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TO LOVE AN(OTHER): NARRATIVES OF MIXED MARRIAGES AMONGST BRITISH PAKISTANI MUSLIMS

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NARRATIVES OF MIXED MARRIAGES AMONGST BRITISH PAKISTANI
MUSLIMS

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A THESIS IN SUBMISSION FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an anthropological exploration of how British Pakistani Muslims[1] and their romantic partners navigate their relationships through a narrative process of balancing and negotiating social risk. While intermarriage is used as the common identifier of these couples and individuals, marriage is employed not exclusively as a ritual practice defined by British law or by *sharia*, but by conceptions of marriage, partnership, co-habitation, and sexuality as experienced by the participants in this study. My participants take part in a narrative process that comprises a discursively shared, but also at times conflicting historical memory (Ricoeur 2004) and postcolonial experiences of cultural hybridity. Modern narratives are part of the constant dialogical interactions in which individuals engage, including the most infinitesimal of interactions (Carrithers 2005). Included within these broader narratives of collective memory and hybridity are also smaller, but just as fundamental narratives that include the interactions and experiences each individual has with the complexity of their inimitable and variable environments and contexts. While many of the cases presented in this thesis can be considered 'typical' of any marriage or relationship negotiations in modern Britain, through each individual's circumstances, they are also exemplars (Simpson 1998).

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[1] It is important to note that I purposely use 'Pakistani Muslim' rather than 'Pakistani' in order to clarify the discursive religious backgrounds of the participants within this study. While 'British Pakistani' has often been used to signify the majority of Pakistanis who are mostly considered to be Muslim (Charsley 2013; Shaw 2001), it is indefensible to conflate Pakistan with Islam, an error that not only isolates those Pakistanis who do not identify as Muslim, but also contributes to the racialisation of religion (Marsden 2010: xi; Sheehi 2011).

Intermarriage, typically recognised as 'interethnic' marriage and co-habitation by the Office of National Statistics[2], constitutes a minority of less than ten per cent of overall marital and co-habiting partnerships in Britain (ONS 2014). Pakistani, marriages are considered to be on the lower end of the statistical spectrum (ibid.). This thesis explores some of the examples of these 'statistically marginal' relationships in order to explore not only why they remain low in number, but also how the individuals who are intermarried negotiate their life stories as 'minorities' of an already existing minority. Various experiences of intermarriage throughout this thesis are grouped into negotiations of ritual performances (e.g. weddings), balancing expectations of obligations and reciprocity, interpreting and re-framing their religious identities, and seeking alternative narratives of love and marriage through digital media. While prior studies on widespread examples of 'interfaith' and 'intercultural' marriages have been more recently documented (Katz Miller 2013; Schaefer Riley 2013; Breger and Hill 1998) as well as localised examples of Pakistani 'interfaith' marriages (Khan 1998; Donnan 1990), such studies have been principally concerned with religious difference and raising children. This study, on the other hand, seeks to expand partner 'difference' beyond religious belonging, theoretically accounting for the non-linear narrative interactions that are at the heart of mixed marriages.

Prior studies of mixed marriage have taken either a quantitative approach (Schafer Riley 2013; Alston et. al 1976; Barnett 1962) or a highly localised approach such as Donnan's work in Northern Ireland (1990). The qualitative approach of this thesis connects a variety of intermarried narratives across Great Britain, revealing how each individual's experience is concomitantly and narratively engaged with other individual experiences across time and space (Jackson 2012). Necessitating a multi-

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[2] The ONS conflates the boundaries between ethnic, race, and religion, a feature of the racialisation of cultural and religious identities that are often featured in western societies (Choudhury 2015; Gilroy 1987).

sited approach (Hannerz 2003), the individuals and couples in this study are mostly unaware of each other, yet their stories merge into a collective of narrative prefigurations (Ricoeur 1990) in which their assumed isolated experiences reveal themselves to be collective wholes. The ethnographic accounts of these individuals, couples, and families does not attempt to present a statistical and generalised interpretation of intermarriage trends, nor does it intend to predict specific outcomes of intermarriage in Britain. Rather, this work is primarily concerned with how intermarriage is experienced by a variety of singular life stories in interaction of the most intimate kind.

Majority of participants of this study are from educated middle to upper middle class backgrounds, with a few exceptions. This can be viewed as a result of both methodological consequences, as well as analytical and practical implications around prevalence and acceptance of mixed relationships among those who identify as British Pakistani Muslim. Further, the socioeconomic status of certain participants places their experiences into a certain discursive narrative that interprets intermarriage in different ways from individuals across different socioeconomic backgrounds. In reference to the interpretation of doctrines and traditions among Egyptian Muslim women of varying socioeconomic backgrounds, Mahmood notes how diverse interpretations of Islamic doctrine are lived by 'ordinary adherents' through a discursive logic as opposed to a logic that would seem to pit one interpretation such as folk Islam, as a dilution of 'scriptural Islam' (2005: 95-99). In the same way, this study does not view individuals from one particular socioeconomic background as having a 'diluted', or even 'exceptional' experience, but rather that each individual is engaged in different points of discursive interpretation that contributes to the narrative field of interrelational experiences.

The 'community' of British Pakistanis is dividing by class (Werbner 2002: 65). The upper class is described by Werbner as consisting of wealthy professionals and intellectuals, who make up only a fraction of all those who identify as British Pakistani Muslim. Despite their small representation, they tend to be the 'spokesmen to the outside world' and also have the influence to 'silence' others (2002: 65). In addition, members of the 'elite' have been viewed as 'brown sahibs' (white-oriented) whereby they are perceived to promote an ideological capitulation to Western dominance', a position that enables them to move in and out of different social positions that might include religious piety in some contexts, and 'sinful fun' in other contexts (2002: 197). When placed within this class differentiation, there is indeed a 'privileged' aspect to individual actions, but my own research is not fully able to agree with such privileging in the context of marriage. In her study of transnational marriage, Charsley found that while 'villagers were more inclined to be strict about close kin marriage', her own research found that these 'strict' practices of kinship were just as prevalent among her 'urban' participants (Charsley 2013: 15). Although Charsley is referring to a rural-urban distinction, this distinction carries overtones of class difference where villagers or British Pakistani Muslims from village backgrounds, were considered to be 'uneducated' and 'wild' (2013: 15; Shaw 2000: 20). These distinctions became notable in my own fieldwork where some participants from major city centres, who were also of wealthy backgrounds, referred to Bradford as 'Bradistan' and with it, insinuated 'villager' mentality.

Nonetheless, while class is certainly a factor within this study with regard to the way participants perceive themselves and others, the sense of malleability of entering into an intimate relationship with someone deemed to be 'other', was not as clear. As will be seen, Zaid, one of the wealthier of the individuals in this research,

did not feel any more 'free' to choose his partner. That is, Zaid's higher socioeconomic status did not and has not resulted in his family accepting his relationship choices. On the other hand, participants such as Malik and Laura, who had a multi-day wedding celebration, have been fully supported and celebrated by their family members and friends, including an exchange of Rolex watches between the bridge and groom. On the other spectrum, Charlotte and Margaret, both from working class backgrounds, with working class husbands, rarely experienced difficulties from in-laws or other family members. However, it must be noted that both of these individuals married their partners in the 1960s. In addition, Margaret's husband was living in England as an economic migrant, away from any substantial family and friends and with this, a lack of overt influence on his decisions as a single man abroad.

This raises questions around what is perceived as intermarriage or mixed marriage. Determining who the 'other' is may have implications that reach beyond class boundaries. Some of the main perceptions around intermarriage relate to 'interfaith'. 'Interfaith marriage' and combinations of 'mixed faith marriage' or 'interreligious marriage' are popular descriptors for relationships that comprise spouses of different religious belonging. Yet, there are also 'interfaith' marriages that include intra-religious difference such as Catholic-Protestant unions, or Sunni-Shia unions. Two popular books of the last decade have included Susan Katz Miller's *Being both: Embracing two religions in one interfaith family* and Naomi Schaefer Riley's work *'Til faith do us Part: How interfaith marriage is transforming America.* Both books have upheld 'interfaith' as the main descriptor for the case studies they describe, yet many of the examples they include could very well relate to differences that are much less religious in nature and more related to larger social and political

processes. Additionally, is the problem as to the difference between 'faith' and 'religion'. A difference undoubtedly exists etymologically and theoretically, but rhetorically they are frequently interchangeably by participants and also by larger British organisations, with 'faith' being the more commonly used. For example, the Christian Muslim Forum in Britain uses 'faith' as their main descriptor when discussing the ethics, pastoral care, and suggestions around mixed unions. Interfaith and faith have also been popular buzzwords for large organisations ranging from the UK's 'Inter Faith Network' to 'The Cambridge Inter-faith Programme' to the 'Tony Blair Faith Foundation'.

Despite its popular usage, a closer look at the examples of 'interfaith' relationships seems to complicate the meaning of faith in the relationship. As becomes apparent from accounts in the ensuing chapters, faith, or the etymological root in 'trust' and evolving into belief, often become obscured when confronted with more prominent differences that are taking place in relationships such as daily household differences that would appear to be much more socio-economically related. However, this is not to say faith or religion does not have a part in economic decisions, whether they be financial or social, rather that faith or religion may not be the most accurate description.

Some anthropological studies on religiously different households have used the phrase 'mixed marriage' (Donnan 1990; Khan 1998) in order to encompass a wider variety of social differences that occur in marriage. In this study, for example, Charlotte does not consider her marriage to be 'interfaith' because she converted, so she would describe her marriage as religiously the same. Yet, she still views her marriage as mixed, not only because she is visibly 'white English', but also because of the social differences she holds compared to her husband's upbringing. Or as

another participant wisely shared with me 'aren't all marriages mixed!?' It is with the lead of those like Donnan and Khan, and with the experiences of the various individuals and couples of this study, that I also use 'mixed marriage' and 'intermarriage' so that I am not reducing the various experiences of individuals to that of faith or religion. While this research indeed looks at factors around those who perceive themselves and are at times also perceived as being in 'mixed' relationships, my aim is to look more closely at what does and does not make an potential partner 'other', and how individuals of this study negotiate their own ideas of the 'other' through their own relationships.

I propose that the complexities of intermarriage must be understood through a framework of non-linear narrative formation, which is predicated upon individuals in interaction, navigating through and pervading the bounds of social risk[3], while reflexively cognisant of the emotional labour naturally entwined with risk taking. The pervasion of these bounds of risk are experienced differently by each individual by virtue of their particular life story, and also entail imaginative prefigurations from which individuals can relate to and expand. Through these life stories, social change becomes evident by individuals narratively navigating social risk-taking as an increasing collective. I do not present agency itself as varying in capacity (Mahmood 2005), but rather view one's circumstantial contexts as the variable feature of narrative formation, including how individuals engage with risk. The aim of this thesis is as much about the intricacies of each individual experience of love and cultural difference, as it is about wider occurrences of identity building (Rapport 2014) and social change (Giddens 1991; Ricoeur 1990) within an increasingly culturally pluralistic society.

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[3] This is not to say that mixed marriages are especially 'risky', rather that perceptions of risk, whether 'real' or not, contribute to the narrative process of how individuals navigate their behavior.

Chapter one is divided into two parts concerned with the process of fieldworking. Part one introduces the macro-background of the field from historical (Anwar 1978; Talbot 2012), kinship based (Shaw 2001; Charsley 2013), and diasporic (Werbner 2002) contexts, and then introduces particular cases of the study. Within this section is a necessary discussion of the 'anthropology of Islam' and sectarian division, something that is fundamental to certain participants in this study who are considered to be sectarian minorities, and often heretical by mainstream expressions of Islam. Setting up the field as one that is varied, but has a shared context of hybridity (Bhabha 1994), I review the endogamous marital strategies for maintaining kinship connections between Pakistanis in Britain and transnationally between British Pakistanis and Pakistan. In light of these backgrounds persists a predominant theme that seeks to mitigate group risk by restricting marital partner selection, and consequentially discouraging intermarriages, often portrayed as risky marriages based on not only long standing kinship and religious based relations, but also on colonial 'othering'.

Part two of Chapter One entails my methodological approach. Inescapably multi-sited (Hannerz 2003) due to the lack of a demarcated locale of intermarried couples, I relied upon friends and colleagues who introduced me to individuals and couples considered to be British Pakistani Muslim and in a mixed relationship. While I discuss indisputable limitations of conducting this type of multi-sited fieldwork (Hage 2005), my approach was nonetheless necessary in order to capture the varieties of intermarried narratives. I also highlight my use of social media as an important tool for maintaining correlation with a number of participants and discovering alternative means in which individuals share and realise their life stories, an important feature of modern socialisation (Miller 2011). Finally, I discuss issues of ethics, particularly

concerning the importance of concealing identities, as well as issues of representation (Caplan 2003), and reflexivity of fieldwork (Moore 1994; Adkins 2002).

In Chapter Two I present my theoretical reflections that situate the experiences and stories presented in the ensuing ethnographic chapters. Theoretically, this work is concerned with how individuals, through their agency, imagine and create their life stories through narrative processes of monitoring and negotiating social risk (Rapport 2014; Ricouer 1992, Jackson 2012; Giddens 1991). The first part of this chapter discusses the genesis of anthropological inquiries into impressions of the person and individuality. The second part presents my theoretical analysis of intermarriage by introducing the concepts of social risk and emotional labour.

Opening my ethnographic cases, Chapter Three begins with a discussion of anthropological concepts of marriage. The chapter includes expectations of marriage, and more particularly, of wedding rituals framed within secular, religious, and cultural conceptualisations. I introduce a number of participants who share their own imaginings and actualities of marriage. Far from exhibiting a common theme, participants revealed the manifold expressions of weddings as intermarried couples, ranging from minimalist performances to Islamic *nikahs*, to hybrid wedding spaces. Wedding planning is often the initial phase of confronting more serious differences between partners and families, in which partners must negotiate their respective traditions. Following weddings, I also present how co-habiting couples resolve differences including dietary restrictions, attending and celebrating holiday events, and sharing religious spaces within the home.

Following alongside the discussion of cultural expectations found within Chapter Three, Chapter Four explores how couples navigate through customary obligations and responsibilities. Within Pakistani society and its diaspora there exists

a well-documented economic system of obligation and reciprocity (Werbner 1990). Included in this are expected gender roles, particularly for wives of British Pakistani men. I present cases of multiple generations of women, both as non-Pakistani partners and as British Pakistani women who have 'married out' in order to demonstrate the variation of negotiations and outcomes of these negotiations.

Chapter Five pertains to variations of interpretations of religious identity, including how individuals frame their religious identities in the contexts of their relationships and diaspora. An emphasis on the ummah is notable amongst Muslims who are considered to be minorities in their home, and also amongst intermarried couples who utilise the ummah to expand their sense of belonging, particularly in Britain (Jacobson 1998; Roy 2002). Yet this global appeal is paradoxical to varieties of sectarian expressions, as demonstrated by a number of participants in this study. Alongside these paradoxes, this chapter reveals how couples with children present religiosity to their children, including how adult children of intermarried parents express their religious identities. This chapter avoids engaging in attempts to predict particular sociological patterns of religiosity in Britain (Bruce 2002, Heelas 1998, Davie 1994), offering assorted personal accounts, many of which are conflicting, that uncover the multifarious nature of narrative formation.

The final ethnographic chapter introduces digital media forms of mediating narrative interaction. I focus on two main forms of interaction frequently used by participants: social media and streaming films. While social media was initially used as a method for maintaining contact with participants, I became aware of its ability to function, not as a simple tool of communication, but as an observed and participatory space for sharing one's life (Miller 2011). This chapter includes how participants navigate their online personas, as well as how they select various platforms for

seeking knowledge and engaging in dialogue that they deem to be 'alternative' to the interactions they encounter in their off-line worlds. Additionally, this chapter explores how certain types of films, such as East is East, and particular Bollywood films about forbidden love, are used as prefigurations of intermarriage from which participants reference within their own life stories. Digital media allows participants to further engage with and circulate their stories that actively connect other narratives of intermarriage. I conclude by reiterating the significance of narrative processes of identity formation. Intermarriage presents a compelling case for demonstrating the practice of negotiating social risk because it not only requires reflexive individuals to evaluate their relationships and their selves in light of their cultural upbringings, but intermarriage also reveals why and how individuals endure risks of emotional labour.

ENTERING THE FIELD

Marital patterns of British Pakistani Muslims commonly include accounts of cross-cousin marriages and transnational arrangements as part of a socio-economic strategy to maintain cultural, economic, and kinship networks (Shaw 2000; Charsley 2013; Anwar 1979; Werbner 1990). While participants within this study frequently use the main descriptor, 'British Pakistani Muslim' to denote their sense of cultural and communal identity, there continues to remain a number of ambiguities around such categorical thinking. 'British Pakistani' calls upon multiple senses of belonging that are simultaneously held as a hybrid identity (Bhabha 1994). As is revealed throughout the following chapters, cultural hybridity is a heterogeneous experience and individuals describe their motivations, their histories, and their futures through a narrative process of creating their life stories. A common feature relating to the wider discursive narrative of being British Pakistani Muslim originates with the diasporic history and refigurations of the Pakistani colonial past and present.

While migration from the geographic region of modern-day Pakistan pre-dates the Pakistani state, the most prominent period of Pakistani mass migration to Britain followed the 1947 Partition of Pakistan and India and continued through to the British Commonwealth Act of 1962 (Anwar 1979; Ansari 2004). Partition generated the wide-scaled displacement of individuals and families as *muhajirs* (refugees) along the border between India and Pakistan, considered to be the largest displacement of people during the twentieth century (Talbot 2012)[1]. In the process, Britain perpetrated

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[1] While the global diaspora of Pakistani Muslims has been widely featured in western studies of migration (Werbner 2002; Anwar 1979), greater movement occurred internally between the regions of Partition and other South Asian enclaves such as Sindh where over five million Indian and East Punjab

the aggressive nationalist movements based upon the delineation between Hindus and Muslims as politically different (Metcalf 2004: 218). Pakistan was essentially a country born in 'chaos and bloodshed' during which upwards of ten million people were displaced along with an estimated one million dead from the bloody conflict ibid.). Combined with conflict at home and the ease of migration to Britain under Commonwealth rules, the influx of migration to Britain was anticipated. Approximately 70 per cent of surveyed first-generation Pakistani homes in Britain constituted Punjab Muhajirs, though their status in Britain was not as refugees, but as transient migrant workers (Anwar 1979: 24). Britain was notorious for recruiting low-paid foreign workers to fill the post-World War Two industrial labour shortage, often recruiting from refugee camps through the EVWs (European Voluntary Workers) (ibid. 3).

A second period of mass movement saw the displacement of over 100,000 Pakistanis after the construction of the Mangla Dam in Mirpur (Charsley 2013: 5). Although many chose to relocate to other regions of Pakistan[2], others were determined to find an economic alternative by provisionally re-locating to Britain. As a new nation, Pakistan was adjusting to social and economic development transitions, during which many Pakistanis had limited opportunities to work (Anwar 1979: 25)[3]. The ease of postcolonial migration to Britain[4] combined with an economic appeal

migrants relocated (Talbot 2012: 25) or between East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) (Anwar 1978:23). Inter-ethnic disagreements and divisions continue exist within Pakistan.
[2] Villagers were provided with governmental compensation for their displacement, such as cash settlements to relocate elsewhere in Pakistan, or as some did, use their financial compensation to pay to relocate to Britain for better economic opportunities (Anwar 1978: 24).
[3] However, as Pakistan endeavors to make strides as a geo-political power, it is continues to experience economic instability through a rising population, including an expanding unemployed youth, provincial conflicts over diminishing water supplies, and international financial dependency that has discouraged economic sustainability (Talbot 2012: 226).
[4] Not only did many South Asians fight for Britain and its allies in World War Two, they received vouchers as veterans to move to Britain after the war. Additionally, migration from former colonies to Britain was relatively unrestricted until the development of new immigration laws in the 1960s (Anwar 1979).

towards Britain's textile industry and other labour intensive sectors resulted in an influx of economic migrants from Pakistan to Britain. The success of migratory 'pioneers' sending money back home to their families in Pakistan (and in doing so improved their economic position at home) provided an incentive for others to follow, further stimulating movement between the two countries (ibid. 24-25). To this day, remittances from kin in foreign work sectors, namely Europe, America, and especially the Gulf states, provide large amounts of financial resources for family remaining in Pakistan (Talbot 2012:27). The migrant worker who returns home is often met with renewed prosperity within their community upon their return (ibid.).

These initial fifteen years of mass migration consisted mostly of men living in affordable, shared accommodation as an economic strategy for saving money to send back home. Their living situations indicate the transiency of their intentional economic status. However, the intention to return transformed into the 'myth of return' after the Commonwealth Act of 1962 threatened to restrict movement between Pakistan and Britain, requiring individuals to possess a 'voucher' to remain based on specific skill sets or on dependents living in Britain. Migration surged prior to the instalment of the act in order to 'beat the ban' (Charsley 2013). With a further stream in migration, including wives, children, and extended family, the *biradari* networks became crucial in assisting new migrants and their families with their settlement in Britain, including arranging employment, housing, and emotional support (Anwar 1979: 215). The biradari (literally 'brotherhood') is a kin-based support network that includes relatives and close kin who are often from the same family, tribe, and caste (Shaw 2001)[5]. Members of one's biradari share opportunities, material and financial

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[5] As a kinship network, 'membership' of the biradari is not exclusively based on biological relations, but on degrees of cultural relatedness (Sahlins 2013). Alison Shaw notes that kin relations also include *assumed* kinship ties on the basis that biradaris usually have caste names (Shaw 2001). By sharing in caste names, one could potentially be kin by virtue of this connection.

resources, and arrange marriages as a way of maintaining these connections (Bolognani 2007; Dahya 1973; Shaw 2001). During fieldwork, a British Pakistani café owner I visited had a 'help wanted' sign on his storefront window. He explained that while the sign was 'officially' displayed for anyone to apply, that priority would be given to a Pakistani from his community in need first. Consulting with other members of his family and with friends at the mosque, he seeks advice on business suggestions, including hiring employees. He would consider hiring a non-Pakistani employee only if he was 'desperate' explaining that 'hiring within is the responsible thing to do' and that he will reciprocally receive favours from either this employee or another member of the community at a future time. This practice of obligation and reciprocity (Sahlins 1972; Mauss 1925) is a crucial feature of biradari networks and includes financial, social, and marital obligation. As an extension, this practice of responsibility has come to transcend biradari connections, extending towards other Muslims in diaspora as a part of a global *ummah* (Werbner 2002: 12)[6].

As a means for mitigating economic and social risk, Pakistanis construct parameters that control marital partner selection. Encouraging and arranging marriages between kin maintains traditions and resources within the group. Kin-based marriages predominantly include consanguineous and transnational unions (Shaw 2009; Charsley 2013). As one woman explained to me, 'There are no "skeletons" when marrying someone your family already knows, especially a cousin. You know their entire background, you don't have to adapt to strange in-laws, and you know that their values are in line with yours'. While the formation of close-knit Pakistani communities in Britain suggest that 'returning home' may no longer be widely

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[6] Young British Pakistani Muslims often emphasis their religious over ethnic belonging as a powerful indicator of their unified global identity as Muslims. Charsley argues that the most visible sign of this emphasis is seen by young Muslim women wearing the hijab as a way of 'resolving the felt contradictions of contemporary British and traditional Pakistani moral views' and of 'postcolonial resistance of race denigration' (Charsley 2013: 58)

practiced, other cases prove otherwise such as the increase in transnational marital arrangements, further extending and solidifying biradari relations between Britain and Pakistan (Charsley 2013). While a large motivation is to increase the wealth and connection between Pakistan and Britain, transnational marriage also serves as an immigration strategy for bringing more biradari members to Britain (ibid.). Despite the practice of transnational marriage, Charsley notes that some young British Pakistani Muslims are conflicted about 'marrying back home', particularly because they consider Britain to be their home and not Pakistan, resulting in potential cultural clashes between the arranged partners, and consequently defeating the intention to maintain cultural continuity (ibid. 67). Likewise, despite theoretical categorisations of difference, many intermarried partners believe their relationships transcend religious or ethnic heritage citing their common political and moral values, similar cultural upbringings in Britain, and shared interests in hobbies.

Permeating the migratory history and marital strategies remains postcolonial individual and collective historical memory[7] and prefigured narratives lived out through British Pakistani Muslim life stories. Not only are British Pakistanis placed within a narrative of hybridity and 'between two cultures' (Bhabha 1994; Watson 1977), early migrants became strangers in their new home (Werbner 2002). The deliberate colonial mimicry (Bhabha 1994) places the British Pakistani in a perpetual state of 'being both', without ever being fully both, and is reinforced through postcolonial racialised and anti-Muslim 'othering' (Sheehi 2011; Choudhury 2015).

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[7] Of historical memory, Ricoeur writes, 'Does there not exist an intermediate level of reference between the poles of individual memory and collective memory, where concrete exchanges operate between the living memory of individual persons and the public memory of the communities to which we belong? This is the level of our close relations, to whom we have a right to attribute a memory of a distinct kind. These close relations, these people who count for us and for whom we count, are situated along a range of varying distances in the relation between self and others. Varying distances but also variation in the active and passive modes of the interplay of distantiation and closeness that makes proximity a dynamic relationship ceaselessly in motion: drawing near, feeling close'. (2004: 131)

However, Werbner argues that the ambivalent position of Pakistani migrants to Britain demands a moral and aesthetic contemplation, in which the stranger becomes a 'stranger-intellectual' producing 'counter-hegemonic' narratives (2002: 6). The process of identity formation, nevertheless is not entirely based in a postcolonial prefiguration, but is a reflexive process of all human interaction (ibid. 17), including the most minute nuances of interaction (Carrithers 2009). The rhetoric and imaginings of postcolonial diaspora, however, are generated and established within the effects of colonial histories, including ethnic and religious hostilities, mass displacement, and the rise of nationalism (Werbner 2002: 58). Diasporic identities are situated within their imperial histories (Gilroy 1993), though these narratives, as imaginative constructions, are experienced as overlapping and at times competing interpretations of diasporic collectivity. While the colonial past is crucial to understanding the present, interpretations and experiences as a response to this past vary and are actively imagined and displayed within localised and individualised settings of identify formation.

At large, the participants of this study are British Pakistani Muslims in the broadest sense that their life stories hinge upon their interpretations and interactions with their diasporic imaginings. Within this experience are the individuals of this thesis who strive to make sense of their hybrid selves and their hybrid relationships, some of which are secret, as will is seen with Zaid[8] and with Fatimah, and others that manifest as 'blended families', requiring a constant negotiation of cultural expectations, as demonstrated with Alice and Tariq. Each individual story of these participants serves as an 'exception' in that their interpretations and experiences belong to their own life stories, yet they concurrently act as symbolic and at times

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[8] All participants' names throughout the thesis are pseudonyms, intentionally used as a layer of protection from being identified. Occasionally, minor details may have been changed, including number of children in some cases.

political collectives of love and intermarriage, seeking to counter not only the postcolonial narrative, but to serve as narrative prefigurations for their imaginings of a culturally pluralistic Britain.

These cases are not bound together as a regional community collective, and cannot be presented as a 'community' in such terms. Majority of the individuals in this thesis have never met nor are they aware of each other's specific stories in any other way outside of their imaginings. Yet they each share related and intertwined narratives of British Pakistani Muslim belonging and of negotiating cultural differences within their relationships. They share the experience of negotiating risk when selecting their partners and of navigating through expectations of obligation and reciprocity within their chosen families. Furthermore, while they may not constitute a geographically bounded 'community', they produce senses of community based around these similar experiences by contributing to wider narratives of intermarriage. Yet, through these contributions, many of them are also searching for other narratives to relate to, namely through re-tellings of alternative stories of intermarriage, through 'anonymous' on-line interactions, and also by way of their own conceptions of intermarriage.

Some individuals in this study identify with the predominant migration narrative of their grandparents migrating during the wave of the 1950s as represented in Anwar's work, yet many others do not share this history. Some, such as Zaid, are second generation British Pakistani Muslims, whose parents are considered to be highly skilled labourers who relocated to British city centres without a large dependency on a pre-existing kinship or Pakistani network. Other individuals settled away from larger Pakistani communities because they believed they no longer needed a connection, as with Jinaan in London, and now live what they consider to be a

relatively independent lifestyle. Additionally, others intentionally avoid settling near larger Pakistani communities because they experience a sense of 'othering' by these communities due to sectarian and ethnic differences, as is the case with Roun and Ibrahim. Within British Pakistani Muslim communities, these 'communities' are not religiously or ethnically monolithic. There exist hostilities between sectarian belonging and also between regional belonging from Pakistan. Furthermore, individuals interpret and experience these collectivities in very different ways, as will be made evident from the various individual representations explored throughout this thesis.

Anthropology of Islam

While Pakistan was created on the foundation of an Islamic nation-state, there remain a number of issues with determining what Islam is or who Muslims are. This includes problems of sectarian divisions and the varieties of secular manifestations that may seek to distinguish Islam as religion separated from politics. Attempts to address these problems are found within debates of the 'anthropology of Islam'.

Concerns around an anthropology of Islam can be encompassed by following two questions: what is Islam and what exactly is the object of study: Muslims or Islam? The debate is ultimately one of methodological approaches, which includes the prominent position of Talal Asad's introduction of an 'Islamic discursive tradition' (1986), and more recent arguments prioritising Muslim individuals (Marranci 2008; Schielke 2010). Furthermore, problems arise when speaking of abstract religious categories when multiple, and often contradictory, cultural, political, and theological formations make claim to this religious identity. Both Clifford Geertz (1968) and Ernest Gellner (1981) have been criticised for their essentialist analyses in their

anthropological works of Islam mostly due to a lack of Muslim voices within their ethnographies (Varisco 2005: 49-76; Marranci 2008: 4-7). The lack of Muslim voices is noted in the work of Dale Eickelman who identifies that the problem of studying Islam in anthropology is the same problem with studying any religion in universal terms, which is the lack of local contextualisation. He describes it as a conceptual problem of applying ethnographic data gathered in smaller communities to larger, global categories of religion, in this case Islam (1982: 3). Furthermore, he concludes that by studying the practice of Islam in local contexts, one cannot for example explain recitation of the Qur'an in a definitive fashion as it may be practiced differently throughout time and space. Instead, he suggests that we should observe how expressions of Islam shape and are shaped by the political and economic occurrences surrounding its manifestation (ibid. 13).

Eickleman's work illuminates how anthropology of religion, and Islam in particular, should be approached in more localised settings, essentially resulting in methodological issues of representation. In addition to this, only Muslims can be observed and Islam as an abstract category of religion can only be represented (Varisco 2005: 20). Besides the representational issues prevalent in all ethnographic studies, the elusive concept of Islam still prevails. What exactly constitutes Islam and how can one recognise when it is being observed in local or in global contexts? Talal Asad's paper *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam* confronts the definitional problem with Islam and it's multiple manifestations by presenting the concept of an Islamic discursive tradition (1986). While Islam is far from monolithic, the various and multiple manifestations that people interpret and experience as Islam 'aspire to coherence' (ibid. 16).

Necessarily following this is the search for the congruent aspiration for coherence that can be discursively traced through all manifestations of Islam. While the discursive basis of Islam consists of its sacred texts: The Qur'an and the *Sunnah* (or the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad), some have attempted to explore how praxis is informed by sacred text. Referring to Cantwell Smith's observations, Brian Morris states that Islam is not definable by a definitive orthodoxy, but rather by its orthopraxy, particularly through the embodiment of the Five Pillars (2006: 80). For Morris, praxis is informed by text, and in accordance with this, Sophie Gilliat-Ray explains, 'The early Muslim resistance to enclosing God in theological discourse has left the conception of God not fully realisable through dogmatic definition, thus allowing the faithful a certain degree of freedom to develop a personal grasp of the divine through their practice' (2012: 185). Multifarious representations of Islam consist of a myriad of interpretations of the Qur'an and Sunnah put into practice, continually transmitted and shaped by individuals in local and global contexts. Olivier Roy suggests that there is no such thing as a 'Muslim culture' and only such a thing as a religion called Islam, arguing that religion cannot be reduced to a single culture (2004: 11). Knowing the rudimentary articulations of the Qur'an is not a prerequisite to understanding Muslims, rather anthropologists of Islam should orient themselves to apprehend what it is that Muslims say about the Qur'an and how they choose to frame their practices based on their interpretations (ibid. 10).

The chain of anthropological inquiry into Islam sensibly begins with those self-identifying as Muslim (Schielke 2010:14; Marranci 2008). An approach towards Muslims, though, poses a veritable predicament in which some self-identifying Muslims do not have a 'deep knowledge of the Qur'an or hadiths' from which to explain their practice (Marranci 2008: 42). While Asad is not necessarily requesting

that all religious individuals be able to discursively trace their practices to sacred text, he is clear that not everything Muslims say and do is considered a part of an Islamic tradition (1986: 14). However, the exclusion of certain statements and practices by self-proclaimed Muslims can be considered a type of 'proto-theological paradigm', which Marranci accuses Asad of employing (2008: 42). Deliberating and assigning Islamic actions from non-Islamic actions verges a fine line that vacillates on theological reasoning. Furthermore, acknowledging the existence of a discursive tradition, which can exclude certain practices or beliefs that do not fit into this tradition, opens the discussion of the separation of sacred and profane.

The separation of sacred and profane spheres of identification can be challenging when studying Islam from an anthropological perspective because it entails delineation between political, economic, and religious spheres of life.[9] In his study of young Muslims in Britain, Philip Lewis states that 'Muslimness is as much cultural as it is religious'; doubting that two spheres of culture and religion can ever be analytically and autonomously separated (2007: 3). A body of scholars self-identifying as Muslims endeavour to contribute to some of these analytical complications, and have proposed an 'Islamic Anthropology' (Tapper 1995). Asserting Western anthropological theory as characteristically ethnocentric, Islamic Anthropology applies Islamic ideals to encompass all aspects of life, which is theoretically and comparatively discussed to achieve the idealistic Islamic society (Tapper 1995: 188).

As in all ethnography, it is advantageous to allow participants to provide the material to guide anthropologists through abstract religious identifications in order to

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[9] Rogers Brubaker makes this compelling point in his paper, *Religion and Nationalism: Four Approaches* (2012), arguing that, 'Languages of religion and nation, like all other forms of language, can be intertwined pervasively. But even when the languages are intertwined, the fundamental ontologies and structures of justification differ' (17).

make sense of their rhetorical and practical uses. Despite being criticised as 'proto-theological', Asad's discursive tradition is useful in so far as it describes a unifying point of origin from which all other experiences of Islam extend. In this sense, Muslims need not necessarily engage with theological debate, but their identities as Muslims are a part of a wider interactional historical and present narrative of identity formation. As revealed throughout the various self-identifying Muslims of this thesis it is crucial to understand Islam from their own experiences.

Sectarianism

The 2011 Census places the Muslim population of the United Kingdom at 4.5 per cent of the population; approximately 2.6 million are in England and approximately 76,000 in Scotland, with the remainder residing in Wales and Northern Ireland. This growing religious population includes overlapping demographics of ethnic and cultural belonging. As the largest ethnic group of Muslims in Britain, Pakistanis, comprise approximately 38 per cent of total British Muslim belonging (Bolognani 2011: 288). According to the organisation, 'Muslims in Britain'[10], total mosques in England and Scotland, including premises used for *salah* (prayer), temporary premises, and presumed premises, sits at approximately 1,697 in all of the United Kingdom as of the latest mosque report in 2014. Reflecting the dominance of Pakistani and South Asian Muslim heritage in Britain, the mosque report finds that majority of managerial positions associated with mosques were held by Pakistanis, followed by Bangladeshis. However, as noted by both the statistics gathered and the language used

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[10] www.muslimsinbritain.org. The organisation is considered to have 'the most comprehensive mapping of mosques in Britain'.

by this organisation, factional and ethnic divisions are prominent across regions and within cities of Britain.

One of the regions I conducted fieldwork in was Edinburgh, which boasts the Edinburgh Central Mosque. It is widely recognisable in the Old Town of the architecturally gothic capital city, located near the University of Edinburgh and the National Museum of Scotland. The mosque has been established as a visible manifestation of materiality of the local Muslim community's involvement in civic and social life by regularly offering events and fieldtrips for the public in addition to holding regular programmes for the Muslim community. Attached to the mosque is the 'Mosque Kitchen', a popular eatery on the busy South Bridge Road. The restaurant occasionally co-hosts interfaith quiz nights and the mosque arranges field trips with local schools for students to learn about cultural diversity as part of course curriculum. The mosque also attracts a variety of Muslims from various ethnic backgrounds, especially due to the large student population.

One such Muslim who attends the Edinburgh Central Mosque is Farid, a British Pakistani Muslim who resides in Edinburgh with his wife, Christy, who identifies with the Church of Scotland. Farid works in the medical field and rarely has time to attend mosque, but he makes exceptions for holidays such as Eid. 'It is expected of me to celebrate [Eid], but it's also not very difficult to persuade me to do so. Sort of like my version of Christmas,' he explained. Farid intentionally refrains from adhering to any particular sect of Islam, though he acknowledges that his family is associated with the Barelvi tradition. He says he 'sticks to the basics': praying during the day when he can, though admittedly this is not very practical with his job, and 'being a good person'.

The Barelvi sect is one of the major South Asian Muslim branches represented in Pakistan and in Britain. Barelvi Muslims are Sunnis, with Sufi, or mystical inclinations, founded by Ahmed Reza Khan, a Sufi scholar in the early Twentieth Century. They make use of Sufi *pirs*, considered to saints, who guide Muslim followers in spiritual matters. None of the participants throughout this study with specific Sunni backgrounds (e.g. Barelvi) initially self-identified their sectarian belonging, instead calling themselves Muslims, or Sunnis, at the most. Another popular South Asian Islamic movement is the Deobandi tradition. Of the participants, only one individual was distantly and briefly associated with this branch. The Deobandi tradition was created as a reform movement in South Asia during the nineteenth century as a reaction against increasing influence of what were perceived as non-Muslim cultural practices. The tradition seeks to provide Muslims with guidance on 'correct practice', discouraging popular performances of competing Islamic sects like the Barelvi who create shrine arrangements or appeal to pirs for spiritual knowledge.

Feroz is another Sunni of Barelvi belonging living in Edinburgh. While he is currently single, he regularly dates and is hopeful to find a woman to start a family with in the near future. His most serious relationship was with Hindu British woman, a relationship that his family was displeased with based on their cultural differences. He avoids identifying himself as Pakistani or British because he considers himself to be a 'world citizen', having taken up residency in a variety of major cities: Islamabad, New Delhi, Wahington D.C., and Edinburgh. A well-travelled lawyer, he also frequently questions the meaning of being a Muslim. He acknowledges that he grew up in what most Muslims would recognise as a Sunni Barelvi home, though he says that culture, politics, and lack of theological understanding obscures these sectarian

meanings when examined in self-reflexive ways. He is also cynical of his own Muslim belonging, confessing that he evades attending mosque as well as failing to maintain his religious duties, such as prayer.

While Feroz and Farid confess their infrequent mosque attendance at Edinburgh's Central Mosque, there are other Muslims in Edinburgh who ineluctably avoid the central mosque because they are characterised as heretics. Zaid is considered by many Muslims to be a heretic because of his association with the Ahmadi tradition, making him unwelcome in Edinburgh's Central Mosque, or any other mainstream mosque that he is aware of. When sharing his and his family's religious belonging he revealed to me, 'When I meet another Muslim or Pakistani, even at a social gathering, I would never admit I am Ahmadi'. Ahmadis, named after their *Mahdi* (guided one), Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (the final prophet of Islam according to Ahmadis), are also referred to as 'Qadiani', a pejorative term used towards Ahmadi Muslims amongst South Asians. Many Muslims consider them to be heretical or even *kaffir* due to their belief in a messianic lineage succeeding Muhammad. Despite its pejorative usage, it is the official terminology used in legal documents in Pakistan, .[11] Along with labelling Ahmadis as 'Qadiani', which is based on the geographic location from which their Mahdi originates from, the British mosque report further labels Qadiani as 'Non-Muslim'. Because Ahmadi practices are outlawed in Pakistan, the current headquarters of the Ahmadi are located in London, a move that was made in in the aftermath of widespread, government-approved discrimination of Ahmadis in the 1970s.[12]

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[11] Visit Pakistan's legal code: www.fmu.gov.pk/docs/laws/Pakistan%20Penal%20Code.pdf. Pakistan has determined the Ahmadi sect to be an illegal continuity of Islam.
[12] Since the creation of Pakistan as an aspiring religious nation-state, Ahmadis have endured multiple political campaigns seeking to criminalise their sectarian beliefs and practices as heretical to Islam. Under Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Ahmadis were 'thrown to the wolves' as Talbot describes,

Another sect often considered to be unorthodox are the Ismailis of the Aga Khan line, called Nizari, though more popularly and simply referred to as Ismaili, with the other branches of Ismailis typically identifying themselves by their more specific names, which includes Seveners and Druze. Ismailis are related to and yet distinct from the more popularly recognised Shia branch sometimes referred to as Twelvers or Imamiyyah, particularly visible in Iran. Ismailis follow a different lineage of spiritual successors than Sunnis as well as the related Shia Twelvers. The splinter between Twelvers and Ismailis was in the 8th century when Ismailis believed the son of the sixth Shiite leader, Ismail, would be the seventh Imam. Imams within the Shia tradition differ from Sunni meaning. For Sunni Muslims, an imam is a leadership position within mosques or Muslim communities. Within Shia tradition, an Imam is one who has succeeded the leadership of Muhammad. Imams in this sense have a leadership role, though the role is reserved for divinely-chosen men in the line of succession, who will eventually reveal the final messianic Mahdi after a period of Occultation. The particular Ismailis I had the opportunity of interacting with, however, have continued following a living line of succession, which includes the current Imam, Aga Khan IV, in Britain. Ismailis are also considered to be the more mystical of the two major Shia branches, with Twelver Shiism being more legalistic.

Fatima was the first British Pakistani Ismaili I met. In her mid twenties and finishing a prestigious degree in accounting, she was enthusiastic to share what she could with me about her life and religion, or what she preferred to identify as her 'spirituality' to help give me a different perspective on Muslim identity in general. While they are mostly recognized as being Muslim, deep divides run between Sunnis and Shias, sometimes with accusations as to which way is the 'correct' Islam. Fatima

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as a means to separate Bhutto from allegations of Ahmadi financial support during his campaign (Talbot 2012: 104-105).

explained to me, 'certainly back in Pakistan, and even sometimes here, I meet other Muslims who say that my version of Islam is not the true'. Fatima also does not attend a mosque, choosing instead to practice in the privacy of her home. Being a student living away from her family, she avoids immersing herself in a Muslim community, instead focusing on her studies and developing her secretive relationship with her boyfriend, a non-Muslim Scandinavian man whom she secretly lives with and hopes to marry one day.

Another Ismaili is a man named Malik and his wife Laura, who reside in Birmingham. Laura however is not a Muslim, nor does she plan to convert, though she has a deep respect for her husband's religious devotion. Being Ismaili, Malik described the 'openness' of the followers of his tradition, saying that they, 'strive for spirituality as opposed to fighting over right and wrong'. When Malik and Laura married, they travelled the two-hour journey to London to receive a blessing from the Ismaili Centre. Granted, their union has been well received by friends and family who are spread between London and Birmingham. Both Malik and Laura believe that their relationship and experiences are no different than other couples living in large metropolitan cities of the West, where race, religion, and ethnicity merge together. Young and with a variety of friends from differing backgrounds, they live a shared life of what they believe to be the 'new globalised couple', something they both believe to be a positive inevitability of the effects of multiculturalism.

Adhering to distinct sectarian belonging or to a more generic Muslim belonging changes from individual to individual. Sometimes both distinct sectarian identifications and also more global Muslim identifications are used by one person depending on their current experiences. Furthermore, senses of these belongings

change as romantic partners are introduced to the equation and individuals are placed into interaction.

Methods

With the sizeable descriptor of 'British Pakistani Muslim' and the added difficulty of finding specific cases of intermarriage within an ambiguous collective, locating the field required a multi-sited approach (Hannerz 2003). Intermarriages amongst British Pakistani Muslims are not remarkably visible, making locating a community residing within a relatively confined geographic place, demarcated by a physical space, out of the question. Instead, this 'community' of mixed marriages was not a geographically defined area of shared cultural practices, but a dispersed, and at times undetectable field of individuals and couples. With mixed married couples asthe 'subjects' of my study, the people in these marriages would be considered a sort of hidden population, 'neither well defined nor available for enumeration' (Braunstein 1993: 132). Indeed, the question of how to actually locate the field in the practical sense after theoretically locating the field was and continued to be the most difficult part of this research endeavour.

My course of action demanded that I establish trust with others who might be able to introduce me to individuals or couples they knew personally (Bernard 2006). These individuals included friends, colleagues, and acquaintances, each whom I knew prior as either identifying as British Pakistani Muslims or who were acquainted with British Pakistani Muslims. The snowballing technique (ibid. 192) directed me to each of my participants, who were located from Edinburgh to London, and everywhere in between. Nearly all of these individuals were established through this snowballing

process. Defining and locating my field was dependent upon an object of study, being intermarriage, as opposed to the people located within a specific place. Defending her own research in Venezuela, Kathryn Tomlinson selected an 'object of study' and followed it utilising snowballing techniques, oftentimes taking various directions and connections to assorted places and spaces which revealed her object of study (2011: 168).

A multi-sited approach is not without its criticisms, namely for its break with traditional ethnography, or of immersing oneself into a particular place and space with a particular community of people for a prolonged period of time (Evans-Pritchard 1951: 77-78). Anthropology has established itself for its in-depth participant observation, particularly within small-scale societies. Yet circumstances arise when it is no longer suitable to maintain one location in order to grasp a holistic representation of the systems of societies one is studying. George Marcus explains that the 'crisis of representation' also calls into question methodological issues including the creation of grand theories from extremely isolated and localised research contexts. He writes, '[T]he corresponding change in ethnographic research and writing that I have in mind is a shift away from the ethnography that is so centrally place-and local-world determined toward an ethnography that emphasizes a link-up with the more pluralistically sensitive systems perspectives' (1998: 34). The macro-micro contrast limits anthropologists' potential applications within a contextually post-modern world of knowledge (ibid. 35).

While studying transnational Lebanese diaspora, Ghassan Hage admits that the multi-sited nature of his initial methodology, but subsequently challenges his methodological approach. While Hage spent a significant amount of time attempting multi-sited fieldwork, he found that it was unmanageable due to its international

nature in which he was travelling from Lebanon to France to Britain to America and back within short spaces of time. The first of his criticisms considers difficulties already present in single-sited ethnography arguing that if a researcher is not immersed in thick ethnography, they have failed to be an ethnographer (2005: 465). Secondly, he believes that multi-sited ethnography inhibits the ability to attain thick ethnography due to basic impracticalities such as jet lag and regularly moving around locations and families, therefore greatly reducing the ability to perform suitable thick description (ibid. 465). While I am in agreement with his criticisms of multi-sited ethnography within the context of international multi-sited work, there remain smaller scaled multi-sited projects, which constitute ethnography, as well as the expanding concepts of spatial interaction including the rise of the Internet (Miller 2011). Spatial distance and time are relative concepts, requiring contextualisation of the intended field (Coleman and Collins 2007).

I oriented my methods of communication around how other individuals in Britain might socialise or interact with friends and strangers, especially a researcher, and relying on technology such as social media and mobile phones to maintain relations (Horst and Miller 2012). In the mundane routines of modern British life, some people may find it challenging to keep in touch with friends, attend social gatherings, or take the time to invest in new friendships. Continually reminding myself through the research process '[t]he value of pure sociability should not be underestimated as a means of building trust' went a long way in overcoming initial steps in establishing field relations (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995: 89). Ease of interaction and very little disruption to daily life was important to many of my participants, which encouraged me to find alternative ways of interacting with

participants who could not consistently host me in their day-to-day lives at work and home.

The Internet and social media played a larger role than I had originally intended and social media was used as supplementary sources of ethnographic interaction by maintaining reciprocal connections that many of my participants already heavily rely upon in their social lives. Through social networking, especially on Facebook, I was able to discover groups and pages of British individuals whom are directly involved with mixed faith relationships while also sustaining friendships I had already built with participants. In some ways, Facebook is also used as a type of 'surveillance tool' that allows users to scrutinise whether a potential friendship should be invested in or not. Some of my participants made it clear to me that they had 'checked out' my entire Facebook page and had 'cleared me' as a 'genuine person' because of the photos and posts that I share. Daniel Miller explains this interaction:

> Most people feel awkward in the company of people they barely know, self-conscious about the possible effect of their words and actions. Facebook provides an attractive buffer in this regard. It helps us to find out a considerable amount about potential friends, without requiring any awkward face-to-face interaction (2011: 165).

Though, I primarily relied upon off-line interactions with my participants, tools like Facebook expanded this interface and contributed to building rapport. Users found that if they added my social profile, they could view very personal stories of my life: family photos, silly videos, and interactions between my own friends and family on my 'timeline' and their 'newsfeeds'. Likewise, I could view their interactions, photos, and status updates. Miller demonstrates how Facebook users can reveal 'unintentional truths' about themselves by the things they share, contributing to their identity formation, even if their online selves are aspirational or imagined identities (2011:48-50).

In many ways, Facebook interactions are a form of participant observation. Social media through computers, tablets, and phones, makes interaction much more accessible in the fast-paced society of Britain, potentially allowing individuals to interact without prior arrangement at any time of day. A simple, 'Hi, what are you up to?' through a message or even something as unassuming as 'liking' a photo initiates a conversation or acknowledgement that both parties are in the same social space at the same time, similar to spontaneously seeing friends walking in town and striking up a conversation, though at a much more intense pace. Writing about Internet ethnography, Christine Hine explains that, '[u]sing the Internet in this way is akin to hanging out in a public setting, catching the prevailing cultural currents, and listening to the way that people talk about a topic when, unlike in an interview, they are not being asked to generate a formal account of their relationship with that topic' (2015:165).

Using Facebook can foster off-line relationships providing further spaces for expressing oneself. Contrary to the assumption that social media diminishes the value of sociality, Miller argues that Facebook provides a medium for efficient interactions and can intensify friendships because of the frequency and ease of interacting (2011: 167). Additionally, social media has provided a platform for concurrent and multiple interactions that can be revisited[13], and which allow for a 'more creative or extravert public presence, which may previously have been much restricted' (169). As in my own experiences, participants on Facebook appeared to be more expressive behind the comfort of their screen than in a face-to-face interaction. Scrolling through years of Facebook posts on a friend's page can reveal considerable knowledge about a

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[13] Re-visiting pages and discussions is important to the cyclical and non-linear process of narrative formation. The past becomes present and imaginings based on a reflexive interaction with this past contribute to the future.

person's political ideologies, social interactions, and even purportedly trivial things they find to be meaningful.

Unsurprisingly, building rapport with individuals between the approximate ages of 20 and 40 was an easier undertaking due to generational similarities. As social peers, we more easily conversed about topics of popular culture such as the latest television shows, music, and technology. One participant helped me with my iPad in the middle of our recorded a conversation. His friends consider him to be rather tech-savvy and he insisted I download a better dictaphone application. Later that day when we spent time with his friends, they joined in laughter when he shared that he had to correct my 'low-grade technological proficiencies'. These minor interactions and memories contributed to building friendships with participants.

More mature individuals, like Margaret or Charlotte, preferred to interact with me in the format of a formal conversational setting. They wanted the opportunity to convey their stories in a more uninterrupted manner, waiting to answer any questions I had until after they had shared their life stores. Despite the formality of these interactions, their methods of interacting created a natural sense of hierarchical differentiation based on life experience. This hierarchical position is no different from my own experiences with my grandparents, aunts and uncles, where 'with age comes experience' and 'experience comes wisdom', and with such experience and wisdom younger generations are meant to listen and learn. Instead of gaining friend-to-friend peer insights, I took the role of an agreeable listener or experienced as the 'dutiful daughter' (Abu-Lughod 1986: xv). In some ways, because of my age and realisation of relatively limited life experiences, I had feelings of naiveté, but also respect towards the older participants. I related to what Laura Bohannon, under her pen-name Elenore Smith Bowen, remarked upon her experience as a novice

researcher in her field when she wrote, 'I felt much more like a backyard child than an independent young woman […] I felt even less like a trained and professional anthropologist pursuing his researches' (Bowen 1954:40). While her research experience on the whole was much different than mine, the intermittent feelings of inexperience and ignorance surfaces.

Ethics and representation

For some participants, their intimate relationships are highly secretive, and many of these participants actively contributed to altering details in their stories as represented in this thesis in order to reduce the possibility of being identified. Building and protecting confidence, minimising any disturbances whether short or long term, and maintaining safeguards of anonymity were paramount to this study. Pat Caplan confronts the overriding role ethics plays in anthropology by stating, '[y]et ethics of anthropology is clearly not just about obeying a set of guidelines; it actually goes to the heart of the discipline: the premises on which practitioners operate, its epistemology, theory and praxis. In other words, *what* is anthropology for? *Who* is it for?' (2003: 3).

Responsible representation presents the question of authority. Why I am speaking for and representing these intermarriages, especially considering I am conducting a type urban anthropology 'at home' (Clifford and Marcus 1986: 17)? Not only are my participants willing and encouraging contributors to this work, but by compiling their various stories, we are collectively weaving a tapestry of alternative and sometimes concealed narratives of interrelations in Britain. These stories provide prefigurations of culturally diverse marriages for our rapidly changing society. While

each of the participants in this study are more than capable of sharing their stories, this work entwines their individual stories into a narrative of hybrid senses of belonging and of community formation. When speaking about the 'peculiar' research experiences of interviewing divorcees, Bob Simpson discovered the 'happy' willingness of individuals to participate on the basis of feeling a part of a meaningful project, to have their stories heard, and to contribute to helping others in similar situations (Simpson 1998: 20). As with my own participants, while their willing and honest accounts were 'in a sense typical', they were also 'exemplary' (ibid. 20).

Questions of authority help to refine the research intentionality and motivate researchers to remain holistic in their representations that include self-reflexive engagement with the field (Denzin 1997: 5). Since the 'crisis of representation' (Marcus and Fischer 1986; Clifford and Marcus 1986), anthropologists must continuously face the reality of their role in the field. Henrietta Moore draws our attention to the fact that 'we are no longer objective, comparative scientists, but self-reflexive, self-critical, connected individuals' (1994: 127). Furthermore, anthropologists are fluid individuals, representing multiple selves, which are reflected throughout interactions and then interpretations of these interactions (Adkins 2002). These self-reflections played a role throughout the entire process of this research process, from my interactions with participants to writing up.

Taking the need for reflexivity into account, I entered the field mindful of a number of visible markers of my identity including my gender, being American, and being from a 'mixed' family myself. Gaining access to individuals based on gender played a considerable role during my fieldwork. While I was able to meet and speak with many male participants, I noticeably had an easier time interacting with women. Many of the younger women treated me as a friend and included me in more intimate

details of their lives. In one interaction a woman had to secretly arrange her meeting with me, as her husband was not aware she was contributing to this research. Upon our meeting, the house was filled with her female friends, gathered around to see what was happening, delighting in the secret nature of our discussions. As a man, this access would not have been granted, and the insights into her life would never have been gained. Being a woman allowed my fieldwork to more deeply engage with other women in this study, though may also have limited certain levels of engagement with specific male participants. In *Veiled Sentiments* Abu-Lughod describes her position within her fieldwork setting, and how her gender immediately placed her into a position with varying intensities of interactions with other people of the community, establishing her into a concentrated role with the women of the Bedouin community (1986: 1-24).

Along with being female, my American identity was initially of concern in that America has been viewed as an antagonistic nation towards Muslims, especially considering the current affairs in countries among predominantly Muslim populations.[14] However, as my field is located in Britain, the argument can also be made that similar levels of distrust or anger toward America are also made against British politics and any country that allies with the United States in current global affairs. Considering this, it was important that within the macro view of global politics, that I was clear about the intentions of my research, as well as presenting myself as open to scrutiny. If my American identity in relation to current global affairs was at all scrutinised during my interactions, it failed to be explicitly evident. For example, the usual response when participants discovered I originated from

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[14] American militarised campaigns in the Middle East has not exclusively impacted those residing within those territories, but as Olivier Roy suggests, the globalisation of Islam and the interconnected diasporas and ummah 'brotherhood' impacts perceptions of the 'war on terror' that resonates beyond territorial boundaries (Roy 2004).

Southern California included questions about Hollywood and the climate, usually accompanied with an exclamatory question, 'Why in bloody hell are you in Britain?' Additionally, some participants initially assumed I was an 'interethnic' Pakistani or South Asian, due to my 'darker features' and complexion, but were surprised to know I inherited these features from my Filipino father. Drawing upon my own family heritage, many participants detached me from my 'white background' and from being an American 'WASP' (the disapproving acronym for White Anglo-Saxon Protestant), especially when learning that my Filipino family are more recent migrants to America. In a similar manner, many British Pakistani Muslims are also portrayed within the 'between two cultures' paradigm (Watson 1977) and of the discrimination of ethnic minority groups, regardless of whether they are 'integrated' or not (Song 2009). Sharing of life stories of cultural hybridity was imperative to establishing relationships within the field, but also served as a theoretical reminder of how identity building occurs through narrative interactions. The research process served as a part of these narrative interactions.

Despite minor similarities between myself and participants of our perceived hybrid identities, when directly observing my field interactions, I am an 'outsider'. My experiences of hybridity are not entirely like those that British Pakistani Muslims and their partners are experiencing, and likewise, many of their stories represented in this thesis are unlike the other. These narrative differences, I argue throughout this thesis, are products of individuals in interaction, constantly negotiating social risk through their non-linear narrative interactions, whether these interactions involve their experiences of their political histories, or their interactions with their friends and partners, or with myths of love, their individual interpretations and life stories belong to them, but also belong to the narratives of others (Jackson 2012). These individual

stories are experienced and lived by the individual, yet their individual narratives are reflected through other individual life stories as a part of an interactional process.

2

THEORETICAL REFLECTIONS

Considering the anthropological evidence that British Pakistani Muslims are predominantly endogamous, preferring to primarily marry within their ethnic networks, consanguineously and transnationally (Shaw 2001; Charsley 2013), the stories of those who make decisions against the given general trends of the overwhelming majority are ethnographically compelling. On the basis that Britain is a self-professed 'secular' and pluralistic society, immigration policy continues to perceive endogamous, intra-ethnic marriage as a barrier to integration (Charsley 2013). Immediately following this, how might current examples of individuals who do marry outside of their ethnic community help us understand decisions around intermarriage amongst British Pakistani Muslims? What happens to existing notions of cultural traditions when more people intermarry and what role does individual agency provide in shifting structural forms of current cultural collectivities? Implicit within and paramount to each of these questions is why and how certain individuals evaluate and flirt with what I will term 'social risk', in which intermarriage can be considered to be 'high risk'? The British Pakistani Muslim 'community' in connected locally and transnationally through biradari networks in which financial, ideological, and emotional economic reciprocity remains crucial to the maintenance of the system. Contrariwise, the British system encourages, if not demands, inter-ethnic 'integration', monitored through immigration restrictions (including marriage restrictions as will be discussed in the following chapter) and a culture that espouses

'individual liberty' through their campaign on 'British Values'.[1] Between these two cultural persuasions comes another type of hybridisation of identity (Bhabha 1994) and process of decision making that I argue to be based in a narrative method of weighing social risk.

The bridge between each of these questions rests on the idea of negotiation between paradigms of individuality and community (Rapport and Amit 2002), or in other terms between the balance of 'free will' and cultural determinism. I propose a more compatibilist approach that addresses not only questions about particular occurrences of British Pakistani Muslim intermarriages, but more broadly about how individuals facilitate social change through mimetic (Ricoeur 1990) and interrelational (Jackson 2012) processes of narrative, enabled by the individual human's capacity for imagination, reflection and negotiating risk (Giddens 1991). Intermarriage, whether it is interfaith, interethnic, interracial or any other combination, reveals itself to be a useful theme for understanding the correlation between agency and cultural structures.

Part one of this theoretical discussion addresses the inception of anthropological debates around the concepts of individuality, individualism, agency, and community, including criticisms of the east/west and private/public dichotomies of the 'person' (Strathern 1984) and of human subjectivity (Moore 1994; Mahmood 2005). Part two reveals the process of narrative through agency and social risk. There is a perceived tension between structural forms and individual heterodox imaginations that have the potential to unsettle existing doxa (Bourdieu 1977). Both orthodoxy and heterodoxy are results of the same process of human agency in which individual life stories are an interrelational arrangement of narrative, simultaneously acting as

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[1] The British Department of Education has implemented curriculum for British schools that promotes 'British Values'. Visit: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/guidance-on-promoting-british-values-in-schools-published

prefigurations and refigurations (Ricoeur 1990) from which other individuals can imagine and create new cultural forms (Carrithers 2005). I propose that narrative is never fully cyclical, but consists of meandering spirals. Social structures and life stories are not passive mimicries, but consist of an interlinkage between individuals and the aggregates they create (Rapport and Overing 2000). As encountered throughout the stories of the people presented in the proceeding chapters, the spiral of mimesis and the capacity for structural change originates with their individual abilities to imagine (Rapport 2014) and negotiate risk (Giddens 1991). Individuals throughout this study continuously envisage and confer (both intentionally and reflexively unintentionally) their life stories within the socio-cultural milieu they are situated.

PART ONE: The anthropological genesis of individuality and agency

Individuality and individualism

A once prevalent view defined individuality as something distinctly 'western', whereby the individual is characterised as sovereign, autonomous, scientific and rational. This notion of the individual falls within the purview of *individualism*, tracing its sociological genesis to Durkheim and his contemporaries who regarded the individual as subsumed within the societal, whereby the hallmarks of an individual are derived from the collective conscience, a product of Enlightenment philosophy (Rapport and Overing 2000: 178-182). Consequentially the notion of the individual was entirely related to a western cogitation of individualism fashioned by social and

historical contexts of western society that were assumed to have produced the 'modern', rational and autonomous individual (Macfarlane 1978). A noteworthy example is found in the work of Louis Dumont on Hindu hierarchy in India (Dumont 1966) where the 'hierarchy' of the caste system was considered to be natural and collective as opposed to the individuality of the West, which Dumont perceived as a unique societal development. In Dumont's work is a contrast between collective and individual civilisations where individual civilisations (the west) are 'modern'. He does, however, cite the example of the Hindu 'world renouncer' who exhibits characteristics of the western individual agent and as such is 'free' and 'equal' (1966: 274). Dumont's comparison culminates at this point because the 'world renouncer', by principle, cannot continue to live within the everyday society from which he came, whereas the western individual is at home within western society. Like Dumont, 'non-western', localised ethnographies failed to find the manifestation of individuality as understood from the western notion of individualism (see for example Read 1955).

As an alternative approach, a more universal view of individuality surfaced that denied an ontological category of society and instead focused on the individual agent (see for example Macfarlane 1978; Liendhart 1985; Burridge 1979). Despite attempting to release the individual from societal constraints of western thought, characteristics of the western individual continued to be employed in order to identify or limit one's personhood based on that individual's access to spheres of action within their society. An individual could be perceived to be less of a person based on their position within their social context, an assumption that that conceptualises identity through gender roles. This problem becomes increasingly evident and subsequently criticised with the rise of feminist and gender theory, particularly because women

have and in some ways continue to be viewed as members of 'muted groups' (Ardener 1989).

Rooted in the question of 'representativity' Henrietta Moore identifies a number of concerns accompanying cross-cultural assertions of gender which included the problem of the 'universal woman' such as the nature/culture paradigm introduced by Sherry Ortner (1974), as well as the assumption of the inferiority of women based on her reproductive and domestic roles in rigid contrast to presumed the 'public' sphere, one associated with men and wage labour (Moore 1994: 10). In addition to these problems, alternative concepts of the body further challenged notions of a unified category of women that were originally predicated upon a biologically common body (ibid. 11-14). Ortner's argument rests on universal categories of men and women that relate men to culture and women to nature (Ortner 1974). While she believed these correlations to be symbolically present across cultures, a large part of her argument drew from male versus female roles by ascribing 'private' and childbearing roles to women, while suggesting that males have a predisposition towards 'public' roles.

Within the Western elucidation of spatial separation, the private has been reduced to a domestic and also inferior position to the political, public sphere of activity, a hierarchy that has since been disavowed (Arendt 1958: 28). Ascribing status has been entangled with assumptions about gender and postulates ideas about rights and privileges where performances of work categorised as 'wage labour' are immediately linked to notions of personhood (see discussion in O'brien and Tiffany 1984: 7-9). Strathern critiques the idea that housebound women are somehow perceived as not 'fully persons', arguing that such representations are predicated upon models of 'extradomestic domains of power' and of the 'politicization of domesticity'

(Srathern 1984: 30). Likewise, Moore cautions against the popular framework of the household as a bounded and autonomous space, and advises the need to further investigate the influence and relation of external networks (Moore 1988: 59). She further emphasises the necessity for recognising difference within culture and not necessarily between cultures (Moore 1994: 10). Moore writes,

> [a]nthropologists are more aware than ever that it is impossible to speak of one particular culture as having one model of the person or one conception of the self. What seems evident is that although multiple discourses exist, some discourses are dominant over others and some are appropriate only to specific contexts. In the case of discourses on the person/self, what appear as dominant models may actually turn out to be relatively divorced from everyday life and experience. (Ibid. 34)

Within these feminist perspectives also come conceptions of human agency, which Mahmood contends are historically located in the political and moral autonomy of the subject (2005: 7). Emerging from the feminist idea that agency is subject-centred, Mahmood argues that agency is a 'product of the historically contingent discursive traditions in which individuals are located' (ibid. 32). Agency takes on multiple forms, not only as resistance (Abu Lughod 1986) but also as a process of subjectivation and discursive narrative (ibid. 154). However Mahmood's proposal, in part, embraces a Foucauldian model in which agency only exists as a product of subjectivation, indicating that individual humans do not inherently possess agency, an opposition against Descartes's 'I think therefore I am'.

Nigel Rapport repeatedly critiques what he believes to be an incorrect, but all too common error of confusing approaches to individuality with individualism, though admits the difficulty anthropologists have had in separating the two definitions and their implications. He explains that the dichotomy between the individual and structures is often viewed as a 'peculiarity of Western sociocultural milieux',

rendering it useless by many for its ethnocentric shortcomings (Amit and Rapport 2002: 135). The criticism against focusing on the individual is an insistence that this tension between collectivities and individual agency is a dichotomy exclusive to western thinking. However, this 'indefensible' mistake, as Rapport calls it, mistakenly conflates these two distinct approaches, despite the individual being significant for both approaches. Individualism is a specific historico-cultural idea of the person that includes 'notions of the ultimate value and dignity of the human individual', including ideas of moral autonomy and privacy rights (Rapport and Overing 2000: 178). In contrast, individuality is a universal fact where to become human is to be individual (ibid. 178, 192).

Taken as universal, individuality then also asks questions about its conditions. Rapport argues that is through individual consciousness and creative cognition that individuals interact with other individuals who then 'make and maintain communities' (Amit and Rapport 2002: 140). It could be argued that these individual conditions belong to the realm of cognitive sciences, whereby observing the individual has too many limitations within the methodologies of social anthropology. On the contrary, by using a phenomenological approach, Rapport brackets social structures to explore 'as if' (Rapport's phrase) from the point of view of the individual whereby the individual's life stories are reflectively enacted to create their own becoming. He writes that '[n]o process of socialization or enculturation overcomes the separateness of the individual body and brain, the phenomenology of the ideating, acting, breathing, eating, mating, dying, birthing subject. Individuals experience and interpret (and interpret themselves interpreting) and therefore they are' (2002: 136).

Rapport argues, however, that emphasis on the individual's life story and creativity does not somehow make social and cultural concepts bad, but rather it shifts the focus to the active force creating socio-cultural concepts because such concepts only exist within the minds and embodied habits of individuals (Rapport 2003: 59). It is individual humans who create societies, who create culture, who create relationships. Throughout his anthropological career, he develops his theories of individuality to move through an anthropology of power (*I am Dynamite* 2003) and anthropology of identity and collectivity (Amit and Rapport, *The Trouble with Community* 2002), towards a cosmopolitan anthropology (*Anyone* 2012), where he has persistently laboured to shift anthropological approaches away from those that tend to favour function, structure, and community, over and above the individuals that are the movers and makers of such objects of study. He in turn is making the individual agent the subject of inquiry.

Self and identity

Shifting towards intersecting terms includes how we decipher 'self' and 'identity' within this idea of individuality, especially when we find compounds of the words such as self-identity, individual-self, individual identity, oneself or any other number of such hybridity of words. As Martin Sökefeld has documented, concepts of 'self' and 'identity' in the social sciences have transmuted, accompanying other methodological changes of the past century (Sökefeld 1999: 417). In his discussion of the terms, he utilises ethnographic examples from his research in Northern Pakistan, and determines that the self is active, belonging to the individual, and it is the self that actively retains various identities of belonging across religion, ethnicity, and so on.

He uses the example of a man named Ali Hassan who has multiple identifiers across religion, sect, clan, and so on, yet Ali remains distinct in that his self and his self's multiple identifications are not shared by all others who might have overlapping identities. Just because the self retains an identity shared by others, does not necessitate that these others within that one identification share all other identities of the self. An individual experiences 'multiplicity of the self' in which they recurrently occupy more than one sense of identity at any given occasion (Kirtsoglou 2004: 26-32), sometimes as perpetual and contradictory subjectivities (Moore 1994: 55).

Likewise, in utilising the self as a descriptor of an individual human, Anthony Giddens explains that the self is active, but that it is shaped by, yet also shapes, social institutions. In contrast, identity 'presumes continuity across time and space' and self-identity is reflexively interpreted by the individual agent (Giddens 1991: 53). However self-identity is an existential question that, Giddens argues, creates 'robust' and 'fragile' feelings. He explains that a person's identity is found in the 'capacity to keep a particular narrative going' (ibid. 54). This particular narrative would be the individual's biography as reflexively understood. The 'fragility', or existential anxiety, of this continuous narrative exists because it has the potential for constant questioning in the face of contending narratives of the self, yet the robust feelings are the sense of ontological security in the face of tension and transition (ibid. 55).

Adhering to Giddens' existential questions in relation to the self and identity, I want to explore the self or the individual within the realm of existential anthropology. Michael Jackson proposes that the human self is a subject in relation with others, where reality is relational and cultural is the product of interaction (Jackson 2015: 235). This 'intersubjectivity' harkens to the work of Ricouer's collection, *Oneself as Another* (1992), with Jackson writing,

Solitude and sociality are not two horns of a dilemma, but two moments of one

phenomenon in which self and other are always co-present, even though the

other is reduced to an object, or momentarily disappears from sight and mind.

(Jackson 2012: 122)

The idea of the self presupposes an 'other' whereby the two are bound within the

same thought of what it means to exist. Ricoeur contends that capacity for agency is

not merely a noetic representation, but is the ability to enact, of 'being-able-to-do-so',

whereby an individual increases their subjectivities by interacting with the world

(Ricoeur 1992: 181). On the contrary, within this same field of existential

anthropology, Albert Piette places emphasis on human singularity in which

phenomenology reveals how humans can both engage and disengage from relations

(Jackson and Piette 2015). Using religious experience as the subject of inquiry, he

argues for the use of the 'minor mode' as opposed to an 'institutional mode' where

religious experience (or any human experience) utilises an 'ascriptive' approach

rather than one that is sui generis[2]. This ascriptive approach of minor modes of human

experience primarily brackets conventional monothetic classifications of institutions

to instead 'explore the experiences that become cognitively certified, colonized, or

collectivized' into the institutional models we create (ibid. 13). For example, with a

monothetic approach to Islam, one would observe what is conventionally thought of

to be the characteristics held by all members of the religion. By using the minor mode

approach, these categories are temporarily set aside to instead discover the individual

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[2] The ascriptive versus sui generis approach within the study of religion has been thoroughly studied by Anne Taves' work on the 'building block approach to the study of religion' where religious experience is studied outside of specific models of religion and instead links psychological and neuroscientific research with 'religious' experiences to clarify the role of conscious and non-conscious experiences in what is considered to be 'religious'. See Taves 2009 and 2011.

human experiences that might give credence to or contradict such institutional categories, thus unveiling the individual agent behind such categories.

Reintroducing Rapport's work on individuality raises some similarities between the existential work on the self and self-identity as previously mentioned. Rapport would place far more emphasis on the individual life stories rather than exploring the intersubjectivity of the individual like Jackson. Yet, one thing connects the work of those just discussed, and that is the agency and action of the individual in shaping the self, regardless of whether one focuses on the structuration or the individual life story of the individual, though these approaches become significant in the holistic studies in anthropology.

Agency

Taking the general consensus from these theorists of the necessity of approaching anthropological questions through an emphasis on the individual self of human experience, we must also address the expanses and limitations of what is meant by agency, a word that each of these theorists have attributed as meaningful to each human individual. When returning to the spectrum of free will and determinism, how far along the scale does agency slide? In all of the above theoretical discussions of the individual, agency involves a practice of self-reflexivity. In introducing agency, Rapport and Overing explain that the crux of agency is action and the capability to be 'the originator of acts' (2000: 1). They explain that it is creativity and imagination that contributes to individual agents to create and recreate their selves (ibid. 2).

Sökefeld would agree with this assessment, but suggests that there are limitations to the degree of agency. In line with Jackson's intersubjective approach,

Sökefeld argues that while agency is integral to human beings, it has constraints in that it is not 'without regard for others' nor that it 'always leads to its intended outcomes' (Sökefeld 1999: 424). Through self-reflexivity, the agent monitors the surroundings and potential outcomes of action. Through this monitoring, one can recognise the constraints of their action, which is a sort of limitation of one's ability to act (ibid. 430). However, even with the limitations of agency through self-reflexivity, the fact that the limits of agency are not clearly demarcated means that the process of monitoring and action by the individual 'continually threatens the culturally established norms' (ibid. 424).

Giddens introduced the 'theory of structuration' that explores the process of agency, reflexivity, and the constitution of social structures (1984). In his theory, he carefully demonstrates by way of multiple diagrams that reveal cyclical processes, where the motives of agents reflexively interact with other individuals and with the structuring of society. The cyclical nature poses a reciprocal relation where the very structures that agents create are reproduced through a monitoring of the structure and reorienting oneself within the structures. He calls this 'the duality of structure' where structures constitute rules and resources that are organised into social systems, and systems are reproductions of relations between agents and organised collectivities (Giddens 1984: 26). Structuration then is the process and conditions of the metamorphosis and reproduction of social systems. Agents are the key to this transmission, though Giddens establishes that the process includes unintended consequences of the agent, as well as unacknowledged conditions of action (ibid. 6).

In the theory of structuration, Giddens uses a 'stratified model' where, like Sökefeld's approach, actors are monitoring both themselves and others. This monitoring, though, involves what Giddens calls a 'discursive and practical

consciousness' (Giddens 1984: 42). A discursive consciousness is the way in which agents offer reasoning for their actions. Practical consciousness entails the motive behind the action, which relates to ontological security. Revisiting this from earlier, ontological security answers 'fundamental existential questions' (Giddens 1991: 37). These existential questions include the very nature of existence, the contradictions between humans and nature, the interpretation of other individual human experiences, and as mentioned earlier, the continuity of self-identity (ibid. 55). Each of these are balanced between an ontological security and insecurity or rather anxiety around these existential questions. However, ontological security does not mean one adheres to habit blindly.

As an anthropological comparison, Giddens theory can seem similar in many ways to Bourdieu's theories of habitus, field, and doxa. Doxa are 'self-evident universals' that inform an agent's actions within the field (Giddens 1977: 164). These actions are developed through one's field and are solidified through the habitus. In short, doxa informs habitus, habitus regulates and generates the practices of social life that constitute the status quo of the field of social positions and power relations. Doxa in turn favours the status quo of the field. This process of action and power is continually reproduced, and has also been picked up by Catherine Bell in her work on ritual when she discusses 'redemptive hegemony', where human actions reproduce shared senses of reality that continue to 'empower them to act' (Bell 1992: 85).

Rapport shifts away from these paradigms of reproduction of social systems in favour of concentrating more on the life stories of individuals, their reflexivity and the contribution of narrative to self-identity. Rapport and Overing state that both Giddens and Bourdieu, while attempting to introduce agency into their theories, have ended up privileging the more 'communitarian' view whereby individual actions are reduced to

'institutional reality' within a structural framework (Rapport and Overing 2000: 2). Bourdieu's model implies a passive form of agency, in favour of collective wholes and reproduced behaviours. Rapport instead proposes a cosmopolitan anthropology that seeks to understand the human individual, not the collective.

In his book *Anyone* (2012) Rapport explains that the project of a cosmopolitan anthropology is '[e]mancipating the individual and the human from symbols and structures that collectivize, homogenize and totalize' (ibid. 14). Rapport admits that the concept of cosmopolitanism often conflates or confuses it with ideas of multiculturalism, pluralism, hybridity, globalization and so forth, and as such, he traces its meaning from the stoics through to Immanuel Kant's idealism into its contemporary usage, such as in Seyla Benhabib's work, and towards its critiques (ibid. 35). Kant's categorical imperative draws upon a metaphysical morality of the Golden Rule, or the virtue of duty to others (Kant 1785). Those like Benhabib and Rapport, while giving nod to the Enlightenment and Kant's cosmopolitan ethics, move away from this metaphysical morality and towards what they consider a universal and political program. Benhabib, for example argues for transnational legal cosmopolitanism that grants rights equally to individuals, not to polities; where individuals are 'moral agents to each other' (Benhabib 2006). Rapport's political cosmopolitanism would agree with Benhabib in this sense.

Even with its historical origins with a Eurocentric and Enlightenment project, Rapport endeavours to understand the extents of the human capacity, consciousness, and creativity, which underlie his cosmopolitan anthropology. In this manner, it is somewhat different from his political program of cosmopolitanism and seeks also a methodological and theoretical cosmopolitanism that understand the human condition. While nodding towards Kant's cosmopolitanism, he suggests that his approach is still

morally aware so as to 'clarify the conditions whereby individuals may live out their potential for experience and expression to the fullest' (Rapport 2012: 41). Part of his anthropological quest for individual consciousness and life-projects is self-reflexive narrative, as many of the other theorists have mentioned. For Rapport, narrative is 'the form of our everyday consciousness' (Rapport 2003: 29). What he means is that through narration, an individual becomes conscious of and enacts their reality. The individual is in control of their reality, whereby consciousness 'creates meaning of the world and its objects' (ibid. 53).

The criticism that prior and current models of individual agents are overshadowed by social structures, habitus, and hegemonic systems has led Rapport to locate the motives of the agent. He detects two types of motives, yet believes that one is a false set-up. 'In order to' motives are the only which exist for Rapport while 'because' motives place responsibility of action on something or someone else (Rapport 2003: 52-55). 'In order to' motives imply the self-determination of individual action. However, humans often use 'because' motives to explain their actions (or inaction), which Rapport believes incorrectly and oppressively shifts responsibility away from the self and towards something seemingly stronger and wiser (ibid. 53). It undermines individual agency in favour of hegemonic and habitus models.

Yet this does not preclude our experience with others. Humans indeed use cultural symbols, language, and metaphors shared with others collectively to make sense of their individual selves. Humans are not isolated and closed off from others. Rapport, though believes that humans overemphasise these symbols as being meaningful in and of themselves, so he seeks to remind that it is individuals who give meaning to such symbols. When individuals stop giving meaning to a symbol, the

symbol does not exist. The 'socio-cultural is not a thing' Rapport states, but is a 'concept, existing nowhere but in the minds (the habits and body) of individuals' (Rapport 2003: 59). To provide a sort of relativity of these thinkers on the determinism-freewill scale, Rapport's model would linger around the freewill side of the spectrum, while Giddens would be much more compatibilist with his theory of structuration. However, this is not to say the Rapport does not permit the influence of others in the individual self-project. On the contrary, he does admit the influence of others (Rapport 2003:89), but seeks a cosmopolitan framework to prevent the frequent slippage that overvalues social symbols as meaningful.

Community

On the other hand of the discussion is the ambiguous, but commonly used idea of 'community', which implies commonalities that could include certain sets of shared cultural symbols and interests, social structures and institutions, locality, and other forms of commonality. Throughout anthropology, but particularly in its earlier approaches, community indicated a type of locality or territory with certain levels of homogeneity amongst members of said community. This is the type of community that Rapport and Overing refer to as belonging to the 'traditional approach' of anthropology where ethnographers would study the structural units of villages and tribes on a small scale (2000: 61).

Moving away from this geographically fixed approach, other frameworks of community have acknowledged the idea of symbolic significance where shared meaning and belonging is held in the minds of the members. This can be interpreted in both nationalistic senses and in cosmopolitan approaches to individuals. Benedict

Anderson's work on 'imagined communities' views the nation state and the project of nationalist ideology as a part of this 'imagined communities' framework (Anderson 1991). 'Imagined' indicates how such nationalist ideology has been arranged into existence through the institutions that give it weight. Religion, and particularly the concept of the ummah has been widely compared to and included within both nationalistic and imagined senses of belonging (Brubaker 2012; Fox 2001; Saunders 2008; Roy 2002). This does not mean that these symbolically shared thoughts and senses are something to be taken lightly as the allure of such commonality provides profound senses of belonging for its members, which at times turns into individual and collective action based on such shared sentiments.

The hazard of fixating on this vague and yet widely used sense of community is in attributing meaning to the community itself, that is, in making community to be something *sui generis*. In *The Trouble with Community*, Vered Amit challenges approaches to community that continue to create bounded fields of interaction that involve membership criteria, institutional organisation, and collective predictability (Amit and Rapport 2002). Even within mobility and transnational frameworks, bounded patterns continue to exist whereby individuals who are viewed as part of these movements are assumed to think and behave like the collective whole. Community becomes an ontological category for identity, while Amit claims that it is much more in flux than how anthropologists are currently framing it. Social context is paramount to Amit where individuals are in constant negotiation, interpretation, and reaction that are socially oriented (ibid. 170).

Rapport agrees to a degree with Amit's approach. He critiques former and current models of community, such as Anderson's 'imagined communities' as being somewhat of a contradiction since imagination implies an inherent lack of

collectivity, and Appadurai's 'community of sentiments' (1996) as misrepresenting the 'nature of connection between people' (2002:169). While Amit endeavours to continue to work within a socially oriented context while challenging the existing categories of community and sociality, Rapport's response is to question whether 'individual sense-making' should be essentially social and reactive. Instead, he proposes that individuals are not always in a state of reacting, reinterpreting, and continuing to replicate current systems, but rather that it is the individuals who have the capacity to act and interpret, sans the 're' (ibid. 171). He cautions against an anarchic view of this approach, however, and admits the 'dialectic between individual and environment', but that individuals engage on their own terms (ibid.). Context and shared meaning, then are not irrelevant, but both contextualisation and sharing originate from individual processes of interpretation that in turn create the capacity to negotiate, empathise, and relate. For Rapport, imagination does not belong to a collective, but rather originates from individual consciousness that gives meaning to cultural symbols and to social structures.

Rapport would still use community as something symbolic, but that such symbols are empty when not 'filled with individual meanings' that are then 'synthesized into a process by which individuals can come together and live together' (2003: 59). Using the ummah as an example, Rapport explains how cosmopolitanism can manifest in a variety of ways as cosmopolites (2012: 39). Referring to Pnina Werbner's use of cosmopolitanism as both a sense of rootedness and also openness to difference, Rapport briefly illustrates the ummah as being 'Islamist cosmopolites'[3] whereby the concept of the ummah is globally disseminated (ibid. 39). Far from being a multiculturalism message, the concept of the individual within 'community' is still

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[3] However I want to note my disagreement with his terminology in calling it 'Islamist' cosmopolites rather than calling it 'Islamic' or 'Muslim' cosmopolites. This is due to the loaded concept of the word 'Islamist' and its usage as being hinged to more conservative ideologies within Islam.

rife with inflexible ideas about how all individuals who identify with a community are expected to think or act. Both Rapport and Amit are challenging anthropological approaches to observe the individuality of each 'member' and free the individual from the pigeonholes we place them in. Just because two individuals appear to be doing the same thing, does not equate their actions with actually being the same thing; that is, individuals in interaction to not require, and likely do not maintain, a singularity of interpretation.

PART TWO: Theoretical application

Monitoring social risk

The varieties of individual interpretation of community belonging are paramount to understanding the process of negotiating impending social risk embedded in intermarriage. Each relationship reveals itself to be a product of merging life stories and negotiations, while through narrative, concurrently engaging and paving new narratives to be interpreted and prefigured within the imaginings of other individuals. British Pakistani Muslims are often interconnected through their local and transnational kinship networks, namely the biradari. The successful maintenance of biradari networks relies upon the proliferation of arranged marriages within kinship circles. In order to protect outside risks from disrupting the economic benefits of the biradari, thorough strictures around partner selection are upheld. As is seen throughout the next chapters, Zaid frequently signifies the plausibility of 'being abandoned' or of his own family being ostracised by others because of the fact that he is gay and has a gay partner, something he keeps intentionally hidden from his family

and other Pakistani Muslims. Or for Yasir who is currently concealing his newfound atheist identity for fear of losing access to his wife, children, and friends. The question remains why those like Zaid or Yasir may risk the security and even happiness they feel within the community of being 'British Pakistani Muslim'. The motive rests with the individual, though the decision to keep something hidden is a part of a reflexive monitoring of the individual's environment.

While some anthropologists have placed the idea of risk into concepts of biological and physical risk (Caplan 1998; Douglas 1982), I want to reorient the idea of risk towards an economic discussion. Through his writings on political economy, John Stuart Mill has been attributed with the idea of 'homo-economicus'. Primarily concerned with accumulating wealth, homo-economicus attempts to obtain more financial prosperity by expending as little energy as he can (Mill 1836). This concept has been criticised not only for its characterisation of man as innately greedy (Persky 1995), but moreover for its sweeping ethnocentric generalisations that exclude gift and kin-based economies in favour of a market-based standard (Mauss 1925; Polyani 1944). Critiquing the 'economic man' as a 'bourgeois construction', Marshall Sahlins turns the concept of affluence on its head by describing hunter-gathers as 'the original affluent society' (1972). In his argument, hunter-gatherers follow the 'Zen path to affluence' whereby material impulses are not desired because they were never made to be institutions in the first place (ibid. 13). The subsistence strategy of hunter-gathers allows them to accumulate their needs for survival on relatively minimal energy expenditure in comparison with other economic models across the globe (ibid. 15).

When expanding the definition of economy to a broader framework that includes kinship relations as opposed to the market/gift economy divide, humans can

be perceived as continuously weighing social risks, with the intention towards the path of least resistance. However, as many individuals in this study reveal, many life choices defy the model of socio-economic rationality. The biradari demands social and financial economic obligation to kin in order to preserve family assets and prevent fragmentation of resources (Charsley 2013: 92). In addition, this obligation is reciprocal in that kin-based marriage allows and expects partners to correspondingly access communal benefits of the society (ibid.). As Charsley further notes, the economic structure of the biradari system entails a level of emotional risk, often mitigated through strategic marital arrangements (ibid. 98). Marital selection features both high and low risk choices, including intra-ethnic marriages. Marriage partners outside of the norms of the biradari are considered to be high risk, both economically and psychologically and can be viewed as threats to the economic system of the biradari. Taking Sahlins model of economic thermodynamics and applying it to the prevalent marital strategies of the biradari, it can be deduced that social risk is retained to a minimum by creating systems around obligation and reciprocity with regard to marriage and kinship amongst British Pakistani Muslims. These expectations of obligation are not only about mutually giving and receiving financial and emotional support, but also about protecting the system from others who have the potential to disrupt their economic arrangement. As with other systems of obligation, there are established procedures of reprisal for failing to reciprocate. For the Maori, this retribution specifically manifests through witchcraft (Sahlins 1972: 154; Godelier 1999). I will soon argue that in addition to the economic fallout of exogamous marriages, there remains, perhaps more strongly, the emotional labour involved with high-risk partner selection. Yet through my ethnographic representations, I will also

demonstrate how schemes of reciprocity, as presented amongst British Pakistani Muslims, are not as straightforward as they may appear.

An alternative model of risk proposed by Giddens suggests that modern societies engage in continuous level of risk assessment by hypothesising and preventing the negative consequences associated with risk taking (Giddens 1991: 109). Monitoring and regulating risk is seemingly 'modern' because of its systematisation in modern societies including perpetual policy development such as health and sanitation, workplace risks, and technological risks. Yet risk assessment exists outside of these contexts, and I argue, becomes evident within mundane human life choices as a part of a self-reflexive process of identity making. As demonstrated through the historically discursive practices of marriage among Pakistanis, marital arrangement has been a pervasive method of risk assessment. The parameters of risk assessment are determined through a reflexive monitoring (ibid. 114), through narrative mimesis, and through the individual's capacity to imagine 'what if', as in 'what happens if I choose one partner over another?' Contrary to homo-economicus, social risk assessment is not entirely concerned with the individual's desire to find the path of least resistance, but is a more nuanced reflexivity in which an individual concurrently weighs the risks for themselves and correspondingly for their social circles. Jackson explains,

> We endure because there is always more than our individual survival that is at stake. Should this cease to be the case, and we have only ourselves to care about, then existence may indeed become absurd… For better or for worse, however, our lives are interwoven with the lives of significant others, so that the struggle for being is never simply a struggle to be ourselves, but to be with others, to be there for them, to find ourselves through them. (Jackson and Piette 2015: 156)

As will be evident with Dr. Islam and with Zaid among others, most of their decisions are weighed with their families in mind, not in exchange for the benefit of their own

life stories, but as a significant and fundamental part of their life stories. Dr. Islam considers both his own reputation and that of his family when he agrees to marry couples that other imams would otherwise refuse to entertain. Zaid keeps his relationship hidden, not only because he is afraid of the consequences he may face, but also because he desires to protect his family (who are essential to his own sense of identity as he is to theirs) from potential recoil.

While both Dr. Islam and Zaid assess the risks associated with their decisions and opinions of marriage, they are not necessarily discussing material repercussions. Zaid sensitively notes that his father could hypothetically continue to visit him and send him money and other resources out of obligation from son to father regardless of his sexuality. However, the risk he is more concerned with is the social risk and the emotional risk of, as he says, 'unnecessarily disrupting' the 'peace and happiness' his family currently experience and imagine for their futures. Rather than avoiding labour intensive work, as the economic man strives to do, the individual who weighs social risk is monitoring the levels of psychological labour they and others may endure as a part of a reflexive interaction. Along the lines of emotional and psychological labour, Giddens explains:

> In the reflexive project of the self, the narrative of self-identity is inherently fragile. The task of forging a distinct identity may be able to deliver distinct psychological gains, but it is clearly also a burden. A self-identity has to be created and more or less continually reordered against the backdrop of shifting experiences of day-to-day life and the fragmenting tendencies of modern institutions. (Giddens 1991: 186)

Anxieties around risk taking can be alleviated by 'taking refuge in a traditional or pre-established style of life' (ibid. 182); that is, the emotional toll of pondering and engaging in varying levels of risk are mitigated by avoiding the risky behaviour and returning to presumably more comfortable environment.

For Zaid, the choice exists to 'come out', as he says, to his family, yet as a reflexive individual weighing risks, he considers the consequences and potential interactions that could take place when openly exerting such choice. Do self-reflexive deterrents then mean that agency is limited? These deterrents continue to produce or reproduce, as some theorists may argue, the status quo, or doxa (Bourdieu 1977), or structures (Giddens 1984). However within each of these models, the individual's agency eventually takes the back seat to an overriding power of a collective influence. While I would agree that collective influence is ubiquitous, I would argue against any insinuations that diminish an individual's agency through this process. Rather, it is by an individual's agency to create these collectivities, to interact with others in order to give them shape through meaning and interpretation, and to also abandon them. Continuing to uphold a community is as much of an individual action as it is to abandon a community. As Rapport would argue, the symbols that may amount to being social or cultural are shells that are filled with meaning by the individuals that make them; culture and communities have no agency and as such have no innate impetus, rather it is individuals in action who create meaning (Rapport 2003). As such, Zaid is not a marionette of his community, rather he is actively contributing to its meaning, both in sharing his experiences with others, and also in his own mind. Potential consequences do not prevent agency from occurring. Agency is always occurring, whether consciously or not.

The consciousness of an individual is important to how individuals exercise their agency because it directly relates to the ability of an individual to reflexively monitor and interpret their interactions. Giddens argues that both conscious monitoring and non-conscious motives are a part of agency. Consciousness includes the process whereby individuals are able to rationalise and contextualise their

decisions. The non-conscious dimension, however, is linked to underlying motives (Giddens 1984: 41). Motives are not reasons, nor are they needs, rather they are a 'feeling state' related to ontological security and can manifest through such a feeling of guilt, and eventually through conscious narrative manifesting as shame (Giddens 1991: 64-5). However, Giddens venture into the psychological underpinnings of consciousness and unconsciousness can at times be difficult to reproduce within the methodologies of social anthropology, belonging more to a psychological approach. Rapport, on the other hand, moves into the ethnographically observable position of the conscious realm of individual agency through narrative. While consciousness is still an area of cognitive and neuroscientific study, it is through narrative both as the account and experience of consciousness, through which individuals create, navigate, and maintain their self.

Negotiation as *politesse* and narrative configuration

Despite individual agency and interpretation, neither of these two abilities means total control over outcomes or over how other individuals choose to reciprocate interaction. Individuals experiencing multiple, but conflicting identifications (Moore 1994; Kirtsoglou 2004) suggests a more nuanced approach to identity making that continues to entail a narrative process of identity, and as a part of this process necessitates postcolonial prefigurations of hybridity (Bhabha 1994). Each individual partner in a marriage must reflect on their own sense of identity and their partner's when faced with the everyday negotiations of sharing one's space, finances, and everyday decision-making. This is not unique to intermarriage, but rather to any marriage. Intermarriage becomes more complicated, though, because it entails the potential of

more contrasting differences between people. These differences are usually framed as opposing religious communities, different cultural backgrounds, and even different economic backgrounds, all which rest on the idea that there are demarcated communities of belonging, and that by virtue of being a member of a community, anyone outside of said community is 'other'.

In this current work, the context of opposition is those 'within' the British Pakistani Muslim category and then all those outside of it. This dichotomy is an illusion. The range of interpretations as to what it means to be British Pakistani Muslim is defined not by a group and not by one individual representing their group, but by each individual who makes claim to this identification. Collective senses of identification do not equate to sameness in motivation by each individual within the collective. Building upon Devereux, Rapport uses his maxim of '*si bis faciunt idem, non est idem*' that is 'if two people do the same thing, it is not the same thing' (Rapport 2012: 179; Devereux 1978: 125). Maintaining a community is not predicated upon a singularity of interpretation of all members, nor does it require each 'member' to think and act correspondingly as every single other member. While many members of the community may strive to do these things by creating an illusion as though the community demands such uniformity, it is a futile endeavour because an individual's mind is neither subject to another individual nor to an envisaged community. The marriage of a British Pakistani Sunni man and a British Anglican woman does not reduce their relationship to the othering and opposition that either category of belonging might entail on a surface level. Yet, their individual interpretations of these identities do feature in the marriage. British and South Asian identifications have been posed within narratives of hybridity and the colonial mimicry, in which a 'partial presence' is experienced for those who have been

colonised (Bhabha 1994). While a British Pakistani individual may seek to separate themselves from their biradari and from a sense of being 'Pakistani', their hybridity risks the possibility of never being accepted as 'fully British' due to the colonial method of instigating a mimicry that places the colonised persons into a state of cultural limbo. They may adopt and replicate the cultural attributes of the British, but they are intentionally 'Angliciced', not 'English' (ibid. 1994: 90). Inversely, Charsley re-phrases the colonial mimicry from a Pakistani perspective whereby refusing to reciprocate obligation to kin, British Pakistanis risk the accusation of becoming 'too Anglicised' and of forgetting their Pakistani culture and kinship allegiances (Charsley 2013: 92). However, as many couples attest, their intermarriages are examples of defiance, of risk-taking, and of reconfiguring the narrative. While still recalling the past, they choose to re-write their futures.

If an individual's mind is ultimately interpreted through their reflexive monitoring, the question remains as to the limits and expanses of interaction. For Jackson, the experience of the self, even if projected as singular, is always one that is in relation to other subjects. It is this intersubjectivity that creates culture and community. Giddens proposes the distinction between an individual's self-identity as opposed to the 'performances' they enact in their social contexts. Though not mutually exclusive from each other, self-identity and performance can at times become distinct in that performance may not always align with the individual's self-identity, whereby the 'practical consciousness', that is the motives, of performance can become routine, contrived, or even false personas that can at times compromise an individual's sense of self (Giddens 1991: 58).

This compromise between an individual's sense of self and how they behave is quite notable in marriage. Alice, for example, maintains her Anglican identity while

married to her non-sectarian Muslim husband, while she does not 'believe' in anything she considers to be 'Islamic', she reverses such attitudes by selecting times when she outwardly appears to be involved with Islamic practices, mostly in front of people with whom she considers important to her children, such as their Muslim grandparents and other community members. While she intentionally does not breach a line of pretending to be Muslim, there are times when she chooses to adhere to certain practices depending on the company she is with, despite not agreeing with such practices herself, which includes dietary restrictions as an example. As more is revealed in Alice's life throughout the next few chapters, she reveals how she negotiates her self-identity with her performance, though not always easy.

While the occasional paradoxes between Alice's thoughts and actions may agree with some of what Giddens proposes, what is actually occurring may more closely align with what Rapport calls the virtue of 'politesse' (Rapport 2012: 174), and as such, may not be as much of an ontological compromise as Giddens may suggest in this circumstance. The key to interaction with difference, or with anyone for that matter is through a kind of 'superficial polite engagement' (ibid. 174). Rapport argues that politesse is not only practical, but is a moral imperative that serves as a medium not only for individual-to-individual interactional success, but also as an ethic that secures the independence of the individual's life project in a diverse and global society. However, politesse is not a meaningless gesture because it is intentional in order to initiate or preserve relationships that serve individual and collective interests. For Alice, preparing a halal meal for her in-laws and taking her children to Qur'an lessons does not pose a threat to her self-narrative, rather they serve to create a loving and knowledgeable environment between family members. She has acknowledged that these things are not required of her, but that she actively

chooses to do these things because they align with values she already holds such as caring for family. To make a fuss over the legitimacy of food preparation, taking children to Qur'an lessons, or any other matter of difference in her marriage amounts to 'pettiness' that contradict her own sense of self more so than participating in the actions themselves. She engages voluntarily, and also disengages with other acts voluntarily. Voluntarism and free movement of an individual's mind and of their participation with others are paramount to the cosmopolitan understanding of identity and community (ibid. 55).

Within politesse, and also considering Giddens' distinction between performance and self-identity, continues the existence of narrative. Narrative is the form that consciousness takes (Rapport 2003: 29; Gallagher 2014). Self-narrative can manifest through biographical stories that are constantly re-worked and developed, but narrative is also lived and experienced, which Gallagher calls a 'minimal narrative'. Minimal narrative is the synchronic, most present experience or embodiment of narrative, whereas narrative self is diachronic, spanning time where individuals are interpreting and accounting for their changing self-narrative (Gallagher 2014: 406). Both forms of narrative are important for understanding how individuals negotiate their own senses of self when faced with diversity, both with their partners and with their immediate interactional surroundings such as family members and close friends. While these individuals may utilise the medium of politesse, this does not mean that these types of interactions are excluded from their self-narrative.

Narrative is a form of consciousness that necessitates reflexivity of the individual who makes and interprets their own worldviews, not as a perfect narrative, but more often than not as a process full of contradictions and loose ends. Narrative is

constantly being shaped and experienced. The point of reflexivity though, is not created out of a vacuum; it does not stem from nothingness into something by virtue of an individual's consciousness. Rather the first-person narration is actually what Rapport and Overing call a 'second-order stories', which are 'segments of other stories: parents', kinsfolk's, enemies', strangers'. (Rapport and Overing 2000: 287). However the language in which their preceding narratives are told tend to be 'overdeterministic' in language (ibid. 289). This is where the process of self-narration and the experiences of minimal narrative are important, because it is through the individual's experiencing and interpreting that individual's write and live out their story. Intermarriage does not pose an immediate threat to an individual's sense of identity because the relationship acts as a point of reflection, interaction, and experience through which an individual creates their narrative. While some argue that narrative is a collaborative tool that is shaped and reshaped through conversation (Ochs and Capps 2001), I contend that it is not always so much a deliberate collaboration, but rather a necessary and inherent process of individual consciousness that engages in a spiral of narrative configurations. I say spiral and not cycle because human experiences of narrative are not duplicates of each other. It is not because the stories are not alike, rather retellings of stories often are, but because the individual experience of the details and moments of narrative are subjective.

Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative* serves as a useful model for narrative, which can be used as both a model for individual identity building, but also as a model for wider phenomena that are 'structuralist' in nature, as I will explore in the next section. He explores the idea of human time that is experienced both linearly and phenomenologically (i.e. our experience of past, present, and future) within a three-part cyclical process of narrative configuration that he calls 'mimesis'. Despite the

process being named 'mimesis', the model is not hegemonic in nature in that it is not about narratives simply replicating each other like DNA, but rather is about the mimetic process by which individuals come by and utilise narratives, eventually configuring new narrative that in turn serves as points of reflection for parallel and future narratives. Borrowing from Aristotle's notion of mimesis where '[m]an differs from other animals in that he is the one most given to mimicry and learns his first lessons through mimesis' (quoted in Bourdieu 1977: 96), Ricoeur details mimesis as a three-phase process. Mimesis1, mimesis2, and mimesis3 can correspondingly be referred to as prefiguration, configuration, and refiguration. Prefiguration (mimesis1) acts as the acknowledgement of the existence of human action, configuration (mimesis2) acts as the emplotment of narrative, and refiguration (mimesis3) acts as narrative in lived experience. The process of the three, he states, is found in both historical and fictional narrative (Ricoeur 1990b).

Mimesis2 cannot exist without mimesis1 because mimesis2 requires a mediated imitation of action, which indicates that a pre-understanding of human action must exist. These basic prefigurations can be viewed as the logical or structural actions that are articulated through symbols, and with a competency of within-time-ness, or the understanding of the field of temporality of past, present, and future (Ricoeur 1990a: 54-64). In short, mimesis1 is the understanding that emplotment cannot exist within a vacuum; it relies upon an existing understanding of basic human actions.

Configuration, or mimesis2, is the emplotment or as Ricoeur calls it, 'the kingdom of *as if*' (Ricoeur 1990a: 64). During this process, plot is mediated by 'grasping together' of the story's temporal whole (ibid. 66). It configures agents, interactions, and goals, and brings together individual events with the entirety of the

story (ibid. 64-65). Mimesis2 pulls from the prefiguration of mimesis1 to create the narrative. As the pivotal connector between mimesis1 and mimesis3, one can begin to see where the cycle, or 'spiral' of narrative leads. By mimicking the logics of human action and placing these actions within human time, that is the coexistence of linear time and the temporality of past, present, and future, a narrative becomes applicable, or otherwise worthy of being repeated and used as a model for self-identity.

In mimesis3, the spiral of the mimesis process reveals itself. Mimesis3, or refiguration, brings the process of configuration into lived experience. Ricoeur suggests that this occurrence is through the act of reading and the act of reception. The reader, he explains, almost 'carries the burden of emplotment' (ibid. 77). It is at this stage that Rapport's work on individual narrative is crucial. It is through emplotment and experience that individuals are constantly interpreting themselves and their worldviews. As will be seen in the chapter on digital media, many intermarried individuals use both fictive stories and frequent interactions online as tools and forms of narrative to navigate and create their own narratives in the context of their intermarriages.

In this sense, intermarriage acts as another context that provides a point of reflection and interaction by which an individual lives and shapes their sense of self. As will be uncovered throughout the participants of this work, there fails to be a neat predictability of narrative, as they are constantly being shaped and understood by the individuals who live them. It is through the third and fourth questions of this research that the securities and anxieties around identity building come to light because the third and fourth questions enter the realm of the preservation of communities and collective identity.

Threatening the maintenance of existing communities

What happens to the respective religious and cultural communities when more people intermarry? In part the question is becomes meaningless in so far as communities themselves are meaningless without actors filling them with value. Yet, there remains something significant about religious and cultural traditions to the individuals that lay claim to them. An anxiety with how children are raised is of great concern for many family members of intermarried couples, but it was also of concern for intermarried parents, though the details of concern differed. Despite a belief by many participants that 'everyone is born a Muslim', some admitted the paradox that socialisation of Islam was still necessary. As arises in the proceeding chapters, intermarriage purportedly threatens to separate the Pakistani Muslim partner from their current communities by introducing them to new worldviews and traditions. Not only is the non-Pakistani Muslim spouse a potential risk, but so is raising children. Will the children be socialised into Islam? Will they speak Urdu, Punjabi, or read Arabic? Will they understand the value of their kin and the sharing of resources, or will they become 'self-seeking' and 'independent', as some family members speculated? Will children be 'confused' by the cultural contradictions of their upbringing and will such confusion cause them to become non-religious and uninterested in their cultural heritage? The diverse individuals in this study, including grown children of intermarriages, discussed each of these concerns to varying degrees.

What happens when more people intermarry is complicated because there are a variety of outcomes due to the fact that each individual experience produces different actions. Some individuals religiously convert and endeavour to fully

socialise into their spouse's worldview, but even on this level, their experience of this socialisation is not necessarily the same as that of their spouse or of anyone else in the religious community. Nevertheless, conversion is a popular response to the potential conflict that religious difference could create. However, in the cosmopolitan framework, an action such as conversion to a different religion should always be of one's own volition (Rapport 2003). While none of the participants in this study converted by coercion, some participants felt initial pressure to do so before getting married. Alice is one such example, and while she remains Anglican, through acts of politesse, she keeps her in-laws' concerns about her 'otherness' temporarily at bay.

The general reaction to the threat of agency is that individuals possess the potential to threaten current communities in favour of something else. Inversely, they are also the ones to uphold the status quo. If starting from the premise that it is only individuals who create and maintain communities, then it is also individuals who re-shape or abandon them. In fact, both questions are false formulations because they begin with the proposition that a community is something static. The status quo, however, understands that their communities have potential to change, and as such adopt and at times even coerce certain behaviours of members as a means to preserve the community. Such actions include membership criteria and subsequent punishment or deterrents against breaking any of the criteria. In Islam for example, the discursive tradition is built around an acceptance of the Qur'an and of the Sunnah. Beyond these two texts there are countless interpretations and experiences by those who call themselves Muslim. Different interpretations then lead to different sects, diverse legal systems, and so on. Even a marriage between two Muslims from opposing sects can be viewed as highly problematic. As discussed earlier, Islam has changed and continues to change over time and space; and individuals interpret and experience it

differently based on not only their localities, but also their individualities as conscious, reflexive humans. These variations of interpretation and experience are not unique to Islam, or to religion in general. One only needs to look through history to see how societies continually transform. The communitarian position would owe these changes to larger political forces, whereby things like nations can effect change in and of themselves. Yet at closer look, these contexts of change reveal that the drivers behind cultural and social constructs such as 'community', 'nation', or 'empire' are individuals in interaction who animate such organisations.

As a response, while individuals threaten to change community through their interpretations and actions, they can also choose to maintain them. Rapport is useful for understanding the agency behind change due to the focus on individuality, but in divergence from Rapport, it is models from those like Giddens and Bourdieu that help to highlight the continuation of community organisations. While accused of being excessively in favour of a 'communitarian worldview' (Rapport and Overing 2000), neither of the two models dismiss the subtleties of changes that occur by virtue of an individual's agency, rather they focus on how such communities are created and upheld. One single agent in a community comprised of two undoubtedly has the ability to collapse such 'community', but a single agent in a community comprised of millions is another scenario that necessitates multiple discursive narratives that create change. This is not to say that a single agent suddenly loses power. On the contrary, it says something about the collective power that is generated by each agent in general agreement; it says something about the status quo and about 'doxa'.

For Bourdieu, doxa is what is ultimately taken for granted within society. By observing how social structures 'reproduce themselves in the agents' dispositions' he determines that the field of doxa, or the taken for granted, increases amongst the

individuals and thus the collective (Bourdieu 1977: 165-167). When the collective forms a consensus, they confirm the very social structures already in place. In short, doxa favours the status quo of the field; that is the current state of the existing social structures and agents. Doxa then informs habitus, or individual embodied dispositions, which in turn continue to confirm the current field.

However, the non-consciousness[4] of doxic relations can eventually become conscious, that is, aware of arbitration. Doxa, Bourdieu explains, is differentiated from heterodoxy and orthodoxy. Heterodoxy and orthodoxy take place within the 'field of opinion' or the 'universe of discourse' (ibid. 168). That which is orthodox has a vested interest in preserving doxa, but only arises when posited against heterodox argument. Orthodoxy defends the arbitrariness of doxa by establishing a logical systematization of society. As agents, human actors have the ability to participate in and transcend the current orthodoxy by providing a competing alternative. As Giddens expresses, '[t]he self is not a passive entity' (Giddens 1991: 2). Agents can take the arguments of the doxic field to transform the current social field, but in turn it eventually recreates a new doxa. This very practice is occurring as individuals in intermarriages create dialogue, pulling from and contributing to narratives that represent an alternative to both the orthodox and doxic fields from which they came.

Likewise, the 'field of opinion' can (and I suggest that it frequently does) uphold the status quo, because individuals in interaction have determined and implemented systems that intend to preserve the current field. Both heterodox and

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[4] Note that I am not implying 'unconsciousness' in psychoanalytic terms, but rather 'non-conscious' in Giddens' sense of ontological motives. He writes, 'Practical consciousness is integral to the reflexive monitoring of action, but it is 'non-conscious', rather than unconscious. Most forms of practical consciousness could not be 'held in mind' during the course of social activities, since their tacit or taken-for-granted qualities form the essential condition which allows actors to concentrate on tasks at hand' (1991: 36).

orthodox opinions regularly take place within this field, regardless as to whether intermarriage is thrown into the mix. Intermarriage simply brings another dimension to the field of opinion. Each instance of heterodox opinion has the potential to threaten, that which is orthodox. I would also propose that politesse can conceivably and superficially promote the status quo. As Alice adheres to certain practices in order to appease her in-laws, she is, in those instances, preserving aspects of the field. However, her heterodox worldview of merging elements of her husband's practices with her own provides a plausible alternative to both her Anglican identity and to Islam, something which can be viewed as threatening to members of either of those senses of belonging.

The fear of any absolute collapse of a religious or cultural community within the lifetime of the individual(s) who fear it for themselves becomes real if they cease to provide meaning for it. It is ultimately those individuals who have the capacity to maintain their community. However, I do not want to minimise the fears they may have about the future of such traditions, communities and so on because future maintenance is ultimately outside of their control and in the control of other individuals who come after them. The only 'control' they do have during their lifetime is the creation of narrative configurations of their life stories that become narrative prefigurations for future generations. As such, it is not difficult to see why parameters are put into place to protect such collapse. Marital instructions are significant parameters. Additionally, fear about community collapse can exist because the members of other communities may infringe upon another's abilities to embody their worldviews. For example, Roun, an Ahmadi woman explains how she has to conceal her identity at times with other Muslims she meets due to her sect being viewed as heretical both in Pakistan and among some Muslims in Britain. While she

maintains being an Ahmadi in her mind or inside her home, she cannot express this at the community mosque, nor can she return to Pakistan and openly practice as an Ahmadi.

Rapport considers limitations imposed on individuals out of fear of their individual agency or of their communitarian belongings as a problem for 'Anyone', that is the universal, but also individual human being, because it restricts their ability to enact their life projects. Because of this view, Rapport proposes a cosmopolitan framework that not only serves as a methodological and theoretical framework of human subjects, but as a moral and even political project to emancipate individuals from sui generis structures of collectivity. It does not seek a project of individualism, but rather allows each individual to voluntarily participate in the communities and various senses of belonging that they find meaningful to their life story. However, this is one alternative to the flux between individual agency and attempts to maintain certain religious and cultural communities. My current work seeks to display the various ways in which individuals move with and respond to their various senses of belonging.

Summary

This thesis reveals the diverse interactions that occur in intermarriages involving partners who identify as British Pakistani Muslim. It explores the fluidity of the individual, their anxieties, their hopes, and their navigations through their experiences when met with the worldviews of others, particularly through their partners and their extended families. It is not promoting individualism, but rather individuality whereby it is individuals who feature as the active subjects, not the communities. It reveals the significance of the individuals behind such communitarian categories, and also about

the diversity within what are often viewed as monothetic categories. It also reveals how the status quo of certain contexts responds to heterodox opinion and practice.

While some individuals in this study self-identify as 'cosmopolitan', like Feroz who calls himself a 'world-citizen', others insist on being identified and understood through their community membership. Some, feel they must hide their relationships or their fluctuating senses of belonging out of fear of backlash from other individuals, like family members, not necessarily because they believe the backlash stems from their loved ones, but because they believe the collective pull of community members can influence such backlash. Religious and cultural intermarriage (whether there is a significant difference will be discussed in the proceeding chapters) may become more prevalent through increasing pluralism, but will only become commonplace within such diversity because of the individuals who make it so, and who create new doxa, new status quos by virtue of their reflexive individuality when in interaction. A significant part of this is narrative, both as a configured product and as a lived experience. There is not a dichotomy between individuality and community. Rather, communities are organised and filled by the individuals in interaction who create them; and it is through narrative configuration and experiences of the self in interaction that individuals reflexively shape their life stories.

MARRIAGE AND RITUALS

'*But, what is marriage? Really?*' asked Zaid, a young Muslim man who resides in secret with his male partner, Tomas. Zaid listed a number of conceivable answers to his own question, framing them in British legal language, religious language, and in partnerships he deemed to be 'unidentifiable by institutions'. Some Muslims I spoke with regarded marriage entirely within the context of *sharia* and the legal contract of *nikah*, while others viewed marriage as a British civil union. With the exception of Zaid, many couples I spoke with maintained that their idea of marriage is reserved for heterosexual couples, explaining that the purpose of marriage is to biologically produce children. Beyond the religious and legal definitions of marriage, partner characteristics were also of concern, including educational status, religious belonging, ethnic belonging, and national belonging.

The indeterminacy of establishing a common model of marriage is not an exceptional difficulty for couples in mixed relationships, but is a much greater definitional problem within kinship studies. Not only are there assorted meanings and interpretations for the English word 'marriage' (Holy 1996: 48), but there also remains the difficulty of designing cross-cultural comparisons that further complicate any universalising attempts to define marriage. 'Legitimacy' of children was once viewed as the defining feature of marriage (Gough 1959) and could be used to include cases such as Nuer women and 'ghost marriages' in which the offspring of a widow's second marriage to her deceased husband's brother are still attributed to her first husband (1959: 23). Another noteworthy example includes the legitimacy of royal succession, where a ritual act of marriage serves to determine which offspring are

'authentic' inheritors of a royal birthright and which are 'bastards' (see examples in Fox 1967: 23). A number of anthropologists criticise the 'legitimacy' model on the basis of circular reasoning (Riviere 1971) and that even within 'ordinary English' uses, childless marriages do not consequentially cease being marriages, discrediting universal assumptions that offspring are essential to marriage (Holy 1996; Leach 1982).

Parkins describes marriage as involving various levels of cultural restrictions on sexual relations between humans including negative and positive rules for pairing spouses (1997: 39-41). Some of these restrictions manifest as expressions of kinship alliances (Levi Strauss 1969) from which incest prohibitions develop. Features of marriage alliances involve what is often considered to be legalistic terminology (Fox 1967: 16) including transfer of property, such as bridewealth and dowry[1], as well as wider family laws on inheritance. There also exists the perception that kinship-based societies exist in opposition to 'western', bureaucratic societies where kinship dominant societies uphold favouritism while bureaucratic societies sustain meritocracy (Fox 1967: 14), an idea that rests in problematic assumptions that a 'kinshipless' society is merit based, and that kinship dominant societies are entirely blood related and dependent upon marriage and offspring. Sahlins proposes that kinship accounts for both social constructions as well as certain examples of procreation that he sums as the 'mutuality of being' (Sahlins 2013). He proposes that 'kinship categories are not representations or metaphorical extensions of birth relations' but rather that 'birth is a metaphor of kinship relations' (2013: ix).

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[1] Dowry is a significant, obligatory practice for many Pakistanis, comprising upwards of 95 per cent of all Pakistani marriages (See UNICEF's The Population Council, *Adolescents and Youth in Pakistan: A Nationally Representative Survey*). Additionally, the UK Border Agency compiled a report indicating that dowry related disputes contributed to approximately 4,000 incidents resulting in violence or death amongst Pakistani women in 2010 (UKBA 2011). See *UKBA Operational Guidance Note: Pakistan*.

Further to expanding concepts of kinship is the suggestion that marriage is retained as a concept when nominally defined within its specific ethnographic context (Barnard and Good 1984). Within definitional English understandings of marriage, Leach outlines four senses of marriage as 1) mutual rights and duties of spouses to each other and their children, 2) the personal relationship between spouses, 3) a marital ritual or ceremony, and 4) alliances determined to 'make a good marriage' (1982: 82-83). Yet even within these senses, he concedes that all attempts at universalising definitions of marriage fail to withstand the scrutiny of the variances in ethnographic comparisons (Holy 1996: 50). Taking a cue from the definitional difficulties of kinship studies, rather than attempt to define marriage for couples, this chapter covers how individuals experience and delineate marriage and kinship based on their own experiences. It addresses Pakistani kinship connections in Britain, Islamic interpretations of marriage and family, and how couples negotiate social risk and expectations of marriage in their wider family relationships. It explores how individuals interpret and interact with these expectations as a part of a narrative whole.

The *biradari*

One of my first connections in the field was with a Sunni imam, Dr. Mirza, who is known mostly for his academic work on Islam, yet, is more discreetly known for performing 'interfaith marriages' along with a close academic colleague. Their interfaith activities remain inconspicuous mostly because they fear for their reputations and backlash from mosque leaders, both in Britain and abroad. When meeting Dr. Mirza, I accompanied him to his office adorned with a large collection of

Islamic theological books, almost entirely in Arabic. There was also a lectern and embroidered gown in the corner of the room, which he later explained were ritual items he used when performing interfaith unions. Despite the formal office setting, he was eager to share his life story and experiences in an open and candid manner.

'*That's my father there, in bell-bottoms. You know, it was the whole hippie thing. It was the 60s and 70s; he wasn't the only one embracing it,*' he said pointing to a photo of his parents, his siblings, and himself, in the 1970s, each dressed in the latest British fashions of the period, though his mother wore a colourful sari. We perused through other photos as he detailed the history of his family. I had originally planned on meeting Dr. Mirza to discuss his involvement with interfaith marriage performances, but our conversation revealed much more than the intricacies of ritual wedding ceremonies. Instead, he spent a substantial amount of time explaining why marriage rituals in Islam, especially amongst Pakistani Muslims, are fundamental within the context of social and historical relations. He shared how family is more than just blood relations, but is a protected network of reciprocated social sustainability, that is very much entwined with historical memory of their colonial history. Dr. Mirza was the only participant I spoke to who directly addressed the events of Partition with detail, citing this period of history as further justification for Pakistanis, Indians, and Bangladeshis to hold a deep mistrust when forming bonds with 'outsiders', or even amongst themselves. He believes that these historical and political factors have a greater influence on efforts to maintain endogamous marriages than theological reasons, though he explained that because Islam is an enmeshed part of everyday life, that religion is inevitably used to justify and promote endogamous relations.

Indeed the colonial-engineered forceful demarcation between India and Pakistan, influenced by over a hundred years of British Imperialism, imparted political and educational polices that 'encouraged religious identity' (Metcalf 2004: 218) and resulted in decades' worth of violent tragedy along the border, and especially over Kashmir and Jammu, a conflict which exists to this day[2]. Following Partition, multiple bloody wars were fought between India and Pakistan based on territorial and nationalised imaginings that discriminate between Hindus and Muslims. Rollier indicates that postcolonialism and nation building generated a 'metaphor of the body' invoked as the 'supposedly organic ties binding a land, its people, and the political power that stands for it' where Muslims across Pakistan felt innately connected to the Kashmiri 'martyrs' (Rollier 2011: 88-89).

Werbner examines how postcolonial migration and forced exile produces transnational persons who form a new home-away-from-home in which 'surrogate cultural worlds' protect them from their new local culture, led by 'invisible leaders' who fashion 'political imaginaries' (2002: 6). These 'invisible leaders' speak, for the most part, solely to these transnational communities who enlist them, but their voices also surface when oppositional circumstances arise that demand a unifying and representative voice for transnational Muslims.[3] However, even in visible moments of unification, the Pakistani Muslim diaspora is hybrid in that different expressions of cultural performances are experienced through an array of wider narratives of being Muslim, British, South Asian, Pakistani in postcolonial and modernist contexts, while at the same time experiencing smaller scaled, dialogical interaction within the process

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[2] Increasing self-represented networks of global Muslims provide commentary on contemporary issues such as the Kashmir Conflict as a means to 'raise awareness and enhance the unity of Muslim communities' (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996).
[3] Such as the Rushdie Affair and other similar events in which European Muslim communities collectively address the purported incompatibilities between so-called 'western' and 'Muslim' values (Marranci 2008: 57).

of identity formation (ibid. 17, 58). Learned leaders, educated either in *madrasa* or in 'secular' schooling, act as discursive mediators of 'Islam as constituting the language of Muslim politics' (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996). While anti-colonial sentiments, as a part of a historical memory and current narrative formation, may be a significant cause for rejecting intermarriage, such rejections will often be framed within Islamic language.

Feroz, a young self-described 'world traveler', explained that if he were to marry a Sikh, Hindu, or Indian woman, he would risk being 'cut off' from family support, including emotional and financial support. Like Feroz, others similarly expressed that marrying a non-Muslim or an Indian would be problematic for their family's cohesion, with particular emphasis on the 'heartbreak' it would cause their grandparents and great grandparents. Social risk not only involves economic risk, but also entails emotional labour. While some members of the younger generation may feel 'beyond' ethnic and national differences, they continue to have a shared sense of the emotional distress that their families may experience due to the choices they make.

Despite the use of religious categories of belonging such as Sikh and Hindu to describe differentiation, participants generally claimed that the problem wasn't actually about religious difference, but rather with the assumed ethnic and national identity of the individuals, largely being Indian. While many emphasised the problems with intimately engaging with Sikhs and Hindus, they also claimed that, generally speaking, any prospective partner outside of their kinship network could be viewed as threat, including sectarian, ethnic, and caste differences. While religious and national differences based on a historical memory serve as threatening examples, there are a number of other cases that also pose a threat. Zaid is one example of an

individual experiencing various senses of 'othering' both as an Ahmadi Muslim and also as a gay man, otherwise experienced as multiple, interrelated identities (see Moore 1988: 9).

During my time in Edinburgh with Zaid, he expressed his inner conflict with his secret life as a gay British Pakistani Ahmadi[4] Muslim, and with the strong obligation he feels to his family. Yet, these conversations did not arise upon our first meetings. I first met Zaid briefly as he dipped into a café I was sitting in with a mutual acquaintance. Zaid was dressed smartly in designer brands and he drove a brand new Mini Cooper with customised leather seats. Our mutual friend, Andromache, a Greek woman, kissed his cheek sat close with him in the café. They appeared as a couple, even touching each other's hands flirtatiously as we talked about the latest TV shows. Andromache later showed me Zaid's social media page, in which he had numerous photos of himself in nightclubs and at social events, nearly always with an attractive woman on his arm. She explained that women 'love him', whether it is because of his good looks and charm, or his family's affluence, Zaid attracts many women. She believed his insistence to uphold a heterosexual bachelor image to many others was to dissuade any of his family members from suspicions about his relationship with his partner, Tomas. It was only until a few months later that Zaid that he explained his life in more detail.

With his belonging as a religious minority within Islam and also as a gay man, he has overlapping, interconnected 'feelings' about marriage and family. When talking about partner suitability he explained,

> *It is about how a person fits into the family. They have to share all of the same values. I still identify as a Muslim because it's what makes me and my family a unit. I never want to feel disconnected from them. I mean, I know people here have close families. I don't want to say their culture is*

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[4] See the Chapter One for the historical and sectarian significance of the Ahmadi sect and also Chapter Five where Zaid and other Ahmadis are discussed in relation to sectarianism and the ummah.

> *selfish, but there is this attitude here of people doing whatever suits themselves, and it's completely opposite for Pakistanis.*

Note that Zaid's comment that British people 'doing whatever suits themselves' does not result in a lack of agency, but rather that Zaid's agency works within 'historically discursive traditions' as a process of subjectivation (Mahmood 2005: 32, 154). Likewise, British individuals are not somehow uninhibited by identity narrative formation. While we sometimes speak in language as though we live as singular beings, the self is always predicated upon an interaction with something other or 'oneself as another' (Jackson 2012; Ricouer 1992). When speaking exclusively of his family life, Zaid animatedly detailed regular home-cooked Pakistani food, merriment, and an 'eternal support group'. Yet, when the conversation shifted to discussing his life with Tomas, a part of his life that his family is oblivious to, his tone shifted. He explained that he was 'breaking every single rule': his partner is not from his sect (Ahmadi), not a Pakistani, and not a woman. Not only is Tomas a French atheist, but having biological children would also be an impediment for Zaid[5], especially because as the firstborn son in his family Zaid feels a large responsibility to 'continue the bloodline' with a Pakistani woman. While Zaid said he wants to 'stand proudly as a gay Muslim', another part of him concedes that it is not simply about him; it is about 'the pain his family would endure', not entirely because they might shun him, but because they too would be ostracised by the rest of their Muslim and Pakistani communities. For the time being, Zaid believes it is easier to conceal his sexuality so that he can be in his relationship with Tomas while continuing to be connected with his family. Because his family lives in the same city, he purposely avoids specific places that he and Tomas could be 'spotted', preferring instead to attend house parties

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[5] However, surrogacy allows gay couples to now have children biologically related to them. See www.nhs.uk/Livewell/LGBhealth/Pages/Havingchildren.aspx

with close friends, take journeys outside of the city, or spend time together at home. He also explained that he is in a transitional stage of reassessing his identity as a Muslim within its Pakistani cultural confines[6]. He commented:

> *My religion and culture isn't accepting of Tomas, so is my culture really that great? I always held my culture so highly because of the amazing times, great food, the family, happiness, but now, having to face the fact that my culture wouldn't accept my relationship… do I really regard it as highly anymore? Probably not. I don't know.*

The prevailing family connections between Pakistani Muslims has been widely documented and framed within wider discussions concerning the 'myth of return', and transnational marriage (Anwar 1979; Modood 1997; Shaw 1988, 2000; Werbner 2002; Saifullah Khan 1977; Charsley 2013). These studies underscore that familial bond extends to a network of kinship ties, known as the *biradari*[7]. Badr Dahya considers the chief motivation of migration to Britain as being predictably economic, while also consisting of a large displacement of Pakistanis following Partition and the construction of Mangala Dam in Mirpur (Dahya 1973). The demand for labour in Britain in the early postcolonial years, combined with the ease of migration for former British subjects encouraged a surge in male migrant workers (Ansari 2004). Dahya observes that this temporary status placed the early migrants into the debate of the 'myth of return' (see also Anwar 1979), ultimately categorising the community as a transitional one that relies on the support of their village connections in Pakistan. He writes,

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[6] Note that Zaid uses religion and culture almost interchangeably. This is not always the case for all British Muslims, as some distinguish between religious experiences and cultural expressions (Bolognani and Mellor 2012). Also see Chapter Five for a discussion of global and local interpretations of religion.

[7] Biradari can hold a variety of meanings, but is often used to invoke close relationships. Donnan uses the Dhund, a Northern Punjabi tribe, as an example of the ambiguities between biradari and kunba writing, 'First and foremost they imply a relationship of agnation, and in some contexts Dhund talk about them in such a way as to suggest that they are patrilineages. In the second sense, however, the terms are used to imply nothing more than close kinship or 'fraternal' unity; in this sense, any first cousins and even close friends are sometimes referred to as biradari' (Donnan 1988, 129).

> The migrant continues to reaffirm his adherence to the myth of return because for him to do otherwise would be tantamount to renouncing his membership of the village community and the village-kin group in Britain—for these groups together form a single whole, and for the migrant to opt out of one means opting out of the other as well. The myth is an expression of one's intention to continue to remain a member of both of them… Here, the myth enables the migrants to keep alive social relationships, the chain of communication and movements between the village and Britain, which in turn enable the migrant and his village-kin group to persist as a cohesive group for mutual aid, for mobilising socioeconomic resources and for social control (Dahya 1973, 268).

Maintaining loyalty to the biradari has been framed within the practice of consanguineous arranged marriage (Shaw 1988, 2000) and with transnational marriages (Charsley 2013). Notable reasons for these marriage preferences suggest that it is to maintain lineage endogamy[8] and group economic benefit (Holy 1989; Patai 1965; Shaw 2001). 'Alliance Theory' proposes that the 'universal incest taboo' encourages the growth of alliances between two or more communities through marriage reciprocity (Levi-Strauss 1969). Building upon theories of exchange, men exchange their sisters to another group of men, who reciprocate this exchange, which ensures a mutually beneficial relationship between the groups (ibid. 233-254). Marital alliances continue to be practiced in order to strategically protect against and reduce outside risks of loss such as property and wealth, and to also protect the endurance of ideological values, such as religion or moral codes (Shaw 2009: 63-88; Ottenheimer 1996: 134-149). Alison Shaw expands upon the link between marriage and kinship for British Pakistanis concluding that cousin marriage is not decreasing even amongst second and third generation Pakistanis in Britain, and that means of maintaining specific kinship connections include preferences for arranged marriage within one's caste or class (Shaw 2001). In addition, transnational marriage continues to be

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[8] Endogamy and exogamy have been debated terms in anthropological theory. Morgan and McLennan considered endogamy as marriage within a descent group, while exogamy was not based on genetic distance, but on marriage outside of the descent group (see Shaw 2009, 67).

prevalent practice as an immigration strategy and also for maintaining connections between kin networks between Pakistan and Britain (Charsley 2013; Shaw 2001).

As confirmed by most people I spoke with, regardless of their generational status, the topic of kinship loyalty was frequently conferred. As with Zaid, the potential ramifications for distancing oneself from family and ultimately kin are significant considerations for those who consider an interrelationship. Fatimah was one such woman expressing her concerns with the repercussions that might occur if she chose to move forward more seriously with her boyfriend, Jasper, a Christian man she shares a home with in secret. Fatimah had moved away from her family who are spread between London and Karachi, in order to attend university in Scotland. She has continued to live in Edinburgh, though she made the decision to move into rented accommodation with Jasper, without her family's knowledge of his existence. Fatimah and Jasper also have another female flat mate, so her family believes she is only sharing her flat with another young female. She is able to keep her relationship secret because of the physical distance between herself and family members.

Fatimah shared that as an Ismaili[9], she is not so concerned with 'following rules' but with developing a 'personal and spiritual' relationship with Allah, something she believes is only achievable through religious rituals, prayer and belief, not in mundane restrictions. To her, Jasper is a 'spiritual person', and his path is ultimately his own. Because of this, she believes that as long as they love each other and are each striving for spirituality (something she believes transcends religious institutions), that they can be together. Despite her and her family's focus on 'personal spiritual development', she continues to obscure her relationship from her family. She explained that if they did warm up to him over time, they would expect

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[9] See Chapter One for a description of the history and development of Ismailis in Britain.

him to convert to Islam, something she believes is a desire to uphold social appearances. However she explained that she doesn't want or need to presently complicate matters, but also suggested that her parents would never resort to 'tactics of abandonment' if she did introduce Jasper to them, something she imagines is because of her parents' decision to allow her to 'choose' her own partner. She presented her background in contrast to how other young women are raised, including friends she knows in Karachi, explaining that many of them are arranged into marriages with little to no influence over the selection of their partner.

Both Zaid and Fatimah touched upon 'rules and expectations' around marriage including partner selection that was described in both Islamic terminology and in relation to kinship connections. Additionally, both Zaid and Fatimah belong to minority sects both within Islam that can further complicate the meaning of marriage. Their perceptions and expectations of marriage are situated within their discursive traditions from which they derive their actions. Because participants frequently framed marriage in terms of religious terminology, they guided me through the source of the religious accounts of marriage.

Expressions of marriage through Qur'anic interpretations

Searching for a cohesive Islamic theology or legal code on marriage can be challenging when taking into consideration cultural filters and sectarian divisions. As Islam is an embodied action, meaning 'to submit', I am taking a cue from Marranci by side stepping theological debates and instead focusing on its embodied meaning as expressed by the Muslims who describe marriage through Islamic terminology (2008: 6). Many participants were able to directly refer to the Qur'an when speaking of rules

or legalities surrounding marriage. However, the Qur'an, like any sacred text, has a host of interpretations, particularly when small sections are quoted. Keeping these interpretations in mind, my utilisation of Qur'anic marital references is not to make a theological statement, but to orient oneself with the textual tradition from which participants explain their ideas about marriage.

Many of the couples spoke of religious directives that included partner selection and eligibility, the function of marriage, and the legalities of the marriage contract known as *nikah*. The most popular Quranic passage[10] mentioned by participants was Surah al Ma'idah 5:5 which reads:

> 5. This day allowed to you are all clean foods and the meat of those given the Book is allowable for you and your meat is allowable for them, as also allowed to you are the chaste women of those given the Book before you when you have given their dowers, taking them in wedlock, neither fornicating nor taking them as mistresses. And whoso rejects faith, his work will surely come to nothing, and in the Hereafter he will be of the losers.

Because most of the couples I met were between Christians and Muslims, they were quick to point to this passage permitting relationships between 'People of the Book', meaning Jews, Christians, and Muslims, citing it as an essential validation of their relationships.

Dr. Mirza discussed the problem he faces with extended family members when conducting interfaith marriage ceremonies. Most of the time, the Muslim family members remained adamant that a non-Muslim woman must convert to Islam before the contractual ceremony. Dr. Mirza's response is that unless the conversion is intentionally 'pure', no individual should be forced to convert. For Dr. Mirza, pure intentionality conversion is primarily motivated by belief in Allah, placing all other motivational reasons as secondary to this belief. To do otherwise, in his view, would

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[10] All direct quotes and exegesis throughout the thesis are from *The Glorious Qur'an: Text, translation and commentary*, published by The Islamic Foundation.

be 'making a mockery of religion'. Because all of the marriages he has conducted have been between 'People of the Book', he said that conversion is not necessary. He explained,

> Even though it is permissible in the Qur'an, there has been a heightened sense of anti-colonial sentiment. The land is still entrenched in anti-British sentiment. They come here and it is the same. All of a sudden the 'white' Christian women become kaffirs. If you go with a 'white' woman, you're of the lost sheep of Ishmael. So what happens? The only marriage they will accept is if they convert. Sometimes those who do convert find a very warm energetic reason to explore the religion. But I think without this, it is a big problem for the families, but not actually for the religion.

Dr. Mirza reiterates his statements about colonialism as being a significant factor for why families fear intermarriage. Remaining loyal to one's kin group through endogamous marriage is used to mitigate a loss of identity. However, Dr. Mirza believes that the families attempt to use religious reasons for explaining their reservations for mixed marriage rather than directly addressing their colonial past and postcolonial present. Yet making such statements may not be commonly employed considering that for Pakistanis the 'Islamic identity' and 'Islamic language of Muslim politics' remains preeminent to other expressions of identity, where even Partition is characterised as a demarcation of boundaries based on religious 'othering' (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996: 103). However, Dr. Mirza went on to explain that the Qur'an serves as the ultimate authority in decision making, trumping any other reasoning that may exist, including historical memory of colonialism. He became quite frustrated when discussing conversion, explaining various scenarios he has encountered. He continued,

> They will say, 'let's convert her', to which my response is 'why the hell you going down that road of conversion bullshit?!'—Sorry for my language—It's nonsense. I will say that I am probably hated by these families, but it is because I intimidate them. I have the power of the weapon of knowledge against them. When I point it out, they know that they can't condemn the Qur'an. They can't say anything in return against it.

He regularly cites Surah al Ma'idah 5:5 when extended family members approach him about the feasibility of an interfaith marriage ceremony. According to Dr. Mirza, the families then realise they do not have much say in the matter because both the Qur'an and his authority as an imam make no room for their own interpretations, unless they either decide to become Islamic scholars themselves or dismiss Dr. Mirza to find another imam who will give them the answer they want. He repeated that much of the problem with Pakistanis frowning upon intermarriage even with 'People of the Book', was a struggle between the balance of accepting the Qur'an's ruling and also trying to cope with social life and history of colonialism. Dr. Mirza continued,

> *It is about acceptability and insecurity. The Qur'an might say this is okay, but their own society, especially the Sub-continent, they've never experienced being with Christians of Jews outside of colonialists… whereas Arabs have always had Jews and Christians in their midst that they can readily identify with the Qur'an. Before partition, the Hindu and Sikh were brothers with Muslims, but the white man became an enemy. Their whiteness was associated with being Christian or Jew. This translated when they came to England. Islam is now embedded in the anti-imperial narrative. When you try to mention that Jews and Christians are not kaffir, but are 'People of the Book', the usual response is that, 'Well, they are not the real Jews and Christians of the Qur'an, they are some sort of mutation.' They use religious language, trying to make it seem theological, but it is not. This is actually sociological.*

Outside of the anti-colonialist narrative, many Muslims are aware through the Sunnah and Qur'an that Jews and Christians share a rich history with the Prophet, the formation of Islam, and historical periods such as the Golden Age of Islam[11]. When placed into these contexts, and with the use of Surah al Ma'idah 5:5, interfaith couples are able to change the narratives against the perceived social perversity of intermarriage, and instead turn the narrative back to one of an idealised coexistence of the Abrahamic traditions.

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[11] For example, the first *hijra,* or migration out of Mecca by the early Muslims escaping persecution, was to Abyssinia, or modern day Ethiopia, where the followers of Muhammad received refuge under the Christian king. Additionally, throughout Muslim history, non-Muslims and 'People of the Book' were protected through contribution to the *dhimmi* tax.

In addition to the religious belonging of the partner involved is also the Qur'anic guidance on specificities of suitable marital partners from other social spheres of life.

> 22. And wed not of women those whom your fathers have wedded, except what has already passed. Verily that has been an indecency and an abomination and an evil way.
>
> 23. Forbidden to you are your mothers and your daughters and your sisters and your father's sisters and your mother's sisters, and your brother's daughters and your sister's daughters, and your foster-sisters, and the mothers of your wives and your step daughters that are your wards, born of wives to whom you have gone in, but if you have not gone into them, no sin shall be on you, and the wives of your sons that are from your own loins, and also that you should have two sisters together, expect what has already passed. Verily Allah is ever the Forgiving, the Merciful (Surah al-Nisa 4:22-23).

As mentioned previously, for social and financial economic benefit, many Pakistani Muslims marry within their kin group, with the closest relatives of marriage being between first cousins. This endogamous practice has been verified within the Qur'an as well, as seen in the surah above. Donnan explains in his ethnographic exploration of marriage preference amongst Northern Pakistani Muslims, that the men in these communities were quite aware of the Qur'anic restrictions detailing who amongst kin are ineligible as marriage partners, so as not to deliberately enter into a 'corrupt union', while also being able to keep close kinship ties (Donnan 1988: 115). While the couples I connected with were observably not in close-kin relationships, nearly all of them were able to easily list friends or relatives who were in such unions, usually arranged between family members. The kin proscriptions in the Qur'an are suitable not only from a perspective of religious 'cleanliness', but also serve as parallel and complementary for the economic strategies of maintain the biradari in Pakistan and its diaspora.

The final religious restriction that surfaced concerned sexuality. Restrictions on sexuality preference were mostly unearthed when meeting with Zaid, while other couples would only mention with brevity that homosexuality was unacceptable in Islam. Zaid explained that homosexuality is completely forbidden, regardless of sectarian belonging. He believed that there was nothing in the Qur'an that could defend the sexuality of his own relationship. The Qur'an consists of retellings of the stories and lessons from the Torah and Bible. Making a reference to the story of Lot, the Qur'an reads:

> 80. And we sent Lot, when he said to his people: 'Do you commit an indecency with which none has preceded you in the worlds? Verily you go in lustfully to men instead of women! Aye! You are a people extravagant.' Naught was the answer of his people save that they said: 'Drive them forth from your city; indeed they are a people who would be pure!'" (Surah al-A'raf 7:80-81).

Just as family remembers refrained from questioning Dr. Mirza's recitation of the Qur'an to them, Zaid also felt that this passage could not be disputed. For the time being, he said there was no way around this passage, and that his choice is to either leave Islam as an apostate if he were to openly reveal his relationship, or to reject his relationship and remain a Muslim. Additionally, as an Ahmadi, his resources for religious guidance are limited to his relatively small network. He feels pessimistic about his options for seeking an alternative interpretation of this passage because to do so would mean abandoning his Ahmadi connections. Keeping his relationship hidden from his family and his Islamic connections is a way in which Zaid partially alleviates his angst around making a definitive decision. It is an alternative method that allows Zaid to both have his family and his traditions, while also being with the man he loves.

Beyond the restrictions around partner selection, couples also discussed the marital contract in Islam. Weddings, as a cultural practice, can differ greatly from the

marriage contract in Islam. Weddings as a cultural practice are expressed through the various local contexts in which they are performed, something that will be discussed shortly. As an Islamic practice, the marriage contract is mostly uniform across all cultural expressions of Islam, with some minor exceptions within Shi'a branches.

The marital contract is called *nikah*, and it is meant to be a divine and legally binding agreement. All *nikahs* of classical jurisprudences, that cover Sunni and Shi'a sects (Maliki, Hanbali, Hanafi, and Shafii within Sunni tradition, and Jafari[12] within the Shi'a tradition) consist of the following base elements[13]: *mahr* (dowry), a *wali* (bridal guardian, though this role can vary in its authority and role), consent of both parties, and two witnesses. *Nikah* requires, but is not limited to these four provisions. Beyond these, the actual practice of the *nikah* can alter depending on the couple. One such variation, especially amongst Pakistani Muslim marriages is the practice of *purdah* during the ceremony. *Purdah* is the separation of women and men, though to what degree the separation manifests can be interpreted differently. Among the participants married for multiple decades, purdah was expressed through physical separation, with the bride in one room and the groom in another. Veiling also acts as a form of *purdah*, and in some cases, modest behavior is a sufficient expression of purdah, though participants admitted that this was not a common interpretation.

I sat with Charlotte in her terraced house in Oldham as she began describing her 50 years of marriage, particularly recalling the day of her wedding. The room we sat in was small and cosy, adorned family photos of multiple generations hung on the

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[12] Within the Jafari school of Jurisprudence, there exists a temporary marriage contract called *mutah*, which is a temporary contract between a man and a woman sometimes for the purpose of sexual pleasure and for management of household services, though the specificities would need to be explicitly outlined in the contract in advance (Esposito 2003: 221). This practice was used in pre-Islamic societies, but carried over in Shi'a tradition. All other forms of Islamic jurisprudence forbid this type of contractual agreement. Additionally, none of my participants made detailed reference to it, only explaining that is indeed a permissible practice, but unconnected to their own experiences.

[13] As described by participants, as well as confirmed through John L. Esposito's The Oxford Dictionary of Islam (2003), entry: 'Marriage and Divorce: Legal Foundations'.

walls with some of them in frames that said 'family' and 'love' around collages of photographs. Charlotte made sure we were comfortable as she brought out mugs of black tea and an array of chocolate bars and biscuits. She laughed about her wedding day and pointed to photos of family members framed on the wall while telling her story. She explained that she was never briefed on what was to happen the day of the marriage ceremony. She recounted,

> *I got this red suit and I sat in this room and this man comes in saying something to me. I couldn't understand a thing cause I couldn't understand the language! He could've been sayin' he was gonna kill me, and I just nodded and replied, 'yes' as told to. I didn't have a clue. Then I asked his friend's wife when I will be going into the room with Taj to get married. She looked at me and said, 'you won't, you just got married!' I was confused why he wasn't comin' in here.*

Unbeknownst to her, Charlotte had experienced a *purdah* styled *nikah* ceremony, where she was located in an entirely separate room from her husband, along with the other women in attendance. She continued to laugh about the experience, but her husband joined the conversation stating that he never really wanted a nikah, especially not with purdah, but it was expected that they do it. He explained,

> *I just wanted to marry her. Just go down to the office in town. Them days anyway, Muslim marriages didn't count legally in England, so we were going to have to get registered anyway.*

Dr. Mirza also shared his experiences of purdah during nikah. He detailed that he in fact does not like performing ceremonies using any sort of gender separation because couple that are supposed to be joined before God should be standing together in that moment. He explained,

> *It is mostly the extended families, or parents who want the purdah in the nikah. It is a motif that is the bane of all marriage ceremonies, purdah. I refuse to entertain this stuff. This is strongly practiced amongst the Kashmiris. Some people even hold telephone nikahs! Can you believe that?! We do these things [rituals and contracts] because it is an act of our faith. If a man and woman have already been living together before the nikah, which happens more and more now, sometimes even with*

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children involved, it is a mockery of religion to then put on a show and pretend they are chaste. They have already committed to each other in their hearts, so the contract is the official piece, why segregate these couples for pretentious show when they are already together in union?

After the legal Islamic contract of *nikah*, is the understanding that husband and wife live together for a purpose, a purpose that participants also state as being described in the Qur'an. As described both within the Qur'an, marriage, family, and kinship are some of the highest 'gifts' from Allah. Moreover, Allah rewards devotion to these 'gifts', that is, family and marriage. As I skimmed through my Facebook 'Newsfeed', I noticed that one participant had 'liked' and 'shared' an image of a child's hand holding his parent's hand, with a quote over the image reading:

> If your parents are alive, be grateful at the opportunity to earn jannah by serving them. -Ustadh nouman ali khan

I messaged her to ask about the quote, specifically about 'earning *jannah*'. Her appreciation of the quote was based in Qur'anic messages, which emphasise the significance that the role of marriage has on all family relations. Here is where an Islamic cosmos and a Pakistani cosmos unify. The 'service' and maintenance of family, and then of a wider kinship network benefit not only the socio-economic everyday, but are also rewarded in the metaphysical afterlife of Heaven, known as jannah. I searched through my copy of the Qur'an to find specific references concerning the significance of kinship, and also of jannah.

Surah al-Nisa 4:1 and following commentary from 'Abdul Majid Dayabadi, an Indian Qur'anic commentator and translator, read as:

> O mankind! Fear Allah Who created you of a single soul, and He created from it its mate, and out of the two He spread abroad manifold men and women. And fear Allah by Whom you importune one another and the wombs. Verily Allah is ever a Watcher over you.

And the accompanied commentary referring to the word 'wombs':

> Meaning kinship. The word has direct reference to the high status of motherhood and wifehood in Islam. Kinship in Islam is regarded as one of the most important social institutions.

This metaphysical rendering is understood in the same terms of obligation and responsibility of kinship in Pakistan. Eickelman and Piscatori note that doctrine and practice have a complex and interrelational role, where a Muslim may adhere to a doctrinal prescription both as a metaphysical motivation, but just as likely for social obligations (1996: 17). Personhood, is not simply embedded in the discursive narrative of history and present, but also of the metaphysical, 'other' world. I asked Christy if she knew of another source of significance that specifically referred to Heaven as a reward. She replied:

> *It is difficult for me to know off the top of my head where verses in the Qur'an are located. I try to read as much as I can, but what is more important is that I remember the teachings for my children, and not necessarily the direct quotes. (Yet she still included a quote from the Qur'an that read:*
>
> 'Q 25:75': 74. And who say: 'Say; O our Lord! Bestow on us the coolness of eyes from our wives and our offspring, and make us a pattern unto the God-fearing.' 75. Those shall be rewarded with the highest apartment, because of their fortitude; and there they shall be met with a greeting and salutation.

Sentiments like the one that Christy shared on Facebook connected both the 'here and now' and the metaphysical other. Also note that Christy conceded that she did not readily know specific passages, but rather knew of them more generally because they have been taught through daily actions of obligation and responsibility, something she has learned marrying into a Pakistani Muslim family. Christy was able to explain her appreciation of the quote as stemming from Qur'anic inspiration, unintentionally ascertaining the existence of an Islamic discursive tradition, but both her informal and

non-textual knowledge of these sentiments were more about the learned action of living these things as opposed to actually being aware of a distinct textual tradition.

Revealing the significance of the responsibilities of mother and wife, not only in Islamic tradition, but also in Pakistani households, holds a fundamental role in perceptions and expectations of intermarriage, not just from the partners involved, but also from the extended family members, which will be explored in great length in the next chapter.

Wedding rituals and celebrations

The actual celebration, the party (or parties) so to speak, is an entirely other experience from the Islamic nikah. Salma messaged me a few photos she found around her house of weddings she has attended in Pakistan. Brides were in bright red dresses intricately embroidered with gold, silver, and white threads, some with extra beading and stones. Some women also had henna over their hands. The grooms wore almost as detailed form fitted shirts, called *kurta*. The photos were bursting in color and overflowing with the numerous guests celebrating. I asked her to explain what was happening in these photos.

> *They are really Indian weddings. The nikah is just a small part of the whole thing. Sometimes they can last a week long, with many days of rituals like the mehndi for the women. Loads of food. People look forward to weddings; they are the highlight of the year for many.*

I found her brief description of events noteworthy particularly regarding her mention of 'Indian wedding' since historical events associated with India have immensely hindered any sort of acceptance of cross-cultural relations. Pnina Werbner has stated that the Reformist movements, such as some Deobandis, have prohibited certain rituals and customs associated with 'instrumental music, dance and masquerade',

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especially with any 'Hindi' influence (2002: 192). With most participants belonging to other sects outside of Reformist movements, these concerns associated with 'Hindu' influences were of no matter. Many participants commented on the insistence of Pakistani families to hold elaborate Indian styled wedding celebrations, regardless of the clearly Indian performances. Some explained that weddings are not Indian or Pakistani, but are a part of both culture's rich traditions. The weddings weren't Indian anymore than they were Pakistani; the rituals belong to Pakistanis and Indians alike.

Feroz, the self-declared 'world citizen' criticised the large social displays of wealth. He shook his head in disappointment, explaining how much money, and sometimes years of planning or financial savings people spend for what he essentially considered to be a weeklong party, though he did admit that he has some fond memories at the celebrations. Feroz further noted that even if a family does not have much money, they feel obligated to meet social expectations of what a wedding should consist of, and often exhaust financial resources, to appease the public eye and in return gain compliments. Many participants commented on the fact that the weddings are more than just a celebration of the couple, and are in fact an expected social event for all in attendance.

Werbner detailed her experiences attending British Pakistani weddings (1990: 259-296). Practices included *tel* (smearing with oil for the bride), *mehndi* (henna), *khara* (a ritual bath before the *nikah* where the groom is washed in milk), the *nikah*, and finally the wedding reception (263). With each event, she also notes the rise in size, cost, and elaboration. *Tel*, *mehndi*, and *khara* (for the bride), are all rites executed by the women. Men coordinate the groom's bath, the *walima* expenses (for the banquet), and nikah. This gender division of control over weddings is notable because it reflected the ways in which couples spoke about their own wedding

expectations. Due to the fact that the overwhelming majority of all British Pakistanis throughout the study were men and not women, perceptions of wedding rituals were from the male point of view. Their non-Pakistani wives were unaware of the predominantly female controlled wedding rituals amongst Pakistanis, instead focusing on the expected rituals and practices from their own traditions.

Of the female Pakistani Muslim participants, details of specific wedding rituals were limited, with the exception of Salma's photographs. Of the two female British Pakistani Muslim women I met who had weddings, neither included any of these rituals in their own ceremonies, opting instead to be registered in a registrar's office in order to avoid any conflict that could ensue between extended family members. Jinaan, a good friend of Salma's, was indifferent to discussing rituals of Pakistani weddings, saying they are a 'big waste of money', are void of 'true' religious or cultural meaning, designed for 'showing off'. Jinaan preferred her minimalist civil ceremony at her registrar's office. '*Look, instead of paying out for the fancy wedding and all the drama, we were able to buy our first flat... in central London, too. It's a better trade off.*'

I asked Salma if she agreed with Jinaan's sentiments. She explained,

> *The women, even Jinaan, who say they don't care or don't want to talk about it, are fooling themselves. Of course they care! I think about the fact that I didn't get those things (the big Pakistani wedding), and sometimes I throw it in my husband's face when we argue. Look, I get Jinaan. I don't admit it publically either because that would just open myself up to criticism. I stand by my marriage choice, but I would be lying if I said I didn't think about it sometimes.*

Reflections and expectations for wedding ceremonies also occur for the non-Pakistani, non-Muslim partner, widely being from white, English, and Christian backgrounds.

While Britain is far from being the culturally monolithic nation, there are certain ideas of marriage in terms of both legalities and ritual. As of 2016, British law recognises both marriage and civil partnerships, with civil partnerships being reserved only for same-sex couples, though same-sex couples may also be 'converted' to a marriage if they choose. Additionally, British law is quite thorough about the formalities that occur during the actual ceremonies, including the inclusion or exclusion of certain religious practices[14]. Formal vows are required for marriage, though unnecessary for a civil partnership. Additionally, wording may vary from couple to couple, with approval of the individual administering the ceremony. Within civil ceremonies, poems or stories are permissible, but any religious symbolism, music, or religiously oriented readings must be excluded. What qualifies as religious or not is up to the discernment of individual officiants in advance of the ceremony date. All of the particulars for registering a marriage must be completed within at least 28 days of the wedding, and the wedding must not exceed one year from the time of registrations, with the exception of Scotland which requires no more than a three-month time period between the registration and ceremony.

In addition to the actual wording of the ceremony, two witnesses must be present to sign the official certificate of marriage or civil partnership. Various fees are also paid to the government in order to legally register the certificate. Without such, the marriage or civil partnership is considered invalid. Other legal restrictions include age limit (must be over 16), proximity of relatives (no close blood ties), and residential status. The residential status can be exempt if the weddings are for destination purposes, or if a valid 'fiancée visa' has been issued particularly for the non-resident partner.

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[14] All of the listed legalities can be found on the 'GOV.UK' website: https://www.gov.uk/marriages-civil-partnerships/overview

Due to the fact that the Anglican Church serves as the state church of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, with the Church of Scotland serving as the state church of Scotland, separate rules apply for couples performing a wedding ritual within a registered state church. Each church has its own authority to officiate weddings in their own manner, thus there is no need to register in advance with the registrar's office, though the banns are published in advance of the wedding to the congregation. For all other religious traditions, notice has to be given to the registrar's office 28 days in advance.

Beyond the legalities of performing a marriage or civil ceremony in Britain, there are also the popular culture ideas of what a wedding consists of. Walking through an aisle of magazine stands reveals wide number of wedding themed magazines on the shelves, advertised towards women. Though couples are free to stylistically coordinate their ceremonies as they please, there are some typical patterns that emerge. The bride is usually in white, with gown selections varying from suit pieces to flowing white dresses accompanied by a train and veil. The groom is typically expected to wear a suit or tuxedo. Additionally for the larger celebrations, brides and grooms will have a series of groomsmen and bridesmaids, all in matching colors and themes. As with Pakistani weddings, large spectacles can take place, sometimes with horse drawn carriages, limousines, and professional flower arrangements. As with Pakistani weddings, though, there is typically a demarcation between the contractual part of a wedding and the celebratory part.

Giving and taking

Negotiating between Pakistani and British expressions of weddings gives rise to considerable give and take, often at the expense of couple's own wishes. For every 'give', there is likely a 'take' or sacrifice. For example, if a couple selects a nikah over a church wedding or vice versa, the result could mean isolating family members who feel their tradition has been undermined in favour of another. It could be assumed that within negotiation, every 'take' also comes with an equal 'give', yet with cultural sway driven by strong expectations, mutuality can be difficult to achieve. Decisions rest between the couple and how they mitigate family expectations. Sometimes the couple's decisions reigns at the expense of family wishes, while other times their choices align, and yet in other cases, the couples wedding desires are set aside in favour of appeasing certain family members.

Alice and Tariq

> *I don't even have photos from that day. My parents were there, and of course everyone was happy, but there was something missing. Dad cried. I know he was happy, but even though he didn't say anything, I knew he wished he could have walked me down the aisle (in the church). -Alice*

Alice began tracing events from the day she married Tariq. She was raised in an Anglican family and eventually married Tariq, from a British Pakistani Muslim family, though Tariq has distanced himself greatly from Islam. Just as many other girls growing up, she had preconceived ideas of her future wedding: a white gown, elbow length gloves, a historical cathedral serving as the backdrop, and most importantly, her arm wrapped around her father's as they walked down a long aisle surrounded by her closest family and friends. When Tariq and Alice began dating, neither of their families seemed concerned, believing their relationship to be 'young love', but when talks of an engagement and wedding ensued, frustration developed.

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Initially, Alice liked the idea of a big Pakistani wedding. However, she was quickly corrected that Tariq's family would not be too impressed with this display because of his parents believed that these wedding expressions represent 'non-Islamic' and 'Indian' attitudes. Tariq's family insisted upon a formal *nikah*, including the enforcement of strict *purdah,* including Alice's conversion. Alice was open to the idea of an intimate nikah, but she refused to convert. As an alternative she suggested they hold a nikah followed by a British-styled celebration.

To Alice's frustration, Tariq's family saw no other alternative. Tariq explained that he was prepared to prohibit his family from attending any sort of wedding or ceremony, including a nikah if they could not find a way to compromise, arguing that Alice and her family were already willing to compromise most of their traditions. Alice, however was against starting her marriage by isolating family members, so she agreed to perform only the nikah with the exception that she would not convert. She explained the process of telling her parents about their wedding decisions saying,

> *The day I had to sit down with my parents to tell them we wouldn't be having the wedding in the church was one of the most difficult days… especially for Dad. I had to convince them that this was something that I wanted. In truth, because of the drama with everyone in his family [nodding her head in the direction of Tariq], this was what I wanted. I just wanted to be married to Tariq and have as many of the family there as possible. When I convinced them that this was what I wanted, Dad hugged for some time. Mum stayed cold for a while. She didn't get why his family 'won'. Like, her thinking was, 'Isn't our family just as important?' Dad stood up for me, and said that this was what would make me happy. Though it was difficult at first, they did support me.*
>
> *It still hurts. What makes me happy is to see everyone else happy. But, I had to choose to either exclude Tariq's entire family, or maybe make my parents slightly uncomfortable.*

Tariq touched her hand for what I sensed was to provide comfort but also as a sign of their solidarity. She then began to tell me about the actual day of nikah. She described:

> *Drama, still [she laughed]. But it was quite nice. I didn't know what to expect from these things, but it was really quite sweet and short. I refused to cover or do the whole separation thing. Tariq supported me with this. It was very small and very short, just quick sayings of 'yes', and what else? The dowry was more symbolic; we exchanged rings. Dad was smiling and he still got to be presented as my guardian. Mum was a bit confused during it, but she cried tears of joy in the end. (Nodding to Tariq) Your family was quite pleased with everything in the end, even though they didn't like that we didn't separate during the ceremony.*

Notice that Alice and Tariq's interpretation of dowry involved a transaction of marital rings. This interpretation was commonly practiced by other participants, rather than the more customary Pakistani dowry model consisting of a financial or property transaction from groom to bride. Bossen makes the case that economic considerations regarding bridewealth and dowry are considerably different when there is 'greater occupational choice and mobility' of each individual partner (Bossen: 1988: 142). Tariq contributed to the conversation:

> *Well, yeah. The actual nikah went smoothly. But, the problems came again after the wedding, when settling in. Alice didn't convert, so that is still a big problem for them.*

Alice decision to remain a Christian continues to play out in her marriage with Tariq's family, as will be revealed in the following chapter. While Tariq and Alice did not have the wedding they envisioned as a couple, their decision to adhere to Tariq's family's wishes was a way in which they could include both sets of families, which was ultimately more important to them than the style or format of their wedding.

Creating hybrid wedding spaces

When both families are mutually prepared to cooperate in wedding planning, the resulting wedding ceremonies are considered by many of the participants to be 'quite unique' in that they seek to equally express both partner's traditions within one or

multiple ceremonies. As other researchers have shown, these types of mutual negotiations are difficult to achieve (see Riley 2013: 60-78) due to points of conflict with family members or wedding officiants who are unwilling to compromise their religious or cultural traditions.

Laura and Malik

Laura and Malik found a medium that not only satisfied both sets of families, but also their own ceremonial vision that served as the foundational symbol of their life together. Their wedding celebrations took place over the course of a week in Birmingham, involving different layers of family members and friends. In all, they managed to accomplish a Christian wedding, an Islamic *nikah*, a Pakistani-styled banquet, and an English-styled pub gathering, all with approval from who they considered to be the important parties involved such as immediate family members and the wedding officiants.

They began with a civil ceremony that legalised their union, with only their parents and siblings in attendance. The same day of the civil ceremony, they went to a nearby pub to have a small English-styled celebration. Malik's parents, siblings, and some close cousins attended as well, with some of the men even choosing to drink the ales on tap, though most of his family chose to drink the non-alcoholic choices on offer. It was '*low-key*', Laura described to me, '*just as I've always wanted*'.

The following day, Malik and Laura had a meeting with the reverend of the church in which they would hold the Christian portion of the ceremony. Laura admitted that she is not particularly 'religious' anymore, but found symbolic value in the blessing that the reverend would provide to their union. The day after going over

the particular logistics of the wedding day, the formal wedding took place. Laura, in a simple, but elegant gown, walked down the aisle of the church with her brother and her father, one on each arm, whilst meeting her groom at the steps of the church's altar.

Laura explained that for everyone's sake, the reverend removed any references of Jesus as 'savior' or 'God'. The reverend's decision reflects a sort of politeness or as Nigel Rapport calls it, *politesse*, writing:

> I would describe politesse as that virtuous social state where Anyone is recognized as an end in themselves—the end of his or her own life—and where norms of social interaction are in place such that a balance is achieved between space and care. Once cares sufficiently about fellow individuals to ensure that they are afforded the space to come into their own and not become mere means to others' individual or collective ends: but one does not presume to know in any detail, or seek to influence in any substantial way, what another's 'coming into their own' might entail (2012: 174).

In this respectable fashion, the reverend chose instead to use scriptures that he believed to be 'universal truths of love'.

The Christian ceremony combined elements of British wedding structures including bridesmaids and groomsmen, a reception with a white-tiered cake, and bouquet-toss. Knowing that many churches require pre-marital counseling, or are even opposed to uniting a Christian and non-Christian in marriage, I asked Laura how this was avoided so easily. She explained,

> *We did have one-day worth of counseling, but it was more to see whether we were prepared to be committed... you know, stuff like financial responsibilities, that the 'fireworks' eventually die, and such. Nothing about it was religious really. The reverend is also known for performing interfaith weddings so he knew exactly what to do and say. It couldn't have been simpler.*

She then described the next few days of week of wedding celebrations. They held the *nikah* two days after the Christian ceremony where a respected friend of Malik's family, who are Ismailis, performed the nikah. Conversion was never even a part of

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the equation for the officiant or for Malik's family. Laura was 'of the Book' and as a Christian, no further questions were asked in the regard. Physical purdah was also a non-issue for the nikah. The nikah was purely a contractual blessing, and like the civil ceremony, was intimate, with only close relatives invited. Instead of a dowry, Laura and Malik exchanged gifts with each other: engraved cufflinks and a ring for Malik and diamond earrings and ring for Laura. In addition to the requisites of the nikah, a poem from Rumi was read, and both Malik and Laura made the obligatory acceptance of marriage.

The final celebration began the following day and served as the celebratory banquet of their union. Laura wore an elaborate red gown, while Malik wore a white, embroidered *kurta*. The event took place in a community center hall, but the hall was transformed as though they were in a large tent. Brightly colored material was hung from the ceiling and draped down the walls. Intricate lanterns, decorated tables, and comfy floor seating with pillows and throws adorned the hall. Long banquet tables of South Asian cuisine ran across two different walls of the room. A DJ stage was set up in the corner and played everything from chart hits to Bollywood soundtracks for guests to dance to. Laura and Malik had their own separate seating area to overlook the party and for guests to approach them with gifts and shower them with attention. During the earlier portions of the evening, alcoholic beverages were nonexistent, but as the night moved on, there was champagne and whisky for those so obliged to drink. It was a long week of memories for Laura and Malik, and they believe their wedding serves as a symbol of their future life together including bringing families and traditions together. However, they noted that they were especially fortunate to not only have open-minded families.

Note that in addition to the 'open-mindedness' of their families, a significant factor that stipulated the smooth conditions in Laura and Malik's situation compared to many others is that both Laura and Malik come from fairly affluent families. Pakistani communities, in addition to religious and kin belonging, are also divided by economic standing. Werbner notes that especially amongst 'elites' celebrations take a different form in presentation, often being more indulgent and sensual (2002: 197). Referring to celebratory examples of class difference with the community-imposed label of 'brown sahibs' ('white mentality'), Werbner explains:

> [S]et apart was a class fraction (Westernised elite and wealth Pakistanis/Asians) whose members were willing to shed, at least temporarily, one facet (Islam) of a multi-faceted ethnicity, while continuing to celebrate their national and regional cultural attachments (197).

As a member of a affluent Pakistani family, Malik believes this leniency towards traditional practices, including moral restrictions is more accessible. Not only does his family openly reject certain forms of purdah that include physical separation and veiling, but they also permit alcohol within reason, like at the weddings. Their personified communal identity as displayed during the wedding celebrations is not representative of all Pakistani Muslim diasporic communities, but is rather an example of the economic differences which obfuscate overlapping and changing spheres of identity, reiterating Werbner's observations of a 'hybrid diaspora' where 'visionary narratives' can clash with others over the 'nature of democracy, citizenship, power, morality, and identity' (2002:17).

Additionally, both Laura and Malik specifically highlighted the religious rituals during their weddings as 'symbolic blessings'. In line with Geertz's renowned definition of religion as a cultural system and a set of symbols providing meaning of existence (1973: 90), Laura and Malik create their own sense of meaning acquired

from the ceremonies which serve to simultaneously represent the traditions their families from, and also of their future as a couple. The past and the future are met in the present as a form of narrative configuration. By viewing the ceremonies not as strict divine decrees, but instead as 'symbolic blessings', the narrative involves a reinterpretation of marital rituals within both Tariq and Alice's life stories. However, beyond the wedding ceremonies, exist other areas of ritual negotiation within the shared spaces of intermarried couples.

Everyday ritual compromises in shared spaces

Dietary restrictions, sacred spaces within the home, and religious or cultural events to attend throughout the year each require some level of negotiation from partners. Nearly all of the non-Muslim partners, including those who converted, had to make adjustments to their dietary lifestyles, including food preparation, grocery shopping habits, and alcohol consumption. The most significant change made surrounded issues of bacon. It was not unusual, and almost expected after my first few encounters with couples, that some sort of joke would be made about the British need for bacon. Additionally, alcohol was widely discussed, with some Muslim partners explaining that they will admittedly drink alcohol during certain occasions, so long as the drinking is 'under control'.

Eating *halal* was adopted in most intermarried households, however the degree to which they practiced halal differed depending on a couple's location. For example, pork was considered completely unacceptable within nearly all homes, but purchasing halal butchered meats was not as regularly followed, especially when halal meats are not as readily available. Choosing to embrace these dietary restrictions,

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while difficult for a few partners was a part of a decision to respect dietary customs of their Muslim partner. Many individuals placed it in the context that it was easier to cut certain foods or drinks out of their diet, than to try to keep a dual-functioning kitchen, or than trying to persuade their partner from abandoning his or her dietary rules. Christy explained that many of these dietary changes were also for the best for her own health, and that of their children.

Other differences that occur are determining attendance at religious functions, and even of ritual spaces within the house, such as having a space for prayer, or for those who want to display objects of religious significance around the home such as statues, crucifixes, or Islamic calligraphy. Rajbir and Jinaan have a special arrangement in their own home. In Rajbir's home office, he keeps a small statue of Ganesha, a Hindu deity on his bookshelf, though he admits that is 'collects a lot of dust'. Jinaan uses their bedroom as her prayer space and on her nightstand, she keeps a framed picture of Arabic calligraphy of the *Basmala* or 'in the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful'. They choose to keep all other spaces of the house free from religious icons or symbols, instead, as Jinann jokingly said, displaying "*Swedish culture*", referring to their IKEA furnished flat.

Attending religious services or ceremonies is a matter of scheduling for most couples, and to many of them is no different than scheduling around other activities during their busy weeks. Alice and Tariq, however, explain that it is sometimes difficult for Alice to attend church because she does not like the feeling of attending without her family. Tariq has offered to accompany her to church services, but Alice does not think it fair to ask him to do so, just as he has not asked Alice to convert or attend mosque-related events. In other cases, such as that of the couples in hidden relationships, such as Fatimah residing with Jasper, or Zaid residing Tomas, mosque

attendance and involvement with gatherings such as Qur'an reading groups (something Fatimah attended prior to her relationship with Jasper) has slowly faded away. This decrease in collective participation has become a point of academic analysis for some social researchers in Britain, using cases such as these or statistical reports to determine a rapid decrease in religious belonging (Bruce 2002). This phenomenon within the context of mixed marriage will be explored in depth in Chapter Six on religious belonging.

Summary

As discussed through experiences of couples, marriage rituals and ceremonies range in meaning and often involve reinterpretations and compromise. There are overlaps, and at times contradictions between the multiple layers of experience (Werbner 2002: 17). Blending two seemingly opposing backgrounds into a new mixed family, is a continuous balance of negotiating social expectations and individual desires (Simpson 1998).

For some, partner selection may be linked to certain Qur'anic statements, or can be influenced by historical memory. Whatever the motivation, widespread expectations that marital partners are selected from within the biradari serves as a socially economic guarantee for cohesion within the biradari. It is a means for mitigating social risk of the group. When a partner outside of the cultural and religious expectations enters the family, negotiation for on behalf of both parties must occur. The most conspicuous and eventful negotiation, as a symbol of the entire marriage, is the wedding ceremony. During this time, the couples and many in the family are able to gauge how relations will move forward. Who will be the more

culturally dominant of the two families, will there be resistance to change or willingness to compromise? These ceremonies are more than just a contract, but are exemplars of the changes in belonging that occur during a mixed marriage. They are examples of 'give and take', of a growing compromise, where typically, both partner's cultural backgrounds have to adjust or provide space for a new type of cultural blending. Additionally, these negotiations continue beyond the wedding contract, and exist throughout the marriage including dietary adaptations, attending religious services, and sharing sacred spaces.

The compromises and hybrid performances, whether at weddings or in day-to-day life, do not merely reveal something about changing British Pakistani Muslim cultural belonging or that of their particular partner, but also reveal how individual life projections contribute to narrative processes of navigating change, expectation and risk. As will continue to be revealed throughout the following chapters, these cases of intermarriage expose how individual agents create, interact with, and transform the perceived resilience of current British Pakistani Muslim kinship communities.

OBLIGATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

Within Pakistan and its diaspora, marital reciprocity is a widespread practice, with spousal arrangements made between biradari members. These endogamous exchanges benefit the group by protecting and expanding upon existing resources, including wealth, property, and cultural ideology, which necessitate levels of loyalty, obligation and responsibility between spouses and families (Shaw 2009: 87). The sustainability of kinship relations fundamentally relies upon a transactional relationship or 'economy of regard' (Bloch 1874; Simpson 1998). While the 'economy of regard' is framed within a gift-giving framework, this context can be extended to include everyday transactions between spouses and family members including domestic responsibilities, engaging in sex, shopping, and caring for family members in a multitude of ways including physical and mental wellbeing and financial assistance (Simpson 1998).

A partner that is considered to be an 'outsider' is an impending social hazard to the endogamous community that relies upon a transactional 'economy of regard'. The 'outside' partner is not necessarily, nor readily accountable to group expectations of responsibility and as such, risks polluting or weakening the bonds between biradari members, consequentially threatening group resources, including economic resources and the maintenance of ideological traditions. Not only is there the potential 'conflict over what is transacted, but there is usually conflict over the meaning of the transaction' (Simpson 1998: 117). Many communities throughout the world do not simply view 'otherness' or lack of ritual adherence as impure, but also as dangerous (Douglas 1966). Marriage and intimate partnerships are not simply another form of

human interaction, but entail a much more nuanced connection. When speaking about the re-ordering of separated families and of navigating through marital differences, Simpson explains:

> This process is not, and is never likely to be, a mechanical re-allocation of personnel and resources, but will always reflect the deep psychic, emotional and practical investment that individuals make in one another, in their children and the spaces they together inhabit. It will always necessitate a re-negotiation of the basic human qualities of trust, commitment, regard, intimacy and love…
> (Simpson 1998: 124)

While Simpson is referring to the process of divorce, his statements are just as pertinent to the process of entering a marriage as they are to exiting one. Marriage is, as he says 'riddled with anxieties brought on by the efforts of husbands and wives to match their individual expectations and life-styles to the constraints of family life' (ibid. 159).

This chapter explores how British Pakistani Muslims and their 'outside' partners navigate through expectations of loyalty and obligation within the expectations of the wider family and kinship group. Contingent upon spousal 'loyalty and obligation' come expectations of specific spousal roles that are often delineated by gender, in which many Pakistani wives are expected to take on traditional gender roles of domestic household responsibilities rather than pursuing paid employment (Charsley, Bolognani, et. al 2016). Although, as observed within the Pakistani diaspora and British Pakistani imaginaries, contesting 'public spaces' and the ownership and control over these spaces are being challenged by both Pakistani women and younger Pakistani generations who seek to re-evaluate the authoritative voices of the community in Britain, which had previously been perceived as exclusively male (Werbner 2002: 191). Such challenges highlight not only the contestations within the Pakistani diaspora in Britain, but also become evident within

intermarriages that contribute to the re-framing of 'private' and 'public' and of gender expectations.

Who marries whom?

Within Lévi-Strauss' model of alliance theory, women, not men, are exchanged in marriage (1969). Men remain 'within' the group, and women move between the groups. In Pakistani cross-cousin marriage both women and men remain within their kin group. Women, however, are still considered to be the transferable person in marital exchange, moving from one household to another. A new wife typically moves into a home with her husband, and oftentimes this also implies she is moving in with his parents and any unmarried younger siblings. For Pakistani women, a wife is expected to assume and adhere to specific ascribed gender roles (as a caretaker, cleaner, cook), and by moving into her husband and in-laws' home she is held accountable for her actions and familial obligations. For the non-Pakistani British woman, integrating into certain gender expectations can serve as a challenge.

The prevalence of men marrying outside of the biradari, outside of Islam, or outside of their ethnic belonging, remains low compared to the preference of marrying a religious, ethnic, and community 'insider'. However, it is more acceptable for a Pakistani man to marry outside of his religious, ethnic, or kin communities. Participants identified two major justifications for the gender difference in marital practices; the first is religious in nature and the second involves roles and responsibilities of the kin group. As reviewed in the previous chapter, the Qur'an permits marriage between 'People of the Book', yet, it specifies that men may receive women of 'the Book', and is silent on whether the same is true for women. When I

spoke to Dr. Mirza, he touched upon the gender discrepancy from a religious perspective. He explained to me:

> *Look, what happens if a Muslim girl decides to marry a Jewish or Christian boy? In theory, I have no problem with it. In practice, am I a coward? I was approached to do something like this [perform a nikah between a Muslim woman and non-Muslim man]. The only thing I could do is pray for them in person, but not issue a certificate. This is sort of a confession I am making to you, because the repercussions are on my family and when even the slightest understanding of religion is contrary to the status quo… well, these are the times we are living in. Religion is used as a weapon. You saw what happened with the Karachi Islamic Studies professor? If you condemn his killing, you are guilty by association.*

Dr. Mirza was referring to Professor Mohommad Shakil Auj, who was murdered in his car in Karachi after issuing a *fatwa* permitting Muslim women to marry non-Muslim men.[1] He admitted that he agrees with the professor's fatwa, and would even like to perform these types of intermarriages, but that he is reluctant to because of the consequences. Again, he emphasised the repercussions, not only for himself, but for his parents, siblings, and anyone closely associated with him. One of Dr. Mirza's academic colleagues joined us in a conversation that same day, and to my surprise, the first thing he asked me about was whether I had come across any Pakistani Muslim women married to non-Muslim men. While I had, they were few in number. In these few cases, British civil ceremonies were held rather than nikahs, demonstrating to the Dr. Mirza's colleague that it is still difficult to find an imam who will marry a Muslim woman to a non-Muslim man.

Islamic marital laws raised further questions, not just about the religious development of such laws, but about gender differences that parallel these religious

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[1] Professor Shakil Auj was murdered in 2014 after it had been circulated via social media and gossip that he was an apostate and was teaching blasphemous practices, including issuing fatwas that women need not remove lipstick or nail polish before prayers, and that women could marry non-Muslims. Despite his murder, students of the University of Karachi protested in support of Professor Shakil Auj declaring: 'The murders of teachers is a murder of the whole society'. See: www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/18/liberal-professor-islam-shot-dead-pakistan-karachi

laws. Even if Islam was removed from the equation, British Pakistani Muslims continue to marry within their group, and uphold certain gender expectations. Much of the religious guidance on gender responsibility is complimentary to the aims of the British Pakistani household and community, demonstrating the interrelation between metaphysical and social justifications (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996: 17). The layers of 'community' range from the immediate home, to the smaller networks of homes, to the wider geographically related community, to the transnational community. Individual participation in these various layers is subject to the individual's level of interaction, though, as revealed in many of the intermarried cases, becomes complicated due to competing worldviews. As is also revealed, gender responsibility is fundamental to the support of these layers of community.

Women and the 'home'

Women of mixed marriages frequently discussed practices of *purdah*, but opinions regarding purdah varied greatly between each individual woman. When meeting some of the women who converted to Islam prior to marriage, the meaning of purdah was used within a positive and virtuous context, that solidified both religious and social roles. For others, certain purdah practices presented confusion around inferiority of women and superiority of men. From a strictly historical and definitional point of view, Esposito writes of purdah as gender separation of public spaces, variations of veiling, and restricting women to certain spaces of a home during socialising, all of which he says are encompassed within both religious and cultural customs, seeing as many of these practices existed in the pre-Islamic Mediterranean and Persia (Esposito 2003:282).

The strict contrast of perceptions on purdah was notable between convert and non-convert wives of British Pakistani Muslim men. Their experiences differed drastically, though the differences changed depending on what aspect of purdah we were discussing. For example, *hijab*, and other forms of covering, were viewed in a different manner than physical separation in the home. I must also admit that of all of my interactions and observations with couples, I only once ever experienced any sort of spatial gender separation within a British Pakistani Muslim home.

Alice the 'outsider'

When visiting Tariq and Alice in Manchester, Alice presented her position on common purdah practices. She explained that as a Christian woman, she has no obligation to wear hijab or dress in a certain way to appear 'more modest'. She also stated that she never practices spatial separation of male guests and women in her home. However, she viewed the choice to veil and to adhere to spatial separation as a woman's freedom over her own body and home. Despite holding this view, she still maintained reservations about the practice of keeping women confined to a specific space of the home, particularly the kitchen, whenever male guests are present. She shared that she had experienced this practice a few times when visiting friends, where she was expected to sit in the kitchen with the other women and refrain from 'disturbing' the men. She explained, '*Am I not good enough to have a chat too? Can I not keep up?*' While Alice associated the act of gender separation in social spaces in the home as a 'woman's choice', she simultaneously viewed this choice as confining women to certain rules and responsibilities such as cooking and cleaning. Her association between the spatial separation of the home and a domestic hierarchy of

space can be viewed in western notions of 'private vs. public' and of hierarchical arguments based on these perceived spheres of separation. Originally deriving from the ancient Greek concept of spatial separation, the private has been considered the domestic and also inferior realm, which stands in opposition to the public, or the political sphere (Arendt 1958: 28). While Arendt proposes that the private and public are neither inferior nor superior to each other, she maintains a distinction between the two realms, with a third 'social' realm, which is both public and private (ibid.). Similarly is the nature/culture paradigm (Ortner 1974) where housebound women can be viewed as not 'fully persons', an idea that Strathern argues to be predicated upon models of 'extradomestic domains of power' and of the 'politicization of domesticity' (Strathern 1984: 30). Henrietta Moore cautions against the popular framework of the household as a bounded and autonomous space, and advises the necessity to further investigate the influence and relation of external networks (Moore 1988: 59). Alice's concern with the delineation of space is not actually about women being inferior within these spaces, but rather she feels that those who expect her to adhere to practices of purdah do so because it is *they* who believe she is inferior. On the contrary, a Muslim friend of Alice's whom I spoke to felt the opposite and stated that purdah is not 'confinement' nor an attempt to make women inferior, but that separation is a type of division of labour and responsibility, and also serves as the maintenance of moral values in Islam.

We sat in the kitchen to the rear of Alice and Tariq's terraced house. The kids were watching cartoons in the front sitting room, but would run in and out of the kitchen for snacks. As Alice spoke to me, I watched as she performed near perfect hostess duties. She made sure to make my tea exactly to my liking, and moved around the kitchen and house making sure everything was in place so that I was always

comfortable. She spent a great deal of time preparing South Asian dishes for me to try. I asked if she did this especially for me, to which she laughed and replied, '*Well, yes, but I do this for everyone who visits me*!' We continued to discuss 'obligation and responsibilities'. Some of the responsibilities she believes she is expected to perform include taking her children to Qur'an lessons, providing all of the cooking and cleaning, regularly visiting with and contributing to the wellbeing of her mother-in-law (e.g. cleaning the home, keeping her company), being actively involved with other women in the Pakistani Muslim community through gift giving, socialising, and arranging 'play-dates' for the children. She explained that these expectations are based solely on gender and her status as a married woman, and that husbands are never expected to perform these tasks.

Despite her subtle criticisms of some of these roles, she admitted that she actively performs all of the responsibilities that her in-laws expect of her, with the exception of spatial separation of guests in her home. She spoke of her position to 'pick and choose' varying degrees of participation in these roles explaining:

> *I am quite sure most of the women talk about me behind my back. I pick the kids up from Qur'an lesson and I always see the women sitting together waiting and chatting. They always look at me. I wave and smile, but rarely join them because I am so busy between work and the kids. Plus I really don't want to join them. I only have time to join when we do playdates on the weekend. I know they must talk about me because even when I do see them for the kids to play, they make comments like why I have not converted yet, and how it will confuse the kids. I think it is funny actually. I just kill them with kindness.*

She then described her relationship with her female in-laws.

> *They are another story altogether. Tariq isn't the oldest son, so it's his brother and his brother's wife who live with mum and dad. She [her sister-in-law] is the one with the major responsibility to mum and cleaning, etcetera. But, it's weird because she is actually from Pakistan, not just British, but Pakistani, and I think she thinks this gives her the right to think she is above me, no doubt because I am younger and because I am English. So, she calls a lot for me to come over to help with mum, but I end up doing all of the work. She thinks she is controlling me, but I really don't mind it. The kids get to spend a lot of time with their*

grandparents in the process, and I also get that break from the kids. The only thing I don't like is when she asks me for money, you know for stuff like extra shopping she needs because her husband isn't home at the time. I work during the day, so that money is hard earned, so is Tariq's. My family [speaking of her English parents], they don't do that. I've always been taught to be independent when I turn 18, no more 'bank of mum and dad', but with Tariq's family, there is no such thing as financial independence. When she [sister-in-law] asks me for money, she does it in front of mum and dad, so I can't argue and say 'no', otherwise it makes Tariq and myself look bad. Although, I will lie a lot and say I only have a tener on me, even if I have more.

Tariq joined our conversation and explained that he would be content distancing themselves from his family and Islam. He called Alice a 'saint' for dealing with his family and trying to please everyone. '*She doesn't have to do this. I married her because I love who she is*'. Alice said that she is able to cope with the gossip, financial interdependence, and 'bullying' from her eldest sister-in-law, not because she views it as a duty, but she thinks the payoff of having an unbroken family are worth it.

It is a choice, and it is a sacrifice, for something better than the independence Tariq wants. The moments that the kids get with his parents will always be remembered. Tariq would regret it later in life, so would I. Both of our parents are getting older, and so will we one day. No one should be cut out of the family because it is 'too hard'. That is what makes family special… because it is hard!

Tariq nodded, kissed his wife on her head, and made a quick joke before leaving the room saying, '*I saw a job advert in Spain. Nice and warm, just say "yes" and we'll be off!*'

Alice's performance of expected duties, and even enjoyment of being gossiped about as an outsider, or concealing money from her sister-in-law constituted her own minor 'rebellion', as faithfully executing all expected duties, while still remaining an 'outsider' through subtle choices on her behalf to not 'fully conform'. While I use 'rebellion' as a way to describe Alice's own feelings about her actions, I am cautious against finding and explaining 'resisters' who are working towards their own interests

as separate from traditions (Mahmood 2005: 8). Alice conceded that she is not viewed as entirely 'loyal' in the eyes of Tariq's family because she does not aesthetically or religiously mirror their perspective of a Pakistani Muslim woman. Far from Alice being a 'victim' of her circumstances and then as a 'resister' to these circumstances, she is in fact expressing her agency through the community (ibid. 2005: 7-12). Though it may appear that Alice practices random selection at times, in fact, her decisions are sensibly weighed actions that occur within her marriage. When she performs duties for her mother-in-law, sister-in-law, and children, her in-laws view her as adhering to the rules of the community, but Alice views her actions as her own, which happen to correspond with what is expected of her. While she may not perform most of the duties without being asked to, she sees the benefit of doing so for the purpose of 'keeping the peace', not just for Tariq's sake, but her children's. Her choice to fulfil certain roles offers practical rewards that align with her vision of her own life story.

Charlotte and Margaret the 'reverts'

In predominately Christian-centric societies, 'conversion" is the common method for changing one's religious belonging. While participants would use the word 'conversion' to describe the action of changing one's religion, some would correct themselves, stating that it is in fact 'reversion' that was occurring. This coincides with the teaching of *fitra*, meaning that every child is born a Muslim. In this sense, all humans are Muslim, though many are either unaware of it, or choose to deny it. Intentionally leaving Islam, then, is apostasy or *riddah*. Additionally, an unbeliever of

any kind[2] can be referred to as a *kaffir*, namely as a derogatory statement. Because of status of 'People of the Book', though, kaffir may not always be used for other Abrahamic traditions.

Charlotte refers to herself as a revert, conceding that she has 'always been a Muslim', though only came to this realisation after being introduced to Islam formally through her husband. For Charlotte, being a Muslim woman is inseparable from what she considers to be her social duties. Like Alice, she provided specific examples of what she considers to be her duties, but did so in accordance with her Islamic identity. She explained:

> *I took care of my mother-in-law, but I think the generation after me… I don't think they will look after me. You know? It is dying out. Cause, my generation that learned about mosque at home and also learned cooking and cleaning. These days, they are going to college and university and they're not being taught family values. It's all turning now. The majority of the English girls… all they want to do is get an education. They don't want to be like their mum. For me, I would never ever let me mother-in-law lift a cup. With my generation, we automatically say to the elderly, "sit and we do the work". That has gone out the door now. And the generation after that is getting even worse. I've spoken to younger English girls if they have their gran living with them. They say they don't want to live with them or any other gran because they want to be single, party, go to school, ya know, leave everything. You would never hear this out of a Muslim girl's mouth. But, also the western world is spoiling it for the Muslim girls. The girls are starting to be given more freedom, like the boys have. Like, in public toilets, there are signs now targeted at the Pakistani girls that if they are being forced to be married, they can call a certain number. A lot of the girls see that as a way out, as a way to run away from home. The girls just need to make one phone call and they are free. It is shameful. It is messing up Islam. When the girls get free, it messes up Islam, and it messes up the family. Who will be there for the gran, and know how to look after husbands properly?*

She would frequently shift between the multiple factors that influence her commitment to her duties. Generational difference, religious belonging, educational pursuits, and ethnic belonging were each referred to as either positively or negatively affecting Charlotte's view of a wife and daughter's responsibility. For Charlotte,

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[2] This can include atheists, polytheists, and other religions considered not 'of the Book'; though some may use it to derogatorily also include Christians and Jews.

mundane tasks such as making cups of tea, standing so that the grandmother may sit, and staying 'at home' as opposed to following other pursuits in life, are all a part of a cultural worldview that she has confirmed through the discursive norms she has come to know through her in-laws. For Charlotte, her cultural and religious worldviews are one in the same and cannot be designated or understood separately from each other.

Through her reversion to Islam, Charlotte feels she has fully come to understand and appreciate her duties as the wife of a Pakistani Muslim man. For her certain rules of purdah, such as wearing the hijab, are non-essential because it does not directly impact family relations. Instead, she views the 'desire for too much independence' as the ultimate enemy to a woman's role in her family. This independence goes both ways; that is for boys and girls. Charlotte explained that if her grandson were to meet a non-Muslim girl at university it would be disastrous to the family because the non-Muslim girl would not have a sense of ideological loyalty to her husband or his family. She explained it more simply to me:

> *Women in Pakistan must care for her husband, the elders, and also be responsible for the children. No Muslim woman would go against this. My own [children] didn't need to be told what to do, they knew who to marry to keep it all straight. The children learn the Qur'an, but the girls especially watch and learn what they should be doing when they get older and marry. The boys, well they know they choose a girl who will do these things without a question. If they leave, then who will look after us older people? Who will help us and make sure our religion and our customs ain't lost?*

Charlotte demonstrated the mutual and transgenerational chain of dependency that is created within the biradari. Within relational roles of mother, wife, daughter, granddaughter, sister, and grandmother, it is the woman who holds a position of authority. Without the woman fulfilling the duties of these roles, the entire family is exposed to risks associated with loss of physical care, loss of ideological worldviews, and everything else conceivable that benefits these relationships. For the entire family

and community network to function as a whole, the individual woman must satisfy her role.

Like Charlotte, Margaret also reverted to Islam during her marriage to her Pakistani husband. Raised Anglican, she decided to explore Islam as a young adult after meeting her husband. Unlike Charlotte, Margaret clarified her Muslim identity as a spiritual one rather than social, though she admits that one influences the other. She explained, '*Once you are at one with Allah, everything else in life falls into place*'. When I asked her why she considered it to be a spiritual experience, she described her formative experience of actually knowing she was Muslim:

> *I heard the Qur'an being read in Arabic in the most beautiful and mesmerising way. I had heard it like this before, but it was just words to me those times. This time, it just moved me; it made sense. I could feel it throughout me. From that day on, I just kept getting closer and closer with Allah. Reading the Qur'an, learning Arabic. No one told me to do this. I just did because I knew Allah was asking me to.*

In this sense, 'spirituality' is not being applied in the manner of 'believing without belonging' (see Davie 2015 on this paradox), but as a way of countering the nominal or social functions of religious belonging by focusing on the transcendent aspects of religiosity. In fact, for these conversion cases, belonging and practicing within strict religiously institutionalised settings are paramount to demonstrating their newfound devotion. The social reasons were merely a secondary benefit to Margaret's reversion.

Margaret continued to explain how she has 'never been closer' with her in-laws and the other women in the community. Margaret says she feels much more connected with Pakistanis and other Muslim women than with the English women she once knew. Conversion is a very public act, even if one thinks it is private. Being a Muslim is an act of submission to God. It is an act of verbalising the *shahada*: 'There is no god, but God and Muhammad is His prophet' in the presence of witnesses. Furthermore, one must embody Islam through acts of submission, such as *zakat*

(paying alms), *salat* (praying five times a day), *sawm* (fasting during Ramadan), and *Hajj* (a pilgrimage to Mecca). These, including the shahada, are known as the Five Pillars of Islam. Because of the many social and religious contexts during which conversion takes place, some view conversion through two lenses: conversion by 'way of the light' and by 'way of power' due to external situations (Dutton 1999: 156). Margaret would classify hers as a conversion by way of light, though her conversion had wider effects on the ease with which she adopted her social roles in her family.

There are debates surrounding whether religion is a separate and distinct category from culture[3]. For many, Islam, regardless of the sect, is viewed as integral to everything in life, including what is perceived as mundane tasks. However, this separation of 'sacred' and 'profane' is still a debatable topic within Islam, with some Muslims and scholars finding a noticeable separation between the two (Bolognani 2012; Werbner 2002: 115) while others have stated that a separation of spheres is near impossible (Lewis 2007: 3). As my own research has shown, acknowledging or denying a separation is entirely dependent upon the individual's experience and can even change at times for that individual, though for the most part, even when envisioning a separation, participants of this study found it difficult to separate the overall identity of being Muslim from contributing to their biradari.

Islam, whether viewed as a 'sacred' space beyond the confines culture, was unanimously viewed by participants as being important to the totality of belonging to their biradari. Belonging to another religion diminishes one's belonging in the biradari, based on the premise that cohesion on all levels of ideological planes is

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[3] See the next chapter for a discussion on this theoretical distinction.

indispensable to communal loyalty. I invited Margaret to share what attracted her to Islam. Her explanation was embedded in a romanticisation of the other:

> *It was different. It was something entirely alien to me… of lands far away. Why did these women hide themselves? It was mysterious. It intrigued me. The language and calligraphy. It was something exciting. I stopped school at 16, you know, and this was long before many Muslims began coming to the country. So when I came across it, it was something different and exciting to learn about. But then I realised during my experience [spiritual experience through hearing the Qur'an] that it was more than these things.*

Such reflection on her initial romanticisation of Islam was not unique, especially for partners in culturally mixed relationships. As some researchers have identified, initial attraction to a life different from their own is often rooted in the 'exotic other', and of setting up idealised stereotypes (Breger and Hill 1998: 11, 52). As Kapferer and Theodossopoulos write, '[m]arvelous and mysterious, dangerous, deceptive or corrupt, the exotic is an inherently relational term that presupposes an awareness of Otherness' (2016: 1). Still, while Margaret has now moved away from these romanticised visions of Islam, she views her responsibility as a 'Pakistani Muslim woman' to be a public example of how Muslim women should present themselves, both within and outside of her home. She remarked upon her shock and disappointment when she first visited Pakistan and found the women to be inappropriately dressed. '*They barely wore their hijab, just loose, ill-fitted scarves. Some girls were even wearing modern dress like here in England. I told some of them they should feel ashamed for not covering properly, that if an English woman like me can do it, they better be doing it without a problem.'* Her comments were still rooted in an ideal she had constructed for herself regarding the standards of which she expected all Muslim women to adhere to. In this sense her disappointment, but also persistent expectation, partially rooted in her ideal of the 'other', and also in upholding an important domestic role within her family.

Even with her idealised vision of Islam, her efforts have magnified her position and loyalty within the community. Her own idealism resonates with what can be considered as a nostalgic idealism (Breger and Hill 1998) with other British Pakistani Muslims.. Unlike Alice, who did not convert, both Charlotte and Margaret are more easily accepted by their in-laws. Even though Alice adheres to most of the social tasks expected of her, her publically scrutinised decision to not convert has continued to make family members sceptical of her loyalty.

Agency and individuality

Women bear the responsibility of raising the children to be socialised into Pakistani Muslim customs, such as being obedient toward and caring for their elders. Particularly for young girls, the emphasis on caring for their Pakistani mother-in-law is engrained as they observe their own mother take after her mother-in-law. This practice is transmitted between each generation. The mother has the role of raising her boys to find a wife who will one day look after her when she is aging, and of raising their daughters to eventually look after their own mother-law. This social responsibility is also reinforced as an Islamic duty to family and kin. The exegesis in the *Glorious Qur'an* explains the esteemed position of the woman in marriage explaining that kinship 'has direct reference to the high status of motherhood and wifehood in Islam. Kinship in Islam is regarded as one of the most important social institutions' (Surah 4:1, commentary 255). However, there are many exceptions to these responsibilities, especially if the exception yields other benefits for the family. For example, Fatimah has moved away from her entire family in order to receive a university degree and embark on a career in accounting. For her and her family this

role is far more financially beneficial, and also raised Fatimah's status as an eligible marital partner. While it benefits Fatimah's own educational interests, it does not compete with her expected loyalty to her family and kin. For many other participants, though, such as Alice, Charlotte, and Margaret, the responsibilities were clearly defined, especially as 'outsiders' being introduced to their 'new lives' within the biradari.

Far from perceiving these responsibilities as a form of oppression, the female household role within Islam is a position of influence. In her discussion of feminist politics within Islam and the mosque, Mahmood explains that indeed, according to readings of al-Gazhali, that a woman's duty to her kin is paramount, but only if it does not interfere with her relationship to God, thus empowering the woman within her kin group due to the effects of her social responsibility as well as the agency to invoke 'Islamic' activism in the name of moral responsibility (Mahmood 2005: 182). Other feminist scholars of Islam have reasoned that past theories on the roles of women in Islam have disregarded female voices, and that current trends find that many of these women have much richer and more substantial roles within their communities; though not always externally visible, their roles permeate community related actions (ibid. 2005, 6; Abu-Lughod 2013). The relationship between Islam, kinship, and gender responsibility each reinforce the other.

At times, the paradox arises where women conceding to a publically perceived subordinate role are difficult to assess by feminist scholars (Mahmood 2005: 16). Within this is the ontological problem of the subject, the origin of her agency, and the effects of such agency. On one hand, even if a woman is choosing to perform within her expected role, this role still likely functions within a patriarchal framework, thus continuing to affirm the woman's subjection. On the other hand, there is the

ontological argument that 'the abject can only be conceived in relation to hegemonic terms of discourse' and that the subject is thus incapable of a pure ontological 'Otherness' (Mahmood 2005: 159; Butler 1993: 8).

While there are various uses, interpretations, and possible misinterpretations of Foucault's discourse on subjectivity, it is understood that power produces the subject (Kelly 2009: 78-104; Butler 1997). This process has been described by Foucault as *assujettissement*, meaning subjection or his neologism 'subjectivation', whereby an individual becomes the subject through a process of subordination (Butler 1997: 2; Foucault 1980). He distinguishes between differing 'modes of subjection', where one chooses the manner in which she establishes herself in relation to the obligation (Foucault 1984: 27). The subject's agency and self creation does not exist within a vacuum, but is realised through the discursive history of society.

Margaret's and Charlotte's conversions, and subsequent adherence to their expected roles as women, developed as choices of self realisation. These choices, though, were determined within the framework of the socioreligious structure that positions them as supposedly subordinate. However, this is not to state that their actions are pre-determined by social and political contexts, but rather these contexts serve as narratives from which they construct their own life stories. What about Alice and others like her then? Alice did not convert, yet she seemed to pick and choose her role in the family and community. In this sense it would seem that Alice is contradicting her inner thoughts, feelings, and desires with her outward expressions. As Mahmood discovered during her years of interaction with the women in the Islamic mosque revival in Egypt, she found a process of action on behalf of the women that would cultivate their inner thoughts and actions. To put it more precisely in her terms, 'it is through repeated bodily acts that one trains one's memory, desire,

and intellect to behave according to established standards of conduct' (Mahmood 2005: 157).

Alice, in this case, is performing acts that do not necessarily align with her inner thoughts. She will take the children to Qur'an lessons on her own accord, yet has no interest herself in the actual knowledge of Islam. She meets nearly all expectations her in-laws bestow upon her, yet she has reservations at times about the fact that she feels she is being taken advantage of. In this light, and according to her in-laws, this uneasiness at times with her own in-laws and outright personal disregard of Islam could be viewed as valid reasons for their scepticism towards any instinctive loyalty to them. As Mahmood suggests, liberal conceptions of the self may interpret this dichotomy as a betrayal of the self, and yet the women in her study view it as a process where the end goal is to synchronise the two (Mahmood 2005: 157). That is, the actions and performances, through their repetition, will eventually align the inner thoughts with their performance. For Alice, though, her inner motivation is not rooted in an Islamic ideal, and her actions remain a performative routine because she has no aspiration to dissolve the discrepancy between her thoughts and actions. This, however, does not imply that her agency is oppressed, but rather begs the question why she opts to perform acts that do not entirely align with her thoughts.

Speaking of agency, Abu-Lughod remarks that providing women with is not the same as excessive cultural relativism, nor does it seek to contest that all women are equal in their experiences or free from oppression (Abu-Lughod 2002: 787). Rather, it is to discern different histories, experiences, and concepts of personhood that we may or may not be wrong about without permitting women to speak for themselves. Additionally, agency is not about (or not always about) rebellion. Resistance certainly exists as a type of agency, but having female agency does not

equate to overcoming masculine norms. Can a woman really choose what she wants when her choice is what the patriarchal system has expected of her? This question has often revolved around the popular topic of veiling in Islam.

Abu-Lughod describes the shock many 'liberals' had when even after the 'liberation' of women in Afghanistan from the Taliban, women did not choose to discard their burqas. She assertively counters this western preoccupation with veiling by writing,

> Not only are there many forms of covering, which themselves have different meanings in the communities in which they are used, but also veiling itself must not be confused with, or made to stand for, lack of agency[…] Is it not a gross violation of women's own understandings of what they are doing to simply denounce the burqa as a medieval imposition? Second, we must take care not to reduce the diverse situations and attitudes of millions of Muslim women to a single item of clothing (2002: 786).

Along these lines is the confusion over individuality and whether it is in tension with notions of community. The individual and community are often pitted against each other in a dualistic fashion, where the individual represents a Western paradigm. Nigel Rapport highlights this typical error, claiming it to be indefensible and 'at best confusing individuality with individualism' (Amit and Rapport 2002: 135). When Charlotte described her disappointment that 'Western ideology' is damaging younger girls' sense of obligation to her family, she was specifically referring to the ideological individualism. Charlotte described anger at the British state for influencing young minds into a false sense of 'choice', and to 'rebel' against arranged marriages. Granted, these options are also made available to Charlotte, yet her agency comes into focus because through her 'lawful choice' to do what she wants in life, she has chosen to marry a Pakistani man and become a Muslim, adopt to the model of her biradari responsibilities, and has chosen this path as a part of her 'life project'. For Rapport, while individualism is a 'particular sociocultural form of behavior',

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individuality, like that which Charlotte is expressing, is 'a human universal: by virtue of a unique consciousness' (ibid. 135). While discursive histories and traditions serve as past and parallel narratives with which individuals interact, they should not be viewed as overly deterministic in an individual's life story. The model that treats individuals as a product of social discourse neglects that individual agency and responsibility create, shape, and change the social worlds in which they live (Rapport and Overing 2000: 193-195).

The examples of Alice, Charlotte, and Margaret demonstrate how their individuality moves within the larger categories of communal belonging, specifically within the Pakistani biradari. Much of the previous work by anthropologists on Pakistanis and their diasporas has focused on senses of community, where resources are shared between biradari members (Shaw 1988; Charsley 2013). These sociocultural boundaries of shared resources indeed exist to a certain degree, but this notion of 'community' is perceived as superseding one's individual identity, and can be viewed as an 'illusory' notion of community (Amit and Rapport 2002: 161). As an illusory notion, the community is believed to predict how members of the community behave. However, it is not the community that dictates members' actions because it is only individuals who constitute a community. Rather it is individuals weighing social risks as a part of their life stories that determine the maintenance or parting with bounded senses of collectivities.

Talal Assad's argument when debating the 'Anthropology of Islam' encourages the importance of a discursive tradition to locate the nucleus of Muslim belonging. Yet on the other hand, Marranci argues for orienting the discussion from the point of view of the individual human being before the category of Islam (Asad 2008: 7). In the same vein, when speaking about how individuals such as Alice,

Charlotte, and Margaret navigate their sense of belonging and responsibility within their homes and communities, it is important to observe each individual and the effect she has on shaping her communities and in return how she shapes her life story in the context of parallel and intersecting narratives as a part of a self-reflexive process of narrative formation.

Each of the women confirmed much of the existing social research on responsibilities of women within the community. For the most part, the wife is responsible for being the 'glue' to the family, ideologically and practically. However, for these responsibilities to even exist, the individual woman must also exist and choose to perform these roles. Of course, many of them have chosen to take on certain roles, because they can perceive the consequences of choosing otherwise in relation to their own life stories. Just as all other individuals, they use their agency to weigh outcomes that inform their decisions. For someone like Alice, who has not conformed to all of the existing social norms such as converting to Islam, how do her individual choices affect these existing norms?

Alice has not converted to Islam for the sole reason that she does not 'believe' in it. Without this belief, she does not want to embody it. In her opinion, to do so would be to ridicule Islam. Because of this attitude she also refrains from expressing forms of purdah separation found in other British Pakistani homes. Her children are used to mixed gender spaces, and even occasionally accompany their English grandparents to church. She did say that her children would likely 'still be Muslim', but that such decision is ultimately their choice.

While Alice is consequentially responsible for her own identity formation, her decisions, especially those she makes with her children, have further reaching effects on her family due to their interactions. The 'expected payoff' of choosing to marry at

all is to participate in a type of collectivity that seeks to create a 'long-term project of family life' and chief among this project is a mutual effort to provide stability (Simpson 1998: 6). Margaret's and Charlotte's resolutions to adhere to pre-existing social norms continue to reinforce these norms, but on their own accord as willing participants in their marriages. Alice has partially taken them up, but what she understands as minor deviances of these norms may gradually alter the status quo. Alice's deviations from the British Pakistani Muslim status quo is not unnoticed by her own in-laws and other community members as already mentioned. Their scepticism towards Alice is, in a way, an acknowledgement of the power of the individual to generate change.

In her research in Uzbekistan, Svetlana Peshkova discovered that the women she worked with were using a specific methodology for '(re)making the existing society' (2014: 251). Employing the established religious teachings of Islam, they gave new voice to these religious instructions to enact change. They subtly altered the political and moral directions of their society through 'individual evolution into a moral subject capable of influencing and remaking not only her self but her immediate context through her existential power' (ibid. 253). Presenting her analysis of 'relational existential power', Peshkova surmises that 'social relations have no life of their own' and that 'self-formation *always* has social effects' (emphasis hers, ibid. 263-264). Keeping the power of the individual in mind, how does this impact the existing status quo?

Effecting change and the intermarriage question

Specific gender roles and responsibilities are often employed as visible markers to distinguish a Pakistani Muslim community from other communities in Britain. Islam, expectations of purdah, and family interdependence reinforce each other. As mentioned throughout this chapter, intermarriage serves as a potential disruption to these sociocultural norms. When intermarriage practices increased in the United States, Ruth Shonle Cavan wrote, 'Interreligious marriage threatens values, security, and continuity of a religion, and is held in check by an endogamous eligibility system that extends to the incorporation of children of intermarried couples into one or the other religion' (1970: 311). Hastings Donnan also expressed these fears in Northern Ireland stating the mixed families are often 'judged failures for their inability to successfully transmit the values and beliefs of one generation to the next' (Donnan 1990: 213). Within British Pakistani Muslim households, the mother is expected to transmit cultural and religious ideology to children. Having a non-Pakistani, non-Muslim woman adopt this role poses potential risks to the existing norms.

Warnings against intermarriage have also included the spread of haphazard statistics about inevitable divorce rates. An article from 1962 in the United States hinted at the higher divorce rates of interfaith marriages, though did so without providing any distinct statistical evidence (Barnett 1962: 193). Alice showed me a book that her sister-in-law gifted to her to acquaint Alice more with 'Islamic marriage'. The book was called *Addressing the Taboos: Love, Marriage and Sex in Islam* by Zia U. Sheikh (2014). Alice said she had only skimmed through it, but could not manage to fully read it, explaining the problems she had with the author, such as his suggestion that 'upwards of 90% of mixed unions end in failure' (2014: 45). Further, he suggests that even for those few that do not necessarily end in divorce, major problems will undoubtedly arise, such as women not following purdah

properly, mistakes with halal laws, and most importantly a 'severe crisis of identity' for the children (ibid. 46). With this sort of reading material circulating, it is no surprise that negative perceptions exist.

If agency is a human characteristic regardless of social context, then is intermarriage being overly blamed for unwanted change within a community? While I do not know whether it is necessarily overly targeted as the source of change, it remains a valid fear due to such direct differences if one relates communal belonging with the 'outsider' individual. Yet, sometimes the change originates from within the British Pakistani Muslim community instead of from outside of it.

Jinaan, Salma, and non-Muslim husbands

Jinaan, for example, has remained distant from any Pakistani attachments since she was a teenager, with the exception of her friendship with Salma who is also married to a non-Muslim British Indian man. Jinaan's distance was one of circumstance, being an only child, and both parents now deceased; she lives in London with her Hindu husband, Rajbir. Salma also lives in London, and though first arranged in marriage to her husband in Pakistan, she divorced him and moved back to England, choosing to marry a Sikh man. Though I spoke to both women separately, we also decided to have a group chat via Facebook one evening. Through the group messaging, I was able to see how Jinaan and Salma distinguish themselves from each other because they both mentioned that they are often viewed through the same lens as women who 'abandoned their communities and married Indian boys'. I have decided to tell their stories together, not to group them as one in the same, but to explore their individuality side by side.

Jinaan: *Yeah, it was circumstantial. I didn't have a choice to not be a part of the community really because I never really was.*

Salma: *Right, whereas I was definitely a part of the community. Pretty much in the middle of it, especially in Pakistan. I still have friends back there, but for the most part, I can't go back. I took his kid's away, not to mention he probably knows by now about my new husband. But my parents are cool with it, they live nearby, so as long as they see their grandbabies they are happy.*

Audrey: *So, you both 'left' so to speak, but was the choice because you fell in love (Salma), or because of something else?*

S: *Definitely not because of love. I was already rebellious before I even met Pardeep. My parents always thought I was the rebellious type, even since I was little. My arrangement to my ex was supposed to 'domesticate me'. Lol. Yeah, that worked for about one minute... well two kids later.*

J: *Lol. I definitely wasn't considered rebellious. Like, I did everything textbook, you know? I got good grades at school, never disobeyed my mum. But, I was different regardless because we didn't have the big family and Dad had passed. Me being with Rajbir has nothing to do with him being Indian or whatever. We met at work, as you guys know. I could have just as easily married some English lad who takes his mum to church. Or I could have been with a Pakistani man. I don't care about race and stuff. Just be a good man, my friend, love me, etc. etc.*

S: *No offense to Jinann, but I actually love having a Sikh man. I kind of like the idea of pissing people off.*

J: *Yeah, but seriously, you love Pardeep regardless of the reputation.*

S: *Obviously. But, it kinda turns me on you know... that he is this 'other'. It keeps things interesting.*

J: *Lol. I know what you mean in that sense. Even though they are both still, you know, South Asian, there is definitely that sense of difference that makes you feel like you have that ability to just love regardless of what a bunch of other people tell you to do.*

As our conversations persisted, Salma continued to reinforce her self-perception as innately 'rebellious'. Jinaan on the other hand, drifted from British Pakistani Muslim social norms regarding marriage and family out of circumstance. In fact, she stated that except for partner selection, she mostly runs her home the same as she would if married to a Pakistani Muslim man.

Salma's self-proclaimed rebellion has manifested in a variety of ways. Originally married to a Pakistani man through an arrangement by her parents, they had two children. She originally moved to his house in a small village in the Punjab region, but eventually moved the family to Islamabad under the presumption that she would attend the Open University. Ultimately, it was a move towards instigating a divorce, something she said she was strategically planning. Her husband and mother-in-law agreed to move with her to take care of the children while she studied. Salma said they allowed her to follow this academic pursuit because they believed Salma needed this transition from British to Pakistani life. Plus, neither her husband nor mother-in-law spoke English very well, so the university social scene provided her an opportunity to interact in English. After only three years of marriage, she divorced her husband. While children would typically stay with the father after a divorce, she was able to keep her children with her because her youngest was still breastfeeding. She brought them with her back to England and has no plans of allowing her in-laws or ex-husband to see her or the kids.

I asked Salma why she sought the divorce and why she prevents her children form having a transnational relationship with their father. She explained:

> *Look, my husband wasn't a very good guy, he provided financially for us, but that's about as far as the goodness goes. For some women, that is enough. But it wasn't just that. I couldn't take any of the life there. There was no way I could be happy taking care of his mother and pretending to live with him, even though he was a cheating and abusive jerk. I wasn't in love. It was arranged, you know? I gave it a shot and thought that maybe I could change, but I'm not cut out for that kind of life. And the kids… if he saw them now, he would probably take them away. He is kind of crazy, and is probably more so now knowing that their new father figure is Sikh. I don't trust my ex. Like, I don't trust him with mine or my children's lives. He wouldn't know the first thing about finding us in England, so that's a good thing. He barely even speaks English, so he won't be moving here anytime soon. This is for the best.*

Note that Salma, even when trying to adhere to the social norms she was raised in, enacted her agency to weave in and out of her social environments. This enactment of rebellious agency was not caused by her intermarriage, rather her intermarriage was a product of her long-standing rebellion. One of the early American interfaith marriage research summaries from 1961 illustrates the likely pattern that explains tendencies towards intermarriage. It states,

> [I]t seems possible that in most cases there is similarity of attitudes from the beginning. The attitudes and practices of the religious groups differ in some respects, but many of those who intermarry do not subscribe to the position of their group even before they meet their future spouses. It must be remembered that only certain people intermarry, and these people are probably emancipated from the traditions of their group. They may have more in common with another emancipated person who is nominally of a different religion than they do with most people of their own religion (Heiss 1961: 228).

While Heiss is speaking of religious categories, this same sort of reasoning is useful for understanding Salma and Jinaan's intermarriages. Whether as a manifestation of rebellious characteristics as in the case of Salma, or due to a circumstantial sort of emancipation like Jinaan, neither felt particularly attached to this 'Pakistani Muslim community' to begin with. It was not an integral part of their individual life stories, and as such moved beyond it.

Additionally, it should be noted that as women, Jinaan and Salma present a much rarer act of intermarriage, as intermarriage of Pakistani Muslim women to 'outsiders' is often not possible under rules of nikah. Considering the well-established kinship networks amongst British Pakistani Muslims, there is potential threat to the benefits of the marital norms, if other women follow examples such as Jinaan and Salma. This threat also exists if men choose to marry women like Alice.

Revisiting Zaid

Discussing roles of the wife and the risks associated with wives selecting the 'wrong' husbands or husbands choosing the 'wrong' wives, begs a re-visit to Zaid's situation and his secretive same-sex partner. Zaid's relationship with Tomas certainly disrupts the concept of marital exchange and associated gender roles that accompany it. By having a secretive relationship and a conflicting identity between his family and Tomas, does Zaid essentially lose his ability to enact agency? Using Butler's theory of performativity, we must ask whether the physical enactment can challenge the presumptions of categories, such as gender, and more importantly how the individual enacts his/her agency within it (Butler 1990; 2010). In her ethnography on performativity and the ambiguity of gender and sexual identities amongst the 'parea' in Greece, Kirtsoglou argues:

> [S]exual identifications are not only conceptually or symbolically reworked by the subject, but also practically established consciously or unconsciously. In this sense, sexuality is not only a culturally constructed regulatory ideal, but also a practically or performatively instituted idiom or, in other words, not simply a subject of discourse but also a matter of practice (2004: 28).

Utilising performative theory, she explains that gender performativity, or any performativity for that matter, is not constantly based in a 'strategic kind of reflexivity', and instead acknowledges that 'gender is not always subject to the conscious will of the actor, or to a cognitive monitoring of the self' (ibid. 34).

Aware of the expectations of gender specified norms within his Pakistani sociocultural milieu, juxtaposed with his self identification as gay, Zaid is at times confused about how to reflect on the possibilities of combining what he considers to be deeply opposing lifestyles. He explained to me,

> *I don't know and have never known any gay Pakistani or Muslim. I am sure they exist somewhere, but I really, really doubt they have found a way to stay within the community. There's just no way. That's partly why I*

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have to keep this hidden. It can never work. Even if they [his parents] are cool with my sexuality, then how do I or my partner fit into the family? They expect a family- focused daughter-in-law to basically follow in the footsteps of all of the other women in my family.

We spoke about the possibility of him leaving Tomas to satisfy his role in his family as the oldest son, and marry a woman with his family's blessing. Would this choice to alter his sexual representation concede to the expected male quintessence expected of his family?

I really don't have a plan. I won't rule anything out though. If I stay 'single', like how my family thinks I am now, then that will disappoint them, too. But at least being single, my identity as a man in the family is not mistaken. I think they would question my abilities as a man if they knew I was gay. Like, being gay doesn't change that though. I just think they relate the two. Or at least see you as less of a man, especially if you aren't sexually with a woman. Like, for mum, it is about having grandbabies.

Keeping his relationship secret allows him to maintain his role as the dominant oldest son within his family. While he is still relatively young, he is able to mitigate this problem because he is seen as solidifying his career and financially contributing to his family. Eventually though, the pressure will be placed on him to find a wife to continue his family's blood line.

When Zaid is not working or spending time with Tomas, he regularly chooses to spend his time with his family. His mobile phone rings or buzzes numerous times of every hour of the day: messages from his dad, his cousins, close friends. He enjoys spending any free time at his parents' home, where the rest of his extended family also gather, simply for meals or hanging out. In this sense, Zaid both consciously navigates through his expected role as the eldest son and his sexuality. He carefully keeps them separated and strategically enacts his sexual self within the space of his hidden home life with Tomas. On the other hand, he still regularly re-confirms his

identity as the eldest son within his family, where he engages in conversations about 'finding a good woman' to raise children with.

Instead of viewing Zaid as subjected to a type of inhibited action, unable to fully express his individual agency, Zaid is reflexively enacting his identity. By being involved with his family, which makes him supremely happy, and also being able to have a life with Tomas, Zaid is deliberately navigating his life story. In other words, he is enacting a 'performative ambiguity' which can serve 'as a political habitat of alternative and conflicting sexualities, subjectivities, gender discourses' (Kirtsoglou 2004: 37-8). Though it is self aware, it is nonetheless complicated for him. Not much different from Kirtsoglou's description of the woman who on Sundays accompanies her mother to the Greek Orthodox Church, and yet by night 'sweats on the dance floor' to express her frustration over the woman who broke her heart, Zaid also moves between these spheres of 'plural and conflicting identifications' (ibid. 37). He accompanies his father to prayers, respects traditions of purdah practiced by his mother, aunts, and grandmother, and provides the allusion that he will one day dutifully bring a promising Pakistani Muslim daughter-in-law into the family. Then he returns to Tomas where they watch their favourite television programs together on their sofa, enact their romantic relationship together, and talk about their future, all without disturbing the order of his Pakistani family's existence.

Keeping his relationship secret is not just to protect himself from adverse reactions, but also to protect the comfort and routine of his family. The likely effects of revealing or attempting to join his 'two lives', would disrupt the interactions of each of his family members, something he does not want to do because he genuinely wants them to continue living peacefully within the norms they affirm and exist within. If he can continue to keep these identities separate, he believes he has

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negotiated a happy medium for everyone. However, I do not want to confuse his respectful and protective attitude as a form of *politesse* (Rapport 2012: 174), as it is not merely a superficial politeness on a civic level, but a conflicted and actively involved respectability he engages with his family and community. As stated, his ambiguity reveals how complicated individual agency becomes when it must come into contact with social contexts, which paradoxically are mutual narratives with which Zaid reflexively engages.

Summary

There is a general consensus that British Paksitani Muslim homes require certain degrees of participation in reciprocating obligation, especially obligations pertaining to one's gender roles (Shaw 2009; Werbner 2002, 1990). 'Outsider' partners are considered to be threats to these obligations, yet as revealed in this chapter, partners find ways to negotiate the risks involved with fulfilling or denying their expected roles. Agency and individuality should not be confused with the Western cultural ideology of individualism. Rather, individual agency is universal human characteristic; it is our ability to think, feel, and act. Sometimes our performative actions do not align with our thoughts and imaginings, an outcome of agents navigating social risk. Why does Alice still adhere to certain norms with her in-laws when in her mind she does not always agree with the ideological traditions from which they originate? Why at other times, does she reject certain norms in favour of her 'English' identity? In part, it is because she desires to maintain cohesion in her family, something already in line with relational roles she agrees with, but more prominently, her decisions are enactments of her ability to move in ways that subtly

influence change as a part of her own life narrative, as well as larger narrative interactions.

Zaid on the other hand, provides a narrative that demonstrates the complicated enactment of agency when he intentionally refuses to bring a wife into his family, while still providing his family with the impression that he will eventually do so. His movement between upholding a heterosexual traditional male role while with his family, and then shifting into his intimate life with Tomas, simultaneously counters as well as confirms norms and expectations. By moving between these two paradigms, he is able to take part in both spheres of existence, neither of which he is ready to abandon for the other. Yet his relationship with Tomas is still considered 'risky behaviour', something Zaid is highly cognisant of. He has intentionally set up a dual existence, at times a conscious strategy, and at other times a habitual performance that seeks to protect the norms of his family and community.

This innate quality of the human agent will always be a threat to 'community' in the sense that human identity fails to exist as a static construct. However, as routinely observed throughout the past decades of anthropological inquiry into Pakistani Muslim communities and their diasporas, individuals continue to affirm the benefits of the community and the networks they take part in. While there are individual exceptions to this sense of community, there is still an effort to maintain ideological continuity, financial networking, and communal stability by strategically arranging who comes into the group and who moves out of the group. By marrying within the existing network, familiarity is already established, individuals are already vouched for, and risk is limited. Intermarriage is thus a higher security threat because 'outsider' individuals bring in their own 'foreign' individuality potentially misaligning with existing norms of the British Pakistani Muslim community. As also

discussed in the previous chapter, these risks are assessed when considering other Pakistanis, where sectarian belonging, or ethnic affiliation can constitute difference, and in essence be considered intermarriage.

The accounts from this chapter help us realise different outcomes and examples of how 'outsiders' negotiate their agency within the marital and gender expectations of their new families. The result is that each individual experience is exceptional, yet are also united in that they remain 'outsiders' even if they are, in performance, 'insiders', as Margaret has become. Yet, those who have not fully embodied the expectation set up for them, will remain, configurative 'warnings' of 'what is to come' or 'what not to do'. They are warnings that if intermarriage becomes a more frequent practice, the 'outsider' individuals will consciously or unconsciously, subtly or rebelliously, participate in encouraging further change for future generations. Yet some may welcome this change.

5

RELIGION

As individuals experience and express their senses of belonging, such as religious, cultural, and national identifications, they often encounter contradictory and competing worldviews, and further puzzling conceptions of not only these created categories of belonging, but of the individual agent. In the endeavour to unravel the complexities of senses of belonging, this chapter focuses on the various expressions of Islam and how individuals experience and legitimise their religious identities both in the context of being 'British Pakistani Muslim' and within their framework of mixed marriage. Research and analysis will navigate paradoxes of belonging, such as sectarianism versus the *ummah*, and also seek to understand how religiously intermarried couples contribute to the changing landscape of religion in Britain, including how children of religiously intermarried couples are raised.

A popular approach to the study religion in increasingly pluralistic societies is the comparison to the 'marketplace'. This metaphor has been referred to as 'spiritual shopping', in the sense that religious and spiritual worldviews are on offer as commodities that one can 'pick' and 'choose' to their liking (Wuthnow 2005). While it has been popularised in America, the marketplace metaphor is gradually becoming relevant interpretive metaphor for British religiosity. This marketplace perspective can be viewed as consisting of two parallel, and at times intersecting, types of 'shoppers': active individuals as a part of established religious institutions, and those 'shoppers' who are appreciative of the traditions that exist, but who do not necessarily choose to engage with any one particular tradition (Davie 2015: 135). Questions around benefits, drawbacks, or risks of participating in the assorted offerings of a

religious marketplace immediately play into the persistent difficulty of navigating social risk. In addition, there is a marked difference, but also continuity between perceived local and global manifestations of particular religious traditions. As is seen in this study, being a Pakistani Ahmadi Muslim, for example, requires a unique adherence to their 'Promised Messiah', yet at times, this very same individual, invoking the ummah, claims a universal identity as a Muslim (Lewis 2007: 5, 10). Furthermore, identifying with a particular branch of a religion raises questions regarding the criteria for belonging to that specific religious tradition, including whether one must believe to belong, and whether they can belong without believing (Davie 1994; Day 2011).

Underscoring a more intensified awareness of conflicting identities within Islam amongst young British Muslims, Phillip Lewis identifies significant generational differences in the way that young Muslims reflect on their Muslim identities, often appearing to uphold contradictory visions of belonging (Lewis 2007). Likewise, in her research with young Pakistani Muslims in Britain, Jessica Jacobson discovered a shift in conceptualising Muslim identity, particularly in relation to ideas about the ummah and a desire to belong to a new sense of kinship not bound by ethnic bloodlines, but reimagined and conceived as a sacred brotherhood and sisterhood of Muslims (1998: 133). Increasing visibility of the ummah, especially amongst second and third generations, is owed largely to the wider Muslim diaspora in the postcolonial era, where the concept of the ummah 'back home' in a predominantly Muslim society is a less vital concept, as opposed to diasporic communities that appreciate the maintenance of a transnational and global connection (Lyon and Bolognani 2011; Werbner 2002). The 'visibility' of the ummah becomes apparent when placed in opposition with a non-Muslim 'other', as a means for unifying global

Muslims (Saunders 2008). Parallel to this visibility is also the process of 'acculturation' of first generation Muslims followed by a process of 'deculturalisation' of second and third generations in attempts to salvage Muslim identity from ethnic boundaries, a method that Roy believes is regularly employed by what he identifies as 'purist fundamentalism' (Roy 2004). Such processes have been linked to the diaspora and aided by globalisation, which will be discussed in the following section. Furthermore, these paradoxes experienced by younger generations intensify when juxtaposed with further disparities introduced through intermarriage. To demonstrate some of these shifts, I will begin by reintroducing Feroz.

Feroz's scepticism

Accompanied by some of his friends, a mix of men and women of different backgrounds ranging from Greek to Indian to British, Feroz discussed what he described as his struggle with inconsistencies between his Pakistani and Muslim identities. With his friends present, Feroz spoke of his life and his understanding of Islam, particularly in the context of marriage. The following is a condensed version of his perspective.

> *In Islam you have the idea of the ummah where everyone is equal, and yet ideal marriage partners are based on location and class. It doesn't make sense. They [referring to Pakistani society in general] take the bits they like [from Islam]. They pick and choose depending on what suits them at the time.*
>
> *I went back to Pakistan last in 2013 and I didn't recognise the country at all. I used to go all the time when I was younger. Girls imitate what they see on 'Gossip Girl', kids smoke pot more and more, but then, 'oh no, my new wife better be a virgin'. Like for my family, your wife better be Muslim, but not Shia or Ahmadi—you'd be shooting yourself with that— and she better come from a well-off family, educated, but prepared to give it up for her husband. Fair skin is definitely preferred. The Pakistanis I know, not just over there, but here and some in America, too, they are really superficial. Like, my grandmother says that if I find a fair skinned*

girl from Pakistan it must mean she is wealthy because she stays inside an air conditioned residence. When I go back to Pakistan, all I have to say is that I have a prestigious degree from a UK university, without even needing to name the university, and people are impressed. Plus, my travel background. I have had women who do not even know what I look like, yet they have been told about me as a potential husband. They would basically marry me, just by knowing my CV! [Laughs]. I mean, my own folks were arranged to be married on a lot less knowledge of each other than my own 'CV' [he used this term to describe the knowledge that girls would know about him, which often included his educational background].

Look, my point is that I know my family, and by knowing other Pakistanis, they are not unique in any way. This is commonplace. I know… I am very critical of Pakistan. I admit that I do not believe it should exist as a country, the same way that many 'don't believe Israel should exist'. I was raised to believe that Islam is everything from love to peace to kindness, and it is! But then, how do you explain these inconsistencies? Like, if the ummah does not discriminate, why is it practically 'life and death' for my family whether I marry even a different type of Muslim, or a girl who is darker skinned? So, just get rid of these hierarchies of culture that are in Pakistan and stick with Islam. Don't pick and choose different stuff.

He paused while one of his friends noted that inconsistencies exist everywhere in the world, not just Pakistan. Feroz continued:

Okay, maybe you think I am not the best person to be speaking of this stuff because I am biased. But, you need to be biased to want change! I agree, this happens everywhere, but I am speaking for my knowledge of Pakistan and Pakistanis and Islam. I do not feel guilty about thinking and saying these things. It is like a comprehensive suicide, really. I can say this here now, but I know better than to do it in public in Pakistan. I'd be shooting myself ten times over. But, no, I won't stand down from my criticisms when I am free to do so. I think as British Pakistanis or American, or whatever, we need to look back and see what we left behind; what our families left behind. They are still connected, but we have a responsibility to understand why we still want to be called Pakistanis, and if we don't, why that is. I have decided that I don't. The region, I love, yes. The culture of exclusion, no. The politics, no. I will remain a Muslim, so to speak, in my own way, but I am Pakistani by passport only.

Feroz prefers to adhere to a concept of the ummah because to him the ummah is a cosmopolitan ideal that espouses 'egalitarianism'. Further, it can be viewed, as will be discussed in the following section, as a type of illusory community (Anderson 1991), though this Islamic community is not without paradox. It is the idea that he can travel

anywhere in the world, meet a Muslim and be accepted as kin. Yet, he often says that this ideal of the ummah that many Muslims invoke at particular times in their lives is often contradicted in daily actions, particularly as demonstrated when Pakistani Muslims select marriage partners. Feroz's perception of 'picking and choosing', and separating his religious identity from his national identity can also be viewed in light of theories of secularisation and of the 'self-owning human' (Asad 2003: 148). While secularism is a modern and Euro-American political concept that 'presupposes new concepts of religion, ethics, and politics' (2003: 2), the secular is non-linear in relation to the 'religions that supposedly preceded it' and should not be viewed as a simple separation of sacred and profane (2003: 25). Joined with societal traditions of the secular (e.g. Judeo-Christian-Islamic), is the role of the individual, their agency, and the responsibility they hold and are accounted for. For example, in a secular system that perpetuates human rights acts of cruelty must be assigned to someone (2003: 129), but this is often obscured in light of the discursive element of agency and narrative, as will be discussed in the following sections.

The *ummah* paradox

His criticisms of Pakistan aside, Feroz's struggle is not overtly unique. Many researchers have pointed out the contradictions that exist between localised practices of Islam and the aspirations of the ummah (see Roy 2004, 2010; Werbner 2002; Eickelman and Piscatori 1996; Saunders 2008). The *hajj* is perhaps the most visible event of local and universal expressions of Islam occurring in a single space. As one of the Five Pillars of Islam, the hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca, is a requirement for all

Muslims to perform at least once in their lifetime[1] and serves as a commanding symbol of the global ummah. Participants of the hajj must adhere to a dress code intended to promote 'humility and equality' (Esposito 2003: 103). Men must wear a white draped cloth around their bodies and over their left shoulder, while women are required to cover their hair and bodies but refraining from wearing *niqab* or face veils (Buitelaar and Mols 2015: 3). Despite attempts to ensure the equality of the ummah during the hajj, sectarian divisions continue to exist during the hajj experience. For example, one participant revealed that the hajj visa application requires individuals to state their sectarian belonging, causing some to feel concerned about potential oppression against non-Sunni affiliations, and in some cases minority Muslims have expressed direct discrimination, particularly during attempted visits to Medina where shrines of Shia imams are located.[2]

In addition to the example of the hajj and prior to the events of September 11th, the controversy over the publication of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* (1988) generated an international appraisal of Islam that sought to uncover that which divides Muslims and that which unites Muslims (Werbner 2002: 134-183; Weller 2009). The widespread disapproval of the *Satanic Verses* inaugurated a perceived universal and singular Muslim identity. Particularly amongst British Muslims, ethnic divisions and other categories of belonging yielded to a collective Muslim identity, and as both Davie and Werbner identify, created a message that 'westerners' are compelled to 'engage seriously with Islam as a great, global, monotheistic contemporary religion' (Werbner 2002: 152). In Britain, the unification of Muslims generated a statement

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[1] While all adult Muslims are required to perform the Hajj once in their lifetime, there are exceptions to this including physical ability and financial resources (Esposito 2003:103).
[2] This problem has also been highlighted in popular media. See The Guardian's article (16 November 2010) 'Sectarian hostility lies beneath hajj spirit' at
www.theguardian.com/world/2010/nov/16/sectarian-hostility-hajj-spirit-pilgrims

that minority religious convictions within the United Kingdom should not be undermined or pushed aside (Davie 2015: 180).

Using the concept of the ummah to legitimise their Muslim belonging, some intermarried couples seek to transcend ethnic and cultural barriers, believing that their respective traditions are more appropriately experienced as part of a globalised collective. For example, a few of participants found it 'unfitting' to self-identify with a specific ethnic or sectarian belonging. Farid, a Muslim from Edinburgh, refrains from identifying as 'Pakistani' nor with any particular branch of Islam. While he acknowledges his grandparents are from Pakistan, he prefers to be referred to as British, without the addition of 'Pakistani'. With regard to ethnicity and nationality, he provided a counter argument for my own identity. He explained,

> *You are of Filipino and Scottish descent, but you are neither Scottish nor Filipino. You don't live there, you don't vote, you don't have citizenship… you're American. How is this different for me? I'm British, I have British education, I eat British food, my accent is British, I vote, pay taxes. My grandparents are Pakistani. If we really dissect that, they aren't even Pakistani, but from Punjab. I mean no disrespect. If I were to go back to Pakistan today, it wouldn't be familiar to me. It wouldn't be home, I'd be a foreigner in so many ways.*

On the other hand, participants like Charlotte and her husband, Imran, who are of an older generation, held onto a Pakistani identity, but dismissed Pakistani ethnic divisions as well as Islamic sectarian divisions.

> Imran*: Well, there used to be the whole Sunni—Shia divide, but not really now, no. No point to it.*
>
> Charlotte: *Yeah, that has faded away here now. Not much of it nowadays.*
>
> I: *But it existed in the Northwest Frontier. You know it? Between Pakistan and Afghanistan, but not here any longer in these parts. Not Manchester.*
>
> C: *If you think now, you can find Pathan girls marrying Punjabis. Where at one time you wouldn't ever see that. Now it's happening all the time. His brother [nodding to Imran] married that Bengali sister, or was it Pathan? Well [laughs], you see my point. I get mixed up, but where they were once not marrying, they are now.*

> I: *We have to remember multi-faith. The kids should learn more about other religions and peoples. If a Jew came to mosque for help, we would feed him, befriend him, help him. But then the last decades they don't do that no more. They would want to hurt him! We need to be wise again. The Prophet, peace be upon him, he welcomed people of other faiths. He let them pray in their own faith within the mosque. He said to let them pray to their God.*

Imran later explained that he was referring to a *hadith* where Muhammad received a Christian delegate from Najran to Medina, and subsequently allowed the delegate to perform his prayers within the mosque upon arrival. Both Charlotte and Imran believe times are changing rapidly for Muslims, using their own decades' worth of life experience as instruments to measure change. Their perception was that Islam was becoming more accepted in Britain, that intermarriage was happening at an increasing pace compared to when they were married decades earlier. For them, divisions that were once prominent in their local mosques were now more welcoming to all, sometimes including women.

Yet back in Scotland, Roun and Ibrahim, hold a different point of view. Ibrahim, once a Sunni Muslim, is married to Roun, an Ahmadi. They consider themselves a rarity because they have yet to meet an intra-religious (or inter-sectarian) couple, such as themselves. However, they do not believe their circumstance was based upon a new, universally accepted perspective of religious cohesion, but rather on their environment that allowed them to 'fall in love' and remain distant from their respective communities. They attribute their 'love marriage' to the fact that they are both individually wealthy and accomplished, and that they both come from smaller sized families that had distanced themselves to a great extent from their Pakistani and Muslim communities. Additionally, the migrant experiences of their parents differed from many other Pakistanis to Britain, having settled instead in the Lowlands of Scotland, remaining detached from other Pakistani communities

that settled in England. However, in order to prevent any unwanted attacks about their mixed union from Muslims they would encounter, Ibrahim to the Ahmadi tradition of his wife. Despite widespread Ahmadi oppression from other Muslims, the decision to become Ahmadi for Ibrahim was embedded in his worldview of the 'the here and now' and the 'greater picture of peace and love' rather than in strict adherences to religious rituals. He views his Muslim identity as flexible and highly personal[3]. Roun, however feels strongly connected to the Ahmadi tradition, not just out of religious devotion, but also because of her family's kinship line, which is believed to be attached to the founder of the sect. As such, Ibrahim and Roun felt it was important for Roun to remain Ahmadi and for him to support her in this especially since Ibrahim felt no particular attachment to his prior Sunni sect. Prior to having children, they remained mostly aloof to larger events with friends and family, focusing instead on their demanding careers and travelling. Temporarily removed from religious circles they were not excessively concerned with identifying as Ahmadi, or as religious at all. However, once they had children they became more anxious about sectarian differences. 'Settling back' into a more family-centred social sphere, including introducing the children to Ahmadi tradition, they became uneasy with the persecution against the Ahmadi community, prompting them to adopt a practice of concealing their sectarian belonging when meeting other Muslims. When speaking of the ideal of a global ummah, Roun explained,

> *The appeal [of the ummah] sounds nice, does it not? It is something we believe in, but it is not reciprocated to us. Sometimes it sounds easier to just be a Secular Humanist—you know the 'secular atheist' living in Britain—than to be Ahmadiyya. The children conceal it most of the time, especially as they go to school and interact with their peers, especially other Muslims. The children do not understand why they are perceived as*

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[3] While Ibrahim views his actions in the 'here and now' along with 'peace and love' as paramount to his worldview, this should not be viewed as explicitly 'New Age'. The 'New Age Movement' is a 'collective engagement with ideas and practices' without the attachment to a 'membership, as such' (Sutcliffe 2016: 27).

different. We are quite a far way off from any sort of unification of Muslims. Yet, this is Britain, multiculturalism is growing and one day— one day—we will be accepted and respected.

For Roun, there is a sense of 'making progress' while also feeling moments of 'moving backwards', an inevitable feature of non-linear narrative interaction (Ricoeur 1990). While some participants expressed their excitement at the 'progress' of breaking down sectarian and ethnic divisions, and the hope of further acceptability of intermarriages, some of the minority Muslims within the tradition of Islam, like Roun, failed to see this immediate 'progress', frustrated by the pace and even contradictions present in their daily socio-political interactions and observations.

Nearly all of the participants who spoke of the ummah viewed it within a positive light. The ummah was something special for Muslims. As Feroz explained, it has become a symbol of egalitarianism within Islam, a beacon of love and compassion, where you can expect hospitality and brotherhood or sisterhood wherever you go in the world. However, this humanitarian vision of the ummah that Feroz describes is not unanimously shared by others. In fact, some researchers on the subject provide arguments for and against ideas of a 'political Islam' or a sort of 'nationalised' Islam (Saunders 2008; Brubaker 2012; Roy 2002; Piscatori 1986).

One approach to the ummah is through Olivier Roy's compelling argument on neofundamentalism, politics, and culture. Based on Roy's experiences, political Islam in the form of an 'Islamic State' is a failed project, yet he provides an alternative. He suggests that what he terms as 'neofundamentalist' movements in search of scripturalist and conservative views of Islam embrace the ummah as opposed to state structures (Roy 1994, 2004). A significant complication he addresses throughout his argument is that there is frequent confusion between religion and culture. He states that religion is 'embedded in one or more cultures, but cannot be reduced to a single

culture' (Roy 2004: 11). The core of his argument rests with the idea that 're-Islamisation' based in a 'purist neofundamentalism' is a product of acculturation and then a process of deculturalisation of second and third generation migrant communities in the west who endeavour to re-create a Muslim identity that can exist beyond ethnic boundaries due to the persistent demands of western conceptualisation of creating various minority categorisations (ibid. 133). 'Neofundamentalism', thus uses the void that has been created through globalisation to 'rebuild the Muslims ummah on a purely religious basis' by decontextualising and delinking Islam from any particular culture (ibid. 258). This does not intend to produce a new 'culture' for purists. On the contrary, the goal is to purify Islam from culture, so that it may be recognisable by any Muslim globally regardless of any particular cultural influence. Despite this effort, individual Muslims continue to live and experience the ummah within their social contexts. Another approach to discern the universality of the ummah, without attempting the impossibility of separating Islamic expressions from culture, is by tracing its initial motivations.

Marranci's historical and anthropological analysis explores the Islamic concept of *tawhid* in relation to the invocation of the ummah (Marranci 2008:109). Tawhid is the central Islamic doctrine concerning the oneness of God, and that all things belong to God and will return to God (ibid. 109; Esposito 2003: 317). Marranci proposes that contemporary conceptualisations of the ummah are based in the communion and feeling of a shared ethos through belief in the *shahada* and tawhid, which are eventually expressed and diffused through charisma (Marranci 2008: 114). In other words, while the ummah may be experienced in a variety of ways, these experiences can be traced to a common and universal theological acknowledgement of the oneness of God. For example, a visible manifestation of the ummah becomes

evident when the ummah feels threatened by external forces, such as the Rushdie Affair (ibid. 114).

This 'shared ethos' of the ummah with regard to tawhid coincides with the political interpretations of the ummah, or of the ummah that Roy argues to be the driving force behind neofundamentalism and perceived political manipulations seeking to establish a 'pure Islam'. It assists in determining a motivational focal point for the ummah. As Marranci argues, the ummah does not exist within itself, rather its existence is dependent upon human actors, based in a 'feeling' of communion. This communal focus can be narrowed to a rudimentary, yet 'transcendent' universal, which is the oneness of God. Some arguments maintain an 'ontological' separation between religion, or Islam, and political manifestations, such as nationalism, arguing that that they are often conflated due to overlapping ambitions (Brubaker 2012). Yet the problem with attributing an ontological character to religion relates to the broader dispute of assigning a life force to social categories and institutions as though they can exist in and of themselves.[4]

Endeavours to demarcate religion from other expressions of social behaviour, such as politics and culture, have been extensively debated, which includes debating categorical definitions of religion. The widely used anthropological definition from Geertz claims that religion is:

> (1) [A] system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic (1993: 90).

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[4] Strathern's motion to make the concept of 'society' theoretically obsolete on the basis that it creates dichotomous thinking and that (building on Leach) society is not a thing but rather a 'medium of human behavior' which 'cannot be set against it' (Strathern 1996).

However, when applying other forms of sociality to this definition, such as a nationalist movement, the description still functions. How then is religion different from this political experience? Theoretical efforts to separate religion from cultural and political domains is ingrained in the narrative that modernity is something radically different from the pre-modern. However, as Smith notes, the modern nation derives from the notion of a pre-modern 'ethnie', rather than being exclusively a product of modernity (Smith 1988). In addition to the separation that views the modern as scientific and rational against the pre-modern origins of kinship, religion, and magic, is another parallel argument of the 'sacred' versus 'profane' distinction (Durkheim 1912; Eliade 1956). The 'sacred', often shrouded in mystery, is differentiated and substantiated by what some historical scholars, such as Rudolph Otto, have referred to as the *numinous* (1917), witnessed in certain events coined by Mircea Eliade as a *hierophany* (1959). Despite articulating their distinctions from separate starting points, both approaches become difficult to sustain under empirical scrutiny, especially when considering certain nationalist manifestations such as the modern Greek case, which indicates that the merging of religion and ethnos recreates a sense of collective national identity (Lycourinos 2017). While the modern/pre-modern distinction utilises a diachronic approach, the sacred/profane approach seeks to uniquely sacralise the self in contrast to the mundane. In the *Elementary forms of religious life* (1912), Durkheim claims that the origin of religion is the 'sacred', which is eternal and set apart from the profane, and is recognisable by specific beliefs and practices. In revivals of Durkheim's model, the base layer of religion is comprised as the 'situational, unsystematic nature of belief; an intimate association with the non-empirical; and an attempt to respond to pragmatic questions concerned with daily life and coping with everyday problems' (Stringer 2008: 108).

In addition to the prior mentioned problematic method of sustaining such distinctions within nationalist examples, focusing on the sacred could be viewed as perpetuating a *sui generis* categorisation of religion that is ultimately 'theological', and therefore unable to be empirically queried (Fitzgerald 2009; McCutcheon and Arnal 2012). Timothy Fitzgerald problematises the academic preoccupation with defining religion, when such a definition is typically substantiated upon a 'non-empirical' element, posing the question as to whether a category of religion can exist (2009: 978). While I am not arguing for a *sui generis* category of religion, debates surrounding this distinction necessitate returning to those individuals who claim to experience a 'sacred essence' within their religious identities, and to understand what they mean by their 'sacred' expressions.

For example, while Feroz views the ummah as a cosmopolitan ideal of equality, his validation for his vision of the transnational community is based in both a 'sacred' sense of tawhid, as well as a political sense of belonging to a community encouraged by his 'world citizen' status. Utilising this emic perspective of religious belonging is imperative to comprehending the motivations for defining oneself in religious language or 'sacred' terminology. Saba Mahmood concedes that many researchers on Islamic veiling, as important as their contributions have been, frame their arguments mostly within models of sociological causality, thus ignoring the Islamic virtues of modesty, 'especially given that many of the women who have taken up the veil explain the motivations precisely in these terms' (Mahmood 2005:16). While attempts to separate 'religion' from 'political' categories can become problematic, particularly when framed in light of the modern versus pre-modern narrative, continuing to use the language and motivations behind what individuals might consider to be a 'religious experience' should be considered rather than

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ignored, as has been seen with Margaret's conversion experience in the previous chapter, or Feroz's dual inspirations of the ummah. These blurred categories are the product of collective expressions of individuals attempting to make sense of their experiences and motivations. Reflecting on one's sense of identity in light of other narratives once again becomes heightened when further layers that categorise perceived 'otherness' through intermarriage arise.

Multi-membership

An effective way in which Farid and Christy maintain their self-described 'seamless marriage' despite not sharing the same religious path, is embedded in how Farid defines the ummah for himself. For Farid, being married to a non-Muslim is irrelevant to his own religious path. His religious identity involves social interaction to a certain extent, but this interaction is not predicated upon his spouse's inclusion. Being in a religiously mixed family does not deprive Farid from belonging to a wider Muslim community. He explained:

> *I am a Muslim, I may not be the best Muslim, but I'm Muslim. What does this have to do with my wife? I met my wife when she was—well still is—a Scottish Christian, and I wouldn't change her. If she embraces Islam, then that is between her and Allah… she is welcome to the faith. I don't need to prove to everyone around me that I am a 'good enough' Muslim by surrounding myself constantly with other Muslims. That is between me and Allah. I live in Scotland, you know? Always have done. Last I checked, most people here are Christian, so even if I tried to surround myself with only Muslims, I would be isolated from majority of the population. I don't want that. There are what, 2 billion Muslims in the world? All I need to know is that I have Allah here [points to his heart]. If I want to be around Muslims, I can see my mates, go to mosque, you know. If I wanted everything around me to be Islamic, I'd just move to Pakistan. But, I'm British. This is my home, I live amongst Brits, I'm married to a Brit. Who says you can't have both? Islam is in my heart.*

For Farid, shifting in and out of different communities and maintaining 'membership' in each, so to speak (Amit and Rapport 2002), is not unusual for the migrant or

second-generation experience in Britain. In his section fittingly titled 'Islamic practices in Britain: set menu or a la carte', Lewis explains the contradictory data about second-generation Muslim belonging in Britain (2007: 12). Data revealed that many young Muslims feel fairly treated in Britain, while at the same time feel anger and alienation that also coincides with contradictions between a lack of mosque worship, with a rising sentiment towards wanting a more conservative version of Islam (ibid. 12-13, 33). He explains that much of this differentiation, particularly towards a unified Islamic vision in utopian projects, such as *sharia* in Britain that have appeal to diaspora Muslim communities, may not be as revealing, particularly when framed within a duality of choice such as British law versus Islamic law (ibid. 12). When posing questions to young Muslims, Lewis interprets their utopian visions as based on a 'picking and choosing' mentality rather than a comprehensive awareness of what these visions might actually look like (ibid. 12).

Where Islam was once the overwhelming majority and an entwined everyday experience in Pakistan, the sudden shift for migrant communities to a state where they are now considered minorities, effectuates a determination for identity mobilisation. In their edited volume, *Pakistan and its Diaspora*, Lyon and Bolognani place the diaspora within the metaphor of Tennyson's 'crack'd mirror' to demonstrate how the Pakistani diaspora does not consist of 'simple cultural extensions of Pakistanis in Mirpur or any other part of Pakistan' and that the diaspora was in fact modelling new forms of self-representation influenced by Pakistan (2011: 5; see also Sökefeld and Bolognani 2011: 126-127). Speaking of the Muslim diaspora, Werbner lists the moral (Islamic), political (Pakistani), and aesthetic (South Asian) diasporas evoked by British Pakistanis, in order to describe the sentimental, as well as performative culture of Manchester Muslims (Werbner 2002: 59). However, she moves her argument from

a discussion of hybrid identities to the wider global Islamic diaspora of the ummah (66). The latter moves beyond 'Manichean' class and race debates, and into a discussion of mobilisation of 'identity and the defence of the integrity of the lifeworld' (ibid. 67). While Farid, for example, does not necessarily exude Werbner's theorisation of mobilising enthusiasm, he believes he has moved beyond the other sorts of diaspora movements associated with the political and aesthetic that Werbner describes. He also upholds the ummah, not as a constant entity that exists in and of itself, but as one which can be renewed when times call for it. His emphasis of 'Allah in his heart' as opposed to a visible community expresses his view that his religiosity is based on a sentimental and personalised relationship with the divine. He explained:

> *I don't see this constant need for me to be marching for Islam. I've got a life to live [laughs]. Yeah, when I was young and maybe naïve, I was angered by 'The Satanic Verses', and a part of me felt empowered to be a part of a community that could unite and cause the world to stop and look. I don't really care anymore about that stuff, or getting into the sensationalism of Islamophobia, whatever that word is supposed to mean. Now that I am older, I am not so politically inclined. This ummah thing for me isn't about making a statement anymore. Instead it is about knowing I have a faith community I always belong to. If others want to use it to march in the streets, okay, go ahead. I know what the ummah means for me. It is a bond of the heart. We don't have to be seen all the time, but I know that there are others like me that exist. That is the comfort of the ummah.*

While Farid perceived 'apolitical' stance of the ummah as the main way he identifies as Muslim, others may not as readily accept this model of self-identification. Farid admittedly is not a regular mosque attender, nor is he diligent about participating in regular mosque events, finding himself as 'believing without belonging', or in other words, not being a part of a visible community, yet still feeling a personal connection with God (Davie 1994). The ummah, however, provides a way for him to continuously 'belong' through his belief, though it is only visible during certain called-upon moments in time.

The contrast to this religious position is the argument of 'belonging without believing' (Day 2011), which in many ways describes Farid's wife, Christy, a Scottish Presbyterian, who despite 'never really believing in Jesus' still identifies as a Christian for 'cultural reasons'. She attends church at holidays, identifies herself in the census as Christian, and she even wears a cross on a silver chain around her neck. A desire to belong to a religious community, often times despite a lack of belief, is often done so to match complementary or parallel social belongings (ibid.). Christy's 'religiosity' is not due to a transcendent belief system or personal relationship with God. In fact, she says she thinks most of it is 'bollocks', and yet she also said she would never fully renounce her 'faith' because as she said, *'I'm Scottish. Mum is Church of Scotland, Granddad is. It's just who we are.'* As opposed to her husband, Christy links her religious identity to her Scottish ancestry and heritage, and is in many ways a 'nominal Christian'. However this nominal affiliation should not be undermined as insignificant or superficial, but rather as a significant way in which an individual shares and connects with other individuals and histories that are deemed meaningful to her life story.

Even though Farid and Christy use language that might suggest a distinction between cultural/political and religious motivations for identifying with particular expressions of their religious traditions, both interpretations are enacted within social and localised contexts that give rise to new interpretations formed from the narrative 'refiguration' of their experiences (Ricoeur 1990). As individual agents, Farid and Christy possess the ability to create their life stories (Rapport 2014). However their narratives do not form out of nothingness. Their agency works as a part of the entirety of the process of narrative formation, of the individual in interaction, which

necessitates a pre-existing socio-cultural context that has been enacted by individuals prior to and coinciding with their own life story process.

The religious marketplace: a new concept?

Fluid interpretations of religious belonging are not an exceptional phenomenon. Davie's work on religion in Britain details both the historical and the social evidence for on-going religious change, particularly regarding the various transformations of The Church of England and church attendance (Davie 1994, 2015). The Church of England has not continuously existed as a static and monolithic institution. Religious belonging is continually shifting, sometimes subtly or in correlation with other events or movements in time, such as political upheavals or technological transformations. A notable example of political events merging with religious change is The Protestant Reformation, which gained traction in England in concurrence with King Henry VIII's marriage to Anne Boleyn (Davie 2015: 92). Due to the Pope's refusal to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, King Henry VIII, determined to marry his mistress, took up the cause of the Reformers to separate England from Rome, and consequentially establishing the Church of England with the monarch as its head. It can also be contested that religious syncretism, or the combination of two or more religions into something new, cannot truly exist, because to do so would assume a pre-existing 'pure' religion once existed (see Hanegraaff 1998: 397; van der Veer 1994: 185). The concept of syncretism should be approached with caution as a slippery model that acts as a 'pejorative' for cultural mixing particularly when based on the false presupposition of 'purity' (Stewart 1999).

Acknowledging the false assumption of presumed religious purity is not to say that efforts for protecting 'traditions' are done so in vain, but rather argues against the dubious notion that categories such as religion are fixed, as they do not exist without the enactment of humans. It could be assumed that any sort of collective belonging, not just religious, creates a narrative of 'us versus them'. In a generalised sense, intermarriage calls into question competing worldviews and senses of belonging. However, beneath the surface, as is evidenced by those like Farid, Christy, and Feroz amongst many others, these generalised categories of belonging can differ widely. Within the 'inter problem' is often an 'intra problem'. As Zaid described the complexity of his own senses of belonging as a Muslim in Britain, an Ahmadi and gay, to name a few, he claimed that it is '*one cultural clash within another, and then another clash within another. It can seem endless*'.

Yet, are these pluralities, sometimes contradictory, or even 'clashes' as Zaid calls them, evidence of a new sort of religious marketplace, where one can pick and choose according to their needs? If taking Rapport's model that human individuals 'make and maintain cultural worlds—remake them continuously through their creative cognitions', then this very innate agency has always existed (Rapport 2002: 140). However, the pull of the collective that is comprised of individuals, can have a powerful appeal, as seen with the visible ummah. On the other hand, the religious marketplace can appear to be more visible and thus more accessible than in the past, particularly in the context of Britain's part in globalisation and migration.

From studies conducted by Linda Woodhead and Paul Heelas on changing religious attitudes and performances (see their research study on the city of Kendal, known as 'the Kendal Project' in Heelas and Woodhead 2005), they determine that external and objective religious duties have transitioned to a subjective experience

(see also Davie 2015: 168). In other words, the trend reveals that personal experience of religion in Britain is outperforming organised religion's conformity. Davie explains that this is a 'shift away from culture of obligation to a culture of consumption' (ibid. 168). Citing other instances of changing religiosity in Britain, such as Glastonbury's 70 plus different 'faiths' available for adoption, and of the 'New Age' categories of 'spirituality', Davie credits the agency of individuals, particularly those who view themselves as being on the margin of society, as creating heterodox senses of 'believing' (ibid. 170-172).

Across America and Europe, the movement of fluidity of the 'religious marketplace' occurred within the decades following the Second World War. In the context of Britain, Davie identifies that the vacant space left by the destruction of society from the World Wars resulted in the need for reconstructing economics, politics, and social life. As such, while attempts were made by the Anglican church to establish a conservative and unified religious nation (Davie 2015: 29), the people began to move in new directions, including a sexual revolution, musical revolution, push from industrialisation to fast-paced marketing, increasing immigration, and of course, decades worth of political change that moved and continue to move drastically between conservative and liberal spheres of influence (ibid. 28-38; see also Wuthnow 2005 for the American context of these regional changes). Davie suggests that in turn, churches attempted to appeal to the changing social situation by adapting to 'progressive change', such as that seen with the Second Vatican Council, and the decision to alter the language of the prayer books to make them more 'readable' (Davie 2015: 30). Likewise, the end of the Second World War also saw the decline of the British Empire and with it, an increase in migrants from former colonies to Britain. Dr. Mirza contextualised his parents in this post-war period as first generation

migrants saying, '*It was the hippie days. Bell bottoms, sex, music, dance. A revolutionary time. It was not just for the Brits and Americans, the South Asians who lived here participated as well. Why shouldn't they*?'

Even though the 'religious marketplace' has become more visible in Britain, this does not diminish the reality that 'religious shopping' is not as accessible for every individual. Particularly with the possibility of intermarriage, extended family members can become apprehensive about the religious identity of the 'other' partner.

Anxieties of religious difference

In Tower Hamlets, Yasir lives in a large community of British Pakistanis, including his wife, children, cousins, and even great grandparents, yet he has a secret that distresses him. He found a private group of Facebook users to confide in, as well as an on-line anonymous forum where he can share his thoughts. His secret: he is an atheist. Growing up attending Qur'an and Arabic lessons, and attending mosque with his father and uncle in London, Yasir came to realise he was an atheist in his mid-twenties after studying at the University of Birmingham and becoming close friends with a variety of non-religious individuals. Though he is usually surrounded by Muslims and Pakistani friends and family, he also finds additional time to wander bookstores and create new friendships outside of his Muslim and Pakistani networks. A hobby, which continues to this day, is finding spare time to visit bookshops to browse books by Richard Dawkins and similar authors. His favourite book by Dawkins is *The God Delusion*. While he says he disagrees with the severity of Dawkins' criticisms against all people of faith, he thinks it is 'necessary at times' to sink in the reality of how 'irrational it all is'. He is careful to visit bookstores in

different neighbourhoods so he is not recognised by familiar faces. He also keeps a password lock on his computer in case any of his family discovers his reading interests or his 'hidden' social media presence. Yasir explained a bit of his perspective,

> *[Speaking of meeting his wife] We loved each other when we met, even though our marriage was arranged. I was still at university then, so I was also still a Muslim then, so it is not like she knowingly married an atheist. I'm the one who changed. She knows I'm an atheist, but neither of us have told anyone. She's angry, she's hurt, I know these things. But, I cannot believe in God. It doesn't make sense. We need to face reality as it is, not burry it in fantasy.*

Yasir attributes his atheism to the fact that he developed as an individual outside of the safeguard of his family and friends from Tower Hamlets, particularly during his time at university. He continued:

> *We need to be going to uni and learning, broadening our horizons, learning biology, maths, you know? My father was reluctant to let me go to uni because he wanted me to stay at the restaurant, you know, take over the business. I just couldn't do it, always had that itch to get out. I convinced him I could make more money by getting an accounting degree. My family wanted to keep a fairly tight hold on me, especially mum. Always in my business. They don't want you to be making serious relations outside of Pakistanis. I dated around a bit, some English girls, some Asian, but I knew the arranged marriage was important to my family. When we met [he and his wife], it was a good match at first. She was beautiful, devoted to family life, really brilliant mum to our kids. Just everything you would want.*

He further disclosed that his relationship with his wife, Amina, is like a mask, shielding his family from knowing the 'real him'. If he were to reveal his scepticism about Islam and his atheist inclinations, he could risk losing his entire family. He explained, '*I have to think about the whole family with this. Being atheist is probably the worst thing you could be. It would destroy the family's reputation… destroy Amina and especially the boys*.' Amina knows he is an atheist and has threatened him with divorce, and worse, moving to Pakistan with their children permanently. Yet, she is still holding onto hope that it is a temporary struggle that he will eventually

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overcome. Yasir does not think Amina actually cares about his beliefs (or lack thereof) from the standpoint of the two of them as a couple, but that she is more concerned about what his 'non-belief' may mean for their children. He said, '*Muslim children must have a strong Muslim father. I mean, Amina would be afraid the boys would take after me, leave Islam, and basically cut ties with everyone and basically everything we know. I am their role model.*' For the meantime, he keeps his secret to himself, placating his wife and the rest of his family members. He believes that by revealing his secret, his family's fears about the university environment negatively influencing him will be proven correct in their minds. Learning and meeting new people outside of the protection of his Muslim community had indeed contributed to his drift away from religion, something he readily declares, but is also grateful for.

A generation before Yasir, another family in London attempted and failed to adapt to changing religious identities. When Cecilia married her husband, a British Pakistani Muslim, she decided to convert to Islam, both for 'social and personal' religious reasons. Though she did not take up any visible form of religiosity, that is she did not veil nor change her style of dress, her conservative Anglican family members reacted negatively to her conversion. They began distancing themselves when she initially converted, but when she had children and raised them as Muslims her parents severed anything that remained of their relationship. What worsened matters further, according to Cecilia, was that they lived only a block away from each other, so as Cecilia's children grew up their grandparents whom they could see about town nearly every day were complete strangers. Eventually Cecilia and her husband moved away to Birmingham taking the children with them, and leaving the family scars behind. Cecilia did not understand the coldness of her family, especially since she considered herself to be the same girl. She explained,

Christianity aint that much different from Islam. Same God, same morals. We even uphold Jesus, you know, as a prophet. He's very important in Islam. Don't know why my folks had such trouble with this. I'm the same person as always. Same values and such. They just walked away. Their own grandbabies, too. I pray for them always, even though they aint with us anymore. I think it was just those times, you know. They couldn't be seen having dark grandbabies.

Cecilia believes that associating religion with race is what caused her parents to disassociate themselves from her and their grandchildren, not that she condoned race as a valid reason for rejection either. As with this case, while many narratives thus far have hinged on the social risks that come with Pakistani Muslims marrying a partner outside of their community, the social risk can exists for both partners. Cecilia risked and lost her relationship with her parents, as well as her children's relationship with their grandparents. Additionally, Cecilia admitted that before meeting her husband, she too would use 'Muslim' as synonymous with any South Asian, though she admitted she would also do the same with the descriptors, 'Hindu' and 'Sikh', not knowing which one was which, but knowing that '*only darker skinned people were called Muslim, Hindu, or Sikh, or also "Paki", really terrible looking back at it now'*. Not until she discovered Islam for herself, did she understand how unfitting these labels and associations between religion and ethnicity were. The racialisation of religion is imbedded not in race itself, but in perceptions of race, imagined and historically constructed as a political category of 'othering' (Choudhury 2015; Gilroy 1987). Especially fixed in the neo-colonial orientalist, and also post-September 11th perceptions of Islam, arises a racialised anti-Muslim prejudice, which espouses a moral and intellectual superiority of the 'white westerner' (Sheehi 2011; Choudhury 2015).

One unifying point that can be drawn from both Yasir's and Cecilia's stories was the mention of children. Fear of the 'other' can certainly exist without involving

children, but the prospect of how to raise children seems to be an even greater fear for extended family members who are invested in the inheritance of their traditions.

Though I had great difficulty getting in touch with one particular case, the rumour nonetheless spread about a particular instance of a man named Isa who is both English Christian and Pakistani Muslim. Isa grew up to denounce both traditions and instead became a Pagan. It was said that he once travelled with his father on *hajj*, though criticised it upon return to England. I was shown a wedding invitation some individuals had passed around of Isa, which revealed he was marrying an English woman, also a Pagan. It was clear with these rumours that this sort of outcome of a child of a mixed marriage was feared by families. It was not even the fear of converting to the non-Islamic partner's religion, but of entirely abandoning both traditions in search of an alternative identity in the vast religious marketplace. This 'religious shopping' is perceived as contributing to the confusion of growing up in a religiously mixed household.

During her research on transnational marriages between Pakistanis and British Pakistanis, Katharine Charsley concludes that the British partner often has to adapt to cultural differences through code switching (Charsley 2013). She claims that British Pakistanis can use religion as a force of dominance when it comes to identity markers of a unified or shared cultural understanding. When speaking about women taking up the hijab or men growing beards, she writes, 'they may be able to transcend the need to code-switch, without sacrificing respect either in Pakistan or from the Pakistani community in Britain and simultaneously symbolising an Islamic identity for wider British society' (ibid. 59). Charsley's research reveals that these transnational connections, while pivotal for maintaining relations and kinship connections between Pakistan and its diaspora, also sometimes come with cultural clashes including false

expectation, language barriers, and overall adjusting to a new community and family with different sets of social norms (59, 142-171). Many parents worry about their daughters, whether moving to Pakistan from Britain or inversely, and they attempt to ease such concerns by controlling the search for a good *rishta* (marriage proposal or partner) (ibid. 61). Sharing Islam, however, can ease the anxieties around some of these cultural differences.

Additionally, transnational marriages can be perceived as a form of mixed marriage when viewing them through the framework of social norms of Britain as compared to Pakistan. Even these marriages come with concerns of cultural clashes, and are supposedly remedied through a shared Islamic identity, much in the same way that the ummah has a universal appeal to Muslims worldwide. As with transnational marriages, concerns with remedying social difference of partners becomes especially important for religiously mixed marriages, particularly when it comes to raising children. Emphasis is on maintaining the existing kinship and social structures, but social differences of varying levels can pose a direct threat to these connections. Children are trusted to be the keepers of such structures, and Islam acts as a central unifying feature that children of Pakistani Muslim families are 'born into', so to speak. The unification that Islam carries is heightened amongst migrant communities, as seen with the earlier discussion of the ummah.

There have been various attempts to theorise the increasing 'religious marketplace' and how themes of multiculturalism will impact the future of religious belonging (see Bruce 2002; Brown 2009; Davie, Heelas and Woodhead 2003; Drew 2009; Eck 2001). Intermarriage contributes to these conversations of religious belonging, sometimes confirming speculations of 'secularisation' or even of a growing atheism (Bruce 2002), and at other times offering alternative ways of

viewing religious belonging (Drew 2009; Davie 2014). Mixed marriages represent and contribute to the changing diversity of religion in Britain. Research on mixed-faith families in the UK found that most parents in mixed-faith relationships encourage their children to adopt an 'attitude of choice' regarding their own religiosity (Arwick and Nesbitt 2010:169). The attitude of individual choice goes in hand with the increased visibility of 'religious shopping'. Additionally, the attitudes of parents towards their own religiosity seems to impact how their children contemplate and approach their own 'individual' religious identities (ibid. 177). In her research on foreign non-Muslim wives moving to Pakistan and marrying Pakistani Muslim men, Dina Khan discovered a similar pattern regarding attitudes of parents, particularly of the mothers, and the link between eventual religiosity and cultural belonging of children. While she states that Islam is theoretically passed through the father, it is the mother's role in raising children that eventually has the greatest impact on children receiving and shaping their religious identities (Khan 1998: 17). For example, if a non-Muslim wife refrained from adopting a Pakistani lifestyle despite her marriage and living in Pakistan, Khan found that the children experienced conflict on the one hand as feeling alien to Pakistani Muslim society, and on the other as being Pakistani Muslim (ibid. 16-19). For the children and the foreign wives, this negotiation of identity establishes an ontological security dilemma between one's sense of power (i.e. her sense of individual self), and of a constant negotiation and renegotiation of such identity that is dependent upon culturally shaped situations. The research suggests that the attitudes of parents, and even those attitudes that seem indifferent towards religious identity, consequentially impact the religiosity of their children, and thus continue to raise questions about what the future of mixed marriages brings to religious identity.

I made my way to a café, excited to finally meet Kamilah in person; we had been chatting through text messaging and email when we decided to finally meet up for lunch. I had the impression from our messages that she was polite, if not shy. Over messages we talked about the story of when her parents met. Her English father was in the process of converting to Islam when he met her mother, a second generation British Pakistani Muslim. I arrived a bit earlier than Kamilah, so chose a quiet table for the two of us. She arrived fashionably dressed, wearing full make-up, and her hair was uncovered in long brown curls. She smiled and shook my hand, then leaned in for a hug because after all, it was not technically our first meeting.

As we grew more comfortable sharing stories about our lives, she explained that because her father converted, there was never any question as to how she would be religiously raised. Her father took his conversion quite seriously, still practicing Islam regularly to this day. She is proud of her family's story and of their devotion to Islam. For her, being Muslim is about her moral actions towards others: kindness, compassion, generosity. She explained, '*I don't need to talk about God and I don't need to convert people, you know? We should be sharing God through our actions. When we are kind, that is God and when we show love, that is God.*' Yet, this is not enough for many Pakistanis she knows, both in Britain and abroad. Kamilah spoke more to this,

> *I imagine you expected to meet a 'devoted Muslim woman', and then you see me* [points to herself]. *I am devoted, just not in the way a lot of other Muslims think I should be. But don't get me wrong, there are so many Muslim women, including hijabis, who embrace me. But, I get a pretty strong pushback, too. They say, 'Oh, she is not a real Muslim, she does not veil, she dresses like a white woman, her and her father are secretly trying to bring Christianity into the family.' Nonsense stuff like that. I once was in an airport with my mum, my mum wears a scarf around her hair. Anyway, some younger guys, Muslims, approached us, politely, but*

> *also out of line, asking why I would disgrace my mum by not veiling. I mean, a lot of Muslims do care about it, I actually feel like they care more about it over here. Like, because I am clearly racially mixed, I have to prove for whatever reason that I am 110% Muslim. I move around a lot with work, so I always try to connect with women's Qur'anic circles, but some places, especially with other Pakistani women, they are suspicious of me, just because of how I look.*

Kamilah continued to recount scenarios where other Muslims judged her 'Muslimness'. Part of this judgment, as recognised in her language was the racialisation of religion; that being 'white' somehow meant being 'non-Muslim'. Yet, when she shifted her discussion to her appearance outside of an Islamic context and within a British or a Pakistani context, her appearance worked in her favour. She continued,

> *It makes no sense. I am a modern Muslim woman, I have my own money and I am devoted to my family and most importantly to God. Plus, I 'supposedly' [she emphasised this word while rolling her eyes] have this sort of standard of beauty because I am not as dark skinned and have light colour eyes, that makes me supposedly desirable as a marriage partner. It's ridiculous. [laughs] Like, they go from questioning my devotion to Islam to then in the same breath putting me on a pedestal because I have 'the look' that is desired in Pakistan. Then the Brits... like I am either something exotic or I am too dark for them, mostly now though, guys try to hit on me thinking I am some sort of 'exotic prize' or something. No thank you!*

Even though her mother covers her hair, her mother supports her, and even believes that veiling is not compulsory or necessary for women; that it is more of a 'cultural symbol'. Additionally, Kamilah wants to help non-Muslims and Muslims alike understand how diverse Islam is, how one can be fashionable and also be a Muslim. She enjoys the opportunity to talk about hijab as well as refusal to veil with non-Muslim women because she said, '*it helps them see a different example of what a Muslim is. People have all kinds of interests, from music to fashion, hobbies, and still people have this narrow view of what a Muslim looks like, and I like challenging that.*'

As introduced in the previous chapters, Alice is very aware of the balance she engages between what she sees as her own life choices and of expectations from her Pakistani in-laws. This balance at times reveals her devotion to her in-laws, and other times exposes a sense of dissatisfaction and even rebellion against her in-laws. This contradiction is especially noticeable with how she raises her children. Despite the fact that she insists they are Muslim, taking them to Qur'an lessons, her general attitude towards Islam is met with a lack of enthusiasm. Besides the Qur'an lessons that her children attend, she has no other method of teaching them Islam in the home. While those like Kamilah claim that it is actions and certain characteristics such as compassion, that teach Islam, in Alice's case, even these characteristics couldn't be linked with something uniquely Islamic. In fact, her children witness the opposite. Alice still attends church for the main holidays, and she refrains from participating in any of the Islamic celebrations. Sometimes Alice's parents even take the children to their church, as was the case for the past few Christmas Eve services. Her morality is not linked to Islam.

While her children were completely uninterested in discussing religion with either Alice or myself, when they heard us mention Christmas Eve, they became excited because they associated this event with Santa Claus and presents to be opened the following morning. Alice explained, '*I don't think they see it as a religious thing. They think it is something special that Gran takes them to welcome the celebration of Christmas. Like, they just see Christmas trees and presents.*' Alice also noted that she keeps this information quiet from her in-laws, so as not to cause any trouble within the family. Her husband Tariq explained that he doesn't want his children to feel they

have to be Muslim, or Christian, or anything at all. He just wants them to be happy in life. Alice disagrees a bit and believes it is important for their children to have an appreciation and awareness of their 'religious heritage'. However, she also agreed that as the children grow, it is ultimately their decision, so long as they have respect for other religions.

Alice and Tariq's situation resembles some of Dina Khan's findings. Though their children are not fully ready to participate in a discussion about how they have come to understand their mixed belonging, the methods Alice uses confirm how attitudes of the mother can affect a child's sense of religiosity. Even though the children are formally being brought up as Muslims, they will realise at some point, if they have not already, that their upbringing with their mother has exposed them to another tradition that they readily enjoy. What this exposure signifies for their religious growth and how it will contribute to the changing tapestry of religious belonging in Britain remains to be fully seen. However, as with the case of Kamilah, or with Isa, multiple options may ensue. While Khan underscores attitudes of the mother, she also indicates that these 'identity crises' are a notable part of the process of individual development. She writes,

> Individual development thus occurs in a matrix of culturally shaped situations which are often embedded in inconsistent, often incompatible, symbolic systems. This means that self representations are highly contextual, and shift rapidly as the actors negotiate status and seek to specify specific goals, implicitly redefining themselves and each other during the course of interaction. (Khan 1998: 8)

The cases of Alice's family, Kamilah, and Isa, are pieces to understanding wider change, but fail to have a specific formula that has created such change. The only common denominator in each is having belonged to a mixed family, and yet the outcomes appear to differ greatly, whether as a result of factors within the family or from external influences. Any proposed formula would have to take into

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consideration the differentiation of the individual in conjunction with how such individuals navigate through their interactions and weigh social risk.

Summary

This chapter covers a variety of manifestations of religious belonging within British Pakistani Muslim intermarriages, focusing primarily on individual identity mobilisation and anxieties surrounding raising children in a religiously mixed home. A few premises developed, including how Muslims of mixed unions view their religious identities in light of ethnic and sectarian belonging on the one hand and a wider belonging with the ummah on the other. Attempts to release a Muslim identity from cultural and ethnic influences in favour of upholding the ummah creates a dichotomy between religion and culture. Such distinctions create a false opposition (see Strathern 1996) that ignores the prevailing process of identity formation, necessitating certain conditions from prior individual and collective narratives that are reflected upon within another individual's life story (Ricouer 1990). Prior experiences and stories provide a prefigurative narrative that individuals use as points of orientation for their own life stories, and it becomes meaningless to speak of specific expressions of religion without understanding the cultural and political narratives that are involved in shaping these expressions. This is not to say that there is an ontological entity called 'culture', but rather that the individuals who enact cultural expressions generate collective experiences that can be viewed as 'movements' that other individuals engage with, internalise, and live (see Giddens' theory of structuration in chapter 2). The racialisation of religion serves as an example in which ambiguous categories of belonging, ingrained in neo-colonial expressions, have

revived the so-called superiority of the Occident to the inferiority of the Orient (Sheehi 2011). Of importance to this example is not the supposed criteria of the categories, but of the perceived and ascribed criteria others have situated onto these categories due to pre-existing notions deriving from a history of colonialism.

Furthermore, the ummah has developed as an amplified experience for diaspora communities, such as Pakistanis in Britain. The ummah provides a means to feel connected to a large transnational force motivated by the collective feeling of tawhid. Farid, for example, feels that because he is always connected through the ummah, he does not necessarily need to be connected through local Muslim communities. Using the ummah as an emotional and spiritual collective belonging, one that is attached 'through the heart', allows him to identify with a variety of senses of belonging. Yet some individual Muslims, particularly those of minority and oppressed sects such as the Ahmadi, might be sceptical of the idea of the ummah because they have not experienced the benefits that it claims to produce.

The idea of increasing religious plurality and of a 'marketplace' where religious ideas and practices can be spread and accessed is not entirely novel, but has certainly become more visible in the past century, once again surfacing as a product of wider social change. Religion has always been changing, most sensibly because individuals change as a part of a wider narrative configuration. Yet despite the growing visibility of religious, or more broadly speaking spiritual options, the idea of 'shopping' can be intimidating. As seen with Yasir, his atheism and enjoyment of popular atheist bestsellers, such as Dawkins, is something that he has yet to openly embrace. Weighing the outcomes is the most difficult part, while he could pursue his individual path, he also realises that doing so might entail risking his relationship with his wife, and more importantly with his children. And in the other case of Cecilia, it

was her English parents who shunned her and her children after she converted to Islam, though the problem was not strictly to do with Islam, but to do with a practice of conflating religion with race, and of associating Cecilia with 'brownness' by virtue of her religion. Regardless, her choice to become Muslim and raise her children Muslim caused a permanent divide between Cecilia and her English family, a social risk she took and eventually accepted.

Seeing that Islam acts as a powerful unifying bond for marriages where other cultural differences may exist, such as those between transnational Pakistani marriages, removing a religious common denominator can be viewed as problematic for parents who do not share the same religion. Children of mixed marriages can be viewed sceptically, as has been the case with Kamilah, even though she considers her to be Muslim. Additionally, stories such as Isa becoming a Pagan and rejecting both Islam and Christianity serve as cautionary tales associated with the risks of intermarriages. Equally, time has yet to tell how Alice and Tariq's children's dual religious belonging will impact their future religious decisions.

Religious identity is continuously changing. In what direction it is moving remains an enduring debate. However, intermarried families serve as both a product and a process of the changing landscape of religious identity in Britain in that they act as additional 'prefigurations' within the narrative process of identity building. Behind the collective narrative configurations remain the fundamental understanding that individuals are the agents producing change through reflexively navigating social risks.

ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVES
AND DIGITAL MEDIA

Digital media serves as a mediating tool in which individuals participate in the spiralled mimetic process of creating their life stories. Avoiding the descriptor 'virtual' for its rivalry with 'reality', Daniel Miller critiques the argument that 'prior forms of sociality were somehow more natural or authentic by virtue of being less mediated', claiming instead that there is hardly such a thing as 'pure human immediacy' to begin with (Miller 2012: 12). In this same manner, when I refer to 'digital' forms of narrative, I do not mean that these forms are any less 'real' than the analogue or pre-digital. Digital media intentionally describes media that is accessed via digital means. For example, movies converted onto DVDs ('digital video disc') or through online streaming (both through legal and illegal web hosts) are digitally encoded films for viewing on one's television or computer. Likewise, social media is a form of digital encoding, allowing individuals to communicate with others through images, words, and live or on-demand audio visual through computers and smart phone devices. Many individuals and couples disclosed their reliance upon digital media when describing their opinions about Pakistani and British culture, and about sex, love, and family. Furthermore, individuals demonstrated that their thoughts on these themes are elucidated or even romanticised at times within certain films, including but certainly not limited to, Bollywood tales of forbidden and elated love stories. These stories emerge as forms of the narrative process, prefigured, but also refigured in dialectical relationships with audience's life stories.

Two major strands of digital interaction materialised during fieldwork: online social media and online video streaming. Participants commonly used interactive websites such as Facebook and Reddit in order to relate with other couples with similar stories to theirs, as well as for seeking 'alternative' answers to questions that their families, friends, and religious leaders decline to entertain, as will be discussed through this chapter. The British produced films, *East is East* (1999) and its sequel, *West is West* (2010) alongside Bollywood and Indian cinema were regularly referenced as significant narratives for understanding the 'intermarriage difficulty' amongst South Asians. Such difficulties have been situated in postcolonial 'othering' as demonstrated between neighbouring South Asian communities and between the 'colonised' and the 'coloniser', also at times revealing a 'partial presence' of postcolonial hybridity (Bhabha 1994). Individuals and couples use these mediums to describe their fears and hopes alongside their decision making processes, in a synergetic relationship between prefigured narratives and refigured life stories. Through these digital interactions emerge inadvertent sequences of online interacting, including targeted advertisements and personalised media suggestions, which are simultaneously at work in the narrative process of intermarried individuals.

While digital media is not generally a unique form of interaction, the intentions in which participants use it in relation to their marriages and families are unique, as without these modes of reflection individuals resort to seeking inspiration from religious leaders and from the people they immediately relate to within their social circles, limiting their interactional space. This became evident when speaking with older generations that did not engage as much with digital media in contrast to the younger generations who are more widely and regularly utilising digital media. The stories of intermarried individuals utilising digital technology when forming their

life stories contribute to the pursuit of digital anthropology in understanding what it means to be human (Miller and Horst 2012). These stories reveal the continuous transaction between individual agents and their collective senses of belonging. Additionally, these stories demonstrate how digital interaction may be further assisting the normalisation of mixed marriages through mimetic refiguring and as such serving as impending narrative prefigurations.

Organising friends in the multi-community of Facebook

Facebook features a distinct mechanism which allows users to control a variety of levels of 'privacy'. Users can include or exclude specific users or groups of users from single, occasional posts or for a manifold of posts depending on the settings they select. Settings can be pre-selected for every past and future post, but can also be altered where each individual interaction can select an algorithm of privacy factors. The algorithms includes a spectrum ranging from 'public' where any Facebook user regardless of 'friendship' status can view your post if they so choose, to the 'only-me' setting where only the Facebook user can view the post they have made. A public setting naturally engages a wider variety of users while the 'only-me' setting allows a user to temporarily or indefinitely limit viewership without needing to permanently 'delete' a post in the case they wish to re-release the post at a future time. Settings include 'friends' only, 'friends of friends', 'friends with exceptions' where specific user names are manually excluded in the privacy setting. In this process, individuals can create senses of community based around common interests by including or excluding other users in certain posts. Additionally, Faceboook 'groups' can be organised and privacy boundaries can be set based around common interests ranging

from hobbies to other cultural and social similarities. Within one profile a user can simultaneously partake in multiple groups. Many participants have welcomed the varieties of privacy settings, and consider them to be indispensable to their online interactions.

Many participants of this study strategically use the privacy settings to manage their online social world from a single profile, while controlling the levels of access that others, such as family or friends, have to their profile interactions. For example, Fatimah has selected 'in a relationship with Jasper' on her Facebook profile. However, because her family is unaware of her relationship, she has created a privacy exception through her settings that excludes all of her family members from viewing her online relationship status. The only people who do see her relationship status are her mutual friends with Jasper. The online world has provided a similar platform as offline, where an individual has the ability to conceal certain parts of his or her life from certain social groups, in this case, Fatimah's family. Facebook does not somehow create new levels of privacy not found in off-line socialisation, rather it facilitates in expanding social interaction (Miller 2011: 163). Fatimah could avoid filtering through numerous privacy settings by alternatively selecting to leave her relationship status 'unanswered' on Facebook. Yet Fatimah feels it is important to have her relationship status confirmed online because it signifies that her and Jasper are 'committed' and 'exclusive', and that any online ambiguity around their relationship invites unwanted romantic advances from other individuals. She noted the common declaration from Facebook users that 'a relationship is not real unless it's

"Facebook official"', noting that while this statement is one in jest, that there is indeed a level of truthfulness behind it.[1]

Similarly, Miller found that certain Facebook users in Trinidad relied upon Facebook as significant expressions of love between romantic partners. He describes one woman who never found herself to be pretty, but suddenly felt appreciated and beautiful when her boyfriend posted hundreds of photos of her on his Facebook profile, proudly displaying his love and affection for others to see (Miller 2011: 141). Even though other individuals expressed her beauty to her in-person, including her family, her boyfriend's explicit actions to publish her photos and their relationship on the most popular social media website in Trinidad solidified not only her relationship, but also her own feelings about her appearance.

When browsing through Facebook groups, users can easily discover specific 'pages' that appeal to interreligious, interfaith, and mixed race marriages, or any other communal belonging. The Facebook search engine allows and even populates suggestions for specific people, pages, and groups that resemble a user's keyword searches. Occasionally, public pages are linked with private or even hidden groups, allowing users to interact with layers of 'communities' depending on their 'commitment' to the community, determined by a screening processes moderated by page and group 'administrators'. For example, I was easily able to engage with a publically accessible page about interfaith marriage in the UK. However, these interactions were limited and consisted mostly of advertisements for public workshops or news articles about mixed marriages. Not many users commented or interacted with posts besides. However, when requesting additional information about

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[1] Facebook users can reveal 'unintentional truths' and that the things they post, share, and create are a part of a truth of their identity, even if that truth it is an aspirational one or created identity (Miller 2011:48-50).

intermarriage discussions, the page administrator messaged me with an invitation to a private group for intermarried couples. Despite the invitation to the group, I was still screened through a series of questions from the group's administrator, including questions about my personal relationship and membership intentions. As group administrator, it was her obligation to 'protect' current members in the group from potential harassment or as some members called it 'trolling'.

Such screenings and privacy controls are necessary when considering some of the younger individuals who have concealed relationships, such as Zaid and Fatimah, both of whom have meticulously and deliberately designed specific settings for their online presence. Despite attempts to control privacy, there is always risk involved with sharing aspects of one's life with others. Just as Zaid trusts that his friends avoid mentioning his male partner if they happen to see Zaid's father in town, Zaid must also trust that his online friends will refrain from sharing posts from his Facebook with other friends of theirs that could potentially get back to his family. Likewise, he must be quick to 'untag' himself from unwanted photos or posts by friends, a commonly noted problem of Facebook that users cannot avoid (Miller 2011: 23). However this problem is dually manifest in the offline world, where Zaid takes a risk each time he goes on a date with Tomas. A balancing act exists in both offline and online relations, where risk can only be mitigated to certain degrees.

One woman I met through the private interfaith group was Anya, a Russian Orthodox Christian who messaged me about her engagement with a Pakistani Muslim man. She was hoping to find a 'liberal' imam to facilitate a nikah for their marriage. Because we were both members of this group the process of membership screening provided a preluding level of trust and familiarity so that Anya could feel comfortable sharing and messaging other users, including myself. While still strangers, we were

paradoxically 'friends' based on our belonging to the private group. Anya shared that both her and her partner's parents disapproved of the relationship. However, in desperation Anya believed that finding Christian and Muslim authorities to marry them in separate ceremonies could persuade their families to mutually agree with relationship. Dr. Mirza expressed his caution of facilitating nikahs for couples in desperation explaining that past experiences and uncomfortable news headlines expose potential complicated consequences, such as families forcefully separating the couple[2]. Moreover, when discussing Anya's position with Dr. Mirza he revealed that being involved with delicate relationship circumstances could not only injure his own reputation, but also that of his family and friends.

Other Facebook users provided Anya with resources, including downloadable pamphlets such as 'Christian Muslim Forum's Interfaith Marriage Guidelines'. The group created a cache of these resources where any user could upload or download documents and stories. However, without firm and swift confirmation of an imam to help her situation, Anya disappeared from the group and deleted mutual friends from the group soon after. In her contribution to *Digital Anthropology* (2012), Stefana Broadbent explains how individuals can interact online in intimate ways, creating bonds and exchanges no different than in offline interactions, often due to the need for mutual support or uniquely shared interests (ibid. 130). She suggests that if an individual has reached out on these levels of sharing her life stories, that she is likely to evolve the friendship or relationship into other types of encounters, namely face-to-face (ibid. 130). Likewise, an individual who 'disappears' either through deleting their profile or by deleting you from their 'friend list' can be analogous to distancing

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[2] See the following selection of news articles on forbidden marriage:
www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/28/pregnant-woman-beaten-death-family-pakistan-court;
edition.cnn.com/2014/06/06/world/asia/pakistan-alleged-honor-crime/;
www.theguardian.com/uk/2010/sep/02/parents-arrested-suspected-honour-killing?CMP=share_btn_link

oneself from a friend offline. Furthering this is the indication that deleting a friend can signify the disapproval of breaking the vague 'netiquette' rules of Facebook (Miller 2011: 74). Facebook does not demand face-to-face intimacy, but rather provides a space of co-presence with others, even with peripheral 'friends' and acquaintances, where users can choose varying levels of interaction with other users. 'De-friending' can signify a public censure of another user or group's netiquette, making many users cautious of prematurely 'de-friending' another user. Anya posted a final message explaining that her decision to de-friend members of the group was not due to anyone member's 'wrongdoing', but rather to her no longer desiring to witness other member's 'success stories' in light of her own relationship complications. Following this message she refrained from any further engagement with the group, choosing instead to delete her own profile. In turn, Anya established her own Facebook netiquette by explaining her reasons for removal in order to mitigate any potential negative feelings of group other group members.

Online forums and alternative da'wah

While Facebook tended to be used for more personal interactions, often replicating many offline interactions, certain individuals also turned to more anonymous platforms for seeking guidance about love, sex, and marriage in the context of Islam. Some researchers have identified a growing strand of Muslims seeking guidance or *daw'ah* (preaching) through the Internet (see Alazrak and Saleh 2016; Marcotte 2016)[3]. Online guidance allows individuals to receive instant responses without

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[3] Daw'ah is typically perceived as a call for Muslims back to the moral values of Islam. However, as documented by Alazrak and Saleh (2016), younger generations of Muslims, particularly university students, rely on social media and the Internet for access to knowledge and debate. As such, preachers have learned to rely on these mediums for successfully engaging young Muslims. Online daw'ah

needing to travel or meet a teacher in person (Alazrak and Saleh 2016: 219). Additionally, many Muslims in culturally pluralistic societies, such as Europe, are turning to the Internet as a source for navigating their Muslim identities within their multicultural societies. Young European Muslims are increasingly using the Internet in 'handling their hybrid identities', revealing an array of perceptions amongst the same social group (Yousef and Abdualla 2016: 139).

While the utility of the Internet has provided more varied and accessible da'wah and opinion for European Muslims, the case can be made that this is even more true for those Muslims who feel to be minorities within Islam; such as individuals from smaller sects like the Ahmadi, or those who choose to marry and date outside of Islam. The Internet has provided a space for individuals to read the Qur'an and Sunna, while having access to a wide variety of interpretations of these texts as an addition to the guidance they receive from the mosque. Giddens notes how the proliferation of media through print and electronic sources has mediated both self-identity formation and social relations in the modern world (Giddens 1991: 5). Technological advances, such as the influence of the printing press during the Protestant Reformation, can assist the social, political, and theological changes in society. Prior to the wide and accessible distribution of the Bible in the vernacular, interpretations and reading of the Bible were subjected to the rule of the priest. The wide dissemination of the Bible created diverse interpretations of sacred text, working as an 'agent of change' Eisenstein 1982) or as Anderson calls it, 'print capitalism', which has wide reaching affects on the genesis of national and global political communities (Anderson 1983). The Internet is an expanded version of 'print

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however has manifested in various ways, both as a means for recruiting and promoting more pious forms of Islamic morality, and also as a positive way of promoting the compatibility of everyday life enjoyments and Islamic teachings. Both messages have strong appeal to young Muslims who feel marginalised within their societies.

capitalism' in that it is not only globally accessible, but instantaneously allows for the proliferation and spread of ideas as an impetus for dialogue and change.

Muslims today have wide access to the printed and online Qur'an, yet there is still an important connection between reading the Qur'an and having a qualified individual interpret it. Participants shared that considerable respect is to be given to those individuals who have become learned in the Qur'an and Islam. In Sunni terms, this person is most widely known as an imam, whereas an 'Imam' (intentionally capitalised by Shias) in the Shi'a tradition is linked to the Imamah, or the succession of religious leadership. Additionally, there are multiple levels of Islamic scholarship ranging from the *ulama* (scholar) who study *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and *pirs* (Sufi master) to name a few. The Internet has succeeded in creating a single location for individuals to interact with the widest range of interpretations, including entering into debate about such interpretations through online forums. Sometimes, a public leader, who has revealed himself as a teacher or scholar, provides da'wah. These publically proclaimed experts are often accompanied by approving organisations or mosques that can verify the teacher's authority. Other times, an Internet user can enter an anonymous online forum where the authority and 'legitimacy' of the scholar remains ambiguous.

Participants who regularly interact with the Internet as a source of guidance used specific websites for different types of responses. For general Islamic rulings, many participants would turn to websites run by notable figures who also have a public presence at large mosques, claiming these websites to be the more authoritative and as such more reliable for 'traditional' interpretations. This varies depending on sect, but some notable websites such as those run by the Muslim Council of Britain and its member organisation, Muslim Association of Britain are utilised as general

and authoritative positions for Muslims living in Britain. Despite efforts at being a unifying voice for Muslims in Britain, the organisations have been critiqued for particular biases towards Sunnis (Yousef and Abdulla 2016: 147).

Even though participants noted the authoritative appeal to websites such as those run by recognisable Islamic bodies, many participants still utilised anonymous forums for debate and to bring clarity to issues. Some of these forums exist within Islamic themed websites, yet some debates exist on more secular, anonymous sites such as Reddit. Reddit, for example functions as an online space where users submit discussion points prompting other anonymous users to debate and 'up vote' or 'down vote' other user contributions. By up voting or down voting replies, more popular responses rise to the top of thread shaping the manner in which the overall discussion thread is read. Users who used ambiguous forums such as Reddit, where anyone can make a claim to religious scholarship, were aware of the ambiguities, yet they continue to utilise the websites for guidance and debate.

Participants turn to less moderated websites for discussion because they seek answers and dialogue beyond the advice they are receiving from more authoritative websites. Others have used them to discuss more intimate and even risky topics such as one British Pakistani Muslim woman who debated whether to 'run away' with her Sikh boyfriend or concede to an arranged marriage in Pakistan. The precarious matter she wanted advice on concerned whether having vaginal rejuvenation surgery could conceal the fact that she was not a virgin, something which her potential husband in Pakistan fully expected. Many anonymous users responded to her question, mostly persuading her to avoid the surgery. While the discussion was eventually abandoned, the history of it remained on the website, accessible for others to continue to read,

serving as not only a part of one person's life story, but also as a prefigured narrative from which future readers continue to read as a part of their own stories.

The original commenter's appeal for advice was accompanied with a desire to receive confirmation on a decision she was already prepared to make. For example, users persuading her to avoid surgery and marry her Sikh boyfriend received more votes of agreement, thus elevating the idea that this was the decision she should make. Those who disagreed were down voted. Additionally, the few commenters seeking to purposely instigate conflict as opposed to engaging in dialogue were quickly labelled 'trolls', Internet slang for inflammatory and disruptive commenters. The original commenter later revealed that she was already determined to avoid surgery and marry her boyfriend, but that she simply wanted affirmation of her decision, even if such affirmation was from anonymous strangers online. Anonymity reduced emotional bias in responses that she felt that she would not receive from the few friends who were aware of her circumstances.

Other users turned to interfaith dating and marriage website discussion boards to seek advice about planning mixed wedding ceremonies, improving relations with in-laws, and raising children. These websites offer advice from other couples that have similar stories of intermarriage. Through these forums, feedback was based on personal experience and tended to promote mutual respect as the most important feature of marriage. For example, one particular discussion addressed how to respectfully speak to a priest about holding an interfaith marriage ceremony. Another discussion focused on including or excluding alcohol and food restrictions at wedding receptions. The interfaith discussion boards focused on providing as much support as possible, while also attempting to maintain sensitivity and respect to all aspects of interfaith marital issues.

Users also appeared to engage more in discussion boards like Reddit as opposed to reading moderated advice on designated faith-based websites because the secular discussion boards allow for a less mediated experience. Restrictions of debate and alternative perspectives become more limited when heavily moderated, but also places the burden of fact checking on the users, not the moderator. Some participants, such as Jinaan explained that she reads multiple websites and discussion boards, especially on Muslim women who intermarry, and on Muslim-Indian marriages. However, she rarely engages with the message boards. She prefers to peruse archived discussions and also enjoys watching debates ensue on current discussion threads. She explained to me,

> *I only post stuff when my own experience can relate, so when you met me, it was because I shared my marriage story to that girl who felt it could never work. I do that because I want to give a little hope to my sisters out there. But like, a lot of stuff no one really follows, I know I didn't when I first joined. It's more about knowing there are other women in similar situations. Like, I think we will all do what we have to do to make our families happy instead of doing what some random person online says. But it's that feeling of knowing someone can listen and relate. It makes you feel less crazy for being who you are. Like, I know on Reddit I upvote everyone who responds the way I would have. Like, I do want to read debates and stuff because it is fun, you feel smart, but you want to find people you agree with too, otherwise, why be there? It's just another way of feeling like you're not alone in your thoughts.*

Because most of these websites archive their discussions, you can search through seemingly endless pages of dialogues and advice, often finding exactly the type of answers that can confirm your current disposition. Message boards can function as a way to find new answers, search for different interpretations, but also as a way to confirm one's alternative views and lifestyles in order to make themselves feel less marginalised.

In her research on online fatwas, Roxanne Marcotte explores what she considers to be accelerated tensions between religious individuality and religious authority, incited by the Internet (Marcotte 2016). Some Internet users utilise the accessible knowledge they gain from their online interactions as a form of agency or empowerment in the face of authority, while others view it as increasing the awareness of the varieties of Muslims discourses (ibid. 231). I agree that both of these processes are occurring, but that the Internet is simply emphasising such processes that are already exist offline, rather than uniquely inciting them. The specific use of social media and message boards have helped reveal how individuals are actively creating their life stories through balancing risk, searching for new meanings, and at times finding challenges against the status quo of their social contexts. However, within this search is not a desire for anarchic individuality, but rather the exploration at creating new senses of community based around experiences of intermarriage.

Viewing digital media

Besides the interactive networks through social media such as Facebook and online forums, many participants also referred to the significance of watching films at home. Many younger participants stream films online or use paid streaming services like Netflix. Specific types of films repeatedly surfaced throughout the research process, namely Bollywood, and also the popular hits, *East is East* (1999) and *West is West* (2010). One participant teasingly suggested that I need 'not waste my time researching her', but rather should 'watch lots of Bollywood' on forbidden love, and then view *East is East*. When speaking with some participants about their favourite films of intermarriage, the subjectivity of the viewer's experience changed depending

on what aspects of certain films they focused on. Just as social media provides spaces for finding alternative and varied answers to religious and cultural questions, viewing films provides a way in which participants can place their own stories within parallel and interrelational story-telling narratives.

Multiple emotions, praises, and critiques can arise from watching the same film and by the same person. Sometimes the films evoke nostalgic, 'myth of return' sentiments, while other times, the same film is criticised for its lack of authentic representation, of historical inaccuracy, as offensive, or as exoticising Pakistan and Islam. When observing the themes of mixed marriage, some participants felt the films were tongue-in-cheek, 'spot on' representations, and yet at other times felt that the feel-good endings have been either overplayed or underplayed. Yet even during periods of criticism, such films remain important for participants in helping to clarify 'outsider' perceptions of conflict within their intermarriages. Their commentary adds to or adjusts the storylines that have become cinematically popular to the millions of other audience members in their homes watching the same films. Like other forms of narrative, the prefiguration of cinematic narratives are not mimicked to the point of repetition, but are reconfigured within the life stories of the viewer.

Bollywood and love across 'the border'

Unless one makes the effort to find specific social groups that hold screenings of popular Bollywood cinema, participants have turned to downloading or streaming movies onto their computers. The British version of Netflix has a modest collection of Bollywood films that members can watch with frequency. Notable features of watching Indian films were the dance, music, and cinematography, providing a

nostalgic feeling for South Asia. However one individual focused on how Bollywood challenges viewers to 'transcend boundaries of class, ethnicity and religion', yet also contradicts the storyline by mostly using 'pale skinned actors' for the main roles, consequently presenting a false impression of the realities of moving between strict categories of social belonging. One particular movie stood out more than the others, though, not for its elaborate dance and song, but for its dramatised storyline of a Sikh-Muslim relationship during Partition.

Gadar: Ek Prem Katha (2001) remains one of the most watched Bollywood films in the history of Indian cinema and loosely follows the real-life story of Boota Singh, named Tara in the film. Tara is a Sikh lorry driver who falls in love with and marries Sakina, a wealthy Muslim woman whom he saves while she is dramatically separated from her family during the Hindu-Muslim riots after Partition, circumstantially placing her in India with her family in Pakistan. After years of a life in India, Sakina discovers her family is alive and well in Pakistan, prompting her to reunite and also introduce Tara and her son to them by crossing the border into Pakistan. In the process, Sakina is separated from her husband and son due to a passport problem, and a conflict ensues with Tara trying to reunite with his wife on the one hand and Sakina's father trying to keep them apart. An emotional plot point of the film includes a humiliating political performance where Tara must pledge allegiance to Pakistan and Islam, disavowing his own religious and national ties in order to continue his life with Sakina. Instead, Tara, Sakina, and their son flee on foot to cross back into India. The climatic action scene culminates in a shootout on a moving train where Sakina is unintentionally shot by her father. After a dramatic three hours, the climax drops to a peaceful scene, with Sakina surviving the gunshot wound and her father accepting Tara as his legitimate son-in-law.

With Tara as the protagonist, Sakina's Pakistani Muslim family serves as the antagonist. Despite enjoying the film, a number of participants explained that the film unfairly represents the Pakistani struggle during Partition. Jinaan, married to a British Indian, explained,

> *The film is quite obviously biased. Indian cinema is, there is a reason certain films are banned in Pakistan. But this is not the point. All films make you choose sides, that's the point of entertainment because you're supposed to become attached to the lead character. But, for me, 'Gadar' isn't completely about us versus them. It is a message to everyone that love conquers all. It tells us how stupid nationalism is because it makes people demand ridiculous things of others even if they don't really believe it themselves. Like, when Tara is told to convert to Islam, obviously it wouldn't be a real conversion, and none of the Pakistanis believe he will really convert; it is just to make him submit, to degrade him. I am Pakistani and this isn't about demonising us, but about pointing out flaws, like the parents not listening to Sakina. Sakina has a whole family from India now who want to unite with their Pakistani family as well, which is the whole point of love, it's about bringing people together. And, spoiler alert, keeping family together is supreme to Pakistanis, so why are they trying to tear it apart now? And in the end, the dad, though he loses the plot and nearly kills his daughter, realises how crazy it all is and then happily accepts everything. To me, that is the bigger message than the India versus Pakistan feud. Like, the dad was horrible at times, but the film shows that he can change—that love changes people no matter the background. So, subtly, the dad is more of the hero in the story because he is the one who radically changes. Tara is always the good guy, like he can't really do wrong, and even when he does, you are still cheering for him, but that gets boring after awhile. So, the dad is the real character change. People will disagree with me, but this is about challenging nationalism and prejudice.*

Jinaan explained that she enjoys *Gadar* and similar films because they make it easier for her to talk to other South Asians about her marriage to an Indian. She explained,

> *When I get some naïve girls asking me why I have married an Indian, I think it's amusing to ask them if they watch movies like 'Gadar', which they nearly always have. And then I say, 'well love, who wins in the end?' So many girls I know think it is an unspeakable thing to do, but they all watch these films and empathise with the story, yet they miss the whole point about love*

and about bad history repeating itself. But then they will still say, 'but it's just entertainment', and yet here I am, a Pakistani woman, a Muslim woman, with my Indian husband, and we make it work. Sometimes these storylines couldn't be more obvious, they are trying to teach us to be more accepting people, but so many people continue to miss the point.

Not all were as enthused about Bollywood depictions of mixed marriage. Fatimah explained Bollywood films to be 'too shallow', stating that they oversimplify the realities of intermarriage. She noted that while *Gadar* is explicitly about Partition, that others like *Veer-Zaara* (2004), are 'just there to look at attractive Indian actors and dance along to the songs'. She also believes that Bollywood films exoticise views of India, Pakistan, and kinship relations. She continued,

When some of my English friends talk to me about my relationship with Jasper, they don't mean to offend me, but they use their ideas from Bollywood to give me advice about my relationship. They think that because Bollywood likes to portray forbidden marriages that South Asians have somehow normalised it. This is so far from the truth. Or my friends think they suddenly understand what my family is like based on watching films.

The problem is that we know these relationships can work, but Bollywood just brushes over the reality and they make everything look perfect and simple, but it's false hope. And the things they focus on, like old fashioned and unsupportive families are just silly. My parents are truly supportive, my mum is in so many ways like a sister to me, and she doesn't resemble the films at all.

Between Jinaan and Fatimah the subjectivity of Bollywood in the British context varied in interpretation and weight. Even though Fatimah rejects Bollywood as an accurate depiction of her experiences, she nevertheless uses the presence of Bollywood to reject certain images and prefigurations that do not fit into her life story. Bollywood films also allow the viewer to exercise their imaginations and to remain aware of other possibilities even if they do not intend to pursue them. Yet the viewer's imaginings are real and are reflected upon when they approach the worlds

they encounter. The films are narrative resources evoked by actors as ideological platforms that can support real-life decisions. The world in which individuals live out their life stories are 'reflections of the assumptions with which they approach the world and reactions to what their assumptions effect' (Rapport 2012: 136). Human agency is realised through the layers of interpretation in which our 'assumptions are preconditions of our active encounters with reality' and where such encounters are inversely affected by these same encounters, placing human action within a hermeneutic cycle (ibid. 136). When moving to British cinema, *East is East* and its sequel, *West is West* managed to conspicuously capture the attention of nearly all of the participants in the study.

Between East and West

As a reference to *The Ballad of East and West* (1889) by Rudyard Kipling, *East is East* is a British comedy that focuses on the life of 'George' Khan (Pakistani name, Jahangir Khan), Ella Khan, and their five children living in a working class neighborhood of Salford, England. It follows the struggle of George, attempting to reconcile his longing for Pakistan by arranging marriages between local Pakistani girls and his eldest sons, despite his sons' objections. The mother, Ella, is caught between supporting her husband whom she loves and the desires of her children, eventually finding herself in a position of frustration with everyone. Revealing the tensions of a modern hybrid family, where the children, some whom view themselves as British, not Pakistani, are constantly negotiating their sense of identity in an era of juxtaposed British politics of Enoch Powell, hippie culture, and Pakistani heritage.

Themes of 'between two cultures' and of the 'myth of return' are heavily featured in the film (Bolognani, et al. 2011: 164). While the film's themes accurately represent the political era it is set in, it fails to provide any backdrop of George's Pakistani past, only alluding to it (ibid.). In this sense, the film is almost entirely from a British perspective, and consequentially is a result of 'outsiders' perceptions rather than insiders' communication' (ibid. 171). While true of *East is East*, the sequel, *West is West* provides a response to these criticisms by featuring George's life in Pakistan.

In *West is West*, George brings his youngest son, Sajid, to his village in Pakistan to stay with his first wife, daughters, and other relatives. It is here that we learn about George's life as 'Jahangir', such as his wanderlust habits of visiting distant villages, and of his first marriage. It is also a time for Sajid, who earlier in the film refers to his father as a 'Paki', to finally appreciate and 'fall in love' with Pakistan. *West is West* completes the reference to Kipling's poem where he writes 'East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet' (1889). The two films complement each other, revealing the theme of 'between two cultures' as also present in Kiplings poem. While the first part of Kipling's poem alludes to the perceived distinction between East and West, the subsequent stanza reads, 'But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth'. In the film, Sajid experiences emotional pains when he is faced between choosing Pakistan or England as his home. Additionally, we witness Sajid's older brother, Maneer, struggle to adapt fully to Pakistani life during his search for the 'perfect Pakistani wife'. Ironically, his new bride not only resembles his favourite singer, Nana Mouskouri, subtly revealing a third layer of his dual and global identity, but he discovers that his future bride was born in Rochdale, England, and shares the same outspoken British slang as his mother and siblings. Participants noted the irony and the sense of 'between two cultures' that

is pertinently portrayed in the two films, and is a common feature of postcolonial positionality. Through colonial mimicry, colonised persons experience 'partial presence' (Bhabha 1994), and comparable to historical memory, the hybridisation of postcolonial intermarriages brings colonial histories into the present. For Bhabha, the mimicry is 'almost the same, but not quite' where cultural imitation of the coloniser serves as a 'metonymy of presence' (ibid. 89-90). Being 'English' is not quite the same as being 'Anglicized' Bhabha explains. The person 'in-between' is a hybrid of their own and the coloniser's cultural identity.

A few participants such as Zaid, Feroz, and Farid, empathised with the Khan children from *East is East*. While none of these men are 'racially hybrid', they were all raised in Britain, and identify first and mostly as British, placing them into the double vision of partial presence. Feroz commented that there is an undeniable expectation from other family members, especially the ones he is still connected to in Pakistan, to 'remain Pakistani', yet Feroz says he rarely identifies as such. He continued,

> *We're being told to live in a certain way, but we don't even know what that way really is. And, why should we? I don't live in Pakistan, I live in Britain. I know Britain and I know America. Why should I change that lifestyle? 'East is East' shows that. You feel bad for the kids, especially for Tariq who has his English girlfriend and goes out at night. Like, nothing his father says makes sense to him because it is alien to him.*

Yet East is East appropriately contrasts the scenes with the Khan children with examples of English racism in the form of posters of Enoch Powell. These posturings leave the viewer with the blatant experiences of 'between two cultures' in which the English locals fail to see the hybrid Khan children as 'fully' English, even if the children themselves prefer to identify as English. Zaid also made comments about the film and his own experiences

When they go on that trip to Bradford and someone has crossed it out to say 'Bradistan', like even Pakistanis know this and think it is kind of funny. It isn't racist, even I call it Bradistan. Like, I don't really relate to people I've met who are a part of that community, they want to be like Pakistan still, yet they are British, it's bizarre. And, like, a lot of them are not even similar to Pakistanis today in Pakistan.

The experience of the second or third generations not relating to the first generations' experiences of cultural identity is not surprising. Dr. Mirza explained this experience with his own father. Showing me photos of his father's younger years wearing bell-bottoms, he explained how he grew up celebrating Christmas, and 'did things most other English kids did'. However, he explained that today his father and men of his father's generation have reversed this position. Instead, they encourage their grandchildren to attend Arabic and Urdu lessons, they refrain from celebrating Christmas, and despite many of them once having dated English girls, now attempt to arrange transnational marriages for their children and grandchildren. These experiences in many ways resemble the changes with the character of George in the film. In one scene George demands that Tariq 'step in line' as an upright Pakistani Muslim son, causing Tariq to challenge him. The dialogue follows:

Tariq: *Look Dad, we're all fed up being told what to do and where to go.*

George: *I'm warning you mister, I'm not bringing you up to give me no respect. Pakistani sons always show respect.*

Tariq: *Dad, I'm not Pakistani. I was born here. I speak English, not Urdu.*

George: *Son, you no understand cause you no listen to me. I'm trying to show you a good way to live. You know English. English people never accepting you. In Islam everyone is equal, see? No black man, no white man, all Muslim. Special community.*

Tariq: *I'm not saying it's not Dad. I just think I got a right to choose who I get married to.*

> George: *You want to choose like Nazir? And lose everything? You want bloody English girl? They're no good. They go with other men. Drink alcohol, no look after.*
>
> Tariq: *Well if English women are so bad, why did you marry me mum?*

Farid noted this specific dialogue in the film revealing the disconnection experienced between different generations. Not only does Tariq not view himself as Pakistani, but when his father tries to logically reason with Tariq it backfires because Tariq then questions George's decisions to marry his English wife. The dialogue is not only about the difference between father and son, and Pakistan and England, but about integration. Neither Tariq nor George feel they fit in with their surrounding environment. In the film Tariq changes his name to 'Tony' when he enters nightclubs in order to avoid racist harassment, while the other South Asians queuing at the club are turned away. George is cognizant of these contradictions and informs Tariq that the English will never fully accept him; that Tariq will never be 'fully English', and only ever be 'Anglicised' (Bhabha 1994). Likewise, Tariq's final question to George reveals that George is not necessarily upset with his own family whom he has always loved, but is possibly upset with his own decisions in life, something we find more about in *West is West*.

Farid shared that this particular scene felt like versions of conversations he has had with his own father while growing up. However, now that he is married to Christy, his Pakistani family is accepting of her, and shared that *East is East* is sort of a family tradition film to watch, because everyone feels they can relate in some way, even Christy. While the film addresses intense themes of intermarriage, as a genre in drama/comedy it brings the viewer back to a place of comfort. Farid commented, 'Yeah, when it first came out, we joked that my father was George, but we all know

he wasn't really like George, like he'd never do some of the things George does in the movie, but we always made fun and he took it as banter.' Farid's family's ability to laugh in self-deprecating humour, as similar to Zaid's comments on 'Bradistan', are self-stereotypes that only 'insiders', in this case, British Pakistanis, can express at their 'collective expense' (Herzfeld 2005). The diasporic humour 'exerts ironic moral pressure on local outsiders' and in the process creates a common ground with the surrounding society (ibid. 2005: 3).

Speaking of the more dramatic and stereotypical scenes of George's portrayal as the domineering father figure, Feroz explained,

> *Yeah, um, like clearly it doesn't look good. But, it's a movie. Like, I've always said that 'East is East' is the original version of 'My Big Fat Greek Wedding', only for us (Pakistanis), not Greeks in America. Not everything is going to be perfect or perfectly portray everyone's experiences, but people still enjoy it because it resonates in some way.*

When observing the film from the perspective of her own marriage, Alice said she loves it. She said,

> *A lot of my friends were worried I was going to convert or completely change my life when I got married, but they see now that I really haven't. And in the film, even the mum isn't Muslim. The opening scene is the best bit, so funny, where the kids are participating in the parade for the church and holding the crucifix and the Virgin, whilst hiding it from the dad. It's so funny, but so real. I mean I sort of do this stuff, too, like scaled down, and seeing it in the movie just makes me feel all the more understood. You know that my own lot sometimes go to church with me and their grandparents, and the other side of the family hasn't a clue. Our family is really unique and it is blessed in its own way. It just makes you appreciate being different and having so many kinds of experiences. I wouldn't change any of it.*

Alice, like Farid, explained that *East is East* is a popular movie their family watches together, and while its representation contains flaws, it still resonates with the experiences of hybrid families in England. Like Feroz, Alice doesn't expect people to

think all Pakistanis are like George, but she also says that the English portrayal is just as bad. She justified her comments saying that 'it doesn't matter because you end up cheering for the whole family, not against each other, but against everyone else who is against them!' While the film can be viewed as partially representational, it also serves as a prefigured narrative from which viewers orient their life stories.

Narrative configuration

DVDs and online visual streaming providers have allowed families and individuals to more easily watch films that they otherwise may not be regularly viewing. This includes access to Bollywood cinema and re-plays of the debated, yet also appealing film, *East is East*. I propose that this type of viewing experience helps to create both an individual and collective enactment either in conjunction with or against narratives found in such viewings. Additionally, social media contributes to new senses of community, whether intentional or not, by creating and contributing to spaces of mutual interaction around intermarriage and dating. There are two threads that contribute to this community building, the first being the significance of narrative which can be linked to the wider appeal towards collective belonging, (Ricoeur 1990; for approaches of nationhood see Abu Lughod 2005). The second thread pertains to the formation and shaping of opinions within doxic relations (Bourdieu 1977). Some argue that these 'private' interactions, that is activities performed within the confines of the home, such as using social media, browsing the internet, and watching films contribute to isolation or unsociable behavior (Turkle 2011), yet the process of viewing and reflecting on the cinematic narratives reconfigure implicit manifestations of individual life stories. Individuals flirting with the idea of cross cultural marriage

and couples within intermarriages who partake in interactions such as finding alternative advice on religion, sex, and marriage are not necessarily 'falling out' with their existing communities, but are simultaneously maintaining their involvement with their present communities and creating new communities around a narrative that confirms their own experiences. As such, they use prefigured narratives, whether through fictional accounts or lived experience, and enhance them, also contributing to further collective narratives based on the intermarriage experience.

There are a number of notable exchanges of narrative occurring through digital technology. First there are the experiences shared through posting, reading, and interacting with other individuals in online networks. Second is the act of viewing a cinematic narrative, reflecting upon such narrative, and then contributing one's own experience to such cinematic portrayals. Both of these involve transmission of narrative. Narrative is ultimately a collaborative instrument, a means for sharing, reflecting, creating. It is a method which positions an individual experience into the wider contexts of life (Ochs and Capps 2001, 2).

Carrithers deconstructs the concept of narrative to discuss what he refers to as 'story seeds', which 'are not the epic, the novel, the narrative history, but rather minimal narratives' (Carrithers 2009, 40). He explains that it is within these story seeds that listeners pick up on hints of familiarity, some of which can have incredibly powerful and persuasive meaning. The story seeds of metaphor and more systematic narratives 'work together to achieve a persuasive effect' (ibid. 49). He utilises examples from German speeches that employed a form of rhetoric in an effort of 'overcoming the past' as a response to the Nazi period. In using these examples, he analyses the nature of rhetoric, argument, and persuasion within culture. Focusing on specific story seeds, or the words and phrases used within the minimal narratives, the

story seeds of this rhetoric provokes 'familiar information, familiar motives, familiar storylines' whereby simple insinuations to a singular event may evoke a more detailed historical memory (ibid. 40). Rhetoric is a distinct human force of interaction in which new cultural forms are created, not through cultural determinacy, but through rhetorical devices of persuasion that people use to situate themselves and others, and 'move the social situation from one state to another' (Carrithers 2005: 581). As noted earlier, Farid recalls his own familiarity with the brief, but significant conversation in *East is East* between George and Tariq. The conversation resonates with Farid, and also with a sense of reflecting on not only his own life, but on specific times and places of events. The narrative of the film does not stay in the past, but is residually refigured into new narratives.

Various histories and stories can live and can also be forgotten. Whether a narrative lives or dies rests in the reception of the individuals who remember it and even more so, how the collective collaborate to keep it alive. Mimesis does not operate as a full circle, but rather as a spiral. Prefiguration, configuration and refiguration are continuously occurring in identity formation, but these three processes do not simply repeat the narrative. The refiguration process is key to shifting mimesis from a cyclical process into spirals of narrative. No narrative is exactly alike, and it is in refiguration of the reader, the viewer, and the listener, that individual and social situations change. Returning to the concept of 'story seeds', we can appreciate the value of metaphor and persuasion involved when the active reader, or listener in Carrither's cases, are met with familiar story seeds that resonate with and persuade them. Rhetoric is a tool of force that persuades and discourages, ultimately conveying cultural schemas with which other humans interact. The completion of mimesis is not in fact complete, as the refiguration process produces

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lived experiences that are drawn from the connections of human action and attempts at reflecting and reshaping narratives based on new circumstances that emerge from the narratives before it. Refigurations then become prefigurations.

If taking this model of narrative and time into consideration, it becomes evident not only of historical or fictional narrative configuration, but also of the process of identity building. When looking back at Fatimah's experiences of Bollywood, the idea of mimesis3, or the action of the reader becomes apparent. Fatimah had at one time enjoyed viewing Bollywood, even using it with her cousins to discuss their future love lives, and as such contributing to a continuing narrative, bringing together a temporal whole of the films as both something of the past, and also of the present, and also of their hypothetical futures. However, as she entered her own secret relationship with Jasper, her reception and reflection on such narratives changed; she now challenges certain narratives of the 'past', but also brings them into her present in order to refigure a new narrative.

Likewise, through films and social media, one can find each of the processes of mimesis occurring. This raises the question of the 'truth' claim of narrative. Ricouer claims that both fictional and historical narrative go through the same processes of narrative because 'human time' is ultimately time that becomes human by virtue of the articulation of narrative (1990a: 52), but he also argues that there is a distinct difference concerning the motives of truth, where history has an 'ambition to constitute a true narrative' (1990b: 3). Nevertheless, he also establishes that fiction informs and shapes reality, challenging normative understandings of both reality and truth, stating that both fictional and historical narrative merge as an 'interwoven refiguration' (1990c: 101). As such, an individual's truth and reality hinge upon their imagined and lived experiences.

The model of Ricoeur's narrative formation, particularly within the realm of identity building, contributes to the ways in which both individuals and collectives of individuals experience reality. Bourdieu explains that accepted norms as objective reality, or the experience of when 'the natural and social world appears as self-evident', can be termed *doxa* (Bourdieu 1977, 164). Orthodox opinions are invested in preserving doxa as the habitual status quo, while heterodox opinions challenge the current field. Online forums serve as a type of medium within the 'field of opinion', although multiple types of arguments are occurring. On the one hand a question or topic may be proposed that challenges what some participants have considered to be a taken-for-granted practice such as the value in maintaining close kin connections. The proposed topic then raises questions as to why such connections exist. From this, some Internet users provide what they believe to be the 'ultimate truth' on such matters by quoting directly from the Holy Qur'an. Alternatively, others provide 'new truths' that challenge the orthodoxy of such scriptures. In doing so, they provide a new kind of justification, not found in religious text, but in alternative narratives (either of lived experience or of fictionalized moral tales). Within these exchanges, there often arises a clear favourite; that is, one particular set of opinion takes precedence. More often that not when the conversations take place on secular messaging threads, the favoured opinion leans towards the alternative interpretations of marriage and dating that do not conform to 'orthodox' Islamic doctrine. Yet by creating a new favoured interpretation within specific online communities, a new doxa has the potential to take shape.

Additionally, what is deemed to be 'Islamic' doctrine takes on new forms as well. Rather than providing a wholly new alternative to marriage, users sometimes re-interpret the Qur'an. What is helpful in these reinterpretations is the act of referring to

religious leaders who may have already begun teaching about alternative perspectives. For example, some users would cite imams in the UK who celebrate interfaith relations, including interfaith marriages. While some have been accused of the sort of fallacy of appeal to authority, nevertheless, new senses of marriage, dating, and sexual relations are taking shape by combining both 'fictional' and 'historical' narratives, by challenging that which appears to be 'arbitrary normative' opinion, and by calling upon as many 'credible' authorities that can potentially establish a new set of norms. Moreover, not all of the seemingly credible authorities exist within the traditional sense of Islamic understandings of authority. Rather, credibility rests in lived experience for many Internet users.

Returning to the role of the agent provokes questions of motive. What is the purpose for which an individual becomes unsettled with the social field they were born into? What causes heterodox opinions to ensue and then acted upon? Giddens (1991) discusses the anxieties of the modern existential human. On one hand is the phenomenon of trust, or the familiarity one can rely upon for ontological security. On the other hand is what Giddens believes to be a feature of modernity, which is doubt. The balance between trust and doubt take place within another feature of modernity being reflexive self-identity. This contributes to the balances of the cosmopolitan individual, of the existential individual and their relation to community. Both Zaid and Fatimah find themselves in positions where they are balancing and questioning their secret relationships. They both currently have a financially and emotionally secure life if they continue to adhere to the security of their kinship system. On the other hand, their secret relationships have called into question what they have always taken-for-granted, instead creating doubt.

With the anxieties of belonging on the one hand and the apparent ease of following one's existing field on the other, remain questions around an agent's motives. Within her theory of ritual practice, Catherine Bell provides a model for understanding an agent's motives through the idea of redemptive hegemony (Bell 1992). Using Antonio Gramsci's concepts of hegemony, she explains that what could be considered a type of doxa of 'un-self-conscious awareness of the world', include the recognition of dominance and subordination. As such, humans act according to the politics of power relations. She writes that redemptive hegemony is 'a strategic and practical orientation for acting, a framework possible insofar as it is embedded in the act itself' (ibid. 85). In this framework, agents are aware of the power plays that exist and can advantageously reproduce relations of power, however it is not produced 'mechanically', but offers a means of empowerment through 'constraint' and also through 'possibility' (ibid. 84). Effective reproduction is key in this as it provides a motive of empowerment to continue the enactment. Yet, as noticeable with many intermarried couples, constraint and possibility are far from mutually exclusive options of enactment, where multiple senses of belonging are simultaneously balanced and negotiated. Fatimah's online space of Facebook allows her to balance these enactments, where within one social world she has her family, her boyfriend, and her friends. The controls of Facebook act as a tool to easily allow her to make a statement to certain groups of people that she is in a relationship with Jasper, while also providing her a constraint that allows her to still be fully active with her family. This also occurs offline, however it cannot occur offline within the same space, which is where the difference occurs. Additionally, as Fatimah has already noted earlier, she struggles with how she will eventually bring her two worlds together, or more likely hold onto one while letting the other go. However, she is hopeful that through her

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actions and through the actions of others that when the time comes to choose, a choice will not need to be made because she has hope in the possibility that mixed marriages will become more acceptable in the near future. Furthermore, she acknowledges that her own story is a part of creating this possible status quo transformation.

Summary

This chapter has considered how social media and film function as mediators that are employed for shaping narrative, new communities, and the possibilities of a new standard of marital acceptance. As discussed previously, both through the narrative repetition of mimesis and through the challenges of doxa within the 'field of opinion', alternative opinion can become heard and established as a new norm, which continues to the cycles of both narrative and doxa. Digital media used via the Internet, however adds a further layer to the processes of this social change. While the digital experiences itself are no less a reality, the ways in which ideas are spread and multiply is unique to digital media. This has to do with a digitally specific collectivity whereby the 'community' we are digitally surrounded by (e.g. our Facebook Timelines, our 'newsfeeds', website advertisements, news suggestions, and so on), is populated by the very Internet pages we frequent via personalised targeted algorithms, and is in many ways auto-creating new senses of social norms.

During the process of individuals engaging in the 'field of opinion' and of confirming certain types of narratives online, the digital process of creating a sort of digital passport is populated and at times specifically targets you to feel subsumed by a particular worldview. After large political events have taken place and have shocked the populace, such as the announcement of a 'Brexit' or of increasing polls for

populist political parties, many users on social media explained their shock because everything they read or could see online told them otherwise. Users were digitally surrounded by friends, news articles, political pages, and so on that already confirmed their own disposition about such political debates. As such, they were sheltered in a way from the populace that otherwise thought differently from them.

In this same manner, individuals engaging frequently in 'interfaith' discussions and websites online will begin to witness a social media world that caters to their predisposition. By 'liking' something or reading something, or engaging in a particular topic, targeted advertisements for new friends, new media suggestions, and even consumer products related to their interests will begin to populate their social media profiles. As such, a type of illusion can be created for that individual, an illusion that the pages they can see are now the status quo, or that everyone else can see exactly what they see. Through my research I found this to be the case as well. My own social media profiles began to shift and I began to receive advertisements and suggestions for Islamic dating websites, for new 'friends' to add, and for specific types of media to follow related to interfaith, or to Islam, or to Pakistan. It suddenly felt as though interfaith Muslim marriages were 'everywhere'.

While some users may feel they are experiencing the illusion of targeted media, the reality is that through these sorts of digital passports, new types of communities are indeed created. When the community can be experienced, it can further be acted upon and shared. Giddens explains that modernity has given rise to electronic forms of mass media, which interpenetrate self-development and social systems (Giddens 1991: 5). It is spreading on two levels, by individuals intentionally sharing and creating new communities, and also by computer programmers who have designed an entire network of algorithms that can profile every person with an

Internet history and compartmentalize them by their finances and their cultural and social interests. Of course, time will tell how accurate such compartmentalisations are. For example, in a computer science study of social media, researchers determined that certain algorithms can determine with high accuracy 'automatic community detection' and create a profile of user attributes from sampling small amounts of user data online (Mislove, et. al 2010).

While such inferences are still being researched, it is unquestionable that digital media has provided a variety of mediated experiences of alternative community building, whether through narrative configuration, dialogue between heterodox and orthodox opinion, or through the inadvertent consequences of a personalised Internet. The Internet has provided a space for individuals to interact in a variety of ways in order to express themselves or discover others who have similar experiences. It is a way for individuals to remain a part of their pre-existing communities while also engaging in 'anonymous' spaces of discussion. Likewise, the narratives shared online and through film continue to feed the spiral of identity configuration, continuing to feed into new senses of social truths.

Conclusion

This thesis has been concerned with the experiences of mixed marriages of British Pakistani Muslims, of individuals who are navigating risk between their collective senses of belonging. British Pakistani Muslims are often framed within the close kinship network of the *biradari*, a system that provides reciprocal economic and emotional support. Means for protecting this tight-kin network include arranging endogamous marriages, often consanguineously (Shaw 2009) and transnationally (Charsley). Included in efforts to maintain group endogamy are the effects of colonial historical memory, in which colonised persons partake in the postcolonial mimicry, becoming partially present culturally hybrid persons (Bhabha 1994) and diasporic imaginings (Werbner 2002). Within these contexts appear culturally intermarried couples who are negotiating and creating their life stories through a narrative process (Ricoeur 1990) that considers the past, present, and imagined futures of love, family, and identity. Within this narrative process of shaping their life stories through their interactions, these individuals are not seeking to haphazardly abandon their pasts, but are finding creative ways to unite their conflicting multiple selves (Moore 1994) by using their relationships as exemplars of alternative narrative configurations of marriage and cultural difference.

Each individual is experiencing a different phase in their life story, from Margaret, the elderly woman who converted to Islam when she married her husband more than fifty years ago, to Zaid, the gay Ahmadi man, strategically balancing the separation between his hidden relationship with Tomas and his Pakistani family who are eager for him to find a suitable Pakistani wife. Despite the varying frequencies of experience, each of these individuals are connected in that they are shaping not only

their own senses of belonging, but are reflexively navigating social risk that take into consideration their partners and their families. In Britain, long-term commitment to a marriage entails as Simpson states, 'tension between individuality and collectivity' that is 'captured in the confusion that couples experience in talking about "we", "me", and "us" in relation to their lives together' (Simpson1998: 6). By committing to a life partnership, couples are joining in the participation of the 'powerful collectivity' of family life, which provides affection and security (ibid.). Not only are the individuals of this thesis interactionally traversing through the formation of their relationships with their partners, but they are simultaneously considering the maintenance of the family and cultural collectivities from which they come. The influential and commanding kinship network of the biradari provides a context in which members can make sense of their relationships with kin. Intermarriage re-arranges this understanding of kinship and family within a Pakistani Muslim context.

Fundamental to this re-arrangement is the agency of the individual in interaction. The endogamous biradari as it stands, serves as the status quo, as a taken for granted doxa (Bourdieu 1977), and the deviation of intermarriages purportedly threatens the maintenance of this status quo. Yet intermarried individuals are not attempting to disband the biradari through their intermarriages; they are mimetically shaping their experiences of obligation to family to expand the biradari on the basis that their relationships are not in conflict with their past (and current) collectivities, but are acceptable through re-interpretations of discursive prefigurations. Notable in these interpretations are couples that call upon the knowledge of the Qur'an to justify their relationships, particularly when they involve 'People of the Book'. Other instances include re-framing what being an 'insider' entails by re-evaluating religious

identity, such as Fatimah who implicitly accepts her partner Jasper as being a 'Muslim' (though not in name), due to his inherent 'spirituality', as she calls it.[1]

These interpretations and re-interpretations are means by which individuals can negotiate their relationships without needing to relinquish their cultural upbringings. Their abilities to interpret in such ways occur through their capacities as agents to imagine and reflexively interact with their histories and with others. Ricoeur explains:

> To understand the term 'capacity correctly, we must return to Merleu-Ponty's 'I can' and extend from the physical to the ethical level. I am that being who can evaluate his actions and, in assessing the goals some of them to be good, is capable of evaluating himself and of judging himself to be good. The discourse of 'I can' is, to be sure a discourse in *I*. But the main emphasis is to be placed on the verb, on being-able-to-do-so, to which corresponds on the ethical plan, being-able-to-judge. The question is then whether the mediation of the other is not required along the route from capacity to realization. (Ricoeur 1992: 181)

Agency is not only about individuals being able to imagine and interpret the possibilities of their relationships and life stories, but being able to live them. This does not mean, however, that by not living out one's imaginations, such as Alice and Tariq's playful musings on leaving their extended families behind, that they have lost their capacity as agents to act. As demonstrated with Alice, her insistence on adhering to her expected obligations as a daughter-in-law, is a deliberate choice of imagining and weighing the consequences of her actions not only for herself, but for her entire family. For Alice, having grandparents regularly present in her children's lives is fundamental to their upbringing. Alice values the benefits of the connections with her in-laws over and above her misgivings about specific obligations.

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[1] Believing that an individual is a member of one's religion without that person identifying as such is a common religious construction of 'theological inclusivism', a perspective that allows one to maintain that their religion as the 'true religion', while also avoiding proselytisation (Rahner 1993).

Whereas Ricoeur notably emphasises the individual agent in his works (2002, 2003, 2012), he argues, as I do, that while socio-cultural constructs have no life of their own, that they comprise prefigurative inertias that carry 'emotional value' to individuals (2003: 59). He states,

> Indeed, not only do we live in narrative understandings, not only is narrative the form of our everyday consciousness, but narrative can be appreciated as the form in which we come to consciousness. The conscious self can be said to emerge, initially by way of narrational acts, and to continue to develop by way of signifying practices; the individual self is a reflexive being which comes to itself and maintains its own sense of significance and reality through acts of self-narration. (ibid. 29).

Narrative is implicitly and explicitly utilised by individuals in their marriages and relationships. Implicitly experienced in the narrative residual of the colonial past manifesting as a hybrid present (Bhabha 1994), or in the inchoate 'story seeds' (Carrithers 2009) of both momentous and infinitesimal rhetoric (Carrithers 2005); and explicitly experienced through deliberate attempts at seeking and consuming narrative configurations. Many of these narrative configurations sought out include films of forbidden love, or reading and contributing to online chat rooms and social media platforms that are intentionally employed because they confirm an individual's current disposition. However, explicit narrative forms such as film also carry implicit narrative prefigurations, from which the viewer is consuming and refiguring through their imaginations and through their own relationships. These coinciding interactions of prefiguration, configuration, and refiguration convey past-present-future as a non-linear paradigm of identity formation.

The mimetic cycle of narrative presents itself as a cyclical[2] process of competing and complementary experiences. One narrative configuration is never quite like another due to the agent's ability to interpret and interact with others in

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[2] The cycle is a spiral, not a full circle.

minimal and significant ways. Noting the solitary individual, yet sameness of the collective, Michael Jackson explains:

> The oscillation between being a part of and being apart from is, as I have noted, not peculiar to ethnographic or empirical methods. It is in the nature of human consciousness itself, for our minds are continually and spontaneously moving between absorption in a task and reflection on it—between doing something without thinking and thinking about what we are doing. What is true of thinking is also true of being. Although we sometimes experience ourselves as singular or solitary, this experience is always predicated upon a sense of what it means to be with another. (Jackson 2012: 8).

Through processes of refiguration, narrative prefigurations are called upon by reflexive agents and become discernible in more noticeable, configurative formations, such as with the materiality of marital choices including partner selection and wedding rituals. The ability to create social change is through an agent's ability to consciously and unconsciously reflexively monitor and engage with social risk taking, through deliberating socio-economic security and anxiety (Giddens 1991). Individuals flirt with and test varying levels of social risk. Zaid attempts to assuage levels of social risk by hiding his relationship with Tomas, by avoiding places where they might be recognised by his family or acquaintances, and holding two separate, competing identities within a single self. Yet by the very act of being in his relationship with Tomas, he has already engaged in risky behaviour that could have direct socio-economic and potentially violent[3] ramifications for himself, and also for his family. His relationship choices are a result of his ability to imagine future risks and test his imaginings of these risks. While it is possible he will experience negative repercussions because of his relationships, it is not inevitable, and this hope, this

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[3] Tariq Ramadan has been publically engaging in discussions about Islam's approach to homosexuality for the past decade, seeking an alternative to the punishable offence of homosexuality in Islam due to its forbidden status amongst Islamic legal traditions. See his approach to homosexuality at tariqramadan.com/english/islam-and-homosexuality and Ramadan 2003.

imagining of an alternative result allows Zaid to put his imaginings into cautious, but intentional movements of change.

Monitoring social risk is not only about imagining alternatives, but also about sentient understandings of current social expectations. Within the biradari exists a central arrangement of obligation and reciprocity that include organising division of labour and the mutual transfer of economic and emotional resources. Members are expected to adhere to expectations of group loyalty including requests for financial and material possessions, and contributing to household responsibilities of raising children, cleaning and cooking for in-laws, and regularly participating in social events. As contributing members, each member not only provides to this system of sharing and giving, but are the beneficiaries of the same system. Charlotte has devoted herself to this system and now appreciates the benefits that giving have bestowed upon her in the form of being financially and emotionally supported by her children and grandchildren. While Charlotte embraced these practices, individuals deemed to be unaware of the necessary loyalty to these obligations pose a fundamental threat to the maintenance of the socio-economic community. However, those such as Charlotte, Margaret and Alice, demonstrate that when committed, 'outsiders' are capable of embracing these traditions. Margaret's conversion and subsequent devotion to her Pakistani family has, in her terms, 'made her Pakistani'. Margaret's attentiveness to her expected responsibilities have at times made her 'even more Pakistani than the younger generation of Pakistani girls back home'. However, as revealed, Margaret negotiated risk not only by contentedly adopting her husband's cultural traditions, but she engaged in risky behaviour in the form of allegedly 'abandoning her English identity'. Her white, English friends she grew up with no longer associate with her and her entire social network is with other British Pakistani

and Muslim women, something perceived as 'non-British' and as racialised Islamophobia (Choudhury 2015) experienced through English strangers labelling her a 'Paki' because of her hijab and abaya.

The racialisation of religion (Sheehi 2011; Choudhury 2015) was noticeable in the stories of white female converts to Islam married to British Pakistani Muslim men. Cecilia's story revealed her emotional abandonment of her English family after marrying and converting to Islam. Despite Cecilia's insistence that her conversion was a continuity of the morals she held growing up as a Christian girl, her family believed she had become 'Paki', that she was something wholly other based on a racialisation of religion, imbedded not in racial difference, but in perceptions of race that originate with orientalist political 'othering' and of moral and intellectual superiority of the white westerner (Choudhury 2015). Regardless of the risk Cecilia accepted through her marriage and conversion, she has received the recompense of creating her own family; of her children and grandchildren, and of new narratives of acceptance that serve as prefigurations that falsify racialised othering of individuals and communities perceived as threateningly different.

While there exists a shared discursive history of the British Pakistani diaspora, communal imaginings often develop and reveal themselves in contradictory ways. Included within these imaginings are varying interpretations of Islamic identity including those who distinguish between culture and religious belonging (Bolognani 2012), those who view religion and cultural as one in the same (Lewis 2007), sectarian divisions and the paradox of the ummah (Roy 2004). While the ummah is called upon as a uniting feature of Muslims worldwide, some feel they are not included in this global community due to being characterised as heretics, like Roun and Ibrahim. Yet others use the ummah as a means for remaining a part of a wider

Muslim community, while avoiding local interactions with their mosque as a method for balancing their hybrid sense of identity and their intermarriage, such as Farid. Farid has reframed his Islamic identity as something that can only be found 'in his heart', not in mosque attendance. These varying interpretations of belonging are a result of a narrative process seeking to evaluate one's identity within diaspora and within culturally their pluralistic society as religious and ethnic minorities (Davie 2015; Jacobson 1998).

Monitoring varying levels of risk is fundamental to decision making processes and entails the ability to imagine future happenings based on current contexts. The systematisation of rules and obligations of the biradari originates from a collective consensus for anticipating and mitigating future risks. This ability to hypothesise future risks requires the ability to imagine by way of fashioning varieties of scenarios from prefigured, cautionary stories of risk taking. One of the most significant examples of cautionary tales comes in the form of transmitting gossip about children of intermarriages who 'grew up to be lost'. One of these stories manifested with the re-telling of Isa, raised by a British Christian mother and a British Pakistani Muslim father. As an adult, Isa is said to now be a pagan, having abandoned most of his connections with his community, and cutting off his financial connections with his relatives, despite inheriting multiple properties in Pakistan. The tale of Isa reveals the perception that he has 'betrayed his Pakistani identity', an accusation commonly made against the hybrid individual (Bhabha 1994); though Isa's 'betrayal' is not entirely his responsibility, it is a regarded as consequence of being raised in a religiously hybrid home. As one woman put it:

> *Children of mixed marriages are confused. They have enough trouble trying to learn the culture of their parents. Bring in another religion, and boy, does that cause problems. It's not the children's*

> *burden—The parents should know better. Choose one religion, no need to complicate matters.*

 Intermarried couples with children carry the burden for controlling how their cultural values are transmitted to future generations. Yet many of the couples of this study do not believe that their traditions 'live or die' within their hands, seeking instead to prove how intermarriage can concomitantly sustain traditions, while also resolving to diminish racial and ethnic barriers.

Intermarriage futures

Increasing intermarriage has often served as an indicator of social integration (Song 2009; Berthoud 2005). Inter-ethnic marriages and co-habitation have been steadily rising in the last decade with nine per cent of British Pakistanis and four per cent of those identifying as 'white British' declaring themselves as married or co-habiting with a partner of a different ethnicity.[4] Through the increase of 'mixed race' children, the demographics of society are observed as becoming more diverse (Song 2009: 332), which purportedly signals social acceptance of 'others'. However, integration poses a number of issues including how the term is employed and how indicators of integration are measured. Examples include integration as 'assimilation' (Favell 2001) in which ethnic distinction is reduced otherwise designated as 'acculturation' (Gordon 1964). Intermarriage, though, does not guarantee social acceptance, neither does social integration guarantee economic or structural integration (Song 2009; Charsley et. al 2016). While Pakistanis have been residing in Britain for generations, concerns about integration of Pakistanis in particular have been demonstrated in the

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[4] From the Office of National Statistics (2014), *What does the 2011 census tell us about inter-ethnic relationships?*

aftermath of the Bradford riots of 2001 (Charsley et. al 2016) and from data suggesting a lack of upward economic and educational mobility (Modood 2003; Charsley et. al 2016). The perceived paucity of integration on structural and social levels has been attributed to rising transnational marriages, thereby reducing economic and educational integration of female migrant spouses who often assume traditional household roles, yet research has also indicated that the British spouse's identity is rarely impacted by the transnational partner, who moreover provides an easier transition into society for the foreign spouse (ibid.).

Shifting from the British expectation of integration to concerns amongst British Pakistani Muslims is the increasing concern with divorce rates and single-parent homes (Qureshi, et. al. 2014), something that has increased across all of British society (Simpson 1998). Single-parent family homes have doubled amongst British Pakistani Muslims since the 1990s, comprising around ten per cent of Pakistani and Bangladeshi family homes (Qureshi, et. al 2014: 262). Despite concerns with the assumed complications of intermarriage and 'love marriages' in contrast to arranged marriages, marital instability of Pakistani Muslims has been linked with the increase of transnationally arranged marriages (ibid.) creating a paradox of controlling risk. While kin-based and transnationally arranged marriages have been widely used as a means for protecting group resources and ideological transmission, these same marriages are now concomitant with the increasing insecurity of British Pakistani family homes. Considering the wider social change towards love-marriages (Giddens 1992), romantic intimacy is becoming a considerable factor for preserving marital stability (Qureshi et. al 2014). Due to emotional and geographic stress of many transnational relationships, arranging such unions is procuring a reputation as being risky (ibid.). In line with this realisation remain fears about the risk of intermarriage.

Rather than turning attention away from the risk of intermarriage, families attempt to mitigate marital and kinship breakdown by continuing to focus on the predominant narratives of collapse, namely intermarriage.

Despite research suggesting the risks of transnational marriage, the predominance of anti-miscegenation narratives are rooted in the widespread repetition of these current narratives. Only as further prefigurations of intermarriages arise will these other narratives decrease within the field of opinion (Bourdieu 1977). As with examples of divorce in Britain, the 'sense of anomaly and stigma has been greatly diluted' (Simpson 1998: 29) which can be credited to the increasing narrative configurations that normalise these changes. As the transmitters of traditions, parents are considered to be responsible for the cultural and religious upbringing of their children. Yet, some of the couples of this study have intentionally re-assigned this responsibility to their children, viewing themselves as examples of certain religious and cultural practices and beliefs, without requiring their children to make a definitive decisions, as in the case with Alice and Tariq. While Alice takes her children to Qur'an lessons, she allows brings them to church. Alice and Tariq imagine themselves as transmitters of tradition only in so far as they are willing to display both of their traditions, eventually allowing the children to determine their own religious path. Although interfaith research reveals an 'attitude of choice' when raising children (Arwick and Nesbitt 2010), other research suggests that the beliefs and actions of parents are determining factors in a child's future religious (or non-religious) belonging (Khan 1998). Finding a compatible position, I would argue, as with my cases that both instances are not only occurring, but are concomitantly transpiring through the interactive process of narrative formation.

Children of intermarriages will always hold the choice to create their life stories, but their life stories cannot be fashioned without the contexts from which they live and imagine. None of these imaginings are created within nothingness, but are a part of reflexive process of merging past, present, and future narratives. While a child may reject both or one of their parent's traditions, the decision to do so is predicated upon a preceding knowledge of these traditions, no matter how minimal or extensive the knowledge is experienced, as is the case with the story of Isa. Intermarriage does not suddenly allow one to exhibit their agency, rather the proliferation of intermarriage narratives reduce the conditions of risk associated with engaging in risky behaviour such as leaving one's religion. For example, the choice to leave Islam is always present, but the risks of apostasy are a preventative. Individuals can and do leave Islam, but they knowingly do so acknowledging the risks involved. As is seen with Yasir, he refrains from openly identifying himself as an atheist because doing so could result in losing his children, wife, and friends. Weighing these potential outcomes are a part of how Yasir envisions his life story. For Yasir, preserving his family is more important than publically declaring himself as an atheist. As a negotiation of this risk, he continues to read atheist literature in private, while keeping his family together, though acknowledges his continuous state of evaluating the tensions and interconnections between his family and his ideologies.

Yasir acknowledges that he cannot transmit Islam to his children, but loss of transmission from a parent does not mean that knowledge of a tradition is altogether lost. As viewed through the alternative forms of experience by way of digital media, narrative interactions do not comprise themselves in a linear or even kin-based manner. The multiplicity of other histories and narratives apparent in books, films, the Internet, gossip, and basic interactions with other human beings bring past and future

imaginings into the present. Exposure to and engagement with these narrative forms serve as prefigurations from which narrative configurations and refigurations take place (Ricoeur 1990). The propagation of intermarriage and hybrid children can be viewed within sociological speculations of secularisation (Bruce 2002), but more appropriately of demographic changes in religiosity (Davie 2015). Yet this research cannot affirmatively attest to either. In fact, on the contrary, many of the examples of this study have purposefully re-affirmed the transmission of their traditions, in particular of Islam, but have discursively re-framed their hybridity within prior narratives, while developing new prefigurative narratives that link together their life stories with their narrative pasts and futures.

I cannot claim that intermarriage serves as an indicator of 'integration' or of rising secularization or even 'disbelief'. Rather, these stories of intermarriage demonstrate how individuals monitor and negotiate social risk when they chose to love an(other). These individuals are not establishing themselves as altogether detached from their traditions, but are finding ways of navigating 'being both' (Katz Miller 2013). By interacting with their partners, their families, and their environments, they are not only constructing their life stories, but in the process of doing so, have included these interactions within their sense of identity. They appreciate 'oneself as another' (Ricoeur 1992), while retaining their own life projects (Rapport 2014). They fashion their imaginings of their selves within a narrative spiral of mimesis. They create change by entwining and proliferating their stories of romantic risk taking, but also of negotiating the emotional labour that they endure. These individuals and couples seek to accommodate and include elements of their own experiences including natal traditions into their new relationships, incorporating their families and customs, searching for alternative ways to bridge the divide that has

sought to 'other' them, and desiring to promote narratives of the success of intermarriage. Though some struggle in this path of negotiating risk, they continue to persevere because they can hope and imagine a future in which the risks they are taking today will no longer hold such weight. As individuals, they forge new narratives (both intentionally and unintentionally) that weaken the emotional labour of romantic risk-taking and negotiating cultural difference.

GLOSSARY

Ahmadi – a messianic sect founded in Punjab; often viewed as heretical by
majority of Muslims due to the belief in a continual prophethood after the
Prophet Muhammad; their practices are outlawed in Pakistan

Barelvi – a South Asian sect of Islam known for the use of pirs and personal devotion
to the Prophet

Daw'ah – Literally 'call'; bringing individuals and communities to Islam

Deobandi – an Indo-Pakistani reformist movement

Dhimmi – legal protection under Islamic laws mostly for 'People of the Book'
(Christians and Jews), but also sometimes Zoroastrians and Hindus

Fatwa – an authoritative Islamic legal interpretation

Fiqh – interpreting Islamic law

Fitra – the primordial state of human existence, often referred to by Muslims as
'every child is born a Muslim'

Hijab – Muslim woman's head covering

Hadith – transmissions of the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad

Hajj – one of the Five Pillars of Islam; the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, required of
every able Muslim at least once in their life

Hijra – the migration of the Prophet Muhammad and his early followers from Mecca
to Medina

Imam – a title for Muslim leaders. In Shi'a tradition, it is often capitalised to refer to
divine successors of Muhammad; in Sunni tradition, it often refers to an
Islamic jurist, scholar, and leader in prayer

Ismaili – a Shi'a sect originating in the 8th century and most notably found in Persia

and modern-day Iran; centred around esoteric interactions with the Qur'an

Jannah – Heavenly afterlife

Kaffir – unbeliever

Madrasa – a school for Islamic learning

Mahdi – guided one; an eschatological messianic prophet who will redeem Islam

Mahr – obligatory dowry, promising a financial transaction from groom to bride

Muhajir- refugee; though it has specific significance to the Pakistani events of

Partition and mass displacement

Mutah – a temporary marriage contract permissible in the Shi'a tradition

Nikah – marriage ceremony

Pir – 'respected elder'; a spiritual mediator important to the Barelvi and other Sufi

traditions

Purdah – practices of gender separation, such as veiling or physical separation within

public spaces

Riddah - apostasy

Salat – prayer; one of the Five Pillars of Islam

Sawm – fasting; one of the Five Pillars of Islam

Shahada – the first of the Five Pillars of Islam; reciting 'There is no God, but God,

and Muhammad is the Messenger of God'

Sunnah – customs and practices of Islamic conduct based on the life of the Prophet

Muhammad

Tawhid – significant Islamic doctrine declaring the oneness and uniqueness of God

Ulama – men trained in Islamic theology and law

Ummah – global community of Muslims proclaiming the unity and equality of all

Muslims

Wali – male guardian, usually the father of an unmarried daughter

Zakat – almsgiving, customarily of 2.5 per cent of one's earnings; one of the Five Pillars of Islam

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