Chapters 6 and 7. The idea that 'traditional cultural norms concerning women's roles may be changing' might be exemplified by the group of participants in Leeds discussed in Section 4.2.1 who, despite being distanced from the labour market themselves, spoke of career aspirations for their daughters. Similarly, Fiza (University employee, Leeds), spoke of her mother who said that it was a 'scandal' for her to work, but then said her mother was keen for her to return to work after her maternity leave so that she could look after the children. This perhaps signifies a change in attitudes towards women and work.

Second, for female migrants joining their husbands in the UK, there are risks associated with distance from their families, particularly if prospective husbands conceal undesirable behaviours prior to marriage (Charsley, 2005). Furthermore, Charsley (2005; 389) suggests that the issues associated with increased familial distance for female marriage migrants is likely to be exacerbated by 'the lack of language skill and local support networks.' In addition, Charsley also highlights the extent to which wives are expected to adopt the norms of their in-laws, particularly given the argument, already made, that some families adhere to norms and traditions more strongly than others, or differently to others (e.g. Brah, 1993). Therefore, the risk for female migrants, in terms of labour market participation, relates to the potential for isolation and a lack of skills, and hence lessened bargaining power, in a foreign country.

However, Charsley (2005; 383) also argues that

*Not only are ideas of feminine or masculine at least partly defined with reference to the other, but men play important roles in women's lives, and vice versa. A gendered approach to marriage migration must, therefore, include both men and women.*

Given that just under half of marriage migrants from Pakistan to Britain are male, Charsley (2005; 393) draws a link between men's migration and downward social mobility:

*Qualifications and work experience may not be recognised, high fees for foreign students deter further training, and lack of local knowledge may be compounded by poor English and discrimination to limit employment prospects.*

Given the suggestion (e.g. Ramji, 2007) that men and women depend on one-another to fulfil specific gender roles, it is probable that where the husband is the migrant, this might serve to complicate the household division of labour.

Overall, therefore, marriage migration is related to labour market participation. Charsley et al. (2006) found that migrant husbands had employment rates comparable to those of their British born and/or raised counterparts, whilst this was not the case for migrant wives, who were less likely to be in employment than their British born and/or raised counterparts. This section begins by exploring this link, with a specific focus on how this affects Pakistani women. Table 11 shows the relationship between birthplace and economic activity for all men and women aged 16-64 in England and Wales. It demonstrates firstly that there is a link between place of birth and economic activity, and secondly that this link is gendered. For men, the group least likely to be in employment are those from the UK, whilst those born in the EU have the highest rates of employment. All women have lower rates of employment than their male counterparts, but those least likely to be in employment are those born in the Middle East/Asia. 55.5% of women born in the Middle East/Asia are in employment, compared to the highest rate of 77.4% of women from the EU/Europe. Table 12 shows that 14.0% of Pakistani men, and 19.2% of Pakistani women living in England and Wales were born outside the UK.

**Table 11: Place of birth and economic activity for men and women aged 16-64 in England and Wales**

		UK	Europe /EU	Africa	Middle East/ Asia	Other
Male	In employment	82.5	89.1	82.8	84.1	87.0
	Unemployed	6.7	5.2	9.7	7.0	6.4
	Retired	4.3	1.8	2.2	2.3	2.3
	Looking after home/family	1.0	0.9	1.5	1.9	1.3
	Sick or disabled	5.5	3.0	3.8	4.6	3.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Female	In employment	74.1	77.4	69.8	55.4	76.8
	Unemployed	4.2	5.2	8.7	6.1	5.4
	Retired	7.9	4.1	3.9	4.9	4.6
	Looking after home/family	8.8	10.7	13.3	28.9	10.5
	Sick or disabled	5.0	2.7	4.2	4.8	2.8
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Table 12: Place of birth for white British and Pakistani women aged 16-64 in England and Wales**

	White British male	White British female	Pakistani male	Pakistani female
Migrant from outside UK	4.0	3.2	14.0	19.2
UK born	96.0	96.8	86.0	80.8

It is evident that there is a link between birthplace and economic activity, and that this link is gendered, disproportionately affecting Pakistani women who are born overseas, and furthermore that a reasonable percentage of Pakistani women living in the UK were born overseas. This chapter has also argued that marriage remains a key reason for migration to the UK, and that female marriage migrants might arrive in the UK with differing expectations of if or how they might engage with the labour market. To understand this, Table 13 explores economic activity for married and non-married Pakistani men and women according to whether or not they were born in the UK.

**Table 13: Place of birth and economic activity for Pakistani men and women aged 16-64 in England and Wales**

			Male	Female	
Not married	Migrant	In employment	69.6	42.3	
		Unemployed	26.8	26.9	
		Retired	3.6	0.0	
		Looking after home/family	0.0	26.9	
		Sick or disabled	0.0	3.8	
		Total	100.0	100.0	
		UK born	Economically Active	75.8	54.0
	Unemployed	15.9	15.8		
	Retired	0.6	1.9		
	Looking after home/family	1.3	21.3		
	Sick or disabled	6.4	7.1		
	Total	100.0	100.0		
	Married	Migrant	In employment	59.1	13.4
			Unemployed	33.6	17.1
Retired			2.0	0.5	
Looking after home/family			3.4	67.4	
Sick or disabled			2.0	1.6	
Total			100.0	100.0	
UK born			Economically Active	87.9	44.7
Unemployed		7.7	7.4		
Retired		0.8	0.9		
Looking after home/family		2.0	45.2		
Sick or disabled		1.7	1.8		
Total		100.0	100.0		

For women, the highest employment rate is for those who were born in the UK and were not married at 54.0%, while the lowest overall employment rate was for married female migrants at 13.4%. Whether married or not, Pakistani women benefited from being born in the UK, since this increased the likelihood of them being employed. For men, the highest employment rates were for those born in the UK who were married, whilst married migrants had the lowest employment rates, as well as the highest unemployment rates. This supports the idea that migration itself

has a negative effect on labour market participation for both genders, and this will be explored in more depth in Sections 4.5.1 and 4.5.2.

#### **4.5.1 Female marriage migrants and labour market participation**

This chapter has demonstrated lower levels of employment amongst Pakistani women who have migrated to the UK, and lower rates still for married migrants. These findings are consistent with other literature that suggests migrants face additional constraints in the labour market (e.g. Dale and Ahmed, 2011). This section reflects on these findings, but focuses on the effects of their adapting to the norms of their new families. The benefits of qualifications, fluency in English, and having experienced the British school system are also commonly discussed in relation to the lower levels of economic activity experienced by female migrants compared to those born in the UK, but these factors are discussed in greater detail in Chapters 6 and 7.

Charsley (2005; 396) discusses the practice of wives moving in with their in-laws, which is common in both Pakistan and amongst Pakistanis in the UK, stating that there is an 'expectation that brides will adjust to their husbands' and in-laws' ways and support their interests.' Related to this, Charsley (2005) also highlights the isolation female migrants may experience on moving in with their new family, and joining a new community. This was discussed by several of the participants in this research. Mahira (Third sector employee, Leeds) described the isolation she felt upon moving in with her non-Pakistani in-laws. Although she was born in the UK, she had little contact with her parents after she married her husband. Therefore, although she was not a migrant, her experience is likely to echo aspects of the experiences of some migrants, given the loss of her social network and feelings of isolation once she was married and living with her husband's family. She described feeling 'used' by her parents-in-law because they knew her parents would not come, and becoming a servant in the house, since she had to look after her own children, as well as the children of her brothers-in-law who also lived in the house. Having relocated, she felt that where she lived was 'not my community, not my space.' Although her in-laws allowed her to work part-time, she was still expected to take responsibility for the housework. For Mahira, getting married appeared to decrease both her bargaining power and her mobility outside the home, which was hampered by her in-laws' expectations that she would take responsibility for all the housework. It should be noted, however, that, as a Pakistani in a non-Pakistani Muslim household, she also described being on the receiving end of racist abuse from her in-laws, and therefore this is likely to have exacerbated her feelings of

isolation. Even so, the isolation and lack of mobility reflect other accounts collected for this research, as well as echoing Charsley's suggestion that being a female marriage migrant can be risky not just because of distance but because of having to adjust to a new family. Mahira was not the only participant to highlight the potential risks associated with wives moving in with their in-laws. Farzia (Administrator, Kirklees) was married to a Pakistani migrant, and she viewed this as a positive thing because it meant that her in-laws were in Pakistan rather than England. Therefore, she was aware that her own marriage to a Pakistani migrant counterbalanced the potentially negative repercussions of moving to a new country and living with a new family. Farzia was evidently aware of the potential risks associated with marriage migration, particularly when the migrant is female.

Female marriage migrants are also likely to have different expectations of labour market participation in comparison to male marriage migrants. Much of the literature on the initial migration of South Asians to Britain, which was outlined in Chapter 1, suggests that women moving to the UK to join their husbands might arrive with low expectations regarding participation in the labour market, and instead expect to take on a strictly domestic role (e.g. Leslie and Lindley, 2000). This links to the suggestion made by some of the participants that Pakistani culture is less permissive, which again is likely to shape women's expectations about the division of labour. Indeed, several participants drew distinctions between Pakistani, Muslim, and British culture. For example, Heera (Not economically active, Kirklees), and Atiqa (Teaching assistant, Kirklees) both agreed that Pakistani culture is stricter and women have fewer rights, and pitted this against Islamic culture, which they viewed as more permissive. Similarly, other participants spoke of men in Pakistan being unwilling to help with domestic work. As such it is not unsurprising that women who migrate to the UK from Pakistan, for marriage in particular, do not necessarily expect to participate in the labour market. Indeed, the majority of participants who were distanced from the labour market had migrated from Pakistan, rather than having been born or brought up in the UK. Therefore, the experiences of female migrants, as well as being constrained by differing skills and qualifications, and adjusting to a new community, are likely to be shaped by having come from a country where women are afforded less mobility and are not necessarily expected to participate in paid employment.

#### **4.5.2 Male marriage migrants**

To be joined by a spouse, both men and women must demonstrate that they 'meet the financial requirement' to sponsor them by earning £18,600 a year before tax

(Citizens Advice, 2016). Consequently, husbands can no longer expect to move overseas to marry a wife who has not been active in the labour market, and therefore male migrants 'may start married life dependent on their wife and her family' (Dale and Ahmed, 2011; 922). Furthermore, there might be a clash between their expectations and those of their wives, who have grown up experiencing British culture and the British education system. This has already been mentioned in terms of Pakistani culture being perceived as less permissive than British culture. For men, joining their wives and their wives families in the UK 'may result in the loss of much of men's traditional power in the family' (Charsley, 2005; Dale and Ahmed, 2011; 904). Further, Charsley (2005; 393) states that:

*Immigration regulations requiring demonstrable sources of income to support spousal migrants mean that most women importing husbands from Pakistan are in employment and may, at least initially, hold better paid or higher status jobs than the husband can immediately hope to obtain.*

This section will therefore consider what happens when the husband has migrated to join his wife in the UK, and how this affects divisions of labour.

The costs associated with migration, as already outlined, mean that men relocating to the UK for marriage must, at least initially, accept that their wives are likely to be in employment. Nadia (Administrator, Leeds) moved to England as a young child, and her husband migrated from Pakistan. She left school with some O Levels and immediately entered the labour market, having received a lot of support from her teachers at school to do so. She said that her husband did not initially want her to work, but that when he arrived in the UK he had no access to money, so she continued to work. In this instance, therefore, the more traditional division of labour was subverted out of necessity. Nadia did take some time off whilst her children were young, but after returning to work she and her husband both worked part-time and evenly split household chores and childcare. Nadia's account echoes Dale and Ahmed's (2011) suggestion that situations where husbands from overseas join women in the UK may provide the opportunity for women to challenge gender roles, since they necessitate greater mobility outside the home for women.

Charsley (2005) argues that the risks faced by male marriage migrants have elicited less attention than those faced by female migrants, but they are certainly worth considering here to the extent that men's and women's labour (in terms of both labour market participation and paid labour) are interrelated, as is highlighted throughout this thesis. For some men, moving to Britain to join their wives is associated with downward social mobility. Charsley (2005) discusses an



interviewee who had almost finished his medical training, and on moving to Britain had to seek work through an agency. Similarly, Hadiqa (University employee, Leeds) stated that when her father moved to the UK from Pakistan in the 1960s, he turned down a university scholarship in favour of manual work in Yorkshire, demonstrating a relationship between migration and loss of opportunity in the labour market. It has already been suggested in this chapter that Pakistani men may find themselves working in precarious and low-paid work. Table 14 demonstrates that there are some differences in occupation types for Pakistani men born in the Middle East/Asia, in comparison to those born in the UK. Whilst there are some similarities across the categories, it is notable that 30.5% of men who were born in the Middle East/Asia are in the 'Process, plant and machine operatives' category. This category represents jobs which '...do not pay badly but employees from ethnic minority groups are paid less well than their white counterparts...' (Brynin and Longhi, 2015), and could therefore be taken as an indication that male migrants are disadvantaged in the labour market.

**Table 14: Occupational categories for Pakistani men aged 16-64 born in England and in the Middle East/Asia**

	Born the UK	Born in Middle East/Asia
Managers, directors, proprietors	10.8	10.7
Professionals	28.0	26.8
Associate professionals	12.3	5.2
Administrative and secretarial	7.0	3.9
Skilled trades	7.3	11.0
Caring, personal service, leisure	3.0	2.4
Sales and customer service	16.5	9.6
Process, plant and machine operatives	15.2	30.5
Total	100.0	100.0

Some participants held negative views of men born in Pakistan, which were largely related to perceived differences between Pakistani and British cultures. For example, of her husband, Farzia (Administrator, Leeds) said 'he's not from Pakistan so he's not backwards.' For some participants, Pakistan-born husbands are viewed as being less permissive and more 'strict' than British-born husbands. This was

often in relation to distinguishing between Pakistani and Islamic culture; the former less permissive, based on negative perceptions of British women, and the latter more open to interpretation and not necessarily constraining. Indeed, Farzia said that 'religion is one thing, culture's another', and described culture as oppressive, whilst 'Islam is free'. Heera stated that her Pakistan-born husband (she was UK-born) could be strict but she did not mind. In differentiating between Pakistani and Islamic culture, Heera and Atiqa (Teaching assistant, Kirklees) agreed that Pakistani culture was quite strict and that women in Pakistan have fewer rights, whilst Islam states that husbands should help their wives, affording women more rights. Similarly, other participants said that men from Pakistan were less likely to help with the housework. Farzia (Administrator, Kirklees) said that 'English men encourage you to work, Pakistani men are more dominant.' Nonetheless, she suggested that, since men born in Pakistan who marry UK-born women have a 'golden ticket', they must adjust to their wives' life-styles, further reflecting the notion that it is perhaps easier for British-born women to be joined by Pakistani husbands than vice-versa.

This section has demonstrated how the relationship between spousal migration and labour market participation varies according to the gender of the migrant. Female marriage migrants are less likely to be economically active than their British-born counterparts, and in this chapter this has been considered in terms of isolation and adherence to the norms of their new families. The experiences of female migrants are reconsidered in terms of skills and qualifications in Chapters 6 and 7. For women with husbands born in Pakistan, their experiences of the labour market are more complex. There is certainly a greater necessity for wives of Pakistani migrants to be economically active, not least because of visa requirements. However, Pakistani husbands are viewed as more strict, and this might have an effect on their wives' ability to participate in the labour market.

## **4.6 Conclusion**

This chapter began by demonstrating higher marriage rates amongst Pakistanis in England and Wales than amongst other ethnic groups (excluding Bangladeshis), and further argued that the relationship between marriage and labour market participation is, for Pakistani women, only partially mediated by dependent children. This chapter has also argued that marriage affects men and women's labour market participation in different ways.

Initially, the relationship between marriage and Pakistani women's labour market participation was considered in relation to the linkage between an emphasis on marriage amongst Pakistanis, and a tendency to observe gender norms quite strictly, which is related to *izzat* and *purdah*, discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3. Accounts from participants suggested that, for some, their lives are shaped by an emphasis on marriage (although there is variation as to *how* this happens, which is discussed in greater detail in terms of participation in education, in Chapters 6 and 7). Furthermore, some participants viewed earning as being a 'husband's responsibility', though this did not necessarily mean they did not participate in the labour market. However, the role of commonly held stereotypes of Pakistani women, and in particular those who were also visibly Muslim, was also argued to shape labour market participation.

Marriage migration was also explored in this chapter, and was postulated as affecting labour market participation differently according to the gender of the migrant. Being a migrant is risky for both men and women, and this was viewed as partially being due to a clash between British and Pakistani cultural norms. For female migrants, the process of relocating can be isolating, whilst for male migrants, relocating might challenge pre-existing ideas about how household labour should be divided, particularly if they find themselves unable to find well-paid, stable employment. Again, migration is returned to in Chapters 6 and 7, where it is considered in terms of skills and qualifications. Chapter 5 will reconsider some of the issues discussed in this chapter in its exploration of the relationship between dependent children and labour market participation.

## 5 Children

### 5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 explored the relationship between marriage and labour market participation. This demonstrated how an emphasis on preserving women's modesty, particularly prevalent amongst Pakistani Muslims (e.g. Papanek, 1971; 1973; Ramji, 2007), might shape women's choices pertaining to labour market participation. It argued that, for Pakistani communities, there is a propensity to locate women in the home and men in the workplace. This contention was supported by the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. Nonetheless, this was not the case for all of the participants. Whilst some were distanced from the labour market (Turner and Wigfield, 2012), others were actively participating in it, and spoke of how they valued work, and further, of how they were encouraged by their parents to develop their careers and maintain their independence.

Furthermore, Chapters 3 and 4 have argued that a heavily gendered division of labour is not exclusive to Pakistani communities, but is more of a universal issue. For example, Park et al. (2013) suggest that women still undertake more unpaid housework than men, whilst ONS (2013b) report that 42.0% of women in employment work part-time. Nonetheless Robson and Berthoud (2003; 3) describe South Asian communities in Britain as having '...an "old fashioned" family formation type...' whereby a comparison is drawn between the experiences of South Asian women now with '...white women in Britain during the 1950s and 1960s...Women tend to marry at early ages and have children shortly thereafter.' Notably, coupled with a rise in women's employment between the beginning and end of the 20th century, which almost doubled, the number of British women having children before the age of 30 has steadily declined since the 1960s, whilst the number of women having children over the age of 30 is increasing (ONS, 2014). Further, Chapter 4 demonstrated higher marriage rates amongst Pakistani women compared to white British women, as well as a greater propensity to marry young, and a more pronounced relationship between marriage and labour market participation for Pakistani women.

Dale et al. (2006) suggested that for white British women, the relationship between marriage and labour market participation tends to be mediated by dependent children, whilst Chapter 4 demonstrated that, for Pakistani women, marriage had an

effect on labour market participation irrespective of dependent children.

Nonetheless, dependent children have been cited as a key issue in other research that explores Pakistani women's labour market participation. For example, South Asian women are more likely to have children at an earlier age (e.g. Robson and Berthoud, 2003). Furthermore, previous research (e.g. Nandi and Platt, 2010) suggests that Pakistani women tend to have a greater a number of children than women of other ethnic groups, which may suggest an emphasis on mothering in the Pakistani community. This is in keeping with research by Dale et al. (2006; 461), who state that:

*South Asian families traditionally have strongly demarcated gender roles, reinforced by a belief in the importance of the family and of the role of a mother in bringing up children.*

The relationship between motherhood and labour market participation is complex to the extent that there is cultural variation in the role of the mother and what is perceived as 'good mothering.' Duncan and Irwin (2004) suggest that African-Caribbean women view spending time in paid work as 'good mothering', where paid work is encapsulated in 'family life'. By contrast, Brown (2006) suggests that, for many Muslim women, motherhood and home-making are legitimate labour choices, whereby domestic labour is valued in the same way as wage labour. Nonetheless, the relationship between motherhood and labour market participation must also be viewed in terms of the increasingly individualised (as opposed to family focused) nature of employment policy in the UK, whereby there is an increasing expectation that all adults in a household will participate in the labour market (as discussed in Chapter 1). Such expectations are complicated by a gendered labour market, and the underlying assumption that women remain responsible for care-giving (e.g. Daly, 2011).

As such, in the UK it is not always easy for mothers to participate in the labour market. For Pakistani women, particularly, this is likely to be further complicated by the aforementioned 'old fashioned' ideas about family formation, which were discussed in greater detail in Chapters 3 and 4. In relation to this, Nandi and Platt (2010) report that, while dependent children are associated with greater household income for many ethnic groups, this is not the case in Pakistani households, for whom dependent children have a negative effect on household income. The relationship between motherhood and women's labour market participation is well documented (e.g. Joshi et al., 1999; Metcalf and Rolfe, 2010). Consequently, it is unsurprising that having dependent children is commonly identified as a key life-

stage factor affecting Pakistani women's labour market participation (Dale 2006; Salway 2007). This relationship is a complex one, since it is likely to be shaped by ideological views of motherhood and the morality of caring, as well as more practical considerations about how best to combine work and care. The increasing individualisation of social policy (e.g. Daly, 2011), in this respect, contrasts with the expectation that childcare is a woman's job. Since fathers work more hours than men without children, and more hours than women with or without children (e.g. Hardill and Watson, 2004), it follows that women are still likely to be charged with the bulk of domestic labour.

Drawing on issues already raised in Chapters 3 and 4, this chapter explores the ways that Pakistani women combine work and motherhood, as well as considering the domestic division of labour more broadly. It begins by exploring the impact of dependent children on labour market participation, and considers how motherhood and perceptions of motherhood might shape this. It then explores ways in which women might seek to combine work and childcare, specifically through flexible working, and the use of both formal, and informal childcare, with a focus on the extent to which current policy that seeks to enable and encourage mothers to combine work and care supports Pakistani women who wish to participate in the labour market.

## **5.2 Dependent children and labour market participation**

The relationship between dependent children and labour market participation affects both men and women, but in different ways. ONS (2014) reports that men with dependent children are more likely to participate in the labour market than those without, whilst having dependent children is, for women, associated with lower levels of labour market participation, as well as a greater likelihood of working part-time. The ONS findings reflect prior research by Hardill and Watson (2004), who found that men with dependent children were likely to work longer hours than men without dependent children, whilst women with dependent children worked fewer hours than women without. The relationship between dependent children and labour market participation for white British and Pakistani men and women aged 16-64 in England and Wales is illustrated in Table 15.

**Table 15: Economic activity according to ethnicity, and the presence of dependent children for white British and Pakistani men and women aged 16-64 in England and Wales**

		White British		Pakistani	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
No dependent children	In employment	81.9	74.7	75.6	47.1
	Unemployed	5.7	2.8	11.8	8.1
	Retired	6.8	13.7	3.3	6.5
	Looking after home/family	0.8	4.2	2.3	27.3
	Sick/disabled	4.7	4.7	7.1	11.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Dependent children	In employment	89.7	74.8	83.1	35.4
	Unemployed	5.4	5.1	8.9	7.5
	Retired	0.7	0.4	0.7	0.6
	Looking after home/family	1.6	16.4	2.3	51.9
	Sick/disabled	2.6	3.3	5.0	4.7
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 16 shows that the relationship between dependent children and labour market participation is mediated by both gender and ethnicity. For both white British and Pakistani men, dependent children are associated with an increase in employment of over 5.0 percentage points, which is consistent with previous research (Hardill and Watson, 2004; ONS, 2014). For white British women, employment remains the same irrespective of dependent children, though the gender gap increases with dependent children, from 7.2 percentage points to 14.9 percentage points. For Pakistani women, however, dependent children are associated with a decrease in employment of 11.7 percentage points, as well as an increase in economic inactivity due to looking after home/family of 24.6 percentage points, compared to an increase of 12.2 percentage points for white British women with dependent children. Furthermore, the largest gender gap is between Pakistani men and women with dependent children, at 47.7 percentage points (although it should be noted that there is also a large gender gap for Pakistani men and women *without* dependent children).

The findings presented in Table 15 are not only consistent with prior research that indicates men's and women's labour market participation is affected differently by dependent children, but also with research that suggests Pakistani women with dependent children are less likely to participate in the labour market than mothers in other ethnic groups (e.g. Duncan and Irwin, 2004; Salway, 2007). Accounts from some of the participants also indicated an expectation that they would leave the labour market if and when they had children, or at the very least that childcare should be prioritised over the pursuit of paid employment. For example, Fiza (University employee, Leeds) said that 'a woman's role is to protect and maintain her home and family', also stating that she initially declined the opportunity to return to work after her maternity leave because she valued motherhood.

The role of dependent children in shaping women's labour market participation is also likely to vary according to age. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, overall, women's labour market participation is steadily increasing in the UK. Exploring the role of age is a useful way of considering the scope for change over time, as well as whether or not expectations that women take primary responsibility for childcare are decreasing. This is illustrated in Table 16, which shows the relationship between dependent children and labour market participation for white British and Pakistani women aged 16-64 in England and Wales, for three different age categories.



**Table 16: Economic activity for white British and Pakistani women aged 16-64 in England and Wales with dependent children, according to age**

		Dependent children		No dependent children	
		White British	Pakistani	White British	Pakistani
16-24	Employed	60.7	45.7	87.8	55.7
	Unemployed	13.0	17.7	9.3	18.7
	Retired	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2
	Looking after home/family	24.3	33.3	1.0	21.7
	Sick/disabled	2.0	3.2	1.8	3.8
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
25-49	Employed	76.4	35.2	89.2	61.2
	Unemployed	4.3	6.6	2.8	8.0
	Retired	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2
	Looking after home/family	16.0	54.3	3.0	24.1
	Sick/disabled	3.2	3.8	4.7	6.5
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
50-64	Employed	75.6	21.8	62.2	24.1
	Unemployed	3.2	3.0	1.5	3.3
	Retired	3.8	6.9	25.4	17.8
	Looking after home/family	11.3	49.9	5.6	34.4
	Sick/disabled	6.1	18.4	5.3	20.5
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 16 shows that the relationship between dependent children and labour market participation varies with age, and the effect of age varies according to ethnic group. White British women are more likely to be in employment if they do not have dependent children, with the exception of the 50-64 age category, for whom not having dependent children is associated with a decrease in employment of 13.4 percentage points. However, this is likely to reflect the larger percentage of women in this age category who are retired (25.4% compared to 3.8%).

For Pakistani women with dependent children, employment declines with age. 21.8% of those in the 50-64 age category are in employment, compared to 35.2% of those aged 25-49, and 47.5% of those aged 16-24. Furthermore, 17.7% of those in the 16-24 age category are unemployed, and are therefore active in the labour market since this is an indication that they would like to find employment. Pakistani women with no dependent children are more likely to be in employment if they are in the 25-49 age group, although those in the 16-24 age group are more likely to be economically active when employment and unemployment rates are added together. For those in the 50-64 age category, employment is slightly higher but the difference is minimal. This could be viewed as an indication that attitudes towards motherhood are changing for Pakistani women, with the younger age groups more likely to be economically active whether or not they have dependent children; the women in the 50-64 category appear to be observing more traditional gender roles, as highlighted by Robson and Berthoud (2003), for example.

As well as the age of the mother, the age of the children is likely to add further complexity to the relationship between dependent children and labour market participation. ONS (2013b) state that having children under the age of three has a particularly pronounced effect on women's economic activity, and also that lone mothers with children under the age of three were less likely to be employed than mothers with partners. This is illustrated in Table 17, which shows lower employment rates for women with young children, as well as for those with three or more children; specifically, the lowest employment rate is for women with 3 or more children aged 0-9. Table 18 shows that Pakistani women are more likely than white British women to have three or more children aged 0-9.

**Table 17: Women's economic activity according to age and number of dependent children**

Number and age of dependent children	Economic activity	
One dependent child aged 0-9	Economically Active	72.4
	Unemployed	6.5
	Retired	0.4
	Looking after home/family	18.2
	Sick or disabled	2.5
One dependent child aged 10-18	Economically Active	80.6
	Unemployed	5.5
	Retired	1.0
	Looking after home/family	7.8
	Sick or disabled	2.5
Two dependent children, youngest aged 0-9	Economically Active	70.0
	Unemployed	5.0
	Retired	0.1
	Looking after home/family	23.0
	Sick or disabled	1.9
Two dependent children, youngest aged 10-18	Economically Active	81.4
	Unemployed	4.6
	Retired	0.3
	Looking after home/family	10.2
	Sick or disabled	3.5
Three or more dependent children, youngest 0-9	Economically Active	50.2
	Unemployed	6.4
	Retired	0.1
	Looking after home/family	40.1
	Sick or disabled	3.2
Three or more dependent children, youngest 10-18	Economically Active	70.6
	Unemployed	6.9
	Retired	0.2
	Looking after home/family	17.6
	Sick or disabled	4.7

**Table 18: Age and number of dependent children for all white British and Pakistani women aged 16-64 in England and Wales**

Age and number of dependent children	White British	Pakistani
No dependent children	53.8	30.9
One dependent child aged 0-9	9.9	11.8
One dependent child aged 10-18	11.6	9.8
Two dependent children, youngest aged 0-9	11.6	15.1
Two dependent children, youngest aged 10-18	6.2	5.9
Three or more dependent children, youngest 0-9	5.7	23.3
Three or more dependent children, youngest 10-18	1.1	3.3

The relationship between dependent children and labour market participation is therefore complex, and shaped by numerous factors. First, it is shaped by gender, in that men and women are both affected by dependent children but in different ways, which supports a gendered division of labour where men remain located in a breadwinning role (as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4). Nonetheless, the gender difference is more pronounced for Pakistani women, compared to white British women. However, exploring the relationship between dependent children and labour market participation whilst also taking age into account suggests that there might be scope for change over time, with younger Pakistani women increasingly likely to be active in the labour market even if they also have dependent children. This chapter has also demonstrated that age and number of dependent children are likely to affect labour market participation; having younger dependent children, and having a greater number of dependent children, are both associated with lower levels of employment, as demonstrated in Table 18. Yet again this affect is more pronounced for Pakistani women, and furthermore Pakistani women are more likely than white British women to have more children, and more young children.

The findings reported in this chapter so far could be taken as an indication that Pakistani families are indeed more 'old fashioned' (Robson and Berthoud, 2003), and that, related to this, Pakistani women 'mother' their children in a specific way. This is considered in Section 5.3, which discusses 'preferences' for particular ways of dividing work and care. However, the findings could also be an indication that Pakistani women and white British women differ in their strategies for consolidating

work and childcare, for a multitude of reasons. The ways in which, and the extent to which Pakistani women employ flexible working and formal or informal childcare (which have been discussed in Chapter 3) to enable them to participate in the labour market are discussed in greater detail in Sections 5.4 and 5.5.

### **5.3 ‘Preferences’, perceptions of motherhood, and the division of domestic labour**

Concepts of motherhood and caring, within different social contexts, are central to the ways women negotiate between the motherhood role and participation in the labour market. As outlined in Chapter 1, Hakim’s (2001; 2006) highly critiqued ‘preference theory’ argues that some women ‘choose’ to prioritise work, some ‘choose’ to prioritise care, and the majority fall somewhere in the middle. Hakim has been criticised for over-stating the role of choice in navigating between domestic and paid labour. For example, Tomlinson (2006) argues that women make choices based on the knowledge available to them, which brings into question the mechanism of choice where knowledge is limited (this is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 1). Furthermore, Duncan et al. (2003) argue that women are socialised to perform caring roles, providing a further challenge to the idea of ‘choice.’ In over-stating the extent to which women can really ‘choose’ if and how they participate in the labour market, Hakim (2000; 2006) overlooks the additional structural constraints that are experienced by women, and that affect their ability to choose. Having outlined, in Sections 5.1 and 5.2, the relationship between gender, dependent children, and economic activity, this section considers how perceptions of motherhood, for Pakistani women more specifically, might contribute to domestic labour being divided in certain ways, with particular reference to the typologies proposed by Hakim (2000).

Many of the participants in this research were either participating in the labour market or intended to participate at some point, and most also had dependent children. However, there was considerable diversity in methods of combining work and care, and for some of the women, these methods were clearly determined by their perceptions of motherhood, and how it should best be consolidated with other forms of labour. Some participants had taken time out of employment in order to care for their children. Nadia (Administrator, Leeds) took 8 years out employment before returning to work in a part-time administrative role, in order to re-build her confidence. Despite taking time out of work while her children were younger, her husband was also in part-time employment, and they split household chores

equally. Atiqa (Teaching assistant, Kirklees) also described taking time out of employment following the birth of her daughter, before returning to work in a slightly less intensive role (as a teaching assistant rather than a teacher), 4 mornings a week, which meant that she could do household chores and collect her daughter from school in the afternoon. According to Hakim's typologies, therefore, Nadia and Atiqa might best be described as 'adaptable', managing to both work and care, but without prioritising participation in paid work, if taking time out of employment indicates a prioritisation of motherhood over paid employment. This pattern is certainly not specific to Pakistani women, indeed Hakim (2000) states that most women fall into the 'adaptive' category. Furthermore, both Nadia and Atiqa describe a common career trajectory for women, which is shaped by periods out of work, and a return to work on a part-time basis (e.g. Joshi et al., 1996).

Fiza (University employee, Leeds) was also in employment, and had followed a similar career trajectory, characterised by periods out of employment when her children were born. Indeed, she described herself as having obtained her current role via a non-traditional route. However, the way she spoke about motherhood ('motherhood is more valued in Islam') indicated that she prioritised this over her career. Furthermore, her prioritisation of motherhood over paid work was also reflected in her employment decisions post-maternity leave; she stated that she had, in the past, turned down a job she was offered specifically because of the value she placed on motherhood. Referring to formal childcare, she said that she did not want her children to 'grow up with people who didn't share my values.' Despite this, she returned to work out of necessity after maternity leave, and, for some time, she was the 'breadwinner' in her household. Nonetheless, she also stated that 'it's a myth that women can share responsibility with men for children, because there is something specific about the mother-child relationship'. This reflects Duncan et al.'s (2003; 310) suggestion that:

*...people do not view care simply as a constraint on paid work. Rather they feel morally obligated to care, and often wish to do so. Furthermore, when it comes to dependent children, there can be non-negotiable, and deeply gendered, moral requirements to take responsibility for children's needs and to place these first.*

This is echoed in Fiza's account, since, although she was in paid employment, she still viewed her children as a priority, and furthermore valued the 'mother-child relationship'.

Nadia and Atiqa both had arrangements whereby their jobs enabled them to also provide childcare, with Atiqa taking on a part-time role once her daughter was at school. They each spoke of valuing work; Atiqa felt that her job was a good opportunity for her to use her skills and do something 'for myself', whilst Nadia valued her job because it had helped her to build her confidence after a long period out of the labour market. Nonetheless, they might not be described as 'career oriented'. Similarly, although Fiza had been in employment quite consistently, and sometimes out of necessity, she was still clear that motherhood was a greater priority for her. By contrast, Ayesha (Teacher, Kirklees) was highly career oriented; she described attending an interview when she was pregnant, since it 'wouldn't stop a man', and because she was concerned about slowing down the progress of her career. She also took a short maternity leave, and had a childcare arrangement where responsibilities were shared with her husband and her children's grandparents. Mehreen (Doctor, Leeds) was also very career oriented, and described how she had been clear with her husband (to whom she was engaged at 17) about her chosen career path. Once she qualified as a doctor, their choice of location 'hinged on my career aspirations'. Nonetheless, when discussing the proposed changes to junior doctors' contracts, she said that if those changes took place she would probably leave her job since she planned to start a family and would not be able to continue working and pay for childcare. Despite both Ayesha and Mehreen being career oriented, childcare arrangements remained an important consideration which, for Mehreen, could potentially mean leaving her chosen career eventually.

Conversely, some of the participants could better be described as falling into the category of those who opt out of the labour market entirely, and prioritise childcare. For example, Heera (Not economically active, Kirklees), who had been employed in the past, said that 'having a child and a husband makes it difficult to work'. Other participants who were less engaged with the labour market did not discuss this in relation to childcare, although their distance from the labour market could probably be explained in terms of a stronger adherence to a gendered division of labour, as well as *pardah*, which is discussed in greater detail in Chapters 3 and 4. Without much expectation of participating in the labour market, these participants may not have consciously factored childcare commitments into their decisions. Childcare commitments can also affect labour market participation in other, less direct ways, for example in terms of reducing the flexibility to attend ESOL classes, and this is discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

Although this section has used participants' accounts to, very loosely, group them according to Hakim's (2000) typologies, what is evident here is a conflict between the prioritisation of motherhood and the need or desire to participate in the labour market. As Duncan (2003) argues, women are socialised into caring roles, and as Tomlinson (2006) suggests, women can only make decisions according to the knowledge and resources available to them. Fiza (University employee, Leeds), who was very family oriented, ended up working too due to her husband being unable to, whilst Mehreen (Doctor, Leeds), although admittedly career oriented, was willing to leave her job in order to start a family. For the women who were not in employment and cited childcare responsibilities as one of the reasons, the factors contributing to this decision must be considered; a lack of knowledge of the availability of certain options, particularly for those for whom English was not their first language, may well be an important factor in their decision making. Finally, as discussed in Section (4.4), the role of others in shaping attitudes to labour market participation should not be overlooked, particularly where participants are being perceived by others as family, rather than work oriented. The next two sections consider the ways mothers might combine work and childcare commitments, exploring both flexible working arrangements and the provision of childcare, with a focus on accessibility.

## **5.4 Flexible work**

The purpose of flexible working arrangements has been ostensibly to incorporate more women into the labour market. For example, Metcalf and Rolfe (2010) cite flexible working, and part-time working in particular as a family friendly policy that might encourage mothers to re-enter the labour market. Similarly, Crompton (2002) draws an association between gender and flexible employment, and argues that if women continue to work in flexible employment, there will be little change in the gendered division of labour. This section considers flexible working as a means of work-care consolidation by using the following definition, taken from Kelliher and Anderson (2008; 4).

*Flexible working has tended to be used as an umbrella-term to encompass a wide variety of activities, including, for example, practices such as remote working (from home, other company premises etc), reduced hours, different hours (either agreed, non-standard hours, or discretion over working hours on a day-by-day basis) and compressed*



*working time where employees work their contractual hours over a fewer number of days than is normal (e.g. a 9 day fortnight).*

To explore the extent to which Pakistani women utilise flexible working, Table 19 shows rates of part-time and full-time working for white British and Pakistani men and women of working age, with and without dependent children, where part-time working is classified as being less than 30 hours per week.

**Table 19: Part-time working rates for white British and Pakistani men and women aged 16-64 with and without dependent children**

		White British		Pakistani	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
No dependent children	Part-time	12.0	34.9	28.3	37.6
	Full-time	88.0	65.1	71.7	62.4
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Dependent children	Part-time	9.0	58.5	38.2	61.2
	Full-time	91.0	41.5	61.8	38.8
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Overall, irrespective of dependent children, Table 19 shows that men are less likely than women to work part-time and more likely to work full-time. Furthermore, although there are slight differences between white British and Pakistani women, with Pakistani women more likely to work part-time whether or not they have dependent children, these differences are not large (not exceeding three percentage points).

For white British men, having dependent children is associated with a small decrease in part-time working and an increase in full-time working of 3.0 percentage points, whilst for Pakistani men, having dependent children is associated with an increase in part-time working of just over 10.0 percentage points. This could be indicative of a more egalitarian division of labour within Pakistani households. Indeed, Nadia (Administrator, Kirklees) stated that both she and her husband worked part-time and shared childcare responsibilities. Further, Ayesha (Teacher, Kirklees) stated that, while she was at work, childcare was shared between her parents and her husband. However, this should also be considered within the context of Pakistani men being concentrated in precarious employment. For example, in research on South Asian men in Luton, McDowell et al. (2014; 851) report that 'casual forms of attachment and exploitative insecure

contracts were common'. Dwyer et al. (2010) also reported that Pakistani men tended to work in more precarious forms of employment. The increase in part-time hours for Pakistani men with dependent children may therefore be indicative of the types of employment they find themselves in, rather than a more egalitarian division of labour.

Dependent children are associated with increased part-time working for both white British and Pakistani women; this is an increase of 23.7 percentage points for white British women, and 22.4 percentage points for Pakistani women. This suggests that, of those who *are* in employment, both white British and Pakistani women utilise part-time working as a way of combining work with childcare. Nonetheless, this should be considered firstly in relation to the lower overall employment rates amongst Pakistani women, and secondly in terms of whether a propensity for mothers to work part-time reflects choice or whether they would prefer to be employed on a full-time basis. Referring to Tomlinson's (2006) critique of Hakim's (2000) preference theory, such patterns must be considered in terms of the options available and people's awareness of those options. The overall lower employment rates amongst Pakistani women could be taken as an indication that they do not utilise flexible working as a way of participating in the labour market. Further, the propensity for mothers to work part-time rather than full-time may be borne out of necessity, rather than choice.

For some women, the types of work they perceive to be available to them are difficult to combine with childcare responsibilities. For example, Reema (Not economically active, Kirklees) said that she had worked in a warehouse but found that the shift-work was difficult to combine with childcare, so she left and was not in employment at the time of her interview. Although she had previously obtained voluntary work in a charity shop she found that she was deemed 'not experienced enough' for other, similar, roles. Difficulties, or perceived difficulties, in obtaining flexible employment may therefore reflect the concentration of Pakistani women within certain employment sectors that offer less opportunity for part-time and flexible working arrangements. Notably, the majority of participants in this research who worked part-time were employed in the public sector. Dale and Holdsworth (1998; 91) speculatively link work patterns to the concentration of ethnic minority women in certain types of work, suggesting that '...minority ethnic women may also have particular difficulty in obtaining full-time jobs in higher-level non-manual work', whilst Owen et al. (2015) report that ethnic groups are unevenly distributed by industry, and specifically '...Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups are concentrated in

the trade, accommodation and transport sector (including hotels and restaurants).’ Being excluded from the types of employment most likely to offer part-time or flexible contracts might be one explanatory factor for the lower numbers of Pakistani women in the labour market. If they must choose between precarious forms of employment that are difficult to combine with childcare, it may be easier to opt out of the labour market all together, as was the case for Reema.

The Work-Life Balance Employee Survey (2012; 76) supports the idea that jobs that can be done flexibly tend to be taken up by a specific type of person;

*The availability of many forms of flexible working was most commonly reported by women, those with higher qualifications, those in managerial/professional occupations, public sector employees, trade union members or those whose pay and conditions were agreed between the employer and a union.*

In addition, the Work-Life Balance Employee Survey (2012; 76) highlights knowledge about the availability of flexible working as a key issue; in regards to awareness of the right to request flexible working, the survey states that

*Awareness was also higher among those in managerial/ professional occupations, with particularly low awareness among those in routine or manual occupations.*

As such, it is probable that some women will lack awareness of their right to request flexible work. Although this was not stated explicitly by any of the participants, there was some discussion regarding a lack of support available in finding work, and this might extend to a lack of knowledge about flexible working. This issue relates specifically to Tomlinson’s (2006) argument that women make decisions relating to labour market participation based on the knowledge available to them, rather than basing their decisions entirely on preferences.

Nonetheless, part-time or flexible working arrangements were utilised by some of the participants, specifically with relation to childcare. Heera (Teaching assistant, Kirklees) had a part-time job that meant she could collect her daughter from school, whilst Zeba (ESOL teacher, Leeds) said that she balanced work with childcare by teaching one day a week, and working from home in a different job on other days. Farzia (Administrator, Kirklees) worked a 4 day week, which meant that she could

look after her son one day a week, and he could go to nursery one day a week, and was then looked after by her mother or sister on the other three days of the week.

Aside from the use of flexible working arrangements as a way of combining work with care, what is evident here, is the complexity of the childcare arrangements. Ayesha (Teacher, Kirklees) also spoke of a complex care arrangement; her husband took her children to be looked after by their grandparents before work, and she collected them on the way home. In this case, however, her husband, a plumber, had flexible employment whilst she did not. It is likely to be the case that those who do use flexible working arrangements also have other structures in place; family nearby or husbands who work more flexible hours that enable them to do so too.

While flexible work may seem like a good option for women who wish to combine work with childcare responsibilities, as exemplified in the cases outlined above, this is not necessarily always the case. First of all, previous research has brought into question the efficacy of flexible employment in enabling women to provide both work and care. Ward et al. (1996; 13) view part-time work positively, as a way of increasing women's independence, with the caveat that such employment depends on the availability of childcare. However, they conclude that:

*Only those with the ability to get or retain a well-paid job whilst their children are young are able to afford full-time childcare which...can be very costly. A high proportion of the arrangements made in the absence of subsidised facilities involve other family members rather than the purchase of childcare on the market.*

Therefore, those who work part-time may find themselves reliant on informal childcare since expenditure on childcare could negate earnings from part-time work, and this is discussed in greater detail in Section 3.5.2. In addition, part-time work can be associated with jobs that are: '...undemanding and lacking in responsibility and promotion prospects... low paid and segregated from the work of men' (Dale and Holdsworth, 1998; 79). Part-time jobs also tend to have lower hourly rates of pay, compared to full-time jobs (ONS, 2015). Crompton (2002; 544) argues that

*...Flexible working is often insecure employment, offers less (proportionately and absolutely) by way of employment-related benefits and, in many cases, insufficient income to support a one-person household, let alone a household with any dependents.*

Although it is evident that some of the participants in this research used part-time or flexible working as a way of combining work and care, there are many reasons why this might not be a viable option. As well as Pakistani women being more likely to work in jobs that are not available on a flexible basis (as exemplified by Reema, who found it difficult to combine shift work in a factory with childcare responsibilities), the concentration of Pakistani men in low-paid, precarious work (e.g. Dwyer, 2010) may mean that there is little incentive for women to participate in part-time employment when their earnings might only just cover the cost of childcare on other days, meaning that work simply does not pay (as discussed in Chapter 1). Furthermore, the extent to which the opportunity to work flexibly is a case of privilege should not be overlooked - employees have stronger bargaining power the more knowledge they have about employment rights and structures, and this may not be the case for Pakistani women, particularly if they are recent migrants to the UK.

This section has explored the extent to which Pakistani women use flexible forms of working as a way of combining work with childcare. It began by showing that white British and Pakistani women who are in employment have similar rates of part-time working. Nonetheless, the efficacy of flexible working arrangements as a way of facilitating Pakistani women into the labour market should be questioned when Pakistani women have much lower overall rates of economic activity than women in most other ethnic groups; this suggests that they may be less likely than their white British counterparts to use flexible working to their advantage. Some of the participants in this research did work flexibly, though had fairly complex care arrangements. Nonetheless, not everyone is equally able to use their bargaining power to request flexible forms of working, and not everyone is aware that such provisions exist. Furthermore, participation in flexible employment is not necessarily beneficial in the long run, and does not necessarily seamlessly enable women to combine work and care responsibilities. Section 5.5 considers the provision of childcare, and how this is used by Pakistani women.

## **5.5 Formal and Informal Childcare**

Another way in which women might seek to combine work and motherhood is through the outsourcing of childcare, which can be done formally or informally. Bell et al. (2005; 2) define formal childcare as ‘...childminders, nannies, babysitters, crèches, nurseries, playgroups, out-of-school clubs, family centres, nursery classes and reception classes.’ They define informal childcare as childcare that is

provided by ‘...ex-partners, relatives, and friends.’ The Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents (2014 - 15; Department for Education, 2016) found that the majority of families with dependent children (78%) aged 0 - 14 took up some form of childcare during 2012-2013, and further that a slightly smaller majority (63%) favoured formal over informal childcare. However, the survey also showed a significant relationship between ethnicity and uptake of formal childcare, with women with Pakistani or Bangladeshi backgrounds being the least likely to take up formal childcare, compared to those of white British, mixed white and Black backgrounds, whilst:

*Receipt of informal childcare was highest among White British and mixed White and Asian children (36% each), and was lowest among children from other Asian, Black African and Bangladeshi backgrounds (9%, 9% and 6% respectively) (Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents, 2014 -15; 42).*

The findings from the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents demonstrate diversity in childcare preferences, and variation according to ethnic group. Further, these findings demonstrate that formal childcare is less popular amongst Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups, although this is not necessarily compensated for by a preference for informal childcare. This section explores the extent to which, and how, Pakistani women use formal and informal childcare in order to participate in the labour market, through a consideration of both costs and the accessibility of childcare more generally.

### **5.5.1 Childcare costs**

Currently, 3 - 4 year olds and some 2 year olds (if parents are in receipt of various benefits, the child is being looked after by the council or due to be adopted, or if the child is disabled) are eligible for 570 free hours of early education or childcare per year. Typically this is taken as 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year (Gov.UK, 2017b). This childcare must come from an ‘approved childcare provider’. In September of this year, some parents will be eligible for 30 hours of free childcare per week (1,140 a year) based on their income. To be eligible, both parents must be in work and earning at least the national minimum wage for a minimum of 16 hours a week (Gov.UK, 2017b). Therefore, although parents are entitled to some free childcare, it still incurs a cost, since even 30 hours of free childcare does not cover a full-time working week. Further, neither the participants of this research, who were interviewed in 2015, nor those who responded to the 2011 Census, would have been able to benefit from this. The Childcare Survey (Rutter, 2016) reports the average cost of a part-time childminder for a child aged 2 or over to be

£103.48 a week. There is more support available for those in receipt of certain benefits but the costs are never fully covered (Childcare Survey, 2016). Further, those working part-time may not be able to claim the benefits that would give them heavily reduced childcare rates. As such, some women are likely to be priced out of using formal childcare. The Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents (2016) found that just over half of the respondents (53.0%) found it easy or very easy to pay for childcare given their family income, whilst 22.0% of respondents found it difficult or very difficult. They do, however, report an increase in positive views about childcare affordability since the 2012 - 2013 survey, as well as a decrease in those finding it difficult to cover childcare costs. Nonetheless, others (e.g. Viitanen, 2005) have cited cost as a key factor in decisions about childcare. This may prove particularly relevant given the concentration of Pakistanis in lower paid work, and the concentration of Pakistani families in deprived areas (Fisher and Nandi, 2015).

Farzia (Administrator, Kirklees), spoke of the costs associated with childcare; she worked 4 days a week and her son received informal childcare as well as one day a week in formal childcare. She saw benefits to her son being in formal childcare, but also came to an arrangement that enabled her to reduce the costs associated with it. Mehreen (Doctor, Leeds), although she did not yet have children, also expressed concern about the costs of childcare. More specifically, she said that the proposed changes to the junior doctor contract in 2016, which would affect pay, particularly for those working anti-social hours, would mean that combining her work with formal childcare was not financially viable; she would not be able to work the hours required of her as a doctor and also be able to afford to pay for childcare. She added that if the contract changes were approved, she would have to leave her job, since starting a family was a priority for her over her medical career.

Whilst Mehreen's account demonstrates how childcare costs can serve as a disincentive both to using formal childcare, and participating in paid employment. Farzia's account supports the idea that, in combining work and care, women adopt 'complex care packages' (Daly, 2011). In Farzia's case, this related to childcare affordability, since she evidently viewed formal childcare positively. Other participants also described somewhat complex care packages. For example, Nadia (Administrator, Leeds) worked part-time and so did her husband, which enabled them to split childcare and other household chores, whilst Ayesha (Teacher, Kirklees) stated that her husband, since he was able to work more flexibly than her, took their children to her parents' in the morning and collected them in the afternoon.

Childcare costs are likely to serve as a disincentive from working if the perceived opportunities available are not well paid. Indeed, a report by Barnado's (2012) suggests that in some cases, the costs of childcare mean that people are having to pay to go to work. This is an issue to the extent that women are often perceived as secondary earners in the labour market, their employment often characterised by lower pay, less opportunity for career progression, and a greater likelihood of working part-time (e.g. ONS, 2013). This is further complicated for Pakistani women, particularly if they were born outside the UK and have not been able to benefit from English fluency, which is likely to further limit the types of work available to them (this is discussed in greater detail in Chapters 6 and 7). Though the participants of this research did not explicitly state this, some participants felt that the jobs available to them, given their levels of English, tended to be insecure positions in care homes, or private cleaning jobs. They were not interested in these jobs, but instead viewed the public sector favourably in terms of more rights and better working conditions. Given the costs of childcare, it should not be surprising that women opt out of the labour market where the types of work available are perceived as being precarious and associated with low pay. Further, this should be considered within the context of other sources of household income. The concentration of South Asian men in low-paid, precarious employment, has already been outlined (e.g. McDowell et al., 2014). Again, given the costs of formal childcare, such services might not appeal to families with unstable and precarious incomes.

This section has considered the extent to which costs serve as a disincentive to the use of formal childcare for Pakistani women. On the whole, there is evidence to suggest that women are put off using formal childcare by prohibitive costs. Costs were cited as an issue by one participant who used formal childcare one day a week, and another who perceived that in the future childcare costs might cause her to leave her job. Other participants also described 'complex care packages' that may in part relate to the perceived expenses of childcare. For those who perceive themselves as likely to work in low paid and precarious employment, it is likely that, should they use formal childcare, work simply will not pay. Nonetheless, cost is not the only issue affecting uptake of formal childcare, with some participants expressing concern about the availability of culturally sensitive childcare, which is discussed in greater detail in Section 5.5.2.



### 5.5.2 Informal childcare and culturally sensitive childcare

Prior research on ethnic differences in childcare preferences suggests that Pakistani women may also have culturally specific reasons for opting out of using formal childcare. For example, Hall et al. (2004; 48) found that:

*There were reported to be few formal childcare services available for children in minority ethnic groups, which operate for whole days throughout the week, and before school starts, which are culturally and religiously sensitive, e.g. dress, religious readings, prayers, respect for ethnic origin/culture, and halal food etc.*

The need for 'culturally sensitive' childcare, particularly for Muslim families, is also expressed by Clark and Drinkwater (2007), and Bell et al. (2005; 10), who state that: '...race, culture, language and ethnicity ... are likely to play a particularly large part in the childcare decisions of these families.'

Such concerns were echoed by two of the participants. Hadiqa (University employee, Leeds), suggested that Pakistani parents may be reluctant to use formal childcare due to concerns that their children would not be looked after in a way that is culturally sensitive, and furthermore that there are not many nurseries where employees speak a variety of languages. Fiza (University employee, Leeds) also expressed concern about her children being cared for by people who did not share her values. A reluctance to use formal childcare might also be related to increased Islamophobia following the September 11th and July 7th attacks, discussed previously (for example see Section 4.4) in relation to discrimination in the workplace. Hall et al. (2004) link this to concerns about racism towards children, as well as within childcare services, suggesting that this context has led to '...Muslim women being increasingly insular and reliant on Muslim services for support' (Hall et al., 2004; 33).

A preference for culturally sensitive childcare could also both reflect, and be reflected in, the higher rates of informal childcare being used by Pakistani families (e.g. Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents, 2014). Bell et al. (2005) report lower levels of childcare usage amongst Pakistani families, which they suggest may reflect both circumstances (low maternal employment, low levels of lone parenthood, tendency to have other adults living in the household) and preference (such as parental childcare being preferred for cultural or religious reasons). If parental childcare is generally preferred, it might follow that, in families where both parents work, care provided by family members would be favoured over informal

childcare from strangers. Certainly, several participants spoke of using informal childcare provided by other family members. However, Bell et al. (2005) report the use of informal childcare, and particularly childcare from grandparents, to be higher amongst white families. Further, it is difficult to separate a preference for informal childcare from other inaccessibility issues that are discussed in this chapter.

It should be noted here that some of the community centres involved in this research did have childcare facilities that were utilised by some of the participants, and that, being located in areas with higher South Asian populations, these facilities were more likely to be attuned to cultural differences and needs. For example, Heera (Not economically active, Kirklees) used the crèche facilities at the community centre where she was recruited and interviewed, while she participated in other activities provided by the centre. Nonetheless, such services are not accessible to everyone, even when accounting for costs. This is discussed in Section 5.5.3.

### **5.5.3 Accessibility and awareness of childcare facilities**

Waldfoegel and Garnham (2008) question the provision of childcare in deprived areas. This is supported by research conducted in Leeds by Yeandle and Joynes (2012), who found that the places most affected by cuts to childcare were deprived inner city areas. This is particularly relevant given the geography of Pakistani communities in Leeds and Kirklees, where they are largely concentrated in deprived inner city areas, as detailed in Chapter 2. Similarly, Bell et al. (2005) discuss affordability; availability and location; awareness and information; cultural recognition, inclusion, and understanding; and preconceptions of childcare, as affecting access to childcare amongst ethnic minority groups. This highlights accessibility as being far more complex than just being related to costs or cultural sensitivity, as already highlighted, and is instead dictated by a broad spectrum of factors.

Though the availability of childcare that was easily accessible was not discussed by the participants in this research, it may still have been a factor in decisions regarding work and care. Indeed, as already mentioned, participants' experiences of and ability to access childcare might have been a reflection of the way in which they were recruited for this research. Participants were either in employment, indicating that they had been able to access formal or informal childcare if necessary, or they were recruited via community centres, all of which provided crèche facilities. Further, many of the participants recruited via community centres worked part-time or were not active in the labour market, and therefore might not

have attempted to access childcare. Nonetheless, prior research indicates awareness of childcare options is still likely to be an issue for Pakistani women (and other non-white British women). For example, researching how ethnic minority mothers use childcare, Hall et al. (2004; 41) found '...low awareness...of all the childcare services, initiatives and financial incentives available.' Similarly, Bell et al. (2005; 13) state that 'many parents who fail to access local childcare services report a lack of awareness of what is available to them.' This issue is even more prevalent for parents who do not speak English; indeed, language barriers may also affect understandings of other forms of support available to help with the costs of childcare. The role of English fluency in shaping labour market participation, both directly and indirectly, is discussed in greater detail in Chapters 6 and 7.

Bell et al. (2005) also suggest that transport, or lack thereof, can create difficulties with accessing childcare facilities, especially for poorer families, and further state that the location of childcare facilities is likely to present issues for families in ethnic minority groups, particularly in places where ethnic minority groups are clustered. Transport and location were not discussed by participants in terms of childcare facilities specifically. However, James and Liz (ESOL teachers, Leeds) suggested that distance created a barrier to attending ESOL classes, and further had observed that some Pakistani women preferred to stay within their communities rather than travelling too far. Indeed, they described their service users as being more willing to travel to local venues and preferring areas that they were familiar with. Although this was in relation to ESOL classes it does indicate that location might be an issue in terms of access to childcare for Pakistani women, depending on the provision of such services in their local area, and awareness of such services.

This section has considered the extent to which Pakistani women use childcare to enable them to participate in the labour market. Childcare costs are commonly cited as an issue, and this was mentioned by two of the participants. Further, childcare costs might lead women to adopt what Daly (2011) terms 'complex care packages'. Nonetheless, without the necessary data it is difficult to separate cost from other factors that might affect whether or not women use childcare facilities. A need for 'culturally sensitive' childcare was also cited as an issue by participants and prior research, whilst some women may have other access issues too that preclude them from using childcare services. While childcare is a complex issue for all women, Pakistani women are likely to experience additional barriers based on cultural preferences. These include concerns about culturally sensitive childcare and potential discrimination, a lack of awareness of childcare facilities, and language barriers, which are discussed in greater detail in Chapters 6 and 7.

## 5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has explored how Pakistani women negotiate childcare and labour market participation. It began by demonstrating a link between dependent children and labour market participation, which was more pronounced for Pakistani women, who are also likely to have more, and younger, children to care for. Nonetheless, younger Pakistani women with or without children were more active in the labour market, indicating that the role of dependent children in shaping labour market participation might be lessening.

This chapter also considered the value placed on motherhood, and the ways in which motherhood might vary culturally. Although it was suggested that motherhood is highly valued in Islam, where it is associated with caring rather than providing for children through earnings, many participants spoke of the ways they had combined work and care responsibilities. Further, Pakistani women who were in employment were as likely as white British women in employment to work part-time. However, the lower numbers of Pakistani women in the labour market might be an indication that Pakistani women tend to opt out altogether rather than seek part-time or flexible employment, and this might be dictated by the concentration of Pakistani women in certain types of occupational roles. Furthermore, not all women have equal bargaining power in terms of accessing part-time or flexible working arrangements.

Finally, this chapter considered whether, and how, Pakistani women use formal and informal childcare in order to combine work with care. Participants appeared to use informal rather than formal childcare, and it is probable that childcare costs might have been a key factor in influencing childcare decisions. In addition, concerns about culturally sensitive childcare were raised, as well as general childcare accessibility. Indeed, accessibility of key services such as formal childcare is likely to be more complicated for those who are not fluent in English, and this is discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, which explore skills, language proficiency, and qualifications.

## 6 Education, qualifications, and English proficiency

### 6.1 Introduction

Previous chapters have focused on life-stage factors and how they shape Pakistani women's engagement with the labour market, specifically focusing on marriage and child-bearing (Salway, 2007) as well as 'family norms, cultural practices...and individual agency' (Giele and Elder, 1998; Dale et al., 2005; 2). In doing so, this thesis has already suggested that certain family norms and cultural practices are linked to educational trajectories, as well as English proficiency, in the case of marriage migration. This chapter discusses more explicitly issues relating to education, qualifications, and English proficiency, and how these might shape Pakistani women's labour market participation. More specifically, this chapter explores existing research and literature, whilst Chapter 7 presents findings from the 2011 Census, and the primary qualitative data.

Qualifications are associated positively with labour market participation: people with university qualifications are more likely to participate in the labour market than people who have not participated in higher education (ONS, 2013), whilst fewer than half of those with no qualifications are reported to be in employment (ONS, 2014). Nonetheless, this relationship is not straightforward, and is particularly complex where gender and ethnicity intersect. Salway (2007; 826) states that:

*...Bangladeshi and Pakistani women show similar patterns of positive association between educational qualifications and economic activity as majority White women. However, the differential between qualified and unqualified women has been found to be much larger (Holdsworth and Dale 1997). Furthermore, poor English language competency has been identified as a significant additional barrier to the labour force participation of many Bangladeshi and Pakistani women (Dale et al. 2002; Leslie and Lindley 2001).*

Pakistani women, therefore, benefit from educational qualifications in the same way as their white British counterparts. However, the larger gap between qualified and unqualified Pakistani women needs to be examined, as do issues relating to access to and experiences of education. Language competency is a different, yet interrelated factor.

Therefore, this chapter initially explores how the intersection of gender and ethnicity shapes experiences of education, and the relationship between education and labour market participation. In doing so this chapter will begin by considering subject choices, with a focus on further and higher education; academic attainment, over-education, and under-education. A separate but related issue that has been touched on elsewhere in this thesis is the role of language proficiency. This is a particular issue for first generation migrants, and there is extensive research highlighting the link between poor language proficiency and under-representation in the labour market (e.g. Leslie and Lindley, 2001; Dale et al., 2002a).

## 6.2 Subject choice

Subject choice in non-compulsory education is ‘...another element which may contribute to reproducing gender and social inequalities (Ianelli, 2007; 322). Although much of the research relating education to labour market participation focuses on academic attainment, Jin et al. (2011; 2) argue that: ‘At every stage, choices are likely to affect young people’s later-life employment prospects, earnings and job satisfaction’. Subject choice relates both to the accessibility of certain jobs, and to educational attainment more generally. Van De Werfhorst et al. (2003; 59) also relate subject choice to labour market outcomes, which they suggest are heavily linked to social class, finding that ‘...children of the professional class were more likely to enter the prestigious fields of medicine and law than the children of unskilled manual workers.’ This quote, firstly, highlights the fact that some subjects are ‘better’ than others in terms of labour market outcomes, and secondly, by linking children’s subject choices to their parents’ occupational class, it highlights the importance of parental background in shaping experiences of education. This section begins with an overview of the literature on gender and subject choice generally, before focusing more specifically on the experiences of Pakistani women. Subject choice, in both compulsory and non-compulsory education, is gendered, both in terms of the subjects learners *choose* to study, and those they are *encouraged* to study (Thomas, 1990). Indeed, Ianelli (2007; 323) asserts that ‘...the strong association between educational segregation and occupational segregation has been widely documented.’ More specifically, Ianelli (2007) draws a link between ‘traditional ‘female’ courses’, and ‘lower-level, less well paid occupations with restricted chances of career promotion.’ There is certainly evidence of a continued gendering of subject choice at GCSE level, where the Department for Education and Skills (hereafter DfES, 2007; 3) report that:

*...many subjects show gender stereotypical biases with girls more likely to take Arts, Languages and Humanities and boys more likely to take Geography, Physical Education and IT.*

The gendering of subject choice continues post-16, where:

*Girls' most popular subject is English, while boys' is Maths. Psychology, Art and Design, Sociology and Media/Film/Television Studies are amongst the 10 most popular choices for girls (but not boys), while Physics, Business Studies, Geography and Physical Education are in the top 10 for boys (but not girls). Girls' participation in Physics is particularly low and is the least popular of the three Sciences, accounting for only 1.3 percent of female A-Level entries. For boys, Physics remains the most popular science but whereas it used to be the most popular subject overall, it now is in sixth place and represents only 5.7 percent of male entries (DfES, 2007; 3).*

Jin et al. (2010) also report a gendering of subject choices, both at age 14 - 16, and post-16, indicating that the DfES (2007) findings have persisted. The gendering of subject choices also continues at University level, where men tend to dominate in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects (e.g. Ianelli, 2007). Indeed, Smith (2011) argues that initiatives to increase women's participation in STEM subjects have been ineffective, despite women's increased participation in higher education, and that although more women are studying science, they do not tend to opt for Physics or Engineering. WISE (2016) state that there are more women than ever before studying STEM subjects, with an increase of 15% between 2015 and 2016. However, women still make up only 14.4% of the STEM workforce. While STEM subjects are dominated by men, women tend to be over-represented in Subjects Allied to Medicine, Education, Arts, and Humanities (Ianelli, 2007, Tight, 2012). The subjects studied at school, and in further and higher education, are likely to shape labour market participation. Brown (1995) associates the subjects dominated by men with better progression into employment. Furthermore, Tight (2012; 214) argues that men are concentrated in subjects that are '...viewed as key to future national economic prosperity...' Conversely, the subject choices women make in higher education are associated with lower-level, less well-paid occupations, which create less mobility within the labour market (Ianelli, 2007; Tight, 2012).

Whilst subject choice is argued to shape labour market participation, it is also likely that expectations regarding women's labour market participation will affect subject choice, or at least, the subjects they are encouraged to study. Jin et al. (2010; 28)

suggest that the students' subject choices are a reflection of the ... 'type of life they would like to lead in the future.' Further, they argue that

*In the standard model of rational decision making, it is generally assumed that individuals make the best possible decision from the choices available to them given the information at their disposal...current evidence suggests the quality of information available to young people is, at best, 'variable' (Jin et al., 2010; 5).*

Consequently, 'gender differences also play a key role in subject choices, with perceived subject appropriateness of gender stereotypes affecting decisions' (Jin et al., 2010). The argument that gendered subject choices contribute to the persistence of a gendered labour market is in line with Marxist-feminist critiques of education, whereby education serves to perpetuate both 'gender and class relations' (Barrett 1988; Thomas, 1990; 24). For example, Barrett (1988) argues that gender relations are reproduced in schools in four ways: through the socialisation of girls and boys into 'masculine' and 'feminine' behaviour; through the organisation of educational institutions, where men are at the top of the hierarchy and women are at the bottom; through the channelling of masculine and feminine behaviour through subject selection, whereby male and female students are ultimately funnelled into gender appropriate jobs; and through what is constituted as 'legitimate' knowledge, which tends to favour traditionally male-dominated subjects.

The literature outlined in this section thus far presents a case for a gendered education system that, ultimately, funnels women into specific types of career (Ianneli, 2010). However, for Pakistani women, their educational experiences are likely to be a product of both their gender and their ethnicity combined. Firstly, it is relevant to note that Pakistani families are disproportionately concentrated in areas of higher deprivation, and lower paid occupations upon entering the labour market. Jivraj and Khan (2013; 1) report that 'in 2011, more than one in three in the Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups lived in a deprived neighbourhood, which is considerably more than any other ethnic group.' Further, they report that, whilst Bangladeshis were more likely to live in deprived areas due to low income and barriers to services, Pakistanis were more likely to live in 'areas deprived because of living environment (39%), education (23%), health (20%), and employment (16%).' This is relevant since this chapter has already argued that subject selection is shaped by both class and gender (e.g. Jin et al., 2011). Bagguley and Hussain (2007) describe Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in higher education as being more likely to come from 'routine occupational backgrounds', or have fathers whose



occupation is 'unknown', in comparison to white British women, whilst Van De Werfhorst et al. (2003) suggest that social class plays an important role in shaping choices in education. Jin et al. (2011) found that pupils whose parents had no qualifications were more likely to study vocational subjects, which, despite being an important route into the labour market (Dale et al., 2002b), can potentially limit career options given the aforementioned benefits of studying at higher education level (e.g. ONS, 2014). Nonetheless, the uptake of vocational subjects is likely to be gendered. For example, Ahmad (2001; 144, emphasis added) found that, in British Muslim families, 'many sons were strongly encouraged to pursue vocationally-oriented degree subjects, such as law, medicine, dentistry, engineering, and computer science for instance.'

Conversely at university level, Pakistani women are often encouraged by their families to study more traditional subjects: Law, Medicine and Dentistry, rather than Sociology, English, and Psychology (Bagguley and Hussain, 2007). Related to this, Thapar-Bjorkert and Sanghera (2010) link Pakistani Muslim parental aspirations for their children to a desire to transcend social capital; this could in turn mean that parents encourage their children to study prestigious, traditional subjects rather than non-traditional subjects they associate with lower employment prospects. Ahmad (2001; 148), however, suggests that subject choice at degree level is more complex than an outcome of parental aspirations:

*Whilst the young women I interviewed were keen to honour their parents' wishes and achieve academic success, they perceived a number of distinct advantages for themselves. Pursuit of higher education, the subjects studied and choices of institution were found to be the effects of a far more complex social assessment process by students and their parents, than a pragmatic decision alone...Prestigious career choices such as medicine, dentistry and law continue to be pursued and highly regarded within South Asian communities. At the same time though, female Muslim students are 'branching out', studying topics such as English language and literature, history, economics, international politics, media studies, fashion, and (even) anthropology and sociology. Personal interest is obviously the main reason behind such diversity of choice, but it also suggests that students in this sample are meeting 'middle class aspirations' through studying more arts-based subjects. They are also signalling their own individuality, by not bowing to pressure (however subtle) to study the sciences or law.*

Nonetheless, parental aspirations for their daughters may also be in tension with 'cultural and religious norms and values' (Thapar-Bjortkert and Sanghera, 2010; 253), whereby girls are expected to adopt a home-making role. This is likely to affect subject choice, echoing the Marxist-feminist analysis of gender and education outlined previously: by encouraging girls to study certain subjects and not others, their career options are limited, and they may subsequently be funnelled into 'gender appropriate' jobs (e.g. Thomas, 1990).

This section has explored the extent to which subject selection in further and higher education is gendered. In doing so it has argued that, even before academic attainment is taken into account, the subjects Pakistani women 'choose' to study, if they participate in post-16 education, are likely to shape the options available to them in the labour market. For Pakistani women, subject choice is seen as being shaped by assumptions relating to gender and work, as well as parental understandings of the education system, and class aspirations. The next section considers the relationship between academic attainment and labour market participation, considering the relationship between gender, attainment, and labour market participation broadly, before exploring this relationship for Pakistani women more specifically.

### **6.3 Gender and attainment**

There is a gender difference in academic attainment, but it is complex. DfES (2017) report that, for the 2015-16 academic year, girls continued to outperform boys at GCSE or equivalent level. This is consistent with prior research by Gorard et al. (2001; 136), who argue that '...the examination system at key stage 1 - 4 favours girls, and teacher assessment even more so; girls enter more, and more varied, subjects at GCSE, achieving higher grades'. Nonetheless, Gorard et al. (2001) note that the gender gap at GCSE level is more prevalent in some subjects than in others, and in addition that the gap varies according to attainment level, with a smaller gender gap at lower levels of attainment; the gender gap is driven by the failure of male students to achieve higher grades (Gorard et al., 1999; Burgess et al., 2004). DfES (2015) also reports that the gender gap in key stage 4 attainment varies according to subject, with the gap being narrower for Mathematics than for English. Burgess et al. (2004) report on the 'sheer consistency' of the gender gap between key stages 3 and 4. They report that 'the gender gap is primarily driven by performance differentials in English, while boys and girls are still obtaining similar results in Maths and Science' (Burgess et al., 2004; 210).

The nature of the attainment gap at GCSE level changes slightly at A level, where it narrows, even in subjects where girls had previously out-performed boys (DfES, 2007). Nonetheless, the gap still exists. At level 3 (A level or equivalent), students are more likely to be female than male (DfES, 2015). In 2015, 53.1% of those studying at level 3 were female and DfES (2015) states that this has remained stable since 2010; at A Level specifically, 55.5% of the cohort were female, increasing from 54.0% in 2010. However, despite slightly higher numbers of female than male students studying at level 3, and particularly at A Level, more male than female students achieved three A\* or A grades, and this has also been consistent since 2010. DfES (2015) reports a similar pattern for AAB grades, where male students are more likely than female students to obtain these results. In relation to Section 6.2, which explored subject choice, DfES (2017; 11) report that ‘a higher percentage of male students entered mathematics and science subjects than females, except in biology. The gender gap in mathematics, further maths and computing has widened since 2015.’

This differs from the gender pattern at GCSE level, where girls outperform boys, and it may partially be explained by subject choice, given that students are no longer bound by the National Curriculum to study specific subjects. In Section 6.2, it was argued that girls and boys might find themselves steered towards certain subjects at school, and DfES (2007) found a relationship between subject choice and attainment level. Specifically, they report that:

*With subjects that are traditionally less popular among boys (Modern Foreign Languages), boys demonstrate higher levels of attainment than girls. The same is true of girls (e.g. Physics which is not popular amongst girls). It seems that pupils who choose a subject not popular with their gender are likely to achieve highly, presumably because only the most able pupils put themselves forward in a subject not traditionally popular with their gender (DfES, 2007; 44).*

Gender differences in attainment persist in higher education. Although boys do slightly better at A level than girls, at university level, female students outnumber male students. This continues the trend started at A Level, where girls slightly outnumber boys (DfES, 2007). ONS (2013a) reports university participation rates of 42% for men and 51% for women. This represents a sizable increase in women’s participation in higher education since the 1970s, increasing from around one-third of female undergraduates in 1975 (McNabb et al., 2002). Nonetheless, male students are more likely than female students to achieve a first class degree. Again,

this might be linked to subject choice: it may be harder to achieve higher marks in the subjects women are more likely to study at university level, and McNabb et al. (2002) suggest that this accounts for differences in degree results between subjects; it may be easier to obtain a first class degree in a STEM subject, and, as has already been established, this is an area dominated by men (Tight, 2012).

This section has suggested that, overall, there is a gender difference in academic attainment, though this is somewhat complex; girls out-perform boys at GCSE level, but this becomes more complex at further and higher education levels; whilst girls are more likely to pursue their education, boys slightly outperform girls. This was linked to the gendering of subject choice already discussed in Section 6.2, whereby subject choice might determine attainment level. Having broadly established a relationship between gender and attainment, Section 6.4 explores academic attainment for Pakistani women, focusing on how gender and ethnicity intersect, and the role this plays in attainment.

## **6.4 Pakistani women and academic attainment**

Connolly (2006) suggests that gender differences in academic attainment are so small that they are overshadowed by social class and ethnicity. Section 6.3 demonstrated that academic attainment is gendered, but in a complex way and, further, the literature discussed did not take into account the effects of ethnicity. However, there is a well-established link between academic attainment and ethnicity, and in particular, previous research has explored the extent to which Pakistani students attain at a lower level than students from other ethnic groups. The relationship between academic attainment and labour market participation (e.g. ONS, 2014) suggests that this could be a key factor in understanding Pakistani women's labour market participation, and therefore this section focuses on Pakistani women's academic attainment.

At GCSE level, Pakistani students have been found to achieve lower grades than students of other ethnicities (Bradley and Taylor, 2004). This is supported by more recent findings from the DfES (2015), who report that 51.4% of Pakistani students achieved more than 5 A\*-C grades at GCSE in 2014 (including English and Mathematics). This places them at 4.2 percentage points below the national average of 56.6%, and 4.0 percentage points lower than white British students specifically, 56.4% of whom achieved these grades. There is also a gender difference: DfES (2016) report that 55.7% of Pakistani girls achieved 5 A\*-C grades at GCSE, compared to 62.1% of white British girls, whilst 47.8% of Pakistani boys,

compared to 52.4% of white British boys achieved 5 A\*-C grades at GCSE. In sum, at GCSE level, Pakistani students exhibit both an ethnic and a gender gap; Pakistani girls perform better than Pakistani boys, but both groups do not perform as well as their white British counterparts.

This attainment gap continues to A Level, where Pakistani and Bangladeshi students are the group least likely to obtain post-16 qualifications (Tolley and Rundle, 2006; Tackey et al., 2011). Despite lower attainment at A Level, Tackey et al. (2011) report high rates of participation in post-16 education amongst some ethnic groups, including the Pakistani group. This is supported by Battacharya et al (2003), who report that 85.0% of Asian students stay on in post-16 education, compared to 69.0% of white students, with only a small number choosing work-based routes instead. Similarly, Drew (1997) found that women from ethnic minority groups had higher staying-on rates in post-16 education than white women. Furthermore, the participation of South Asian groups in post-16 education is increasing (CoDE, 2014b), and the attainment gap is narrowing (Stokes et al., 2015). Pakistani students have also experienced an increase in degree level qualifications between 1991 and 2011 (CoDE, 2014b). Bagguley and Hussain (2007) report that young Pakistani and Indian women are more likely to apply to, and participate in, higher education than young white women. Indeed, research by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (2015) indicates that ethnic minority students are more likely than their white British counterparts to attend university.

The statistics on academic attainment, therefore, present a complex picture for Pakistani women. At GCSE level, Pakistani students fall behind many other ethnic groups, and they are also the group least likely to obtain post-16 level qualifications. Nonetheless, this is not reflected by their participation in post-16 education, which is relatively high, as is their participation in higher education. Furthermore, CoDE (2014b) argue that attainment is steadily increasing amongst Pakistani students. However, as will be argued in Section 6.5.3, success in further and higher education is not necessarily mirrored in the labour market.

CoDE (2014b) suggest that the lower attainment (as opposed to participation) levels for Pakistani students partially reflect the lower levels of educational participation amongst older ethnic minority women, rather than poor performance in education for the younger cohort. Pakistani women migrating to the UK as teenagers or adults will not have benefitted from the British education system, and CoDE (2014b; 3) reports that:

*...the proportion of Asian people aged 25 to 49 with no qualifications was nearly double that of people in the 16-24 age bracket (15% compared with 8% respectively), but the proportion of White British people with no qualifications in the same age groups was almost identical (11%). Among people aged 50–64, members of the Asian group were also (1.3 times) more likely than people in the White British group to have no qualifications (CoDE, 2014b; 3).*

This suggests that the relative success of younger Pakistanis is partially obscured by the lower qualification levels of the older groups, when considering data on attainment overall. Furthermore, it might be indicative of a change in attitudes towards education amongst Pakistanis. This is likely to reflect, firstly, the cultural value of education amongst Pakistanis, and, secondly, an increasing awareness of education as a tool to increase social mobility and decrease the ethnic penalty in the labour market (Basit, 1997; Dale et al., 2002b; Bagguley and Hussain, 2007). Tyrer and Ahmad (2006; 12) conducted research on Muslim (and more specifically, Bangladeshi and Pakistani) women and higher education and suggested that:

*Muslim women spoke of their parents as often sharing in their educational and career aspirations. Women cited several reasons for entering higher education; these ranged from personal interest, career aspirations, financial stability, personal independence, and greater respect and choices when thinking about marriage.'*

This suggests that, for their participants at least, education was viewed positively for several reasons. Indeed, Tyrer and Ahmad (2006; 12) argue that '...educational aspirations were shared by parents who promoted a 'family expectation' to achieve academically.' Singh (1990) also links aspirations and values placed on education to greater participation of ethnic minority groups in higher education.

The idea that families play a key role in decision making is noteworthy, since:

*The nature of encouragement from parents is indicative of the high symbolic and practical value many had for higher education, which contrast with a number of stereotyped notions about Muslim families (Tyrer et al., 2006; 14).*

Indeed, Dale et al. (2002b) found that some of their participants felt pressured to remain in education by their parents, who might lack an understanding of less traditional, and alternative, career trajectories. Furthermore, they suggest that education can be viewed as playing a key role in 'enhancing family status' (Dale et

al., 2002b; 951), and therefore links to *izzat*, which is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Nonetheless, education can be part of 'tradition' (Ahmad, 2001) but not for everyone. Tyrer et al. (2006; 15) state in their research that a small proportion of women '...experienced difficulties or tensions from their families in entering higher education', though they argue that this cannot be attributed to one single factor. One issue, with specific reference to higher education, regards concerns about women moving away from home, living in university accommodation, and being far away from family, unattended. Ahmad (2001; 146) relates a reluctance for women to participate in higher education to concerns about the "Anglicising' effects of university life'. Dale (2002; 955) also discuss this, suggesting, with reference to post-compulsory education, that girls' behaviour is policed in a way that boys' behaviour is not. They argue that:

*While the notion of honour was widely accepted, there were considerable differences in the ways in which it impinged on girls. For the most traditional families it meant that girls were not allowed outside on their own and going to FE college or university was forbidden. By contrast, in other families, girls were encouraged to go to university, even if it meant living away from home, and parents trusted their daughters to behave in an appropriate way.*

This presents a contradiction, whereby education is viewed positively but does not necessarily correspond with attitudes towards women's behaviour. Ahmad (2001, 147) notes a similar process in relation to education and marriage, whereby education is simultaneously viewed as an attribute and a potential obstacle.

*Muslim daughters (and their parents) are thus faced with a set of conflicting interests, a double-bind situation. Too little education and the family could be viewed by the rest of the community as 'backward' and 'old fashioned'; too much education and daughters could risk 'pricing themselves outside the marriage market' and 'going past their sell-by date' (Amber).*

Indeed, the complexity of attitudes towards education was discussed in Chapter 4, where some participants were encouraged by their parents to participate in higher education, but discouraged by other family members who expressed concern about marriageability. Although families play an important role in decision making with regard to education, the role of other adults should not be discounted; indeed, in Section 4.4, perceptions of Pakistani women held by teachers and careers advisors were suggested to be potentially detrimental to labour market participation. Since it has been argued that educational attainment, and the role of parents'

encouragement, among Pakistani children and adults runs counter to 'stereotyped notions of Pakistani families' (Tyrer, 2006; 14), the influence of teachers and careers advisors should not be overlooked. Basit (1997, in Tyrer 2006; 10) reported that '...the stereotyped attitudes of many teachers and careers advisors towards Muslim women and schoolgirls influenced the nature of the advice they gave', and, furthermore, that this lack of support continued into higher education, where lecturers lacked an awareness of their different cultural and socio-economic circumstances.

This section has explored the complex relationship between gender and academic attainment for Pakistani women. It has demonstrated that younger Pakistani women, though they do not achieve as highly as their white British counterparts, are very active in further and higher education, and furthermore that attainment is steadily increasing for Pakistani students. Parents might prove instrumental in encouraging their children to further their education, though this is complex. Given the increasing academic attainment discussed in this section, it appears that there is a disconnect between qualifications and labour market participation, which is discussed in Section 6.5.

## **6.5 Utilising qualifications and over-education**

So far, this chapter has shown that experiences of education, from subject choice to attainment, are shaped by both gender and ethnicity. Despite more women taking up STEM subjects, subject choice remains gendered in a way that funnels men and women into specific roles. For Pakistani women, subject choice is likely to be shaped by career expectations, and the expectations of other family members, as well as by social class (a full discussion of which is beyond the scope of this thesis, as discussed in Section 2.3.1). The relationship between gender and attainment is more complex, in that girls tend to outperform boys at school but not necessarily at university. Pakistani students do not attain at the same level as white British students, though attainment is increasing and Pakistani students tend to participate in further education at a higher level than students of other ethnicities. Despite an association between qualifications and participation in the labour market (ONS, 2014), the increased attainment and participation in further education amongst Pakistani women is not necessarily reflected in the labour market. Although this can partially be accounted for by age, whereby older Pakistani women have lower qualifications than younger women who were born or brought up in the UK (CoDE, 2014b), it could also be the case that there is inequality in the extent to which



people are able to capitalise on their qualifications. This will be explored in this section, which examines both the extent to which people are able to utilise their qualifications, and the relationship between gender, ethnicity, and over-education.

Although all labour market participants benefit from qualifications, and degree level qualifications in particular, the returns seem better for men than for women. For example, the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (hereafter BIS; 2016) reports a higher employment rate for male graduates than for female graduates, and a higher economic inactivity rate for female graduates, and furthermore that male graduates are more likely than female graduates to work in 'high skilled' employment. Finally, BIS (2016) reported higher earnings amongst male graduates than female graduates, with male graduates earning an average of £8000 more than female graduates in 2015. The same research also highlights the extent to which other factors mediate the relationship between qualifications and labour market participation for women, many of which are related to the life-stage factors discussed in Chapters 3, 4, and 5 of this thesis. For example, BIS (2016) links lower employment rates for women to taking time out of employment for childcare responsibilities.

In addition to overall lower employment rates for female graduates in comparison to male graduates, Chevalier (2003; 517) suggests that:

*...there is a slight gender differential, with women more likely than men to accept non-graduate jobs. Married women might be more constrained in their job search by family preferences and hence are more likely to be over-educated...or employers may discriminate against women.*

This is a slightly different issue to non-participation, demonstrating that life-stage factors have the potential to shape the nature of women's participation in the labour market, and family 'preferences' limit women's choices in the labour market. Instead, this is more an issue of over-education, whereby levels of education exceed those required for the job (Rafferty and Dale, 2008). Similarly, Battu et al. (2000) conclude from their research that, although it is unclear which gender is more prone to over-education, the *effects* of being over-educated are more significant for female than for male graduates. Conversely, Dolton et al. (2008) found that over-education is not predicted by gender, and similarly, Dolton and Silles (2001; 17) state that:

*One of the most important results from our research is that over-education is not contingent upon gender. We find that women are no more likely than*

*men to be overeducated either in their first or current jobs. This indicates that women are not given lower level jobs simply because they are women.*

However, this is not consistent with more recent research from BIS (2015) that suggests women are more likely than men to be overeducated; this is unlikely to be intrinsically related to gender but more to the gendering of both the education system and the labour market, particularly where men are more likely to study subjects at university that are associated with greater career prospects.

Women's over-education has previously been associated with career breaks, such as maternity leave (e.g. Neuberger et al., 2011). The impact of discontinuous employment, for example due to taking maternity leave, is well documented (e.g. Warren et al., 2001), and has also been discussed in Chapter 5. Periods out of employment are associated with reduced training and promotion opportunities, for example (Warren et al., 2001). Another outcome of women's increased care responsibilities is that their pool of possible jobs might be limited to those that can be done flexibly, or part-time. Flexible employment was discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5, where a disparity between men's and women's participation in part-time employment was discussed. However, with regard to over-qualification, it is relevant that flexible working arrangements are more readily available for specific types of lower paid job (e.g. Neuberger et al., 2011). Additionally, Grant et al. (2005) suggest that women working part-time are likely to be under-utilising their skills and qualifications. Also, as suggested in Chapter 5, since flexible work might be difficult to negotiate, some women are likely to opt out of the labour market altogether; this is likely to have an effect irrespective of qualification levels.

In short then, there is a gender difference in the way that qualifications are utilised, and this links to the process of education itself, the gendering of the labour market, and the gendering of unpaid labour that has already been discussed in this thesis. Section 6.5.1 considers the extent to which over-education is related to ethnicity.

### **6.5.1 Ethnicity and over-education**

*Studies of 'over-education' or 'over-qualification' suggest that a disproportionate number of minority ethnic men and women are employed in jobs which do not require their level of educational attainment both in the UK...and internationally (Rafferty, 2012; 988).*

Rafferty and Dale (2008) argue that an understanding of the incidence of over-education amongst different ethnic groups is important since it could be indicative of discrimination within the labour market, and therefore raise equality and policy

concerns. They found that, for women, the highest incidences of over-education were amongst Black African, Pakistani and Bangladeshi graduates, whilst white women were the least likely to be over-educated. Similarly, Lindley (2009; 18) found that 'for women, Indian and Pakistani/Bangladeshis are 11.7 and 7.5 percentage points more likely to be over-educated compared to white British born women.' Although qualifications reduce unemployment, there is still inequality between ethnic groups, both in terms of attainment, and in terms of the translation of qualifications into jobs (Rafferty and Dale, 2008).

Not all Pakistani women capitalise on their qualifications, and, although this could be considered in terms of family 'preferences', and in view of the life-stage factors outlined in Chapters 3, 4, and 5, other explanations centre on unequal access to certain educational institutions. Specifically, Bhattacharya et al. (2003) report that ethnic minority students are unevenly distributed across institutions, being clustered in more modern, post-1992 universities. Similarly, Modood (2004) argues that although members of ethnic minority groups are more successful at achieving university qualifications than their white peers, there are important differences within institutions and subjects. Other than Chinese groups, ethnic minority groups are the most likely to be mature or part-time students, and are more likely to be concentrated in post-1992 universities, both of which have implications for career prospects. Furthermore, Modood (2004) suggests that post-1992 universities respond better to ethnic minority applicants, and that the ethnic penalty persists in older, more prestigious universities. Bhattacharya et al (2003; 4) also found that ethnic minority students are less likely than white students to hold first-class or upper-second class degrees. Therefore, a combination of attending a less prestigious university, and achieving lower grades at degree level, might be one explanatory factor for over-education amongst Pakistani graduates.

Another issue relates to the value of overseas qualifications. Rafferty and Dale (2008; 8) argue that:

*For people who received part or all of their formal education abroad, the relative value of overseas qualifications is a further factor to consider. Some employers may not recognise overseas certificates as equivalent to UK qualifications. Qualifications that allow entry into certain professions can also be country specific. Dale et al (2002) found that, in terms of predicting economic activity for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, overseas qualifications were of no greater value than having no qualifications.*

Although their research took place in Switzerland, Riaño and Baghdadadi (2007; 163) also report that skilled migrants found difficulty establishing themselves in the labour market, stating of their own participants that ‘most of the women cannot use their social and cultural capital to establish themselves in the upper segments of the labour market.’ This is one of many reasons why, despite qualifications, Pakistani women might struggle in the labour market.

### **6.5.2 Spatial flexibility**

Over-education might also be understood in terms of ‘spatial flexibility’ (McGuinness, 2006), whereby women have a more limited labour market than men, which, specifically, is spatially limited due to increased caring responsibilities. Similarly, Grant et al. (2005; ix) argue that women typically travel a shorter distance to work than men, and state that that ‘women are working below their potential because they face a restricted labour market.’

The idea of a lack of ‘spatial flexibility’ is a useful one when considering how caring responsibilities might affect labour market participation for Pakistani women, and prevent them from obtaining jobs that match their skill-sets. Ethnic minority groups in the UK are more likely to live in neighbourhoods classed as deprived than white British groups (CoDE, 2013), and this gap is greater in some regions than others. This is also demonstrated in research by Buckner et al. (2007; vii), who found that Pakistanis are amongst the ethnic groups most likely to live in ‘Neighbourhood Renewal (NR)’ areas, and observed:

*...a complex relationship between the residential clustering of communities of working age women from different ethnic groups in deprived districts, and their access to labour market opportunities.*

Further, they argue that ‘...local labour markets are simply working better in some districts than in others for ethnic minority women’ (Buckner et al., 2007, vii). This suggests that, even with the higher level qualifications viewed as key to labour market participation, Pakistani women might find themselves unable to capitalise on them, based on where they live.

Spatial flexibility does not only limit access to the labour market, but access to higher education, which in turn, as has already been demonstrated in this chapter, is positively linked with labour market participation. Indeed, Reay et al. (2001) argue that ‘localism’ is as much a race as a class issue, with 40% of ethnic minority students concentrated in London universities, and in newer, less well-established, and less prestigious universities (Preece, 1999). Preece (1999) also states that

ethnic minority participation in higher education is even lower in working class areas, citing the University of Lancaster as an example; despite its catchment area consisting of a higher-than-average percentage of Muslim Asians, they constitute only 1% of University of Lancaster attendees. As with access to other services (such as childcare, as discussed in Chapter 5), therefore, space can affect access to labour market participation in a multitude of ways, both directly and indirectly. Those who are unable to capitalise on skills and qualifications, therefore, might experience such limitations (as well as others that are discussed throughout this thesis).

### **6.5.3 Discrimination in the labour market**

As discussed in Section 4.4, Pakistani women also experience discrimination in the labour market, and this is likely to affect the way that they are able to utilise their qualifications. This is reflected in Riaño and Baghdadi's (2007) research on migrant workers, where one participant experienced discrimination based on opting to wear religious dress. Turner and Wigfield (2012) also suggest that discrimination is a key barrier to the labour market for South Asian women, who are more likely to report difficulty finding a job compared to white women. Citing research from Botcherby (2006, 469), they report that:

*...one in five minority ethnic women compared to one in ten white women often work in a job below their potential because no one would employ them at the level they were qualified for. Minority ethnic women in Botcherby's (2006) sample were more likely to state that they often or sometimes have seen less qualified/experienced people promoted above them...*

This is supported by other research. The All Party Parliamentary Group on Race and Community (hereafter APPGRC; 2013; 4) report that, for Black, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi groups trying to obtain employment:

*Discrimination was found to be present at every stage of the recruitment process – when assessing applications, during interviews, at recruitment agencies and also in the workplace itself.*

Discrimination was found to be based on names and accents, as well as wearing traditional clothing. In particular, APPGRC suggest that people with African or Asian sounding surnames submit twice as many applications as those with British names to get an interview. Further, they report discrimination against Muslim women who wear the hijab and that, although some women chose not to wear one for this reason, '...younger women were more likely to choose to wear the hijab, including

those who were highly educated.’ This is supported by Bunglawala (2008; 6) who reported that:

*Eighteen percent of women respondents in work stated that they previously wore the hijab, and in one case the niqab and that when they did so they could not find work. Once they stopped wearing the hijab and niqab they all found employment.*

APPGRC (2013) also link discrimination to assumptions that Muslim women are more likely to choose to leave employment in favour of having and caring for children. This has already been discussed in Chapter 5, where some participants spoke of school staff making such assumptions.

This section has explored the reasons Pakistani women who do participate, or wish to participate in the labour market might not be able to capitalise on the qualifications which have already been linked to career success (e.g. ONS, 2014). The prevalence of over-education amongst Pakistani women was first linked to their greater likelihood of attending post-1992 universities, a lesser likelihood of having obtained first or second class degrees, and less value being placed on qualifications obtained overseas. This section also considered spatial constraints which might shape the nature of the local labour market as well as shaping its boundaries. Finally, this section has considered the role of discrimination in the labour market, which provides an indication that, as suggested by Rafferty and Dale (2008), over-education is shaped by the discrimination experienced by Pakistani women.

## **6.6 Under-qualification**

Section 6.4 stated that Pakistani and Bangladeshi students achieve lower grades at GCSE and A Level than students of other ethnicities, and further that educational disadvantage, though it is decreasing, still persists (CoDE, 2014b). In addition, Pakistanis are amongst the ethnic groups least likely to have degree level qualifications (CoDE, 2014b). This means that under-qualification, which is defined by Battu and Sloane (2002;1) as ‘...where educational attainment is below that formally required...’ remains a key consideration when exploring labour market participation. Under-qualification is most likely to affect the older Pakistani cohort; CoDE (2014b) reported that those aged 25-49 were twice as likely as those aged 16–24 to have no degree level qualifications, which is similar to the rate for white British people of the same age group. Additionally, they argue that the age gap in

attainment is exacerbated for those born outside the UK, indicating that under-qualification might be a more pronounced issue for first generation migrants. This section outlines key factors that might lead to under-education amongst Pakistani women, focusing on age and migration status (CoDE, 2014b), and religious and cultural norms (Ahmad, 2001, and see also Chapters 3, 4, and 5 of this thesis), and considers the implications of under-qualification for labour market participation.

Lindley et al., (2006; 353) relate Pakistani women's academic attainment to whether or not they were born in the UK, stating that: '...there is a considerable gap between the qualifications of first generation women and those of young women born or educated in the UK.' This is reflected in the literature reviewed in Chapter 1 on migration, which argued that women who moved to the UK as adults, often to join husbands, had low expectations of their participation in the labour market, which therefore affected their attainment and other skills that might help them to participate (e.g. Leslie and Lindley, 2000). Furthermore, statistics from Unicef (2013) indicate low levels of participation in secondary school education for Pakistani women *in Pakistan*, suggesting that those who move to the UK as teenagers or adults will not have the same qualification levels as their British counterparts. Indeed, Shaw (2000) suggests that Pakistani girls are steered towards marriage from a young age, and Ahmad (2001) suggests that education is simultaneously viewed as an asset and a potential barrier to marriage. Such conflicting views of education are also reflected in the experiences of some of the participants as outlined in Chapters 5 and 6.

When considering under-qualification, it should also be noted that educational attainment is linked to socio-economic status. Bradley and Taylor (2004: 343) conclude, from their research on ethnicity and attainment, that:

*The primary reasons for the relatively poor performance of Afro-Caribbean and Bangladeshi/Pakistani youths lie in their family's relative poverty, which may in turn stem from discrimination in the labour market. This suggests that the most disadvantaged ethnic groups will continue to improve their exam performance relative to whites over the longer term provided ethnic disparities in socioeconomic status continue to narrow. This will only happen, however, if discrimination in the labour market is eliminated.*

It has already been demonstrated in this thesis that Pakistanis living in the UK are more likely to be concentrated in areas of higher deprivation, as well as more likely to be in precarious and low-paid forms of employment. Therefore, although under-qualification is linked to age and migration profile, socio-economic and locational

factors should not be overlooked. For example, CoDE (2013) state that Pakistani groups are most likely to be concentrated in more deprived, inner-city areas, whilst both Singleton (2010) and Basit (2012) link educational attainment to area and the type of school students attend. In turn, attainment at school affects access to certain types of university; therefore even where students obtain the right grades to attend university, this chapter has argued, in Section 6.5.1, that not all universities are 'equal' when it comes to participating in the labour market.

Finally, some Pakistani women are also likely to experience barriers to accessing higher education, which potentially affects access to the labour market. Chapters 3 and 4 suggested that cultural preferences might place limits on women's mobility outside the home (e.g. Shaw, 2000). Nonetheless, more research indicates that Muslims place a lot of faith in the education system (e.g. Afshar, 1989), and furthermore ethnic minority students are more likely than white students to stay on in higher education (e.g. Bhattacharya et al., 2003). Furthermore, Catney and Sabater (2015) argue that ethnic penalties in the labour market persist even when educational differences are taken into account. Therefore, although under-qualification is likely to be an issue for some women, particularly those who were not educated in the UK, it seems more likely that Pakistani women are, for various reasons already discussed in Section 6.5, less likely to be able to capitalise on qualifications they have. Furthermore, for those who were not educated in the UK, language proficiency is more likely to be a barrier to both the labour market, and to obtaining qualifications. This is discussed in Section 6.7.

## **6.7 Language proficiency, economic activity, and migration policy**

Language disadvantage has been linked to higher levels of economic inactivity amongst Pakistani women (Leslie and Lindley, 2000), as well as a decreased probability of participating in employment (Shields and Price, 2010). For first generation Pakistani migrants, language proficiency poses '...a considerable barrier to seeking paid work outside the home'(Dale, 2002; 5). ESOL classes are a valuable resource for women whose English fluency might be preventing them from participating in not just the labour market, but various aspects of life in the UK. Issues relating to the accessibility of such classes for Pakistani women will be the focus of this section, however it is first of all necessary to outline the visa requirements regarding English proficiency.



The level of English required for migration to the UK differs according to the visa level being applied for. Those applying for family visas, unless they are children or adults migrating to be cared for by relatives, over 65, or have a physical or mental condition that prevents them from meeting the requirement, must demonstrate knowledge of English. This can be proven by: either a degree or academic qualification that is taught or researched in English or recognised by UK NARIC as being equivalent to a UK bachelor's degree or higher; or passing an approved English language test (Gov.UK, 2017c). Therefore, migrants are required to demonstrate some level of English proficiency. Nonetheless, this section will demonstrate that language remains a considerable barrier to labour market participation.

### **6.7.1 Accessing language classes**

Having argued that '...lack of English language fluency reduces average predicted employment probabilities by 20–25 percentage points', Shields and Wheatley Price (2001; 741) suggest that:

*Increasing the provision of English language training directly or indirectly...would go a long way to eliminating the 10% employment gap between Britain's white and ethnic minority communities.*

Similarly, Leslie and Lindley (2000; 604) found that

*Lack of fluency in English has a significant impact on the unemployment and inactivity rates of ethnic minority men and women in Britain. For men the biggest impact appears to be on unemployment, and for women its biggest impact is on inactivity rates. Earnings are also significantly reduced.*

This suggests that being able to access language classes or other methods of language training is central to increasing labour market participation amongst Pakistani women. As well as a degree of English fluency being required for many jobs, learning or improving English is likely to be a precursor to developing or building on qualifications, as well as navigating complex processes relating to employment. Learning more English is not just positive in terms of increasing employability: BIS (2011; 16) reports that ESOL study for Pakistani housewives meant they could visit medical practitioners independently, communicate with their children's teachers and their neighbours, and '...generally lead more integrated lives.'

Despite the positive aspects of learning or improving English, Pakistani women are likely to differ in their ability to access ESOL classes. Such difficulties might in part

be shaped by their status as Pakistani migrants, and relate to cultural factors and family commitments, whilst funding and availability of services is also a key concern. Anwar (1979; 166) stated that some women ‘...find it difficult to participate in literacy and language courses, because they are not allowed to leave their homes and to participate in any kind of social life.’ Although this was written over 35 years ago, Chapter 3 of this thesis has suggested that Pakistani women might still face limitations to their mobility outside the home, which will affect their participation in certain activities. However, BIS (2011) reports that uptake of ESOL classes amongst Asian or Asian British women is fairly high, making up a third of ESOL learners. This suggests that ESOL classes are popular amongst Pakistani women who are able to access them. Furthermore, Hashem and Aspinall (2010; 20) found little evidence of women not being permitted to attend classes by their husbands. Nonetheless, they do relate non-attendance to ‘time and family commitments’, stating that:

*The lack of time and having both childcare and family responsibilities is an issue that does affect all women regardless of ethnicity. Perhaps the case of Bangladeshi women is more acute, because they are more heavily reliant on state-funded childcare services, especially as the majority are unsalaried and dependent upon the availability of government provided childcare or childcare through their extended families.*

Although Hashem and Aspinall (2010)’s report is about Bangladeshis in London, the lower rates of labour market participation amongst Pakistani women mean that they may face some of the same issues with accessing ESOL as the Bangladeshi women in Hashem and Aspinall’s (2010) report.

In addition, BIS (2011; 17) suggests that financial constraints might prevent women from attending ESOL classes, ‘...either because they have no income or may not have access to funds if learning needs are not prioritised within the family budget for financial or cultural reasons.’ Changes to the funding and provision of ESOL classes have also been described as disproportionately affecting women (Moore, 2011). Those on ‘inactive’ benefits are no longer able to access government funding for ESOL classes, and Moore (2011) suggests that those on inactive benefits are more likely to be women who stay at home to look after the family. More recently (in January 2016), former Prime Minister David Cameron proposed a fund that would be specifically targeted towards funding ESOL classes for Muslim women, providing courses to isolated communities via local colleges, though this follows a much larger cut in ESOL funding of £45,000,000 (Martin, 2011). This

increase in ESOL funding has been criticised on the grounds that firstly, it is still an overall cut in real terms, and secondly, in targeting Muslim women specifically, it makes subtle links between low English fluency and extremism. Indeed, the National Association for Teaching English and Community Languages to Adults (hereafter NATECLA, 2016) responded to the Prime Minister's proposal with the following statement:

*Government funding for ESOL classes across the UK has been significantly cut over the last four years. The most recent cut took place only four months ago (September 2015) and saw the withdrawal of £45 million worth of funding for Job Centre claimants who were identified as having a language level that prevents them from getting employment. This cut in funding, and those that came before, have had a profound effect on the ability of further and adult education centres to offer ESOL classes in general. Many organisations have stopped running these courses altogether, a number of qualified and experienced teachers have lost their jobs and, where ESOL classes do still exist, huge waiting lists are commonplace. This means migrants often have to wait over a year to start learning English and the number of free places available for the most vulnerable learners have been slashed.*

Furthermore, they question the timing of the announced funding changes, as well as the prioritisation of Muslim women over other migrants, and they criticise David Cameron for claiming that '...there is a lack of will in Muslim women wishing to learn English', when 'perhaps the drop in take up he refers to should rather be attributed to the significant loss of funding for ESOL courses provided by the government and the subsequent closure of many classes' (NATECLA, 2016).

Irrespective of costs, the availability of ESOL classes is declining. Participants in research by Turner and Wigfield (2012; 48), who wanted to work but were constrained by their English fluency,

*...stated that local ESOL classes were full or were not run frequently enough, whilst those whose English was better felt that having English as a second language still prevented them from gaining employment, either because they perceived they were being discriminated against by potential employers or because they themselves lacked confidence in their ability to understand English well enough to obtain work.*

In Section 6.5.3, discrimination against Pakistani women was postulated as something that could prevent them from capitalising on their qualifications. It might

also be the case that employers use a lack of English fluency as an excuse not to recruit certain people; this was reported by participants in a focus group conducted by Turner and Wigfield (2012; 36), with one Bangladeshi woman stating:

*I want to work, but I can't find any work. I have tried but they tell me that my English is no good, I bet they never said that when they needed our fathers to work night shifts in the 50s and 60s.*

This section has outlined the relationship between language proficiency and Pakistani women's labour market participation, and unsurprisingly, it is easier to access the labour market for those who can speak English well. Nonetheless, family commitments, cuts to funding, and a lessening availability of local ESOL classes mean that they are becoming difficult to access. This has the potential to prevent some Pakistani women from working, studying, or participating in other more everyday activities such as accessing healthcare.

## **6.8 Conclusion**

This chapter has reviewed literature on education, language proficiency, and accessing the labour market. It began with a consideration of subject choice in post-16 education, and how this is both gendered and ethnicised. Following this, it explored the link between academic attainment and labour market participation, which again is gendered and ethnicised, but in a complex way; overall, girls attain at higher levels than boys. However, Pakistani girls and boys are both slightly behind their white British counterparts in terms of academic attainment. Nonetheless, Pakistani women are increasingly participating in higher education.

This chapter has also argued that people differ in their ability to capitalise on qualifications: for all women this is likely to relate to other caring responsibilities affecting the accessibility of certain types of work. For Pakistani women, this is further affected by discrimination in the labour market, as well as country of birth. Women born overseas with qualifications might still have issues navigating the labour market in the UK, and language remains a barrier to the labour market irrespective of qualifications. Indeed, English proficiency is a key barrier to labour market participation, as well as access to other services. Despite this, access to ESOL classes is compromised by costs, caring responsibilities, and physical proximity to places that provide them. Having established that qualifications and language proficiency play an important role in labour market participation, but that this is not simple or straightforward, Chapter 7 explores the themes that have arisen

in this literature review chapter by drawing on data from the 2011 Census, as well as accounts from the research participants.

## 7 Skills for the labour market

### 7.1 Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 6, both qualifications and language proficiency are frequently cited as affecting labour market participation amongst ethnic minority groups (e.g. Shields and Wheatley Price, 2001; Lindley et al., 2006). More specifically, Chapter 6 argued that the relationship between ethnicity and attainment of work-related skills is particularly complex for Pakistani women; higher education attendance and academic attainment are steadily increasing amongst Pakistanis in the UK (CoDE, 2014), and lower attainment can also partially be accounted for by other factors, such as age and migration profiles, social class (CoDE, 2014b), as well as the life-stage factors outlined in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 (e.g. Shaw, 2000; Dale et al., 2006). Chapter 6 argued that under-qualification is an issue for *some* women, but also that more pressing issues relate firstly on the extent to which Pakistani women are able to utilise their qualifications, and secondly to other skills such as English fluency. Both the extent to which qualifications can be utilised, and English fluency, are likely to hinder access to the labour market and to other services. Therefore, Pakistani women, depending on numerous factors, need differing types of support in either utilising skills and qualifications, or developing those skills (Turner and Wigfield, 2012).

This chapter begins by presenting an overview of the relationship between gender, ethnicity, and educational attainment and participation. It then considers how people translate their qualifications into jobs, since although attainment is associated with positive outcomes in the labour market (ONS, 2014), qualifications do not guarantee jobs, as discussed in Section 6.5. Following this, the experiences of migrants are considered, specifically focusing on the barriers that might be faced by those who are engaged but might need additional support in accessing the labour market. Finally, this chapter considers those who, as defined by Turner and Wigfield (2012), are removed from the labour market and might need different types of support.

## 7.2 Education and qualification levels

Table 20 shows the relationship between qualification levels and economic activity for all adults aged 16-64 in England and Wales. Here, it is evident that qualifications are associated with an increase in employment levels; those with qualifications below degree level are more likely to be in employment than those with no qualifications, whilst those with qualifications above degree level are more likely to be in employment than those with qualifications below degree level. Those with no qualifications are more likely to be in employment than not, although 48.6% of people in this category were unemployed or economically inactive. Qualifications, and particularly those above degree level, also reduced the chances of being economically inactive due to looking after home/family. Those with 'other' qualifications, which include vocational qualifications or qualifications at degree level or above obtained overseas, were less likely to be in employment than those with qualifications below degree level, but more likely to be in employment than those with no qualifications.

**Table 20: Qualification levels and economic activity for all adults aged 16-64 in England and Wales**

	None	Below degree level	Above degree level	Other <sup>5</sup>
In employment	51.4	80.1	87.9	76.4
Unemployed	8.6	6.3	3.1	5.9
Retired	12.6	4.1	4.7	5.8
Looking after home/family	10.7	5.5	3.0	7.9
Sick or disabled	16.7	3.9	1.4	4.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Whilst Table 20 shows a positive relationship between qualifications and economic activity, it was argued in Chapter 6 that this relationship is complicated by both gender and ethnicity, whereby participation, attainment, and outcomes are affected by both factors separately and in combination. Table 21 shows qualification levels

<sup>5</sup> Vocational qualifications and overseas qualifications above degree level.

of white British and Pakistani men and women aged 16-64 in England and Wales, and shows that Pakistani women are the group most likely to have no qualifications, and least likely to have qualifications above degree level; 30.6% of Pakistani women had no qualifications, compared to 22.2% of Pakistani men, 15.8% of white British women, and 15.3% of white British men; by contrast, 23.8% of Pakistani women had qualifications above degree level, compared to 30.3% of Pakistani men, 30.2% of white British women, and 29.9% of white British men. Furthermore, there is only a negligible gender gap between white British men and women, and a larger one for Pakistani men and women, particularly for those with no qualifications, and those with qualifications above degree level. For example, 30.3% of Pakistani men, compared to 23.8% of Pakistani women have qualifications above degree level. Finally, the Pakistani group are more likely than the white British group to have 'other' qualifications. This table shows, therefore, that Pakistani women are less qualified than their white British counterparts, and are also less qualified than Pakistani men, and therefore indicates that gender and ethnicity intersect with regard to educational attainment. This is consistent with literature cited in Chapter 6 that suggested Pakistani women in particular might face considerable barriers to participation in higher education, despite the increase in their participation in education at this level (e.g. CoDE, 2014b).

**Table 21: Qualification levels for white British and Pakistani men and women aged 16-64 in England and Wales**

	White British male	White British female	Pakistani male	Pakistani female
No qualifications	15.3	15.8	22.2	30.6
Below degree level	51.4	51.6	32.4	30.9
Above degree level	29.9	30.2	30.3	23.8
Other	3.4	2.4	15.1	14.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The relationship between class and participation in higher education could go some way to explaining the ethnicity gap in qualification levels demonstrated in Table 21. Chapter 6 linked socioeconomic status and deprivation to educational outcomes, particularly for Pakistani students (see Section 6.5). Nonetheless, it does not explain the wider gender gap exhibited by the Pakistani group, which is particularly evident for those with no qualifications, and those with above degree level



qualifications. Understanding this will go some way to furthering understandings of labour market participation amongst Pakistani women, given the relationship between qualifications and economic activity, as illustrated in Table 22, which shows that having no qualifications is associated with decreased employment, whilst having *any* qualifications is associated with increased employment. However, interpretation of this table is not straightforward.

For those with no qualifications, Pakistani men are the most likely to be economically active (either in employment or unemployed), followed by white British men. Men who are not economically active are most likely to be sick or disabled. Less than half of white British women are economically active. A majority of inactive white British women are retired, with the rest split between looking after home/family, and sick or disabled. The majority (59.5%) of Pakistani women with no qualifications are economically inactive due to looking after home/family, and less than 20.0% are economically active. Qualifications below degree level increase economic activity for all groups. The majority of each group in this category are economically active, although economic activity remains lower for both groups of women, and lowest for Pakistani women. Despite this, the greatest employment increases are seen amongst both groups of women; there is a 32.9 percentage point increase in employment rates for white British women with qualifications below degree level, compared to white British women with no qualifications, whilst for Pakistani women there is a 35.0 percentage point increase. This is consistent with Salway's (2007) suggestion that Pakistani women benefit from qualifications in the same way that white British women do.

Qualifications above degree level increase economic activity further still, raising economic activity to above 90.0% for white British and Pakistani men, 85.0% for white British women, and 76.1% for Pakistani women. Although Pakistani women in this category still have the lowest employment rates, Pakistani men and women benefit more from above degree level qualifications than white British men and women. For Pakistani women, there is a 21.0 percentage point increase in employment if they have qualifications above degree level, in comparison to qualifications below degree level. This figure is 13.4 percentage points for Pakistani men, 9.4 percentage points for white British women, and 5.3 percentage points for white British men.

Finally, 'other' qualifications are beneficial for all groups in comparison to having no qualifications. For both groups of men, economic activity (including unemployment) is just under 90.0%, and for Pakistani men, economic activity in this group is higher

than in the group qualified at below degree level. A majority of white British women in this category is in employment, with those who are economically inactive most likely to be retired. Pakistani women with 'other' qualifications are most likely to be inactive due to looking after home/family, with only 23.4% of these women in employment. The role of 'other' qualifications will be returned to in Section 7.5, since this category includes degrees obtained overseas. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that vocational qualifications, which are also included in this category, are not as beneficial in the labour market as below or above degree level academic qualifications.

**Table 22: Economic activity according to qualification level for white British and Pakistani men and women aged 16-64 in England and Wales**

		White British male	White British female	Pakistani male	Pakistani female
None	In employment	59.7	43.6	67.1	13.1
	Unemployed	11.0	5.7	10.9	5.9
	Retired	7.5	20.1	3.2	5.5
	Looking after home/family	2.5	15.0	3.6	59.5
	Sick or disabled	19.2	15.6	15.2	16.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Below degree level	In employment	85.1	76.5	77.8	48.1
	Unemployed	6.9	4.6	15.0	11.1
	Retired	3.2	5.6	0.6	0.9
	Looking after home/family	0.9	9.4	2.1	35.0
	Sick or disabled	3.9	3.9	4.5	4.8
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Above degree level	In employment	90.4	85.9	91.2	69.1
	Unemployed	2.9	1.9	6.3	7.0
	Retired	5.1	6.1	0.6	1.2
	Looking after home/family	0.4	4.5	0.9	21.4
	Sick or disabled	1.3	1.5	1.0	1.3
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Other	In employment	81.8	67.1	82.1	23.4
	Unemployed	6.1	3.9	7.4	6.2
	Retired	5.3	17.8	2.9	4.1
	Looking after home/family	1.0	6.0	2.7	60.1
	Sick or disabled	5.8	5.2	5.0	6.2
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

This preliminary exploration of the link between qualifications and economic activity demonstrates that having *any* qualifications is better than having no qualifications, and that the gains associated with qualifications are greatest for Pakistani women. Despite this, even with qualifications above degree level, Pakistani women do not participate in the labour market at the same level as the other groups, exhibiting a gender gap as well as an ethnic gap, even where educational attainment is taken into account. This brings to the fore two key points. The first relates to the differing attainment levels of Pakistani students, particularly in non-compulsory education, and the second relates to the idea that even with qualifications, Pakistani women may struggle to access the labour market, an idea expressed by Dale et al. (2002b; 950) who found, in their research conducted with the South Asian community in Oldham, that:

*Respondents frequently expressed this view and it reflects the extent to which discrimination in the labour market is perceived as a constraint and the recognition that, if you were Asian, you would only succeed by being better qualified than your competitors.*

Section 7.2.1 explores attainment levels for Pakistani women in comparison to their white British counterparts. Specifically, it focuses on ideas about marriageability that link to the themes outlined in Chapters 3 and 4, and how this shapes experiences of education, and expectations of future participation in the labour market.

### **7.2.1 Education, attainment, and ‘marriageability’**

Shaw (2000; 175) states that, for Pakistani women

*...experiences of secondary schooling and of employment have, to varying extents, been shaped by their parents’ concerns to protect their daughters’ marriageability.*

This is corroborated by Dale et al. (2010; 951) who found that ‘...some parents were reluctant for daughters to continue in education and preferred them to make an early marriage.’ Further, Dale et al. (2002b) draw a link between participation in non-compulsory education, and the prevalence of early marriage amongst Pakistani communities, which they link to *purdah*, insofar as early marriage could help to negate the risk of women engaging in sexual relationships outside of marriage. Additionally, in their research, Bagguley and Hussain (2007; 19) found that ‘marriage was central to the plans of young women from all of the South Asian communities.’ This is discussed in greater detail in Chapters 3 and 5, which explore

marriage as a key life-stage factor affecting labour market participation amongst Pakistani women. While this suggests that marriageability might have a negative effect on attainment, and more specifically participation in non-compulsory education, Bagguley and Hussain (2007) also found that many women, whilst aware that marriage could be a potential disruption to participation in higher education, opted to defer their marriage in order to pursue higher education. Similarly, both Fiza (University employee, Leeds) and Mehreen (Doctor, Leeds) stated that their participation in higher education shaped decisions regarding marriage. Mehreen met her husband when she was 17, and her parents in law were happy for her to attend medical school, whilst Fiza went to teach abroad for a year once she had got married, in a role directly related to her degree. Thus, the relationship between marriageability and education is complex (e.g. Ahmad, 2001), and this section considers such complexities.

Nonetheless, for some women, a preference for early marriage in the Pakistani community (e.g. Dale et al., 2002b; Lindley et al., 2006) has the potential to affect educational trajectories, and in particular, participation in higher education. In order to explore this, Table 23 shows marriage<sup>6</sup> rates according to age category and ethnicity for men and women aged 16-64 in England and Wales. This table shows high marriage rates for Pakistani women aged 16-24, even in comparison to Pakistani men. 43.8% of Pakistani women in this age group are married, compared to 21.2% of Pakistani men, and 4.2% of white British women. Marriage rates amongst all ethnic groups are highest in the 25-49 age category, and drop slightly for those in the 50-64 age category.

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<sup>6</sup> For clarity, in this table, 'Not married' refers to people who are single, divorced, separated, or widowed.

**Table 23: Ethnicity and marital status according to age category for all men and women aged 16-64 in England and Wales**

			White British	White other	Mixed/multi-ethnicity	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Chinese	Other	African	Caribbean
Men	16-24	Not married	98.0	92.0	97.8	93.1	78.8	90.2	93.7	89.9	91.5	97.6
		Married	2.0	8.0	2.2	6.9	21.2	9.8	6.3	10.1	8.5	2.4
	25-49	Not married	55.8	54.9	67.7	31.5	25.1	24.8	46.9	39.1	47.5	68.7
		Married	44.2	45.1	32.3	68.5	74.9	75.2	53.1	60.9	52.5	31.3
	50-64	Not married	32.6	35.8	51.7	10.4	11.3	6.3	19.1	20.2	33.8	54.4
		Married	67.4	64.2	48.3	89.6	88.7	93.7	80.9	79.8	66.2	45.6
Women	16-24	Not married	95.8	84.5	94.9	74.5	56.2	58.7	89.3	63.1	82.9	94.2
		Married	4.2	15.5	5.1	25.5	43.8	41.3	10.7	36.9	17.1	5.8
	25-49	Not married	51.8	51.9	66.6	26.7	24.3	19.6	38.4	28.9	54.2	72.6
		Married	48.2	48.1	33.4	73.3	75.7	80.4	61.6	71.1	45.8	27.4
	50-64	Not married	34.3	41.0	52.5	22.9	27.8	38.5	29.0	34.8	58.8	66.5
		Married	65.7	59.0	47.5	77.1	72.2	61.5	71.0	65.2	41.2	33.5

As detailed in the opening paragraph of this section, the prevalence of early marriage amongst Pakistani women might link to participation in non-compulsory education. This may not be related to the link between education and the labour market per se, but might have more to do with concerns about the *nature* of non-compulsory education (Ahmad, 2001), and, for some, fears that it might prove a disruption to the anticipated trajectory from compulsory education into marriage and family life. The relationship between marital status and qualification levels for white British and Pakistani men and women is illustrated in Table 24. Age is also accounted for here, since Table 23 has already shown a relationship between marital status and age.

**Table 24: Qualifications and marital status for white British and Pakistani men and women aged 16-64 in England and Wales, according to age category<sup>7</sup>**

			White British		Pakistani	
			Male	Female	Male	Female
16-24	Single	None	11.5	9.6	11.8	10.1
		Below degree level	71.2	69.5	63.6	60.6
		Above degree level	15.7	19.9	21.0	26.1
		Other	1.6	1.0	3.5	3.2
	Married/Civil Partnership	None	12.1	11.4	18.6	23.2
		Below degree level	68.3	69.3	48.8	41.1
		Above degree level	17.3	17.9	13.4	14.0
		Other	2.4	1.5	19.2	21.7
25-49	Single	None	14.5	12.8	14.8	20.9
		Below degree level	52.8	53.1	34.9	34.7
		Above degree level	29.9	32.5	41.8	36.4
		Other	2.8	1.6	8.6	8.0
	Married/Civil Partnership	None	7.4	6.9	20.3	28.2
		Below degree level	52.1	54.1	29.2	30.2
		Above degree level	37.8	37.6	32.5	24.6
		Other	2.6	1.3	18.0	16.9
50-64	Single	None	30.0	29.9	40.1	59.9
		Below degree level	42.2	41.3	21.7	14.2
		Above degree level	23.4	24.8	18.8	9.8
		Other	4.4	4.0	19.5	16.1
	Married	None	19.5	25.3	42.8	57.9
		Below degree level	43.7	44.0	20.6	13.8
		Above degree level	31.6	26.2	18.2	10.9
		Other	5.3	4.5	18.4	17.5

<sup>7</sup> All column totals add up to 100.0%.



Table 24 shows a relationship between age, marital status, and qualification levels that varies with age. For those aged 16-24, marriage is associated with a greater likelihood of having no qualifications, though the gap is notably larger for married Pakistani men and women in this age group. Further, for Pakistani men and women in this group, marriage decreases the likelihood of qualifications below or above degree level, whilst increasing 'other' qualifications. A similar pattern is evident for Pakistani men and women in the 25-49 category, whilst married white British men and women in this group are more likely to have above degree level qualifications than their single counterparts. Pakistani men and women in the 50-64 category are the least likely to have any qualifications, though marriage does not change this to a great extent. Nonetheless, the gender gap is wider within this group. For white British men and women in this group, marriage is associated with a decreased likelihood of having no qualifications and an increase in above degree level qualifications. In sum, the relationship between marriage and qualifications does vary with age. However, it is only in the Pakistani group that marriage is consistently associated with a decrease in qualification levels, irrespective of age group. Nonetheless, the gender attainment gap is smaller for the younger group. Overall, the fact that married Pakistanis aged 16-24 are among the least likely to have qualifications above degree level could be taken as an indication that in some cases, marriage is prioritised over pursuing non-compulsory education.

Some of the participants also drew links between marital expectations and labour market expectations. For example, Veena (Not economically active, Leeds) stated that she had Pakistani qualifications that were equivalent to A levels, but did not pursue education any further because she got married and, in doing so, drew a link between marriage and her non-pursuit of non-compulsory education. Indeed, none of the other members of the focus group Veena was part of were economically active, and they all indicated that they did not anticipate participating in the labour market. Therefore, it is likely that some women simply do not expect to participate in the labour market, particularly once they are married. It is noteworthy too that the women in this focus group specifically were all first generation migrants. Aston (2007; 5) found that '... younger women and second and third generation women [hold] less traditional views than their older relatives, in terms of education and employment.' This is evident where this research has found that Pakistani women aged 16-24 are more likely to have non-compulsory qualifications, and more likely to be active in the labour market.

By contrast, Mehreen (Doctor, Leeds), who was born in the UK, accepted a marriage proposal when she was 17, but made it clear that she would be pursuing

her medical career prior to getting married. Her husband's parents were friends with her parents and said that they did not mind her studying, as long as she did so 'in a modest fashion.' Mehreen's account indicates that, although her parents (who were very invested in her career) and her parents-in-law encouraged her to continue her studies, her parents-in-law were still invested in *how* she pursued her education. This relates to broader concerns about the 'westernising influence' of universities, and indeed Brah (1993; 143) suggests that allowing girls to work away from home 'unaccompanied' could subject a family to 'malicious gossip'. Similarly, Dale et al. (2002b; 957) suggest that:

*If a girl remained at home under the supervision of her family there was less risk that she would engage in activities which could damage the family's reputation. For a girl to continue in post-16 education it was necessary for parents to be confident that this would not bring dishonour on the family.*

Such concerns were also discussed by other participants. Farzia (Administrator, Kirklees) said that she did not go to university because she did not want to go to the University of Huddersfield, but was not allowed to travel further afield to study. As a result, she opted out of university education altogether, because she felt that Huddersfield was not as prestigious as nearby Leeds, and therefore a degree from Huddersfield would not improve her job prospects. She described herself as being 'a step ahead' because she was born in England rather than Pakistan, but went on to say that not being able to commute limits university options, which affects job prospects: 'If I had grown up in Leeds I would have been allowed to go to Leeds University.' Ayesha (Teacher, Kirklees) spoke of her parents' reluctance to let her go away to university, wanting her to stay nearby and study pharmacy. However, her brother was allowed to go away to university, and she used this to negotiate going away to university to study Chemistry; a compromise, with her choice of location and a course they approved of.

This section has, so far, demonstrated a propensity for early marriage amongst Pakistani women, and suggested that this relates to decisions about participation in non-compulsory education. Further, it has demonstrated lower attainment levels amongst married Pakistani women. Participant accounts do provide some support to the idea that marriage shapes the nature of participation in non-compulsory education, as well as decisions to not participate at all. Nonetheless, other research, as well as data collected for this project, also suggests that others' perceptions of the role of marriage within Pakistani culture, as well as other facets of belonging to a migrant population, affected their experiences of education, and

the extent to which they were encouraged to participate in non-compulsory education. This is discussed in Section 7.2.2.

### **7.2.2 Perceptions of Pakistani students**

In Chapter 6 it was suggested that perceptions of Pakistani women led to discrimination in the labour market. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this happens in educational institutions, too. In their research on higher education and opportunities for Pakistani women, Bagguley and Hussain (2007; 34) report of their participants that:

*The women were very critical of some staff in schools who had shown a lack of interest in South Asian pupils. Many of the women interviewed had either encountered or heard about teachers who did not take the education of South Asian women seriously. This seemed to especially apply to Bangladeshi and Pakistani women and to working-class Indian (often Sikh) students. This minority of teachers assumed, often quite openly, that South Asian women's education was going to be a waste of time as they were destined for marriage and motherhood rather than for careers.*

This reflects research on discrimination in the labour market, as well as the experiences of several of the participants. For example, Ayesha (Teacher, Kirklees) felt that teachers' expectations of children who speak English as an additional language are often limited, and further that, even in areas with large South Asian communities, school teachers lack awareness of the different communities in Pakistan. Hadiqa (University employee, Leeds) spoke of low expectations from a careers advisor she went to see at secondary school, and also stated that her teachers made racist comments. Similarly, Farzia (University employee, Leeds) said that, in retrospect, she realised that her tutors at school and college did not expect her to continue her education, and that there was an assumption from her school careers advisor, and her teachers, that she get married and have children: 'People didn't send their girls to uni, *especially Pakistani girls.*' This demonstrates how others' perceptions of Pakistani women can potentially influence attainment and participation in higher education.

It should be noted that these participants were both aged over 40, and it is likely that their age profile will be linked to their experiences of education; Hadiqa's account suggests that she was attending school at a time when it was also less common for girls to attend university in general. Tight (2012; 213) describes a steady progression of women's participation in higher education, whereby '...social

attitudes have changed and restrictions on their involvement have been dismantled.’ Tight (2012; 215) concludes that: ‘Overall, it is clear that the post-war period has seen a massive improvement in the position of women in higher education in the UK, such that women students now significantly outnumber men.’ Nonetheless, the roles of teachers, peers, and careers advisors must not be overlooked in terms of their potential effects on educational trajectories for Pakistani women, particularly to the extent that this pertains to lay understandings of Muslim women. In particular, David Cameron was, in 2016, ridiculed for referring to the ‘traditional submissiveness of Muslim women.’ Linked to this, in discussing their findings, Bagguley and Hussain (2007; 34) state that:

*In relation to their experiences at school the young women talked about the stereotypes that some teachers had of them. These assumptions in some cases were seen as being buttressed by the public comments of some prominent local politicians, again illustrating the ways in which schools and universities are not insulated from the outside world.*

As such, commonly held understandings of Pakistani, and specifically Pakistani Muslim women are just as damaging, or more so, than familial concerns about marriageability. While women’s experiences of education in general might be shaped by concerns about fulfilling gender roles, which is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6, the experiences of Pakistani women in the British education system, and their subsequent participation in higher education, must be considered in terms of the broader climate of Islamophobia, whereby anti-Muslim hostility stems from ‘...a symbolic order that places Muslims, as a group, in direct, inevitable opposition to the liberal freedoms and values of secular European societies’ (Britton, 2015; no pagination).

Support from teachers, careers advisors, and peers is particularly important for those whose parents do not understand the British education system. In this case, they become an invaluable source of information for those who are unable to rely on their parents for it. Ayesha (Teacher, Kirklees) said that her parents, who were from a city, knew that education was important and helped her where they could but that this became harder as she left primary school, because they did not know the curriculum. She said that because of this, she did not have all the options she could have had, and that the education system should provide support, and further said that those from rural areas might not be as aware of the importance of education as those from cities. Whilst Dale et al. (2002b; 953) find parents to be influential in terms of take-up of higher education, they also suggest that ‘...a lack of dialogue

between the Careers Service and parents may result in young people applying for courses without the necessary A-level grades to gain acceptance.' Further, encouragement from parents might be gendered (e.g. Turner and Wigfield, 2012) with boys, rather than girls, encouraged to pursue their education, and a preference for girls to leave school and pursue an early marriage (Dale et al., 2002b). In this instance, again, a lack of external support might disempower girls and women from pursuing their education.

This section has argued that, while teachers and careers advisors are vital in supporting trajectories from school to higher education for Pakistani girls, particularly where parents are unfamiliar with the British education system, they may provide inadequate support due to their understandings of Pakistani culture and what it means to be a Pakistani woman. Whilst cultural preferences for early marriage, and a focus on family formation, are likely to hinder participation in higher education (though not just for Pakistani girls), the context of Islamophobia in Britain, which in turn identifies Pakistani, and specifically Pakistani Muslim women as being 'submissive', continues to create a barrier to the way Pakistani women participate in both education and the labour market. Indeed, many families encourage female members to pursue their education and view it as an asset, which is discussed in Section 7.3.

### **7.3 Education as an asset**

Contrary to the idea that Pakistani girls are being prepared for marriage and therefore are neither encouraged to, nor expected to participate in the labour market, many parents view education as an asset for their daughters. Indeed, Dale et al. (2002b) suggest that some girls are pressured to pursue their education even if they would have preferred not to, which reflects the experience of Mehreen (Doctor, Leeds), who said that she had little choice in the way she pursued her education, and that her studying medicine was a 'foregone conclusion'. Afshar (1989; 262) writes that 'in many ways academic achievement is perceived as the best strategy for success both economically and even in terms of dealing with racism', whilst Shaw (2001; 177) stated that education can be '...an asset in marriage' and Ahmad (2001; 137) described it as '...a necessary asset in maintaining and gaining social prestige.' Decisions about participation in non-compulsory education are, therefore, extremely complex for Pakistani women. Such decisions are linked both to an awareness of the importance of education in social mobility (Ahmad, 2001), and the labour market (Afshar, 1989), as well as

marriageability (Shaw, 2001). The potential conflict between pursuing education and marriage was highlighted by Ahmad (2001; 147) who argued that:

*Muslim daughters (and their parents) are thus faced with a set of conflicting interests, a double-bind situation. Too little education and the family could be viewed by the rest of the community as 'backward' and 'old fashioned'; too much education and daughters could risk 'pricing themselves outside the marriage market' and 'going past their sell-by date.'*

In a similar vein, within this research, Mahira (ESOL coordinator, Leeds) said that her husband wanted to marry her because she was 'both intelligent, and traditional and domesticated', further highlighting the delicate balance between academic attainment and marriageability.

Other participants reported being encouraged to pursue their education by their parents, seemingly separate from any concerns about marriage. For example, Hadiqa's (University employee, Kirklees) parents encouraged all their children to continue their education, saying 'education will get you somewhere.' They did not mind what she studied in higher education as long as she could get a career; they wanted her to 'stand on my own two feet and not be controlled by a husband.' Mehreen (Doctor, Leeds) was strongly encouraged by her parents to pursue a career in medicine, saying that if she became a doctor, 'it will be your meal ticket...it's a good career for a woman. You will be able to stand on your own two feet.' Both these accounts reflect an awareness of the role of participating in the labour market in the UK; this is reflected in research by Dale et al. (2010) who argue that second generation Pakistani women view education as an important route into employment, and Shaw (2000) who argued that awareness of higher divorce rates in the UK, compared to in Pakistan increases parents' concerns about what their daughters will do should their marriage fail. Such concerns are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3. Parents' experiences, aspirations, and missed opportunities, have also been linked to their daughters' experiences of education. For example, Hadiqa (University employee, Leeds) said that her parents, who migrated to the UK from Pakistani in the 1960s, wanted her to have the opportunities they did not have.

This section has explored the accounts of participants who were encouraged to pursue their education, and more specifically higher education. However, despite the ever-increasing participation of Pakistani women in higher education, and despite changing attitudes that might lead to greater mobility (e.g. Aston, 2007),

Chapter 6 argued that many Pakistani women still have difficulty translating their qualifications into jobs. This is discussed in Section 7.4.

## **7.4 Translating qualifications into jobs**

Section 7.2 highlighted the link between qualifications and participation in the labour market, as well as demonstrating a qualifications gap between white British and Pakistani men and women, with Pakistani women being least likely to have qualifications above degree level. Despite this, some of this gap can be accounted for by age profile and generation, whereby first generation Pakistani migrants are less likely to have qualifications than second generation Pakistanis (CoDE, 2014b). Furthermore, education was viewed positively by some of the participants, and recent research suggests that Pakistani women are increasingly likely to participate in non-compulsory education (see Table 24).

However, increasing participation in higher education, and a change in attitudes towards girls participating in higher education is not necessarily reflected in Pakistani women's labour market participation. Section 6.5.3 of Chapter 6 argued that Pakistani women might have difficulty utilising their qualifications, and linked this to Islamophobia and associated discrimination in the labour market. Indeed, Table 22 showed that, even with the same qualification levels, Pakistani women do not participate in the labour market at the same rate as their white British counterparts. Therefore, this section will explore the extent to which Pakistani women are able, should they wish, to translate their qualifications into jobs.

### **7.4.1 University attendance and the under-valuing of post-1992 universities**

A key consideration, raised in Chapter 6, is that despite increased participation in higher education amongst Pakistani women, not all universities are 'equal'. Coffield and Vignoles (1997) report that ethnic minority groups are now better represented in higher education than white groups, but add that '...this encouraging development needs to be tempered by the persistently low participation of specific ethnic groups in the pre-1992 universities.' Further, they argue that:

*... ethnic minority students remain concentrated in certain post-1992 universities... This may reflect a positive decision by these students to attend institutions that they perceive as more diverse, more multi-racial, and more access 'friendly', as well as being nearer family and other support networks (Modood, 1993). However, the concentration of these students in the post-*

*1992 universities may also be partly explained by these universities accepting, on average, greater numbers of students with non-standard entry qualifications and the fact that ethnic minority students are more likely to fall into this category (Taylor, 1992).*

This was only mentioned by one participant, Farzia (Administrator, Kirklees) who, as already discussed, was not permitted to travel further than to the University of Huddersfield. She chose not to attend, and felt that a degree from Huddersfield would hold less currency than a degree from the University of Leeds. Therefore, an awareness of the difference between pre and post-1992 Universities appeared to be a factor in her decision not to pursue higher education. As she said, 'The university you go to affects your job prospects.'

For Farzia, her options were limited because she was not allowed to travel far on her own, but access to more prestigious universities is complicated by other factors too. Russell Group Universities, for example, have higher entry requirements, and in Chapter 6 a link was drawn between locational factors and educational attainment. Therefore, some students are at a disadvantage before they begin their university application process. Further, where school staff assume that people don't send their Pakistani girls to university (as suggested by Hadiqa, University employee, Leeds), this is not likely to facilitate applications to more prestigious universities.

#### **7.4.2 Discrimination in the labour market**

Another issue affecting labour market participation amongst university educated Pakistani women relates to discrimination in the workplace, which has already been discussed in this thesis, in Sections 4.4. and 6.5.3. This was experienced by Ayesha (Teacher, Kirklees), who said that in a previous role she had experienced stereotyping and institutionalised racism, where, for example, a colleague expressed concern that she was going to 'Islamify the school', whilst one of the teaching assistants had been worried that she would 'make everyone wear a headscarf.'

Turner and Wigfield (2012) also found that female Pakistani graduates experienced discrimination at work, even where jobs were perceived as being readily available. Further, some of their participants reported being overlooked for promotions, or finding it harder to get promotions than their white counterparts. This was also suggested by Ayesha (Teacher, Kirklees), who said that, although ethnic minority



teachers are good role models, they often do not get promoted, and that most head teachers were white and middle class.

Related to the suggestion, in Section 7.2.2, that careers advisors can sometimes overlook Pakistani students, based on the assumption that they will not pursue non-compulsory education, some participants questioned the types of support available to help them into the labour market. For example, although it was generally agreed in one of the Kirklees focus groups that support is better in the UK than in Pakistan, Sadia (Not economically active, Kirklees) said that she did not know where to look for a job, and that she felt as though she received more guidance in Pakistan.

So far, this chapter has focused on educational attainment. It has supported prior research in demonstrating that, although Pakistani women benefit from qualifications in the same way as white British women, even those educated at university level are less active in the labour market. This chapter has also shown that, although some women might be discouraged from pursuing education, particularly at University level, many are in fact encouraged to attend university, and education is viewed positively. Nonetheless, even with qualifications, women might experience difficulty in the labour market. In exploring the link between ethnicity and attainment, it was suggested that the gap can partially be explained by age and migration status, whereby women who migrated to the UK as adults are less likely to hold qualifications at above degree level. Furthermore, this chapter has not yet considered the experiences of women whose qualifications fall into the 'other' category, which includes qualifications at degree level that have been obtained overseas. Additionally, differing English skills have been identified as affecting access to the labour market. Therefore, Section 7.5 explores the experiences of migrants in terms of attainment, qualifications, and English skills.

## **7.5 Migration and academic attainment**

This chapter has already highlighted the attainment gap between Pakistani women who were born in the UK and first generation migrants. Table 25 shows that people born in the UK are more likely to have below degree level qualifications than people born outside the UK (51.9% compared to 30.7%), and less likely to have degree level and above qualifications, or 'other' qualifications (29.6% compared to 38.6%, and 2.8% compared to 15.3% respectively). Further, migrants from outside the UK are more likely to have 'other' qualifications in comparison to those born in the UK (15.3%, compared to 2.8%). Therefore, there is a relationship between birthplace

and qualifications, though it is not always the case that migrants from outside the UK have lower qualifications than their UK-born counterparts.

**Table 25: Qualification levels for adults aged 16-64 born in the UK and outside the UK**

	UK born	Migrant from outside UK
None	15.7	15.4
Below degree level	51.9	30.7
Degree level and above	29.6	38.6
Other <sup>8</sup>	2.8	15.3
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 26 shows that the relationship between migration status and qualification level varies with gender and ethnicity. Amongst those born in the UK, Pakistani men and women are slightly less likely to have no qualifications, or qualifications below degree level, and more likely than UK-born white British men and women to have qualifications at degree level and above, with a percentage point difference of 5.7 for men, and 5.1 for women. For those born outside the UK, there are much larger gender and ethnic differences in qualification levels; white British men and women are more likely to have higher qualifications than Pakistani men and women, whilst Pakistani women are more likely than Pakistani men to have no qualifications (39.5% compared to 27.3%), and less likely to have qualifications at degree level and above (17.7% compared to 27.2%). This indicates that the migration profile of Pakistani women in the UK goes some way towards explaining the attainment gap illustrated in Section 7.2 of this chapter.

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<sup>8</sup> Vocational qualifications and overseas qualifications above degree level.

**Table 26: Qualifications according to gender, ethnicity, and place of birth for white British and Pakistani women in England and Wales**

		White British		Pakistani	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
UK born	None	15.5	15.9	13.6	13.9
	Below degree level	51.9	52.0	48.4	48.6
	Above degree level	29.4	29.7	35.1	34.8
	Other <sup>9</sup>	3.3	2.3	2.9	2.7
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Born outside the UK	None	9.8	8.3	27.3	39.5
	Below degree level	36.5	31.9	23.3	21.1
	Above degree level	42.1	46.0	27.2	17.7
	Other	11.6	13.9	22.2	21.6
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The data presented in Table 26 presents two key issues. The first is that Pakistani men and women born in the UK are more likely to have qualifications at above degree level than white British men and women born in the UK. This supports the argument, already made in Section 7.4, that under-qualification cannot be assumed to account for the lower labour market participation rates amongst Pakistani women. The second issue raised is that Pakistani migrants born outside the UK are less likely to have qualifications above degree level. This therefore indicates that the academic attainment gap demonstrated in Table 21 can partially be accounted for by the migration profile of the British Pakistani community. The third issue is the greater likelihood of migrants having 'other' qualifications which, as demonstrated in Table 22, are associated with lower rates of participation in the labour market compared to qualifications above or below degree level obtained in the UK.

In terms of lower levels of academic attainment amongst migrants, this is in keeping with the suggestion that marriage migrants in particular do not necessarily anticipate participating in the labour market once they move to the UK. Dale (2005; 13) states that 'qualifications are also strongly related to whether a woman did her schooling in the UK...', and found similar or higher attainment levels amongst Pakistani women who '...have experienced the same educational system as white

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<sup>9</sup> Vocational qualifications and overseas qualifications above degree level.

women.’ In turn, it is probable that having been brought up in the UK, and having experienced the UK education system, will have shaped expectations regarding labour market participation making those women, as stated by Farzia (Administrator, Kirklees) ‘a step ahead’. Similarly, Nadia (Administrator, Leeds) said she felt lucky that she’d moved to the UK at a young age (when she was 5).

Nonetheless, some women have qualifications obtained overseas that they are not able to use, or do not hold the same currency as qualifications obtained in the UK. Reema (Not economically active, Kirklees) said that she had a degree from Pakistan that she was unable to use in the UK, whilst Atiqah (Teaching assistant, Kirklees) benefited from having a Masters from Pakistan, since this was equivalent to a degree in the UK. Having a post-graduate qualification from Pakistan therefore enabled her to pursue a PGCE in the UK and become a teacher (she returned to work as a teaching assistant after taking time off to care for her daughter). Utilising overseas qualifications was perceived by Reema as being complex; qualifications need to be translated from Urdu into English before being recognised as their UK equivalent by UK NARIC (National Recognition Information Centre). Building on existing qualifications by pursuing post-graduate education in the UK was also perceived as expensive. Further, for some women it is likely that having overseas qualifications is a less pressing issue than developing English fluency, and this is discussed in greater detail in Section 7.5.1.

### **7.5.1 Language: ability and ESOL access**

Chapter 6 outlined regulations that mean, for the most part, Pakistani women migrating to the UK will need to have some degree of English. Nonetheless, lack of English fluency remains a barrier to the labour market for many first-generation Pakistani women (e.g. Evans and Bowlby, 2000; Dale et al., 2010; Turner and Wigfield, 2012). Further, many of the participants in this research cited English fluency, and improving their English fluency as a key concern. Table 27 shows differences in levels of English fluency for white British and Pakistani men and women aged 16–64 in England and Wales, according to place of birth. Pakistani women born outside the UK have lower levels of English fluency than Pakistani men, or white British men or women who were born outside the UK. This provides further support to the suggestion that English fluency is a key concern for first-generation Pakistani women. To an extent the lower levels of English fluency can be linked to the nature of day-to-day activities that mean interactions are limited to those with other Pakistani women (Shaw, 2000). Furthermore, for female marriage migrants, ‘...many join their husbands and language ability may not be a crucial

factor in their migration decision.’ (Leslie and Lindley, 2001; 588). However, this section also considers that role of access issues that mean women struggle to attend classes or access services that might improve their English fluency.

**Table 27: Place of birth and English proficiency according to gender and ethnicity for white British and Pakistani men aged 16-64 in England and Wales**

	English proficiency	White British		Pakistani	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
Migrant	Good	80.5	72.3	63.7	58.1
	Poor	19.5	27.7	36.3	41.9
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
UK born	Good	82.5	83.6	83.0	71.4
	Poor	17.5	16.4	17.0	28.6
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Table 28: Economic activity for white British and Pakistani men and women aged 16-64 in England and Wales, according to English proficiency**

		White British		Pakistani	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
Good	In employment	84.2	68.4	82.3	33.7
	Unemployed	6.7	7.7	7.9	7.3
	Retired	1.9	5.9	2.1	2.7
	Looking after home/family	1.0	11.9	2.4	50.3
	Sick or disabled	6.3	6.2	5.3	6.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Poor	In employment	66.5	49.3	67.7	10.2
	Unemployed	5.6	6.3	8.3	5.1
	Retired	3.2	4.6	4.1	6.8
	Looking after home/family	1.9	14.6	4.3	62.0
	Sick or disabled	22.8	25.2	15.6	16.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Having established lower rates of English fluency amongst female Pakistani migrants in Table 27, and having also argued that low English fluency is a barrier to

labour market participation, Table 28 shows that employment rates are higher for those with good English proficiency, although Pakistani women in this group still have the lowest employment rates, at 33.7%. Nonetheless, for Pakistani women with poor English proficiency, employment is decreased to 10.2%. Poor English proficiency decreases employment for all groups, however for each group there remains a majority in employment, apart from Pakistani women. Further, for white British men and women, and Pakistani men with poor English fluency, those who are not in employment are most likely to be sick or disabled, whilst Pakistani women remain most likely to be inactive due to looking after home/family. In sum, good English proficiency is positively associated with economic activity for all groups, and should therefore remain a key consideration when exploring labour market participation. Nonetheless, the overall lower rates of employment amongst Pakistani women support the idea that language is only one factor, amongst many, that affects their labour market participation, irrespective of their English proficiency.

English proficiency was recognised by many participants as a barrier to the labour market, affecting participation in numerous ways. In particular, it was recognised that language fluency affected the types of work available, with the jobs available for those who were not yet fluent in English, perceived to be limited to private, insecure positions. With this type of work, participants were aware that their rights as employees might be limited. When faced with such a limited labour market, participation becomes a far less attractive prospect. Indeed Sanam (Not economically active, Leeds) said that she would be happy to work as a hospital cleaner, but not as a cleaner in a household, because her job would be more secure. Table 29 shows occupation types for white British and Pakistani men and women, according to their English proficiency, and demonstrates both a decreased likelihood of working as a 'manager, director, or proprietor' for those with poor English, and an increased participation in 'Elementary' occupations, which are those at the lowest skill level (ONS, 2010).

**Table 29: Occupation type for white British and Pakistani men and women aged 16-64 in England and Wales according to English proficiency**

		White British male	White British female	Pakistani male	Pakistani female
Good English proficiency	Managers, directors, proprietors	11.9	7.5	9.7	5.7
	Professionals	14.8	18.3	10.1	12.5
	Associate professionals	11.0	9.5	4.8	6.3
	Administrative and secretarial	5.0	17.3	3.2	13.8
	Skilled trades	20.1	2.9	11.0	2.8
	Caring, personal service, leisure	4.3	15.5	2.6	16.4
	Sales and customer service	5.0	8.8	10.7	15.9
	Process, plant and machine operatives	11.9	4.3	31.6	8.7
	Elementary occupations	15.8	16.0	16.3	17.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Poor English proficiency	Managers, directors, proprietors	5.5	2.6	3.9	5.2
	Professionals	8.1	9.1	2.7	6.5
	Associate professionals	7.8	7.8	1.3	3.7
	Administrative and secretarial	2.9	9.5	0.9	6.2
	Skilled trades	24.4	3.9	20.0	6.4
	Caring, personal service, leisure	4.9	9.5	3.1	11.8
	Sales and customer service	3.3	6.9	10.4	10.1
	Process, plant, and machine operatives	15.6	12.1	32.7	20.0
	Elementary occupations	27.4	38.8	25.1	30.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	

### 7.5.2 Accessing ESOL classes

Language proficiency was also discussed by participants in relation to the availability and accessibility of ESOL classes. Issues with ESOL accessibility were also outlined in Chapter 6, particularly in relation to recent cuts made to ESOL funding, which were argued to disproportionately affect women, given that women make up two thirds of ESOL learners (Moore, 2011), as well as stigmatising Muslim women specifically (NATECLA, 2016).

One issue with accessing ESOL classes was costs: some participants viewed the costs of ESOL classes as being prohibitive, and stated that they would need affordable, or free, classes. Similarly, Stiell and Tang (2006; 13) reported that their participants in Leicester had ‘...limited access to free ESOL classes, citing long waiting lists and complex eligibility rules affecting some recent immigrant groups’, and also recommended that:

*Free access is needed in community based centres providing opportunities to develop skills and confidence in a safe environment, alongside basic skills/IT training to enhance employability (Stiell and Tang, 2006; 19).*

Costs are not the only barrier to attending ESOL classes. Those who can afford to attend them may require crèche facilities too. This was identified as an issue by Liz and James (ESOL teachers, Leeds). They found that it was not practical or cost effective to provide crèche facilities for the classes they ran, and recognised that this was likely to have prevented some women from attending. This was echoed by Ayesha (Teacher, Kirklees), who agreed that crèche facilities can be difficult to provide. When courses were held at the school she worked at, the crèche facilities were only available for children over the age of three, which would rule out women with young babies, particularly given issues with childcare accessibility outlined in Chapters 3 and 5. The availability of crèche facilities was not, however, raised as a barrier to attending classes by any of the participants for whom English was not their first language. However, because of the sampling strategy used for this research (outlined in Chapter 2), most of the participants were recruited via links with community centres, and therefore had access to free classes either through the community centres or, in some cases, via their children’s schools. They agreed that English classes were well publicised, through their children’s schools, and through the community centres they used, where there were leaflets and posters. Participants also saw their English-speaking children as valuable for developing their English skills. It is harder to explore this for women who are neither engaged



with the labour market, nor community centres and schools that act as invaluable sources of information.

In addition to potential issues with accessing childcare, there are likely to be other factors affecting ESOL accessibility. Again, such issues were not raised by the Pakistani participants, but were raised by Liz and James (ESOL teachers, Leeds), who had observed that some Pakistani women do not feel comfortable going too far from home, and therefore even relatively local classes might be perceived as inaccessible. As well as childcare and caring responsibilities, they cited the availability of public transport as a potential barrier to attending ESOL classes. Further, they said that many of the women they had worked with would not travel independently, and particularly not to unfamiliar places. Again, within this research it has been difficult to consider the experiences of women who are perhaps more isolated, since it is unlikely that they would have wanted to participate in this research.

Another issue raised by Liz and James related to husbands' statuses as 'dominant decision makers', which relates to the potential for strict observance of gender norms discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. They said that the husbands of potential ESOL attendees often make the initial contact, rather than the woman who will be attending the class. Access to ESOL classes should, therefore, alongside access to the labour market, be considered in terms of gender roles, and particularly those who adhere to stronger gender roles. This was highlighted by Nadia (Administrator, Kirklees), who argued that a crucial step in enabling Pakistani women to access the labour market was to educate husbands 'to let their wives out and about'. Indeed, attendance at ESOL classes was perceived by Liz and James as valuable in terms of confidence building and encouraging participation in the wider community. The organisation they work for runs an 'ESOL for Work' course, which gives women experience of practicing interviews in an environment they perceived as safe. Similarly, Nadia (Administrator, Leeds) viewed ESOL courses as being a good way of building women's confidence. Highlighting the strengths of ESOL as a way of building confidence and providing experience is likely to be useful given the decrease in accredited ESOL courses.

The reluctance of some women to travel to unfamiliar locations relates to another issue; that of the uneven distribution of ESOL classes. This may firstly make it harder to attend, and secondly prevent people from finding out about such classes. Mahira (Third sector employee, Leeds) said, in relation to attending ESOL courses, that Pakistani women can be 'stuck in their own little bubble' and 'usually live in

their own communities'. Related to this, James and Liz (ESOL teachers, Leeds) said that people often find out about them through word-of-mouth, whilst it has already been noted that some participants were recruited through schools and community centres. This is a problem where ESOL classes are not always nearby. Hashem and Aspinall (2015), for example, found that there was variation in ESOL access across four different boroughs in London, with some areas less well provided for due to lack of funding or a change in funding arrangements that affected ESOL participation levels.

This section discussed the important role of ESOL classes, not just in terms of improving access to the labour market but in terms of general confidence building, and has also considered some of the issues women might face in accessing ESOL classes. However, academic attainment and English proficiency were not the only skills gaps discussed by the participants of this research, and therefore Section 7.6 considers other skills that might facilitate participation in the labour market.

## **7.6 Other (employability) skills**

Turner and Wigfield (2012; 642) suggest that Pakistani and Bangladeshi women tend to fall into three categories: 'Women who are some distance from the labour market; women who wish to enter paid work; and women who do currently work but require support.' They argued that, for women in the first category, who are most likely to be first generation migrants:

*A large amount of pre-interventionist support would be needed before these women are in a position to even think about entering paid employment. More appropriate policies for these women in the short term would be to assist them to develop their language skills, provide them with initiatives that help them engage in society, building on skills and interests that they already have such as cooking, sewing, childcare, providing meeting places and peer support structures so that they can develop as individuals, providing confidence building, assertiveness and motivation support so they can start to think that a different route is possible (Turner and Wigfield, 2012; 660).*

This perspective was certainly evident in the data collected for this research. Indeed, Section 6 has already highlighted the role ESOL courses play in confidence building and potentially enabling attendees to engage in society more broadly. Further, participants who were not economically active, many of whom were also, in

keeping with Turner and Wigfield's (2012) research, first generation migrants, also spoke of additional skills they felt they would benefit from developing.

Some of the skills viewed by participants as having the potential to improve employability are those that are likely to be taken for granted by those who have been educated to a high level, or who have grown up in the UK and experienced the British education system. For example, Rubya (Economically inactive, Kirklees) viewed her lack of computer literacy as a considerable barrier to employment. Not only do many jobs expect applicants to be able to use computers, but, increasingly, job searches and job applications are to be completed online. Further, James and Liz (ESOL teachers, Leeds) stated that, whilst not an issue for the younger generation, computer literacy remained an issue for the older generation, whilst Nadia (Third sector employee, Leeds) expressed concern that mothers' relationships with their children will be affected by a lack of IT skills, when children are so 'media oriented'. Other research has demonstrated this link between computer literacy and labour market participation. The BCS (2015) surveyed HR professionals and employees, 90% of whom viewed digital literacy as an important component of the majority of jobs within their organisation. Furthermore, they found that prospective employers wanted employees who already possess these skills so that they can be 'productive straight away.' Similarly, Knight (2011) estimates that 90% of jobs now require computer competency, while BIS (2012) report that the majority of full-time workers are required to use computers at work, with the majority of those in higher managerial and professional occupations (93%) having a computer at work and at home, and the highest percentage of those with neither a computer at work nor at home being in routine occupations (10% compared to 4% on average).

This is relevant because it not only indicates that employers are likely to favour computer literate employees, but that lack of computer literacy may exclude some Pakistani women from certain jobs; this may well be reflected in data analysis that has shown Pakistani women to be concentrated in certain sectors of employment. The extent to which women access support with this is likely to be uneven. At one of the community centres through which some of the participants were recruited, there was a weekly 'job shop' where attendees could use the computers to apply for jobs and improve their CVs, and this was a service that had been used by some of the participants. Similarly, the community centre in Leeds where James and Liz were based offered a computer skills course.

Aside from computer skills, other vocational skills were perceived by participants as potentially helping them to obtain employment. When asked what single thing would help them to obtain employment, participants from one of the focus groups held in Leeds agreed that short, affordable courses that taught them new transferable skills would be beneficial, especially if these skills could be practised from home. As well as being affordable, the participants said that such courses would need to be local to them, preferably within walking distance. One of the community centre employees involved with this focus group said that there had been a centre that offered such courses, but that this was closed down due to a lack of funding. One participant specifically said that she would like to do a cake-making course, and this was met with enthusiasm from the other participants. The opportunity to participate in such courses could also play a key role in developing confidence in participating in activities outside the home, as well as enabling women to develop their conversational English skills and so, in this way, could prove invaluable. This was expressed by Turner and Wigfield (2012; 660) where they link the provision of meeting places to 'confidence building' and 'assertiveness'.

## **7.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has considered how education, qualifications, language proficiency, and opportunities to build other skills affect labour market participation for Pakistani women. In considering academic attainment, this chapter argued firstly that academic attainment and participation in higher education are both increasing amongst Pakistani women, secondly that education is often viewed as an asset, and thirdly that much of the attainment gap can be explained by the migration profile of the Pakistani community in the UK. Although there are no doubt issues that affect Pakistani women's educational trajectories, some of which arise from cultural preferences and pressures, and some of which relate to others' perceptions of the Pakistani community, a larger issue is that Pakistani women appear more likely to struggle to utilise their qualifications to access the labour market. Here, both a greater likelihood of attending less prestigious universities, and discrimination in the labour market, which has been discussed throughout this thesis, have been cited as contributing factors.

First generation migrants were discussed, firstly in terms of their lower levels of academic attainment, and secondly in terms of language ability and access to ESOL classes. It was argued that, although women might struggle to attend ESOL classes, they are invaluable in terms of confidence building, as well as providing a

stepping stone to the labour market if desired. Finally, this chapter has suggested that there are other key skills that some Pakistani women would benefit from developing, not least IT skills, which are now taken for granted in the UK. Chapter 8 concludes this thesis, summarising the key arguments made, identifying research limitations and scope for future research, and making policy suggestions based on the findings of this project.

## 8 Conclusion

### 8.1 Introduction

This mixed-method project has drawn on secondary data from the 2011 Census, and primary data collected from Pakistani women of working age in Leeds and Kirklees, as well as two ESOL teachers, in order to explore Pakistani women's labour market participation. More specifically, this project aimed to answer the following questions:

- What are the key factors affecting labour market participation for Pakistani women in Leeds and Kirklees?
- What is the influence of structure on labour market participation for Pakistani women in Leeds and Kirklees?
  - To what extent are Pakistani women able to exercise choice within the labour market?
- What are the policy implications of these findings for local, regional, and national policy makers?

This concluding chapter will begin by outlining the main findings of this research, directly linking them to the research questions outlined above. Following this, the wider contribution that this project makes to existing research is discussed. Finally, this chapter will outline some of the limitations of this project, which are discussed in conjunction with possible directions for future research.

### 8.2 Key factors affecting labour market participation for Pakistani women in Leeds and Kirklees

*If you want to do one thing there's about five things pulling you back*  
(Mahira, Third sector employee, Leeds)

The introduction to this thesis, drawing on research by Salway (2007) argued that the key factors affecting Pakistani women's labour market participation could be loosely divided into two themes: life-stage factors; and factors pertaining to skills, education, and qualifications. In this research, life-stage factors were taken to mean those relating to migration, cultural preferences, and family formation (Giele and Elder, 1998; Dale et al., 2002). Nonetheless, in practice, many of these factors

proved to be inter-related, which is reflected in this synthesis of the main findings of this research.

### 8.2.1 Culture

'Cultural preferences' have long been linked to Pakistani women's labour market participation (e.g. Shaw, 2000). More broadly this relates to the role of women in maintaining *izzat*, or family honour, and the ways *purdah* is observed (e.g. Papanek, 1971). Related to this, adhering to a male breadwinner model ensures that women do not *have* to work, but places pressure on men to do so, and therefore men and women are interdependent in ensuring they each fulfil the 'correct' role; this is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

In this research, several participants, even if not explicitly, linked culture to labour market participation. For example, some of the participants who were distanced from the labour market and said that they were not permitted to work, reflecting an adoption of traditional gender roles that led them not to participate in paid employment. Similarly, this might be reflected in the data analysis that shows Pakistani women are less likely to participate in the labour market than women of most other ethnic groups (illustrated in Table 1).

However, many of the participants in this research were either participating, or keen to participate in the labour market and instead spoke of more structural constraints preventing or at least hindering them from doing so. Furthermore, it is hard to distinguish the effects of one culture from another, and Pakistani women are often navigating between three: Pakistani culture, Islamic culture, and British culture. In negotiating between different sets of cultural norms, there was a lot of variation in experiences of, and engagement with, the labour market. Indeed, some participants were keen to distinguish between culture and religion, and it was a common perception that Pakistani culture was less permissive, whilst the influence of religion was highly variable, and open to interpretation. As such, Pakistani women might find themselves orienting between different sets of norms as best they can, and this is likely to affect how they engage with the labour market. The myriad of ways the women in this research engaged with the labour market serve as a caution against adopting entirely 'culturalist' explanations' (Brah, 1993; 44). Nonetheless, Brah (1993; 443) also states that:

*...structure and culture are enmeshing formations. The one is not privileged over the other. What is of greater significance is how structures – economic,*

*political, ideological – emerge and change over time in and through systems of signification, and how they in turn shape cultural meanings.*

Therefore, the reciprocal influence of culture and structure on one another should not be overlooked in their abilities to shape and inform one-another.

### **8.2.2 Marriage**

Related to cultural preferences, it was postulated that marriage shapes Pakistani women's labour market participation from an early age (Bhopal, 1997, and see Chapter 3), which could be reflective of an 'old fashioned' family formation type (Robson and Berthoud, 2003; 3). This research demonstrated that marriage contributed to labour market participation but not in an obvious way. Analysis of data from the 2011 Census was consistent with prior research in showing a link between marriage and employment rates that was particularly pronounced for Pakistani women, and certainly some of the participants stated that they were not permitted to work by their husbands. Alternatively, Nadia (Administrator, Leeds) said that although her husband did not initially want her to work, he had no access to money when he arrived in the UK so realised it was a necessity for her to do so. This suggests that although cultural preferences pertaining to women not working once they are married are likely to shape labour market participation, it might also be an outcome of a multitude of other conflicting factors, including domestic economics. Pakistani women were distinct from white British women in terms of the impact of marriage on labour market participation, however exploring the effects of marriage whilst accounting for age illustrates that there is scope for change, particularly as the Pakistani community becomes more enmeshed with other communities, and as Pakistani women are increasingly likely to have been educated in the UK.

Chapters 3 and 7 demonstrated that marriage, and expectations of marriage, didn't just affect women's labour market participation per se, but also shaped the how women engaged with education. Prior research suggests that concerns about a woman's marriageability might complicate participation in education, but that women might find themselves faced with a double bind where both too little and too much education was not desirable (Ahmed 2001). This was exemplified by Mahira (Third sector employee, Leeds) who said that her husband liked the fact that she was both traditional and 'domesticated.' Indeed, another participant, Mehreen (Doctor, Leeds) spoke of pursuing her education once she was engaged, with the support of both her parents, and her future parents-in-law. As such, decisions relating to marriage are often a factor that shape how women participate in the



labour market, as well as in formal education, but it does not necessarily follow that such decisions will cause women to opt out of either. Again, analysis that considers age shows that the younger cohort of Pakistani women in the UK are more likely than their older counterparts to have qualifications at degree level and above, even if they are married.

### **8.2.3 Children and work-care consolidation**

As demonstrated in Chapter 5, analysis of data from the 2011 Census showed that having dependent children affected labour market participation for men and women, Pakistani or white British. However for men, having children was more likely to lead to increased employment, whilst for women, having children was more likely to lead to decreased employment. Furthermore, the relationship between dependent children and labour market participation was far more pronounced for Pakistani women, indicating that dependent children present a greater barrier to their labour market participation.

This was considered in terms of the role of motherhood in Islam. For example, Hadiqa (University employee, Leeds) felt that 'motherhood is more valued in Islam', and this is consistent with other research that suggests strongly entrenched motherhood roles for Muslim women, and an emphasis on the role of the family (e.g. Brown, 2006). Nonetheless, Hadiqa was still active in the labour market, which suggests that the value placed on motherhood is not necessarily associated with opting out of the labour market.

The role of dependent children in shaping labour market participation was also considered in terms of work-care consolidation. For example, some of the participants described what Daly (2011) terms 'complex care packages', combining part-time working with formal or informal childcare, or combining informal childcare with formal childcare. Here, the cost of formal childcare was mentioned as a disincentive, though this is certainly not exclusive to Pakistani women; cost is commonly cited as a disincentive for all women (Viitanen, 2005). However, participants also spoke of cultural preferences, and a lack of 'cultural sensitivity' in formal childcare, which was reflected in other research (e.g. Bell, 2005; Clark and Drinkwater, 2007). This suggests that Pakistani women might have additional reasons for not wishing to use formal childcare (which was demonstrated to be the case in Chapter 5).

Finally, this research demonstrated that employed Pakistani women are as likely to work part-time as their white British counterparts, but argued that, when considered

in terms of the lower labour market participation rates of Pakistani women overall, this could indicate that some Pakistani women might opt out of employment entirely rather than trying to find part-time or flexible work. Where perceived opportunities for labour market participation are limited, it might be preferable not to work at all; in particular this is framed by what is evidently a labour market that discriminates not only against women, but more specifically against Pakistani women. Further, the option of negotiating part-time or flexible employment is associated with certain types of job and is, to some extent, a privilege, as demonstrated by the Work-Life Balance Employee Survey (2012). As such, not all women are equal in the extent to which they are able to work on a flexible basis.

#### **8.2.4 Migration**

Although a detailed exploration of the role of migration (in terms of the difference between being a first or second generation migrant) was beyond the scope of this thesis, it would be remiss not to consider the difference in experiences between first generation and second generation Pakistani women. Further, in Chapter 1 it was argued that migration processes have contributed a great deal to the way Pakistani women participate in the labour market, and continue to do so. The benefits associated with being a second generation migrant were expressed by Farzia (Administrator, Kirklees), who felt that, having been born in the UK, she was 'a step ahead.'

Chapter 4 suggested that women who migrated for marriage purposes run the risk of being socially isolated. This is likely to affect the types of support these women require, not only when it comes to the labour market, but also other aspects of participation in social life. Furthermore, in Chapter 7 it was demonstrated that first generation Pakistani women were found to be at a disadvantage in comparison to those who were educated in the UK. Their participation in the labour market is likely to be shaped by slightly different sets of concerns, in that they do not benefit from having experienced the British education system nor, necessarily, fluency in English.

#### **8.2.5 Skills and qualifications**

Chapters 6 and 7 considered the relationship between skills and qualifications and labour market participation, showing it to be complex and shaped by many of the life-stage factors already outlined. Being under-qualified was found to be an issue for first generation Pakistani women, but not necessarily for those who had experience of the British education system. Further education was both seen as an

asset and potentially a hindrance to married life, particularly in relation to concerns about daughters moving away for university, a concern that was expressed by Ayesha's parents. Despite this, several participants discussed having been encouraged to pursue their education by their parents.

Another key issue was the extent to which Pakistani women are able to capitalise on their pre-existing qualifications. It is generally harder to get employment with overseas qualifications, so some migrants, even if they are not under-educated, might have their access to the labour market limited in this way; this was certainly the case for Reema (Not economically active, Kirklees). However, Pakistani women born in the UK with above degree level qualifications were still less likely to be in employment than white British women at the same qualification level. Although preferences to prioritise domestic labour should not be overlooked, this thesis has suggested that the employment gap between Pakistani women and white British women qualified at the same level is likely to be partially attributable to racial discrimination in the labour market.

For women who were distanced from the labour market, Turner and Wigfield (2012) argue that other types of support are needed that focus on the development of other types of skills, and this was echoed by some of the participants in this research who said they would like the opportunity to do short, affordable courses. In relation to this, a gap in IT skills was reported, whereby some women lack information literacy and are therefore reliant on services that provide support with computer usage. This is an issue where employees are increasingly expected to have access to computers at home and be able to use them in the work-place, and indicates that, for some women, there are additional skills beyond just formal qualifications and language proficiency that need to be built in order to increase their options.

### **8.2.6 Language proficiency and ESOL access**

Language proficiency was commonly cited as a key issue for the first generation Pakistani women who participated in this research, though it should be noted that many of these participants were recruited via community centres on the basis that they were already participating in ESOL classes they provided. The relationship between language proficiency and labour market participation is discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

Whilst most of the participants in this research, as a result of the recruitment techniques, were quite engaged with and knowledgeable about their communities

and services available to them, including ESOL classes, the two ESOL teachers interviewed raised issues of access for their female attendees. In particular, they spoke of households where the husband, as the key decision maker, had the final say in his wife's attendance at ESOL classes. The suggestion here was that, where *pardah* is strictly observed in these households, it affects women's mobility outside the home too, making it more likely that these women will struggle to access these classes. This is not helped by cuts to ESOL funding that have affected the availability of local ESOL classes, and in particular accredited ESOL classes.

Participants were also aware of the expenses associated with some ESOL classes, which should be considered in the context of recent reductions to ESOL funding. In addition to the expense of taking a class, the ESOL teachers suggested that being unable to access classes closer to home also prevented some women from attending. As such, there is evidently an issue relating to access to and availability of ESOL classes.

### **8.2.7 Discrimination**

It is probable that factors affecting Pakistani women's labour market participation remain underpinned by Islamophobia and discrimination in the labour market, and this has been made evident throughout this thesis. The labour market already discriminates against women, but where gender intersects with ethnicity, discrimination is likely to be exacerbated. Such discrimination doesn't just occur within the labour market, but also in the build up towards participation. For example, participants spoke of teachers' assumptions that they would leave school and get married, and it is probable that this affected the types of support and advice they received at school. Brah (2005; 134) argues that:

*This social imagery of Asian women as hapless dependants who would most likely be married off at the earliest possible opportunity has played an important role in constructing the 'commonsense understandings' which teachers, employment advisers, training officers and other professionals might hold of young Muslim women's education and employment prospects.*

It is evident that Pakistani women, particularly if they opt to wear traditional dress, are discriminated against in the labour market. For example, Ayesha (Teacher, Kirklees) said that her colleagues expressed concern that she would 'Islamify the school'. To a certain extent, employers justify such discrimination by relying on what Brah calls 'common-sense' understandings of Pakistani and Islamic cultural practices, in which women are read as submissive, something that was echoed by

former Prime Minister David Cameron in 2016. This is in spite of the fact that for participants in this research, religion was less of a factor in the way they participated in the labour market, whilst the way they negotiated between different cultures was much more complex.

### **8.3 Structure and choice**

Where the labour market is both gendered and potentially underpinned by Islamophobia, it becomes difficult for many women to make unconstrained choices. This research has demonstrated that women wishing to participate in the labour market are already facing limited options as a result of a labour market that is persistently gendered (e.g. Brah, 1993; Daly, 2011). Pakistani women must not only contend with this gendered labour market, but also with inherent racism; factors which are compounded by the failure of the labour market to fully take account of their needs. Until policy makers are fully aware of the impact of belonging to intersecting categories, many women's choices are limited by such structural constraints.

Where Pakistani women experience discrimination in both the education system and the labour market, their choices are reduced by an uneven playing field. This is reflected by findings from Dale et al. (2002b) whose participants felt that '...if you were Asian, you would only succeed by being better qualified than your competitors.' Furthermore, Tomlinson (2006) suggests that women can only exercise choices given the information that is available to them. For first generation Pakistani women, they may be contending with a lack of understanding of British education and employment systems, and possibly less engagement with their local communities, where community centres, for example, are invaluable in imparting information about services that might support them.

The role of culture should not be overlooked when considering choice, but structural inequalities in Britain will affect the types of choices that can be made: as such, women can only choose within the context of: a labour market that is persistently gendered; a climate of discrimination and Islamophobia, which affects experiences of both education and the workplace; a lack of suitable services that take into account a wide diversity of needs.

In sum, women's choices in the labour market are constrained by a multitude of factors. Women of differing ethnicities, class backgrounds, and so on are likely to experience different sets of constraints.

## 8.4 Policy implications and recommendations

Employers, and employment policy, need to continue considering how labour market inequalities might best be addressed. This thesis has demonstrated that the labour market is gendered, and that ethnicity (as well as other factors that were not the focus of this thesis) affects experiences of the gendered labour market. As such, a 'one size fits all' approach won't be effective; policy makers always need to consider a multitude of complex factors. A key issue identified in this research, as well as prior research, is that there is inequality in people's abilities to capitalise on skills and qualifications. Although some migrants might be under-qualified (or, at least, might not yet have navigated the process for transferring their qualifications to their English equivalents), other participants were encouraged to pursue their education. If this is a common experience, then focus should be on demand rather than supply. Further, clarity is required regarding flexible working practices; this research has argued that there is inequality in who can access flexible working arrangements, and this might reflect types of work undertaken as well as certain privileges.

Childcare providers need to take into account a wide variety of childcare preferences, and need to demonstrate that they are able to do so, given concerns raised about a lack of 'culturally sensitive childcare' (e.g. Clark and Drinkwater, 2007). Doing so might encourage more women to utilise formal childcare, and this may, in turn, serve to simplify their caring arrangements. The provision of childcare has changed, and parents are now entitled to 30 free hours of childcare per week. Nonetheless, the rules surrounding childcare use and provision of free childcare can be difficult to navigate, and furthermore even small costs can be difficult to cover in households where adults are earning low wages, which is more likely to be the case for those in Pakistani households. Further, Hall et al. (2004) suggest that childcare arrangements can be difficult to navigate for ethnic minority groups specifically, and this should be addressed.

Schools need to know how best to support *all* their students, parents need to be involved in this too. Careers advisors and teachers are invaluable sources of information for students when they make decisions about further education and employment. One participant praised her careers advisors at school, who supported her to apply for an apprenticeship, while others said that school staff assumed they would leave school to get married and have children. In educational facilities, lay understandings of ethnicity, cultural 'preferences', and religious practices need to be addressed and students need to be clear about the multitude of options

available to them, and supported in making decisions regarding educational and labour market trajectories.

People who are distanced from the labour market, in particular, need support developing a wide array of skills, not just formal qualifications and English fluency but other skills that might help with building confidence and wider participation. The aim need not be a job but simply more ease of participation in social life.

Participants in this research felt they would benefit from access to short courses that would enable them to develop new skills. This was also identified by Wigfield and Turner (2012). Further, inequality in information literacy should be addressed, taking into account people's differential access to computers, and variation in ability to use them, since this might hinder people from participating in the labour market.

## **8.5 Contribution**

This research is timely given firstly a policy focus on work as a route out of poverty (as discussed in Chapter 1) and secondly a climate of heightened Islamophobia, where Muslim women in particular are viewed as oppressed and submissive despite the fact that this is often not the case. Indeed, some of the findings in this research challenge and problematise commonly held conceptions of Muslim women. For example, Ayesha (Teacher, Kirklees) was interviewed for her job while pregnant, stating that it 'wouldn't stop a man.' Furthermore, in drawing distinctions between Islamic and Pakistani culture, Mahira (Third sector employee, Leeds) stated that 'Islam is free'. Both these accounts challenge the idea that Islam is always associated with women being oppressed and submissive.

Furthermore, this research highlights ways in which labour market participation is still gendered whilst demonstrating not all women experience this gendering in the same way, and not all women have the same opportunities to participate. In addition, this research has used secondary quantitative data, as well as original data collected specifically for this project. As such one of the key contributions of this project is in its use of an original dataset.

Finally, this research also contributes to a wider body of research that focuses on intersectionality, and in particular that brings intersectionality to the fore and makes it a key concern when researching labour market participation. Although the theory of intersectionality is not new, awareness of it within the labour market is. The fact that Pakistani women, for example, face additional constraints in accessing the labour market indicates that policy makers, workplaces, and service providers are

either unaware of concerns associated with intersectionality, or not prepared to develop systems to deal with it.

## **8.6 Limitations and scope for future research**

A limitation of this research lies in the data collection techniques and the use of focus groups in particular. A general issue with using focus groups is that participants might be less likely to be honest when in a group, and although there was a good rationale for using focus groups, as discussed in Section 2.3.2, the accounts of the participants might overlook issues that they were uncomfortable discussing in a group setting. This is particularly an issue given the close-knit nature of Pakistani communities; concerns about observing certain cultural norms might lead participants to present themselves a certain way. Furthermore, the focus group participants were selected by staff from the community centres, likely based on their perceived willingness to participate and also potentially on the basis of having participated in similar groups before. As such, there is a missing group of women that it would be much harder to obtain data on – those with greater levels of social isolation. Therefore, future research could benefit from adopting different recruitment processes, perhaps through building up relationships within the relevant communities over time.

Although some women who were active in the labour market were interviewed for this research, the questions asked focused on initial labour market access, rather than experiences within the workplace. Future research could therefore consider Pakistani women's experiences once in the workplace, which might shed light on some of the ways employers can ensure that they are providing an accessible workplace for everyone. Similarly, research that considers experiences of Pakistani students and staff within educational institutions, and how Pakistani students interact with careers advice services, would be beneficial given accounts of students being discriminated against, which could potentially affect the types of support they receive.

In this research, the scope was narrowed to Pakistani women living in Leeds or Kirklees. Future research could explore a wider range of ethnic groups, and particularly focus on the different ways people perform care, and the ways this differentially affects labour market participation, drawing on research by Duncan and Irwin (2004). Similarly, the scope of this research could also incorporate an understanding and analysis of class, which has been hinted towards, particularly in Chapters 6 and 7 but not discussed explicitly in this research.



Despite some (inevitable) limitations, this project has collected new data and analysed existing data that continues to problematise the role of intersectionality in shaping experiences of the labour market. In this respect, and in the potential for this project to lead to future avenues of research that might influence policy makers, this research provides another step in the direction towards a fairer labour market.

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## Appendix A

### Participants recruited: pseudonym, location, data collection method and occupation

Data collection method	Location	Pseudonym	Occupation
Paired interview	Kirklees	Heera	Teaching Assistant
		Atiq	Not economically active
Focus group	Kirklees	Reema	Not economically active
		Sadia	Not economically active
		Yasmeen	Carer
		Veena	Third sector employee
		Zeba	Third sector employee
Focus group	Leeds	Sanam	Not economically active
		Rubya	Not economically active
		Meesha	Not economically active
		Zara	ESOL teacher
		Nida	Not economically active
Focus group	Leeds	Zainab	Student
		Ameria	Not economically active
		Noor	Not economically active
		Asma	Not economically active
		Khadija	Not economically active
		Mariam	Not economically active
Paired interview	Leeds	Liz	ESOL teacher
		James	ESOL teacher
Interview	Leeds	Nadia	Administrator
Interview	Kirklees	Ayesha	Teacher

Interview	Kirklees	Farzia	Adminstrator
Interview	Leeds	Hadiqa	University employee
Interview	Leeds	Fiza	University employee
Interview	Leeds	Mehreen	Doctor
Interview	Leeds	Mahira	Third sector employee

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## **Appendix B**

### **Interview schedules**

#### **Focus group interview schedule**

This is a schedule for interviews with focus groups. The questions do not have to be asked verbatim or in the order they are presented; if the researcher is satisfied the topic has already been discussed without participants being prompted, they may choose to exclude the question. The main questions are in bold, prompts are below in italic.

#### **Introduction**

Researcher to introduce themselves and colleague if relevant.

Remind participants of the aims of the project: to explore the link between ethnicity, location, and labour market participation in Leeds and Kirklees.

Discuss ground rules with participants:

- The idea of a focus group is for participants to discuss issues with each other, the role of the facilitator is to provide prompts where necessary
- Confidentiality: participants will not be named in the research, and it will not be possible to identify them from the research findings. Only the facilitator/researcher will have access to focus group notes/transcripts. As participants, you will need to ensure that you do not repeat any of the discussion outside the focus group setting, to maintain the confidentiality/anonymity of the other participants.

Check whether participants have any questions, and remind them that they are free to leave at any time and do not have to provide a reason.

#### **Questions**

##### **Introductory questions:**

**Participants to introduce themselves and their occupational status (they will have already provided this, it's more of a warm up).**

##### **Domestic life:**

**What do you do during the day?**

- *Do you go to work, do you come to sessions at the community centre, etc?*

- *What kinds of things do you do in the house? E.g. cooking cleaning, childcare, etc*
- *Who does most of the housework? Who does the cleaning, who does the cooking, who looks after the children, etc?*

**What does your husband do during the day?**

- *Does he work?*

**Experience of employment**

**Tell me about your experience of employment:**

- *Are you currently in employment/seeking employment? Have you ever worked*
  - o *If yes, can you tell me a bit more about finding a job/looking for a job etc?*
  - o *Was it easy or difficult to find a job? Or do you think it is easy or difficult to find a job?*
- *Do you think it's more difficult for women to find work than men?*
- *Do you think some ethnic groups find it harder to gain employment than others?*

**Education/Training/Qualifications**

**Can you tell me about your experience of education?**

- *Were you educated in the UK?*
- *What was the highest qualification you obtained?*

**If you have qualifications, have they helped you to find a job?**

- *Have you done any training specific to your career?*
- *Have you done any unpaid work experience?*

**Local labour market:**

**What can you tell me about the kinds of work available where you live?**

- *How do you think your area compares to other parts of the UK?  
Better/Worse/about the same?*

**What could be done to make it easier to find work? Does anything need to be done?**

- *Do you know what services are available to help you, and have you used them? **Could make this specific to the centre that I'm visiting***

**Specific barriers/concluding comments:**

**What do you think is the best way to help women who want to gain employment?**

- *Are there any services that could be provided/improved?*

### **Gatekeeper interview schedule**

This is a schedule for interviews with gatekeepers. The questions do not have to be asked verbatim or in the order they are presented; if the researcher is satisfied the topic has already been discussed without participants being prompted, they may choose to exclude the question. The main questions are in bold, prompts are below in italic.

#### **Introduction**

Researcher to introduce themselves.

Remind interviewee of the aims of the project: to explore the link between ethnicity, location, and labour market participation in Leeds and Kirklees.

Check whether interviewee has any questions, and remind them that they are free to leave at any time and do not have to provide a reason.

#### **Can you tell me about your charity/service/etc, and what you do?**

- *Specifically what services do you provide to Pakistani women/how many of the women using your service are Pakistani?*

#### **What do you know about Pakistani womens' participation in employment?**

#### **How do you think experiences [of Pakistani women participating in the labour market] in Leeds/Kirklees compare to experiences in the rest of the UK?**

- *Is there a difference? Is it better or worse?*
- *What do you think the area provides in terms of support/guidance/training for Pakistani women who wish to participate in the labour market?*

#### **What do you think are the main barriers faced by Pakistani women who wish to participate in the labour market?**

- *Give examples if necessary.*

#### **What do you think needs to be done to assist Pakistani women who would like to participate in the labour market?**

- *What does your charity/service do?*
- *Do you know about any other relevant charities/services?*



## **Appendix C**

### **Information sheet**



**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

#### **Labour market experiences of white and Pakistani women in Leeds and Kirklees:**

##### **Exploring gender, ethnicity and location**

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide if you would like to participate, it is important you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully, and ask if anything is not clear or if you would like more information. Please take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

For any enquiries, please contact Daisy Payne,  
D.Payne@Leeds.ac.uk/07921072264

#### **The purpose of the project**

The purpose of this project is to explore how gender, ethnicity, and location affect employment, focusing on white British and Pakistani women in Leeds and Kirklees.

You have been invited to participate because your views would be beneficial to the research project.

#### **Do I have to take part?**

Participating in this research is voluntary. You do not have to participate, and may withdraw from the project at any time, until 3 months prior to its completion (01/07/2016). If you decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form. Once you have done this, you may still withdraw from the research if you wish. You do not have to give a reason for withdrawing from the research.

#### **What do I have to do?**

If you decide to take part, you will be required to attend an interview, either alone or in a small group. Daisy will run the interview, and may be accompanied by a colleague from the University of Leeds. You will not need to do any preparation prior to this discussion, and there are no right or wrong answers. Daisy will either record the interview, or take notes – this is up to you.

It is hoped that this work will give you an opportunity to speak out about employment issues that affect you, and that you will find it rewarding to participate in the project. If you wish, you will be provided with a summary of the key findings of the research, once the thesis has been submitted.

Your participation in this project will be kept confidential, where possible. Although you may be quoted in the research, you will not be referred to by your real name, and no-one will be able to identify you.

## Appendix D

### Consent form

**Consent to take part in:**

**Pakistani women in the labour market: Exploring structure, choice, and constraint**

	Add your initials next to the statement if you agree
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.	
I understand that, should I withdraw, I will need to discuss with the researcher what I would like them to do with any data collected up to the point of withdrawal (for example, whether the data should be destroyed or whether the research can still use the data already collected).	
I understand that it may not be possible for me to withdraw from this research 3 months prior to submission of the PhD thesis (01/07/2016).	
I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.	
I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential.	
I agree for the data collected from me to be used in relevant future research in an anonymised form.	
I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the lead researcher should my contact details change.	

Name of participant	
Participant's signature	
Date	
Name of lead researcher	Daisy Payne
Signature	
Date*	

\*To be signed and dated in the presence of the participant.

Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/ pre-written script/ information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be kept with the project's main documents which must be kept in a secure location.

## Appendix E

### Demographic Questionnaire

You have been given this questionnaire to complete because you have consented to participate in an interview to discuss your experiences of employment. The questionnaire asks for some information about you which will help with the running of the focus groups, as well as contributing to the research. This will be confidential, and will only be kept until the focus group data has been analysed. If you have any concerns about any of the questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, [D.Payne@Leeds.ac.uk](mailto:D.Payne@Leeds.ac.uk). You do not have to respond to any questions you feel uncomfortable with.

Name:

Age

Marital status:

Occupation:

If you are currently in employment, do you work full-time or part-time?

Do you have any dependent children?

If yes, how many?

Do you have any other caring responsibilities for adults or children?

Country of birth:

Religion:

Highest qualification level (please circle):

No qualifications   GCSE   AS/A level   Degree

Higher degree (PGCE, MA, PhD)   Other (please specify):