TOWARDS EQUAL VOICES:

CHILDCARE AND CHILDREN IN
CHINESE AND BANGLADESHI HOUSEHOLDS IN
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

by

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Abstract

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Childcare is the site of a number of interrelated and contested social, political and economic issues. The impetus for this piece of research came from a concern with how the agenda for social inclusion, especially with regard to minority ethnic 'hard-to-reach' groups, could be promoted through childcare. As yet, very little research has been undertaken specifically on the childcare needs of minority ethnic groups in Britain, despite the fact that 'race' and 'social exclusion' issues are more pertinent than ever. The research is a comparative study into the childcare practices and needs of Chinese and Bangladeshi communities, undertaken in collaboration with the Newcastle Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). It is based on in-depth interview data from eight Chinese and seven Bangladeshi households of different origins, compositions and socio-economic backgrounds in Newcastle upon Tyne.

Taking a household and social networks approach, the research aims to capture the perceptions and experiences of childcare from the perspectives not only of parents, but also of grandparents, children, and others taken to be part of the household. Household data is contextualised by focus groups with women and interviews with key workers. Practices of childcare were very different within and between the two communities, which differ in terms of their migration history, settlement and employment patterns. In some cases, understandings of the needs of children were structured around work obligations and in other cases vice versa. There are strong

links between childcare and education, which includes religious instruction for Muslim children. Bringing up children varied in terms of the combinations of parent, grandparent and older sibling involved, and migration history, neighbourhoods and networks and family ideologies are among a matrix of factors underpinning practice. Research participants, in particular children, demonstrated agency and an ability to thrive within the structural and cultural constraints of their household circumstances, challenging the cultural assumptions often made about the respective communities.

The research examines the meanings of 'household', 'family' and 'social networks' for a greater understanding of the contexts for childcare in each of these communities. It also highlights the importance of understanding the impact of migration history and settlement patterns on household and childcare preferences. The environment surrounding these households and the degree to which parents perceive this to be hostile or against their beliefs and values also affect the care of children. An understanding of cultural and religious values was found to be important in this regard. A major theoretical outcome of the research is the greater recognition of the place of social reproduction and the socialisation of children in discourses on social exclusion. This has been identified as being particularly pertinent for most families, for whom the cultivation of the cultural identities of children is a prime consideration. Another key finding is that participation in certain sectors of the labour market can be socially-excluding in itself. A definition of social exclusion as the result of cross-cutting social inequalities such as gender, class, ethnicity and race arises from the data. There are significant policy implications for government initiatives such as Sure Start and Children's Centres, and recommendations have been made to Newcastle EYDCP with respect to implementing the duty to ensure that policies on race equality and inclusion are acted upon.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The background to the research

According to the final report of the Labour Government's Strategy Unit on 'Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market', the British economy is predicted to grow in the long term, demanding more labour in the service sectors particularly from women who are able to provide a pool of flexible, skilled labour with their increased participation rates in education and training (Cabinet Office 2003). Indications are that Bangladeshi and more particularly Chinese women are following the footsteps of white women in delaying marriage and having fewer children in order to be economically active. This implies that childcare is becoming a salient issue for younger generation minority ethnic participation in the labour market. The recognition of the need for a national childcare policy in 1997 came from the campaigning and continual growth in the independent childcare sector started through the initiative of mothers setting up playgroups in the 1960s. The Pre-School Learning Alliance and the National Childminders Association, the largest voluntary and community sector umbrella groups (Bertram and Pascal 2000) is testimony to the work of these pioneers. Minority ethnic voluntary and community groups, many led by women, have similarly organised themselves to provide care for children and the elderly, although there are areas such as in Newcastle upon Tyne where little has been done by such groups. Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships were set up all round the country to implement the National Childcare Strategy of 1998 but partnership working is still yet to reflect the range of clients and stakeholders in childcare provision,[1] which raises questions as to whether all sectors of society are being catered for.

Linked in with ideas of social citizenship, New Labour has embraced communitarian and European thinking to promote the idea of social inclusion in its political agenda. Since 1997, the Labour government has been committed to reduce social exclusion

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[1] There is only one minority ethnic member of the Newcastle EYDCP who has attended only two meetings of the full partnership since I started my research. See also Chapter Two, page 58 on minority ethnic representation on EYDCPs.

and the National Childcare Strategy was one of its flagship policies devised to achieve this aim. The impetus for this present research thus came from a consideration of how social inclusion, especially with regard to minority ethnic 'hard-to-reach' groups, could be promoted through the National Childcare Strategy. The understanding behind this was that socially excluded groups might have very different childcare practices and needs, but there is little empirical evidence of what the variations were. In order to address these gaps in knowledge, the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership of Newcastle and the University of Newcastle upon Tyne proposed this piece of innovative research and secured funding from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) for a CASE (collaborative research) studentship. With my background in researching Bangladeshi (Sylheti) women in the West End of Newcastle (Lie 2002; Lie 1998), my previous contacts with the South and East Asian communities in the city because of voluntary work, and my cultural background as a Singaporean Chinese, I met the criteria for the studentship holder. The main thrust of the research was to account for the unmet childcare needs of socially excluded groups, in this case, the Chinese and Bangladeshi communities in Newcastle upon Tyne. The start of the research coincided with the publication of the Parekh Report on the future of multi-ethnic Britain (Parekh 2000a) as well as the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. This gave the research a particular relevance as to the examination of equal opportunities policies and the agenda of combating social exclusion. As the research progressed however, it became clear that the term 'childcare' needed to take on a wider definition beyond its policy-based connection to paid work because of what the fieldwork was showing to be the real issues for the minority ethnic families concerned. The endeavour to provide opportunities for 'equal voices' with the mainstream white community and the importance of children's perspectives of childcare issues gained more prominence and became more pertinent to the doctoral project. The title of the thesis drew inspiration from the conference in June 2003 which launched the research findings (Lie 2003).

The need for the research: citizenship, social exclusion and minority ethnic communities

Childcare that would enable women to join the labour force has been deemed one of the ways by which social exclusion may be tackled, as well as the means by which full citizenship rights for women are achieved. Social critics of government policy such as Levitas (1998) argue however that an attempt to reduce social exclusion primarily through workforce participation is flawed. Research shows that Chinese and Bangladeshi participation in the labour market is mainly in the catering industry thus indicating that labour market participation is segregated along ethnic lines. This segregation is further exacerbated by their non-standard and unsocial business hours. The question then is what is the nature of Bangladeshi and Chinese gender roles in the formal economy vis-à-vis unpaid work in the household? How are the childcare needs of such communities being met? The research will thus uncover the effect of gender and race on labour market participation in these communities, and the involvement of the family by using household research. The boundaries between household, market and state are thus where the main actors in this thesis play out their roles.

Improved labour market participation is an important outcome for the National Childcare Strategy, but for minority ethnic communities, racial discrimination in the market place as well as public services is a palpable issue. Thus another main focus of the research arising from the consideration of minority ethnic childcare needs is that of institutional racism and discrimination. To illustrate, the onus has been on these sections of the community to diversify into other business areas, but employment and trading conditions are often less favourable than in traditional business sectors or self-employment (Pang 1993). Little has been achieved in the removal of barriers due to institutional racism that exist to prevent members of these communities from entering non-traditional employment sectors, in particular employment in majority-white public and private sector organisations. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 does however target racial discrimination in the public sector, but not the private sector. In the Cabinet Office's Interim Analytical Report on Ethnic Minorities and the

Labour Market, the 'diversification of sectors' figures as one of the outcomes that should be worked towards for the long term (Cabinet Office 2003). It appears that rather than just participation in the labour market, sector diversification, together with favourable economics, mobility, improved infrastructure among other things should be given sufficient attention. Only then can the childcare strategy begin to deliver the outcomes of greater economic participation for minority ethnic communities.

There are various theoretical positions that may be adopted with regard to approaching the study of social exclusion, but most do not address issues of race and ethnicity. Writers like Anthias on the other hand argue for a reconceptualisation of approaches to sociological analysis, with social divisions such as gender, race and ethnicity rather than just class playing a central role in the stratification of society (Anthias 2001; Anthias 1998). Thus in any understanding of society and any attempt to deal with social inequalities, there needs to be an adequate understanding of the interplay of the social divisions existing within it. This is a complex process requiring a historical perspective of *origins*, a description and analysis of *processes* as well as present-day *outcomes*. This framework proposed by Anthias has inspired the following research, in that special attention is paid to the origins of the communities being studied and their migration histories as processes that contribute in no small part to the social positions that they hold in British society today. Getting the balance right between gender, race and ethnicity is not an easy task, as Allen comments:

> In a racially ordered society there are very serious questions to be addressed, but these require not simple dichotomies or claims or counter-claims of racism, but the painstaking hard work of rethinking in non-exclusive ways the experienced vulnerabilities, particularly of women and children, in a patriarchal and class-divided society. (Allen 1994:99).

Intrinsic to the discussion of childcare in relation to citizenship is the dependency of women, and in particular South Asian women on their husbands (Bhopal 1997; Khan 1979b; Khan 1979a; Wilson 1978). Citizenship assumes the independence and autonomy of individuals and often neglects the value of human interdependence. This interdependency is most clearly expressed through the care relationship, but is often mediated through patriarchal systems of authority. Lister proposes that the best way of

improving women's autonomy is by removing their economic dependency on men through their independent economic participation in the labour market. She states:

> Economic dependency on even a woman-unfriendly state or labour market is more conducive to women's autonomy than one-to-one economic dependency on a man. However inadequate and oppressive the nature of state provision, it potentially offers women more rights and control than uncertain dependence on male patronage. (Lister 1997:110-111).

This evaluation is made from a feminist perspective that seems to extract the individual from her cultural context, and fails to understand the full significance of cultural and religious institutions that are responsible for her sense of identity. It assumes that autonomy and independence are to be valued above all else, whereas this thesis will investigate whether for the non-white person, other things take precedence. What for example is the influence of Confucian values that ascribe orderly relationships within the family, and Islamic teaching on the roles and obligations of family members? In many minority ethnic group cultures, self-sacrifice for the care and upbringing of children is worthwhile and valued, whereas such self-sacrifice is considered too costly and unacceptable by some Western feminists (Lister 1997). With regard to childcare, what evidence is there from minority ethnic communities about the desirability of being a full-time mother to bring up one's own children, especially at certain times of a child's life before she/he enters school? To what extent do parents entrust children to the care of grandparents and other relatives? The government has begun to give recognition to the importance of parental responsibilities with improved schemes for parental leave and the promotion of work-life balance. But to a minority ethnic woman, the mainstream labour market is not only 'woman-unfriendly' but also unfriendly to those who are not white in origin, and thus is doubly oppressive and intimidating. What effects will such 'family-friendly' government policies have on minority ethnic communities if in the first place they are distanced from mainstream labour market mechanisms?

Let us consider the issue of 'race' in relation to citizenship rights more generally and the question of religious identity. In some societies, additional rights are given to groups that have been historically suppressed so that they may be 'equalised' with the rest of society. Examples of these include the Australian aborigines and Native

American (Castles and Davidson 2000). According to Parekh, in Britain, minority religions cannot claim equal status with the established church because the latter is an integral and pervasive part of British national identity. Nonetheless, because of the increasing presence and influence of minority religions in British society, they should be given a certain degree of recognition (Parekh 2000b:260). Surely what this boils down to is not only the importance of recognition, but also of rights, and the working out of formal as well as substantive citizenship. One manifestation of cultural citizenship, which may be described as 'the capacity to participate effectively, creatively and successfully within a national culture' is 'cultural empowerment' (Turner 2001). As almost all the members of the two communities interviewed in this research have British citizenship, it is important to ask if they are experiencing the full and equal rights and opportunities due to them as citizens. Thus the research will not only probe what aspects of racial or religious discrimination and harassment members of the community have experienced, but also their capacity as citizens to participate in British society.

The focus of the research

Chinese and Bangladeshi social exclusion

In order to address the issues that were raised about the social inclusivity of the National Childcare Strategy, the research focused on two contrasting community groups that are socially excluded: the Chinese and Bangladeshi communities. That the Bangladeshi community is 'socially excluded' was without doubt as it is one of the most disadvantaged groups in Britain (White 2002). Bangladeshis have the lowest levels of labour force participation even among men, are more likely to live in areas of high deprivation, and live in over-crowded households. This is established by such sources as the 1997 report on *Ethnic Minorities in Britain: Diversity and Disadvantage* by the Policy Studies Institute (Modood *et al.* 1997), Labour Force Survey statistics (Cabinet Office 2003; Owen *et al.* 2000) and the Census 2001 (National Statistics Online 2004). As evident from the previous discussion, the definition of social exclusion in social policy discourses often tends to focus on measures of poverty and social deprivation, marginalising other issues that contribute

to the process such as gender, race and racism. As such, there was some debate regarding the categorising of the Chinese community as 'socially excluded' because of the success of the group in achieving high levels of education, employment and social mobility, although polarities in the community exist.[2] Parekh identified a need for a definition that is more culturally sensitive and relate more directly to the history of migrant groups in the U.K. (Parekh 2000a) and their experience of racism. With a wider definition of social exclusion as will be proposed in this thesis, there are good reasons for considering the Chinese together with the Bangladeshi community as 'socially excluded'. These reasons include the nature of their labour market involvement (Chau and Yu 2001), the changing composition of the community due to new migration and the fact that they are 'hard-to-reach' from the policy-makers' viewpoint. That little qualitative work has been done in the area of childcare and social exclusion with reference to these groups, partly because of the fact they are difficult to access because of linguistic and cultural reasons, further affirms their social exclusion.

The process of comparison

Literature on the background to these communities in the U.K. is gradually building up. Among the growing number of writers and researchers on these topics, that which has been most inspirational to my research is the doctoral research contributed by Katy Gardner and Sultana Khanum looking specifically at the Bangladeshi community (Khanum 2001; Gardner 1995), and Miri Song and David Parker on the Chinese community in the U.K. (Song 1996; Parker 1995). With transnationalism making its mark in the field of social research (Phizacklea 1999; Portes *et al.* 1999; Vertovec 1999), it was thus important for me in this research to look carefully at transnational issues in these communities and how one can move away from Eurocentric definitions of household, family and childcare because of the transnational character of these communities. At the same time, it was important to have a unit of analysis that would be relevant for comparative purposes. As a result, the research process involved the examination of the household as the unit of analysis

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[2] Chinese men and women have high levels of employment and earnings but their income distribution is more widely stretched than any other group (Berthoud 2002).

in the context of migration, and located in the particular set of social networks in each community, which was found to take on a special significance because of their transnational experience. With household research aiming to account for individuals in their household context, it seemed logical to me that children's perspectives needed to be taken into account. Previous household research tended to concentrate on the male-female dyad, but I sought a holistic view also from grandparents involved in child up-bringing. The importance of the socialisation of children within the social reproductive work of the household also appeared to be heightened in this context. Identifying the issues as such, the research took on an interdisciplinary approach and drew on the subject areas of comparative family studies, multilingual and multicultural development, gender studies, household economics and small business studies.

> For most sociologists, the very nature of sociological research is comparative, and thinking in comparative terms is inherent in sociology (Øyen 1990:3)

The comparative nature of this research opens it up to a number of challenges. One is the basis of the comparison, and the other is regarding the different stages of fieldwork, and the sequence of collecting and analysing the data. This may be embarked upon in two ways. The research design could be such that the two communities are researched concurrently, for example, through surveys of the two communities to establish background statistics, then focus groups of each community to identify key issues, before collecting the in-depth qualitative data from individual households. The alternative, which I have taken is to look at each community consecutively, through the household research, focus groups and informed by the EYDCP survey. This second procedure was chosen because of the essentially qualitative nature of the research. Also, as a CASE student, the priority was to produce the research findings so as to meet the timescale of the Partnership. As a result, it worked out to be more feasible to focus on one community group, report back on findings and recommendations, and continue in like manner with the second community group. When that was completed, a presentation of the comparison of the two communities and their childcare needs was given to the Partnership at the national conference in 2003.

The aims and methods of the research

The following are the aims of the research as outlined in the original proposal to the ESRC, entitled, 'Accounting for the unmet childcare needs of socially excluded groups'. As the research was a piece of collaborative research between the university and the Newcastle Early Years' Development and Childcare Partnership, not only the process but the aims of the research tended to be partner-driven. However, as the research progressed on its journey to becoming an academic thesis, there were other shades of meaning that were uncovered. Some commentary is provided as to the way the aims have been interpreted in the course of the doctoral project.

1. *To gain an understanding of the existing childcare arrangements of excluded groups in the light of cultural and economic differences between two contrasting minority ethnic groups i.e. the Chinese and Bangladeshi communities.*

This first aim provides the main rationale for the comparative account of the unmet childcare needs of these groups. It was important to find out what exactly is meant by 'The Chinese community' and 'The Bangladeshi community'. To discover how childcare is managed in these communities, within their particular cultural and economic contexts, a thorough literature review of the background to the two communities is required, which would provide an account of the establishment of the two communities in the U.K. and a thorough description of their socio-cultural, socio-economic and demographic characteristics.

2. *To identify the unmet childcare needs of each group in the light of parental and cultural preferences for different forms of childcare*

After establishing the socio-cultural and economic background to each community, and as has been discussed, their experience of social exclusion, I needed to have a sample of households that would reflect a variety of characteristics so as to capture a range of childcare needs. It was then necessary to determine what the existing childcare practices of these two groups are, to be able to identify the different existing forms of childcare both formal and informal, when, why and how they are used, and

to examine parents' preferences based on their experience and perceptions of the range of childcare provision available to them. An added dimension to this aim is gaining insights into children's preferences, which is an often neglected area in policy terms.

3. *To use empirical data to inform local (and national) childcare planning processes in a manner which aids understanding and challenging institutional discrimination*

This aim refers to the collaborative research partnership with the Newcastle EYDCP, wherein the findings of the research are fed back to childcare planners to inform and effect changes to childcare provision in order to address the needs of the communities concerned. It was also envisaged that the research should provide a framework for better understanding the needs of minority ethnic communities in general. Within this, it is also recognised that rather than pathologising the situations of black and minority ethnic communities, the contributions they are making to the national culture need to be affirmed. With the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, all public and statutory organisations have a duty to address institutional racism, and the research was meant to assist this process, and attempted to do this through a dissemination process aided by the Newcastle EYDCP.[3]

4. *To contribute to policy debates on equalities issues with particular reference to ethnicity, as a means to achieve social inclusion*

Social inclusion can cover a wide range of issues, and the Newcastle EYDCP had launched an inclusion project focusing on children with special needs before this research began. The contribution of my research was thus to raise the profile of ethnicity in social inclusion issues for the Partnership. The recognition of cultural differences in the first two aims needs to be complemented by the recognition here of the importance of equalities issues, as critics of multiculturalism would argue. Social

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[3] Apart from presenting the research at national conferences and seminars such as the National Toy Libraries Conference (October 2002), the research was given an opportunity to reach other childcare practitioners and policy-makers when the Daycare Trust gave Newcastle EYDCP a table at the launch of their Parents' Eye Project (October 2003), at which the Minister for Children, Margaret Hodge, made a keynote speech.

inclusion is not simply achieved through training in cultural diversity, but also through the provision of equal opportunities. The research throws light on the experiences of these groups in the areas of paid and unpaid work and childcare provision, and is able to comment on ways forward to improve equal opportunities for these and other groups.

5. *To develop a comparative cultural understanding of the (gendered) choices underlying household decision making in its community context*

Household economics recognises the importance of cultural understanding and contextualisation, and the research will provide an opportunity for a comparative understanding of two culturally and economically distinct communities. The research will ask what the role of gender is, as played out in this cultural and transnational context and of what importance it has for the accounting for the childcare needs of the two minority ethnic communities. By comparing the two communities, the research aims to provide a more nuanced description and analysis of household decision-making processes.

In essence, the research aims at identifying those factors that contribute to minority ethnic family members' roles and responsibilities in the household, and the context within which childcare decisions are made. These in turn need to be interpreted within the migration histories, cultural ideologies and experiences of marginalisation that individuals in their family and community context possess. In order to reach these depths of understanding, a qualitative research methodology (see Chapter Three) was employed. The sampling procedure used was that of maximum variation through purposive sampling. The result is a wide range of households of varying household compositions, household incomes and areas of residence. The aim is to capture a wide range of experiences of bringing up children in Britain and thus to show how patterns of social characteristics identified in large scale surveys play out in reality or on the other hand, may mask what are the more important issues for these communities. While the thesis is based on research that is essentially qualitative in nature, there is contextualisation and triangulation in the form of the two focus groups of women in each community as well as discussions with key community workers. In order for an in-depth understanding of the communities as they exist in Britain (see aim 1), efforts

have been made to provide a thorough background contextualisation of the beliefs, values and norms of the families concerned.

The journey ahead

The structure of the thesis follows the aims and processes so described, but beginning with a thorough examination of the literature and methodological issues that were involved. Chapter Two is divided into two main sections, the first outlining the relevant theoretical frameworks that will be drawn on to analyse the research data. The second looks at the policy framework that provides the contextualised tools for the analysis of childcare and bringing up children, and the policy implications arising from these. I have already indicated some key elements of these frameworks in this introductory chapter. Interrelated themes arising from the issues raised in this chapter are grouped together, starting with a discussion of social exclusion, citizenship and race equality. This is followed by an examination of the importance of migration history in the discussion on ethnic diversity and the related theme of identity. Picking up on the theme of households, I look at the way social reproduction is structured by gender and patriarchy. Before considering the policy framework, an overview of the interactions between public and private, market and non-market spheres is provided, as well as the importance of children's perspectives as specified in the UN Declaration of Children's Rights in 1991. In the policy section, the global and national context for British childcare policy is described, and linked in with race equality by an examination of the policies to improve the labour force participation of minority ethnic communities. This sets the scene for looking at minority ethnic childcare needs.

In Chapter Three, methodological issues will be examined, and the argument presented for the unit of analysis that will be employed i.e. the household located within the family network. The basis for this argument comes from the inter-relationships between paid and unpaid work that are acted out in the arena of the household, and where decisions around work and care are made on a day-to-day basis. I will pay particular attention to the methodological complexities of researching minority ethnic groups such as the effect of the interviewer on the interview process where difference can be an issue, the problems of communication and the use of

interpreters, and the importance of gatekeepers and networking. Attention is also given to the issues surrounding the researching of children and the observation of ethical guidelines for this and other aspects of the research.

Before starting on the analysis of how childcare, social reproduction and institutional racism interact at the level of the household, a background chapter prefaces the empirical analyses of the household research of each community. Chapters Four and Six describe the migration and settlement of each community, its demographic characteristics, participation in education, training and employment, and family and religious ideologies. The material for these chapters comes from a variety of sources such labour force statistics and census data, ethnographic studies on U.K. ethnic minorities and international and local area studies. Key issues for bringing up children in Britain that have arisen from the literature in the case of the Chinese were found to be language and identity, while that for the Bangladeshi children were religion and the role of women. Each background chapter ends with a brief description of the community in Newcastle upon Tyne. The greater part of the thesis is the substantive chapters Five and Seven, which provide rich and detailed descriptive analyses of each sample of households but more importantly draw on the wider frameworks outlined in Chapter Two for more in-depth analysis. As such, emerging themes from the data such as family background, parenting and grand-parenting and Western values are linked to those identified in the theoretical frameworks such as migration history, identity and the socialisation of children. These chapters also provide accounts of the use of various childcare facilities and children's services.

The final chapter, Chapter Eight examines the similarities and differences between the two communities along the themes identified in the previous chapters to provide the basis for the analytical comparisons. It locates the micro-societal perspectives of household within migration history, and the family within the wider context of neighbourhoods and networks. The livelihoods of the two communities are examined and compared in relation to the existing socio-economic context, and the bringing up of children within the religious and ideological systems subscribed to by the communities being studied. My conclusions about childcare, citizenship and social inclusion are made in this chapter, together with a proposed matrix of factors which can be utilised in further research on minority ethnic communities. In this chapter I

also propose a wider definition of social exclusion that acknowledges more specifically the existence of cross-cutting social inequalities and the influence of such factors as migration history, gender and race. This has theoretical implications for constructions of the meaning of citizenship and integration. Following this, I discuss the policy implications and recommendations that have arisen from these findings. They point to the lack of understanding and appreciation of the two established community groups in terms of their migration history, their family and religious ideologies, their family and household structures, and their social networks and neighbourhoods. What stands out in all of this is the core of their shared experience of living in pluralistic but hegemonic Britain, and yet also their varied experiences of securing and maintaining their livelihoods while at the same time bringing up their children to live what they hope to be successful lives in a 'home away from home'.

CHAPTER TWO: FRAMEWORKS FOR UNDERSTANDING CARE IN MINORITY ETHNIC HOUSEHOLDS

Introduction

The examination of minority ethnic childcare needs is a complex enterprise. Firstly, there has to be an appreciation of the place in society that minority ethnic groups hold in their country of settlement. The chapter starts with a discussion of the concept of social exclusion in relation to citizenship and race equality before some understanding is reached as to whether ethnic minorities fall into the category of those who are socially excluded. For purposes of contextualisation, this is followed by an examination of the effect of migration on the experiences of minority ethnic groups and the structuring of these experiences. What becomes evident is their diverse cultures and evolving identities. We next look at the household as an institution for the economic survival, family support and the social and cultural reproduction of diasporic communities. Social reproduction 'covers all of those activities that make up our everyday lives yet are not covered by the home-work relationship' (Jarvis *et al.* 2001:15). A large part of this is the care and bringing up of children, which is the focus of Nancy Folbre's work (Folbre 1994). Thus household behaviour must be seen as more than just the physical production and consumption of goods and services, it is also involved in the production and reproduction of human capital. These processes are contingent on the norms, values and preferences of the individuals within it and the nature of their social relationships, which provide the context for understanding childcare. The political economy of the household is intimately connected to the wider market economy. Indeed it is not possible to separate the domestic economy from the formal economy because the boundary between the two is established by decisions within the household, which are not always for economic maximization (Wheelock 2000). An examination of these inter-relationships uncovers the arbitrariness of dichotomies such as private and public, market and non-market. A consideration of children's perspectives highlights these ambiguities, and sheds light on children's behaviour and preferences in the household. Such a child-centred approach is the incentive for researching children for their views and opinions, and constitutes a unique aspect of this piece of research.

Following on from these theoretical frameworks, the second part of the chapter looks at the policy frameworks for the examination of the childcare needs of minority ethnic communities. It begins with a brief overview of the context for childcare policies from an international perspective, which demonstrates the influence of different ideologies that are the result of the social, economic and political climate and the role of the state. The different roles that childcare plays are also explored, and how this ties in with the rights of the child, or children as a social group. The roles of mothers and fathers in the household also have an impact on how childcare is viewed in the overall changing global economy. A historical overview of childcare policy in Britain then follows, as well as an outline of the principles underlying the National Childcare Strategy. These are seen in the context of the overarching political aim of reducing child poverty through welfare-to-work schemes (Piachaud and Sutherland 2001). A description of the implementation of the National Childcare Strategy and its limitations, as well as the latest policy initiatives then follows. In order to examine the childcare needs of minority ethnic households, there is first a careful look at the current state of minority ethnic labour force participation and the government's plans to improve access to the labour market. What is highlighted here is the complexity of issues facing minority ethnic groups that go beyond cultural explanations and into the realms of structural disadvantage. The government's prioritisation of economic measures is shown to be limited in tackling equal opportunities in the workplace and labour market. The penultimate part of this section concentrates on the childcare needs of minority ethnic communities, and is informed by existing qualitative studies of minority ethnic women and their experiences of work. Reports from consultations on ethnic minority childcare and childcare campaigners further highlight the various needs of these communities. The chapter ends with a move away from work and childcare issues to a consideration of race equality and children's rights issues. It includes an examination of the way race equality policy is being implemented in the childcare strategy via Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships and programmes like Sure Start.

Theoretical frameworks

Social Exclusion, citizenship and race equality

Social exclusion is a concept that has been widely debated in Europe[4] and a popular focus of research, analysis and theorisation for more than a decade. In Britain, the concept has gained ascendancy mainly because of the Labour government's choice of the term in political discourses to push forward economic and social reforms. In this section I will examine some of the arguments put forward in the development of the term and its relationship to citizenship and race equality.

The Social Exclusion Unit was set up not long after New Labour came to power in 1997 and defines social exclusion on its website as:

> a short-hand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environment, bad health and family breakdown. (Social Exclusion Unit 2001)

From a political perspective, 'social exclusion' has been linked mainly with the concept of poverty and multiple deprivation although poverty has been defined in broader terms than just income and is a preferred concept in liberal welfare societies such as America (Micklewright 2002). From the social democratic European perspective on the other hand, Duffy (1995) defines social exclusion as:

> a broader concept than poverty, encompassing not only low material means but the inability to participate effectively in economic, social, political and cultural life and in some characterisations, alienation and distance from the mainstream society. (Levitas 1998:20; Duffy 1995)

According to Walker, poverty has to do with the lack of material resources that are required in order for participation in British society whereas social exclusion is much

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[4] A term first used by Socialist governments in Europe in the 1980s, it has been taken up by the European Union to address issues of social and economic cohesion. In 1998, Eurostat set up a Task Force on Social Exclusion and Poverty Statistics, which established a framework for the analysis of social exclusion and recommended the use of the European Community Household Panel (ECHP) to investigate exclusion (http://www.stat.fi/tk/kk/datashop/echp81999.pdf).

more than that. Following on from the above definition, he defines social exclusion as not a static, either-or category but:

> the dynamic process of being shut out, fully or partially, from any of the social, economic, political and cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society.(Walker 1997:8)

While the definition from the Social Exclusion Unit describes circumstances that those who are regarded as being socially excluded would most likely be experiencing, there are those who may be in those same circumstances but who do not experience being 'shut out' or 'distanced' as Walker and Duffy describe. Because of the problematic nature of the concept, research has been conducted to investigate the concept further, with the result that a number of centres such as the Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE) at the London School of Economics, and the Centre for Research into Socially Inclusive Services (CRSIS) at Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh have been established. CASE for example has looked at operationalising the concept of social exclusion (Burchardt *et al.* 1999), studying insider perceptions[5] of social exclusion (Richardson and Le Grand 2002) as well as looking at area studies of social exclusion (Lupton 2001). CRSIS has investigated for example the meanings of social exclusion as evidenced by the lack of access to services, including childcare services (Bramley and Ford 2001). What arises from most of the studies is the dynamic and multi-dimensional nature of the term.

Many of the factors that have been used to describe social exclusion in the definition given by the Social Exclusion Unit hold true for minority ethnic communities in Britain. According to an ONS report focussing on ethnicity (White 2002), minority ethnic groups have lower levels of household income than the White population. Men and women from non-White ethnic groups were more likely than their White counterparts to be economically inactive. Although some were more likely than the White population to have a degree, minority ethnic groups were also more likely to have no qualifications at all. The risk of being a victim of racist crime was also considerably higher for members of minority ethnic groups. Almost forty years after

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[5] People with direct experience of the phenomenon of social exclusion in deprived neighbourhoods were asked for their understandings of the concept.

the First Race Relations Act in 1965, ethnic minorities still face racial discrimination in the labour market (Cabinet Office 2003).

Social exclusion as a concept has also been viewed as the antithesis of citizenship. The experience of being socially excluded results from the 'denial (or non-realisation) of the civil, political and social rights of citizenship' (Walker 1997:8) or *substantive citizenship* as opposed to formal, legal citizenship (Castles and Davidson 2000). The concern then is for those who are not full citizens and whether they have any rights to inclusion. The status of immigrants who may be quasi-citizens, denizens or margizens[6] varies among modern states (Castles and Davidson 2000). To such people, the concept of citizenship indicates exclusivity, but even for those who have attained formal citizenship status or are of the second or third generation in the country of migration, their experience of citizenship in its substantive sense is often that of exclusion on the grounds of race (Lister 1997).

The present Labour government's understanding of the term social exclusion is interpreted by Levitas to have moved from a focus on poverty and the consequent need for redistribution, to social integrationist discourse on paid work as the primary and proper means of social inclusion (Levitas 1998). The importance of paid work as 'the core of the social tie' (Micklewright 2002:4) providing social protection, social identity, social status and wider social relations (Jahoda 1982) is without doubt, although some qualifications have to be made with regard to some sectors of the workforce such as in the irregular economy. However, with this emphasis on paid work and its outcomes comes the underplaying of substantive equality and the detraction of attention away from inherent social divisions in society. Instead we have the catch-phrase 'equal access' and the redistribution of opportunities.[7] The concept of equal access is more complex when one addresses the needs of minority communities. According to Bhikhu Parekh, it needs to encompass the following: the elimination of discrimination, equality of opportunity, equal respect, acceptance of

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[6] Denizens are defined as those foreign citizens who have legal and permanent resident status while margizens is a term to describe those foreign citizens who are not denizens because they lack secure residence status, i.e. illegal workers, temporary workers, unauthorised family entrants and asylum-seekers (Castles and Davidson 2000).

[7] The use of the term 'equal access' in the rest of this thesis is informed by some of these issues and includes equal treatment, equal opportunities etc.

immigrants as a legitimate and valued part of society who have the opportunity to preserve and transmit their cultural identity (Parekh 2000b; Parekh 2000a; Modood *et al.* 1997). As a result, a new model of citizenship has been developed i.e. **multi-cultural citizenship**, which has as its key elements linguistic and cultural rights (Lister 1997). This however is not without its problems, such as the tendency to essentialise cultural groups and their differences, and the difficulties of the public appreciation of the differences within cultural groups.[8]

Ethnic minorities aside, in Labour's terms according to Levitas, the individual is presented with a duty to be socially integrated through employment rather than having a 'right' to be included. The government's emphasis is such that their concern becomes households on benefit and the resultant charge incurred on the state. The effect is that paid work becomes a necessary condition for social inclusion only if there are no employed members in the household. It has been found that policies to encourage paid work are more likely to affect lone parents and primary or only earners in households, while having negative effects on the market participation of women in low-earning households (Piachaud and Sutherland 2001; McLaughlin *et al.* 2001). As 'entry into employment is generally more effective at reducing child poverty in lone parent than in two-parent families', the Labour government's strategy is 'selective' and many, particularly those who can only work less than the 16 hours required to qualify for tax credits, or who have 'tardy or transitory employers', will not gain much from paid work (Piachaud and Sutherland 2001:104,107). Many minority ethnic parents fall in this category.

Parenting and childcare used to be seen as a private responsibility but with the National Childcare Strategy, the government has acknowledged the value of childcare and the need for better childcare provision. With its stated support for informal childcare arrangements (Cm 3959 1998:7), there is some recognition of the unpaid work of women. However there is a profound contradiction in Labour's view that paid work is the ultimate answer to social exclusion and the recognition of unpaid work (Levitas 1998). Also, without universal childcare provision by the state, childcare

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[8] Criticisms of the policy of 'multiculturalism' will come towards the end of the chapter.

remains subject to market forces with a tendency to polarisation in provision.[9] To address the status of women and their contribution to society through their unpaid work, there have been attempts to define the 'social' in social inclusion to mean building social capital and networks (Levitas 1998) thus placing value on such unpaid work. Another more radical way is to create a balance between earning and caring such that both are valued in a form of **social citizenship** (Lister 1997).

The Cantle Report on community cohesion that came about after the inner city riots of 2001 in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford (Community Cohesion Review Team 2001:9) also called for a new and meaningful concept of citizenship in order to bridge the deep physical and social divides between communities. It blamed the unrest on a lack of 'open and honest dialogue' confronting the sensitive issues of race and culture and of 'race relations' in Britain. Arun Kundnani however criticises the report for identifying the cause of racism as cultural segregation and downplaying the institutional racism of the police. He succinctly points out another problem: "Like its conceptual cousin, 'social exclusion', 'community cohesion' is about networks, identity and discourse, rather than poverty, inequality and power" (Kundnani 2002). Indeed, the proposals from the report that have sparked off much debate are the national oath of allegiance from immigrants to show loyalty to Britain, and increasing the use of the English language in minority communities.[10] The proposals to diversify mono-cultural single-faith schools are more positive towards race equality: 'British history in particular should be taught in a way in which young people from ethnic minority backgrounds feel a sense of ownership and belonging' (Community Cohesion Review Team 2001). Perhaps there are signs of hope as a new Government panel, the Race Equality Advisory Panel, was launched in 2003 to put race equality at the heart of policy.[11]

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[9] Childcare is more likely to be available to those who are able to afford it because of their income and those who are in targeted deprived neighbourhoods receiving more government support for childcare. There are also geographical disparities (see page 48 for a fuller account).

[10] The first citizenship ceremony involving an oath of allegiance to the Queen took place in February 2004 (Press Association 2004)

[11] 1 July 2003: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/n_story.asp?item_id=529

Migration history, ethnic diversity and identity

> It is in order to make sense of the present that a historical perspective, including the role of mythical pasts and a comparative approach building on the most rigorous theories and methods developed by social scientists, is essential. (Allen 1994:90)

The government's recognition of the place of race relations at the heart of policy-making requires also an understanding of the historical factors leading to the situation of minority ethnic communities as they exist in the present context. Political discourses about black and minority ethnic communities need to take into account the diverse experiences that exist due to gender, generation and geography, and beware of out-of-date perceptions of white success and minority ethnic disadvantage (Cabinet Office 2003). However, in much policy research on minority ethnic communities, the distinctions between different generations of migrants and their varying characteristics have not been given enough attention. The context of the post-war call for labour and the impact of imperialism, economic restructuring and the changes in immigration policies and their impact are also not fully accounted for.[12] Unlike others, Ballard for example acknowledges these historical factors, and believes that personal, social and economic insecurity causes Asians to be encapsulated in their own communities. But this is no different to their Jewish and Irish predecessors before them, except that they are more physically visible than these 'invisible' minorities (Ballard 1998). He thus challenges existing stereotypes and generalisations that so often pervade British consciousness.

An understanding of migration and its effects is important in getting to the root of diversity and social identity. When migration was at its peak in the seventies, a number of studies concentrating on the migrants and their adaptation to life in their new countries were published. One of this was a collection entitled 'Between Two Cultures', which looked at the situations in both sending and receiving countries (Watson 1977a). In the late seventies, we have a study that looks at the effects of migration on Mirpuri Pakistanis in Bradford (Khan 1979a). Khan's study revealed that the stresses that women experience as a result of migration arise from the move

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[12] Examples of such research include Law (1994a; 1994b) and Bloch (1994)

away from a village household and its relationships and the clear-cut roles of the family, and the role of the kin group that regulates and structures relationships beyond the household. Khan also found a stricter form of *purdah* (veiling or seclusion) is experienced because they are in Britain, and the women have a reduced control over the household income in Britain. She contrasts this to the subsistence economy in Mirpur and the way the women are able to make direct contributions to the household income. She finds that an increasing number express the wish to go to work for financial and/or companionship reasons. In another study, Catherine Ballard describes the inter-generational conflicts, which may occur in the socialisation of Sikh children in England (Ballard 1979). The role of the father as being excessively authoritarian is explained as being the result of living in Britain. She shows how the role of the mother as a mediator between the children and their father has adverse effects, often resulting in her depression.

The feeling of social and economic insecurity in a foreign land has also led to children being sent back to the homeland, and thus to family fragmentation. Like Caribbean women (Goulbourne 1999; Bryan *et al.* 1985) the Chinese women in Baxter's account (Baxter and Raw 1988) and those who were Bangladeshi (Summerfield 1993) suffered the loss of their children who were sent back to Hong Kong and Bangladesh. The salience of the 'homeland' (Alam 1988), and their experience of life there for migrant communities must not be overlooked in the consideration of their needs here in Britain. With the new age of globalisation and transnational identities, the use of categories such as 'migrants' has been criticised as being no longer adequate to capture the complex realities of global movements, whereas the use of 'diaspora' takes into account multiple, return and circular migrations (Solomos 2000). While the attempt to construct a national identity is claimed by some to be yielding to hegemonic attempts to deny or limit the citizenship rights of minorities (Allen 1994), the nature of 'diaspora' enables it to challenge the hegemony of the nation state. Indeed, one defining feature of postcolonial diasporas in the democratic West has been identified as being that of campaigning for the enhancement of their citizenship rights (Werbner 2002; Castles and Davidson 2000).

A range of classificatory terms has been used by successive British governments to describe the immigrant population in Britain, among them 'aliens', 'coloureds',

'foreign nationals', and more specifically those from NCWP (New Commonwealth and Pakistan), Black (in which Chinese were also included), Black and Asians, and more generally, 'ethnic minority'. In recent times, the term 'ethnic minority' has been replaced by 'minority ethnic' and in some cases by 'black and ethnic minority' or BEM. Essentially a term that is used in Britain, 'minority ethnic' implies a complementary relationship to 'majority ethnic'. This I believe is an attempt to underline the fact that the term ethnic should be a generic term and not confined to 'minorities', as though the rest of the British population were devoid of cultural characteristics. I would like to suggest that it is precisely because of the inability to articulate the culture of the majority white community because of its internal diversity, that the term 'ethnic' is often reserved for those who are diasporic communities on these isles, as in 'ethnic food', 'ethnic enclaves', 'ethnic economy' (Westwood and Bhachu 1988), 'ethnic penalty' etc. The term also implies that only 'ethnic' minorities are 'different' from the majority. And yet the differences between and amongst these migrant minority groups are greater than that between 'white' and 'non-white'.[13]

Thus, in using the term 'ethnic minority', we need to beware that:

> The concept devalues the idea of dynamic interactions and developments arising from people's contact with each other, at both individual and institutional levels. Indeed the concept of ethnic minority groups complements the multi-cultural thesis, where people are perceived as encapsulated within their social and cultural group, and where these groups co-exist in plural society. (Mayall 1991:562)

The term 'ethnic minority' has also been criticised because it implies a 'problem' group with special needs (Thompson 1997). This 'deprivationist paradigm' has a tendency to minimise the dynamic and creative character of minority responses to racial and ethnic exclusion, and the variety and complexity of exclusionary practices (Ballard 1992). The agency of these groups and individuals to resist English

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[13] Britain is an increasingly diverse society. Between a quarter and a third of children born in Britain's major cities do not have European ancestry (Ballard 1998) and further evidence of the complexity and plurality of the British population is found in the Census 2001 in which 660,000 people described themselves as being of *mixed ethnicity* (National Statistics Online 2003a; National Statistics Online 2003b).

hegemony[14] may take the form of moral, spiritual and linguistic 'deviance', with religious ideology playing a key role in mobilising this resistance. Another line of defence is the building up of vibrant networks in the inner cities as a source of cultural capital. This has the effect of building up a sense of identity and self-worth in the face of denigrating racist attitudes. Collective and individual responses to the exclusionary experiences of living in Britain vary widely however, and may or may not take the forms described by Ballard. Many younger generation migrants for example are rejecting the kinds of identities forged by the older generation.[15] While some eschew traditional cultural identities, preferring the freedom of Western secularism, others are discovering national or religious ideology as the main source of their identity (Glynn 2002; Eade 1998). Ethnicity is thus only one of many possible identities, others being gender, class etc. Parker's research on Chinese youth takes into account the social site of the Chinese takeaway in the formation of identity, identifying racism and sexism as being responsible for a defensive form of identity. Apart from retentionist and assimilationist forms,[16] localised regional forms of cultural identity are also in existence, such as a 'Scally-type Chinese'[17] (Parker 1995:235). Like Parker, Mac an Ghaill challenges the black-white dualism with the new politics of cultural difference that arises from new ethnicities that are more fluid, interconnected and uncertain (Mac an Ghaill 1999).

While the agency and composite identities of minority groups and individuals are to be recognised, these should not be used as excuses to overlook the significant disadvantage suffered by many communities as a result of their race and ethnicity. It is only too easy to say that their families and community networks will provide for them, when indeed many factors may exist to prevent this, such as family conflict and disintegration. Migration can result in new and often problematic relationships that can lead to antagonism and mistrust in the family (Khanum 2001). Coupled with the

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[14] Ballard discusses English hegemony in his paper on the historical development of polyethnic Britain (Ballard 1999a).

[15] Les Back points to young Asian youth assimilating the culture of 'English yobbery' and becoming a minority within their own communities (Back *et al.* 2002)

[16] Parker sees these as forms of closure resulting from a lack of hybrid British cultural forms of identity. He discovered that those who have faced racism are more likely to have a stronger sense of Chinese identity arising from within themselves, whereas those who have not are more likely to be assimilated (Parker 1995:235).

[17] Rather than a humorous term for 'trouble-maker', 'Scally' here refers to 'a male inhabitant of the Liverpool area' (Thorne 1990).

legacy of ethnocentric nationalism and conservative economic restructuring, some groups end up in much weaker positions than others. The tension between affirming the agency of such disadvantaged groups as well as recognising the adversarial structural constraints within which they have to work is a common dialectical problem that plagues all sociological analyses. Those in the dominant majority wanting to effect positive change need to work much more closely with gatekeepers and possible agents of change (e.g. community workers, religious elders) in the communities concerned.

> In a racially ordered society there are very serious questions to be addressed, but these require not simple dichotomies or claims or counter-claims of racism, but the painstaking hard work of rethinking in non-exclusive ways the experienced vulnerabilities, particularly of women and children, in a patriarchal and class-divided society.(Allen 1994:99)

It is the social site of the household that I will now turn to as the main arena in which other social divisions and structures of constraint in the form of gender and patriarchy are played out.

Households, social reproduction, gender and patriarchy

Models of migration such as the 'new economics of migration', which base their accounts on families and households appear to overcome the deficiencies of neo-classical models based on individual rational choice. However, they have been criticised for not recognising the political economy within households in terms of gender and generation, as assumptions are made about a shared income, resources and goals (Phizacklea 1999). While migration can be seen as a response to the disparity between household consumption and available resources in the migrants' country of origin, questions have been raised about the collective decision-making that leads for example to male heads of households leaving their family to fend for themselves, and young unmarried women forced to earn an income as foreign maids. Because 'new household economics' does not take into account issues of power, sharing, reciprocity, gender, nurturance and authority (Folbre 1986), its account of the decision-making that occurs within such households will necessarily be limited. In

contrast, an institutionalist analysis of the household (Wheelock and Oughton 1996) takes into account the power relationships within the household, the cultural processes at work within it that affect members' work strategies, and the changes in the family life cycle. Decision-making in the household is thus not limited to economic aspects. In addition, the household is seen as being embedded within the economic, political, socio-cultural and physical environments and having to sustain its livelihood within these changing structures.

In a similar vein, Mackintosh criticises the 'new household economics' treatment of household boundaries as impermeable (Mackintosh 2000). In institutional economic terms, the boundary of the household is porous because it is defined by decisions about the way its resources are managed, used and distributed. It is this that distinguishes the household economy from the market economy. Because of the way these decisions are made, Mackintosh argues for a concept of the household as contingent on the social relations that exist in it.

> households are best understood ....as culturally very diverse institutions rooted in the joint consumption of certain elements of domestic labour. The further implication is that the household is not a 'natural' unit in any sense, but a contingent one: its composition and its structure (hence behaviour) are contingent on the social relations which constitute it. And the relevant social relations are those which determine the performance of and the distribution of benefits from domestic labour, for example the arrangements for feeding from the common cooking pot. (Mackintosh 2000:135)

In terms of Marxist economic analysis, the social relations within the household were perceived of in terms of economic categories, with domestic labour being the source of oppression and women the victims of capitalism. It thus ignored gender relations, family ideology, and the labour involved in caring responsibilities and generational reproduction (Gardiner 2000a). Such social reproduction can be seen in terms of human capital formation.[18] One essential aspect of parenting could be described as the

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[18] Human capital is taken here in a general sense to mean the 'knowledge, skills and other attributes relevant to working capabilities which are embodied in the person' (Gardiner 2000b:62).

'intergenerational transfer of human potential capability' (Gardiner 2000b:71).[19] Apart from the parents in the household, there are other members such as grandparents and older children who also contribute to housework and the care and bringing up of children and therefore are involved in this process. All these members contribute to the domestic labour supply and thus free others, mainly parents, to be economically active. The important contribution of feminist thinkers to economics was thus to underscore the importance of the production and reproduction of people i.e. labour force in the context of the household as being an essential part of the economic system. As Folbre demonstrates, this important work of social reproduction incurs costs (Folbre 1994) such as those to do with the care of oneself, one's children and dependents, involving opportunities foregone, money, time, physical, emotional and educational work (Reay 1995) and the maintenance of social relations, lifestyles and environments.

While recognising the household as an important unit of analysis in studies of migration, Phizacklea warns against the difficulty of boundary marking on a transnational basis because of cultural differences and the heterogeneity of family forms (Phizacklea 1999). Khanum for example gives a detailed account of the way Bangladeshi households in Britain have evolved complex and ambiguous forms as a result of the migration process (Khanum 2001). She demonstrates the way in which the household as a social grouping has had to adjust to its circumstances and thus can be seen as an adaptive strategy rather than any fixed entity. Bhopal's qualitative and quantitative research of 60 South Asian women (Bhopal 1997) analyses from a feminist perspective, issues of patriarchy, gender, religion and ethnicity. Looking at the household as the arena for patriarchal relations, she studied three religious groupings of women, namely Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. She highlights the differences between South Asian women and white women, in particular the impact of arranged marriages and the dowry system, as well as the performance of domestic labour and the distribution of domestic finance. By doing so, she shows how the social structures of patriarchy for South Asian women are different from those that disadvantage white women.

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[19] The meaning of 'capability' here does not refer to the concept developed by Amartya Sen to compare inequalities within and across societies, but focuses more on internal mental processes and abilities to cope with work (Gardiner 2000b).

In addition, households cannot be divorced from extra-household relations such as social networks supporting transnational migration, and their structural contexts (Phizacklea 1999). Looking at the cultural dimensions of immigrant entrepreneurship, Werbner has highlighted the role of British Pakistani women in developing networks of gendered social relations (Werbner 1990). Like Khan (Khan 1979b), she shows that this unpaid work is as much about social reproduction as it is about domestic labour, described by Westwood as 'reproducing solidarities and distance between families outside the group, maintaining cohesion and cultural identities through social relations' (Westwood and Bhachu 1988:13). These networks constitute cultural capital, with the cultural competencies of the women as labour. When these networks extend beyond the household, these facilitate the flow of information and the opportunities for paid work.

Nevertheless, even with economic development, the patriarchal and capitalistic systems collaborate to maintain the existence of gender inequality within and beyond the household. While market capitalism does have the effect of undermining patriarchy in the household through facilitating the movement of women into the labour market, patriarchy as a system is sustained in the market economy with the gendered segregation of waged labour. Patriarchy continues to exist in that the responsibility for the cost of children and childrearing continues to be passed on to women (Gardiner 2000a). In some cultures however, this responsibility does not clash with a women's desire to participate in paid work. For example in the case of Black (Afro-Caribbean) women, their identity as 'worker' is seen as part of their role as 'mothers' (Duncan and Edwards 1997) and full-time mothering is considered a privilege not easily afforded. This thus explains the relatively high rates of education and employment among black lone mothers. Most importantly, the contribution of black feminists to the above analysis is to point out the omission of the effect of race and racism on the household economy. Often, the inequalities between black and white women are greater than that between black women and black men, and there is a preference among black women for patriarchal authority in the household (Gardiner 2000a). Thus to them, patriarchy is of less significance than other social relations and the importance of the household is that for those who are powerless, it serves as their primary support system. Thus:

> Households are also differentiated by composition, by class, education and access to income, by race and culture, by sexual orientation, by stage in the life-cycle and generation and by care responsibilities. There is a matrix of gender relations and relations between partners within households in which shared interests coexist with divergent interests. The elements of this matrix include the bargaining power of partners, the nature of the dependency relations and types of caring relations. (Gardiner 2000a:100)

Caring and 'work': public/private, market/non-market

Just as production has moved from the realm of the household in pre-industrial society to the market economy in modern capitalist society, social reproduction has also moved from the private to the public sphere. With the emergence of urban industrial society, households are finding it increasingly difficult to fulfil their role as providers of welfare. This is because of the changing economy and growing numbers of women entering the labour market. Education and health for example have become the responsibility of government with the rise of the nation state and the development of its citizenry. Many other aspects of social reproduction such as emotional development and social integration (Esping-Andersen 1999; Hochschild 1996; Doucet 1995) particularly of children continue to be carried out in the main by the household.[20] When traditional family forms disappear and family breakdown and dual-earner and lone-parent households increase, a welfare or care deficit emerges. In some countries, there has been a de-familialisation (Esping-Andersen 1999) of welfare responsibilities, such that the household receives greater help from the state in fulfilling its care responsibilities. In the case of childcare, some welfare states like Sweden provide universal childcare while others operate on the 'subsidiary principle', which places the prime responsibility of childcare on the family, with the state only providing in situations of need. This may be described as a familialistic system

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[20] Hochschild describes work and family as emotional cultures with rituals and shared meanings, the reduction of which leads to 'weakening threads of reciprocity in the community and neighbourhood' (Hochschild 1996:20-22) while Doucet points to the invisibility of emotional housework (Doucet 1995:279).

(Esping-Andersen 1999), which insists on the family carrying out its care responsibilities, and only when that fails does the state intervene. Many East and South Asian countries operate on this principle, even in communist regimes (Chen *et al.* 2000; Stockman *et al.* 1995). In such countries the role of the state is minimal, and compensated for by the role of the market in the provision of welfare services.

The position of a woman in this scheme of things is such that apart from opportunities for self-realisation and independence, she will have much greater economic security if she is able to provide for herself rather than being dependent on a male breadwinner. Employment benefits such as paid maternity leave, job-seeker's allowance, and an occupational pension scheme could be available to her which is important because women bear the brunt of childcare and child-rearing expenses. More crucially for others, if the earnings of the male partner are insufficient, unreliable or non-existent, she is forced into the position of having to 'commodify' herself and participate in the labour market. This however is only possible if she is able still to carry out her household and caring responsibilities, or find alternative provision. In most cases, this comes in the form of informal carers who are part of the family, in particular grandparents (Hall 2002; Wheelock and Jones 2002). In modern technological societies, help may also take the form of modern household appliances and modern technology such as mobile phones to enable her to be in constant touch with children who are home alone, or with employed carers.[21] Then there is the market or the state-assisted, or state provision of care, depending on the welfare regimes described above. If the market provision of care is available at a low cost to her, depending on her own earnings, she would be able to afford to buy in care. Mothers with low earnings will however not be in a situation to afford such private provision of care without some form of assistance, and many minority ethnic families are caught in such a position. This has implications for citizenship issues around equal access.

If the cost of private provision is too high and there are no alternative forms of care, then the tendency is for working mothers to de-commodify their labour, and to withdraw from the labour market. White mothers have been found to adapt to their

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[21] The significance of technology has been highlighted by Gershuny in his theory of socio-technical innovation, which draws attention to the role of technology in mediating between the domestic sector and the formal economy (Wheelock 2000:61).

circumstances through a combination of strategies (England 1996), which apart from using informal care includes part-time working, shift-parenting, home-working (Jorgenson 1995), a 'jigsaw' of care (Wheelock *et al.* 2000) and adapting childcare to self-employed work environments. There could also be delayed or reduced fertility so that women would be able to cope better. Such are the effects of the commodification and marketisation of care. Decisions about care responsibilities in the household are thus interconnected with decisions about participation in the labour market. If however, childcare were to be provided by the state on the same universal basis as education (Moss 2003), then mothers would have the opportunity, freedom and choice to earn a wage, whether on a full-time or part-time basis.

Caring work is wide-ranging and involves child-bearing, child rearing, the education and socialisation of children, the care of those who are ill, disabled or elderly along a life course (Yeandle 1995). The welfare and economic debates outlined above about work and care have led to a further theorisation about 'care', leading to a body of literature, with care being defined as:

> more than just unpaid personal services but was inherently defined by the relations within which it was carried out, relations that tended to be characterized by personal ties of obligation, commitment, trust and loyalty. (Daly and Lewis 2000:283)

The development of care as ethical practice contrasts with individualism, which underpins rational economic behaviour. In rational choice models, economic decisions are made according to self-interest and expected outcomes. However, social theorists have identified socially assigned responsibilities as being the main motivation for caring about others (Folbre 1994). Understanding these structural processes at work in people's decision-making is important because they affect people's identities, attitudes, preferences and behaviour. This is especially important in cross-cultural comparisons and comparative social policy. External situational constraints also play a part in affecting these internal characteristics such that those who are in a financially weak position have to adapt their attitudes and preferences because of limited or a lack of choice. For example, research on Gujarati women from East Africa (Warrier 1988) suggests that the main reason for employment for Asian women is for economic considerations, and few women in the sample found work a liberating experience.

This is similar to Phizacklea's study of home-working women (Phizacklea 1988). Yet, work did not diminish the women's ultimate responsibility for childcare and the income they earned was in most cases used to benefit their husbands and children.[22]

Such attitudes to South Asian male and female roles continue to hold according to research conducted by Brah and Shaw, although women's paid work has come to be valued more (Brah and Shaw 1992). Even beyond the household, gender stereotypes result in the gender segregation of the labour market, with women found more commonly in low-paying sectors of the economy. These are often in care-related occupations such as nursing, social work, teaching, childcare and elderly care. While this gendered pattern has been explained by reference to the norms, values, and responsibilities that have been inculcated in them in their socialisation as women, there are other contributing factors. Mayall describes not only the caring dimension but also control as being women's work, but subordinated to the patriarchal control of male-dominated social structures both in the private and public domain (Mayall 1996). She refers more widely to the paid and unpaid work of women in the socialisation of children, as parents, teachers, health visitors and social workers in the reproduction of citizenry.

Even if women reach higher income levels, their parity with their male counterparts is yet to be achieved, although improvements have been made (Cm 5005 2000:9). In addition, reduced labour market activity because of child-bearing and their care responsibilities tend to put them in more vulnerable positions with regard to lifetime earnings, opportunities for career advancement and pensions. Cultural and relational feminists have argued that women's positions in the household and labour market are a reflection of their gender differences (rather than disadvantages). This view contrasts with the 'equal rights' framework advocating full-time work and reduced participation in housework and childcare leading to a devaluation of women's care-giving and home-making work (Doucet 1995). Economic recognition of the value of these caring positions has been low, as seen in their wage levels. This is because

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[22] In an early study on South Asian women, a mother's desire to work is often explained in terms of money to ensure her children's education in Britain. Criticism and disapproval of the mother with young children who leaves the house to work was reported across all the categories of women. Cooking, cleaning and child-care duties must be fulfilled and the husband' s position as main wage earner, exempted from housework, must be maintained (Khan 1979b).

'caring' has been seen as 'something that comes naturally to women' so that 'paid care work is assumed to be low-skilled and of low intrinsic value' (Moss 2003:3). Then again, 'the movement of money is only one dimension in a complex relationship of child care-givers and parents including elements (when it is going well) of trust, affection, and appreciation' [Folbre and Nelson, quoted in Land (2002)].

The supply of care services may be distinguished according to whether or not they are motivated by a caring attitude, that is, if they are carried out because of self-interest or altruism. 'Caring labour' (Folbre and Weisskopf 1998) is that which consists of both a caring attitude as well as labour to provide care. With the marketisation and commodification of care services, the likelihood is that the provision of caring labour falls and self-interested care services labour rises. This has been identified as a social problem, which will not simply be resolved by wage increases. Folbre and Weisskopf (1998) argue that values such as altruism, responsibility, pleasure, reciprocity or informal *quid pro quo* underlying motives for caring may in fact be eroded by high wages. Rather than blaming women for the decline in caring labour, the solution is to encourage a culture of care irrespective of gender, so that fathers and all who are in a position to provide forms of care will fill the welfare gap, or make up for the deficit in care. Values such as affection and reciprocity among citizens, respect for individual choice, challenges to traditional gender roles, solidarity and altruism need to be actively promoted by the state. However, the willingness of male partners to take over some of women's care responsibilities is affected by the lack of parity between gender pay scales and the opportunity cost involved.[23] In Britain as things now stand, 'childcare' is treated as 'a private commodity to be purchased by parents via the market' (Moss 2003:1). Moss argues that it should instead be viewed as a public good, fully funded by the government, with training and financial incentives for improved recruitment to meet the increase in demand. High wages provided in such a non-market context will not erode the intrinsic values of care.

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[23] Evidence suggests that 'fathers are more able and willing to alter their economic activity if any deficit in household income can be replaced by their partner to an equal or greater level. The cash vs. care negotiation in contemporary households cannot be separated from the current national gender differentials in income' (O'Brien and Shemilt 2003:xii).

Childcare policies have tended to make a sharp distinction between formal and informal care where there is often confusion about boundaries. Childminders who have minimal training for example work from home which is considered an informal setting, and provide care that is closest to family care (Land 2002). Informal carers are also sometimes paid for their services in cash but more often in kind. It has been established that informal childcare is a valued part of welfare (La Valle *et al.* 1999) because of the trust that exists in such long-term relationships. The over-emphasis on formal (market) childcare over informal (non-market) childcare arises from a market solution to the childcare gap and an inadequate understanding of the nature of care and work. It has also been argued that the use of cash payments to support informal carers can sustain informal childcare provision and acknowledge its importance (Land 2002; Wheelock and Jones 2002). In Britain more recently, the focus has shifted to 'care' as a central concern of social life rather than the work of women as oppressed labourers. Care is now increasingly argued as being as important as paid work, and as a civic virtue engendering important aspects of citizenship (Williams 2001). The significance of caring to the national economy and to national productivity levels has also come to be recognised by the government but perhaps not enough for it to be viewed as a public good. This has potentially significant implications for equal opportunities and social inclusion, encompassing issues of gender, ethnicity and class.

Child-centred and children's perspectives

Household dynamics is better understood if all the perspectives of the members of a household are taken into account. This would include children who in recent years have gained a place and recognition in sociology as worthy of a separate sociological grouping (Qvortrup *et al.* 1994; James and Prout 1990). The theoretical paradigm of the child as a developing individual in a state of 'becoming' has shifted to that of a social agent, thus 'being'. As a result, it behoves us to consider more carefully their role in the household and in society, no more as objects but as subjects in their own right. Unfortunately, the definition of a 'child' is not without its difficulties, and the definition of childhood remains ambiguous. The Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1989 defines a child

as a person 'below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier'. Under British legislation, the school-leaving age is used as a marker, with 'children' defined as those who have not yet reached the minimum school-leaving age, and 'young persons' being those over this age but under eighteen (Hobbs and McKechnie 1997:6). There is thus a vast difference in considering a child of two and that of fifteen, which taken together with their difference from adults is part of the reason why historically children have tended not to be included with adults as participants in sociological research. Definitions of 'childhood' have also varied through history and across cultures, which leads to the suggestion that 'childhood is less of a fact of nature and more an interpretation of it' (James *et al.* 1998:62). For this and other reasons, the sociological study of childhood (James *et al.* 1998) examines children's everyday lives in the context of the structured nature of society and analyses the historical, political and cultural dimensions of childhood.

In relation to the objectification of children, the view of children as subjects leads us to consider them from an economic perspective as producers.[24] In the same way as adults, children's productive work may be analysed along the dimensions of paid and unpaid, domestic and non-domestic (Wintersberger 1994). A range of children's productive work comes to mind, among them household chores, caring for younger siblings or a parent who is ill in the household, and even 'self-care' by children that contributes to the public economy through releasing women from mothering tasks (Mayall 1996). These are unpaid domestic tasks and care work that can be categorised as social reproduction, which as has been established, makes a valuable contribution to economic life. As for paid employment, the practice of children being involved in such activities is recognised in the 1973 Employment of Children Act, which limits the number of hours that children are able to work to between 7.00 a.m. and 7.00 p.m., but much of the work that children do is done illegally (James *et al.* 1998). In one study, it was found that while Black and Asian children were less likely to be in paid employment, a large proportion (61 per cent) of Asians were working in their family

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[24] Wintersberger (1994) considers that it is more important to clarify children's position as producers as not enough is known about them as consumers. Also, in considering children as consumers, he argues that it is parents who usually do the buying (although in my own experience, I would have no hesitation in considering my 13 year old the true consumer).

businesses (Hobbs and McKechnie 1997) as a form of family labour. The analysis of children's everyday lives, as has been evidenced by this present research, reveals that children's labour is often rendered invisible behind the conception of children as dependent beings needing to be cared for. Children are also more often seen in terms of having an input into the well-being of adults (Oldman 1994) as a source of pleasure and thus could be viewed as an item of consumption. This is related to the 'warm-glow' gains that are a result of the intrinsic enjoyment or satisfaction in caring for a child (Folbre and Weisskopf 1998). In economic terms, there are other rationalities governing the care of children, such as caring for them as an investment, as reciprocal giving, and as a consequence of the norms of society (Himmelweit 1998). The role of children in a sociological analysis of childcare is therefore not to be overlooked if a holistic picture is to be gained.

Mayall proposes a new sociology of childhood, which defines children as a social group, not just simply a part of families or households.[25] Oakley goes further to define children as a social minority group, just as women are, who are looked upon pathologically (Oakley 1994). Following this argument, minority ethnic children are doubly disadvantaged as being in the 'minority' in more than one sense. As such, the importance of children's voices in sociological research, theory formation and policy development is increasingly being recognised. One example of this is a survey of more than 900 children between the ages of 10 to 12 (Brannen *et al.* 2000) in which children's views and experiences of care were developed after follow-up case studies, extensive and intensive analyses. Four aspects of care were identified: moral, affective, social and reciprocal. 'Caring about' other people was distinguished from 'caring for' others. Some of the findings of the research were that children thought they should be the care priority for their parents and within their families, with love and care being more important to them than the structure of the family. Children also believed that mothers and fathers should be equally involved in caring for their children. After parents, siblings were the most significant people in their lives, followed by grandparents. Asian children did not differentiate between care from mother and father as much as white children did, and they considered family more

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[25] In her many research studies of the daily lives of children and their parents and carers, including those in minority ethnic communities (Mayall 1994b; Mayall 1991; Mayall and Foster 1989; Mayall 1986), she has examined social policies and practices that affect children's well-being.

important than friends. Children were also of the opinion that they should not do too much housework or other 'adult work' and should be allowed to get on with their schoolwork.

With Britain signing up to the UN Declaration of Children's Rights in 1991 and childcare being the focus of this research, there is all the more reason that children's perspectives should be taken into account. While parents' rights are more often than not associated with a market philosophy, the rights of children are not, simply because the large majority of them do not have the financial resources which adults do (Cohen and Hagen 1997). In the context of social inclusion and the need to understand the complex realities of minority ethnic families' lives, the views and voices of children, as well as other members of the household will provide a more holistic view of household behaviour. It will also mean that children and their needs as opposed to just those of adults are given an opportunity to be heard and hopefully addressed.

Policy frameworks

Childcare in Context: international and labour market perspectives

> Policies reflect their time and must be ahead of it, they must be mindful of history, must exist in the prevailing ideological, economic, and political values, and must anticipate those of the future. (Zigler and Gilman 1996:5)

Childcare policy is structured differently depending on the cultural, political and socio-economic ideologies and contexts in which it is situated. The development of childcare policies in different countries has been the result of various ideologies to do with the family, the role of the state and social, economic and political factors. In seeking to explain the differences between Western countries, Bronfenbrenner (Bronfenbrenner 1992)identifies an Anglo-Saxon heritage underlying practices of childcare in modern English-speaking countries. In comparison with Scandinavian, Eastern, Central and Southern European countries, English-speaking countries such as the U.S. and Britain exhibit the highest divorce rates. Together with the incidence of teenage pregnancy, unmarried mothers and separated couples with children, the

resulting lone parenthood combined with the increase in labour force participation rates of women in these countries give rise to a greater need for childcare for the purpose of employment (Bronfenbrenner 1992). On the one hand, childcare is often seen in these countries in terms of social assistance to low-income parents and 'children in need' (a 'welfarist' approach), and as an employment issue that is left to market forces on the other. In America for example, there is no national childcare policy of publicly funded childcare nor any broadly based family benefits, because the philosophy behind childcare is that of individualism and family privacy, subjecting it to the market so as to increase choice (England 1996). America's wariness of governmental involvement in family matters has been explained by its upholding of the values of cultural heterogeneity and the pluralism that goes with it. Kamerman and Kahn (1988) have noted that value confrontations have been avoided in order to sustain multiculturalism and multi-religious diversity.

To a great extent, Britain also shares with America this libertarian economic ideology combined with traditional moral conservatism, which opposes societal infringement on the private domain of the family (England 1996; Broberg and Hwang 1992). Another way to describe such countries is as **liberal welfare regimes**,[26] which 'reflect a political commitment to minimize the state, to individualise risks, and to promote market solutions' (Esping-Andersen 1999:74-75). Such countries are also strong in terms of private welfare. In contrast to this individualistic orientation, in Nordic states, there is generous state provision of childcare because of the acceptance of the duty that the state has in supporting children (Hantrais and Letablier 1996). These countries have been described as having a **social democratic welfare regime**, with its ideology of universalism, comprehensive risk coverage and generous benefit levels that are based on citizenship rights. Such countries are also characterised by their de-commodifying of welfare and minimising of market dependency. For example, Sweden, with its publicly-funded childcare, makes it more likely that mothers would take up paid work (Duncan and Edwards 1997; England 1996). In a Nordic country that is culturally more homogeneous, childcare is a community issue and as a result, childcare for profit is virtually non-existent (Leira 2002; England 1996).

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[26] Welfare production is allocated differently between the state, market and households, and the word 'regime' is used to describe the ways this is achieved (Esping-Andersen 1999:73).

Another group of countries are those that have been influenced by social Catholicism and the principle of subsidiarity.[27] These countries are classed as **conservative welfare regimes** because of their inclinations towards conservative family-oriented social values. Southern Europe, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany are characterised by strong corporatist traits manifested in such policies as compulsory social insurance, while the market provision of welfare is essentially marginalised. With the family as main care-giver, family benefits are very limited, and unlike the Nordic countries, social assistance is favoured over rights. Esping-Andersen includes in this group of countries Japan because of Confucian teaching on family piety and loyalty (Esping-Andersen 1999:91-92), which parallels Catholic familialism.[28]

Looking at childcare in other countries, in Israel, communal childcare in the kibbutzim has arisen out of the need for the socialisation of a second generation in preparation for nationhood (Lamb and Sternberg 1992). In China, the advent of communism led to greater equality between men and women, and the priority of the collective life over and above the individual. These politico-economic changes resulted in the setting up of work-units (*danwei*) and childcare provision with welfare and household-like facilities (Stockman *et al.* 1995). With the dismantling of the commune system, Chinese women find themselves more prone to patriarchal authority and discrimination.[29] Because of the strong tie between parents and children, working mothers in China where part-time work is virtually non-existent, are dependent on grandparents, in particular paternal grandparents for childcare (Chen *et al.* 2000). In parts of India as in other Third World developing societies, poor wages result in women's employment being combined with childcare, often with children strapped to women's backs, or older children taking on the childcare of their younger siblings (Himmelweit 1998). Similarly, non-parental childcare has been the norm in most parts of Africa, with infants and toddlers left in the care of older siblings and

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[27] The subsidiarity principle refers to the centrality of the family as care-giver with ultimate responsibility for the welfare of its members.

[28] Familialism is used here to denote pro-family politics upholding traditional family values such as the male-breadwinner model, so that it is the household that is assigned maximum responsibility for family welfare (Esping-Andersen 1999:45). Taiwan and Korea are also considered with Japan for this reason.

[29] East Germany (GDR) can be compared to the situation in China with women actively participating in the labour force. The after-effects of modernisation and reunification are such that they suffer the effects of insecurity, unemployment and dissatisfaction with their at-home status (Walper and Galambos 1997).

young relatives under the general supervision of adults in the vicinity (Lamb and Sternberg 1992). In Africa, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand, the economic utility of children is such that they constitute an important resource to the family, thus they are perceived in a different way to that from a Western perspective, which views children mainly as having to be provided for.

In the Western world, the long-term trend of increased numbers of mothers in the labour force has been one result of globalising economic and social forces. The instability of the 'couple' as an economic unit, as well as the inadequacy of welfare provision are factors that also contribute to this social trend (Phádraig 1994). However, if employment in the formal economy is not available, is limited or poorly-paid, the opportunity cost of caring for children is reduced (Folbre 1994). This serves to discourage women's participation in the labour force or increase the demand for non-maternal childcare in the form of informal or family care. But care by relatives is also limited, for example by workers' geographical mobility and the labour force participation of grandparents, in particular grandmothers (Wheelock and Jones 2002). Although life expectancy has increased, this will also bring with it responsibilities for elderly care, which altogether increases the burden of care in the household.

So childcare is managed differently and poses different problems in a variety of contexts but in most societies, women are responsible for the care of children. Even in Scandinavian countries where childcare is universally provided, it is the women who opt to spend a greater proportion of their time at home than men do through reduced or flexible work hours and the take-up of parental leave (Leira 2002). This is because in spite of the increased participation of women in paid work, men typically do not take on an equal share of the burden of housework and childcare. From an international perspective, changes in the nature and extent of maternal employment outside the home have generally not been matched by domestic changes (Frankel 1997). The more fully employed women become, the more unequal is the amount of unpaid work between partners.

However, there are indications of adaptation and change that are the result of changing employment patterns and socialisation (Gershuny *et al.* 1994). The politicising of childcare has resulted in policy changes in childcare provision, parental

leave entitlements and cash benefits for childcare (Leira 2002). In spite of these changes, women undertake what has been described as a 'dual burden' of domestic and paid work (Gershuny *et al.* 1994), and work a 'double' or 'second shift' in terms of the household division of labour (Hochschild 1990). The role of fathers is expected to change but from a very low base-line, as in a study of pre-primary care in 11 countries, it was found that no country reported supervision of four-year-olds by the father exceeding one hour daily (Olmsted and Weikart 1995).[30] A number of reasons explain this situation. Firstly, women's occupations tend to have secondary position in the labour force, with corresponding lower status, rewards and prospects than their partners. As a result, their partners' jobs tend to take priority over theirs. Secondly, women tend to take on responsibility for childcare and managing the household because of their gender socialisation and natural instincts. It has also been argued that the household is where their sense of identity and power lies (Allan and Crow 2001).

With employment moving away from manufacturing to services, Britain has seen a shift in the gender composition of the workforce as well as greater inequality between families (McRae 1999). Among families at work, the norm is no longer the husband as sole breadwinner, but the wife employed part-time in a dual-earner household. However, with growing insecurity in the labour markets due to globalisation and global political and economic insecurity, leading to workless households, more self-employed households, and greater polarisation between over-worked and workless households (Brannen 2000; Wheelock and Vail 1998), such macro structural changes are likely to lead to even more confirmation of traditional gender roles as women continue to occupy vulnerable positions in the labour market while still carrying the burden of responsibility for care.

Because of these social trends, livelihoods and economic priorities have been found to take precedence over the needs of the child. In a study of a range of international research on childcare (Phádraig 1994), the needs of parents and children in relation to non-maternal childcare were identified. Phádraig found that generally speaking, the childcare requirements sought by working parents were more about being financially

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[30] The other categories of caregivers apart from 'father' were mother, two parents, sibling, grandparent, other relative, friend/neighbour, other adult, teacher/caregiver and nobody (Delhaxhe *et al.* 1995).

affordable, offering stability and continuity of care, discipline, safety, security, and cleanliness. The hours provided had to be convenient to the parents, as did the location of the services. Children's needs as assessed by child experts on the other hand focus on the need for companionship, attachment, a stimulating environment, and autonomy in addition to security and stability (Phádraig 1994). Now that children are beginning to be recognised as a social group in its own right, many such as Petrie (2000) now argue for a policy rethink so that services are provided primarily for them rather than for adults or for the sake of society.[31] Children should be seen as social partners with adults, and the social positioning of different groups of children according to gender, age and ethnicity should be taken into consideration (Petrie *et al.* 2000). Research that looks at these different factors and highlights key issues to policy-makers as this piece of research hopes to do is a good place to start.

Britain: the evolution of a national childcare strategy

The development of early childhood services in Britain has been the result of public policy that has followed different perspectives on the role of the state, local and global economic considerations and the needs of children. The post-war ideology of motherhood emphasised the need for young children to be cared for by their mothers who had the prime responsibility for them. Publicly-funded provision of day care was confined to children 'at risk', and private services were regulated through local authorities. In the early 1970s, with crises in public expenditure, plans to expand nursery education for 3 and 4 year olds were scrapped (Moss 1991a). The focus instead was on health with day care provided for children from deprived or inadequate backgrounds. Local authority day centres provided for the needs of children of low income or lone parent families. The oil crisis in the mid-seventies further mitigated against free state nursery provision (Bertram and Pascal 2000), and a growth in private and voluntary sector provision was driven by demand for childcare (Liu 2001). With the Thatcher government, public provision of childcare was discouraged and childcare provision was left to market forces and the independent provision of childcare was encouraged. However, in the 1980s, but particularly from the mid

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[31] Examples include services to keep children off the streets, to make a profit, or to allow parents to work.

1980s, the employment of mothers increased dramatically and was more than that for other women, with the greatest growth occurring for those with children under five (Brannen 2000).[32] The number of lone mothers was increasing significantly and the size of the labour force was falling because of demographic changes. As a result of skills and labour shortages, women were required to join the workforce, which meant a greater need for the public provision of childcare for Under-Fives.

In spite of this, the childcare focus was on child protection issues and children who were at risk. Social service departments concentrated on family support with many local authority day nurseries turned into family centres working with parents and children together (Statham *et al.* 2000). The Children Act in 1989 placing statutory duties on local authorities to provide for children 'in need' put day care services firmly within the realm of welfare and social work. Local authorities were financially constrained in their ability to provide for children not at risk (Cohen and Hagen 1997). However, while the emphasis on training and regulation to improve provision for children up to the age of eight was innovative and useful for strategic purposes, the responsibility for childcare was still left to individual families (Liu 2001; Moss 1991a). The government's role was to encourage private provision such as through employers and school governors and to regulate such provision. The aim in this was for the market to provide diversity, choice and good quality (Moss 1991a). The result however was large variations between local authorities, poor pay and conditions for childcare workers and a concentration on part-time places, preventing equal access to childcare (*ibid*).

As economic activity rates of women went up, the provision of childcare by the independent sector increased in the form of private day nurseries and childminders. Those using these services were predominantly well-qualified and professional women, while lone mothers experiencing poverty and unemployment became a cause for concern (Lewis 2003). By the mid 1990s, the focus turned to childcare from an educational and economic perspective. Women with school-age children were given more help to participate in the labour force through the public provision of after-

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[32] Jane Millar however argues that married women who are earning rates of pay that are unable to support them independently are the invisible 'poor' (Millar 1997).

school and holiday provision. Schemes were also developed to assist lone mothers, but these were still concentrated on benefiting families that were 'disadvantaged'. Further development of independent childcare sector was encouraged through the Nursery Education Voucher Scheme (Liu 2001), which was designed to provide part-time pre-school education for four-year-olds. Again, the aim was to promote individual choice and to provide a market-led solution to the need for childcare provision, but this policy was withdrawn soon after the new Labour government was elected in 1997.

A year after New Labour came to power, the first attempt by a British government at a comprehensive childcare plan was launched as the National Childcare Strategy (Cm 3959 1998). The role of the strategy was outlined as 'meeting the needs and enhancing the opportunities of children and families' through 'good quality, affordable and accessible childcare' (Cm 3959 1998:5), in other words, giving children a good start in life and improving the material welfare of families in poverty (Lewis 2003). A key part of an overall economic and welfare modernisation strategy (Grover and Stewart 2000) to combat poverty and social exclusion, it was also devised as an expression of the political commitment to bring all the elements of a disparate and diverse system of childcare provision together. The strategy was one component in the Labour government's support for families (Home Office 1998) that included increases in child benefit and 'New Deal' as a welfare-to-work investment. Its characteristics included demand-side state subsidies to working parents (mainly lone mothers), a variety of supply-side state subsidies to providers, and the guarantee of free, part-time, early years education place for all 4-year-olds by the end of 2000 and 3-year-olds by 2004 (Lewis 2003; Department for Education and Employment 2001). The result is a mixed economy of care that is supposed to provide choice for parents, but again does not ensure equal access for reasons that will be explained.

In his Beveridge lecture in 1999, the Prime Minister pledged to eliminate child poverty within 20 years. In order to achieve this, the government's approach has moved from a redistributive to an *enabling* approach that emphasised the responsibilities of parents and other carers who should take full advantage of opportunities to work in order to provide for their dependents (Roberts 2001; Levitas 1998). This is achieved through tax credits as an income guarantee as opposed to a

means-tested benefit, so as to improve incentives for paid work.[33] It was also an experiment at re-channelling social security expenditure through the personal taxation system, while still retaining the means-tested element. This was a radical stance targeted specifically at economically inactive people in particular those with childcare responsibilities and disabilities (Grover and Stewart 2000). To further ensure that work pays more than welfare, the government introduced the first ever National Minimum Wage and targeted tax cuts (HMSO 2001). At the same time, with child poverty acknowledged as largely being a result of a range of interconnected problems and 'cycles of disadvantage', a new government initiative called Sure Start was launched in 1999 to deal with this in a 'joined-up' way. A total of 250 programmes around the country were aimed at improving the welfare and upbringing of 0-3 year-olds in deprived areas linking health, education and children's services.

The government also recognised that not only should parents be encouraged into work, but mothers in particular as primary carers in the home should have equal opportunities to participate in the workforce.[34] Lone parents, predominantly mothers, were particularly targeted through New Deal for Lone Parents, the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative (McCalla 2002) and the Sure Start Maternity Grant for those on benefit. A Women's Unit in the Cabinet Office at the heart of government was set up to bring about improved opportunities and choices for women. Apart from its political message to 'make work pay' for those in less well-paid jobs, the majority of whom are women, the government has also pushed for a balance between family and work. In order to promote family-friendly employment practices and improve conditions for working parents (Cm 5005 2000), the government has implemented the European Parental Leave Directive, the Working Time Directive, and the Part-Time Work Directive. In doing so, the role of working parents in bringing up their children was affirmed, complementing the subsidised market provision of childcare as an overall

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[33] The Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) has a basic tax credit, a 30-hour tax credit and a tax credit for each child in the family with different rates according to the child's age. Couples or lone parents who work at least 16 hours a week, and have one or more children living with them, and have savings of £8000 and below, qualify to receive it. Within the WFTC is a Childcare Tax Credit, in which up to 70% of childcare costs up to maximum costs of £135 a week for one child and £200 per week for two or more children would be paid (figures as of April 2002). The WFTC is a tapering credit such that if net income is above £94.50 per week, the maximum WFTC is reduced by 55p for each £1 of income above £94.50. On completion of an application form giving employee's details, payment will be added on to the wage packet of employees, or directly to those who are self-employed.

[34] The low pay and poor working conditions of childcare providers however goes against this aim.

government strategy for supporting families. Other initiatives include the setting up of a National Family and Parenting Institute and a new National Parenting Helpline (Parentline Plus). On the issue of consulting with children, there has been a campaign for the establishment of a Children's Rights Commissioner who would hold the government to account on the UN Declaration of Children's Rights. The government has responded by setting up a National Care Standards Commission in 2000 with a Children's Rights Director for children in care (Roberts 2001), and appointing a new Minister for Children in June 2003.

As for the main instrument to deliver the childcare strategy, the trend of private-public partnership initiated by John Major's Conservative government was continued in the form of Early Years Development Partnerships (Liu 2001). These were later to become Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships (EYDCPs) made up to ensure representation from private, voluntary, statutory and business sectors, and convened by all 150 local authorities throughout England in 1999. The role of the Partnerships is to implement plans to develop and improve the quality, affordability and accessibility of early years and childcare provision for children between the ages of 0-14. In a major strategy move, the responsibility for childcare came under the Department for Education and Employment, now the Department for Education and Skills, and funding for providers from both independent and public sectors was made available through the New Opportunities Fund, a distribution arm of the National Lottery. Children 'in need' continued to be provided for under the interdepartmental 'Sure Start' programme for under-fours in areas of disadvantage.[35]

An inter-departmental childcare review published in November 2002 (Cabinet Office 2002a) found that there were too many uncoordinated programmes for funding and delivering childcare, with vague accountability. As a result, responsibility for childcare, early years education and Sure Start is being integrated within a new inter-departmental unit called the Sure Start Unit. The review identified the need for childcare to be mainstreamed as part of the wider agenda, and recommended that

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[35] A study of sponsored day care however showed that "the integrated and coherent early childhood service" promised in the Labour Party's document *Early Excellence* (Labour Party 1997) was far from being fulfilled (Statham *et al.* 2000). It suggested that the provision of day care for children in need was in danger of being marginalised by the focus on early education and child care for working parents.

responsibility for the funding and delivery of childcare services should come more directly under local authority control, so that local needs will be best met. One criticism of this is that local councils vary greatly in their interest and capacity to deliver childcare, which because it is non-statutory, is still viewed as 'non-mainstream' (Walker 2002). The review also highlighted the fact that the opportunity to use childcare to further educational and wider objectives is being missed.

The Labour government, in setting up the National Childcare Strategy began with the message to the public that childcare is a means of enabling women, in particular lone mothers, to join the workforce. Over time however, the aim of the government is to provide an integrated system of early education, childcare and family support, through expanding and reorganising existing services using a multi-disciplinary approach (Cabinet Office 2002a; Bertram and Pascal 2000). The government's plans to establish integrated children's centres for pre-school children will link up local Sure Start Programmes such as in Extended Schools, Neighbourhood Nurseries and Early Excellence Centres.[36] However, in terms of provision that will not discriminate against the various sectors of society, it still has some way to go. Childcare is still more readily accessible to the middle and upper-middle classes and those living in more affluent areas (Smith 2002). The experimental Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative launched in 2000 to enable lone parents to enter the labour force through the provision of childcare services in the 20 per cent most deprived areas is one solution but has its limitations. Questions around the economic sustainability of such schemes in deprived neighbourhoods need to be answered (McCalla 2002). Free nursery places through the Nursery Education Grant available through childcare providers that provide early years education are also restricted to 2½ hours per day which places limits on parents' availability to work. Apart from juggling between statutory part-time pre-school and private childcare, there is also the issue of parents who have atypical working hours (Statham and Mooney 2003; Skinner 2003). Integrated children's centres developed from linking Sure Start services with centres such as

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[36] The extended schools approach involves the development of childcare provision in and around schools and offering a range of services and facilities for the benefit of pupils, their families and the wider community (Cabinet Office 2002a; Cabinet Office 2002b; Department for Education and Skills 2002) while the early excellence centres pilot programme aims to provide a network of early years providers that would provide models of effective integrated family services for other childcare providers (Bertram and Pascal 2000).

neighbourhood nurseries would provide full day care, parental outreach, family support and health services (Cabinet Office 2002a) but they are restricted to the most deprived wards (Walker 2002; Daycare Trust 2002). The House of Commons inquiry into childcare for working parents also expressed concerns about low-income families in rural areas and pockets of deprivation outside of these targeted areas (House of Commons 2003). With its goal of universal childcare provision, the Daycare Trust is campaigning for the provision of a children's centre in every community (Daycare Trust 2002).

Evidence shows that childcare subsidies under the Working Families Tax Credit have raised the employment rate for single mothers but have little effect on those with partners (Paull *et al.* 2002). McLaughlin goes further to say that the labour participation of women in low-earning couples was negatively affected. As it was administered on the basis of the joint earnings of couples, it reduced the incentives for 'second earners' to join the labour market (McLaughlin *et al.* 2001). In addition, paying childcare tax credits through the wage packet was problematic because the recipient is often not the person who is responsible for arranging and paying for childcare.[37] The research and analysis by the Inland Revenue also gave evidence that take-up is particularly low among ethnic minority groups and families in London (Inland Revenue 2002). Like some sections of the white community, some of the reasons why they may be discouraged from applying include the insecure or interrupted working patterns of potential claimants, fears of the impact of tax credits on other benefits (Scott *et al.* 2001), the casual nature of employment in catering sector and the 'grey economy', which affects the formal declaration of income for tax purposes. Eligible claimants are also often reluctant to approach employers for details because of fears of employer non-cooperation. Also, for the Chinese community, their savings may take them above the required limit. According to some, the WFTC (of which the CTC is an element) is a repackaging of 'old' Labour and Tory policies without substantive changes (McLaughlin *et al.* 2001; Grover and Stewart 2000). According to research by the Institute of Fiscal Studies, there are still many barriers to

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[37] Recognition of these problems has led to a change in policy such that payment goes to the main carer (see closing discussion).

mothers wanting to undertake paid employment, the main hurdle being the lack of formal and affordable childcare (Paull *et al.* 2002).

In reality, informal childcare is still the main form of provision that women depend on, and not only for financial reasons. Sixty-two per cent of those with pre-school children and 77 per cent of those with school children use informal care (Paull *et al.* 2002). Little consideration has been made about the fact that parents prefer 'family childcare' especially among those in lower socio-economic areas (Hall 2002). This 'informal childcare' or 'complementary unpaid care' often takes the form of grandparental care, which amounts to a 'family-based life-cycle insurance' (Wheelock and Jones 2000). Often, this involves not only benefits, but costs to grandparents, which are rarely reimbursed in formal payments by parents. One argument against subsidising informal or 'ineligible' childcare is that one in five lone parents who use it already pay an average of £21 a week for it, while one in ten low to moderate income families pay an average of £20 per week (McKay 2000). However, it has been suggested that the role that grandparents play in childcare may be given recognition through a 'grandparenting allowance' and some form of national insurance contribution (Wheelock and Jones 2000). Another way to acknowledge the role of informal carers is for them to apply to be home child-carers, a new scheme introduced by the government to help shift workers and parents of children with disabilities. However, this would require them to be registered first as childminders, which can be problematic because of requirements such as Ofsted inspections.

From April 2003, the Working Tax Credit replaced WFTC as an integrated children and employment tax credit to extend the principle of in-work support to those without children. At the same time, the Children's Tax Credit, an income tax relief for people with children introduced in 2001, is replaced by a 'Child Tax Credit' which also combines the different strands of support currently available for children, for example in Income Support, the Jobseeker's Allowance, and the WFTC. No work conditions are attached to the Child Tax Credit, which is made on the basis of household income. The Childcare Tax Credit element of the WFTC continues to be available to workers with eligible childcare costs, but is paid direct to the main carer, alongside payments of Child Tax Credit. Together with the increases in the National Minimum Wage and the Minimum Income Guarantee for pensioners, some see these changes as a step

towards a form of basic income as well as a boost to women's rights because of their vulnerable position in the labour market. Recruiting and training childcare workers is also a means of employment creation and local urban regeneration, but insecure time-limited funding in the childcare sector, and the low pay[38] and status of childcare workers affects worker retention and business sustainability (House of Commons 2003; Scott *et al.* 2002; Scott *et al.* 2001). In 2003, Britain still has the worst childcare provision of Europe with only 830,000 registered childcare places for the 5.1 million children under eight in England (Gaber 2003). The typical cost of a nursery place for a two-year-old is more than what the average household spends each year either on food or housing (*ibid*).[39] The success of the government's aim to halve child poverty by 2010 therefore remains to be seen.

Minority ethnic labour force participation

Following the previous discussion on the labour market participation of women and their childcare needs, we will now consider in more detail minority ethnic participation in the labour force. There are three main survey data sources for information about minority ethnic labour force participation, namely the annual Labour Force Surveys (LFS), the Census of Population, and the PSI Fourth National Ethnic Minority Survey. The latter survey as its name implies has been designed specifically for the purpose of capturing the experience of minority ethnic groups but also has a representative white sample for purposes of comparison. A sample of each group is taken from a sample of wards therefore problems of statistical representation arise. For example, there is an insufficient sample size to distinguish between Pakistani and Bangladeshi women and studies such as that conducted by Dale and Holdsworth (Dale *et al.* 2002a) are unable to separate out the two groups in their analysis. The Chinese as a category is also often omitted in studies of ethnic minority

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[38] In 2000, the average adult gross weekly earnings of full-time childcare workers was 66.5 per cent that of full-time manual workers and 52 per cent of average gross weekly earnings of all full-time workers. In Scott et al's study, it 'appears that the commodification of childcare at local level is regularizing the low status of childcare work in the unpaid sector rather than developing well paid employment', just as it is happening in the United States (Scott *et al.* 2001).
[39] According to a study based at the Institute for the Study of Social Change, University College Dublin in Ireland, a quarter of all mothers of pre-school children are not able to access the type of childcare they prefer and childcare subsidies do not appear to help (Gaber 2003; Chevalier and Viitanen 2002).

populations for the same reason. However, with its wide coverage of topics, the PSI study has been the main reference for researchers on minority ethnic communities in Britain. It needs to be borne in mind that the PSI data was collected in 1994 whereas other surveys such as the LFS are more up to date. Most other studies use Census and LFS data to build up a more accurate picture, as well as other sources such as administrative records, the Family Resources Survey and the Youth Cohort Study (Owen *et al.* 2000; Berthoud 2000; Ballard 1999b; Ho and Henderson 1999; Jones 1996; Owen 1994). The most recent source available is the Census data collected in 2001, which improves on the ethnic group classification that was first introduced in the 1991 Census.

Comparisons between Census and LFS can however run into problems because the LFS uses International Labour Organisation (ILO) definitions of employment, which are different to those used by the Census. Most crucially, students are classified in the Census separately as being an economically active group whereas according to the ILO definition and guidelines, they are included with other employed or unemployed people (National Statistics Online 2003c). This is particularly relevant for the Chinese and Bangladeshi minority groups because there are high numbers of post 16 students in these groups (Owen *et al.* 2000). Among the economically inactive, students are also not differentiated from those who are looking after themselves and others at home (Ballard 1999b). In any case, both surveys are likely to depress rates of economic activity particularly among minority groups (Dale *et al.* 2002a). This is because of the higher rates of non-response and poorer rates of response from minority ethnic groups than for white people. With small sample sizes, it is also difficult to generate estimates (Owen *et al.* 2000). Aggregate figures also mask differences that are due to age cohorts and educational levels (Dale *et al.* 2002a).

Factors that affect the labour market participation of minority ethnic groups include demographic issues such as migration and family formation (Berthoud 2002), and the education, social class, and urban or rural origins of the communities concerned. Thus the classification of 'South Asians' is unhelpful because of the distinctions between Indians, East African Asians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, as is the classification 'Black' because of the differences between Africans and Caribbeans. Local economic structures at the time of migration and settlement such as the types of employment

available (Ho and Henderson 1999) may explain the nature of industries in which particular ethnic groups are found, and their resultant employment characteristics. For example, 52 per cent of Bangladeshi men are in the catering industry while one in twenty working Indian men is in the medical profession (Cabinet Office 2003). Factors such as neighbourhood, housing, transport, health and childcare are also important, as is the uneven nature of educational provision in the areas of settlement (Ho and Henderson 1999). The combination of different factors is important in understanding such phenomenon as for example why African men, in spite of being among the best educated, fair poorly in employment terms,[40] and why the Caribbean community, although it has been in Britain longer than the Indians fare much more poorly in employment than the Indian community (Berthoud 2000). Family structure and culture are also important in understanding why for example Black Caribbean women outdo their male counterparts in education and employment. The levels and types of employment that minorities experience are also closely linked to their local economic environment. Chinese self-employment in Manchester for example is less than half that in London, while within London, the rate of Bangladeshi self-employment in Tower Hamlets is only 4 per cent whereas it is nearly 23 per cent in Brent (Ho and Henderson 1999).

When generational differences are examined, unemployment disadvantage was found to be more serious than earnings disadvantage for those who were British-born (Leslie *et al.* 1998). British-born ethnic minorities have better earnings prospects than their foreign-born counterparts but their unemployment rates remain high (Lindley 2002). Some have explained this as being because the British-born are more likely to be young and single (Berthoud 2000; Leslie *et al.* 1998). Compared with the first generation, their educational achievements are much higher, but in spite of this, some minority groups such as the Caribbeans, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis suffer considerably more of an 'ethnic penalty'[41] in the labour market than others such as the Indians and Chinese. This may be explained by the polarisation of educational

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[40] Black African male graduates face unemployment currently seven times that of their white counterparts (Cabinet Office 2003).
[41] These have been described as 'all the sources of disadvantage that might lead an ethnic group to fare less well in the labour market than do similarly qualified Whites' or 'net differences' in labour market achievements after such differences as education, social class, generation and gender are taken into account (Cabinet Office 2003).

achievement within groups such as the Pakistanis (Cabinet Office 2002b) and the significant number with English language deficiencies. Apart from the 'ethnic penalty', there have also been increased arguments to support the idea of a 'religious penalty' (Lindley 2002; Brown 2000). There are clear differences for example between Sikhs and Hindus, and evidence of real disadvantage to Muslims compared to other non-whites (Lindley 2002). But there are also significant differences between Indian Muslims and Bangladeshi/Pakistani Muslims (Brown 2000), which point to different expressions of faith, or non-religious factors. Half of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi working households fall below the poverty line and face three times the poverty risk of Caribbeans (Berthoud 1998). In terms of gender differences, non-white women are more likely not to be participating in the labour market and non-fluency in English appears to be more significant among them, affecting their earnings rather than their employment prospects (Lindley 2002).

Together with the Fourth National Survey of ethnic minorities in Britain (Modood *et al.* 1997), most studies agree that there are two broad groups: the Chinese, African Asians and Indians who are close to parity with the whites (Berthoud 1998; Jones 1996), and the Caribbean, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis who are significantly disadvantaged.[42] A growing interest in ethnic labour force participation and entrepreneurship has been generated by the Labour Force Survey and the 1991 Census (Jones 1996; Metcalf *et al.* 1996), but has unfortunately been restricted to the Black and South Asian groups. Some studies mark out the role of the family in the process of business formation and management of the enterprise (Ram *et al.* 2000) while others point to wider cultural attributes (Basu and Altinay 2002). Commenting more specifically on the labour force participation of minority ethnic women are writers such as Bhavnani and Bhopal (Bhopal 1998; Bhavnani 1994b). Bhavnani's research review on black women[43] in the labour market highlights their specific experience mediated by the cross-cutting categories of race, gender, age and class. They are more

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[42] Details of the labour force participation of the Chinese and Bangladeshis will be provided in Chapters 4 and 6.

[43] As in other reports (e.g. (Butt and Box 1998), 'black' is a shorthand for people coming from Africa, the Caribbean and Asia, but this can be a controversial term as Modood among others has argued that 'black' is inapplicable to Asian communities (Modood 1992). On the other hand, black has been used in a political way to emphasise the common experiences and determination of people from these regions who live in the UK (definition used by BECON, see page 57). In research terms, Bhavnani makes a call for the recognition of heterogeneity and the effects of the dynamic and changing nature of racism, gender relations and class on culture (Bhavnani 1994b).

likely to work full-time on the one hand and on the other to be hidden from official statistics because of homeworking and 'helping-out' in a family business. They often work in lower paid and manual jobs, in differentiated industrial sectors. Some are increasing their participation in professions by working with black service users in the contracting welfare state. While they may enter white women's jobs, this may be under deteriorating conditions such as temporary contracts and depressed pay structures.

The differences between Black-Caribbeans and Pakistanis or Bangladeshis can only be understood in terms of their historical, cultural and economic circumstances and the way in which these interact with the labour market and other institutional structures. In examining the reasons why minority ethnic women prefer not to work part-time, Dale and Holdsworth (1998) records considerable differences in part-time working between women of different ethnic groups. With the exception of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, full-time working appears to be the norm for minority women even in sectors where part-time work predominates, and they are more likely to be economically active when they have a dependent child. Historical, cultural and economic circumstances interact with labour market and other institutional structures to influence the fact that part-time work is not an inevitable response to combining motherhood with employment. There is also little evidence to suggest that minority ethnic women have easier access to childcare than white women (Dale and Holdsworth 1998; Duncan and Edwards 1997). In fact their lower level earnings would imply higher relative childcare costs. Thus their higher level of full-time working is in spite of the limited availability, rather than because of the availability of childcare. A section on early years education and childcare provision in a DfEE report (Pathak 2000) with statistics on ethnicity, education, training and employment reports that in general, ethnic minority parents are slightly less likely to use early years provision than white parents. But looking at specific groups, preliminary information suggests that a black child (0 - 14) is nearly two and a half times more likely to receive formal childcare than a white child.

The danger of quantitative analyses is that culture has been used to mark out specific populations and practices as aberrant. Qualitative ethnographies on the other hand critique common sense accounts in which ethnic and cultural elements are abstracted

from the whole structure of relations of which they are a part and warn against dissecting culture and offering pieces of them as a means of understanding minority peoples and their lives (Westwood and Bhachu 1988). To supplement the survey research, there is a growing body of qualitative research literature on the labour force participation of ethnic minorities in Britain. As early as 1979, a collection of articles edited by Sandra Wallman (entitled *Ethnicity at Work*) served to throw light on 'informal', 'subversive' or 'hidden economies'. English Gypsies, British Jews, Asian brokers in British foundries, and South Asian women in South London were the groups that were presented from the British experience. Almost a decade later, a collection entitled *Enterprising women: Ethnicity, economy, and gender relations* (Westwood and Bhachu 1988:11) featured Greek Cypriot women, Chinese women in the catering industry, Sikh and Gujarati working women. Ho (Ho and Henderson 1999) recommends that the local variations which exist in employment patterns of ethnic minorities requires at least partly ethnographic research in the communities and local labour markets concerned. The importance of this has increasingly been recognised in policy related research on minority ethnic communities.

New Labour's goal is that in ten years' time, ethnic minorities will not face disproportionate barriers to making labour market achievements (Cabinet Office 2003). At present, ethnic minorities make up 8 per cent of the U.K. population and will account for half the growth in the working-age population between 1999 and 2009 (*ibid* p. 4). In addition, the social costs of relative underachievement are of concern to the government. Recognising that experiences of different ethnic minority groups vary widely, the government plans to adopt 'a fine-grained approach with interventions tailored to meeting the different needs of particular groups' (Cabinet Office 2003:3). The influence of various factors such as family patterns, culture, class, gender, generation and geography on minority ethnic labour market participation rates has been acknowledged in their reports on *Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market* (Cabinet Office 2003; Cabinet Office 2002b). Education is seen as a symptom of these factors as well as a causal factor for different levels of ethnic minority labour market activity. New Labour's stated emphasis is on economic integration rather than just social and civic integration, so as to reap the dual benefits of higher economic growth and stronger social cohesion. The final report on *Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market* in March 2003 marks out four categories of policy measures to

improve ethnic minority labour participation, i.e. education, employment, equal opportunities and delivery:

- Action to improve the employability of ethnic minorities by raising levels of educational attainment and skills
- Action to connect ethnic minorities with work by reforming existing employment programmes, tackling specific barriers to work in deprived areas, like poor transport and promoting self-employment
- Action to promote equal opportunities in the workplace through better advice and support to employers, and through more effective use of levers such as public procurement
- Action on delivery led by a Minister in charge of a cross-departmental Task Force comprising relevant Ministers, senior officials and key external stakeholders, reporting through the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to the cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, Productivity and Competitiveness.

(Cabinet Office 2003:4-5)

While the report has provided a refreshing approach to the problems of ethnic minority underachievement in the labour market essentially because it acknowledges the complexity of underlying causes, there are possible oversights. Firstly, while there are good reasons for the approach being an overtly economic one, the result is a tendency to downplay institutional racism that exists at all levels of British society right from the time of migration. The political discourse seems to prefer the use of the terms 'discrimination' and 'equal opportunities', which can ignore the value of the diversity of cultures and the resources that minority ethnic groups bring to society. A greater appreciation of the origins of the communities and the transnational links that they have with their homelands may make for a more global economic approach, rather than just concentrating on the state of the British economy. Perhaps more could be done for example in encouraging economic cooperation and trade links with the migrants' countries of origin through the networks and various forms of capital provided by members of minority ethnic communities. Also, while English language proficiency is a key factor in access to the labour market, proficiency in other

languages should be viewed as a major resource provided by these communities.[44] While it is important to raise educational attainment and skills, it is also important to value existing skills and human capability, and examine their transferability across sectors, even from domestic, voluntary and irregular sectors (Gardiner 2000b; Wheelock 2000). The report also concentrates on the most 'visible' minority groups, thus leaving out the Chinese and other groups such as Travellers in their review of past trends and future prospects. There is greater need to acknowledge the 'invisibility' of many minority ethnic groups and the consequences of their 'invisibility'. There are also important lessons that can be learnt from the history of established minority groups that could be applied to the treatment of other more recent groups such as asylum seekers and refugees. Many of them are now working often illegally for extremely low wages and propping up the economy in sectors like agriculture and construction where there is a huge shortfall in the supply of labour (Pai and Leigh 2004; Vidal 2003; The Observer 2000).[45] Last but not least, there is no mention of childcare, which reveals assumptions of community self-provisioning.

The childcare needs of minority ethnic communities

Childcare campaigners have identified childcare as having the potential to promote equality and to tackle disadvantage (Daycare Trust 2000; Lane 1999), but the government has been less specific about its role in this area.[46] The previous section has established the fact that black and minority ethnic communities do face significant differentiated barriers to employment but there are complex issues that need to be taken on board. There are also the overall risks that these communities face as they are more likely to be living in deprived urban areas and to be facing discrimination and racism. Just as in the case of employment, there needs to be a more informed

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[44] With the international threat of terrorism, the need for intelligence agents with linguistic skills is even greater.

[45] The Home Secretary is however considering a 'way out' for illegal workers through 'earned regularisation', following initiatives in the US and Mexico and advice from Sarah Spencer, Policy Research Director of Oxford University's Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (Institute for Public Policy Research 2003; Travis 2003).

[46] For instance, in the inter-departmental childcare review (Cabinet Office 2002a), mention of the benefits of childcare to ethnic minority children and families is restricted to providing interaction with the white community and building community cohesion, as well as improving their language skills and educational outcomes. No mention has been made of the potential of childcare for valuing diversity and improving equal opportunities.

approach towards specific communities and the particular disadvantages that each face. Other than gender, geography and generation, other factors such as migration histories, imperialism, immigration policy and racial stereotyping have been found to have different influences on the economic positions of ethnic minorities (Brah 1994; Westwood and Bhachu 1988; Wallman 1979). Although cultural reasons do affect their patterns of paid work, they often interact with these other factors and 'culture' should not be used as a convenient explanation where particular minority ethnic groups experience low pay and employment rates. Greater understanding of these less quantifiable factors can be gained from ethnographic accounts of the experiences of minority ethnic communities. In order to account for their childcare needs in relation to paid work, capturing the experiences of women in particular is required, seeing as they have the main responsibility for childcare.

Saifullah Khan's study of South Asian women in the 1970s identified the following factors affecting their working: the number and type of industries and jobs available, transport, childcare and pre-school facilities, desired standard of living, felt economic need, cost of living, transferable resources and processes of change. Race relations as well as women's perceptions of their situation were also important (Khan 1979b). Khan found that stereotypic understandings of ethnic preferences or competencies could exclude women from different forms of work. Unfortunately, these South Asian women in turn accepted this as an immutable feature of their environment (Khan 1979b). As in the case of some white women (Gelder 2002; Brannen and Moss 1991), acceptable work such as home-working and child-minding coincided with certain stages in the family life-cycle.

Brah and Shaw (1992) conducted a one-year study to identify the variety of factors that affect the labour market participation of South Asian young Muslim women between the ages of 16-24 in Birmingham. The majority of the women had a Kashmiri/Mirpuri or Punjabi background. While paid work was found to be valued because it was seen as a source of income and a means to gain independence and social networks, again, in the late 1980s as a decade earlier, responsibility for housework and care of family members weighed heavily against it. The research found that paid work would only have meaning if domestic responsibilities come to be shared more evenly and good quality affordable childcare becomes available. Social

norms such as the notion of the male as breadwinner, *izzat* or family honour, and *purdah*[47] were still strong ideologically but material circumstances might be a stronger reason for non-participation. A good proportion of parents of these women however were keen for their children to have good educational qualifications and find 'good jobs'.[48] As in Khan's study, discrimination in the form of racialised stereotypes of Muslim women undermined the women's ambitions for themselves. Racism, recent migration and the processes of cultural and inter-generational change were also cited as problems.

Evidence however has been building up to show that childcare services are not sufficient or suitable to meet the needs of minority ethnic parents who do work. A report for the European Commission's Childcare Network on equal opportunities in the childcare sector in Britain (Cohen 1988) found that West Indian, Guyanese and Indian women with pre-school children had higher rates of employment activity than other women, but these parents faced great difficulty in finding provision that met their needs. Afro-Caribbean mothers were more likely to be found in employment than other mothers (Bhavnani 1994b). However, they were more likely to end up with poor quality childminders, often unregistered, than were other mothers (Cohen 1988; Department of Health and Social Security 1984) and there was a high representation of their children in local authority nurseries and very few in independent pre-school provision (Cohen 1988). This relates to the fact that minority ethnic workers are more likely to be found in low-paying sectors of the economy.

In the report to the European Commission's Childcare Network (Cohen 1988), concern about provision for minority ethnic groups was expressed by the organization, Save the Children, which referred to incidences of racism within provision and the failure to reflect the ethnic mix of the surrounding community. It was also noted that childcare workers are often not trained in an awareness of the needs of children from cultures not familiar to them and they may discourage

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[47] The outward manifestation of *purdah* is the veil, but in terms of a cultural ideal, it refers to the seclusion of women. In essence, *purdah* is an internal state that can be interpreted differently in different environments. It is thus possible for Sylheti women to shop alone and take on jobs if they wear the veil or *burqua* (cape) (Gardner 1995).

[48] Just under a third of women who were interviewed indicated that it was their parents who had encouraged them in their educational pursuits while the rest were not obstructive to their daughters' aspirations.

bilingualism. Ten years later, a report by the Race Equality Unit (Butt and Box 1998) on family centres noted a lack of community-specific provision, even though those that did were found to be doing important and successful work.

According to the more recent Childcare Commission by the Kid's Club Network, black and minority ethnic families wanted childcare to reflect their family values (Kid's Club Network 2001). One of the ways of achieving this was through staffing but there is a significant lack of minority ethnic staff in the childcare sector (Bertram and Pascal 2000; Daycare Trust 2000). From various childcare workforce surveys, it was found for example that only 1.6 per cent of childminders were black, and only 3 per cent of registered pre-school and playgroup workers were from minority ethnic groups (Daycare Trust 2000). This is in spite of the fact that ethnic minority communities are characterised by a younger age profile and therefore are likely to have greater needs for childcare (Daycare Trust 2000). The high rates of participation in further and higher education among minority ethnic groups are also likely to lead to an increased need for childcare for students who are parents. The Childcare Commission led by the Kid's Club Network has recommended that there should be increased recruitment of black and minority ethnic childcare workers and a closer working relationship with their community organisations and religious groups (Kid's Club Network 2001).[49]

The needs of minority ethnic children and families was found to come from the fact that they are more likely to be suffering discrimination and disadvantage as a result of living in disadvantaged areas, and having high rates of unemployment and low pay (Daycare Trust 2000). For this reason, the high cost of childcare has been identified as one of a number of issues to be tackled for Black and minority ethnic communities (Kid's Club Network 2001; Daycare Trust 2000).[50] Another problem that was

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[49] Arguments for community-specific services have been put forward as early as the Inter-departmental Consultative Group's report in 1984. In the case of playgroups for example, minority ethnic mothers can be put off by what they see as a service predominantly for white children, and may be lacking in self-confidence and security. The consultative group recommended that voluntary organizations start playgroups specifically for minority ethnic children and gradually hand them over to local authority management. An example of good practice was the funding of a post that had the specific responsibility for the outreach and training of South Asian women to run groups for mothers and children (Department of Health and Social Security 1984).

[50] Community nurseries that began in the late 1970s and early 1980s offered inexpensive, not-for-profit childcare to low-income parents, in particular lone or minority ethnic mothers in deprived

identified was the lack of appropriate information, which was preventing equal access (Kid's Club Network 2001; Daycare Trust 2000). Communication by local 'word of mouth' is particularly important for some groups, as is family care. They recommend more research and regular monitoring of childcare and family support take-up rates by different ethnic groups. Local children's centre's should ensure proper access to information and culturally appropriate services that meet needs. The Daycare Trust has also made a number of recommendations (Daycare Trust 2000:6), among them:

- Government to resource expert organisations to ensure ongoing dissemination of good practice, advice and guidance to parents, providers, practitioners, EYDCPs and other government bodies

- Government to resource networks/support targeted at black-led organisations to help them succeed in winning funds for childcare development

- EYDCPs to establish task forces to examine the childcare needs of black and minority ethnic communities in their area and implement anti-discrimination practice and procedures

- EYDCPs to support the development of childcare services led by black and minority ethnic organisations

Approaches to meeting the needs of minority ethnic children

According to the UN Convention on Children's Rights, the education of the child shall be directed to:

> The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilisations different from his or her own;

> The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin.

> (Article 29 c and d)

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neighbourhoods (Cohen 1988). Since then, the focus has shifted to market-led initiatives with local authority functions being taken over by non-elected groups (Cohen and Hagen 1997).

Following from these declarations, quite apart from the needs of minority ethnic parents who work, the childcare needs of parents not in paid work and the needs and rights of children have also to be considered.[51] Whether parents are in the labour market or not, there are other problems around multiculturalism and institutional racism (Rigney and Charraighe 2001; West 1996a). It has been argued that multiculturalism does not go far enough and can actually allow racism to persist in a more respectable form.[52] Cultural explanations in the treatment of minority groups often reveal that assessments are being made on dominant white norms. This over-reliance on cultural understanding can also detract from emotional and structural factors such as race and class and consideration being made for racial justice and power relations between white and black people past and present (Thompson 1997; Mayall 1991). Another flaw of the multicultural approach is that it assumes educating service-providers about different cultures is sufficient for providing better and more appropriate services. Unfortunately, cultures are shifting and dynamic constructs that vary in time and place (Solomos 2000; Burnham and Harris 1996; Baumann 1996). The multicultural approach can also detract from more pressing material needs and the suffering of oppressed groups such as minority ethnic victims of domestic violence (Beckett and Macey 2001).[53]

A Save the Children report on day care for ethnic minority children (West 1996a) highlights the service providers' preference to treat everyone 'equally' and the problem of resistance to multiculturalism. It was based on research on families who were associated with a range of countries i.e. Bangladesh, China, India, Iraq, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. Interviews were also held with a range of providers of daycare services in Hull and Scunthorpe. According to the report, the main findings were that families would use day care if the provision were affordable, familiar and

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[51] West (1996b; 1996c) found that a child focus is particularly needed in black and minority ethnic families because of the added responsibilities that children in such families have, mediating between two cultures.

[52] Often for example, schools would celebrate 'cultural festivals' while still failing to address racist bullying. "Multiculturalism would have been ideal in a society where racism does not exist, but it could not even begin to address the underlying racist attitudes that many people held in Britain. The real problem is that it failed to touch the way that racism ranked cultures in a racial hierarchy." (Lane 1999).

[53] The ability of groups to resist hegemony and oppression is however demonstrated by writers like Ballard (1992), and groups like the Southall Black Sisters.

suitable in terms of meeting families' needs. Racism and the isolation of mothers were brought out, as were general barriers such as language, cost, distance and timing. There was identified a need for greater awareness of the benefits of forms of day care in children's learning and development and in addressing social isolation amongst potential users. Many providers, while acknowledging that minority ethnic families have particular needs, feel that 'treating equally' was the fairest approach. This attitude however refuses to acknowledge cultural differences, diversity and experiences of racism. Multicultural activities tended to be practised only if there were minority ethnic children present. Resistance to multicultural approaches from white parents and some colleagues was also reported. Recommendations of the report for improvements in the service could be classified into two groups, namely training and greater cultural awareness, and greater contact with parents and improving communication.

In another Save the Children report, national research conducted by the Race Equality Unit (Butt and Box 1998) was supplemented with a study exploring the practice of family centres in working with black and minority ethnic families in the region (Rigney and Charraighe 2001). Their findings confirmed most of the previous research into these communities about their relative disadvantage. What was significant was that none of the centres in the survey provided services that were specifically targeted at black families and none received funding specifically for providing services to black families. While the centres did state that they did undertake work with black and minority ethnic families within the framework of multiculturalism, the report highlighted the limits of such an approach as it could mask issues to do with racism and oppression. The authors feel that issues of 'inclusion' but not necessarily 'equality' may be emphasised by multiculturalism, which they view as a 'white' perspective. They therefore recommended that racism-awareness training be carried out to supplement multiculturalism. Positive action to improve the access that minority people have to childcare training opportunities was also recommended as was greater interaction with community groups.

It seems that there needs to be a balance between multiculturalism and anti-racism, and between equality and diversity. Where services for minority ethnic groups are integrated with those for the white community, the balance between these approaches

is even more important. At the same time, there seems to be scope in developing services specifically for particular communities but this would go against policies to integrate minority groups into mainstream society. And yet, there is an argument that because their needs are not being met in mainstream provision, they have every right to seek and develop their own community-specific provision. It appears that childcare services specifically catering to minority ethnic communities are much more developed in London where there are higher percentages of such groups. Mother-tongue nurseries in London include the Union of Turkish Women in Britain Nursery and the Malfada Latin American Nursery. Some nurseries such as the Fire Station Nursery in Hackney have workers to reflect the multi-racial composition of the surrounding community, and consults with organisations representing ethnic minority communities, but many do not.

According to guidance to the Children Act 1989 (Department of Health 1991):

> Children should have the right to be cared for as part of a community which values the religious, racial, cultural and linguistic identity of the children (6.28)

In addition,

> People working with young children should value and respect the different racial origins, religions, cultures and languages in a multi-racial society so that each child is valued as an individual without racial or gender stereotyping (6.10)[54]

Jane Lane[55] referred to the 1976 Race Relations Act as a tool to eliminate bad practice, and the 1989 Children Act as a tool to promote good practice (Lane 1991). Together with writers like Iram Silaj-Blatchford (1994), she highlighted the importance of the early years in the development of positive cultural identities, and the need to recognise that during these early years, children begin to learn racial attitudes and values. The Commission for Racial Equality (1996) had also published legal guidance based on both the Children Act and Race Relations Act giving examples of good practice. The main disparities with regard to childcare between ethnic groups were outlined and supported by statistics from OPCS and other

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[54] Quoted in Petrie *et al* (2000).
[55] Jane was formerly coordinator of the Early Years Trainers Anti-Racist Network (EYTARN, now Early Years Equality or EYE).

research. The needs of West Indian and African children in particular were highlighted and practical guidance provided on all other aspects, for example creating the right environments, recruitment, and equal opportunities policies. McLeod highlights the fact that Black and Minority Ethnic voluntary and community organizations were severely disadvantaged by the 'contract culture' of the 1980s and the pooling of funding into the Single Regeneration Budget initiated by the Conservative government (McLeod *et al.* 2001). Many were involved in providing childcare services to their communities. These organisations lacked organisational structures, managerial training and experience to meet new standards such as service levels and quality assurance. They also face educational, employment, linguistic and cultural barriers in comparison with white-led community organisations (McLeod *et al.* 2001).

Now under New Labour, the Active Community Unit of the Home Office has been set up to support community and voluntary organisations with the aim of improving community participation while the Race Equality Unit is responsible for race relations policy and legislation and helps to promote equal opportunities to other Home Office policy areas and outside agencies. Together, the two units support the Home Office aim of 'helping to support strong and active communities in which people of all races and backgrounds are valued and participate on equal terms by developing social policy to build a fair prosperous and cohesive society in which everyone has a stake' (http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/index.html). In the northeast, the Black and Ethnic Minority Community Organisations Network (BECON) was established in 1999 to develop the networks and capacity of Black and Minority Ethnic community groups and organisations in the region. Backed by the Active Communities Unit of the Home office and other funders, it supports over ninety groups including refugee organisations. Another example of such an organisation is the Black South West Network in Bristol. It remains to be seen if these organisations will be able to make improvements to the lives of minority ethnic groups in a substantial way.

In considering the education of minority ethnic children, this has mostly been catered for under Section 11 of the 1966 Local Government Act, which made additional resources funded through the Home Office available to local authorities with large numbers of immigrants. From 1993, Section 11 was extended to cover not only

immigrants from the New Commonwealth and Pakistan, but all ethnic minorities. In practice however, the result was that the number of eligible authorities and populations was increased, and existing programmes maintained (Eversley 2000). In addition, over half of Section 11 funding was transferred to the Single Regeneration Budget in order to improve the targetting of funding on ethnic minorities in relation to economic development and regeneration. However in total it fell from £131m in 1993-1994, to just under £88m by 1996-1997, even though the minority ethnic population grew (Eversley 2000). This funding which was originally intended to cover all local authority functions became increasingly an education resource mainly focussed on teaching English as a second language to black and minority ethnic pupils. Under New Labour, the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) replaced the education element of the Section 11 Grant in 1999, and funding has increased significantly, taking into consideration groups that Section 11 failed to fund. The match-funded element of the grant has however caused some local authorities to run into difficulties.

In broader political terms, two major developments in race relations in Britain have since served to change completely the complexion of British public policy in terms of its legislative framework. The first was the report of *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry* by Sir William Macpherson in 1999, and the second was the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, which received Royal Assent in November 2000. The Macpherson Report pointed to the role of institutional racism in the flawed investigation of the murder of Stephen Lawrence. This has been defined as :

> The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people. [56]

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[56] The definition has mainly been criticised for the way responsibility for racist acts may be shifted from the individual to the organisation, through explaining incidents as 'unwitting' and reducing responsibility and accountability. One recent critic has been Marion Fitzgerald. According to her newly published research (Today programme, Radio 4 broadcast on 1 May 2001), institutionalised racism according to the definitions of the Macpherson report is an empty phrase that has failed to provide any concrete ways forward. Instead it has exacerbated racist feelings among white unemployed youth, which is part of the reason for the riots in Oldham.

The inquiry called for an unequivocal acceptance of the problem of institutional racism and a commitment by every institution to address it, in partnership with members of minority communities. The changes to the 1976 Race Relations Act extends protection against racial discrimination to all public authorities and places on them a new, enforceable positive duty to tackle institutional racism and racial discrimination. As a result of this Race Relations (Amendment) Act, local authorities are required to have Race Equality Schemes in place which set out the ways in which the specific needs of black and minority ethnic communities will be met. More recently, there are plans to have race equality standards integrated into 'equality standards' that are written to provide a common approach for dealing with equality for race, gender and disability. According to the DfES Planning Guidance for EYDCPs (2001-2002), targets with regard to Equal Opportunities include ensuring that partnerships have effective equal opportunities strategies which are monitored at least annually (Department for Education and Employment 2001). Presently, there is evidence that suggests that there is very little minority ethnic representation on EYDCPs. According to the 2000 survey of EYDCPs, the average number of representatives of black and minority ethnic groups on EYDCPs was just 0.4, and only 4 per cent of Partnerships has a sub-group dealing with black and minority ethnic issues (Daycare Trust 2000). The DfES has however set targets at increasing the representation of minority ethnic childcare workers in the workforce to 6 per cent. And in accordance with governmental guidelines, Start Up guidance for the establishment of children's centres from the Sure Start Unit, first issued in February 2003, states that they will need to demonstrate how they will:

- Plan inclusive services for minority ethnic families
- Consult with families from all ethnic groups in the area served by the centre
- Implement culturally appropriate services
- Ensure staff in the centre represent the cultural mix of the local community
- Ensure that baseline data for the catchment area has reliable demographic data with ethnic breakdown
- Conduct annual monitoring of ethnic mix reached by services
- Consider issues relating to living in a multicultural society and address issues of community cohesion in areas that are ethnically homogeneous

- Ensure that all services are inclusive and readily accessible by children and families with disabilities and special needs

(SureStart 2003:7)

In order for the above aims to be achieved, there needs to be sufficient resources on the part of Sure Start and EYDCPs for them to support inclusive practices in childcare initiatives throughout the country. Partnerships are already undergoing some upheaval in their re-deployment under local authorities. Initiatives such as neighbourhood nurseries are expected to be spearheaded by private market-led organisations stimulated by start-up funding from the government, which will then be reduced year on year. As such, they may have more pressing priorities such as overheads, staff recruitment and retention, and poor take-up of full-time places especially in areas of disadvantage where shared care with grandparents is more probable. Partnerships will then have to take on some of the burden of consulting with neighbourhood communities or else providing development workers dedicated to helping private childcare providers to engage with their surrounding communities and their needs. They also will have to work hard at dealing with the competition between private providers such as between nurseries and childminders, so as to build up the kind of partnership working required of Children's Centres. Ofsted who have a responsibility to inspect settings may be able to ensure that standards to do with equal opportunities are met, but have also had to economise on their inspection procedures because of a lack of resources. The business rationale for providing inclusive services (often interpreted as just being for users with Special Education Needs) will have to be pushed very hard, but more importantly, the training of childcare personnel has to include good quality cultural awareness, anti-racist, and equality and diversity training. However, many who are already working in the sector may not have sufficient training in these areas and some form of in-service training needs to be made compulsory. While the aim is to have more minority ethnic childcare staff, there is also the strong possibility that white parents may prefer not to have their children looked after by a member of a minority ethnic community, especially in the case of childminders, for the same reason that a minority ethnic parent might not be too keen on a white childminder [57].

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[57] Many of the comments and observations made above have been the result of participation in Partnership meetings and childcare conferences and in particular, my involvement as Regional

Conclusion

In this last section, we have come full circle back to the theme of social exclusion in which we discussed the concept of race equality. Members of ethnic minorities not only experience the structuring effects that come from gender inequality and patriarchy, but are also subject to inequalities that are a result of race and ethnicity. Set in the context of the market economy, their disadvantages become starker. Childcare is identified as one of the economic solutions for increasing employment in the struggling welfare state, but the low pay and status of childcare professionals, and the gendered nature of the labour force are further evidence of social inequality. Government policies are held in tension between trying to provide a market solution with work-related subsidies, which, as has been shown, goes against having to provide equally for all sectors in society. New Labour believes that the way out is in partnership and joint working between private, public and voluntary sectors, but the happy balance is difficult to achieve. Although much has improved since New Labour came to power, it is now having to battle against the resultant polarisation in childcare provision, between haves and have-nots, and geographical disparities.

Are equal opportunities sufficient or do we want equal outcomes because we recognise the historical effects of gender discrimination and institutionalised racism? Can equal opportunities be achieved in spite of the lack of equal access to childcare, education, housing and employment? Special attention needs to be paid to those particularly and typically disadvantaged groups who are under-represented in policy-making circles (Allen and Grobman 1996). This is not to ignore the specific needs of some groups that may not be as disadvantaged as the rest, such as the Chinese who may have achieved some degree of parity with the white community. Questions also need to be asked about the extent to which the high rates of self-employment and the underemployment of minority communities is a result of discrimination. Is it simply a case of their poor language proficiency? Those in the second generation have better prospects but generational differences are mediated by gender, class and race. Increased social mobility can have the effect of moving families away from traditional

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Research Officer in the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative Implementation Study being conducted by Oxford University at the time of writing.

sources of childcare i.e. their extended family, thus leading to increased need for childcare.

The year 2000 is significant in that it has seen two major benchmarks in the field of race and equality issues. Firstly, the report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain was published in October 2000 (Parekh 2000a). Referring to Britain as a Community of Communities and Citizens, it proposes that Britain should declare itself to be a multicultural state with a new Equality Act, Equality Commission and Human Rights Commission for Britain. Secondly, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act is the first major reform targeted at the public sector i.e. hospitals, schools, police, local councils, government ministers and extends protection against racial discrimination to all public authorities. Thus, this is a new, enforceable positive duty on all public authorities. Although private agencies are not directly affected, the standards expected of public bodies are expected to influence practice in the private sector. According to the CRE (Commission for Racial Equality 2000), the implications for public agencies are that they should accept the problem of institutional racism and its nature, accept that present practice can have discriminatory results, and be determined to address the problem. They recommend that public agencies should work in partnership with minority ethnic communities to combat racism, but such partnerships are difficult to develop.

The importance of research has been evident from this review of theoretical and policy approaches to the question of childcare for minority ethnic groups. Research both quantitative and qualitative has informed thinking in both theory and policy fronts. In the context of race equality, its crucial role in the process of policy-making is well expressed in the following quote:

> In the absence of knowledge relevant to the design of policies that meet the diverse needs equitably we are subjected to philosophies of policy making that are dominated by the politics of the majority culture, as well as their cultural biases and beliefs. (Allen and Grobman 1996:356)

Some unique features of this present piece of research include the comparison between two minority ethnic groups of contrasting cultural and economic characteristics, the role of religious and cultural belief systems and how the different

practices and values of these groups relate to the commodification of care. The positioning of minority ethnic children and the role of grandparents as active participants and contributors in the household as well as in the research process are also significant features of this piece of research. The challenges presented to me are therefore great because of the responsibility involved in providing a fair and valid account of the inequalities experienced by these two communities. It is the task of finding a mode of analysis that will do justice to the experiences of these communities that I will next turn.

CHAPTER THREE: APPROACHING THE STUDY OF CHILDCARE AND CHILDREN IN CHINESE AND BANGLADESHI HOUSEHOLDS

Introduction

There are unique methodological problems in doing research in minority ethnic communities, whether the researcher is from the minority group in question or not (Andersen 1993). The perceptions, practices and needs of minority ethnic respondents are often less accessible than more quantifiable data from surveys or statistical presentations (cf.Edwards 1993:183). For this reason, a qualitative research methodology has been adopted, also because the 'complex and dynamic interplay of family meanings, coupled with a phenomenological and structural diversity in families, requires a method that is malleable, sensitive, and practical' (Daly 1992:11). Multiple, multi-layered perspectives can also be taken into account even though this would require maintaining balanced relationships with all members of the family. This 'thick' description also has enormous implications for our understanding of the major issues families (more so for minority ethnic families) face in our day (Gilgun 1992).

The advantages of the researcher and the researched being from the same minority group have been described by Bhopal (Bhopal 2001), because of the better rapport that comes from shared experiences. While researchers from the minority group may be able to generate questions different to those generated by those from the majority group and also be less likely to face distrust and hostility, they are accountable to the communities they are representing. This can pose problems not experienced by researchers from the majority group (Andersen 1993). With the research in the Bangladeshi community, there is a sense in which I am in a unique position of being of a minority group but not of the same minority group. Apart from identification with an in-group, as a minority group researcher, it is important to acknowledge the dynamics of class, age, and gender (Andersen 1993), as well as 'place' or

geographical locality (Callaghan 1998) on the research process.[58] These complex interrelationships are further complicated by factors such as migration and generational differences. The social distance between researcher and researched can increase if respondents vary in all these dimensions in relation to the researcher. Coupled with shifting identities so often a characteristic of the migration experience, this impacts on the status of the researcher as insider or outsider or neither, making reflexivity complicated in more ways than one.

Apart from these issues, the very practical and relevant nature of the research for the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership's strategic planning gave me an element of assurance that delving into the private lives of families and households was not just tokenism and merely for purposes of academic research. On the other hand, there was the need for a balancing of pragmatic and academic pursuits as well as the danger of coming at the research with a pre-set agenda based on the requirements of a CASE studentship. Yet, policy-makers typically look for a value-free, objective data collection and analysis leading to bullet-point conclusions and recommendations. In spite of this, the Partnership, which has been under considerable pressure from central government to deliver on childcare places, has been supportive of the research methods employed and has shown commitment to research and dissemination.[59]

In this chapter I will be presenting arguments for my analytical framework. There will be a discussion on the unit of analysis, which is the household, as well as the positioning of this unit within a wider framework of analysis utilising social network analysis. Following this, I will be looking at issues surrounding researching difference, the effect of the interviewer on the interview process and particularly around researching children. On a more practical level, I will then describe the design and piloting of my instrument, methods employed to gain access, how I arrived at my final sample and the importance of ethics and confidentiality. I will then examine the

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[58] Callaghan's focus groups on mothers and toddlers groups in an old industrial city found that the locality of these groups and the identity that was connected to these localities was an important factor in structuring the women's lives. As someone who has lived in a council estate in the West End of Newcastle for eight years, I could identify with a number of the research participants.

[59] There has been assistance from the Partnership in terms of helping to me in my networking with the minority ethnic communities and childcare providers, opportunities to present my findings at Partnership meetings as well as the organisation of a conference at the end of the research to disseminate the findings to a national audience.

various issues presented during the data collection process, and then particular problems and complexities arising from the research and lessons learnt. Special attention will be given in this chapter to issues surrounding the use of interpreters. The chapter will end with a short description of the process of data analysis and comparison. First we turn our attention to the relationship with the CASE partner, i.e. the Newcastle EYDCP.

The CASE studentship and the EYDCP

The fact that this was a CASE studentship had its advantages in that it eased access to gatekeepers and some respondents. Newcastle City Council's research and information services also had an input through the studentship's Management Group, and were able to assist in terms of their statistical services and local authority data. There was also the advantage of resources that the Partnership had that could be used for purposes of the interview. These included information sheets on Working Families Tax Credit and Children's Tax Credit, information about the different kinds of childcare options and their costs, as well as where further information could be accessed. Such information was useful in the research process because it provided me an opportunity to reciprocate by offering parents leaflets or information. My connections with the Partnership through participating in the Racial Equality Subgroup helped my data analysis to be grounded in the real issues that were of concern among minority ethnic groups in the city. While the research centred on the Chinese and Bangladeshis, many issues were common to the different groups. Attendance at full Partnership meetings made up of childcare providers, consultants, managers and development workers also gave me an overall perspective of strategic planning. The Partnership also kept me up to date with planning documents from the Department of Education and Skills (DfES) and news about other initiatives from other childcare organisations. Other childcare-related research carried out in the North East was also brought to my attention through networking. Through the Partnership, I was invited to run a workshop on the childcare needs of the Chinese at the National Toy Libraries Conference in 2002 that had the theme of 'Inclusion through Play'. The conference gave me a wider national picture of inclusive childcare provision.

The primary aim of the Partnership was to deliver on childcare places according to government directives. The role of the Development Team (to which I was 'attached') was precisely to plan for and set up childcare places. Monitoring and evaluation, which came later, was achieved mainly through the subgroups. It was soon made clear to me that the EYDCP was keen on assessing demand for childcare provision so as to assist them in planning purposes. Their priorities were economic and pragmatic policy considerations. This was very clearly hinted at in the design of the EYDCP Parental Childcare Needs Survey, although in other planning documents, targets on quality, recruitment, equal opportunities and curriculum had to be clearly described. To me as a researcher, there were two positions in tension. On the one hand, there were the more urgent, practical and strategic considerations from the Partnership's perspective. On the other hand, there was the relevance of the research to those in the community and the practical implications for race relations and race equality policy. Academic and theoretical debates had to wait till these more pressing issues were grappled with, but with the result that the data collected had a more 'grounded' feel.[60]

The advantages of combining both qualitative and quantitative methods are their complementary nature, the additional insights that come from investigating multiple dimensions of reality and increased validity when there are consistent results across both methods (Rank 1992).[61] Inconsistent results would serve as a useful springboard for further investigation and hypothesising. The Parental Childcare Needs Survey[62] had been administered for two years before I came on the scene and was an instrument that assisted in the childcare audit that was required by the Department of Education and Employment (now the Department for Education and Skills). In response to a proposal from the Chinese community for a Chinese Centre, which would also house childcare facilities and other facilities like an IT suite, a survey among the Chinese was conducted with a total of 100 respondents.[63] The questionnaire was partly administered by paid Chinese workers and partly distributed

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[60] Cheek writes about having to grapple with the 'requirement to produce performance outcomes' in funded research (Cheek 2000:403) but acknowledges the advantage of funding in enabling projects that otherwise would not be possible, and the benefits to research participants that can result.

[61] Other researchers prefer combining or integrating strategies as a means of looking at the same research problem with a view to improve internal validity, rather than at different aspects of a research problem in a complementary way (Brannen 1992).

[62] The sample included a very small number of non-Whites.

[63] See also page 87.

and returned by envelope from parents at the Chinese School and other community settings. The Partnership then suggested that I should conduct a similar survey among the Bangladeshis. This was to provide a context for my household research and greater credibility to the research on the whole, especially for comparing between the two communities. However, owing to the size and composition of the sample and the poor comparability with the Chinese survey because of the weak sampling procedures used by the Partnership, triangulation with the survey work was not carried out.

As a CASE student, I had to fulfil my obligations to the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership by completing the research and reporting according to the agreed time-scales. The regular reports and presentations were useful as a test of my own understanding of the research and its relevance to the Partnership. Two reports of around 16-17 pages were written up for the EYDCP, one on the Chinese community and one on the Bangladeshi community. Data was thus fed back into the communities in an accessible format suitable for the public domain and comments taken on board in the writing up of the research. Some feedback from key workers in the Chinese community who were shown the report were that one of the Chinese surnames used was quite unusual, so it was changed to a more common surname. One asked for the reasons why there were not many Mainland Chinese who were interviewed.[64] The Partnership also fulfilled its responsibilities to me as a researcher by providing the needed supervision of the project, support with regard to access, and in particular the opportunity for the public dissemination of the research findings through a national conference.[65]

The unit of analysis: the household

An important question in any piece of research is the establishment of the unit of analysis. From the perspective of family research, the focus has been on studying the relationship of marital couples. From an anthropological perspective, and increasingly

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[64] The majority of Chinese in the UK originate from Hong Kong, see section on sampling on page 89 for figures.
[65] This was organised by the Racial Equality Subgroup of the Partnership, of which I continued as an active member. Funding for the conference came partly from the Partnership and other sources such as the European Social Fund with a small contribution from my research funds.

from a social science perspective, the unit is more than the individual and more than a couple in a relationship. While definitions of the family by some communication experts have defined the family as primarily a unit of companionship between two people, others insist on there being intergenerational characteristics (Davilla 1995). Following on from the last chapter's discussion of the household as the social site for structures of constraint and social reproduction, I will argue that the household is the most appropriate unit of analysis for this study.

Household economics has shifted the theoretical focus based mostly on male decision-making to household decision-making. In spite of this, the male breadwinner has been the focus of research with the household regarded as an undifferentiated individual. An important contribution of feminist sociologists and economists was to highlight the important role of unpaid work and its gendered nature, much of which takes place in the household, part of the informal or complementary economy (Wheelock 1992). Childcare is one of the aspects of this unpaid work along with domestic work, and the care of the elderly, ill and disabled (Ungerson 1990). That the unit of analysis is more than one or two individuals makes particular sense when applied to childcare wherein there are often shared responsibilities in child-rearing, oftentimes by more than one or two adults. With childcare also occurring across residences, the concept of the household with porous boundaries (Wheelock and Oughton 1996; Wheelock and Oughton 1994) becomes very relevant.

With the Labour government's National Childcare Strategy however, the tendency has been to look at childcare as a macro-level economic issue. They adopt an economic paradigm that assumes households will respond to monetary incentives through tax credits. In the sense described above, their underlying assumption comes from viewing the household as 'anthropomorphic', so that it is seen to behave as a self-interested individual (Wheelock *et al.* 2000:2).[66] The social and economic relations within the household are ignored and the calculations of costs and benefits apply only to relations outside the household boundary. Wheelock and Oughton (1996:156) argue

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[66] New Household economists conceive of households as individuals with a single household utility function but research such as that by Oughton, Wheelock and Baines has confirmed the importance of taking a household approach rather than that of an individual enterprise approach in assessing rural household micro-businesses (Oughton *et al.* 2003).

that the focus should instead be on individuals within their household context, and the household embedded in the wider economy. With the boundaries of the household perceived of as porous and permeable, the social relations of a particular context become of structural significance to the household (Mackintosh 2000). In a study using the household as the unit of analysis, informal or complementary childcare was found to involve a redistribution of resources between parental and grandparental generations, and across household boundaries (Wheelock and Jones 2002; Wheelock *et al.* 2000:7). The gendered nature of childcare (England 1996) whether or not women were employed has also been confirmed.

What then is meant by 'the household'? All those that are co-resident whether they are related or not? Wheelock and Oughton (1996) have employed a definition based upon function that describes it as the basic unit of society in which the activities of production, reproduction, consumption and socialisation of children take place, and whose members share and manage a common fund of material and human resources. From an anthropological perspective, the members of the 'household' need not be co-resident or related through kinship or marriage if for example they are linked by a common economic purpose. This breaks away from the limited concept of the nuclear family, often treated as synonymous with the household, as the unit of analysis. As a working guide, this more flexible notion of the household is particularly useful for certain minority ethnic communities, which exhibit varied family configurations.

Household economics as an analytical perspective is also particularly appropriate to an institutional perspective that draws on both sociology and economics (Wheelock and Mariussen 1997). This takes into consideration cultural norms and values, and power relations that are the result of the social, political and cultural contexts, also particularly relevant in the minority ethnic households in this study. It allows the study of the process of social provisioning, the reproduction of personal and social capital and the gender division of labour within and beyond its boundaries.

> The household can be envisaged as a node in a multilayered web or as the locus for a number of networks of relations: economic, social, and technological. The household as a unit and its individual members are embedded and implicated in these networks. (Wheelock and Oughton 1996:156)

In much social research, including those among minority ethnic communities, it is frequently women who are the subjects because they are more readily accessible and willing to participate. According to Mayall, focussing on mothers may be both missing something and reinforcing stereotypes (Mayall 1991). In other minority ethnic research, there is often the non-representation of those who are not fluent in English, for example in Parker's research on the cultural identities of young Chinese people in Britain (Parker 1995). Baines and Gelder (2003) have recently employed a household approach in which not only parents' perspectives, but also those of children and young people are taken onto account. In a similar way, my aim is to include children but also other adult carers i.e. fathers and grandparents and to hear their perspectives, in order to build up a holistic picture of the family and household. This necessitated the use of interpreters, the ability to understand Chinese-English and Sylheti-English Interlanguages[67] (Lie 1998) and the skills required to interview children. These methodological complexities will be discussed in more detail at a later stage.

If the focus of the research method is the bringing up of children, then all those who are involved in caring for children whether or not they are adults, or resident in the house, are possible respondents/participants. This is because they are involved in caring work, and in contributing to the household economy albeit unpaid in the formal sense. They also contribute to the development of personal and social capital as they are involved in the upbringing of the children, for example grandparents who travel from abroad bringing with them their skills, expertise and experience, and influencing the values and ethos of the household. The study of these values is essential in the study of household decision-making. Possibilities of conflicting opinion will occur (Detzner 1992) but from the point of view of modern household economics, carers other than parents are contributing to the domestic labour supply, freeing up parents in some cases to be economically active. Whether older children or grandparents, they therefore have to be included in the unit of analysis.

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[67] An interlanguage is the language system that a learner of a language constructs out of the linguistic input that he/she has been exposed. It can be thought of as a continuum between the first and second language along which all learners traverse (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:60).

The analytical unit in context: social network analysis

Social network analysis is an established mode of analysis in the sociology of the family especially with regard to children and care (Phillipson *et al.* 1999; Cotterell 1996; Cochran *et al.* 1990; Milardo 1988; Willmott 1986). It has also been used in sociolinguistics (Raschka *et al.* 2002; Milroy 1992) and studies of entrepreneurship (Brereton and Jones 2001). It may be described as a geography of social relations and as a means of plotting the social landscape of an individual (Cotterell 1996) or indeed that of a unit such as the household, which constitutes a *node* in the network. The relationships between key figures and groups may be described in terms of their network strength, structure or density. In social network terminology, the links between individuals or units are *ties*, and they can be described as *strong* or *weak* (Granovetter 1982) depending on the nature of the relationship. This is characterised by the frequency and intensity of contact between network members, and its capacity to exert an influence on them. In terms of the structure of the network, *dense* networks are those in which the networks of individuals overlap, giving it the sense of 'everybody knows everybody'. Those that are *multiplex* are those in which one person is linked to another in more than one way, for example being both a family relation as well as a work colleague. Bott (1971:59) used the terms *close-knit* and *loose-knit* to describe the 'connectedness' of the families she studied. *Close-knit* networks are also described as being both dense and multiplex (Milroy 1992). Often, with its overlapping ties, the tendency is for the network to be insular and self-sufficient, "directing members' energies towards maintaining the structure and constraining them from investing in new relationships" (Cotterell 1996:15). On the other hand, *loose-knit* networks are 'less stable but more open to new members, and more able to provide bridges to other groups' (*ibid*).

In looking at social class and the way it influences informal care and social networks, Willmot (1986) observes that more resources at one's disposal means more choice over housing, transport and employment, affecting individuals' geographical mobility, neighbourhoods and therefore their relationships. This is also related to the idea of social capital and the need for democratic politics, as Evers comments:

> In modern industrial democracies, people at the bottom of society usually have more restricted social networks, are to a greater extent driven into a kind of defensive privatism, and their powerlessness makes their voices and concerns being less heard in the concert of interest groups. Operating with the broad notion of social capital one might say that they may have more 'bounded' but clearly less 'bridging' capital. (Evers 2003:16)

More pertinent to my research, social network analysis has also been a means of looking specifically at childcare strategies. In a study by Dyck on women's support networks (Dyck 1996), it was found that local knowledge and informal childcare strategies obtained through these networks were useful and important. Uttal (1999) used a network analysis to offer a new explanation of why African American and Mexican American mothers are more likely than Anglo American mothers to use childcare arrangements with relatives when they work. Studies like these also illustrate how families with young children are embedded in the socio-economic networks of the extended family. It has also been found that the availability of organised and regulated services can encourage the sharing of childcare tasks through informal networks (Fincher 1996). One can imagine that relatives, grandparents and fathers would be more willing to help out if they could fall back on such services as crèches and playgroups. But according to Fincher (1996:165), if the extended family, particularly of immigrants, is depended on to provide childcare without such support, the reality is that women will most likely continue to carry the responsibility for childcare.

Social network analysis is able to provide a flexible method of exploring community life, change over time, and networks as resource provision (Phillipson *et al.* 1999). It can also place the micro-level analysis of the individual as complementary to the macro-level analysis of society (Milroy 1992). Social network analysis is also compatible with an ecological perspective that views childcare systems as a product of the wider social structure in which the social systems of the family, health care, school and non-parental care interact. The ecological perspective views social networks

> not as static, structural universals but as dynamic, processes-in-context that vary systematically in their nature and effect as a joint function of the

characteristics not only of the environment but of the person living in that environment.(Bronfenbrenner 1990:vii)

In terms of looking at minority ethnic communities, social network analysis has been used to analyse the linguistic interaction of these groups with the wider society. Indices such as an integration index (Bortoni-Ricardo 1985), ethnic index and peer index (Li 1994), outgroup index (Raschka 1997) and index of contact (Lie 2002) have been devised in order to quantify these relationships. Floya Anthias (1998) however warns against postmodernist emphases on empiricism with its political and moral relativism. She advocates a search for deeper structures of commonalities as well as class-based and trans-ethnic solidarities. Adopting concepts from social network theory, Anthias argues that while identities can be construed of in terms of *nodes* and of *multiplex* relationships, it is also possible to define them in terms of outcomes rather than just explanations. She criticises the focus on human capital, capacities and skills as inadequate because it ignores the overall system of stratification that embodies gendered, ethnicised and racialised relations. From the perspective of transnational networks, Salaff and Wong (1997) have discovered differences between the networks of Hong Kong Chinese migrants from different occupational classes. These global network relations, like other resources, are socially differentiated and create links to people abroad in different ways. The possession of network capital (*ibid*. p. 213) provides access to meaningful circles of emigrant kin. The more diverse the network capital, the easier it is for them to emigrate.

Social network analysis is far from being unproblematic, but much of it has to do with terminology.[68] In any case, I believe that its relevance to my research outweighs its difficulties. I will be employing the terms adopted by Elizabeth Bott but not as a means of measurement. Rather, the use of the terms *close-knit* and *loose-knit* will be employed in a descriptive, metaphorical sense. Bott simply defines a *close-knit* network as that 'in which there are many relationships among the component units',

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[68] Definitions of whether for example a tie is 'weak' or 'strong', or a network is 'close-knit' or 'loose-knit' can come from a few sources: the research participants' own opinion of his/her contacts (cognitive), self-reported retrospective data, and participant observation. Ideally, all three sources should confer for reliability. In this study, only self reported data on those who are turned to for assistance in childcare have been collected.

while *loose knit* is used to describe 'a network in which there are few such relationships' (Bott 1971:59).

Researching difference

Reed (2000) talks about the problems of researching 'difference', in particular of operationalising differences between western and non-western medical systems bearing in mind that Western systems of knowledge very often take hegemonic precedence over others. This is true also in the area of childcare (Campion 1995) as well as education (Blackledge 2001; Brooker 2000; Blackledge 1999). Black parents are often perceived as 'problems' in professional practice and deficient as parents and educators. Even in research with children, the danger is in the pathologising of difference both within and across cultures, and perceiving social differences as inevitable because of age or biological development (James *et al.* 1998:174). Gender differences have also been seen by equal rights feminists as obstructing socio-economic equality while other strands of feminist thinking would advocate the celebration of difference, arguing that equality would only come about from doing so (Doucet 1995). In terms of research, categories like race, class, gender and age must be seen not to be 'determinate in themselves but rather are made concrete, experienced and perceived in a multitude of different ways' (Doucet 1995:276). In addition, feminist assumptions about the nature of gender differences and the subordination of women needs to examined in the light of cross-cultural interpretive methodologies which uncover the power of women in other communities.[69]

There are a number of positive and negative aspects in the use of 'difference' as an analytical tool. I would advocate its use on the condition that there is an awareness of its various drawbacks. To Watson and Scraton (2001), the differences between the South Asian women in their sample were central to their research because it underlined the diversity of their experiences. They were aware of the sensitivity of

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[69] Billson in her cross-cultural study of women in Canada asserts that "in our alacrity to target the oppression of women, we have galloped over the communities of women who are strong, powerful, autonomous, in balance with men, in touch with nature, creative, willful, dominant, and superbly competent - and not inspite of men or in opposition to them, but because their culture has laid it out that way" (Billson 1991:213).

gaining access to South Asian women and the dangers of misrepresenting shifting identities. 'Difference' as a concept, could also be used to describe the power relations that affect respondents at both micro and macro levels of analysis (Watson and Scraton 2001:268). All this however requires the recognition that while everyone experiences a racial identity in different ways, racism may have certain effects on black/Asian women not experienced by those who are white (Bhopal 2001:282). The impact that colonialism may have on research participants is also seldom acknowledged (Kalra 2000:43). The value of difference as an analytical tool is also limited because it is not sophisticated enough to account for power, inequality and subordination (Maynard 1994). Concentrating on difference can also create an unhelpful gulf between social groups, whether between children and adults (James *et al.* 1998:181), or racial groups. Perhaps one way through is to aim for a balance in perspectives and to highlight the disadvantages and domination as outcomes that result from difference. Reflexivity requires that these theoretical considerations be grappled with in the field as much as in the analytical stage of the research.

The importance of shedding the position of privilege because of competency in English is worth pointing out, as language barriers are also social barriers that could jeopardise the research process (Watson and Scraton 2001:270). From Watson and Scraton's observations, difference, whether due to language, colour, religion or dress, can be negotiated, and is not always a marker of hierarchy or oppression but dependent on context. In dealing with the complexities of researching difference, reflexivity with responsibility should be central in one's research methodology.[70] In attempting to deconstruct the research process and examine my bias and assumptions, I have to look into my racialised identity as a Singaporean Chinese woman, a parent, my language abilities, my place as a minority ethnic researcher in the context of research in the U.K., and my previous research experience among other things. The process of uncovering how these elements that shape my values and beliefs might impact on the research is very complex, but could begin with a consideration of the effect of the interviewer on the interview process.

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[70] See also Andersen (1993).

Researching children

Approaches

One of the main difficulties of researching children apart from ethical issues (which will be dealt with later in the chapter) is the difference in age and competencies between the researcher and the respondent, and among the respondents. However, assumptions about age-specific and age-appropriate behaviour can impede the research process, as the danger is in adopting a developmental paradigm that assumes age differences as 'natural' rather than 'sociological' (James *et al.* 1998:169-191). This can affect the assumptions of the researcher and colour her perceptions. On the other hand, differences that are the result of age cannot be ignored altogether, and age can be a useful indicator for the skills and competencies of the child (Mauthner 1997), within their particular socio-cultural contexts. Researching children therefore requires a flexible use of research methodologies. Davilla (1995) proposes that children cannot be approached with schemes and categories used for adults but that children's playfulness requires talking to them at their own level and giving them a chance to express their own experiences in their own words. This implies a phenomenological methodology that is concerned with the uncovering of senses and lived experience, which relates particularly well to researching children. Procedures in this kind of methodology could include open-ended interviewing and the use of play and picture drawing.[71] Care has to be taken in the interpretation of children's conversations, as their communicative competencies are often quite different to adults.

Davilla's approach may be useful in researching nursery and infant school children because less successful interviews are often with those in younger age groups (Mahon *et al.* 1996). Scott (2000) advocates the use of less structured methods for those under seven and semi-structured for those above seven. Another approach is that of participant observation, which requires the adult researcher to blend in with children, a task not easily achieved (Holmes 1998), and not necessarily accepted by children (Mayall 2000). Access to children in a school setting is more manageable than access to them in their homes in household research. In the case of my research, the bilingual ability of the children and ethnic and cultural differences between child respondents

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[71] See also Christensen and James (2000a; 2000b) and Holmes (1998:23), for the advantages of drawing as a research tool to mediate communication especially of abstract concepts.

and the researcher have to be taken into account (Holmes 1998). Some of the ideas in the phenomenological method could more readily be applied to those ethnic minority participants who have limited competency in English, as could ideas from participatory research methods.[72] Investigators have also to gain the children's trust and so reduce the likelihood that children will only say what they are expected to say. This may be more of an issue with those from a minority ethnic background who, depending on their status vis-à-vis the researcher, may be more keen to 'please'.

Mauthner (1997) argues that children should be treated as subjects rather than just objects of research, and active agents in the processes of communication and cultural transmission (James *et al.* 1998). Such a child-centred approach that recognises among other things the use of appropriate language styles, can deal with the problem of unequal power relations. Davilla (1995) however highlights the importance of examining the integration of children's lived experiences into family discourse and understanding children's positions within the family. An approach that emphasises the difference between adults and children may tend to exclude the family and the role of adult control in research contexts (Harden *et al.* 2000; James *et al.* 1998).

Techniques adopted and fieldwork experiences

For practical time limitations rather than theoretical reasons, a decision was made to interview only those children aged six and above. In order to find a 'focus' for them to interact with me, I used a colourful chart of the days of the week with spaces for them to fill in any significant events that happened over the past week (see Appendix 1).[73] There was one with graphics more suited to a younger age group i.e. 6-9, and then another for 10- 14s. These 'time-sheets' were left with them to complete when I interviewed their parents, and I returned the week after or at a later date to look at them, discussing with the children/young person regarding what they had written rather than following any strict interview schedule, although some questions had been drawn up (see Appendix 2). The children also had the option of writing in a blank-

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[72] This is because there is less emphasis on oral and written skills in these approaches. Participatory Appraisal (PA) for example uses a community-based approach, and employs visual and flexible tools such as maps and spider diagrams to enable people to start at their own level, and participatory approaches have also been used in collecting data on household labour (Doucet 1996; Doucet 1995).
[73] Apart from participant observation and interviews, some researchers advocate the use of task-centred activities, but as a stimulus for talk rather than evidence in their own right (Harden *et al.* 2000).

paged exercise book, or if they wished, they could draw or colour, using felt tips that were provided. They were then allowed to keep the pens. These books turned out to be useful for other younger children too who needed to be occupied when I interviewed their parent.

In my informal open-ended interviews with the children, I was pleasantly surprised at the maturity of those aged eight and above, reflected in their communicative abilities. Warnings that children often 'clam up' or offer only one-word answers were not borne out in my interviews. On reflection, this might have to do with my experience as a former teacher with talking to children, and involvement in various children's activities. This, coupled with my being Chinese, female (Holmes 1998) and a mother, as well as my conversational style, may also have overridden the social distance due to the age differential. I found the task-centred activities helpful for one or two of the younger children, but in most cases they were really not necessary to get the children to talk.[74] What was important for me were how relaxed the children felt and my rapport with them.[75] This also depended on the personality of the child and the circumstances in which he or she is interviewed. For example, watching and playing badminton with the three Chinese children I was to interview in a sports centre resulted in a relaxed atmosphere for an in-depth conversation. The fact that a nine-year old Chinese boy I interviewed was talented in art, which he expressed in a task-based activity used as a prompt in the interview did wonders for the open and lengthy conversation I had with him.

Altogether I interviewed eight Chinese children and thirteen Bangladeshi children between the ages of six and fourteen. Most were chatty and quite willing to speak to me. They were bright, sociable children and I did not have to work very hard to get them to speak. They were also able to speak on a variety of subjects, with some willing to volunteer much more than I had asked for. Most of the time, they were interviewed away from the presence of their parents, who were mostly happy for them to get on with it. Any assumption that they would be less communicatively competent

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[74] It was found to be the case with 13-14 year olds that different young people preferred different techniques and that not all special strategies to get them to talk would work (Punch 2002).

[75] The key to balancing 'techniques' and 'talk' is the 'flexibility and sensitivity on the part of the researcher to the individual children being interviewed' (Harden *et al.* 2000:2.10).

because they were bilingual was not borne out in my interviews with the children. Perhaps my Chinese respondents were more forthcoming because I am ethnically Chinese, but in the case of the Bangladeshi children, there was also little difficulty in getting the children to speak of their experiences. The fact that I know some conversational Sylheti also helped to break down barriers with the children.[76] Gender and possibly age was felt to be more of an influence because apart from a ten-year-old Chinese boy and a fourteen-year-old Bangladeshi boy, the other boys (Chinese aged 6 and 8 and Bangladeshi, aged 7) were more reticent than the girls. Another Bangladeshi boy aged 12 declined to be interviewed.

In the case of the children from the Bangladeshi sample, most of them were interviewed in pairs or groups. This was largely because of the nature of the household set-up in which there were more children in the household and younger ones were unable to keep away out of curiosity. It was also the children's preference to be interviewed together, and as it was nearing the end of my fieldwork, time was another factor. There were advantages and disadvantages in interviewing children in groups. Sometimes being in a group gave the younger ones more confidence because 'two against one' evened out the power imbalance. The children were sometimes pressing to have a 'say', and contradicting or reinforcing one another's viewpoints, or checking details of an event with one another, but most of all, there was no 'silence'. On the other hand, another power relationship existed in which the older one tended to have the upper hand and in most cases dominated the conversation. The younger ones tended to go off at a tangent, so it was sometimes useful to have an older one leading the way. The books and pens were invaluable in one case where there were ten children in the family, and the girl who was the main spokesperson (aged ten), willingly obliged by drawing a table in the book, of all her brothers and sisters, detailing their names, sex, birth-dates and ages.

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[76] See page 78 for an example.

The effect of the interviewer on the interview process

There are many advantages in being of the same ethnicity as one's respondents, or not being a member of the majority ethnic community. A white researcher is often perceived as someone in authority and 'black' respondents may wish to keep their families, regarded as a haven from racism, especially private from them (Edwards 1993:181; Edwards 1990). On the other hand, there is the need to guard against implicit cultural understandings, which may come in the form of respondents saying, 'you know what I mean' (Beishon *et al.* 1998:5-6). The argument that only 'black' researchers are suited to 'black' respondents however can produce the effect of marginalizing them as only being able to contribute to research on black informants (Bhopal 2001:281; Phoenix 1994). Like Mayall, Bhopal observes the lack of ownership and control over the research and data analysis that 'black' researchers have, because of the hierarchies of research. I would like to add that there is a need to interrogate the term 'black', which is increasingly being challenged in postmodernism.[77]

But there are other factors to consider as well. Language, whether it is language variety, dialect, style or register is often unmentioned in accounts of research methodology in spite of it being a key factor in the process of understanding. The potential of language to unlock the experiences and emotions of respondents is particularly great, especially if a minority group is more accustomed to the transmission of information orally rather than through written modes. The researcher has to be versatile in adapting to different ways of communicating, in the different social contexts he or she is placed in. This can be further complicated in minority ethnic research. In the interviews with my Chinese respondents, interviews were carried out in a range of language mediums, often an interlanguage variety as well as code-switching[78] between Cantonese and English. In the following example, the father is helping his wife by interpreting her Cantonese for my benefit because of my

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[77] See Chapter Two, page 20, for a discussion.
[78] 'Code-switching' is 'the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or sub-systems' [definition by John Gumperz quoted in Romaine (1995:121)].

limited ability in the language, and the interpretation is provided in square brackets by one of my interpreters:

Mrs Ho: *cho yea la* [do something]

(laughter)

Researcher: *cho mie yea* [do what]

(laughter)

Mrs Ho: *ngo chi ( ) cho kong la ( ) er ngo cho um kam lo, cho chor ho tor lei, cho to ngo ko lei eh yau kei swei ko lei er yau kei swei ko lei ko ko e hang, kun chi em [ ] hai* England

[working, working in gold, work for a long time till I came here, when I was in my twenties I came as a tourist]

Researcher: "Kam" what's "kam"

(laughter)

Mr Ho: Er em at Hong Kong, some

Researcher: *'Kam'* is gold

Mr Ho: Yeah *'Kam'* is gold that's it

Researcher: You're making gold? Jewellery?

Mrs Ho: Not jewellery, em is a *ika hai, hai* [it's, it's..]

Researcher: Precious stones?

Mrs Ho: No, no it's, you know em during the cake you're I make the cake 'pong' [scales]

While this was not as evident in the interviews with the Bangladeshis, my little knowledge of Sylheti which most of them spoke, was useful in increasing rapport with some respondents:

Researcher: Yeah, but I speak a little bit of Sylheti also. *Tumar nam kita?*

[What is your name?] I can say that! (laughs)

Child (aged 11): You sound like proper Bengali!

Researcher: Of course! (laughs)

Child (aged 9): Say it!

R: *Tumar nam kita?*

The complications of using an interpreter, and attempting to reduce miscomprehension through the reiteration of statements made, can lead to respondents thinking that the researcher was hard of hearing or lacking in intelligence. However, making sure that one had got things right was more important than losing a bit of self-respect. With the children, a non-directive, participatory conversational style enabled me to elicit responses. The ability to engage in these different forms of discourse added to the rapport that I felt with my respondents.

It has been argued that similarities of age, gender, background and other identity markers between researcher, interviewers and the researched are advantageous to the research process as they can serve to even out the power relations between the parties concerned. In the tradition of feminist reflexive methodology, I would not claim that being a wife and mother similar to many of my respondents did not have its advantages (Miller 1995). I was able to empathise with mothers describing difficult births and sleepless nights because of children. In fact, with both mothers and fathers, our social role as parents trying to bring up our children in British society was a common denominator. In terms of race and ethnicity, and more so as a 'migrant', I shared the same marginality that one father felt when he expressed his identity as a 'foreigner', so that our gender differences were not so much of an issue. In terms of origin, there was particular rapport with a Malaysian father, although he did take a more formal conversational style with me and strangely, avoided eye contact. Whether this was because he was attempting to concentrate on his answers, or because of gender and class differences is still unknown to me.

In further reflecting on differences, Hong Kong, Vietnam and Mainland China are very different to my background as a Singaporean. More so are there differences with the Bangladeshis, especially with respect to religion, although Singapore does have a large minority who are Muslim, and many of my friends are Muslims both in Singapore and Britain. There are also class and age differentials but none of these constituted social barriers that could not be overcome through the flexibility of an open-ended interview (Fielding and Thomas 2001). Questions could be reformulated to be less intimidating and intrusive, and the right use of intonation and prompts could

reduce the stress of being interviewed.[79] If the respondent did not have a good command of English, it was important that I adopted a gentle but not patronising approach. Interviewing those men and women who were professionals required a different approach, and on reflection, I could say that I adopted a more formal stance, which became more relaxed in the course of the interview. Having said that, it also depended on the setting (Flick 2002), so that interviewing a graduate mum in her kitchen with a newborn baby on her arm was quite different to being in an armchair in a sophisticated living room.[80] Interviewing Chinese grandparents required that I treated them with more respect and be more willing to listen to their views even though they might not be directly answering the question, or may have misunderstood it. Thus, a certain amount of cultural competency and interpersonal skills (Chiu and Knight 1999) with an awareness of cultural expectations is required in minority ethnic household research.

The social characteristics of the interviewer therefore interact with those of the interviewee to affect the sensitivity of the research topic in different ways (Edwards 1993:195). The fact that education is held in high esteem among the Chinese and that I was a student helped to place me in a positive light to some extent. One of the Bangladeshi women I interviewed gave me a glimpse of her perception of Chinese people, when she said, 'Chinese people are so brainy!' but on the other hand, another Bangladeshi man held Chinese people lower down in his esteem because of his perception that Chinese people did not know how to manage their money responsibly. According to him, 70 per cent of those who visit casinos are Chinese.[81] To some Chinese, there might have been a perception that I was just another researcher like others who cannot speak the language.

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[79] Minichello *et al* (1990:111) recommend a method of establishing rapport developed from linguistic research: 'Rapport with another person is basically a matter of understanding their model of the world and communicating your understanding symmetrically. This can be done effectively by *matching* the perceptual language, the images of the world, the speech patterns, pitch, tone, speed, the overall posture and the breathing patterns of the informant'.

[80] The differences in behaviour of research participants has been found to depend on different settings, and a good literature search is recommended (Berg 1995:94).

[81] When asked where he got this information, he confessed to going to the casino himself, but quickly added 'only occasionally'.

Instrument design and piloting

While the main source of data would come from the household interviews, it was decided that some focus group work would be valuable in order to 'test the waters' and explore what were some of the initial reactions to the childcare issue among the Chinese community (Chiu and Knight 1999). Ideas and themes arising from the focus group could then be incorporated into the interview schedule for the households. Not long before the project started, the EYDCP had conducted focus groups to obtain feedback from members of minority ethnic groups. These were used to inform the design of questions for the focus groups planned for the Chinese and Bangladeshi communities (see Appendix 3). The focus group with Chinese women (see section on focus groups, page 116) assisted greatly in the design of the interview schedule for the household members.

Two interviews with each member of the household were planned; one schedule covered the household members and their background, childcare used in the past and childcare used in the present and the other covered household routines, income, needs and childcare preferences (see Appendix 4). It was felt that a second interview was useful in that it allowed questions that were not covered in the first interview to be covered in the second and so would act as a kind of 'safety net'. Each question was linked to particular themes arising from the literature review and focus group work e.g. family history, household practices, child preferences, networks and integration. To assist in the data-collection, a chart of income bands and charts of formal and informal childcare options, leisure services and children's clubs and other organised activities were designed. (see Appendix 5). Separate interview schedules were also drawn up for grandparents and children (see Appendix 2), and the schedule for grandparents was adapted when other family members were interviewed. The non-academic supervisors from the EYDCP[82] and the academic supervisors checked the introductory letter (see Appendix 6) and drafts of the interview schedules, and the necessary revisions were made. The interview schedule served mainly as an *aide memoire* and in the nature of qualitative researching, was designed not to be adhered

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[82] The involvement of the non-academic supervisors from the Partnership provided a useful perspective from those who were working directly in the childcare sector with various providers.

to rigidly. This was found to be quite essential in interviewing those for whom English is an Additional Language, and for whom questions had to be reformulated for better comprehension. There was also room for flexibility in terms of prompting to allow a respondent to elaborate at length about a particular topic. Eventually, towards the end of the research, the schedule was replaced with a list of topics with points or prompts in order for more flexibility and openness (see Appendix 7).

The pilot interviews conducted indicated that one interview was sufficient. In reality the length of the interview also depended on the amount of formal childcare each household employed.[83] Eventually, most of the interviews were completed in one sitting rather than two, thus eliminating the inconvenience of arranging a second interview and making additional time demands on respondents. Another advantage of the pilot interviews was that any translation difficulties or ambiguities in the questions could be dealt with. Issues which arose or which were more pertinent to the community in question could be discussed in more detail if necessary. Because I had the task of 'training' interpreters, I decided to apply the interview schedule to them in the first place, as they would then obtain a clear idea of the kinds of questions I would be asking, and the kinds of answers that were possible. The first pilot interview was with the first Chinese interpreter, and the second with her husband.[84] The first interview lasting about an hour highlighted to me some of the sensitivities of the research. As she recounted her personal history, she became emotional and the interview had to be suspended for her to recover. As part of my responsibility as a researcher, I had to ensure her well-being and that she was not adversely affected by the interview.[85] The interview with her husband lasting about twenty minutes provided me with the experience of interviewing across gender and was much more focused, as it was time-constrained. I also conducted interviews with the other two Chinese interpreters in order to familiarise them with the interview process. Similarly for the research on Bangladeshi households, I conducted a pilot interview with the one interpreter who assisted me throughout the fieldwork. I also made contact with

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[83] One interview with a mother who had used a range of childcare lasted two and a half hours, but this was because she had declined my offer of a second interview as she had such a busy schedule.

[84] I also had hoped to conduct an interview with their teenage daughter, but for reasons beyond my control, this was not possible.

[85] Researchers of sensitive topics recommend checking periodically with the interviewee their comfort levels (Daly 1992).

another couple, which provided me with another pilot interview from the Bangladeshi community.[86]

Thus the pilot interviews not only tested the questionnaire schedule but also were preparation or 'priming' for me, and each interview provided valuable experience. The result was that not only did my interpreters familiarise themselves with the schedule, but I was also able to gather information about their own perspectives and background that might colour the interview process. The interviews with the four interpreters and Bangladeshi couple were not included in the household interview data. The effects of the interpreters on the interview process together with their interview data would merit another research study in itself. A more detailed discussion on interpreters is provided later in chapter.[87]

Ethics and confidentiality

Ethical issues with regard to access in this research relate mainly to the consent of individuals to participate. As most of the participants were accessed through gatekeepers, their positions of trust as professionals whether as community workers or interpreters was not compromised as each obtained consent from individuals before their details were passed on to me. At another level, 'informed consent' that is the right to be informed about the purpose of the research with the right to consent to or withdraw from participating was also negotiated when I met the participants. Information was also provided about who is financing the research, how it is to be used and the possible outcomes. Other principles in ethical research include research integrity and the researchers' responsibilities towards research participants, in particular confidentiality and the safeguarding their interests (British Sociological Association 2002). The research participants (including the children, see page 86ff.) were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. They were also given the option of

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[86] One of the Bangladeshi community leaders has always been very supportive of my past research into the Sylheti community, and through his wife, I was able to interview a middle-aged Bangladeshi couple living in the north of the city. Their son and daughter-in-law who had just recently had a child, were living very close by. The couple also had other children but they were over the age of fourteen. On their request, their interview was not recorded. Unfortunately, contact with their son could not be made after several attempts.

[87] See section on interpreters, page 95.

stopping whenever they wanted, for example, when they felt uncomfortable or there were things that they did not understand. They were also given the option of listening to what they had said in order that they could retract any statements that they felt they should not have made.

Because both the Chinese and Bangladeshi communities in Newcastle are rather small, the likelihood of respondents being recognised and identified in my accounts was quite high. This led to the decision to present the data in ways that would reduce the chance of that occurring. The removal or masking of certain identifiers e.g. occupation helps to maintain confidentiality. Another method used here is presenting the data in themes rather than case by case. In order to prevent confusion, tables describing the characteristics of each of the households interviewed are provided.

Ethical issues of researching children mostly involve access and adults as gatekeepers. Harden et al highlight the problems of 'informed consent' and children's social locations as subordinate to adults (see also (Mauthner 1997). The idea of the child needing to be protected or not being 'old' enough to decide can involve having children's rights curtailed or over-ridden. Adult gatekeepers may either prevent the child from having their voices heard or may give permission on their behalf to be involved in the research without first consulting with them (Harden *et al.* 2000). By right, just as in the case of adult respondents, children should be allowed to agree or disagree on whether to be interviewed, and the researcher should try to ensure that adults in the power relationship should not be putting pressure on the children either way (Roberts 2000). In some cases, it can be difficult for children to understand fully the purpose of the research and their contribution to it. All one can do is to explain as clearly as possible about the project and to give them the option of participating or not. In some cases, an activity could draw the attention of a child who consents but is not really keen. A six-year-old boy I was trying to interview at home was much more interested in watching the telly than answering my questions. He was much happier when I produced some pens and paper that he could work with. In my experience, children also have ways of exerting their rights.[88] Others would recommend building

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[88] The example is the Bangladeshi boy who refused to be interviewed.

up friendships with children while also recognising the unequally structured nature of adult-child relations (James *et al.* 1998).

Researchers working with children have to be aware of child protection issues and the potential disclosure of abuse, in which case there is the possibility that guarantees of anonymity might have to be over-ridden (British Sociological Association 2002; Holmes 1998). The EYDCP have trained personnel whom I could turn to if I had any concerns about children at possible risk. For my own part, police and social services checks were carried out, and I was therefore suitably 'covered'. I also attended a day-course on child protection awareness with other childcare workers at a nursery, conducted by the local authority. In my fieldwork however, one case was noteworthy; one mother requested that I stopped the tape so that she could tell me about a case of abuse that occurred to her daughter in school. As community workers had already been called in to deal with it, the issue was not pursued. For reasons of confidentiality, this piece of information was not made available to the Partnership, although it could be argued that it had relevance for the way the family was being looked after in the community. One solution in such a dilemma is to make a distinction between the public domain as represented by the EYDCP and the reports that are submitted to it, and the academic domain, which can be deemed more restricted. Other ethical issues exist apart from the dissemination of findings, such as in sampling decisions about the inclusion or exclusion of particular sections of the community (students and other temporary residents for example),[89] and the beneficial or detrimental effects of the research on children, which also need to be looked into (Roberts 2000).

Accessing the households

The Chinese community

Establishing credibility

An introductory letter about the nature of my research and myself as the researcher was written and translated into Chinese (Cantonese) (see Appendix 6). This was

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[89] See section on sampling, page 89.

distributed to people I met while networking,[90] in the hope that this would generate research participants. Unfortunately, the letters failed to produce any volunteers. However, it was useful as a means of introducing myself as a genuine researcher, and there were some who expressed interest in the results of the research.[91] Ease of access was also possible because of my association with the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. Carole Barnes, my non-academic supervisor and the Partnership's Development Worker with the remit of working with minority ethnic groups had already been in contact with the Chinese community in order to explore the development of childcare provision in the city. Once her name was mentioned, people I met were then able to make the connection between my research and the aims of the Partnership. Not all were aware of the Partnership and there were indications that more could be done to promote its work in the community. Carole was also responsible for convening the Racial Equality Subgroup of the Partnership,[92] which was made up of representatives of minority ethnic communities. I was assigned to be part of that group and it was to be a means for me to access the communities that I was studying.

The best way of accessing households was found to be through community key workers or 'gatekeepers'. The advantage of using this method was that there was less of a need for me to establish my credibility. Minority ethnic people have concerns about researchers that the indigenous white population will not. For example, one Bangladeshi interpreter took a whole day to establish her credibility as some parents thought that she was from the Home Office investigating their right to stay in the country (Mayall 1991:561). This was exactly the experience that I had in my previous M.A. research among the Bangladeshis.[93] The advantage of being recommended by someone seen to be trustworthy was very valuable, particularly when I was beginning to face different problems in making up the sample.

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[90] Networking took the form of visits to community meeting places open to members of minority ethnic communities. As a Chinese person at times accompanied by my children, access to these did not pose any problems and created opportunities for meeting community workers and volunteers.

[91] One for example wondered if the results were going to be available in time for funding applications that he was putting in for the Chinese Community. While it was not ready in time for his application, it was for another application from the Chinese community. This is an example of social research being a two-way process, i.e. for the researcher and the researched.

[92] This group was set up about the time I started the research.

[93] My M.A. research was on the speaking abilities of Sylheti women in Newcastle upon Tyne (Lie 1998) and involved collecting spoken data from women. The husband of one of the women called the police to the house to check my authenticity as a student, even though I had shown him my student card.

Networking and communication

The ease of networking in the Chinese community was made possible because of the fact that I myself am Singaporean Chinese and was able to join in its activities and blend in. More importantly, I had contact with some community workers from previous work that I had done in the community.[94] The trust that was there meant that I could depend on them for their assistance, which they offered generously. Two of these workers were connected to the work of the EYDCP through Carole Barnes; one was in the Racial Equality Subgroup that Carole convened and the other was involved with her in a project to set up a Chinese Centre. Both these women were key gatekeepers to the community. I was however somewhat disadvantaged because I have a limited command of the dialect that is the vernacular in the Chinese community here i.e. Cantonese. I was pleased that because I am Singaporean, I was thought of highly to some because 'Singaporeans can speak so many languages' as one said to me, and in particular admiring my English and Mandarin. So there were not as many barriers as I had initially imagined and my broken Cantonese improved in stages. It was also a personal journey of discovering something of my Chinese identity.[95]

Fieldwork and different gatekeepers

The first place of contact was the Minority Ethnic Community Support Service (MECSS), a citywide Community Project supporting minority ethnic communities. Formerly the Ethnic Minorities Team, it provides free confidential service to individuals from minority ethnic communities, for example on welfare rights. Community development workers undertake development and outreach work and provide support and assistance for new and existing community groups such as the Chinese Health Club and the South Mountain Chinese Older People's Club. From this base, contact was made with the Health Development Team that concentrates on

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[94] Between 1993-1997, I was a volunteer with the Elswick Asian Project in Newcastle, which was a Church of England community project set up to build bridges with South Asian and other minority groups in order to offer community support, promote interfaith understanding and address racism and discrimination.

[95] Although Malaysian and Singaporean Chinese are quite different to Hong Kong Chinese, there are many similarities as well and points of contact that became useful in the networking process. Examples were the ease I felt in joining the meals at the Chinese luncheon club and listening to Chinese opera.

minority ethnic health needs. Attendance at Chinese New Year celebrations in the city led me to come into contact with the Dragon Project, set up by the Enterprise Council to look into the diversification of the business sector in Chinatown, part of the Graingertown Regeneration Project. Other community contacts led me to visits to the Newcastle Chinese Church, the Newcastle Chinese Sunday School and the Chinese Youth Forum. Through the EYDCP's Racial Equality Subgroup, I was also introduced to the Chinese Centre Committee, which was in the throes of obtaining funding to build a multi-purpose Chinese Centre, to include IT training facilities and childcare provision. There were other less formal visits to the North East Chinese Association and Chinese supplementary schools.

The outcome of all this fieldwork was to enable me to build up a picture of an established and vibrant community, the result of more than ten years of hard work by Chinese community workers in a community but which is not without internal dissensions.[96] There were also opportunities to interview key workers on their views regarding childcare in the Chinese Community. The focus group with members of the Chinese Health Group and a separate interview with two grandmothers also provided further information about the community. The key workers from whom I requested help included development workers from the business enterprise agency working among the Chinese[97] and the health project for ethnic minorities. The health worker provided a contact, that of a 'socially isolated' Mainland Chinese family. However, at the last moment, the husband refused to cooperate, as he was concerned that his wife would not be able to provide 'the right answers', as he saw it.[98] This example of Chinese patriarchy was similar to another family that was suggested, where the woman was willing to cooperate but the husband was described as being 'difficult'. In such cases, the researcher is dependent on the gatekeeper's evaluation of the family situation and assessment of whether certain individuals can be included in the sample.

Other gatekeepers, professionals such as the welfare rights worker, the head of the interpreting service and the Chinese School headteacher were wary of approaching

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[96] See Chapter Four on the Chinese community in Britain and in Newcastle upon Tyne.
[97] The business support worker was able to refer me to a Chinese lady who was setting up her own business, but unfortunately, she lived in Gateshead and so fell outside my sample criteria.
[98] See page 95 for a similar attitude in a Bangladeshi household.

people, although they were happy to distribute the introductory letters to those who they thought might be interested. As I was only looking for 6-8 households, others were more comfortable about introducing people whom they knew well who would probably cooperate. At the Chinese church, I approached a church leader who declined being interviewed, but referred me to someone else, who, though she was very interested in the project, also declined because her husband was so busy. 'Busyness' was probably a common excuse, and also the fact that many of the mothers did not use any childcare provision and cared for the children themselves, so even after my attempts to persuade them otherwise, they felt they were not suitable as participants.

The Bangladeshi community

Networks and communication

In the case of the Bangladeshi community, I had the advantage of having conducted fieldwork in 1997 and 1999 among them,[99] and was still in touch with some contacts in the community from that work and my previous voluntary work. Two in particular were also involved in the Racial Equality Subgroup and were particularly helpful. Another was my Sylheti language teacher, former research assistant and friend. I was still able to speak a small amount of conversational Sylheti, but was out of practice, so an interpreter was employed for five of the interviews and for the focus group work. The families that I had researched before were not included in order to prevent research fatigue (Atkinson and Flint 2001; Moore 1996) and my previous knowledge from affecting data-collection and interpretation. However, one woman and her daughter at the focus group turned out to be old friends I had lost touch with. The introductory letters in Sylheti were written in Bengali script (see Appendix 6), but letters in English were also offered in order to access more participants. Most preferred the English version of the letter possibly because they were not taught the Bengali script well enough as children, and those who were older from rural backgrounds were not literate. Eventually, it was through the gatekeepers as face-to-face contacts in the community that yielded the most research participants rather than

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[99] The contacts made in 1997 were in relation to my M.A. research and those in 1999 as part of my work as a research associate for MILLE, the Minority Languages Engineering Project based at Lancaster University.

the written letters. They were however useful in providing written information about the project if there were any enquiries.

The Parental Childcare Needs Survey

As mentioned, I conducted a Parental Childcare Needs Survey on a sample of the Bangladeshi community on behalf of the EYDCP. This ran concurrently with the work of accessing the households for the household research. Apart from aiming to provide contextual and comparative data, it was also used to increase my contacts with the community. Because of the time element involved, it was agreed by the Management Group of the project that the research services of the local authority would assist me by collating the information from the survey. The original questionnaire used for the Chinese community was edited so that more detail could be incorporated in the answers.[100]

Although the results of the survey are not used in the analysis to any great extent because of its limitations,[101] I will still describe the survey process here as it was a networking tool and could be instructive for other minority ethnic research. Initially, the plan was to administer the questionnaire through groups of Bangladeshi women, with the help of Carole Barnes, the convenor of the RE Subgroup who had had experience in this area. However, it was difficult to establish where there were groups of Bangladeshi-only women meeting. At that time, the female community worker I had been referred to was away on leave but as part of my fieldwork, contact with a health project starting up named *Ma Bache* (Mother and child) was made. A meeting for women at *Ma Bache* to hear about childcare services in the community, with *halal* food provided, was organised.[102] Carole gave a short presentation on childcare

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[100] The survey was hindered by some delays in the production of the questionnaire and its accompanying covering letter and information sheet produced by the EYDCP to inform respondents of the aims of the research and previous consultation exercises. The survey was eventually administered between 2 May and 6 September 2002.

[101] Limitations include the questionnaire design that (for the EYDCP's purposes) followed the Chinese survey. Comparisons between the two surveys were also called into question because of the different sampling procedures and ways that the surveys were administered.

[102] However, many problems arose, such as women not arriving and community workers who were supposed to act as interpreters being called away on emergencies halfway through the meeting. Such is the unpredictability of community field research.

facilities in the community to the handful of women who attended, and some questionnaires were completed with the help of those who were bilingual.

Another method of administering the questionnaire was devised in which I used my contacts to access bilingual interviewers to conduct interviews with members of their own networks in the community who had children between the ages of 0-14. Nine interviewers were recruited, four with the help of an employment adviser for the Bangladeshi community in the West End of Newcastle. A training session on interviewing techniques and understanding the questionnaire was conducted for four of the nine interviewers, whereas those that I had contacted on my own were briefed individually. Interviewers were also given the opportunity to do a trial-run of the questionnaire by interviewing a fellow interviewer. Each was given between 5 to 15 questionnaires, which they were required to interpret and explain terms used such as Childcare Tax Credit and the different forms of childcare that were available, and they were paid for each questionnaire that was completed and returned. Unfortunately, one of the interviewers did not return any of the 15 questionnaires that he had been given, and another returned only 9 of the 15, even after repeated attempts by the employment adviser to contact these men. To make up the numbers, more questionnaires were given to existing interviewers, and another woman who was recruited at a later stage was able to complete 15 questionnaires. Altogether, a total of 106 questionnaires were returned, which was a comparable number to those returned by the Chinese community.[103]

One outcome of the survey was that one of the interviewers in this exercise also participated in the household research. The rapport built up with her as a result led her to recommend a friend to be one of the household respondents. Although the survey did not yield respondents for the household research as I had expected it to, it did give me the opportunity to visit households to train the interviewers and gave me further insight into the lives of individuals in the community.

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[103] The SPSS data on the Bangladeshi, Chinese and non-Chinese communities were then made available to me by the Policy and Research Services of the local authority for comparative work.

Two different samples

The proposal to investigate the childcare needs of a particular ethnic group is not without its problems. The category 'Chinese' is far from homogeneous. For example, it could include a range of nationalities e.g. from Hong Kong, China, Macau, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Taiwan to name just some.[104] There is also a sizeable number who are students, and there are those who are of mixed parentage. According to the Census 2001, in Newcastle the Chinese population was 1,869 and 2,595 for the Bangladeshis. While it was important to challenge monolithic conceptions of ethnic categories, and to break away from perceptions of minority groups as encapsulated socio-cultural groups, it was also important to acknowledge that a large proportion of those who are classified as 'Chinese' are in fact from Hong Kong and are involved in the catering trade.[105] At least half of the Chinese sample would therefore need to come from the predominant group from Hong Kong, and the rest should reflect variations from it. On the other hand, the vast majority (around 95%) of Bangladeshis are from the region of Sylhet and speak Sylheti (Baker *et al.* 2000). The Bangladeshi sample chosen was therefore Sylheti in origin, except for one household. The goals of my sampling procedure could thus be described as 'purposive sampling' and 'maximum variation' (Davilla 1995:95).

The respondents would need to be ethnically Chinese and Bangladeshi and would have to be local residents in Newcastle upon Tyne for at least two years. Because of their transient status and differences in their social entitlements, refugees, asylum-seekers and overseas students were thus not included in the sample. This is not to deny the fact that the childcare needs of such groups have also to be addressed. The households sampled would need to have children aged 14 and below because of the requirements of the EYDCP.[106] The aim was also for a sample that would have variability in terms of area of residence, size of household and socio-economic status.

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[104] With regard to the proportions of Chinese in Britain by country of origin (Chan and Chan 1997) 35 per cent were from Hong Kong and 28 per cent were born in Britain. The proportion of those from other countries each ranged between 1 and 12 per cent. (see Chapter Four, page 134). These figures were referred to because the Census 2001 figures were not available at the time.

[105] According to Labour Force Survey figures 2001/2002, two thirds of Bangladeshi and half of Chinese men in employment worked in the distribution, hotel and restaurant industry (http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=463)

[106] This is according to requirements laid down by government.

As the study had to do with socially excluded groups, it was also hoped that those on low incomes and/or on benefit would be incorporated. It should be pointed out that the Chinese as a community, as is the Bangladeshi community in the U.K. is still little researched and understood.[107] This constitutes a form of social exclusion in itself.

The reason for this kind of sampling frame was not so much about representativeness as to challenge notions of the stereotypical Chinese or Bangladeshi family as being representative of a perceived homogeneous ethnic minority. Also, within the minority group, it is important to recognise that 'each competing faction, group or individual, elite or non-elite, has its historical slant' (Dennis 1993:67). The aim was to collect narratives of the practices, needs and preferences of a sample of people that could give the researcher a valuable insight into these communities. This was to be an exercise in understanding and questioning, rather than claiming to be definitive of what the community needs in terms of childcare.

In locating the Chinese sample, I made contact and was able to interview three households with the help of one community worker who acted as a 'gatekeeper' at the Chinese Health Club. Through a health development worker, I made contact with a fourth family. A community interpreter helped me to make contact with the fifth family.[108] A recommendation from one of the initial families brought me into contact with the sixth family (snow-balling) while a Chinese colleague at the university put me in touch with the seventh family.

As stated previously, I was interested in interviewing as many members of the household as possible, in particular those involved in the care of the children and the children themselves. It was not so difficult getting the consent to speak to the parents, and even to the children. However, when some attempts were made to interview grandparents who were involved in childcare to some extent but not living in the same house, this was denied.[109] As a result, I was close to having no grandparents in my

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[107] This will be evident from the closer look at the Chinese and Bangladeshi communities in Britain in chapters 5 and 7.

[108] I was already acquainted with one at the time when my own daughter was in the same school as her children.

[109] For one particular family, it was felt that there were too many 'bad memories' for the grandparent. Another grandparent refused because she was 'shy'.

sample. In an attempt to find households in which grandparents were involved in childcare, I did a quick survey of the grandparents at a Chinese luncheon club. Those who did take care of their grandchildren were either unwilling to be interviewed, or said that their sons or daughters were too busy to be involved. I detected a certain amount of 'protectiveness' over their adult children - a term used by a senior community worker. In other cases, the children were over 14, or the parents of the children being taken care of by the grandparent were living outside Newcastle. It was only through another interpreter that I could be put in touch with the eighth family in which the grandparent was very much involved, and the whole family,[110] because of their close relationship with the interpreter, was willing to speak to me.

The following table summarises the final Chinese sample.[111] All the names used in both samples are pseudonyms.

Table 3.1: Sample of Chinese households

Household name	Household composition	Employment	Individuals interviewed
Chan	2 parents, 2 children	Self-employed professional, wife assisting	Parents
Fan	1 parent, 2 children, one nephew	Unemployed, voluntary work and language learning	Mother, daughter (12) and son (8)
Wong	2 parents, 2 children	Both self-employed in their takeaway	Parents
Ho	2 parents, 2 children	Husband employed as head cook in restaurant	Parents and son (9)
Kwok	2 parents, 2 children, 1 ward, 1-2 tenants	Company director, wife employed	Parents and daughters (14 and 13) and ward (17)
Lee	2 parents, 2 grandparents, two children, one brother and sister-in-law	Company employee and takeaway owner, wife working in takeaway	Parents, grandparents, brother and sister-in-law
Pang	1 parent, 2 children	Full-time self-employed	Mother
Tang	2 parents, 3 children, 1 grandparent, one brother	Takeaway employee - cook, wife does volunteer work	Parents, daughters (12 and 8), son (6) and grandmother

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[110] The interpreter described the family as an example of an ideal Chinese family.
[111] The wards that the households were located in were Gosforth, Dene, Elswick, Fenham, Jesmond, Kenton, Blakelaw and Sandyford. (However, since the June 2004 local elections, ward boundaries have changed.) More detailed tables of household characteristics are given in chapters 5, 7 and 8.

The Bangladeshi sample proceeded in the same sort of exploratory way. Through my Sylheti language teacher, a number of possible families were identified. Two were her work colleagues, and one her relative. Later on, one of these who were contacted was dropped from the sample because the husband had been in the country for only about a year. This family would have been interesting to study because of the kinds of problems he faced adapting to life in Britain, but finally because they lived in the same area as other households that were confirmed, a decision was made not to include them. Two households were contacted by means of snowball sampling,[112] with one declining to participate. The male Bangladeshi community worker who is a member of the Racial Equality Subgroup contacted two families on my behalf. Finally, in order to increase the range of families that I had so far, the female Bangladeshi key worker and member of the subgroup assisted me by identifying two possible families who were different to the others in my sample in terms of their background and circumstances, and paved the way for my visits.

The following table summarises the Bangladeshi sample.[113]

Table 3.2: Sample of Bangladeshi households

Household name	Household composition	Employment	Individuals interviewed
Ahmed	2 parents, 4 children	Takeaway cook, wife is lunchtime supervisor	Parents, daughters (11 and 9), son (7)
Bari	2 parents, two grandparents, 1 child	Community worker, wife works casually	Parents, grandparents
Ferdousi	2 parents, 3 children	Casual employment, wife in education	Parents and daughters (12 and 10)
Haque	2 parents, 3 children, one grandparent	Husband in part-time employment in catering	Parents, grandmother
Miah	2 parents, 4 children	unemployed	Parents and daughters (10, 8 & 6)
Siddique	2 parents, 2 children	self-employed, wife in casual employment	Parents, son (14), and daughters (12 & 6)
Tauhid	1 parent, 10 children	unemployed	Mother, two daughters (9 & 7)

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[112] Snowball sampling is an established method of obtaining respondents where trust is required, through the social networks of identified respondents, and particularly for qualitative and descriptive studies (Atkinson and Flint 2001).

[113] The wards that the households were located in were Elswick, Fenham and Gosforth.

Altogether eight Chinese and seven Bangladeshi households were included in the research. The reason for the difference in the number of households was because of the larger sizes of the Bangladeshi households. Eventually twenty-eight individuals from the Chinese sample were interviewed, with twenty-nine from the Bangladeshi sample. The methodology used in household research is the individual interviews with household members to capture the perspectives and internal relationships and dynamics within the household. However, it is not always possible to include every single household member for reasons such as the lack of individual consent. The issues to do with access restricted sampling to some extent, and thus the households sampled tended to be those that had some contact with community services. That the sample did not include households suffering severe deprivation and isolation was difficult to avoid, and a common problem in anti-poverty research . There was still enough variety among the households for rich and meaningful comparisons, each household constituting a case study for comparing households within the sample, as well as across the two samples.

Collecting the data

The fieldwork for the Chinese community was conducted between April and September 2001 and between April and October 2002 for the Bangladeshi community.[114] The process of data-collection from the Bangladeshi households differed from the Chinese households for various reasons, one of which was the size of the households. Interviews with the children for four of the households were conducted in groups, whereas for the Chinese, the children were interviewed individually. For the Chinese sample, there was not the kind of variation exhibited in the interviews with the Bangladeshis, such as interviews having to be cut short and re-scheduled, or interviews postponed for many weeks.

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[114] The interviews were taped with a Sanyo TRC-950 tape recorder with an in-built microphone on 90-minute cassette tapes. Care had to be taken that the positioning of the recorder was adequate for picking up the dialogue. In some cases, when the research participant's voice dropped in volume, there could be problems in the quality of the recording. External sounds also presented difficulties at times. Although not many major problems presented, there could have been better recordings made with digital equipment, and therefore greater ease of transcribing, particularly where a participant might not be speaking English as their first language.

All in all, interview order did not appear to have any adverse effects on data collection. At first, a policy of interviewing the husband first before the wife was adopted for both communities, in order to acknowledge the husband as the head of the household as this was felt to be more culturally sensitive.[115] It would also deal early on with any reservations that husbands might have about the research. However, many of the men were not easily available, and those who were, in most cases, were interviewed first before their wives. In one case, a Chinese father I met at the language school quite happily agreed to participate but when I turned up at his doorstep, only his wife was there. He had tried unsuccessfully to get in touch with me to cancel the interview and so informed his wife to take his place. This turned out to be one of the most valuable interviews in my sample, and I will not forget her saying to me that if she had not been 'landed' with the task so suddenly, she would never have agreed to the interview. At the end of the session though, she was very positive and was able to say that she enjoyed the experience. When the opportunities present themselves, they have to be grasped quickly, just as in another case of a Chinese husband coming to the door to apologise that his wife whom I was to interview was not available. I ventured to ask if he had some time to spare to be interviewed. His wife had previously warned me that he was a very busy man, so I was very grateful when he agreed.

The effect of long intervals between interviews within the same household was to give the research a longitudinal perspective and added information on the household. Two households in the Bangladeshi sample will prove my point. In the first household, after interviewing the mother, it was more than two months and three unsuccessful appointments later that I was able to interview her husband. Interviewing her children was not without its difficulties as well. Once on arrival, the mother was not in and the children wisely were not allowed to let me enter. At the second appointment, the interview had to be interrupted because she needed to visit a friend experiencing a crisis. Because there was no one else in the house, she had to take all three children,[116] which meant arranging another interview. When I rang her to confirm the next

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[115] This also challenged the view that childcare was solely a woman's domain.
[116] This gave me an added insight to childcare issues.

interview, she was in the midst of moving house.[117] Such barriers to accessibility are quite typical of family research, requiring flexibility and sensitivity, and can constitute rich data in themselves (Daly 1992).[118] From this sequence of events, I discovered that with the house-move, she was able to put her son in the nearby nursery school, and that her daughters would be able to walk to school easily. In the case of the second household, a series of delays and a visit without the chance of a formal interview with the wife[119] meant I had an insight into the impact of a family wedding on the workings of the household with visitors coming and going and much household work directed at shopping and cooking. It also became clear that the wife went to London regularly to stay with relatives, which may not have been disclosed in the more formal interaction of an interview, especially if it was mediated by an interpreter and her husband's presence.

Mayall (2000:127) refers to the dynamics of family-based interviews as 'the triangle of conventions and negotiations' that structures the event. A researcher's social positioning in the family home is not within established parameters and has to be negotiated. The presence of the husband at the wife's interview can have a very constraining effect on what the wife is free to say. Even though at the start of the interview, I had tried with the help of the interpreter to request that one particular Bangladeshi husband leave us to interview his wife, he was insistent that he needed to stay because he was quite sure that she was not able to understand the questions that would be posed to her, even with the help of the interpreter. Whether or not this was a reflection on the ability of the interpreter, or the particular language variety that the interpreter used, or the intelligence of his wife, was not established. In any case, it was

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[117] The importance of ringing to confirm interviews was highlighted here as I thus managed to get her new address before she moved. On the other hand, a Chinese respondent I had rung up to confirm an interview appeared irritated as it appeared as though she was not to be trusted.

[118] The gap between first and second interviews for another household was even greater, that is, four months. Firstly there was a problem with booking the interpreter. The visit to the household still proved useful as I could still speak to the husband about various aspects of his life in Bangladesh that had not been covered at his interview. Secondly, at the next appointment, the husband had to cancel the interview because his brother was getting married and elaborate arrangements were being made, as well as visitors staying at the house. To make amends, we were both promised an invitation to the wedding but did not receive it. When the time came for the third appointment, his wife was visiting relatives in London. Finally, the interview with his wife took place about four months after the first interview in the household, and even then, the arrival of visitors meant that it ended rather abruptly.

[119] From my experience, Bangladeshi families are very hospitable and even if the interviewee were not available, one would be invited in for a cup of tea. This points to the advantages of multiple interviews in the same household, but also to the usefulness of having an interpreter who was known to the family.

all taken in good humour and the interview proceeded with the wife answering very minimally, and the husband always volunteering the answers, until which time he was called away by a telephone call, and the wife then began to exercise a bit more freedom in her answers.

The same effect of an observer in the interview situation presented itself when I interviewed a 14-year-old boy. His mother settled herself on the sofa opposite us, and happily interjected whenever she felt she could during the first part of the interview, until I requested as politely as I was able, for her to leave. There was a marked difference in the flow of the interview afterward as he was no longer looking towards mum for affirmation. In previous interviews with children, mothers would observe unobtrusively and then go away quietly, as if to make sure that things were going well, and that if needed, they were on hand. This posed no difficulty, but for this case, I had to make the request for her to leave.

Complexities: Transparency in the research process

Interpreters

Mayall (1991) questions the category of workers known as 'interpreters' who are temporary employees 'paid only to do interviews, and perceived as having no other valid contribution to make to the project'. Instead she proposes that there should be bilingual workers with academic qualifications who should work with the principal investigators as a team, 'contributing to the thinking, design, method and analysis, throughout the duration of the project' (*ibid*. p559). In this project, there was money available to fund interpreters as I needed them, but essentially, most PhD research is the responsibility of a single person. The advantage of one researcher is that it allows consistency in the use of concepts and in the evaluation of data. However, as the questionnaire schedule was applied to them,[120] I could take the views of my interpreters into account, and there was a further opportunity for feedback when the

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[120] See page 81 for the pilot interviews with interpreters.

findings were presented to them in a meeting. This was important as they are part of the community together with those who were interviewed.

Advice about working with interpreters includes the fact that as professionals or key individuals within the community, they are usually identified with a particular organisation or group faction, which may have consequences for the research (Edwards 1998). Interpreters from outside the community on the other hand need to have their credibility established. In the case of the Chinese community, the interpreters whom I recruited were closely associated with the popular community group from which I drew many of my contacts.[121] The Bangladeshi interpreter and the Chinese interpreters were all mothers of school-aged children, and so were well-placed to be working with parents and grandparents in their respective communities.[122] Interpreter-interviewee match in terms of social characteristics is based on the assumption that communication is better with a better match. In my research there was some correspondence in terms of ethnicity, marital and parental status, and age. In the case of the Bangladeshi community, Islam as a religion is all-embracing so it was also important that the interpreter was a Muslim. In terms of language, symmetrical bilingualism[123] is difficult to achieve (Chiu and Knight 1999) but there was a close enough match in most cases.

Edwards (1998) argues for interpreters to be made more 'visible' in the research process, so that researcher 'reflexivity' should also extend to them. It is with this in mind that I give brief sketches of the interpreters I have used and assess their social locations to analyse the possible impact that these would have on the construction of interview accounts. Interviewing with the help of interpreters is, moreover, a three-way process which I will illustrate as being a complex and dynamic communicative act. In terms of my own preferences, I would have liked to interview the respondents without a third person. It makes for a more direct form of social interaction and avoids

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[121] In Chapter Four, I refer to the community as having divisions within it, but as my initial fieldwork brought me to visit various sectors of the community to recruit participants, there were no complaints as such that I was giving any preference to a particular section of the community.

[122] Miller (1994) found that her young unmarried interpreter and the women whom she was interpreting for felt embarrassed about the issues of pregnancy and childbirth that were being discussed.

[123] Inter and intra-language differences among minority languages such as those that are a result of the rural-urban divide are often overlooked, and often a linguistic correspondence between interviewer and interviewee is difficult to achieve.

interpreter 'editing'. A lot depended on the quality of the interpretation. My limited grasp of the languages concerned gave me an awareness that there was something 'lost in translation'. Interpreters might shorten or summarise longer lengths of discourse, which had repetitions and reformulations resulting in certain emphases of meaning that are lost when summarised in a convenient word or phrase. Interpretation also can affect the flow of a discourse.

Chinese Interpreter 1

Initially, I recruited an interpreter who was an acquaintance from my previous work in the community. She was active in community work and although was not registered as an interpreter with the Newcastle Interpreting Service, had done interpreting before. Unfortunately, at the focus group discussion where she was interpreting, I discovered that her command of English was not as competent as I had expected. Other problems encountered in conducting focus groups with minority ethnic groups using bilingual moderators include more matter-of-fact and prosaic responses from participants, and emotions and feelings being edited out in the process of interpretation (Chiu and Knight 1999). The solution to this problem was partly found in that we worked on the recording at a separate session wherein she had more time to interpret the responses of the participants. Because of interference and the distance of individuals from the microphone, as well as the size of the group, which made for smaller side discussions occurring, some data was omitted. However, because she was a participant in the group, she could recall most of the discussion, which was recorded separately in the second session.

Chinese Interpreter 2

My second interpreter was recruited mainly because of her contact with one of the families concerned. As an interpreter working in a hospital and a personal friend of the family, she introduced me to the household members and interpreted for three of them. The grandmother who was interviewed was very suspicious in the beginning, questioning why it was that I had to interview everyone in the household, when she was the one who knew all about childcare. She was insisting that it was not necessary to interview the others and it was only through the artful persuasion of the interpreter

and her good relationship with all the members of the family that I was able to complete this case study. On the other hand, because she knew the family so well, the interpreter sometimes offered her own opinions about the family on topics in the interview. These had to be assessed carefully and through some negotiation in the discourse, I was able to get at the responses of participants themselves. Yet, participants can exert their agency too as in the interview with the grandmother who had some knowledge of English, she 'bypassed' the interpreter to emphasise her point to me in simple English.

Chinese Interpreter 3

Interpreter 3 was recruited because of the good relationship that she had with an interviewee who needed an interpreter. She worked for the Interpreting Service but was also able to speak Hakka, which was the preferred language of the interviewee. In fact, they both spoke a mix of Hakka and Cantonese, which were very much their 'heart' languages. The very positive effect of both Interpreters 2 and 3 was that they made their interviewees very comfortable. The power dynamics of the interview were clearly different: in the case of Interpreter 2, I felt a little intimidated by her strong personality and her knowledge of the family, but in the case of Interpreter 3, I was very comfortable. This was because the interpreter reserved her opinions to herself and the interviewee was previously an acquaintance of mine.

Interpreter 3 interpreted for a grandmother in another household as well as worked with me on tapes that I had of interviews with other respondents. In these interviews, there were no interpreters and the English used was halting at times. For certain sections of the interview where the respondents found it difficult expressing themselves, I encouraged them to speak in Cantonese, which I had some understanding of. Interpreter 3 then clarified or corrected my understanding of some of these sections of the tapes.

The dynamics of the origins of the three interpreters would also make a fascinating study as one was from Hong Kong, another was from Malaysia and the third from China.[124]

The Bangladeshi Interpreter

The Newcastle Interpreting Service provided me with an interpreter who was very fluent in English as she had been brought up in Britain, and fluent in Sylheti as well. She is married and has two children, which was an asset when speaking to the parents about issues to do with children and parenting. Her only drawback was that she was not fluent in Bengali or *Bangla*, which one of the respondents had used in her interview. In the case of this particular mother, who is a graduate from Bangladesh, the interview was conducted without an interpreter. When I discovered that she was not able to express herself very well, I gave her the option of speaking in Bengali. I explained that I could get the interview interpreted later on by the interpreter. When this was attempted, the interpreter found that she was unable to comprehend some of the terms that the mother had used, so I had to request the help of my former Sylheti teacher who knew *Bangla*, to help me in the interpretation of sections of the tape. Apart from this, the interpreter who assisted me consistently through the research in the Bangladeshi community, was both articulate and very well accepted among the households she worked with. She was also able to facilitate the focus group discussion with skill and interpret with ease and speed the various comments from the participants. Altogether, she interpreted in five interviews in three different households.

The focus group and other interviews

The Chinese focus group was useful in allowing questions and themes that were thrown up in the course of the discussion to be incorporated in the questionnaire

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[124] The Malaysian interpreter was not able to read Chinese although she was fluent in English, Hakka and Cantonese. Some vocabulary in the Cantonese spoken here was also unknown to her. The Mainland Chinese was literate and fluent in Mandarin and Cantonese, but her English pronunciation and vocabulary tended to be limited. The interpreter from Hong Kong was very familiar with the variety of Cantonese spoken here and was able to do written translations from English to Chinese. Her English though more halting than the others, had a good vocabulary.

schedule, so making it more relevant. Some initial reactions for example were that formal childcare issues really had nothing to do with Chinese as it was only an issue for the white community. This led the focus to shift to include all forms of childcare. There was also the assumption that it was the mother who knows everything that was needed to know about childcare. These viewpoints had to be 'tested' against the household data I would be collecting. In the case of the Bangladeshi research, the focus group, which was meant to be carried out before the household research in order to inform it, could only be organised towards the end of the fieldwork.[125] Both focus groups provide contextual information to complement the household research[126] but the aim of the Bangladeshi focus group was also to provide comparative data with the Chinese focus group. Each focus group was made up of members of an existing women's group within each of the communities. Thus there was no attempt at recruiting new members, which made it possible to maximise the openness and flow of conversation in response to the questions.[127] The setting up of the interview was also facilitated by the gatekeepers that I had made contact with. As focus groups were not the main research instrument and because of their aims, the need for a fully representative sample was not a pressing need. In any case, each focus group was made up of a range of women, both parents and grandparents.

I was naturally apprehensive having to conduct a focus group for the very first time and it was compounded by the problems of it having to be interpreted.[128] In order that I would not be too much of an outsider coming in, I spent some time in participant observation at the Chinese Health Club. This included a fair amount of performing *tai chi*, which was a welcome change to sitting and observing. A Chinese elderly group met before the health group and the key worker had assured me that it would not be a problem to get members together in the seated reception area to talk in a group. However when I arrived, that 'area' was in use, so we had to use the meeting room,

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[125] This was because the community worker who was to set it up was on sick leave. When she returned, there was the problem of finding a suitable venue that was registered for a crèche. The venue that she had used previously for her women's group had recently been converted into a community nursery, which had undergone some reorganisation and did not as yet have insurance for a crèche to be held in the community room. After some delay, a mobile crèche was contacted, and the focus group was conducted.

[126] See page 65 on complementary methods

[127] Homogeneous groups are advantageous in that communication is facilitated, promoting the exchange of ideas and experiences in a 'safe' context (Robson 2002).

[128] See Chiu and Knight (1999) for the problems of using interpreters in focus groups

which was also used for the health group later on. There was a delay, and as a result, the focus group that was supposed to be for the elderly grew to include those from the health club and the discussion became unwieldy because of the size of the group and the fact that smaller discussions on the side had started up. Thus familiarity worked against the smooth running of the discussion when the size went beyond eight.[129] Fortunately, a recording was being done so most of the data would be picked up and could be interpreted at a later stage, as indicated above. Many of them had strong views on the different subjects and were very keen to share their views. This focus group was a useful launching pad for the rest of my research.[130]

The Bangladeshi focus group worked better than the Chinese focus group because there were not as many women. In addition, the interpreter was more assertive and had a stronger voice to facilitate and manage the discussion. Two or three main women who were the oldest in the group dominated the meeting and although I did ask for responses from the others who had not yet spoken, only one or two were willing to speak up.[131] As in the Chinese focus group, the interview was taped and transcribed. From these two focus groups, I found that the interpreter was a key person for the group to work, and that group dynamics differ with the size of the group. As in other research situations, one has to be prepared for unforeseen circumstances, and technical equipment can be an essential aide.

Other data collected that included meetings with key workers in the Chinese community were not taped as they were more for introductory purposes than data collection (for questions, see Appendix 8). Field notes were taken on salient points during the meetings, which were then kept for reference. In one case where I specially

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[129] There is some debate about the optimum size of a focus group, some putting the figure at between 8 and 12 (Robson 2002:284-289).

[130] When I attempted to conduct a youth focus group, there were mitigating circumstances that prevented it happening. The Chinese Youth Forum where I was hopeful of conducting the focus group underwent complete reorganisation because there was a dispute about the management of the group. One key worker resigned and its meetings were reduced to sports events, and as a result it was difficult to find a venue for the research to be conducted. I explored other possibilities such as the young people who attended the Chinese Church English Service as well as the older children of a Mandarin class. The church members were mostly young adults, and the children at the Mandarin class except for one, were all from Mainland China. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, a youth focus group could not be conducted.

[131] Miller (1994) also experienced this domination by older Bangladeshi women and describes a process of "self-muting" in which the most powerful in the group were dictating to the other women how the interview should progress.

requested for a time to interview the worker, he granted a twenty-minute interview in his busy schedule, which I was very grateful for. Field notes were also taken of informal meetings with community workers for their insights into the life of the community that would later inform my interpretation of the household data, and serve as a backdrop to the tapestry of human lives. Meetings with key workers in the Bangladeshi community were with a community worker and an employment adviser. These were taped and notes were similarly made of these meetings.

More learning points: settings and observations

Except for four members of one household,[132] all the interviews took place in the homes of the families. This was important as they would be in their own natural setting and in their 'territory' as it were, which is advantageous (Daly 1992:5). The choice of home as research setting also depends on the aims of the research (Mayall 2000:131). In this case, being at home with members of the family gave me an insight into the dynamics of family life as well as the social status and environment in which the household is placed, thus providing valuable data that could be used for cross referencing with the interview transcripts. The home as a setting worked well with children as a safe and familiar place. One could also move round the room with the child and utilise items (e.g. books, toys) to stimulate conversation (Mayall 2000). While waiting in some Bangladeshi homes, one was aware of the television being switched on and the programmes that household members watched. Particularly interesting were those programmes from Bangladesh, which I could use to break the ice. There were sometimes visitors to the household, which although could be disruptive, threw light on the social networks of the families. This happened in the Bangladeshi families rather than the Chinese families.

The timing of the interview is also of some importance. In all the interviews with fathers conducted in the morning,[133] they had woken up after late night working and were looking after their young sons. This gave me an insight into their caring abilities.

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[132] The four members of one family were interviewed almost entirely at a sports hall, which was not the most ideal of settings but the place that was chosen by the mother. When the noise level grew too high, one interview was conducted outside the building on a bench.
[133] Of these fathers, one was Chinese and two were Bangladeshi.

Then there were fathers whom I interviewed when they had just come in from work. Some were more relaxed than others. Sat at a dinner table, one young Chinese father who I was interviewing was rather nervous about being interviewed. In another setting, I was led into a large sparsely furnished reception room and when the father arrived in his business suit, it was clear that the power relations in this context were rather different to the others.[134] In conducting the interview, I also found it advantageous to be at the same eye level as your interviewee, whether a child or adult (Holmes 1998:18).[135]

In other cases, there are examples of the good rapport that I had built up. Possibly because I had taken a more informal interactive style, one couple began telling me their problems with the health service here in the U.K., and at the end of the interview before I left, the husband very kindly offered me a small paw-paw as well as a lift in his car. In another case, I was offered a simple lunch. In most cases, the influence of the tape recorder was not too off-putting, possibly because of the familiar setting of the home. To some of the younger children, it was a novelty to them, and they were rather thrilled that they were being recorded. Only one father was a bit anxious about being taped. This Bangladeshi was rather reserved in his answers but was more communicative after the tape recorder had been switched off. He was quite happy to answer me when I enquired about documents left on the coffee table, which led to him telling me more about his past business experiences and future plans.

Observations about the neighbourhood were also useful in the course of the interview in that one could bring up conversational topics that could be used to break down barriers or throw light on the material in the interview proper. As a researcher, I was

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[134] This was reflected in the fact that he was able to query some of the questions that I put to him and I found myself on the defensive. I also allowed the topic to stray because he was in a position to shed quite a lot of light on the Chinese community because of his previous work and contacts. This interview was similar in a way to another that I had with a Bangladeshi man. He felt quite comfortable at that time in the evening after coming in from work to reflect quite extensively on his experiences with racism and British society. One had to be aware of the very personal nature of their comments and not to generalise too much from their accounts. There was a sense in which they were asserting themselves as men who were authorities within their communities.

[135] A physical example of this was when one of my Chinese respondents, instead of sitting on the settee next to me, decided to make himself comfortable on the carpet, where he could also play with his young son more easily. I therefore took the cue to sit on the carpet too and made myself comfortable there. The interview was one of the most successful ones in that it lasted about two hours.

sometimes left waiting outside houses.[136] For example, while waiting for one Bangladeshi father to complete his gardening, I observed that there was a sign on the gate that said 'no cut-through' and was able to ask him about problems in the neighbourhood.[137] In another instance, I arrived earlier than expected and decided to take a stroll further up the street where I observed a police car pulling up outside a tavern. When probed, the interviewee later explained about neighbourhood disturbances.

Data analysis and comparison

There were 28 interviews with Chinese participants and 25 with Bangladeshi participants, some in groups. All the tapes were fully transcribed and were of varying lengths. In some small sections of the transcripts, interpreters listened to the tapes to clarify unfamiliar language (see example in page 91). The software package NUD*IST (QSR N4 and N5) for qualitative data analysis was employed to index and manage the transcripts. Altogether a total of 59 categories were generated from the data (see Appendix 9), partly guided by the themes according to which the questions in the interview were framed, and partly by first manually coding three interviews. The development of categories is in itself a qualitative endeavour (Kvale 1996:206), which can significantly contribute to knowledge and data interpretation. Marshall (1999) encourages the process of critically challenging the emerging patterns that seem apparent to the researcher, and exploring alternative explanations for linkages. By experimenting with various linkages, connecting and disconnecting nodes in the NUD*IST 'tree', and developing larger categories (such as 'Lifestyle') to encompass smaller categories (such as 'safety'), a network of nodes was built up. Some categories were developed from the literature on race and ethnicity (e.g. 'Transnationalism and Belonging') while others were more pragmatic categories such as 'parental preferences'.

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[136] Once after waiting for about twenty minutes, some household members returned only to say that the interviewee was called away at the last minute for work.
[137] I had also observed that there was a vacant green area opposite the house and when asked if the children played there, was told that there were problems with white youth loitering there and dog dirt.

Ragin and Hein (Ragin and Hein 1993:254) argue that 'because ethnicity is much more socially constructed and situated than most other forms of social inequality, (e.g., social class), the diversity of ethnic situations is extreme, so much so that each ethnic situation may appear to be unique and unparalleled.' However, although the two-case comparative study of ethnicity can be highly complicated because of its contextual and interactive nature, and thus limited in its ability to test causal theories, they believe that it can still be 'a rich arena for developing and elaborating concepts and ideal types, and for carrying on a rich and constructive dialogue between ideas and practice' (Ragin and Hein 1993:272). With this in mind, these eight case studies of the Chinese community will be compared with the seven from the Bangladeshi community in the hope that understandings about the two communities will be further sharpened as a result. The data presentation will take the form of an 'illustrative' style (May 2001:196), in which examples from the data are chosen according to their ability to illustrate the broader themes that are being discussed. In explaining this process of systematic data interpretation, it can be seen that the themes and categories are linked, with some categories having more prominence than others depending on the community under discussion and the amount of material collected under the different categories.

> it has been commonplace for scholars, particularly scholars of color, to be criticized for conducting studies with no comparative white samples of populations. The subtle evolutionary presumptions underlying such criticism are more than apparent: People of color in many social science circles are not relevant enough to stand on their own two feet in analysis; unless they are compared with whites, they have no value in important social science circles. (Stanfield II 1993:27)

It is often the case that research among minority ethnic participants either gets 'pigeon-holed' as being too specialised to be of any significance to the dominant majority, or gets highlighted because the minority group in question presents a social problem. Research on a single ethnic group whether minority or majority is valuable for its own sake, but epistemological and socio-political processes have a part to play. Like Stanfield II (1993) I would argue that there are lessons for the majority population that can be gleaned from minority communities. Likewise, comparative research is of particular value in multi-ethnic Britain whether or not it is with the white majority, mainly because of the paucity of such research. However, the

complexities of translating one cultural concept from one cultural context to another and relating observations and interpretations to the Western framework of understanding cannot be ignored or underestimated (Øyen 1990). Even as someone of Chinese ethnicity, I had to assume the role of a researcher to get to the details of the workings of a Chinese takeaway for example, which led to assumptions of my ignorance by one of the Chinese interpreters:

> Interpreter: Yeah the same people come to the shop to help
>
> Researcher: Right, okay, oh, so these people weren't working elsewhere or they have their own his, business but they
>
> Interpreter: No not these people, this, her mother-in-law,
>
> Researcher: This mother-in-law
>
> Interpreter: Yeah, and her sister-in-law's elder son
>
> Researcher: Who is how old, how old was he
>
> Interpreter: 17 or 16, oh might be 15 at that moment (laugh)
>
> Researcher: Okay, right, so he was at school then
>
> Interpreter: Yeah
>
> Researcher: Right, okay
>
> Interpreter: So you see, sometimes you you not really understand the Chinese people how they working

Household income was a problematic concept for example:

> Researcher: but er I'm, can you tell me how much money comes into the house, you can choose between um, monthly and weekly, this is just, not er talking about profits or anything, but how much money the house uses you know, the household, roughly
>
> Mr Lee: Ooooh
>
> Researcher: Roughly
>
> Mr Lee: Haven't got a clue, yeah, because like um, cos we all like we all just working differently so I don't know like um ………yeah, like no in in our family like we we don't talk about money because we just whoever like, have the free money we pay it, maybe like we don't like, we not like say, oh you have to pay the tax pay that pay that, no

This to some was taboo and a subject for self-censorship, if one understands the place of the grey or shadow economy in the historical, socio-economic and political context of racial discrimination in Britain:

> Researcher: No, um can you have a look at this and tell me, would you be able to tell me, about household income, your household income how much money comes into the house
>
> Mr Ferdousi: why you asking these things
>
> Researcher: so I could compare with other families where roughly the same sort of
>
> Mr Ferdousi: just er, roughly sort of things is come from
>
> Researcher: So, can you, like (….)
>
> Mr Ferdousi: no, no, you return I don't like this

It needs to be acknowledged that two-case comparisons especially those of ethnicity are limited in their ability to make generalisations because of the involvement of complex phenomena so dependent on context. However, its analytical value is in the way concepts and conceptual relationships may be developed, explained and elaborated.

Conclusion

Although I started out in my research endeavour not claiming to be a feminist, I have discovered how feminist research methods are most appropriate for research on minority ethnic households.[138] While at the same time acknowledging that feminist methodology is not without its problems (Oakley 1998), I would like to show that the

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[138] Feminist methodology is characterised by a critique of rational, detached and value-free research. It looks at the researcher and researched as parts of a social 'whole' in the research process, and therefore the location of self by the researcher is a key element. Women's lives have to be addressed on their own terms and a feminist inquiry is an instrument to improve women's situations (Edwards 1993). K-K Bhavnani (1994a) includes other criteria in the defining of a feminist methodology: the researcher should not reproduce the researched in ways in which they are represented in the dominant community; the writing-up of the research should make reference to the micro-political nature of the research i.e. the relationships of domination and subordination negotiated in the research. Also, questions of difference need to be dealt with in the design, write-up and dissemination of the research.

criteria for a feminist methodology have been fulfilled in the research I have undertaken. Because of the importance of reflexivity and the locating of the researcher in the research in feminist methodology, I have gone into detail in reflecting on those questions of difference that may or may not impact on the research process. In seeking to address each community in its own terms, I have opted for a qualitative in-depth method of interviewing individual household members. A feminist methodology would also look to improving the lives of women. With the collaboration of the Newcastle EYDCP, the aim of the research is to address the childcare needs of these communities with the hope of improving their situation.

In seeking to question the dominant stereotypes and views about Chinese and Bangladeshis in Britain, I have sampled a good range of households to bring out the diversity within these communities. I have also referred in this chapter to aspects of power relations, within households between the various members, within the community as well as with having to collaborate with a CASE partner. Because of my feelings of accountability to the Chinese and Bangladeshi communities, I have made the reports I have written to the Partnership available to key workers and contacts in the community, and most of the feedback have been favourable. The national conference that launched the findings of the research in June 2003 demonstrated a certain amount of 'micro-politics' in that a certain lack of interest was detected from the new Sure Start Unit and the Daycare Trust, who were invited to participate but declined. Perhaps the issues of childcare in minority ethnic households were not high enough on their agenda, or a trip to the North East was too arduous or there could have been more legitimate reasons. In the descriptive, analytical and comparative chapters that follow, I look not only at difference, but commonalities as well as power relations within the complex social matrix of migration history, gender, class and race.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE CHINESE COMMUNITY IN BRITAIN

Introduction

The word 'community' is not without its problems because it implies shared group characteristics and a degree of cohesion, which is often not the case among the Chinese population in Britain (Li 1994). One reason is because the 'community' is far from homogeneous. In order to appreciate the diversity of this community, I will give an account of the migration and settlement of the Chinese in Britain from their various origins. These sending countries include most significantly Hong Kong, but also China, Malaysia and Vietnam. There are also new forms of migration that will have an impact on the identities of the Chinese people in these isles. Another possible problem with the use of the word 'community' is that the Chinese population is one of the most widely dispersed of ethnic minority groups[139] (Owen *et al.* 2000), with approximately half living outside metropolitan areas. The South East, including Greater London, has the highest concentration and the North West, including Greater Manchester and Merseyside, has the second largest concentration of Chinese. The importance of migration history, immigration policies and settlement patterns in the lives of the Chinese people therefore cannot be overlooked as community formation does not occur in isolation from the rest of society. Indeed, it also takes place in the crucible of an institutionally racist British society (Kundnani 2002; Macpherson of Cluny 1999; Yuval-Davis 1999).

Because childcare is closely linked to labour force participation, we will be examining the employment patterns of the Chinese. According to the 4th PSI Survey, the Chinese have the lowest rate of unemployment of any ethnic group mostly because they have among the highest rates of self-employment.[140] Chinese women are also twice as likely to be among professionals, managers and employers as white women (Modood 1997c). However, once family size has been taken into account, more Chinese than

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[139] Some geographers would disagree that the Chinese are as dispersed as others make them out to be, based on calculations from a dissimilarity index which measures segregation (Bailey *et al.* 1994).
[140] The latest figures from the LFS 2000/2001 for Chinese self-employment was 19 per cent (National Statistics Online 2004).

white households are in poverty and their incomes are more sensitive to local unemployment rates than those of white people (Berthoud 1998). In addition, they have a low rate of home-ownership with many living in poor quality rented accommodation (Lakey 1997).[141] It is thus a 'community' geographically apart with a wide polarisation between those who are affluent and middle-class and those who are in poverty.[142]

Another area of exploration in this chapter is the participation of Chinese in education and training. It has been suggested that for Chinese and Indians, the reason for their success in overcoming disadvantage is their strong drive for educational qualifications (Leslie *et al.* 1998; Modood *et al.* 1997). In conjunction with this, we will also look at Chinese children's education and social needs within the predominant norms and values of the 'community'. The structuring forces of the typical Chinese family are shown to be essentially patriarchal and hierarchical. These are translated into the everyday lives of Chinese families, and onto the values placed on education and livelihood, on family self-sufficiency and orderly relationships. But with the second and third generations of migrants, a cultural shift most evident in language use is taking place, with forms of childcare playing a role. As a link to the following chapter, we will take a closer look at Newcastle upon Tyne, where the local authority and community and business organisations are working to improve the situation of the Chinese 'community'.

Migration and settlement of Chinese communities in Britain

Chinese people have been in Britain as far back as the 18th century (Taylor 1987) when links between China and Europe were developing. Most writers describing the migration of Chinese to the United Kingdom (Li 1994; Taylor 1987; House of Commons 1984-85) have identified three main stages in Chinese migration to Britain,

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[141] It has been claimed that many Chinese are 'outright owners' who do not use the services of estate agencies and building societies, so the numbers of Chinese home-owners are likely to be underestimated in statistics provided for example by the Census (Bailey *et al.* 1994).

[142] The extent of poverty was more serious for Chinese (28%) than white, Caribbean and Indian households, though there were also more well-off households than in other groups. Prosperous Chinese and Indians were more likely to found in areas of economic success and low minority concentrations (Berthoud 1998).

namely, pre-World War II, post-war and reinforcement. Pre-war migration consisted of two very divergent groups: seamen on European freighters, and members of the Chinese aristocracy seeking education. By the mid 19th century (Visram 2002), a few thousand Chinese seamen were coming to the U.K. every year, employed by the British Empire because of expanding trade with China after the two Opium Wars (1832-40 and 1858-60). The first communities of Chinese developed in London, Liverpool and Cardiff, mainly through Chinese boarding-house keepers who often acted as crew contractors. In the early 20th century, Chinese seamen faced opposition from their British counterparts because of their growing numbers and unwillingness to participate in strike action. Chinese seamen then found another economic niche as laundrymen with a smaller number as restaurateurs.[143] It has been suggested that the seamen's experience of racial conflict has continued to influence the type of occupations that Chinese have hitherto engaged in (Taylor 1987). In the inter-war years, the dispersal of the Chinese population from the docklands and inter-marriage with non-Chinese women meant that the Chinese were not able to form a cohesive social group (Li 1994).

The migration of the Chinese in the latter half of the 20th century was a result of different push and pull factors. Numbers of Chinese built up more rapidly after World War II with post-war migrants arriving partly as a result of push factors in China and Hong Kong. The communist take-over increased migration from China into the New Territories in Hong Kong. Together with a decline in agriculture and shortage of arable land coupled with competition in international rice markets (Li 1994), this meant that it was difficult for agricultural workers to make a living.[144] The economic boom in Britain in the late 1950s and early 60s constituted a pull factor for these Chinese (Shang 1984), and many young single men took advantage of the British Nationality Act of 1948, which gave them right of abode. They were assisted by lineage and other kinship or village links with men from the first wave of migration (Shang 1984). Wong (1992) points out rightly that it was economic necessity that

[143] Little has been written about the Chinese laundry business, but in the 1920s and 30s, there was a slump in shipping and an economic recession (Shang 1984), which also led to alternatives being sought by the Chinese. Chinese cultural values fitted in with family-based self-employment and their work ethic of diligence suited the hard menial work required by the laundry.
[144] See Wong (1992) for a fuller account of the political and economic conditions of the Chinese in the New Territories of Hong Kong.

made these young men leave, with many sending large remittances back and intending ultimately to return.[145] The 1950s marked the collapse of the laundry business because of mechanization, and the gradual establishment of the restaurant trade because of greater affluence and the changes in the dietary habits of the British public (Verma *et al.* 1999; Li 1994). Once settled in the catering business, these male immigrants sent for their wives and children.

The Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 which abolished the right of entry into U.K. of British colony citizens served to produce an increase in immigration before the Act came into effect. In addition, Chinese workers took advantage of the employment voucher system introduced by the Act, in particular category A vouchers which allowed entry for workers who had specific jobs to come to (Wong 1992). Migration was facilitated through the network of family members in the U.K. who arranged travel documents, work permits, and travel expenses and accommodation as advances of wages. But because of the importance of existing networks, immigration tended to be restricted to those villages from which earlier immigrants had come (Taylor 1987). Under the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1968, entry of children under the age of 16 required that their mothers be sent for as well. This led to an increase in the number of dependents and family reunions. Li (1994) observes that immigration laws which were designed to restrict the inflow of migrants, in practice delayed the returning home of first generation migrants who supported the immigration of family members.

During a period of 'reinforcement', push factors of the Cultural Revolution of 1966-76 led to urban professionals in China leaving for political reasons, and gave added impetus to family reunions in the U.K. For those who were in the catering trade, both parents would be working full-time,[146] leading to problems with the care and upbringing of children, particularly those who were not of school age. Children were sent back to Hong Kong for a number of years to be looked after by relatives. Under the Immigration Act of 1972, women and children lost the right to join their husbands

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[145] Remittances were estimated to be around £20-£30 per month in 1970-71 (Watson 1977b).
[146] In the 1960s and 70s, women who were not working in the catering trade would be involved in home-working in the rag trade (Shang 1984).

and fathers living in Britain, and this once more resulted in a 'beat the ban' inflow before the Act came into effect.

This immigration of family members coincided with the emergence of the 'takeaway' ('carry-out' in Scotland). As with the earlier reliance on laundries, there was strong competitive pressure with the arrival of global fast-food chains (Baxter and Raw 1988). The number of restaurants reached saturation point in many cities. Many of these small-scale takeaways were set up by nuclear families relying on family labour. Like family labour in British businesses, family labour in Chinese catering establishments is not wage-earning in a formal sense but comprises work for profit and therefore productive market work.[147] The work of family members is characterised by the lack of fixed hours, contractual agreement and payment of taxes, and thus resembles domestic work in many respects. This can result in a competitive and flexible economic unit typified by loyalty and commitment. Among Chinese households however, it can also involve the exploitation of more vulnerable members of the family, notably women (Baxter and Raw 1988) and children (Song 1997a).[148] In spite of this, such self-employment is preferred to having waged work because it is more profitable and offers a greater sense of control and autonomy (Song 1995). Unlike Euro-British family labour, this form of labour is situated in a 'racialized work niche' (Song 1997a:695) in the ethnic [*sic*] catering industry.

Li (1994) summarises the reasons for the majority of Chinese people being in catering businesses as firstly the employment restrictions that they face, as well as the negative consequences of appearing too competitive in British society.[149] In addition, family-based businesses that are founded on traditional values of loyalty and commitment suit well the purposes of economic survival and independence. Li also highlights the fact the majority of the immigrant Chinese population do not have the necessary

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[147] 'Family labour is productive market work in that the goods and services produced by the family business are traded in the cash economy. The constant emphasis on it being *unpaid* in the sense of not wage-earning is irrelevant. Family labour is work for profit rather than for pay, as few are paid a regular wage. However family labour has none of the other characteristics of market work'(Hakim 1996:35).
[148] With the white community, self-employment can allow a personalised life-style with a sense of creativity and dignity (Wheelock 1992), but much of the unpaid work burden also falls on women (Baines *et al.* 2003).
[149] This brings to mind the Chinese seamen confronted by their British counterparts for refusing to participate in strike action (see page 110).

language skills, education and training in order to compete with the indigenous population. They have therefore capitalised instead on their diligence, family values and traditional love of cuisine, which coincided well with the increased affluence and change in the dietary habits of the British public. What has not been expounded in his account however, is the ethnicised and racialised context of the development of these family-based businesses, as well as their capacity for self and family exploitation. The development of minority ethnic catering businesses can be seen as a mechanism for the survival and success of community livelihoods in the context of their marginalisation within the wider society (Song 1997a), as well as a solution to identity and language maintenance for the second generation.[150] In addition, there is the 'entrepreneurial ethic' (Basu 1991) under-pinning their economic behaviour, which will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

In comparing the laundry business with takeaways, it can be observed that both require only a small capital outlay and offer independence, but are labour intensive. An important advantage was also that these businesses were not competing with the indigenous population for jobs or capital. The demand for Chinese labour in the expanding catering sector also drew on those who were China-born but from Hong Kong and who were not subject to the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act.[151] They and other later migrants provided the labour needed in the restaurants that were a result of staff leaving to set up their own takeaway businesses.[152] An added element was the closure of many traditional fish and chip shops in the 1970s due to competition. Many of these were taken over by Chinese families, because of the demand for increased culinary choice. An important result of this increase in the number of takeaways has been the dispersal of Chinese families from towns to villages, to escape business rivalry. This geographical dispersal is partly to blame for the 'invisibility' or low profile of the Chinese in Britain (Chau and Yu 2001; Verma *et al.* 1999).

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[150] Basu suggests that the reliance on family labour may reflect group's attempt either to strengthen bonds within their own community or to remain insulated from the host community (Basu and Altinay 2002:376). In the case of the Chinese, there is some support in my fieldwork regarding insulation.
[151] By 1973 the loophole allowing Chinese 'aliens' to enter as a separate category was closed and all labourers from HK are now admitted under the same work permit scheme. Approximately 10,000 'stateless' Chinese found employment in Britain between 1963 and 1973 (Shang 1984; Watson 1977b:188).
[152] This was related to me by a key worker and supported by accounts from research participants.

Finally, three important political events have contributed to refugees of Chinese origin arriving on British shores. Firstly, the Communist victory in Vietnam in 1975 and the start of anti-Chinese policies in 1977 led to over 16,000 Vietnamese refugees[153] being resettled in Britain (Shang 1984). Secondly, there was the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, which led to the British government offering asylum or long-term residence extensions to those affected by these events (Chan and Chan 1997). Most recently, in 1997, Hong Kong was absorbed as a special administrative region within the People's Republic of China. In preparation for this, the 1990 British Nationality Act (Hong Kong) was passed in which the British government guaranteed that 50,000 Hong Kong households would be permitted to enter Britain, but up to 2003 only some 4,345 availed themselves of this opportunity (Dudley and Woollacott 2004:6).

New forms of migration and social divisions

Salaff and Wong (1997) have categorised the more recent migrants leaving Hong Kong according to their political experiences, their social networks and family economies, while also classifying them according to their occupational groups, i.e. affluent, petty bourgeois, lower middle and working-class. The diversity of social groups in the Chinese community in the U.K. is increasing along these dimensions and is further complicated by bilingualism, biculturalism, religion and the experience of racism. In addition to this, the polarisation between the young Chinese professionals and those in the catering industry was predicted to be exacerbated by the arrival of the post 1990 British Nationality Act Hong Kong Chinese migrants, who are highly skilled and who have little association with the British Chinese in catering (Pang 1993).[154] Increasingly, 'host' communities in the U.K. will also have to reckon

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[153] Wang Gungwu (2001) has estimated that there were 1 400 000 ethnic Chinese in Vietnam in 1977 but notes the difficulties in being sure about numbers because few countries outside China register the ethnic origins of their citizens. The majority of the Chinese in Vietnam are Cantonese or originate from the province of Canton.

[154] Man (1995) for example also describes the experience of middle-class Chinese women in Canada and how their lives have had to be modified because of the institutional processes at work in the host society, describing for instance the difficulties for these women in finding employment. This is similar to the 'systemic barriers' faced by immigrant Chinese professionals in Toronto, Canada, leading to downward occupational mobility in their new country of residence (Li Zong 2003).

with the emergence of a new form of diasporic family, the principal characteristic of which is their professional or managerial status with a high rate of return to the homeland while leaving family behind in the destination country. Popularly, they are known as 'astronaut' families and their children 'parachute kids' (Hardill and Watson 2004; Skeldon 1997; Gerstel and Cross 1884). This is a reverse phenomenon to that of the earlier economic migrants who sent their children back to Hong Kong.

> the analyst may well be witnessing the emergence of a new form of physically, as well as functionally, extended family, a "diasporic family", that discharges its familial functions globally, across political boundaries. Its maintenance is not without its tensions and dilemmas. (Chan 1994a:319)

The Chinese community in the U.K. is not without examples of such families and they may be developing within these shores from the second and third generation of migrants who have climbed up the social ladder in this country. Already the community experiences divisions due to regional and language differences, e.g. between Cantonese and Hakka speakers (Li 1994:51). These new diasporic families and more recently, the new 'poor' among the students, refugees and asylum seekers from Mainland China (Flynn 2002; The Observer 2000) will further add to the diversity of the community and the internal conflicts already existing within it.

Demographic information on the Chinese community

The resultant Chinese population in Britain is thus far from homogeneous. In the seventies, it has been estimated that 70 per cent of the Chinese in Britain are Cantonese speakers from Hong Kong and the New Territories, 25 per cent are Hakka speakers, with the remainder from Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia (Watson 1977b). But before the 1991 Census, estimates from the Census are fraught with difficulties (Taylor 1987). For one, the question asking for the country of origin of the head of household would class ethnic Chinese born in Britain as British, while those of British origin born in China would be recorded as Chinese.[155] Labour Force Survey (LFS)

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[155] Another problem is the large numbers of students, nurses and visitors of Chinese origin. In the past, these numbers have been difficult to estimate because of the lack of congruence between country of

figures are more detailed but differences may be due to sampling errors and response rates. The total Chinese population according to the 1991 Census was 156,938 or 0.3 per cent of the British population (Chan and Chan 1997; Owen 1994). The following figure illustrates the different origins of the Chinese community in Britain in 1991:

Figure 4.1: Chinese in Britain by country of origin
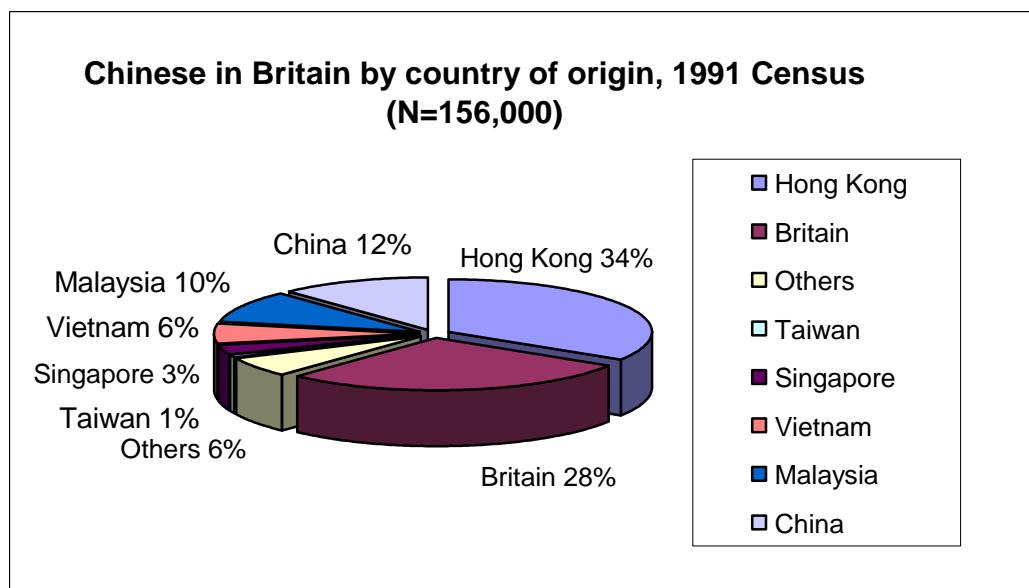
Source: Chan and Chan (1997)

According to Chan and Chan (1997), the Home Office figures on the acceptance for settlement by nationality showed that the number of Mainland Chinese settlers would most likely overtake the Hong Kong Chinese after 1995. This means that the Chinese would overall still be an immigrant community. The composition of the Chinese population in the Census 2001 confirms this, as out of the total of 226,947 Chinese in England and Wales, 28 per cent originate from the U.K., and 19 per cent are from China (National Statistics Online 2003a).[156] The total number of Chinese in Britain is

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origin and ethnic origin. While they constitute only a small proportion of the total number of Chinese, Taylor is perceptive in noting their important contribution to the development of the Chinese Community in Britain, in particular in terms of those who remain in the country on completion of their studies (Taylor 1987).

[156] Scotland uses a slightly different ethnic question and outputs the data slightly differently.

247,403, which is 0.4 per cent of the U.K. population and 5.3 per cent of the minority ethnic population (National Statistics Online 2003a).[157]

Information about the age distribution of the Chinese is helpful in getting an idea of the structure of the population. The age-sex pyramid for the Chinese in Britain based on the 1991 Census is in the shape of a minaret and the main reason for this, it is argued, is migration rather than a low birth rate (Chan and Chan 1997). Taken as a whole, the number of those entering the country aged 20-40 is much larger than that of the under 20s, the largest group being those young adults between the ages of 25-34 (Chan and Chan 1997). The age-sex pyramid constructed from the Census 2001 is similarly shaped (see Figure 4.2). The proportion of adults to children in the pyramid seems to suggest that there are more adults particularly women available in the Chinese community to look after children.

Figure 4.2: Age structure of Chinese population in Britain
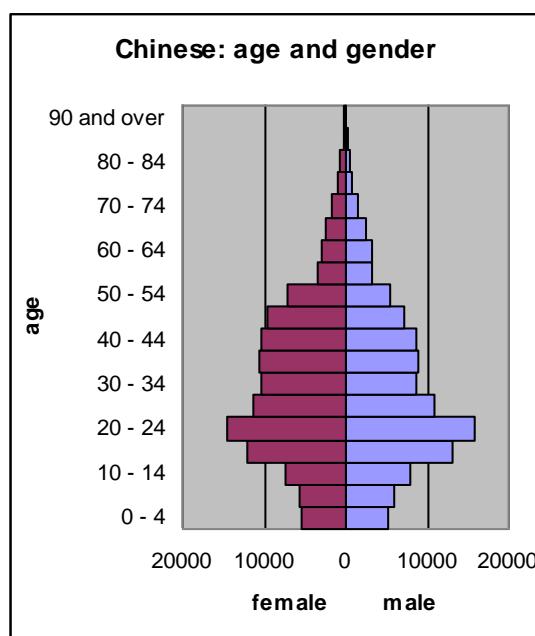
Source: Census 2001 (National Statistics Online)

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[157] According to the latest Census figures (England and Wales), in terms of people born in the Far East [*sic*], 13% were born in China, 23.5% in Hong Kong, 22.4% in Malaysia or Singapore, 9.7% Japan and 31.2% 'other Far East' (Table S015, Census 2001). 48.3% of all ethnic Chinese in England and Wales were born in 'other Far East' (Table S102, Census 2001).

According to the LFS 1999/2000 figures (Owen *et al.* 2000), the percentage of Chinese between the ages of 25-44 was 40.8 per cent, while the percentage in the 0-4 and 5-15 age groups in contrast was the lowest among all the other groups in this age range (3.8 per cent and 11.8 per cent respectively). The reasons for this are likely to be the structure of the immigrant population as well as a low birth rate. Large numbers of the Chinese overseas students and immigrant workers are entering the country to take up low-paid jobs in the catering industry shunned by local residents. In 2002, a total of 1,379 work permits granted to Chinese nationals were for catering occupations, making up 40 per cent of all occupations taken up by Chinese nationals (Clarke and Salt 2003:570).The significance of the relatively larger numbers of young people is that it represents their capacity for socio-economic participation as well as child-bearing. The fact that more than 80 per cent of the Chinese population (Annual Local Area LFS 2001/2002) were aged 16 and over, again indicates the significance of migration to population growth.

Employment characteristics of the Chinese community

When compared to the rest of the U.K. population on the whole, the Chinese community in Britain is characterised by a relatively low unemployment rate, high self-employment and high concentration in the catering and distribution sector (Owen *et al.* 2000; Modood *et al.* 1997). As has been explained, these have resulted from a combination of reasons, which include migration history, socio-political and economic circumstances, and the human, social and cultural capital of the community. The participation of Chinese in the labour market is marked by a fall in their participation in traditional industries over the years, a higher participation in education and training, and greater numbers in professional and managerial occupations (National Statistics Online 2004; Owen *et al.* 2000). There are gender differences to note as well, and an appreciation of the impact that their employment patterns have on the establishment of Chinatowns in the country.

From evidence presented to the Home Affairs Committee (House of Commons 1984-85), it was estimated that 90 per cent of Chinese workers were involved in the

catering industry, with up to 60 per cent in small family enterprises. This number has fallen through the years. Table 4.1 plots the drop in the number of Chinese in the distribution, hotel and restaurant sector by gender. There are however increased numbers of Chinese who are entering the country as foreign labour in this sector.[158] The LFS figures (1997/98/99) indicated that when both males and females were considered, there were 50 per cent in distribution, hotels and restaurants, 13 per cent in banking, finance and insurance, and 20 per cent in public administration, education and health.

Table 4.1 Percentages of Chinese in distribution, hotel and restaurant sector

	1989/90/91	1997/8/9	2000/2001
Chinese Men	60.5	58	50
Chinese Women	50.9	42	40

Source: LFSs 1989/90/91, 1997/8/9 (Owen *et al.* 2000; Owen 1994) and 2000/01.

The economic activity rate of Chinese women in 1991 (Owen 1994) was recorded as 57.6 per cent and was roughly the same in 1999 at 57 per cent (Owen *et al.* 2000). According to LFS figures 1999/2000, the economic activity rates of Chinese women increased with age, with levels of 63 and 64 per cent in the age ranges 25-44 and 45-59 (Owen *et al.* 2000). This indicates that Chinese women continue to be economically active during their child-rearing years. However, this is still significantly lower than the economic activity rate for white women, which was 74 per cent (Owen *et al.* 2000). On the other hand, the economic activity rate for Chinese men in 1991 was 72.9 per cent and fell to 63 per cent in 1999 (Owen *et al.* 2000; Owen 1994). According to the LFS 2001/2002, 31 per cent of Chinese males were recorded as economically inactive, but three quarters of this were students (National Statistics Online 2004).

The unemployment rate for the Chinese population was about 6 per cent in the 1991 Census, lower than the national average (Chan and Chan 1997). According the LFS

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[158] According to an analysis of work permit issues of foreign labour in the UK, 14 per cent of issues to Chinese were for catering occupations in 2000, but this rose to 21 per cent in 2002. In terms of the work permits and first permissions, the proportions in catering occupations with Chinese and Malaysian nationalities were 40 and 52.3 per cent respectively in the year 2002 (Clarke and Salt 2003).

figures (1999/2000) the unemployment rate for Chinese was 10 per cent, higher than the national average of 6 per cent (Owen *et al.* 2000). The possible reasons for this include difficulties of competing with the white population in non-traditional business sectors, more competition within the catering sector because of increased migration from abroad[159] as well as higher participation in education and training. The increased economic and educational attainments of British-born Chinese (see following section) have led to their higher expectations in terms of employment. This has meant that they are not so willing to work for the relatively low wages in the catering sector. According to the LFS figures (1997/98/99) the percentage of Chinese men in professional occupations (16 per cent) is higher than the corresponding percentage for white men (11 per cent, cf. Owen2000). These figures also show that significantly more Chinese women were involved in public administration, education and health (Owen *et al.* 2000:79) compared with men, and more work in associated professional and technical occupations, and clerical and secretarial occupations than men (ibid. p.82). More recently, Chinese are also among those minority ethnic groups identified as being more likely to be employed in professional occupations (National Statistics Online 2004).

The successful participation of Chinese in the labour market is also evident in the development of the Chinese 'community' in local areas. With the establishment of restaurants and takeaways, networks of supporting businesses such as grocery stores and supermarkets, food-processing factories, retail outlets and professional services have developed. These tend to be concentrated in a section of most large metropolitan cities known as 'Chinatown'. In Britain, these are typically centres of business and networking, rather than for residential purposes (Li 1994). Parker argues that Chinatowns have been commodified by city councils to attract business and tourism, but as a result are held up as icons of exoticism and cultural difference (Parker 1995). I would argue that in spite of this, they can serve as 'gateways' into the Chinese community, and have developed as social sites for the interaction between East and

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[159] The market presently is open to other Chinese workers in particular from Macau, whose residents have European passports and therefore right of entry to the U.K., as well as the refugees and asylum seekers from China. Chinese takeaway businesses would be threatened with shut down if not for this new immigrant generation from China willing to work for lower wages (Flynn 2002). See also footnote 157.

West.[160] In the past few years, Chinese restaurants in Chinatowns have diversified into buffet bars, which can be described as a cross between a restaurant and a takeaway because they offer fast-food of a wider variety than in a takeaway but in pleasant sit-in surroundings and at competitive rates (Young 2003). At the same time, with the increasing interest in complementary medicine, Chinese herbal shops or medical halls are being set up as new businesses in shopping malls. These are gaining popularity with the British public. More gambling halls or casinos, which serve as recreational centres for Chinese men, have also developed. This has been encouraged by the wide-ranging liberalisation of gambling in Britain (Mathiason 2001), a result of the report by the Gaming Review Body, which was commissioned by the Home Office in 1999.

Participation in education and training

Most studies of minority ethnic participation and achievements in education and training use data from the Youth Cohort Study, but sample sizes are often too small to capture information about individual ethnic groups. Because broad aggregates of minority ethnic groups are used instead, there is limited data on Chinese students as they are classified under the category 'Other'. A useful source of information on minority ethnic children in compulsory education comes from the DfEE's Annual School Census. In January 1999, minority ethnic pupils comprised 11.6 per cent of pre-school children, 11.8 per cent of children of primary school age and 11.5 per cent of secondary school pupils (Owen *et al.* 2000:19). White students outperform those from minority ethnic groups in general, but those from Indian and 'Other' ethnic groups did better than whites with more achieving 5 or more passes at GCSE grade A* to C according to the Youth Cohort Study 9, sweep 1 in 1998 (Owen *et al.* 2000). This may have to do with the fact that this cohort of Indian and 'Other' students were more likely than average to be attending Grant Maintained or Independent schools (*ibid.* p.27). According to the pupil level annual school census (PLASC) 2002, the

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[160] This comment is based on the appreciation of and involvement in Chinese culture that many white people have come to have as a result of the presence of the Chinese community in Newcastle. Most of the lion dancers performing regularly at Chinese festivities for example are young white men.

proportion of Chinese students achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs for those entered for GCSEs in maintained schools in 2002 was over 70 per cent, the highest across all ethnic groups (Department for Education and Skills 2003). In the Careers Activity Survey of children aged 16-17 (Year 11 completers) in 1998, 89.8 per cent of the Chinese students surveyed were in full-time education,[161] compared to 67.8 per cent of white students (*ibid*. p.34).

In further education sector colleges, Chinese students were recorded as most likely to be studying for A/AS levels, compared to GNVQ or 'other advanced' qualifications (Owen *et al.* 2000:52). In higher education,[162] Chinese and Other-Asian students were particularly well represented in old universities (47.1 per cent, *ibid*. p. 60). While there were fewer Chinese women than men in higher education institutions, the disparity was not great. For example, there were 4111 male compared to 4076 female first degree students in British higher education institutions, excluding the Open University in 1998/1999 (Owen *et al.* 2000:61). According to these figures, Chinese women are also more likely than men to be studying part-time. Chinese and 'Other' men are also more likely than other groups to be studying full-time for postgraduate qualifications (Owen *et al.* 2000:55).

According to the LFS figures 1999/2000, 31.1 per cent of Chinese had degree or equivalent qualifications compared to 23 per cent of whites. However, it is noteworthy that 19.1 per cent of Chinese compared to 16.3 per cent from the 'white' category had no qualifications (Owen *et al.* 2000:112). One outcome of the high attainment of qualifications is that Chinese graduates experience the lowest rates of unemployment for minority ethnic groups but this is still higher than the average unemployment rate of graduates. Like other minority ethnic groups, the Chinese are disadvantaged by the continued existence of racial discrimination in recruitment and promotion.[163] This is evidenced by their high concentration in the catering and distribution sector, in spite of their high educational achievements and qualifications.

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[161] As opposed to being in training, employment, 'not settled', 'moved out of contact', etc (Owen *et al.* 2000).

[162] The number of overseas Chinese students is included among these figures.

[163] In Pang's (1993) research, over three quarters of the respondents believed that half/less than half of all employers in Britain practised discrimination, and their entry into the professional and technical occupations was such as to avoid direct competition with white British in the labour market.

Pang explains that the family catering business is a safety net for those who are well qualified but unable to succeed in the British labour market. The bimodal distribution of young Chinese adults in the labour market is thus a result of an adaptive strategy to enable them to deal with the structural constraints of racism and discrimination (Pang 1993). Such tensions and constraints were further demonstrated in the heated opposition to the numbers of Hong Kong families allowed to settle in Britain because of the 1997 handover.

Children's educational and social needs

While childcare is not an issue that has been the focus of research in the Chinese community, the educational and social needs of Chinese children on the other hand have. The patterns of migration and settlement coupled with the employment characteristics of community have been found to impact on the second generation of Chinese growing up in Britain (Chan 1997; Simpson 1987; Taylor 1987). Although there are encouraging signs of high educational achievement among the Chinese in Britain, the long and unsocial working hours of parents coupled with the wide dispersal of the Chinese population are factors to be considered in assessing Chinese children's educational and social needs (Lie 2003). A research review on Chinese Pupils originally presented as a report to the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups (Swann Committee, 1983) identified a number of educational and social needs that continue to be highlighted in later studies.[164] The review described Chinese pupils as 'ignored, isolated and inscrutable' (Taylor 1987:229), and recommended that educational researchers urgently need to make up for lack of information and the poor quality of existing research. It also highlighted the severe difficulties that children coming from Hong Kong in their teenage years have in school. The different values of home and school were brought out, the most serious area of cultural conflict being that of Chinese children assisting their parents in the family business in the evenings and weekends, leading to absences

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[164] In 1987, the National Foundation for Educational Research published this comprehensive and objective review of research into the education of pupils of Chinese origin (Taylor 1987).

and late arrivals at school.[165] The review recommended greater home school liaison and greater mutual understanding on the part of teachers and parents. Chinese parents also expressed dissatisfaction about the perceived lack of social ethics and discipline in school, and homework for children of younger ages.[166] The lack of Chinese language provision in mainstream education was another matter of concern for Chinese parents, who have responded by sending their children to 'mother-tongue' classes, which draw upon the skills of the more educated members of the community (Taylor 1987).

While pointing to the communication difficulties and the need to help in the family business as contributing to the children's isolation, Taylor also criticises the 'school' for not promoting social interaction between pupils of Chinese origin and their peers, citing evidence that points to schools as a site for racial harassment. This is particularly regrettable seeing as it is the school that may be the only context in which Chinese children encounter their peers. She asks if ignorance on the part of British society of the Chinese who live and work here does not constitute a form of *institutional racism* (my emphasis), and calls upon the Chinese community to participate more in society as a whole for example by 'revealing aspects of their culture, both in traditional and modern forms for adaptation within a U.K. context as some other minority ethnic groups have done' (Taylor 1987:312). In order for more community participation to happen, Taylor recognises that greater confidence and respect is needed between the communities, which could overcome Chinese people's non-assertiveness and reticence in making their needs known. Another recommendation she makes is the use of the important community networks provided by the Chinese language classes in establishing home-school liaison with mainstream schooling.

That language is one of the abiding concerns of the Chinese community will arise from my findings presented in the next chapter and is supported by a number of other research conducted by ethnic Chinese (Chan 1995; Chan 1994b; Wong 1992; Tsow

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[165] In the same vein, Simpson (1987) published a short but illuminating study of Chinese pupils in Leeds, which highlighted the plight of Chinese children often let down by teachers who are not culturally informed to help them, and parents whose lives are so caught up in the catering business with its unsocial hours.

[166] This strikes a chord with my own findings, see page 164.

1984). As a result of her research,[167] Tsow recommended that the Local Educational Authorities (LEAs) should be encouraged to give clear financial commitment in helping with the financing of the language classes and should seek to teach community languages within the school curriculum in accordance with the Race Relations Act.[168] According to Lornita Wong,[169] the EEC directive in 1977, which was adopted by Britain and which required member states to provide for the teaching of the 'mother tongue' and culture of the country of origin of school age migrant/immigrant children, has not been successfully implemented. In many cases, Chinese pupils in Britain continue to experience educational disadvantage, racism at school, language loss and cultural conflict. It appears that little had been achieved after the research review and its recommendations in 1987.

The focus on the educational needs of Chinese children continued to be taken up by Y.M. Chan (1995; 1994b), whose study revealed that the needs of Chinese children were in language learning, relationships between parents and children, home and school, and the special needs of newcomers. In spite of the racism they experienced, Chinese children were found to be hardworking and often praised by their teachers. Recent research directed by Verma (1999) paints a more optimistic picture. Depending on their length of stay, the Chinese adolescents who were the subject of this study were coming to terms with their identities, had high aspirations and were getting the 'best of both worlds' as Chinese in British society. However, their identities were closely tied up with language, and a significant finding of this study was yet again the practical importance of the Chinese language and its maintenance to both young people and their parents. The children in the case studies came across as 'heroic' and successful in negotiating their multiple roles in their different social domains. However, the authors point to the insufficient resources being directed to Chinese children mastering the English language in a sophisticated form, and the lack of action on the part of the Home Office and education services in increasing the numbers of bilingual teachers to schools in spite of recommendations from the Home

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[167] Tsow (1984) conducted the first survey of its kind on the use of 'mother-tongue' classes for the Commission for Racial Equality.

[168] Martin's (1986) research of 48 Chinese families in Glasgow also supported the recommendations arising from her research.

[169] Lornita Wong (1992) conducted a comparison of Chinese children in Britain with three cities in the U.S. as regards bilingual-bicultural education.

Affairs Committee (House of Commons 1984-85). Verma et al also recommend that on the basis of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), pressure should be put on the Home Office or the DfEE (now the DfES) to accept responsibility for the education of children of minority groups in their mother tongues.

Language and Identity

According to the PSI Study (Modood *et al.* 1997), Chinese people tended not to describe themselves according to their country of origin, physical characteristics or religion, and were not averse to coeducational schools and mixed marriages unlike other ethnic groups (Modood 1997b). Instead, it appears that one important way Chinese people in Britain are able to retain their traditional identity is by means of language maintenance. The issue of language and the learning of the 'mother-tongue'[170] is however not as simple as it might appear to be. Once again we need to be reminded that the Chinese community in the U.K. is diverse but not only in terms of country of origin but also the language varieties[171] that are spoken. In Hong Kong, the *lingua franca* is Cantonese, which is spoken by those native to the country, but there are a number of other language varieties as well such as Hakka, Chiu Chou, and Hokklo among others. In addition to these regional varieties, there is the standardised spoken form used in China, *Putonghua* (or 'common speech'), better known as Mandarin in the English-speaking world. Those who have migrated from China to Hong Kong are speakers of this language, and with the reversion of Hong Kong Island, the Kowloon Peninsula and the New Territories to China in 1997, there are growing numbers of Hong Kong Chinese learning Mandarin.

Chinese from Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore speak a number of dialects such as Hokkien but the 'standard' Chinese language in these countries is Mandarin. However, because most of the migrant Chinese communities in the West speak

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[170] The term 'mother tongue' is a contested term (Rampton 1995; Romaine 1995). Technically, it is used by linguists to refer to an individual's first learned language (first language) with the assumption that mothers are the main transmitters of language to their children. But it has been more popularly used to describe the language used in the home. Ethnic group identification by the state is often on the basis of the 'mother tongue', which then becomes defined more according to national languages for nationalistic and administrative reasons rather than the definition above. Problems with the concept also occur because of assumptions of competency in the language.

[171] The term 'varieties' is preferred to 'dialects' because they are often mutually unintelligible.

Cantonese (Wang 2001), 'mother-tongue' classes are mainly in Cantonese and many Westerners seeking to learn a Chinese language have learnt Cantonese. With the burgeoning economic position of China, the importance of Mandarin has increased and more are learning Mandarin for business exchanges. Mandarin has a written form that can be shared by all the other Chinese language varieties. Thus the importance of this written form is in its role as a cultural symbol distinguishing Chinese from all other people. However, there are two forms of written Chinese that have complicated the picture. In the People's Republic of China, the language reform movement of the 1950s and 1960s led to a set of national simplified characters that is easier to learn. These have been adopted in Singapore but not Hong Kong and Taiwan. The dilemma facing overseas Chinese is whether they should continue to retain their own language variety and written form or adopt the national form of People's Republic of China. This in turn will have implications for the kind of Chinese identity formed among the younger generation of Chinese overseas. Wong (1992:158-159) recommends that Mandarin be taught because there is a romanised system to help in learning the language (phoneticisation) and it would help young people's future job prospects more.

Another aspect that should be taken into account is the English language speaking ability of the overseas Chinese and the difficulties of their British-born children in learning English. As most of the first generation migrants are from the rural territories of Hong Kong, they have had a much more limited exposure to the English language than their urban counterparts because educational facilities have been much less developed in these areas. Children also started school later and had to travel long distances to secondary schools (Taylor 1987). The scenario in a Chinese family in Britain therefore is that of children communicating with their grandparents and parents in a regional speech variety like Cantonese, or in English depending on the relative competence of the three generations in these languages. Competence is linked to many factors such as education, age and length of stay but most importantly, social networks (Li 1994), but bilingual competence lies also in the ability to use different language varieties and styles appropriately in different social domains.[172]

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[172] 'A domain is an abstraction which refers to a sphere of activity representing a combination of specific times, settings, and role relationships' (Romaine 1995:30).

According to a study conducted by Raschka and others (2002), the social networks of children are a key influence on whether Chinese, English, or a mixed code[173] is used. In order for the 'mother-tongue' to be maintained, the older generation needs to communicate consistently and frequently with the younger generation, but this is hindered by the non-standard 'unsocial' hours of the catering trade. This indicates that grandparental care of children is of particular value for this purpose. Another parental solution to this is pressure on children to attend Chinese language classes, which concentrate on the written form and is taught in ways very different to what the children are used to in mainstream British schools.[174] In spite of the often uninspiring teaching methods, the adolescents in Verma's study are clear about their need to attend these classes because of the value placed on learning Chinese in maintaining their cultural identity (Verma *et al.* 1999). Language is after all the main vehicle for the transmission of culture, with values and norms enshrined in words and phrases, stories and proverbs.

A person's linguistic and cultural identity is therefore inextricably linked to membership of the family and by extension, to the Chinese community in Britain with its particular organisational characteristics (Song 1997a). Identity for the Chinese young person is also tied up with family reputation in which being 'bad' in the eyes of the community often had to do with not helping-out and being 'Westernised' (Song 1997b). Relationships within and between generations, within the family and beyond it, are also influenced by and influences language use in a dialectical way. For example, solidarity among the members of the second generation is characterised by a mixed code of Chinese and English that can serve either as a bridge between two cultures or a means of estrangement and possible conflict.[175] If the younger generation are encouraged to achieve competency in both the languages through bilingual

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[173] Language that uses a mixture of Chinese and English, or where switching between the two languages (code-switching) takes place.

[174] Chinese language schools used to be assisted by the Hong Kong government (Wong 1992) but this has been withdrawn after the 1997 handing over of Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China.

[175] In a discussion with two Chinese grandmothers, this was brought out, as one grandmother spoke of how she advised her friend who was facing problems with her teenage son, to not to stop her teenager from speaking in a mixed code. Instead she encouraged her to communicate in whatever language, just as long as the communication lines were open.

education, it can only serve to improve intergenerational as well as transnational relationships.

Within the community itself, apart from networks and geographical locations such as Chinatowns, a key vehicle for the development of identity is language. Unfortunately for many minority ethnic groups in Britain, the lack of English language proficiency has resulted in insecurity and loss of respect, and often serves as a trigger for racist tension.[176] On the other hand, racism whether it is a result of language, colour or culture has also been a source of identity formation. When the cultural identities of Chinese youth were studied, an inner world of protected identities or defence mechanisms was uncovered, which had developed from specific forms of racism and discrimination faced by Chinese youth involved in takeaways (Parker 1995). For those who experience migration and come into contact with other cultures, bilingualism can be a useful strategy in minority group adjustment to the country of destination. Among adolescents, language sharing and exchange resulting in mixed codes for example was found to break down divisions on the lines of race (Rampton 1995).[177]

> Language not only works as a negative means of identification, it can also be used as an aid to the construction and confirmation, and in some instances the reconstruction, of ethnic identity. (Kershen 2000a:3)

The Chinese family in the U.K. and familism (*chia*)

The lives of Chinese children in Britain need to be understood as being situated within the dynamics of family, work and school. According to the PSI Survey (Modood *et al.* 1997), 24 per cent of Chinese couples had three or more children living with them compared to 18 per cent in the white sample (Berthoud and Beishon 1997:41). 72 per cent of Chinese aged 60 plus shared a household with their son or daughter, the highest proportion among the ethnic minorities (*ibid*). This points to the propensity

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[176] On a personal level, my family and I have often been subjected to racist youth imitating the Chinese language and directing their taunts at us.
[177] Rampton (1995) gives accounts of Interracial Creole, Interracial Panjabi and Stylised Asian English in language among adolescents.

for family members to stay together rather than to assert their independence, but it is also more likely to be a result of economic necessity and pragmatism. It also suggests a high number of three generational households that will contribute to the maintenance of traditional culture.[178]

Another aspect that needs to be understood in any study of the Chinese in Britain is that of culture and religion[179] and the ways in which these are at odds with mainstream beliefs and practices in British society. According to the research conducted by Verma et.al (1999), Chinese families are retaining their traditional values,[180] and these are reinforced by the continued observance of religious practices that are essentially domestic and independent of priestly bureaucracies. Chinese ancestral worship serves two purposes in that it 'retained a link with the past through former members of the family and personalised the process of seeking the intervention of remote deities' (Verma *et al.* 1999:170). Respect for authority, duty and obedience are nourished in the context of the family, which is also the site for the perpetuation of the ancestral cult through the production of a male heir and in which the extension of the family line gives meaning to life. This continuation of the family line is also important in that because of the principle of filial piety, it ensures that one is looked after in old age (Verma *et al.* 1999:172). Thus it is not entirely true that 'Chinese parents are unable to claim the validation of a religious philosophy for a justification of their value orientation' (Taylor 1987:308).[181]

Underlying most Chinese thought are the teachings of Confucius who emphasised the importance of order and right relationships, in particular within the family.[182] The five

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[178] The average size of Chinese households in the Census 2001 however is 2.7 people (National Statistics Online 2004).

[179] There are a number of Chinese Christians in the U.K. as well as the existence of a Christian sect known as the True Jesus Church (Li 1994; Acton 1990) but the majority practise ancestor worship.

[180] Wong (1992) however makes a note of the fact that Chinese culture is an ambiguous concept in relation to Hong Kong Chinese because of the possible influences of Communism, the Cultural Revolution in China, and exposure to Western Capitalism in Hong Kong. Culture is a fluid and dynamic concept and elements from these different influences can be incorporated depending on the environment.

[181] It can be argued that ancestral worship cannot be defined as a religion in the true sense of the term. Taylor also gives an account of the spread of Christianity in the Chinese community in the U.K. and the role it plays in mother-tongue education and social services for the community (pp.98-101).

[182] Other influences on Chinese culture are Taoism, which teaches the proper relationship of people to nature, and Mahayana Buddhism. Confucianism is the basis for ancestor veneration (Chang and Kemp 2004).

relationships (*Wu Lun*) of Governor-Governed, Father-Son, Elder brother-Younger brother, Husband-Wife and Friend-Friend form the basis on which a man's life should be ordered. Alongside this, there is another hierarchy in operation based on generation, age and sex such that the younger son of the grandparents owes obedience to his eldest brother's wife, and everyone except the grandfather owes obedience to the grandmother (Li 1994:55). The central feature of the Chinese traditional family based on yin-yang philosophy is also embodied by the three obediences and the four virtues: 'A woman is to obey her father when young, her husband when she marries, and her son when she is old. The four virtues include her obligations, her appearance, her behaviour, and her speech' (Woo 1999:141). The traditional patriarchal Chinese family is the model of the state, and is also the basis on which the 'family wage economy' (Salaff 1984) is structured:

> Each member works in concert toward goals set by the family head. [Members] were trained from childhood to function in the domestic and work life of the family and to follow its rules and expectations to the letter. Each learned early that her life is inextricably interwoven with family fortune and that survival and success depend on the integrated contribution of every member. (Salaff 1984:147)

Another way of describing this is 'familism' or *chia,* i.e. family kinship as an organizing principle, which is the essence of Chinese economic organisation (Song 1997a). The impact of the Communist Revolution in 1949 followed by the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) on the value system of Chinese people cannot be overlooked especially with the increasing numbers from Mainland China migrating to the U.K. Under the communist regime, the nature of the Chinese family and the value system underpinning it came under attack as state supremacy took on another meaning. The dictum 'Women hold up half the Sky' is a saying from Chairman Mao that gave women in Communist China a status different to that which they were used to. However, the structural power of the patriarchal family continued outside China, and in the migrant Chinese communities beyond East Asia, and still does in Communist China today (Stockman *et al.* 1995).

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The importance of this patriarchal family structure cannot be overstated[183] and Song (Song 1997b) provides a case study of how it works in takeaways. She looked at sibling dynamics and relationships in young British-Chinese people, in terms of the forms of economic activity that are carried out by the young people, i.e. 'helping-out' in the takeaway. In general, daughters are expected to help out more at home and in the shop than the sons, and older children help out more than younger children. Song describes the unwritten understandings between family members based on this as the 'family work contract', developed out of the context of families' experience of migration, ethnic minority status and parents' dependence on their children for labour and English language mediation. Thus, the traditional patriarchal Chinese family in the U.K. is shaped also by parental dependence on the children for economic and social survival, responsibilities which children and young people are very well aware of and take very seriously. Those who are British-born are more likely to renegotiate the commitment to these 'family work contracts' by participating in education and waged employment.[184]

The family undoubtedly plays an important role in providing children with security in the face of a hostile environment (Verma *et al.* 1999:173-174). However, practices of duty, respect and obedience may appear oppressive and as leading to unhealthy passivity to those with a Western mindset, where the values of individual autonomy in Western liberal education are based on the Aristotelian concept of man and society. What constitutes education to a Chinese person is quite different to what is being delivered in British educational institutions. Again, a traditional Chinese parent would expect lots of homework, reading and writing, and have difficulty understanding the value of learning through play and independent discovery (Verma *et al.* 1999:165). Chinese parents feel that their authority will be threatened, especially if their relationship with their children is affected by the lack of quality time with their children, their lack of proficiency in English and the children's diminishing competence in Chinese (Wong 1992:38). Apart from their role in language maintenance, grandparents as providers of care and discipline are a valued part of the

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[183] Chiu and Yu (Chiu and Yu 2001:683) would argue that too much has been made of the role of cultural factors and not enough of economic and migratory ones, such that Western assumptions about the strength of the Chinese family can create blinkers to their real needs.
[184] None of the young people in Song's (1997a; 1997b) research as well as the children in my research wants to work in the catering trade.

family structure in these cases (Chiu and Yu 2001).[185] At the same time, parents' aspirations for their children are that they would be well educated in order to compete in British society for their economic survival and prosperity. This was also supported by my interviews with key workers, women and grandparents in the Chinese community in Newcastle.

The self-sufficiency and internal resilience of the Chinese family has also been held responsible for the lack of provision of services for the Chinese community in Britain. Of the £30 million expected to go to specific minority ethnic projects under the Urban Programme (1984-5), only 0.3 per cent was allocated to Chinese Projects and in 1995, only two local authority social services departments had Chinese social work teams (Chiu and Yu 2001). Research into the care of Chinese elderly found that the traditional status of grandparent[186] was not adhered to in Chinese families in the U.K. Instead, many grandparents were involved in the care of their grandchildren, while experiencing a shortfall of care in their old age. Perhaps there is an argument for saying that where communism failed to erode Chinese family values, Western capitalism[187] may have succeeded. And yet, a wide range of studies of migrant families (Basu and Altinay 2002; Ram *et al.* 2000) has focused on the importance of family solidarity and collectivism in establishing a living.[188]

The Chinese community in Newcastle upon Tyne

In comparison with the rest of the U.K., the North East of England has the lowest percentage of minority ethnic groups (White 2002:7). The proportion of minority ethnic groups including Chinese in the area has however increased recently as the following statistics show.

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[185] For some grandparents I spoke to in the community, there was a distinction also between a son's children and a daughter's children as daughters are considered 'married out'.

[186] See page 128: everyone owes obedience to the grandmother except the grandfather.

[187] In discussing the Duck Islanders however who have migrated from Hong Kong to Scotland, Acton describes a form of 'family capitalism' in contrast to 'formal capitalism' as an adaptation to modern economic life (Acton 1990).

[188] One such study is that by Kibria (1994) who observed that the family collectivism of Vietnamese refugee families in Philadelphia was responsible for their survival, and that there is a need to examine the critical role of family ideology in household life, which is often shaped and challenged by the migration process.

Table 4.2: Minority ethnic population in Newcastle upon Tyne (1991-2001)

	1991	1996	2001
Total population of Newcastle	260,000	251,000	259,536
Minority ethnic as % of population	4.07	4.00	6.90

Sources: 1991 Census, 1996 Inter Censal Survey, Census 2001

Policy, Research and Information Services, Newcastle City Council

In comparison to London, Liverpool and Manchester, Newcastle is more similar to other areas where the Chinese community is less concentrated. It is also comparatively young, with the number of Chinese in the North East numbering no more than thirty before 1948 (Li 1994:62). The 1960s marked a period of increased numbers of Chinese beginning to settle on Tyneside. Laundries were replaced by eating establishments based on partnerships, and when family members began to join the men, takeaways based on the labour of the single family became the more popular and widespread business enterprise (Li 1994). The economic recession of the 1980s exposed the vulnerability of the catering sector, and fears arose of the impact that the handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997 would have on British-Hong Kong business links. This would lead to more second generation Chinese staying rather than leaving for Hong Kong, increasing the possibility of greater unemployment and business failure (Parker 1999).

Chinatown in Newcastle upon Tyne comprises one main street of Chinese restaurants and associated shop-fronts such as a supermarket, the North East Chinese Association, language schools, and gift and stationery shops. After a Community Skills Audit of the Chinese community (Parker 1999) was carried out, the Dragon Project was set up, initially based in Chinatown, to support business diversification in the Chinese community. There appears to be some evidence of success on this score as more recently, there have been buffet bars[189] and a proliferation of Chinese medicinal shops in the main shopping areas of the city. Chinese businesses that were affected by the disruption caused by the construction of a large cinema and restaurant complex adjacent to Chinatown appear to have recovered. Recently, it was reported that with

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[189]Douglas Young, "Eating out: Lau's Buffet King", *Evening Chronicle* 2 May, 2003

more than 30 companies trading from it, the North East has the largest concentration of Chinese-owned businesses outside of London (Oliver 2003). The Dragon Project has also been re-launched as The Big Dragon Project providing assistance in marketing, business planning and start-ups, IT and e-commerce and support for the community. The project is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and One North East, a regional development agency.

The economic success of the Chinese community in Newcastle is reflected in the findings from the Newcastle EYDCP's Parental Childcare Needs Survey in 2001.[190] Most of the respondents were in employment with only 5.7 per cent who were unemployed. Take up of income support at 9 per cent was very low and 31 per cent were earning between £183-268 per week. The surprising finding was that relatively few of those surveyed had heard of Working Families Tax Credit (26.1%), and Childcare Tax Credit (21.3%), but 47.7 per cent would work if they were eligible for the Childcare Tax Credit. According to the survey, the main reason for these Chinese families to use childcare would be for purposes of work. The average number of children in the Chinese families surveyed was found to be lower than the other families at 1.63 per family,[191] with children aged 4-6 being the largest grouping (32.6%). The majority (68%) used a partner or relative for childcare and only nine used formal childcare facilities. Most of the respondents preferred children under the age of 4 to be cared for by their mothers. This view was supported in the focus group with Chinese women, which revealed some strong views about mothers having this responsibility because they are the ones who 'give birth' to these children.

> If you do not take the responsibility to look after you children, why do you give birth to them? If the mother has no intention to look after her children, it is not right for her to bring her children into the world.[192]

Some of the women in the focus group felt that Newcastle did not offer much social life for them, but four women went regularly to the casino where they could play

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[190] The survey findings need to be treated with caution because the sample selected by untrained research assistants included those who live in North Tyneside (36%).
[191] The figures on family size contrast considerably with those given in the PSI study and may signify a falling trend in family size.
[192] Reported in Chinese focus group, 9 March 2001, 1.30-2.30 p.m.

mah-jong. From participant observation and conversations with gatekeepers, Chinese women and the elderly now have more opportunities for social activities than 10 or more years ago, before the local authority and voluntary sector employed Chinese community workers to look into providing for the needs of the community. These community workers often work in association with existing community organisations. One project that came about from such cooperation was the setting up of Mascot House, a residential home for the elderly Chinese people close to Chinatown.

The concerns that some members of the community had about the lack of provision of social activities for young people led to the setting up of the Chinese Youth Forum in 1999. This organised computer clubs, leisure activities such as bowling, swimming, and badminton and trips to theme parks. Unfortunately, there were conflicts in the management of the group and many of its activities are now limited because of the resulting lack of funding and support. The success of funding applications from community groups depends on the ability of the group to show a degree of organisation and good management. Often this only comes about with the help of community development workers who are familiar with Western ways of project management that are more democratic and representative of clients' needs, compared to patriarchal traditional Chinese ways.

Newcastle is home to the True Jesus Church,[193] which in reality is a townsmen association founded by senior emigrants from the island of *Ap Chau* to the north east of Hong Kong (Li 1994). There are a few other community clubs and associations such as the North East Chinese Association that make up the Newcastle Chinese Festivity Group which organises cultural events and celebrations for the public during auspicious Chinese festivals. The Chinese community has also gained prominence from the work of the Sino-Anglo Cultural Exchange Association promoting cultural links between the North East and China. The organisation has been instrumental in the development of the Chinese Arts Forum, which has contributed to the city's bid for the European Capital of Culture. Within the community, the Chinese Health Group is active in providing for and representing the health care needs of the community at the

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[193] For a more detailed account of the True Jesus Church, see Acton's (1990) description of Seui-Seung-Yahn Immigrants from Hong Kong to Scotland and Liu's (1992) study of the same religious group with reference to the catering business.

annual Community Action for Health conferences. Community representatives from this and other groups like the Newcastle Chinese Women's Association and the *Wah Sun* Chinese Association (a clan association) have very recently established the Chinese Centre (North of England) providing IT facilities and childcare. This was made possible with the help of the Newcastle EYDCP, but the organisers faced many difficulties along the way because of internal divisions in the community.

The Newcastle EYDCP Parental Childcare Needs Survey (2001) indicated that there was a demand for childcare facilities for those who were over the age of four and for provision to be made in the evenings. As a result, the Chinese Centre provides care for both Chinese and non-Chinese children till nine in the evening and at weekends. The survey also found that parents were willing to pay for childcare if they were beneficial to their children. There was also a preference for out-of-school clubs and play-schemes, in particular homework clubs. The centre hopes to develop further such services for the children in their care. In terms of language learning, there are two Chinese language schools teaching Cantonese and some Mandarin to the Cantonese-speaking residents and one Mandarin class mainly catering to children of university students from Mainland China. There are also some classes for children held at the Newcastle Chinese Church in the city centre.

The above account of the Chinese community indicates that there are issues to be addressed with regards to the needs of the Chinese community. These include building on the work of the existing community development work to encompass the increasing diversity of the community and meeting their varied information needs. From my observation, trained bilingual, bicultural community workers play an important role in this area. At another level, there is also a need for more leaders who are able to network and represent the community effectively to the local government and the society as a whole. This is likely to be true elsewhere in the U.K. and its various localities.

Conclusion

This chapter has established the fact that the Chinese community is far from homogenous with its diverse composition, geographical dispersal and economic polarisation. Often, these characteristics are used as excuses for limiting the allocation of resources into meeting needs, as low numbers and diverse needs make it less easy to justify provision. Another is the sufficiency of the 'family', which I have shown to be influenced by a number of factors such as Confucian thought, but also market capitalism and the experience of migration. This is most evident in the family takeaway, a strategy of survival in a racialised work environment. The mismatch between traditional Chinese values and Western society has been introduced in this chapter, as well as family strategies for coping, via grandparents and the Chinese language school. There is also the assumed strength and cohesion of the 'community', which has been challenged along a number of lines in this chapter. In spite of divisions along a number of lines, the Chinese community in Newcastle has been able to assert itself in various ways and is a recognised and visible part of the life of the city. This has been because of the tireless work of dedicated community workers engaging with willing members of the community.

From this account of the Chinese community in Britain and Newcastle, it can be seen that a combination of macro-level and micro-level analysis is instructive when one approaches the meeting of community needs. General population trends are insightful, but not without more localised information. The understanding of where the client group comes from and the history of the migrant experience can go some way, for example, towards dealing with racist attitudes. The settlement patterns of the community and the occupations that are taken up determine the types of services that are best suited to meet their needs. Parental preferences and needs are also structured by the norms and values of their specific cultural group. Each group is however undergoing changes and shifts that are the result of migration experiences and living in British society. The rootedness of the Chinese community in their traditional cultures appears to be undergoing upheaval but this has been described more positively by Modood as an 'acculturative' strategy of living in Britain (Modood 1997b:330). What is clear is that the three generational structure of the family or one

that maintains contact with the grandparental generation is an important way forward for the maintenance of Chinese culture and language. The following chapter will investigate in a more in-depth way the significance of this and other issues in various Chinese households.

CHAPTER FIVE: BRINGING UP CHINESE CHILDREN IN BRITAIN

Introduction

> Chinese in their transnational practice thereby draw on their participation in the proliferation of difference in the global economy. Their sense of fragmentation and even displacement comes out of an ever-increasing sense of being alternatively embedded in and disembedded from various social relationships (Giddens 1991) and the inescapable tension between identification with specific places (or families) and the postmodern flux of many places and many identifications. (Ong and Nonini 1997:26)

All the individuals in the various Chinese households that were interviewed are ethnically Chinese, but with their own specific characteristics. This chapter thus begins with a description of the range of Chinese households included in the research sample, detailing first their background and migration experiences, the composition of the households and their networks and their employment characteristics. Following this is a closer look at the effect that migration and transnationalism has on the household and social network as the sites for the bringing up of children, the formation of cultural values and their social identities. The practical realities of bringing up children are then considered and with it, issues about parenting, discipline and childcare arrangements. Most of the parents' economic activities are located outside of the home, and the different forms of childcare that have been used, both formal and informal are discussed. The chapter ends with a case study of a lone parent in paid employment as an example for whom formal childcare has 'worked'.

In keeping with the description of the Chinese community in Britain, the sample of Chinese households was chosen to reflect a range of different characteristics: country of origin, education, employment and area of residence as explained in Chapter Three. The majority in the sample have had some form of involvement in the catering industry whether in the past or present. There are Chinese whose own parents have been in the catering trade for many years in the U.K. and they have followed in their parents' footsteps. There are also those who do not wish to do so and through hard work and education, have been able to enter employment in other sectors. In the

sample are also the Vietnamese who came as refugees, worked and have integrated into British society. While they have not had the same employment history as those from Hong Kong, they have also ventured into the catering business. Whether in the catering sector or not, self-employment is the most common form of labour market participation in this household sample.

The households

Migration history and family background

The impact of the migration experience was never far from the accounts given by parents about starting their lives in Britain. Some indication of the range of different experiences will be given here as they were found to have an influence on the decisions about child-rearing that households made. The grandparent generation of four of the households can be said to be quite typical of those migrants from the rural New Territories in Hong Kong who took advantage of the economic boom in the U.K. in the late 1950s and early 60s and the growth of the restaurant trade. Once established, fathers sent for wives and older children. Three of the parents had such a migration experience as teenagers growing up in Britain. Mr Ho for example was first inducted into the catering trade when he came over to the U.K. at the age of thirteen. Before he reached the legal school leaving age of 16, he worked for pocket money at a restaurant owned by his relatives, but once he reached 16, he went to work full-time. In the case of Mrs Chan, her parents were among those who came to the U.K., who met and married, set up their family business and sent their children back to Hong Kong to be cared for by relatives. She is the only British-born person in the sample.

Interestingly, the early migration history of Chinese seamen was part of the experience of one of the parents as he attended a school in urban Hong Kong that was set up originally as an orphanage training young men to be seamen. In this 'sea school', which began to take in underprivileged children, Mr Kwok trained to be a cook and dreamt of going abroad to a new life. He then saved up to come to the U.K. to study, as his wife did before him. There are also two households with members who are Vietnamese refugees of Chinese origin. They began their lives in the U.K. in

Portsmouth where they stayed for about a year before being resettled in the North East. Compared to those who came originally from Hong Kong as economic migrants, they were assisted by white families who served as their mentors and both sets of grandparents found work in the ancillary services in the public sector.[194] This has contributed to their families' integration into British life.

Chinese spouses from abroad fall into a particular category of migrants who have come to the West because of marriage rather than primary migration. According to Kalra who studied Pakistani taxi-drivers (Kalra 2000), they can be described as *mangeters* or 'those who have been summoned'. Unlike the younger generation, they do not fit into the framework of generational conflict because they have a mindset that is more attuned to that of the older generation. Thus they also cannot be classified in the same way as those who are 'caught between two cultures' (Watson 1977a). For lack of an equivalent term in Chinese[195] or Bengali, the term *mangeter* will be used in future analysis. Three women in this category worked in factories in Hong Kong or China as young women, and were accustomed to making a financial contribution to the family and later saving for their future.[196]

There are also language issues that are of relevance. Those who migrated from China are fluent in both Cantonese and Mandarin, whereas those who are from villages in Hong Kong tend to speak only Cantonese and/or a regional dialect. Two men who originally came for educational reasons are effectively tri-lingual in English, Mandarin and Cantonese. They are among three men and one woman in the sample who have saved up to migrate and be educated in this country. Three have obtained well-paid jobs and settled as residents after completing their studies. In terms of settlement and movement within the British Isles, most of the families have their roots in the North East, although the grandparents may have worked elsewhere originally, such as in Scotland, and there are siblings in other parts of the country. Mrs Chan

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[194] For confidentiality, I have avoided identifying these Vietnamese Chinese families.

[195] One possible term is *kuo fou sin niang* or 'harbour (thus coming from abroad) bride' or *kuo fou fu cai* for the male equivalent, but there is no composite term to cover both male and female.

[196] In a study of working daughters in Hong Kong, Salaff's working class respondents were recruited to work between the ages of 12 to 14, and they were obliged to delay marriage till their mid twenties because marriage 'signals the close of the daughter's financial contribution to the family' (Salaff 1981:2688). Money from these earnings was also put aside for the wedding and the new family home.

claims that her parents were the first to set up a takeaway in the North East in the 1970s. The participants in the research thus exhibit a range of different migration experiences, all of which contribute to some extent to their outlook on life, their values and preferences.

Migration and households: age, marriage and children

Table 5.1: Mothers' characteristics

HOUSEHOLD	Chan	Fan	Wong	Ho	Kwok	Lee	Pang	Tang
Age	34	44	36	37	50	29	32	40
Age on arrival	BBC*	40	14	25	20	25	11	13
Age at marriage	28	31	29	26	31	23	23	26
Age at birth of first child	32	32	31	28	36	26	28	28

*BBC is a common acronym for British-born Chinese

Table 5.2: Fathers' characteristics

HOUSEHOLD	Chan	Fan	Wong	Ho	Kwok	Lee	Pang	Tang
Age	32	N.A.	35	39	37	35	33	38
Age on arrival	21	N.A.	29	13	17	13	23	25
Age at marriage	26	32	28	28	18	29	24	24
Age at birth of first child	30	33	30	30	23	32	29	26

Three of the women who emigrated to the U.K. when they were children came when they were between 11 and 14 years of age (see Table 5.1). Three who are *mangeters* came when they were in their mid twenties and early thirties. Of the remainder, Mrs Chan is British-born and Mrs Kwok came for studies. In the sample, the women *mangeters* had relatives already in the U.K. such as older siblings whereas the male *mangeters* did not. One woman was married overseas and had to wait two years before joining her husband in Britain while another came to stay with relatives in Britain first before marrying. Two of the men arrived in Britain when they were 13 (see Table 5.2). Mr Chan, Mr Kwok and Mr Pang were those who came as young men because of studies while Mr Tang and Mr Wong are *mangeters* who were married in the homeland and joined their wives later in the U.K. Altogether eleven out of the sixteen parents are in their thirties and the age gap between husband and wife is one to

two years for six of the parents. Four out of eight of the mothers are older than the father, by one or two years. All four of these mothers were resident in the U.K. for longer than their husbands. It appears that in spite of the patriarchal nature of the Chinese family (see Chapter Four), the social taboo of such an age differential does not hold for such couples. With the exception of the Kwok household, the age of parents when their first child was born was in the mid twenties to early thirties, and often a few years after marriage.

Table 5.3: Children's characteristics

HOUSEHOLD	Chan	Fan	Wong	Ho	Kwok	Lee	Pang	Tang	Totals
No. of children	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	17
No of girls	1	1	1	0	2	1	0	2	8
No of boys	1	1	1	2	0	1	2	1	9
0-3	2	0	1	1	0	2	1	0	7
4-14	0	2	1	1	2	0	1	3	10

The number of children altogether in the sample of households is seventeen, with nearly as many girls as boys. Seven of the children were aged three and under and ten were aged between four and 14. Altogether five households have a child under the age of three, and six households have a child between the ages of 4-14. Except for two children who were born in Europe, the rest were born in the U.K. and are third generation[197] migrants and British citizens.

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[197] Third generation here refers to those who are born and brought up in the UK, but could also refer to those who were not born in the UK, but had their primary school education here (see Chapter Seven). In the Chinese community, there are those who were born in the UK but were brought up in Hong Kong till they were in their teens. They could be considered second generation for that reason.

Table 5.4: Household structure

Household	No. of children	Age and sex of children	Household structure
Chan	2	2 (M) 1 mth (F)	Nuclear + non-resident grandparents
Fan	2	12 (F) 8 (M)	Lone parent
Wong	2	5 (F) 3 (M)	Nuclear
Ho	2	9(M) 2 (M)	Nuclear+ non-resident grandparents
Kwok	2	14 (F) 13 (F)	Nuclear+ non-familial residents
Lee	2	3 (M) 7 mths (F)	Extended (3 Gn stem+ nuclear)**
Pang	2	4 (M) 1(M)	Lone parent+ non-resident grandparents
Tang	3	12 (F) 8 (F) 6 (M)	Nuclear + non-resident grandparent

**'Stem' consists of grandparents, child and his/her family

The sample of households and their household structure is detailed in Table 5.4. There is a diversity of household structures ranging from two lone parent households to one household composed of three generations. The Lee household may be described as an extended family household made up of a stem family of grandparents, their child and his/her family, and another son and his wife (Li 1994:53). All the households except for the Tang household have two children, which is quite the norm in Chinese families in Britain at the present time.[198] Non-resident grandparents are included in the household structure of four households because of the close relationships and exchanges between them. Three out of the eight households do not have grandparents included in their household structure. The Kwok household shows an unconventional household structure in the sense that the nuclear family hosts a number of other residents who lodge at the house, one of whom is a 17 year-old ward. The

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[198] The average number of children among Chinese families surveyed in the EYDCP Parental Childcare Needs Survey (2001) was 1.63 (see page 135).

composition of this household would change according to the number of tenants who stay there. The structure of other households also changes when a grandmother from abroad comes to visit, sometimes for periods of six months to a year. This occurs particularly in the Chan and Wong households, which may be described as quite typical of transnational households because of this strong overseas link. Before Mrs Pang was separated from her husband, her mother-in-law also came to visit and was very much a part of the household. To obtain a clearer picture of how the families are embedded in their networks of local and overseas ties, the following section provides network 'portraits' of each family.

Individual families and their support networks

> 'Networks are a significant constituent of the moral and normative context which impinges upon the individual. They also provide a potential resource of informal support, able to offer various types of practical help. The notion of social network as a resource therefore encompasses both aspects of the divide within sociological theory - both the facilitative as well as the constraining elements of social structure.'
> (Brannen and Moss 1991:228)

Evidence from the research shows that childcare is often heavily dependent on family networks and the proximity of family and friends. In order to have a picture of the configurations of the significant relationships that surround each family, the family and friendship networks of each of the households will be described first, and then there will be a discussion about other support networks. The following key applies to the diagrams that accompany the descriptions of the various families in the sample:

KEY

Δ male   O female   Δ̷ deceased

══ marriage tie   ═╱ separation   ¯¯¯¯ temporary liaison

━━━━ Strong network tie   └─┬──┴─┬─┘

                                       Gender unknown

··············· Weak network tie

Residence in Newcastle

Residence in U.K.

Residence abroad

The terms 'close-knit' and 'loose-knit' will be employed in the description, as well as the concepts of strong and weak ties to describe the nature of the relationships (see Chapter Three, page 81). Family trees will also be constructed and depicted as much as possible from the accounts given by household members. As such, the diagrams that will be used to portray families and residences together with their networks will show only those significant ties (represented by bold lines) that the family under discussion has (Figure 5.1). The ties that other families have with each other, represented by the dashed lines will thus not be depicted nor discussed.
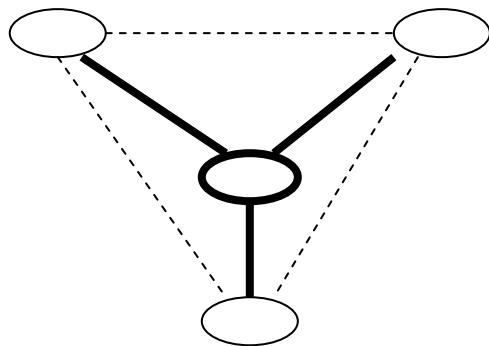
Figure 5.1: Significant ties

Families with close-knit family networks

Figure 5.2: Chan family and networks
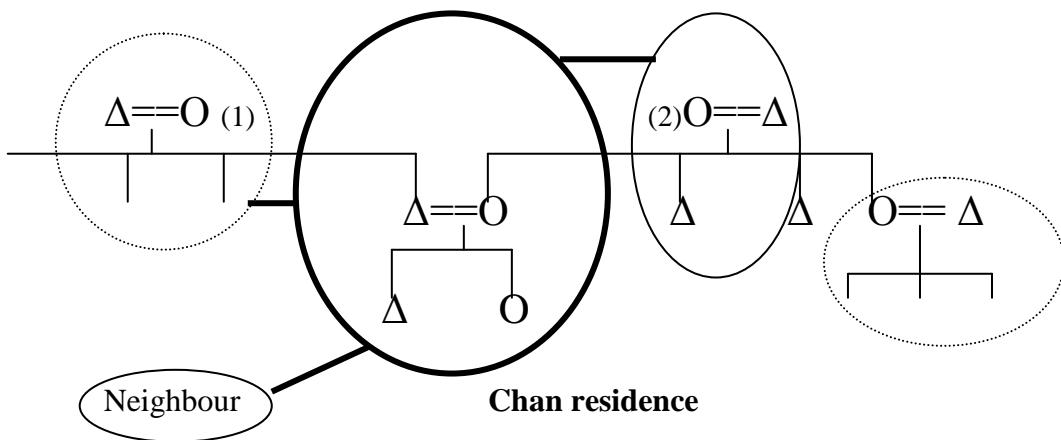
The Chan Family

The Chan family is linked to the families of the two sets of grandparents. One link is a transnational link as the paternal grandmother (1) has spent a considerable amount of time with the Chans in the U.K., and the family also travel abroad to visit regularly. The local tie with Mrs Chan's mother (2) is also a strong tie, and although the family is not in Newcastle, it is in the North East. Because of the relationship that the Chan's son has built up with his neighbourhood friend, there is also a strong tie with this family. Although not shown in the diagram, the Chans are also very active in their church.

Figure 5.3: Ho family and networks

Hong Kong

Ho residence
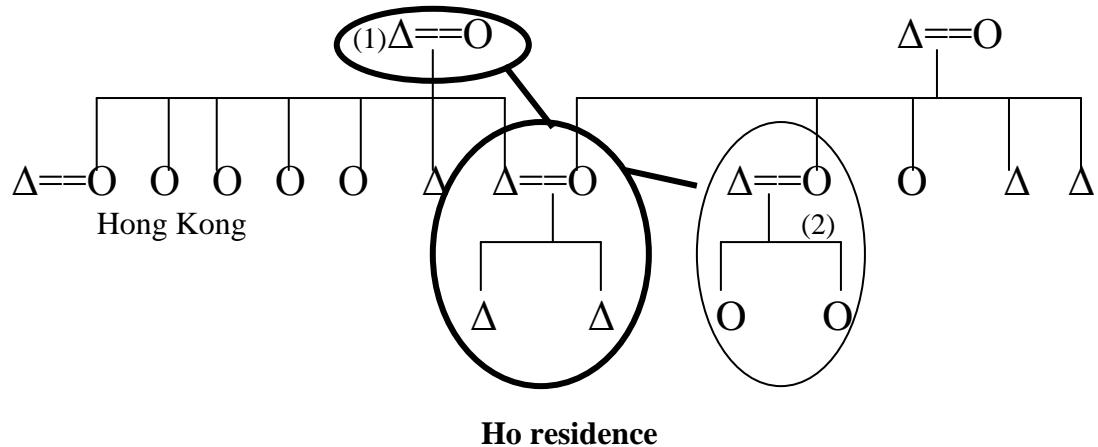
The Ho Family

The Ho family is close-knit in the sense that Mr Ho visits his parents (1) every weekend, and if there were any need for anyone to mind the children, the Hos would leave them with their grandparents. Almost every holiday, the Hos would also meet up with Mrs Ho's sister (2) who lives about an hour or so away in Yorkshire. Apart from these kin networks, Mr Ho has links with other members of the community through a badminton club and Mrs Ho through the Chinese Health Club and ESOL classes.

Figure 5.4: Lee family and networks

Lee residence
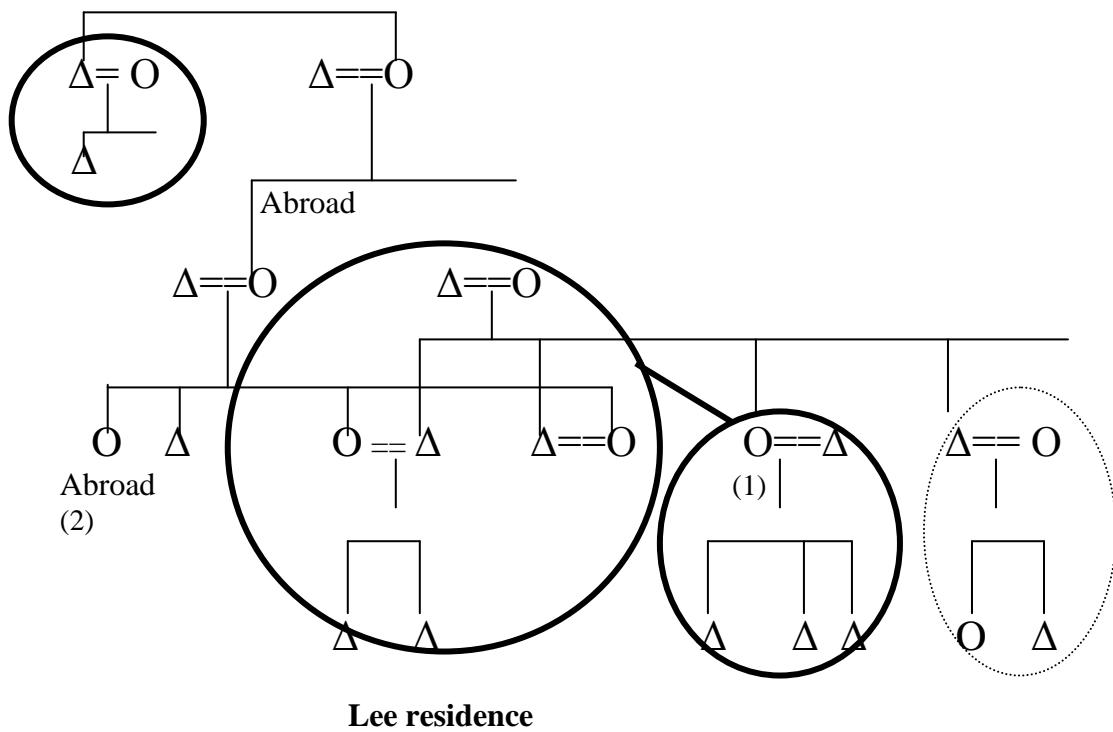
The Lee Family

The Lee family is a large three generational family with a very strong tie to another sibling's family (1) a few minutes drive away. The daughters-in-law of the Lee grandparents also are reported to have many relatives in the region, but contact with them appears to be limited or non-existent. Grandfather and Grandmother Lee have several children who are abroad (2), who they visit from time to time. Grandmother Lee is also very active in Chinese community activities such as the lunch club.

Figure 5.5: Pang family and networks

Abroad

Pang residence
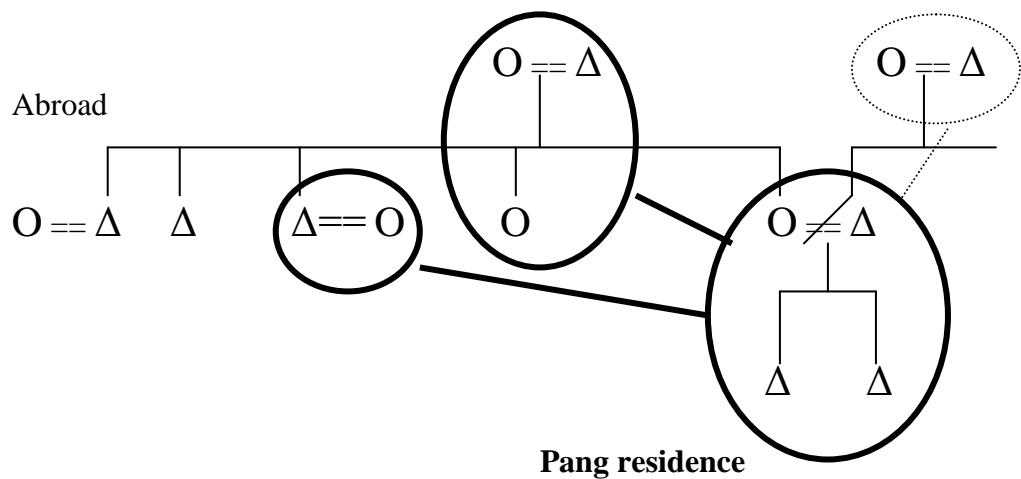
The Pang Family

The Pang family is also close-knit with two very strong ties and one weak transnational tie, which has been made even weaker after the separation of Mr and Mrs Pang. When the separation occurred, Mrs Pang and her children stayed with her parents for a period of time.

Figure 5.6: Tang family and networks

Tang residence
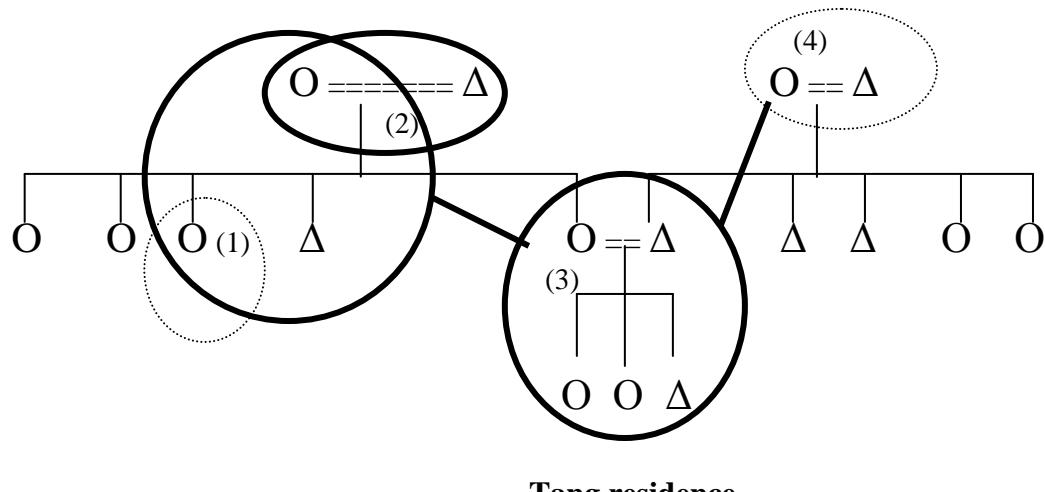
The Tang Family

The Tang family is also closely-knit to another family unit that is characterised by a transnational member (1). This is Mrs Tang's sister who owns the house, but works in Hong Kong. She returns to the U.K. during her holidays, and keeps in touch with her

family in the U.K. almost every day on the telephone.[199] Mrs Tang's parents (2) technically live together in the Chinese elderly home, but because Mrs Tang's brother is out at work for long hours, and someone is needed to look after the house, the grandmother spends most of her time in her son's home. This residence is closer to her daughter's family (3) and visits both ways are very regular. Mrs Tang's mother is therefore connected to three residences, namely her husband's, her son's and her daughter's (1), which may be considered as one large household altogether, or three *intersecting* households, one of which is abroad. But because of her care involvement in her daughter's family (3), she is included in their household for analytical purposes. Although Mr Tang has not visited Hong Kong for a long time, he and his family do keep in regular touch with his family (4) through the internet and a webcam. Apart from their kin networks, their links with the community are through their voluntary involvement in the Chinese community.

The family with a loose-knit family network

Figure 5.7: Wong family and networks

Wong residence
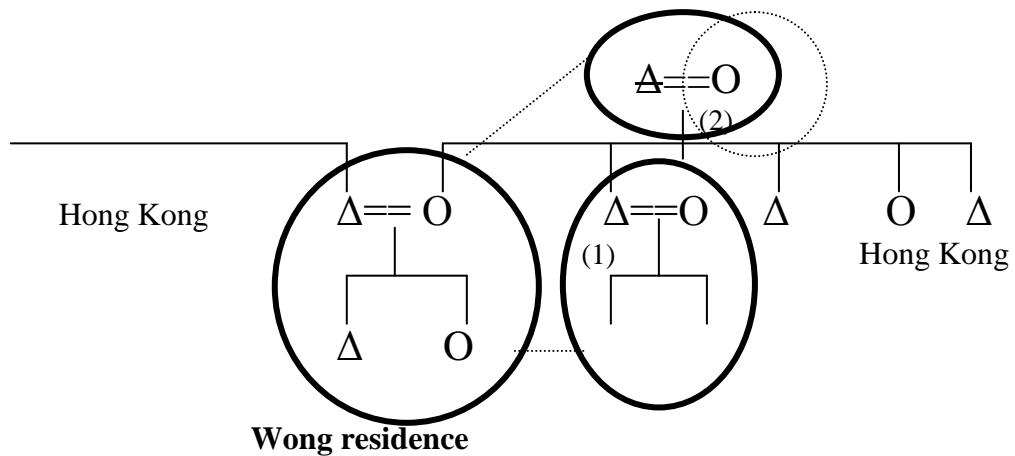
The Wong Family

Mrs Wong's brother (1) lives in Newcastle but because of his work commitments, the two families do not meet regularly. For example, when asked about meals out together, the Wongs would more often eat with their friends than with family. Mrs Wong's mother (2) is a British resident with property in Newcastle but sometimes

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[199] The sister living abroad is also an example of a transnational family tie in a diasporic extended family.

spends half the year in Hong Kong and the other half in the U.K.. When she lives in the U.K. however, she tends to live with either one of her children rather than in the house on her own. This relationship can be described as an example of a transnational family tie in a diasporic extended family.

Families with few/no local family ties

Figure 5.8: Fan family and networks
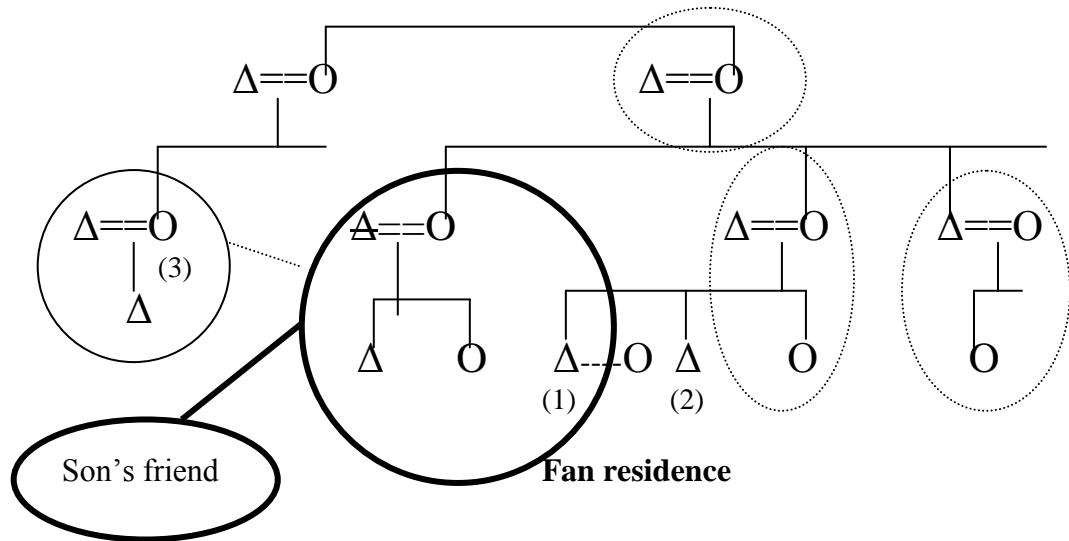
The Fan Family

Mrs Fan has a number of family members who live in Hong Kong, but the degree of contact with them is unclear. What is clear is that there are two nephews (1) and (2), who are studying in the U.K.. One stays in her home and can be considered as part of the family unit.[200] This nephew is the closest relative she has in the family, and has a girlfriend who has invited the family to meals with her own family. Apart from this, Mrs Fan's son Simon has a school friend whose mother is very friendly towards Mrs Fan and has built up a relationship of trust with her. The children also speak of an aunt who lives a distance away in the North East. She apparently has not visited them but has spoken on the phone to their mother. Other than family ties, Mrs Fan has links in the community through her ESOL classes and involvement in the Chinese Health Group that has allowed her to access voluntary work in the community.

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[200] This is according to the accounts from her children, but in her responses, she does not acknowledge this, and prefers to class him as having his own alternative living accommodation.

Figure 5.9: Kwok family and networks

Kwok residence
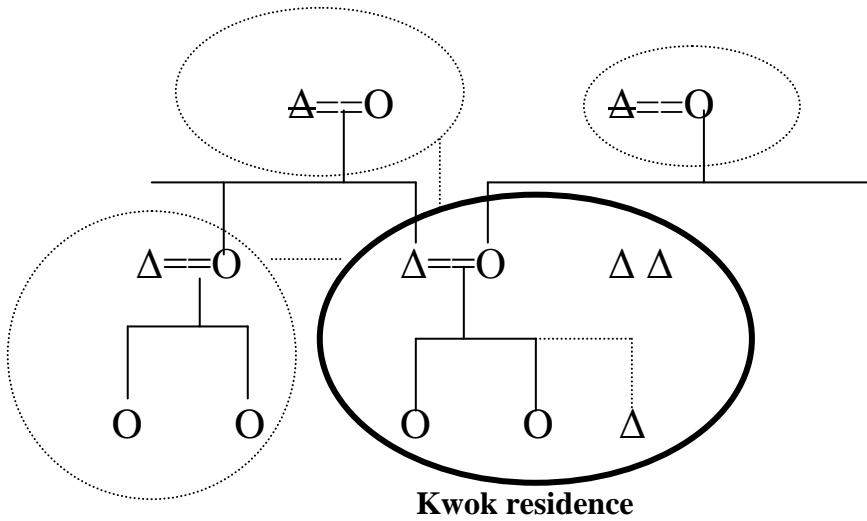
The Kwok Family

The Kwok household is separated from their family who are all overseas, which explains the fact that they can be classified as having few family ties. The transnational ties are still maintained to some extent as visits are made at intervals of a few years. One indicator of the very weak ties existing between these households is the children's lack of contact with their cousins through e-mail, telephone or letters. The Kwoks are also very involved in their church and have non-kin residents in their household.

Livelihoods, education, employment and self-employment

The households in the sample show significant variation in terms of their education, employment and income (Table 5.5). There are thus differences that are a result of class but also gender.

Table 5.5: Education, employment and income: gender and class

Parents	Education	Country of Education	Economic activity	Weekly Household Income (£)
Mr Chan	Higher education	UK	Full-time self-employed professional	601-700
Mrs Chan	Higher education	UK	Helping out part-time in family business	
Mrs Fan	Primary education	Overseas	Full-time mother Voluntary work	101-200 On Income Support
Mr Wong	Secondary education	Overseas	Full-time self-employed	201-300
Mrs Wong	Secondary education	UK	Helping out full-time in family takeaway	
Mr Ho	Secondary education	UK	Full-time employed chef	501-600
Mrs Ho	Primary education	Overseas	Full-time mother	
Mr Kwok	Higher education	UK	Full-time self-employed businessman	601-700
Mrs Kwok	Professional education	UK	Full-time employed	
Mr Lee	Further education	UK	Full-time employed in industry, and self-employed	Not available
Mrs Lee	Secondary education	Overseas	Helping out full-time in family takeaway	
Mr Pang	Higher education	UK	Student in casual work	101-200
Mrs Pang	Higher education	UK	Full-time self-employed	Receiving WFTC
Mr Tang	Secondary education	Overseas	Full-time employed takeaway cook	201-300
Mrs Tang	Secondary education	UK	Full-time mother	

Six of the parents have not gone beyond secondary education and two, both women, have not gone beyond primary education.[201] Seven parents have had some form of post-16 education with five having higher education. There are three couples with both husband and wife having higher or further education qualifications. None of them obtained these qualifications in their homelands. The incomes of the households range from four on incomes of £101-300 to three who are at the other end of the scale

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[201] Mrs Ho and Mrs Fan were involved in factory work from the age of 13 soon after they completed their primary school.

i.e. £501-700 a week. Only one of the households is on Working Families Tax Credit and only one on Income Support.[202]

There are a number of possible explanations for these small percentages for those on some form of state assistance. These include administrative complexity, the stigma and shame attached to receiving such help and the perception of the right to claim, which has been found to be particularly weak among the Chinese (Law *et al.* 1994a). There is also the problem of employers' working practices, something also expressed in an interview with one of my own respondents:

> Researcher: So you know about the Working Families Tax Credit?
> Mr Ho: Er child
> Researcher: Childcare tax credit?
> Mr Ho: Child er I I not very sure, but I heard before that not er that's it, I haven't try to find out the very clean the [ ] , I think for my mind or Chinese is that, they best not to claim any benefit, I I heard the child child family credit about one, one £70, or a £70 er a week, and anyway, my pay over and another ways, my boss pay, he always not collect them to pay the tax from the Chinese, so why we the Chinese not many want to try to claim the benefit, that's why we haven't try before, like we claim the every tax, children's tax, or council tax we haven't try it.

Catering and non-catering

The majority of the families have been involved in the catering trade either in the past or the present. Four parents grew up in catering families themselves, but only two (Mr Ho and Mrs Wong) have continued to work in this line of business. Mrs Chan was born in Britain and as a teenager she used to help out in the takeaway as well as look after her youngest brother. However she did not want to continue in the family business and went on to higher education and employment. Mrs Tang tried for a time

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[202] In the Parental Childcare Needs Survey of Chinese in Newcastle (see Appendix 10, Figure A.1), more than 30 per cent had incomes of between £183-268 a week (£9500-13999 a year) and only about 19 per cent had incomes of between £87-182 a week (£4500-9499 a year). A large proportion earned more than £346 a week (above £18000 a year). Around 6 per cent were on Working Families Tax Credit and 9.3 per cent were on Income Support.

to work with her husband in their catering business but stopped for various reasons. The Kwok household is the only household with no experience of being in the catering trade.

At the time of the interviews, altogether four families have individuals working in catering. Mr Ho and Mr Tang are employed as cooks, one at a restaurant and one in a takeaway. Being a head cook in a restaurant is financially more rewarding than being employed as a cook in a takeaway, and this is reflected in the different household incomes of the Ho and the Tang families.[203] Mr Wong and Mr Lee own their takeaways and work in them with Mr Wong as a cook and Mr Lee at the counter. Mr Lee also has another job as a company employee. He bought the takeaway a few years ago with his brother and now they and their wives run it after some initial help from their parents and his sister's son. His sister and brother-in-law also have their own takeaway business where Mr Lee's brother worked before starting up the new takeaway with him. After four years, business seems to be doing quite well and his brother is now buying a house of his own for his wife and the child that they are expecting.

Those who have married into a catering family have had to change their trade in order to survive. As an emerging social category of *mangeters*, they may have more capacities and skills than those in the older generation but they have not been able to utilise them and are sucked into a mode of livelihood that they have had to adapt to. Mrs Fan, Mrs Lee and Mrs Ho for example worked in factories in Hong Kong and China but their skills could not be used in Britain. Mr Wong worked in colorimetrics[204] colouring plastics and his last job was as a salesman selling rugs imported from China. He had to be trained to cook by his wife who used to work as a teenager in her family's takeaway in the U.K. and knows the trade well.

> Researcher: if you had a choice [ ] what will you do

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[203] Shang categorises the organisation of the restaurant trade in the following way (Shang 1984):
Sole proprietor or family
Larger establishments owned by wealthy proprietors
Partnerships consisting of kinsmen or fellow villagers from home, chefs being either partners or the highest paid employees
[204] Colorimetrics refers to the properties of colour and colour matching technology.

Mr Wong: yah I don't do the takeaway

Researcher: What will you do? What do you want to do?

Mr Wong: That one I don't know, I don't know what I can do,

Researcher: Mm. Right.

Mr Wong: Because er I need to make money, so I need to do the takeaway

Researcher: So the reason why you do the takeaway is to earn the money

Mr Wong: yeah

Researcher: If you had the choice, you won't do

Mr Wong: yeah.

Researcher: Right

Mr Wong: In Hong Kong, I didn't know how to cook

In the case of Mrs Lee who works full-time at the family takeaway and who has two children aged three years and seven months, it appears that she too has no choice in her work situation:

Researcher: so were you happy with the arrangements?

Mrs Lee: *To mo pan fat* (no other way out)

Researcher: if you had a,

Interpreter: Said that no no

Researcher: no choice what

(laugh)

Researcher: If she had a choice, if you prefer something else

Interpreter: yeah, she felt tired, she would like to stay in, (with) the children of course

Researcher: And look after them full-time, is it full-time or?

Interpreter: If she can get a part-time job and spend more time to look after the children, that's better

Fluency in the English language is one of the key skills in being able to enter the mainstream labour market in Britain, but this is far from easy to achieve. For example, Mr Ho related his struggle with trying to learn English as well as supporting his extended family in the U.K. because he is the eldest son. He used to work from 5.00

p.m. till 3.00 a.m. and then he would go to his English class, which was at 9.00 a.m. He did this class for two years part-time but had to abandon it because of marriage and having to concentrate on his work to support his family. Mr Wong has also spoken about his attempts to master the English language that he gave up, as he could not help dozing off to sleep at the classes.

Employment and self-employment

For many Chinese, there are structural constraints and barriers to entering the mainstream labour force that necessitates the formation of 'niche' markets, as earning a livelihood is the main concern. Culturally-based motivations are detectable such as the desire to be one's own boss, but economic survival and other factors also come into play, as the following discussion will demonstrate. In the sample, there are three couples (Chan, Wong and Lee) who are self-employed in their own family business and one mother and a father who are self-employed (see Table 5.5).[205] There are also examples of some families who have been involved in setting up their own businesses in the past but who have had to sell up. Only two families (Ho and Fan) have never ventured into self-employment. Evidence from the sample seems to suggest that if one is self-employed, it is more than likely that it will involve family labour based on the 'family work contract' in the 'family wage economy' (Song 1997a; Salaff 1984) as discussed in Chapter Four. In the Lee family business, the shop is run not by a single couple and older children but a close-knit extended family with grandparents, siblings and sibling's older children helping when needed. Looking at the Chan's retail business, family labour appears to be involved whether or not one is in the catering trade.

The household incomes of Mr Tang who is employed in a takeaway and Mr Wong who owns and works in a takeaway are not significantly different, so whether one benefits more from being self-employed in one's own family business is open to other considerations such as the location of the business and the clientele.[206] Self-

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[205] The Annual Local Area Labour Survey 2001/2002 recorded a high percentage of Chinese people (71 per cent as compared to the overall figure of 18 per cent) in self-employment (White 2002).

[206] As the Wongs are located in an area of the city that is populated by student residences in a deprived part of the city, they spoke about a drop in income as a result of students not being able to afford takeaway meals as much as they did before.

employment does however offer the advantage of flexibility in that when the Wongs' first child was born, they were able to shut the shop for a time, and then open with reduced working hours till the baby was more manageable. For some, resisting the social pressure towards self-employment was a result of family circumstances and a desire not to involve the wives in family labour. Mr Ho never went into setting up his own business because of his family responsibilities. At that time, he had his mother, two younger sisters and a younger brother to support as his father no longer worked. Mr Ho's relatives strongly encouraged him to start his own takeaway but he prefers to be employed as a chef as he does not wish his wife to have to work because of her poor health and also because of the priority he places on his children's welfare. His decision is influenced by the fact that his mother made huge sacrifices and worked to support all of them in Hong Kong when his father failed to provide for the family.[207] Only when the children are older might he think of starting his own takeaway.

On the other hand, Mr Tang and his wife had to cut their losses and give up their takeaway business. They now live in council housing close to the city centre whereas they used to own their own home. Mr Tang now prefers being employed as a cook, and like Mr Ho, prefers his wife to concentrate on looking after the children. Mrs Tang describes running your own business in this way:

> Mrs Tang: I don't have any, once you, once you have a shop you find that money is very tight, you have to spend it for for all given to the shop, for the all the bills

Mrs Tang worked as a waitress for more than ten years before she and her husband set up their own business. However, the options that Mrs Tang now has are limited because of the demands of childcare, coupled with poor job prospects that are a result of language and job limitations as well as the influx of new migrants.[208] Mrs Pang and her husband decided to buy a takeaway a few years ago but because of the strain of

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[207] He also mentioned a pension scheme, requiring him to have a secure form of work till he is fifty-five.

[208] As has been noted in Chapter Four, the number of work permit issues to Chinese in catering occupations rose from 14 per cent in 2000 to 21 per cent in 2002 (Clarke and Salt 2003).

childcare and the distance involved, it folded up. After a spell being employed, she decided to start her own business but not in catering.

The Chan and Kwok households are not in the catering industry but also exhibit a strong trait of Chinese families in that the heads of households are both self-employed. However, the fact that they are running successful businesses has much to do with their human capital accumulation, compared to other households with fewer resources. The 'ideal' of being 'your own boss' is very strong in the Chinese community, but involves a lot of sacrifices and risks, more so for some families than others. Sometimes these are too much to bear and parents have to weigh up their priorities in a value system that is increasingly different from their own parents.

Women and men

Interestingly, all the mothers in the sample were economically active when they left school whether overseas or in Britain. This is because the unmarried women's income or labour supply makes a significant contribution to the family's means of survival and prosperity and can constitute a disincentive to marrying while they are young. 'Work' has also often been cited in the interviews with other members of the community as the main reason for young people delaying marriage and having children later. Those who have left work to care for children however face significant disadvantages. Mrs Tang believes she is getting too old to return to work and added:

> Mrs Tang: Difficult to me, is so many, is I think, different Chi, to work in
> Chinese restaurant no, they prefer someone younger to work in Chinese,
> when they, I don't know what kind I can do, actually[209]
> Researcher: But a lot of the younger ones don't want to work in Chinese
> restaurants
> Mrs Tang: But still is like like nowadays, still so not just Chinese, they
> employ like some people from Thailand, from China
> Researcher: Yeah there're lots, a lot

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[209] She seems to imply here that restaurateurs prefer young, pretty girls as waitresses.

Mrs Tang: Yeah it's not, nowadays, people like people from Macau they come over here, er lots of people from Macau nowadays here[210]…..

Researcher: …So you can't think of something you would like to do

Mrs Tang: Not at the moment

Researcher: Or help when he starts another business (laugh)

Mrs Tang: I don't think so. Er he wants me to look after children more

Researcher: But when they are grown up?

Mrs Tang: Still they were

Researcher: ten year, ten years time, they'll be 16 and all

Mrs Tang: No, when they getting bigger you you will they will you will more trouble, you will worry more because when they get older you will get worry about more about what kind of friend they will meet and things (like that)

From the research, there appears to be a preference on the part of husbands for their wives to concentrate on looking after the children. Like Mrs Tang, Mrs Fan and Mrs Ho are full-time mothers with children of different ages. When Mrs Fan's husband worked in a restaurant, she used to look after her children full-time. She says that now that he has passed away, she is restricted to working in the catering sector because she is not proficient in English. However, she will only work hours while her children are at school, and she is also concerned about the loss of social security benefits. In the meantime, she has found some voluntary work among the Chinese elderly. Mrs Ho is also weak in English and used to work before she had health problems. She would like to be able to work when her younger son is older.

Mrs Chan, as the only British-born Chinese mother in the sample is fairly typical of those in the second generation who have worked in their parents' businesses, so well described in other research accounts (Song 1997b; Song 1997a; Parker 1995). Mrs Wong and Mrs Lee could also be described as quite typical of those women who work

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[210] Those from Macau are at an advantage because of their European passports. According to Mr Kwok, an agency was set up to recruit workers from Macau for the catering trade in the U.K. and these workers were willing to work for £160-200 a week whereas British Chinese would not. They came between the early to mid-90s. After the economic downturn in '96 and '97, others who are more desperate would even work for £80-100 a week. They met the demand for workers in more isolated rural areas, which were not popular with British Chinese.

in their family takeaway often under very difficult circumstances. Mrs Pang and Mrs Kwok on the other hand are both well-qualified and both work full-time, but Mrs Pang works in her own business whereas Mrs Kwok is employed.

All the men except for Mr Pang are economically active on a full-time basis. Mr Lee is full-time employed but also works in his family takeaway in the evenings. From all accounts, it appears that they are fulfilling cultural expectations of being the main breadwinner in the family. Looking more carefully at the household division of labour however, there are signs that there is some moving away from patriarchal norms.

Two cases for example serve to exhibit this. In Mrs Pang's case, before they were separated, Mr Pang used to help out in his wife's business. For Mr Kwok on the other hand, his wife is quite a few years older than himself and a self-made professional who is not involved in his business.

Migration, transnationalism and bringing up children

Migration and the Chinese 'family-as-a-unit'

In looking at the impact of migration, we recall the importance of the 'family-as-a-unit' that originates from the value system of 'familism', the family work contract (Song 1997b; Song 1997a) and the practice of family wage labour (Salaff 1984) [see Chapter Four page 129]. Whatever individual members of the family do is 'for' the family, even if it involves travelling from afar or working in a back kitchen for extended hours. It appears that for the Chinese community, the institution of the family continues to be preserved across class, generation and regional differences, but may take different forms, including less patriarchal and even less hierarchical versions, as grandparents are depended upon increasingly for childcare. I would however argue that their migration experience has served to strengthen the idea of 'familism' among parents as a form of cultural maintenance in a Western environment.

According to Mr Ho, in the 'Chinese style', a person would put the family first, but then he says later that often Chinese women would put work before the children and continue to work even when they had small children. In the Chinese priority of things, therefore 'work' is not at odds with 'family' as it is in the modern Western mindset,[211] because prioritising 'family' does not necessarily mean prioritising children's needs, but the whole 'family-as-a-unit', its self-preservation and continuity. In Mr Ho's opinion, the Chinese value of being industrious is so highly regarded that those English women perceived as having a child so as to be able to receive state assistance instead of working are looked upon unfavourably. The institution of the family as opposed to its constituent parts also requires that respect is accorded to elders, something mentioned by many respondents as being of importance, e.g. Mrs Kwok, Mr Wong and Mr Lee for example who thinks that English people are 'so terrible' at in this respect.[212] Mrs Pang also claims that family is everything to her, and family values are taught to the children in the Tang family who are expected to help in the house, so that in the future they will also put their own family first and not be irresponsible. One result of this emphasis on the 'family-as-a-unit' is that individual needs of women in the family, in particular the 'daughter-in-law', can get subordinated by family needs that are of higher priority. The idea of the family as a self-sufficient unit is so strong that any outside involvement is often seen as an intrusion.[213]

Some ambivalence to the general norms described above is also seen in the preference of some of the Chinese husbands that their wives should not take up paid work. This is the result of a number of factors, e.g. a sufficiently adequate household income, the lack of informal childcare, their migration experience, Western influences as well as the economic environment. Care and work strategies are influenced by family networks but also by work settings and the availability of employees.[214] The strength

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[211] Black mothers too look upon full-time work as 'good mothering' (Duncan and Edwards 1997).

[212] In the household research, the role of grandparents in working parents' households is negotiated in such a way as not to deny them respect, but in other studies, there is evidence that this is not always the case (Chiu and Yu 2001).

[213] For example, there are those like the Chans with negative attitudes towards strangers coming into the home but which may not be confined to being a Chinese value. However this is not borne out with the recorded examples of young adults who are not kin (usually students) and who are recruited to help out in looking after younger children. This may be an adaptation, or concession to living abroad.

[214] This is shown in the Chan and Wong households.

of family ties as described in the previous section is much reduced because of the geographical dispersal of families. While some are able to depend on transnational links, other families are quite isolated. This often results in a heavier burden of responsibility for each family member, translating into a greater burden for the mother, who has been described as doing everything in the household by the focus group, with the expression 'one foot kick'.[215] Certainly this was the case for several of the women respondents, whether or not they are in paid work. Exceptions to this include Mrs Lee, who has some assistance from other members of the extended family.[216] In the Kwok family, there is a clear division of household tasks, with Mr Kwok cooking, the girls doing the washing up and Mrs Kwok handling the finances. With self-employment, the workings of the household are often bound up with the family business with no clear boundaries. This is especially so for the Wong family where the household residence and the business are in the same building.

The parent who has lived for a longer period in the country often has a heavier responsibility of care, in contrast to the *mangeter* who has arrived more recently. Thus Mr Ho and Mrs Wong, with their greater facility in the language and knowledge of the country, took a lead in helping their spouses adapt to the environment. Mr Ho for example introduced his wife to his friends, interpreted for her at visits to the doctor until they were able to access the interpreting service, and took care of their child's admission into school. When his wife was ill, he took over most of the housework.

Finally, the effect of migration history is particularly pertinent to individuals like Mrs Chan and Mr Ho in influencing the understanding of their role in the household. The fact that Mrs Chan herself did not have the care of her parents when she was young has influenced her to give time and affection to her own children over and above material things. She probably speaks for a lot of Chinese who have experienced being sent to Hong Kong to be looked after by relatives while their parents worked in the U.K. and also those who have not had the attention of their parents because both were at work.

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[215] Expression used at the focus group, 9 March 2001, 1.30-2.30 p.m. to mean 'doing it all'.
[216] When asked about how household tasks were divided, Mr Lee said that it was a case of everybody chipping in as and when they could.

Mrs Chan: so that that definitely has affected, and also the fact that I've been lacked, er, I think love, attention, tenderness you know, giving them time is more, more than toys or money, you know

Researcher: mmhm

Mrs Chan: materialistic things can give, and that's why, I try and give them a lot of that

Researcher: mm

Mrs Chan: you know cuddles and things like that which, in my time, never had you know

Western values, education and transnational dilemmas

The decision of individuals to develop or not develop networks is constrained by their social situations, (such as living in a deprived part of the city) but also influenced by the values and norms that they subscribe to. These in turn are affected by their migration experience. At two extremes are Grandfather Lee and Mr Wong. Grandfather Lee for example appreciates the fact that in the U.K., every child gets to go to school, something that the developed world takes for granted. However, like many Chinese, Mr Wong is mainly concerned about his daughter not really being 'like a Chinese', and that she will not be taught to respect her parents.

Mr Wong (interpreted): We Chinese value Chinese culture, respect parents, I don't feel that here they will teach this, it seems as though there is nothing like this (here) so (in terms of) personal development we don't feel that she is like a Chinese, so we will consider going to Hong Kong to learn a bit of this so that my interaction with her will be better.

Parents like Mrs Wong and Mrs Tang with school-age children have expressed their dissatisfaction with education in Britain, particularly the lack of homework. Teaching

Chinese to their children is also a lot more difficult here than if they were in their homeland.[217]

Interestingly, Mr and Mrs Chan who are very middle-class and Westernised, are the most critical of British norms and values. Mr Chan believes that his children are more fortunate being brought up in Britain as opposed to abroad, specifically in terms of education, and yet he has many reservations about Western values. In view of this, they have committed themselves to bringing up the children themselves without any formal childcare assistance even though they are able to afford to do so. This is so that they can lay the firm moral foundations they feel are necessary for living in Britain. As he elaborates:

> Researcher: Would you say they were Chinese values
>
> Mr Chan: yeah, yeah, very much so, I think, we have lost a lot of confidence in well, the sense of value in the Western world as it were
>
> Researcher: Right
>
> Mr Chan: so that's why we didn't want him, to pick these up
>
> Researcher: Right, so even your wife, who has been brought up, in the British system much of her life, has the same kind of feeling as you or
>
> Mr Chan: well even more so I think

There is a clear disapproval of the way some children are brought up here and an expectation that some of what is lacking can be made up for by early years education. Mr Chan does acknowledge that this Western trend is finding its way to East Asia with the tendency to spoil children because there are smaller families nowadays. He believes that he is in a privileged position in being able to compare the two systems of education, overseas and in Britain. He is also of the opinion that childcare provision is much better here than abroad. However, from Mrs Chan's experience with her British-born younger brother who was educated in a state school, she feels that primary education is wanting in that the fundamentals are not taught properly enough although children are encouraged to develop creativity and independence. Manners

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[217] Mrs Wong prefers living in Hong Kong, where her husband would be the sole breadwinner and she would have more time to look after her children. This is rather idealistic as in reality in present-day Hong Kong, often both parents have to work and in several jobs to make ends meet.

are important to her as she sees children who do not show respect such as when they do not greet adults.

What they see as their solution to the dilemma about their children's education is also framed by their own experience as children.[218] Because of the concerns she and her husband had about the education system here, they contemplated sending their first child abroad to be looked after by relatives. However, Mrs Chan's memories of being parted from her own parents for most of her childhood have influenced her decision not to do so. The alternative was for her to accompany her son abroad, but that would have affected their marriage and her job prospects. They also thought of moving abroad for ten years or more as a family for the sake of their children's education but felt it was too much to sacrifice in terms of their business.

Most parents like Mrs Tang prefer not to associate with the white community, going out only with Chinese friends:

> Researcher: Okay, um, so do you have many friends in the neighbourhood, English friends,
> Mrs Tang: English friends no. I just say hello, I don't get eh I don't really bus, go, but also I don't go out, if I'm stay at home all the time if I'm in the house, I stay inside the house, I don't go outside

Fathers like Mr Tang and Mr Lee have more opportunity to associate with non-Chinese in their workplaces, but leisure times are spent with those of their own community. Mrs Pang on the other hand, is not keen on the Chinese community and their sense of values, describing them as calculative and full of gossip. She much prefers the Western values of openness and generosity.

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[218] Although for Mrs Chan's generation, it was quite common for children to be sent overseas to be brought up by relatives while both parents had to work, things are now changing. After establishing their businesses and with more relatives settled in the U.K. who can be involved in 'helping out', many have opted for keeping their children with them. Many takeaways now shut during the lunch hour and one day a week, leaving more time for the parents to be with their children. Parents also take more time off work. This is due also to business slow-down and competition from 'buffet bars', which can act as takeaways as well, and Chinese ready-made meals sold in the big supermarkets. This is related to me by one of the gate-keepers in the Chinese community.

The dilemma that parents can have when trying to put into practice values that they subscribe to, can show up a certain hierarchy in their value system: Mr Chan talks about the efforts they made in exposing their son to different settings and children and to teach him that 'life is not just full of rich kids'. This reveals a certain value system that recognises the importance of 'inclusion' perhaps, but after the boy's experiences in poorer settings, the parents are in a dilemma because they also do not wish their son to be picking up bad habits, which appeared to be the case, so that 'good behaviour', a prized value among Chinese takes precedence over social exposure. For other families like the Kwoks, who are committed Christians, one way of dealing with undesirable Western influences on their two teenage daughters is to enforce a certain regime in the family that includes assigned household tasks, no television (except for approved videos) and limited access to the internet. The girls do not show any outward resentment towards their parents for such restrictions, perhaps because they are given quite a lot of freedom to go in and out and spend time with friends.

Language, networks and identities of transnationals

Most of the household respondents did not identify themselves as British, but Chinese first and foremost. With regard to how far the children have a sense of Chinese identity, a number of factors are pertinent, in particular their relationships with their parents and grandparents, and their competence in Chinese. There are however different experiences that children have with language learning as a source of cultural reproduction that are dependent on class and family and friendship networks.[219] In the sample, there are four families whose children have been to Chinese language classes, and in most other cases, the children are able to communicate in Chinese, but are not able to write in Chinese beyond a few words and sentences. Simon's father Mr Ho

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[219] In one study, a range of abilities and attitudes to Chinese language learning was found to depend on class, family and friendship networks. Those without close-knit Chinese networks are likely to suffer language loss, intergenerational conflict and possibly some loss of cultural identity (Raschka *et al.* 2002).

complains that Simon (aged nine) has been attending the Chinese Sunday School[220] quite regularly for five years and has even won prizes, but is still unable to write more than a couple of sentences in Chinese.[221] His spoken Cantonese is also not up to standard, to such an extent that Mr Ho has had to adapt to his son's lack of proficiency:

> Mr Ho: but if I use Cantonese, like say something to him, he don't understand but he don't ask and eh don't do anything, that's look at you, then I ask him, understand? Then you try then other way I try to speak English then okay he understand is okay, so sometimes I have to use English, speak English for Simon

Only in one family are the children successful in Chinese literacy and there are various reasons for this. Mrs Tang's children attend the Chinese Sunday School regularly and are supervised by their mother in completing their homework. They also have a close relationship with their grandmother, who speaks Cantonese, the language variety taught at the school. The children also have friends in a Chinese youth group that they attend. Altogether they appear to be the most proficient in Chinese with the oldest child hoping to offer Chinese as one of her GCSE subjects in a few years time. That language maintenance is also dependent on class and household income is also borne out in the following examples. Mrs Fan the widow is unable to drive and cannot afford a car. Her children went to Chinese School for a while when there was someone who could give them a lift there and back, but when this friend stopped attending, they stopped as well. There is another school that is closer to Mrs Fan's home but the cost is a deterrent to her. Her situation contrasts with Mrs Chan who is able to provide her son with regular Chinese lessons by a private tutor. She prefers this option to the Chinese School because she feels that once a week is not sufficient.

To facilitate their children's learning of Chinese, some parents like the Wongs have expressed their desire for their children to spend some time in Hong Kong to pick up

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[220] In Newcastle, there are two Chinese Sunday schools teaching mainly in Cantonese, and one class in a different venue on a Saturday, teaching Mandarin primarily to children from Mainland China.

[221] There are some possible reasons for this: there were problems in his relationships with the other children at the Chinese school. In addition, his grandparents speak Hakka, a Chinese language variety.

the language. However, unless children are left with relatives abroad, trips to the 'homeland' are an added expense and some families are more able to afford this than others. In spite of the problems with language learning, there is a good chance that children like Simon Ho, with their visits to Hong Kong, are still able to retain a transnational link with their parents' 'homeland'. This was graphically expressed in a picture that Simon drew for me (see Appendix 1). In this depiction of Hong Kong Island complete with links to China, there are Metro stations and the BBC so familiar to his life in Britain.

For those without such visits home, without the presence of grandparents, and little contact with the rest of the Chinese community, it can be a different picture. One adult, two teenagers and one child have identified themselves as 'British-born Chinese' or BBC, and there is also the derogatory term 'banana' used to describe the teenagers by a non-kin resident of the Kwok household.[222] This is because they do not speak much Chinese, and have adopted very Western attitudes and norms. In fact, when asked, they do not have many friends who are Chinese nor do they communicate much with their relatives in Hong Kong:

> Sarah: Um, not really no, I'm more used to having English friends, I don't
> really have many Chinese friends so it's a bit weird if I just, I don't know,
> I just feel a bit weird, if I just
> Researcher: Right, so you don't have any er friends er who are Hong
> Kong
> Chinese
> Sarah: not really
> Researcher: Not at the moment?
> Sarah: No, not really

When I asked about whether they would like Chinese lessons, the time factor was quoted as a problem and Sarah's sister Rachel said that she has had enough of 'school'. Mrs Kwok is also not particularly concerned with her children's lack of

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[222] This is a derogatory term to describe that they are yellow or 'Chinese' on the outside but white or 'Western' on the inside.

Chinese proficiency, as she would like them to be brought up 'like everyone else'. These children have grown up without much input from their grandparents as they are in Hong Kong. As evidenced here, their friendship networks are all with white peers.

Having looked at the children's language abilities and networks, it is important to examine also whether they have opportunities to develop networks and build their social capital.[223] Some children have very little opportunity to socialise and develop social skills.[224] For example, Mrs Fan's children had this to say about weekends, as I had met them previously helping mum with bags of shopping on a Saturday:

> Researcher: I know Saturdays are very important days for, for three of you when you go shopping right
> Tina (aged 12): Umhm
> Researcher: Do you enjoy that
> Tina: Um yeah
> Researcher: Just carrying all the stuff home (laugh) is a bit of a pain. And what do you do on Sundays?
> Tina and Sam (aged 8): Um, just stay in
> Researcher: Stay in all day
> Tina: yeah

The effect of staying in all day is likely to affect their ability to network and build relationships with the wider community. Sometimes opportunities to do so are curtailed by parents' work schedules:

> Mr Tang: Yeah so I I don't mind, working on a Saturday and Sunday as well, so it's a not affect me anything like, I don't have a weekend off[225]
> Researcher: Umhm

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[223] Social capital as the sum total of social networks and the norms of reciprocity is increasingly seen as a valuable asset to communities and responsible for the success of certain immigrant communities over others (Portes 1995).

[224] This was one of the first concerns conveyed to me by a Chinese community worker who was one of the gatekeepers in the research.

[225] Mr Tang and Mr Ho expressed their dislike of going to the pubs, which they believe most British people frequent. Mr Tang here says he does not mind working at the weekends unlike the British with their pub culture which he does not subscribe to.

Mr Tang: ya, sometimes is er affect is like, the girls er need to go to the
party,

Researcher: Um

Mr Tang: I cannot pick it, I cannot pick them, so they miss them

Researcher: Oh right

Mr Tang: So, that's the one thing…..

While a large part of the previous chapter was dedicated to the education of Chinese children, there was little evidence from the household research that children were experiencing any educational disadvantage in their compulsory schooling, apart from their ability to reach good standards of in learning the Chinese language. The attempt to rectify this with Chinese classes, together with the limitations to their social activities and networks is likely to be a key element in the formation of their cultural identities. From the perspectives of their adult carers, their aim is to ensure that these children turn out as well behaved, disciplined, hardworking and respectful individuals. The tension between work and parenting, as well as transnational dilemmas are undoubtedly there, and different families cope with this differently according to their resources.

Bringing up children in Britain: the Chinese way

In Chapter Four, the traditional patriarchal Chinese family was described as one that places a lot of emphasis on orderliness and right relationships, with respect for authority, duty and obedience being of key importance. I have demonstrated in the previous section that this ideal is modified by the migration experience and the economic circumstances of particular households. Having examined the options and constraints that parents face when seeking to instil in their children a sense of their Chinese cultural heritage, particularly through language learning, I now go on to look more carefully at the practical impact that paid work has on the workings of the family-as-a-unit. We find that there is a range of experiences based on whether the families are dual-earner or single-earner families, and whether they are self-employed, employed or unemployed. The paid work or family labour that each parent is involved

in also structures their ability to fulfil their role as 'good' parents. Household income provides not only the resources for the provisioning of the household but also for the educational upbringing of children. Parenting is also inextricably tied up with all the activities of daily life that ensure its continuity but which are unpaid and often unrecognised, i.e. housework, shopping, cooking, caring and educating, and having time for recreation. One characteristic of most of the families is their reliance on this unpaid work by grandparents (whether they are in Britain or come from abroad) especially around the birth of children. For those parents who are working as family labour or in paid employment, only two women have accessed formal paid childcare in order to continue to be in the labour market. The preference then, is for informal unpaid childcare, and to adapt the care of children around work spaces and routines.

The nature of parenting in the Chinese family is not only a result of the workings of the 'family-as-a-unit', but also a product of a range of different factors such as the age of the parents, their origins, their length of residence in the U.K., (see page 143) and their own family experiences. It appears that those who have been well-disciplined in their childhoods wish their own children to be similarly disciplined, and those whose relationship with their own parents have been less than ideal, work to develop better relationships with their own children. The nature of the involvement of parents in the care of children also depends on whether the children are infants, pre-school or school-age children. In keeping with their traditional values, most parents appear to prefer formal learning environments to provide more structured activities for children and for sufficient discipline to be enforced in these environments. The influence of patriarchy on gender roles is observed in the way that mothers, whether they are working full-time or not, have the prime responsibility for the upbringing of their children. Some fathers assist to greater extents than others and may make an effort to bond with their children more if they feel that their relationship with them is under some threat. Whether or not the new family is living with the grandparent generation also has an impact on parenting roles. The values underlying parental preferences are influenced by Confucian teachings about discipline, respect and hard work but there is some evidence of the influence of Western norms in those families that are Christian.

Paid work, family relationships and parenting

Let us start by looking at the fathers. The husbands interviewed seem to want to spend more time with their children but they are constrained by their work schedules, which have priority because of their role as breadwinners. This has been corroborated by evidence from interviews with gatekeepers. Although there were some comments in the focus group[226] that complained against the fact that women were the ones who did the most in the household, there were no such 'complaints' from the women in the household interviews. For example, in the Wong family where both husband and wife own and work in their takeaway, Mrs Wong appeared to be very understanding of her husband's plight in trying to spend time with their two children aged three and five:

> Researcher: But [ ] you are the one who does it ah
>
> Mrs Wong: Yeah
>
> Researcher: Not your husband
>
> Mrs Wong: Because he he he not, so worry about his work, maybe he's too tired, because he get up, he go to bed about four o'clock,
>
> Researcher: Oh, later than you
>
> Mrs Wong: And get up half past eight
>
> Researcher: Oh ya, he's got to fetch
>
> Mrs Wong: Until until the next day, yeah because he go, he got to
>
> Researcher: Fetch
>
> Mrs Wong: Yeah take my girl to the place
>
> Researcher: School
>
> Mrs Wong: But I don't have to, so he after that er, half past nine and he go to school [playgroup] again, so he don't have time, so he bit hard for him,
>
> …

For Mr Wong, when asked about his concerns for his children, his first wish was to have time to spend with his children, and when asked what his main worry was, his answer reflecting his role as financial provider was:

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[226] Focus group, 9 March 2001, 1.30-2.30 p.m.

Mr Wong: No, *yau mo chin pei* [whether you have the money to give them....]

Something as basic as spending time with children is what both parents struggle with in the Wong family. Mrs Wong is pressed to find time to check on her daughter's work. She catches the odd half hour when there are no customers or when the child is asleep, or after work in the early hours of the morning before she retires, and takes some time with her daughter in the morning to comment on her work. Her husband on the other hand is not involved in their schoolwork. At other times, they go together as a family everywhere, such as to parent consultations at the school, and the cash-and-carry. Because of their busy schedules, Mrs Wong would prefer her children to be in close proximity to her even though she may not have the time and ability to give them her whole attention. She is more comfortable leaving her five and three-year-olds upstairs in the presence of a television rather than for them to be away from her. This is supported by Song's findings that Chinese takeaway owners feel childcare is more viable in the shop because in a self-employed establishment, there is much greater control and autonomy (Song 1995). The Wong family is similar to other Chinese described by Mr Ho, when he explained why he preferred his wife to concentrate on the children:

Mr Ho: lot of friend, my friend got a family and takeaway something like that. They, I saw them, they out the children, because they working hard, and working hard downstairs, so they got child, they leave them own all upstair, my friends

Researcher: Upstairs?

Mr Ho: Yah, very very small, they oh leave the upstair, my so many so many friend like sit go up, so alway compare with family, so what I said to my wife, I don't want your son complain me, and if you go out to working and leave your son or like if like, like if I find a takeaway job, help me to do the business, then your son will say that, because we both working for the takeaway. You don't thinking you can do got a son look after, then you have to do same thing all people leave their son own

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upstair, when they grow up they won't like close with you or they will same like my all so many friend they got a lot of problem with family.

Researcher: They have?

Mr Ho: So, so, that's why I, first I, for my wife always on the family first,

…

There is an indication here of a lack of time for parent-child relationships in the face of requirements to provide financially being a common problem in the Chinese community, and an assessment of where that originates, i.e. the 'takeaway' where the residence is 'upstairs'. It also comes across that Mr Ho does not want his sons to accuse them later of not being good parents, particularly if they both work in their own takeaway. However it is also clear that the onus is on the mother and her responsibility, reflecting a patriarchal view of the way things should be. Like Mrs Chan, Mr Ho spent half his childhood in Hong Kong and would like to put the family first, thus being careful not to follow his father's footsteps leaving the family to fend for themselves in Hong Kong. When the Ho family moved to their own house, Mr Ho who works as a restaurant cook would not begrudge his younger son wanting to play with him at seven in the morning even though he had not had a lot of sleep.[227] He sleeps in another room so as not to wake his wife and son who sleep together when he comes in from work.

The priority for Chinese fathers is as breadwinners, and this is even more demanding for those like Mr Lee, who works as a company employee during the day and in the takeaway that he owns in the evenings. Mr Lee's children are aged three and seven months:

Mr Lee: Quite at the minute, quite busy, know, after finish, the work,

Researcher: Mmhm

Mr Lee: Go home, have my tea, make a change and go to the, the shop again so like er, not many, chance spend

Researcher: Very hard work, holding down, doing two jobs

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[227] This pattern of being disturbed in the mornings by younger children is the same for Mr Lee and Mr Tang, both of whom also work in the catering trade, except that Mr Lee also works in a manufacturing company in the daytime.

Mr Lee: Yeah I know, yeah yeah

Mrs Lee is equally stretched working full-time in their takeaway business. As she only manages to sleep about four hours each time, often having to get up for the baby, she is very tired during the day.

In the context of paid work and other situations, most parents manage their childcare needs with the help of kin particularly their grandparents, but also friends and sometimes even staff who are available. Parents have been found to exercise all kinds of *creative flexibility* when they arrange for their children to be cared for. Far fewer turn to formal providers of care. The discussion of these various providers of care will come after more consideration of aspects of parenting i.e. the socialisation and education of children. This is so as to provide the background to their childcare choices.

Parenting, socialisation and education

In this section, the discussion will mainly concern those activities that have to do with the bringing up of children, their care, education and socialisation into adults. Generally, mothers and fathers share the responsibilities for these according to their ability and availability. The responsibility for activities centred in the home are largely the remit of the mothers in the sample, and this is particularly so for those who are not in paid work. There were at the time of the interviews three full-time mothers in the sample, with children of different ages. Mrs Ho has children who are nine and two, Mrs Tang has three children who are aged 12, eight and six, and Mrs Fan's children are 12 and eight. Mrs Ho appears to enjoy being a full-time mother and her husband has made it quite clear that that is what he prefers her to do for the time being. Among the three women, she is the only one with a toddler. Of the five remaining mothers who juggle paid work and childcare, four have children who are aged three and under.

A combination of the class element, education and family background and the migration history of particular families were found to influence parents' views of their role as parents. Generally, families in the sample with pre-school children were quite relaxed about their parenting responsibilities, unlike Mr and Mrs Chan who appeared to be very anxious to do all that was possible to give their children the best start in life. One explanation is that their Western education and middle-class background contrasts for example with those who are Vietnamese refugees or from the rural Hong Kong New Territories. For such families, what is considered best for the children has to be constructed around economic survival and sustenance, which have to take precedence.

The Chans place a high value on the educational development of their children, and after leaving her full-time job to have her first child, Mrs Chan in a sense found a new 'vocation' as a mother.[228] She surprised herself and her husband with her change in attitude.

> Mrs Chan: anyway but when he came along, it just totally changed me, (laugh) I just thought oh, I can't leave him with anybody else (laugh) so it, all that you know, all this career-mindedness, er it just disappeared out of the window

To Mr and Mrs Chan, there is a clear economic element in the role that they have as parents, with the use of the words 'invest' and 'dividends':

> Mr Chan:… in the two years that he [son, aged 2] had the full attention of my wife while he was at home, she made sure that, he doesn't just, well he's he's never alone in the sense, unless he wants to be, he never er, just plays all day, you know there will be times for reading, times for writing, times for you know, certain things, she's very very good at that, and it's paid a lot of dividends

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[228] Mrs Chan's mother had her children when she was 20 but Mrs Chan herself has taken time to pursue a career before finally becoming a mother at age 32.

> Mrs Chan: the amount of time I spend with, with er Seng Seng because I
> did spend a lot of time with him, I gave him a lot of my time and invested
> a lot of my time with him

Mrs Chan says she is constantly getting ideas about how to occupy her son from books and the television. She expressed pride at teaching her son to recognise pictures at a young age, teaching him pen control and shape recognition through tracing and impressing her husband's relatives with his abilities. Mr Chan is quite clear that they would not like to have more than two children because of the time element rather than the financial, in bringing them up to have values that are morally and culturally desirable.[229]

Mr Chan believes that there is a 'correct' way as opposed to a 'wrong' way to bring up one's child, with discipline as one of the most important aspects to him, based on his own strict upbringing:

> Mr Chan: I think the most, important thing that's been etched to into my
> mind, probably goes too for yourself, is the stern discipline that was
> instilled in us when we were very young, I mean we were caned, we were
> whipped if we did anything wrong, and that was acceptable, er, personally
> I think it's a shame kids are not, er punished, or smacked or caned or
> whatever you call it, enough in this country, that's my personal opinion,
> and it certainly, didn't do me any harm. It would, I mean I'm not saying
> that you know that I would cane my son for no reason, but I would be
> stern and I would be dis- I would discipline him. I see examples where
> kids er, parents just giving in to kids because they scream, and they wail
> and they stomp their feet. For my wife and I, if he screams and wails and
> stomps his feet, he's left, doing that. I would let him get on with it, and he
> would do that until he's finished

Mr Chan sees himself as the main disciplinarian, whereas he thinks his wife can be manipulated. He disapproves of parents who do not discipline their children enough

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[229] See page 167ff about their concerns about the inculcation of moral values.

and, if they were not learning it at home, would like children to learn some discipline in an early years setting such as a playgroup.

In some other families, fathers are also seen as the main disciplinarian, and particularly responsible for sons being socialised into their gender roles. Mr Ho for example feels that his nine-year-old son is trying to be close to him, but Mr Ho is more concerned that he should instead learn to be independent and not be so 'soft', which makes the boy a little bit upset. Good behaviour is important to Mrs Pang too and she takes pains to remind her own parents not to spoil their grandchildren with unwarranted treats. What seems to be important for her in parenting is the outcome that they are well behaved and that they know right from wrong. Compared to the Chans, she sometimes does smack them if they have been given enough warnings:

> Mrs Pang: that's why I say I just lose patience with him because I'm stressed out, you know, and and then I feel guilty afterwards that I smack him, because he's not listen to me because I feel that I'm smacking so hard (laugh)

Education is foremost in parents' minds especially if their children are in school. Mothers of school-age children find ways to support their children in their education, but some are able to manage this better than others. Mrs Tang makes an effort to help her children with homework and buys them revision guides for English and Mathematics. The children also have English tuition on a Saturday from a friend's daughter. Mrs Tang is also quite strict about her children having to finish their homework before anything else, in particular from Chinese School. Mrs Ho also helps her children but her English is not as fluent as Mrs Tang's, so the son also has an English tutor who comes to the house. Mrs Fan's English is even weaker than the other two women and finds it difficult helping her children in homework and is unable to afford a tutor. Eventually, apart from the mother's skills and capacities, the resources available to a household determine the degree to which a mother is able to support her children's educational development. In the other families, there is no explicit mention that it is any responsibility of the father to provide this educational support, which is ironic in those cases when it is the father who has lived in the

country longer and who is more proficient in English (i.e. Mr Ho and Mr Lee). Arguably, this is because they are working full-time.

Case studies of fathering

The perception of the father as provider is still very prevalent for the Chinese community. In the focus group of Chinese women, their idea of what is an essential role for their husbands is 'to earn the money', whereas 'it is the mother's responsibility to look after her own children'.[230] But the role of mothers in facilitating the involvement of fathers in the care of their children can be crucial in the management of family life and often it is the mother who has been responsible for allocating care responsibilities to the husband. 'Arrange' is the preferred word to 'being in-charge' from the point of view of Mr Tang:

> Researcher: But mostly she's the one who manages everything and sort of tells you
> Mr Tang: Most, yeah most of thing is
> Researcher: Most of this
> Mr Tang: She like er
> Researcher: She's like in charge ah?
> Mr Tang: Arrange not in charge
> Researcher: Arrange

In the examples of fathers who participate in the practical care of their children, this may be the result not only of the mother's instigation but a particular 'trigger' in the circumstances of the family such as moving out of the family home to set up a new family unit. Another contributing factor is the influence of a more 'westernised' outlook on parenting that comes from the social networks of the parents. The Chan and Kwok families are very committed Christians and regular church-goers who have a number of non-Chinese friends. Mr Ho used to attend the Chinese church in Newcastle with his parents, but has since stopped. Compared to the other fathers, the

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[230] Focus group, 9 March 2001, 1.30-2.30 p.m.

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fathers in these families have described a more active involvement in the care of their children. But involvement by 'helping out' to care for the children is quite different altogether from assuming a fair share of responsibility for the care, education and development of children. Overall with the exception of the Kwok family, this is still the domain of the mother whether she is in paid work or not.

Mr Chan's decision to spend more time with his older child resulted from his perception that his son was becoming so attached to his mother when she was looking after him full-time, that he was rejecting his father.[231] As a result, Mr Chan made a conscious decision to make time for the child, employing someone to work in his business so that he could have a day off to spend time with his son. There was also a change in his daily routine so that now he bathes both his son and month-old daughter every evening when he returns from work. When questioned further about other involvement in parenting, Mr Chan admits to only having some say in his son's daily routines if his wife actively discussed issues and consulted with him. The active parenting of the mother, who communicates to the father his son's developments, instils in him a sense of responsibility and desire to share in the parenting task.

When they had their first child, Mr and Mrs Ho were living with his mother and sisters and they felt that they were unable to look after the baby on their own and in their own way. When Mr Ho and his family moved out from living with his mother and sisters, and his wife gave birth to his second son, he was actively involved with the care of the baby. As his wife was very ill after the caesarean section, he did the housework and cooking, in spite of the long hours he himself worked as a cook. He preferred not to involve his mother because she was also poorly at the time, and he would take it upon himself to wake up in the night to attend to the baby and change his nappy. He explained that his dedication is a result of his own mother's dedication to her own family and his desire to be a good father to his 'dream family'.

In the Kwok family, there is some gender role-reversal possibly due to the fact that Mr Kwok is a lot younger than his wife, and that he is self-employed with more

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[231] Mr Pang was also unhappy with the situation that his son was always 'mummy's favourite' sticking to her 'like glue', so Mrs Pang made efforts to involve him more in taking care of the children.

flexible working hours. Mrs Kwok on the other hand is professionally qualified and has worked full-time for a number of years before motherhood. Mr and Mrs Kwok have both expressed separately the view that Mrs Kwok is not particularly maternal. Mr Kwok has a very close relationship with his children and has been very involved in their education and development in many ways, e.g. playing with them, training them to cook and look after themselves. There is even a 'special time' for father and daughters only on Tuesdays when they go shopping without mum. He is also involved in cooking and housework at home while Mrs Kwok handles the bills.

Apart from those parenting situations described above, there are others in which childcare by the father is needed, such as when the mother goes to a language class or other community classes such as in word-processing or cooking. This was the case with the Ho, Wong and Fan (before her husband passed away) households. When Mrs Ho went on a training course, it had to be on a Sunday morning when her husband was not working or when it was her husband's day off so he could look after the boys. In the context of paid work, with their unsocial work schedules, fathers like Mr Ho, Mr Lee and Mr Wong are half-asleep in the mornings when their young sons come in to play with them. This constitutes the particular kind of context within which fathers and their pre-school children interact.

Grandparenting

As highlighted in the discussion on bringing up children, grandparents play a role in the unpaid work in the household, but are also influential in their grandchildren's Chinese language maintenance and sense of Chinese identity.[232] Grandparents have looked after grandchildren at various times and to various degrees in all the households interviewed except for one. These include both maternal and paternal grandparents, who may visit from abroad or live as residents in the U.K. (see Table 5.6). The grandparents who are British residents have lived in the U.K., some since their late teens and one grandmother since 1974. Visits by grandmothers from abroad in particular often coincide with the birth of a grandchild. This is because in Chinese

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[232] Apart from page 172, see also the discussion on 170 on language and identity.

culture, the confinement period after the birth of a child is an important time for the mother to be well nourished and rested, after losing the heat ('yang' in yin-yang philosophy) from her body. Special heat-producing foods are often prepared for her to restore her strength.[233] According to Chinese custom, it is usually the mother-in-law who is on hand to provide such assistance. If the couple is not living with the husband's parents, mothers-in-law (even from abroad) would come to stay with the family during this time. Research in China also shows that paternal grandparents play a greater role in relieving a mother's childcare load (Chen *et al.* 2000). This reflects the legacy of a patrilineal culture, even in modified extended families or networked families in China, in this case, transnationally networked families in Britain.

The following table (Table 5.6) shows the grandparents who have visited or have been involved in caring for their grandchildren. The cases of grandparenting differ in terms of the age of the grandparents, the ages of their grandchildren, their experience of previous grandparenting and the work situation of both parents and grandparents. In five of the cases, both grandmother and grandfather are involved in grandparenting, though most of the burden falls on the grandmother. It can be seen that those who are British residents are invariably involved in childcare either in the past or present. In three cases of paternal mothers-in-law coming from abroad, it has been because of the expected arrival of a baby. The grandmothers in the Lee and Tang households may be described as involved in 'intensive' grandparenting, which happens on a daily basis covering a range of different aspects over a prolonged period of time. Their case studies will be discussed under 'The happy grandmother' and 'The tired grandmother'. Significantly, Mrs Fan the widow has not had the assistance of either her mother-in-law or her own mother for reasons that could not be explored. We will look at these different categories of grandparents in turn, starting with grandparents travelling from abroad as their visits coincided with the birth of children.

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[233] 'Postpartum, many women practise *Zuo yuezi* (sitting in for the first month) for 30 days. *Zuo yuezi* includes staying in the house; avoiding cold foods, drinks, wind, water, and any other cold substance or contact; diet based on balance (of yin-yang) as discussed earlier; abstinence for physical work; and abstinence from excessive pleasurable activities (e.g., sex, parties, etc.). Bathing (and especially washing the hair) is limited and may include a warm bath with ginger wine or other "hot" alcoholic beverage' (Chang and Kemp 2004).

Table 5.6: Grandmothers visiting and helping with childcare

Grandmothers	Chan	Fan	Wong	Ho	Kwok	Lee	Pang	Tang
Abroad	P		(M)	M	P		P	
British Resident	M		(M)	P		P	M	M
Childcare past	P/M		M	P/M	P	P	P/M	M
Childcare present	P*					P	M	M

*At the time of interview, because Mrs Chan had recently given birth

Note: P indicates paternal and M indicates maternal

P & M: Grandparents who were interviewed

(M): British resident but living abroad

Grandparents from abroad

While the role of grandparents in childcare has been investigated and increasingly been recognised (Wheelock and Jones 2002; Chen *et al.* 2000), little is known about grandparental care across nations, which could be described as forming an aspect of diasporas of care (Williams 2001). From what can be seen, grandmothers appear quite willing to spend substantial amounts of time in a foreign country (refer to Table 5.7) to help their sons or daughters with childcare, cooking and housework, or just to visit. Sometimes this was when support was not available from grandparents who were British residents, for reasons such as employment and distance. For others, as it was a second child, the mother needed more assistance.[234] Some grandmothers stay from three months to a year. Others like Mrs Pang's mother-in-law can face difficulties in getting a visa, or are only allowed to stay for short periods. It was only when Mr and Mrs Pang appealed that she was granted permission to stay for six months. Grandmothers coming from abroad have to endure the long flight, language barrier, inclement weather and cultural differences to visit their offspring and their families.

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[234] This was the case with the Wong and Kwok households. The Wong family had their takeaway business to run, while the Kwok family was moving house.

Table 5.7: Grandmothers travelling from abroad

Family	Grandmother	Purpose of visit	Period
Pang	Paternal	Birth and confinement period for both children	6 months to a year
Chan	Paternal	Birth and confinement period for both children	6 months to a year
Wong	Maternal	Support during birth of second child	6 months
Kwok	Paternal	Support during birth of second child	3 months
Ho	Maternal	Visits to first and second child	Few weeks

The five grandparents who have travelled from abroad to care for their grandchildren in the U.K. are all grandmothers. Three are paternal while two are maternal (see Table 5.7). Two of the paternal grandmothers came specifically to assist in the birth and confinement period while two grandmothers, one paternal and one maternal, came to assist when the second child was born, by looking after the first child who was still very young. For the two paternal grandmothers who came from abroad to assist in the birth and confinements periods, they stayed from between six months to a year.

Mrs Pang had her mother-in-law to help when she had her first son. She came for a year, six months before and after the birth. She also came when her second son was born but for six months only. When her mother-in-law was staying with her, Mrs Pang still undertook her responsibilities in the house for cooking, washing and feeding the children, making sure that she was not leaving everything to her mother-in-law. This was because the strict observation of the confinement period was not considered necessary according to the mother-in-law, possibly because of her experience of communism in China.[235]

In the case of the Ho household, the maternal grandmother came to visit from the New Territories in Hong Kong where she owns a smallholding. She found it very difficult adapting to life in England because she did not know any English and so only spent a week with Mrs Ho not long after her first son was born. She also spent three to four weeks here when the second child was born seven years later but was still very homesick.

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[235] In communist China, traditional customs were made subservient to the state as individual life was replaced with collective life.

Grandparents who are British residents

Five grandparent couples and one grandmother are British residents. All of them have been involved in grandparenting but to different degrees. As one would expect, those grandparents who are living with or close to their children's families are more involved than those who live further away or are in elderly accommodation.[236] The role of the grandmother can range from helping in confinement care, infant care, care of other children, domestic chores, fetching the children to school, to childcare when the mother is unwell or went out to work. This applied also to grandmothers from abroad. From the experiences of the different households, most of the difficulties arose when childcare was required so that the mother is able to work, and were a result of the limitations faced by grandmothers due for example to health reasons, paid work commitments and the distance between home and work. In the following three case studies, mothers' paid work was the reason for grandparental childcare.

Grandparents who are co-resident with the family are clearly more in a position to help their children with childcare. When her son was two months old, Mrs Ho was offered part-time work at a friend's takeaway, and left the baby with his grandmother who would look after him when mum was at work during lunchtime, and in the evenings from about 5.30 p.m. to midnight. Grandmother sometimes sat up with the baby till about midnight, going to bed very late. This went on till Mrs Ho had a miscarriage and was unable to continue work due to a prolonged period of ill-health.

On the other hand, because of non-co-residence, there was a different sort of arrangement in the Chan household. After the confinement period, the maternal grandparents were called upon to be involved when the child was about a year old and when the mother needed to work. Mrs Chan's mother had helped in the past to baby-sit when the child was asleep, but when the baby was between ten months to one and a half, she and her husband came to stay, looking after their grandchild for about ten hours for two and a half days a week. Mrs Chan was working part-time, going to work on Mondays and Wednesdays in the mornings. Her parents would come on a Sunday and leave on a Wednesday after Mrs Chan finished work. Grandmother would be the

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[236] Mr Ho's parents and Mrs Tang's father are in elderly accommodation at Mascot House.

main carer while granddad would help to play with him when grandmother was preparing food. But in the end, the grandmother felt she could not cope with the travelling any longer and the arrangement came to an end. Now that Mrs Chan has had her second child, she is contemplating calling upon her mother again in the future if the need arose.

Again, time and distance were the reasons for dependence on grandparental childcare arrangements coming to an end. Mrs Pang, who owns her own business has two boys, aged four and one. When she was working in a takeaway with her husband, she left her son with her mother but travelling was a problem because at the time she lived in County Durham while her mother was in Newcastle.

> Mrs Pang: That's, it's very stressful for them, when he's only a baby then, so they have to get up like a few times, like night times to feed him, you know so, it's like, I mean my mum, she's very good, she look af - I mean, I take him to my mum here um, and then um my mum look after him but I have to come back here to pick him up about half two in the morning, and I live in County Durham then, so by the time I got back there is about three o'clock, half three, and I'm knackered, yeah and then I'm put him in bed and then I have to have a shower

Due to a combination of difficulties, they sold the takeaway. Mrs Pang went on to other types of work, finally deciding to set up her own business.[237] She describes another time when her mother and sister-in-law looked after the two children when she went on a business trip for a week:

> Mrs Pang: nobody else in here, so my um, but the only time that, the only way I could do it is like is my sister-in-law says she will look after them for me. But you see my mum, she work early very early in the morning …… she work there from like say, six o'clock, half six to go to work, you know, and she come back about three o'clock you know and then, then

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[237] Some elements of this case are not divulged for confidentiality.

> she take the share, you know, then my sister-in-law will look after them in the morning
>
> Researcher: Uh huh
>
> Mrs Pang: Now as my mum goes to work, then my sister-in-law had to go to work about 5 o'clock for the takeaway, yeah, and then the little one needs to drink milk at at night-time as well, like they have to wake up quite a few times, ...So um so, I realise that even though that week you know is stress all around because it's like my sister-in-law have to look after in the morning, then go to work and she doesn't finish work until one o'clock in the morning

As a result of this experience, Mrs Pang found that it was too stressful for her mother and sister-in-law and would not like to repeat it. However, later on in the interview, she said that she would have to consider doing this again because there was no alternative, but by then the boys would be older and perhaps more manageable.

Let us now look at two examples of 'intensive grandparenting'. The grandmothers in the Lee and Tang households are presently giving the most care to their grandchildren, so much so that it can be termed *all-round care* or perhaps *wrap-around care*. This points to the undertaking of grandparenting as a 'social career',[238] which Grandmother Lee has expressed a desire to 'retire' from. In the Tang household, the grandmother's contribution is all-encompassing over the course of the family's history and so includes infant care, cooking, fetching to school, and entertaining. This demonstrates the close-knit reciprocal 'family-as-a-unit' relationship between the members of the household.

The happy grandmother

Mrs Tang's mother was involved with her daughter's children, now aged 12, eight and six from the beginning. She looked after her daughter during the confinement period for all three children, even assisting by bathing the infants, the first child everyday for a few months. By the time her second grandchild was born, Mrs Tang's parents

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[238] The term 'social career' has been used to describe the differing patterns of social participation in the course of a person's life, in particular identifying life transitions and turning points (Humphrey 1993).

moved from their extended family home to a flat for elderly Chinese, but Mrs Tang's mother would spend most of her time at her son's house five minutes from the Tang residence (see page 173, Figure 5.6: Tang family and networks). Mr Tang recounted the time when his youngest was a baby, and his mother-in-law would come over in the morning to fetch all her grandchildren over to her house so that her daughter could catch up on sleep (wrap-around care).

When the Tangs owned a takeaway for two years, the children would be taken to their grandmother's before they went to work at 5.30 p.m. and when they finished work at midnight, Mr and Mrs Tang would fetch the younger ones home but sometimes leave the oldest one when she had school the next day. Mrs Tang's oldest daughter remembers the time when her grandmother looked after her.

> Karen (aged 12): yes, um when I was about four or five, my mum used to be a waitress, and [ ] my grandmother was looking after me, nearly everyday
>
> Researcher: Do you remember, you remember that time quite well or
>
> Karen: yes, I remember very well
>
> Researcher: What did you think of that time
>
> Karen: My grandmother bought me a lot of stuff, because we always went to town....[239]

When the grandmother was looking after the children while her daughter was working, she was very tired especially with having to prepare the meals. She did not have the chance to go out much as the children were still small.[240] When they were older, the grandmother helped out by fetching the children to school. Presently, they go most weekends to their gran's, sometimes staying overnight (all-round care) on Friday and Saturday. During the holidays, they would often stay Sunday night as well, enjoying their uncle's collection of video games. The children can also ride their bikes or roller blade as it is safer around their gran's than their own home. The children love their grandmother's cooking but also assist her by running errands. On weekdays, all

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[239] Grandparenting thus also involves monetary expense.
[240] The grandmother was worried lest they would fall or the weather was too cold.

three grandchildren would regularly have tea at their maternal grandmother's. Since stopping work because of her high blood pressure and diabetes, she has been very happy to look after her grandchildren while she can because they are her own flesh and blood and she feels very fortunate ('*hoi sum*' translates 'good life'). She would do so anytime she was needed. Mrs Tang repays her mother 'in kind' by buying food for her or anything that she needed, but when they had the takeaway, money was tight. Maternal grandfather who lives in the elderly home has also enjoyed his grandchildren but he doesn't see them that often.

When asked about her preference, the oldest daughter would choose her grandmother as her carer:

> Karen: Well I [ ] my gran more close, so I will choose my grandmother because um, our, I was the first one, because I'm the oldest, I been more close to my gran longer than, my brother and sister, and um my grandmother, my dad's mum, mother right, well, I haven't well we do still contact her but we don't really, I just because I haven't been that much long with my grandmother, my dad's mother, but I've been, because since I was born I was been with my grandmother, I feel more safer with her

This is a very close-knit family, particularly between the grandmother and her only grandchildren. The children are now of an age when they do not need as much supervision and can provide companionship to the grandmother. The health of the grandparent and ages of the grandchildren are important factors contributing to the willingness for the grandparent to continue to provide care. This is an example of a symbiotic, reciprocal relationship built up across the generations.

The tired grandmother

The Lee household is a three-generation extended family (see Figure 5.4, page 150). The oldest son has one child who is three and a seven-month old baby. As in the Tang household, the one-month confinement was observed in the household with the assistance of the paternal grandmother. This grandmother had previously looked after her daughter and her new-born child during the confinement period and her children

when they were older.[241] Now she looks after her son's children, in the past every night, but now five nights a week from about five to twelve (wrap-around care). The three-year-old would go to sleep sometimes at nine, ten or twelve depending on his afternoon nap. She has not taken the boy to any toddlers' groups. She finds looking after the children a bit difficult at the moment because she has a pain in her leg and going up and down the stairs carrying the baby girl can be a problem. Grandfather Lee helps sometimes looking after the boy (described as the 'naughty' one) while she concentrates on the baby. They don't go out much with the children because the grandfather doesn't like it, perhaps because he has worked all day. In the past she used to take a walk with the older boy but now with the baby it is more difficult. Grandfather Lee would be happy to help look after his grandchildren when he retires next year, because it would be a help for his son who is holding down two jobs. The second son is expecting a child in the New Year so that will be an added burden on the grandparents.

Grandmother Lee has expressed her doubts about whether she can continue to provide care in about two or three years as she is looking forward to her 'retirement':

> Grandmother: [ ] if you got the children I can't do it, you know, I'm too old, I'm looking for for, my leave

Mr Lee has not yet made any plans for childcare for when his mother is going to be unavailable. Grandmother Lee has high blood pressure and diabetes but leads a very active social life, swimming and attending luncheon clubs. She would like to see some childcare facility to relieve grandparents from looking after their grandchildren so that they can pursue other activities. Perhaps she is more accustomed to the idea of a childcare facility because when she worked in a factory, they provided a nursery where she could leave her own children.

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[241] This happened for her daughter's youngest child. Grandmother Lee went to stay at her daughter's house to look after her during the one-month confinement period and afterwards. Her daughter's mother-in-law helped out when the first two children were born as they were living in Sunderland at that time. When her daughter's sons were young, Grandmother Lee would look after them at the weekend and overnight sometimes (all round care). When they moved nearer, she would see them every night, but now she sees them about once a week.

To summarise, grandparental care can take many forms and the accounts above suggest that it involves time, energy and commitment, constituting a valuable form of unpaid work particularly performed by grandmothers who are the most involved. Grandfathers when they are able give a supportive role to the grandmothers. It is however usually at the stage when the children are older when the grandfather can play with them or take them out shopping. Whether grandparents are counted on for help in childcare is also dependent on the physical distance between the families. Half of the families who have grandparents nearby would turn to them for emergency care, but the other half would not because of the lack of proximity. On the other hand, the confinement care of the new mother seems to be very significant when it comes to the reasons for grandmothers, usually paternal, travelling from abroad to assist. This underlines the importance of this period in a mother's life, and its significance in Chinese culture. The other main aspect of care provided by grandparents has been in the context of the family business or paid employment of the mother. In most of the families, grandparents have been involved in a period of regularly caring for their grandchildren, five of which have happened when the mother was at work in a takeaway.

Other kinds of informal care

Apart from the confinement period and in order for the mother to take up paid work, childcare has also been needed for language classes, training courses,[242] for medical appointments or for relatively shorter periods such as popping out to the shops. In the latter case, an older child might mind the younger one or they might be left with a relative or friend. Childcare choices thus depend on the social networks that are available to the parent/s.

Providers of informal care: social networks, neighbourhoods, friends and others

Households that are more integrated into British society like the Kwok, Chan and Pang households have access to more forms of informal childcare because of their

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[242] In such cases, the father has mostly been responsible for the care of the child or children.

wider social networks or 'bridging capital' than other households in the catering trade with more 'bounded capital' who tend to depend on relatives and 'make do' with what is available (Evers 2003). Catering households such as the Ho and Lee households may have prospered enough to buy properties in more middle-class estates, but language and cultural values, as well as demanding working hours still limit their interaction with their neighbours. Households in more deprived areas such as the Wong, Tang and Fan households are further disadvantaged by their environment.

In the midst of all this, the school as a means of contact with the 'host' community and therefore friendship networks, with children as important agents holds promise to such families. For example, the widow Mrs Fan does not have relatives nearby apart from her nephew who works and studies, and she has mentioned an English mother of her son's school friend who she thinks she can call upon in an emergency. This friend has invited Mrs Fan's son home and to join her son in sporting activities during the holidays. The children aged 12 and eight are also sometimes left with the older girl minding the younger boy, but this is rare as Mrs Fan does not work, and organises her English classes and voluntary work to happen when the children are at school. In the case of the Tang household, there was a time when the 12-year-old daughter was attending an after school club and depended on her English friend's mother to fetch her home because her father was working at that time, her mother did not drive and she was not allowed to come home on her own. However, she stopped attending the club because she did not want to bother them. In these two cases, we see the agency of children in making contact with white families, and possibly accessing childcare through their friends in school.

There is a feeling that comes from Chinese culture that you don't trouble people if you can help it, and this is manifested in the fact that there is little dependence on neighbours and friends in the Ho, Wong, Lee and Tang families for childcare help. Interestingly, all these families are in the catering trade. The families that are not working in the catering sector, i.e. the Kwok, Chan and Pang households, have friends or neighbours that they have turned to for help with childcare. It may be argued that this may be more because of practicalities, such the unsocial working hours of those in the catering trade rather than class differences, but cultural differences are

important as well. Language would be an explanation for the friendship networks each household has, as the Kwok, Chan and Pang households communicate more in English than the other households. As we have seen, children of parents who are unable to communicate well in English are often the ones who can provide contact with the white community.

An interesting comparison can be made between two families living in upper-middle class new-build housing estates for about the same length of time. Mr Ho says that they do not have friends or neighbours who are close enough whom he could send the children to. They have so far never had the need to impose on their neighbours even though one, who is Chinese, has at times left her son with them. Mr Ho also says that his children (aged nine and two) are also not very close to his own friend's children, and that he feels awkward as his friends already have their own children to take care of. He may think about leaving his son at his friend's, but the occasion has not presented itself as yet. Mrs Ho feels that her neighbours all have their own jobs so she does not feel she can count on them to help look after the children. So apart from her mother-in-law, she cannot think of anyone else who would be able to help.[243] On the other hand, Mrs Chan's son (aged two) plays regularly with their English neighbour's son who is a year older, so Mrs Chan is very comfortable about leaving him with this family to be looked after.

The Kwok household does not have any family around them so they depend on church members if they want any help with childcare, and it helps if they have children who are friendly with their girls. As such, one family has let the girls stay overnight in the past. Otherwise the girls are left on their own as they are quite independent, or left with the older teenager (aged 17) in the house who is a ward. He is not given any specific responsibilities in 'looking after them' but said that he would see to things if there were an emergency. The Kwok family shows similarities with the Chan family in their dependence on church members because of the non-proximity of family members and their active involvement in church life. They are also professionally trained, dual-earner households highly integrated into British life,

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[243] Simon their son (aged 9) prefers to be on his own at home than to be looked after by someone as he knows 'where the biscuits are'. In any case, his good friend and neighbour who is just a year older is also often home alone by himself.

which may be another reason for the fact that they have friends who are British whom they can rely on for help with childcare.

Mrs Pang also has had white neighbours who would play with her children, but in her case, she has lived on the estate for many years and has close links with the residents. She also has friends who are Indian, Pakistani, Jewish, gay, and thus is also well integrated into British society and her neighbour who has child-minded for her is English.

In the context of paid work, the presence of staff (whether Chinese or non-Chinese) working in the business enables the odd minding of the child in the proximity of the parents in the workplace. When Mr and Mrs Wong were working evenings in the takeaway, there would be one paid counter staff at the takeaway who would keep an eye on the children and sometimes play with them, e.g. drawing at the counter,[244] but would not be paid specifically for looking after them. Similarly, when Mrs Chan's son grew older and did not sleep as much, he would play downstairs at pretending to shop and the English female staff in the shop would 'mind' him as his mother got on with her work. These two instances show how parents engage the help of whoever is at hand in the workplace.

Mrs Chan like many mothers, waits for the time when her child is asleep before she gets on with book-keeping and other administrative work. And when she goes to the workplace with the baby, the upstairs office is converted into a type of nursery where the child can be put down to sleep so that she can get on with the stock-taking. Children who are taken to the takeaway with their parents, who both work till midnight, will have a place where they can bed-down. In the case of the Lee household, when the grandparents are away on holiday, the children are taken along to the takeaway. The two brothers and their wives work at the takeaway so there are enough adults to manage the children. If the children need a rest, there is a sofa in the back room.

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[244] These were two workers who were overseas students from Malaysia, who would each work three evenings a week.

In the catering trade when work carries on into the early hours of the morning, adults are very often asleep during the day. If children are of a certain age to be able to occupy their own selves safely, they are often left in the care of someone who is asleep. In this case, it is Mrs Fan's nephew who works in a takeaway and lives temporarily with them, or it could be Mrs Tang's brother who works as a waiter. Mrs Kwok is also often asleep at home because of her night shift when the children come home from school, or are in the house during the holidays. The responsible adult is still present even though he or she is asleep. On the other hand, when children are asleep, they are deemed easier to care for than when they are awake. At such times, they are happily left in the care of possibly less 'able' carers such as Mrs Chan's younger brother.

Other ways that Chinese cope with care of their children while being involved in other activities is to engage the help of young people.[245] For example, one of Mr Ho's sisters helped care for the children of her friends at their home while they worked in the catering trade and obtained pocket money for it. According to Simon, his cousin was also involved in something similar. Mr Lee's teenage nephew has also cared for his three-year-old cousin while his parents worked at the takeaway. In this Chinese household, 'family care' is thus 'extended family care'. The baby however would not be left in the boy's care but be cared for by the baby's parents at the takeaway. In the Kwok household, the teenage ward has been described as 'a great help' as he would keep an eye on things in the household when the adults were out.

Dimensions structuring parental use of informal childcare

In the Chan household, a *hierarchy of care* can be constructed from more intensive to less demanding forms of care over time. Mrs Chan works for half a day each week and has identified five different forms of informal complementary childcare for different purposes:

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[245] According to figures in Scotland, half of those between the ages of 16-24 who are involved in informal volunteering are engaged in baby-sitting and looking after children (Volunteer Development Scotland 2004).

1. Mother-in-law: for confinement period and infant care (up to a year)
2. Mother: when mother-in-law is not around, for regular childcare
3. Church friends: for emergencies as well as on a more regular basis (when they are paid)
4. Neighbour: for emergencies but not on a regular basis. There is a reciprocal understanding that she would do the same for her neighbour (who also has a small child)
5. Brother: when babysitting does not require too much, i.e. when the child is asleep.

All the individuals selected for providing care are well trusted by the mother who has expressed her unwillingness to allow any strangers into the house. What can be observed is that there is a range of informal carers that the mother can depend on and the type of informal childcare used depends on the purpose for which it is required.

To further illustrate how other different factors play out, here is a case study:

> Mrs Wong has a brother who also has a takeaway, but his children are grown up and so in an emergency, he can be called upon to help look after the children. The children don't really like it because they are very attached to their parents and are taken with them everywhere, e.g. to the hospital or the cash and carry. They also don't get on with their cousins, but Mr Wong has left them with his brother-in-law before one or two times and would leave them there for a few hours if it were necessary. When Mr and Mrs Wong attended the training required for the Health and Safety Certificate, there was only one child to be looked after because the other one was at school, and the brother had agreed because he was free at that time (10 a.m. – 4 p.m.) for two days, and could manage it. The child was taken shopping. This older brother of Mrs Wong's is quite happy to look after her son because his two children are grown up (18 and 21) and he likes playing with his nephew. However, they would not impose on her brother if they could help it because of his work. Mrs Wong's younger

brother (now in Hong Kong) on the other hand would never agree to look after her children.[246]

The research findings thus indicated that the need for informal childcare depends on a number of different factors. Firstly, there is the value placed on the reason for having childcare, whether it is for work, training, health or other reasons. Because proper certification was a Health and Safety requirement, both Mr and Mrs Wong had to be present. They therefore had no option but to leave the child with Mrs Wong's brother because there was no childcare provided. If the *purpose* for the childcare being needed were not worth the trouble of arranging childcare, mothers would rather forgo the activity. For instance, Mrs Ho wanted to go to some language classes, but as there was no childcare provided[247] and her husband was unavailable at that time, she decided not to attend.

Secondly, the *context* for the childcare being required, such as the parents' ability to accommodate the children, is also important. If the parents' work commitments are not that intense, or if there are enough 'hands' around at work, such as in the Lee household, they will tolerate the child being with them in the workplace. Older children may or may not be easier to have around the workplace:

> Karen: Um, well sometimes I stayed with my mum in the takeaway….
> Researcher: Yeah, so what did you feel about that, [ ] how did you spend your time
> Karen: Well, good thing was, you could eat the takeaway food over there
> Researcher: Oh and you like that
> Karen: Yes, and, but the bad thing is that you have to always ever do work, got nothing to do over there

On the other hand, some parents are not able to cope with very small children:

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[246] This is rather like Mrs Chan's younger brother who is not often around and can only be relied on if the child were asleep.

[247] When she wanted to access childcare at her ESOL classes at the local further education college, Mrs Ho found that the teachers were unable to offer much help and that there was also some kind of requirement that the child had to be over two years of age.

Mrs Pang: Um hm, so we have the takeaway for very short-time, cos we realise that when he born, um, is very difficult, I mean some people could do it, but to me, money is not everything, so when he's born, er we just feel that we couldn't cope with it, it's very difficult to serve people, er he's crying, and I just say we just have to sell the takeaway, I just cannot, I hate being children crying, while I'm trying to work, they have to be away from me, you know, if I see them getting stressed, I couldn't concentrate on my work, so we decided to sell the takeaway

She was unable to depend on family care because her mother and sister worked and she lived a distance from them. Without other childcare alternatives, the business folded up. Thirdly, thus whether parents would ask for childcare help from relatives, friends or neighbours would also depend on the carers' *availability* and their *proximity*. If children are physically close to the parents while they work and workers in the workplace are easily called upon to help out in minding the child, the parents are happy for their children to be taken care of by other people. This happens in the Wong and Chan households. If the carer were a distance away from the home, they would only be called upon if the need were great.

Fourthly, the basis for informal childcare is the *personal relationship* involving the elements of obligation and trust. Some idea of the extent of these relationships can be found in the kinds of ties existing in family and friendship networks. The child's preference is also important in this regard for if the child had a good relationship with the carer, or if the carer had children and they got on with the child who is to be cared for, this would also increase the chance of such care being taken up.

Finally, the *activity* involved would also determine which carer would be engaged. With children of different ages, care might involve just babysitting while the child was asleep, or might involve infant feeding and overnight stay, or noisy primary schoolchildren who might get into squabbles.

To summarise, the informal childcare that the families have used are shown in the following table, which also describes the families according to their networks to identify patterns of childcare use.

Table 5.8: Informal childcare past and present

Family Network	Close-knit	Close-knit	Close-knit	Close-knit	Close-knit	Loose-knit	Few ties	Few ties
HOUSEHOLD	Chan	Ho	Lee	Pang	Tang	Wong	Fan	Kwok
Children's ages	2, 1m	9, 2	3, 7m	4, 1	12, 8, 6	5, 3	12, 8	14, 13
Grandmother	✔	X	✔	✔	✔	X		X
Grandfather	✔		✔	✔				
Sibling							✔	
Relative	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	
Friend	✔							✔
Other	✔					✔		

Note: X indicates that care took place in the past.

Among the close-knit families, the Ho and Tang households stand out as not using much informal childcare, but this is because the mothers in these households are not in paid work as the other mothers are. Although Mrs Fan is not in paid work, as a widow, she cannot depend on a spouse, and so has had to rely on other alternatives.

Formal Childcare

Whether a parent chooses to use formal or informal/complementary childcare depends not only on the availability of kin and the various factors discussed above, but also on the ages of the children. For children between the ages of 0-3, parents have generally used family care when mother is in paid work, and only two families have used childminders (see Table 5.9). One family has used registered childminders and the other a non-registered childminder. Only the Kwok household has used a nanny and a babysitter apart from a childminder. This can be explained by the fact that the family does not have relatives in the U.K. Only three families have taken their children to parent and toddler groups. Once the children reach the age of three, group or

institutional childcare settings are more popular as a form of childcare, although this has to be combined with other forms of childcare if the mother is in full-time paid work. A clear example of this 'jig-saw' of care will be given in a case study towards the end of the chapter.

Six of the households interviewed have used playgroups for their children (see Table 5.9). This popular form of childcare is used widely because it is a pre-school facility providing early years education. Most provide free places for three and four-year-olds. Very often in the interview, the respondents would use the term 'playgroup' and 'nursery' interchangeably and clarification always had to be made. This indicates their lack of knowledge that early years education and not just 'play' is provided in these settings. If the playgroup were then perceived as a nursery, parents would obviously have certain expectations of it, e.g. expecting it to be more structured. In other cases, there are lower expectations like those of Mr Ho who thought that it was just a kind of crèche facility. Most of the families have experience of sending their children to school nurseries. Mrs Pang uses both a day nursery and a school nursery for her two children.

In the case of school-going children, their use of out-of-school activities has been found to be dependent on various factors. For the Tang family, involvement is restricted due to the fact that the clubs finish at a time that is inconvenient for the father to collect the children as he is on his way to work. Also, his wife does not drive. In the Ho family, the wife drives, but the boy's interest in the clubs waned. All the school clubs that the children have attended have been activities-based, for educational or enrichment purposes. The Kwok sisters are heavily involved in sporting and music activities which they attend quite independently because of their age. In other cases, the clubs are held during times when parents are not working and are able to fetch them. Mrs Fan's son has attended a drama club, gym club and a homework club after school. The facility for younger children to be fetched from after-school clubs appears to be an important deciding factor as to their participation

Table 5.9: Uses of children's facilities past and present

Family Network	Close-knit	Close-knit	Close-knit	Close-knit	Close-knit	Loose-knit	Few ties	Few ties
HOUSEHOLD	Chan	Ho	Lee	Pang	Tang	Wong	Fan	Kwok
Children's ages	2, 1m	9, 2	3, 7m	4, 1	12, 8, 6	5, 3	12, 8	14, 13
school nursery		✔		✔	✔	✔		✔
private day nursery				✔				
playgroup	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔		✔
toddler group	✔	✔						✔
childminder				✔				✔
baby-sitter								✔
nanny								✔
family centre				✔				
school club		✔			✔		✔	✔
holiday club								
Chinese class		✔			✔	✔	✔	
Community club					✔			

☑ Childcare/provision that is paid for

In Table 5.9, the list of facilities include those that are childcare facilities and those that are not strictly so, childcare being defined as providing care for children when parents are at work, training or education. The nursery class or school nursery is not childcare under that definition because it is part of the state education system in the sense that schools are. Parent and toddler groups that require parents to be present are also not 'childcare' in that sense, nor are the weekly school and community clubs. These are to be distinguished from the regular out-of-school clubs offering after-school childcare. However, in order to get a sense of the different children's facilities that are being used by the research participants, they are all included. The ages of the children give an indication of the facilities used, although it is not necessarily the case that those with older children would have used more facilities, although the Kwoks, with their particular occupations and lack of family networks have used the most facilities. The children in the Fan family are recorded as not having used any pre-school facilities because they were not in the U.K. at the time.

Pre-school groups: practice and social inclusion

There are a number of reasons why playgroups are popular with parents. Firstly, they are seen as a stepping-stone to school. Secondly, the timing of the playgroup is usually during the morning when the parents are not at work and so transport is less of a problem. Also, when the playgroup provision is located near the school which older siblings attend, parents are more likely to use the facility. Mrs Tang for example felt that her children's time in playgroup was good because they were able to practise speaking English there, which prepared them for school. She also found it 'very handy' that the playgroup was within the school compound.

The Chans were very determined to find the best facility for their son. The two-and-a-half-year-old has attended different toddler groups three times a week from the time he was about nine months old. After trying out three different playgroups for about nine months, he now goes four days a week to one, and goes to a toddler's group on a Wednesday afternoon. This is because Mrs Chan wanted a setting that was quite structured, offering craft work which her son enjoys and at the same time where 'the style of learning is fun'. Experiences in these playgroups varied, and his parents were concerned about him picking up undesirable habits like 'grabbing and shoving', behaviour indicative of the neighbourhoods that families were from and where the setting is situated:

> Mr Chan: like shoving people off, toys and things like that, he just picks things up, but you can notice the difference in the parent's reaction to that, even in different areas, is quite evident. In Beeston[248] the parents would pull children aside and say, look you can't shove people off toys because you want them, and make them apologise and things like that, just the way it should be I think, in my opinion, but er, in places like Sandwell, parents would just, you know, ignore it and sit and stand in a corner and chat, and then you know, the kids can get, do whatever, it's still going on

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[248] Names of places have been replaced with fictitious ones for confidentiality

Mr Chan is however generally pleased with the staff and activities in these settings, although he mentioned some children being too 'physical', and 'not groomed, for lack of a better word' and 'dirty'. This may be interpreted as 'snobbery' but can also be understood as arising from cultural[249] more than from class differences. The two-year-old son will be attending a private day nursery when he turns three even though he could stay on in the playgroup till he was four. According to the parents, this is so that he will be given more individual attention and the chance to progress beyond his peers.

Instances of children facing problems settling were rare, but two examples serve to highlight some issues of social inclusion in these settings. Mrs Wong's three-and-a-half-year-old son goes to the same playgroup that his sister went to, but has encountered some problems there. He had said a child had hit him, and that he had been called 'chinky'.[250] Mr Lee's three-year old son goes to playgroup with no problems about being left. They knew about the playgroup because his sister's children had been to the same playgroup. He did not know any English when he started, and as the only Chinese child, did not know anyone there. When asked however if his son had made any friends, Mr Lee says that he is quite isolated, sitting in the corner by himself, but he has only been there a couple of months, and in another couple of months, he will be going to the nursery which is in the same compound. Unlike the Chans, they settled on this playgroup without visiting others because their youngest nephew had recently attended it and it was conveniently located for his wife to collect him. There is something poignant about a little three-and-a-half year old sitting in a corner by himself, not knowing any English, being the only Chinese there and not knowing anyone else in the playgroup. However the father doesn't appear to have any worries and in any case as a father, he is busy with his two jobs and his wife who also works is preoccupied with the baby. Often, the practicalities that need to be considered with both parents working can result in 'convenience' being the deciding factor.

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[249] See footnote 225 for the dislike of British pub culture.
[250] This is a common derogatory term for 'Chinese'.

Parental decisions about whether to use a pre-school facility are also governed by other factors, some cultural in nature. When it came to parent and toddler groups, Mrs Tang was not keen on them because the English parents she encountered waiting outside the school smoked, which she did not approve of. Also, her friends had been to toddler groups and did not find anything that was beneficial to them. Mr Ho said that his wife did not really enjoy the parent and toddler group because the English people there did not have much to say to her and she found it hard to communicate. Attendance at the toddler group is therefore affected by how welcomed one feels, who would be attending and what could be gained from attending.

Childminders: the social relationship

The two households that have used childminders are the Kwok household and the Pang household. Both the mothers in these households worked and they both used white childminders. While Mrs Pang had family around her, as they were working, they could not be depended on for regular childcare. In the case of the Kwoks, their family were all in Hong Kong so after Mrs Kwok's maternity leave of six months, their first baby had two childminders, one after the other. When their second daughter arrived, they hired a nanny for about a year, so that Mrs Kwok could return to work after three months of maternity leave.

With individual care as in childminding where the relationship can go beyond 'formal' roles, there can be difficulties arising from how 'close' the parent would like the relationship to be. From the age of six months, Mrs Kwok's first child had a registered childminder who was good, caring and trustworthy. As the attachment between child and carer grew too strong, they decided to change the childminder when they moved house. On the other hand, Mrs Kwok was also concerned when the childminder had too many of her own children and as such, was too busy to give sufficient attention to her child. On reflection, Mrs Kwok said that she preferred to use a relative who would be more reliable, reflecting parental preference for family care.

In Mrs Pang's case, her first son Jo (aged 4) was looked after by a childminder for eighty pounds a week full-time for about a year when she was employed. She is an

English neighbour, described as a friend doing a favour, and she went beyond being a formal carer when she took the child on outings and bought things for him, attending to his particular needs.[251] Mrs Pang reciprocated by returning in 'kind' some of the 'favours' she saw undertaken by the carer who went over and above her expectations.

> Mrs Pang: sometime I [gave] her extra if I know that he er she gonna take Jo to shopping, or going to the park, just so that um you know like the extra ten pounds she could spend it on like find anything that she likes, you know like food or, you know while they going out, like for day or something
>
> Researcher: Little treat
>
> Mrs Pang: yeah uh huh you know like she could buy, or if I buy a lot plentiful, you know like we buy things from wholesalers, I would give you know, I buy a whole box and I probably give her half of it you know and things, it's just that I think
>
> Researcher: A token
>
> Mrs Pang: Yeah uh huh yeah, I mean …..but I think it's just like the thought of it really. I'm not just doing it because I have to do it, it just like, it just a thought really, you know, I mean I don't have to do it, so, but that's why they been, because they always, I mean, the reason I do that is because they been really nice with Jo as well, I mean £80 for them is nothing, you know right, £80, they take him to shopping and to like park and ride and do like bouncy castle and thing. They would spend on Jo, I mean that £80 I don't know whether she got anything out of it you know what I mean? And they buy clothes for Jo

Because the childcare is paid for and needed so that the mother could perform her paid work, this has been categorised as formal childcare, although this carer is not registered as a childminder.[252] The issues raised in this case study of payment and

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[251] She described for example the child's tendency to not have enough to drink and how her friend would buy countless kinds of drinks to try to satisfy her son.

[252] The childminder has had experience looking after nieces and nephews, and has since obtained training to be a foster parent and has fostered children, indicating that her experience of childminding has been valuable in helping her secure a more formal occupation.

reciprocity highlight the important informal social relationship between neighbours and friends.

Case study of a jig-saw of care

The Pang household is an example of how a range of childcare options was used over a period of time for one family. When Mrs Pang was looking after her small son full-time, she went to a family centre where she could leave her son one morning a week to 'take a break' and they would even give her son lunch:

> Mrs Pang: it's just want to be there if they are not too full, you know they accept anybody it doesn't, even though you have loads of money you know right, if you want come in that's fine, there's no, there's no um sort of like rule or anything that you can't go, um. I I like Barnado I I still said it to a lot of people is that they take the children to trips, you know like like, any trip I mean in Christmas, they take, they have a party for him and er that's for everybody they have Santa Claus and they take them to the farm where they can see Santa Claus you know

As a facility for parents who are unemployed, not in regular work or training, the centre is a valued opportunity for a mother to recharge her batteries. It also operates an inclusive approach to clients and reflects the importance of sponsored day care.[253]

Presently, Mrs Pang juggles between different childcare facilities and family care. The older child has just recently started nursery class at a school and goes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday one week and Tuesday and Thursday on alternate weeks. This confuses Mrs Pang especially after the holidays when she cannot remember which days her son has to be at nursery. She also struggles with having to pick up the child in the middle of her working day and has the alternatives of taking him to work with her, leaving him with his father or grandmother. Now that the youngest is at a day

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[253] Early childhood education and childcare for working parents has been given too much attention from policy-makers to the neglect of sponsored daycare (Statham *et al.* 2000). Sure Start programmes are filling the gaps but are targeted at deprived neighbourhoods.

nursery, she greatly appreciates the option that her older son can be left there with his younger brother after school and during those days when he is not at nursery school. This was due to the flexible and understanding approach that the day nursery employs towards clients.

Mrs Pang refers to the workers at the day nursery as 'lovely people' and it was very reassuring to her to know that they were caring. She compared this with other nurseries that are in more affluent areas where people 'didn't have time and patience for you'. The day nursery has thus proved to be a welcome stop-gap measure for the schooling infant when full-time nursery is not yet in place. Nursery school provision usually starts with two or three days a week before full-time nursery in order to allow the children time to adjust to school, but this is based on the assumption that mother is not in paid work. If parents are resorting to alternative childcare in between, then it would appear to be defeating the purpose for which it was intended. A small child being ferried from one childcare provider to the next cannot be an ideal situation, and would have been more difficult if the mother was employed rather than running her own business.

This case study shows that family members may be on hand to help occasionally but it is quite a different matter to be depending on them in the longer term and on a more regular basis. Many work and have other commitments. The Pang household has found a way out of depending on family, but the outcome is a jigsaw of childcare provision (Wheelock and Jones 2002), a pattern found in many white families in a similar work situation. The key solution in this case is the flexible caring approach that is taken by the day nursery, which underlines one important role that formal childcare can take.

Conclusion

The household data throws up a great diversity of experiences in the Chinese community in Britain. Some clear categories are however discernible, such as those who are children of economic migrants who have been in the catering trade, and those

who came because of marriage. Then there are those who came to the U.K. because of studies and hold quite different views because of their social and educational background. Different household and family structures, as well as social networks led to different strategies in managing paid work, parenting and childcare. The lone parents in the sample are more of a rarity in the Chinese community than in the white community but their needs cannot be ignored. Like the others, their work options are dependent on a range of factors such as language, education, family responsibilities and social networks. A distinction also exists in the sample between those who are very well off and those who are at the other end of the scale (see Table 5.5), but this class divide is not entirely along occupational lines.

The impact of paid work on parenting and childcare depends on such characteristics as employment and self-employment and hours of work. There are those women who are providing 'family labour' as opposed to those who are employed, and those who are full-time mothers. Grandparents and others play an important role in providing informal care in all its various facets. Parental use of childcare is varied. Children aged 0-3 are more likely to be cared for by family while pre-school childcare is linked with education and upbringing, in particular the inculcation of good behaviour and discipline. Cases of families who access childcare show that institutional, language and cultural barriers exist and that not all are able to access care through family and friendship networks. Overall, migration history, transnationalism and family ideology provide the frameworks for values, norms, parental practices and childcare preferences.

Significantly, the case studies show that the households interviewed have concerns mainly around British values, education and the learning of the Chinese language. This, in policy terms would need to be considered very carefully at a time when there is a 'call' from the Home Secretary that immigrants should embrace British norms if they wanted to be fully-fledged members of British society. There is evidence that there is an ambivalence amongst the Chinese in being fully 'British', precisely because they would not like to subscribe fully to what is perceived as 'British' with its concomitant lifestyle and value system. This is not to say that they do not appreciate many aspects of life in Britain. If however a set of norms and values that describes

British-ness can be defined, which the Chinese community feel they can subscribe to, that might be a different matter. In religiously plural and multicultural Britain that is plagued by community segregation, that may be a long time coming.

CHAPTER SIX: THE BANGLADESHI COMMUNITY IN BRITAIN

Introduction

It is only in understanding the origins of a community that one begins to understand their values and aspirations in their country of migration. The following description of the Bangladeshi community in Britain attempts to provide a full account of their migration and settlement patterns. Also, in many current debates in race relations, stereotypical images of the economic migrant living off the assets of the state abound, and little is discussed about the rationale for their arrival, in different stages, on these shores. The population resulting from these historical and migratory processes is significantly youthful, with many new arrivals and an increasing number who are born in Britain. The chapter discusses the reasons for the distinctive way the Bangladeshi community is concentrated or 'encapsulated' in certain districts. Language and religion are significant factors in the way the community is structured. More than that, these factors have important implications in the way the community has access to public and social institutions, with education given particular attention here. As women have the main responsibility for childcare, and in order to address the stereotypical image of Muslim women, the role of Bangladeshi women in Islam is discussed. Indeed, in this and other race research, Bangladeshis are often cited as being the most disadvantaged of the main minority ethnic communities, thereby alerting the attention of policy-makers. What needs to be understood are the underlying historical circumstances for their migration, their lack of recognised capital (Jones 1996) and the cultural factors affecting their socio-economic situation. Since 1991, the Centre for Bangladeshi Studies, based at Roehampton Institute in South London, has been at the forefront of research on the British Bangladeshi community,[254] contributing to its thorough understanding.

While the Bangladeshi community is more homogenous than the Chinese community, there are particular difficulties that pertain to its description. According to Peach (1990), Bangladeshis in Britain can be described as a 'concealed' community because

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[254] See website: http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/bss/researchcbs.asp

it is only since the 1981 census that their existence as a separate immigrant group has been recorded. Similar to the Chinese community, even after being recognised as a separate ethnic group in 1981, samples of the Bangladeshi population tend to be comparatively small and for statistical reasons, sometimes combined with Pakistanis in such surveys as the PSI survey of ethnic minorities (Modood *et al.* 1997). This is because the establishment of the independent nation state of Bangladesh only came about after 1971. Moreover, Bangladeshis differ significantly from the Pakistanis in many ways (Peach 1990), i.e. in terms of the geography of their area of origin, their languages, and their political histories that put the two nationalities at odds with each other. Ethnic classification in Britain groups Gujeratis, Punjabis and East African Indians whether they are Hindus, Sikhs, or Muslims, collectively as 'Indians', and with Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, as 'South Asians'. Qualitative studies such as Bhopal's (2000), which do not distinguish between Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani women, labelling them collectively as South Asian women, only perpetuate the 'hidden-ness' of these distinct ethnic groupings. In this chapter and the rest of the thesis, the term 'Bangladeshis' will be used instead of 'Bengalis'. Bangladeshis are overwhelmingly Muslim while Indian Bengalis are predominantly Hindu, even though both share a common history of belonging to the region of Bengal.

Migration and settlement of Bangladeshi communities in Britain

The Bangladeshi community in Britain is predominantly from the Sylhet district of Bangladesh. It is estimated that 95 per cent of those born in Bangladesh living in Britain have originated from that north eastern area (House of Commons 1986-87). Sylhet, which like the rest of Bengal was part of the Mughal empire, came under British rule in 1765 (Chalmers 1996). As an area connected by waterways with the rest of India, Sylhet's central lowland provided the link with the tea-producing highlands of Assam, thus giving it geographical and commercial importance. In the mid-nineteenth century, the British introduced steamers, and local boat traders were recruited as engine room crewmen to compensate their loss of earnings (Choudhury 1993). These Sylheti steamer crewmen were well suited to be later recruited to work on sea-going ships leaving from Calcutta. The number of Sylheti seamen increased

dramatically with the establishment of a seamen's accommodation centre in Calcutta. Part of the central lowland of Sylhet came to be known as 'The Seamen's Zone' as a result of this. During both the First and Second World Wars, Sylheti seamen worked on warships and many lives were lost (Choudhury 1993). According to the evidence presented to the Home Affairs Committee (House of Commons 1984), an estimated 20,000 Sylheti seamen perished during the Second World War (Peach 1990).

The first migrants to Britain were those Sylheti seamen employed as cooks and in the boiler rooms on British merchant and navy ships sailing all over the world. Once in dock, many slipped ashore to find their fortune, often working in hotels and restaurants and returning a few years later on other ships *en route* to Sylhet. One of the often overlooked reasons for these seamen, known as *lascars* and others taking the risk of jumping ship was their inferior working conditions and wages (Visram 2002).[255] This first migration began as early as the eighteenth century and continued into the mid 1950s when networks of male kin were well established. The monopoly of Sylheti seamen from East Bengal in the recruitment of ship workers by British shipping companies during the 1930s and 1940s was mainly because of successful Sylheti foremen and later, brokers favouring their own countrymen (Gardner 1993). The post-war demand for unskilled cheap labour in Britain resulted in a rapid increase in migrants eager to earn foreign currency to send home for investment in housing and land. It can thus be seen that central to the migration process was the existing tradition of out-migration and a pattern of chain migration that followed between Sylhet and the U.K. Eventually, younger relatives replaced older ones using the well-established links and sponsorship of kinsmen already in Britain.

Sylhet was well suited to be sending young men off in search of work because in contrast to other areas of Bengal, its people were largely landowners. Land could be mortgaged to pay for travel fares, and the labour of one or two of the men could be spared more easily (Gardner 1995; Gardner and Shukur 1994). There were other reasons for migration. During British rule, Sylhet was annexed to neighbouring

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[255] *Lascars*, originally defined as native Asiatic seamen of the British Empire, were first employed by the East India Company in the 17th Century. At the start of the Second World War, their white counterparts earned more than £9 a month while the average for lascars was 35 shillings. They were required to receive maintenance when in London waiting for their return passage, but in reality, the Company abandoned them when they reached London and many became destitute (Visram 2002).

Assam from 1911 to 1947 (Chalmers 1996) resulting in Sylheti migration into Assam. In August 1947, the Partition of India resulted in East Bengal, West Punjab, Sindh and the North-West Frontier becoming Pakistan, but Assam became a province of India, so that the Sylheti landowners there moved back to Sylhet and became 'refugees' in their own land (Peach 1990; Alam 1988:27). It was they who responded to the post-war call from Britain for labour, evidenced by the 1948 Nationality Act which granted citizenship to anyone from a British colony. Migrants often had the help of the pioneers who had travelled with the British tea traders moving frequently between Sylhet and Calcutta. There was however no great desire on the part of these migrants to stay permanently in Britain as the work was unpleasant and demanding, and mainly confined to marginal low-paid industries, in textiles and transport.

When Calcutta was closed off to Sylhet during the 1960s and 1970s for economic and political reasons, emigration to Britain increased (Peach 1990). There were other more pertinent reasons for this however. The main pull factors for post-war migration were the changes in immigration law, and the wealth generated from living abroad, which went into remittances that led to a relationship of economic dependency of *desh* (homeland) on *bidesh* (foreign country) (Gardner 1993). In 1962, the Commonwealth Immigration Act abolished the right of entry into U.K. of British colony citizens. With the threat of such immigration control, greater than ever numbers rushed to enter Britain. The labour voucher system was set up to regulate immigration but many saw it as an invitation to work (Barton 1986). After the white paper on immigration in 1965, the number of vouchers issued was cut drastically and restricted to skilled professionals (Gardner 1995). Then in accordance with the 1968 Immigration Act, wives and children under 16 who previously were admitted freely had to obtain entry certificates by interviews at the British Consulate. Tighter controls were in force in the 1971 Act with vouchers or work permits issued only for specific jobs and valid for one year. Dependents found it much more difficult to obtain entry certificates and were subject to long delays.

With the 1971 civil war between East and West Pakistan as well as the economic recession and unemployment in Britain, Sylheti men began to lose sight of their return to the homeland. Unable to accumulate enough wealth for a future in the new nation

of Bangladesh, they began to bring over their families, beginning with their sons (Summerfield 1993). After independence, Bangladesh with its large population and high growth rates suffered huge economic problems. Peach (1990) claims therefore that the reasons for Bangladeshi migration to Britain changed and were related more to their acute economic difficulties in the homeland, and therefore to push rather than pull factors. Others argue that poverty was not the main cause for migration but the pulls of profit and adventure (Gardner and Shukur 1994). According to the data collected by Oldham Metropolitan Borough in 1988, 269 Bangladeshi men out of 695 sent remittances to Bangladesh (Khanum 2001). When the decline in traditional labour intensive industries led to unemployment, many Sylhetis started their own restaurants and takeaways, and businesses expanded because of the growing British taste for 'curry'. Together with garment factories and corner shops, the starting up of these small catering businesses is described by Katy Gardner as 'the only alternative for British Asians who because of institutionalised racism were excluded from other forms of employment' (Gardner 1995:48).[256] In the early 1980s, 69 per cent were employed in unskilled or semi-skilled manual work, in hotels, catering, factories and garment production (House of Commons 1986-87).

Bangladeshis are disproportionately represented in inner city areas, and on average, live in wards with the highest unemployment rates (Modood 1997a; Lakey 1997). Reasons for this involve an interplay of choices and constraints, among them, economic position, lack of information and discrimination (Lakey 1997). Some writers have blamed racial discrimination for immigrants' choice of poor housing in the inner wards of industrial cities in the early years.[257] However, Dahya (1974) argues that in the early days, there was also voluntary segregation for purposes of mutual aid and to achieve economic goals by enduring austere communal living conditions; the natural preference to live in close proximity to kinsmen and fellow villagers was also linked to the factor of sponsorship. When women and children arrived, more pragmatic and pertinent reasons prevailed. The men waited till mosques, Muslim schools and *halal* butchers were established in the areas where they

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[256] The counter-argument for this is the desire for self-employment for self-reliance and cultural preservation (Ram *et al.* 2000).
[257] According to the Political and Economic Planning Survey in 1967 for example, two out of three estate agents were found to be practising avoidance of black clients (Hiro 1973).

lived before they sent for their families, as their womenfolk and children needed to be catered for and protected (Gardner 1998). This, together with the experience and fear of racist attacks, explains why in London, the official policy of dispersing 'Asians' to estates throughout the borough was resisted by Bangladeshi organisations in Tower Hamlets, the area with the highest concentration of Bangladeshis. The alternative policy of 'safe estates' housing Bangladeshis in a more protected environment has led to a 'high level of ethnic segregation and encapsulation' (Linguistic Minorities Project 1985:99). [258]

The Bangladeshi population in Britain is distinctive in being the most concentrated of all minority ethnic groups in Metropolitan Counties (Peach 1990), with over half of the population settled within the Greater London area. But at the same time, next to the Chinese, Bangladeshis were also found to be the most likely to live in wards where less than five per cent of the population were from the same ethnic group (Lakey 1997). Nevertheless, the Bangladeshi settlement in the East London borough of Tower Hamlets constitutes the largest settlement of Bangladeshis in the U.K. The population in this borough increased more than sevenfold between 1971 and 1991 and presently constitutes around a quarter of British Bangladeshis (Eade 1998). The picture according to more recent figures, such as from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2001/2002 is not much different with 56 per cent of Bangladeshis in the U.K. living in London (White 2002). According to the Census 2001 (England and Wales), 33.4 per cent of the population of Tower Hamlets are Bangladeshi (National Statistics Online 2003b). Other areas of concentration include Luton and Oldham, with strong representations in the West Midlands, Newcastle, Scunthorpe, some Pennine mill towns and the major cities of South Wales (Owen 1994).[259] In comparison with other South Asian groups, Bangladeshis stand out with their high occupation of council and social housing (Platt and Noble 1999; Peach 1990). According to figures from the Fourth PSI Study, 35 per cent of Bangladeshi heads of household rented accommodation from the local authority. This contrasts with 7 per cent of Indian and 13 per cent of Pakistani heads of households (Lakey 1997). Bangladeshis (10 per

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[258] Unfortunately, there is evidence that among Bangladeshis, an increase in the degree of minority concentration only increases the probability of unemployment (Lakey 1997:192).
[259] This is largely the result of the post-war employment of Bangladeshi men in British steel and textile industries and reflects the importance of immigration policy in minority ethnic settlement patterns.

cent) were also most likely than these groups to have housing association tenancies (Lakey 1997).

Migration, and linguistic and religious identities

With 95 per cent of the Bangladeshi population in Britain coming from Sylhet, the dominant spoken language among Bangladeshis is the regional variety, Sylheti. Attempts to make Urdu the National Language after the formation of East and West Pakistan led to riots in the 1950s (Peach 1990). As a result, Bengali, the formal written variety, is a symbol of national unity having competed for its status as a National Language with Urdu in the years before the independence of Bangladesh in 1971. However, Sylheti is so different from standard Bengali that a Sylheti may reply in Urdu when spoken to in the formal variety (Husain 1991; Barton 1986). In the Home Affairs Select Committee report on Bangladeshis in Britain (House of Commons 1986-87), it was acknowledged that, 'Sylheti differs sufficiently from Bengali for a Sylheti speaker to have difficulty understanding a Bengali interpreter' (I: vi-vii). In fact, Assamese is closer to Bengali than is Sylheti, yet Assamese is accorded language status for socio-political reasons (Husain 1991). Debates are ongoing as to whether Sylheti can claim to be a separate language or whether it is simply one of the dialects of Bengali. One of the arguments for its status as a language is the fact that it can claim to have its own script and literary tradition.[260]

The identity of Bangladeshis in Britain is intimately linked with these ambivalent socio-political realities in the homeland. Chalmers (1998), in his discussion of a British Bangladeshi linguistic identity describes the pejorative attitudes of educated and middle-class Bengalis towards Sylheti, placing them in the context of the linguistic hegemony of Bengali in Bengal and Bangladesh. The organisation, Bangladeshi Educational Needs in Tower Hamlets, was the site of much of this conflict, which led to the group's end (Chalmers 1998). Because of the resurgence in

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[260] The success of printing in Sylheti took its toll from the effects of the Partition, with the owner of one of the Sylheti printing presses moving to India. Finally, during the war of liberation from Pakistan, the remaining Sylheti printing press was destroyed in the fighting (Chalmers 1996:25). Printing in the Sylheti script thus came to an end in the region.

regional and ethnolinguistic identity,[261] some Sylhetis have campaigned for the teaching of Sylheti in addition to Bengali or in place of it (Husain 1991). However, most Bangladeshis recognise the value of Bengali as an officially recognised language, and would like their children to be taught it (Chalmers 1998). Mother tongue classes for the Bangladeshi community in Britain were developed much later than for other minority ethnic groups, and there is a wide range of standards of teaching, learning and organisation (Husain 1991).

Public services such as in education and health struggle with the complexity of trying to communicate with a community whose spoken language is different to the formal written variety.[262] This has not been aided by the fact that many community workers were and often still are Bengali rather than Sylheti speakers because their educational background, make it easier for them to get such jobs. The House of Commons (1986-87) report *Bangladeshis in Britain* however recognised the issue of language, and its recommendations included the support for mother-tongue classes wherever possible. The rationale for this was that the ability to learn English is enhanced by literacy in one's first language. However, the learning of Bengali as the designated 'mother-tongue' cannot be equated to learning Sylheti. Chalmers warns against a prescriptive definition of ethnolinguistic identity (in this case, Bengali) that ignores the complexity of real communicative needs. This is further complicated by increasing linguistic diversity exemplified by British varieties of Sylheti that include large amounts of English loan-words (Chalmers 1996). In the past few years, statutory bodies, local authorities and other public agencies are beginning to deal with the issue of language by making available tapes and videos in Sylheti rather than in Bengali,[263] and the active recruitment of Sylheti-speaking personnel.

While language is one defining characteristic of the community, religion is another. Sylhet is often seen by local people as the spiritual capital of Bangladesh (Chalmers

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[261] Sylhet achieved the status of a separate Division in August 1995, the sixth in Bangladesh .

[262] As a former member of a project in Newcastle to provide health information on tape for minority ethnic communities (now named the Talking Information Project), and the EYDCP Racial Equality Subgroup, many discussions have centred on these difficulties.

[263] As a researcher with the Minority Language Engineering project (MILLE), I was involved in collecting spoken Sylheti data and found these largely in the form of health information tapes and videos, for example on topics such as miscarriage and eczema.

1996). This is because of the Islamic *pir* (*Sufi* master or elder) or saint, Shah Jalal, who was also reputed to be a great Muslim conqueror and was mainly responsible for bringing Islam to Bengal in the 14th century (Choudhury 1993; Gardner 1993). His *darga* (shrine) in Sylhet remains highly revered to this day.[264] The lands in which Shah Jalal and other holy men were buried are regarded as holding spiritual power, which explains the value of consuming the produce of the land such as fish and fruit as well as 'holy water' from Sylhet to migrants abroad. The process of sending such gifts as well as brides from rural Bangladesh is a form of 'spiritual reproduction and the essence of patrimony' (Gardner 1993:12). Another way of describing this is the reproduction of the *desh* (home) overseas, especially when Britain is seen as not providing such spiritual replenishment.[265]

The localised form of Islam practised in Sylhet, structured around *pirs* and their spiritual powers, has been found to conflict with more orthodox forms of Islam (Barton 1986) whose adherents object to the veneration of *Sufi* saints. Gardner (1995) describes a continuum of Islam in Sylhet as moving from puritanical to less puritanical, which also coincides with the secular poles of status and class, and which are in turn influenced by migration. In the region of Sylhet where Gardner conducted her research, the *madrasa* or religious school is run by a puritanical Islamic movement from North India, which advocates the rejection of charismatic *pirs*. Other *madrasas* in Sylhet are however more varied and many have developed in association with *Sufi* buildings or shrines.[266] The part-time Qur'an school in Britain is an example of direct transference of such educational institutions in Sylhet to Britain and an attempt at religious continuity between homeland and country of migration.

An extended quote from Barton's description of a part-time Qur'anic school in Bradford, which had more than thirty in a class, each running two hours for three days a week gives a flavour of what is involved:

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[264] Such is his influence that rulers of Sylhet including the ministers of the government of Sylhet are required to visit the shrine on coming to power (Barton 1986).
[265] According to Castles and Davidson (2000) on the other hand, minority groups are considered incapable of belonging, which is always a result of racial discrimination.
[266] For a fuller description of the development of *madrasas* in Sylhet, refer to Barton's (1986) work on the mosque in Bradford.

> The floor is covered with sheets and the children sit behind low sloping benches…arranged around the edge. The imam sits on a cushion and mat by one wall…. The children are arranged in as many as ten small groups according to sex and stages of learning, and each group progresses independently. A group learns something new by sitting in front of the imam and repeating what he reads or recites. Imitation and repetition are the chief methods of learning, and no aids are available other than the teacher and books……The classes have no formal beginning and no register is kept, for the imam knows the Bengali families well and seems to notice who is present and who is absent….for most of the time, the children work without direct instruction or supervision and the room can become very noisy or chaotic. The imam then enforces a degree of order by use of a short cane. Qur'an schools, especially in Europe, have been criticised for the use of corporal punishment as a means of maintaining discipline….But it must be noted that the teacher often …works under very unsatisfactory conditions, and also that the use of short canes is not uncommon in primary schools in Sylhet. The imam himself disapproves of the practice and would prefer to have better facilities and more staff to facilitate supervision of the children…..The Bengali imam also acknowledges that his class fulfils to an extent the function of a club for the younger children of the community. (Barton 1986:157-158)

From this account, the implied conflict between ancient Islamic and modern western schooling is real. Through the foundation of full-day Muslim schools (*madrasas)* with some that offer boarding facilities, Muslim educators have begun to use the insights and resources of western education to bridge the gap (Barton 1986). There is evidence however that part-time Qur'an schools still have far to go.[267] Nevertheless, the value of the Qur'an school to the Bangladeshi Muslim community in Britain is not to be disputed as it fulfils a crucial role in providing a means by which the children discover what belonging to a Muslim community is all about. Apart from their role in cultural reproduction, these religious educational institutions are an essential part of the development of a Bangladeshi identity as well as community solidarity.

Social divisions, education and community solidarity

In a fascinating study of the language of multiracial urban youth in Britain, Ben Rampton (1995) records the low esteem experienced by Bangladeshi pupils in

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[267] The household research among Bangladeshis shows that Qur'anic classes at the mosque are often inadequate in terms of student teacher ratios and facilities (see Chapter Seven, page 291).

comparison with Caribbean, Anglo, Indian and Pakistani pupils. Some explanations that he puts forward for this are Bangladeshi pupils being the most recently arrived migrant group, and their low proficiency in English. Bangladeshi migrants have taken a longer time than most groups to bring their wives and children over to the U.K. (Gardner 1995; 1993). Barton (1986) gives some reasons for this. Firstly, in order to reunite a family, the men have to ensure that they have enough financial security, which takes years to build up. Secondly, the men were unwilling to subject their families to what they perceived to be a morally corrupt society (also Gardner 1998). In this respect, Taylor and Hegarty (1985) believes that Sylheti women are more rigidly secluded. This is reflected in the relatively small numbers of wives migrating from Bangladesh by the end of the 1960s. The myth of return[268] is also a reason for the later arrivals of Bangladeshi women, as the men were much slower in sending for their families to join them.

Another major factor determining the status of Bangladeshis *vis-à-vis* other migrant groups is education.[269] Within Bangladesh, Sylhet has traditionally had a low literacy rate due to poor educational provision, poor health and the need for child labour in subsistence farming (Taylor and Hegarty 1985:29-31). There is a higher rate of illiteracy among females than among males, reflecting social attitudes towards the role and status of women. In addition to these factors, Sylhetis, like the Mirpuris from Pakistan, have relatively little experience of urban life, but unlike them are more isolated by their language as Sylheti is not understood by Pakistanis, whereas Urdu is understood by some Sylhetis. This is because in 1947, with the creation of Pakistan, Urdu replaced Sylheti language learning in schools (Chalmers 1996).

The phenomenon of the Bangladeshi community in Tower Hamlets appears to be unique compared to other settlements because of the larger numbers of Bangladeshis concentrated in this area. An established body of second generation community

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[268] The 'myth of return' is a term employed by Anwar (1979) in relation to Pakistanis in Britain, to refer to the expectation that the aim of migration is to amass wealth so as to return eventually to the homeland. This is relates to the 'sojourner' mentality that has been used to describe migrant Chinese sojourners or *huaqiao* in South East Asia, that was often a prelude to eventual migration (Wang 2001)

[269] Literacy in Bangladesh for the population over the age of five stood at 18 per cent in 1961 rising only to 22 per cent in 1976, compared for example to the 31 per cent literacy rate of Gujerat (India) in 1971 (Taylor and Hegarty 1985:29).

activists and representatives has developed as a result of Bangladeshi history and political struggles. Bangladeshi nationalism is celebrated by such events as Independence Day, Martyrs Day (Bengali Language Day), which is a tribute to martyrs opposing the imposition of Urdu as the national language in1952, and Victory Day celebrating the defeat of Pakistani forces in 1971 (Eade 1990). In observing the politicisation of Bangladeshis in Tower Hamlets, John Eade (1991; 1990) identifies other forms of solidarity that are a result of secularization and political mobilization towards nationalism, especially as Bangladesh progressed towards being a modern independent state. Not only that, but the racial discrimination that the community experienced in Britain led the younger members to join arms with the socialists and anti-racists in the early 1980s order to combat racism as well as to achieve political recognition and community leadership. Once that was achieved however, recognition of racism within the ranks of the activists led to further divisions. A distinction between those of the older and younger generations was also evident as the elders in the community and religious leaders tended not to be involved in these activities (Eade 1991).

Obstacles to the process of community solidarity also lie in the fact that the Bangladeshi community is itself divided along several lines, among them the linguistic and religious identities discussed in the previous section. In addition, Fazlul Alam (1988) describes the societal polarisation of the community along class lines, with migrants identified as 'economic' and 'non-economic'.[270] He argues that this is a result of the replication of social divisions that exist in Bangladesh.[271] To a large extent, these divisions match those along Sylheti/Bengali linguistic lines (Chalmers 1998). More recently, Islam appears to offer a more powerful global identity and impetus for political mobilization (Glynn 2002; Gardner and Shukur 1994; Eade

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[270] Alam defines non-economic migrants as those who came to Britain to gain or improve their qualifications, and economic migrants as those who came with the sole purpose of finding work.
[271] In Sylhet, these social categories, which have developed way back in time are *Chhotomanush* (literally 'small' people) and *Bhalamanush* (literally 'good' people) (Gardner 1995). However, in current British discourses on immigration, 'economic' migrants are much frowned upon, 'non-economic' migrants could be defined as those whose skills and expertise are sought after, and 'genuine' migrants appear to be those who have a legitimate right to stay. The question remains as to whether these definitions are accurate.

1990).[272] In the 1980s and early 1990s, increased Islamic religious commitment can be seen in the growing number of mosques and religious schools across the country. Also, with the heightened awareness of multiculturalism in British politics, the community's religious needs began to be addressed. Through the 1990s, Islamic revival movements have resulted in another kind of internationally-oriented Muslim solidarity that finds its identity in an imagined, universal Islamic community or *ummah* (Glynn 2002).[273] The impact of these political and religious movements may not be felt as strongly outside of London, but will no doubt be influential in raising the status of Bangladeshis in Britain *vis-à-vis* other minority groups. In the context of the events of September 11th and the aftermath of the war in Iraq, the future interplay between all these varying identities within the community remains to be seen.

Demographic information on the Bangladeshi community

The Bangladeshi population is the most recently arrived of South Asian groups, but the most rapidly growing. The population of Bangladeshis in the 1991 Census was 168,500, or 0.3 per cent of the total population, rising to 267,900 or 0.5 per cent in 1999 (Owen *et al.* 2000:9). In the Census 2001, the population was 283,063, still making up 0.5 per cent of the total population. This constituted 6.1 per cent of the total minority ethnic population. The Bangladeshi population is more homogenous in terms of country of origin, language and religion than the Chinese population, with 52 per cent of the Bangladeshi population in England and Wales born in Bangladesh and 47 per cent born in the U.K. In addition, 97 per cent of Bangladeshis in England and Wales or 260,000 described themselves as Muslim in the Census 2001 (National Statistics Online 2003b).

The age composition of the population provides some clues as to the residency of the population in Britain. According to the PSI Survey of Ethnic Minorities conducted in

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[272] Gardner and Shukur (1994) liken this development to that of Bhangra music, borne out of a response to exclusion on racial and ethnic lines, but different because of its separatist element.
[273] This revival of Islam could be compared to the cultural and religious resurgence that took place amongst the Sikhs in Britain in the 1980s and 1990s (Bhachu 1993; Bhachu 1988).

1994, of the 48 per cent of Bangladeshis between the ages 0-15 (Berthoud and Beishon 1997:20-21), 78 per cent were born in Britain representing the lowest percentage among minority ethnic groups. This suggests that more children in the Bangladeshi community compared to other communities have arrived as immigrants, and reflects the process of the reunion of families being more recent. Another factor to consider is the phenomenon of step-children joining their fathers' families in Britain (Khanum 2001). Other figures confirm that Bangladeshis are the most recently arrived group among the more established minority ethnic groups as three out of ten adults arrived within the last ten years of the PSI Survey (Berthoud and Beishon 1997). Figures in the Labour Force Survey 1999/2000 show that the composition of the Bangladeshi community remains particularly youthful with 27 per cent and 13 per cent being in the 5-15 and 0-4 age ranges respectively (Owen *et al.* 2000). In the Census 2001, the proportion of those under 16 was 38 per cent, which is double the proportion for the white population of under-16s.

The Bangladeshi age-sex pyramid (see Figure 6.1) shows a pattern that corresponds to the immigration policies of the 1960s in which right of entry into the U.K. of British colony citizens was abolished, and labour vouchers issued were severely reduced. In addition, children were required to be accompanied by their mothers under stricter rules. Around 40 years later, the effect on this population who came in the 60s can be seen in the smaller numbers of this age range. Correspondingly, with the norm of wives being a number of years younger than their husbands, the resulting population of the women aged in their thirties to forties is smaller in proportion to the men of that age range. The large numbers of children and young people indicate the potential for a large labour pool but their needs to be supported and resourced will have difficulty being met by the much smaller middle age range.

Figure 6.1: Age structure of Bangladeshi population in Britain
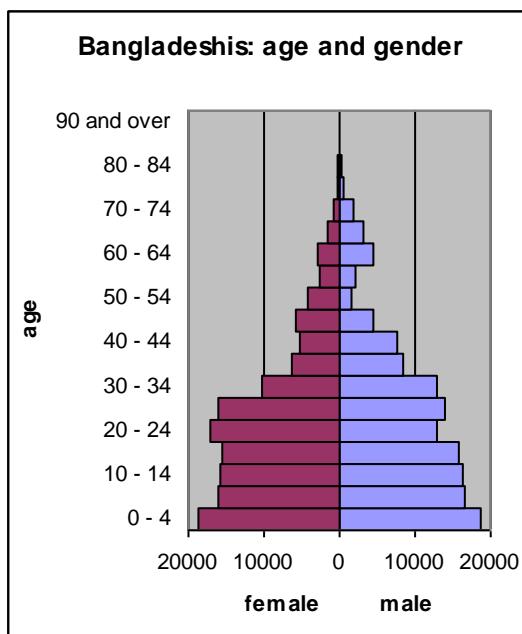
Source: Census 2001 (National Statistics Online)

According to the PSI Survey, Bangladeshi families stand out as generally being larger than in other ethnic groups with 42 per cent having four or more children (Berthoud and Beishon 1997:41). In addition, Pakistani and Bangladeshi families were most likely to have three or more adults in the household, with or without children, as 49 per cent were recorded as having this household composition (*ibid* p. 46). This implies the tendency for more than two generations to be living together, and for adult siblings to be living in the same household, which is often a result of a combination of housing preferences and social deprivation. There are also many cases of Bangladeshi couples hosting married relatives whose spouses in Bangladesh are in the process of obtaining immigration clearances (Khanum 2001). The number of adults in a Bangladeshi household also had the highest rate of increase, from 2.4 in 1982 to 3.0 in 1994, while the number of children increased from 2.6 to 2.7 (Berthoud and Beishon 1997:47). According to more recent figures, among all the ethnic groups, Bangladeshi households were the largest, with an average of 4.7 people (LFS Spring 2002)

Employment characteristics of the Bangladeshi community

According to the 4th PSI survey, 60 per cent of Bangladeshi men work in hotels and catering and they appear to be concentrated in waiting and kitchen work, judging from their manual work profile (Modood 1997c:109). The limit to the availability of these jobs helps to explain the high levels of male Bangladeshi unemployment (Modood 1997c). This was recorded at 42 per cent (*ibid*. p.89), the highest rate among all the minority ethnic groups including Pakistanis. Bangladeshi men also stood out as being the only group to have lower weekly earnings than other men even after simple regression controlled for age, qualifications, social class, family circumstances and local labour market conditions (*ibid*. p.117). Only about a fifth of Bangladeshis in paid employment were self-employed, compared to a third of Pakistanis.

According to more recent figures (LFS, 1997-1999), 70 per cent of Bangladeshi men were involved in distribution, hotels and restaurants, the highest among all minority ethnic groups. The unemployment rate for Bangladeshi men (mean of Spring 1999 to Winter 1999/2000) was recorded as 21 per cent while the unemployment rate for both men and women was 24 per cent (Owen *et al.* 2000). According to the LFS 2000/2001, two thirds of Bangladeshis worked in the distribution, hotel and restaurant industry (National Statistics Online 2004) and Bangladeshi men had the highest unemployment rate at 20 per cent, which is four times the figure for white men (White 2002). Self-employment was at around 12 per cent. The disparity of the unemployment figures between the 4th PSI survey conducted in 1994 and the Labour Force Surveys could be explained by the fact that at the time of the 4th PSI survey, national unemployment had just peaked.

The economic activity rate for Bangladeshi men fell from 74.7 per cent in 1991 to 65 per cent in 1999 (Owen *et al.* 2000; Owen 1994). Those aged between 45-64 have even lower rates at 40 per cent. This implies a higher occurrence of disability and retirement from work.[274] On the other hand, the economic activity rate for Bangladeshi women in 1991 was recorded as 22.4 per cent and was roughly the same

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[274] According to figures from the Census 2001, 54.09 per cent of Bangladeshis aged 50-64 had a limiting long-term illness, compared to an overall figure of 26.61 per cent (ONS).

at 22 per cent in 1999. This figure is higher at 36 per cent for the age range 16-24, but drops considerably after the age of 25 (Owen *et al.* 2000). Based on data from the 4th PSI Survey, Dale *et al* (2002a) found that Pakistani and Bangladeshi single women without children were equally active in the labour market as white women, but economic activity fell after marriage, and was particularly low for women with children aged five and over. It appears that after marriage, which is often at a relatively early age, and after having children, Bangladeshi women are less likely to return to work. There are various explanations given for Bangladeshi women's low rate of participation in the labour market. These include the timing and reasons for their migration, their language ability and educational level, the structure of local labour market and employment opportunities (Dale *et al.* 2002b).[275] Among the various cultural and structural reasons, other important factors are also that Bangladeshis tend to have larger than average family sizes, higher rates of long-term illness and therefore greater caring responsibilities.

The low economic activity rates of women is also linked to the unemployment of their husbands in that if they were to join the labour market, their earnings would impinge on their household benefit entitlement (Modood 1997c). Patriarchal structures and the need to uphold family honour can discourage women from working or seeking work as it could reflect badly on their husbands. Bangladeshi female inactivity in the formal economy suggests that those who are poorly qualified are more likely to be full-time housewives and carers than be in paid manual work outside the home (Modood 1997c). What the PSI study found was that for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women who are in employment, there was a higher ratio of full-time workers to part-time workers compared to that of British European women. This suggests that Bangladeshi women are less likely to work part-time juggling childcare and work as white women do, although there are now indications that part-time working is beginning to be perceived as a solution (Dale *et al.* 2002b). An exception to these women who are unemployed or not in the labour market is the small percentage of Bangladeshi women who have A-levels or degrees, and who seem to have a proportion in the labour market that is as high as in other groups. Research on South Asian women reveals that for these

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[275] Brah (1994) cautions against a culturalist explanation, and would include in this list structural reasons such as the global economy, state policies, racial discrimination in the labour market, and the segmentation of the labour market by race, class, age and ethnicity.

women educated in the U.K., there was room for negotiation with their parents-in-law in combining paid employment and childcare (Dale *et al.* 2002b).[276]

Participation in education and training

The importance of participation in education and training to the labour market prospects for minority ethnic people cannot be disputed although employment outcomes differ according to the type of qualification, educational institution attended and employer discrimination. Higher education qualifications obtained from Bangladesh for example do not have the same recognition as British qualifications (Dale *et al.* 2002a). In the 4th PSI Survey conducted in 1994, Bangladeshi men and women were found to be the least qualified among all the minority groups. At that time, while the second generation of migrants generally benefited from participation in the British education system, this did not appear to have the desired employment outcomes, and was 'extremely worrying' (Modood 1997d:71).277 Indeed, in terms of compulsory education, Pakistani/Bangladeshi students display the lowest levels of academic achievement in the GCSE examinations (Owen *et al.* 2000). There are however indications of steady improvements. The pupil level annual school census (PLASC) 2002 recorded more than 40 per cent of Bangladeshi students achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs for those who entered for GCSEs in maintained schools. This compares well with the average of 51 per cent (Department for Education and Skills 2003), considering that in 1991, only 14 per cent achieved such grades (Brown 2003; Haque 2000).

In 1998/1999, Bangladeshis in the 16-18 age group were found to have the highest proportion in their group (73 per cent) compared with other minority ethnic groups in further education colleges and were most likely to be studying for GNVQ Level 3 qualifications. For the 19-24 age group however, the proportion of the Bangladeshi group was the lowest at 16 per cent (Owen *et al.* 2000:52). Bangladeshi students also

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[276] The Bangladeshi norm is for patrilocal marriages, but with migration, a number of variations exist (Khanum 2001).
[277] Modood attributes this to a failure in educational provision, but there could be other structural reasons such as discrimination in the labour market.

had some of the lowest representation in higher education institutions (Owen *et al.* 2000:60). Some of the contributory factors to this lack of educational attainment include migratory patterns, family background, low esteem, religious obligations, low income and family and caring responsibilities, which have been discussed in the previous sections. Again, in spite of all these odds however, there have been promising signs with regard to the educational achievements of Bangladeshi youth, in particular young women (Brown 2003; Dale *et al.* 2002a; Dale *et al.* 2002b).[278]

According to Gardner and Shukur (1994), higher education is increasingly seen as the means to achieving a higher earning potential, and younger British Bangladeshi women are also recognising this, although parental fears may militate against their ambitions.[279] In comparing the LFS figures 1984-1994, although numbers were relatively low, Bhopal (1998) noted that there had been an overall increase in the numbers of Pakistani/Bangladeshi women obtaining degrees. In terms of gender, the total number of Bangladeshi female students in British higher education institutions, excluding the Open University in 1998/1999, was 2003, compared with 2724 Bangladeshi male students (Owen *et al.* 2000:61). However, Bangladeshi women were more likely than their male counterparts to be studying full-time. When applications by home students to degree courses were compared (Dale *et al.* 2002b), there was a marked increase (83 per cent) from 1994 to 1999 in the numbers of Bangladeshi women applying. Similarly, the numbers of U.K. domiciled full-time first year students on degree levels by ethnic group showed an increase (95 per cent) of Bangladeshi women from 1994/5 to 1998/9. The increase for Bangladeshi men was 21 per cent in comparison.[280]

There is however a tendency towards 'a polarization in educational aspirations and attainment' (Dale *et al.* 2002b:946), with the coexistence of high levels of those who are qualified as well as high levels of those who are unqualified. Incentives to succeed

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[278] National statistics show a marked increase in the numbers of young Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in full-time undergraduate courses in recent years.

[279] These fears concern the maintenance of *purdah* or the 'seclusion' of women for their sexual honour.

[280] These figures are from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA, Table 10A quoted in Haque 2000). Even though Bangladeshi women started at a lower base than their male counterparts, the difference is significant. One explanation is the improvement in Bangladeshi girls' school performance relative to boys' (Haque 2000) thus enabling easier access to further and higher education.

include the cultural value of education held by their community, their parents' ambitions for them, and the challenge of having to compete in a dominant white society. For those women who succeed in achieving high qualifications, they have more negotiating power in the family with regard to domestic responsibilities, paid work and maintaining family honour. Those who do not hold higher qualifications will face more difficulties in participating in the labour market. In any case, there are indications that for younger Bangladeshi women, very different educational opportunities and therefore employment careers exist for them compared with their mothers (Dale *et al.* 2002b; Dale *et al.* 2002a).

Children's educational and social needs

In 1985, a review of research into the education of children of South Asian origin was published, entitled *The Best of Both Worlds…?* (Taylor and Hegarty 1985).[281] While the research review covered most of the South Asian groups, research on Bangladeshi children was notably sparse compared to work done on Punjabi Sikhs, Indian Hindus and Pakistani Muslims. This is related to the fact mentioned already that Bangladeshis were only recognised as a separate category after Bangladesh achieved independence, and were the most recently arrived of South Asian migrant groups. Following on from this research and that of the Home Affairs Committee report on 'Bangladeshis in Britain' (House of Commons 1986-87), there has been more research carried out on the education of Bangladeshi children.

It is important to keep in mind that although most Bangladeshi men arrived in the 1950s, it has only been since the 1970s onwards that children have joined them, and many families are still divided.[282] Among other things, some argue that the lack of the paternal control in Bangladesh may have contributed to the children not taking education as seriously as they should (Murshid 1990). Interestingly however, research

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[281] This was originally commissioned by the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups and presented as a report in 1982.

[282] This is a result of the 1947 Partition of India, and the 1948 Nationality Act, as well as subsequent immigration restrictions (see page 216ff), in particular the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1968, which limited children under the age of 16 entering the country. This, combined with the initial reluctance of Bangladeshi men to send for their wives and daughters, led to families being divided.

on 36 families from the Bangladeshi community (Murshid 1990) residing in Hertfordshire revealed that mothers tended to be more educated than fathers and were more involved in the supervision of children's homework, although fathers were more conversant in English. A study conducted in Cardiff (Ghuman and Gallop 1981) compared the attitudes of 11 Hindu Bengali parents and 19 Muslim parents from Bangladesh. They found that the Muslim parents held much less favourable attitudes towards their children's schooling than the Hindu parents, who were more educated. This might have to do with the fact that the Muslim parents were less aware than the Hindu parents about what goes on in schools. However, most still regarded the importance of the family as less than or equal to school. What both Muslim and Hindu parents agreed on was their preference for more first language teaching (Ghuman and Gallop 1981). In terms of children's preferences, when Bangladeshi secondary school pupils were interviewed in the Hertfordshire study, 86 per cent wanted to study *Bangla* (Bengali) as one of their core subjects (Murshid 1990), indicating that this is not solely a parental preference.

Religion is an important determinant of parents' views. With regard to Muslim religious education, most of the parents in the Cardiff study (Ghuman and Gallop 1981) expected that their religion be taught in school, while fewer had expectations such as that it should be taught at home, or be taught comparative religion at school. The Muslims indeed felt more strongly than the Hindus about religious education being taught at school. Most of the Muslim parents objected very strongly to co-educational schools. They were also critical of the standards of discipline in school and objected strongly to uniforms where girls were required to wear skirts. Another study on Muslim parents in Liverpool by Khan-Cheema (Taylor and Hegarty 1985) also highlighted the fact that Islamic education was regarded as their most important duty as parents. However, with regard to single-sex schooling, although the parents preferred it, the parents in the Liverpool study felt that it was more important to inculcate Islamic values at home. [283] In the 4th PSI Study on ethnic minorities in Britain, 46 per cent of Bangladeshis preferred single-sex schooling for their daughters compared to 59 per cent of Pakistanis. On the whole, Muslim mothers were found

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[283] The importance of developing one's moral character through Islamic teaching and single sex schooling is also emphasised in other studies (Haque 2000:155).

more likely to prefer Muslim schools for their children, although an important observation has been that the non-availability of single-sex schools has influenced their preferences. The study further suggests that

> while twice as many Muslims want a girls' school for their daughters than want a Muslim school, for perhaps up to a fifth of Muslims the preference for a girls' school may be based on a religious view of education which is unlikely to be fully satisfied with non-religious, single-sex schools. (Modood 1997b:325)

This view has some resonance with my findings, although I would add that Modood appears to overlook the fact that most single-sex schools are Christian denominational schools.

Taylor concluded that a substantial number of Muslim pupils were often heavily engaged in the out-of-school learning of religion and language, although none of the research in her review concerning attendance at mosque during out-of-school hours deals specifically with Bangladeshi children, As in Barton's (1986) study of a mosque in Bradford, Mackillop's study in Sheffield described Pakistani children attending the mosque daily after school for two hours, and who were sometimes sent to Pakistan to complete their religious education (Taylor and Hegarty 1985). Summerfield (1993) also observes this practice among her Bangladeshi respondents. A need for leisure provision for Muslim girls was expressed in work done by Walker because of the tendency for them to lead socially isolated lives, often being confined to doing homework, household chores, and watching television at home. On the other hand, Muslim boys were given the liberty to stay out late, and go to discos and pubs in their teens (Taylor and Hegarty 1985:387).

The first official report of 'underachievement' amongst Bangladeshi pupils in British Schools was that of the Swann Report (Swann 1985). A further report on Bangladeshis in Britain in 1986-87 spoke of alarming signs of considerable underachievement and low attainment particularly at the end of secondary schooling (House of Commons 1986-87). This was supported by the research in Hertfordshire (Murshid 1990) where a survey of 65 schools showed that the academic performance of Bangladeshi pupils fell significantly once they entered secondary school. This has

been attributed to the assessment-oriented nature of secondary schooling requiring assistance from parents. School attendance has also been affected by parents wishing to send their children on visits to Bangladesh, and needing them to act as interpreters. Other reasons for the age-related fall in attainment include the late introduction of these children to the U.K. education system, cultural and religious constraints in particular for girls, poor socio-economic background, low expectations of teachers and racial hostility. More recent research identifies weak home-school relationships and negative cultural stereotypes as also contributing to the poor performance of Bangladeshi pupils (Haque 2000). Large family size and inter-generational conflict have also been suggested as contributory factors. Some studies show however that although Bangladeshis may achieve lower results than white children, their progress is better (Haque 2000). Also, in spite of their lower attainments at GCSE level, more are likely to stay on in post-16 education than their white contemporaries, although a significant number are those who stay on to improve on poor performance (Dale *et al.* 2002b; Owen *et al.* 2000; Modood 1997d).

Haque (2000), arguing that past research has often lacked an understanding of what life is like in Britain for these children and their parents, and what is the nature of their relationship with schools, highlights the lack of focus on what schools are doing to bridge the cultural divide between home and school. Indeed, as far back as 1985, Taylor had argued that home-school liaison in order to promote mutual understanding between parents and teachers is 'where greatest initiative is required by schools, teachers and LEAs who might consider it an essential area for in-service training'(Taylor and Hegarty 1985:366). Murshid (1990) recommends that the performance of pupils could be improved by the provision of quiet study areas, *halal* food, and a commitment from school authorities to deal with racism and discrimination; other suggestions include the availability of bilingual teachers, basic information about the education system to be made available to parents, and more parental involvement in their children's education. Interestingly, in looking at gender differences, while research nationally on the performance of Bangladeshi children is limited, ILEA's findings indicated that Bangladeshi girls outperformed Bangladeshi boys. In the 1995 GCSE results, Bangladeshi girls in Tower Hamlets surpassed not only that of their male counterparts, but also their white peers (Haque 2000:149-

150).[284] This finding underlines the need to tease out different influences working in the local context in addition to broader socio-economic, historical and cultural factors.

The whole area of cultural mismatch between home and school is also addressed in recent research on the early years development of Bangladeshi children, which has questioned the effect of Western child-centred and play-focused early childhood pedagogy on their adaptation to school (Brooker 2002; 2000). Bangladeshi beliefs about childhood and learning meant that children were not socialised at home to 'learn for themselves' but to 'learn what they were taught', and therefore were the 'wrong' kind of pupils for the school setting. This in turn impinged on teachers' assessments of their personal and social development at school. Blackledge (2001; 1999) argues strongly for a greater recognition of the linguistic and cultural capital that Bangladeshi mothers possess. His research showed that Bangladeshi mothers were marginalised by educational structures that prevented them from gaining access to information about, or support with their children's schooling.

Islam and the role of women

The role of women in Islam is often stereotyped and pathologised in British society, but there are alternative views that need to be presented to redress the lack of understanding about this subject. Variations in religious practice occur as a result of migration, class differences, rural versus urban contexts, and educational attainment. Generally speaking, Muslim women interpret their role according to the Qur'an differently depending on the contexts they find themselves in, but what their role is as women needs some examining. The typical image of Muslim women is that of submission to their husbands in arranged marriages, seclusion from men who are unrelated and dependence on male relatives for all kinds of tasks, particularly outside the household and dealing with other men. Indeed, while Islam brought improvements to the lives of women in Arabian society during the time of the Prophet Muhammad,

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[284] Improved achievements in Tower Hamlets have been recorded in which the percentage of those achieving five or more A* to C grades went from 8 per cent in 1990 to 44 per cent in 2001. Reasons for this include the council's commitment to the community, the improvements in schools and a new generation of minority ethnic teachers, most of whom are Bangladeshi (Brown 2003).

the *hadith* (the corpus of traditions relating to the life of the Prophet) generally displays negative attitudes towards women (Glaser and John 1998). These relate mostly to the impurity connected with menstruation and pregnancy.[285] Often in a non-Islamic society such as Britain, Muslims argue for a stricter observance of religious guidelines, mandatory or otherwise, to preserve their religious identity. In Britain, gender role divisions in Bangladeshi families were discovered to have more to do with public as opposed to private domestic spheres (Glaser and John 1998). The role of women in child-bearing and child-rearing, and as carriers of culture and faith is however undisputed. Bangladeshi women are expected to have many children and their husbands are generally opposed to contraception.

With regard to relationships with men, in Islam a woman should be protected by her husband and her adult son throughout her life. The basis for this comes from Islamic teaching on how mothers ought to be regarded:

> The Prophet said, 'Paradise lies at the feet of your mothers'. Once a person asked the Prophet, 'Who deserves the best care from me? The Prophet replied, 'Your mother' (he repeated this three times), 'then your father and then your nearest relatives'. (Nisayi, Baihaqi, Timidhi)

However, according to a historical account of Islam, because there was a need for a family pattern to unify the new believers in Islam, there was a move towards a model of patriarchy that has continued to this day (Ahmed 1992). The traditional Islamic view of the man being responsible for the material well-being of the woman comes from the verse from the *Qur'an, Surah* 4.35:

> Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because God has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them out of their means.

This is the Islamic basis for the patriarchal, androcentric view of life, which is challenged by Muslim feminists. One argument that has been put forward is that 'equality' is not the same as 'sameness' or being 'identical', so that the different roles

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[285] Interestingly, respondents to Clinton Bennett's inquiries about Islamic traditions in Dhaka believed that only the *qudsi* (golden) *hadith* had to be accepted by all Muslims, and that many of the *hadith* are advisory, not mandatory (Bennett 1998).

of men and women are entirely legitimate (Glaser and John 1998; Doucet 1995). In a situation in which male unemployment is high, there is evidence of changing attitudes, whether or not they are based on religion.

The global religious and political dimensions referred to in the discussion on the British Bangladeshi identity are also having an effect on the positions of Muslim women. These interact with educational achievement to produce a more assertive younger generation of Bangladeshi women. In discussing the Islamic revivalist movement now gaining strength in the East End of London, Glynn (2002) reports that young educated Muslim women claim that traditional restrictions have no basis in Islamic law. Similarly, in interviews with young Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, Dale and her colleagues (Dale *et al.* 2002b) found that respondents were keen to show that there was no conflict between being a Muslim and taking on paid work, drawing a distinction between tradition and religion. Education in fact could give young women increased chances of getting married (Dale *et al.* 2002b) and educated mothers living with their parents-in-law also had more bargaining power in negotiations regarding paid work and child care (ibid. p.959). Bhopal (2000) found that South Asian women with high levels of education were not committed to upholding community traditions, but were endeavouring to create identities of their own. Education was empowering them in this process.

It appears therefore from the above discussion that those women who are able to progress educationally gain a position in which they may be able to choose whether or not to conform to traditional norms, whereas those with lower educational levels are more restricted in their choices. With the emergence of the Islamic revival movement however, a new conformism is demanded of young Muslim women in education, bringing a dichotomy between those who are more religious as opposed to those who are not (Glynn 2002). As for the less educated, the impact that puritanical Islam has on them is a possible area of research. In the meantime, the older generation approve of the practices of educated young people influenced by the Islamic revival when they are seen to be in line with Islamic teaching. Where the two generations would disagree is likely to be in extremist interpretations. In addition, traditional Sufism with its veneration of *pirs* practised by the majority of the older generation is also at odds

with this new form of puritanical Islam. It is likely that this conflict will not only be religious but also based on class distinctions. Such contextual factors and global religious movements is likely to influence the role of Bangladeshi women in Britain in the future.

Transnationalsim and the Bangladeshi family in the U.K.

The transnational nature of the Bangladeshi family in the U.K. has been touched upon in the previous sections on migration, with the 'divided' nature of some Bangladeshi families that have yet to achieve reunification, and its effects on children's education. These and related issues to do with the family will be explored further here.[286] Summerfield's (1993) description of the different patterns of adaptation between Somali and Bangladeshi women bring out the emotional allegiance that Bangladeshis have towards their country of origin. This is displayed when children are sent back to Bangladesh to be educated. Wives often return to Bangladesh as well, once they have established the residence rights of their children.[287] Also, arranged marriages are made in which the spouse is from Bangladesh, because "one can only find a 'good' son or daughter-in-law in Bangladesh": the risk is that Bangladeshi girls reared in England are not sufficiently 'servile' to the mother-in-law or husband (Summerfield 1993:87).

The coming of wives from Bangladesh led to many important and positive consequences for the community. They brought a spiritual and moral ballast to the men-folk, when religious observance had faltered in the years away from home (Gardner 1998; 1995). The important role of women in cultural and spiritual reproduction is part of the rationale for brides to be sought in Bangladesh. Life-cycle rituals particularly those related to marriage and death can then be celebrated in Britain in traditional ways and become important occasions for social interaction and networking (Ballard 1994). In economic terms, the reunion of families has played an

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[286] Studies like Stopes-Roe and Cochrane's (1989) on traditionalism between generations (young South Asian adults and their parents) overlook a number of other important characteristics of transnational families that come about because of their history of migration.

[287] This was because of the 1968 Immigration Act, which required children under 16 to be accompanied by their mothers.

important part in the establishing of family businesses, particularly in the case of the independent restaurant sector, as a study by Ram and others found (2000).[288]

One important aspect of immigration legislation was to have far-reaching effects on the structure of Bangladeshi households in the U.K. (Khanum 2001). In the 1980s and 90s, the 'primary purpose rule' refused entry to those foreign spouses for whom it has been deemed that the primary purpose of the marriage was to facilitate their entry into the country. The burden of proof lies with the applicant who as rural Sylhetis, have very little idea of immigration law and lack official documents such as birth certificates. This law also ignores the fact that such spouses are legally married and is culturally insensitive to the norm of arranged marriages (Menski 1999; Gardner 1995). In addition, British immigration authorities are unwilling to give rights of residence to Sylheti husbands of British Bengali women because they claim that the norm of patrilocality casts doubts on the validity of their application (Gardner 1993). The primary purpose rule was abolished in 1997, but signs are that a restrictive approach still continues (Menski 1999).

In order to maintain links with the home country, Bangladeshi male immigrants often have two wives, one residing in Britain; the other residing in Bangladesh and responsible for land and property there, often purchased by earnings in Britain (Khanum 2001). According to Khanum, the restrictive immigration rules and this practice of more than one marriage have resulted in changing patterns of household composition and a form of household she describes as 'circumstantial' households. Khanum classifies such transnational households as one single household on the grounds of joint budgeting (*ibid*. p.495).[289] For those Bangladeshi households in Britain that are nuclear in form, they may not be so in function because of the practice of a 'common hearth' wherein parents still exercise control over their son's households. In addition, many households in Khanum's study have stepchildren and

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[288] Ram found that while South Asian restaurateurs used family labour more than other restaurateurs, Bangladeshis did so to a lesser extent than Pakistanis. Economic necessity rather than 'family solidarity' was the main motivation for a family business, as the reason quoted by many South Asian respondents was the provision of a 'safety net' for children in the future. Muslim businesses were sharply distinguished from non-Muslim businesses in the sample by the fact that wives were absent from the work of the restaurants and given domestic 'hidden' roles.

[289] While this definition has not been employed in my research, the effect of such transnational relationships has been considered by means of a network analysis.

stepmothers. The principle of 'reciprocal responsibility'[290] in which a woman makes sacrifices to serve her husband and children, who are in turn responsible for protecting her throughout her life, does not apply between stepmothers and stepchildren. This can lead to antagonistic family relationships. Lines of conflict in the Bangladeshi family in Britain therefore are not restricted to dichotomies of younger versus older generations, traditional versus modern, which themselves can be contested. Very real structural changes to the family have come about because of migration and adaptation to a different country. At the same time, these families have to reckon with racism, discrimination, economic polarisation and marginalisation. These, together with poverty and social deprivation could spur them on to follow previously used strategies to strengthen their ties with their homeland (Khanum 2001; Alam 1988), where many still hope to return.

The Bangladeshi community in Newcastle upon Tyne

In Newcastle upon Tyne, the Bangladeshi community exhibits characteristics similar to the national picture. In terms of migration and settlement, they have migrated more recently than the other South Asian groups. They also come predominantly from the Sylhet district of Bangladesh and may have moved from other parts of Britain where they were employed in industries such as the steel and textile industries. As elsewhere in Britain, Bangladeshis are concentrated in inner city areas, and are mainly found in deprived wards such as Elswick and alongside low-income white populations with high unemployment, not far from the city centre. With increased social mobility, families move to surrounding areas with safer neighbourhoods and more desirable schools for their children. While there are concentrations in certain wards, Newcastle is different to Tower Hamlets and areas in Manchester and Bradford with their larger populations and higher concentrations of Bangladeshis. According to the 1991 Census, the percentage of Bangladeshis in the population of Tyne and Wear was 0.3 per cent and in Newcastle upon Tyne, it was 0.5 per cent or 1,300 persons. This estimate is likely to be affected by a poor or non-response rate owing to language

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[290] Khanum points to 'reciprocal responsibility' as being the essence of an Asian household. This long-term commitment distinguishes Asian from Western households and should be incorporated into definitions of the Asian 'household'.

barriers and sampling errors. According to the Census 2001, out of a population of 259,536 people in Newcastle, 6.9 per cent of the population are ethnic minorities, and 4.4 per cent are classified as Asian or Asian British. Of this, there are an estimated 2,595 or 1 per of the total population who are Bangladeshi in origin (Policy, Research and Information Services, Newcastle City Council).

In the West End of Newcastle, there are four adjacent wards with more than 3 per cent South Asians (Newcastle City Council 1997). The following table compares figures on the South Asian population in some West End wards between 1991 and 2001:

Table 6.1: Percentages of South Asians in some Newcastle wards

Ward	1991	1996	2001
Elswick	16.78 %	25 %	21.9%
Moorside	3.37 %	5 %	8.0%
Wingrove	13.70 %	16 %	19.8%

Source: Ward data, Census of Population 1991 and 2001, and 1996 Inter Censal Survey, Newcastle City Council

There are notable changes in the South Asian populations of these wards, which appear to show that there is some recent movement away from Elswick into less deprived areas.[291] However, the greatest concentration of Bangladeshis is still in Elswick, with the percentage in that ward increasing from 7.8 per cent in 1991 to 11.7 per cent in 2001 (ONS, Ethnicity by ward figures). According to the 1991 Census, 56.7 per cent of all Newcastle Bangladeshis live in Elswick but only 22.5 per cent of Pakistanis and 8.7 per cent of Indians. This suggests a certain degree of ethnic encapsulation similar to other regions of the country.

The following table shows the contrast between Elswick, an adjacent ward Wingrove, and another ward to the north of the city according to more recent figures.

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[291] According to 1991 figures, 97.7 per cent of Bangladeshis live in the City Challenge area, which indicates their relative poverty (Glaser 1994).

Table 6.2: Ward data

Percentage of ward population:	Elswick	Wingrove	Grange
Asian or Asian British	21.9	19.8	5.1
Bangladeshi	11.7	3.2	1.4
Had no qualifications	43.8	29.9	25.1
Unemployed	8.2	4.9	3.2
Rented council home	27.2	14.7	15.8

Source: Census 2001, National Statistics Online

From the above statistics, Elswick appears notably more deprived than the other two wards, with a higher percentage of residents who are without qualifications, who are unemployed and renting a council house. Elswick is one of several wards included in Newcastle's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. While both Elswick and Wingrove have a high percentage of Asian or Asian British, the percentage of Bangladeshis is much lower in Wingrove ward. In addition, the percentages with regard to the other characteristics indicating social deprivation are lower in Wingrove ward. In addition, the average age of Elswick and Wingrove is under 35, but the average age in Grange ward is 40.6, reflecting its older age profile.

Since the 1970s, the West End has been the target of various urban policy initiatives introduced by successive governments because of the loss of large traditional industries. In spite of this, urban decline, social deprivation, and community fragmentation led to riots in Elswick in the West End of Newcastle in 1991. Following this, a City Council Plan was drawn up and a large injection of City Challenge Funding resulted in visible improvements in social conditions. However, die-hard attitudes and prejudices still remain as can be seen in a report on local people's views on living in East Elswick (Hedges 1997). In a community crime profile of the area (Community Crime Profiling Project 1998), Northumbria Police data indicated that of all the wards, Elswick had the highest rate of burglaries per 1000 households over 1996. The Bangladeshi mosque and community centre are both located in Elswick, close to residences, community projects, shops and businesses. When questioned, many of the residents did not want to leave the area because of the local amenities, close-knit communities and convenient access to the city centre (Community Crime Profiling Project 1998). *Halal* butchers, Asian supermarkets and

sari shops are some of the essential services that Bangladeshis depend on in this part of the city. A local primary school attended mostly by children of Bangladeshi origin serves the community well by making its facilities available for community events and meetings. These include the monthly Racial Equality Subgroup meetings of the Newcastle EYDCP. Likewise, the nearby playgroup that was developed as the main part of a local community project has served Bangladeshi women and children since the 1980s, and has recently been registered as a community nursery. In the West End, there are voluntary and community sector agencies numbering over 200, and well-established networks. However, making sure that work is joined-up is a challenge with the large number of initiatives and organisations present.[292]

Bangladeshi men in Newcastle are mostly involved in the catering sector, with a much smaller number in transport (bus and taxi-drivers), community work and small businesses. Bangladeshi women are employed in schools, voluntary and public services in jobs that include mid-day supervision, crèche-work, secretarial work, community work and interpreting, with a small number in self-employed businesses such as *sari* shops, where customers are predominantly female.

The activities of the Bangladeshi male population are most actively centred on the mosque in Elswick, which was only recently renovated and extended after having been the target of racist attacks for a number of years. The Bangladeshi Community Centre suffers from a lack of funding and is housed in a building that is in urgent need of renovation. The organisation most active in community development among Bangladeshis is the Riverside Community Health Project based in the West End of the city. Their work with Bangladeshis is one among a number of other services that are provided in Benwell, a neighbouring ward to Elswick, which has undergone extensive area regeneration. Recently, the project has been able to secure funding from the Children's Fund for a Young Voices project, to meet the needs of Bangladeshi children. Bangladeshi community development is mainly found in association with services for other sectors of the community such as the Riverside Community Health Project, the West End Health Development Project, the Millin Centre (a community

[292] City profile, The Newcastle Plan, Newcastle City Council.
http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/ncleplan.nsf/a/westend?opendocument

and housing project) and in South Asian women groups like Roshni and the Angelou Centre, where support and networking is valued. Apart from the Bangladeshi Community Centre and the mosque, other organisations dedicated to the needs of the Bangladeshi community are the Bentinck Tenants Association and the Shati Women's Project.

Some idea of the local Bangladeshi population and its childcare needs is provided by the key findings of the Newcastle EYDCP's Parental Childcare Needs Survey, administered in 2002. In the sample of 106 respondents, the average number of children in the families represented was 3.06. If only children under the age of 14 were considered, the number was 2.62.[293] Children between 4-6 years old was the largest age grouping (28.7%), with a fifth under the age of three. Only one family used a childminder and two used an out-of-school club. For the large majority, family members were called upon to look after the children. A third of the respondents had grandparents looking after children, and 17 per cent a friend or neighbour. In terms of childcare options, there was a significant preference (more than 60% of respondents) for clubs and playschemes that provided learning or physical activities. There was a high preference for homework clubs, followed by school clubs, which reflects the importance that the parents place on schoolwork. These types of provision are preferred to childcare e.g. using a childminder, where there is almost three times the number of parents who would not use one to those who would. 65 parents preferred a family member, and 33 preferred a friend or neighbour for childcare provision. This is understandable considering the fact that many parents had low incomes with around a third earning between £87-182 a week and below. In the survey, take-up of income support and tax credits was high with 23 out of 76 (30.3%) on income support and 55 (61.8%) on WFTC. Encouragingly, most (66 per cent) had heard of CTC but only two in the household research knew anything about it. There is also the difference between hearing about it and knowing how it works, which is an important distinction, so that while a number had heard about it in the survey, most may not know how it works out in practice, as evidenced in the household research. This lack of knowledge coupled with the low incomes of the households will impact on the ability of parents to afford

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[293] The question on number of children over the age of 14 was added to the questionnaire for the Bangladeshis.

to pay for childcare, especially if they are already paying for Qur'an reading classes for their children.

Conclusion

The Bangladeshi community in Britain is distinguished from other minority ethnic groups by its more homogenous nature and the tendency to be highly concentrated in certain wards or boroughs in large metropolitan areas. One could assume that there would therefore be greater community solidarity and opportunities for mobilisation. In fact the community is riddled with divisions that are mainly a result of class and generational differences. The sense of community is most strongly fought for in the London borough of Tower Hamlets, which has the highest concentration of Bangladeshis in Britain (Eade 1991). However, the community in general suffers from high unemployment rates and low incomes. Much research has tended to focus on Bangladeshi women despite concerns raised as to the poor employment activity levels of men. This is particularly crucial when we see that the educational achievement rates of Bangladeshi women are gradually surpassing Bangladeshi men. The pattern for women however appears to be that their economic activity rates fall significantly after the age of 25, although percentages of those who are entering higher education are rising rapidly. There appears to be a polarisation between women who are able to achieve educationally and those who are unable to. Education as capital is of key importance to the Bangladeshi woman seeking to further her employment prospects as it is used to negotiate her share of housework, childcare and other responsibilities in the context of the family. A distinction between tradition and religion is important here, and educated Bangladeshi women would emphasise that tradition, not religion, is responsible for the majority of Bangladeshi women being housebound.

The situation of children in Bangladeshi families is also given some emphasis in this chapter, with the lack of opportunities particularly for girls to participate in activities outside the home and school. This is because of a combination of factors, such as *purdah,* household responsibilities and attendance at Qur'an classes on a regular basis. Underpinning this is the importance of religion and the effects of migration in the lives of Bangladeshi people in the U.K. As in Chinese families that have faced

separation and reunion, Bangladeshi children may also suffer the effects of such changes. The context within which these children grow up also needs some examination, as the effect of migration is such as to lead to different kinds of family structures, and familial tensions that are more than just generational in nature. Coupled with environmental factors of poor employment opportunities, deprived neighbourhoods, crime and racism, it is little wonder that one of the main coping strategies of Bangladeshi families is to segregate themselves from the majority white population and their very different values and norms, to work hard to maintain their ties with *desh,* or to establish it in the land of their migration. One way this is happening is the establishment of full-day Islamic schools or *madrasas.* Just as there is a need to understand the transnational forces that led to the circumstances surrounding the migration of Bangladeshis to Britain, similarly Bangladeshi lives in Britain are being affected by global movements, the most recent of which is Islamic revival. Its relevance to community solidarity and the role of women in cultural and spiritual reproduction is not to be underestimated.

CHAPTER SEVEN: BRINGING UP BANGLADESHI CHILDREN IN BRITAIN

Introduction

> No matter how routinely members of the indigenous majority may overlook such matters, every single migrant minority has its own distinctive historical and geographical roots, which in turn have had – and continue to have – a powerful impact not just on the specific character of the intellectual, social, cultural, religious and material capital which members of each group brought with them to Britain, but also on the strategies which they have deployed as they set about devising their own self-generated strategies of survival in their new alien environment (Ballard 1999b:30).

This chapter begins with an overview of the sample of Bangladeshi households and their members in some detail, picking up the themes of migration, education, employment and geographical locations. As in Chapter Five on the Chinese households, the social networks and therefore social capital of the families is analysed in diagrammatic form. The community and institutional support networks that exist for some families are also noted, as they relate to the issue of childcare. The impact of migration on the household is seen in the ways that the categories of gender, class and religion are played out in the context of the household. The research participants' experiences of racism and the transnational identities of household members are also focused on, taking into consideration the particular neighbourhoods the households are situated in. The task of childcare and the socialisation of children, looking not only at the roles of parents, grandparents, older children, relatives and friends but also the formal institutions of pre-school, school and out-of-school provision is covered in this chapter.

As in the sample of Chinese households, the sample of Bangladeshi households reflects a range of characteristics, i.e. household size and composition, economic activity and educational background of parents. The employment status of the men include unemployed, part-time and casually employed, and full-time self-employed. The majority are or have been in the catering trade. All but one of the families

originate from Sylhet, and all but one family live in the West End of Newcastle. This is a reflection of the origin and pattern of settlement of the Bangladeshi community in Britain and in Newcastle as described in Chapter Six.

The households

Migration history and family background

The importance of migration history is evident in this sample as the households concerned are the product of the history and the movements of a people through colonial times to the present day. For most of the parents in the households, their fathers were British citizens who have worked in shipping, rail, or textile industries after the war years when there were severe labour shortages. For three of the parents, their fathers passed away as British citizens before their children arrived in the country. For instance, Mr Miah's father who died in 1975 after living in the country for about thirty years, sponsored many of his nephews to come to the U.K., but wanted his son to stay in Bangladesh for as long as he could, so as to 'study our country' before leaving home. Unfortunately he died before he could see his son settle in England. Mr Ahmed on the other hand is the only one who came because of marriage. He described how hard life was in Bangladesh when as the oldest and only son, he struggled to support his widowed mother, as well as his sister and her husband who had eight children. Mr Ahmed's brother-in-law worked at a government office but the wages were very low, so Mr Ahmed helped by supplementing it from his tailoring business. He then decided to train up his oldest nephew to take on the business. Times were hard, and for four years, he tried to get a job abroad, even facing imprisonment for a false passport. Then the opportunity arose for an arranged marriage to someone in Britain whose mother used to live nearby in the same village.

All the households included in the Bangladeshi sample have their roots in the district of Sylhet except for one from southern Bangladesh. This is a reflection of the community as a whole (see Chapter Six). Most are from the rural parts of Sylhet while one couple, Mr and Mrs Bari, are from Sylhet Town, and this seems to account for their having a different lifestyle and values. With the expansion of the city, those

areas that were originally villages have gradually become urbanised. Three interviewees are from such areas. The rural-urban distinction is thus not as clear as one might imagine. Most of the parents have migrated from other parts of the U.K. For example, Mr and Mrs Ferdousi moved to Newcastle two years ago but have family in London and the North West. Many have relatives in Tower Hamlets in the East End of London, or in the Midlands or North West.[294] Only two of the fathers interviewed have always lived in Newcastle since they arrived.

The social divisions of the Bangladeshi community along economic/non-economic, traditional/radical religious, and Bengali/Sylheti linguistic lines have been referred to in Chapter Six, and the distinction between the Siddiques, the Tauhids and the rest of the households may be described in these ways. Most of the households came as 'economic' migrants because their parents or they themselves came to the U.K. in search of paid work. The Siddiques and the Tauhids came for other reasons. Both Mrs Siddique and Mrs Tauhid refer to the fact that they are accustomed to having female helpers when they were in Bangladesh, indicating that they were from well-to-do backgrounds. The Siddiques exhibit more of the characteristics of 'non-economic migrants' that Alam (1988:61-62) outlines than the Tauhids do, because of their urban background, broader outlook and greater integration into British society. They have strong ties with their 'homeland' because they are able to travel more frequently there and back, but their ties are less likely to be financial in nature compared to the 'economic' migrants in the sample. The Siddiques speak Bengali as their mother-tongue but as graduates, Mrs Bari and Mrs Miah are also proficient in the language. Divisions along religious lines on the other hand are clearer between the Tauhids and the rest of the households because the Tauhids follow a stricter more puritanical form of Islam, which is one of the main reasons why Mrs Tauhid is not in paid work, and the older children are boarding in *madrasas* (which refers to an Islamic boarding school here, but elsewhere more generally to Muslim schools).

The following section, which gives details of the ages of the parents when they migrated to the U.K. (see Tables 7.1 and 7.2) shows that most of those who are

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[294] The post-WW II pull factor of employment in the British steel and textile industries [in the case of East London, the rag-trade or garment manufacture (Kershen 2000b)] is responsible for the concentrations of Bangladeshis in these areas (see also Chapter Six).

mangeters[295] - or those who come to Britain because of marriage - are women, i.e. Mrs Bari, Mrs Haque, Mrs Miah, Mrs Tauhid and Mrs Siddique. Some of them, like Mrs Haque already had family in the U.K. before they moved here. Mr Ahmed is the only male *mangeter*, which is likely to be the result of the prohibitory nature of primary purpose rule and the assumptions of immigration officials that male Bangladeshis who apply for residency because of marriage are suspect, because of the norm of patrilocality.[296] In the sample, Mr and Mrs Ferdousi are the only couple with British residency prior to marriage.

Migration and households: age, marriage and children

Table 7.1: Mothers' characteristics:

HOUSEHOLD	Ahmed	Bari	Ferdousi	Haque	Miah	Siddique	Tauhid
Age	32	28	32	24	32	37	41
Age on arrival	8	24	8	21	21	23	23
Age at marriage	19	22	17	19	20	21	18
Age at birth of first child	21	24	20	21	22	23	20?*

*Mrs Tauhid miscarried her first child and it was a sensitive issue.

Table 7. 2: Fathers' characteristics:

HOUSEHOLD	Ahmed	Bari	Ferdousi	Haque	Miah	Siddique	Tauhid
Age	41	34	40	31	38	50s	N.A.
Age on arrival	29	8	15	18	17	20s	
Age at marriage	28	28	25	26	26	30s	
Age at birth of first child	30	30	28	28	28	30s	

Out of all the mothers, two have lived in Britain since they were eight while the rest came to join their husbands in this country when they were in their twenties. Two mothers have been in the country for only three to four years. All of the women

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[295] A term translated as 'those who have been summoned', used by Kalra in his research on Kashmiri/Pakistani taxi-drivers in Oldham which I have adopted for the Chinese spouses from abroad, see Chapter Five, page 142.
[296] Most commentators describe Bangladeshi society as patrilineal i.e. descent being traced through men (Gardner 1995:29). Thus, a newly-married Bangladeshi couple usually lives with or near the family of the husband, a socially instituted practice termed 'patrilocality'.

married in their late teens or early twenties and had their first child in their early twenties. For four of these women, the birth of their first child coincided with their arrival in Britain.[297] Their husbands are all older than themselves, with between five to more than ten years age difference between them. Three of the men arrived in Britain in their mid to late teens, while one came when he was eight. Mr Ahmed came to join his wife when he was twenty-nine. Mr Tauhid came to Britain a year before his wife. All the men had their first child when they were in their late twenties or thirties.

Table 7.3: Childrens' characteristics

HOUSEHOLD	Ahmed	Bari	Ferdousi	Haque	Miah	Siddique	Tauhid	Totals
No of children	4	1	3	3	4	3	10	28
No of girls	2	1	2	3	4	2	8	22
No of boys	2		1			1	2	6
0-3	1		1	3	1		1	7
4-14	3	1	2		3	3	7	19

The number of children altogether in the sample of households is twenty-eight, of which a large majority (22) happen to be girls (Table 7.3). Nineteen children were between the ages of 4-14, with two above the age of 14, and seven between the ages of 0-3. Altogether, five households have a child of three and under, with one household having three children aged three and under, and one with a four-year-old child. All the children except for one were born in the U.K..[298] All the children can therefore be described as second or third generation[299] migrants and British citizens.

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[297] This is in line with immigration ruling in which women from abroad have a better chance of entering the country if they are with child (Menski 1999).

[298] Mrs Siddique's son was seven months old when the family migrated to Britain.

[299] A more in-depth discussion of the definitions of first, second and third generations is provided in Chapter Eight.

Table 7.4: Household structure

Household	No. of children	Age and sex of children	Household structure
Ahmed	4	11, 9 (F) 7,1 (M)	Nuclear+ non-resident grandmother
Bari	1	4 (F)	3 Gn Stem*
Ferdousi	3	12, 10 (F) 3 (M)	Nuclear
Haque	3	3, 2 (F) 3 weeks (F)	Nuclear + resident grandmother**
Miah	4	10, 8, 6, 2 (F)	Nuclear
Siddique	3	12, 6 (F) 14 (M)	Nuclear
Tauhid	10	16, 15, 13, 11, 9, 7, 5, 2 (F) 14, 12 (M)	Lone parent (widowed)

* 'Stem' consists of grandparents, child and his/her family

** Another term that has been used for this type of household structure where the grandparent comes to live with the family is that of 'supplementary nuclear family' (Khanum 2001:503).

The seven Bangladeshi households with their different family and household structures are represented in Table 7.4. The sample has five households composed of nuclear families, two without extended family members around them (see section on family networks). In the Ahmed family, the grandparent is included in the household structure because of the weekly caring responsibility that Mrs Ahmed has for her mother. Also in the sample are a widowed lone-parent family and two three-generational families namely the Bari and the Haque families. Mr Haque's mother lives with them, while Mr and Mrs Bari and their daughter live with Mr Bari's parents and brother. The parents in the families interviewed are all married couples except for the widow. She has a significantly large family composed of eight girls and two boys. Five of her older children are at Muslim boarding schools, thus reducing the household size during school term time.

It needs to be noted that households with their porous boundaries, are also dynamic structures, and that household residential composition may change depending on the circumstances. Thus the Haque household for example gained co-resident members

when Mr Haque's brother returned from Bangladesh with his new wife in between my interviews, after about a year of being away, and the Ahmed household lost a member when Mr Ahmed left to attend to family matters in Bangladesh.[300] This transitory nature of household composition that is a result of movements between countries is a particular feature of transnational households.

Individual families and their support networks[301]

The importance of family networks lies in its contextualisation of the childcare arrangements of individual Bangladeshi families. In many families, their networks are composed of more than two 'ties' or relationships with other households. These features are illustrated by the following figures. However, because they are static and linear, diagrams are limited in their ability to depict some of the more complex relationships in these families, which will be described in the narrative.

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[300] He left soon after the interviews with this household.
[301] Refer to Chapter Five, page 147 for key to diagrams.

Figure 7.1 Ahmed family and networks

Ahmed residence
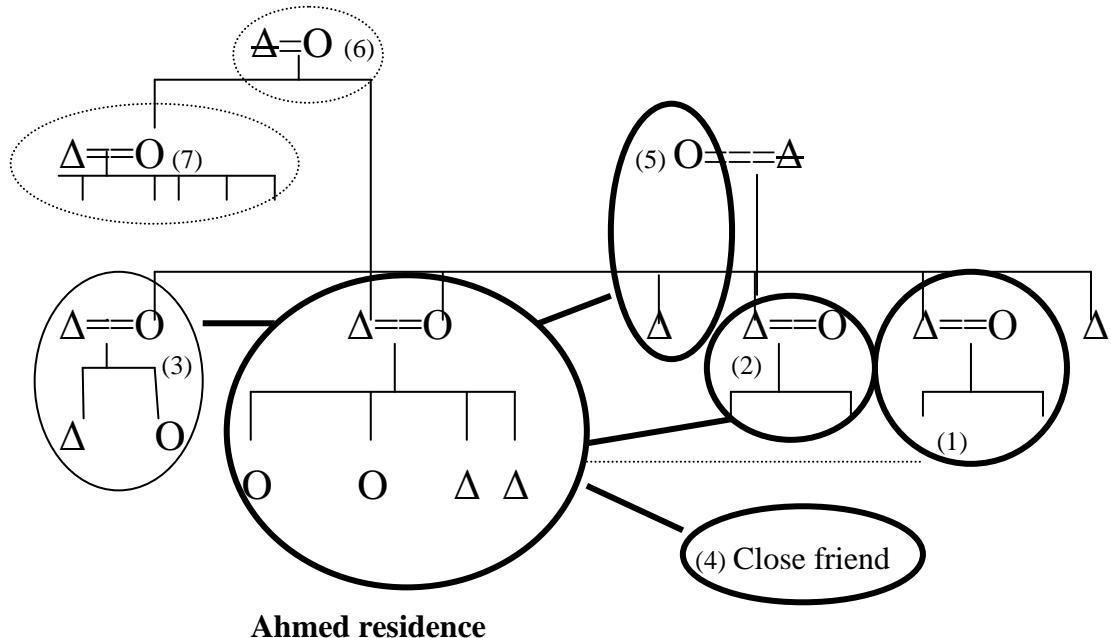
The Ahmed Family

Mrs Ahmed has four brothers who live in Newcastle and a sister in Birmingham. Her mother lives just on the next street with her brother who is waiting for his bride from Bangladesh. The other three brothers live nearby, one (1) who she does not get on with (note: weak tie).[303] Another brother is a taxi-driver (2), and lends Mrs Ahmed his car on occasions when her husband is using theirs. Her children play with their four cousins who live nearby. The children are very close to their maternal aunt (3) particularly when she lived in Newcastle. Recently, when Mrs Ahmed went away to Birmingham to visit her sister's new-born child, her friend (4) looked after her children. This household is close to the family because the women are childhood friends. Because Mrs Ahmed's mother (5) lives nearby, she has helped to look after the children in the past. Mrs Ahmed however prefers not to depend on her mother because of her poor health. Instead, because she is fluent in English and is able to drive, she has been the one to attend to her mother, fetching her to medical and other appointments and interpreting for her. Mrs Ahmed knows that if anything should happen, she can depend on her relatives who live close by. The children are allowed

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[302] These four households have close-knit family networks illustrated by Figure 5.1, page 148, showing how households are interconnected (see also the discussion in Chapter Three, page 81).

[303] 'my mum doesn't talk to him'- Anisa, aged 9

to walk to these houses (1), (2) and (5) on their own. Mr Ahmed is the only son in his family and the only one from his family in Britain. The Ahmed family visited the paternal grandmother (6) and aunt's family (7) in Bangladesh the year before their interviews.

Figure 7.2: Bari family and networks
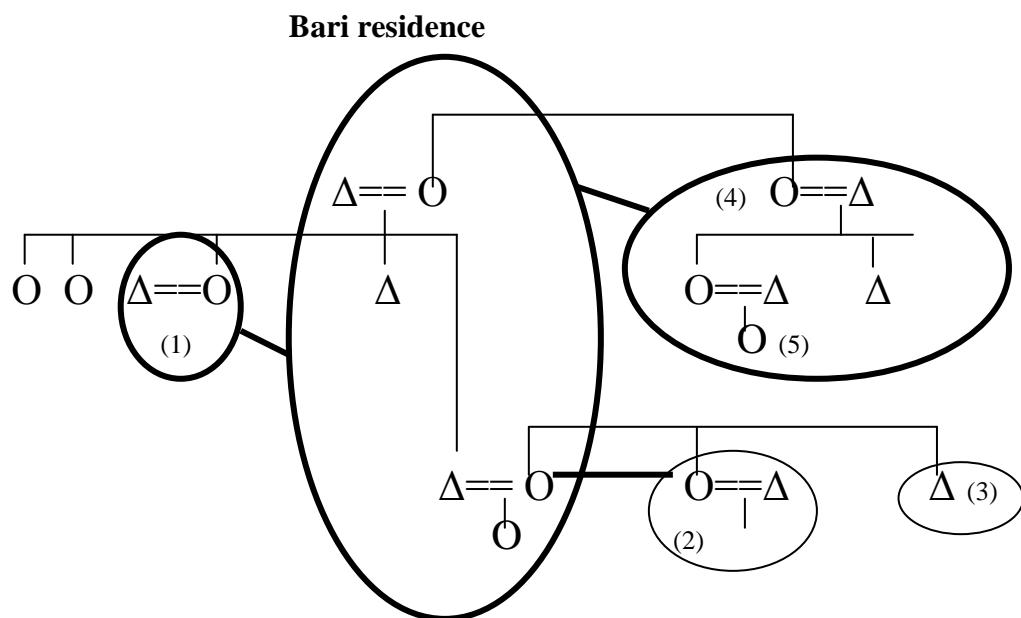
The Bari Family

Mr and Mrs Bari live with Mr Bari's parents and brother. Apart from his brother, Mr Bari has three sisters. The oldest (1) is married but lives close by and regularly visits the family home while the other sisters are working and studying abroad. Mrs Bari has an older sister (2) in London who she visits every summer for two or three weeks, and a brother (3) living near Manchester. Grandmother Bari's younger sister (4) lives nearby with her son and daughter, and often the two sisters visit each other with their grandchildren. Mr Bari's cousin sister's daughter (5) regularly plays with their daughter. Mr Bari and his father are active in the community through their voluntary work and therefore are also well linked to others in the neighbourhood.

Figure 7.3: Haque family and networks

The Haque residence
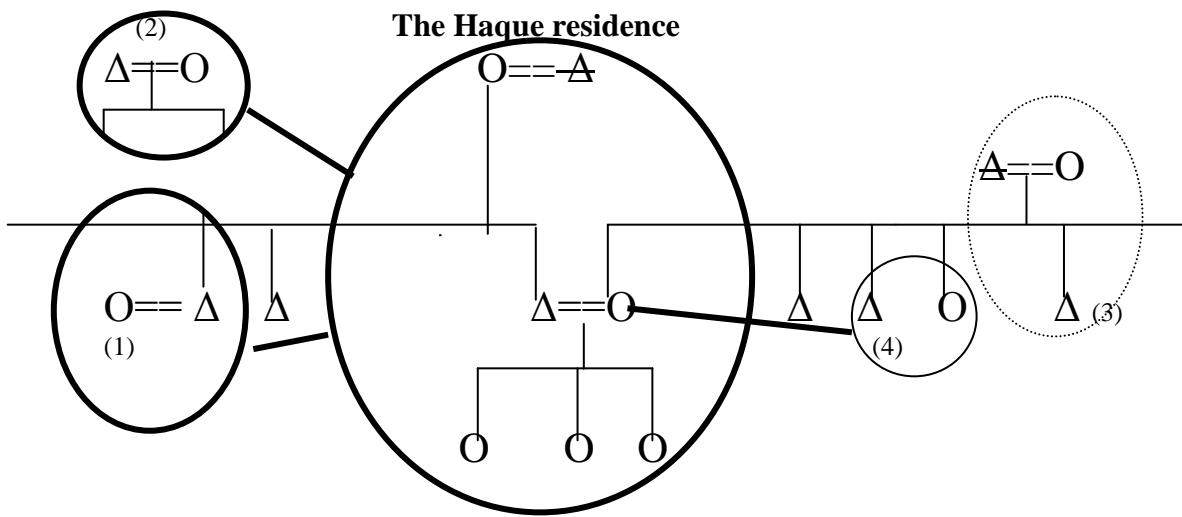
The Haque Family

Mr Haque and his wife lived with his mother, his brother and his sister-in-law [now (1)] when his first child arrived, but moved house before his third child was born because of the lack of space. His mother now lives with them but is not able to do a great deal because she is getting elderly and frail. She has four children and six grandchildren altogether and Mr Haque is her third child. Mr Haque's sister-in-law (1) helps with the children on occasions. Mr Haque has other relatives in Newcastle such as his uncle (2) who lives about five minutes away. His children are older but they come sometimes to play with the little girls. Most of Mrs Haque's siblings are in London, but her youngest brother (3) is looking after their mother in Bangladesh. Mrs Haque regularly spends the summer visiting her relatives (4) in London with her children. With Mr Haque's youngest brother marrying, the family network is likely to expand with another family unit developing nearby.

Figure 7.4: Miah family and networks

Miah residence
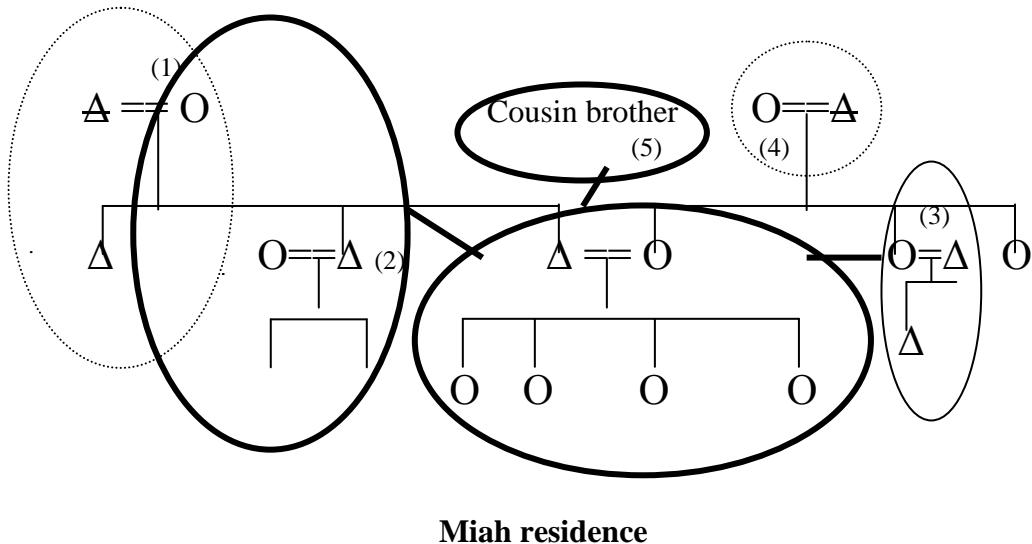
The Miah family

The Miah family is surrounded by a number of relatives, many of whom are Mr Miah's cousins who were helped by his father to enter Britain. He also has family in London and Luton. Mr Miah's mother (1) who is a British citizen, spends long periods of time in Bangladesh, and when she is visiting Britain, lives with Mr Miah's brother (2) nearby in the same neighbourhood. This constitutes a transnational tie as the grandmother visits the country regularly and maintains close contact with the Miah household. Mrs Miah also has many relatives in London such as her sister (3).[304] Her mother (4) lives in Bangladesh but has visited her in 1993 and 1997. In an emergency, she would turn to Mr Miah's cousin brother (5) who lives next door with his family.[305] This relative's youngest daughter is 19 and gets on well with the Miah's oldest daughter who is ten. Apart from these kin networks, the Miahs also have links to professional support because of their disabled two-year-old child.[306] Mrs Miah

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[304] This sister was visiting the house with her son when the interviews took place. Mrs Miah was also planning to visit her sister in London in the summer holidays.
[305] The exact nature of the relationship is not known, and so is not depicted in the diagram.
[306] The Miahs' fourth daughter caught meningitis, misdiagnosed as a simple virus when she was three months old. She suffered a stroke and was in hospital for twenty-two days undergoing three operations on her brain and two on her eye. She is now able to see with both eyes but is brain-damaged on the left-side and has lost the use of her left arm. Aged two, she is only now learning to walk.

regularly attends a toddler group for children with special needs and a physiotherapy group where she meets with other mothers and children.

The family with a loose-knit family network

Figure 7.5: Ferdousi family and networks
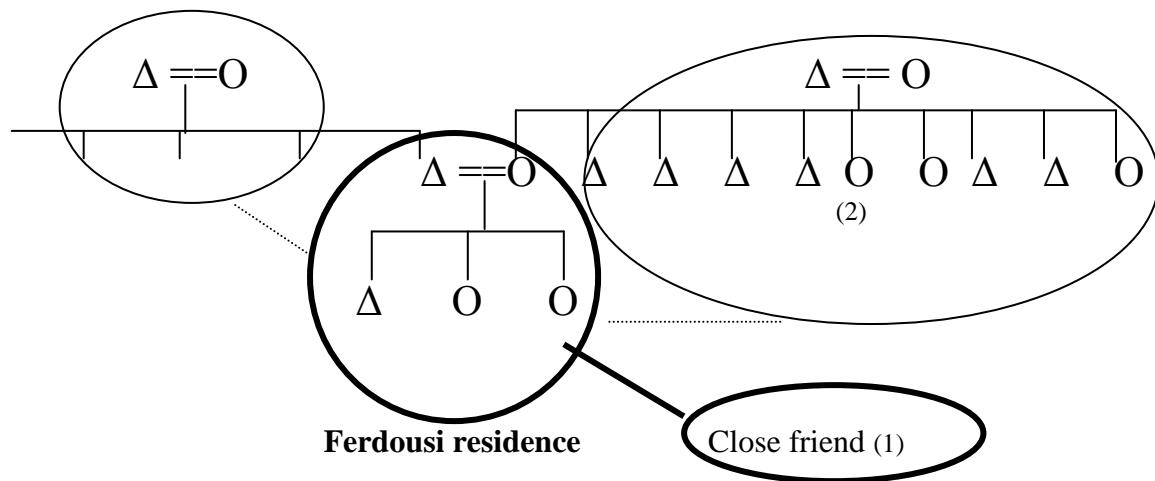
<u>The Ferdousi Family</u>

Mrs Ferdousi is from a large family of six brothers and three sisters. Living a distance away from them in Newcastle, the family does not appear to have many close family links. Mr Ferdousi is a very private man who spoke little about his family, except for saying that he is the only one from his family in Newcastle. Mrs Ferdousi makes the same claims although her children have spoken of a relative in Newcastle. Community and family tensions were referred to (note the two weak ties) when Mrs Ferdousi explained their move to the North East. A close childhood friend (1) of Mrs Ferdousi's who moved to Newcastle beforehand, helped the family to adjust to life in the new city. The two women continue as close friends who support one another, and the children, who are roughly of the same age, play well together. When Mrs Ferdousi's sister (2) travels from the North West to visit however, she is great with the children.[307] However, these are rare occasions.[308]

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[307] Mrs Ferdousi: Oh my d-my sister she's great on them, could just leave my son with him and have, you know a day to myself.

In contrast to the families described above who have a network of relatives who can be depended upon for help, there are two families in the sample who have not had this type of network in the U.K since they migrated.

Families with few local family ties

Figure 7.6: Siddique family and networks

Siddique residence
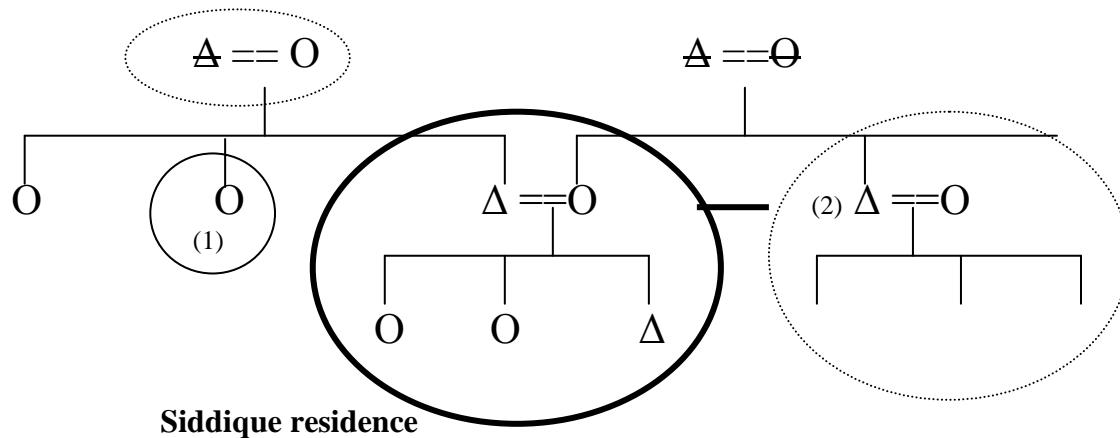
The Siddique Family

Mr and Mrs Siddique do not have any relatives in the U.K. apart from Mr Siddique's sister (1) who lives in Blackburn and Mrs Siddique's cousin in London. According to Mrs Siddique, their relationship with them is more of an occasional conversation on the phone rather than any visiting. Every two years however, Mrs Siddique and the children travel to Bangladesh to stay for eight weeks during their summer holidays with her brother (2) and his family. Mr Siddique remains in the U.K. because of his business, but holidays in Bangladesh for two weeks during the Christmas break on his own.[309] Mr Siddique's son (aged 14) is in touch with his cousins through the internet, but according to him, they are a lot older. Mrs Siddique has developed links with other middle-class Bangladeshi women in the North East. They have formed a charitable group that raises funds for good causes in Bangladesh and meet regularly

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[308] In some cases, individuals in the household may be closer to certain individuals in other households, just as Mrs Ferdousi appears to be close to her younger sisters. Whether the relationship between households may be described as being a strong or weak tie is dependent on these individual relationships as well, but also affected by the geographical distance and regularity of contact between them. Diagrams are often limited in their ability to depict the full complexity of such relationships.

[309] He is typical of a self-employed father working with not much time to spare (Baines *et al.* 2003).

for social events. So although the Siddiques do not have many family ties in the U.K., they compensate for this by their trips back to Bangladesh and non-familial networks, and with information technology, transnational links may be further strengthened.

Figure 7.7: Tauhid family and networks
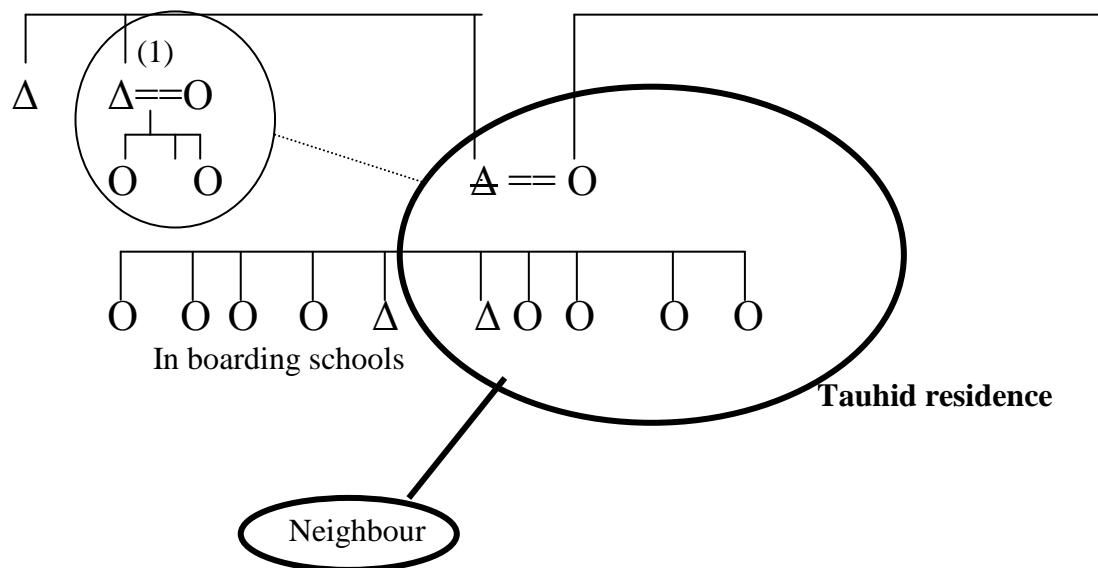
The Tauhid Family

Mrs Tauhid, the only lone parent in the sample, also does not have relatives in the U.K. who live close to her. Now that her husband whom she used to depend on a great deal has passed away, she relies on one neighbour and community workers. There was very little reporting of contact with family in the interview with Mrs Tauhid, but interviews with the children revealed more. According to them, at the time of the interview, they reported that they would soon have a visit from their father's brother (1) and his family, and that their mother's uncle has visited them from Manchester. This family is also characterised by the fact that five of the children are away in Muslim boarding schools in Manchester and Bradford where the family go for visits from time to time. This family's network is thus characterised by few family ties and the non-proximity of these family members. The support that Mrs Tauhid is able to access in the community becomes quite important as she does not make trips back to Bangladesh like the Siddiques and has limited access to information technology.

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Because of her large family and her husband's sudden demise, she has also been able to access support in the form of care workers and language support workers through the Bangladeshi community support worker.

Discussion

The close-knit family network that seems to characterise South Asian families is evidenced to some extent in a number of the households in the sample but there can be problematic relationships between extended family members, such that there may be 'weak' rather than 'strong' network ties[310] and even 'interfering' rather than 'supportive'[311] networks, within the close-knit structure (Milardo 1988). While the nature of some ties may be weak as can be seen in the case of the Ahmeds, such ties to family members however cannot be discounted. When ties break down altogether, the consequences may be great, such as Mrs Ferdousi moving away from her family in the North West because of family tensions. In one sense, the loose-knit nature of her household's family network has contributed to it being more open to new relationships outside the family, such as various pre-school groups. The lack of kinship ties due mainly to geographical location is seen in the Siddique and Tauhid families. For the Siddique family, kinship ties are maintained on a transnational basis with family overseas, and each family member has developed ties with non-family members in the U.K.. It will be demonstrated later that the strong ties and network density in the Miah and Bari households do not cause them to be as insular and self-sufficient as in the case of the Haque family. For these families, other factors need to be considered such as language and social class, which will come into the discussion later. In the Ferdousi, Siddique and Tauhid households, where family support is not available or limited, the assistance of community professionals and structures is invaluable, particularly when there is bereavement in the family or health problems.

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[310] Whether a tie is weak or strong is dependent on such factors as regularity, frequency and length of contact (see Chapter Three, page 81)
[311] This describes the nature of the relationship rather than more quantifiable features of the tie.

Livelihoods: education and employment

Apart from variations based on household structures (Table 7.4), the sample is also composed of a diversity of households based on the education and employment of husband and wife (Table 7.5). Characteristics that are a result of gender and class differences are outlined in this section.

Table 7.5: Education, employment and income[312]: gender and class

Parents	Education	Country of education	Economic activity	Weekly Household Income (£)
Mr. Ahmed	Secondary education	Bangladesh	Employed as cook	201-300
Mrs Ahmed	Secondary education	UK	Part-time employment in school	Receiving WFTC
Mr. Bari	Further education	UK	Employed full-time in community services	301-400
Mrs Bari	Higher education	Bangladesh	Casual employment	
Mr Ferdousi	Secondary education	Bangladesh	Former businessman - in casual employment	*
Mrs Ferdousi	Secondary education	UK	HEFC** student	101-200
Mr Haque	Secondary education	Bangladesh	Employed as part-time cook in takeaway	101-200
				Receiving WFTC
Mrs Haque	Secondary education (HSC)	Bangladesh	Full-time mother	
Mr Miah	Secondary education	Bangladesh	Unemployed former waiter	301-400
				Receiving JSA &
Mrs Miah	Higher education	Bangladesh	Casual employment	Carer's allowance
Mr Siddique	Higher education	Bangladesh and UK	Full-time self-employed professional	401-500
Mrs Siddique	Higher education	Bangladesh	Casual employment in community services	
Mrs Tauhid	Primary education	Bangladesh	Full-time mother	201-300
				On Income support

*Declined to comment

**Higher Education Foundation Certificate

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[312] Some details are purposely vague to conceal the identities of the research participants.

Half the parents have not been educated beyond secondary education. Three of the wives have attained education to graduate level from Bangladeshi universities[313] while one is a further education student. Two of these three women have husbands who are not connected to the catering trade, and who have received further or higher education.

Two of the families have household incomes of between £101-200 a week, two between £201-300 while two have incomes between £301-400. Only one income falls between £401-500 a week.[314] In the household sample, two households reported receiving Working Families Tax Credit. Mr Miah is on Jobseeker's Allowance, and his wife is receiving a Carer's Allowance for the care of her disabled child. Mrs Tauhid is receiving income support.[315] This incidence of claims on state assistance is also reflected in the EYDCP Parental Childcare Needs Survey (Bangladeshi community), confirming the fact that the increased numbers of Bangladeshis claiming benefit have diminished feelings of guilt, shame or stigma (Law *et al.* 1994a).[316]

In terms of employment, what stands out is that a number of parents, both fathers and mothers are employed on a casual or part-time basis and under 16 hours a week. Two heads of households are not in paid work. None of the women are employed in catering: three women are working on a casual basis, two for an hour a week and one around 12 hours a week. Another is working regularly part-time a couple of hours a day. Most of the households have connections with the catering industry as in five households, the father has at one time or another been involved in catering. Presently however, only one father is employed full-time in catering, with one part-time and

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[313] The incidence of graduate mothers in the sample could be explained by the fact that one of the gate-keepers, in seeking to be helpful, located two mothers who would be able to respond in English. For variability, she was also asked for a contact who was not from Sylhet and not in the catering trade.

[314] In the case of the income distribution of the respondents in the Parental Childcare Needs (PCN) Survey, more than 30 per cent had household incomes of between £4500-9499 per year or the equivalent of £87-182 per week (see Appendix 10 Figure A.2). Less than 17 per cent in the survey had household incomes of more than £269 per week or £14000 a year.

[315] It needs to be noted that in many families, husbands were unwilling to discuss household income and wives were generally unclear or unaware about the various different benefits and allowances that the household was receiving because their husbands had responsibility for such things. For three of the mothers in particular, language difficulties contributed to their lack of knowledge.

[316] In the PCN Survey, 30.3 per cent were on income support and 61.8 per cent on WFTC. In addition, a number of parents in the household research with school-age children were found to be paying for their children's religious instruction (see page 264 on statutory schooling and religious issues).

another employed casually.[317] At the other end of the spectrum, one father in the household research is a self-employed professional while another is employed full-time in the non-catering sector. There is also evidence of the underemployment of women, which will be discussed in detail below.

With respect to education and economic activity, variations along the lines of gender, class as well as religion were found. A number of the Bangladeshi women in the sample are not typical of Bangladeshi women in general if one refers to the national picture. Three are graduates from Bangladesh and a further two have worked in kindergartens there before coming to Britain. Mrs Bari and Mrs Miah are Arts graduates and Mrs Siddique is a Science graduate,[318] who taught in a kindergarten for two to three years before emigrating. Mrs Bari worked for a few months till she got married while Mrs Siddique stopped when she was expecting her first child. They are among the many Bangladeshi women who leave the labour market on marriage (Dale *et al.* 2002b). Unlike those who have overseas qualifications but have the same level of economic activity as those with no qualifications (ibid2002b:12), these women have however found themselves some casual employment in the community, with Mrs Bari and Mrs Miah each working only one hour, and Mrs Siddique working a few hours a week.[319] Mrs Ferdousi hopes to train as a social worker when she finishes her studies. Mrs Ahmed who works in a school is keen to further her studies when her youngest son aged one starts school. Only two women are full-time mothers and they have good reasons; one has a new-born child and another has ten children.

The two men in the sample who work full-time are Mr Bari and Mr Siddique. They work very long hours and are not involved in household duties to any great extent. Both of them have professional qualifications, while the three men working in the catering sector have up to the equivalent of the British GCSE. Mr Bari is characteristic of those who have been brought up in the British education system

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[317] According to Mr Ahmed and one of the interviewees in the pilot interviews, business in the catering sector was good in the mid 1990s and then declined greatly after that. This observation is supported by the findings of the Parental Childcare Needs Survey of Bangladeshis (2002), where among the 51 men in the survey who were either respondents or partners of respondents, 41.2 per cent were unemployed.

[318] Fazlul Alam (1988) makes a distinction between two kinds of university graduates from Bangladesh namely *mofussal* or non-urban graduates who attended district centre colleges, and urban Dhaka University graduates. Mrs Miah and Mrs Bari are *mofussal* graduates.

[319] For reasons of confidentiality, their occupations cannot be divulged.

achieving further education qualifications and employment. He has managed to obtain jobs working with white colleagues within the systems and structures of community service provision. Mr Siddique on the other hand has had to compete with white members of his profession, which has led him to take the route of setting up his own business, servicing the needs of minority ethnic communities.

The variability of economic activity among the Bangladeshi men seems to point to a combination of insecurity in the Bangladeshi catering business and family demands. There is also some evidence of flexibility in the sector in the way that part-time and casual work is available. Two of the fathers have worked as cooks and one as a waiter, although two have said that they have been involved in different aspects of a takeaway business such as working at the counter, as and when it was necessary. Mr Ferdousi who is looking to start his own business but is now working on a casual basis for a friend, says that he is an 'all-rounder'. Sometimes he gets paid and at other times does not, depending on the takings.[320] Mr Haque on the other hand has been able to get part-time employment as a cook in a takeaway, and has chosen to do so because of his very young family and elderly grandmother. Mr Ahmed was employed as a cook, but had to leave his employment in order to make an extended visit to Bangladesh, returning to find new employment.[321] Mr Miah is the only one who is looking for alternative employment because he suffers from diabetes, and would like to have a nine to five job. He has said that he is open to being a porter, a bus-driver or mail-sorter. He did try his hand at driving a bus but could not manage working as a waiter at the same time. He has good reasons for wanting a job with more standard hours; apart from his ill health, he has a disabled child.

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[320] Mr Ferdousi used to run a business in Surrey but things were not doing too well, although he spoke to me about running his father's business in the past which had a turnover of £10,000 a week.
[321] The trip was made from March 2001 for four to five months. After I had interviewed the family in 2002, I discovered later that he had to leave his job again to return to Sylhet because his mother had taken ill.

Migration, transnationalism and bringing up children

Back and forth: migration and the Muslim family

> Researcher: so your mum is er, living in this house or
>
> Mr Miah: no, is my brother house,
>
> Researcher: in, back in er Sylhet
>
> Mr Miah: oh yeah, back in Sylhet now
>
> Researcher: oh she decided to go back to Sylhet
>
> Mr Miah: Sylhet yeah, is come visit come, sometime here you know, coming and go is you know

Like some first generation Chinese migrants, first generation Bangladeshi migrants to the U.K. also find themselves spending a good proportion of their lives in their country of origin. Mr Miah's mother is a widow but has grown accustomed to travelling back and forth from Bangladesh to spend time with her relations. While Mr Bari would describe himself as 'British', he has been back to Bangladesh several times and loves the way of life there. He feels that there is much more support by way of people who are available to run errands, whereas in Britain, you are responsible for everything.[322] Mr Bari and his family have a house in Bangladesh, and according to him, more Bangladeshis in Britain are buying and developing property in Bangladesh, often with the help of their relatives there. Mr Ahmed on the other hand had to sell land to come to Britain to join his wife. Making a decent living after many years of struggling, he is able to remit money to Bangladesh to support his mother. He is now in the process of building a house in Bangladesh, and having a stake in the country.

In recent decades, with generations of people migrating to Britain from Sylhet, emigrant communities that are dependent on the remittances of those who live abroad, have flourished (Gardner 1993), and it is to these communities that the migrants return and are accorded the respect and adulation as *Londoni*,[323] or those who are the

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[322] Labour is cheap and there is also not the same level of bureaucracy that one would find in Britain.
[323] 'London' as the overall symbolic category for any region in Britain is common, even among the Chinese, but it is ironic that Geordie Asians like the Ahmed children with their strong Geordie accents, are referred to as *Londonis.*

rich benefactors of the community. Mrs Ahmed's daughters describe with amazement how they were treated like royalty when they went back to Bangladesh to live for four months. They were immediately recognised as *Londoni* because of their fine clothing, and beggars would come to them for money. But it is not so much this that attracts Mrs Ahmed's oldest daughter to the country as the wide open spaces, the lakes that people swim and fish in, the easy-going lifestyle, and the opportunities to be with her cousins and relatives. Travelling to Bangladesh is dependent also on the financial means to do so, especially if there are many children. For the Ahmed children (the oldest of four is 11), this was their first time back. For others too, journeys back were restricted so for example, Mrs Ferdousi who is one of ten children, has only been back twice in her twenty four years here.

The migration experience can also influence gender roles that are based on the following cultural norms:

> The traditional Muslim family model is of a patriarchal extended family consisting of a man, his sons and grandsons together with their wives and unmarried daughters, bound by the legal, moral and religious parameters based on the Islamic family law, or *shariah.* (Husain and O'Brien 2000:6)

The separation of gender roles that one would expect in a patriarchal extended Muslim family is more clearly borne out in some families than others. The couples with the most clearly delineated gender roles are the Baris and Siddiques, and this is in large part because of the nature of the husbands' occupations.[324] Let us look at the female *mangeters* and their experience of gender roles in their host country. Mrs Siddique admits that the adjustment to life in Britain was difficult for her because she was used to having domestic helpers in Bangladesh.[325] After 14 years in the country, she is much less housebound than those who have arrived more recently and are more likely to be restricted to the home, with heavy household and care responsibilities. Mrs Haque appears to be quite a typical housebound Bangladeshi wife who has recently immigrated. Her responsibilities are compounded by the fact that she has

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[324] See section on paid work and parental roles, page 296ff.
[325] This was the same experience for Grandmother Bari and Mrs Tauhid.

three children under the age of three, and a mother-in-law who is in poor health.[326] Mrs Bari is rather different. When she gave birth to her first child, she missed the presence of her own mother, but she ably took on her role as eldest sister-in-law with most of the responsibility for domestic work in the three-generation family.[327]

Thus among many families, traditional gender roles may be set aside to cope with life in the new country. If one of the partners has recently come from abroad, and his or her English speaking skills are not developed, the likelihood is that most of the social reproduction work involving interactions outside of the household will be carried out by those who are more accustomed to the British way of life, and are able to get around more easily. For Grandfather Bari, when his wife and children arrived from Bangladesh in 1976, the responsibility for their welfare fell on him as he had lived here for a number of years. Unfortunately, his wife was quite fragile in health, and it was Grandfather Bari who shouldered a lot of the responsibility of looking after the house and the children, which included domestic and care responsibilities usually assigned to women. Even now, Mrs Bari depends on her father-in-law for quite a lot of shopping and cooking, which he enjoys in his retirement. In the same way, Mr Tauhid, when he was alive, took on many responsibilities for his wife and children in this country.

The length of time that an individual has spent in the country also has an impact on the gender division of domestic labour. Mrs Ahmed has lived in Britain since she was eight and is independent and self-reliant. She claims to have been that way since she was a child. She made it quite clear that she is not in favour of the way her mother has done everything for her brothers and sister, and makes sure that her own children learn to be responsible at a young age. When the children arrived, she had the help of her family, although most of the time, she managed by herself and did not ask for help unless she really needed it. Her husband, a *mangeter,* looks after the baby when she is busy and does the gardening and some shopping but Mrs Ahmed says that she has 'to

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[326] Partly because of the needs of his family and because of the jobs situation, Mr Haque does part-time work and spends a large part of his time doing the shopping and helping his wife to look after the children, especially since the arrival of the new baby.

[327] Mr Bari's eldest sister who used to have this responsibility had moved out of the family household to set up home with her husband. She visits the family home frequently but has had to get used to her position in the family as 'the eldest daughter' being taken by her sister-in-law.

do most of the things'. In addition, Mrs Ahmed has the responsibility of attending to her mother's needs as her brothers are all at work, and her sisters-in-law are not proficient in English and are unable to drive. In this case, gender and cultural expectations of care responsibilities intersect with the abilities and availabilities of individuals.

But even those who are second or third generation in this country may not have the social networks that allow them to depend on kin relationships for support. The Ferdousis were both resident in Britain before they were married, Mrs Ferdousi from age eight, and Mr Ferdousi from age fifteen but they moved away from their respective families soon after they were married. When their first two children were born, Mr Ferdousi helped with the cooking and other aspects of care because their relatives were unable to offer any assistance.[328] By the time they had their third child (now aged three), they had moved to live close to Mrs Ferdousi's family, but family tensions took them away again, this time to Newcastle where they have been for the last two years. However, as someone who has been brought up in this country, Mrs Ferdousi is confident in her social skills. She communicates well in English, mixes easily with the white community, and takes her children to local mother-and-toddler groups, playgroups and the school nursery. Comparing *mangeters* with herself, Mrs Ferdousi comments:

> Mrs Ferdousi: not many of them you know, can go out, themselves, they need their husband to be with them, but whereas me it's like, I didn't need any support I could just go out, you know, mind my way and make friends
> Researcher: yes
> Mrs Ferdousi: so I, it's like, especially with the school um, the, parent teachers association and things like, used to be quite involved with these sort of things

The influence of Western society and education on individual members of the family has also resulted in changes to household structure and organisation. For example in the case of the Bari family, rather than staying with the family in an extended family

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[328] Mrs Ferdousi's mother had nine children to take care of and the youngest was only three at the time.

set-up,[329] Mr Bari's sisters have gone abroad to pursue education and employment. For those particularly of the second and third generation, traditional gender and generational roles are challenged when the social positions of Muslim women and children are improved. Already, Mrs Ferdousi is pursuing further education with the support of her husband. She plans to go on to higher education and a career and this is likely to affect the division of labour in her household even more.

Racism in the neighbourhood, school and work

Migrants report a range of experiences in their interactions with the dominant white community, but in many studies, racism is highlighted as one of the key structuring factors for the identities of young people (Husain and O'Brien 2000; Parker 1995). In this study, the reporting of racist incidents was not particularly widespread among the respondents, with less than half of the adults (parents and grandparents)[330] not having any specific experiences that they could or were willing to relate. Most of these are also past experiences rather than more recent accounts. The reports come mainly from Mr Bari and his parents, the Miahs and their children, as well as the Ahmed children, most likely because of the nature of their neighbourhood. The following is a description of the neighbourhoods where the households are located, to contextualise the personal accounts of racism.

In **Neighbourhood 1**, three households are located in estates with a high concentration of Bangladeshis, high deprivation and a history of crime and racist incidents and one household is in a less disadvantaged part of the ward. In one estate, most of the houses are council-owned with gardens while the other is a mixture of council and privately-owned or rented terraced homes.[331] One household is situated is a private estate of semi-detached houses with increasing numbers of South Asians.

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[329] Refer to quotation from Husain and O'Brien (2000) on page 268 concerning unmarried daughters.

[330] This includes Mrs Ahmed, Mrs Bari, the Ferdousis, the Haques and Mrs Siddique. The Haques have however mentioned the white children in the neighbourhood knocking on their door and running away, but whether that is racist in motivation has not been established.

[331] The specific locations of these households is avoided here for reasons of confidentiality.

Much has been done to try and make improvements in Neighbourhood 1. Some positive outcomes have been observed in that the streets are cleaner and the local Bangladeshi mosque has been extended and refurbished. In addition, there are new shop fronts catering to the South Asian community along a stretch of road notorious for clashes between black and white youths.[332] Unfortunately, the Bangladeshi community centre has not had the same investment. There are also various community projects that have been set up to serve the needs of the black and minority ethnic community, in particular South Asian Women's groups that also offer classes in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), South Asian Girls' groups and those that look specifically into the health needs of minority ethnic groups. The area is also benefiting from the New Deal for Communities programme, Sure Start West Gate, the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB 6) and the City Council's 'Going for Growth' plans. Unfortunately, racist incidents still occur as can be seen from the accounts given by interviewees.

Another two families live further west of the city centre in **Neighbourhood 2**, in private estates that are less densely populated and increasingly popular with South Asians who have achieved a degree of social mobility. These estates are predominantly semi-detached houses with gardens front and back, which are within walking distance of local shops serving the South Asian community. A shopping precinct, local schools, police station and fire station are also close by.

One family lives in a terraced house in a white council estate in **Neighbourhood 3**, which is not known for racial incidents. There is some university student accommodation in this estate and there appear to be fewer families with children here than in the other estates. There are a few South Asians in the neighbourhood, with only one other Bangladeshi child in the nursery class that one of the children attends. Shopping facilities are located beyond the Metro line that separates the estate from the school. The family say they are disturbed by the noise from the Metro trains but are not willing to move from the locality.

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[332] The road is a natural boundary between the two communities.

Accounts of racism

Let us begin the accounts with an adult who has experienced racism since he was a child in the late 1970s. Mr Bari, who arrived in the U.K. at the age of eight, describes how he went through different stages of adapting to the country and the racist attitudes of its people. He begins by describing his childhood days:

> Mr Bari: with my cousins, my sisters, we would all used to walk, that way, and they [white children] will chase us, at times we used to chase them, you know, they would call us names, but we used to look at it as though this normal kind of thing, really good oh yes we'll chase them we never looked at it as a, black and white thing, but when you grow up you suddenly, suddenly finished it, I think, I remember one day I clearly remember, my dad and myself, Saturday, we used to go shopping, he used to take us, me dad used to take us, like myself, [ ] and er [ ] and there was this, people just came, running, we got in the bus, (..) and struck all the window, and wrote N F, National front, and what I understood, I got a bit scared but what I understood was, Newcastle Football (laugh)
> Researcher: (laugh)
> Mr Bari: I didn't understand that about National Front and that, but, I slowly started understanding to understand that about National Front and that, but, I slowly started understanding the difference, and I think, um, the hate grow, I I hated it, I hated white people, I started hating white people in general, anybody that would look to you as different

Mr Bari then explained how, in Gateshead, he was set upon one evening and beaten up by a white youth in an unprovoked incident. But in spite of this, he learnt to deal with his hatred, channelling his energies instead towards fighting discrimination and working for community cohesion. Mr Bari, who has lived in Neighbourhood 1 for most of his life, explains that his wife however has had to take a while to adjust to the area.

> Mr Bari: because where we live, out here, you do get that shouting and stuff like that, but that's just in general, taking the children to school, in

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general, so she has that, and the problem of adjusting, er [ ] when you look at a person, just that trust……… yeah (.) and also, it's taken her, quite busy road I mean the estate we have just down the bottom, 'Z' Estate, that's kind of a no-go area[333] for, black and minority ethnic communities, and no household can last there, and the people that come around there are not very, friendly, you'd find out, I would (go) with an expectation that it's going to be stone throwing, [ ] cars

Researcher: does that happen quite often

Mr Bari: yes, it has, we we get through windows, stone throwing through the back, a few households here has got the stone throwing through the back, was broken, though here you get, at times you get lots of kids trying to break into the car and somebody looks out of the window and will get, stone thrown in her face or something like that, my sister had that experience, sh-she's moved away

Mr Bari then went on to describe how his sister shouted from an upstairs window at some youths who were trying to break into her car and one of them threw a stone at the window which fortunately missed her. When the police were called, they then questioned her in a rather insensitive manner about her residential status.

Mr Bari's mother had this to say about the neighbourhood:

Grandmother Bari (interpreted): some people are good some people are bad, the white people that are in this area are totally bad, they're not good…….

Grandmother Bari (interpreted): when you're walking up and down the street, they do swear at you, they throw stones at you and they throw stones at the house and at the gate, and they kick at the gate

Researcher: and how often does it happen

Interpreter: and her windows are broken, about a year, three times windows are broken…..

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[333] Mr Bari is referring here to the adjacent white council estate on the other side of the road that serves as a boundary between the two estates.

Researcher: how does your granddaughter feel when something like that happens

Grandmother Bari (interpreted): she gets very frightened, she cries a lot and, …..she gets very frightened and they [adults], comfort her saying it's only bad people throwing things

Researcher: oh, does it make the, her [grand-daughter] afraid to go out, mix with others

Grandmother (interpreted): she's not afraid to go out, she's got friends from school, er Bengali, Iranian people

Mr Bari therefore feels that the people in his neighbourhood live their lives under a cloud of fear, or, as he says, their lives are 'moulded' by fear. His wife, for example, feels that her street is dangerous because there are too many older children playing on it. Mrs Miah, who lives in an adjoining estate, describes what it is like:

Mrs Miah: no, first time, is this is there you know my hou, brother house

Researcher: what happened

Daughter: they do it now

Mrs Miah: call 'black bastard' you know

Researcher: oh really, when did that happen, when was that

Mrs Miah: When is er, quite often you know is, two three years ago you know, somebody's there or, backyard,

She went on to say that the white boys were smoking in her backyard. Her husband was asked about what he thought of the local park,[334] which is about five minutes from their home:

Mr Miah: you know the, there is the English, er, children you know

Researcher: aha

Mr Miah: 15, 16 years (old), there is lots of you know, atmosphere bad

Researcher: Right

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[334] Like Mr Miah, Mrs Ahmed says that the park is 'surrounded by bad people' but the swimming pool in the park is alright because it is indoors.

Mr Miah: they swearing

Researcher: they're swearing at you?

Mr Miah: ya, you know,

The Baris and the Miahs live in a neighbourhood that has the greatest concentration of Bangladeshis. The Baris however have no desire to move from the area partly because they have lived there for so long and all the local South Asian amenities are present.[335] Grandfather and Grandmother Bari, as well as Mrs Bari do not drive and appreciate the fact that these are within close walking distance. Grandfather Bari has worked in the area and is not intimidated by stone-throwing children, as he has earned their respect and that of their parents over the years. Neither is he perturbed by the local drunkard who, like the children, also addresses him fondly as 'granddad'. Like Mr Bari, he believes that there has been some progress made. Until enough progress has been made against racist attitudes and towards an acceptance of 'difference', there is little likelihood that the parents can take full advantage of the facilities provided in the area.

Some other parents like Mrs Tauhid did not have much to say about the racism in Neighbourhood 1, which may stem from her not allowing the children much time outdoors. She was concerned about the bad language that the local children used, and its influence on her children,[336] and had one scarf-pulling incident to relate about her daughter at school, which is just up the road.[337] She is of the opinion that in primary school, such incidents are not considered very significant, whereas in secondary school, such matters are treated with more urgency and parents are called into the school to deal with problems. She feels that as long as her children are getting on with their studies, she is satisfied.

Children's encounters with racism have mainly been in the form of verbal abuse. The daughters from the Ahmed household who live in Neighbourhood 1 had this incident to report:

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[335] These include *halal* meat shops, *sari* shops, the local mosque and community centre as well as voluntary groups catering to their needs.

[336] The use of the word 'bad' in these accounts points to 'morality' being the main concern of parents.

[337] Interpreter: even like um primary school, her ten-year-old daughter goes, eh she got a bit of eczema on her foot and this boy kicked her on the foot and then pulled her headscarf off.

Researcher: have you had any trouble like, when you're walking up to school, which is a bit of a way from here, have you had any trouble along the way

Sufia (aged 11): yes, once

Researcher: what happened

Anisa (aged 9): this boy came past her and called her a yellow-faced fucker

Sufia: no he's, they're just people who be racist and stuff like that, I don't know why they just do this

Anisa: because she's black

Mrs Miah's 10-year-old daughter also recounted an incident when she was verbally abused in Neighbourhood 1:

Aisha: Yeah, well I was looking through the window, cos I was really bored and this girl came, this girl was riding her bike, because I was just staring into space, and this girl thought I was staring at her, so she called me a 'black bitch'.

In the context of the school, colour can become a stick for children to beat each other with, whether you are minority ethnic child or not:

Researcher: Oh she's Bengali, yes.

Aisha: And, this other boy, he's Bengali as well

Researcher: Aha

Aisha: And they keep on calling each other black girl, black girl, chocolate boy.

Researcher: (laughs) they call each other names?

Aisha: Yeah.

Researcher: Oh...

Aisha: They always fight and kick!

The Ferdousi and Siddique children have been spared verbal abuse possibly because they live in Neighbourhood 2 and go to a private school. The issue of 'difference' however is encountered not only in the colour of one's skin but in the way one speaks as well. This can also have an effect on the children as can be seen from Mrs Ferdousi's daughter's explanation:

> Researcher: so you haven't had like any trouble with like being treated differently because of, colour
> Safna: no
> Researcher: race
> Sufina: maybe the way I speak cos I've got like three accents in, one
> Researcher: Yeah
> Sufina: So, since I've, like I say um, like you know how, 'tongue'
> Researcher: 'tongue'
> Sufina: yeah, I say 'tongue'
> Researcher: yeah the vowel is different huh
> Sufina: yeah
> Researcher: and they can pick it up can they
> Sufina: yeah, and they goes, it's 'tongue' not 'tongue'
> (laugh)
> Sufina: well, it's not my fault
> Researcher: (laugh)
> Sufina: I feel it like, stuff like that

Racism in the local comprehensive school is something that parents and children have to reckon with. The Catholic school on the other hand is located about a mile away from the neighbourhoods that the Ahmed and Miah children live in. The Ahmed girls have been warned not to apply to go to the local comprehensive by their friends who attend the school and the Miahs' oldest daughter had this incident to tell:

> Aisha: I won't, I wouldn't go to 'X' College.
> Researcher: Why?
> Aisha: There's loads of bullying, racism.

Researcher: How do you know about that?

Aisha: Well, I go swimming there with my class

Researcher: Right.

Aisha: And, well, there's like, drugs and smoking, well

Researcher: You've, you've seen the children smoking in the corner?

Aisha: No, well I was walking from the swimming pool to my home 'cos I was walking, and, well, my friend saw, this boy smoking and she said 'Look this boy's smoking' and the teachers didn't see him, and the boy ran to this corner, then the tea - and then we all saw him and we told the teacher, he, he's there. When the teacher saw him, saw him, she told him to 'You better not be smoking or I'll tell the o- the school office.'

Researcher: Hmm

Aisha: And the boy said 'Well I'm not' and he stubbed it in his front pocket.

Researcher: (Laughs)

Aisha: And like, he sweared after, after miss turned her back. And a load of cheek to, older people.

Researcher: Hmm

Aisha: I wouldn't dare go there.

Racism has implications not only for children in school but also adults in their work environments. Those adults whose work brings them in contact with the majority white community are open to racist experiences. Mr Ahmed describes being intimidated by customers at the restaurant who are inebriated, especially nearing closing time. Refusal to pay and verbal abuse are quite common. Once, when he was walking in the town, a convertible sped by with a passenger who stuck his head out to hurl abuse at him. Mr Ferdousi declares that he does not have any problems because he adopts the attitude of 'when people argue with you, you don't argue with them'.

Mr Siddique came to the U.K. for his professional training about thirty years ago and because he faced stiff competition and discrimination in the capital, he moved to the North East. When he lost his job at a local firm, he decided to set up his own business. Because of his language skills and community networks, his clientele are mainly from

the South Asian community, but he feels trapped in a situation in which he is obliged to charge them lower fees. Mr Siddique claims that even though people deny the existence of racism, he can 'feel' it as an underlying attitude. He however believes that things are changing for the better though not 'overnight', and that his children are in a more privileged position than he was.

The effects of racism can however be far-reaching. The fear of racist incidents reduces the confidence of individuals such as Mrs Bari and has instilled a sense of antagonism in those like Mr Bari. They contribute to the desire of parents to have children educated in a safer environment, or kept indoors away from trouble. It stops parents taking children to the local amenities such as the park, which have much to offer children whose lives revolve around home and school. It traps the likes of Mr Siddique in economic niches not of their own making and is suffered by innocent workers like Mr Ahmed who are simply trying to make a living.

Transnational identities

Some idea of the way respondents view themselves in the context of their experience of racism and integration whether as first, second or third generation migrants provides an insight into perspectives on child upbringing. When interviewees were asked to describe themselves, the most common response was 'Bangladeshi', but there were a variety of other responses such as 'Bengali', 'British', or just 'Muslim', as well as composite[338] terms like 'British Bengali', 'British Muslim' and 'British Asian'. Interestingly, four individuals, all of them children, preferred to be identified as Bengali or British Bengali.[339] The use of the term 'British' tended to be restricted to those who were more integrated into British society. Responses to the question of identity also vary between and within households, and between and within generations in the household.

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[338] Husain and O'Brien (2000:4) prefer the term 'composite' to 'hybrid' so as to define 'a multidimensional identity which is not in disarray'.
[339] A likely explanation is that they are accustomed to their teachers describing them as 'Bengali'. As children brought up in Britain, perhaps there is not as much importance attached to being of Bangladeshi rather than Indian origin. Thus 'Bengali' as an ethnic and cultural category is preferred to 'Bangladeshi', which refers to nationalist belonging.

When asked how he would like to be identified, Mr Ahmed said that it would have to depend on where he was, and Mrs Ahmed, on who was asking the question. Mrs Tauhid had this to say about identity:

> Mrs Tauhid (interpreted): er, it doesn't matter how British er you think you are, you're still, nobody still will say you're British, you're still a foreigner,
>
> Researcher: (laugh)
>
> Interpreter: no matter how, er, how British you feel you're still a foreigner
>
> Researcher: mm
>
> Mrs Tauhid: [ ]
>
> Interpreter: even if you tell them, even if you say you're British, they will still say, you're (not)

Most families ascribe to a Bangladeshi identity that is inseparable from a strong religious culture (Modood 1997b). Mrs Bari, for example, misses the religiously-oriented Bangladeshi society and wishes that her children can imbibe some of these cultural elements in other ways:

> Researcher: Sometimes do you wish er your daughter could be in Bangladesh, eh going to school in Bangladesh, sometimes do you wish
>
> Mrs Bari: (laugh) yeah
>
> Researcher: Why,
>
> Mrs Bari: because er, I want to, mm, to be a Bangladeshi, culture or, my er I want to er um, teach her, Bengali culture, more, ev- B-Bangladeshis
>
> Researcher: how they live, yeah
>
> Mrs Bari: But, expensive…..
>
> Mrs Bari: (interpreted from Sylheti) Even if she goes to Bangladesh, it'll be different from here, how you live, people are here from Bangladesh as well but you get to know occasional things, like when *Eid* [340] comes, she'll

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[340] *Eid-ul Fitr is* the Muslim festival to celebrate the end of *Ramadan,* the fasting period. *Eid-ul-Adha* is celebrated at the end of the annual *Hajj* or pilgrimage to *Makkah* (Mecca).

know about it, when *Ramadan* comes along, you get to know it, when it's prayer time you know, cos of the *Azzan*,[341] you always get prayer calls

Mrs Siddique bewails the fact that it is very difficult for her children to get a grasp of Bangladeshi culture, because of the 'English world' that they inhabit outside of their home. Her main concern is that they grow up to be sensible young adults, and learn to respect their cultural roots, and never to forget that they are not English but Bangladeshi. They are allowed to have fun with their English friends but they are not allowed to do certain things such as clubbing which go against their cultural norms. She is also against her children being involved in mixed-race relationships.

Apart from religion and one's social environment, language ability whether in Bengali, Sylheti or English and the attachment to the homeland were some factors also found to be influential. Language is an important means of preserving cultural values, but for most of the Bangladeshi parents, their concern is not so much for the children's ability to speak their mother tongue as they believe that this is sufficiently catered for in their home environment. Their concern is mainly for their children's religious education and learning to read the Qur'an in Arabic. Because their children's time is already taken up with Qur'an reading and homework, there is little time remaining for language classes. One observation is that the British-born children who visited Sylhet reported being unable to read and understand the standard Bengali used in public places, which can have implications for their links with their parents' homeland.

The Ahmed and Siddique girls differ in their abilities to speak Bengali, and these abilities reflect and affect their sense of identity.[342] Two of these children, namely Mrs Siddique's son Mohammed, and Mrs Miah's oldest daughter Aisha, are rather Westernised; his favourite food is pizza and his life revolves round football and rugby, while her favourite music is 'Shaggy' and 'Eminem'. On the other hand, Aisha and her sisters are the only ones in the sample who attend Bengali language classes on

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[341] *Azzan* is the Muslim call to prayer.
[342] Mr and Mrs Siddique observe that their youngest child (aged six) is better at Bengali than her older sister aged 12, whereas the Ahmeds' older daughter's identification with Bangladeshi culture is stronger than her younger sister's.

a weekly basis, and according to them, 'loads of children go'. Therefore the composite transnational identity of the children takes many forms. Some identify more with Western culture, but still know their place either as Bengalis or as Bangladeshis. Evidence of this comes in the form of their love of Bangladeshi pizzas (without the cheese), spicy Bengali chips and Maggi noodles.[343] Then there are others like the Tauhids who are brought up in a strict religious tradition, and one wonders if they really have a choice in the matter.

It was interesting to note that the only child to declare an identity based solely on religion is the nine-year-old daughter of Mrs Tauhid. She would like to be identified as Muslim, 'with black hair and brown eyes'. Her ambition is to train as a teacher so that she can teach the Qur'an. There is a likelihood that she and her siblings who are at Muslim boarding schools will be involved in the growing international Islamic revival and identification with the *ummah* (global community of Muslims) (Glynn 2002; Husain and O'Brien 2000; Eade 1998) that has been further fuelled by recent world events.[344]

The children in this study are thus exposed to social influences such as their family, their peer group and the media, not forgetting the school as a social site. Whatever their starting points, these children are developing ways and means of equipping themselves for life in an increasingly pluralistic Britain struggling to shake off its racist image. Having explored the influence of culture and language on identity, we look more carefully at the school as an influential site for the development of these children.

Statutory schooling and religious issues

Britain's visible minority groups see education as having the potential to lift them out of their disadvantaged positions (Lau 2000; Ballard 1999b). This is no less so in this Bangladeshi sample where a number have experienced racism, live in deprived

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[343] A popular Malaysian brand of instant noodles.
[344] See Chapter Six, page 225.

neighbourhoods, and are in receipt of income support and other state assistance because of their low earnings. Understandings of the meaning and practice of education as well as the reasons for education being valued can vary, depending on factors such as migration history, religious convictions, class affiliation and aspirations. Of the seven households, four families have children that are at or are reaching the age for secondary schooling. Two families have been able to obtain the finance needed for their children to attend private schools, while the alternatives for others include the Roman Catholic comprehensive school, a city technology college and an Islamic school or *madrasa* in another county. For its notoriety, the local comprehensive tends to be avoided. In deciding on the best school for their children, Bangladeshi parents face dilemmas that go beyond geographical proximity and school reputation to religious issues such as appropriate uniform and gender segregation.

To her children, Mrs Ahmed has made much of the fact that she did not get enough of an education when she was younger, and so they should do their best in getting educated. To this end, she has seen to it that the children have had a tutor, in particular the eldest who has had to prepare for her SATS and entrance into schools of her choice.[345] According to her children, Mrs Ahmed hopes one day that her children will be able to buy her some nice things from the jeweller's.

> Sufia (aged 11): my mum wants it, my mum actually, dreams about it, a really good job,
> Researcher: right
> Sufia: she says, when she's explaining that we have to work harder it's good because we've got the chance, um she says work hard in school because, I didn't get the chance and she says that I wish that I had a better job....
> Anisa: she told us when we're em grow older um, to buy her like them expensive things because she didn't have the chance like um watches and stuff like that
> Researcher: right

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[345] This is in spite of their household income of £201-300 a week.

> Sufia: we went to a goldsmith's in town, our dad bought a watch and she
>
> [mum] wanted to fix it and she, she likes all these
>
> Anisa: while we're waiting for the man [watch repairer] to come back
>
> Sufia: when you grow up, buy me that, when you grow up, buy me that

In spite of the value that Mrs Ahmed places on education, the family made a trip to Bangladesh for a considerable length of time (four to five months from March 2001). Schools are generally not in favour of children being taken out of school for such lengths of time and the commitments to one's homeland versus children's education in Britain can represent a tension that parents face.

In contrast to the view that education is able to lift one out of disadvantage, there is a perspective that is more religious in nature. According to the views expressed in the focus group, which were mainly those of the older generation, there is no distinction between religious instruction and education. Education is tied up with a grasp of the Islamic faith, as the belief is that as long as the Qur'an is read and its tenets adhered to, parents would be satisfied that they had fulfilled their parental responsibilities. This is linked to the religious view that codes of conduct have consequences for eternal judgement and the attainment of paradise (Becher and Husain 2003).

> Religiously, when a young person goes and does things, after they die, the angels will say to them, why did you do this, they will say, if we did wrong, why didn't our parents stop us from doing it?
>
> Everything is written in the Qur'an and the ones who have read the Qur'an and understand it, they don't look left or right[346]

Because of Islamic teaching, certain practices in educational establishments are frowned upon. These include gender-mixing at lessons particularly during swimming or physical education (Becher and Husain 2003). The focus group also raised concerns as to why there was the need for sex education. The members of the focus group would also prefer that Islamic religious education be provided for in state

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[346] This is taken by me to mean keeping to a moral life without being tempted to stray from it (Bangladeshi focus group 30 July 2002)

schools.[347] There is also the perception of the social environment within which their children are being brought up, that is of concern to parents. Mrs Tauhid would go so far as to send their children to a *madrasa* once they reached puberty, because of their understandings of the importance of education and value placed on Islam being intrinsic to this.

From the interviews, mixed-sex classes and dress code were seen as not a problem in primary school, but are matters of concern in secondary school. Without a Muslim faith-based school in Newcastle, Muslim parents like Mrs Ahmed have shown a preference for single-sex schools because of their religious beliefs and concerns for the moral upbringing of their children. The only single-sex school in the West End of Newcastle where most of the families live is a Roman Catholic comprehensive, which has a good reputation for academic success.[348] Unfortunately, the school uniform does not allow Muslim girls to wear trousers or ankle-length skirts. The choice faced by conscientious Muslim parents thus is to attempt to send their children to this school anyway, or to send their children to the local mixed comprehensive, which has a more acceptable uniform, or schools that are further away, such as the city technology college in Gateshead. The other alternative if they are able to afford to, is to send their children to the reputable independent school located within the neighbourhood. In this school, boys and girls are taught separately and Muslim girls are allowed to wear long skirts.

The Siddiques' and the Ferdousis' older children attend the private school. The Siddiques' children were at local primary schools and the reason for their move to private education was mainly the fact that the local comprehensive was well-known to have poor standards of behaviour and academic performance. According to Mr Siddique's son aged 14, his friend had been to the school and did not like it:

> Mohammed: Because he said there's like, the teachers aren't as good as there's, like the pupils are really like, bad all the time, they smoke and, behind the teachers' back, or, like throw things at them…

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[347]These concerns tie in with those of an earlier study (Ghuman and Gallop 1981).
[348] One of the household respondents has however mentioned discriminatory attitudes in the way the children are selected.

The private school is virtually at their doorstep, which worked well at the time because Mrs Siddique was not yet able to drive.[349] Mrs Ferdousi's oldest daughter has been able to obtain a scholarship, which covers her education till she completes sixth form, but the Siddiques' two children have not been so lucky. Their father bewails the fact that the Conservative government programme of assisted places has been dismantled by Labour and now he has resorted to moving his six-year-old child to a Roman Catholic primary school so that in future she will be given a better chance of getting a place in the Roman Catholic comprehensive. In any case, the standards of the local primary school where she was at had gone down, which was a concern to Mrs Siddique. Mrs Ahmed's daughter Sufia sat for the entrance exams to the independent school to get a bursary. Unfortunately, although her daughter did do well, she did not get the financial assistance, and although Mrs Ahmed's sister offered to pay the fees, she decided instead to appeal against their unsuccessful application to the Catholic school. The outcome has been positive and the girl is presently attending the school.

The views of children when they consider the various options, is well captured in the following conversations. In the following quote from Mrs Ahmed's daughters, Anisa aged nine and Sufia, 11, their anticipations about going to comprehensive school include their reluctance to abide by the religious obligations imposed by the Catholic school, but they are more concerned about the reputation of the state comprehensive.

> Anisa: is it a Catholics (talking about the Catholic school)
>
> Sufia: yeah
>
> Anisa: they says, they says that they have to pray and that and go to church
>
> Researcher: yes, they don't have to go to church but they have prayers yeah
>
> Sufia: they've got, cross thing
>
> Researcher: why do you not, er what about 'X' College were you not

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[349] When children start secondary school, parents like the Siddiques prefer that the school is not too far away for their children to have to make their way to.

Anisa: no we're not allowed to

Sufia: because my mum says that not a very good school

Researcher: right

Anisa: cos there's a lot of fights going on there

Sufia: yeah, it hasn't got a good reputation

Mrs Miah's daughter, aged 10, has picked up on the fact that the Roman Catholic comprehensive operates a strict admissions policy, but does not realise a small percentage of non-Catholics are admitted:

Aisha: No, like, the teacher tells you to go to church.

Researcher: Where did you get that idea from?

Aisha: No! Everybody knows that! The people who applied for it, you have to go to church.

Another alternative to the options above is that of sending one's child to a Muslim boarding school or *madrasa*. This has been the decision of Mrs Tauhid and her late husband, because they had also been unsuccessful in obtaining a place for their eldest child in the Roman Catholic School, even though they had appealed against the decision. The three oldest daughters aged 16, 15, 13 and most recently their 11-year-old, attend a Muslim girls' boarding school in Bradford, while their oldest son aged 14 attends a boys' school in Manchester.[350] The second son has applied to join his brother and is impatient to attend, as he is presently unhappy at the local state comprehensive.

The grandmother in the Bari household reported that her son and daughter-in-law have expressed an interest in having their four-year-old educated in a *madrasa* when she reaches the age of twelve. Their aunt's youngest daughter has been to the school and like other parents, they were impressed:

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[350] This had been arranged by Mr Tauhid before he passed away, because of his access to an educational fund.

Interpreter: they went to a conference last Sunday at the *madrasa*, the Islamic school

Researcher: ah

Interpreter: and there it's the speech where they talk about religion and, the students the older students that have been there for a while, er read the Qur'an out in English and it's very much like the Bible, just er, sayings things from the beginning to the end just about life so. They read it out in English and then, in Bengali as well, and in Urdu as well

The grandmother is fully supportive of this plan as she feels that there is much to be desired from local education.

Interpreter: she's saying that children, in this country when they go to school and stuff, a lot of children go bad, they go, they follow the wrong path go bad, and some children even before the age of twelve start going on the wrong, er on the wrong path, start going bad, and so to prevent that from happening she would be happy for them to go the *madrasa*

One explanation for the above attitude is that while the Bari grandmother's eldest daughter has turned out well, her other two daughters have left the household and taken on very Westernised world views.[351] More schools have been set up to meet the needs of Muslim families, and more are willing to send their children in spite of the distance. Ideally, they would like a Muslim school in Newcastle. Transportation is available in the form of minibuses or vans that carry the children and family members who wish to visit, to and from the schools in Bradford and Manchester, and also for different school functions. Together with frequent phone calls, this allows links between family members to be maintained. It appears that as in the past when Bangladeshi parents resorted to sending their children back to the homeland for their religious and moral instruction, now there are alternative ways of providing for this in the form of Islamic schools. Parents are now willing to part with the children in a

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[351] When her children were growing up in Newcastle, there wasn't this option of sending children to these schools, whereas now, she believes that it is getting to be increasingly popular.

different way, by sending their children to other areas of the country where they are able to access the education of their choice.

The setting up of these *madrasas* thus meets a need that is not being met in the statutory school system, and is one solution to parental concerns about their social environment. Not only that, it is also one way to address the problems that parents are facing in fulfilling their responsibility for the religious instruction of their children, i.e. daily prayers and the requirement to have read the Qur'an in Arabic at least once by the time they reach the age of 10 (Becher and Husain 2003). The parents that were interviewed managed to get their children to read the Qur'an in a variety of ways, i.e. by employing a teacher who comes, sending the children to the mosque school or smaller teaching group, or teaching the children themselves. The way parents have made their choices depended on a number of factors, the most important of which seem to be the facilities and quality of the teaching.

Mrs Siddique thinks that the classes in the Bangladeshi mosque are inadequate:

> Mrs Siddique: 'X'mosque is too far away and secondly, too many children in there, and I don't think there is any discipline, they just goes there, they come out, I don't think at the end, they learnt that you know, because there's too many people there to control you know, you have to have er you know, little group,

Mrs Ferdousi believes that there are about sixty to seventy children to one teacher in the mosque school and therefore does not send her children there. The Ahmeds' children had this to report:

> Sufia: but now, cos there's mosque, we didn't go there cos we used to go to a mosque and those books, people used to rip them and everything
> Researcher: really
> Sufia: you're not allowed to rip them cos it's Holy Qur'an
> Researcher: yeah
> Sufia: but it was like so rough they used to keep them in big bags and stuff

Researcher: really

Sufia: Yeah we used to go there

The cost of employing a home tutor can be a barrier, and varies according to the teaching arrangements. Mrs Ahmed has employed tutors to come to the house to teach her children at the rate of about £20 an hour or £40 a week for an hour a day. Mrs Miah on the other hand can only afford to get a teacher to come to the house once a week on a Sunday for an hour to teach her daughters and pays £10 an hour. During the weekdays, the children are encouraged to read the Qur'an themselves at bedtime. The Siddiques' daughter goes to a class in another teacher's house to learn in a small group of about ten for two hours twice a week and the fee is £5 per session.

Sometimes, parents' efforts to provide religious instruction for their children were thwarted because the teachers had to be changed when they went on holiday, or when the teachers themselves went on the pilgrimage or *hajj*. Whenever a new teacher came, the children had to start reading from the beginning of the Qur'an,[352] which set them back several months.

The mothers who have taught the children themselves are Mrs Tauhid, Mrs Ferdousi and Mrs Ahmed. Even Mrs Bari has tried to teach her daughter who is only five, some of the prayers. However, learning to read the Qur'an is not without its problems from the perspective of the child:

> Sufia (aged 12): I don't like reading it I've um, every, nobody likes reading it, not nobody, a lot of people might like it, but we like doing better things like, playing out and stuff like that
> Researcher: do you understand what you read though
> Sufia: um no
> Researcher: do you tell your mum that though
> Sufia: no, you're not old enough to understand, there's the Holy Qur'an isn't there
> Researcher: yeah

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[352] The teacher has to have listened to them read it from beginning to the end.

Sufia: which tells the meaning of the Qur'an, but we're not old enough to understand it all

Researcher: that's what your mum says

Sufia: my mum can't even understand it either

Indeed, according to the focus group, children are already attempting to forgo Qur'an classes by claiming that the imam physically disciplines the children.[353]

Interpreter: The children, when they go to the mosque, they've got the opportunity to leave whatever time they want, when they leave from the mosque, they go to the schools and say that they've been beaten, even when they haven't been beaten they say that they have been beaten, so that they don't have to go there, how are they (parents) supposed to get around that, to get their children to learn their religion….when they take their children to the mosque, there are other children or people there influencing their children not to go, to stop them reading

The question that is exercising the minds of many parents is how they can best educate their children in the ways of Islam. Some would like to see Muslim education provided by the state, while ideas of religious education being provided using the school premises after school hours have been explored, but have faced opposition from white members of one community.[354] Some parents however would not like to see this happening because religion to them is essentially a private affair:

Mr Ferdousi: whatever they need, we provide it ourselves, okay, they don't need to stay down at school or anything else, we provide it ourself okay, we can teach them, whatever [ ] in time, they go to community school and, because we are, in different sort of people, we don't look after, you know what I mean,

Researcher: sorry?

Mr Ferdousi: we don't like mix with people such [ ]

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[353] See Barton's description of the practice on page 221ff..

[354] A member of the EYDCP Racial Equality Subgroup reported this as a matter of concern to the group.

> Researcher: okay, so you're quite private, you prefer your own private life
>
> Mr Ferdousi: yeah, private, yeah private life yeah that's right yeah

Muslim parents face a whole host of considerations when they want to see their children educated in the British school system. If they had a choice, they would like single-sex schools where their daughters can be dressed appropriately, and where the education is of an acceptable standard. These issues are of particular concern when their children reach puberty. As the situation exists, the choices are limited: if the school is a single-sex school, the dress-code might not be appropriate, if the dress-code is appropriate, the school may be a mixed school. Parents are then willing to sacrifice the 'dress-code' as they believe that being segregated from the opposite sex is more important. The other deciding factor for parents is whether the school is a 'good' school in terms of academic performance and standards of behaviour. Although there are reservations as to the demands of the Christian tradition in the single-sex school, these are at best tolerated for the sake of a 'good' education.

It needs to be said that the local state comprehensive has a large proportion of minority ethnic students, but that does not do much to encourage the parents in the sample to consider it as a viable option, as its relatively poor standards evidenced in school league tables, and mixed-sex policy weigh heavily against it. Increasingly, the option now open and taken by parents is that of the *madrasa* which follows the national curriculum and offers all that the parents require. The downside is the extra expense and the distance from home. Where the family is large, it may relieve the parents of some of the responsibilities of looking after every child. However, the help of older children in the household will be missed.

Apart from the dilemmas facing Muslim parents in considering secondary school education, there is also the need to make provision for their children to have Muslim religious instruction, since this is not provided in the British educational system. A number of options have been pursued, some more appropriate than others. What is clear to see is that there are real concerns as to the provision afforded by the local Bangladeshi mosque. Private tutors are seen by the parents as a better alternative particularly because of the smaller classes. What is a possibility is to offer more

choices to Muslim parents and relieve them of some of the burden of having to provide religious instruction themselves. Some parents might be appreciative of such moves but others may still consider religion a private matter between parents and their children. This may be no bad thing as it may increase the bond between parent and child. Not many parents however know their religion well enough to teach it, and British-born children may rebel against attempts to be regimented.

One grandmother suggested that a centre where mothers and children can learn their religion together (and through the medium of various languages) may be a step in the right direction. What is lacking then is expertise in modern teaching methods in Qur'an schools, which involves for example the use of picture books, teaching in English, and more imaginative stories based on the Qur'an that would be attractive to children, which could be used as a supplement to the traditional rote learning of the Qur'an (Barton 1986:167-173). This would serve to bridge the gap between the methods used in statutory schools and Qur'an schools. Whether this happens, *madrasas* are currently gaining popularity among Muslims,[355] who see this as the alternative to state education, which does not provide the religious education as well as language education that Muslim parents preferred that they did.[356]

Bringing up children in Britain: Bangladeshi parenting and childcare

> Fathers are to go out and earn. If there's no money, it's the mother's problem, well if the fathers don't bring enough money in, the children will go to their mothers, and she will have to do the explaining.[357]

Having considered the structures of constraint that Bangladeshi families face in the form of migration and transnationalism, racism and the schooling of children, we come now to look at the more practical aspects of parenting and childcare. At the

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[355] Iftikhar Ahmad who set up the first Muslim School in London in 1981 is a keen campaigner for Islamic charities and trusts to run state schools where Muslim pupils are a majority. In his article (Ahmad 2002), he claims that there are 102 Muslims schools educating 10,000 Muslim pupils.
[356] Parents at the focus group said they would be 100% satisfied if the Qur'an and Bengali were taught in their children's schools.
[357] Bangladeshi focus group (30 July 2002).

focus group of women, everyone agreed with the response that 'everything is the mother's responsibility, from A to Z', but the statement above points also to the emotional work of women (Reay 1995). While modern Western ideas of parenting stress the responsibilities of the parents and the rights of the child (Keep 2000), the Qur'an and the *shari'ah* or the Islamic family code, based on the Qur'an, also emphasise children's respect and duties towards their parents and elders (Husain and O'Brien 2000). Muslim children are often involved as much as possible in family events in such a way that they learn to behave responsibly at an early age (Brooker 2002:49-51; Ballard 1979).[358] Such learning constitutes socialisation and examples of children being trained to take on household responsibilities were particularly evident in the accounts of parenting given by some interviewees in the household sample. Variations in values and beliefs exist in the household data as well. It has been observed for example that generational differences do exist, and that while one parent believes that children can be taught at a young age to take on responsibilities, her mother disagrees. Other parents feel that in the context of modern-day Britain, parental responsibilities are greater than in the past.

Different factors such as social class, size of family, generational differences and family economic situation affect the way parents brought up their school-age children. In discussing the parenting practices of South Asian families, Becher and Husain (2003:46) however point out that 'while there are points or spaces of convergence and cultural fusion, some core "traditional" values and practices are maintained and perpetuated'. Evidence that such values are maintained and that they are mainly religious in nature, is found in my research. Bringing up children in Britain depends largely on the availability of parents which in turn is determined by the nature of their participation in the labour market. As Bangladeshi mothers generally are not as involved as fathers in paid work, they have a greater parenting role in the domestic realm. However the role of fathers is not to be under-estimated. There is little use of formal childcare provision for reasons that will be made clear, but apart from Qur'an reading classes, it was encouraging that older children were generally active in out-of-

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[358] Brooker (2002) gives the examples of a ten year old girl standing on a chair using a heavy knife to chop onions, and a nine-year-old boy supervised by his father to use a large meat cleaver.

school activities and benefiting from services provided for the South Asian community.

Paid work and parental roles

The practical everyday involvement in parenting depends on the needs of the children and the availability of the parents in the household. This in turn is dependent on the paid or unpaid work schedules that parents follow. For example, the hours worked in a restaurant are different to that in a takeaway. Those who work in an 'Indian' takeaway usually work from five or six in the evening to four or five in the early hours of the morning after employees have had a meal together. A waiter in a restaurant would work from about mid-day to three in the afternoon, and then again from five or six till midnight. These different hours of work impact on household members in that when the man returns at around midnight, his wife usually stays up for him with a meal prepared,[359] which would not happen for those who have their meal at the premises. But men like Mr Ferdousi who return in such early hours of the morning are unable to fetch their children to school or playgroup, a responsibility that then becomes the mother's. Those fathers in the sample who are not in the catering trade are also constrained by their work commitments, particularly if they are self-employed as Mr Siddique is. However, they are at home in the evenings and weekends, unless they have other voluntary activities outside of paid work as Mr Bari has.

In the focus group, parents reported difficulties in their maintaining of relationships with children.[360]

> When they grow up, be independent, they don't keep in contact with the
> parents sometimes

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[359] Comment from Bangladeshi community worker.

[360] It has been argued that as a result of the low levels of labour force participation and the resultant economic disadvantages faced by Muslim communities, Muslim fathers have experienced a decline in power in the family set-up. In addition, children are acquiring more power through their better communication skills and local knowledge, which then affects intergenerational relationships (Husain and O'Brien 2000).

Some don't come home, don't come near the parents. Is there anything that can be done about that[361]

There was also poor communication between fathers and their children, but the community worker attributed this to the unsocial work schedules of fathers. While the main responsibility of nurturing falls on the mother, some fathers were found to play a significant role, which may be a pattern that has had to be followed as a result of migration and having fewer kinship ties close by. Fathers who are available in the mornings are there to mind young ones and have been observed to fulfil this role with affection and patience, even with skill.[362]

The involvement of parents in practical parenting in the families concerned differs also according to the ages of the children and the size of the family. In examining these families with school-age children, the pattern is that fathers who work full-time are less likely to spend time with their children. Those who work in the catering trade are also busy at weekends, and the time in the weekday that they have off is limited when it comes to spending it with the children.

Mr Ahmed is an example of a Bangladeshi father who is in full-time employment in a restaurant. The Ahmeds' children feel that they do not have very much time with their father who is often getting ready to go to work when they come home from school, and when he does have his day off, he is often watching the television or out at his friend's. As Anisa (aged nine) in the household interview says:

I wish our mum went to work and our dad spent more time (at home) and they'll swop over

Mr Ahmed is however very fond of his second son aged one, who he looks after when his wife is at work in the school. When he was being interviewed, he was holding the child most of the time and playing with him, and when the child was fretting, he was

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[361] Bangladeshi focus group (30 July 2002).
[362] This goes against Western stereotypical images of Muslim men as oppressing and mistreating women and children (Husain and O'Brien 2000).

very patient and did not get upset when he vomited on his clothes. The child is also very attached to his father and according to his sisters, he loves playing with keys in the lock, and gets very excited when he hears his father opening the door to come into the house, and is upset when he leaves for work.

When Mr Ferdousi was interviewed, he also was looking after his young son aged three. He is also not often at home when the children are around because of work commitments. However, when asked about opportunities to have outings, his oldest child Sufina, (aged 12) is quite keen that their father is involved.

> Sufina: yeah, but, sometimes my dad's normally asleep cos he comes,
> home late from work,
> Researcher: yeah
> Sufina: so, most of the time we can't go
> Researcher: but your mum could take you in the car couldn't she
> Sufina: she
> Researcher: she drives doesn't she
> Sufina: yeah, but it, doesn't seem like 'right',
> Researcher: yeah
> Sufina: if we go together,
> Researcher: aha
> Sufina: we like to go with our dad as well
> Researcher: aha
> Sufina: so like, to make it like a family's day-out

When Mr Miah was working, he took time off work when his wife experienced difficulties in the birth of two of their children,[363] and when his youngest child was ill. Unlike the other fathers, he used to work as a waiter in a restaurant where the hours were from mid-day to three, and then he would be home to fetch the children from school, and then be at work in the evening from about five or six till almost midnight.

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[363] Their first child was born by caesarean section because the baby was in distress, and their second child who was born two years after, was premature at twenty-five weeks and had to be in hospital for sixty-five days. Mrs Miah recalls how difficult it was at that time because they did not own a car, and had to visit the hospital two or three times a day by bus.

For Mr Siddique, he observes long working hours in his business that also stretches on into his evenings at home, leaving him very limited time to spend with his children or help in the household.[364]

For most families, the mother is seen as the one who the children are close to, and to her daughters, she is the one who is able to understand them better. Mother is the one who is available and who trains and disciplines them. There are two full-time mothers and one student in the sample while the others are involved in casual or part-time work when the children are at school. Thus the mothers are available to the children most of the time. While the children do wish that their fathers spend more time with them, they accept that their fathers have to be away at work, and in the case of the Tauhid family, their father is much missed.

Mrs Ahmed has a couple of hours' work each day when the three oldest children are at school. As the main disciplinarian (the older son is not afraid of his father), she is often on hand to settle quarrels between the children, and according to the girls' accounts, this usually takes the form of shouting and smacking, even though the grandmother who observes this has expressed disapproval.[365] The girls appreciate the fact that mum is always available to sort things out, for example when they get into squabbles with their neighbours. As a result of recent problems with these white neighbours, Mrs Ahmed discourages her children from playing out on the street.

As in the case of the Ahmed family, Mrs Ferdousi (the student) is usually the one to maintain discipline in the family. She has allowed her eldest daughter to go to one sleep-over but was concerned that she did not have the car to fetch her home if there had been a problem, depending instead on the parents of her daughter's friend. Like the Ahmed girls, the Ferdousis' daughters are not allowed to have mobile phones,[366] which can be particularly difficult in a private school where most children have them:

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[364] In the case of Mr Bari, although he observes standard working hours, he is also involved in voluntary community work, which often takes him away in the evenings.

[365] Mrs Ahmed also says that if the children forget to do their prayers, she will punish them by getting them to double the amount of study time that they are required to have.

[366] In contrast, the two oldest Siddique children (Muhammed and his sister) both have mobiles, and they have five television sets in the house but still fight over them. Mr Ferdousi however has promised Sufina that once he starts his new business, she will get a mobile phone.

Sufina (aged 12): all my friends have got a mobile, everyone's got a mobile, yeah, and I feel like, odd

Researcher: do you

Sufina: Yeah, cos, when you go into school all they do is, play on their mobiles and like, okay, I'm gonna go away now (laugh)

Parents with school-age children also take on the added responsibility of ensuring that their children are able to achieve in education. The role of fathers also comes to the fore when schooling and homework are discussed. Mrs Ferdousi reflects that while in the past, the role of the mother was mainly in caring for the children, there is greater emphasis nowadays on parents helping the children with schoolwork, which she finds herself having to do. Where the parents are unable to provide help with homework because of work commitments or a lack of education, a tutor is possibly employed. There are also study aids if one has a computer. Mr Ferdousi believes that it is important that his children are helped with their education and has spoken of a tutor who used to come to the house. His daughter says that her dad is very good at helping her in science and mathematics. The other school-age children in these families have also said that their parents help them with schoolwork, but for Mr Ahmed and Mrs Tauhid, this has been limited because of lack of language ability and education. In the case of the Siddique family, dad helps his children in maths and mum helps in English. All the families with children over the age of 10 have a computer in the house. Mrs Ahmed has bought her children CDs to help them improve their maths.[367] Mrs Tauhid's nine-year old and her younger siblings are not allowed to go on their computer, which is reserved for their older brothers and sisters when they are home. The children in the sample do not use the internet to any great extent, either because they do not have it or they are discouraged by their parents from going on it.

In the two households in which the children are much younger, the situation with parenting is quite different altogether. Mrs Bari assumes most of the responsibility of parenting because her husband is away at work most of the day, but because she is in

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[367] Unfortunately, Mrs Ahmed's computer has had a number of problems with it, so that the children are not able to use it.

an extended family, she is able to share her responsibility with the grandparents as she undertakes most of the household work for them. In the Haque household, the parenting responsibility is shared with the father as he works only part-time. In my second visit to the house, Mr Haque was busy looking after his three week old child, feeding and then winding her. When he is away at work in the evenings, grandmother is around to lend mum a hand by watching the children, although grandmother is not in the best of health. The father's role is multifaceted, as he juggles work, childcare, shopping and cares for his elderly mother. Mr Haque says that even if he wanted to spend more time with his children, he is unable to because of financial considerations and his need to work. Mr Haque rationalises the fact that he is not in full-time work with the practical difficulties of looking after the children:

> Interpreter for Mr Haque: yeah, it's a problem, when you're looking after 'em, like one's with his, with their mother and one's with their father and if the other wakes up now you know, they're gonna share him, so if he's at work, all three of them will be, you know his mother will be stuck with all three of them.

His wife, who is not able to communicate in English and is unable to drive, stays at home most of the time. In the summer, Mrs Haque visits her brothers and sister in London's East End where she says she feels more confident because of the large numbers of Bangladeshis there. The Haques are the only family living in a predominantly white council estate with Mr Haque's brother living in a nearby street.

Interestingly, those families with more egalitarian parenting roles within the home were not those with higher incomes like the Siddiques and Baris who followed the male-breadwinner role closely, but those who were in casual or part-time employment such as Mr Haque or unemployed like Mr Miah.[368] A comparison between Mr Siddique and Mr Bari demonstrates the interplay of class and patriarchy. They are both involved in non-catering professions, and are minimally involved in household duties and childcare.

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[368] Thus feminist calls for a greater sharing of gender roles need to be predicated on the pragmatic considerations of the work schedules and the nature of the occupation.

When asked if he would approve of his wife (a Bangladeshi graduate) doing more work than she is presently doing, Mr Siddique was in no uncertain terms against it. His main argument is that the children are still too young (the youngest is six) and because he is so stressed out at work, he does not want his wife to be stressed as well. He is however, happy for her to be involved in casual work, and for her to lend him a hand in his office work. Mr Siddique's role in the household has however adapted to the changes in the circumstances in his work. When they had their first child, they were living in Bangladesh and the boy was seven months when they moved to the U.K. When the business where he was employed went into difficulties, Mr Siddique started to work from home. As a result, if Mrs Siddique was busy, he could watch over the children or just their second child (a daughter) when their son was at nursery. After three years of working from home, Mr Siddique found some office space to rent, and the separation of family and paid work became distinct again.[369] Mrs Siddique seems completely satisfied with arrangements at the present time. Mr Bari on the other hand, would like for his wife (also a Bangladeshi graduate) to be able to further her skills and has been frustrated in the way that classes are often not pitched at her level, and that older and younger women of different academic levels are taught together. She herself is not confident enough to venture very far from home, and does not take public transport without someone accompanying her. Mr Bari's wife's lack of confidence is also part of the reason why he has put off the idea of moving out of the house that he shares with his parents.

The socialisation of children into caring roles

Parents with school-age children were found to train the children to carry out various tasks in the household and they learn at a young age to be responsible for younger siblings. But these tasks are divided according to gender and vary depending on the parents' class background and upbringing. How and when the children are socialised into adult roles have been found to be linked to their parents' own experiences of

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[369] This admittedly is a pattern that is not uncommon to white households. However there is also a link that needs to be recognised between institutional racism and the propensity for minority ethnic households to opt to set up their own businesses.

growing up. A number of the parents are members of large families and have been brought up in the inner city. Such families include Mr Bari, Mrs Ferdousi, and Mrs Ahmed. On the other hand, Mrs Siddique was brought up in a small middle-class family in Bangladesh, in which paid household help was available. When she was at school, she used to be fetched to and from school by a servant who would carry her bag. The Ahmed family is one where the daughters have been taught to take on household responsibilities.[370] From the time when the Ahmeds' daughters started school, they were involved in helping out in the house. This takes the form of minding the baby, cooking, vacuuming, putting the washing in, hanging it out to dry and fetching them from the line. The girls are also able to do some ironing. The oldest girl Sufia aged eleven, is particularly close to the baby who sometimes sleeps with her. In the mornings, she would change him, feed him, and hand him over to mum before she leaves for school. As independent as she is at home, Sufia will not be allowed to go into town by herself until she is about fifteen or sixteen. The girls are also not allowed to sleepovers at their friends' houses and activities in the evening are difficult because Mrs Ahmed does not have the car then.

A common practice in many households is for the children to help themselves to food when they are hungry. The children, aged between seven and 12 in the Ahmed and Ferdousi households would get breakfast for themselves and for their younger siblings (aged three and under). Mrs Ahmed's daughters (aged nine and 11) are able to cook rice and curry while Mrs Ferdousi's oldest daughter (aged 12) can cook noodles. Mrs Siddique's daughter, who is the same age as Mrs Ferdousi's oldest daughter, will serve up the meal but not cook. In the Tauhid household, it appears that Mrs Tauhid does most of the main household work but the older children (aged seven and nine) are involved in looking after the younger members of the family, serving up, tidying up and sweeping up fallen rice.

In the Miah family, there are not as many responsibilities given to the children. This is possibly because the father, who has been unemployed for the past six months, is around in the house most of the time. The oldest child (aged 10) has done some small

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[370] Mrs Ahmed does not believe in the mother having to do everything for the children. Unlike her mother, she designates duties to her children according to their age.

household chores but is not allowed to use the vacuum cleaner. Their parents take their one-hour nap after the afternoon meal[371] when the children are home from school, and the older girls (aged 10, 8, 6) take care of their disabled little sister (aged 2). This pattern is common as in all the five households that have more than one child above the age of five, older children have looked after their younger siblings for short lengths of time. Even before the baby arrived, Aisha Miah has been left to look after her sisters:

> Researcher: Erm, right, erm, do you sometimes look after your younger, sisters, when mum and dad are out?
>
> Aisha: Yeah
>
> Researcher: In the past. Yeah. For like, an hour?
>
> Aisha: Because she wasn't there
>
> <<referring to the disabled youngest sister>>
>
> Researcher: Ah-hah
>
> Aisha: So it was easy to look, to look after them two.
>
> Researcher: Yeah, but, when your baby younger sister was around []
>
> Aisha: Was, it was easy, because I just used to, like you know how my auntie (pointing to aunt holding the child) just, make her sleep. I just used to do that or feed her milk.
>
> Researcher: Yeah
>
> Aisha: Because our mum used to just, erm, have a, like, milk bottle ready for the baby. When she left.

Younger siblings don't necessarily like being looked after by their older siblings. Her sister, aged six had this to say:

> Researcher: do you like it when your big sister looks after both of you
>
> Mrs Miah: [ ]
>
> Afifa: No,
>
> Researcher: No, why
>
> Afifa: not really, she sometimes hits us when we're naughty a lot

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[371] This does not appear to be a common practice in other families.

Researcher: awww,

Afifa: and the annoying bit is, when when the baby doesn't, she wouldn't sit down she would just um, you just have to carry her up all, the whole time when your mum and dad are gone with, your brother and your auntie, and all three of us here, the baby, the baby wouldn't sit down, she drinks her milk and she goes to sleep, but sometimes she just like, she, she cries and, she wouldn't stop and,

Researcher: Oh dear

Some of the children gave their views on what would happen if their mum went out to work and who they would prefer to be looking after them.[372] Mrs Tauhid's nine-year-old does not like the idea of her mum going out to work:

Researcher: you don't like the idea of your mum going out to work

Sharifa (9): no because then,

Shazia (7): we, we have to stay in the house

Researcher: you have to stay in the house, that's what you

Sharifa: I have to take care of them

Researcher: (laugh) oh, you suddenly realised eh

Shazia: we usually do

Mrs Ferdousi would leave her older child (aged 12) to take care of things for a while if she had to go out because she says that she can be trusted. However, she takes precautions:

Researcher: Mm, would you be confident to leave your twelve year old in charge of the younger ones

Mrs Ferdousi: I I do sometimes, it's like er, not for long for about ten fifteen minutes, things like that but I don't leave it like or a couple of hours or something

Researcher: mm

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[372] This was purely hypothetical as Mrs Tauhid had clearly indicated that she would not consider paid work unless it could be performed at home.

Mrs Ferdousi: so, it's like, if I take the three year old with me, like for shopping or something, I could trust them two, like finish your homework

Researcher: mm

Mrs Ferdousi: er, I would strictly tell them not to turn the cooker on when I'm not in

Researcher: yeah

Mrs Ferdousi: could use the microwave, the kettle but don't put the cooker on

In another interview, Mrs Ferdousi's 12-year-old told me that she does not like the idea of someone unfamiliar looking after them, and prefers a relative or her mum's close friend, or to be left on her own.

The effect of gender socialisation is also clear as it is the daughters and not the sons who are involved in domestic tasks. An unusual case in the Siddique family however is that, Muhammed (aged 14) has been looking after his youngest sister ever since she was a baby. This included changing the baby's nappy when it was soiled and feeding her with milk. When the baby was older and being potty-trained, he would clean her up in the toilet. This was when he was around ten years old. Sons however are accorded more freedom than the daughters. Muslim parents restrict the amount of time that girls spent outside the home because according to Islam, women represent the family's honour through their modesty and sexual fidelity and need to be protected by men (Becher and Husain 2003; Bose 2000). For example, Mrs Tauhid's daughters (aged nine and 11) are not allowed out of the house much, whereas her son (aged 12) is. Mr and Mrs Siddique allow their son to be quite independent to go off on his own with his friends, and to go on sleepovers. In contrast to Mrs Tauhid's daughters, their daughter (aged 12) is allowed to go to the nearby shops on her own, and has friends from school over to the house, or has followed her non-Asian friends home to their houses, but is not allowed to stay over-night.

Grandparents and other informal care

It will come as no surprise to the reader following the analysis of household networks at the start of the chapter that grandparents and other family are important to childcare. Let us now look in detail at the role these carers play, and the factors that affect these roles. According to the focus group, grandparents regularly look after their grandchildren, and this has been happening more frequently in the last few years with more Bangladeshi women entering paid employment. However, the role of grandparents in childcare varies from household to household and is dependent on the age, health and proximity of the grandparents. In most cases, it is the grandmother rather the grandfather who has been involved in the care of the grandchildren. As the mothers in the sample are in paid work or training mostly when their children are at school or when the father is available, grandmothers are involved when they are resident in the same house, or during emergencies. The Bari grandfather is an exception and this case will be discussed as an interesting example. For many of the grandmothers mentioned, health problems and old-age is quoted as a problem, even though the age of the grandmother is not particularly advanced.[373] If health is not a problem, an additional consideration is the number of small children that the grandmother herself is caring for. Mrs Ferdousi's mother was busy looking after her nine younger siblings and her in-laws were too elderly to help.[374]

The grandmothers in the close-knit Haque, Ahmed, Bari and Miah families have been described as being too elderly or having poor health that affects their ability to be full-time carers of their grandchildren.[375] Those who are co-resident, as in the Haque and Bari families are however able to look after their grandchildren for short periods when mother is occupied with other tasks or indisposed to look after the child.[376] Where the grandmother is not co-resident with the family, grandmother proximity is another factor that makes it possible for grandchildren to be cared for by their grandmothers.

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[373] Grandmother Bari for example is nearly 50, and Grandmother Haque is 67.

[374] Her mother had her six brothers and three sisters to look after and with the youngest being about three or four, she was not able to travel when her first two grandchildren were born.

[375] It is also important to note that in the past, some of these grandmothers like Grandmother Haque, have also helped in looking after other grandchildren for example in Bangladesh.

[376] Presently, Grandmother Haque helps with the care of her grandchildren by carrying the baby or minding the younger ones when it was necessary. She enjoys being able to watch over them, but because she suffers from high blood pressure, she is now less energetic.

When Mrs Ahmed's first child arrived, she had already moved out of her mother's house and had set up her own home, but because her mother lived nearby, she was able to give Mrs Ahmed support when it was needed. Similarly, when Mrs Ferdousi had her third child, a son, she had moved to the North West of England and so had the support of her mother and sisters there.

There are also cases of transnational householding with grandmothers who have come from abroad to help with childcare.[377] Mr Miah's mother often spends long periods of time in Bangladesh, but when their second child, now aged eight, was born premature, she was in Britain and Mrs Miah would sometimes leave the older child, then two, with her so that she could make visits to the neo-natal unit. When Mrs Miah's fourth and youngest child caught meningitis, her mother-in-law was again in Britain at the time and was a source of help in looking after the other children when Mrs Miah visited the hospital. In the same way, Mrs Siddique's mother has been of assistance to her in the past. She came to stay with the family when Mrs Siddique was expecting her youngest child, now six, and adapted well to the country. She liked the cold weather, could communicate in English, and stayed for a month before the baby was born and about five months afterwards. This was particularly appreciated because Mrs Siddique's other children could be fetched to and from school by their grandmother. During that time, Mrs Siddique was also able to do some casual work. Sadly, this grandmother has since passed away.

Let us now look at the Bari household and the role of the grandfather vis-à-vis the grandmother who is not as healthy and active as he is. Mr Bari and his family live together with his parents, and when their daughter was born, they had the help of his parents as well as other members of the family such as his sisters who used to live with them. Mr Bari works full-time and although his wife is not in any paid work, she has attended various training courses. The grandparents look after their four-year-old granddaughter when mum is on a course,[378] or when she is unwell or resting. Given a choice between leaving her child at a crèche and leaving her with her grandparents,

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[377] This is not to the same extent as the Chinese grandmothers because there is no 'confinement' period among Bangladeshi mothers as there is among Chinese mothers.

[378] For instance, when Mrs Bari attended a first-aid course once a week for two hours each time, she left her daughter with the grandparents.

Mrs Bari prefers the latter option. Recently however, she decided to forgo an exercise class that she was hoping to attend because she felt it would be too much of a strain on the grandparents to be looking after the child. Grandmother Bari is not yet fifty, but her son has described her as 'not so active'. She suffers from fatigue, various aches and pains and a suspected stomach ulcer. Nevertheless Grandfather and Grandmother Bari are very happy to look after their granddaughter.

> Interpreter: She [grandchild] wants a drink or whatever she wants to eat, they give it to her
> Researcher: yeah d-
> Grandmother Bari: [ ]
> Interpreter: if the mum's lying down then er, she comes to her grandmother and says er, *dadu*, give me something and she gives something
> Researcher: right, do you find it tiring having to look after your grand-daughter sometimes
> Grandmother: *na, na na* [no, no, no]
> Interpreter: No, she likes it

Grandfather Bari goes out of the house everyday for a walk and his granddaughter loves the chance to go out with him. Sometimes she plays with her friend on the pavement just outside the house, with grandfather watching. At other times though, things can be difficult if Grandfather Bari wants to go to the mosque for prayer:

> Grandfather: do want to look after but sometime you know, she demand something too much, which I don't like you know [ ]
> Researcher: ok, so how's she demanding, how how, how do you mean er...
> Grandfather: Mean er, I want to go to mosque, to pray, I don't like to (take) and [ ] her, she, 'I want to go with you!'

Grandfather goes on to explain that the children are allowed to sit and wait while their carers are praying but that because children can disturb the prayers, they are discouraged from taking children there, unless perhaps they are asleep in a pushchair.

According to him, there are only ever one or two children, but apart from the carer, there is no one specially assigned to look after them at the mosque.

When asked what they thought if their daughter-in-law were to obtain employment that would require some childcare arrangements, Grandfather Bari was of the opinion that it would be alright for them to look after their grandchild:

> Grandfather: It is no problem, it is no problem. Because there is not, if is three or four children, this is only one children, you can look after, [ ] when there is three or four children then it is very, difficult, I don't think it difficult problem. She got a full-time job. We can look after her [granddaughter]. Because when there is children go to school, I think before she work she take to school so about 3 or half-past 3, she's in the school not to come back, for 2 or 3 hours, make any trouble, we give them [her] some dinner and …take her out you know, one hour, two hour at a time [ ]

Grandmother Bari is also of the view that as she is the grandmother, she should be looking after her granddaughter. In any case, she and her husband enjoy looking after their grandchild as she keeps them company and gives them much joy. In that sense, it is a symbiotic relationship. Mr and Mrs Bari however fear that their daughter will exhaust her grandparents, and that in turn she might tend to be spoilt.

> Mr Bari: it's very difficult for my parents to look after my daughter, cos er, kid's attention span is, um that short so you can't have them kind of, um in one room, or something, my daughter is very active, can't, you know, sit in one room and do the boxes and do the dollies, (laugh)

Parenting can also be difficult with grandparents always at hand and the child appears to set grandfather against father:

> Grandfather: sometimes, she come, to complain about her dad
> Researcher: (laugh)

Grandfather: (loudly) 'I don't want', so I go and shout at him so, she'll be happy

Researcher: (laugh) o-oh!

Grandfather: as well as no, e-ie, dad done something wrong to me, my grand-dad will shout at you so it's all right (laugh)

Other carers

The picture seems to be that there is a strong network of relatives and friends for the families in the sample to draw upon, with those having close-knit networks depending on kin rather than friends or neighbours. The exception is Mrs Ahmed who prefers to rely on her close friend rather than her relatives who are all around her.[379] Mrs Ferdousi claims not to have any relatives in the city but her daughters reported their mother had left their brother and them with their cousin sister, or her niece, who is about 28 and has an eight-year-old son. In the past, they used to sleep over at this house, but their brother who was a toddler then, would be taken home in the middle of the night. One of his sisters would have to be with him because he could not sleep without the presence of one of them.[380] The girls have taken turns at sleeping at their cousin's and have done this about seven to eight times. This gives them a chance to play railways with the eight-year-old boy and watch Harry Potter videos. Presently however, Mrs Ferdousi's best friend (their *kala* or 'auntie') is the one she would turn to if she needed someone to look after the children.

Among those with close-knit family networks, Mrs Miah's children (aged 10, 8 and 6) describe a 19-year-old cousin who used to spend time with them, as well as teenage cousins from Bangladesh who used to stay with them and baby-sit them when their parents were out. Grandfather Bari says that if there were any problem with childcare, they would call their eldest daughter who would then come to the house to stay a few nights and lend a hand. Mr Haque's little girls (aged 2 and 3) like to be looked after by their auntie because they get to play with her cosmetics.

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[379] Mrs Ahmed's children have spoken about staying overnight at their mother's best friend's house when their mother went to another city to visit their auntie who had just given birth.

[380] This practice of co-sleeping is common in South Asian families and considered to have beneficial effects (Becher and Husain 2003).

Widow Tauhid on the other hand does not have relatives close at hand, so she and her children will call on their neighbour who is Bangladeshi and whom they have known ever since they moved into the house, if there were any emergency or help needed. It would appear that the Tauhid and Ferdousi families would be rather more disadvantaged than the other families, which have strong family networks. However, as has been described in the section on social networks, good neighbours and friends compensate for this. In the case of the Miah and Ahmed families, 'neighbour' doubles up as 'relative'. The Ahmed and Ferdousi family on the other hand have spoken of non-kin neighbours who leave much to be desired, and the Bari, Miah and Haque family have had problems with their neighbourhood.

Before going on to look at formal childcare, we shall summarise the complementary childcare used by the Bangladeshi households in the following table (Table 7.6) so that easier comparisons can be made with the formal childcare options that the families have used, which will be discussed in the next section.

Table 7.6: Informal/complementary childcare past and present

Family Network	Close-knit	Close-knit	Close-knit	Close-knit	Loose-knit	Few ties	Few ties
HOUSEHOLD	Ahmed	Bari	Haque	Miah	Ferdousi	Siddique	Tauhid
Children's ages	11, 9 7, 1	4	3, 2, 3 wks	10, 8, 6, 2	12, 10, 3	14, 12, 6	16, 15, 14, 13, 12, 11, 9, 7, 5, 2
Grandmother	X	✔	✔	X	X	X	
Grandfather		✔					
Sibling	✔			✔	✔	✔	✔
Relative	✔	✔	✔	✔	X		
Friend/neighbour	✔				✔		✔

Note: X indicates that care took place in the past.

In the two families with co-resident grandparents, the grandparents help to care for the children. As children grow up, there is less dependence on grandmothers, as looking at all the families with school-age children, older siblings take on the role of carers instead. Families with loose-knit networks or few family ties have no relatives to depend on for childcare compared to those with close-knit networks.

Formal childcare and children's activities

Table 7.7: Formal childcare past and present

Family Network	Close-knit	Close-knit	Close-knit	Close-knit	Loose-knit	Few ties	Few ties
HOUSEHOLD	Ahmed	Bari	Haque	Miah	Ferdousi	Siddique	Tauhid
Children's ages	11, 9 7, 1	4	3, 2, 3 wks	10, 8, 6, 2	12, 10, 3	14, 12, 6	16, 15, 14, 13, 12, 11, 9, 7, 5, 2
School nursery	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Playgroup	✔	✔ *		✔	✔	✔	
Toddler group				S.E.N.	✔		
Childminder				d.a.	d.a.	✔	
School clubs	✔			✔	✔	✔	
Community club				✔	✔		
Crèche		'Didn't work out'		✔	'Would have liked'	✔	✔
Qur'an reading	✔			✔	✔	✔	✔
Bengali class				✔			
Private tuition	✔				✔		

Note: d.a. stands for 'don't approve'

      * This was only for three to four days.

      ✔ At times, facilities were paid for

      SEN: Special Educational Needs

In this section, I will review the usage of various formal childcare facilities that the parents in the sample have used. The table above sets out the use of formal childcare and whether the children have attended the various kinds of children's services. It was noticeable that facilities such as a private day nursery, baby-sitter, nanny and holiday club were not used by any of the households. Facilities that do not require payment such as community clubs and crèches are more commonly used among the Bangladeshis. Only one parent has used childminders and only two parents have attended a toddler group. Most of the school-aged Bangladeshi children have attended

clubs at school. The list includes Qur'an reading classes and private tuition as discussed in the previous section. This gives the full picture of how children are occupied during out-of-school hours as well as the financial commitment on the part of their parents (see ☑ items in Table 7.7).

Use of pre-school facilities

The availability of community facilities for children catering to the needs of Bangladeshis was found to be a key factor in determining whether families use pre-school formal childcare provision. The language ability of the mothers was also influential as to whether and which services were accessed. Another key factor was the size of the family and proximity of childcare provision. Some parents faced the lack of provision of places in the childcare facility, and there were also children's preferences to consider.

All the families in the sample have used a school nursery, and most have used the playgroup at the local community project,[381] which has recently been registered as a community nursery. In both these settings in the West End, there are bilingual workers and also activities for parents. The majority of the children who attend are from minority ethnic communities. Mrs Miah, whose three older children went to the local community playgroup, thinks very highly of the playgroup leaders.[382] Like Mrs Miah, Mrs Siddique has been involved in the local community project and went to classes there,[383] putting her son, who was a toddler at the time, in the crèche provided. Her children have all been very sociable and adapted well to the crèche and staff at the playgroup:

> Mrs Siddique: she's [playgroup leader] such a nice person, and er, there's another er, Mrs. [ ] I think, they're all so lovely you know, my children, ah, I told (you) my children they are not like, very, attached to their mum

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[381] This is most accessible to the council residents of Neighbourhood 1, but also a walkable distance from the private estates of Neighbourhood 2.

[382] She is the only parent with a disabled child and presently, she and her daughter go to a separate toddler group specially organised for disabled children.

[383] The project runs classes on English, machine-sewing, interpreting and various other activities are organised for the parents and children of the neighbourhood.

or anything you know, they were, they didn't cry, they once they didn't cry, they say okay mummy bye bye mummy

Her son, for example, loved the playgroup so much it was difficult to get him to leave. Mrs Siddique appreciated the playgroup because it gave her time to be with her second child who was just a baby then.

Mrs Miah, Mrs Ferdousi, Mrs Ahmed and Mrs Siddique all have a fairly good command of spoken English and have availed themselves of children's services provided in the community.[384] While Mrs Ahmed does not see the value of going to parent and toddler groups, she has sent her daughters to the community playgroup where her child can be left. Mrs Ferdousi on the other hand, is the only parent who has been to a few different parent and toddler groups and was very involved in her daughter's nursery as a member of the Parent-Teacher Association. She was often the only minority ethnic person in these settings.

In contrast, the Haques and the Tauhids stand out as accessing very few childcare facilities. In the case of the Haques, this may be explained by the ages of their children, their predominantly white neighbourhood[385] and the fact that Mrs Haque is limited in her ability to converse in English. They also have the added responsibility of looking after the grandmother who lives with them. Mrs Tauhid, on the other hand is a widow with a large family. Her English is also limited although she has been in the country longer than Mrs Haque. She knew about the playgroup but preferred to look after the children at home till they were old enough to attend the school nursery, which is closer to home. Because she was widowed with so many children, an English tutor from a language project has been coming to the house to teach Mrs Tauhid.[386]

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[384] From my observations during my previous work in the community however, it is not the case that only those with a good command of English access the community playgroup and its activities. Many of the women who benefit are not fluent in English.

[385] The children in the Haque household are in the house most of the time, even though there is a large grassed area in front of the house. Because older white children are often there, the family prefer to keep their children indoors. Mrs Haque complains about white children knocking on the door and running away when they answer it. This game of 'knockie-nine-doors' is unknown to them. In a sense, this is comparable to the Miah household where there is also a grassed area just in front of the house, but the children are not allowed there because of the dog dirt.

[386] Otherwise it would be too difficult for her to manage to take all the children to a class, and for them all to settle in a crèche.

Now that the second youngest child is at school, Mrs Tauhid attends an English class at the language centre where there is a crèche for the youngest child aged two. Mrs Tauhid has just started and even though the child cries, she still goes. The crèche is run by Pakistani and Bangladeshi workers.[387]

Mrs Bari's daughter could not get a place in the community playgroup because it was oversubscribed.[388] Eventually, her daughter attended for three or four days, but did not settle and Mrs Bari had to stay with her. She resorted to teaching the child at home[389] and then getting her daughter a place at the school nursery. Mrs Bari's problems stem from the fact that her daughter is very active and demanding, such that she would not settle in a crèche either.

> Grandmother Bari (interpreted): she won't stay at the crèche, she she cries
> she cries a lot she gets very angry, you can't force her to stay there, even if
> they are, going to keep her, even if they're keeping her when she's angry,
> they can't force her to stay, she'll force herself to go

However, she is now happy at nursery with its many activities. Mr Bari would like for there to be more childcare available:

> Mr Bari: (if) childcare, adequate and appropriate childcare was available I
> think, it would especially in my mind, er, I I could put my daughter there,
> I would feel er, much better, I can at least tell my wife now you got a few
> hours you know (laugh), whether to do this do that

Mrs Ferdousi was quite disappointed when she enrolled on a Higher Education Foundation Course (HEFC) at the start of the year and the college was not able to provide childcare on site such as a crèche. A grant was available to cover the cost of

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[387] This is not unusual in the West End where the South Asian population is larger compared to the rest of Newcastle and a number of South Asian women over the last ten years have been trained as crèche-workers.

[388] This was the case with the Ahmed family too, as her second child could not get a place.

[389] Bangladeshi parents have been found to 'teach' their pre-school children, sometimes three alphabets and counting systems i.e. Arabic, Bengali and English, through didactic sit-down methods of recitation and copying (Brooker 2002).

using childcare but both she and her husband were against the idea. Mrs Ferdousi's explanation was that her son would not settle with a childminder if she was a stranger, but in a group situation like a crèche or playgroup, it would be much better. Mrs Ferdousi then found a place in a playgroup some distance away, but because she had to fetch her son, she usually arrived half an hour late for her classes at the college. Now that he has got a place in a local school nursery nearby, things are looking much better.

The following case study shows that access to suitable childcare comes not only via community services but also some degree of integration in the surrounding neighbourhood. When Mrs Siddique had a caesarean for her second child, she had to be in hospital for about ten days. They sent their son, who was two at the time, to a Bengali childminder, whose contact was provided by a health professional. She looked after him from half past eight to half past five and was paid about £60-70 a week.

> Mrs Siddique: Umhm, that was really helpful for us, because we knew
> that he is with a Bengali family, that means they will feed him, what, you
> know like, we eat you know,
> Researcher: mmhm
> Mrs Siddique: and she really take good care of him, he was happy boy

When her son started school, she went on to be employed on a casual basis. At that time, she would leave her daughter, who was about two, at her neighbours' for an hour or so, and pay them £2 per hour. These were two neighbours, one a Bangladeshi and the other English, with school-aged children who could spare the time when their children were at school. She preferred to leave her child with the Bangladeshi mum because she knew her better, and there was more flexibility.

School and community clubs and children's activities

In terms of participation in out-of-school activities, the children who attend independent schools and those who do not, have different options to choose from. The Ahmed and Miah children attend the local state primary school while the Ferdousi and

Siddique children the local independent school.[390] Those in the state primary school have attended homework clubs, dance classes, swimming, netball and even judo classes. When Muhammed Siddique (aged 14) was in a state primary school, he was involved in modern dance lessons, which has taken him to performances held as far away as Leeds. His sister was involved in this too for a period. Now that he is in a independent school, he is into rugby with a chance to represent his school overseas. The girls in the independent school are involved mainly in sports activities after school such as tennis, hockey, netball and football. Sufina Ferdousi (12) has also learnt to play the violin and has reached Grade 5, but has switched to being in the choir. Her younger sister attends a computer club.

As we have already seen, Qur'an reading is a regular out-of-school activity for children of school-age (up to age 12). Children from both independent and state schools also attend a number of activities in the South Asian community. Mrs Miah's second and third daughters attend an hour-long homework and Bengali class on Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays at the community house used for the Tenants' Association, whereas the eldest only attends one at the weekend. This is because on a Monday, she attends a Black Women's Project at the same venue. So far, she has been there once a week for the past three to four weeks and she is looking forward to going on trips with the group to visit other such projects.[391] She and her sister have also been along to a South Asian girls' photography club where she has learnt to use a digital camera and work with images on the computer. Both the Ferdousi girls have also recently attended a South Asian Girls' group where they have made jewellery and key-rings. They are looking forward to going on trips to London and Manchester and have been to the activity centre at Whickham Thorpe.

There is only one household where the children do not participate in any activities organised after school (apart from Qur'an reading).[392] This stems from the fact that their mother is herself a house-bound individual, with the children being kept in the home for most of their leisure time. This is reflected in their enthusiasm for school,

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[390] See dilemmas about schooling on pages 293ff.

[391] The women's group was also involved in preparations for the Queen's Jubilee Party in the summer, which was organised for the neighbourhood.

[392] Extra-curricular activities for the Tauhid children who attend the Islamic boarding school were not discussed because none of these children were present to be interviewed at the time of the fieldwork.

which takes them out of the house. There is no television in the house and the children are expected to spend most of their time in studies (reading) and playing among themselves. The children's capacity for story-telling is admirable, as is the number of books that they have read (including the Harry Potter series).

To summarise, the main factors for the use of children's facilities are the age and number of children, with those families with school-age children using more facilities than those without school-age children. The exception to this is the Tauhid family, reflecting their conservative religious beliefs. The only family that has used paid formal childcare (in the form of childminders) are the Siddiques, who are differentiated from the rest of the families by their class, regional background coupled with the fact that they have few family ties in the country. Like the Ferdousis, their children attend an independent school. All the families with school-age children have attended Qur'an reading classes, a clear indication of the importance of this aspect of training in the mindset of the Bangladeshi family.

Conclusion

A matrix of factors exists that affect the childcare choices that Bangladeshi parents make. Starting with the role of migration history and generational differences, which influence the way families and households are structured, we are able to see these interact with household livelihoods, social networks and neighbourhoods to influence how children are cared and provided for. The chapter started by showing networks providing opportunities for the family to access support and assistance, whether from family members, neighbours or professionals, but for some, family networks cannot always be depended upon. Apart from transnational dilemmas particularly those to do with education, class affiliation can determine how one views the options available in the community, as being sufficient or less than ideal. Religion is of profound importance in most of the families, and is frequently integral to identity and to family ideology. The younger generation are the product of their parents' care, but also their social exposure outside the family, in particular their educational settings. This explains the importance that parents place on selecting the right schools for their

children. And yet, the research participants are still individuals with their own views about how children should be brought up, whether they are conservative or progressive or deeply private.

Parenting practices and childcare preferences are found to be influenced by the waged and unwaged work schedules of mothers and fathers that are in turn shaped by the human capital that people possess and the barriers and opportunities they face. The socialisation of children includes their cultural and spiritual development and is largely the remit of the women. The women are mostly *mangeters* but of different class and educational backgrounds, and their different adaptations to life in Britain are a reflection of the fact that there are various interpretations and practical out-workings of patriarchy and religion in modern day Britain. These are however structures that cannot be ignored for their profound significance in the lives of British Bangladeshis, and in the consideration of community policies towards them.

The issue of formal childcare arises for most Bangladeshis only when family care is not available in such circumstances as the hospitalisation, paid work or training of the mother. In such cases, the key issues of trust, parental preferences and financial ability continue to hold for the Bangladeshi community. This is understandable in the context of the racism experienced by the community and their economic circumstances. Many also have additional financial commitments because of their transnational links and the responsibility for their children's religious instruction. State-provided childcare, in the form of the community playgroup and school nursery that cater specifically for the needs of Bangladeshis, is established and popular in the community. The experience of childcare by most Bangladeshis in the locality also comes in the form of crèche services provided at training sessions. As a result, what seems to be favoured among parents is a setting resembling a playgroup, in particular the community playgroup referred to above, in which there is language support, a friendly atmosphere, and childcare practitioners whom the parents are able to trust with the care of their children. However, the general preference is for pre-school children to be cared for in the context of the home by members of the family, ranging from grandparents, cousin-sisters, and older siblings having responsibility for the care of their younger siblings. The choice of families relying on kin looking after younger ones is also reinforced by

religious and cultural values, but however is not without its problems. These include safety in the home and children's own preferences. With the exception of one family, older children benefit from a range of extra-curricular activities in school and in the community, and this points to the kind of 'childcare' that Bangladeshi parents approve of. Any future use of childcare provision thus has to arise from what is familiar to the community and what has proven to be reliable and beneficial to their children. This has implications for plans to make childcare inclusive for all sections of the community, a focus of the final chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The impetus for this piece of research came from a realisation that there is much to be understood about the childcare needs of minority ethnic families that has yet to be considered under the Labour flagship National Childcare Strategy. The aim of this thesis is to develop a comparative cultural understanding of the ways two contrasting communities bring up children, as well as to discover what parents' and children's preferences and needs are with regard to childcare provision. This understanding has to encompass the gendered and racialised choices in household decision making, which in turn is situated in its particular community context. As the aim of the National Childcare Strategy is specifically placed within the social inclusion agenda, it was necessary to examine whether a mixed economy of care instigated by national government policy has any relevance for disparate groups that are often a marginalised yet significant and growing minority of British society. With second, third and fourth generations of these migrant groups developing and contributing to the British economy, any form of national childcare policy and provision needs to take into account their various needs and aspirations. This is in line with equal opportunities and anti-discrimination policies and legal requirements, and the need to address institutional racism at all levels of society. In addition, the issue of suitable childcare for minority ethnic communities has ramifications for the meaning of citizenship and identity in multicultural, pluralistic Britain.

The way I have set out to meet the research aims outlined above has been to carefully contextualise the qualitative data and interpret it in the light of recent research and current theoretical and policy debates. The journey I have taken may be described as an iterative process of moving from literature, to methods, to data collection, description and analysis, back to the literature, revisiting the data, refining the analysis of each community and finalising the theoretical and policy frameworks as the basis on which the final comparative analyses and conclusions will be made. The thesis is the result of this process. The bulk of the research comprises the qualitative interviews

in eight Chinese and seven Bangladeshi households, with a range of individuals of varying ages and backgrounds and living in different household set-ups. The household as the unit of analysis provides the basis for comparison, but it is examined as embedded in the social network of relationships that proved to be significant in the lives of these households, especially with respect to the care of children. This is further supported by research on the backgrounds of the communities so as to contextualise and inform the fieldwork. The comparative analysis and conclusions that follow thus draw on a number of sources: the literature survey providing the material for the theoretical framework, the policy framework and the background chapters, and the rich qualitative data from the household research, with some further contextualisation from the focus groups, EYDCP surveys, and interviews with community representatives. The result is a nuanced understanding of each of the communities and their childcare needs.

In this chapter, we are thus at a point at which we can identify common themes relevant to both communities, highlighting the similarities and differences between them. I will first examine the impact of migration and transnationalism on the two sets of households, before moving on to the influence of neighbourhoods and networks on families. Next, I look at the socio-economic context and compare the two groups in terms of their livelihoods. Finally I compare the two communities in terms of their religious and ideological systems, looking at the ways these contribute to the households' childcare preferences and needs. Using these interrelated themes, I propose a meta-narrative for the analysis of minority ethnic communities. Following from the arguments introduced in the Chapter One, I will then present the issues that arise out of a consideration of the relevance of childcare to citizenship and social inclusion.

As a CASE student, I wrote two reports for the Newcastle EYDCP in 2002, one on the Chinese community and the other on the Bangladeshi community. In these reports, a number of recommendations were made for meeting the unmet childcare needs of the individual communities. These reports are the bases for the last section of the chapter, i.e. the policy implications that have come out of the research. Here I seek to address the question: how can childcare policy be improved and widened to address

the real and felt needs of the Chinese and Bangladeshi communities, rather than those perceived to be so and based on the assumptions of a majority white perspective? At times, the question will be answered by the voices of the participants of the research, which I will bring alive again at this point in the thesis to buttress my arguments. The chapter is then drawn to a close with a short concluding section.

Comparing the two communities

The households: impact of migration history and transnationalism

From their historical beginnings in the U.K., the two communities exhibit similarities in that the first significant wave of migration started with the Chinese and Sylheti seamen working on British naval vessels. There were also those who came as literati for their education, but they were a small minority. We see the beginnings of the distinction between the two groups when the Chinese went from being seamen to being laundrymen, and Sylheti men were recruited to work in British heavy industries. But with greater mechanisation and labour-intensive industry in decline, both Bangladeshis and Chinese began to find their niches in the catering trade, starting with the restaurant trade and later branching out into takeaways. Subsequently, both the communities were subject to the same immigration policies, and took advantage of opportunities to migrate before these were closed to them. Chinese takeaways were based on the labour of a single household whereas 'Indian' takeaways[393] depended on male kinsmen. Chinese wives were reunited with their husbands largely to assist in family businesses. In the case of Bangladeshis, with women needing to be secluded, sons were more likely to migrate to join their fathers. The Chinese business set-up also meant that households were dispersed throughout the country to avoid business rivalry, whereas Sylheti men would share transport when they had to travel a distance away from their households to their workplaces.

These groups of Chinese and Bangladeshi economic migrants lacked the linguistic and social capital to compete with the indigenous population, but like their

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[393] Most so-called 'Indian' takeaways are actually owned by Bangladeshis.

predecessors, were not short on their willingness to work long and unsocial hours. The impact this had on their households took different forms. Chinese parents who were both working in catering businesses often sent their children back to Hong Kong to be looked after by relatives. The impact of this family separation in this Chinese 'grandparent' generation is seen in the 'parent' generation (as evidenced by the household research) with a greater desire for family togetherness. Among Bangladeshi households on the other hand, women were responsible for the children, and as more households were established close to one another, there was a network of extended kin to depend on for assistance. Children were also sent to the homeland although this was not as common as among the Chinese.

With regard to the origins of those interviewed in the household research, there is more diversity among the Chinese than the Bangladeshis, with some coming from Vietnam and other parts of East Asia. In both communities, those who migrated for educational reasons are first generation in the U.K. with the grandparents in their country of origin. Of those who are in the 'grandparent' generation in the U.K., there are more grandparent couples among the Chinese but more widows among the Bangladeshis, which is a reflection of the age difference between Bangladeshi husbands and wives. The members of the grandparent generation in both communities are also likely to be less educated and to have little or limited proficiency in English, depending on their gender and the number of years in the U.K.[394] This is because most came from the agriculturally-based rural areas where educational opportunities were fewer. But those Bangladeshis who migrated because of marriage (*mangeters*), arriving in the past ten years or so are somewhat different to those of the 'grandparent' generation. The regions where their predecessors originated have undergone development, and the newer migrants are more educated and skilled, although their qualifications are not much recognised in their country of settlement. For those women in paid work in Bangladesh, it was in gender-segregated contexts such as education. The Hong Kong Chinese *mangeters* on the other hand are more likely to have come from the more urban areas where they were involved in paid work, with some women working in factories from their teenage years.

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[394] Grandfather Bari and Grandfather Lee are examples of those in this generation with the ability to communicate in English, whereas the grandmothers were less able to do so.

On the whole, the 'parent' generation in both communities do not have as many children as the 'grandparent' generation. There are also fewer male *mangeters* than female in both Chinese and Bangladeshi households because of restrictive immigration rules that assume the norm of patrilocality. The female Chinese *mangeters* differ from their Bangladeshi counterparts in that they are older when they enter into marriage, and have their children one or two years after family reunification in Britain. Among the Chinese couples, some Chinese men in the sample are younger than their wives. For all of the Bangladeshi women interviewed, the year of the birth of their first children coincided with their arrival in Britain. Thus we are looking at a group of young women who have childcare responsibilities early on in their married life. Bangladeshis generally have more children than their Chinese counterparts[395] and the Bangladeshi husbands in the household research, like those in the 'grandparent' generation, are also a number of years older than their wives. One important consequence of migration for the only Bangladeshi male *mangeter* is that his obligations to his family, primarily his mother in Bangladesh, have to be fulfilled transnationally. The consequence this has on his household in the U.K. is regular remittances to Bangladesh, as well as his separation from the household when extended visits to Bangladesh are made. Thus we see the advantage of the wife's close kin in the neighbourhood when the husband is away.

With greater affluence and social mobility, Chinese in the 'parent' generation (like the Lees) prefer to separate business and residence, compared to the earlier generations of takeaway establishments. However, others (like the Wongs) starting from a smaller financial base still have homes located above their businesses. For those families whether Chinese or Bangladeshi who are more established and with the financial means, visits and capital investments in the homeland are a common part of transnational life. In both communities, it is also possible to distinguish between those in the 'parent' generation who were born or brought up in the U.K. and those who arrived in their teens or as young adults. These differences are reflected in their

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[395] This finding from the household research data is confirmed both by the EYDCP Parental Childcare Needs Survey (2001 and 2002) as well as national statistics.

language proficiencies and the degree to which women in particular may be housebound.

Another key finding from the research to do with migration history is its effect on family life, organisation and structure. With migration, traditional structures and networks are modified with families that cross national boundaries. Among the Chinese, there is evidence that parents are beginning to value family life more after a generation of those who were separated from their parents when they were sent back to Hong Kong. Families are having fewer children to be able to invest more in them.[396] And yet Bangladeshi parents are willing to send their children away to other cities to be schooled in Islamic educational institutions. Such teenage children who would otherwise provide assistance to their parents are not present as a result. Among both Chinese and Bangladeshis, there are those of the first generation of migrants who are financially able to be resident in both the U.K. and their country of origin. There is evidence of grandparents alternating between both 'homes' as and when the need arises, such as with the arrival of a grandchild. On the other hand, there are those who are resident here who also have special responsibilities for family relations in the homeland.

The concept of the 'transnational' household is thus useful as an analytical tool to take into account household structures modified according to domestic and caring responsibilities across nations, remittances sent abroad on a regular basis and the investments made in commercial ventures, community projects and personal property in the homeland. In comparing the two communities and their links with the homeland, their ability to invest in the homeland is not only dependent on their financial means in the U.K. but also relative to the costs of land, labour and capital in their countries of origin. The cost of living, for example, is very high in Hong Kong. In terms of caring relationships, grandparental care from abroad is a key feature in many of the households, more so in Chinese than Bangladeshi households, and the reasons for this difference will be made clearer in subsequent sections. Fiona Williams thus rightly highlights the changing boundaries of care, and the need to

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[396] *Cf.* feedback from the Chinese focus group and comment from the Chan family.

consider 'transnational issues of "diasporas of care" where families care across continents' (Williams 2001:470).

The families: neighbourhoods, networks and childcare needs

Just as transnational kin networks were the means by which family units were established in Britain, most Chinese and Bangladeshi households were found to depend on their family networks as their main resource in their country of settlement. While Bangladeshi families are more likely to cluster together in neighbourhoods conveniently close to the city centre, Chinese families are more likely to be located in white neighbourhoods whether they are private or council estates, which is the case with all the Chinese households in the research. Chinatown in the heart of the city serves as a focal point for the Chinese, where business networking and recreational activities take place. In the case of most of the Bangladeshi households, their networking and social needs are met 'at their doorstep' with the close proximity of the local mosque, shops and community-specific provision, often existing in association with services for other sections of the local community.[397] It follows that households that are not located within a Bangladeshi neighbourhood will experience a certain amount of isolation.

The previous section described differences between the first and second generation of migrants. Among the Bangladeshis, there is also the practice of children moving out when they marry because of the large families that they come from and the lack of space. But children (like Mrs Ahmed) are more likely to set up home as close as possible to their family or relatives to take advantage of, or to be on hand to provide family support. So while there is a trend of more nuclear families in the second generation, these are linked to other kin families, as demonstrated graphically by the close-knit network diagrams of Chapter Seven. In some cases, there is an argument for considering that although they are separated physically, two families may be considered one large extended household. There are exceptions however to this close-

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[397] Thus for example, there are services developed for the Bangladeshi community at the Riverside Community Health Project serving the West End.

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knit pattern as some families have a very loose-knit family network, and because of their different backgrounds, do not have close kin nearby. The pattern of Chinese sons or daughters setting up home close to parents or relatives is not as common, particularly when their residence is tied to the location of their business.[398] Where it does happen, there is a clear example of one household encompassing two residences.[399]

In both the Bangladeshi and Chinese communities, there are examples of three-generational extended families, but the stereotype of Asian extended families is challenged by the complexity of arrangements that exist in the households in the research. For both communities, these range from families that have grandparents who live in the same residence, to those that are visited regularly by grandparents, who may live nearby or at a distance, or as it has been observed in the previous section, across the seas. Such transnational networks with relatives in the home country, particularly grandparental care from abroad, are made evident with the use of social network analysis. Social network analysis also demonstrates how some grandparents (like Grandmother Tang) were found to take on multiple roles such as caretaking a residence owned by kin who live in Hong Kong, as well as helping to care for grandchildren. But there are also grandparents who live with their children who may not necessarily be in a position to be actively caring for children so that the mother is able to participate in the labour market. This may be because of their poor health, or the number or ages of children that are in the family to be cared for, or how demanding is the care required by the child. Among the Chinese grandparents however, their care of their grandchildren is often during the confinement period but largely to enable their daughters or daughters-in-law to engage in paid work. When the grandparents' residences are a distance away from their grandchildren, the extra travel and effort made for such family care to take place can take its toll.[400]

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[398] Mrs Pang for example had to move away from her parents' home when she and her husband set up their takeaway, but moved back to the security of her parents' neighbourhood when that venture failed.
[399] See particularly the Tang household, page 151-2.
[400] This happens in the case of the Pang and Chan family. At the time of writing, with her new job, Mrs Ho has had to engage the help of her mother-in-law, who has had to be fetched from her elderly home to stay with her grandchildren till past midnight when Mrs Ho finishes work. She is then fetched back to the elderly home in the early hours of the morning.

In discussing neighbourhoods and networks, there is the issue of racism to consider, which is experienced in different ways in the two communities. As the Bangladeshi community is more concentrated in a particular locality, racist incidents are also more targeted. This is because working class white populations often housed adjacent to these neighbourhoods react negatively towards such concentrations of non-whites. The result is that even though they have the advantage of being surrounded by fellow Bangladeshis, different degrees of a 'siege mentality' are evident in some households, particularly the Tauhids'.[401] In the case of Chinese households, which are more dispersed, the tendency for insularity might be greater because of the lack of security in numbers and especially if their location is in poorer neighbourhoods. We could describe such households like the Tang's as 'closed' households. In examining the family network diagrams of the two communities, the Chinese households can also be described as more 'discrete' units compared to Bangladeshi households, which are more 'diffuse' with their larger households and interconnecting family ties spread in different directions within the neighbourhood.

Even if they did have Chinese neighbours, Chinese families are usually involved in full-time work and thus cannot provide much friendship or childcare support. It also cannot be assumed that individuals necessarily get along well with those of their own ethnicity. This is borne out by the fact that one Bangladeshi family moved to Newcastle precisely to get away from an area where there were 'too many' Bangladeshis, and two respondents made many disparaging remarks about their own communities. In any case, the effect of the dispersed nature of Chinese households is that Chinese families depend to a greater extent on car ownership to maintain community. The Chinese are also better able to afford cars. It is noteworthy that the two households in the two samples without a car are the lone-parent widowed households. All the other households are in possession of one or even two cars, especially if the wife drives. The car is a rather essential means of transport for

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[401] Unfortunately, the classification of households according to networks and supportive ties is unable to capture the attitudes of the families towards their surrounding neighbourhood and British society in general. Ballard describes such attitudes as 'strategies of resistance' to English hegemony (Ballard 1992). I have also observed the tendency for Bangladeshi youth to 'band' together in dealing with racism.

minority ethnic families who view the British public with an element of insecurity and even disdain.[402]

In contrast to such insular families, 'open' households such as the Chan, Kwok, Pang and Siddique households have developed several links with those outside their own communities, for example through religious networks. For most of these households, the lack of family networks is made up for by such friendship networks. Opportunities for families both Bangladeshi and Chinese to connect with non-kin and majority white residents come from informal relationships of neighbourliness, from formal relationships with statutory services providing education, health and social welfare, and through the dedicated work of community development workers in neighbourhoods and localities. Of the eight Chinese and seven Bangladeshi households, three Chinese and three Bangladeshi families have friendship ties outside their own communities for childcare, and almost all of the households have other support networks such as language classes and healthcare support, that would be able to provide them with information and advice.[403]

The socio-economic context: livelihoods, education and employment

Among the Chinese and Bangladeshi households in the research, not all are involved in the catering trade. However the establishment of the catering trade as the main industry for the community is such that even those who are not from a family background of catering have made it a means of livelihood at some time in their lives. In a society with structural barriers to participation in the labour market, only those who have attained social mobility through education and training are able to find employment outside the catering sector and usually through self-employment. For Chinese and Bangladeshi mothers without British qualifications, even getting a satisfactory job in the catering sector was difficult. A number of factors counted against them: lack of childcare, household responsibilities, unsocial hours of work,

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[402] Mr Ho and Mr Ahmed for example relate their encounters with those who are inebriated and Mrs Tang is unimpressed with parents waiting outside school who smoke.
[403] The nature of the sampling procedure being dependent on gatekeepers may explain this. A more random sample would likely show more isolation.

and low wages coupled with the deterrent of losing social security benefits.[404] If they were to look outside traditional sources of work, language difficulties would be added to this list. The effect of gender can also be seen in that the degree to which a household is economically disadvantaged depends on whether it is the husband or wife who is born or brought up in the U.K. Leaving aside those who came for educational reasons, Chapters Five and Seven show that those Chinese or Bangladeshi families in which the husbands are second generation do better economically than those in which the wives are second generation.

The fifteen households involved in the household research were purposively selected to reflect some of the patterns in large-scale surveys. The Chinese households were earning incomes that were higher than the Bangladeshi households, and more of the parents were in full-time work. There were no incidences of unemployment or of part-time work among the Chinese husbands as there were among the Bangladeshi husbands. Among the Chinese, there were four heads of households who were self-employed and one was holding two jobs and thus was both employed and self-employed. Among the Bangladeshis, only one was self-employed. This suggests that 'being your own boss' is more of an aspiration among Chinese than Bangladeshis. Chinese people also tend to be more competitive in their takeaway enterprises which are family-dependent whereas Bangladeshis are more cooperative because of their reliance on male labour, and casual paid work appears more accessible through extended Bangladeshi networks of both kith and kin.

While the wives of both communities faced similar challenges in the job market, they differed to the extent in which they were involved in the labour market. Unlike the Bangladeshi mothers, all the Chinese mothers had been economically active since they left school. At the time of the research, four of the Chinese mothers were in full-time paid work while none of the Bangladeshi mothers were. Instead, most did casual paid work of less than 15 hours a week. While Bangladeshi husbands' participation in the labour market is limited because of the unfavourable economic environment, their wives can be seen to be attempting to contribute to the household income in small

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[404] Mothers in the Bangladeshi focus group (Tuesday, 30 July 2002, 1.30-2.30 p.m.) reflected on the fact that getting jobs was difficult. One mother was interested in a childcare job but she could not do the hours required. Other respondents from the household research also mentioned these problems.

ways. However, they are constrained by the lack of work opportunities, childcare and wider family responsibilities, although the general pattern is of shared care and household responsibilities across generations in those families that are three-generational. Some Bangladeshi women may have had a good education in their homeland but their skills are often not recognised as transferable in the context of the U.K. labour market. Those who were brought up in the U.K. appear to have better prospects, although this again depends on the constraints of family commitments and values. Among the Chinese wives, three do not possess enough educational qualifications and English proficiency to participate alongside white women in the labour market. Another two who have had some education in Britain in their teens still feel they are limited in their skills. As such, these women depend on the catering sector and because their childcare responsibilities limit their options, some have moved in and out of family labour or paid work. Those who do work full-time in the catering sector alongside their husbands are only able to do so with the help of family members. It is British higher education qualifications for two of the Chinese wives that have enabled them to participate more fully in the British labour market.

The impact of livelihoods on class is another feature of transnational households. For first generation Bangladeshi migrants, what is distinguishable is class defined along the lines of non-economic and economic migration [see Chapter Six and Alam (1988)], a broad distinction also applicable to the Chinese. But categorising households in these terms does not bring out other important class distinctions, as there are many who enjoyed a high status in their homelands but have had to adjust to a completely different lifestyle in Britain because of their new-found livelihoods. There are also the more recent *mangeters* as has been discussed in the previous sections. The transnational nature of class is thus another important dimension brought out in this study. For both Chinese and Bangladeshis, those who migrated for non-economic reasons are most likely able to attain professional or managerial class status. Of those with this status, the more predominant pattern is that of husbands working full-time in self-employment and wives working part-time or casually to give support to the business. These well-qualified wives[405] have the necessary skills to

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[405] Mrs Chan has British higher education qualifications while Mrs Siddique has degree qualifications from Bangladesh.

enable them to contribute in this way, as well as to branch out into other forms of work. Another pattern is where husband and wife work quite differently in completely separate professional spheres. The male breadwinner model of full-time working husband with wife in unpaid domestic and caring work is found in one Bangladeshi household and two Chinese households. One of these households is able to draw an income sufficient to support a middle-class lifestyle, but others are not as able to. The Bangladeshi household in this case prefers to maintain their residence in a working class neighbourhood because of family and community ties. The effect of class on choice of childcare can also be seen. While some parents are able to afford formal childcare, it is only middle-class educated parents who have used such childcare, but the reasons for this may be governed more by the lack of family support networks.

The religious and cultural systems: transnationalism and bringing up children

The Bangladeshi households, while differing in other aspects such as class, size and composition, are held together with respect to their language and religious beliefs. Their social self-identification, however, has been expressed using a variety of terms such as Bengali, Bangladeshi, Muslim and Asian. The use of varied identities within the same household has implications for the nature and strength of family ideology within the household. Social identities are also affected by world events and religious and political movements. The Chinese are more diverse than the Bangladeshis in terms of their origins, but most subscribe to the ideology of the family-as-a-unit that finds its basis in Confucianism, and all except the British-born describe themselves as 'Chinese'. Both Bangladeshi and Chinese communities are patriarchal in essence. For the Chinese, such beliefs originate in the traditional Chinese patriarchal system in which according to *yin-yang* philosophy, a Chinese woman is destined to please and serve her husband (Li 2000). The patriarchal set-up in Bangladeshi households comes from the Islamic teaching that a 'woman's responsibility is to ensure her children and husband's comfort by sacrificing her own' (Khanum 2001:493). However, variations exist that are the result of migration history, the nature of employment, the household make-up, social networks and changes in values and lifestyles as a result of being in a

western country. For example, among the Chinese, less hierarchical forms of family relationships as in two-earner families were found to exist. The unemployment of Bangladeshi men coupled with their transnational responsibilities that take them away from their wife and children, also undermine their patriarchal role.

While the general view from the focus groups with the two communities[406] was that women carried most of the responsibility for the household, the household interviews were able to uncover from the lived lives that there were more nuanced roles for men and women. For example, with migration, a new *mangeter* whether Chinese or Bangladeshi, is often unable to fulfil her traditional responsibilities in the new unfamiliar social environment particularly when traditional support structures of female kin are not available. A greater sharing of roles then occurs, with the husband taking on more domestic and caring responsibilities. On the other hand, the effect of not wanting to repeat the less-than-ideal family circumstances of previous generations leads to a return to more traditional home-based female roles for some of the Chinese women, who set aside dedicated time for children.[407] Being brought up and educated in Britain can also result in another kind of variation. Bangladeshi women are perceived of as needing to be 'protected', but those of the English-speaking 'parent' generation are breaking out of this traditional mould. Often, this is for practical reasons for they are the intermediaries at the boundary between two cultures. The role of these Bangladeshi women thus goes beyond housework and childcare, as they are responsible for financial matters, for fetching children to playgroup and school, and shopping. There was evidence that men were involved in the domestic sphere but this is determined largely by the nature of their employment. The differentiation of husband and wife roles according to public and domestic duties [see Chapter Six and Glaser and John (1998)] was found to apply more to those who are new to the country and for all sorts of practical reasons. The development of these roles arises out of

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[406] The focus group discussions on the roles and statuses of men and women in the family threw up interesting similarities and contrasts. Both sets of women were agreed on the fact that women have to do 'everything'. This becomes particularly accentuated with the geographical dispersal of Chinese families. A number of women at the Chinese focus group reported that Chinese men would want their wives to work, as well as to look after the home and family. Indeed, the Bangladeshi women in the focus group were agreed that their husbands and their housework had to come first before they would then consider paid work.

[407] For women like Mrs Chan, Mrs Ho and Mrs Tang, one of their reasons for leaving full-time labour force participation was to look after their children.

adjustment to the 'host' society, feasibility and functional necessity rather than being reified cultural norms that are transplanted into another context.

Core values for both the communities find expression mainly in the parents' concern about the impact of Western culture on their children. For the Chinese, this is perceived to affect such values as the priority of the family, disciplined behaviour, and respect for those who are older. This again comes from the teachings of Confucianism with its hierarchy of social relationships,[408] and the ideology of familism. Among Bangladeshis on the other hand, fears that their religious beliefs, norms and practices are being eroded are more prevalent. Parental concerns are much more about the learning of bad language, drug-taking, and sexual license. I have argued that values like familism are sometimes reinforced in the migration experience, with some Chinese being more conservative in their outlook than those in their home countries, and that there is greater identification among some Bangladeshis with the Islamic *ummah*.[409] The transmission of these value systems to the younger generation is the pre-occupation of both Chinese and Bangladeshi parents, and is incorporated into their understandings and expectations of 'education'.

Bangladeshi Muslims believe that education should rightly include the cultivation of religious values through the regular reading of the *Qur'an* and prayers, although religious 'form' may not be altogether commensurate with religious 'substance'. At home, Bangladeshi children are also socialised into gender, domestic and caring roles. For the Chinese parents who are both at work, the only time when children are able to receive formal instruction in their cultural traditions is when they attend the Chinese language school, where Chinese dance and songs are also taught, and cultural activities organised. Little wonder some Chinese parents still contemplate returning to the homeland so that their children will be able to imbibe some of the cultural beliefs and values that they as parents were brought up with. The contrasting ways in which Bangladeshi and Chinese parents resolve some of these transnational dilemmas will be discussed in the next section.

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[408] These *Wu Lun* (Five Relationships) have been introduced in Chapter Four (see page 128).
[409] The global community of Muslims (see Chapter Six page 224ff).

Parenting and childcare strategies, and preferences for childcare

From the accounts of the childcare practices of the two communities, a number of common factors structure the way families cope with the demands of parenting and childcare in the context of paid work. Two major determining factors are the ages of the children and the size of the family. For both the communities, children under the age of three are more likely to be cared for by family members, unless their family networks are non-existent or limited. Distance between their residences or their employment patterns may also place constraints on family care. Most children over the age of three attend pre-school facilities most common of which is the playgroup. Most popular among the Bangladeshis is the local playgroup which caters specifically to the needs of both children and their parents. When children reach school age, Bangladeshi children in the West End also benefit from local schools that have a large intake of minority ethnic children, the majority of whom are Bangladeshi. There are also community activities for children to participate in whereas with the Chinese children, because of their greater dispersal in the city, such community specific services are not available to same degree. With large families, the burden of care for Bangladeshi parents is greater when the children are young. When children reach primary school however, older siblings are trained to take on household responsibilities and childcare. The Chinese families in the study have fewer children and their involvement in housework and sibling care was not as common as in the Bangladeshi families.[410]

Differences that are the result of generation and migration experience are also interwoven as factors in parenting and childcare practices. This is observed both among the Chinese and the Bangladeshis. For instance, Bangladeshi mothers who have been brought up in this country show differences in opinion with the grandparent generation. Parenting in Britain has also increased the responsibilities that Chinese and Bangladeshi parents have towards their children. This comes in the form of expectations from schools for parents to support children in their homework and other learning activities, which is further heightened in the context of their minority ethnic

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[410] This may be a generational characteristic as at least one Chinese parent has had responsibility for her younger brother in her youth.

status. There are some parents who have the human capital to support the educational needs of their children but there are others who do not because of their own class and educational background. To make up for this in a further commitment to see their children succeed, some parents from both groups have invested in private home tuition for their children. The dynamics of intergenerational relationships was another point to note when comparing both the communities. With the nature of the catering trade operating during unsocial hours, the negative impact on working parents' relationships with their children was a matter of concern for both communities. For the Chinese, the relationship between children and their grandparents, particularly grandmothers thus becomes more significant in the three-generational household where the mother is involved in family labour. However, there may be further difficulties. Grandparents sometimes speak a different language variety to Cantonese while the younger generation communicate in a mixed code of Cantonese and English, and this impedes intergenerational communication. These problems are not experienced to the same extent by the Bangladeshi families because there is greater uniformity in the language spoken between generations, although there is some evidence that a mixed code has also developed among Bangladeshi youth (Rampton 1995).[411] It was found that among Bangladeshi households, the children's relationship with their working father is more of an issue, especially for school-going children. Bangladeshi children described for example how little time they had with their working fathers and expressed a wish for more time with them.

The practical working out of childcare is most affected by the nature of parents' employment. As more Chinese women are in paid work and for longer hours, their reliance on family or formal care is greater than amongs Bangladeshi women. In most cases, this has been from the grandmother. Whether this is the paternal or maternal grandmother depends on a number of factors such as geographical proximity. The other characteristic of Chinese mothers in paid work is their ability to manage the care

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[411] The importance of regular and extended intergenerational interaction within families was found to be essential for 'mother-tongue' maintenance (Raschka *et al.* 2002). This is important because bilingualism has been established as being beneficial to a child's cognitive development. In addition, knowledge of one's 'mother-tongue' is an important social resource that is able to provide the younger generation with anchorage in their parental cultures, family solidarity and thus an improved sense of personal identity and well-being (Portes and Hao 2002; Tannenbaum and Howie 2002).

of their children by exercising creative flexibility in their workplaces, where children can sometimes be cared for by employees, or be put to sleep close by in adapted work environments. Sometimes, safety is an issue, as leaving children under the age of five upstairs while the parents worked downstairs in the takeaway could pose serious hazards. On the other hand, Bangladeshi women have heavier family responsibilities with their larger nuclear and extended family networks. Husbands working unsocial hours have limited time in the household. In this situation, the advantage for Bangladeshi women of families clustering together for community solidarity becomes evident. However the situation is different if their husbands are out of work or in part-time or casual employment, and fathers may then participate in childcare.

The Chinese and Bangladeshi communities were in agreement on basic issues about childcare. They needed to be able to trust their children to the care of providers, and the childcare provision had to be worth the price they were paying. The cost of childcare was highlighted most clearly in the focus groups, and more so in the Bangladeshi focus group than the Chinese. Even so, some parents of both communities have used formal care for infants, but these cases are restricted to circumstances where there are no family members able to take on the responsibility or in times of hospitalisation. Generally however, according to the views of other Chinese and Bangladeshi parents and those in the focus groups, there is a preference for pre-school children to be looked after by family members or relatives, especially grandparents. In some cases, this has taken the form of older siblings, cousins and aunts. Together with formal childcare and employees in workplaces who watch children, they make up a spectrum of informal to formal care for pre-school children. For school-going children both Chinese and Bangladeshi, if grandparents or other kin are not available, children may be left home alone for short periods of time. Other than that, school-age children in both communities have generally been able to access opportunities for extra-curricular activities and recreation through their schools and community groups, and supplementary classes through their respective communities.

As transnational households, the responsibility of bringing up children to know their roots and not to stray too far away from their cultural heritage is a challenging one and a commonly recurring theme. For the Chinese, the key to success in this

endeavour is the learning of the Chinese language, whereas for the Bangladeshis, it is the reading of the Qur'an and the practice of Islam. For this purpose, most of the parents from both communities make efforts to send school-going children to supplementary schools, but this is not without difficulty and extra expense, and often not with the desired results. Facing such problems, parents are forced to consider alternatives such as more visits back to their home countries. Others have resisted pressures to move back to their countries of origin because of their livelihoods in the U.K., and are resigned to their children losing the Chinese language altogether. For the Bangladeshis, dissatisfaction with statutory provision has led to children being sent either to local Catholic single-sex schools or independent schools, or to Islamic boarding schools in other major cities. These are in preference to the local comprehensive where there is no segregation of sexes and where the reputation suffers from poor academic results, incidents of bullying and drug abuse. The contrast is that such Bangladeshi parents are willing to endure separation from their children for religious reasons and to safeguard their children, while Chinese parents resist this for family cohesion.

The parental childcare practices and strategies for bringing up children discussed above are thus a result of all sorts of constraints and barriers, whereas when parents are given the opportunity for consultation, their expressed preferences can offer much more by way of suggestions for meeting felt needs. There are however, also difficulties with looking at preferences in that attitudes may change over time and according to the amount of information available (Moss 1991b). Information also has to keep up with the provision of childcare services that is also rapidly changing. On this issue of parental preferences, there are similarities and differences in the views of the different communities. The lack of information is a key issue for the Chinese community as it is one of the main barriers to Chinese parents accessing formal childcare.[412] Lack of information and different levels of expectation were found to be linked to class, education and social networks. Those who had fewer networks in the mainstream community had less access to information than those who had more.

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[412] This is also one of the findings from the research by the Daycare Trust on the Chinese community in Doncaster (Daycare Trust 2003). One parent in the household research expressed the fact that most Chinese parents like himself are not aware of what is available and what support is given to parents in childcare provision. If these were clearer, he would consider the childcare options more carefully.

Popular understandings of the babysitter who has a cup of tea and watches the television, media coverage of *au pairs* who mistreat their charges, and cases of child kidnapping and abuse arose in the course of interviews and colour parents' - whether Chinese or Bangladeshi - perceptions of childcare provision. The complexity of childcare services available, variable costs, varying opening times, eligibility for government support, can also be a put-off to those for whom English is a foreign language.

Family and religious ideologies also have an influence over parental preferences. Thus Chinese parents were more concerned about orderliness and structure in the content of childcare provision, and the place of education in childcare was reckoned to be more important in some families than others. One parent expressed her wish for more 'team-work' or 'collective' activities of children doing things together while others were concerned about basic literacy, numeracy and social skills, the latter being considered important for Chinese children left much on their own while their parents worked. The issue of specific services for Chinese children was not as important as the staff-children ratio, the attention paid to individual children, and the disciplined behaviour of children.[413] For older children, compared to the Bangladeshis, Chinese parents had higher expectations of the education system. The common complaint has been that there is a lack of respect and discipline, too much 'free-play' and not enough homework.[414] The Bangladeshi parents on the other hand are generally satisfied with the standard of education provided by schools. They were more concerned with other issues such as dress codes and the lack of gender segregation for the older children as well as schools with reported cases of drug abuse.

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[413] In recent research on the childcare needs of the Chinese community in Doncaster, the indiscipline of 'Western' children posed an obstacle to parents accessing childcare (Daycare Trust 2003). This is corroborated by the interviews in this research such as reflected by the Chan's dissatisfaction at the behaviour of children in some settings (see page 205).

[414] This was also borne out in a study of Mainland Chinese parents and their meetings with English teachers (An Ran 2001). An Ran makes a valid point in highlighting the different educational philosophies of Chinese parents and English teachers, one aiming at practice and perfection, the other emphasising process and development. The Mainland Chinese respondents who were postgraduate students were however quite different to those in my study in that they had the time and some degree of ability to assist their children, something which is a luxury to many Hong Kong Chinese in catering establishments.

Bangladeshi and Chinese parents not only wanted childcare providers whom they could trust with the care of their children but childcare that was affordable and worth the expense. On the other hand, there is also the issue of privacy for some Chinese and Bangladeshi families, where the idea of a stranger in the home is frowned upon. When asked, the Bangladeshi parents pointed to a number of different things that they wanted to be provided at childcare settings. These ranged from activities, games, reading and writing, and being in a group with lots of children. Thus like the Chinese parents, they were for their children mixing well with their peers in a 'friendly environment' and with a 'good atmosphere'. Community-specific services were more of a preference for Bangladeshis, as many had experienced the benefits of this in the locality. However, there was also the other view expressed that it is no use having Bangladeshi workers if they did not have the right training and were not friendly and approachable. Although Chinese families were more dispersed and Bangladeshi families more concentrated in one location, it was the Bangladeshis who expressed the need for facilities to be close enough. The suggestion that parents be involved in childcare settings also came from the Bangladeshi community. There were parents in both communities who voiced the need for parents to feel comfortable in these settings.

A matrix for future analyses

In trying to unpick the various influences on childcare and the bringing up of children for the Chinese and Bangladeshi communities, I wish to propose that the conventional categories of gender, class, race and generation that have been used in a number of studies are embedded in other social realities which need to be carefully re-interpreted. Thus according to my analysis, this research demonstrates the importance of seeing:

Gender in the context of **family and religious ideologies**

Generation as articulated by **migration histories**

Class that is a result of **migrant livelihoods,** and

Race and racism that are embedded in **neighbourhoods and networks**

The research has demonstrated that **family and religious ideologies** constitute an important context for interpreting gender roles. Thus the idea of being female in a Chinese family requires an understanding of the Confucian values of hierarchical relationships, of orderliness and respect. Everyone in the family has his or her specific 'place' in the family, with the well-being of the family-as-a-unit as the goal. The Lee and Tang households are examples of more 'ideal' types among Chinese families. Even the Pang household, with the separation of husband and wife, still exhibits elements of this thinking. This can be found in the cohesiveness of Mrs Pang's own family and their support to her, albeit within limits, and her aim of bringing up her children to be well-disciplined and respectful towards their elders.

Being female in the Bangladeshi context cannot be divorced from Islamic teachings of the 'place' of a wife and mother in the household, which do not necessarily have to translate into servile submission as the Ferdousi and Ahmed households demonstrate. For the women in these families, there is scope for them to develop and they clearly carry roles that take them beyond the confines of their domestic situation. The argument would be that these women are Bangladeshis who have been brought up in Britain and therefore have more resources than what other more recent migrants would have. This brings us to a consideration of 'generational' differences.

The term 'generation' has to be unpicked as there are many ways of using the term. In the case of minority ethnic communities, the situation is more complex and needs to be seen in the context of **migration history.** The terms 'first generation', 'second generation' and 'third generation' have more often been used to delineate particular period*s* in the history of migration to the British Isles rather than groups of people.[415] In looking at the particular characteristics of the groups of people who have settled here in the past five decades, there is good reason for further differentiation. Those

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[415] In terms of migration, three generations have been identified in the Chinese and Bangladeshi communities: first generation emigrants, mainly those who came to Britain in the 1950s; sponsored emigrants, who came either as immediate kin of the first-generation or through personal contact with people already established in the country particularly in the 1970s; and the British-born (Eade 1997; Li 1994). These three main categories are also termed first, second and third generations. Li Wei (1994) has also used the terms grandparent, parent and child generations for his micro-level analysis of language use in Chinese families.

who arrived as children of primary school age can be classed as third generation because their linguistic and cultural competence is close to those who are British-born. There are thus distinct differences between those who arrived during this age group compared to those who arrived in their teens, and this can be detected most clearly in their English language acquisition. There are also the British-born who have been sent back and brought up in their parents' homeland, and who have returned to the U.K. in their teens. In the parent generation, there is a higher occurrence of this among the Chinese than the Bangladeshis. Comparisons between the two ethnic groups will be further complicated by the fact that there are differences in generational length between the Chinese and Bangladeshis, as child-bearing in the present cohort of parents starts at a younger age among the Bangladeshis.

The simplistic division into first, second or third generation is further complicated by the term *mangeters,* which has been used to delineate yet another group composed of those who have arrived in Britain on account of marriage rather than primary migration. Having characteristics that are shared with both parent and grandparent generations, they cross-cut the two age groups and sometimes occupy more disadvantaged social positions than those who are not *mangeters*. I would argue that *mangeters* are a distinct group because of their educational and linguistic skills, and economic participation in their home countries. Their 'weaker' positions with respect to participation in the labour market are a result of their gender, ethnicity and their status as relatively new migrants dependent on the family of their spouse.

But class also is an ingredient in the wider picture, as the class status of first generation migrants and *mangeters* in the U.K. are influenced to some extent by their class status in their country of origin. With migration and social mobility, class cannot be seen in isolation from **livelihoods** as families seek to survive and prosper in their adopted country. From those who are in the catering trade, there are various scenarios, as established chefs in restaurants are more economically secure and better paid than those who wait at tables, or are struggling to survive in their family takeaway. There are those just starting out in their business, and unless they have the support of extended family, the experience can cause them to abandon the enterprise route. Others prefer to take a chance on making a break from traditional livelihoods. Those

who are able to achieve entry into mainstream British occupations have been able to do so because of their educational qualifications, but some have faced institutional discrimination.

It is widely accepted that the ethnic enclaves of concentration in the catering trade, and self-employment more generally are indicative of the racial hostility experienced by these communities coupled with the desire of minority ethnic entrepreneurs to 'make their own way' rather than depend on hand-outs from the government. My research showed that such a desire is truer of the Chinese than the Bangladeshis with their strong sense of self-sufficiency. For Bangladeshis, employment in existing businesses is more prevalent through patronage from kinship networks.

On the issues of race and racism, there is also a need for contextualisation by examining the **social networks** of family and friends. Those who have ties beyond the family network appear less likely to experience racist abuse than others who are located in **neighbourhoods** that are strongly clustered with close-knit networks of the same ethnic group. Such a ghetto-like pattern is characteristic of the Bangladeshi community, whose presence is likely to be resented by the working class white neighbourhood. My research shows that these close-knit networks are often the source of strength for the individual households who, if they are not in such environments, can feel the isolation more markedly, especially in the case of women. On the other hand there are those for whom such community networks are not as positive as one might imagine. Such individuals have had quite scathing comments to make about their fellow countrymen. An increasing number of Muslims draw their sense of identity not from the local community, but the universal Islamic community to which they feel a greater belonging.[416] Thus the networks stretch far and wide and serve not only in the area of childcare with grandmothers who come from abroad in the constructions of transnational households but also in terms of social identification.

From the above analysis, migration history recurs as a grand theme with an all-encompassing effect over the social categories that have been discussed. Thus the

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[416] Children from the Tauhid household who attend the Islamic boarding schools that draw their students internationally will no doubt experience this first hand.

following diagram offers a way of looking at the lived realities (arrows pointing down) and analytical processes of identifying the sources of the structural constraints affecting them (arrows going up).
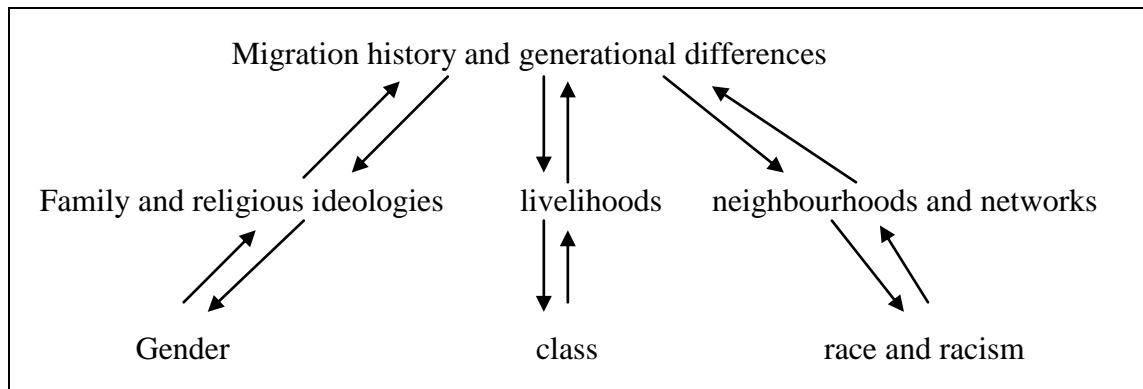
Figure 8.1: Analysing lived realities

This matrix provides a framework of analysis for other comparative studies of migrant communities, as the categories have essentially arisen out of the rich qualitative data comparing two such contrasting communities in the U.K. Future research can further investigate whether migration history continues to exert the same influence on later generations, and what is the nature of these categories and their interrelationships. For example, my study has also shown that race, racism, and gender affect livelihoods, but the link between neighbourhoods and networks with class is less clear. Thus it needs to be acknowledged that this matrix is essentially a heuristic tool, and should not mask the social realities of cross-cutting social categories. For the bringing up of children in minority ethnic communities is a result of a complexity of factors and influences, because the people we are speaking of in this study are at the same time individuals as well as members of groups, a product of systems, ideologies and structures as well as agents of creativity and change, no matter their age, gender, or ethnicity. The last major section in this chapter has to do with the ways individuals can bring about changes in majority understanding about minority ethnic needs, as well as childcare policy. But first, in order to provide a context to the discussions on the policy implications of the research, we will now consider more carefully those issues that arise from the intersections between childcare, citizenship and social inclusion.

Childcare, citizenship and social inclusion

> 'Childcare issues lie at the critical nexus where questions relating to the economy, state ideology, culture, and women's roles come together' (Yeoh and Huang 1995:445).

Childcare has a critical role to play in social and cultural reproduction, the development of human and social capital, and the building up of a generation of citizens at ease with themselves in an increasingly pluralistic British society. This study of the childcare needs of the Chinese and Bangladeshis in Newcastle has shown that childcare, whether formal or informal not only relates to the private realm of the family, but that it impacts on issues of social exclusion and citizenship rights and obligations. In Chapter One (Introduction), I argued that the focus on workforce participation and economic independence ignores interdependence and is not the only means by which social exclusion can be addressed. The issue of independent economic participation in the labour market has been established as a key issue for women's citizenship by Lister (1997). From the research however, the question for Chinese women is not that they are *not* participating in the workforce, but that their participation in the labour market is often in relation to family enterprise. As the research shows, this is commonly located in the minority ethnic catering industry, which is in itself socially excluding because of its unsocial hours and the nature of the work. Even when they are in paid work independent of their partner, women's earnings are pooled for the sake of household expenditure because of the importance of family values in the Chinese mindset.[417] In the case of the Bangladeshis, the nature of men's work is such as to impact on the lives of their womenfolk, who are left with heavy household, childcare and family responsibilities, but without the traditional help they would have access to in Bangladesh. Coupled with adjustment to life in a Western society, these women may find themselves isolated depending on the matrix of factors discussed in the previous section and understandably unable to access the labour market. I would suggest then that the answer is not in women going into paid work in order to attain greater autonomy but that they should still have access to their full citizenship rights whether or not they are in paid work.

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[417] As far as could be ascertained from speaking about the sensitive area of finance, the situation of a pooled household income exists for most of the households in my research.

On the other hand, employment in the mainstream formal economy would allow for better working conditions such as minimum rates of pay, leave entitlements and insurance. There are however a number of reasons for staying in these traditional economies. Participation in the labour market that is dependent on family and kinship ties can offer flexibility and security. Also, moving away from the traditional business sector is costly, as it involves considerable investment in re-training and skills development. In addition, Chapters Five and Seven show that there are barriers such as language to minority ethnic participation in the mainstream British labour market. In the case of Bangladeshis, religious observances also limit employment for women as they are constrained by cultural norms to work in same sex environments and in suitable attire.[418] On the other hand, the fact that Bangladeshis have a greater awareness of and access to the welfare system than the Chinese indicates that the nature of their social exclusion is different and is likely to derive from economic participation being restricted to the home and family. For both Chinese and Bangladeshis, self-employment or employment in community-related sectors then becomes their primary means of economic survival.

As Chapters Five and Seven demonstrate, Chinese and Bangladeshi women are in a weaker position than men whether or not they participate in the labour market. Because of their care responsibilities, women are more likely not to be participating in the workforce, to leave the workforce to care for children or to be involved in part-time or casual work. Thus neither group of women will be entitled to contributory economic benefits such as paid maternity leave, job-seeker's allowance and occupational pensions.[419] Both Chinese and Bangladeshi women's economic well-being is thus dependent on their partner, and on how the household finances are managed. If her welfare needs were not being met by her partner, she would be in a vulnerable position, whereas her male counterpart is able to access paid work more easily because he does not carry the same burden of household and childcare responsibilities. There are a number of women in the research for whom childcare

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[418] All the women in the Bangladeshi sample who are in paid work are involved in contexts that do not normally bring them into contact with adults of the opposite sex.

[419] The Labour government however has worked to improve the circumstances of those who are not in regular paid work and have introduced measures to help individuals invest for their future through tax-free Individual Savings Accounts and the Stakeholder Pension.

provided them with an opportunity to access education and training, and build social networks, which have improved their prospects to participate as full citizens in British society. But childcare could benefit still others. For those Chinese women who are full-time in the market economy, childcare provision is unlikely to free them from their economic enclaves, but can provide some respite from the double burden of work and care responsibilities.

Lister and other feminists writing on 'care' argue for a social citizenship that recognises both caring and earning. This is an inclusive perspective that lobbies the rights of women, particularly those with heavy care responsibilities and those from the minority ethnic communities. If the aim is such substantive and inclusive social citizenship, one of the criticisms of the social exclusion/social inclusion political discourse in the report *The Future of Multi-ethnic Britain* is that cultural inclusion has not been mentioned (Parekh 2000a). It has been argued that if cultural inclusion is not inherent in the concept of social inclusion, then 'the price of inclusion for many individuals will be too high' (*ibid*. p.81), as many would not be willing to give up their cultural values and norms. On the other hand, there are limits to cultural pluralism where the oppression of women is sanctioned. As has been discussed earlier in the chapter, a range of the Bangladeshi and Chinese parents are particularly concerned about the influence of Western society and its values on their children and the need for religious and language classes for their children.[420] In some cases, meeting the specific needs of minority ethnic communities sometimes requires specific or group-differentiated provision to be given to the communities concerned such as in the playgroup frequented by Bangladeshis. A case in point is the desire among Bangladeshi parents to see religious instruction provided in state schools or to have an Islamic school in Newcastle. It has been argued that this constitutes their entitlements as citizens as state-funded faith schools for Christians and Jews are already in existence.[421] On this issue of faith schools, as well as mother-tongue classes and religious instruction, what is required is discussion, negotiation and compromise

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[420] Indeed, Anthias (2001) would argue that for migrant groups, inclusion can often involve assimilation, subordination and exploitation. Cultural inclusion is not without its problems and complexities and attempts at a theory of 'cultural citizenship' is long overdue (Turner 2001).

[421] In 1998, after 30 years of Muslim lobbying, the first state-funded Muslim school was approved, giving Muslims equal educational rights to other faith groups (Tomlinson 1998).

in weighing up needs and rights.[422] Often however, because marginalised groups have not organised themselves sufficiently in order to have a platform, these discussions often do not go beyond the level of rhetoric. Also, there is often not the time and space for such dialogue (Lister 1997:82). In addition, past experience with institutionalised racism manifested for example in the limited choices that those with skills and knowledge from abroad have, as well as in media reports of discrimination in public services such as the police and National Health Service has left many with scepticism that things can change for the better (Andalo and agencies 2004; Dodd 2003).

Moving to more formal aspects of citizenship, perhaps the most significant of responses from the interviews were those stating that as Bangladeshis and Chinese, no matter how long it was that they had lived in the country, they thought they would always be perceived of as foreigners.[423] At the same time, the Labour government has made a political commitment to equal opportunities and to tackling inequalities to do with race, disability, gender, and sexuality. The agenda on social exclusion however takes an overtly economic approach with its employment-linked benefits and tax credits. To be truly inclusive, it requires a rethinking which encompasses and incorporates agendas arising from these other social inequalities. Instead, it appears that economic strategies will still be utilised as the 'driver' for positive social change, rather than social, cultural, and political concerns. This is where migration history and transnationalism are absolutely critical to understanding community needs and ways of working together with excluded groups.

At the core of the way that issues of race and citizenship are often presented in the public realm is a shallow understanding of the migration histories of individual communities and their relevance to race relations in Britain. Social exclusion deriving from migrational characteristics has some common features between the two communities. One is the classification of *mangeters* as a social group of sponsored migrants. Particularly in recent years, they have become more skilled and capable

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[422] Lister (1997:86) argues that 'both needs and rights need to be understood as tiered, embracing both the universal and the differentiated, and standing in a dynamic relationship to each other through the politics of needs interpretation'.
[423] This perception has been heightened by the tightening up of immigration law and the hardening of the governmental stance towards refugees and asylum seekers.

than earlier decades because of the developments in education in the rural parts of the country of origin. Bangladeshi female *mangeters* in my sample who are overseas graduates are under-employed and there are Chinese *mangeters* with skills that are largely untapped. An accreditation system that recognises their skills and qualifications might be able to enlist their contribution, for example, to the religious and language concerns of minority ethnic parents who worry about the influence of Western values and culture on their young people.

The above example shows how my empirical findings highlight the significance of migration history and of the phenomenon of transnationalism, recognised as an emergent research field in the 1990s (Portes *et al.* 1999). The importance of these areas to citizenship and social policy is increasingly significant as migration continues to exercise the minds of politicians particularly as 10 new European member states enter the enlarged European Union on 1 May 2004. My research has shown that migration history shapes the perspectives of individuals towards citizenship and social participation. Often, their migration experience is that of social exclusion rather than inclusion, as in strict immigration controls, discrimination in the labour market, racism from white youth and unsuitable provision for children in schools. As a result, communities resort to their own strategies such as self-employment, neighbourhood enclaves, and as demonstrated, community-led language and religious classes and schools. The kind of perspective of citizenship they have can be described as a retreat from cultural assimilation because of what they deem socially undesirable in British society. To many people without a proper understanding of migration history, such visible segregation is socially divisive, but there are less visible but even more divisive elements within the white community itself (on the basis of, for example, gender, class, disability and age). It is for these reasons and in the light of the theoretical framework of Chapter Two that I propose the following definition:

> ***Social exclusion is to be unjustifiably distanced from mainstream British communities on the basis of a number of cross-cutting factors such as gender, class, ethnicity and 'race'.***

And yet in spite of the existence of social exclusion, citizenship is exercised by social agency, thus the respondents in the research find ways and means to cope with their

transnational dilemmas. Women who do not work full-time can find ways to further themselves and children exercise agency to either rebel,[424] develop hybrid forms of identity and/or act as bridges between their families and the mainstream white community. Herein lies the importance of the various forms of childcare for the communities described in the research. Under the overarching influence of family and religious ideologies, the role of the **mother** in social, cultural and spiritual reproduction becomes accentuated in the matrix of factors I have outlined. In addition, whether childcare facilitates social or economic citizenship depends not only on the migrational context and cross-cutting factors described above but the social, political and economic environment at the time. It is only in this context that we can fully understand and appreciate the childcare needs of the Chinese and Bangladeshi families, and it is to policy implications that we now turn.

Policy Implications

This thesis is entitled 'Towards Equal Voices' to indicate that there is still some distance to go in achieving the equality that is at best a social ideal which is difficult to realise. For this reason, I wish in this section to be able to give voice once again to the individuals whose lives I have had the privilege to study. These voices include not only those of adults but also children, and those in later life, which in a project about social inclusion, is obligatory. At the same time, I will outline the policy implications of the research under a number of key themes arising from both the literature review and the perspectives of the research participants.[425] This includes an examination of how far the Sure Start and other guidelines from the government regarding race equality go towards dealing with the issues that have arisen out of the research. In making my recommendations for meeting the childcare needs of the two communities, I will draw evidence from both the Chinese and Bangladeshi focus groups, my fieldwork experience and the household interviews to support the points that are raised.

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[424] This brings to mind Grandfather Bari's daughters who are unmarried Westernised women pursuing studies abroad, and the reports from the Bangladeshi focus group about Muslim youth discouraging their children from attending Qur'an reading school.

[425] A list of policy recommendations for the EYDCP can be found in Appendix 11.

Children's needs as perceived by children

In the realm of policy-making, children are often inadvertently viewed as 'objects' for which action has to be taken, and whose needs have to be provided for, often ignoring the rights that children have as 'consumers' (Lansdown 1994). One of the aims of this research is that their voices have a chance to be heard, as individuals and in groups as a part of families. From this perspective, there is evidence of the way decisions are made according to intergenerational relationships, and the importance of relationships and activities in the children's own domains (Mayall 1994a). Children's priorities are very different to society's requirements and demands. What was striking was the importance of the family in the children's lives. What one child said to me has stuck in my mind: "I love my family" she said when I asked her to describe the picture she had drawn (see Appendix 1). They have a desire for family togetherness that often cannot be met because of the occupations that their parents have.

> Rachel (aged 13): sometimes I kinda wish that she didn't work so long,
> cos, as soon as get home I wanted her to be there but, she's not all the time
> Researcher: yeah, yeah, so did you tell your mum that
> Rachel: er yeah, but she can't do much about it

The children who were interviewed were concerned with getting along with family and friends and with the opportunity to participate in activities that took them out of the confines of their household. This was especially so during the holidays. The Ahmed girls hate holidays when there was nothing to do, and even their little brother said that he likes school best because of the different things one can do there. The Tauhid children look forward to visiting their sisters in Bradford:

> Shazia (aged 7): I like going to Bradford, and I like going to school. I
> don't like holidays, I don't like, I don't like staying in the house

Whether they were able to participate in activities outside the home or not was dependent on their parents, from whom permission had to be sought, and

transportation arranged, which is a good reason for facilities to be within or near the school compound:

> Anisa (aged 9): I think we should have more, clubs next to our school and that, cos my mum can't take us like to even that sports centre there, because we don't have any time, and my mum can't drop us off and bring us back, because some of the clubs are like seven o'clock and that, like

Although Mrs Ahmed is able to drive, the car is used at that time of the evening by her husband.

Depending on the neighbourhood and their social circumstances, some parents were more protective while others were more liberal. Family-friendly policies espoused by the government are well-intentioned but do not reach the work domains of some in the minority ethnic catering industries for whom survival and livelihood often have much greater priority over time spent with the family.

Those children in the transition between primary and secondary schools were beginning to want a certain amount of independence and for adults to trust them. Children at this age, particularly the Bangladeshis, were also at a point at which they were beginning to take on responsibilities for younger siblings and for duties around the house. Some of them who had heavier responsibilities than others felt some resentment while most grew into their social roles and took them on board as a natural part of growing up. As for childcare, one-nine year-old Chinese preferred to look after himself at home rather than having a baby-sitter, while another nine-year-old Bangladeshi who was faced with the prospect of looking after her younger siblings was less enthusiastic about being left with them. Feeling 'safe' was an important criteria:

> Researcher: do you prefer to have someone looking after you at home or
> Sufina (aged 12): er, (...) probably er
> Researcher: I mean your grandparents are not around
> Sufina: Um, probably, a relative. Cos I feel more safe with them

Researcher: mm

Sufina: and then if you're like with a stranger and you don't know like what they're like or things like that

Safna (aged 10): yeah

Researcher: you're not too keen on a baby-sitter

Safna: Mm

Researcher: If you had a choice between a babysitter or just yourselves on your own,

Sufina: On my own, I normally stay at home on my own so, I'm, quite alright

Those who were older as teenagers were somewhat dissatisfied at what the city centre had to offer them, but seemed happily involved in school activities. Many were ambitious and aware of their parents' expectations for them to do well. Educators need to be aware of some of the demands and cultural constraints placed on minority ethnic children at home by their family, and in dialogue with parents, work towards understanding and mutual support. Consultations with young people about ways to improve public facilities in the city should be on-going rather then one-off and tokenistic, and take into consideration the needs of minority communities, most important of which is the sense of security in public areas. Mohammed Siddique (aged 14) was not impressed with the state of the youth centre that is located close to the mosque which he attended regularly:

Researcher: and, anything else, apart from that youth centre, other facilities, there should be more for the community you would say

Mohammed: well, they should have like more, group things, you know like, have like other opportunities and, cos some people just like hang around on street corners

Those children who are practising Muslims appear to have a stronger sense of identity than others, but most seem comfortable with their bicultural identities. For example, while Mrs Tauhid's daughter has been brought up in a strictly religious way, and has aspirations to be a teacher of the *Qu'ran,* she loves reading and lists her favourite

authors as J.K. Rowling and Enid Blyton. This is the result of her mother's keeping her children in after school and encouragement of reading. Most of the children appear to mix well with white children but many do not have opportunities outside of school hours to do so. In some cases, it is because the children are unwilling to or not so keen on mixing with children they were unfamiliar with:

> Mrs Siddique: there's lots of playcare around here you know
> Researcher: playcare
> Mrs Siddique: playcentre something, holiday, playschemes
> Researcher: playschemes, so they've been to playschemes have they
> Mrs Siddique: yeah but [ ] no, I didn't put them because they are they are not interested to go there
> Researcher: oh, but you did suggest it to them
> Mrs Siddique: aha, but you know, didn't want, they want to stay home, or you know, go in the park things like that

At the end of the day, parents like Mrs Siddique and Mr Ho do take into consideration their children's views and feelings. This also goes for much younger children like the Bari's daughter who appears to be very strong-willed in not wanting to be left at a crèche.

The girls attending independent schools have more interaction with middle-class white children through sleepovers and visits at each others' houses, made possible by transportation provided by parents. All the children are exposed in different degrees to the global consumer culture around them, and find ways of experimenting with some elements of it, even if their parents disapprove. They have different experiences of racism, with some more bothered about them than others. They seem to have the capacity to adapt to their circumstances and a resilience that allows them to cope with hostile situations. But even then, our responsibility to them as future citizens needs to take into account their physical safety, and their mental, emotional and personal development into well-adjusted adults who are able to take their place as citizens in mainstream British society. Many educational commentators would argue that for

them to do this with confidence, they need to be fully affirmed and at ease with their religious and cultural identities (Hewer 2001).

Consulting with minority ethnic parents

In line with general government policy recommending community participation and consultation,[426] childcare services are given guidelines that they should consult with families of all ethnic groups about the delivery of their services. The practical out-workings of this are less straightforward than at first imagined. As evidenced by the household research, parents who are involved in the catering sector work unsocial hours, and those Bangladeshis in part-time and casual work often have heavy family responsibilities that come from their extended family and transnational networks. In addition, they may be hampered by the problems of communication such as the inability to read English, or standard written forms of their mother-tongue. The research reveals also that there is a generation of those who have been brought up in Britain who as bilinguals would be able to fill the gap as interpreters and liaison personnel to facilitate community consultation. For example, many of my gatekeepers and interpreters fulfilled their roles admirably, and one of my interviewees is keen to pursue a career as a social worker. If more is done to increase the status of community workers as well as childcare professionals, this could improve recruitment among minority ethnic people and improve community consultation.

In those settings that do have bilingual staff, there would be scope for also involving parents in the settings themselves, so that they can be involved in sharing and learning ideas about child development. This would also enable them to learn the English language in a working environment. For the Chinese parents in the household research, language and cultural values would be the main barriers to this happening. For the Bangladeshis, many would tend not to take up this opportunity because of other children that need taking care of, as well as other commitments in the home such as caring for elderly relatives. In the research, there has however been an

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[426] In a conversation with Thom Crabbe, Head of Projects in the Daycare Trust, 'dialogue' is probably preferable to 'consultation' because so often in such cases, 'consultation' means trying to get people on board an already predetermined agenda.

example of a parent who has been involved in the pre-school settings of her children and benefited from this. Staff might have to work very hard in drawing out of the home setting women who suffer from a lack of confidence and fears of intimidation. The idea of children's centres that combine a number of services in one place will create an added attraction to parents to get involved. Parents in the research have spoken of their desire for a one-stop facility where they could have easy access to information and services. There are also parents in the household research who have benefited greatly from involvement in activities for parents in childcare settings in terms of improved networks and confidence. The concern is for those parents who are not in easy reach of a children's centre or any such service as they live in those areas where they are more isolated. It would appear that this situation would apply more to those in the Chinese community than the Bangladeshi community.

Information and outreach

In addition, the research reveals that there is a dearth of information on childcare that is able to counter the misgivings that many parents have about leaving their young children in the care of strangers. Information on the training and credentials of childcare staff, what is provided in settings, as well as the regulatory frameworks that they are obliged to work within is important for parents. Information about the Working Tax Credit, and the Childcare Tax Credit element of it, is gradually reaching the communities, but many members of the Chinese community are less inclined to take it up because it is seen as receiving a hand-out from the state whereas they would prefer to maintain their own self-sufficiency.[427] Other reservations could include administrative complexity, family pride, sense of stigma, and concern about employer involvement [see for example Chapter Five page 156 (Law *et al.* 1994a)]. While the Bangladeshis show greater awareness of tax credits,[428] their failure to take it up is more a result of workless households or those that are dependent on casual or insecure

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[427] In a study about improving the access to benefits for minority ethnic groups, Chinese people were more in favour of the face-to-face meetings at a weekly benefits surgery, rather than accessing information through the Ethnic Freeline Service (Bloch 1994).

[428] Sixty-six per cent of respondents in the EYDCP Parental Childcare Needs Survey (Bangladeshi community, see page 245) in 2002 had heard of the Childcare Tax Credit compared to 21.3% of the Chinese surveyed in 2001 (see page 135).

forms of labour. Even then, a marketing and information strategy to meet the needs of all parents is a basic requirement for improving access to services.

Leaflets on the different kinds of childcare in different community languages produced by the DfES have been made available to EYDCP development workers, but had not been distributed to key workers or members of the community when I started my research. While the ChildcareLink Website is informative and helpful, there are many who are not served by it. According to research funded by the Kingston upon Hull EYDCP and Children's Information Service[429], parents generally do not use the internet to access information about childcare. They liked the attractive leaflets produced by Hull EYDCP, but would also like information about financial matters in relation to childcare, and preferred one-to-one contact rather than leaflets. This supports my recommendation that more personal outreach work by dedicated development workers is required, as well as the use of community radio broadcasts. The Newcastle Children's Information Service has just undergone reorganisation and is actively looking for ways to be more effective in reaching out to minority ethnic communities. Members of the Newcastle EYDCP Racial Equality Subgroup have also recommended simple, eye-catching posters in community languages properly translated, which should be available in schools, post offices and other strategic places such as community supplementary schools.

Cultural reproduction

One of the Chinese and Bangladeshi parents' main concerns regarding their children is not only that they would be able to achieve academically, but also that they retain some important elements of their cultural roots. In the case of the Chinese, this takes the form of Chinese language education as all of the school-age children except from one family have attended Chinese language classes. For the Bangladeshis, religious instruction is obligatory (Becher and Husain 2003) with all the school-age children in the household research having participated in classes but Bengali language education is given much less priority. The issue of supplementary schools has been mentioned

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[429] Seventy parents were interviewed, of which 9 were not white.

earlier, and there are signs that the government is recognising the need for support for these areas of minority ethnic children's development. As in the case of faith-based schools, the issues around public provision for such services are complex and debatable. It appears that such provision does not have a place in the mainstream school curriculum, and that the government prefers a partnership with voluntary and community organisations offering this provision, thus launching the Supplementary Schools Support Service in January 2001 (Department for Education and Skills 2003:17).[430] There is scope here that inter-departmental joined-up thinking could result in some support of these forms of supplementary education in the context of childcare provision.

What some sectors of the community cannot reconcile is the lack of recognition of the value of some of these areas of education for mainstream British society.

> If in school there was a mother-tongue subject and a religious subject then it probably would have been good for the children. If the school curriculum includes these subjects then the parents will be 100% satisfied.[431]

The Nuffield Languages Enquiry discusses the importance of building on the linguistic diversity that is already present in the U.K., but which has been 'under-recognised, under-used and all too often viewed with suspicion' (The Nuffield Languages Enquiry 2000:36). Also, 'the variable provision of community languages education results in the failure to meet children's linguistic and cultural needs, and the failure to nurture their talents' (*ibid*). According to the enquiry, bilingual and plurilingual pupils are seen as a problem rather than a resource and community language teachers are described as an under-class. This is in spite of calls from the Muslim community for the teaching of Arabic, Islamic studies and Urdu in state schools (Ahmad 2002).

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[430] The pilot Supplementary Schools Support Service (http://www.supplementaryschools.org.uk) aims to build mutually-beneficial supportive partnerships between mainstream and supplementary school providers. These include services focusing on cultural, mother-tongue or religious faith instruction, set up in Birmingham, Bristol, London and Manchester (Department for Education and Skills 2003).
[431] Interpreter's words at Bangladeshi focus group, Tuesday, 30 July, 2002.

After September 11th and the world focus on Afghanistan and presently Iraq, the need for an awareness of religious issues have increasingly come to the fore. Religion can no longer be ignored as it is a major rallying point for some sectors of British society, and if their requirements for religious education are not being met in the context of state provided education, then they will resort to private means of obtaining what they require. The numbers of *madrasas* or Muslim schools have increased dramatically over the past ten years, from 15 in 1992 to 102 in 2002 (Ahmad 2002; Parker-Jenkins 1992) and many are requesting to be state-funded. The instinctive reaction of many would be that such a move would result in further segregation of minority communities, but because Roman Catholic, Church of England and Jewish schools are already in existence, it would constitute a social injustice if such schools were denied public funding (Hewer 2001).

Childcare provision

As it is for white parents (Gaber 2003), the major obstacle facing minority ethnic parents in using childcare is that of cost. This cannot be taken in isolation because parents have been shown to be willing to spend money on religious instruction, language classes, and for help with schoolwork. Cost of a service is tied up with the benefits and value of the service that is being provided, and if these are tangible and pragmatic, cost becomes less of a hindrance. The opportunity cost of looking after one's own child is however very low when most work that is available to individuals, in particular mothers in the community who are restricted to traditional economies, brings in relatively meagre wages. Thus, even with the Childcare Tax Credit, they would prefer not to take on waged work because to them, it is not worth the trouble.

> If the childcare costs a lot, and your take-home is not a lot, the best way is to take care of your own children. All depends on the childcare costs. No matter how much you earn, you have to pay the childcare costs. If the childcare cost is free, then it's another issue.[432]

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[432] Chinese focus group, 9 March, 2001

It's okay for girls like us who have grown up here, we have our mothers to look after our children for us, what about girls who don't have the language? And going out to work, if the money is taken out of your wages to pay your mother, then it's no point working, the money isn't enough, that's the problem, that's why nobody wants to work..[433]

Yet there are those who are more ambitious and who would like to further themselves educationally, but face the unavailability of childcare in order for them to undergo education or training.[434] Ideally, free childcare would suit many minority ethnic parents, who with means-testing may qualify to use it if they are accessing education or training, or are in receipt of low wages. Also, because the Parental Childcare Needs surveys[435] show that these communities are more likely to use childcare for school-age children, local authority play and youth services offering open access schemes should be funded and expanded to provide for their needs. Play and youth services that are not specifically for these communities tend to be viewed with some reservations by minority ethnic communities (Petrie *et al.* 2000; Kapasi 1992) especially if the services that are offered do not take into consideration cultural needs such as separate provision for the sexes.[436] Also, parents and children are concerned about the lack of discipline and proper supervision, especially if it is a mixed multicultural setting.[437] Community-specific provision for children seems to be the way forward and is already provided by some community groups. This however needs to be balanced with inter-community or inter-faith activities to prevent too much segregation, such as youth camps/conferences.

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[433] Bangladeshi focus group, 30 July 2002

[434] Two examples illustrate this: Mrs Ho had enquired about childcare for her to be able to attend the ESOL class, but had not had success and as a result has had to depend on her husband to look after their son on his day off. Mrs Ferdousi took on the HEFC course in anticipation that childcare would be provided, but was disappointed that she had to make her own arrangements to use registered childcare with a childcare grant.

[435] The household research also shows this to some extent with the high participation of Bangladeshi children in out-of-school activities, but for Chinese children, transportation problems were a limitation.

[436] For most of the children in the household research who were involved in children's activities, these were mainly among children of the same faith group or located in a school setting. None were involved in play or youth groups that had white working class boys and girls.

[437]Unfortunately, in Newcastle over the last 18 months, these services have undergone local authority cutbacks which have undermined their services to needy groups. According to a source in the Newcastle EYDCP, these cutbacks are being followed by a complete reorganisation of council services as part of what is known as the 'Newcastle Plan', with plans for a Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.

As part of the Care Standards Act 2000 that arose out of the Children Act, Standard 9 of the National Standards refers to equal opportunities, that the registered carer and staff in childcare services 'actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children' (Department for Education and Skills 2000). Governmental guidelines for Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships (Department for Education and Employment 2001) recommend equal opportunities training and codes of practice but place less emphasis specifically on anti-racist practice perhaps because of the confrontational stance that is taken by proponents of anti-racism. My research showed that parents are more interested in anti-bullying strategies that relate more directly to their children's experiences. Also, apart from childcare practitioners recognising the role that they play in getting children to mix, parents have expressed a need for them to exercise understanding and flexibility. Thus, if parents bring children in late to a setting, it may be because they have only been to bed at about three or four in the morning because of their work schedules, or because they are fasting and have been up in the night preparing to break fast at sunrise. There is thus an urgent need for a basic amount of religious and cultural literacy,[438] which can be brought about by engaging an adviser on cultural awareness and diversity, but also on bilingualism and anti-racist practice.

Early years settings

Looking more specifically at early years provision, one of the recommendations to the EYDCP that arose from the research was that those playgroup settings working successfully with the community ought to be encouraged, expanded and replicated. This principle of building on good practice is also in the Sure Start initiative's guidelines for the starting up of children's centres, but the question remains as to whether the practice of providing specifically for individual communities may be seen as going against the principle of integrating minority ethnic children into mainstream society. In the case of the Chinese community where concentrations of Chinese

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[438] 'Religious literacy' is a useful term employed by Farnell and his colleagues in his research on engaging faith communities in urban regeneration (Farnell *et al.* 2003).

children in childcare and educational settings are a rarity, the issue of the children being marginalised in such settings has been brought up. In these cases, some parents have requested that there be more structured activities even in early years settings. This could have the effect of encouraging white children to interact more with the minority children in their midst, and in a supervised manner, so that any racist behaviour can be dealt with and monitored. Early childhood pedagogy emphasises play and individual exploration, or as Brooker describes it, 'the pedagogy of child-initiated free-flow play' with its cherished term, 'freedom to choose' (Brooker 2002:166-167). This often neglects the role of instruction and interaction wherein children work together in organised groups or teams, which allow communication, barriers to be broken down and friendships to be made.[439]

While the majority of both Chinese and Bangladeshi parents express their reservations about needing childcare for their pre-school children, they have also acknowledged the need for a 'safety net' for times when childcare would be required. These include instances when other children or parents in the family are taken ill or hospitalised, especially in Bangladeshi families with many pre-school children. The numbers of grandparents who are looking after grandchildren have also to be taken into consideration. Chinese grandparents who are hard put to care for their grandchildren as their working parents follow long shifts and unsocial hours, express their need for a break from the younger children who are more demanding to care for. While such care is needed, there is some degree of concern about a cultural mismatch between carer and child of the younger age range, whereas such concern has not been expressed for school-age children. If grandparents are not available to care for the children, many are left to care for themselves in less than ideal circumstances.[440] For reasons of health and safety, parents should be given the option of leaving their children in supervised environments. While governmental guidelines make much of inclusive services, the kind of flexibility that minority ethnic communities need may not be able to be accommodated in a setting that is reliant to some extent on market forces, restrictions on hours of work and wage levels of childcare staff.

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[439] This brings to mind Mr Lee's young son left in a corner by himself.

[440] We have examples of one family who leave their children aged three and five upstairs while they work in the takeaway downstairs. Another family was caught in a dilemma when their school-age son (aged nine) had to miss school to accompany his mother to visit her invalid father because he could not be left alone in the house when his father was at work in the evenings.

Ethnic minority childcare practitioners and community workers

Parents would like to be able to communicate with childcare providers, and bilingual staff are a valued asset in settings and much appreciated by parents. However, there is also the view that the caring attitude of the staff ranks more important than their ethnicity, and that settings should not take on minority ethnic staff just for the sake of their ethnic background. This brings in the need for staff to be appropriately trained and for those who recruit staff to be aware of cultural, linguistic, religious and class differences within the ethnic groups that they are familiar with. Thus, someone who is Bengali may not be able to speak Sylheti fluently and may even take a patronising stance towards Sylheti clients from rural backgrounds sufficient to turn them away, and someone who is Chinese may not be able to speak the particular language variety of the client.

The DfES has set EYDCPs targets for increasing the employment of people from minority ethnic groups, as well as men, older people and those with disabilities, recognising that the childcare workforce is in urgent need of workers (Moss 2003). From the research, there is evidence of an informal supply of childcarers who are casually paid to mind children on a regular basis in the Chinese community. Interviewees reported relatives who were involved in looking after children while their parents work in catering or Chinese young people giving home tuition to their children. Some are students in colleges and universities and some are from overseas. At another level, there are supplementary schools that cater to the language and cultural needs of the children. These are more formal in nature but traditionally have not been in receipt of much public funding, although this varies from local authority to local authority.[441] In Newcastle, support that has been received comes in the form of permission to use school buildings and facilities for mother-tongue learning. This sector will continue to exist, as it is flexible enough to meet the specific needs of the community, but its existence indicates that there is scope for childcare services to provide for some of the needs expressed in this use of informal and supplementary

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[441] See page 359ff and footnote 430.

services,[442] and to tap into the supply of informal carers that already exists. Parental choice is thus expanded in this way, and it can serve to add an element to childcare settings that will improve their sustainability. This would tie in with Moss's proposal for new type of childcare worker that incorporates more educational aspects of care, a new teacher or pedagogue (Moss 2003), which would have the potential of attracting bilingual minority ethnic recruits.

The research would not have been possible without the assistance of the gatekeepers in the community, most of whom are dedicated community workers who play a crucial role in meeting the needs of the minority ethnic communities that they serve. It has been observed however that they are sometimes not ready with the most up-to-date information on childcare, or have not been provided with information materials in the languages of their clients. Most are overstretched and spend a lot of their time 'doubling-up' as interpreters in situations they find themselves in. At the same time, they carry the responsibility of having to speak on behalf of the communities they are serving and to answer questions and meet demands from management committees made up largely of the majority community and funding organisations. Most of the information that they have come by word of mouth and networking with other community organisations. The Racial Equality Subgroup of the Newcastle EYDCP served in this capacity to disseminate information, and was held once a month, but members were not always present at meetings. In the age of information technology, workers could be trained to use the internet to improve their access to information. However, the chance to meet face-to-face and exchange grievances has been a much-valued part of the meetings.

Towards equal voices

It was established in Chapter Two as well as this concluding chapter that social exclusion has to take into account not only gender inequalities and patriarchy, but those that arise out of race and ethnicity. The gendered nature of the labour force,

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[442] Mrs Chan and Mrs Pang for example expressed their desire for Chinese language classes to be provided more than once a week.

including that of the childcare labour force is still needing to be addressed, but more so racial discrimination in the labour market before any consideration of minority ethnic childcare needs. The examination of the dynamics of minority ethnic households also confirms the fact that divisions between private and public, formal and informal, market and non-market are ambiguous. Now that we have reached the end of the thesis, it is my hope that after all the discussion and analysis of the theoretical and policy issues surrounding minority ethnic childcare needs, the voices and opinions of the participants in the research continue to be heard, and have the opportunity to be aired again and again. There also needs to be recognition that children's voices are often overruled by adults' views and those unable to give expression to their perspectives can often be marginalised. I am thinking here of those who are speakers of other languages, and those whose views are often not captured by social researchers, i.e. men and older people. This piece of research hopefully addresses these concerns with its household perspective that not only takes such voices into account but examines the interactions between them. There is scope for more research to be conducted using the same method, and not only on minority ethnic households. In addition, it is hoped that the matrix that has been proposed will serve as a useful analytical tool particularly for comparative work.

This doctoral research has been a valuable opportunity to provide a detailed descriptive and comparative analysis of two communities in Newcastle upon Tyne, focusing on their childcare needs. My explorations have taken me to the origins of these communities, their journeys through migration, settlement, the establishing of families and livelihoods and transnational dilemmas. The issue of 'childcare' came to be just another of many issues around bringing up children that parents were already dealing with, such as language maintenance, religious instruction, choice of school, safety, discipline, moral education, educational achievement, the sharing of domestic responsibilities and family togetherness and cohesion. In this mosaic of family and parenting matters, market-led childcare as it is offered from a Western perspective with the aim of increasing opportunities for paid work, did not initially seem relevant to many minority ethnic parents. If one however examines the mosaic more carefully, there are opportunities where families can indeed benefit, but only insofar as their concerns and views are taken into account in all seriousness. Minority ethnic

communities are not only there as clients whose needs have to be met, but possibly providing a pool of labour for such services, a means for the sustainability of childcare services, and contributing to a truly multicultural Britain. Such is the potential for social inclusion and a practical outworking of social citizenship, but as long as mainstream services continue to be preoccupied with white perspectives of education and childcare, there will be little progress along these lines.

APPENDICES: APPENDIX 1

I wake up at 7:00 am, got dressed and ate breakfast and went. After school when to the cef youth club to play badminton. When we finded playing, went home and went to bed.
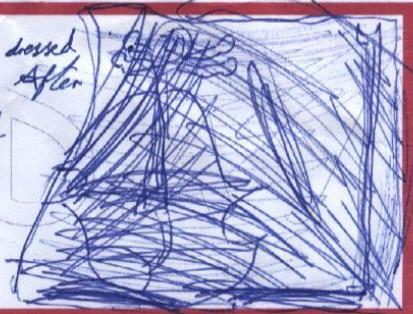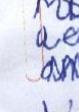
I woke up at 7:00am got my uniform and ate breakfast. Went to school and ate dinner. After school I went to my violin lesson. My mommy picked me up and went home to eat tea and, went to wash and went to sleep.

I woke up at 7:00am and got dressed. I ate breakfast and went to school. I ate and started Started & went on the computer. Finished school and washed E-mail to my schoolmates, ate and went to sleep
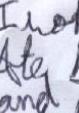
I woke up at 8:00 am. Ate breakfast. We went to school and playing hangman. After school we went shopping. After shopping and went to sleep.

I woke up at 8am. Ate breakfast and went to school. I brought bring some toys to play. After school I went into bath and went to sleep.

Monday

* **am** Left for school 8:10am Arrived at 8:30 am. Had 2 lessons. My friend Nicole came to pick me up.

* **pm** I was having lunch with my 2 best friends Kate and Katie. Met a new teacher called Mrs Newby.

Tuesday

* **am** Had the lesson Maths again. Got to type own password for I.C.T.

* **pm** We had Music lesson and my teacher told me she saw my primary school teacher. We sang Atomic kittens - Eternal flame.

WEDNESDAY

* **am** I overslept because my alarm clock didn't ring. I met a quite weird teacher for French called Mrs Coleman.

* **pm** We learned Latin. I came home and it was raining. I was watching Lizzie McGuire at 4:30pm disney channel.

Thursday

* **am** Nicole got told off by geography teacher about wearing trousers.

* **pm** New teacher for German. She looks a bit like Aunt Claire from Tucker. I come home, did my homework and went to get something to eat.

Friday

* **am** Had 3minute silence for the people in New York at 11:00 am.

* **pm** Had science with Mr McArthur. Drew diagrams of Molecules. Had a supply History teacher - Mr Daughton.

Init city

Key

- Lighthouse
- House/flat/shop
- Hospital (cinema)
- Airport (cross roads)
- Export
- Railway line
- Railway station
- Fire station
- Hospital
- Police
- Post office
- Motorway
- Cycle hire station
- Main line station
- Road
- School
- Life post
- Life boat station

A64

A64

A98

371
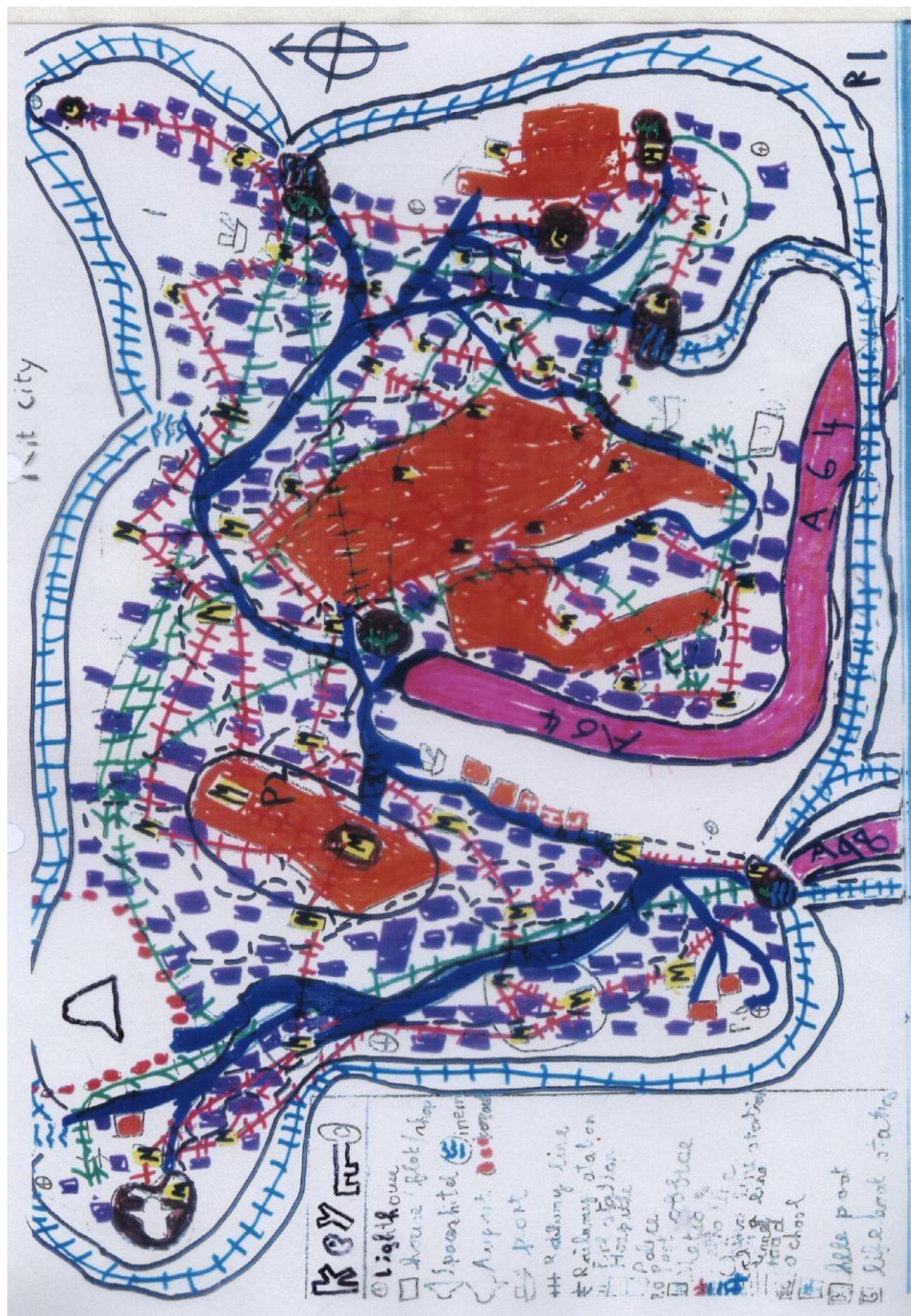
"I love my family"
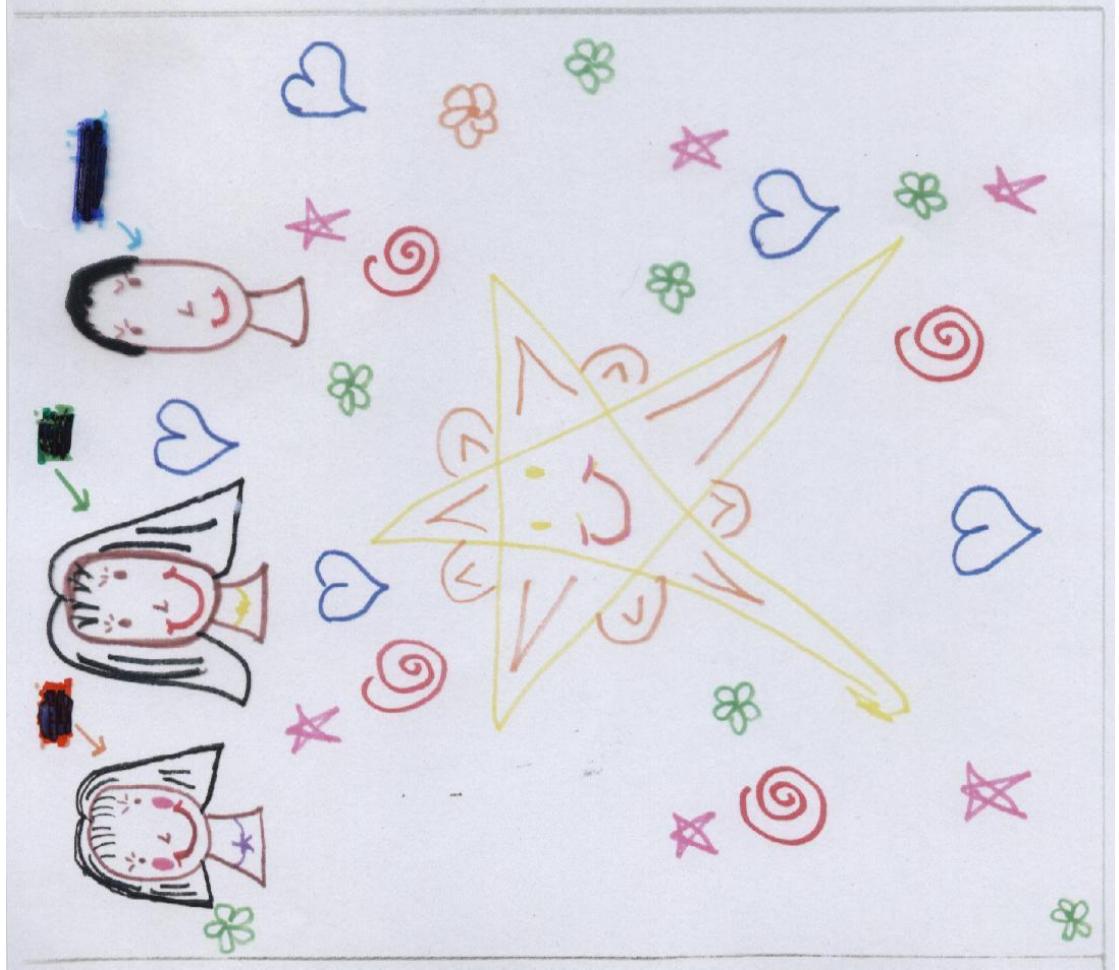
APPENDIX 2

CHILDREN

Between ages 5-8

Children will keep a "diary' in the form of pictures that they will draw of what happens each day for the period of a week. The drawings are done in a book of A4 plain paper which will be provided together with a set of felt tip pens as an incentive. The children will be told that their drawings are very valuable and that if they complete them, they will be able to keep their book and felt tips. Parents are to ensure that the children do at least a page a day. At the end of the week, pages from the book are photocopied and the drawings are treated as field data. The book will then be returned to the child.

After a week, questions about the pictures will then be asked in order to generate a discussion. This will be tape-recorded e.g.:

What's happening here? Looks like you had a nice day? Can you tell me about it?

You can listen to yourself on the tape-recorder if you like.

Is that your granny? Do you like going to hers?

Between 9-14

The children will keep a written diary on the printed sheets provided in a plastic folder which they can then keep.

They have the option of the above if they prefer.

Similar questions will be asked about the daily entries including e.g.:

So you go to a drama club every Friday. Can you tell me about it?

Do you like it there?

How do you think it could be made better?

Do people there treat you differently because you're Chinese?

Tell me about your friends. Who's your best friend?

How about those you don't like? Tell me about them.

CHILDREN'S INTERVIEWS

typical day
typical week
weekends
holidays
off-days

housework
shopping
cooking
childcare
DIY and repairs

helping out
getting along with brothers and sisters
relationship with relatives/grandparents
religious activities

experiences:
parent and toddler group
playgroup
nursery
after school activities, or at:

weekends
school holida

racism/ bullying

schooling in Bangladesh

language spoken
language learning
homework

relatives/friends/neighbours to play with
playing out
visits and staying over

being treated differently
identity
satisfaction with school etc. - best friends/enemies/teachers
what they think of parents' work
own ambitions

child preferences
informal childcare - chart
provision for younger and older children -charts
interest

374

GRANDPARENTS

Where were you born? and where were you brought up?

How long have you lived in Britain?

Where in Britain?

Are you working or retired?

Would you like to continue working/retire/find some work? Why or why not?

(If working) Can you tell me what your weekly income is? (Show income bands)

Do you suffer/ have you suffered from any major illnesses?

How many children do you have?
How many of them have children?
How many and what are their ages?

Do you live with your son/daughter? How long for?
Where do you live? Why did you move there?

How often do you see your grandchild/grandchildren?

Do you look after your grandchildren much? (including fetching to and from school)
Any special reasons?

What was it like when your grandchild/grandchildren were first born?
Were you involved in helping to care for them? How often and for how long?

What was it like when he/she/they grew up?
Were you involved in helping to care for him/her/them? (including fetching to and from school)

The way your grandchild/grandchildren are taken care of now,
is it very different from how you used to look after your own children?

Are you happy with the way your grandchildren are taken care of now?
What would you like to see different?

If you had a choice, would you look after your grandchild/grandchildren? Why?
How often and for how long? Why?

What childcare facilities do you think would be good for your grandchild/grandchildren? Why?

In terms of:
age of child
sex

personality
ability (to communicate, mix etc.)

In terms of:
Location (distance from home/school/transport links)
Place (home/school/community hall)
Cost (per child/per family)
Time (before/after school, weekends, holidays)
Duration (no. of hours/days/weeks/months/years)
Frequency (every weekday/ ? times-a-week)
Carer/s(adult/child ratio, ethnicity, qualifications)

Given a choice, what would you like to be able to do?
What would you like your life to be like?

What hopes do you have for your children and grandchildren?

Thank you for your time and patience.
If you would like to listen to your answers to alter, elaborate or comment on them, you are very welcome to, and we can make arrangements for that to happen.
If you would like to choose your own nickname for confidentiality, you may do so.

APPENDIX 3

CHINESE/BANGLADESHI WOMEN'S FOCUS GROUP

What kinds of problems do young Chinese/Bangladeshi parents face these days?

In your opinion, what should a mother's responsibilities be in her household?

In your experience, how different are men's responsibilities to women's responsibilities in the home?

Do you think a mother with small children should look for work?

Given a choice between working and staying home to look after children, with childcare available, what do you think a young mother should do?

Are children under 14 given many responsibilities in a Chinese/Bangladeshi home?

What kind of a role does a grandparent in a Chinese/Bangladeshi family usually have?

Do you think it is all right for very young children to be looked after by someone who is not part of the family?

Do you think it is acceptable for grandparents to be depended on to look after their grandchildren if their parents work?

APPENDIX 4

FIRST INTERVIEW
Establish beforehand what languages are spoken, ensure confidentiality and freedom to refuse to answer.

PARENT/S

Household and Background

Can you tell me first of all how many members are there in your household,
how you are all related and what are your ages?

Where were you born? and where were you brought up?

Where did you go to school? What did you do after your schooling/education?

How long have you lived in Britain? In Newcastle? Do you have British citizenship?

Why did you/your family move to England? To Newcastle?

Have you been back to your home country? How often?

Would you describe yourself as British? Why or why not?

Are some of your family still in Hong Kong/China/Bangladesh?
What about your husband's/wife's family?
Who do you have here in Britain? Where do they live? When did they come over?

How long have you been married/ lived with your partner?

Childcare - Past

Were your children born in Britain? Any particular problems?

Thinking back to when you had your first child, who was involved in looking after him/her when first born?
Any particular reasons for that? (e.g. a difficult birth/post-natal depression/custom)

Were you working or studying then?
Did you stop/ take leave? Why?
Who looked after your child/children?

Did you get to meet other parents (eg. at a parent and toddler group?)

Did you make other childcare arrangements as she/he got older?
(informal/formal up to age 11, including taking to and collecting from school)
Who was involved in looking after him/her?
Any particular reasons for that? (e.g.affordability, family expectations)

What happened when your second child came along?
Were there a lot of changes in terms of your childcare arrangements?
And what happened when your other children were born?

Were you happy with your childcare arrangements then?
For each child (e.g.oldest from Bangladesh couldn't speak English)
Prompt only if necessary:
Location (distance from home/school/transport links)
Place (home/school/community hall)
Cost (per child/per family)
Time (before/after school, weekends, holidays)
Duration (no. of hours/days/weeks/months/years)
Frequency (every weekday/ ? times-a-week)
Carer/s(adult/child ratio, ethnicity, qualifications)

Did you have other people to care for besides children? (e.g. elderly parents)

Did you wish you could have spent more time/less time with your children?

Childcare - Present

Do you attend a parent and toddler group? What is it like?

Which playgroup/nursery/schools are your children at now?
Do they attend any activities before school/after school/at weekends/during school holidays?
Any experiences with racism/bullying at any time?

Do you wish they were at school in Bangladesh? Why?

Do they have many relatives/friends to play with where you live?

Does your child/Do your children play out on the streets?
How often and with whom?

Does your child/Do your children go to other households to visit or stay overnight?
Whose houses and how often? How far away?

Any problems with being treated differently, eg.because of language etc? Racism or bullying?

Are your parents/parents-in-law in good health?
At present, do you have other people to care for besides children?

Are you at work/study/training now? Why or why not?
(includes eg. catering/home-working/ESOL classes/Sewing classes/ CLAIT Training)
What are the hours like? (how long did the classes last, when did they take place)
How far do you have to travel?
Who looks after your child/children? Where and how long for?
Is anything given to him/her for looking after your child/children?
Can you tell me more about him/her?
(age/employment/own children?/experience with children)

Have you had any problems finding someone to look after your child/children when it was necessary?

(e.g. on a hospital visit, driving lesson, job interview)

What about when it was on short notice e.g. in an emergency?

At times like these, who has looked after the children?
Where and how long for?
Is anything given to him/her for looking after your child/children?
Can you tell me more about him/her?
(age/employment/own children?/experience with children)

Are you happy with your present childcare arrangements now?
For each child? For your purposes?

Do you think your child/children are satisfied with these arrangements?

Do you think the other members of your household are satisfied with these arrangements?

Do you wish you could spend more time/less time with your children?

Thank you for your time and patience.
If you would like to listen to your answers to alter, elaborate or comment on them,
you are very welcome to, and we can make arrangements for that to
happen.
If you would like to choose your own nickname for confidentiality, you may do so.

SECOND INTERVIEW

We've talked a lot about your children and how they were looked after the last time we spoke.
On reflection, do you have any other comments to make?

Can you tell me about your own growing up and who looked after you?
Do you follow your parents in the way that you bring up your children now?
How different is it for your children?

Household Routines

How's your day been like? What have you been
doing?

What was it like for you yesterday?

What's a typical day for you?

What's a typical week for you?

Who does most of the housework/shopping/cooking/childcare in your
family?
Who deals with the household finances? Who drives?

Do children help out in the house? How? At what age did they start? How often?

Are there any activities you are involved in outside the home? (eg. volunteer work, paid work)
How often do they occur?

Does your child/do your children go with you?
Or does someone take care of them? (e.g. in a creche)
Can you tell me more about it?

Are there activities you would like to be involved in, things you would like to do but can't? Why?

What do you as a family usually do during weekends?
What about off-days? Half-term and school holidays?

How does religion play a part in your family life?

Do you speak much English at home? Why? How important is it to write in your own language?

Income, Needs and Preferences

Given the choice, would you work/ continue working where you are/ change your job/
change your working hours?
 Why or why not? (e.g. to fit in with childcare, husband's/wife's hours of work)
How do you feel about your husband's/wife's working or not working?

If you don't mind, can you tell me how much money comes into the household every week?/every month?
(Show income bands and ensure confidentiality)

Given the choice, would you go for training? What kind?

Does anyone in your household receive benefits?
(e.g. Income Support/Working Families Tax Credit/Disability Living Allowance)

What do you know about the new Working Families Tax Credit and the Childcare Tax Credit?
Is it useful to you?
Why or why not?

Does your child/Do your children have any special needs? (including
physical/social/emotional/speech and language needs)

What sorts of things would you want a childcare facility to provide?
eg. how important are the following? (prompt only if necessary)
Safe/clean/caring environment
Educational (eg. opportunity to improve English)
Social (eg. opportunity to interact with others)
Leisure (eg. opportunity to go outdoors, play team games)
Cultural (eg. opportunity to learn mother tongue)
Religious (eg. respect for dietary needs)

What would you prefer for each child?
prompt only if necessary:
Refer to:
age of child
sex
personality
ability (to communicate, mix etc.)

In terms of:
Location (distance from home/school/transport links)

Place (home/school/community hall)
Cost (per child/per family)
Time (before/after school, weekends, holidays)
Duration (no. of hours/days/weeks/months/years)
Frequency (every weekday/ ? times-a-week)
Carer/s (adult/child ratio, ethnicity, qualifications)

Do you know what childcare is available and whether they meet your needs?

If the right childcare were available, how would it affect your plans/decisions about work/study/leisure now?
In the coming year?
In five years?

Here is a list of the kinds of formal childcare available and their typical costs.   (Show chart A)
Do you/ would you use them? Why or why not? How long for?

What would your child prefer? Why?

Here is a list of the kinds of informal childcare that some parents use. (Show chart B)
What do you think of them?

What would your child prefer? Why?

Has your child/Have your children been to the following? (Show chart C)
Who with?

There are also other activities for older children such as: (Show chart D)

Is your child/Are your children involved in any of them?
Would you or your child/children be interested in them?
Who would fetch and collect them?

So, with regard to work and childcare, do you have any specific plans for the coming year?

What about the next five years when the children are older?

Do you have any other comments to make about childcare provision by the local authority, voluntary and private agencies?

Thank you for your time and patience.
If you would like to listen to your answers to alter, elaborate or comment on them, you are very welcome to, and we can make arrangements for that to happen.
If you would like to choose your own "nickname" for confidentiality, you may do so.

APPENDIX 5

CHART A examples of costs	per hour	per day subsidised		per week subsidised		range of costs/other
babysitter	3.80					£5.00 (Saturdays)
registered childminder	2.75			75.72		£60 - 120 FT/ week
drop-in/shoppers' creche	2.60					
family/community centre creche	free					
college/training institution creche		19.95	7.60	94.00	38.00	
live-in au pair/nanny				179.00		av. £226 /week (daily)
work-place nursery		25.68	possible			
private day nursery		24.50		90.62		£80 -180 /week
local authority/community nursery		8.40/7.85	per session			free
after school club		6.90	3.75	26.00	12.00	£15 - 40 /week
breakfast/morning club	2.50	7.50 am & pm		65.00		£1.85 - 3.00 /session
holiday playschemes	1.70	9.00				£35 - 90 /week
playgroup		3.50/2.00	per session			£2 - 5 /session

Sources: Professional Nanny, January 2001
Daycare Trust website, 05/02/01 "Childcare costs"
OSC Childcare Club Charges in Newcastle upon Tyne Update 04/10/99
University of Northumbria in Newcastle
The Nanny Bureau, Heaton Road,
Newcastle
Professor Kidz Creche, Metro Centre, Gateshead
Early Years Information Service, Newcastle
The Babysitting Service

CHART B

grandfather
grandmother
relative
friend
older sibling
at home alone
babysitter
lodger

CHART C

softplay
swimming pool
park
library
toy library
toddler gym

CHART D

drama club
dance club
sports
clubs
brownies/scouts
community youth clubs
music classes
religious classes
mother-tongue classes
cultural associations

HOUSEHOLD INCOME BANDS	
(nett monthly)	
A	less than £400
B	between £401-£800
C	between £801-£1200
D	between £1201-£16000
E	between £1601-£2000
F	between £2001-£2400
G	between £2401-£2800
H	between £2801-£3200
I	above £3200

HOUSEHOLD INCOME BANDS	
(nett weekly)	
A	less than £100
B	between £101-£200
C	between £201-£300
D	between £301-£400
E	between £401-£500
F	between £501-£600
G	between £601-£700
H	between £701-£800
I	above £800

APPENDIX 6

**UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE**

MABEL LIE

"FINDING OUT ABOUT YOUR CHILDCARE NEEDS"

I am a PhD research student at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. I am looking into the childcare practices and needs of the Chinese and Bangladeshi communities. My research is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

I am working closely with the EYDCP, in particular its Development Team, which monitors and seeks to make provision for childcare needs in the city. The aim of this research is to assist the Partnership in their strategic planning, and inform policy makers of specific cultural needs of minority groups.

My research will involve 6-8 households of each community group and will take the form of in-depth interviews with different members of each household, including children. I will be asking questions about work patterns, childcare arrangements and cultural preferences. Interviews will be conducted at the convenience of family members and their daily routines, and confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

As a Singaporean wife and mother of two children who has lived in this country for 14 years, I believe this unique and valuable piece of research will contribute to the good interests of minority ethnic communities not just in Newcastle but also in the UK. If you are interested in participating in this project, or know of anyone who would be willing to participate, please contact:

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UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE

**Department of Sociology
and Social Policy**

Claremont Bridge Building
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Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU

Head of Department: Professor Diane Richardson

孩童照顧需求之研究計畫

您好，

我的名字叫做龔伶心，是紐卡索大學的博士班研究生。 目前，本人正在進行一項關於華人與孟加拉社會中幼兒照顧的現況與需求的研究。 此項研究計劃是由「經濟暨社會研究會(ESRC)」與「早期幼兒發展與照顧合作協會(EYDCP)」共同贊助。

我正與「早期幼兒發展與照顧合作協會」之下的「幼兒發展小組」合作，觀察並且為本市的幼兒照顧需求尋求可行的方法。 本研究的目的在於協助「早期幼兒發展與照顧合作協會」的策略計畫，並藉此讓政策制定者能夠正視少數族群的特殊文化需求。

此項研究將會針對每個社區團體中 6 至 8 戶家庭，並且與每家中不同成員，包括兒童，進行深入訪問。 訪問的內容將會包含："父母親工作的模式"、"幼兒照顧的安排" 以及 "文化偏好的取向"。 訪問進行的時間將視受訪家庭成員平日生活的方便為主，訪問內容絕對保密。

身為一名新加坡的家庭主婦及兩名孩童的母親，再加上本人已居住在此達 14 年之久，本人相信這項研究的獨特性與價值性將會惠及少數民族，不僅是本市的少數民族，更包括全英國國內所有的少數民族。 如果您有興趣參與這項研究，或是您所認識的任何人願意共同參與，請聯絡：

Mrs. Mabel Lie　　龔伶心女士
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মেবেল লী

আপনাদের চাইল্ডকেয়ারের প্রয়োজনের ব্যাপারে জানুন।

আমি নিউ ক্যাসেল আপন টাইন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে পি.এইচ.ডির একজন ছাত্রী। আমি বাংলাদেশী ও চায়নীজ কমিউনিটির চাইল্ডকেয়ারের প্রয়োজনের এবং এর বর্তমান ব্যবহারের উপর লেখাপড়া করছি। আমার এই গবেষনার খরচ, ইকোনমিক এন্ড সোশাল রিসার্চ কাউন্সিল Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) এবং আর্লি ইয়ারস ডিভেলাপমেন্ট এন্ড চাইল্ডকেয়ার পার্টনারশীপ Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) একসাথে বহন করছে।

আমি (EYDCP) এর সাথে বিশেষ করে তাদের ডিভেলাপমেন্ট টিমের সাথে মিলেমিশে কাজ করছি। তারা এই টাউনের চাইল্ডকেয়ারের বিষয় দেখাশুনা বা মনিটর এবং এব্যাপারে দরকারী পরিবর্তনের চেষ্টা করে থাকে। এই মূল্যবান গবেষনাটির লক্ষ হচ্ছে সংখ্যালঘু সম্প্রদায়ের লোকদের বিশেষ সামাজিক প্রয়োজনের ব্যাপারে পরিকল্পনা গ্রহন কারীদেরকে সঠিক পরামর্শ এবং সহায়তা প্রদান করা।

আমার এই গবেষনায় প্রত্যেক কমিউনিটির ৬থেকে ৮টি ঘর অন্তর্ভুক্ত থাকবে এবং প্রত্যেকটি ঘরের শিশুদের সহ বিভিন্ন সদস্যের বিস্তারিত ইন্টারভিউ বা সাক্ষাতকার নেওয়া হবে। আপনাদের কাজের ধরন, শিশুদের দেখাশুনার ব্যবস্থা এবং সামাজিক প্রয়োজন অনুযায়ী অগ্রাধিকারের ব্যাপারে আমি প্রশ্ন করব। আপনাদের দৈনিক কাজের রুটিনের সুবিধা অনুযায়ী প্রত্যেক সদস্যের সুবিধা মত সময়ে বিস্তারিত ইন্টারভিউ বা সাক্ষাতকার নেওয়া হবে। সব ব্যাপারে গোপনীয়তা রক্ষা করা হবে।

আমি একজন সিংগাপুরি মহিলা, আমার দুটি বাচ্চা রয়েছে এবং আমি গত ১৪ বৎসর ধরে এদেশে আছি। আমি মনে করি এই মূল্যবান গবেষনাটি শুধু নিউ ক্যাসেল আপন টাইন নয় সমগ্র ইউকের সংখ্যালঘু সম্প্রদায়ের লোকদের চাইল্ডকেয়ারের ব্যাপারে মুল্যবান ভূমিকা রাখবে।

আপনি যদি এই প্রজেক্টে অংশ গ্রহন করতে আগ্রহী হন, অথবা এ ব্যাপারে অংশ গ্রহন করতে আগ্রহী এরকম কাউকে জানেন তবে দয়া করে যোগাযোগ করুন।

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APPENDIX 7

Household and background
languages
members
ages

origin
socialisation; work

residence
citizenship

migration
visits home

family in home country
family in Newcastle, elsewhere
their migration history

length of marriage

Childcare past

birthplace
problems before/during/after birth

childcare of 1st child
work/study
leave
support from grandparents esp. own mother
support from other parents with children
other childcare arrangements when older

second child etc - jealousy
changes
childcare arrangements
payment in kind or money
other caring responsibilities

time with children; discipline

Childcare - Present

experiences:
parent and toddler group
playgroup
nursery
after school activities, or at:
weekends

school holidays

racism/ bullying

schooling in Bangladesh

relatives/friends/neighbours to play with

playing out

visits and staying over

being treated differently

health of parents/parents-in-law

work
study
training
hours
transport
childcare

contact during emergencies
sickness of child/parent/carer
parent consultations
short notice
payment in kind or money

satisfaction with childcare
adults and children

time with children

difference   between   own   upbringing   and   child/children's
upbringing

typical day
typical week
weekends
holidays
off-days

housework
shopping
cooking
childcare
DIY and repairs
household finances

children helping out
age and frequency

activities outside the home
frequency

childcare
activities wished to be involved in

religious activities

language spoken
written

Income, Needs and Preferences

work - change/continue/hours
why
spouse's work

income -chart
WFTC
CTC
usefulness

children's special needs
childcare provision - what is needed/important
awareness of childcare available
plans/decisions

childcare and costs - chart
child preferences
informal childcare - chart
provision for younger and older children -charts
interest

plans for the coming year
plans for the next five years
comments about childcare provision

APPENDIX 8

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR KEY-WORKERS

What do you think are some of the greatest needs of working parents in your community?

What do you think are some of the greatest needs of children in your community?

What do you see are the uses/benefits of childcare provision in your community?

What kinds of childcare provision do you think would be workable in your community?

Where would you go to get information about childcare provision in the city?

Do you see any changes in the family life of your community?

Do you think fathers should be equally involved in childcare than mothers?

APPENDIX 9

Q.S.R. NUD.IST Power version, revision 4.0.
Licensee: Mabel Lie.

PROJECT: Childcare Needs, User Mabel Lie, 12:46 pm, Sept 22, 2003.

(1)	**/Childcare**
(1 1)	/Childcare/informal childcare
(1 2)	/Childcare/formal childcare
(1 3)	/Childcare/grandparenting
(1 4)	/Childcare/childcare preferences
(2)	**/Transnationalism & Belonging**
(2 4)	/Transnationalism & Belonging/homeland
(2 6)	/Transnationalism & Belonging/Britain vs Homeland
(2 7)	/Transnationalism & Belonging/Chinese Culture
(2 8)	/Transnationalism & Belonging/Bangladeshi Culture
(2 13)	/Transnationalism & Belonging/integration
(2 29)	/Transnationalism & Belonging/discrimination
(2 35)	/Transnationalism & Belonging/identity & residence
(3)	**/Family**
(3 1)	/Family/grandparents
(3 2)	/Family/family members
(3 5)	/Family/family background
(3 43)	/Family/husband and wife
(3 43 12)	/Family/husband and wife/parental preferences
(3 43 19)	/Family/husband and wife/parenting
(4)	**/Children**
(4 21)	/Children/siblings
(4 25)	/Children/children's activities
(4 27)	/Children/children's work
(4 39)	/Children/child preferences
(4 41)	/Children/children's characteristics
(5)	**/Lifestyle**
(5 1)	/Lifestyle/transport
(5 33)	/Lifestyle/safety
(5 34)	/Lifestyle/technology
(5 38)	/Lifestyle/values
(5 40)	/Lifestyle/leisure
(6)	**/Social Divisions**
(6 16)	/Social Divisions/class
(6 23)	/Social Divisions/religion
(6 28)	/Social Divisions/gender
(7)	**/Livelihood**
(7 8)	/Livelihood/parental leave
(7 18)	/Livelihood/work
(7 31)	/Livelihood/income
(7 32)	/Livelihood/future plans
(7 36)	/Livelihood/training
(7 37)	/Livelihood/voluntary work
(8)	**/Household**
(8 1)	/Household/home
(8 20)	/Household/routines
(8 22)	/Household/division of labour
(9)	**/Environment**
(9 9)	/Environment/neighbourhood
(9 14)	/Environment/information
(9 17)	/Environment/facilities
(9 30)	/Environment/education
(10)	**/Networks**
(10 1)	/Networks/children's networks
(10 2)	/Networks/parents' networks
(10 3)	/Networks/institutional support
(D)	//Document Annotations
(F)	**//Free Nodes**
(F 1)	//Free Nodes/Health
(F 15)	//Free Nodes/language
(F 42)	//Free Nodes/methodology

APPENDIX 10

Figure A.1 Income of Chinese respondents in the EYDCP Parental Childcare Needs Survey (2002)
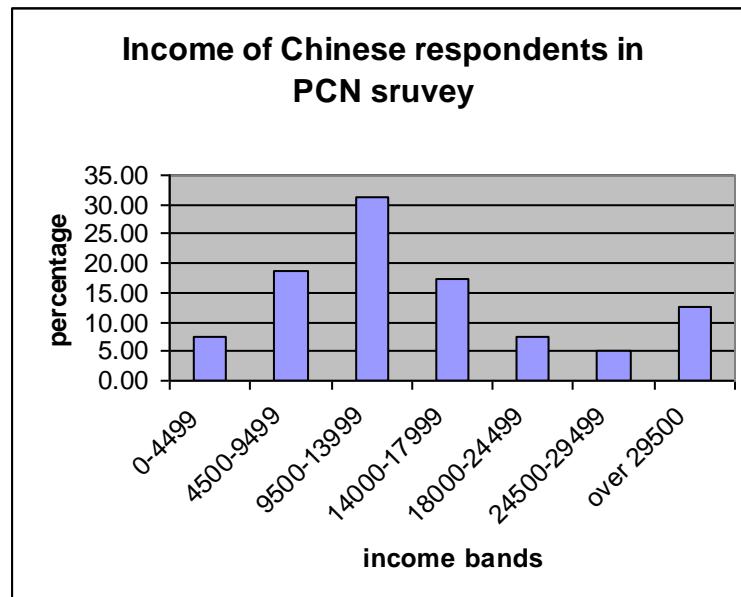
Figure A.2 Income of Bangladeshi respondents in the EYDCP Parental Childcare Needs Survey (2002)
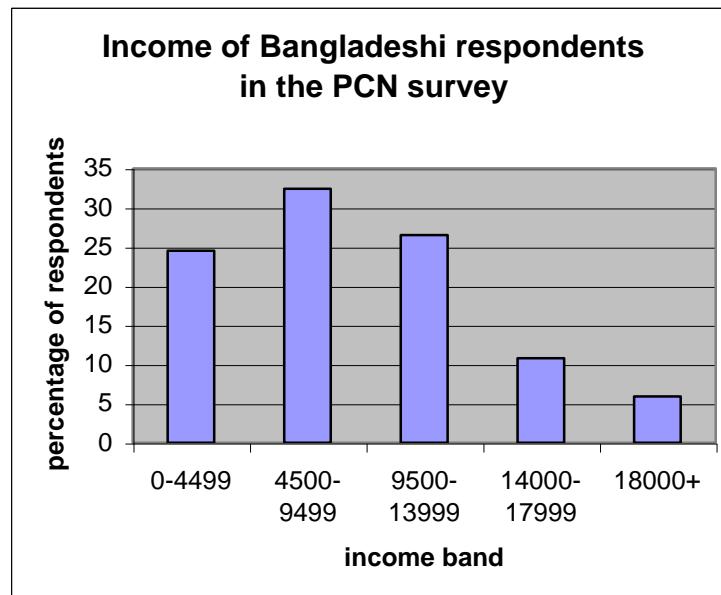
APPENDIX 11

Recommendations arising from the research on the childcare needs of the Chinese community

1. While it is acknowledged that among the Chinese, family members are the preferred option especially for the care of those in early years, a 'safety net' needs to be created for those times when informal childcare is not possible, e.g. when a grandmother takes ill.

2. Formal childcare should be promoted as a possible option for Chinese catering families because of the enormous strain that many families are under and conditions that children are sometimes left in.

3. English classes and other training sessions for ethnic minorities essential for their future employment should offer free childcare so that women who wish to access them do not always have to depend on their husbands. Classes then do not have to be organised around participants' work times, e.g. on Sundays or days off. This would enable parents to have time together with their children and reduce 'shift-parenting'.

4. Chinese youth are already providing childcare for Chinese families and are in some cases paid for doing so. Possibilities for recruitment from this informal pool of workers is worth pursuing.

5. Childcare facilities apart from being inclusive, integrative and flexible, should also adopt an understanding and caring approach towards the needs of minority ethnic parents which could also be reflected in parent consultations.

6. Playgroups should be made more aware of their role in the socialisation and integration of minority ethnic children.

7. Pre-school settings should have a more balanced programme of structured and unstructured activities that will promote teamwork and interaction, and so reduce the likelihood of racist bullying.

8. Organisers of parent and toddler groups could try and promote the involvement of minority ethnic parents by offering informative talks and activities and showing hospitality, thus playing a part in community cohesion.

9. Childcare providers should make parents aware of the equal opportunities policies and anti-bullying strategies that have been adopted in a childcare facility.

10. Black voluntary groups play a key role in the dissemination of information about childcare services, and workers need up-to-date training and reader-friendly publications.

11. In order to overcome fears and feelings of mistrust that minority ethnic parents may have about individual formal carers, information that they are properly accredited and have undergone necessary checks needs to be made known to parents.

12. An advisor for bilingual education, cultural awareness and anti-racist play-work needs to be in post in order to meet requirements of equal opportunities and race relations legislation.

13. There is scope for out-of-school activities to include a language teaching element, either to help with English or to supplement mother-tongue classes already available in the community.

Recommendations arising from the research on the childcare needs of the Bangladeshi community

1. More playgroups following the model of good practice of those presently popular with Bangladeshis, could be set up to meet the current demand for them.

2. Support services and childcare provision must be careful not to overlook the needs of individual Bangladeshi families that are resident in predominantly white estates.

3. Assumptions about Bangladeshi families not needing to use childcare can prevent adequate information about the Childcare Tax Credit and childcare service provision getting through to them.

4. More work can be done to train community workers and employment advisers regarding the benefits of the Childcare Tax Credit and how Bangladeshi parents might be able to gain from them.

5. Open access play settings which do not charge to provide recreation for children are ideal for low income households but parental fears about the neighbourhood and unhealthy peer influences need to be overcome.

6. Parental involvement in childcare settings should be encouraged, so that parents' fears about what goes on in the settings will be allayed.

7. Qur'an reading could be offered in the context of an after-school club to offer parents more choice in the religious education of the children, as well as encourage take-up of out-of-school places, as well as integration.

8. Childcare settings could offer opportunities for parents to learn and share their experiences about parenting and child development, as well as learn language skills while helping in the care of children.

9. Childcare and education professionals should be made aware of religious observances such as dietary requirements and religious dress-codes.

10. College courses could offer on-site childcare facilities such as a mobile crèche for students who require childcare, apart from offering financial assistance for them to access childcare privately.

11. More Bangladeshi mothers or young women can be encouraged to take up childminding and other childcare professions in the same way that many have been trained as crèche-workers, and who could further their skills.

12. Misconceptions about child-minding have to be dispelled as many regard this as leaving children in the care of a stranger, when this may not be the case.

13. Because of dietary, language and other cultural needs, childminders for the Bangladeshi children should preferably be from the same cultural, religious and linguistic grouping.

14. Classes where women and children can learn about Islam, possibly through the medium of English and their mother tongue, is something that might suit the needs of Bangladeshi women who are struggling to fulfil their responsibility to educate their children in the *Qur'an*.

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